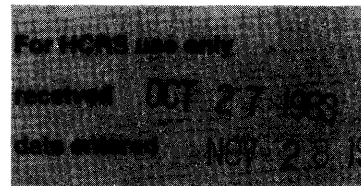


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections



1. Name

historic Telephone Exchange Building

and/or common Norwich Police Station

2. Location

street & number 23 Union Street^① N/A not for publication

city, town Norwich N/A vicinity of congressional district 2nd

state Connecticut code 09 county New London code 011

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

4. Owner of Property

name Isabelle M. Champagne

street & number 1220 Johnson Road

city, town Woodbridge N/A vicinity of state Connecticut

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. City Clerk, Norwich City Hall

street & number Union Square

city, town Norwich state Connecticut

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title State Register of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1983 federal state county local

depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street

city, town Hartford state Connecticut

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" 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			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Telephone Exchange Building is a 2½-story Georgian Revival commercial structure built from 1906-1907. The building is located on the east side of Union Street in downtown Norwich, near Union Square. South of the building is the Norwich City Hall and Courthouse, which faces the square. To the north, along Union Street, is a residential neighborhood. The lot on which the building stands slopes to the south, exposing the basement on that side. Rectangular in plan, the Telephone Exchange is constructed of brick in a variant of the stretcher bond. The basement is also of brick, with the stone foundation being exposed in a few areas. A water table is of brownstone. The gable roof is covered with tin and has stepped parapets at either end. (Photograph 1).

The facade of the Telephone Exchange is five bays wide. The central entrance is approached by a concrete stair with iron railings. (Photograph 2). The entrance is within an elliptically arched opening with a brownstone keystone and stops. Modern lighting fixtures flank the entrance. Above the entrance are placed free-standing metal letters spelling "Police." A single aluminium and glass door has associated sidelights and transom. A wooden strip over this has narrow pilaster heads attached. An elliptical transom above has leaded glass. (Photograph 3) The entrance was remodelled in 1951, during conversion to a police station. The original entrance featured stairs with a wooden balustrade which descended to the south. Double doors with leaded glass windows were divided by narrow pilasters from leaded glass sidelights. (Photograph 4). The pilaster heads and the elliptical leaded glass transom remain.

One basement window, on the south side of the facade, contains 6-over-6 double-hung sash. The other basement windows on the facade have been infilled with brick. First and second floor windows have splayed lintels with brownstone keystones and brownstone sills. (Photograph 5). 1-over-1 double-hung sash is used. The window to the left of the entrance was shortened by the Southern New England Telephone Company during its occupancy of the building. The brownstone sill was reused. A brick belt course connects the sills of the second floor windows. A wooden cornice consisting of an entablature with a plain frieze and molded modillions extends across the facade. A mounting for a flagstaff remains on the roof. (Photograph 1).

The south elevation has an exposed basement with windows containing 6-over-6 double-hung sash. The first and second floor windows are identical with those of the facade. A recessed panel with terracotta molding originally contained a sign. A small hood has been placed over the panel. The brick belt course from the facade continues around the side, connecting the second floor window sills. Another brick belt course defines the separation between the second floor and the attic. The attic window opening is semicircular with a rusticated brick surround. A louver has been installed in place of the original window. The brick chimney protrudes from the side of the building. Both brick belt courses continue around the chimney. Two additional belt courses near the top of the chimney are restricted to the chimney itself. The chimney top is corbelled and has a hood built over it. (Photograph 1).

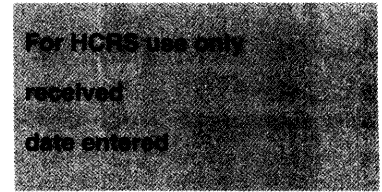
The north elevation is similar to the south. The brick chimney is located nearer to the front of the building and the attic window is bricked in. One of the second floor windows has had a wooden housing built around it. The rear of the building has a 2-story brick addition built by the Southern New England Telephone Company. This has 1-over-1 double-hung sash in the windows. It is not readily visible from the street.

The interior of the Telephone Exchange was extensively remodelled in 1951 to provide facilities for the Norwich police. The basement, which now contains jail cells, originally room for storage batteries, a locker room, and a stock room. The first floor has a central hallway with stairs to the upper floor near the rear. To the left of the entrance is the

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6. Representation in Existing Surveys (continued)

Downtown Norwich Historical and Architectural Survey, 1981

Depository: Connecticut Historical Commission

59 South Prospect Street

Hartford, Ct. 06106

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7. Description (continued)

Police Dispatcher's room. This was built as a lounging room for telephone company employees and contained a stairway to the operating room on the second floor. Door and window surrounds throughout the building feature "bull's-eye" molding. (Photograph 6). To the rear of the lounging room was the terminal room, where telephone wires entered the building and were distributed to the switchboard upstairs and the battery room below. To the right of the entrance is the former business office and the manager's office. These retain original doors and moldings. The coffered ceiling in the manager's office has been obscured by an acoustical tile ceiling.

The second floor of the Telephone Exchange, once one large operating room, has been divided by partions into a large room and several smaller ones. Another room has been placed at the rear of the building. The east wall of the original room once housed the switchboard. (Photograph 7).² This has been removed and window openings on the east wall filled in due to the rear addition. (Photograph 8). All other window openings are still present and have their original molded surrounds. An acoustical tile ceiling has been placed beneath the original ceiling which is still present.

Footnotes

1. "New Telephone Exchange," Norwich Bulletin, September 7, 1906, p7c3, has sketch reproduced as Photograph 4.
2. "New Telephone Exchange," Norwich Bulletin, August 3, 1907, p7c3, has photographs of the interior of the new Telephone Exchange. The photograph of the operations room is reproduced as Photograph 7.

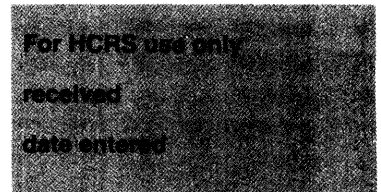
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Telephone Exchange Building
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local operators, capable of handling 400 subscriber's lines. This was expanded to accommodate 5 toll and 7 local operator's positions and 840 subscriber's lines. By 1904, 875 stations were served by this exchange. The magneto, or local battery, system used by this exchange necessitated the use of complex and expensive apparatus with each telephone served. Each set contained a magneto generator and two or three storage batteries. Turning a handcrank induced a current which enabled the caller to communicate with the switchboard operator. The batteries supplied the necessary current for talking. This system was relatively inefficient. Provision of batteries for each telephone set was expensive, while cranking the magneto was a nuisance to the subscribers. The complexity and expense of each telephone set was an obstacle to expansion of the system. 2.

The alternative to the magneto system was the common battery system, first introduced in Lexington, Massachusetts in 1893. 3. In this system, a common battery located at the telephone exchange replaced the batteries located in each set. To contact the operator, subscribers merely had to lift the receiver off the hook. This action completed a circuit to which the common battery was attached, thus lighting a signal at the operator's position. The operator would plug in an answering jack and request the number the caller wished to contact. After connecting the circuit to the desired line, the operator would activate a ringing current to notify the party the caller wished to speak to. 4.

SNETCO began introducing the common battery system in 1900, when the system was installed in Waterbury. Hartford was converted to the common battery system in 1902, and Bridgeport and New Haven in 1903. In 1905, common battery systems were installed in several smaller exchanges and systematic census maps were prepared to show existing and potential subscribers before plans for construction were undertaken. 5. Four new telephone exchanges using the common battery system were constructed in Norwich, Danbury, Middletown, and Bristol. Construction of these facilities resulted in increased capacity in these areas. In Norwich, capacity increased from 2,000 subscribers to 5,000 on completion of the new exchange. Actual subscriptions increased from 875 in 1904 to 1,794 in 1908. By 1910, the Norwich exchange had 2,401 subscribers. When the capacity of the equipment no longer kept pace with demand, an addition was placed at the rear of the building. In 1948, a replacement building was constructed at Chestnut and Bath Streets, about a block away. The old exchange was traded for the building lot, and renovated for use as a Police Station, opening in 1951. 6. The exchange buildings in Danbury and Middletown were replaced about the same time and sold as surplus property. The Norwich Telephone Exchange represents the introduction of a significant technological change to the local level. When the new exchange began operation in 1907, Norwich could boast of having as modern a telephone system as any city of similar size in the country. In 1908, when the other new exchanges went into service, SNETCO had over 70% of its stations utilizing the common battery system. 7.

The Southern New England Telephone Company purchased and constructed numerous buildings throughout the state of Connecticut in the late 19th- and early 20th-centuries. Most of these were located in urban centers. The designs of most of these structures were similar to the prevailing commercial standards of the time. Buildings in Hartford, New Haven, and other cities were inspired by the Romanesque Revival, with round-arched windows, or by the Renaissance Revival style, with rusticated treatment of masonry and other characteristic features. Unlike these earlier buildings, the Telephone Exchanges built in Norwich, Danbury, Middletown, and Bristol in the period 1906-1908 were Georgian Revival in style. Similarities between the buildings in Danbury, Middletown, and Norwich are sufficient to indicate that they were designed by the same architect, whose identity is unknown. 8. The writer was unable to

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obtain information on the Bristol Building, but it is likely that this, too, was the product of the same individual. The three buildings about which information is available are all 2½ stories in height, of brick masonry construction, with window treatments and cornices of similar design, and with stepped parapets at the gable ends. (Compare Photograph 1, of the Norwich building, with Photograph 9, of the Middletown building). All three buildings were located in downtown areas nearby to residential neighborhoods, a desirable location from the viewpoint of distribution. The Norwich building, as the others, is compatible in scale and design to its surroundings.

The Norwich Telephone Exchange Building displays several characteristics which distinguish it from its counterparts. The central entrance (Photograph 1), a Georgian Revival feature, contrasts with the asymmetrically placed entrances of the Danbury and Middletown buildings, although the Middletown exchange was altered to a central entrance about 1950. The five bay facade of the Norwich Telephone exchange has windows evenly spaced. In both Danbury and Middletown, the central three windows of the second floor are grouped closely together. The Danbury and Middletown buildings have three round-arched windows in each gable end as contrasted to the semicircular attic windows of the Norwich building. The Danbury building, adapted to office use in 1948, had similar alterations to those of the Norwich building. In Middletown, the American Legion extensively altered the Exchange building, putting in a central entrance, new limestone cornice, and a wooden surround about the center second floor windows. In its external appearance, the Norwich Telephone Exchange has been altered to a lesser extent than that at Middletown, and to roughly the same degree as the Danbury building. 9.

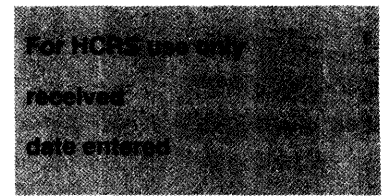
The Norwich Telephone Exchange is a good example of the Georgian Revival style applied to a commercial building. In contrast to churches and residences built in the same style, the Telephone Exchange is simpler in design, with little embellishment. The symmetrical placement of the entrance, splayed lintels with brownstone keystones, brick belt courses, and the wooden cornice with modillions are all typical of the Georgian Revival. The cornice, painted white, contrasts vividly with the darker brick and the brownstone trim. The internal division of the building into floors is well defined on the exterior by the brownstone water table and the brick belt courses at the level of the second floor window sills and the attic. The treatment of the gable ends with stepped parapets, corbelled chimney tops and rusticated semicircular attic windows adds a picturesque quality to the composition.

Although the Southern New England Telephone Company built large office buildings in the Modernistic or Art Deco style in succeeding decades, such as the Headquarters Building in New Haven, constructed from 1937-39, and designed by Foote and Orr, the Georgian Revival style continued to be a hallmark of company structures in many smaller communities throughout the state. For example, the brick buildings completed in Wethersfield, Fairfield and Washington Connecticut just before the outbreak of the second World War were all inspired by the Georgian Revival. The choice of architectural style does seem to reflect prevailing popular taste. In this respect, the Norwich building and its contemporaries in Danbury and Middletown are early examples of this phenomenon within the corporate structure of the Southern New England Telephone Company. 10.

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Footnotes

1. Walsh, J. Leigh. Connecticut Pioneers in Telephony: The Origins and Growth of the Telephone Industry in Connecticut. New Haven: Telephone Pioneers of America, 1950, pages 412-413 for a listing of the corporate predecessors of the Southern New England Telephone Company.
2. "How Telephone Business has Increased in Norwich," Norwich Bulletin, August 24, 1908, p7c5.
3. Walsh, op.cit., page 163.
4. "New Telephone Exchange," Norwich Bulletin, August 3, 1907, p7c3.
5. Walsh, op.cit., pages 213, 226.
6. "How Telephone Business has Increased in Norwich," Norwich Bulletin, 8/24/1908, p7c5. Also, Riley, Dennis J., "History of Norwich Police Department," November 1953, no publisher, in files of the Norwich Bulletin.
7. Walsh, op.cit., page 238.
8. The main offices of the Southern New England Telephone Company in New Haven were contacted regarding the question of the identity of the architect responsible for the four buildings, Unfortunately, no answer could be provided.
9. The extent of alterations to the Middletown Telephone Exchange are evident in plans drawn for the new owners by architect Carl E. Segerberg in 1950. These plans are in the possession of the American Legion, 128 Washington Street, Middletown, Connecticut.
10. Walsh, op.cit., page 289 concerning the Headquarters Building. Unfortunately, the files of the Southern New England Telephone Company are not accessible to give a comprehensive view of the company's policies in regards to selection of architects and design. Examination of the illustrations in Walsh's book, however, reveals that the company reflected current tastes to a remarkable extent in the choice of styles. In the opinion of the writer, the fact that the company was a comparatively new organization, technologically innovative, and very concerned with its public image, may well have motivated its decision-makers to choose styles which were felt to express the latest, contemporary trends. This must remain speculative, however, due to lack of information on the corporate decision-making process in regards to architectural design and selection of architects.

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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1906-1907 **Builder/Architect** Morgan Williams, builder

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

(Criterion A) The Telephone Exchange Building was the first building in Norwich to be constructed specifically for the use of the Southern New England Telephone Company. Earlier facilities were housed in rented quarters. The magneto, or local battery, system was used. Relatively inefficient, this system was replaced by the common battery system in Norwich in 1907. The Norwich Telephone Exchange was built with the purpose of introducing this new system to the Norwich area, allowing expansion of the telephone company's capacity. Located in the downtown, the building was also close to the residential neighborhoods to the north. Similar buildings were erected at the same time in Danbury, Middletown, and Bristol, reflecting the efforts of the Southern New England Telephone Company to introduce new technology to urban centers throughout the state. The Norwich building illustrates this phenomenon on the local level. (Criterion C). The Norwich Telephone Exchange is an early example of the Georgian Revival style of architecture applied to a commercial structure. Earlier buildings designed for The Southern New England Telephone Company in Hartford, New Haven, and other **cities were of** Romanesque Revival or Renaissance Revival inspiration. The Norwich building and its counterparts in Danbury, Middletown, and Bristol were a departure from the earlier pattern, relating well in scale and design to their surroundings.

Connecticut, a densely populated and highly urbanized state, witnessed the rapid spread of telephone service shortly after the invention of the telephone by Alexander Graham Bell in 1876. The first commercial telephone exchange was founded in New Haven in 1878, later becoming the nucleus of the Southern New England Telephone Company (SNETCO). Local companies were founded across the state, but were quickly absorbed by SNETCO. This process was facilitated by the fact that SNETCO and its immediate corporate predecessors, the Connecticut Telephone Company and others, were licensed by the Bell patentholders. By 1900, the Southern New England Telephone Company controlled almost all of the telephone exchanges in the state of Connecticut. This enabled the rapid spread of technological innovations throughout the state. 1.

In 1879, the Western Union Telegraph Company founded telephone service in Norwich. This exchange was sold to the New London Telephone Company, which was reorganized under the name Norwich-New London Telephone Company. The Connecticut Telephone Company purchased the Norwich-New London Telephone Company in 1881. In 1882, the Southern New England Telephone Company, chartered by a special act of the state legislature, succeeded the Connecticut Telephone Company, assuming control of its assets and lines. The Norwich exchange operated by SNETCO occupied rental space in downtown Norwich, first in the Richards Building, followed by the Carroll Building, and last the Beckwith Building, where it was until 1907. Rapidly growing demand for service resulted in the installation of improved equipment. From a one magneto switchboard in the Richards Building, the exchange grew to a two magneto switchboard in the Carroll Building, and a four magneto switchboard in the Beckwith Building. The Beckwith switchboard had a capacity of 4 positions for toll operators and 4 positions for

9. Major Bibliographical References

"How Telephone Business Has Increased in Norwich," Norwich Bulletin, August 24, 1908, p7c5.
 "New Telephone Exchange," Norwich Bulletin, September 7, 1906, p7c3.
 "New Telephone Exchange," Norwich Bulletin, August 3, 1907, p7c3.
 Riley, Dennis J., "History of Norwich Police Department," November, 1953, no publisher. In

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 0.24

Quadrangle name Norwich

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

118	7413	11110	416	011	11410
Zone	Easting	Northing			

B

Zone	Easting	Northing			

C

Zone	Easting	Northing			

D

Zone	Easting	Northing			

E

Zone	Easting	Northing			

F

Zone	Easting	Northing			

G

Zone	Easting	Northing			

H

Zone	Easting	Northing			

Verbal boundary description and justification

For a complete verbal description of the boundaries of the property see Volume 535, page 65 in the Norwich Land Records, Office of the City Clerk, Norwich City Hall, Union Square, Norwich.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries *N/A*

state	N/A	code	N/A	county	N/A	code	N/A
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state	N/A	code	N/A	county	N/A	code	N/A
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dale S. Plummer, National Register Nominations Consultant - edited by John Herzan,

organization Connecticut Historical Commission

National Register Coordinator
 date January 22, 1982

street & number 59 South Prospect Street

telephone 566-3005

city or town Hartford

state Connecticut

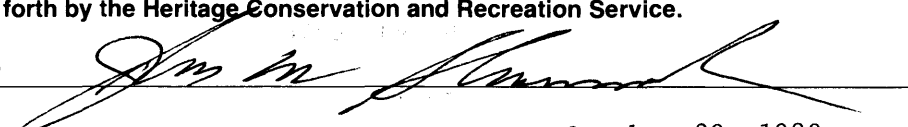
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

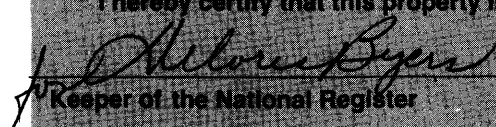


title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

date October 20, 1983

For HCRS use only

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


 Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
 National Register

date 11/28/83

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
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Telephone Exchange Building

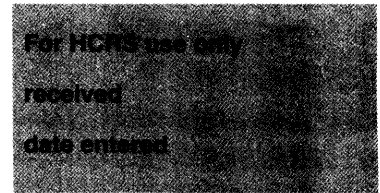
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the files of the Norwich Bulletin, 66 Franklin Street, Norwich, Connecticut.
Sederberg, Carl E., "Plans of Major E. Dyer Hubbard Memorial," 1950, in possession of
American Legion, 128 Washington Street, Middletown, Connecticut.
Walsh, J. Leigh. Connecticut Pioneers in Telephony: The Origin and Growth of the Telephone
Industry in Connecticut. New Have: Telephone Pioneers of America, 1950.