

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 DEC 11 1985
DATE ENTERED 1-21-86

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

New London Main Post Office

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

27 Masonic Street, Corner of Union St. *N/A*

CITY, TOWN

New London

N/A VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Second Congressional District

STATE

Connecticut 06320

CODE
0440

COUNTY

New London

CODE

011

2 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	<i>N/A</i> 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.

City of New London Municipal Building, Registrar's Office

STREET & NUMBER

State Street

CITY, TOWN

New London

STATE

Connecticut 06320

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Town-wide survey in New London, Connecticut for survey grant

DATE

1980

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		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The original building is located within the central business district, an area of high building density. The building is a three-story steel frame structure clad in masonry with reinforced concrete floor and roof slabs. The exterior of the building is clad in cut limestone at the first floor, with limestone pilasters, quoining and brick infill on the upper two floors, capped by a denticulated limestone cornice. Larger first floor windows are set in arched openings with rectangular modern aluminum frame windows which are inappropriate and contrast sharply with the fine limestone detailing of the exterior walls.

Art Deco detailing is utilized to highlight the main entrance, which has larger bronze grilles and bronze eagle panels over the doors, frames with moulded limestone. Flanking the doors are carved limestone eagles set over a pair of limestone grilles. A pair of Art Deco light standards sit in front of these grilles on stone pedestals.

A center entrance leads to the public lobby which is totally internal, surrounded by offices to the front and the larger work room to the rear. The elevator leads to other governmental offices on the second and third floors. Mechanical rooms and storage areas are located in the basement. A loading dock area was added in 1977.

The lobby is handsomely appointed in Art Deco style with predominately Greek motifs. The terrazzo floor is bordered in marble. Green marble bases and pilasters frame a rose marble wainscot, with painted plaster walls, cornice and ceiling above. Finishes on upper floors are for the most part terrazzo and marble floors with plaster walls and ceilings. Six lobby murals painted in 1933 and installed in 1938 depict scenes typical of early whaling.

The condition of the building and site is excellent, reflective of careful and thorough maintenance. The lobby is in excellent condition and has survived intact, housing the important murals which were recently cleaned and restored.

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: 1932	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Payne & Keefe Architects
	Built: 1933-1934	Addition: 1977	New London, Connecticut

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The original Post Office building is part of the Public Buildings Act of May 25, 1929 (Keyes-Elliott Act), a general enabling act which also authorized the Treasury Department to hire outside Architects. The project was built in response to the depression to relieve unemployment and stabilize the local economy. The architecture reflected the new government attitude governed largely by economic considerations of the period, characterized by symmetrical massing and unornamented surfaces. This building was one of 136 buildings designed throughout the United States in 1932 as a post office and was one of a few to be designed by private architects.

This building is located adjacent to the downtown New London National Register Historic District. Several important architectural landmarks surround the building including a large granite Gothic Church, the small wood-frame Nathan Hale School, and the Neo-Classical New London Municipal building.

The post office is of Classical Revival design with Art Deco details, especially in the lobby and entrance areas. It demonstrates classical motifs used as design elements rather than parts of an order.

Murals painted in 1933 and installed in 1938 depict scenes typical of early whaling, and are integrated well into the lobby design. The murals were commissioned as part of the Public Works of Art Program and painted by Thomas Sergeant Lafarge of New York, an important local artist during that period of time. The six lobby murals, grouped into three units "Aloft", "Cutting In", and "Morning Watch Sunrise" were installed in 1938 and are in very good condition. After careful investigation of all existing post office murals in Connecticut, a leading art historian has judged this series of murals as the finest in the State. Wrapping the walls of the lobby, they produce an illusion of being on the deck of a ship, an illusion highlighted by the artist's superb techniques of perspective and powerful foreshortening employed to illustrate ship's rigging and lines.

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 1.26

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 8	7, 4, 2	8, 8, 0	4, 5	8, 2	0, 6, 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING				
C							D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Post Office is located at 27 Masonic Street on the corner of Union Street. The site has 155 feet of frontage on Masonic Street and 200 feet frontage on Union Street originally. An addition at rear property was required in 1977 for parking. The new lot has 163 feet frontage on Union Street and is approximately 112 feet wide.

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

Richard P. DeCoste, Architect

ORGANIZATION

SULLIVAN DESIGN GROUP, INC.

DATE

July 17, 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

[Signature]
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

[Signature]

Director, Office of Real Estate

DATE

12/4/85

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

[Signature]

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

1/21/86

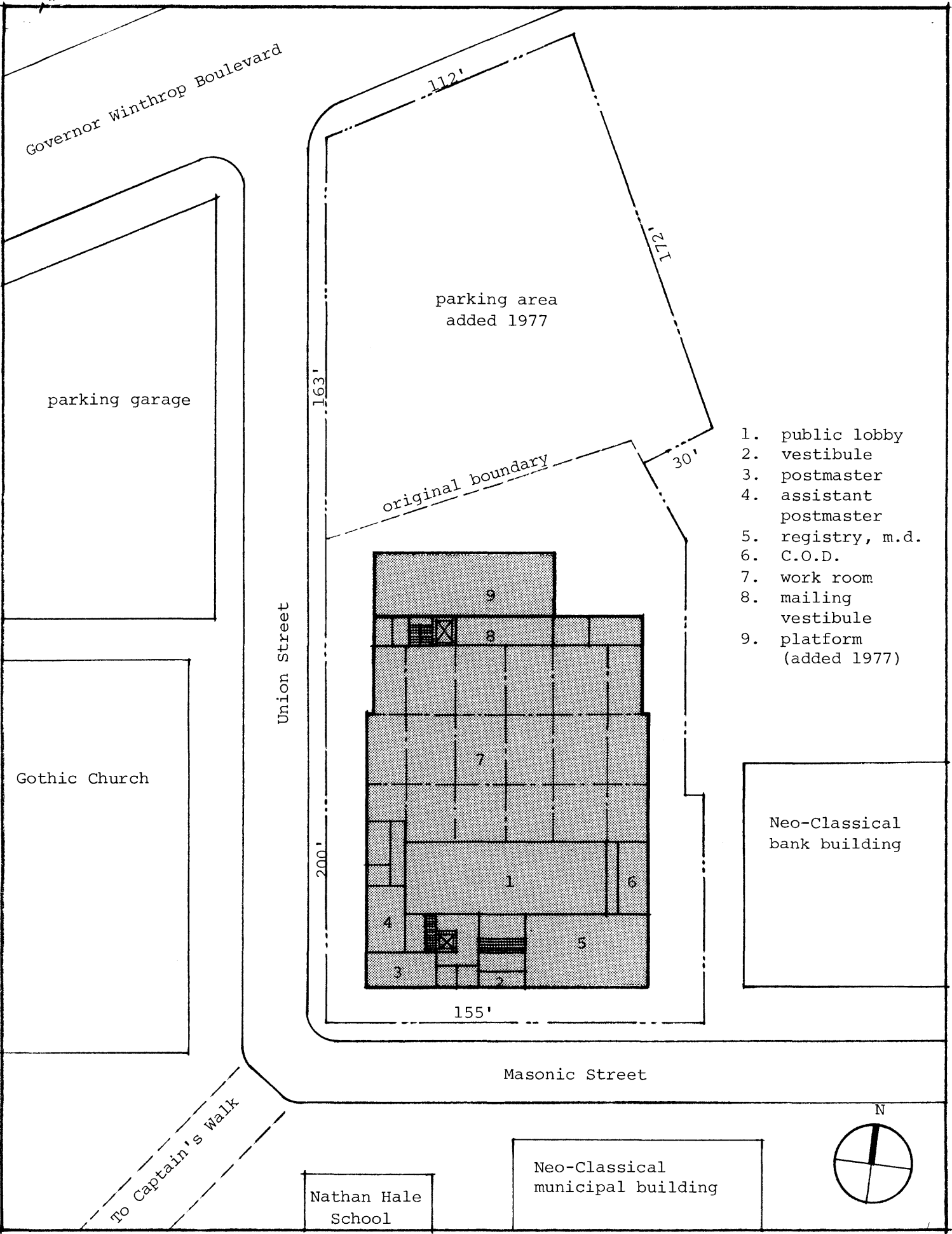
ATTEST:

[Signature]

DATE

1-17-86

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



1. public lobby
2. vestibule
3. postmaster
4. assistant postmaster
5. registry, m.d.
6. C.O.D.
7. work room
8. mailing vestibule
9. platform (added 1977)