

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**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 NEW HAMPSHIRE BANK BUILDING

AND/OR COMMON PORTSMOUTH SAVINGS BANK/FIRST NATIONAL BANK BUILDING

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
22-26 Market Square

CITY, TOWN
Portsmouth

STATE
New Hampshire

VICINITY OF
CODE
33

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
First

COUNTY
Rockingham

CODE
015

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
James A. Shanley

STREET & NUMBER
75 Merrimac Street

CITY, TOWN
Portsmouth

VICINITY OF

STATE
New Hampshire 03801

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Rockingham County Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER
Hampton Road
Rockingham County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN
Exeter

STATE
New Hampshire 03833

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
None

DATE

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 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

A description of the New Hampshire Bank Building makes sense only in light of its evolution. The original building, erected in 1803 for the New Hampshire Bank, was a two-story brick Federal-style structure five bays wide. (Fig. 1) The three central bays were recessed from the street, and contained two windows flanking a central entrance to offices in the upper story. Facing entrances in the projecting bays gave access to the main first-floor room. The recessed area was roofed over at the second story.

Following interior partition in 1869, the first story of the exterior was modernized with a Renaissance Revival facade in 1882. A central entrance led upstairs; large windows flanking the central entrance were in turn flanked by entrances to the two banking rooms. (Fig. 2) In 1903 the Portsmouth Savings Bank took over the abutting lot to the north and rebuilt their half of the building. The First National Bank then remodelled its quarters in 1904, giving the building its present form, which appears to be two separate structures. (Fig. 3)

To the left, Number 22 is a simple Greek-derived Neo-classic limestone facade consisting of a pediment supported by unfluted engaged Ionic-order columns in antis. A central doorway is surmounted by a cornice supported on consoles, over which is foliate cresting framing a cartouche. The present entrance doors are late replacements. Above and behind the entrance is a second-story window. Flanking windows in the first story complete this facade, which appears substantially as it was when constructed in 1903.

Number 26, to the right, has an asymmetrical Beaux-arts facade of Conway granite, capped by a sheet-metal cornice. The first story is raised a half-dozen steps above the street; the steps and their cheeks appear to date from the 1882 remodelling. A sheet-metal balustrade and crested tower-like element over the main entrance have been removed. That change excepted, the south part of the street facade has not been modified since its construction in 1904: An entrance to the right capped by a console-supported cornice enclosing a panel with a cartouche and the dates "1803", "1904" is surmounted by a small, heavily-framed second-story window. To the left a large first-floor window lies below a pair of second-story openings. (Fig. 4)

The south facade is brick with stone sills and lintels, with a band of ornamental brickwork beneath a sheet-metal cornice. A vertical joint about 8 feet back from the street speaks of past alterations. A one-story addition projects about thirteen feet from the rear of the building. Including this ell, the south elevation is about eighty feet long. The rear of the building is brick; the low ell has its rear wall in common with an adjoining building, as does most of the north edge of the building. The south and east (rear) walls appear to be original parts of the New Hampshire Bank Building.

The interiors of both parts of the building date primarily from 1903-4, with overlays and modernizations which fortunately have not destroyed their basic character. The main first-floor space in the south portion remains more or less as shown in a photograph in Portsmouth in the Year 1824, except for the removal of the banking counters shown there and substitution of low-partitioned semi-private office cubicles installed by a recently-departed occupant. According to other views in the same booklet, the

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

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DESCRIPTION (Continued)

basement work areas and second-floor directors' room also retain much of their 1904 detail: mosaic-tile floors and pressed-metal ceilings in the cellar, and Colonial Revival detailing upstairs. The rear first-floor room retains an ornamented plaster ceiling which stylistically dates from the 1869 partitioning. Changes dating from after the Portsmouth Trust Company's purchase of the building in 1959 rearranged access to the second floor, separating it from the lower stories and connecting it to the second story north.

The principal room in the north part is roughly a cube, some thirty feet on a side, surmounted by a coffered ceiling in the middle of which is a large glass dome bearing in its center the Great Seal of the State of New Hampshire. (Fig. 5) Built as the banking room for the Portsmouth Savings Bank, the lower third of this room is clad in black and green marble blocks with rusticated joints, surmounted by an applied plaster frieze of running curvilinear ornament. A pair of lock vaults on the rear wall flank a doorway to office space beyond. Above the lower-story cladding the walls are divided into large rectangular panels with applied egg-and-dart moldings. The front and rear walls originally contained shallow balconies, which have been covered over, leaving their detail substantially intact. The room is presently open; when new, banking counters were arranged to echo the opening of the dome above. Portions of a circular mosaic-tile design were visible in the floor before the present owner covered them with floor levelling compound.

The office space to the rear, while retaining some of its 1903 woodwork and mosaic tile floors, has been greatly modified. The most interesting survival is perhaps a cellar partition wall marking the north foundation of the original New Hampshire Bank building.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" 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 1792, 1803, 1869, 1882, 1903-4, 1977 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the New Hampshire Bank Building lies equally in its architectural fabric and its historical associations. The site was continuously occupied for banking purposes from 1792 to 1977, making it one of the oldest continuously-occupied banking sites in the country. Although later greatly altered, the building, originally constructed in 1803, is one of the nation's senior bank structures. As renovated in 1903-4, it is an excellent example of early twentieth-century Neo-classic revival and Beaux-arts architecture, and a monument to the determination with which its two owners set out to establish separate identities. The principal north room, dominated by a huge leaded and stained glass dome, is surely one of the grandest commercial spaces in New Hampshire.

The history of the New Hampshire Bank Building begins in 1792, when "a bank was established in this town by the name of the New Hampshire Bank, to continue fifty years..." (a) After occupying quarters in an existing building on the site, the bank in 1803 constructed the building which still stands, following a fire which levelled much of the town. Tradition holds the building's architect to have been Eliphalet Ladd, a local merchant and engineer. (b)

The Portsmouth Savings Bank was formed in 1823 as the first mutual savings bank in the state, and initially rented office space above the New Hampshire Bank. The following year, Samuel Lord, treasurer of the Savings Bank, founded the Piscataqua Bank, a commercial institution with essentially the same management and directorate as the Savings Bank. Upon expiration of the New Hampshire Bank's charter, the Piscataqua and Savings Banks bought the banking house in undivided shares in 1844 for \$3,500 (c). The Piscataqua Bank reorganized as the Piscataqua Exchange Bank in 1844, still nominally independent of the Savings Bank, but sharing the same banking house, officers and directors. The Exchange Bank in turn reorganized in 1863 under a Federal charter as the First National Bank of Portsmouth, one of the first banks to file under the new banking regulations (d).

With the retirement of Samuel Lord, the two banks decided at last to assert their separate identities to a degree impossible in a common banking room in a commonly-owned building. In 1869 the building was partitioned through the center and deeds of partition exchanged, leaving the Savings Bank in sole possession of the north half of the building, and the National Bank owning the south. An agreement executed the following year required each bank to secure the other's consent before making any changes to the front of the building or its entrances. (e)

Apparently at the instigation of the First National Bank, the first-floor facade was remodelled in 1882. The banking-room entrances were turned toward the street, the first floor recess was built out, and the entire facade modernized in a conservative (See Continuation Sheet #2)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Nathaniel Adams, Annals of Portsmouth, Hampton, NH: Peter E. Randall, 1971, (print of 1825, original).

Charles W. Brewster, Rambles About Portsmouth, First Series, Somersworth, NH: New Hampshire Publishing Co. 1971 (reprint of 1873 original).

Rambles about Portsmouth, Second Series, Somersworth: New Hampshire Publishing Co. 1972 (reprint of 1869 original).

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.10

QUADRANGLE NAME Portsmouth, NH - ME

QUADRANGLE SCALE 7.5

UTM REFERENCES

A 19 356930 4770630

B

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Plot Map #11, Lots #127, 128 - Portsmouth Tax Records, Portsmouth, NH

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

Allen Charles Hill, AIA, Consultant in Architecture and Historic Preservation

ORGANIZATION

--

DATE

February, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

25 Englewood Road

TELEPHONE

617-729-0748

CITY OR TOWN

Winchester

STATE

Massachusetts 01890

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE X

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

TITLE Commissioner, Dept. of Resources & Economic Development
NH State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 6-20-78

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

Paul Shell

DATE 9-10-79

ATTEST: KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

[Signature]

DATE 9-10-79

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

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SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

italianate mode by "Woodcock the architect". (f)

By 1900 the Portsmouth Savings Bank needed more space and also wanted a grander image. After acquiring the lot to the north, the Trustees tried unsuccessfully to buy out the First National Bank. The Savings Bank then decided to proceed without acquiring that half of the building, and began to demolish their own half, only to be enjoined by the National Bank, invoking the 1870 common-consent agreement. The matter went to the State Supreme Court where the Savings Bank's president and attorney unsuccessfully argued that the 1882 renovations had terminated the 1870 agreement. An agreement recorded in July, 1903 (g) voided the common-consent clause and allowed the Savings Bank to demolish its half of the building and construct the existing Neo-classic revival facade, behind which is the splendid glass-domed banking room. The National Bank followed suit the following year with a more modest renovation, adding a Beaux-arts facade and remodelling its interiors, but leaving intact the original south and east walls of the building.

The two banks continued to occupy the building until 1957, making minor adaptations and renovations. Some time after 1921 the area behind the building was filled with a one-story ell. The National Bank acquired additional space in abutting buildings to the rear, and apparently moved most of its operations there, retaining the old building for a public office and directors' room. (h) In 1957 the Savings Bank left for a new Georgian-revival building a few blocks away, followed two years later by the National Bank. Both banks sold to the Portsmouth Trust Company, which moved into the north part of the building and the second floor of the south part, leasing the first floor and basement to a brokerage house. To accommodate this arrangement, access from the first to the second story south was broken, and a new connection made through to the north side. The Trust Company modernized the banking room by suspending a luminous ceiling under the dome, and made other minor changes to the north part of the building. Availability of an abandoned supermarket building occasioned the Trust Company's leaving the building in 1977 and selling it to the present owner, a realtor, who has re-opened the north banking room and at this writing is adapting the Trust Company Space for his firm's offices.

NOTES:

- a. Adams, p. 301.
- b. But Brighton, p. 35, refers to "designs drawn by an architect named Folsom." Brewster mentions several Folsoms of the correct period, but without identifying their trades.

(See Continuation Sheet #3)

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Significance (Continued)

- c. Rockingham deeds, Book 314, pp. 134, 135.
- d. "The First National came into being under federal banking regulations and was the first bank of its kind in the country to file in Washington the financial security which would permit it to begin operations." Brighton, p. 44.
- e. Rockingham deeds, Book 431, p. 199.
- f. Brighton, p. 54.
- g. Rockingham deeds, Book 593, p. 227.
- h. Conversation 2-1-78 with Harlan Goodwin, President, First National Bank of Portsmouth.