

Hon. Peter N. Kyros

PH0014761

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Maine	
COUNTY: Cumberland	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
MAY 17 1973	

2019
 PH0014761
 H/S
 E 3000 2019

1. NAME

COMMON: U.S.
United States Custom House

AND/OR HISTORIC:
United States Custom House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
312 Fore Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Portland

STATE Maine	CODE 23	COUNTY: Cumberland	CODE 005
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Comments Federal

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
United States Government - G.S.A.

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE

Maine

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Cumberland County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
142 Federal Street

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE

Portland Maine Cumberland

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic American Buildings Survey

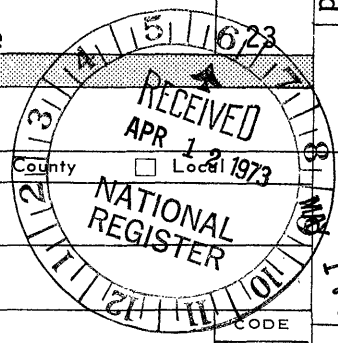
DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local 1973

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Library of Congress

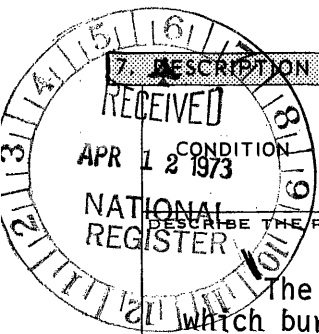
STREET AND NUMBER:
First Street & Independence Ave., S. E.

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE

Washington D.C. 11



STATE: **Maine**
 COUNTY: **Cumberland**
 ENTRY NUMBER
 DATE: **MAY 17 1973**
 FOR NPS USE ONLY



7 DESCRIPTION

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent		<input type="checkbox"/> Good		<input type="checkbox"/> Fair		<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated		<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins		<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed	
(Check One)						(Check One)					
<input type="checkbox"/> Altered				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered				<input type="checkbox"/> Moved		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The United States Custom House was built to replace the custom house which burned in Portland's Great Fire of 1866. Alfred B. Mullett, the Supervising Treasury Architect, was responsible for the design of the Custom House. It was started in 1868, completed in 1871 and dedicated in 1872.

The French Renaissance building is free standing, occupying the entire block bounded by Commercial, Custom House, Fore and Pearl Streets on Portland's waterfront. The street positions determine its sides; it is nearly rectangular, seventy feet wide and one hundred and thirty feet long. It is built of granite from Concord, New Hampshire. It is three stories high with a hip roof.

The Custom House acts as a gateway to Portland. It has two facades, one facing southeast toward Commercial Street and one facing northwest toward Fore Street. The facades are identical except for the level of entrance. The Custom House sits on a flat lot. Pearl and Custom House Streets slope up from Commercial Street to Fore Street, forming an embankment on three sides of the lot. A heavy cast iron railing of tangent ovals tops the embankment. The Fore Street entrance to the first floor level of the Custom House is a graceful bridge of stairs. The Commercial Street entrance is on grade at the basement level.

Each facade has arched, keystone windows between single rounded Doric pilasters on the first and second floors. The center entrance bay projects slightly. Second square pilasters form the corners of this bay and of the facade. The basement level of the Commercial Street facade is emphasized by a heavy rustication. Wide, slightly sunk bands are cut horizontally across the surface of the walls and pilasters. (The rest of the basement level has a flat surface.)

Each facade wraps around the sides of the building for three bays. Between is a slightly recessed five bay section which has the same windows as the facades but no pilasters. This midsection does not have the relief of the facades. Both sides are identical.

A cornice and balustrade surround the entire building. The cornice has triglyphs except over the five bay midsection of the sides where it is blank.

An elaborate tower rises from the center of each facade. Double square Corinthian pilasters flank arched windows on the three outward faces of the square tower, and support pediments. The roof of each tower rises in a curved hip to a balustrade at the top.

There have been only two alterations to the original exterior. Plate glass doors have been installed at either entrance. Two flag poles pro-

(See Continuation Sheet)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Maine	
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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	MAY 17 1973

(Number all entries)

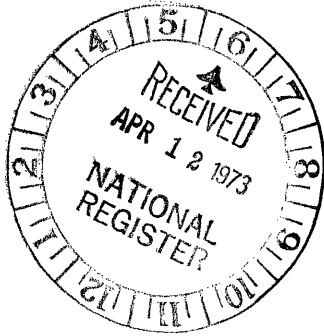
6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

Greater Portland Landmarks Survey

1969 Local

Greater Portland Landmarks, Inc.
Station A, Box 4197
Portland, Maine

Code 23



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Maine	
COUNTY Cumberland	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER MAY 1 1973	DATE

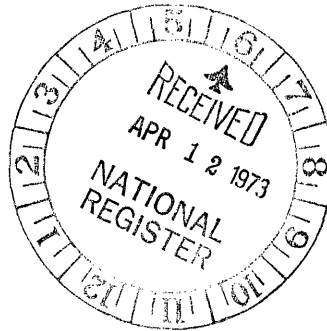
(Number all entries)

7. DESCRIPTION

2

ject from the second floor flanking the Fore Street entrance bay.

The interior of the Custom House was repainted and gilded in 1966. It retains its original elegance. A two story space occupies the center of the sides. Open stairways lead to offices in either end section. The original woodwork is intact throughout the building. The floors are marble. There are Italian marble fireplaces, and the counters of the central space are marble.



SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1868-71

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abariginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi- | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> losophy | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human- | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> itarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Afred B. Mullett (1834-1890) was the Supervising Architect of the United States Treasury Department from 1866 to 1875. He designed the State, Army and Navy Building and the south wing of the Treasury Building in Washington, D.C. and government buildings in many cities across the country. Mr. Mullett designed the United States Post Office in Portland, built at the same time as the Custom House and torn down in the 1960's.

The Custom House is a strikingly handsome building. The rich play of light on the facades emphasizes the fullness of the details. The use of an embankment to enclose the Custom House handles the problem of level change gracefully and gives the Custom House a special setting. The central space is light and elegant, the richness of its finishes appropriate.

The two identical towers and the highly textured exterior of the Custom House draw attention to it. It functions as an introduction to the city from the waterfront area. Pearl Street leads from it past the impressive Victorian business blocks on Middle Street and the Cumberland County Courthouse on Federal Street to Lincoln Park, around which are grouped other federal and city buildings. The Custom House is an important part of the government and commercial district of the center of Portland.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Shettleworth, Earle G., Jr. "Custom House is Stately Monument to Artistry of Treasury Architect". Portland, Maine: Evening Express, August 20, 1966.

Withey, Henry F. and Elsie Rathburn Withey. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects. Los Angeles: 1970.

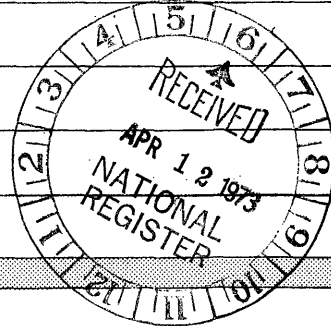
10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA Less than one acre

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	0 0 0	0 0 0		43 0 39	70 0 15	
NE	0 0 0	0 0 0		25 0 05		
SE	0 0 0	0 0 0				
SW	0 0 0	0 0 0				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than one acre

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Mary-Eliza Wengren, Consultant

ORGANIZATION: Maine Historic Preservation Commission DATE: November, 1972

STREET AND NUMBER: 31 Western Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: Augusta STATE: Maine CODE: 23

12 STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: James H. Mundy

Title: State Liaison Officer

Date: April 10, 1973

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Peter M. Withey
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 5/17/73

ATTEST: James H. Mundy
Keeper of the National Register

Date: 5 15 73