

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received SEP 25 1986

date entered OCT 23 1986

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

1. Name

historic Plymouth Post Office Building

and/or common same

2. Location

street & number 5 Main Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Plymouth

N/A vicinity of

state Massachusetts

code 025

county Plymouth

code 023

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Leyden & Main Realty Trust, c/o The Grossman Companies, Inc.

street & number P.O. Box 110 / 1266 Furnace Brook Parkway

city, town Quincy

N/A vicinity of

state Mass. 02269-1001

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Plymouth County Registry of Deeds

street & number P. O. Box 3535

city, town Plymouth

state Mass. 02361

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Inventory of the Historic Assets
title of the Commonwealth (#21)has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date 1967

☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Massachusetts Historical Commission, 80 Boylston Street

city, Boston

s Massachusetts

7. Description Plymouth Post Office Building, Plymouth, Massachusetts

Condition

☐ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☒ unaltered
☐ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The former Plymouth Post Office is a Georgian Revival-style building that stands at the southeast corner of Main and Leyden Streets at the south end of Plymouth's central business district, two blocks west of Cape Cod Bay. Immediately east of the building is an area of freestanding 18th and 19th century wood-frame houses, while areas north, west and south of the building consist of rows of two and three-story commercial blocks, built in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The Post Office building is a freestanding masonry structure that consists of a two-story central block (73 by 42 feet) flanked by symmetrical one-story wings on the building's north and south sides (15 by 42 feet each) and a one-story mailroom wing (73 by 21 feet). The building is constructed of red brick laid up in Flemish bond (except at the rear [east] elevation, which is laid up in common bond). Windows and doorways are set in rectangular openings that have flat-arched heads of gauged brick. With the exception of the stairs at the main (west) and side (north) entries, which are of dressed granite, all trimmings are of Bedford Indiana limestone from the quarry of John A. Rowe Cut Stone Company. Details throughout include ashlar foundation facings, decorative panels over window heads, belt courses, and dentilated cornices at the first- and second-story parapets. Sash throughout the building is wood-frame 6/6 with the exceptions of basement windows (two-pane casements), mailroom windows (8/8 with four-pane transoms), and steel casements at the second story of the east elevation.

The main facade (west elevation) is symmetrical, consisting of a two-story central block flanked by one-story wings; at its center is a shallow portico extending across seven bays and supported by eight limestone columns with papyrus and acanthus capitals. The cornice of the portico is decorated with bands of tongue-and-dart and dentil moldings. Set behind the portico are six windows that are surmounted by carved swag panels and an arched central entry with panelled wood double doors (the doors are 1984 replacements). Set above the portico are seven evenly spaced windows that are separated by brick pilasters; the central window is set in an eared limestone surround. The one-story wings flanking the facade each contain one window surmounted by an undecorated limestone panel.

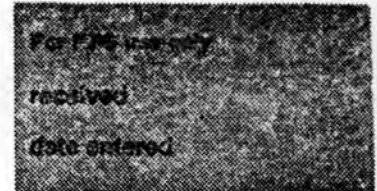
The north elevation is asymmetrical, consisting of an entry in the westernmost bay with wood-frame double doors, each half of which contains twelve lights (these doors, too, were added in 1984), and two windows at the first story of the main block, three evenly spaced windows at the second story, and a gable with a lunette. A limestone cornice separates the gable from the second story. The east end of the north elevation consists of two oversized windows that provide light to the mailroom wing.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**Plymouth Post Office Building,
Plymouth, Massachusetts

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

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The south elevation is a mirror image of the north elevation in massing, but contains a partially exposed basement with four evenly spaced windows, and four windows each at the first and second stories. At the elevation's east end is a brick smoke-and-ventilation shaft that rises above the parapet to the height of the roof's ridge. The east elevation of the mailroom contains two oversized windows.

The east (rear) elevation is more utilitarian in its finishes and design than the other three sides of the building. The first story consists of six oversized windows and a brick loading platform symmetrically arranged. The second story contains a central group of three steel casement windows flanked by four smaller double-hung windows, all separated from each other by brick pilasters.

Enclosing the central block of the building is a pitched roof consisting of steel trusses supporting a reinforced concrete deck; the deck is covered on the exterior by slates. At the facade, the roof has three pedimented dormers. Rising from the center of the roof is a steel-frame cupola with wood facings that form pilasters, arched vents, and a domed roof. The roofs of the building's one-story sections are nearly flat and are covered with tar and gravel.

Alterations to the former Plymouth Post Office building have been very minor. The main facade (west) and side (north) entries were altered in the 1950s or 1960s by the replacement of doors with aluminum and glass; in 1984 these were replaced by the new doors mentioned above, which were based on original construction drawings.

Archaeology

Although the building occupies most of the lot upon which it sits, its location is one of profound historic importance. Leyden and Main Streets were the original public ways laid out within the Plimoth Plantation settlement of 1620. The Post Office's location at the southeast corner of that intersection places it squarely within the original settlement. Two factors suggest that archaeological deposit relating to 17th century Plymouth may survive. Although the building has a full basement, the slope of the hill minimized the need for excavation on the east end of the building and may have caused little subsurface damage. The area behind the building is currently paved and used for parking and a loading dock. A retaining wall at the rear of the property suggests that this area has been filled in order to level it off. As the original ground surface in this area appears to have dropped off sharply toward Town Brook, filling is likely to have protected any 17th century, or even prehistoric, potential that survived the 19th century.

8. Significance

Plymouth Post Office Building, Plymouth, Massachusetts

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
☐ prehistoric	☐ archeology-prehistoric	☐ community planning	☐ landscape architecture	☐ religion
☐ 1400–1499	☐ archeology-historic	☐ conservation	☐ law	☐ science
☐ 1500–1599	☐ agriculture	☐ economics	☐ literature	☐ sculpture
☐ 1600–1699	☒ architecture	☐ education	☐ military	☐ social/
☐ 1700–1799	☐ art	☐ engineering	☐ music	☐ humanitarian
☐ 1800–1899	☐ commerce	☐ exploration/settlement	☐ philosophy	☐ theater
☒ 1900–	☐ communications	☐ industry	☒ politics/government	☐ transportation
		☐ invention		☒ other (specify) Community Development

Specific dates 1913–1914 **Builder/Architect** Oscar Wenderoth, Supervising Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Built in 1913–1914 under the direction of Oscar Wenderoth, Supervising Architect for the Department of the Treasury, the former Plymouth Post Office building possesses integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, and setting as well as historical associations with the United States Postal Service's building program in the early 20th century. An imposing Georgian Revival-style institutional building distinctive in its use of decorative details on both the exterior and interior, the former Post Office fulfills Criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places.

Characteristic of a large number of post offices that were built in small cities and centrally located towns nationwide during the early twentieth century, the Plymouth Post Office is a masonry structure consisting of a two-story central block that contains a main lobby and offices, and flanking one-story wings that contain mailrooms. Although the basic plan and scale of the building were determined by federal requirements established by the Department of the Treasury, the building's Georgian Revival-style elevations and its high-quality decorative details (excepting lighting fixtures) were individually designed by architects working for the Treasury. (Lighting fixtures were the only decorative detail not overseen by federal architects.) Notable features include the English cross bond brickwork with window heads of gauged brick. All elevations are trimmed with Indiana Limestone from the quarry of John A. Rowe Cut Stone Company, Bedford, Indiana. Carved stone details include swag panels, acanthus/papyrus capitals, and tongue-and-dart moldings, as well as molded belt courses. In addition, the building retains its original slate roof and a cupola constructed of steel but faced with wood in a variety of Georgian Revival motifs.

The interior of the building retains architecturally significant finishes on the west side of the first story, where the main lobby extends the length of the structure. The lobby has ceramic tile floors and walls that are faced with several varieties of marble from the quarry of the Vermont Marble Company of Proctor, Vermont. Vaulted ceilings are of plaster, and details such as writing desks and lettering are made of cast bronze produced by the Gorham Architectural Bronze Company of New York. At the north end of the lobby is the Postmaster's Office, which contains panelled window cases, panelled doors, terrazzo floors in hallways, plaster walls, plaster ceilings, and Vermont marble walls in the lavatories.

Originally planned to contain the offices of the United States Customs Office at Plymouth (second story) and a central mailroom for the Plymouth area (first story), the former Plymouth Post Office building was only partially occupied

9. Major Bibliographical References

Original architectural plans, on file at Architectural Conservation Trust, for
Massachusetts, 45 School Street, Boston, Mass.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Plymouth

Quadrangle scale $1'' = 25,000'$

UTM References

A

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3	6	2	1	0	0
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4	6	4	6	0	0	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property includes only the lot on which the building stands; it is described in Plymouth Assessors' Records as parcel 92A on Map 20.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Betsy Friedberg, Preservation Planner, Massachusetts Historical Commission, with
Kim Withers Brengle, Preservation Consultant, ACT for Massachusetts

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission

date July 1986

street & number 80 Boylston Street

telephone (617) 727-8470

city or town Boston

state Massachusetts 02116

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Valerie Taenaga

State Historic Preservation Officer

title Executive Director, Massachusetts Historical Commission

date 9/17/86

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

date 10-23-86

[Signature]
Keeper of the National Register

date

Attest:

Chief of Registration

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

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

Plymouth Post Office Building,
Plymouth, Massachusetts

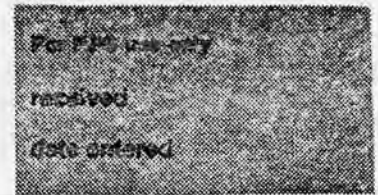
Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page

1



in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when postal sorting and other regional operations were moved to a new building outside Plymouth Center. The building has recently undergone a certified historic rehabilitation and is now used for office and retail space.

The need for construction of the former post office building in 1913-1914 reflects the doubling of Plymouth's population between 1870 and 1915. Industrial growth through the expansion of existing plants and the development of new products spurred a fourfold increase in Plymouth's foreign-born population at the beginning of the twentieth century.

The nominated building stands at the south end of Plymouth's commercial district, in an area that contains 19th and early 20th century commercial row buildings along Main Street and a mixture of 18th and 19th century wood-frame residences on side streets immediately adjoining the post office. In general, the surrounding area is characterized by varied scale and materials as well as various periods of construction. Commercial buildings in the area tend to be simple examples of late Victorian and early 20th century styles. Of its period, the former post office, together with a three-story Colonial Revival-style commercial building near the junction of Main and North Streets, are the most elaborate and well-preserved examples; of the two, the Post Office, with its symmetrical plan, carved limestone trimmings, and cupola is the finer and more carefully detailed.

86002926

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Plymouth Post Office Building
Plymouth County
MASSACHUSETTS

SEP 25 1986

Working No. _____

Fed. Reg. Date: 9/2/86

Date Due: 10/23/86 - 11/9/86

Entered in Action: ACCEPT 10-23-86

National Register RETURN

REJECT

Federal Agency: _____

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

Substantive Review: ☐ sample ☐ request ☐ appeal ☐ NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria _____

Reviewer _____

Discipline _____

Date _____

_____ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: _____ technical corrections cited below
_____ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

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

- ☐ 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

- ☐ 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: _____



Former Plymouth Post Office Building
5 Main Street
Plymouth, Massachusetts

Photographer: B. R. Pfeiffer

November, 1984

Negative on file at A.C.T. for Massachusetts
45 School St.
Boston, MA 02108

Photo Number 1 of 1

Facade (west) and north elevations taken with
photographer facing southeast.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

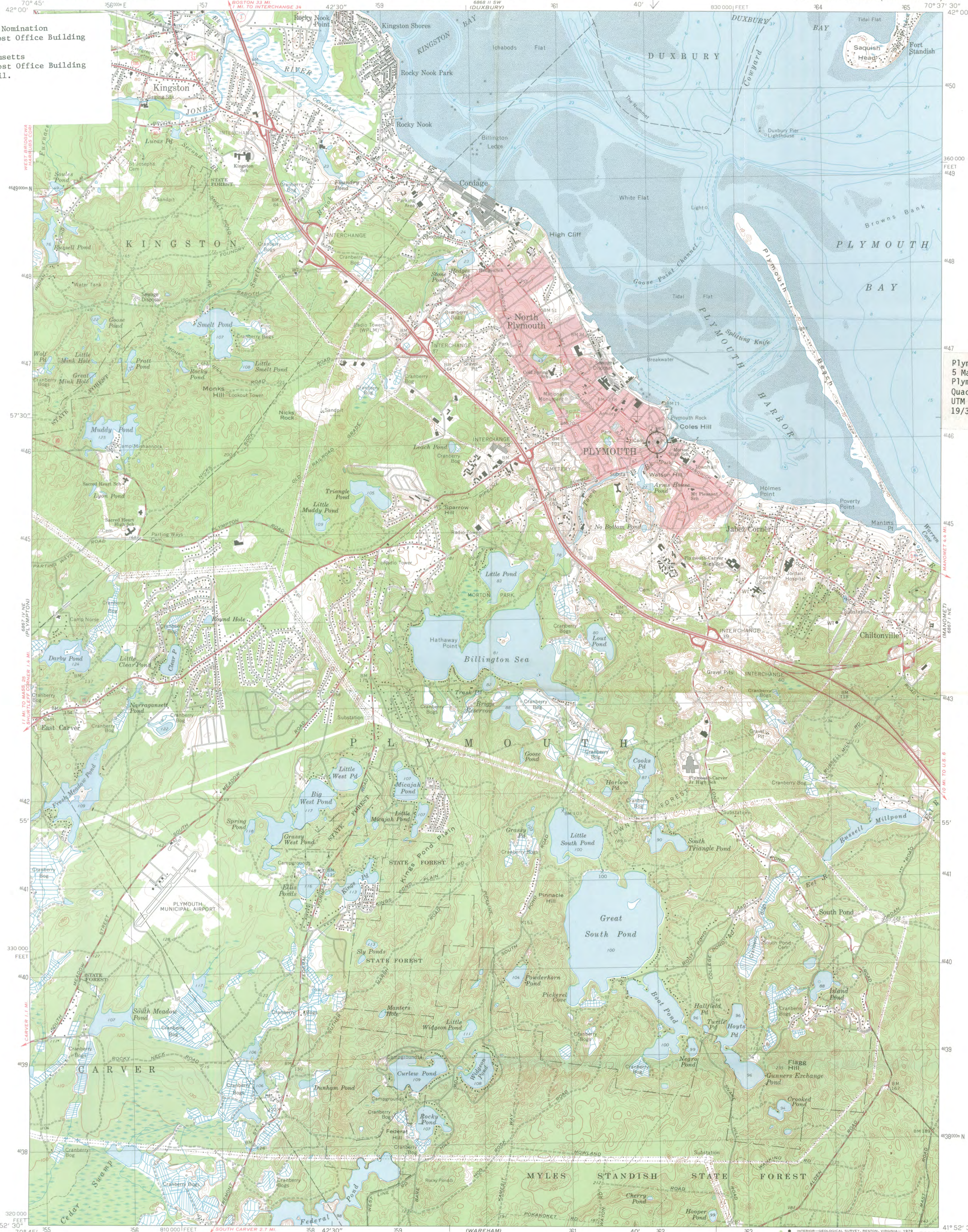
National Register Nomination
Former Plymouth Post Office Building
5 Main Street
Plymouth, Massachusetts
Former Plymouth Post Office Building
indicated in pencil.



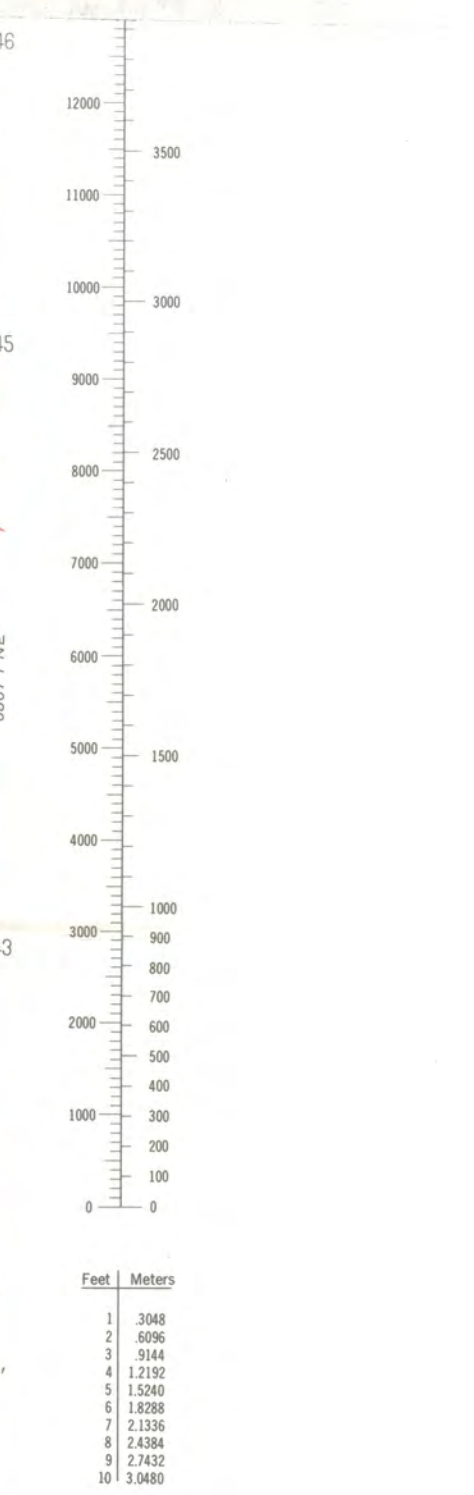
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

PLYMOUTH QUADRANGLE
MASSACHUSETTS—PLYMOUTH CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

6867 1/2 SW
DUXBURY

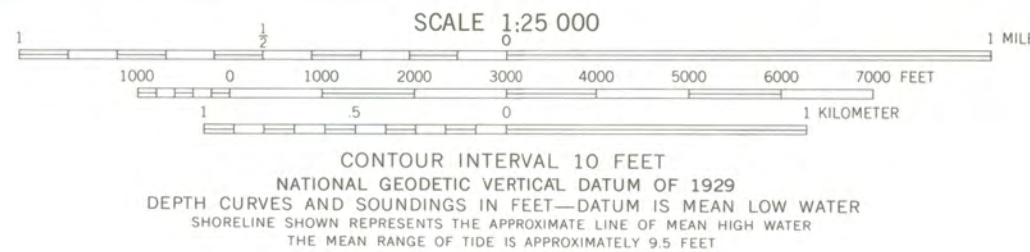
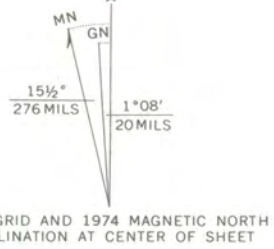


Plymouth Post Office Building
5 Main Street
Plymouth, Mass
Quad: Plymouth, Mass
UTM reference:
19/362/100/4646/000



To convert feet to meters
multiply by 0.3048
To convert meters to feet
multiply by 3.2808

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Topography by planetable surveys 1934. Revised from aerial
photographs taken 1974. Field checked 1974.
Selected hydrographic data compiled from NOS 245 (1972)
This information is not intended for navigational purposes
Polyconic projection. North American datum
10,000-foot grid ticks, based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid,
zone 19
Red tint indicates area in which only landmark buildings are shown



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

PLYMOUTH, MASS.
N4152.5—W7037.5/7.5

1977
AMS 6867 1/2 NW—SERIES V814

FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Plymouth Post Office Building
5 Main Street
Plymouth, Mass

Plymouth Assessor's Map, p. 20
scale: 1" = 120'

National Register Nomination
Former Plymouth Post Office Building
5 Main Street
Plymouth, Massachusetts

Former Plymouth Post Office Building
indicated by cross-hatching

