



STATE OF ALABAMA

ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
725 MONROE STREET
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130
PHONE: 261-3184



ALABAMA REGISTER OF LANDMARKS AND HERITAGE
Nomination Form

ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

COUNTY Baldwin

SEP 11 1985

NAME: Present U.S. Post Office Historic U.S. Post Office RECEIVED

LOCATION: Street and Number 25 Hand Avenue

Town (Give directions if rural) Bay Minette

A MAP WITH THE LANDMARK MARKED MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THIS FORM

CATEGORY: Building (X) Structure () Object () Site () District ()

USE: Present Post Office Historic Post Office

OWNERSHIP: Public (X) Private ()

Owner's Name General Services Administration

Mailing Address 18th and F Streets, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20405

INTEGRITY: Original Site (X) Moved () When?

From where? (Give details in significance.)

CONDITIONS: Excellent () Good (X) Fair () Ruins ()

THREATS: No (X) Yes () By What?

RESTORATION WORK: Being considered () Underway () Completed () Not planned (X)

SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT: Open land () Woodland () Scattered buildings ()
High building density () Commercial (X) Industrial ()
Residential () Rural ()

Acreage Less than one

For all categories other than a district and object give a site plan with a North arrow. Show related buildings.

For a district give a verbal boundary description and attach a sketch map of the district.

Why is this landmark significant? (X) associated with events, persons, or movements
 Local (X) State () National (X)
 () a good example of a type or style of structure
 () other

Explain: (Briefly state why the above is true)

SEE ATTACHMENT

of Construction or Period of major importance. 1937-1939

Architect or Builder (Give name and biographies, if known)

SEE ATTACHMENT

Give a complete but concise history of the Landmark. Include information on important people and events associated with the landmark. (USE ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY)

SEE ATTACHMENT

State sources of information, giving full bibliographical data:

SEE ATTACHMENT

DESCRIPTION: PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE LANDMARK MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THIS FORM.

Complete as directed below for each category.

BUILDING:

Number of stories One Foundation Concrete Basement Yes

Wall Material: (Note changes from one floor or wing to another)
 (clapboard, brick, stone, wood shingle, board and batten, stucco over wood or brick, metal, logs)

Brick with marble trim. Walls are English Bond.

Structural System: (If known)

Wood frame () Load-bearing masonry () Iron or Steel (X)

DESCRIPTION (Continued)

Roof Type: (Gable, Gambrel, Mansard, Flat, Hipped, Combination) Gable, Flat

Roof Covering: (Wood shingle, Asphalt, Tile, Metal, Slate) Slate

Roof Trim: (Cornices, bargeboard, brackets, etc.) Boxed cornice.

Porches: Front (type and description) Full portico 37 by 7 feet. Four Doric columns and two engaged pilasters with full entablature and pediment.

Rear (type and description) Loading dock with flat roof and English Bond brick walls.

Side (type and description) N/A

Doors: Main entrance (location, description)

SEE ATTACHMENT

Other entrances (location, description)

Windows: Types and number of each floor of facade.

Types and number per floor for sides and rear

Interior: Describe mantels, stairways, wainscoting, plasterwork and any unusual features.

SEE ATTACHMENT

Other: Use this space to describe any additions, alterations, outbuildings or other features of the structure and its surroundings.

SEE ATTACHMENT

On an additional sheet make a sketch of the floor plan of the building, showing dimensions if possible.

THIS IS NOT REQUIRED!

DESCRIPTION (Continued)

STRUCTURE: On a separate sheet of paper give a complete as possible verbal description of the structure. (See examples)

SEE ATTACHMENT

OBJECT: On a separate sheet of paper give a complete as possible verbal description of the object. (See examples)

SITE: On a separate sheet of paper give the present description of the site and how the site is believed to have looked during its period of importance.

DISTRICT: On a separate sheet of paper give a general description of the district. Also needed is a numbered list of the structures in the district corresponding to the sketch map. This listing should include a name for the structure, a date of construction, a brief description, a statement of why the structure is significant, if it is.

A MAP WITH THE LANDMARK MARKED AND PHOTOGRAPHS MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THIS FORM

Map: A U.S. Geological Survey Map is preferred, but if you are unable to obtain one a county highway map may be used.

Photographs: Black and white, glossy finish, 5 x 7, or 8 x 10, is preferred.

FORM PREPARED BY

Name John Sledge Date 30 August 1985
Address Box 1827 Telephone 438-7281
Town Mobile
Organization Mobile Historic Development Commission

For Alabama Historical Commission use only

STAFF COMMENTS:

MAP REFERENCE: MAP U.S.G.S. Bay Minette North Quadrangle

U. T. M. Reference 1 6 4 2 6 0 2 0 3 4 1 6 5 3 0
Zone Easting Northing

Thematic Category _____

Added to ALABAMA REGISTER _____

NATIONAL REGISTER Potential

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Explanation of Significance

The Bay Minette Post Office is a physical manifestation of Franklin D. Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration in Baldwin County, Alabama. Built at a cost of \$66,000 in 1937, the Post Office is one of the finest examples of architecture in Bay Minette. By no means a local creation or variant of a popular style, the building was designed and masterminded out of Washington, D.C. by the supervising architect Louis A. Simon.

The exterior of the structure remains unaltered to this day but for a loading dock added to the rear during the 1950s. The interior is also largely unaltered but for some modern wallpaper, lighting and a tile floor. The original marble wainscoting and the fine 12' X 5' color mural, painted in 1939, are still intact in the public lobby. As such, the Bay Minette Post Office is a fine local example of the Works Progress Administration.

The WPA is so recent that some may question its historicity. However, its remarkable success in achieving established goals and its contributions to American society during a time of severe economic distress will insure its place in American history.

Architect or Builder

Supervising Architect- Louis A. Simon. Born in Baltimore, Maryland in 1867. Simon was supervising architect on a number of federal projects during the Roosevelt years including the U.S. Post Offices in the Bronx and Madison Square Station, New York City, and numerous Court Houses, Custom Houses, Mints and Hospitals. Simon died in 1958.

Contractors- Dyson and Company of Fairhope, Alabama.

Mural Artist- Hilton Leech. Born in 1906 in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Leech also painted a mural for the Federal Court-house in Chattanooga, Tennessee. He conducted a summer art school on Long Island and divided his time between Canada and Florida. He received \$660 for the Bay Minette Post Office mural, "Removal of the County Seat from Daphne to Bay Minette, 1901," installed during May of 1939.

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History

On 30 May 1936 Alabama Congressman Lister Hill wrote from Washington, D.C. to inform R.B. Vail, Postmaster of Bay Minette, that he had been successful in obtaining funds for a new Post Office building under the W.P.A. Bay Minette's old, frame Post Office was inadequate to handle the town's mails.

During July of 1936 a suitable piece of property was sought for the new building; a corner lot on Hand Avenue and First Street eventually being purchased.

By February 1937 bids were let for construction of the new building. Plans called for the structure to have brick walls with cast stone trimmings to be reinforced with concrete and structural steel beam construction. The one storey building would rest on a concrete floor over a basement with steam heating equipment. A flat roof of slab construction was also in the original plans. The cost was placed at \$66,000.

By 15 April 1937 work on the Post Office had begun by Dyson and Company Contractors of Fairhope. The supervising architect, Louis A. Simon, operated out of Washington, D.C. The project was estimated to take 240 days.

Over the course of construction, the plans were changed several times. First, it was decided to do the trim in Alabama Marble. Then a larger basement was called for and approved. The changes soon became elaborate; a gable roof and full portico were called for as well as offices for the county agent in the basement.

On 1 February 1938 the Bay Minette Post Office opened for business. The official dedication took place on 28 April. Lister Hill and Congressman-elect George Grant spoke while music was supplied by a military band from Fort Barrancas, Florida. Hill noted that Baldwin County had received more in government spending than any other Alabama county in proportion to population.

More was to come. The United States Treasury Department's Fine Arts Program (1936-41) had a policy of installing mural and sculptural decorations in certain Federal buildings. Six hundred and sixty dollars were allotted to provide the new Bay Minette Post Office with a mural. A Mr. Hilton Leech was invited to submit three designs for the painting. Leech was chosen because of the quality of sketches he had submitted in a competition to do the Miami, Florida Post Office. Though he had lost in that

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contest, Leech had done a mural for the Federal Courthouse in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Of Leech's three designs for Bay Minette, the one chosen depicted the 1901 removal of the county seat from Daphne to Bay Minette. The Section of Painting and Sculpture, U.S. Treasury Department and the supervising architect concurred in the appropriateness of this sketch.

The painting, oil on canvas 12' wide by 5' high was placed in the public lobby over the postmaster's door on 10 May 1939. Postmaster Vail wrote to the Section of Fine Arts that the mural had "occasioned a great deal of comment-pro and con." The building and mural serve postal customers in Bay Minette to this day.

Sources of Information

American Architect's Directory of 1956.

Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals.

The Baldwin Times, Bay Minette, Alabama. 4 June, 2 July, 16 July 1936, 4 February, 15 April, 13 May, 27 May, 8 July, 26 August 1937, 28 April 1938, 11 May 1939.

The National Archives, Record Group 121. Correspondence between Hilton Leech and Edward B. Rowan, Superintendent, Section of Painting and Sculpture, U.S. Treasury Dept., Washington, D.C.

Interview with Davida Hastie, 8/19/85. Stockton, Alabama.

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DESCRIPTION

Doors- Main Entrance- Marble door surround, two engaged, fluted pilasters and entablature with dentil work. Transom with wooden panel below and double wooden doors with large single light. East facade.

Rear- Metal door (1950s) to loading dock.

Basement on South Facade- Metal door with transom.

Basement on North Facade- French doors.

Windows- Facade- Four 8 over 12 double-hung sash. Marble lintel and sill.

South Facade- Three 8 over twelve, one more covered with board.

South Basement- One 6 over 6 and two single lights.

North Facade- Three 8 over 12, one blind and two narrow 2 over 2 .

Basement North Facade- One 6 over 6 double hung sash.

Rear (West) Facade- Two 8 over 12.

Eaves- Ribbon windows along side eaves under the gable roof.

Interior

Some remodeling; new wallpaper and tile floor in lobby. Original marble wainscoting in lobby. Color mural, 1939, on north wall of the lobby over the postmaster's door. Crown moulding in lobby. Large, open mail room.

Other: Additions

Rear loading dock added in 1950s. Flat roof and brick construction.

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DESCRIPTION

Structure- The Bay Minette Post Office sits on a corner lot bounded by Hand Avenue to the east and First Street to the north. The main facade faces east. This one storey, brick structure is an imposing presence with it's full Doric portico and five bay facade. The tympanum has a round vent in the center. The front door surround and window lintels and sills are of Alabama Marble. The side facades are four bays each; a modern trailer sits alongside the south facade. The rear facade is two bays with a loading dock extending to the rear.

The gable roof runs the length of the original structure, the width of which extends one bay on either side of the gable roof. Here the roof is flat. Along the side eaves of the gable roof are ribbon windows for ventilation.

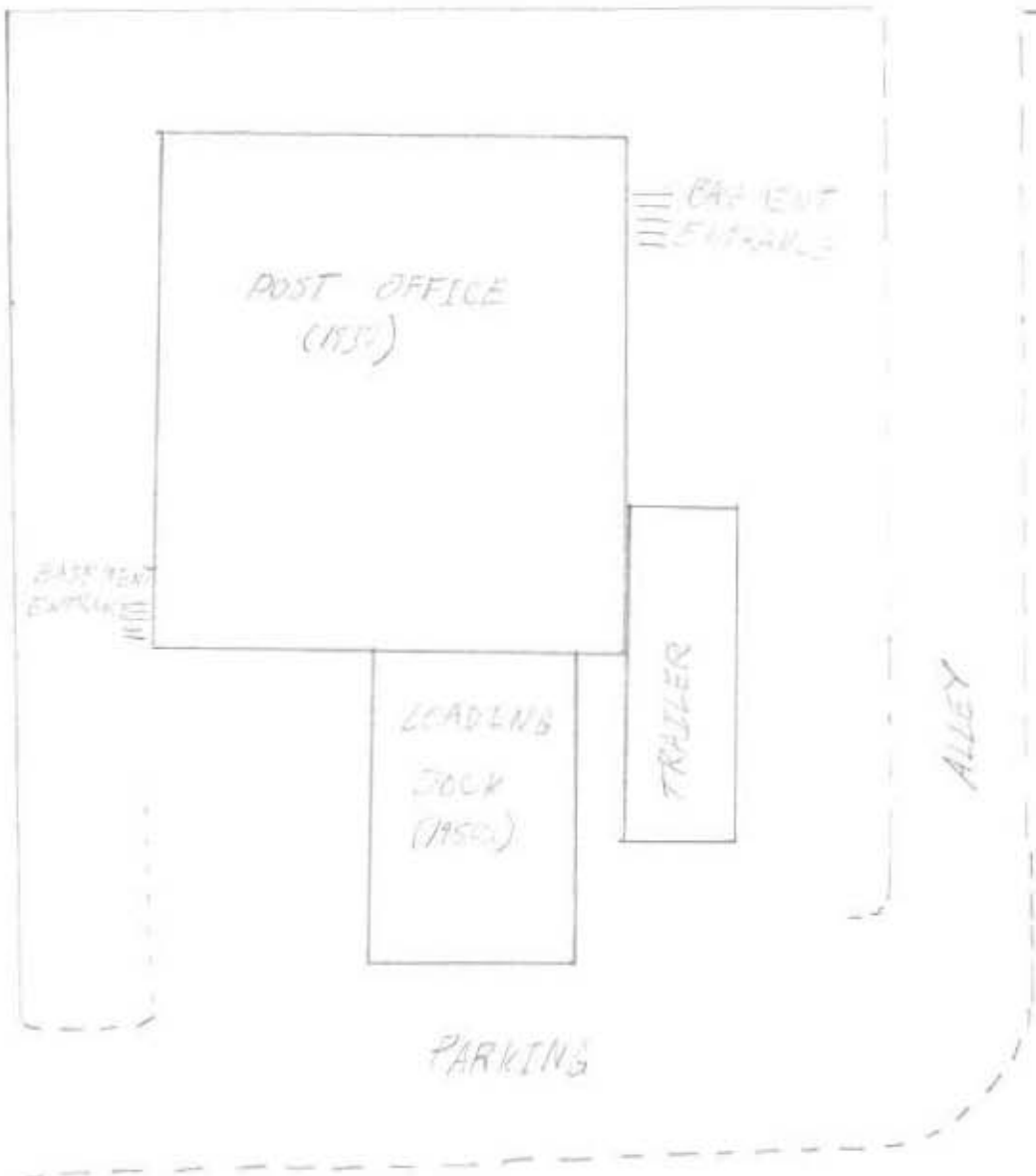
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COMMERCIAL BUILDING

COMMERCIAL BUILDING

HAND AVE.

FRONT ST.



BASEMENT
STAIRS

BACK PORCH
STAIRS

TRAILER

LOADING DOCK
(1950.)

ALLEY

COMMERCIAL BUILDING

PARKING

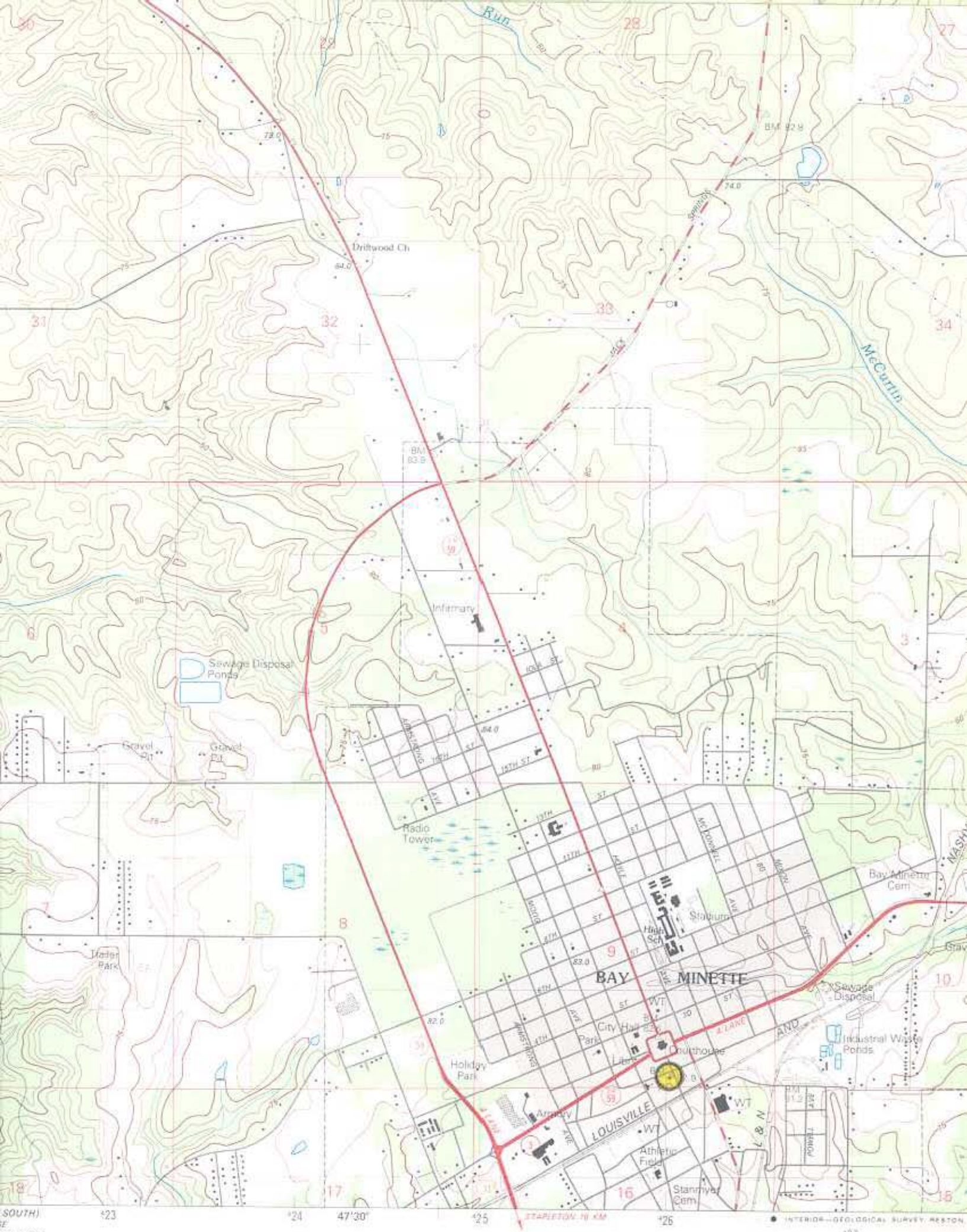
COMMERCIAL BUILDING

BAY MINETTE, AL.

POST OFFICE

SITE PLAN

NOT TO SCALE



SOUTH
24 000

INTERIOR GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20508
ROAD CLASSIFICATION











POSTMASTER

• BULLETIN •

BULLETIN







