

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

| | |
|-------------------------|------|
| STATE: Massachusetts | |
| COUNTY: Bristol | |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| ENTRY NUMBER | DATE |

1. NAME

COMMON:
✓ Custom House, New Bedford

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Southwest corner of Second and Williams Streets

CITY OR TOWN:
New Bedford

STATE: Massachusetts CODE: COUNTY: Bristol CODE:

3. CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY (Check One) | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both | <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) _____ _____ _____ |

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
United States Government, General Service Administration

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: D. C. CODE:

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: New Bedford STATE: Massachusetts CODE:

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic American Buildings Survey (6 photos, 1961) (7 data pages, 1961)

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Division of Prints and Photographs, Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: D. C. CODE: 20540

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: _____

COUNTY: _____

ENTRY NUMBER: _____

DATE: _____

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

| | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| CONDITION | (Check One) | | | | | |
| | <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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered | <input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered | <input type="checkbox"/> Moved | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The New Bedford Custom House is an oblong-shaped two-story granite ashlar building with a hipped roof. The structure is five bays long and three-bays deep. The east (main) elevation is dominated by a three-bay wide giant portico comprised of four giant Greek Doric columns and two pilasters which support a pediment. The four corners of the main structure are treated as giant pilasters. The columns, pilasters, cornice, water table, and belting course on the level with the second-story windows are all of tooled granite and form a distinct contrast with the rock-faced blocks of granite that form the main walls. Windows and doors have flat arches and the windows are decorated by exterior shutters.

A square cupola, possibly added around 1850, which was once located between the four chimneys that rise from the center of the hipped roof, has been removed and the parapet rail originally located between the stacks has been reconstructed. The exterior otherwise appears to be, unaltered. The structure has a groined vault ceiling and the staircase to the second floor is of solid stone, the upper part being cantilevered out from the wall with the steps interlocking. The building is used as a custom house and post office. The Custom House is in excellent condition and open to visitors.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

6. 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) 1834-36

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <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/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Designed by the noted architect Robert Mills and erected in 1834-36, the New Bedford Custom House is a powerful essay in granite of a small public building executed in the Greek Revival style. The design is a particularly interesting illustration of the creative use of Greek precedent; for although the whole effect is recognizably "Greek Doric" it is gained by all sorts of non-Greek means. Molding profiles are changed, triglyphs and mutules omitted, and richness and power are obtained by a carefully studied use of stone textures and the variation of rock-faced and tooled granite. The New Bedford Custom House is the largest, most elaborate, and probably the finest of the series of four granite Greek Revival custom houses that Mills designed for the New England States in the period 1834-36.

History

Robert Mills prepared the designs for four modest-sized granite Greek Revival Custom Houses for the New England States. Three of them, - at Middletown, Connecticut (1834), at New London, Connecticut (1835), and at Newburyport, Massachusetts, (1834-35), are almost identical, and the New Bedford structure is the largest and most elaborate, architecturally, of this group. The custom house at New Bedford was authorized by an Act of Congress on July 3, 1832. The site for the building was purchased on April 22, 1833, for the sum of \$4,900. Construction, supervised by Seth H. Ingalls, began in 1834 and the structure was completed in 1836. Cost of construction, exclusive of the site, was \$25,500. The New Bedford Custom House still serves its original function as a custom house and also as a post office.

¹ The New Bedford Custom House has also been attributed to Russell Warren, a prominent New Bedford architect. If he is proven to be the designer, he should also receive credit for the other three very similar custom houses erected at Middletown and New London, Connecticut, and also at Newburyport, Massachusetts.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Talbot Hamlin, Greek Revival Architecture in America (New York, 1964), 168, 346.
 H.M. Pierce Gallagher, Robert Mills, Architect of the Washington Monument (New York, 1935), 58, 182.
A History of Public Buildings Under the Control of the Treasury Department (Washington, 1901), 280-1.
Massachusetts, A Guide to Its Places and People (American Guide Series) (Boston, 1937), 289.
 John Burchard and Albert Bush-Brown; The Architecture of America, a Social and Cultural History (Boston & Toronto, 1961), 95.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

| LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY | | | LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES | | | |
|---|----------|---------|---|---------|---------|---------|
| CORNER | LATITUDE | | LONGITUDE | | | |
| | Degrees | Minutes | Seconds | Degrees | Minutes | Seconds |
| NW | ° | ' | " | ° | ' | " |
| NE | ° | ' | " | ° | ' | " |
| SE | ° | ' | " | ° | ' | " |
| SW | ° | ' | " | ° | ' | " |

8,600 square feet

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **8,600 square feet**

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

| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|--------|------|---------|------|
| | | | |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| | | | |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| | | | |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| | | | |

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Charles W. Snell, Survey Historian

ORGANIZATION: **Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service.** DATE: **6/29/70**

STREET AND NUMBER:
801 19th Street, N. W.

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington** STATE: **D. C.** CODE:

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 _____

Title _____

Date _____

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

 Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS