

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

FEB 21

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

Somersworth Main Post Office

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

2 Elm Street

N/A -- NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Somersworth

N/A VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First Congressional District

STATE

New Hampshire 03878

CODE

0470

COUNTY

Strafford

CODE

017

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

N/A

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

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.

Strafford County Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

Justice and Administration Building, Country Farm Road

CITY, TOWN

Dover

STATE

New Hampshire 03820

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		

*Loading bay canopy added in rear

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The rectangular Main Post Office at Somersworth, New Hampshire occupies a small 1/4 acre lot at the intersection of Elm and Fore Streets. It is essentially a one-story structure with a mezzanine. However, due to the steep slope upon which it sits, the basement is afforded full height windows in the rear.

The center entrance Georgian Revival structure features a red brick exterior of Flemish bond coursing with white marble band wall, sill window casings, and trim. The building is capped by a hipped slate roof with three marble dormers and 6/6 double hung arched windows centered above the main entrance.

The front entry is defined by a richly detailed marble pediment supported by two fluted Ionic pilasters. The indented fan window above the pediment is repeated in the two flanking window bays. Each of these bays consist of a 15/20 double hung window with 2/4 double hung side lights. The marble window casings carry the line of entrance pediment as a base for the fan windows above. These, in turn, are encased in brick with distinctive marble keystones. The marble cornice features a brick parapet accented by carved marble balustrades beneath the three dormer windows.

On either side of the entrance fans are two 10/15 double hung windows each with a five (5) pane fixed glass transom. These serve as the window standard on the remaining sides of the building. They are enhanced with decorative marble plaques above in front with plain face marble plaques on the rear and sides.

The lobby is centered around the front entrance doors. The original wood vestibule has been replaced with a glass and metal panel construction. Once completely open, the room is now divided into a service area and lock box lobby by a full height glass panel and gypsum board partition. The floor is an orange rectangular quarry tile with the original white marble wainscotting. The ceiling is plaster with a simple moulded plaster cornice at the original wall areas. The windows feature carved wood casings with white marble sills. Typical of most Post Offices, fluorescent lighting has replaced the earlier incandescent fixtures and the hardwood floors have been replaced with stone tile. The marble staircase leads to the basement area where the original light fixtures of gold leaf on white frosted globes are still in place.

The building appears to be in excellent condition with the parking and walk areas well maintained.

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: 1930	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	James A. Wetmore, Architect
	Constructed: 1931		N.H. Turnbull, Contractor

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Main Post Office at Somersworth is an excellent example of McAdoo's 1915 classification "C" category for federal buildings. Although the interior plan is close to being standard for post offices of this time period, the exterior is a somewhat unique example of Georgian Revival architecture as designed by James A. Wetmore, Supervising Architect for the U. S. Treasury.

It was designed and constructed through a Congressional amendment of Rogers-Elliott Public Buildings Act of 1926. It was part of an increased building program that grew in response to the depression (more than three times the number of Post Offices were constructed during this decade of 1930-1940 than were constructed during the previous fifty years).

Taken on historical context, the Somersworth Post Office expressed the desire of the government to have a presence in the smaller communities, to encourage growth and development of new businesses.

The expansion of the local woolen mills and extension of rail lines along with the Post Office construction lead to improved transportation, communication, and better access to jobs and services.

Today, the Somersworth Post Office stands alone. A shopping mall has encroached on the abutting land to the South. A newly constructed library and savings bank occupy the Eastern border and a 1950's bank structure is to the West.

Given its satisfying building proportions; its role in the history of Somersworth; and its place in Post Office development throughout the country, its nomination to the National Register will serve to recognize this significant artifact. It is indeed "an impressive compendium of the most notable characteristics of James Wetmore's design and detailing with especial importance because its original features are unaltered."¹

¹Comments addressed by the Commissioner of the Department of Resources and Economic Development - New Hampshire State Preservation Officer, June, 1985.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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

Craig, Lois, ed., The Federal Presence: Architecture, Politics, and Symbols in the United States Government Building, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1979

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .279

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 8	3 4 8 0, 7, 0	4, 7 9, 10, 9, 3	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The rectangular site maintains approximately 95 feet frontage on Fore Street and 120 feet frontage on Elm Street. The remaining sides are bounded by an alley which runs parallel to Elm Street and the concrete retaining wall that separates the loading area from the adjoining lot.

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

Robert W. St. John, Architect

ORGANIZATION

SULLIVAN DESIGN GROUP, INC.

DATE

August 28, 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

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

TITLE

Director, Office of Real Estate

DATE

02/20/86

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Patrick Andrews

DATE

7/17/86

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

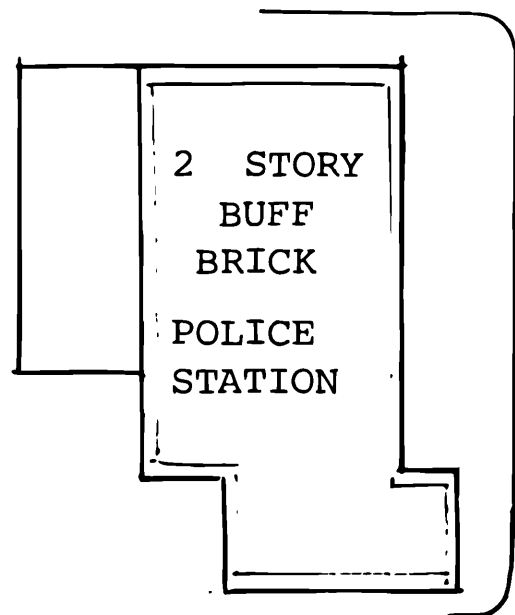
Deborah L. Savage

DATE

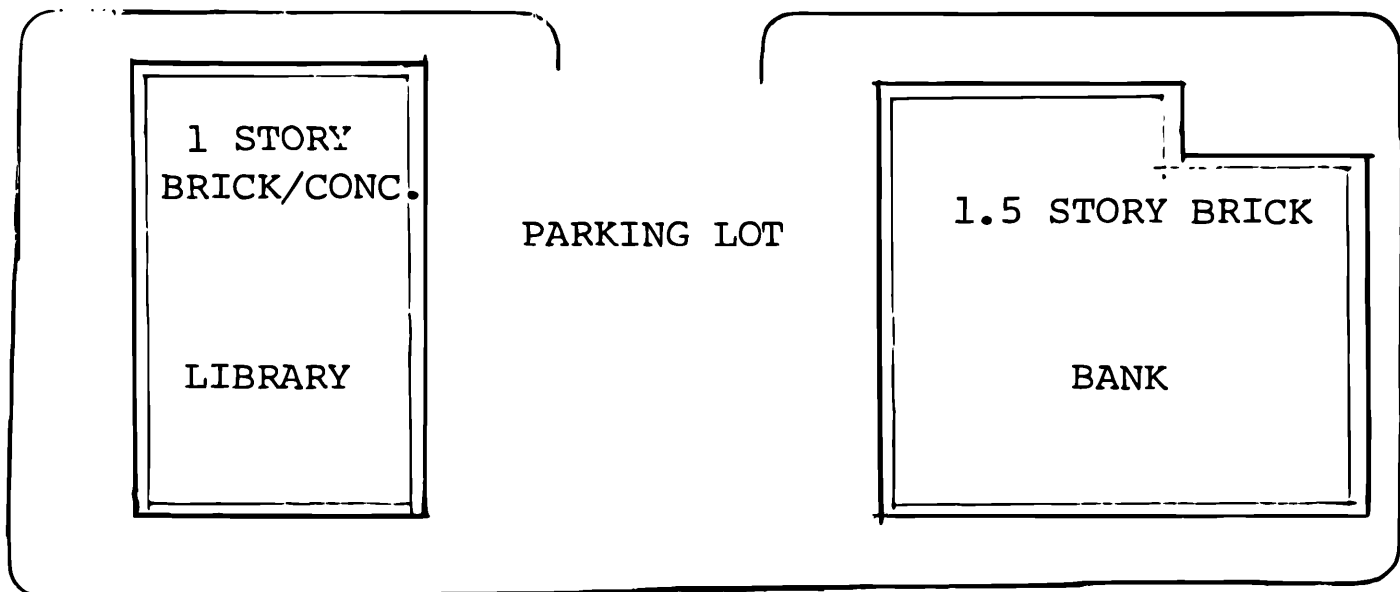
7/15/86

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

PARSON STREET



F O R E
S T R E E T



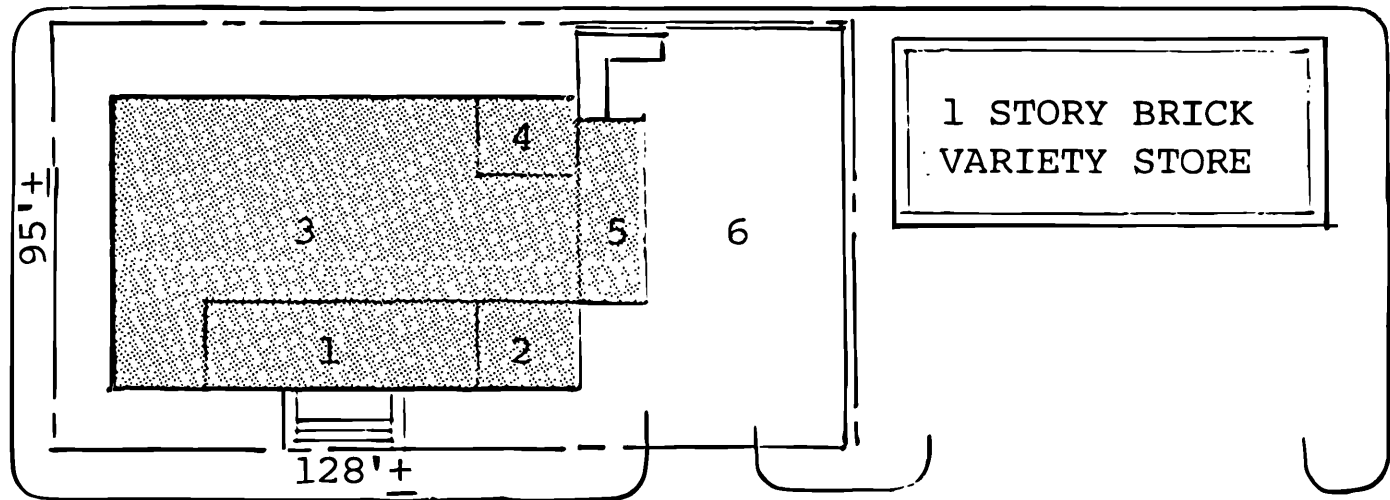
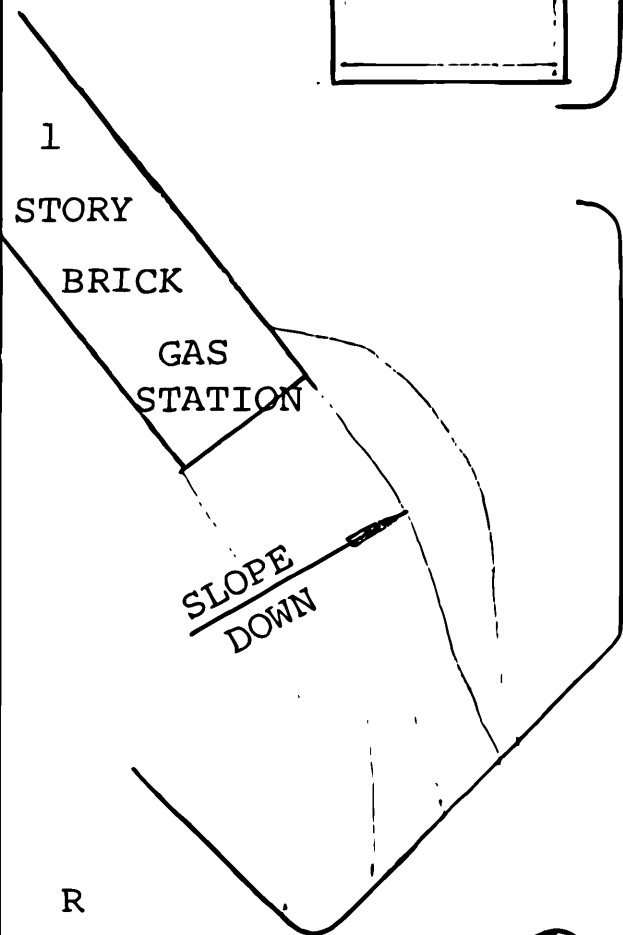
ALLEY — ONE WAY —>

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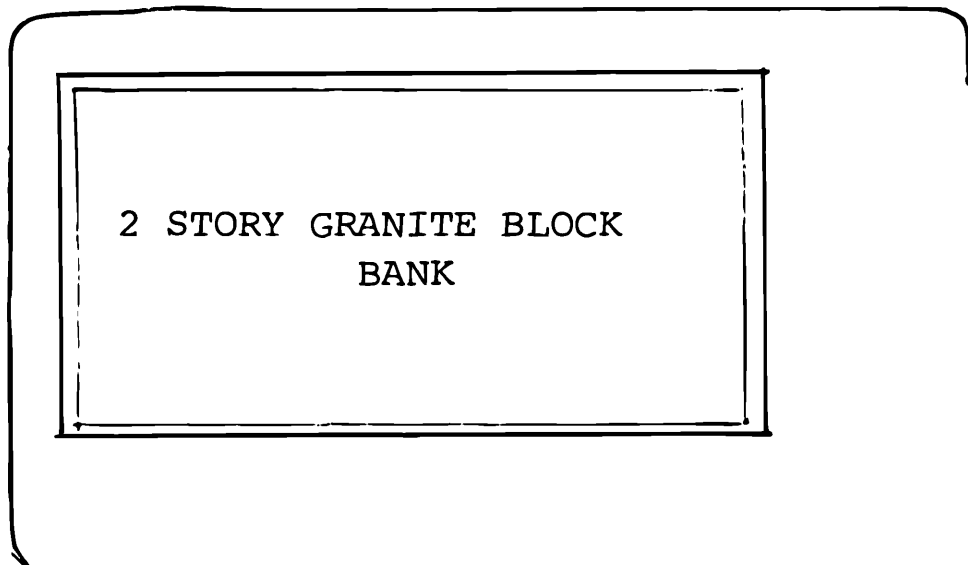
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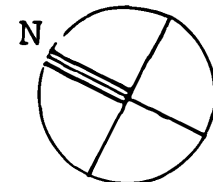
E L M S T R E E T



9



- 1 - PUBLIC LOBBY
- 2 - POSTMASTER'S OFFICE
- 3 - WORKROOM
- 4 - MAIL VESTIBULE
- 5 - MAIL PLATFORM
- 6 - SERVICE AREA



UNITED STATES POST OFFICE - SOMERSWORTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE

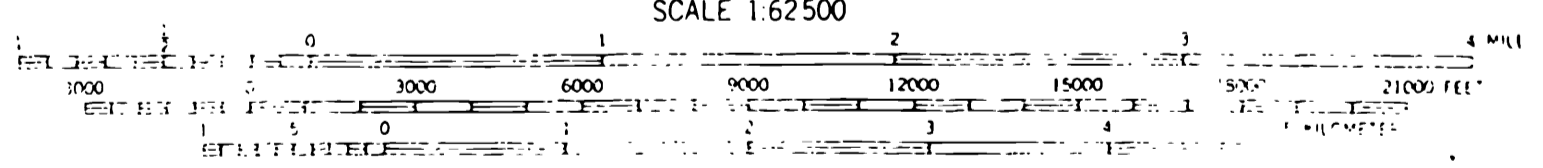


FEET (MAINE) 340 345 350 355 360 365 370 375 380 385 390 395 400 405 410 415 420 425 430 435 440 445 450 455 460 465 470 475 480 485 490 495 500

DOVER INTERCHANGE 4 MI 1343 55' 1345 DOVER 4 MI 1349 DOVER 4 MI 1349 SOUTH BERWICK 1.5 MI 50'

SCALE 1:62500

and published by the Geological Survey
 ISC&GS, and New Hampshire Geodetic Survey
 in part compiled from aerial photographs
 topography by plane-table surveys 1933, 1941, and
 quarter compiled from 1:24 000-scale map of
 minute quadrangle, surveyed 1944



CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET
 DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL

1927 North American datum
 based on Maine coordinate system, west zone,
 coordinate system
 al Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
 blue
 areas in which only
 are shown

UTM GRID AND 1958 MAGNETIC NORTH
 DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

THIS MAP COMPILED WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
 FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

2/21/66