

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	APR 30 1986
DATE ENTERED	6-4-86

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

United States Post Office

AND/OR COMMON

Salem Main Post Office

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

2 Margin Street

N/A NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Salem

N/A VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Sixth Congressional District

STATE

Massachusetts 01970

CODE

1110

COUNTY

Essex

CODE

009

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

New England Field Real Estate and Buildings Office

STREET & NUMBER

1050 Waltham Street

CITY, TOWN

Lexington

N/A VICINITY OF

STATE

Massachusetts 02173

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Registry of Deeds, Salem Probate Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

36 Federal Street

CITY, TOWN

Salem

STATE

Massachusetts 01970

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

None

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Salem Post Office is at the southern end of a very dramatic and bustling downtown area on Margin Street. The building and its corner property are in excellent condition. It is centered on the site, with a grand stairway and lawn before it and a vehicle maneuvering area to its rear. The site is landscaped with lawn, shrubs, and trees. A detailed wrought-iron fence with hollow ornamental posts protects the Norman Street side of the property. This two-story edifice of steel frame construction functions as both the Post Office and federal building. The building is of red brick laid in a Flemish bond with a cross-gabled roof over the public two-story block. In plan, there is an original vestibule and public lobby flanked by the Postmaster's Office and work space, with the workroom, mail vestibule, and platform beyond.

Ten wide granite steps with wrought-iron railings mark the main entry. The front (east) elevation is a thirteen-bay composition with a five-bay central projecting entrance portion. This area is topped by a brick tympanum with a granite raking cornice and a bronze frame oculus window with terra-cotta festooned ornament. A plain granite entablature with denticulated corncing surrounds the structure. The second floor consists of a series of wood-frame, double-hung windows with 12/12 light and granite sills. The entrance portico is emphasized by a series of brick pilasters with Ionic terra-cotta bases and caps suggesting a hexastyle portico. A brick ledge defines the second floor level. The first floor end bays have

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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Salem Post Office

Item number 70

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recessed arched panels above the projecting brick base and granite base course containing double-hung, arched windows with granite sills. The first floor of the entry has three deeply recessed arched openings with paired replacement aluminum and glass doors. These are framed by engaged wood columns supporting a plain wood entablature with modillions and cornicing.

The north and south elevations are similar to the front facade, including the gabled end details and window usage. The north elevation has a large granite balustraded balcony and a recessed Palladian window with a granite entablature and keystone breaking the brick ledge to denote an inside stairwell. The rear (west) elevation contains the mail platform.

One enters the building through a wide vestibule with a wired glass ceiling, bronze beams, walls of polished plate glass with bronze and wood framing, a marble base and pilasters, and verde antique marble flooring. It is highlighted with a notched cast bronze entablature and hollow columns with continuous fluting which frames three sets of inner brass doors that open to the public lobby. This one-story space has a high vaulted plaster ceiling, plaster walls and denticulated cornicing, pilasters, caps, and trim work of St. Genevieve golden red marble, flooring and borders of verde antique marble, and Westfield green marble stools. Beneath the stools are solid bronze-faced radiator grilles. The service screen has three counters, two bays of general mail slots, a door to the workroom, and three customer boxes; above are large wood and glass paneled pivoting windows. The far right bay is a lobby for the Superintendent of Mail and Asst. Postmaster's offices, an elevator, and a set of marble stairs to the federal offices. Flat marble pilasters, entablature, and lintel frame the Postmaster's door.

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ALTERATIONS

The left lobby wall replaces original service windows with a poorly handcrafted display case and window, left of the vestibule is an unsightly "newsstand" of plywood and glass, the vaulted ceiling has new recessed down lights while the aluminum chandeliers are copies of the original brass fixtures, and the passenger elevator replaced a set of stairs.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" 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 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 type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES	Groundbreaking: July 19, 1932 Dedication: July 31, 1933	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Smith & Walker, Architects James A. Wetmore, Sup. Architect Louis B. Cadario & Sons, Builder
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE			

Prominently sited overlooking Ripley Plaza in downtown Salem, their building is a handsome two-story brick cross gable structure (with one story ell). It fulfills the function of U.S. Post Office branch as well as federal office building. Built in 1932-1933, its designs were provided by the Salem based architectural firm of Smith and Walker. Architecturally it is significant as the finest example of a Colonial Revival civic building in Salem. Furthermore, it represents a radical departure from Secretary of the Treasurer McAdoo's 1915 classification of buildings. Under this system (still in operation before the Supervising Architect's office was placed within the Public Works Administration in 1933), post offices of a scale as grand as Salem's Post Office would be categorized as Type A Buildings in their category; however, were faced with marble or brick - brick was used in smaller scale, Type C post offices. In this case, brick reinforced with granite, was employed to meet North Shore weather conditions. The "bond" of the walls feature what is called the "Harvard Effect", so called because it was a technique first used at Harvard University. This technique involves bonding granite over a brick surface. Chelmsford quarries provided the granite material. Compatibility with extant masonry, late 18th and early 19th century structures in the city may have been another reason for the choice of brick.

Stylistically this building is Georgian in terms of form - its five bay pedimented central pavillion is flanked by four bay wings. Windows on the first floor exhibit an arched, multi-pane Palladian-like sensibility, while standard multi-pane rectangular windows appear on the second floor. Ornamentations (in the Adamesque style) is limited to the pediments of the cross and side gables.

Before the Salem Post Office was constructed, 51 buildings occupied this site. Judging by photographs taken at the time of demolition, at least a dozen of the structures were of considerable age, including the old Ruck House which dates to c. 1650. It was "considered to be the oldest house in Salem at that time." One time this Post Office site had been the location of "Knockers Hole", an enclave of 17th century ship's carpenters and the old Salem Depot. It is presently part of Salem's central business district.

The Salem Main Post Office was constructed at a cost of \$3,000,000.00. In April of 1930, Congress approved an appropriation of \$360,000.00 for the building and the site. Razing of existing structures began in August of 1931. Ground was broken on July 19, 1932. The cornerstone was laid on September 21, 1932. It reads "Ogden L. Mills, Secretary of the Treasury; Smith and Walker, Architects; James A. Wetmore, Acting Supervisory Architect, 1932.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

The Salem Evening News", - 9/20/33 p. 5; 7-29-33 p. 4; 7-31-33 p. 6; 7-25-33 p. 1 & 9; 1-4-33 p. 1

History of Post Office Construction 1900-1940, July, 1982

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.875

UTM REFERENCES

A	19	327600	4693840	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

South to North - 150' along Margin Street
Curving at Northeast corner - 50' between Norman and Margin Streets
East to West - 175' along Norman Street
North to South - 170' along rear elevation
West to East - 185' along Gedney Street

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Steven M. Smith, Project Manager

ORGANIZATION

SULLIVAN DESIGN GROUP, INC.

DATE

September 23, 1985

STREET & NUMBER

44 Adams Street

TELEPHONE

(617) 848-1545

CITY OR TOWN

Braintree

STATE

Massachusetts 02184

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES

NO

NONE

Valerie Talavage

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is National State Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

John B. Larson

TITLE

DATE

4/14/86

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Patrick Andrews

DATE

6/4/80

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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date entered

Continuation sheet Salem Main Post Office

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The plans for this building were drawn by Robert W. Hadley of Captain Phillip Horton Smith's office (Smith and Walker - information on their firm is sketchy - apparently the firm moved to Boston at some point after 1935). It was constructed by Louis B. Cadarolo. At the time of its dedication this Post Office/Federal Building was praised for its lavish appointed and innovative features. The lobby, for example, featured verde antique marble floors, westfield green stools and pilasters, capitals and trim work of St. Genevieve Golden red marble. Five "colonial chandeliers" were hung from the ceiling. Innovative features in this building included "the latest patent coal burning boilers", special vaults for records, a "swing room" for off-duty employees ("complete with fans, water coolers and steel furniture), bank-like stamp clerk cages and the latest stamp equipment."

The construction of the Salem Main Post Office at the height of the Depression provided jobs for the city's unemployed workers. During the 1930's in Salem, general federal fundings and appropriations for sewers, schools, and city maintenance provided work for the unemployed. Unemployment insurance was becoming a burden to local mills and the city's lamp industry was threatened by cheap imports. In 1933 the Salem Leather Company which employed 300-400 people was considering moving to Danvers.

In addition to Post Office facilities, this building houses the offices of the IRS and Public Health Service - all rooms were eventually occupied by Federal agencies. The Salem Main Post Office building continues to be an important focal point in downtown Salem.

3-1/2 Story Brick
and Limestone

6 Story Brick Housing

1. Vestibule
2. Public Lobby
3. Postmaster
4. Work Room
5. Platform
6. Loading

Norman Street

175'

103'-2"

141'-0"

100'

6

5

4

2

1

3

Margin Street

50'

150'

Washington Street

Parking

New
England
Telephone

70'

185'

Gedney Street

1 Story Brick
Commercial

1 Story
Brick
Commercial



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Substantive Review

U. S. Post Office--Salem Main
Essex County
MASSACHUSETTS

Working No. APR 30 1986
Fed. Reg. Date: 2/3/87
Date Due: 5/30/86 - 6/14/86
Action: ACCEPT 5-4-86
 RETURN
 REJECT
Federal Agency: U.S.P.S

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Substantive Review: sample request appeal NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

*finely detailed, well-preserved outstanding
example of eclectic Colonial Revival
style civic building in local context.*

Recom./Criteria Accept C
Reviewer Savage
Discipline Architectural History
Date 6-3-86
_____ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: _____ technical corrections cited below
_____ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category Ownership Status Present Use
Public Acquisition Accessible

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? yes no

7. Description

Condition Check one Check one
 excellent deteriorated unaltered original site
 good ruins altered moved date _____
 fair unexposed

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection



UNITED STATES POST OFFICE

SALEM MAIN POST OFFICE
Salem, MA
Dennis Griggs
Sullivan Design Group, Inc.
July 1983
Front elevation

Salem Post Office



Salem Post Office

SALEM MAIN POST OFFICE
Salem, MA
Dennis Griggs
Sullivan Design Group, Inc.
July 1983
Front elevation. Right view

Salem Post Office

SALEM MAIN POST OFFICE
Salem, MA
Dennis Griggs
Sullivan Design Group, Inc.
July 1983
Lobby



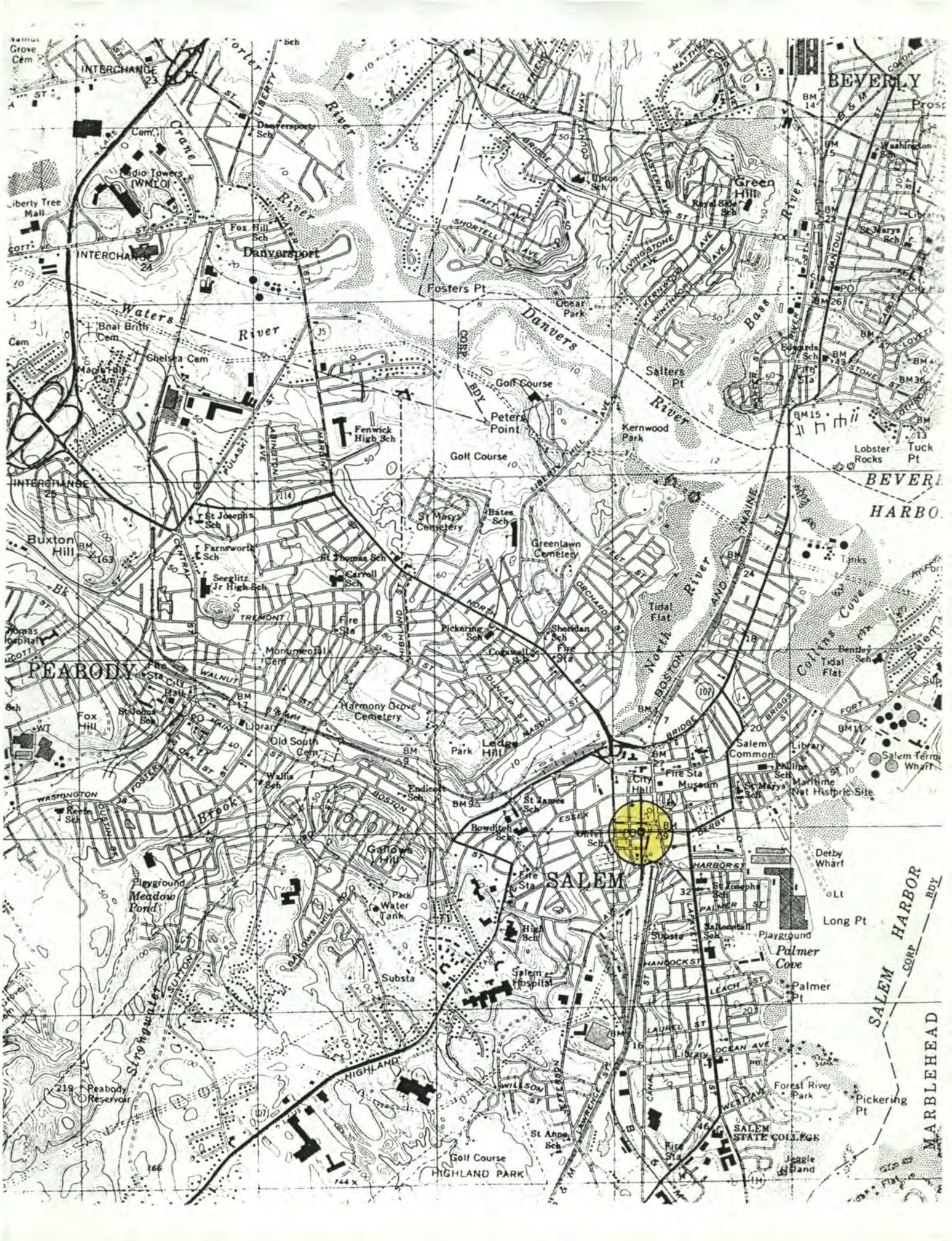
SALEM MAIN POST OFFICE
Salem, MA
Dennis Griggs
Sullivan Design Group, Inc.
July 1983
Front elevation. Left view

Salem Post Office



Salem post Office

SALEM MAIN POST OFFICE
Salem, MA
Dennis Griggs
Sullivan Design Group, Inc.
July 1983
Lobby



BEVERLY

INTERCHANGE 23

INTERCHANGE 24

INTERCHANGE 25

PEABODY

SALEM

BEVERLY HARBOUR

SALEM HARBOUR CORP BDY MARBLEHEAD



Valley Grove Cem

Liberty Tree Mall

Bnai Brith Cem

Buxton Hill

FOX HILL

WASHINGTON

219 Peabody Reservoir

166

INTERCHANGE 23

INTERCHANGE 24

INTERCHANGE 25

PEABODY

SALEM

219 Peabody Reservoir

166

St. Joseph's Sch

Fox Hill Sch

Chelsea Cem

St. Joseph's Sch

FOX HILL

WASHINGTON

219 Peabody Reservoir

166

Danversport

Danversport

Chelsea Cem

St. Joseph's Sch

FOX HILL

WASHINGTON

219 Peabody Reservoir

166

Fosters Pt

Fosters Pt

Chelsea Cem

St. Joseph's Sch

FOX HILL

WASHINGTON

219 Peabody Reservoir

166

Green Hill

Green Hill

Chelsea Cem

St. Joseph's Sch

FOX HILL

WASHINGTON

219 Peabody Reservoir

166

Green Hill

Green Hill

Chelsea Cem

St. Joseph's Sch

FOX HILL

WASHINGTON

219 Peabody Reservoir

166

Green Hill

Green Hill

Chelsea Cem

St. Joseph's Sch

FOX HILL

WASHINGTON

219 Peabody Reservoir

166

Green Hill

Green Hill

Chelsea Cem

St. Joseph's Sch

FOX HILL

WASHINGTON

219 Peabody Reservoir

166

Green Hill

Green Hill

Chelsea Cem

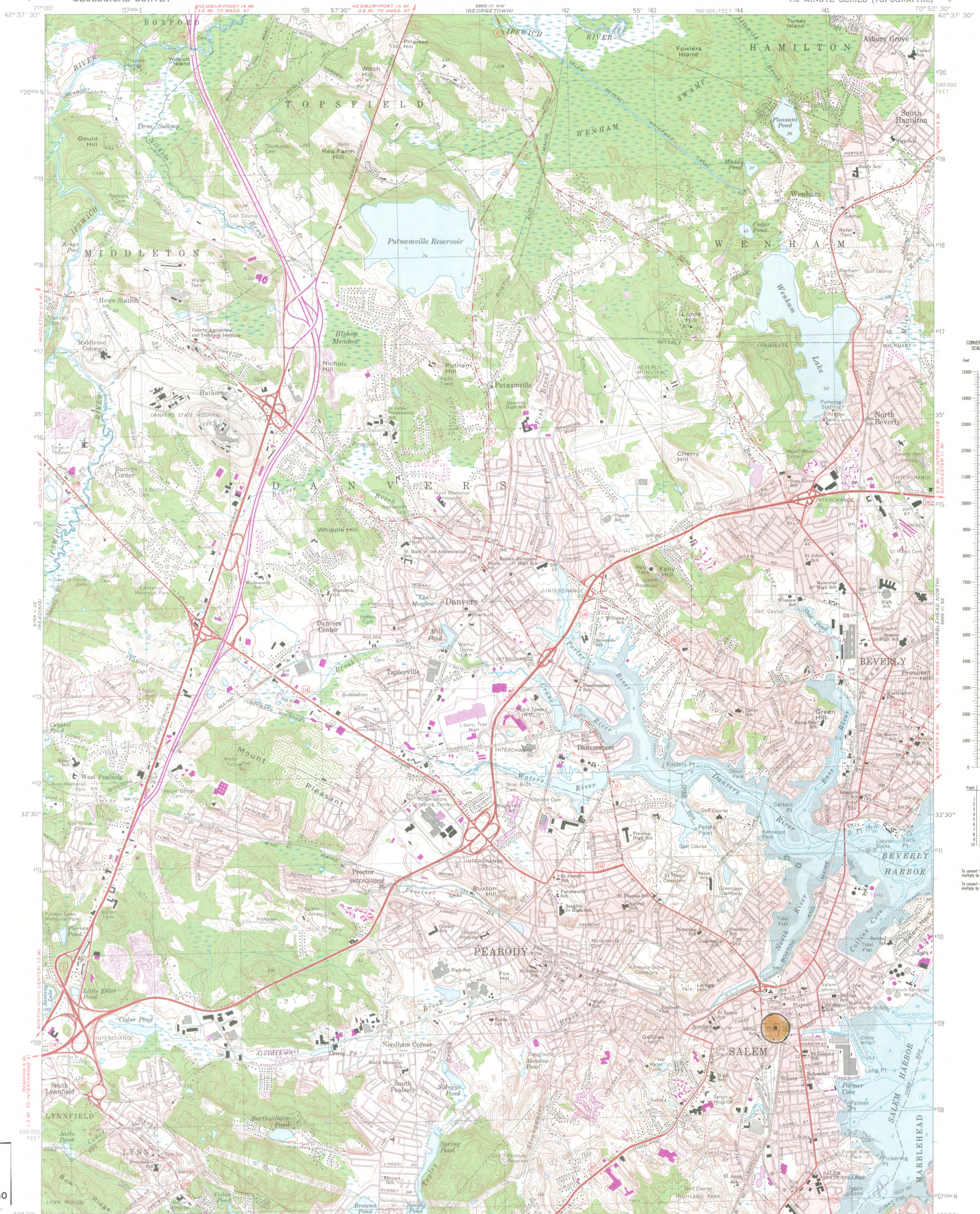
St. Joseph's Sch

FOX HILL

WASHINGTON

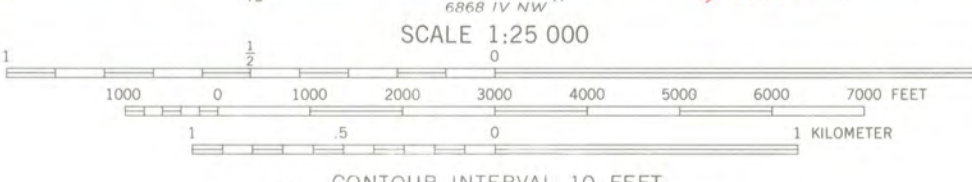
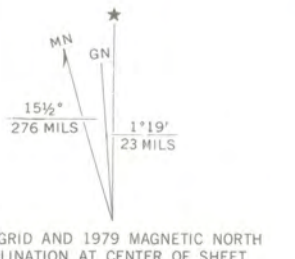
219 Peabody Reservoir

166



U.S. POST OFFICE
SALEM, MA
ATM REFERENCE:
19/344160/4708980

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1938. Topography by planimetric surveys 1942
Revised from aerial photographs taken 1969. Field checked 1970
Selected hydrographic data compiled from USC&GS Charts 240 and
241 (1970). This information is not intended
for navigational purposes.
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid,
zone 19
Boundaries in tidewater areas from information supplied
by Massachusetts Department of Public Works
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

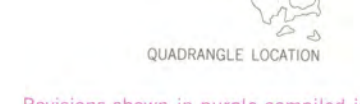


CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 9 FEET

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road
Interstate Route	U. S. Route
	State Route



Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with State of Massachusetts agencies from aerial photographs taken 1977 and other source data. This information not field checked. Map edited 1979

SALEM, MASS.
N4230—W7052.5/7.5
1970
PHOTOREVISED 1979
AMS 6859 III SW—SERIES V814



UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
Real Estate and Buildings Department
475 L'Enfant Plaza, SW
Washington, DC 20260-6400

April 23, 1986

Ms. Carol D. Shull
Chief of Registration
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
Department of Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240-1002

Dear Ms. Shull:

The Postal Service hereby submits a nomination for the post office located at 2 Margin Street, Essex County, Salem, Massachusetts 01970.

If you have any questions concerning this nomination, please call me at 202/268-3107.

Sincerely,

for Michael E. Kunstadt

John S. Sorenson
Realty Specialist, Senior
Realty Management Division
Office of Real Estate

Enclosure

APR 30 1986



FIELD REAL ESTATE AND BUILDINGS OFFICE
P.O. Box 324
Lexington, MA 02173-0324

August 20, 1985

The Honorable Anthony Salvo
Mayor, City of Salem
Salem City Hall
Washington Street
Salem, MA 01970

Dear Mayor Salvo:

The U.S. Postal Service in conjunction with the Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Officer in Boston has evaluated the Main Post Office in Salem and has determined it is significant from an historical viewpoint.

In view of the above evaluation, the U.S. Postal Service intends to nominate this building to the National Register of Historic Places. We would, prior to our taking formal action, appreciate receiving your concurrence.

If you concur with our proposed action, kindly return a signed copy of this letter in the enclosed envelope.

Sincerely,

Gregory Gilleland
General Manager

Concur: _____

Enclosures

JPC/ljr