

100-20000-0010  
EXT. 12/31/84

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For NPS use only

received **MAY 11 1982**

date entered

**JUN 14 1982**

**1. Name**

historic George S. Abbott Building or Wheeler and Wilson Building

and/or common Abbott Towers (Abbott Towers Apartments)

**2. Location**

street & number 235-247 North Main Street N/A not for publication

city, town Waterbury N/A vicinity of ~~congressional district~~

state Connecticut 06702 code 09 county New Haven code 013

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Connecticut Associates I Limited Partnership Arthur M. Winn General Partner

street & number Four Fanueil Hall Marketplace

city, town Boston N/A vicinity of state MA 02109

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Town Clerk's Office - Waterbury City Hall

street & number 235 Grand Street

city, town Waterbury state CT 06702

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Connecticut State Register of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1981  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission

city, town Hartford state CT 06106

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## 7. Description

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**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved      date \_\_\_\_\_

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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The George S. Abbott Building is located at the confluence of Cooke Street and North Main Street on a moderate grade inclining toward the northeast. (photo #1) The building is within three blocks of the central business district although the immediate neighborhood environment is composed of apartment buildings and older three story residential frame dwellings. (photos #2 and 3) The building site is fully developed and the building walls extend to within a few feet of the property line, the right-of-way of the two public streets. The site is not landscaped and is partially covered with rubble, the result of the recent realignment of North Main Street along the building's southern elevation. The long axis of the structure, along North Main Street, is oriented toward the northeast.

The building is actually two structures sharing a party wall. (photo #4) The architectural style of the George S. Abbott Building is an eclectic mix of Romanesque and Neo-Classical influences, mainly expressed in window details and the corbelled cornice. The building is of brick, load-bearing masonry construction and is five stories in height. It is "V" shaped in plan and has a canted corner at the apex. (see floor plan on Continuation Sheet) The building is trimmed with rock-faced granite details and wooden moldings.

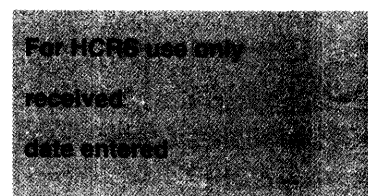
The foundation of the structure is of split granite rubble capped with a bevelled granite water table with a semi-polished finish. Because of the grade, the foundation and water table are stepped.

Principal entrances to the building exist on the southeast elevation, where there are six, including two stairways to the upper levels; and one on the west side, where there is one doorway entrance at grade. (photos #4 and 1)

The George S. Abbott Building has three principal facades, including the canted corner. (photo #1) The southeastern facade has nine bays, the canted corner two and the western side, eleven. Uniformly burnt orange in color, the building is constructed of ironspot brick, laid in dark tinted mortar in American bond. On the northeastern and northwestern elevations, common red brick is used. (photos #5 and 3) There are five bays in the northeastern elevation.

Along the southeastern elevation there are three storefronts in deteriorated condition. (photo #4) Constructed with wooden piers with transom lights and recessed doorway entrances, these features are grouped at the northeastern end of the wing. An additional storefront, accented by granite columns and entry steps, is located within the canted corner. In the solid wall plane between these two groups is a small window aperture expressed with a round, compound arch and granite sill. (photo #6) A sign architrave caps the four storefronts, which are

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currently boarded with plywood for security purposes. The west elevation contains only three small windows, the doorway opening previously mentioned and an access tunnel through the building to the inner court area, at the extreme northerly end of the building. (photos #1 & 3)

The fenestration of the upper four levels is regular but graduated in style. On the second floor all windows have segmental arched heads and a string course of rock-faced granite on the southeastern elevation. (photo #4) The wall plane is slightly relieved at the window heads and the arches are interrupted by a brick string course carried around the building. The upper levels are variously accented with additional string courses of rock-faced granite. The window configuration changes on the third and fourth floors and rectangular granite sills and lintels are used instead of relieving arches. In the spandrels, a toothed brick pattern is used to accent the flat wall plane. On the fifth floor, the window openings consist of compound round arches linked by a string course in brick which establishes a uniform rhythm across this story. (photo #7) Above this, the compound arch motif is repeated in corbelling along with small recessed rectangular panels and two dentil courses. (photo #9) The cornice is capped with interlocking tile coping. Nearly all of the window sash in the building, which were originally two-over-two pattern and one-over-one, have been destroyed. On the west elevation at the fifth floor level, six round arched tracery sash remain extant, although in deteriorated condition. (photo #8)

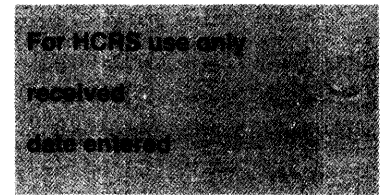
The major design influences which control the expression of the building are the vertical divisions established through the use of exterior chimney wall flues and oriels. On the southeastern elevation, two, matched four-story oriels on the north end and two wall flues near the center of the structure accent this purpose. (photos #4 & 1) On the west side there are an additional pair of wall flues, decoratively finished with corbelling at the foot and cap. The identical oriels are constructed of wood and trimmed with bead and reel moldings. There are also two dentil courses within the modest entablature and a projecting wooden cornice. (photo #10)

The roof plane is covered with an asphalt-gravel composition surface and is in poor condition. Two skylights illuminate the principal interior stairwells. (photo #11) All but one wall chimney has been removed and capped and this exists on the northeastern elevation of the building.

Within the apex of the "V" plan and nearly obscured from public view is the central heating system furnace stack. Adjacent to this is a five-story wooden porch with stairs which served the kitchens of apartments

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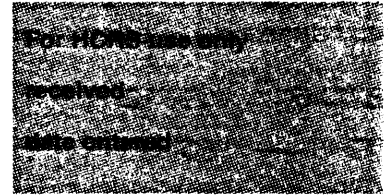
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on each floor. (photo #3) A second five-story projecting wooden porch lacking significant architectural detail is also appended to the rear (northeast elevation) of 241-247 North Main Street. (photo #2)

On the interior, two main stairwells serve the upper floors of the building at each end and are accessible from North Main Street. The interior finishes of the building are deteriorated due to vandalism and deferred maintenance. The interior floors are identical in plan and the access halls repeat the "V" shaped plan, except over 245 North Main Street where the hallway runs perpendicular to the facade. (see floor plan on Continuation Sheet) Rooms are small generally but the larger apartments may have had two bedrooms and adjoining living room-dining areas. (photos #12 & 13) Most of the architectural detailing, plaster walls and floors have been removed or damaged beyond reclamation. Portions of the stair balustrades and newel posts remain and there are a few interior door and window surrounds (typical) having corner blocks with pateras which survive intact. There are no fireplaces; rooms were heated individually utilizing the exterior wall flues described earlier which are integral with the exterior walls. The building appears to have been constructed initially without a central heating system. All kitchens were oriented toward the inside apex of the "V" where the wooden exterior stair served as a second egress. In the storefronts, decorative pressed metal ceilings remain extant within three of these spaces, although they are badly deteriorated. (photo #14)

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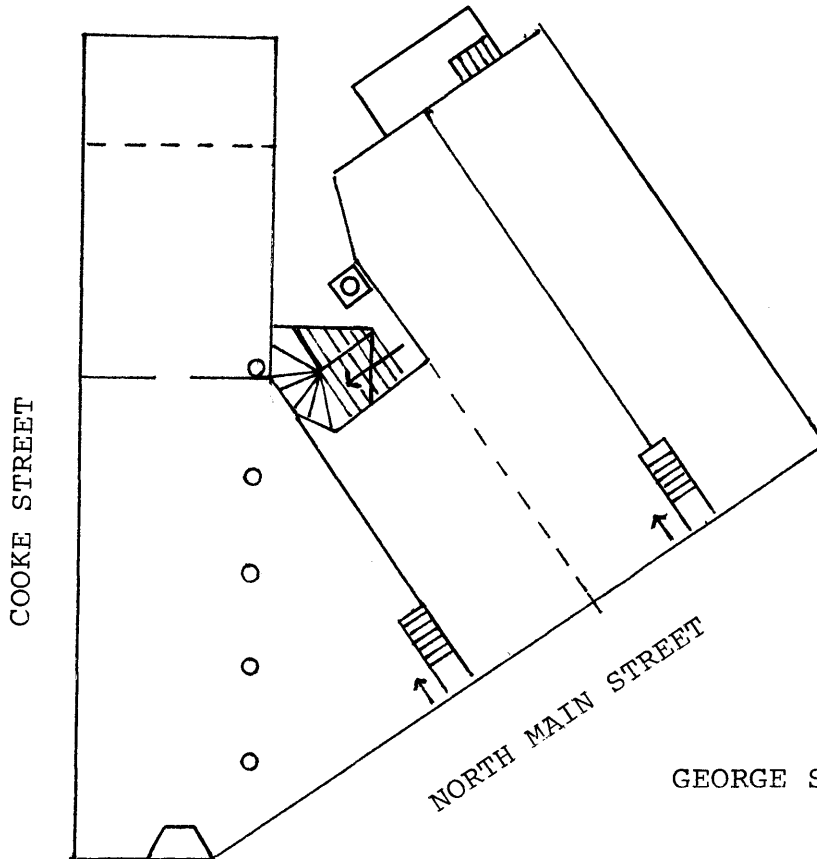


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GROUND FLOOR PLAN



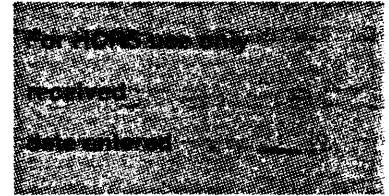
GEORGE S. ABBOTT BUILDING

(not to scale)



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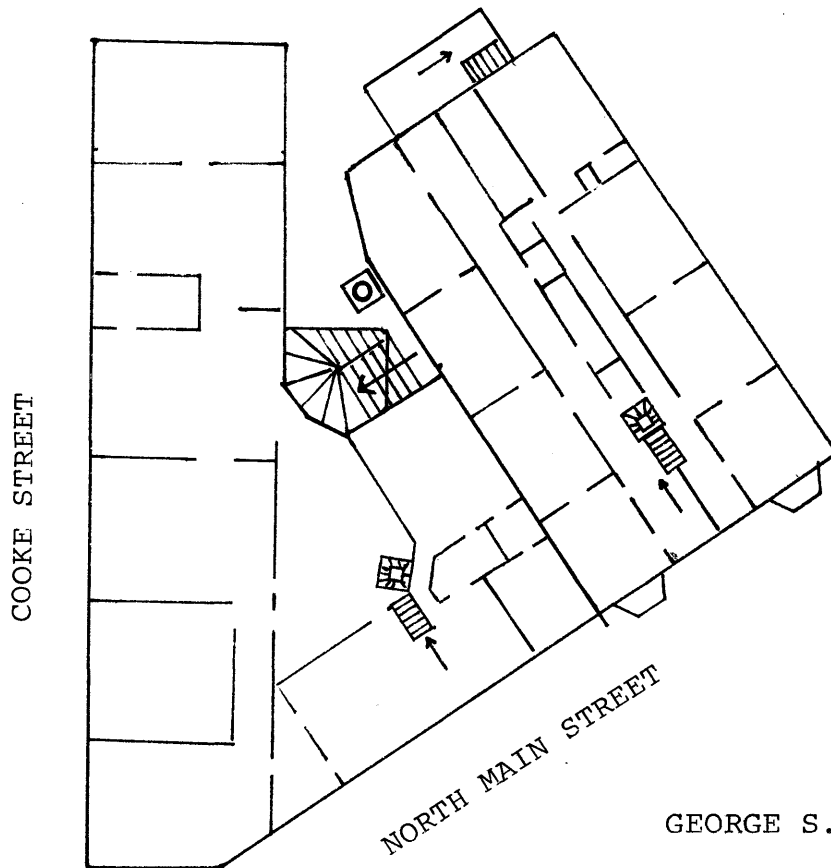


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TYPICAL SECOND - FIFTH FLOOR PLAN



GEORGE S. ABBOTT BUILDING

(not to scale)



## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) (housing)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1899

**Builder/Architect** George S. Abbott, developer  
Henry A. Lawler, builder

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The George S. Abbott Building is an uncommon form of the mixed-use, speculatively-built apartment building which flourished in Waterbury during its period of greatest growth (1880-1920). Planned by George S. Abbott of Oakville, a noted real estate developer of the period, the structure was built in 1899 by Henry A. Lawler, a local builder. 1/ The building stands on its original location and was constructed in two segments, the corner portion having been built first. The building is architecturally significant for its unique design, choice of material and plan. Its all-masonry construction is atypical of the wood-frame/brick facade tenements of the period built on speculation which remain extant in prolific number in the neighborhoods of Waterbury. The building is designed in an eclectic mix of the Romanesque and Panel Brick styles, displaying significant architectural features which include a richly detailed corbelled cornice, windows with compound arches and tracery sash, granite window trim and decorative reticulated brick spandrel panels. There are also two, four-story oriels ornately detailed with wooden bead and reel moldings. The deep cornice and window detailing, combined with the unusual burnt-orange color of iron-spot brick, forms a dramatic landmark effect on the prominently situated, wedge-shaped corner lot. The "V" plan is an unusual building form, rare in Waterbury, and represents a unique architectural solution to the problem of development of the irregularly shaped, steeply sloping site. Coupled with Waterbury's severe topography, the building forms an important visual entrance to Cooke Street, which passes northwesterly of the building. The George S. Abbott Building is also visible from the edge of the downtown core area and stands as a monumental terminus at the confluence of North Main and Cooke Streets. Historical documentation, location, size, and principal use of the building for rental residential purposes suggests that, as an element of city form, it was of only peripheral importance as a commercial structure. The building appears to have served a more transitional function as a neighborhood business building, where only the first floor was commercially utilized. Until vacated recently, the building housed Joe's Tire Shop, the oldest still-operating small business in Waterbury (1930). (Criteria C)

George S. Abbott of Oakville, developer of the property, maintained the offices of the Abbott Brothers Company at 1 Franklin Court, Waterbury. The firm is listed in the 1899 Waterbury and Naugatuck Directory as "builders, contractors and sewer contractors." 2/ In 1900 Abbott is also listed as President of the City Contracting Company. 3/

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

- Files of the Office of Community Development, City of Waterbury, Conn. Abbott Towers file. Unpublished background material extracted from Land Records of the City of Waterbury.
- Waterbury and Naugatuck Directory. New Haven: The Price and Lee Co. 1899, 1900, 1903, 1904, 1907, 1908, 1911, 1922.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property 32,333 square feet

Quadrangle name Waterbury

Quadrangle scale 7.5

### UMT References

A 

1	8	6	6	3	5	5	0	4	6	0	2	4	1	0	5
Zone	Easting				Northing										

B 

1	8	6	6	3	5	3	0	4	6	0	2	3	8	5
Zone	Easting				Northing									

C 

1	8	6	6	3	5	3	0	4	6	0	2	4	3	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

D 

1	8	6	6	3	5	3	8	4	6	0	2	4	2	9
Zone	Easting				Northing									

E 

1	8	6	6	3	5	3	7	4	6	0	2	4	2	8
Zone	Easting				Northing									

F 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

G 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

H 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

### Verbal boundary description and justification

(see Continuation Sheet)

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Christopher W. Closs, mnrp

Community and Preservation

organization Planning Consultants

date June 15, 1981

street & number 4 Bicentennial Sq/3rd Floor

telephone (603)224-6714

city or town Concord

state NH 03301

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

date May 4, 1982

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register  
Entered in the  
National Register

date

6/14/82

for Alouise Byers  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



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The Abbott Building was transferred in 1904 to Cornelius H. Cables, a local real estate broker.<sup>4/</sup> The building was listed as Cables Block until 1906, at which time it was again sold and became known as the Bristol Block.<sup>5/</sup> In 1908 the building was sold to John Littlejohn, real estate and insurance agent, who relocated his office to 239 North Main Street. Between 1907 - 1910 the building was listed as the Littlejohn Building.<sup>6/</sup> From 1911 through 1921, the alternate common name, Wheeler and Wilson Building, is found in the city directory. A franchise of the Wheeler and Wilson Mfg. Company, well-known manufacturers of sewing machines, occupied the storefront space in the northeast corner of the building prior to 1904.<sup>7/</sup>

In 1922 the Wheeler Building (235-241 North Main Street) was transferred to Wolf Hurwitz, plumber, for whom this portion of the building is thereafter listed. Hurwitz also made his residence in the building.<sup>8/</sup> In the same year, Al's Tire Shop opened at 241 North Main Street, the predecessor of Joe's Tire Shop. Owned by Joseph T. Samoska, the oldest small business still operating in the City of Waterbury recently relocated, having been the building's last tenant. Throughout the history of the building, the lower level has been devoted to commercial uses, mostly small businesses and services, while the upper stories served as lodging for transients and as apartments. Included below is a listing of the building's occupants in 1911 which typifies the pattern of occupancy between 1900 and the late 1970's.

"235-241 Wheeler Building

235 Johnson, Claus E.  
 238 Tierney, Dennis H.  
 238 Waterbury Shoe Repairing Company  
 239 Burr, Fred  
 239 Cantor, H. hairdresser  
 239 DuBois, Willett  
 239 Mirfield, M. massage  
 240 Crocco Bros. barbers  
 240 Gallagher, John S.  
 240 Matthews, Albert  
 240 Reed, Hubert A.

243-249 Wilson Building

246 Kingsbury st intersects  
 247 Brearton, M.A. Mrs.  
 247 McLean, George

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247 Munson, Burton H.  
247 Truchot, Louis  
247 White, Addie P. Mrs  
249 Lee King laundry" 9/

While now in a partially vandalized condition, having stood vacant for several years, the George S. Abbott Building retains its structural and visual integrity and is an important component both of the neighborhood in which it is located and as a visual extension of the central business district.

Footnotes

- 1/ Files of the Office of Community Development, City of Waterbury, Waterbury, Conn. Abbott Towers file. Unpublished background material extracted from Land Records of the City of Waterbury.
- 2/ Waterbury and Naugatuck Directory. Vol. XXV. New Haven: The Price and Lee Co. 1899. p. 18.
- 3/ Ibid. Vol. XXVI. 1900. p. 18.
- 4/ Ibid. Vol. XXX. 1904. p. 18.
- 5/ Ibid. Vol. XXXIII. 1907. p. 17.
- 6/ Ibid. Vol. XXXIV. 1908. p. 18.
- 7/ Ibid. Vol. XXIX. 1903. p. 569.
- 8/ Ibid. Vol. LXVIII. 1922. p. 706
- 9/ Ibid. Vol. XXXVII. 1911. p. 458

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Verbal Boundary Description and Justification

The boundary of Abbott Towers Apartments, for the purposes of nominating the resource to the National Register of Historic Places, varies from the property's recorded legal description by virtue of amendment of the northeasterly boundary line. Abbott Towers Apartments is situated upon a portion of Parcel 2 as delineated on a map entitled "Neighborhood Improvement Area, Disposition of Parcels 1, 2 & 3, Waterbury, Conn., Nov. 9, 1978" and as described below. The justification for amending the northeasterly property line is caused by the development of the balance of Parcel 2 for a new apartment building which will physically adjoin the historically significant structure along its existing northeastern wall plane. The two structures will also share common accesses and egresses. Based upon criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, the remaining portion of Parcel 2, which will contain the new structure, cannot be justified for inclusion in this nomination.

The portion of the legal boundary description found below, which describes the property line amended to conform with the criteria for nomination, is underlined for emphasis. The description of the new or corrected property line along the northeast elevation, which bounds the property to the southwest nominated for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, immediately follows in parentheses. The legal boundary description of the Abbott Towers Apartments is described as follows: "That certain piece or parcel of land situated on the easterly side of Cooke Street and the northwesterly side of North Main Street in the City of Waterbury, Conn. begin shown as Parcel 2 on a map entitled 'Neighborhood Improvement Area, Disposition Map of Parcels 1, 2 & 3, Waterbury, Conn., Nov. 9, 1978,' bounded and described as follows: Beginning at a point in the easterly line of Cooke Street at the northwesterly corner of land now or formerly of Boswell E. Trowers & Joyce E. Trowers, thence running in line of land now or formerly of said Trowers S84°-37'-20"E 40.11 feet, S4°-05'-50"W 13.35 feet, N56°-31'-20"E 67.51 feet, thence running in line land now or formerly of Boswell E. Trowers & Joyce E. Trowers, and land now or formerly of Joshua Soloman N4°-03'-40"E 20.69 feet, thence running in line of land now or formerly of Joshua Soloman N9°-06'-10"W 36.57 feet, thence running in line of land now or formerly of Joshua Soloman and land now or formerly of Irene C. Kennelly N11°-51'-10"E 45.29 feet to land now or formerly of Local Union #1251 UAW Building Corp., thence running in line of land now or formerly of Local Union #1251 UAW Building Corp. S84°-39'-50"E 46.59 feet to Parcel 1 as shown on said map, thence running in line of Parcel 1 S37°-42'-00"E 125.12 feet to North Main Street as laid out by the Waterbury Urban Renewal Agency, (thence from the previous point along a straight line to the most northerly corner of the building known as Abbott Towers Apartments, thence running parallel with the northeasterly wall plane of the same structure to the southeast corner of the building, thence running N46°-23'-49"W, a distance of 35.10 feet to a point along North Main Street,) thence running southwesterly in the northwesterly line of North Main Street and in a line curving to the right having a radius of 1670.00 feet, a

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distance of 92.67 feet to a point of a compound curve, thence running northwesterly and in a line curving to the right having a radius of 25.00 feet that connects the northwesterly line of North Main Street with the easterly line of Cooke Street at a distance of 60.64 feet to a point of tangency, thence running in the easterly line of Cooke Street and tangent to the curve of N5°-20'-30"E 153.02 feet to the point of beginning."

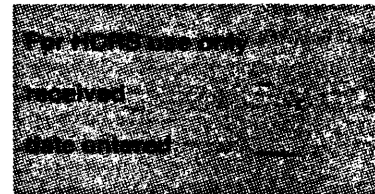
This property description refers to the sketch map (see Attachment 1-Item Number 10) as revised to reflect the portion of the property having cultural significance. The sketch map was derived from the title, recorded in the Waterbury Land Records, Book 1497, Page 285.

The boundary of the property, as amended from the recorded legal description, is an irregular polygon in plan and is justified by the public rights-of-way which form the perimeter on two sides and by a line extended parallel with the wall plane of the northeastern elevation of the building.

Abbott Towers Apartment, "V" shaped in plan, is located within the apex of the confluence of two principal city streets, North Main Street and Cooke Street (south and west elevations respectively). The edge of the concrete sidewalk forms the property line along both of these elevations and includes, at the apex, a curve with a 25'-00" radius.

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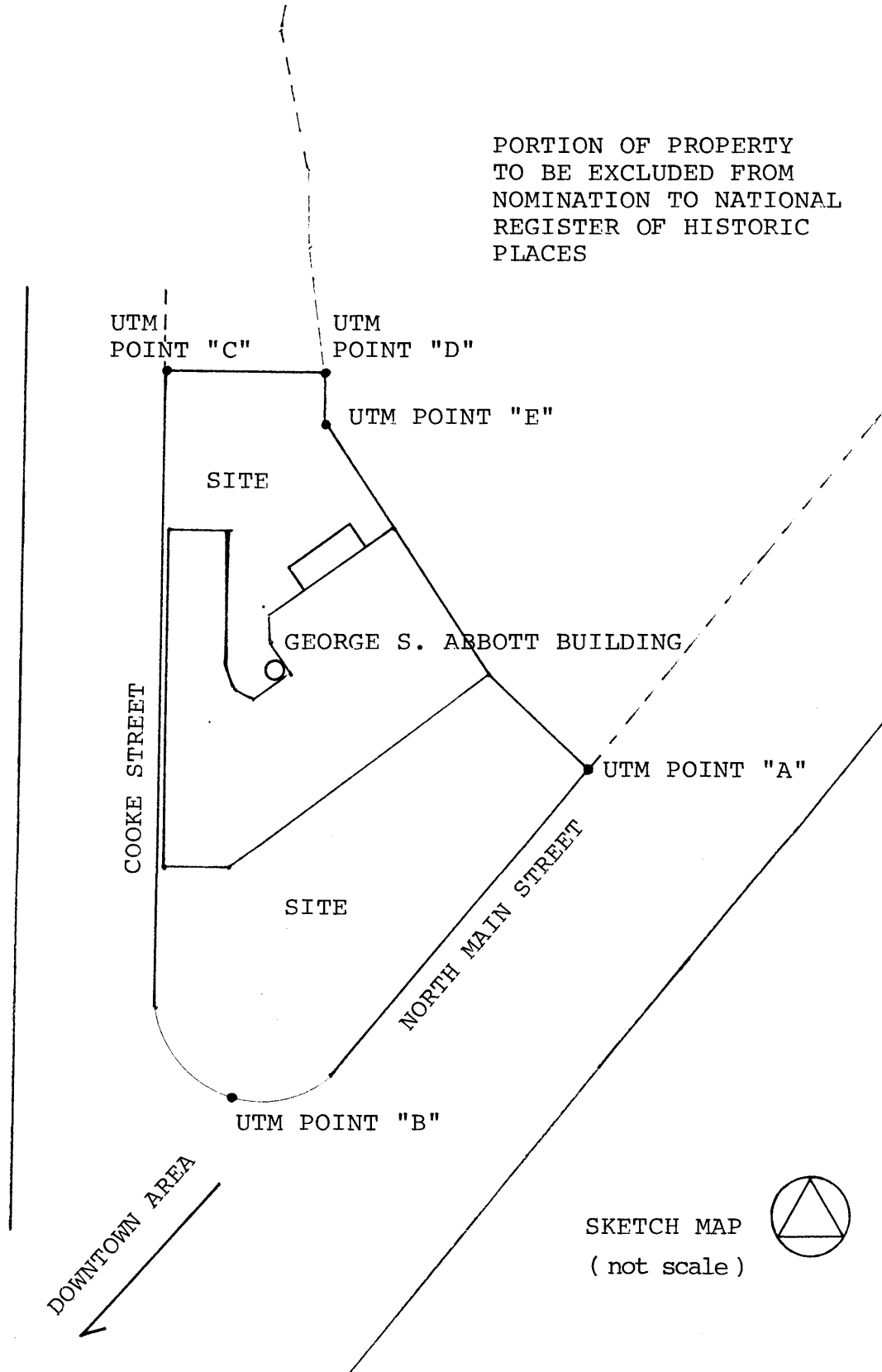


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PORTION OF PROPERTY  
TO BE EXCLUDED FROM  
NOMINATION TO NATIONAL  
REGISTER OF HISTORIC  
PLACES



SKETCH MAP  
(not scale)

