



## **Social Security Administration Building Lewiston, Idaho**

GSA Building No. ID0027ZZ

**DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR INCLUSION IN THE  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

*GSA Contract # 47PL0120F0059*

*GSA Order # EQ10PCE-20-0003*

December 2021



Hennebery Eddy  
Architects



*Cover image: Lewiston Social Security Administration Building looking northeast at the primary entrance, south and west elevations, 2021.*

**Project Address:**

Social Security Administration Building  
GSA Building No: ID0027ZZ  
1617 19th Avenue  
Lewiston, ID 83501-4004

**Project Team**

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### INTRODUCTION

The Social Security Administration (SSA) Building, located at 1617 19th Avenue in Lewiston, Idaho, was initiated and designed from 1967-1970 and constructed from 1971-1972. The General Service Administration (GSA) was and still is the owner and funding was provided by the Small Business Act. The building is nearing 50 years of age and therefore GSA is evaluating it for eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places as required by Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). GSA has commissioned this evaluation to provide a professional analysis and documentation of the building's eligibility for listing in the National Register.

### METHODOLOGY

This evaluation was prepared through a four-step process: preparation, on-site inspection, archival research, and professional analysis. Available building documentation including original drawings and records, as well as records of maintenance and subsequent projects was provided by GSA for review prior to the site visit.

An on-site inspection of the existing conditions and context was carried out on October 4-5, 2021. A site

tour was provided by GSA Facility Manager Jimmy Zelkan. Access was provided to all levels and spaces. The building was photo-documented. Online archival research was also conducted at the University of Idaho Special Collections and Idaho Commission of Libraries.

Professional analysis and evaluation of the property for eligibility for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places is based on the *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* and GSA's 2005 publication, *Growth, Efficiency, and Modernism: GSA Architecture in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s (GEM)*.

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The Social Security Administration Building in Lewiston, Idaho, was constructed as part of a massive federal building program undertaken in the period 1950-1970 and is representative of buildings constructed by the GSA for regional and branch agency offices across the country at the time.

The SSA Building is locally significant under National Register Criterion A as the first federal building built by a minority-owned construction company under the provisions of 8(a) of the Small Business

Act, a programmatic effort to address economic discrimination against minorities.

The building is not eligible for listing under Criterion C; it is an unexceptional example of Modern architecture and does not embody the design standards, public art, or social policy initiatives promoted by GSA for federal building projects during the Modern era.

The suggested period of significance is the date construction was completed in 1972. The building was expanded to the north in 1981, doubling its footprint. This addition falls within the boundaries of the historic property but is outside the period of significance. While it is not considered to contribute to the building's significance as it was not constructed under the original contract, it also does not materially detract from the building.

## Physical Description 1.02



### URBAN CONTEXT

The Social Security Administration Building stands at 1617 19th Avenue in Lewiston, Idaho. Though centrally located within the city limits of Lewiston, the site is approximately two miles south of the Central Business District and the city's historic core along the Clearwater and Snake rivers. The building occupies a corner lot on 17th Street and 19th Avenue in an automobile-oriented suburban context of residential, mixed use, and commercial properties. 17th Street is a busy thoroughfare connecting downtown, big box shopping centers, and the Lewiston-Nez Perce County Regional Airport.

The SSA Building is immediately surrounded by residential development spanning from post-WWII minimal traditional-styled homes to recent residential construction. Across the intersection of 19th Avenue and 17th Street, a large parking lot serves the Lewiston Center Mall, a collection of big box stores. No other government buildings are located in the area. Modern-era buildings in the vicinity include McSorley Elementary School (14th Street and 19th Avenue), Jenifer Middle School (17th Street and 12 Avenue), and a few modest commercial structures on 21st Street.

There are no designated historic properties or historic districts near the SSA Building. The National Register listed Lewiston West End Historic District (1975, Ref# 75000637/1984, Ref# 84003852 and 2018 boundary increase, Ref# 100002681) is two miles northwest of the property, within the Central Business District boundary. The period of significance, originally identified as 1890-c.1922, was amended to c.1930 in 1984 and extended again in 2018 to 1966. Several of the commercial and auto related properties date from the 1960s and reflect International style influences.

### BOUNDARIES + SITE

The rectangular site slopes gradually down from south to north and is bound by a vacant lot and alley to the west, a multi-family residential property and parking area to the north, two single family residences to the east, and a house converted for commercial use to the south. The building occupies the east portion of the 21,300 square foot lot with a 28 spaces parking lot, including 4 accessible stalls, on the west portion of the lot. Vehicular access, via an asphalt paved driveway, is along 19th Avenue immediately west and south of the building. Concrete walkways run parallel to the west and south building

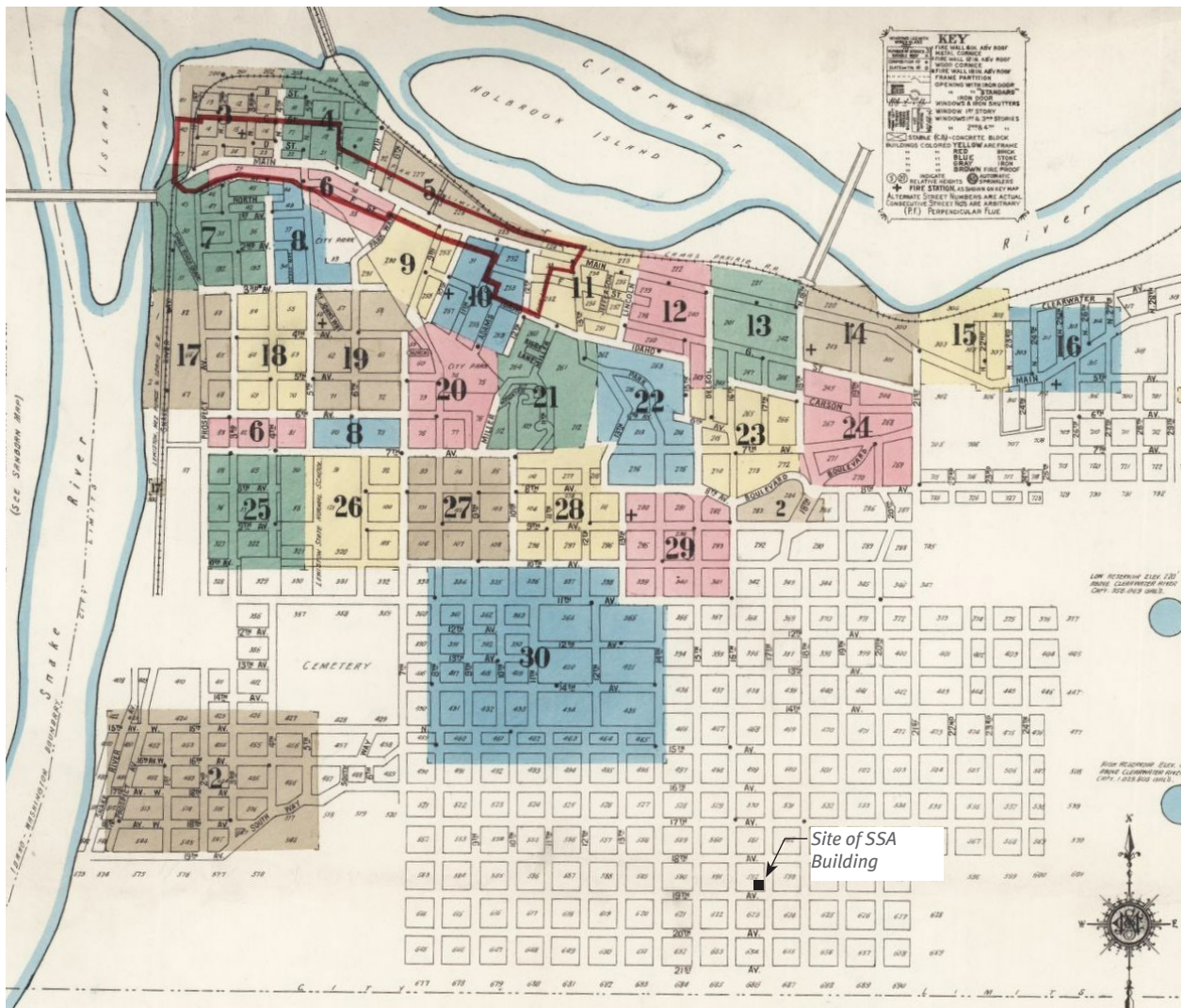




Primary south elevation showing main public entrance and added staff entrance bump out, 2021.



West elevation with parking lot in the foreground, elevator addition does not have the metal panel fascia, 2021.



1918 Sanborn map of Lewiston, Idaho. The area outlined in red is the general vicinity of the Central Business District and is a portion of the current Historic District.



elevations. The south walkway is offset from the building by landscaped planters. Within and dividing the south planter is a non-linear concrete curb that meanders east-west. A landscape buffer of grass, trees, and shrubs is provided along the north, south and east property lines. Concrete site stairs connect the 19th Avenue sidewalk with the primary building entrance on the south elevation. Adjacent to the entrance walkway is a small paved area with a cast concrete bench and a sculptural ash tray. A raised planter bed consisting of concrete masonry unit planter walls, rocks, and shrubs has been added to the southwest corner of the site in one of the front planters.

## BUILDING EXTERIOR

The 8,671 gross square foot building is rectangular in plan with a 10'-0" x 15'-0" area carved out of the southwest corner for the recessed entrance to the building. The building occupies two levels, with the main level accessible from the parking area and a partially subterranean basement accessed externally from a ramp along the north facade. The building height is 15' from grade at the primary south entrance. Structurally the building is comprised of a reinforced concrete foundation, reinforced concrete masonry unit (CMU) walls and a steel joist roof.



*South elevation walkway and landscaping with cast concrete bench, 2021..*

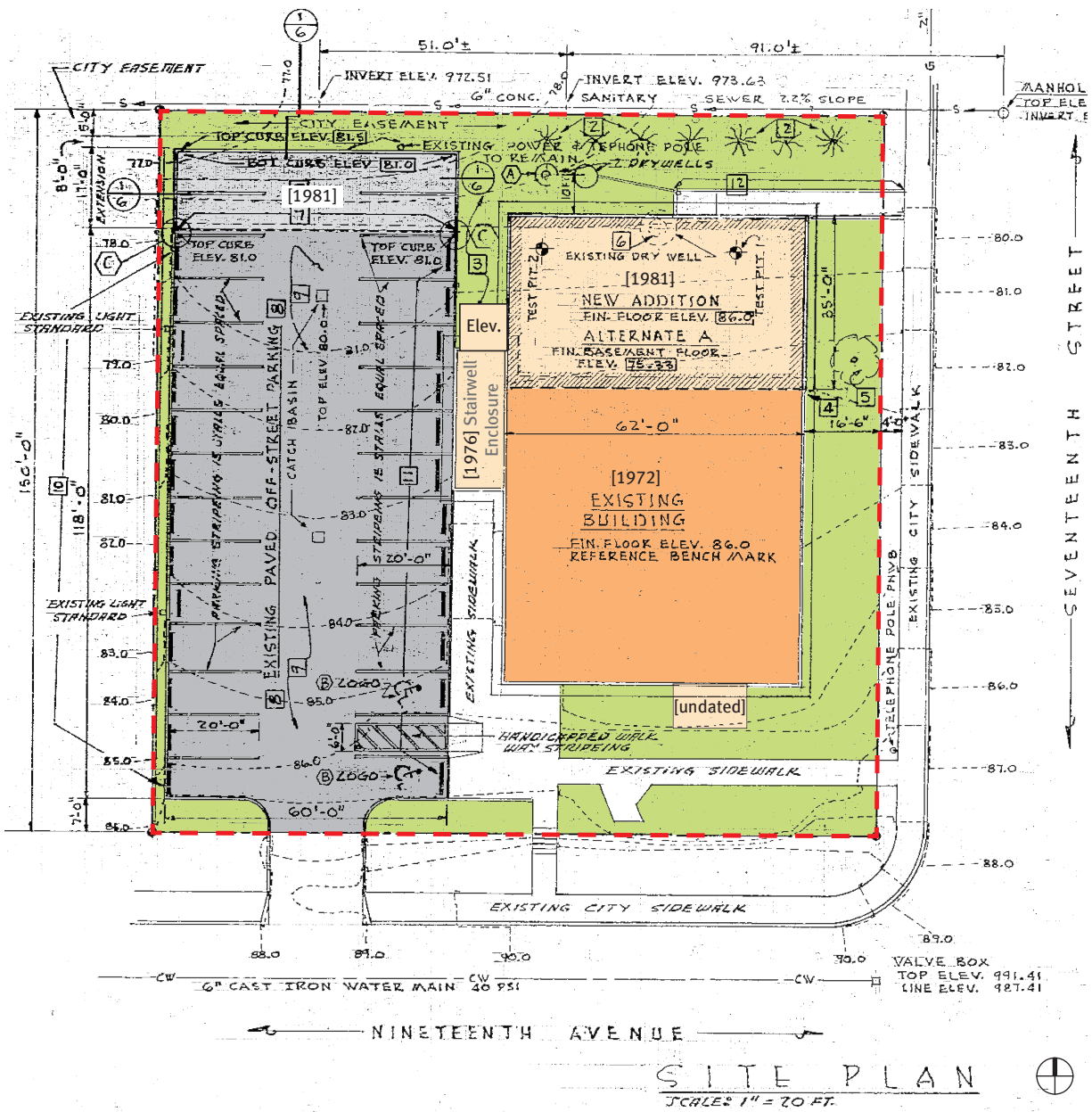
Overall the building is a simple composition of buff colored brick in a running bond pattern, a deep flat roof with stepped, slightly projecting eaves clad in metal panels and a 1"x4" Cedar soffit, and punched window opening accentuated by protruding brick surrounds.

The primary south elevation features the main entrance and no windows. A small bump out projects from the east side of the elevation providing a secondary secure staff entrance/exit. The primary entrance is recessed under the flat roof and flanked by a planter bed and a brick support wall. The entrance vestibule comprises floor to ceiling glazed storefront with double entry doors. An 8"x16" granite date stone inscribed with the year of completion "1971" is set into the wall east of the entrance.

The west elevation faces the parking lot and includes four bronze anodized fixed aluminum windows with brick surrounds. The elevation jogs toward the parking lot at the enclosed stair. A simple elevator addition clad in matching brick is tucked at the interior corner north of the enclosed stair. Two additional staff entrances - one on the south side of the enclosed stair and one at the north end of the elevation - are accessed from the parking lot. Doors are solid metal security doors. As the site slopes



*East elevation landscaping and ramp to basement from 17th Street sidewalk, 2021.*



Current site plan showing the original footprint of the Social Security Administration Building, the building addition, landscaped areas, and parking areas.



down to the north the concrete foundation becomes exposed.

The north elevation is flat and features four windows. The site grade is lowest at this elevation allowing for three fixed square basement windows and a staff entrance accessed via a ramp from 17th Street to the east.

The east elevation, facing 17th Street, is also flat with six windows. A utility well runs adjacent to the north portion of this elevation, partially recessed in the ground and screened by landscaping.

## BUILDING INTERIOR

The building interior includes 7,846 rentable square feet including the main floor at parking lot level and a partial subterranean basement. The main level includes public waiting and service spaces, staff offices and support spaces, as well as public and staff restrooms. The basement, accessed internally via the enclosed stair or elevator, includes an additional restroom, mail room, conference/staff lounge, and utility spaces.



*North elevation with ramp to basement entrance, 2021.*



*East elevation showing landscape buffer between building and 17th Street sidewalk, 2021.*



*Primary entrance sequence from 19th Avenue, 2021.*



*Entrance design features include floor to ceiling storefront glazing, independent brick support wall, Cedar slat soffit, metal panel fascia, and planter adjacent to the entry, 2021.*

The primary public entrance, located at the southwest corner of the building, includes a secure vestibule that includes original finishes such as exposed concrete floor, exposed brick wall, 1”x4” Cedar ceiling, bronze anodized aluminum storefront and double entry doors, and oak railings. The public waiting and service areas accessed by the public entry feature typical office finishes such as carpet tile and suspended acoustical tile ceilings. Open and private office spaces feature similar finishes throughout. Windows on perimeter walls are flanked by a vertical stack of exposed brick masonry. Restrooms retain original square tile floors, dark blue metal partitions, and aluminum accessories.

At the basement level, finishes include carpet and suspended acoustical tile ceilings dating from a more recent renovation.

Original interior finishes include:

**Ceilings**

- Suspended acoustical tile ceiling with metal grid and integral lighting (first floor)
- 1”x4” Cedar slat ceiling in entry vestibule

**Floors**

- Exposed concrete in entry vestibule
- Sheet vinyl flooring

**Walls**

- Painted drywall
- Exposed brick masonry in entry vestibule
- Exposed brick flanking window openings

**Restrooms**

- Square tile flooring
- Blue metal toilet partitions

**Miscellaneous**

- Dark stained wood doors

While some original interior finishes remain intact, interiors are typical of small office buildings and are not distinguished or significant.

**ALTERATIONS + ADDITIONS**

Over the past fifty years, the square footage of the building has more than doubled. Although original drawings delineate a future expansion area along the north side of the building, the actual expansion was much larger.



Primary public entrance vestibule with original finishes, 2021.



Public waiting and security area, 2021.



The first increase in building area was in 1976 with the enclosure of the outdoor stairwell along the west elevation. This addition added approximately 300 square feet to the gross floor area. The building materials used to enclose the space matched the original building - brick cladding at the exterior walls with a metal panel fascia and flat roof. Interior improvements were limited to minor repairs. Site improvements included accessibility upgrades to the parking area and a new sidewalk along the west elevation of the building. A new sprinkler irrigation system was also installed.

The largest expansion occurred in 1981, adding approximately 2,170 square feet to the first floor and a new finished basement of the same area. The addition included restrooms, private offices, general office space, a mail room, and storage. Wood-framed walls were clad in masonry veneer and new windows and metal panel fascia matched the existing building. Although notes from the 1981 drawing set direct for finish materials to match the original, some differentiation in brick veneer is visible along the east elevation. A vertical expansion joint was placed between old and new brick and the new brick is clearly darker in color than the old brick. Other site

improvements included expanding the parking lot to the north adding four parking stalls, re-stripping the parking lot, and a new ramp along the north elevation to access the basement level.

An elevator was added to the west elevation in the past decade, tucked north of the enclosed stair that accesses the addition basement. A first floor secure staff entrance/exit with vestibule was also added to the south elevation at an unknown date.

Interior alterations since the 1981 additions have been limited to replacement of finishes at the end of their service life (carpet), secure separation between public and staff areas, and reconfiguration of the public area to include a waiting area and multiple service windows. The original heating, ventilating, and cooling system located under all perimeter windows with through-wall louvers below window sills has been removed, louvers sealed, and a forced air system installed.

The following is a list of known alteration projects. Dates are provided where there is documentation such as drawings or specifications.



*Typical open office space, 2021.*



*Original restroom finishes and fixtures, 2021.*

- 1976 – stairwell enclosure along west elevation; site upgrades included accessible parking, new walkway and curb cuts along the west elevation, and sprinkler system.
- 1981 – two-story (first floor and basement), 4,340 square foot addition to the north elevation; replacement of mechanical screen at roof with cedar slats; site improvements included expanding the parking area to the north and adding four parking stalls, re-striping the parking lot, and a new ramp along the north elevation to access the basement level.
- Unknown – small secure staff entrance/exit vestibule addition to south elevation
- Unknown – 2-stop elevator at west elevation
- Unknown – landscape improvements along the south elevation
- Unknown – mechanical upgrades



Typical interior window treatment with exposed masonry flanking window (left); typical original wood door (right), 2021.



Basement conference room and kitchenette, 2021.



Typical bronze anodized aluminum window with brick surround and mechanical louver, 2021.



Expansion joint between original construction and 1981 addition showing difference in brick color, 2021.



## Historical + Developmental Context 1.03



### DEVELOPMENT OF LEWISTON, IDAHO

Long before the Lewis and Clark Expedition and the discovery of gold in the West, the land on which the City of Lewiston is sited was the territory of the Nimiipuu (Nez Perce) Native American Indians. Evidence shows indigenous people had populated the area for at least 12,000 years. As migration of colonial settlers, hunters, traders, and speculators continued into the newly created Oregon Territory (1848) and Washington Territory (1853), land disputes between the newcomers and indigenous people intensified. The territorial governor Isaac I. Stevens and the Umatilla, Yakama, Nez Perce, Cayuse, and Palouse tribes initiated the Treaty of 1855 when settlers going overland on the Oregon Trail began to populate tribal territory. Negotiations ensued and resulted in the tribes agreeing to cede 7.5 million acres of reservation land.

In 1860, gold was discovered within the boundary of the reservation, at the Big Eddy along the Clearwater River approximately 30 miles east of present-day Lewiston. Rather than prevent the trespass of gold-seeking settlers on reservation land, the United States government initiated a second treaty which proposed to reduce the size of the reservation by 90 percent. Ultimately, disagreements between tribal members led to the ratification of the Treaty of 1863.

The Treaty reduced the Nez Perce reservation to one-tenth its original size. Amongst the Nez Perce, the Treaty was known as the 'Thief Treaty' or 'Steal Treaty' and it led to the armed clash of non-treaty Nez Perce with the U.S. Army, now known as the Nez Perce Flight of 1877.

At the time of gold discovery the land that is currently within Lewiston city limits was part of the Nez Perce reservation. Due to laws preventing the construction of permanent structures on reservation land, only framed canvas tents were used until the Treaty of 1863 excluded the townsite from the reservation.

The small settlement at the convergence of the Snake and Clearwater rivers soon became known as Lewiston, named for Meriwether Lewis, one of the leaders of the Corps of Discovery that had passed through the area in 1805. From 1863-1865, Lewiston, similar to other mining towns, experienced rapid growth and then swift decline. At its peak, Lewiston was the first territorial capital of Idaho as well as one of the largest city in the Pacific Northwest. However, these claims were short-lived and within a few years, the mining boom ended and most prospectors relocated to new, more prosperous mines in southern Idaho and Montana. Those who did stay turned to the farming and timber industries for income.

Following the ratification of the Treaty of 1863, the federal government conducted cadastral surveys of the Lewiston vicinity and in 1875, Lewiston residents filed a townsite application and paid the federal government the required per-acre fee. On April 10, 1875, a patent to the 561.21-acre townsite was issued. Previously developed areas near the river confluence were included in the first Lewiston plats and, as the town expanded to the east, additional plats were filed. Development to the north and west was limited by the Clearwater and Snake rivers, respectively, and growth was bound to the south by a hill, later named Normal Hill. In the town's early days, Normal Hill was used as a cemetery and then later became the site of a normal school, currently known as the Lewis-Clark State College.

It was not until eight years after Idaho received statehood, in 1890, that the Northern Pacific railroad extended its Spokane rail line from Juliaetta to Lewiston. What had been a small town with a localized farm and lumber industry soon expanded its reaches to the far corners of the nation. Other railroads joined the network and Lewiston saw steady growth. Expansion of Lewiston's Central Business District during the early twentieth century reflected the city's continued role as a supply, service, and transit center for the surrounding region.

Growth continued through the early 20th century with the opening of the Clearwater Timber Company mill in 1927, the largest white pine sawmill in the world. Following the opening of the mill, the town saw a major construction boom. The population, which had been 6,000 in 1920, jumped to 9,000 in 1928. The town continued to prosper until the stock market crash and Great Depression of 1929, effecting Lewiston in similar ways as the rest of the nation.

The town saw very little construction activity during this period and overall jobs were scarce. It was not until after the end of WWII that Lewiston began to see

a resurgence in construction. In the post-war years through the 1970s, infill development and renewal occurred in the Central Business District, but most development came in the form of urban sprawl to the less developed eastern and southern parts of the city.

Farmland south of Lewiston, called the Orchards, was sub-divided into residential lots. By 1960, the population of the Orchards had climbed to 10,000 and in 1969, the Lewiston City Council passed an ordinance annexing that area, an act that doubled the population of Lewiston. The primary route connecting Lewiston with the Orchards, 21st Street, became a major thoroughfare and commercial development along the corridor followed. Other north-south thoroughfares include Snake River Avenue, 8th Street and 17th Street. Major east-west thoroughfares include Highway 12, Main Street, 11th Street, 16th Street, and Bryden Canyon Road.

Completion of the Lower Granite Dam in 1975 on the lower Snake River brought year-round slack water to Lewiston, allowing access by ocean-going barges. This made the Port of Lewiston the furthest end of the Columbia-Snake River system, 465 river miles inland from the Pacific Ocean. As part of the dam project, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers provided one million dollars for beautification of downtown Lewiston. Levees were installed along the shores of the Snake and Clearwater rivers to prevent flooding. The areas adjacent to the levees were turned into recreational greenbelts—planting trees, adding picnic areas, and constructing bike paths. Extensive revitalization of the downtown commercial core was also included. Lewiston's earliest commercial district, comprised of 17 late nineteenth century and early twentieth century buildings, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places as the Lewiston West End Historic District. The historic district's period of significance has since been extended twice to include 13 additional buildings in 1984 and 56 more contributing structures, mostly modern-era, in 2016.

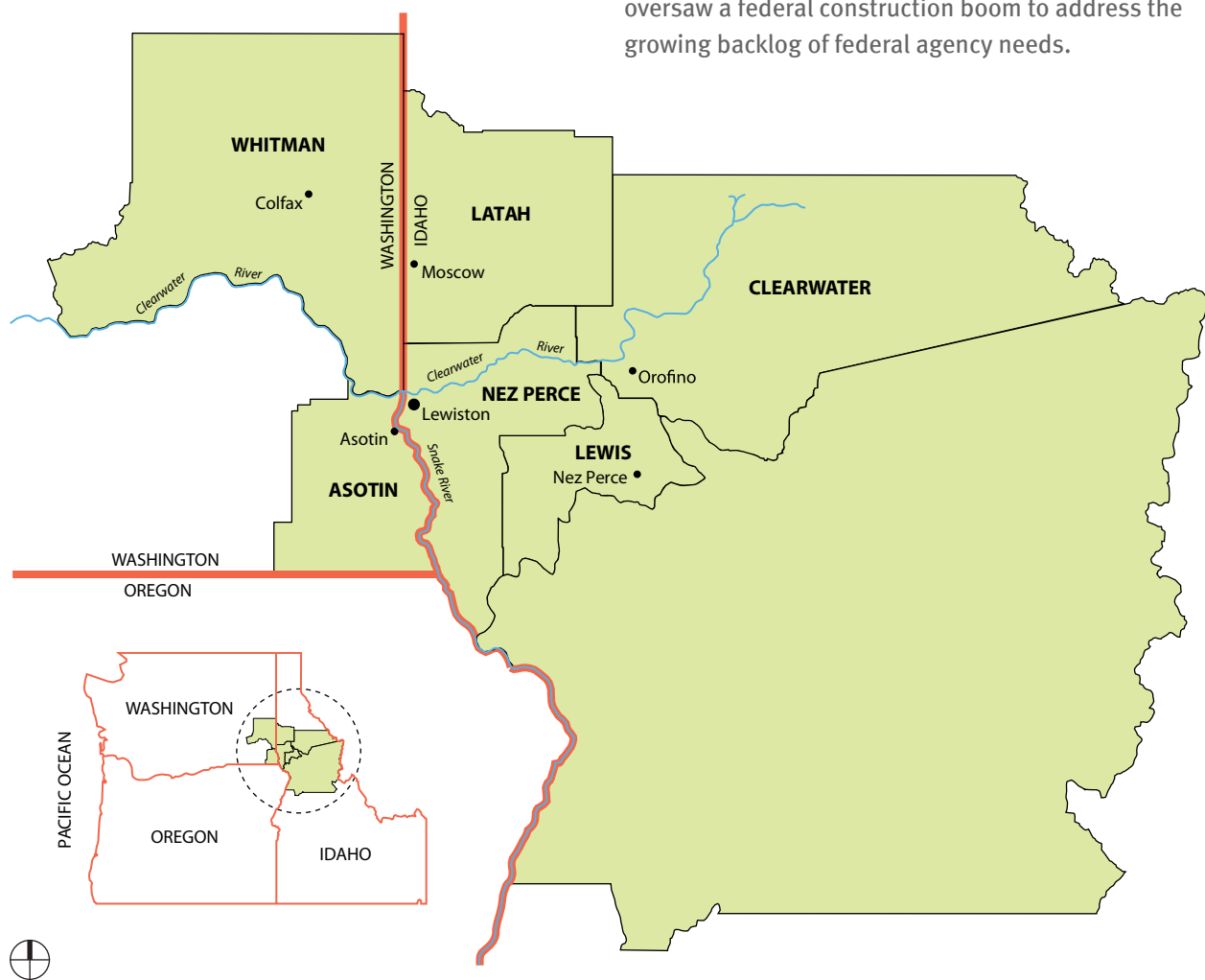


Due to continued prosperity, Lewiston has architectural styles representative of nearly every decade from the 1890s through present. These styles include but are not limited to Italianate, Romanesque Revival, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Renaissance Revival, Classical Revival, Early 20th Century Commercial Vernacular, Spanish Eclectic, Art Deco/ Art Moderne, International, Goggie/Exaggerated Modern, Brutalism, Utilitarian/Industrial, Modern, Post-modern, and Contemporary.

Today, Lewiston remains the county seat of Nez Perce county and as of 2019, boasts a population of 32,664.

## THE U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

By the mid-twentieth century many federal facilities had become functionally obsolete, lacking the capacity and parking to accommodate growing federal agencies. This issue was initially addressed by leasing private office space in cities across the country, but this approach proved costly and inefficient with agencies often divided among multiple locations. The General Services Administration (GSA) was formed in 1949 to consolidate multiple administrative arms of the Federal Government, including the Public Buildings Service. The subsequent Public Buildings Act of 1959 gave the GSA responsibility for constructing federal buildings. In the 1950s through the 1970s, the GSA oversaw a federal construction boom to address the growing backlog of federal agency needs.



Regional map showing areas served by the new SSA office in Lewiston.

## THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

In 1965, extensive changes to the Social Security program, including the establishment of Medicare and extension of disability benefits to more Americans, were implemented by the Johnson Administration. The Social Security program was originally established in 1935 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to provide a range of poverty relief programs, including income for retired workers. The 1965 expansion of Social Security resulted in increased need for in person interaction and service. Social Security Administration (SSA) offices were established in major cities across the country, including Boston, New York, Charlottesville, Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Kansas City, and San Francisco. GSA constructed new centralized district offices as well as smaller regional offices. Locations were selected by criteria that included a minimum distance of 30 miles from the district office; a minimum service area population of 50,000 with 5,000 beneficiaries; and an estimated claims load of 25 claims per week. Lewiston, Idaho, was selected as an advantageous location for a district office to serve a seven-county area in both Washington and Idaho, a collective population of about 134,600. The counties served included Asotin and Whitman counties in Washington and Latah, Nez Perce, Clearwater, Lewis, and Idaho counties in Idaho.

## OFFICE OF MINORITY BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM + SMALL BUSINESS ACT

Following WWII, construction within the public and private sectors increased dramatically. Federal projects numbered in the thousands in the 1960s and 1970s and within that same time period, appropriations for GSA construction, leasing, and site acquisition rose from \$432 million to \$1.9 billion. The reality of many government contracts was that they were awarded to large, non-minority businesses. Two significant federal legislative efforts were made to

improve the economic conditions for minority-owned businesses.

The Small Business Act of 1958 established the Small Business Administration (SBA) as a permanent agency with the power to form subcontracts with small businesses. Sections 7(j)(10) and 8(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(j)(10) and 637(a)) authorized the SBA to establish a business development program, which today is known as the 8(a) Business Development program. The 8(a) program is a robust nine-year program created to help firms owned and controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals. Businesses that participate in the program receive training and technical assistance designed to strengthen their ability to compete effectively in the American economy.

President Richard Nixon also founded the Office of Minority Business Enterprise (OMBE) in 1969, with the objective of giving minorities access to the same economic benefits as non-minorities. A census of minority business, conducted by the Federal Government in 1969, revealed how small a stake minorities had in the US economy. At the time, roughly 17 percent of the total U.S. population identified in a minority group. Minority-owned businesses, which numbered about 322,000, constituted only 4 percent of the nation's enterprises.

The OMBE program, in collaboration with the Small Business Act, permitted the federal government to negotiate contracts with minority-owned businesses on a non-competitive basis.

The contract for the Social Security Administration Building was the first federal building built by a minority-owned construction company under the provisions of 8(a) of the Small Business Act in the United States.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This contract is cited as the first minority-built federal building in the April 1972 issue of Outlook (a government publication by the OMBE) in an article on the dedication of the new Social Security Administration Building in Lewiston.

## LEWISTON SITE SELECTION

Lewiston's first Social Security office was in the new Federal (Post Office) Building at 1613 Idaho St. on the east edge of the Central Business District and opened to the public December 30, 1946. As the population grew and services and benefits expanded, the SSA office moved several times into larger leased facilities, including the third floor of the Weisgerber Building, 1113 Main Street, and 726 21st Street. Finally, in November 1968, GSA announced interest in building a new stand-alone district SSA office in Lewiston.

The GSA placed an advertisement in the *Lewiston Morning Tribune* with the headline, "U.S. Wants Site." The ad describes the desired site size, preferred location, and provides contact information for offers. The location of the site was in keeping with the Office of Minority Business Enterprise (OMBE) program and Section 8(a) of the Small Business Act, which dictated the site must be in an area where minority groups reside. The boundary defined in the ad encompassed

**U.S. WANTS SITE**

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION will investigate possible sites for a Social Security Administration District Office Building in **Lewiston, Idaho, December 3 and 4, 1968. Offers to donate or sell properties are invited.**

**Site Size:** Minimum of 17,500 square feet with a minimum of 125-foot street frontage.

**Preferred Location:** Within the area having the following described boundary — Beginning at the intersection of Carson Avenue and 22nd Street, South on 22nd Street to 19th Avenue, west on 19th Avenue to 16th Street, north on 16th Street to 16th Avenue, east on 16th Avenue to 20th Street, north on 20th Street to Carson Avenue, and east on Carson Avenue to the point of beginning.

Offer forms may be obtained from the Social Security Administration District Manager at 726 21st Street, and offers submitted to the address below; or to the GSA representatives who may be contacted at the local Social Security Administration office between 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. on the above dates. Owners of parcels smaller than size specified are encouraged to submit property for inspection and consideration if adjoining parcels can be added to meet total requirements.

**GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION  
SPACE MANAGEMENT DIVISION  
AUBURN, WASHINGTON 98002**

Offers should be received by December 4, 1968. This advertisement is not a basis for negotiation, and sites other than those offered will be considered.

Newspaper clipping from the *Lewiston Morning Tribune* advertising for offers on sites for the new Social Security Administration Building. November 11, 1968.

an area with a significant population of Nez Perce Indians.

Over the week of December 2, 1968, a team of GSA officials visited Lewiston to review offers and search for a suitable site. After several months of performing fact-finding studies, a site at the northwest corner of 17th Street and 19th Avenue was recommended.

The recommended site did not come without controversy. The site was zoned for residential use and Lewiston City Commission members preferred the new SSA building to be located near the post office and other government buildings at the east edge of the Central Business District. William G. Steffey, Lewiston City Manager, advised GSA that the site must meet requirements of city ordinances governing off-street parking and setbacks from the streets and that a variance or special permission would be needed to build the structure if it failed to meet city standards. E.R. Thiessen, the regional GSA administrator, responded saying, that although public buildings are not required to meet specific zoning standards, they "always attempt to obey the local ground rules."

Letters of concern over the location of the site were exchanged between the Lewiston Chamber of Commerce and the GSA. The city commission recommended the building department not issue a building permit until an agreement was made. The GSA responded saying site studies had been completed and the agency contemplated no change in its plans. William A. Stellmon, the city attorney was asked to provide input, upon which he sided with GSA because the 1956 city master plan was never formally approved. Without approval, the master plan could not legally be enforced. The city attorney's recommendation was to issue GSA a building permit. Further, Frank V. Barton, planning commission vice president, agreed with Stellmon. Barton added that the city's zoning ordinance listed public buildings as a permitted secondary use in an R-75 zone

“providing such as located in accordance with the recommendations of the planning commission, as specified by the comprehensive plan.”

Despite nearly six months of opposition over the location of the building, the Lewiston City Planning Commission approved the site in October 1969. The city commission requested that setbacks for the new building from property lines, landscaping, and general appearance of the building be in keeping with the R-75 residential character of the neighborhood. The commission also voted to permit no curb cuts on the 17th Street side of the property.

#### DESIGN + CONSTRUCTION HISTORY

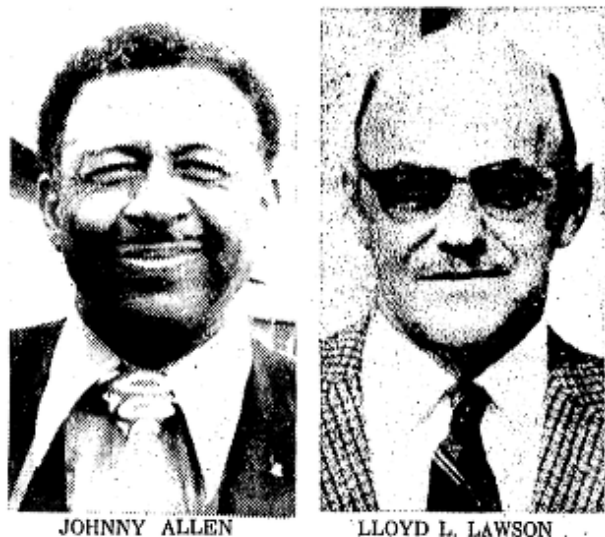
The contract for the design of the new Social Security Administration Building was awarded in 1969 to Richard Owens, a 1967 architecture graduate from the University of Idaho. Owens was awarded the drafting contract through a government supervised competition, which included four other participants.

Considerable changes were made to the original winning competition design before the construction documents were approved by GSA. A floor plan sheet, dated June 19, 1969 labeled “Revised Tentative Submission,” was stamped “Tentative Drawing: 6/14/70” with a note below reading, “Sent to GSA, they did not approve, said to use scheme “B”.” Another floor plan, also drawn by Owens, dated December 15, 1969, shows a schematic-level site plan and floor plan. Neither floor plan resembles the 14-page finalized construction documents dated October 26, 1970, which includes eight architectural sheets, three structural sheets, and three mechanical sheets.

On May 24, 1971, Senator James A. McClure, R-Idaho, announced from Washington D.C., the General Services Administration awarded a \$173,522

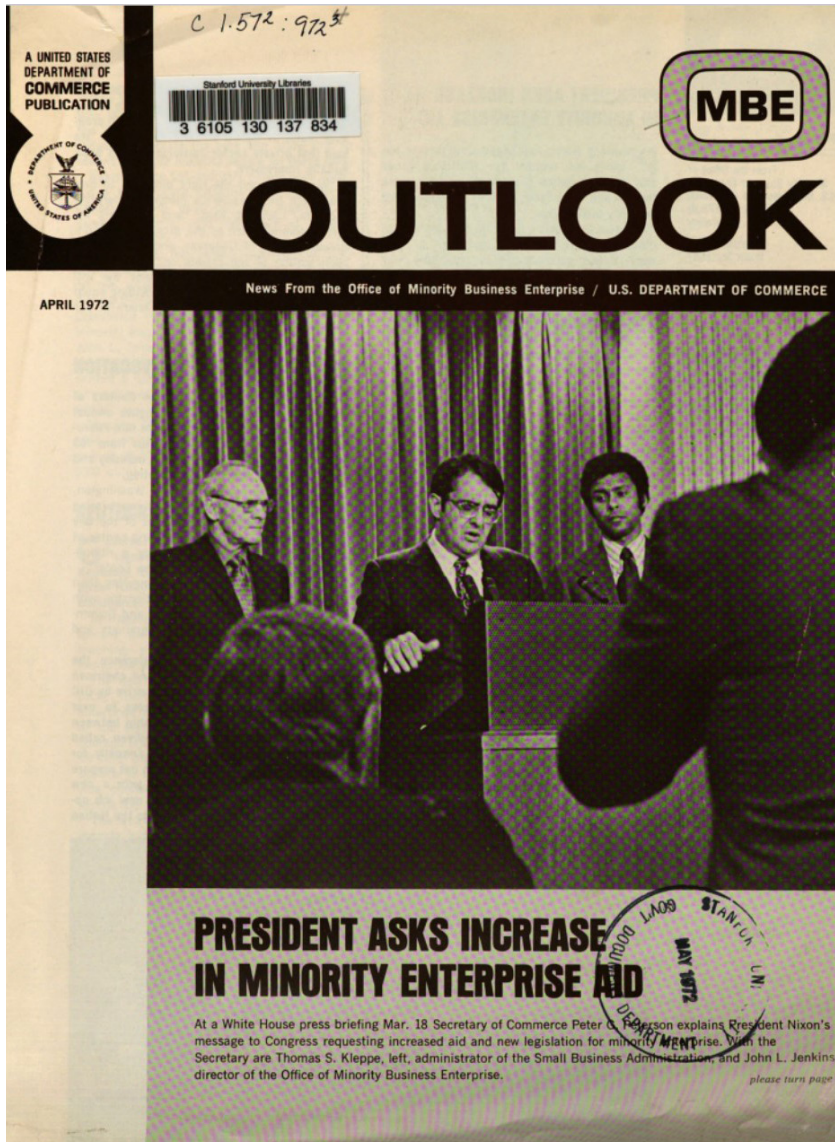
contract for construction of the new Social Security Administration Building to Urban Construction Co. of Seattle, a minority-owned business. The owner and president of Urban Construction Company was Johnny Allen, an African American man. The contract was administered by the Small Business Act in collaboration with the OMBE program, which permitted the federal government to negotiate contracts with minority-owned businesses on a non-competitive basis.

A pre-construction meeting was held June 2, 1971 and grading began the same week. Construction lasted about nine months. A *Lewiston Morning Tribune* article, dated March 18, 1972, quotes the contractor saying, “We were 25 percent behind construction last September, but finished the building 30 days ahead of schedule. This gives a minority firm a pretty good track record.” Lloyd L. Lawson, director of estimating and construction for Urban Construction Co., said only two minority workers were involved in the actual construction of the building, but this was due to the Lewiston area having a relatively low number of minority persons in the construction field.



Johnny Allen and estimator Lloyd Lawson pictured in 1972 *Lewiston Morning Tribune* article on building dedication, 1972.

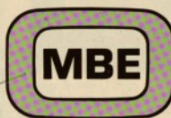




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# OUTLOOK

News From the Office of Minority Business Enterprise / U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

APRIL 1972



## PRESIDENT ASKS INCREASE IN MINORITY ENTERPRISE AID

At a White House press briefing Mar. 18 Secretary of Commerce Peter G. Peterson explains President Nixon's message to Congress requesting increased aid and new legislation for minority enterprise. With the Secretary are Thomas S. Kleppe, left, administrator of the Small Business Administration, and John L. Jenkins, director of the Office of Minority Business Enterprise.

please turn page

"this gives a minority firm a pretty good track record."

The \$173,522 building is one story with a partial basement situated on a half-acre lot. Fireproof materials were used in the structural system of the building, which is heated and air conditioned electrically.

Addressing the 130 assembled for the dedication GSA Regional Administrator Roy N. Vernstrom said the construction contract was in keeping with the objective of President Nixon to further the minority enterprise effort.

Competition for the building's design was held among 5 GSA architectural trainees. After the best design was selected the winning trainee prepared the drawings and specifications and supervised the construction of the building.

Recalling that in his childhood in Louisiana blacks were hired to demolish buildings, Allen said, "this proves we can erect them."

### IN THE SOUTHWEST

#### INDIAN BUSINESS DEVELOPERS MEET IN PHOENIX

A "Pooling of Resources" was the theme of a recent meeting in Phoenix, Ariz. sponsored by the Four Arrows Business Assistance Program to obtain commitments from a variety of Government agencies and institutions to coordinate a broader range of services to be made available to Indian business owners.

Representatives from Federal agencies, Indian business development organizations and an official from Phoenix's Valley National Bank were among those attending the meeting.

Robert J. Slinkard, director of the Four Arrows program, said, "there are a number of resource agencies and people in the Phoenix area and we attempted through this meeting to coordinate their activities in Indian business development."

The Four Arrows Business Assistance Program, a national Indian business development program, is a cooperative effort whereby the Navajo Community College, the Nation's only Indian-owned and operated college, is conducting a Federally funded business outreach program using the expertise of the Office of Minority Business Enterprise and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Slinkard said the purpose of the Four Arrows program is to work through business development organizations to expand business services to Indians at the reservation level. He said four regional offices will function as liaison offices between resource facilities and reservation business people and stressed that outreach must be done at the reservation level.



#### FIRST MINORITY-BUILT FEDERAL BUILDING DEDICATED

Dedication ceremonies were held recently for the first minority-built Federal building constructed under provisions of Section 8(a) of the Small Business Act. The building, the Social Security Administration District Office Building in Lewiston, Idaho, was built by the Urban Construction Co. of Seattle, Wash. under contract with the General Services Administration (GSA).

Johnny Allen, owner of Urban Construction, said that the project marked a breakthrough for his firm. Noting that the building was completed weeks ahead of schedule, Allen said,

April 1972 issue of Outlook, a publication produced by the Office of the Minority Business Enterprise (OMBE) featuring an article on the Social Security Administration Building as the first minority-built federal building.

According to the Index of Drawings and newspaper accounts from the contractor, very few changes were made to the drawings during construction. Two modifications were listed on the Index of Drawings, sheet 6-13-34 – Semi-Recessed and sheet 6-13-20C – Use adhesive set ceramic tile.

The Social Security Administration Building was dedicated March 17, 1972 with much fanfare. Donald Sutcliffe, regional Social Security commissioner from Seattle, presented the dedicatory address. Sutcliffe described features of the building that “improve the services to the public.” Features included carpeting to aid in reducing noise levels and help elderly people with hearing problems use the office and accessibility measures such as doorways designed wide enough to allow wheelchairs to enter. Sutcliffe added that GSA usually leased office space, but the new Lewiston building would be owned by the Social Security Administration and that this was the first office in the Northwest to be built entirely for Social Security needs. John Jennings, field representative for the Lewiston SSA office, remarked that the building was expected to be operable and fit the needs of the Lewiston office for about 25 years.

## DESIGN INFLUENCES

### ***The Guiding Principles for Federal Architecture***

The 1950s, 60s, and 70s were periods of extensive growth for the federal government. During this period the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), founded in 1949, was tasked with consolidating the government’s massive building management and procurement interests. Between 1960 and 1976 alone, GSA undertook more than 700 building projects across the United States. Likewise, other federal agencies embarked on large-scale building programs. This era was highlighted by distinguished architecture rooted in the second wave of Modernism and guided by the 1962 federal publication “The Guiding Principles for Federal Architecture.” These guidelines encouraged modern design that would

both “provide efficient and economical facilities” and “provide visual testimony to the dignity, enterprise, vigor and stability of the American Government.” They called for the federal government not to imitate, but to serve as a model to others, embracing contemporary innovations and design. The three-part architectural policy of the Guiding Principles recommended 1) Contemporary methods and technology with local architectural influence, the incorporation of fine art by living American artists, and a focus on functionality for users; 2) Avoiding an official government architectural style and instead consulting with prominent architects; and 3) A careful consideration of building site and “generous development of landscape.”

This era was also saturated with construction that reflected typical office building design, construction materials, and technologies of the time. Regional buildings intended to consolidate the federal workforce often prioritized cost and efficiency over design and quality.

The Social Security Administration Building in Lewiston minimally reflects the Guiding Principles only in its contemporary design. The design was executed through a competition and the site was selected in defiance of local government feedback in order to meet the requirements of the program through which it was funded. The design does not reflect regional architecture, public art by a living American artist was not incorporated into the design and generous parking was favored over landscape. Developing technologies of the time include suspended ceilings with integral lighting and mechanical distribution. However these systems were in popular use at the time and not inventively designed or installed in the building. The building is undifferentiated from the numerous small office buildings and Social Security Administration buildings constructed across the country at the time—pedestrian in design and reflecting a necessity to economize.

### ***The Modern Movement***

In the United States, Modernism began in the 1920s and continued through the 1970s, overlapping lingering styles of the past and Post-Modern ideologies of the 1960s through the 1990s. The early wave of Modernism was mainly focused around the International Style and began to decline toward the 1950s. The Late-Modern period roughly covers the 1950s through the 1970s and includes many sub-styles, the most commonly accepted included Formalism, Brutalism, and Expressionism.

In general, Modernism expressed advances in technology, materials, and building methods. Common differences from ideologies of the past included tenets such as minimizing interior lobbies by creating exterior plazas that served as gateways and gathering spaces, employing transparent building materials to bridge between the exterior and interior, and using building components that were pre-fabricated or constructed on site to maximize economy during construction. At interiors, offices were planned to maximize flexibility with movable partition walls, open office floor plans, and innovative electrical and mechanical systems that could adapt to change. Design theory also sought to emphasize social equity and democratic values such as providing equal access, equal workspace, and avoiding the displacement of people.

While many exemplary federal buildings were constructed during this period, there were also hundreds of buildings constructed across the country that were simply typical examples of midsize office buildings, closely reflecting private-sector office buildings and also reflecting the era's focus on efficiency and economy. These buildings comprise the majority of properties constructed during this time period. They are not architecturally significant or likely ever to qualify for listing on the National Register under Criterion C. Stylistically they are described as General Modern.

The Social Security Administration Building falls into this category of General Modern in style and economical and efficient in design and construction.

### **ORIGINAL ARCHITECT**

The original architect for the Social Security Administration Building was Jan Richard Owens, a 1967 graduate from the University of Idaho. Owens was awarded the contract through a government supervised drafting competition with four other design engineers.

Owens was born in Seattle, Washington, on April 26, 1944. Because of his father's job with Boeing, he moved with his family throughout the United States. He attended the University of Idaho, receiving a BA in Architecture before returning to Seattle where he lived and worked as an architect until his death in 2012. According to his obituary, Owens began his career as an architect specializing in drafting and construction document development for the United States Housing and Urban Development (HUD) - Federal Housing Administration (FHA) for multifamily housing projects. It can be assumed Owens successful completion of the Social Security Administration Building in Lewiston was a launching point for his career in working with the federal government.

Over the course of a 44-year career, Owens worked on a wide range of projects primarily in Washington State including single family homes, apartments, office buildings, condominiums, special needs housing, as well as the redevelopment of Pier 70 and historic renovations to the Pike Place Market area. It is worth noting the contractor for the Social Security Administration Building, Johnny Allen owner of Urban Construction Company, was also the contractor for the 1976 rehabilitation of the Triangle Building in Pike Place Market. There is a good chance Owens and Allen stayed in contact following the completion of



the Lewiston building considering they both resided in Seattle and worked on federal projects.

One of the architectural firms Owens worked for was H.M. & Co., which was also known as Harader Mebust Group, Inc. In 1992, the firm employed six architects and two other staff members. It was headquartered at 1219 Westlake Avenue North #200, Seattle, Washington. Newspaper articles from the *Seattle Times* have H.M. & Co. working on projects in 1978 for the U.S. Department of Energy and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. In 1980, Jan R. Owens with H.M. & Co. listed a classified ad for an architectural draftsman. And in 1981, they were the architect for the Ravenna Woods housing development in Seattle.

## ORIGINAL CONTRACTOR

Johnny Allen, president and owner of Seattle-based Urban Construction Company, was the prime contractor for the Social Security Administration Building. Allen was born July 6, 1918 on a ranch in Louisiana. At the age of 10 he was picking cotton. Allen aspired to be more than a field hand and with his natural drive to “work hard for an honest dollar,” Allen turned to the construction industry. His first project was a 200-square-foot building to house his high school’s home economics and shop classes. In 1941, at the age of 23, he married Edith Tucker. Their marriage was announced in the March 26 issue of “The Town Talk,” a newspaper publication based in Alexandria, Louisiana.

Allen and his wife moved to Seattle, Washington in 1944 where he worked as a painter and subcontractor. He later bought the company he worked for and formed the Triple-A Painting & Decorating Co. In 1956 he created MALCO Construction Co. and built some of the first homes in Lynnwood, a city within the Seattle metropolitan area.

Allen had a strong presence within the African American community. He was a Free and Accepted Mason (F&AM) with Harmony Lodge No. 2. In 1959, Allen was elected grand master of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Washington and Its Jurisdiction, a position he held until 1963. That same year, the Seattle Human Rights Commission was established, and Allen was appointed by the mayor of Seattle, as one of two Black men of a body of 12, to serve in an advisory role to the Mayor, City Council, Seattle Office for Civil Rights, and other City departments. The Commission is still in existence today and its focus is “to advocate for justice and equal opportunity, to advise the City of Seattle on human rights issues, and to collaborate with public and private sectors in order to educate them on methods to prevent and eliminate discrimination city-wide.”

During his tenure with the Human Rights Commission, Allen extended his reach within the community by obtaining the licensing and bonding necessary to become a prime contractor. He was invited to become part of a Black contractor’s group with the hope to build a successful minority construction enterprise. The plan did not materialize but it proved the catalyst for Allen to originate his own prime construction firm. In 1967 Urban Construction Company was organized and in 1968 incorporated. Allen continued to serve on the Human Rights Commission for 6 years before announcing his resignation in October 1969, stating his firm plans to bid on city contracts and staying on the Commission would have constituted a conflict of interest. Other outreach initiatives Allen was involved with include Seattle Job Market, Inc., a non-profit information clearinghouse whose purpose was to match low-income minority race members with jobs at local businesses. Allen also served as a panelist for a grass-roots forum focused on “Rehabilitating the Ghetto.” As a panelist, Allen explained how to obtain financing to build, buy, or improve housing in the Central Area of Seattle.

After incorporating Urban Construction Company, Allen used his firm as a means to create equal opportunities for minorities. The firm was affiliated with The Seattle Opportunities Center (SOIC), which placed 1,032 persons in jobs with local firms since the beginning of the program in 1966. In 1969, Urban Construction Company was among the top 10 firms which hired SOIC graduates.

Urban Construction Company had similar struggles securing work as other Black-owned and minority businesses. Although initiatives and civil rights laws had been set in place to eliminate discriminatory acts, the reality was most of the sizable construction contracts were given or awarded to companies owned by white men. In a Seattle Times article dated January 6, 1972 and titled, “Minority contractors air their complaints,” Allen is quoted saying “every HUD-sponsored program undertaken here to assist low-income families has gone to the “big white contractors.” Allen was eager to grow his business and would not let discrimination stand in his way. Many of his projects where he served as the prime contractor were within the Central Area, one of Seattle’s most racially and ethnically diverse neighborhoods. Similar to other cities within the United States, the Central Area was one of the few areas within Seattle where persons of color could live due to redlining and restrictive covenants. An example of a project within the Central Area includes the conversion of a supermarket building into a post station at the southeast corner of 23rd Avenue and East Union Street in 1969 (demolished). To gain experience outside the Central Area, Allen would partner with larger construction companies. An example of this includes a 43-unit apartment complex for the elderly located at 18257 First Avenue South where he collaborated with Chris Berg Contractors, Inc.

The turning point came in 1971 with the national recognition of Urban Construction Company being

awarded the Lewiston Social Security Administration Building construction contract. The contract for \$173,522.95 was let by the General Services Administration as a result of President Richard Nixon’s Office of Minority Business Enterprise (OMBE, now called The Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) and the Small Business Act. The program permits the federal government to negotiate contracts with minority-owned businesses on a non-competitive basis. The SSA Building was the first minority-built federal building in the United States under the provisions of Section 8(a) of the Small Business Act. Featured in the April 1972 edition of the Minority Business Enterprise (MBE), Johnny Allen is quoted saying, “the project marked a breakthrough for his firm,” noting that the building was completed weeks ahead of schedule and saying, “this gives a minority firm a pretty good track record.” The article concludes with Allen recalling that “in his childhood in Louisiana blacks were hired to demolish buildings, Allen said, ‘this proves we can erect them.’”

A noticeable increase in business occurred after the successful completion of the SSA Building in Lewiston. Urban Construction Company started winning larger construction contracts as the prime contractor outside the Central Area. In 1972, Allen oversaw the \$350,000 conversion of the Bikur Cholim Synagogue into a community center, followed by a \$120,000 expansion of St. Andrew’s Church in Bellevue, Washington. In 1976, Urban Construction Company was awarded a \$590,000 contract to renovate the Triangle Building at Pike’s Place Market.

Urban Construction Company oversaw additional federal work including a \$518,801 joint-venture contract for alterations to the Seattle, Washington, Federal Center South on East Marginal way. After years of hard work growing his company and dedication to bettering the lives of his community and minorities, Johnny Allen and Urban Construction Company was awarded the Small Business

Administration's Prime Contractor of the Year award for the four states of the Pacific Northwest. Allen received the award in Washington, D.C., on May 12, 1976. Urban Construction Company was nominated by an air base in Montana, whose contracting officer, Ms. Peggy Thomas, said the company's quality of work and reliability "are far in excess of that normally expected of contracting firms." Urban Construction won prime contractor designation over 35 other nominees. Allen continued to manage Urban Construction Company for another few years and then transferred ownership to Luther J. Carr in 1980.

Following 1980, Johnny Allen and his wife Edith continued to live in the Seattle area. His wife passed away October 26, 2006 and Johnny Allen died May 28, 2010 at the age of 91. Both Johnny and Edith are buried at Sunset Hills Memorial Park in Bellevue, King County, Washington. No obituary was located for Johnny or his wife.

The following are a list of known projects completed by Urban Construction Company while under the ownership of Johnny Allen.

1. 18257 First Avenue South, Burien, WA - 43-Unit Apartment Complex in partnership with Chris Berg, Inc., 1969 (extant)
2. 23rd Avenue and East Union Street, Seattle, WA - Post Station Remodel, 1969 (demolished)
3. 12015 Roseburg Avenue South - Boulevard Park Library, 1970 (extant)
4. 1617 19th Avenue, Lewiston, ID - Social Security Administration Building, 1972 (extant)
5. 17th Avenue and East Cherry Street, Seattle, WA - CAMP Remodel, 1972 (demolished)
6. 29th Avenue and East Union Street, Seattle, WA - Pacific Northwest Bell Telephone Co., 1972 (demolished)
7. East Yesler Way and 17th Avenue, Seattle, WA - Community Center Remodel, 1973 (extant)
8. 2650 148th Ave SE, Bellevue, WA - St. Andrew's Lutheran Church Remodel & Addition, 1973 (extant)
9. 4735 E Marginal Way S, Seattle, WA - Federal Center South Remodel & Addition, 1975 (extant)
10. 85 Pike St, Seattle, WA - Triangle Building Rehabilitation at the Pike Place Market, 1976 (extant)





### CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

Evaluation for eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places is based on the process and criteria outlined in *National Register Bulletin No. 15*. In addition to being at least 50 years old, eligible properties must be both associated with an important context and retain historic integrity of the features necessary to convey that significant association. *Bulletin No. 15* recommends the following sequence of evaluation:

1. Categorize the property as a district, site, building, structure, or object.
2. Determine which prehistoric or historic context(s) the property represents - American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, or culture of a given geographic area.
3. Determine whether the property is significant under the National Register Criteria:
  - A. Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
  - B. Association with significant persons of our past.
  - C. Representative of distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or work of a master, example of high artistic values, or representative of a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
  - D. Possess ability to yield information important to prehistory or history.
4. Determine if the property represents a type usually excluded from the National Register.
5. Determine whether the property retains integrity using the following seven aspects of integrity:
  - Location - does the resource remain at the place where it was constructed, where the historic event took place, etc.
  - Design - does the resource retain the original architectural intent of form, plan, space, structure, style, etc.
  - Setting - is the original surrounding physical environment intact.
  - Materials - does the resource retain the original physical fabric and features, patterns, configuration, etc.
  - Workmanship - does physical evidence of the craft/quality of the associated culture or people remain.
  - Feeling - does the resource retain the expression/sense of its original contextual association and time period.
  - Association - does the direct link between the context and the resource remain.

## ASSESSMENT OF ELIGIBILITY

Analysis of the Social Security Administration Building per *National Register Bulletin No. 15* sequence of evaluation:

1. Property type - Building
2. Historic Context - Politics/Government
3. NR Significance - Significant under Criterion A.
4. Type Excluded - No. Meets 50 year requirement in 2022.
5. Integrity:
  - Location - high - The building is at the same place constructed.
  - Design - high - Original design elements including the recessed entrance, flat roof with metal panel fascia, brickwork, and fenestration remain intact. Additions respected the original design and materials.
  - Setting - high - The streets, public right-of-ways, and surrounding built context remain largely unchanged. Landscaping and sitting area at the south entrance are intact.
  - Materials - moderate - Original materials including brick masonry, metal panel fascia, aluminum windows and storefront at entrance remain intact. Additions utilize these materials with subtle differentiation.
  - Workmanship - high - Quality construction has required little repair over time.
  - Feeling - high - Original contextual and time period associations remain intact.
  - Association - high - The building continues to serve its original function for the Social Security Administration.

### *Statement of Significance*

The property is locally significant under National Register Criterion A, as a local representation of the federal government's programmatic efforts to address economic discrimination against minorities. The building was the first constructed under a contract awarded to a minority-owned construction company under provisions of Section 8(a) of the Small Business

Act. The following evaluation identifies significant aspects and shortcomings under each criterion.

### **Criterion A**

The Social Security Administration Building in Lewiston, Idaho, is locally significant under National Register Criterion A, as the first federal building constructed under a contract awarded to a minority-owned construction company under the provisions of 8(a) of the Small Business Act in the United States.

The award of the construction contract represents a significant contribution to efforts of the federal government to address economic discrimination against minority communities through programs such as the 8(a) program. The Small Business Act of 1958 established the Small Business Administration (SBA) as a permanent agency with the power to form subcontracts with small businesses. Sections 7(j)(10) and 8(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(j) (10) and 637(a)) authorized the SBA to establish a business development program, which today is known as the 8(a) Business Development program.

The contract awarded to Johnny Allen's Urban Construction Company, was administered by the Small Business Act in collaboration with the Office of Minority Business Enterprise program, permitting the federal government to negotiate contracts with minority-owned businesses on a non-competitive basis. This contract, which Urban Construction Company completed on schedule and within budget, led to other contracts with the federal government and success for Johnny Allen in the Pacific Northwest construction industry. Allen became a notable leader in the Seattle area for his contributions to the industry and promotion of equal opportunities for minority-owned businesses.

The SSA building is a locally significant representation of the successful implementation and benefits of the federal 8(a) program.

### **Criterion B**

The Social Security Administration Building does not appear to be associated with any individuals who are demonstrably significant at a local, state, or national level. Therefore, the building is not eligible under Criterion B.

### **Criterion C**

Criterion C considers architectural design, innovation, and the architect. Though clearly representative of the modern era, the Social Security Administration Building is an undistinguished building and is not a successful example of any identified Modern-era academic style. The building has little variation of materials and few distinguishing features. It was erected using basic construction means and methods and is not a prototype for other federal facilities nor is it notable for its cost efficiency or utility. The building and site does not include any commissioned artwork or have any qualities associated with noteworthy landscape or site design.

The building exhibits contemporary materials, and places an emphasis on horizontality, limited ornamentation, and an exaggerated cornice. The glass entry vestibule and projecting eaves arguably allude to the architecture of widely influential 20th Century architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. However, while the building speaks to Modern Era architectural styles favored in the second half of the 20th Century and often used for governmental buildings, it is not a notable example of designer Jan R. Owen's work or an exemplary model of a specific mid-20th Century style.

Jan R. Owen is not currently recognized as a master architect at a national, state, or local context. The Social Security Administration Building was the first of a career of federal work, mostly focused on housing, with no known innovations, no awards, and no publications discussing the building's design.

The Social Security Administration Building is not a contributing resource in Lewiston's existing historic district and is not eligible for an identifiable future district. The building does not appear to be significantly eligible under Criterion C.

### **Criterion D**

To be eligible under Criterion D, two requirements must both be met: 1) The property must have, or have had, information to contribute to our understanding of human history or prehistory, and 2) the information must be considered important. The site was disturbed and occupied by multiple buildings prior to construction of the current federal building, it is unlikely that the site has information to yield that would be considered significant to our understanding of human history, prehistory, or the history of the site, and is therefore not eligible under Criterion D.

### ***Period of Significance***

The significance of the property is based on the building's association with the federal 8(a) program. Significance is not linked to the building design, alterations, or events within the building. Therefore, the suggested period of significance is the date of construction, 1972.

The building was expanded to the north in 1981, doubling its footprint. This addition falls within the boundaries of the historic property but is outside the period of significance.

### ***Evaluation of Integrity***

The Social Security Administration Building retains a high degree of exterior integrity. The original design intent, materiality, and primary entry sequence from both 19th Avenue and 17th Street remain intact, including walkways, landscaping, and public building entrance. Aspects of location, setting, feeling, and association also remain fully intact. The building continues to serve as the Social Security



Administration's primary presence in this region of Idaho. It remains accessibly sited in a suburban part of town.

Building expansion and additions to accommodate required access and exiting were executed in keeping with the original design and materials. Additions are differentiated by a slight change in brick color and offsets in elevation plane. While additions are not considered to contribute to the building's significance as they were not constructed under the original contract with Johnny Allen, they do not materially detract from the building.

Interior integrity is moderate due to changes in layout to meet modern agency needs and practices and upgrades in finishes over time.

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#### **OTHER SOURCES**

General Services Administration. Construction Documents and Maintenance Records dating from 1969 to present.

General Services Administration. Owned Building Profile dated September 15, 2017.

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## Appendix 1.06

CURRENT PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORIC DRAWINGS



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## CURRENT PHOTOGRAPHS

*Current photographs taken by Carin Carlson (Hennebery Eddy Architects), October 4-5, 2021.*



*Exterior, view from adjacent shopping mall looking northwest, 2021*



*Exterior, view looking northeast at driveway and building entrance, 2021*





*Exterior, south elevation, 2021*



*Exterior, west elevation, 2021*





*Exterior, northwest corner showing north elevation, 2021*



*Exterior, east elevation, 2021*





*Exterior, primary entrance at southwest corner of building and stair from public sidewalk, 2021*



*Exterior, view looking east at entrance landscaping and concrete bench, 2021*





*Exterior, view looking southwest at recessed entry and adjacent planter, 2021*



*Exterior, typical window, 2021*



*Interior, view looking east in entry vestibule, 2021*



*Interior, view looking west from lobby to entrance vestibule, 2021*





*Interior, public lobby, 2021*



*Interior, typical restroom, 2021*





*Interior, typical open office at first floor, 2021*



*Interior, basement meeting rooms, 2021*



*Interior, stair addition, 2021*