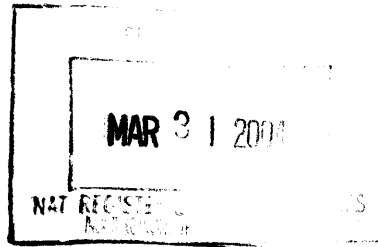


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Southern New England Telephone Company Building

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 55 Trumbull Street not for publication N/A
city or town Hartford vicinity N/A
state Connecticut code CT County Hartford code 003 zip code 06103

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally X statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 3/30/04
Signature of certifying official Date
J. Paul Loether, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Connecticut Commission on Arts, Tourism, Culture, History and Film
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional Comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the
National Register
- See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the
National Register
- removed from the National Register

[Signature] 5/12/04
Signature of Keeper Date of Action
Edson H. Beall

 other (explain): _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
0		sites
0		structures
0		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION /
communications facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT / Art Deco

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation granite

roof synthetic

walls limestone

other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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Southern New England Telephone Company Building, Hartford County, Hartford, Connecticut

Section number 7 Page 1

The Southern New England Telephone Company Building is situated at the northwest corner of Trumbull and Jewell Streets, fronting picturesque Bushnell Park in downtown Hartford, Connecticut. Constructed in 1930 in a restrained Art Deco design, the building is sheathed in granite at the base and topped by a smooth limestone tower embellished with low relief carvings characteristic of its style. The monolithic form of the tower is further enhanced by the absence of setbacks. At the time of construction the building rose only six stories. In 1953, a six-story vertical addition was added that continued the materials and details of the original design, resulting in a virtually seamless transition. The building stands in good condition and the exterior retains the features and details characteristic of the Art Deco style and thus retains a high degree of architectural integrity.

Along the south and east elevations, the building is separated from Trumbull and Jewell Streets by concrete sidewalks with wide planting beds that are defined by granite curbs. Immediately to the west of the building is a paved parking lot. An iron fence with carved limestone posts borders the parking lot along the south perimeter. A narrow alley is located to the north of the building.

The main or south elevation is the primary façade (dictated by the presence of the existing main entrance) and is symmetrically organized with windows grouped in a 1-3-2-3-2-3-1 pattern. On the lower six stories, the planar limestone façade is embellished with low relief stylized geometric and floral carvings and decorative iron grilles beneath several windows. Bronze letters at the western end of the elevation signify the building's original owner, "Southern New England Telephone Company." Primary access to the building is gained through an entrance near the west end of the south elevation that was added with the 1953 addition. Curved red granite walls flank the double-leaf aluminum glazed doors with sidelights and transom that are recessed within the volume of the building. The first story is fenestrated by bronze window units, each with a large pane of glass topped with single-light and paired 3-light transoms. Above the first story, 2/2, 3/3 and 4/4 steel windows light the interior. A number of window openings on this elevation have been boarded-up or infilled with ventilation louvers.

The east, west and north elevations are simpler in detail, reflecting their secondary status and the anticipated future construction of tall buildings on adjacent parcels. The Trumbull Street or east elevation contains bronze window units on the first story that consist of a large pane of glass topped with paired 3-light transoms. Centered on the east elevation is the original main entrance, which was infilled at some point after the 1953 addition. Above the first story are 4/4 and 3/3 windows in a 1-1-3-1-1 arrangement.

On the west elevation, the 3/3 and 4/4 windows are continued in a 1-1-2-1-1 pattern. A three-story, flat roofed loading/mechanical section protrudes from the center of the west elevation. The majority of the window openings on the loading/mechanical section contain ventilation louvers. A roll-down aluminum glazed loading door is located at the first story.

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Southern New England Telephone Company Building, Hartford County, Hartford, Connecticut

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The rear or north elevation mirrors the fenestration type and pattern of the main elevation, but is modest in decoration. The decorative iron grilles are present beneath several windows on the lower six stories, but there are no limestone carvings on this elevation.

The main entrance on the south elevation leads directly to a vestibule and corridor. Defining the vestibule is an interior set of double-leaf aluminum glazed doors with sidelights and transoms. The vestibule walls are clad in granite, the floor is terrazzo and the ceiling is plastered. The main corridor links the vestibule to the elevator lobby. Corridor finishes include terrazzo floor, travertine walls, and an acoustic tile ceiling.

Centrally located on the first floor is the main elevator lobby with terrazzo floor, red marble walls, acoustic tile ceiling, and flush metal elevator doors. The elevator cabs contain c. 1970 faux wood paneled walls and drywall ceilings.

The centrally located elevator lobbies on the second through sixth floors contain terrazzo floors, marble wainscoting, plaster walls and ceilings with simple cove moldings, and marble wall-hung water fountains. The elevator doors are flush metal. Above the sixth floor, the elevator lobbies are more utilitarian in finish with linoleum tile floors, unornamented plaster walls and ceilings, vinyl baseboard, and porcelain wall-hung water fountains.

Stair towers are located to either side of the elevator lobby and service all floors of the building. From the first to sixth floors, the stairs contain terrazzo floors and stair treads, metal risers, metal balustrades and painted concrete walls and ceilings. Above the sixth floor, the stairs feature linoleum floors, terrazzo stair treads, metal risers, metal balustrades, and unornamented plaster walls and ceilings.

The first floor, which was repeatedly subdivided and renovated by tenants after SNET Company vacated the building in the 1970s, contains office features and materials typical of the late twentieth century including: linoleum and carpeted floors, drywall walls, and suspended ceilings.

On the second through sixth floors (representing the original six-story building), the floors are generally laid out in open, uninterrupted plans with no partitioning. The floors are covered in linoleum tile and the concrete columns, walls and ceilings remain exposed. The window trim consists of a simple metal window sill only.

The majority of the floors above the sixth floor are open in plan and utilitarian in finish with linoleum tile floors, and steel beamed ceilings clad in drywall with drywall clad steel columns. Interior storm windows are located on many windows. In some locations, offices have been partitioned off with drywall partition walls and suspended ceilings. A cafeteria on the 11th floor contains a large open dining room with linoleum floor, drywall walls and a suspended ceiling. Adjacent to the dining room is a full kitchen with 1970s equipment and finishes.

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In summary, on the exterior, the building retains the form and characteristics of the Art Deco style. Exterior alterations have been limited to the infilling of the original main entrance and the creation of the existing main entrance; the remainder of the exterior has survived unaltered. In the interior, the major public circulation spaces, which represent the corporate face of the company and contain the highest level of finishes, remain virtually unchanged. The functional role of the building is expressed throughout the remainder of the interior, with linoleum tile floors, exposed concrete and steel beamed ceilings and columns, and painted concrete perimeter walls. Despite the mid-20th century partitioning of certain areas for offices, which included the installation of contemporary features and finishes, the building retains its 1930 character. The building stands in good condition and retains integrity sufficient to express its function and architectural style.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMUNICATIONS

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1931 - 1953

Significant Dates

1931

1953

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Foote, Roy W., Architect of the Original Building

Westcott and Mapes, Architect of the Addition

Industrial Construction Company, Contractors for

the Original Building and the Addition

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation Sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: University of Connecticut

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Southern New England Telephone Company Building, Hartford County, Hartford, Connecticut

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SUMMARY

The Southern New England Telephone Company Building meets National Register Criterion A for its association with the evolution of the communications industry and Criterion C as a significant example of the Art Deco style and as the work of two significant Connecticut architectural firms, Roy W. Foote and Westcott and Mapes. The building reflects a two-fold design intent: the construction of a major landmark that stylishly evoked the innovativeness of the company on the exterior, and a reinforced concrete structural system capable of supporting the endless rows of heavy electronic switchboards housed in the interior. The use of the Art Deco style was in keeping with the progressiveness of the telephone company and reflected their conviction that the telephone would transcend American culture from a novelty to a necessity. The resulting building stands as one of Hartford's most important examples of the Art Deco style and represents advancements in the telecommunications industry in the twentieth century.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Prior to the construction of the Southern New England Telephone (SNET) Company Building, the Trumbull and Jewell Streets site was occupied by a four-story brick building that was built in 1851 for the Rogers Brothers' electroplating factory. In 1863 the factory was acquired by the P. Jewell & Sons, later the Jewell Belting Company, pioneers in the manufacture of industrial leather belting.¹ Nearby Jewell Street perpetuates the family name.

In 1929, the SNET Company purchased the site for the construction of what would become 55 Trumbull Street. New Haven architect, Roy W. Foote, was retained for the design, and the Industrial Construction Company of Hartford was commissioned for the construction. Recognizing the potential for future company growth, the original design provided for a future six-story addition.²

SNET Company's Trumbull Street building, completed in 1931,³ was constructed to house both equipment and offices, for local as well as long distance calling. The first floor was largely dedicated to the business office, where customers would open accounts and pay bills. The upper floors contained offices as well as switchboards and related equipment necessary to complete calls. The operators were primarily stationed on the fourth and fifth floors. Amenities featured in the new building were sparse, but included an employee cafeteria and an operators'

¹ New Hampshire-born Jewell, came to Hartford in 1854 and started a tan yard near the Little River, later the Park. Jewell's firm would at one time become the world's largest producer of leather belting. Herbert Stoeckel, "Hartford Then and Now," *Hartford Courant*, November 29, 1959, p. 9.

² In the "remarks" section of the building permit, it is stated: "Steel work designed for a possible ultimate 12-story building of similar story height." Building Permit 9-C, City of Hartford, July 1, 1930. Transcript copy located in Southern New England Telephone Company Records, Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT, Box 310, folder 3151.

³ Various sources list the date of construction as 1930, however, company records indicate that construction was not completed until 1931. *Annual Report: The Southern New England Telephone Company*, New Haven: 1953.

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Southern New England Telephone Company Building, Hartford County, Hartford, Connecticut

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lounge.⁴ The distribution of the nearly 400 employees throughout the building was as follows: basement-4, 1st floor-55, 2nd floor-15, 3rd floor-15, 4th floor-36, 5th floor-218, 6th floor-50.⁵

The anticipated need for expansion materialized in the early 1950s as the company witnessed rapid growth following innovations which brought improvements in long distance calling. In 1952, plans were announced for the preconceived six-story addition. The New Haven architectural firm of Westcott and Mapes was awarded the contract for the design the following year, and once again, the Industrial Construction Company of Hartford (contractors for the initial six-story building), was selected for construction of the addition.⁶

Day-to-day operations in the building continued virtually uninterrupted during construction of the addition.⁷ Westcott and Mapes' design essentially continued the form and materials of the initial building, but eliminated much of the ornament, in keeping with the minimalist approach to architecture that characterized the mid twentieth century. The original heavily ornamented Art Deco parapet was removed to accommodate the addition.⁸ It was also at this time that the existing Jewell Street entrance was constructed as an employee entrance to supplement the main public entrance on Trumbull Street. Westcott and Mapes were also charged with renovating the interior of the original six stories with contemporary fixtures and finishes. Upon completion of construction, the building functioned as follows:⁹

- First Floor – public office, employment office, assembly hall, locker room
- Second Floor – long lines equipment of American Telephone and Telegraph Company
- Third Floor – long distance switchboards, lockers and rest rooms
- Fourth Floor – terminal rooms and medical quarters
- Fifth Floor – long distance switchboards
- Sixth Floor – dial equipment
- Seventh Floor – district offices, traffic department, dial equipment
- Eighth Floor – dial switching and power equipment
- Ninth Floor – division offices; commercial, plant and traffic departments
- Tenth Floor – directory sales and toll promotion groups; information switchboard; automatic accounting switchboards
- Eleventh Floor – cafeteria, kitchen and lounges
- Twelfth Floor – commercial records, orders and sales groups and district offices

⁴ Letter from RMH (full name not included), SNET Company to James O. Sanders, Supervisor, Federal Writers Project, October 23, 1936. Southern New England Telephone Company Records, Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, University of Connecticut, Box 310, Folder 3151. Offices for the American Telephone and Telegraph Company were also provided for in the design. *Annual Report: The Southern New England Telephone Company*, New Haven: December 31, 1929.

⁵ Employee projections were included in the original building permit. Building Permit 9-C, City of Hartford, July 1, 1930.

⁶ "New SNETCO Building Doubles Space: Six Floors Added, Others Converted," *Hartford Times*, February 12, 1955, page 24.

⁷ The business office was, however, temporarily relocated to a nearby location. *Annual Report: The Southern New England Telephone Company*, New Haven: 1953.

⁸ Gregory Andrews and David Ransom, *Structures & Styles: Guided Tours of Hartford Architecture*, (Hartford, CT: Connecticut Historical Society, 1988), 30.

⁹ "New SNETCO Building Doubles Space: Six Floors Added, Others Converted," *Hartford Times*, February 12, 1955, page 24.

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Southern New England Telephone Company Building, Hartford County, Hartford, Connecticut

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Approximately 1,000 employees were housed in the newly-renovated building; 600 of which were telephone operators.¹⁰

The SNET Company continued to use the building for office space and for switching equipment until the 1970s when they consolidated and relocated those functions into several other company facilities.¹¹ In the ensuing decades, the building was subleased and renovated by the tenants, and space was increasingly vacated until the structure was wholly abandoned in the latter 1990s.

SIGNIFICANCE IN COMMUNICATIONS

The Southern New England Telephone Company Building is significant in the area of Communications for its association with an important Connecticut telephone company. SNET Company launched Connecticut's telephone network in the 1880s and continued to serve the state as its regulated utility until the breakup of the Bell system in 1983.

Connecticut was a leading state in the development of the telephone. In January 1878, the world's first commercial telephone exchange opened at 219 Chapel Street in New Haven.¹² The New Haven Telephone Directory of 1878, the world's first such directory, contained 21 listings.¹³ Telephone service in Hartford actually predated the opening of the New Haven exchange by a few months.¹⁴ Local druggist, Isaac D. Smith instituted a telephone system in the summer of 1877. Smith installed a system of telephones, which he leased from the New England Telephone Company, that connected his store with a number of local physicians and livery stables by means of a homemade switching system.¹⁵ At the close of the first year, Smith's system consisted of 95 telephones.

In 1879, two telephone companies were formed in Hartford, the *District Telephone and Automatic Signal Company*, which had opened the New Haven exchange and used Bell telephones, and the *Gold and Stock Telegraph Company*, a Western Union subsidiary that used Edison developed telephones.¹⁶ Those companies merged in 1882, and the combined

¹⁰ "Operator Need Continues with New Equipment," *Hartford Times*, February 12, 1955, page 23.

¹¹ State of Connecticut, Department of Public Utility Control, Docket No. 02-02-10, Application of the Southern Northern New England Telephone Company to Sell Improved Real Property Located at 55 Trumbull Street in Hartford, Connecticut, February 3, 2003, Draft Decision.

¹² Ellen Stern and Emily Gwathmey, *Once Upon a Telephone: An Illustrated Social History*, (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1994), 17.

¹³ "Timeline of Telecommunications: The Telephone," visited March 20, 2003, <http://www.telephonetribute.com/tribute/timeline.html>.

¹⁴ The story of Isaac Smith's telephone system is recounted in, "History of Hartford Exchange," Typewritten manuscript, Southern New England Telephone Company Records, Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, University of Connecticut, Box 310, Folder 3151.

¹⁵ Untitled, typewritten manuscript. Southern New England Telephone Company Records, Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, University of Connecticut, Box 310, Folder 3151. A typed note on the manuscript indicates that the material was published in the *Hartford Times*, 150th anniversary edition, 1941.

¹⁶ Untitled, typewritten manuscript. Southern New England Telephone Company Records, Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, University of Connecticut, Box 310, Folder 3151. A typed note on the manuscript indicates that the material was published in the *Hartford Times*, 150th anniversary edition, 1941.

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exchange of about 700 telephones³, became the Southern New England Telephone Company, part of the Bell system.¹⁷

Initial growth of the SNET Company was slow, but improvements in the telephone and in the switchboard, propelled the technology into a more practical means of communication. As a result, demand for the telephone increased rapidly in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Growth was even faster during the early years of the new century. In the 1910s and 1920s, as the population began to move outward from the cities into the new suburbs, demand for telephones consequently grew.

The 1920s was a decade of tremendous growth in technology and profits for SNET Company. One significant technological improvement at this time was the development of the dial telephone. SNET Company's Hartford exchange had the distinction of being the first major exchange in New England to have dial service.¹⁸ Instituted in 1922, dial service, which used automatic switches, afforded significantly faster connections. Within a decade, approximately 75% of Hartford's telephones were dial operated.¹⁹ During the 1920s, significant advancements were also made in long distance calling. Coinciding with these developments, SNET Company began promoting "Ideal Toll Service," which offered speed of connection and ease of use for long distance calls that was nearly equal to that of local dial service.²⁰ In 1920, the average toll call was connected in just over four minutes; in 1929, the connection time was reduced to just one minute, a significant improvement.²¹ With growing demand for local and toll dial service, it became evident that SNET Company's main Hartford facility located on Pearl Street could not adequately house the additional equipment required.

In 1929, the Trumbull and Jewell Street site was purchased and the construction of a new equipment and office building (the subject of this nomination) was begun in 1930.

SNET's Trumbull Street facility was one of only a few buildings constructed by the company during the Depression. SNET halted construction on all but the most crucial projects. Justifying the construction of the Trumbull Street building, SNET argued to its shareholders that the building should be completed for the following reasons: the project was already initiated, the building was required for future growth, the facility would result in much needed service improvements, and the construction would provide additional work for their workforce.²²

¹⁷ "History of Hartford Exchange," Typewritten manuscript, Southern New England Telephone Company Records, Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, University of Connecticut, Box 310, Folder 3151.

¹⁸ "History of Hartford Exchange," Typewritten manuscript, Southern New England Telephone Company Records, Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, University of Connecticut, Box 310, Folder 3151.

¹⁹ "Hartford Chamber of Commerce Magazine," Typewritten manuscript dated September 1931, Southern New England Telephone Company Records, Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, University of Connecticut, Box 310, Folder 3151.

²⁰ *Annual Report: The Southern New England Telephone Company*, New Haven: December 31, 1929, 4.

²¹ *Annual Report: The Southern New England Telephone Company*, New Haven: December 31, 1929, 4.

²² *Annual Report: The Southern New England Telephone Company*, New Haven: December 31, 1931, 6.

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Southern New England Telephone Company Building, Hartford County, Hartford, Connecticut

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The opening of the Trumbull Street equipment and office building coincided with the launching of a new focus within the company on customer service, a campaign aimed to counter the stagnant business that the company was experiencing during this period of economic turmoil. Gains in residential subscriptions that were realized by telephone companies throughout the nation during the booming 1920s were largely wiped out during the Depression of the early 1930s.²³ Between 1930, when the effects of the Depression began to be felt, and 1933, over two-and-a-half million households in the nation disconnected their residential telephones, a twenty percent reduction.²⁴ The industry shifted its sales efforts from marketing long distance service to persuading old customers not to disconnect. SNET Company's attention to customer service that was evident in the design of the Trumbull Street building was part of a nationwide trend in the telephone industry. It was not until 1939 that the telephone industry fully recovered.

Beginning with the exterior design, the company sought to create a building that was "impressive, yet not imposingly formal."²⁵ Signaling this new focus, when the building opened in mid-1931, the first occupant was the public Commercial Business Office.²⁶ The business office was a 92 foot by 68 foot room, occupying nearly half of the first floor, and reportedly the largest public space of any telephone building in the state.²⁷ Centered within the room was the cashiers' counter, constructed of two-tone walnut with positions for three tellers. SNET Company promoted the fact that the counters did not contain the traditional grillework that separated the company representatives from the public so as to "present a more pleasing appearance to customers, who are no longer obliged to transact business with the tellers through an intervening grille."²⁸ Service was more personalized at the Trumbull Street location and subscribers were welcomed to visit the office or call it by telephone to review details of their account. Once inside the main Trumbull Street entrance, three service representatives were available to attend to existing or new customers. Individual subscribers were assigned a specific service representative so that each subscriber would become acquainted with an individual in the company who would be familiar with the details of their account, thereby personalizing service to a far greater extent than had ever before been offered.

To the rear of the business office were two customers' rooms, each equipped with a table and telephone, designed to serve business travelers who were at liberty to use the telephones. Four public telephone booths, recessed into the rear wall, were also provided for the public, perhaps as an enticement to subscribe.

²³ Telephone companies throughout the nation reported staggering losses in residential customers during the Depression. Claude S. Fischer, *America Calling: A Social History of the Telephone to 1940* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992), 50.

²⁴ Claude S. Fischer, *America Calling: A Social History of the Telephone to 1940* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992), 53.

²⁵ "Hartford Chamber of Commerce Magazine," Typewritten manuscript dated September 1931, Southern New England Telephone Company Records, Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, University of Connecticut, Box 310, Folder 3151.

²⁶ "Hartford Chamber of Commerce Magazine," Typewritten manuscript dated September 1931, Southern New England Telephone Company Records, Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, University of Connecticut, Box 310, Folder 3151.

²⁷ The description of the features within the Business Office was included in, "Hartford Chamber of Commerce Magazine," Typewritten manuscript, Southern New England Telephone Company Records, Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, University of Connecticut, Box 310, Folder 3151.

²⁸ "Hartford Chamber of Commerce Magazine," Typewritten manuscript dated September 1931, Southern New England Telephone Company Records, Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, University of Connecticut, Box 310, Folder 3151.

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Southern New England Telephone Company Building, Hartford County, Hartford, Connecticut

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Also introduced during this period were varying levels or classes of telephone service, tailored to meet the needs of each individual customer from the individual who placed only an occasional call to the business that requires speedy connections and dependable service. A full line of special services was also developed to accommodate specific needs ranging from amplifying equipment for persons with hearing deficiencies to teletypewriter services, among others.²⁹

During the mid twentieth century, SNET Company once again realized steady gains in subscriptions. In 1955, Hartford had nearly twice as many telephones as it had when World War II ended just a decade earlier.³⁰ Building on the post World War II gains, SNET Company resumed its push for long distance calling with a new service, "Direct Distance Dialing." It was the innovation of Direct Distance Dialing that initiated construction of the six-story addition to 55 Trumbull Street.

Prior to the development of Direct Distance Dialing, a subscriber would dial a long distance number and then the operator would ask for the caller's telephone number. The operator would prepare a "toll ticket," which recorded the caller's number, the city and number called, and the time the call began and ended. The toll ticket would then be sent to the telephone company's accounting offices in New Haven, where the bills were prepared. With Direct Distance Dialing, the operator would briefly pick up to ask for the caller's number, which she would record, but the remainder of the information was automatically recorded on a punched tape. The tape was later run through other automatic machines and the bill of charges would be generated.³¹ This service was a significant improvement and brought considerable recognition and profits to SNET.

Hartford and its surrounding area was the first in Connecticut to have Direct Distance Dialing.³² The addition to the Trumbull Street building was constructed, in part, to accommodate the equipment necessary for this new innovation. That equipment was so massive and complex, that its installation required eight months.³³ With the institution of Direct Distance Dialing, came a need for a uniform system of telephone numbers and SNET Company became the first company in the country to adopt the uniform numbering plan.³⁴

SNET Company's six-story addition to the Trumbull Street building was promoted with great fanfare. Where the original 1931 building was designed with a focus on customer service, the

²⁹ "Hartford Chamber of Commerce Magazine," Typewritten manuscript dated September 1931, Southern New England Telephone Company Records, Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, University of Connecticut, Box 310, Folder 3151.

³⁰ "Hartford Courant Financial Edition," Typewritten manuscript dated January 16, 1955, Southern New England Telephone Company Records, Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, University of Connecticut, Box 310, Folder 3151.

³¹ A complete explanation of Direct Distance Dialing was published in, "SNETCO Building Doubles Space," *Hartford Times*, February 12, 1955, p. 24.

³² "SNETCO Building Doubles Space," *Hartford Times*, February 12, 1955, p. 24.

³³ Direct dialing was first instituted in Englewood, NJ in 1951. "Distant Dialing Apparatus Planned for This Summer," *Hartford Courant*, January 30, 1955, p. 8.

³⁴ "Distant Dialing Apparatus Planned for This Summer," *Hartford Courant*, January 30, 1955, p. 8.

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six-story addition was designed to please the employee. Among the numerous amenities were: a 260-seat cafeteria (reported to be one of the finest in the country), a night kitchen to serve those working the overnight shifts, an assembly hall which could be used by social organizations connected with the company, new locker rooms, new medical quarters with a trained nurse, and new lighting and soundproofing in the office areas.³⁵

With completion of the addition, the building adequately met the needs of the company for the next two decades.

SIGNIFICANCE IN ARCHITECTURE

The Southern New England Telephone Company Building is significant in the area of Architecture as an important Depression-era example of the Art Deco commercial style and the work of two important Connecticut architectural firms, Roy W. Foote and Westcott and Mapes.

Popularized by the Paris Exposition of Decorative Arts in 1925, the Art Deco style, with its planar surfaces and simplified plans, was a conscious break from the revival styles fashionable in the preceding decades of the 20th century. The style emphasized linear compositions, with a strong vertical emphasis, embellished with stylized and geometricized ornamentation. Popular motifs included zigzag, chevron and floral ornaments.

Hartford's SNET Company Building retains the defining characteristics of the style with its smooth limestone cladding that creates a sleek, streamlined façade, its overall organization with a vertical emphasis created by the use of piers and the closely spaced, tall windows, and the use of geometricized ornament in the limestone and in the metal grilles. The style is carried through in the interior, with the straightforward floor plan and streamlined terrazzo and marble finishes. While clearly Art Deco in intent, the SNET Company Building is a restrained version of the style, with comparatively understated ornamentation. This toned-down expression was likely a result of the economic climate of the country at the time of construction.

The use of the fashionable Art Deco style was emblematic of the progressive culture of the company. Advancements in long distance service that were developed in the 1920s propelled the telephone industry into a new era. The newly conceived Art Deco style successfully represented the industry's prosperity and confidence. Two of the nation's earliest Art Deco buildings were built by the telephone industry: the 1923 New York Telephone Company Building in Manhattan and the 1925 Pacific Telephone Building in San Francisco. The critical acclaim that these buildings received inspired telephone companies to build Art Deco offices and

³⁵ "Need for New Workers to Continue," *Hartford Courant*, January 30, 1955, p. 8.

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switching centers in cities throughout the country.³⁶ SNET's Trumbull Street facility is a representative example of this industry-wide trend.

Despite the onset of the Depression, which occurred during the height of the Art Deco style, a number of Art Deco landmarks were completed in Hartford. Those buildings were primarily commissioned by governments and institutions who were seeking to portray the appearance of strength and confidence in the future. Among the most notable examples of the style are: the 1932 Federal Building, the 1930 Hartford County Building, the 1931 Connecticut State Office Building, and the 1930 Polish National Home.³⁷ These buildings share a common vocabulary representative of the style, with planar surfaces, an emphasis on verticality, flat roofs, low-relief sculpture panels, and stylized iconography. The SNET Company Building stands as one of Hartford's most prominent Art Deco buildings.

Roy W. Foote (born in Huntington, Connecticut in 1879³⁸) began his career in the first decade of the twentieth century, during the height of classical revivals. Foote established his firm in 1912 following a decade of employment in the office of New Haven architect, L.B. Robinson.³⁹ In the initial years, Foote completed numerous residential projects and designed major factory buildings for William Schollhorn and J.J. Newman in New Haven. He was then awarded the design of an office building for the United Illuminating Company in New Haven, which was his first major office building commission. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Foote embraced modern trends in architecture, and by the late 1920s was the "acknowledged leader of the profession," having "mastered the Art Deco style."⁴⁰ Foote's major works from this period include: the 1921 Powell Building, a 12-story building that was New Haven's first high-rise office building, and the 1926 Masonic Temple in New Haven.⁴¹ Recognizing the success of his design for the Trumbull Street building, SNET Company commissioned Foote to design their main headquarters building in downtown New Haven, a major Art Deco landmark which was completed in 1938.⁴²

In 1953, Westcott and Mapes was retained for the design of the six-story addition. Founded in 1916, Westcott and Mapes was one of the first firms in the region to offer both engineering and architectural services.⁴³ In the decades preceding World War II, the firm focused on the design

³⁶ A detailed discussion of the telephone company Art Deco architecture is presented in Barbara Capitman, Michael D. Kinerk and Dennis W. Wilhelm, *Rediscovering Art Deco U.S.A.: A Nationwide Tour of Architectural Delights* (Santa Monica: Hennessey & Ingalls, 2002).

³⁷ These examples were cited in, Gregory Andrews and David Ransom, *Structures & Styles: Guided Tours of Hartford Architecture*, (Hartford, CT: Connecticut Historical Society, 1988).

³⁸ A brief biography of Roy W. Foote with the commissions listed herein is included on the website, http://www.rootsweb.com/~ctnhvbio/Foote_Roy.html.

³⁹ Foote's employment with Robinson is noted in, http://www.rootsweb.com/~ctnhvbio/Foote_Roy.html.

⁴⁰ Elizabeth Mills Brown, *New Haven: A Guide to Architecture and Urban Design* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 14.

⁴¹ "Southern New England Telephone Company Administration Building," New Haven County, CT, National Register Nomination, prepared by Bruce Clouette and Hoang Tinh, reviewed by John Herzan, listed November 24, 1997.

⁴² "Southern New England Telephone Company Administration Building," New Haven County, CT, National Register Nomination, prepared by Bruce Clouette and Hoang Tinh, reviewed by John Herzan, listed November 24, 1997.

⁴³ As promoted in their company website. All information on the firm included herein was derived from the Westcott and Mapes website, visited April 2, 2003, <http://www.westcottmapes.com/aboutus.html>.

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of power plants, utility services and industrial facilities. The Southern New England Telephone Company continued to hire Westcott and Mapes for major commissions in Connecticut in the decades that followed the completion of the 1950s addition to the Trumbull Street building.

CONCLUSION

The Southern New England Telephone Company Building is locally significant during the period 1931-1953 according to National Register Criterion A in the area of Communications for its association with the development and proliferation of the telephone, and Criterion C in the area of Architecture, as a fine example of Art Deco architecture and the work of two prominent architectural firms, Roy W. Foote and Westcott and Mapes.

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Southern New England Telephone Company Building
Name of Property

Hartford County, CT
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1 18 693140 4626300
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
Zone Easting Northing

____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Cynthia Rose Hamilton

organization Powers & Company, Inc. date April 7, 2003 (Revised April 28, 2003)

street & number 211 N. 13th Street, 5th Floor telephone 215-636-0192

city or town Philadelphia state PA zip code 19107

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name 55 Trumbull Street Associates, LLC c/o Philadelphia Management

street & number 1411 Walnut Street, 3rd Floor telephone 215-241-0200

city or town Philadelphia state PA zip code 19102

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at a point marking the intersection of the westerly street line of Trumbull Street and the northerly street line of Jewell Street;

Thence running North 83° 29' 25" West, 112.48 feet and westerly on a curve to the right having a radius of 1,893.37 feet and an arc length of 337.47 feet along said northerly street line of Jewell Street;

Thence running North 13° 35' 55" east, 24.26 feet and North 10° 34' 40" East, 46.00 feet along the easterly street line of Ann Street;

Thence running South 85° 00' 24" East, 483.11 feet along the southerly street line of Hicks Street and remaining land of the Southern New England Telephone Company, partly by each;

Thence running South 12° 41' 34" West, 9.87 feet, South 16° 54' 03" West, 93.32 feet and South 56° 42' 19" West, 15.36 feet along the westerly street line of Trumbull Street to the point and place of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries as described are the legal and current boundaries of the nominated property.

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PHOTOGRAPH LIST

Southern New England Telephone Company Building
Hartford County, Connecticut
Robert Powers
February 2003
Powers & Company, Inc.

<u>Photo #</u>	<u>Description of View</u>
1	Looking Northwest at South Elevation
2	Looking Northeast at West and South Elevations
3	Looking Northwest at South and East Elevations
4	Looking Southwest at East and North Elevations
5	Detail of Main Entrance, South Elevation, Looking Northeast
6	Detail of Bronze Windows at 1 st Story, South Elevation
7	Detail of Tower Windows with Limestone Carvings, South Elevation
8	Detail of Tower Window with Iron Grille, South Elevation
9	1 st Floor Corridor, Looking North
10	1 st Floor Corridor, Looking South
11	1 st Floor Elevator Lobby, Looking East
12	1 st Floor Elevator Lobby, Looking West
13	1 st Floor Typical Office Space, Looking South
14	2 nd Floor Elevator Lobby, Looking West
15	2 nd Floor West Stair, Looking Northeast
16	2 nd Floor, Looking East
17	2 nd Floor, Looking Northwest
18	4 th Floor, Looking West at Equipment Racks
19	6 th Floor Elevator Lobby
20	6 th Floor, Looking West
21	7 th Floor Elevator Lobby, Door Detail
22	7 th Floor, Looking East
23	7 th Floor, Looking West
24	10 th Floor Elevator Lobby, Looking West
25	11 th Floor, Cafeteria Kitchen, Looking North
26	11 th Floor West Stair, Looking Southeast