

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 17 1986
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

Somerville Main Post Office

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

237 Washington Street

N/A NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Somerville

N/A VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Eighth Congressional District

STATE

Massachusetts 02143

CODE

1190

COUNTY

Middlesex

CODE

017

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	N/A IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<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

Lexington

N/A VICINITY OF

STATE

Massachusetts 02173

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Middlesex County Registry of Deeds, Cambridge Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

208 Cambridge Street

CITY, TOWN

Cambridge

STATE

Massachusetts 02141

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

None

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION
 EXCELLENT DETERIORATED
 GOOD RUINS
 FAIR UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE
 UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE
 ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The building and its grounds are in very good condition, with the exception of the construction involved in front of it. The Post Office occupies most of the site, leaving a small vehicle maneuvering area to its rear, with access on Bonner Avenue. The site is landscaped with lawn, shrubs, and several small trees. The building is of steel construction with a brick exterior laid in a Flemish bond. In plan, a small vestibule has side entrances to stairs leading to a public lobby flanked by the Postmaster's office to the right and workroom space to the left. Behind the service screen is the workroom with the mail vestibule and platform in the rear.

Three wide granite stairs leading to eight smaller steps, with wrought-iron railings and bronze lamps on Newel posts, create the main approach. The front (south) elevation is a five-bay structure with a projecting one-bay entrance portion. The building features a granite base, brick entablature, and limestone quoins, denticulated cornice, and detailing. The windows are double-hung with wood sash, 15/15 light with limestone architrave, projecting dentils, and infill coffered panel below. The entry features a limestone arch with shaped keystone and inset fanlight. The replacement aluminum and glass doors are framed by fluted wood pilasters that support a simple entablature below a broken pediment with full rosettes and finial. Above is a simple limestone cyma reversa and recta marking the brick entablature. This section is topped by a small gable roof reaching back to the building's hipped slate roof, leaving a brick pediment with denticulated molding and a centered oculus window with limestone keystone repeated every ninety degrees. Within the base are small arched openings containing windows for basement level government offices.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Somerville Post Office

Item number 7

Page 2

The side elevations are similar to the front facade in detail. Some of the windows have brick arched tops with inset fanlight and limestone keystone and springer stones while others are rectangular with a flat brick arch. The rear elevation has a flat roof with low parapet wall and contains the mail platform.

The building is entered by a lower level vestibule of stained wood and glass. It is carved to resemble fluted Corinthian corner pilasters supporting a plain entablature with a stained wood panel dado below and double doors to the sides with brass bars. Two sets of six marble stairs with brass railings lead to the two-story high lobby. Materials here include a plaster coffered ceiling, walls and modillioned edging inset with a floral pattern, a peach terrazzo floor with small black diamonds at each intersection and a black borders, a high white marble wainscot with a black marble base (which extends below the stairs to create a wainscot for the vestibule), and stained wood window frames, sills, and inner doors. Four cast aluminum grills are located high in the interior walls to ventilate the workroom behind. The service screen has postal boxes, a door to the workroom, a large service counter, and new stamp machine.

ART

Above the lobby's right wall wainscot is a canvas mural twenty-one feet by six feet. Entitled "A Skirmish Between British & Colonists near Somerville in Revolutionary Times," it is in excellent condition.

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 checked="" 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: September 3, 1935 Dedication: May 16, 1936	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Louis A. Simon, Sup. Architect Maurice P. Meade, Architect Edmund J. Rappoli, Contractor
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE			

Built in 1935-1936, The Somerville Main Post Office building is located at the foot of Prospect Hill. Along with the nearby police and fire stations, it ranks among the more architecturally distinguished buildings in Union Square, an area dominated by buildings with 20th century commercial treatments. Architecturally this structure is significant as a reflection of 1930's Public Works Administration (P.W.A.) policies in post office construction and design. The P.W.A. endeavored to "provide modest, practical post offices instead of monumental edifices." Its compact, boxy form, brick materials, minimal ornamentation and 7-area plan are features of more efficient and standardized post office building design. That the Colonial Revival style rather than the more frequently used Classical Revival style was chosen for this building's design probably represents an historical reference to a Revolutionary War skirmish that occurred near this site. In an effort to bolster the local economy, local brick rather than an expensive imported stone was chosen for their buildings facing. The marshland and sandy soils of the Union Square area yielded a fine grade Silica. During the 19th century clay pits were dug throughout the area and brickyards ranked among the largest mid 19th century industries near Union Square - by the 1930's only a few brickyards were still in existence in Somerville.

Overtime the Somerville Main Post Office's site has been associated with community focal points such as the Prospect Hill School, the Somerville Boys' Club and a branch of the Somerville Library. Congressman Arthur D. Healy is credited with securing funds to build the Somerville Main Post Office building. He endeavored to replace inadequate facilities which handled mail to Medford as well as Somerville. Healy was also responsible for obtaining a separate post office for Medford in 1936/37. Groundbreaking for the Somerville Main Post Office occurred on September 3, 1935. It was built with an allocation of \$203,000.00. The cornerstone was laid on November 16, 1935, reading "Henry Morgenthau Jr., Secretary of the Treasury; James A. Farley, Postmaster General; Louis A. Simon, Supervising Architect; Neal A. Melnick, Supervising Engineer; Maurice P. Reade, Architect 1935."

^{Simon}
Louis Adolf Sullivan, Supervising Architect for the Public Works Administration (c. 1870-1941) was born in Boston and educated at M.I.T. He began a private architectural practice in Washington, D.C. in 1894, entering the office of the U.S. Treasury Supervising Architect in 1896. He served as the chief architect in this office from 1905-1933. From 1933 until his death in 1941 he was the P.W.A.'s Supervising Architect. Simon was responsible for numerous post offices, custom houses and court houses across the country. He was the architect of the U.S. Federal Building at the New York World's Fair of 1939-1940.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"The Somerville Journal" Volume LXVI, No. 42, October 29, 1937. Also 9-6-35, 5-10-35, 6-28-35, 8-9-35, 3-1-36

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

Beyond the Neck. The Architecture and Development of Somerville, MA - Landscape Research, Cambridge, MA 1982 - p. 120

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.554

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 9	3 2 7 6 0 0	4 6 9 3 8 4 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Southwest to East - 113.26' along Washington Street
 South to North - 205.6' along side lot line
 East to West - 122.67' along rear lot line
 North to South - 206.6' along Bonner Avenue

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

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 Talmage

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 D. Lawrence

TITLE

Realty Specialist, Senior

DATE

April 4, 1986

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Patrick Andrews

DATE 5/30/86

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: *Beth Savage*

DATE 5-28-86

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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

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

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet SOMERVILLE MAIN POST OFFICE Item number 8

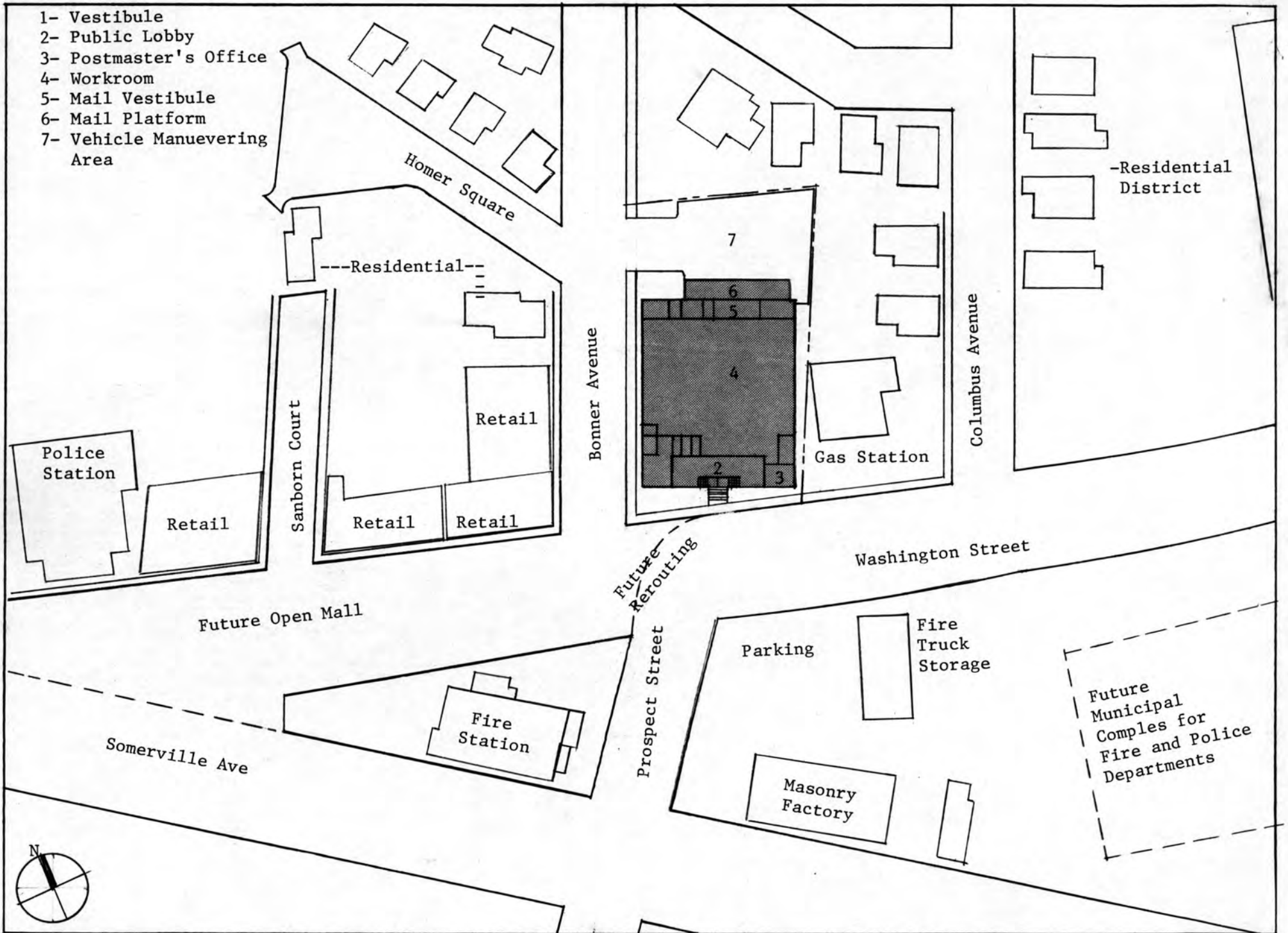
Page 2

Maurice P. Meade, this building's local, consulting architect, was born in Boston in 1882. He graduated from M.I.T. in 1908. During the 1910's his office was located at 44 Bromfield Street, Boston. During the 1920's and 1930's his firm is listed at 80 Boylston Street, Boston. Information on Meade's work is sketchy. He is credited with the design of the Sacred Heart Church in North Quincy and served as consulting architect during the Arlington Main Post Office construction (1935). Meade retired in 1954 and died on October 4, 1955.

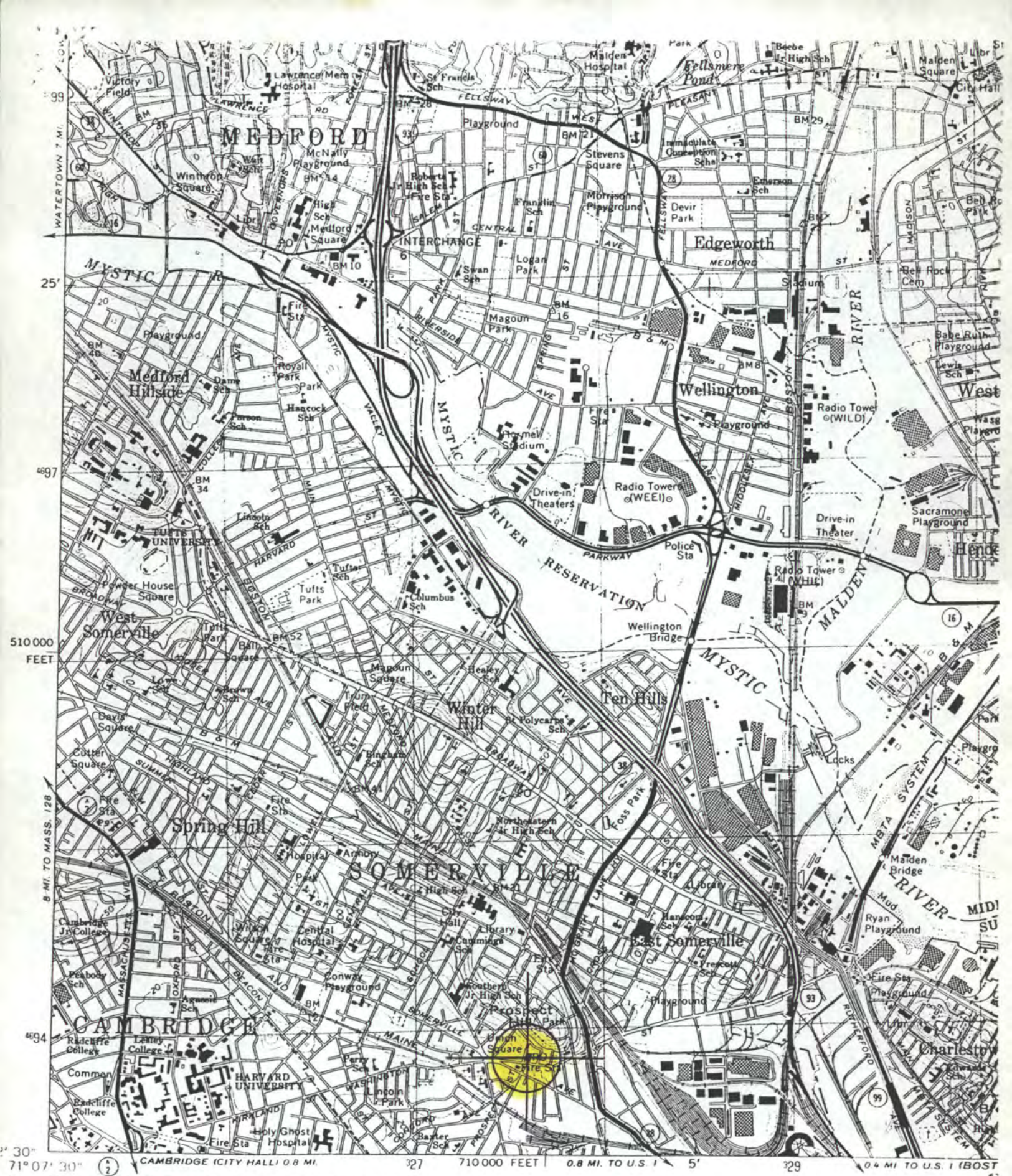
The Somerville Main Post Office's significance is derived, in part, from a well executed mural by modernist Ross Moffitt. He was a member of the National Academy of Design and a winner of numerous medals and honors. The mural in the Somerville Library depicts the retreat of the British from the Battle of Lexington. Moffitt was also responsible for a mural painted for the Eisenhower Foundation.

The construction of the Somerville Main Post Office building provided work for more than 150 men. It was one of several construction projects funded by the P.W.A. in Somerville during the mid 1930's. Other P.W.A. constructed buildings included a vocational school and a stadium for Somerville High School.

- 1- Vestibule
- 2- Public Lobby
- 3- Postmaster's Office
- 4- Workroom
- 5- Mail Vestibule
- 6- Mail Platform
- 7- Vehicle Manuevering Area



UNITED STATES POST OFFICE - SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS



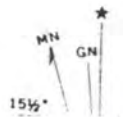
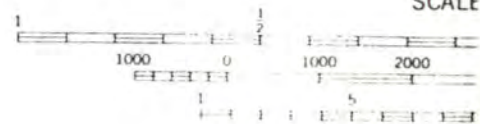
Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey

Topography by planetable surveys 1943. Revised from aerial photographs taken 1969. Field checked 1971

Selected hydrographic data compiled from USC&GS Chart 248 (1971)

SCALE



86001247

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Substantive Review

United States Post Office--Somerville Main
Middlesex County
MASSACHUSETTS

Working No. APR 17 1986
Fed. Reg. Date: 2/3/87
Date Due: 5/15/86 - 6/1/86
Action: ACCEPT 5-30-86
 RETURN
 REJECT
Federal Agency: US PS

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

Substantive Review: sample request appeal NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Intact locally significant Colonial Revival building associated w/ WPA program in Somerville. Includes well-preserved lobby mural by Russ Moffitt entitled "A Skirmish Between British & Colonists near Somerville in Revolutionary Times," which is noted in

Recom./Criteria Accept A, C
Reviewer Savage
Discipline Architectural History
Date 5/28/86
 see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: technical corrections cited below Park & Markovitz Democratic Vistas: Post Offices & Public Art in The New Deal.
 substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership Public Acquisition	Status Accessible	Present Use

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

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> 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

13. Other

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: _____



Somerville Post Office

SOMERVILLE MAIN POST OFFICE

Somerville, MA

David R. Hooker

Earl R. Flansburgh and Associates

May 1983

Front elevation



SOMERVILLE MAIN POST OFFICE
Somerville, MA
David R. Hooker
Earl R. Flansburgh and Associates
May 1983
Front elevation. Left view

Somerville Post Office



Somerville Post Office

SOMERVILLE MAIN POST OFFICE

Somerville, MA

David R. Hooker

Earl R. Flansburgh and Associates

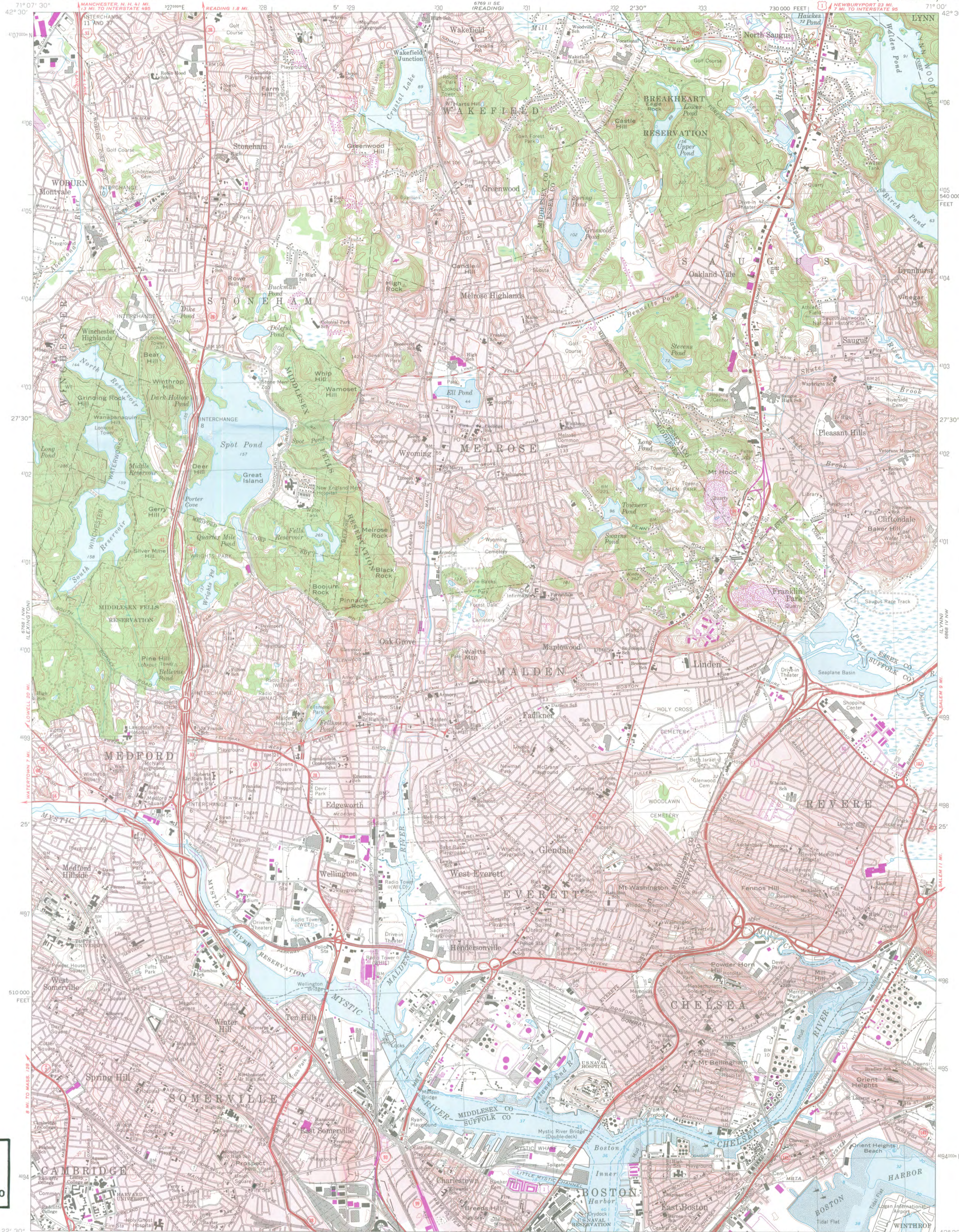
May 1983

Front elevation. Right view



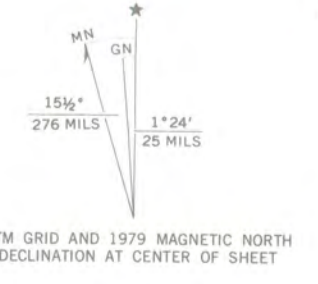
Somerville Post Office

SOMERVILLE MAIN POST OFFICE
Somerville, MA
David R. Hooker
Earl R. Flansburgh and Associates
May 1983
Mural



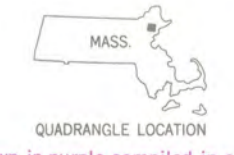
U.S. POST OFFICE
SOMERVILLE, MA
UTM REFERENCE:
19J327600/4693840

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USCGS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Topography by planetable surveys 1943. Revised from
aerial photographs taken 1969. Field checked 1971
Selected hydrographic data compiled from USC&GS Chart 248 (1971)
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
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of
the National or State reservations shown on this map



SCALE 1:25 000
1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET
1 5 10 15 20 25 30 METERS
1 KILOMETER
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 9.5 FEET
THIS MAP COMPLES 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
Secondary highway, hard surface
Light duty road, hard or improved surface
Unimproved road
Interstate Route
U. S. Route
State Route



BOSTON NORTH, MASS.
N4222.5—W7100/7.5
1971
PHOTOREVISED 1979
AMS 6768 I NE—SERIES V814

CONVERSION SCALES

Feet	Meters
15000	4500
14000	4200
13000	3900
12000	3600
11000	3300
10000	3000
9000	2700
8000	2400
7000	2100
6000	1800
5000	1500
4000	1200
3000	900
2000	600
1000	300
0	0

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



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



August 19, 1985

The Honorable Eugene C. Brune
Mayor, City of Somerville
Somerville City Hall
93 Highland Avenue
Somerville, MA 02143

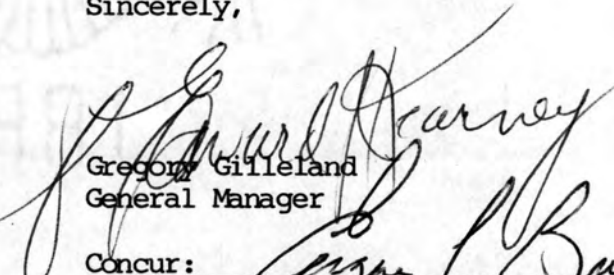
Dear Mayor Brune:

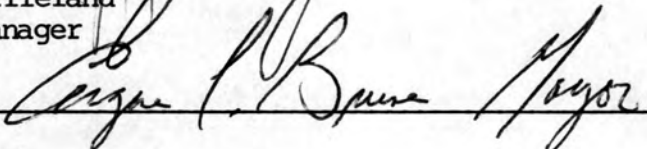
The U.S. Postal Service in conjunction with the Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Officer in Boston has evaluated the Main Post Office in Somerville and has determined it is significant from an historical viewpoint.

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:  Mayor

Enclosures

JPC/ljr

RECEIVED
AUG 23 1985



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

August 19, 1985

Dear Mayor Burns:
Somerville, MA 02143
93 Highland Avenue
Somerville City Hall
Somerville, City of
The Honorable Eugene C. Burns

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

In view of the above evaluation, the U.S. Postal Service intends to include this building to the National Register of Historic Places. We appreciate your taking formal action, appreciate receiving your comments in the enclosed letter. If you concur with our proposal, kindly return a signed copy of the letter in the enclosed envelope.

Sincerely,

General Manager
Eugene C. Burns

Enclosures

JEC/jk

RECEIVED
U.S. POSTAL SERVICE
SEP 4 8 59 AM '85
NEW ENGLAND FIELD REAL ESTATE OFFICE
ESTATE SECTION, MA 02175
LEXINGTON, MA



UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
475 L'Enfant Plaza, SW
Washington, DC 20260

April 7, 1986

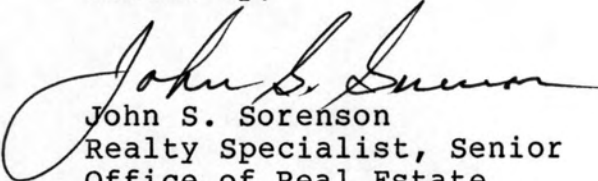
Ms. Carol D. Shull
Chief of Registration
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
Department of Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240-1002

Dear Ms. Shull:

The Postal Service hereby submits a nomination for the post office located at 237 Washington Street, Middlesex County, Somerville, Massachusetts.

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

Sincerely,


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

Enclosure

Rec'd.
APR 17 1986