

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 **SEP 4 1987**  
DATE ENTERED

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

MIDDLEBOROUGH MAIN POST OFFICE

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

90 CENTER STREET

\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

MIDDLEBOROUGH,

\_\_ VICINITY OF

9TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

MASSACHUSETTS 02346

0770

PLYMOUTH

023

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	N/A BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: *(If applicable)*

NEW ENGLAND FIELD REAL ESTATE AND BUILDINGS OFFICE

STREET & NUMBER

1050 WALTHAM STREET

CITY, TOWN

STATE

LEXINGTON,

\_\_ VICINITY OF

MASSACHUSETTS 02173

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

PLYMOUTH COUNTY REGISTRY OF DEEDS

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. BOX 3535

CITY, TOWN

STATE

PLYMOUTH

MASSACHUSETTS 02361

**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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED    DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Middleborough Post Office, constructed in 1932, is located in the heart of the old commercial district on Center Street, one block from the main intersection in the town on the former site of the Pierce Academy. Center Street was, at that time, part of Route 44, the major East-West highway link in the area. The building diagonally faces a three story Victorian commercial block and is adjacent to a Victorian Gothic Episcopal Church across Union Street. The rear of the property is graced by several high-spired wooden churches and the Town Hall. Four Years after the Post Office was opened, the last major building in the neighborhood, the Art-Deco style Union School, was constructed in 1937.

The site is very well maintained, with large shade trees ringing the property. The right, or West portion of the land contains substantial open green, well treed and planted with shrubs and a trimmed hedge that continues easterly to border the property line at the building's front facade.

Rectangular in plan, some 96 feet long by 54 feet deep, with an attached rear mail platform, the building contains 5,540 square feet of first floor space. The full basement contains office space, carriers areas, boiler room and storage areas. The construction of this single rectangular mass consists of reinforced concrete foundations, brick faced on spread footings, reinforced concrete floor slabs, masonry bearing walls and a composite roof framing, with wood framing at the pitched hip roof surrounds.

The Middleborough Post Office is of Classical Revival design, featuring a five bay front facade, with the center entrance and single flanking fenestration ensconced in the quoined cornered central pavilion, typical of this period revival design. The foundation is clad with the same red brick, laid in Flemish Bond, as the wall mass of all four facades, but separated by a wide marble watertable and belt course that surrounds the building and accentuates the base.

Two sets of granite steps are divided with a small mid-landing that leads up to a single entrance, centered in the three bay central pavilion. Each arched bay, trimmed with detailed marble surrounds and and marble keystones centering the outer, brick headed arches, contain fanlights surmounting the objective of the arch. The center arch features a marble broken pediment that graces the somewhat less elegant but newer pair of aluminum entrance doors. The outer arches in the center pavilion house multi-paned, rectangular windows under the fanlights and are seated on blind, segmented panels. The end bays of the front facade, slightly recessed from the central entrance, are centered

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

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... with depressed brick arches of equal size to the central fenestration, containing multi-paned windows, resting on narrow marble sills and capped with a flat brick lintel containing marble corners and keystones. The fenestration on each side facade reflects the theme of the end bays of the front elevation with the recessed arches repeated on the odd alternate bays of the five bay side facade.

A fine, marble string course, ornamented with guttae only over the fenestration in the central pavilion engirds the building at the entablature, separated from the plain, extended cornice by brick coursing. The cornice is crowned with a marble capped brick parapet that reduces the visual height of the hipped roof. The parapet is enhanced with turned marble ballusters over the entrance fenestration and blind marble panels atop the brick arched bays of the side facades and ends of the front elevation.

The lobby, entered through the original wood muntined glass vestibule, is unaltered with the exception of newer fluorescent lighting. The floor is surfaced with red and brown flashed tile, bordered with dark marble surrounds. The walls are faced with Vermont Brocaddillo marble wainscoting, and the high plaster ceiling and walls meet at the molded plaster cornice.

# 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 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	Designed 1931	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	James A. Wetmore, Sup. Arch't.
	Dedicated 1933		R. W. Smythe & Co., Contrs.

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Constructed in 1932, the Middleborough Post Office possesses integrity of location, design, setting materials and workmanship, as well as association with the Public Works Act of 1926, ammended in 1931 and later placed under the New Deal's Public Works Administration, as a response to both Post Office needs of space requirements and an attempt to stimulate the local economy, producing work for the gravely affected construction trades. Additionally, this ediface is a product of the Federal Government's attempt to establish, or reestablish its strong image. It thus meets National Register criteria A and C.

The economic outlook of Middleborough prior to the 1929 Depression was not strong. Perpetual labor difficulties with the large shoe industry and the woolen mills negated the strong economic surge sweeping the country and, with the later closing of the Atwood Box Factory, the cranberry industry became the prime, although sporadic, labor base in the community.

The advent of the Depression also drastically altered the implementation of the Federal Government's building program. While the calls of "Pork Barrel" still echoed in the halls of Congress, more consideration was now given to the actual Federal 'need' in local communities, and spatial requirements of agencies, such as the Post Office Department took precedence over the earlier 'logrolling'. Many communities with no previous federal association now received their first Federal structure, normally in the form of a post office. Early in the Depression, the Hoover Administration attempted to present or improve the image of the Federal Government at the local level, while at the same time, open up a short-term labor market to ease unemployment.

Middleborough had little commercial construction during the 1920's. With the exception of one-story commercial buildings on Center Street, the major projects consisted of St. Luke's Hospital in 1920, and McLean's Georgian High School in 1926, which replaced the romanesque building, located adjacent to Town Hall. The new Post Office was to be the only major, 'downtown' construction of this period, until the Union Street School was erected in 1937.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

The Federal Presence, Craig, Lois A. MIT Press 1980  
 Field Guide to American Architecture, Rifkind, Carole Bonanza 1980  
 History of Post Office Construction, 1900-1940 July 1982

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.580 A

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,9	3,4,1	4,5,0	4,6,3,9	4,0,0	B					
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING	
C						D					

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at a point on Union Street,

thence running: Northeastly 68' along Union Street  
 Southeastly 244' along Center Street  
 Southwestly 158' along Thatcher's Row (Ped. Way)  
 Northwestly 216' to the point of origin

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
N/A			
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

ORGANIZATION E. Brett Heenan Preservation Coordinator DATE March 21, 1986

STREET & NUMBER THE BOSTON PARTNERSHIP, INC. TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN 48 INMAN STREET STATE (617) 492-8866

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

## 12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES  NO

NONE

Valerie A. Talmore 5/1/86  
 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 L. Dawson

TITLE Realty Acquisition Specialist, Principal DATE 7/15/87

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: Beth A. Savage DATE 10/19/87

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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received  
date entered

Continuation sheet

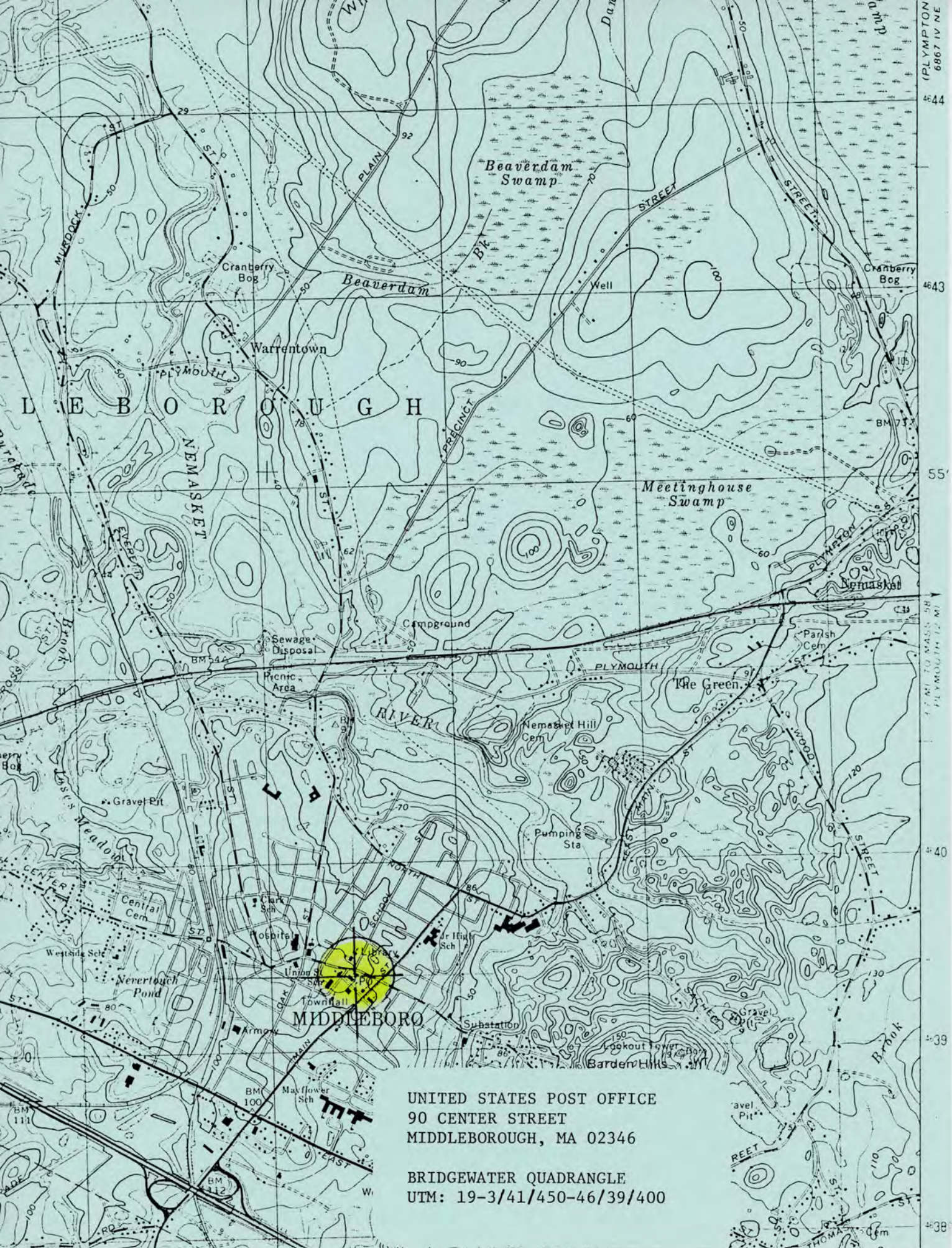
Item number 8

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The site selected for the new Post Office, by the Treasury officials, is interesting and not in keeping with the standard policy for second class post offices. While the Treasury's normal requirements dictated that the location be 'not equal' to the prime, commercial locations in the community, the Middleborough Post Office is situated in what was the heart of the commercial area and one block from the town's main intersection. Originally the site of the Pierce Academy, founded in 1808, the ancient building was in a state of disrepair. Owned by the Central Baptist Society, the building had housed the Y.M.C.A., several fraternal organizations, the Temperance Union, the 4th District Court and the police station in its better days. Despite strenuous opposition by local merchants and the citizenry in general the Society, whose Church was immediately to the rear of this property, sold the site to the Federal Government.

The building was designed in 1931 by the Treasury Architects, with James A. Wetmore, an attorney, as acting Supervising Architect. Louis A. Simon, later credited as the father of "Starved Classicism", was in control of this project as Office Supervisor however, and the plans were completed by Messrs. Morganstein, McDaniel and Bacon of the Treasury Staff. Later attempts to use private architectural firms under the Roosevelt Administration, to create professional employment, would lead to enforced 'payless vacations' of one week per month for these Federal employees.

The Middleborough Post Office is a splendid presentation of Late Renaissance Revival, with grand Palladian fenestration in the main facade but without however, the total, rigid formality demanded of his pure style. Impressive in its surroundings, this building contrasted its colonial, gothic and victorian neighbors and presents a bold scaled form of monumentality that compliments its surroundings while dignifying and stabilizing the locale. The building stands on its own merit. The marble ornamentation commends the familiar brick facades and presents a comfortable and reassuring symbol of stability and Federal Presence to the community. The architects succeeded in presenting a classical edifice that expressed power and organization of the Federal Government in an eclectic, but not vernacular style.



UNITED STATES POST OFFICE  
90 CENTER STREET  
MIDDLEBOROUGH, MA 02346

BRIDGEWATER QUADRANGLE  
UTM: 19-3/41/450-46/39/400

PLYMPTON  
6867 IV NE  
4644  
4643  
55  
440  
439  
438

87001774

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

US Post Office-Middleborough Main  
Plymouth County  
MASSACHUSETTS

Substantive Review

Working No. SEP - 4 1987  
Fed. Reg. Date: 2/7/87  
Date Due: 10/1/87 - 10/19/87  
Action:  ACCEPT 10-19-87  
 RETURN  
 REJECT  
Federal Agency: USPS

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

Substantive Review:  sample  request  appeal  NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

*Locally significant Classical Revival  
Post office reflective of local  
impact of Federal building  
programs of the 1920s + 1930s.*

Recom./Criteria Accept A+C  
Reviewer Swan  
Discipline Architectural History  
Date 10/18/87  
\_\_\_\_\_ 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

- excellent
- good
- fair
- deteriorated
- ruins
- unexposed

Check one

- unaltered
- altered

Check one

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

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

**8. Significance**

Period \_\_\_\_\_ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates \_\_\_\_\_ Builder/Architect \_\_\_\_\_  
Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- applicable criteria
- justification of areas checked
- relating significance to the resource
- context
- relationship of integrity to significance
- justification of exception
- other

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal boundary description and justification \_\_\_\_\_

**11. Form Prepared By**

**12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification**

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

\_\_\_\_ national      \_\_\_\_ state      \_\_\_\_ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature \_\_\_\_\_

title \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

**X13. Other**

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

*Please indicate property on full USGS map.*

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

ER  
ency  
JOHN  
A.R.  
Glidden  
& Son

Bennett's




U. S. POST OFFICE  
90 CENTER STREET  
MIDDLEBOROUGH, MA 0234  
PHOTO DATE-JUNE 1985

VIEW FROM WEST  
RIGHT SIDE ELEV.

NEGATIVES @ USPS-FREBO  
LEXINGTON, MA 02173





U. S. POST OFFICE  
90 CENTER STREET  
MIDDLEBOROUGH, MA 0234  
PHOTO DATE-JUNE 1985

VIEW FROM NORTHEAST  
FRONT ELEVATION

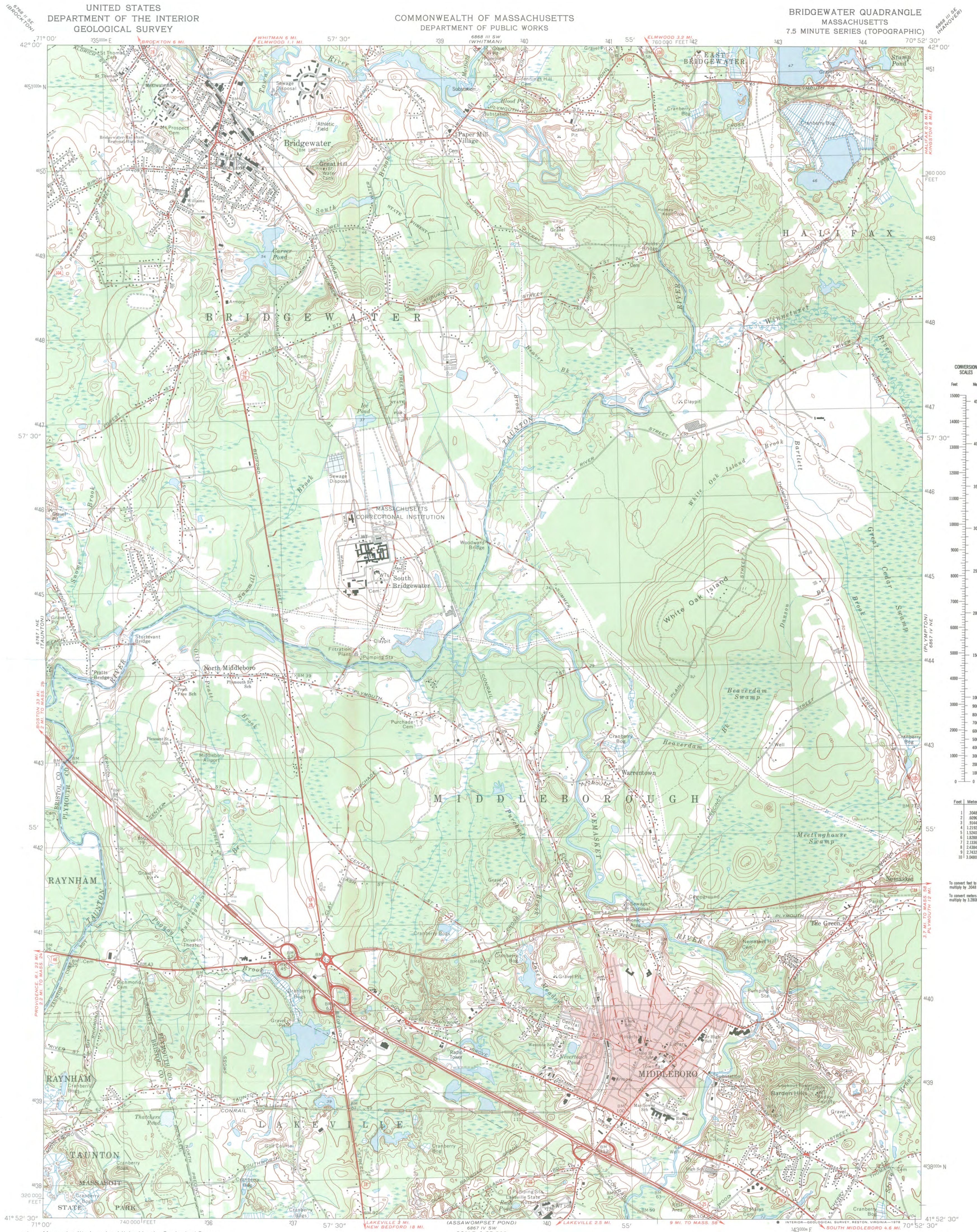
NEGATIVES @ USPS-FREBC  
LEXINGTON, MA 02173



U. S. POST OFFICE  
90 CENTER STREET  
MIDDLEBOROUGH, MA 0234  
PHOTO DATE-JUNE 1985

VIEW FROM EAST  
LEFT SIDE ELEV.

NEGATIVES @ USPS-FREBO  
LEXINGTON, MA 02173

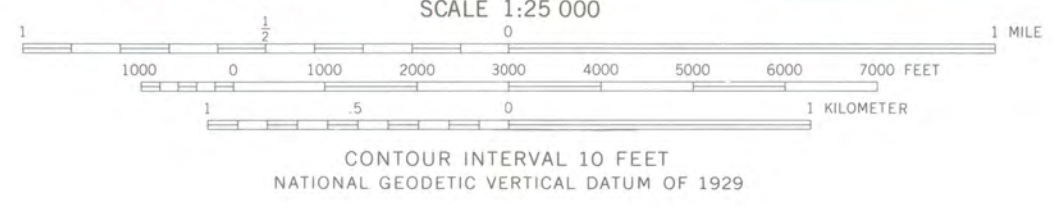
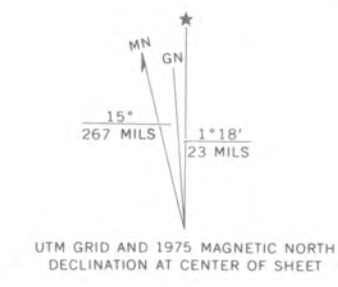


CONVERSION SCALES

Feet	Meters
15000	4500
14000	4000
13000	3500
12000	3000
11000	2500
10000	2000
9000	1500
8000	1000
7000	700
6000	500
5000	300
4000	200
3000	100
2000	600
1000	300
0	0

To convert feet to meters multiply by .3048  
To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey  
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs.  
Topography by planetable survey 1936-1937. Revised from aerial  
photographs taken 1974. Field checked 1975  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid ticks based on Massachusetts coordinate  
system, mainland zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid,  
zone 19  
Red tint indicates area in which only landmark buildings are shown



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



BRIDGEWATER, MASS.  
N4152.5-W7052.5/7.5

July 29, 1986

The Honorable John P. Healey  
Town Manager, Town of Middleborough  
Town Hall  
Nickerson Avenue  
Middleborough, MA 02346

Dear Town Manager Healey:

The U.S. Postal Service in conjunction with the Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Officer in Boston has evaluated the Main Post Office in Middleborough 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: \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosure

cc: File 0018E  
Reading



UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE  
FACILITIES SERVICE CENTER  
REAL ESTATE DIVISION  
WINDSOR, CONNECTICUT 06006-0330

September 1, 1987

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

Dear Ms. Shull:

The Postal Service is pleased to submit nominations for the following Post Office facilities:

1. 119 Elm St., Worcester County, Millbury, MA
2. 217 Commerical St., Branstable County, Provincetown, MA
3. 37 Taunton Green, Bristol County, Taunton, MA
4. 2 Abbott St., Middlesex County, Woburn, MA
5. 58 Church St., Worcester County, Whitinsville, MA
6. 321 Main St., Middlesex County, Wakefield, MA
7. 48 Waterford Rd., Middlesex County, Winchester, MA
8. 75 Park St., Bristol County, Attleboro, MA
9. 90 Center St., Plymouth County, Middleborough, MA

Some of these nominations were submitted previously and returned in order that full quadrangle maps could be included. This has been done in all cases.

Should there be any questions concerning these nominations, please do not hesitate to call me on 203-285-7181.

Sincerely,

William S. Moncrief  
Real Estate Specialist, Principal

Enclosures

cc: John Sorenson  
Realty Acquisition Specialist, Principal  
Washington, DC

SEP 4 1987