

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Saco Central Fire Station (former)

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)



2. Location

Street & number: 14 Thornton Avenue

City or town: Saco State: Maine County: York

Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

_____ national _____ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A _____ B _____ C _____ D

<u>Erin S. [Signature]</u> SHPD	<u>2/26/13</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
MAINE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

SACO CENTRAL FIRE STATION
Name of Property

YORK COUNTY, MAINE
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

For Edison H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

4.16.13
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT/fire station

-
-
-
-
-
-

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

-
-
-
-
-

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH C. REVIVALS / Classical Revival
MODERN MOVEMENT / Art Deco

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Foundation: concrete; walls: brick; roof: other: gravel.

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The former Saco Central Fire Station is a two-story flat roofed brick masonry building with its front façade facing north onto Thornton Avenue.¹ The building sits back from the street with a paved apron between the street and the doors in the front. Stylistically, the building is essentially early 20th century Classical Revival with elements of Art Deco ornament applied. The red brick with cast stone trim station was designed by Lester I. Beal of the architectural firm Miller & Beal and built in 1939 as a Public Works Administration project. Large overhead doors on the front façade provide access to the first floor bays and fire engines, while double-hung windows on the second floor light the former living spaces for the firemen. A hose tower rises four stories from the southeast corner of the building. Attached to the rear of the station is a one-story block, originally built for the city's Street Department. This section of the building is not square to the fire station, but is angled to be parallel with Pleasant Street. Used as a garage it has three garage bays as well as a separate pedestrian entrance. The Saco Central Fire Station is located in a mixed residential and commercial area, close to the Main Street commercial center and approximately one-half mile from the site of the former mills on Saco Island.

¹ Note the building is oriented in the northeast-southwest direction. For simplification, the façade will be referenced to the north.

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Narrative Description

EXTERIOR:

The Saco Central Fire Station is a two-story, rectangular brick building, five bays wide and eight bays deep; with a one-story portion on the rear that is six bays wide and two bays deep. Due to the change of grade between Thornton Avenue and Pleasant Street this section of the building sits approximately four feet lower than the front. A hose tower is located in the southeast corner of the main building. The fire station is constructed with a reinforced concrete and steel frame and has a flat roof and a brick chimney rising from the center of the rear elevation.

The primary façade faces northeast onto Thornton Avenue. The façade is comprised of five wide bays divided by brick piers that extend from concrete bases to the cast stone cornice below the brick parapet. The end bays project slightly past the center bays and here the piers are further detailed by brick quoins. On the first floor, the center bay contains a projecting booth for the dispatcher, constructed of metal with a copper roof with three windows, two of which have curved glass sash. The remaining four vehicle bays have been updated with modern overhead garage doors. Each bay is topped with a segmental arch of brick and cast stone with a cast stone keystone at the center which includes a bust of a horse. The opening in the fourth bay has been shortened with the insertion of a steel beam lintel. Each bay door is flanked by concrete bolsters at the base of the piers, intended to prevent fire trucks from hitting the sides of the opening. Paired one-over-one vinyl replacement windows are located on the second floor of each bay. All of the windows on the fire station are one-over-one vinyl replacement sash with cast stone sills and brick lintels. Above the cornice, the words "SACO FIRE STATION" are centered on the façade in Art Deco-style cast stone lettering. The parapet is capped in sheet metal. The northwest corner of the building features cast iron light fixtures. The original alarm bell is centered over the central bay on the façade.

The east and west elevations are similar to each other with piers defining and highlighting the outer bays. On the west elevation, a pedestrian entrance to the fire station is located in the first bay on the north. The original wood door has turned half-balusters over the glazing to create the effect of a horse stall door (evoking the memory of horse-drawn fire engines). It too is set within a segmental arch entry. The remaining bays on the west elevation and all of the bays on the east elevation have one-over-one replacement windows on both floors. A smaller basement window is present on the rear bay of the west elevation.

The hose tower is located in the southeast corner of the building. Rising four stories, the tower has an entry door on the first floor of the east elevation with windows at each floor above. Each elevation of the fourth story has a window similar in style to those on the rest of the fire station, with no fenestration below on the north, south, and west elevations. Brick piers rise on each corner to simplified cast stone amortizements and a flat roof.

The first floor of the rear elevation of the fire station is obscured by the Street Department portion of the building. The second floor is divided much like the side elevations with the end bays defined by projecting piers. Three pairs of one-over-one replacement

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windows are set in the center of the elevation with the middle two smaller than the others. A single window is set in the western bay while the hose tower rises from the eastern side.

The Street Department garage on the rear of the fire station is set at an angle so it may be parallel to Pleasant Street. It sits on a concrete foundation with the same brick construction as the fire station and a flat roof. There are three garage bays on the west half of the façade with a pedestrian entry flanked by one-over-one windows occupying the east half. The main entry to this portion of the building has a modern metal door with in-filled transom above. The west elevation of the building has two windows, matching those on the remainder of the building. The east side has four windows: a large window near the south side of the elevation, and three smaller windows, one to the storage room of the fire department, and two lower windows lighting the basement under the Street Department garage.

INTERIOR:

The interior of the building is largely intact from its original design. The first floor of the fire station is a large open space, or apparatus room, with square columns supporting beams. The walls have a cast stone block treatment up approximately five feet with painted plaster above. The painted ceiling is the exposed concrete floor structure of the second story. The main stair is centrally located in the apparatus room, while the hose tower is situated in the rear of the room, at the southeast corner.

Adjacent to the center bay of the north wall is the dispatch office with a door on the west side and windows on the remaining two sides. At the southeast corner of the fire station, an arched doorway provides access to the former oil room and battery room. A metal door connects the oil room to a storage room to the south. These three rooms are contained within the footprint of the Street Department portion of the building, adjacent to the hose tower. A door in the rear wall of the apparatus room provides access to wooden stairs leading down to the former Street Department garage. The west half of this area is a large open space used originally as a garage. In the east wall of the garage is a door to the former commissioner's office. Original drawings show this office was divided into two spaces, but currently is one room.

The hose tower is accessed from a door on its north side. The metal stairs climb the perimeter of the tower with concrete landings. At the first landing between the first and second floors, a door opens to the apparatus room on the west side. The stairs climb to the fourth floor where a hoist and hooks are still present for hose drying.

The central stair on the first floor of the fire station garage rises to the second floor and the handrail has a streamlined character typical of the moderne-style. At the top of the stair, multi-light double doors open south to a short corridor running east-west. A large skylight, original to the design of the fire station, is located above this corridor. At either end, large rooms are accessed through double doors. The room on the western side is the former meeting hall. A modern partition wall has been installed within this room to create a small room in the southeast corner. The large room on the eastern side of the building is the former recreation room, which contains the hose tower and a door accessing it. Closet spaces are

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included in both of the large rooms flanking the stair hall. Between the large rooms, on the south side of the building, are two smaller rooms. The eastern room is the original bathroom and includes historic fixtures and period tile up to approximately six feet with painted plaster above. The western room is the original kitchen. Both are accessed from the short corridor between the large rooms.

Both large rooms have doors on the north walls entering into the main transverse corridor spanning the entire width of the building. A multi-light door also accesses this corridor from the central stair hall. A large single-pane window has been installed over the stair, next to this door. The main corridor runs in the east-west direction and contains the seven former sleeping rooms for the firemen along the front of the building. At the center, the largest room was reserved for the fire chief, with the two windows and two closets at the front of the room. The rooms flanking the fire chief's are symmetrical, with three on either side. The rooms have their own doors to the main corridor and closets. Two closets off the main corridor, between the second and third rooms on either side were the locations of the original slide poles to the first floor and were converted to closets after the poles were removed. Walls on the second floor are painted plaster with wood trim that has a combination of varnished and painted finishes. Brass thresholds and hardware are used throughout.

The basement of the fire station is accessed via the hose tower stairs. The basement space is only twelve feet wide and runs the width of the building. A concrete basin for hose washing is present on the north wall. A trapdoor in the apparatus room floor accesses a ramp down to the hose washing area of the basement. Beyond the west wall of the hose washing room is the former furnace and coal room.

A stair down from the first floor of the street department garage leads to the tool room, located under the oil room, storage, and battery room of the fire station. The former tool room is not connected to the basement of the fire station.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance

1938-1963

Significant Dates

1938-9

Significant Person (Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Beal, Lester I. (Miller & Beal, Inc.), architect, Portland, ME (1888-1966)

John H. Simonds Co., general contractor, Portland, ME

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

(Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.) (Refer to photographs)

The Saco, Maine Central Fire Station, built with federal Public Works Administration funding in 1938, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A: Community Planning and Development, and Politics/Government. It represents efforts by the local city government to provide modern and efficient fire protection services to their community, as required under the city charter and ordinances. The undertaking was accomplished with assistance from one of the several innovative federal work relief programs developed in the 1930s by the Roosevelt Administration in response to massive unemployment during the Great Depression. The period of significance begins in 1938, when the Central Fire Station was designed and built, and continues until 1963.²

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

**Criterion A:
Community Planning and Development
Government**

The Saco Central Fire Station is significant as it represents one period within the local governments ongoing effort to provide fire protection to the community. This station incorporated modern, construction techniques, up-to-date conveniences and 20th century technologies such as a new fire alarm system, which was included in the grant from the Public Works Administration which financed the project.³

Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Evolution of Saco's Fire Department

As in many Maine towns, the earliest fire-fighting efforts in Saco were made by private "companies" which owned the fire-fighting equipment and were social organizations as much as "service" organizations. Although these groups were independent of the town, they came increasingly under the control of the local government beginning in 1818 when the town began to appoint fire wardens to supervise the private "companies" of fire-fighters.⁴ Saco historian, Roy P. Fairfield notes in his book Sands, Spindles and Steeples, a History of Saco, Maine that, "Fire wardens were public officers, but they had to work hand in hand with members of the

² The end date of the period of significance has been chosen with respect to the 50 year buffer suggested by the National Register regulations.

³ "Low Bid of \$6,700 on Saco Whistle." *Biddeford Daily Journal*, February 7, 1939.

⁴ Roy P. Fairfield. *Sands, Spindles and Steeples, A History of Saco, Maine* (Portland, Maine: Progressive Printing – Manifold Co., 1956), 39.

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private associations who passed the leather buckets and manned the old pumpers 'Torrent' and 'Plumper'.⁵

With the development of massive textile mills in Saco and directly across the river in Biddeford beginning in 1845, the community grew rapidly, developing a much more urbanized center near the mills and the river. Several serious fires in the 1840s, during which the Portland steam engine came to the rescue, led to an increasing demand from citizens for an adequate fire protection system in the city. In 1845, the town fathers appointed a committee to investigate conditions and the group recommended that the town purchase new equipment, construct a hydrant system for delivery of water, and appoint a "chief engineer" to be in charge of the fire-fighters... "for democracy, good as it is, is sadly out of place at a fire."⁶ Fairfield writes, "From this moment a Fire Department took shape. The town raised funds to buy two hand tubs, the "Niagara" and the "Deluge," in 1848 and 1854. Although private companies continued to thrive, they were built around the two engines and began to receive some compensation from the town in 1852. When Saco built a new Town Hall in 1855, it included spaces on the first story for the storage of the hand pumpers and adjacent halls for the companies to meet in."

In the second half of the nineteenth century there was steady progress toward a more professional, government controlled, approach to fire-fighting. In 1862, the citizens voted to buy a steam engine and the "Saco" arrived in August of that year. It proved itself to be far superior to the old hand pumpers, which required many more men to operate and produced a far less powerful stream of water. In his book The Cities on the Saco, author Jacques M. Downs writes of Saco and Biddeford, "As colorful and industrious as the volunteer groups were, however, professional departments were increasingly imperative. It took city authority and finance to build and maintain the water systems, hydrants, new engines, reservoirs, and to provide the proper coverage of the entire city and cooperate with other municipalities to fight large fires."⁷ By the mid-1860s, Saco's town meeting form of government was proving inadequate to governing the expanding population – in 1866, the annual town meeting required four day-long sessions to get through the necessary business.⁸ Following the lead of Biddeford, which had received a city charter in 1855, Saco citizens petitioned the legislature for a city charter and received one in February, 1867. A "Fire Department" under the management of a Chief Engineer was among the city departments defined in the new charter.

Fairfield writes of the fire department under the new charter, "Gradually the chief engineers brought the situation under control, reporting improvement in discipline and efficiency. But when the city fathers purchased a second steamer in 1871, the "Governor Fairfield," they decided to sell the old tubs. Whereas the hand tubs were manned by as many as 100 men, the new engines required only twenty-five." The 1872 Atlas Map of York County shows a rectangular block labeled "Engine Ho." on the site of the current fire station on Thornton Avenue. No definitive documentation was found in researching this nomination for when this building was constructed, it appears that the horse-drawn steam pumper "Saco" was

⁵ Fairfield, 64.

⁶ Fairfield, 65.

⁷ Jacques M. Downs. *The Cities on the Saco*. (Norfolk, VA: The Donning company, 1985), 135.

⁸ Fairfield, 87.

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housed in the building on Thornton Avenue. With the sale of the hand tub pumpers in 1871, the fire department no longer needed downtown space in City Hall and began operating entirely from the Thornton Avenue site (additional equipment was kept at Camp Ellis, a seaside summer resort within the city's boundaries). In 1892, the spaces formerly used by the pumper companies in City Hall were remodeled for use as the public library. Following acquisition of the steamers, the department adopted the latest materials and methods, including linen hose (half the cost of leather and easier to maintain) and stream-spreading nozzles for improved water delivery. The city's reservoir system doubled between 1862 and the installation of a hydrant system began in the 1880s.⁹

In the 1890s, Saco installed more hydrants, improved their warning system (a perpetual issue for the city throughout the nineteenth century), and made their department completely professional. Fairfield notes, "By 1900, running with the hand tubs was a thing of the past, but the children never ceased to gaze in wonderment when the red and shiny "Governor Fairfield" wheeled around the corner of Thornton Avenue, sparks flying from the horses' hooves, black smoke gushing from the boilers."¹⁰ The city's first motorized fire engine, a Kissel, was purchased in 1918 and was also housed at the Thornton Avenue building. In 1926, an American LaFrance engine, pumping 1,000 gallons a minute, was added. The firemen rebuilt a Pierce Arrow to replace the Kissel in 1930.

Based on historic photographs, it appears that during the transition to motorized equipment little modification to the fire station was necessary to accommodate the new equipment. An article that appeared in the *Biddeford Weekly Journal* in 1923, reporting on a serious fire in the fire station, mentions that the fire started in the hay loft, indicating that horse powered equipment was still in use at that date.¹¹ An article in the same paper in January, 1925, reports on improvements made to the building following another fire in it. "Extensive alterations" included the removal of a shed on the rear of the building, removal of a hay shoot from the loft to the first floor, and painting and papering of the men's quarters on the second floor. The article notes that the removal of the hay shoot will, "...keep the lower floor free from a surplus amount of hay, only enough for immediate use being taken from the loft," documenting that horse drawn equipment was still in use.¹² In the fall of that year, another newspaper article reported on additional work to the building, including repairs to the roof of the ell on the rear of the building, "where the horses are housed", repairs to the flooring in the station proper, and work on the heating system.¹³ These articles suggest that the building was beginning to show its age.

In the 1930s the department became entirely motorized and there was increasing evidence that a new fire station was desirable, if not necessary. The *Sixty-Eighth Annual Report of the City of Saco, for the fiscal year ending January 31, 1935*, the Mayor noted in his address, "If some kind-hearted citizen would donate money enough to build a fire station this department would be in excellent condition." In the Chief Engineer's report in the publication

⁹ Fairfield, 141.

¹⁰ Fairfield, 362.

¹¹ "Headquarters of Firemen Damaged", *Biddeford Weekly Journal*. June 1, 1923.

¹² "Improvements at the Saco Fire Station", *Biddeford Weekly Journal*. January 23, 1925.

¹³ "Chief Milliken Making Big Improvement at Saco Fire Station", *Biddeford Weekly Journal*. September 11, 1925.

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he stated, "It is recommended that improvements be made at the fire station as it is not a safe place to house our apparatus and fire alarm system. It is in very bad condition."¹⁴ The following year's report stated, "All this department needs is housing facilities." The Chief noted that, "No repairs have been made to the fire station. The floor where the trucks are located is badly in need of repairs."¹⁵

Public Works Administration

The Saco Central Fire Station represents a significant investment by the city and the federal government in creating a modern facility to provide necessary services to the citizens of Saco. Additionally, its construction contributed materially to the federal PWA program goal of providing employment and stabilizing the economic downturn during the Great Depression. The building was the result of a new approach to cooperative efforts by the federal and local governments, and documents the innovative actions taken to address the situation of workers and municipal governments at a time of unprecedented unemployment and economic struggle.

The 1930's were a time of great financial stress for municipalities, due to the effects of the Great Depression and in the 1937 annual report, the Mayor of Saco stated, "I believe you realize we have before us a financial condition more serious than the City of Saco has ever faced. According to the Treasurer's Report the past administration increased our debt in the year 1935 approximately fifty-six thousand dollars and on January 31, 1936, we were over our Debt Limit."¹⁶ The Chief Engineer was apparently making do with what he could get for his department from city coffers, noting, "Floors have been repaired where the trucks are located in the station, and the buildings have been painted inside and out."¹⁷ Modest repairs continued the following year, when the Chief Engineer reported, "We have painted and papered the driver's bedrooms and the meeting hall upstairs. A new furnace has been installed to replace an old broken-down boiler, which was only half large enough for half the amount of radiators in the building." He concluded with, "I wish in closing to bring to the attention of the City Government the condition of the street floor (where the trucks are located), which is in very poor condition."¹⁸

In 1938, funding to build a new fire station was finally found in the form of federal support from the Public Works Administration (PWA). During the 1930s when the Depression was taking its toll on the national workforce, the New Deal federal assistance programs were initiated to address the massive unemployment in the country. The New Deal funded a variety of types of projects including public building construction, art work in public buildings, writing projects, and infrastructure projects like roads and sewers. By July 1933, over ten thousand Maine families had received unemployment relief money through one of these federal "make

¹⁴ *Sixty-Eighth Annual Report of the City of Saco, for the fiscal year ending January 31, 1935* (Saco, Maine: Murphy Carton Co, 1935), 55.

¹⁵ *Sixty-Ninth Annual Report of the City of Saco, for the fiscal year ending January 31, 1936* (Saco, Maine: Murphy Carton Co, 1936), 61.

¹⁶ *Seventieth Annual Report of the City of Saco, for the fiscal year ending January 31, 1937* (Saco, Maine: Murphy Carton Co, 1937), 4.

¹⁷ *Seventieth Annual Report of the City of Saco*, 62.

¹⁸ *Seventy-First Annual Report of the City of Saco, for the fiscal year ending January 31, 1938*. (Saco, Maine: Murphy Carton Co, 1938) 63-64.

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work” programs. The Public Works Administration was one of the many programs created under the New Deal legislation. Unlike the better known Works Progress Administration (WPA) and Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) programs which directly employed eligible men in government run construction projects, the PWA supported public works projects that used private construction companies. The PWA was created pursuant to the National Industrial Recovery Act to promote employment opportunities and stabilize the economic downturn. The PWA was created specifically to manage the construction of public buildings. Between 1933 and 1939, the PWA funded more than 34,000 projects in the United States and ultimately spent over \$6 billion for the labor needed on these projects.¹⁹ In Saco, two known projects of the PWA were the Central Fire Station and a sewer construction project.

Section 202 of the legislation creating the Public Works Administration stated, “The Administrator, under the direction of the President, shall prepare a comprehensive program of public works, which shall include among other things the following: (a) Construction, repair and improvement of public highways and park ways, public buildings, and any publicly owned instrumentalities and facilities;...”²⁰ The Saco Central Fire Station fell into this category and was consequently eligible for a combination of federal financing and a cash grant under the program. The PWA grant for the station was for 45% of the cost of construction. The *Biddeford Daily Journal* reported on April 29, 1939, that, “Under an agreement entered into between the city of Saco and the Public Works Administration an outright grant of \$27,000 was contributed by the federal government for the purpose of providing employment and to stimulate industry.”²¹ The same article cited the total price of the project at \$60,000, indicating that the City of Saco borrowed \$33,000 for the project. Under Section 203 of the legislation, “The rate of interest on the local bonds received by the government in exchange for loans was established at 4 per cent.”²²

Following a detailed description of the interior of the new building, the April 29 article states that the fire station “represents an outstanding example demonstrating a well coordinated agreement and good team work between the local officials, the architect, the contractor, and the Public Works Administration. A remarkable collection of more than 60 photographs by Saco newspaper photographer Lawrence Dolby, now belonging to the City of Saco, documents the construction process of the fire station and includes many photos of the now employed workers engaged in their trades.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (If appropriate.)

Architect

Lester I. Beal (1888 – 1966)

¹⁹ In 1943, Executive Order 9357 transferred the functions of the PWA to the Federal Works Agency, dissolving the PWA.

²⁰ Gayer, 90.

²¹ “New Fire Station in Saco Fire Station Ready for Dedication,” *Biddeford Daily Journal*, April 29, 1939. Pg. 8.

²² Gayer, 92.

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Lester Beal was born in Lisbon Falls, Maine in 1888 and was hired in 1906 by the firm of Miller and Mayo (William R. Miller and Raymond J. Mayo) as an apprentice draftsman. Beal attended courses at M.I.T. in 1916-17. During World War I, Beal served in the military, but returned to the firm after the war. In 1926, he was made a partner in the firm, creating Miller, Mayo & Beal. The firm lasted three years, but designed several significant buildings such as the Scarborough High School and the Good Will Home in Hinckley. In 1929, Raymond Mayo left the firm, and on December 14th of the same year, William Miller died. During this year, the architectural firm of Miller and Beal was established. Beal continued to work under this name after Miller's death. In the 1940 census, Beal is listed as "school architect." He designed many schools including Westbrook High School, South Portland High School, and Edward Little High School in Auburn. He also designed such buildings as the Library in Weld, Maine, the Strong Town Hall, and the Maine State Office Building in Augusta. Beal practiced architecture until 1960, having several partners through the years.

While Beal was a draftsman with the Portland firm of Miller and Mayo, he participated in the design of the Portland fire station and used it as a model for the Saco building fifteen years later. The direct relationship of the design of the Portland station to the design of the Saco Central Fire Station is unmistakable. The buildings have almost identical exteriors below the cornice line. The principal differences are in the use of red brick at Saco in place of the buff brick used in Portland, the elimination of one bay from the width of the building, and the addition of the projecting dispatcher booth in the center bay at Saco. The Portland building has a more elaborate treatment of the cornice and a bit more cast stone detail at the corners on the second story. Even the unusual doors, with turned half-balusters over the glazing to create the effect of a horse stall door (evoking the memory of horse-drawn fire engines), are repeated on the Saco building. The use of architectural detail to recall memories of the horse-drawn era of fire-fighting (not long past in 1938) was more pronounced at Saco, with the use of cast stone horse heads on the keystones over the arched double doors on the façade.

The new building in Saco was built on the same lot as the existing station by removing the rear ell from that building and building the new fire station directly behind it. Once the new station was completed, the old one was torn down to expose the façade of the new building to the street. Residential properties behind the old fire station were acquired and combined with the existing lot to create a lot that stretched through the block from Thornton Avenue to Pleasant Street. Additional garage bays were built facing onto Pleasant Street for the use of the Saco "Street Department" (public works). The *Biddeford Daily Journal* reported on July 26, 1938 that the demolition of the Tucker Block on Pleasant Street was underway and that it would be at least a month before excavating for the new fire station would begin.²³ Because of the change in grade between the two streets, the fire station and public works facility were separated by a half story and had no internal connection between them. Unlike the fire station façade, with its cast stone ornamentation, horse head keystones, and stylish signage in an Art Deco font, the public works facility façade was severe and unornamented.

The *Biddeford Daily Journal* reported on April 10, 1939, that, "The apparatus has been moved into the new structure, one of the finest of its kind in New England." It noted also that,

²³ "Tucker Block Being Raised," *Biddeford Daily Journal*, July 26, 1938. Pg. 8.

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"The apparatus will leave the station by one door until the antiquated fire house is torn down and a cement apron laid from the station to the sidewalk."²⁴ Eleven days later, the same newspaper reported that the destruction of the old fire station was underway and would be completed "in another week."²⁵ A photograph by Lawrence Dolby in the collection of the MacArthur Library in Biddeford shows the completed station just after the demolition of the old station with a temporary gravel apron filling the space between the station and the street.

The following excerpt from the *Charter and Ordinances of the City of Saco* shows the increased municipal control and professionalization of the fire companies in the late 19th century.

The Charter and Ordinances of the City of Saco, together with the Act Establishing the Municipal Court also the Rules and Orders of the City Council.
Biddeford, Maine: Butler & Place, Book and Job Steam Printers, 1867.

Subsequent City Ordinances, No. 1.
An Ordinance Establishing a Fire Department.

Be it ordained by the City Council of the City of Saco, as follows:

Section 1. The fire department of the city of Saco shall consist of three fire engineers, to be chosen annually, and such engine men and hook and ladder men, as the city council may from time to time direct and find necessary.

Section 2. Said fire-engineers shall be denominated chief engineer and 1st and 2nd assistant engineers, and be elected as such, and shall possess and have the same powers and duties, except as otherwise provided in this ordinance and they shall have all the powers conferred upon fire-wards and fire-engineers by the laws of the state.

Section 3. The engineers shall have the charge and direction of all engine and hook and ladder companies, and the fire apparatus and reservoirs of the city, and see that the companies are kept in an efficient condition as to members and drill, and that all the fire apparatus of the city is in good working order and condition, and report any deficiency found in any of these particulars, to the city council.

Section 4. Each engine company shall consist of at least forty able, efficient and reliable men, of not less than eighteen years of age, except the steam fire engine company, which shall consist of at least twenty men of not less than eighteen years of age. Each engine company shall choose annually a foreman and assistant foreman, who shall be at least twenty-one years of age, and a clerk and steward, and may adopt such regulations and rules for the government of the companies as they may deem expedient, subject to the approbation of the engineers and mayor and aldermen, and a copy of such rules shall be deposited with the city clerk.

²⁴ "Apparatus In New Station," *Biddeford Daily Journal*, April 10, 1939. Pg. 3.

²⁵ "Tearing Down Old Station," *Biddeford Daily Journal*, April 21, 1939. Pg. 3.

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Section 5. It shall be the duty of the foreman of each company to deposit with the city clerk, upon the first Mondays of January, April, July and October of each year, a true and correct list of all the members of his company, together with the age of each, and the street and number of his residence.

Section 6. It shall be the duty of the engineers, at least once in each month, and immediately after any fire, to examine into the condition of the fire companies and apparatus, and cause them to be put immediately into an efficient condition; and may for this purpose order out the companies, with their engines, to be worked in their presence, if they shall deem it necessary.

Section 7. It shall be the duty of the members of the fire department whenever a fire occurs and an alarm is given, to repair with their apparatus immediately to the fire, and use their best endeavors to extinguish the same, under the direction of the engineers.

Section 8. In all cases of fire the chief engineer, and in his absence the assistant next in rank, who may be present, shall have the command of the whole department; and in their absence, this duty shall devolve upon the foreman who shall be senior in years.

Section 9. Each hook and ladder company shall consist of at least thirty men, of not less than eighteen years of age, and shall have all the powers and privileges as to organization, and be subject to all the duties granted and imposed upon engine companies.

Section 10. The fire department shall receive such compensation as the city council may determine from time to time, and no payment of any kind shall be made for any service rendered, or other expense accruing on account of it, except the same shall be approved by a majority of the board of engineers, unless upon the direct and specific direction and order of the city council, upon application therefore.

Section 11. The engineers may make such rules and regulations for governing the department at fires, and for the care of the fire apparatus, and for working the machines, as they may deem necessary, subject to the approval of the city council.

Section 12. This ordinance shall take effect upon its approval by the mayor; and all ordinances and parts of ordinances, inconsistent with this ordinance are hereby repealed.

[Passed August 16, 1867, and approved August 17, 1867.]

Section 9 of the original charter was removed by 1892 as hook and ladder companies were absorbed into the fire department. Section 11 of the 1892 charter specifies that "horses owned by the city and used in Highway District No. 4, shall be used to haul the fire apparatus belonging to the city at time of fire and at such other times as the chief engineer may direct, and no other horses or teams shall be employed for such purposes, except the same be authorized by vote of the city council."²⁶ The 1892 charter further emphasizes the role of the joint standing committee as having the control over the fire department and responsibility of

²⁶ *Charter and Ordinances of the City of Saco*, 1892, 49.

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communication between the fire department and city council. Section 12 in the 1892 charter states: "The joint standing committee on Fire Department, shall make all necessary contracts for supplies, repairs, or labor for said department, and shall certify to all bills for the same, before they are allowed by the Committee of Accounts.²⁷" Many of the remaining sections of this charter were adjusted to include a statement regarding the control of the joint standing committee. In addition,

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Biddeford and Saco Directory. Boston, Massachusetts: W. A. Greenough & Co., 1875, 1877, 1884, 1894, 1902, 1911.

Biddeford and Saco Directory 1920-1921, 1922-1923. Portland, Maine: Portland Directory Company Publishers, 1923.

Biddeford, Saco and Old Orchard Beach Directory July 1932, 1934, 1936, 1937. Portland, Maine: H. A. Manning Company.

Biddeford Daily Journal. Biddeford Maine.

"Tucker Block being razed." Vol. LIV, No. 173: July 26, 1938, p. 8

"Extend time on station." Vol LV, No. 27: February 2, 1939, p. 8.

"Low bid of \$6,700 on Saco whistle." Vol. LV, No. 31: February 7, 1939, p. 8.

"Saco alarms to sound on whistle here." Vol. LV, No. 54: March 6, 1939, p. 8.

"Interior Views Of New Central Station Of Saco Fire Dept." Vol LV, No. 59: March 11, 1939, p. 8.

"Apparatus in new station." Vol. LV, No. 84: April 10, 1939, p. 3.

"Tearing down old station." Vol. LV, No. 93: April 21, 1939, p. 7.

"New fire station ready in Saco for dedication." Vol. LV, No. 100: April 29, 1939, p. 8.

Biddeford Weekly Journal. Biddeford, Maine.

²⁷ *Charter and Ordinances of the City of Saco*, 1892, 49.

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"Saco fire department: complete change in the personel Monday." March 22, 1912, p. 8.

"Headquarters of firemen damaged." Vol. LXXVIII, No. 33: June 1, 1923, p. 1.

"Unable to solve origin of fire at Saco station." Vol. LXXVII, No. 36: June 22, 1923, p. 1.

"Saco fire headquarters threatened by blaze in barn owned by the city." Vol. LXXIV, No. 49: September 19, 1924, p. 1.

"Improvements at the Saco fire station." February 13, 1925, p. 2.

"Chief Milliken Making Big Improvement at Saco Fire Station." October 16, 1925, p. 2.

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Directory of Biddeford and Saco 1929-1930. Portland, Maine: Fred. L. Tower Companies, 1929.

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Lewiston Daily Sun. Lewiston, Maine.

"Chimney blaze at Saco fire station." Vol. XLV: March 8, 1937, p. 1.

"Saco and Biddeford," *York County 1872.* Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Sanford, Everts & Co., 1872.

Scully, Jeffrey A. *The Old Photographys Series: Saco.* Augusta, Maine: Alan Sutton, Inc., 1994.

Saco Central Fire Station

Name of Property

York, Maine

County and State

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than one acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84:

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Saco Central Fire Station

York, Maine

Name of Property

County and State

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- 1. Zone: 19 Easting: 383035 Northing: 4816978
- 2. Zone: Easting: Northing:
- 3. Zone: Easting: Northing:
- 4. Zone: Easting: Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary for the Saco Central Fire Station begins at a utility pole between the front parking lot of the fire station and an ATM drive through. From this point, the boundary follows Thornton Avenue northward to a next utility pole, where it then turns southwest, following the line of an adjacent building (this is the historic property line). Approximately mid-way down the northwest elevation of the fire station, the boundary turns perpendicular to the building and extends southeast to the exterior wall. The boundary then continues southwest to Pleasant Street. The boundary continues southeast until it is at a 90 degree angle with the point of origin, at which point, the boundary continues northeast to meet the point of origin. (Portion of Saco Tax Map 038, Lot 084.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary for the Saco Central Fire Station is the historic lot on which the fire station was constructed. The lot owned by the city consists of two formerly separate lots that were joined when the City purchased the former bank building to the northwest. The fire station sits on the portion to the southeast.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Scott Hanson & Matthew Corbett
organization: Sutherland Conservation & Consulting
street & number: 295 Water Street, Suite 209
city or town: Augusta state: Maine zip code: 04330
e-mail: scotthanson@sutherlandcc.net
telephone: 207.620.6291
date: October 5, 2012

Saco Central Fire Station

Name of Property

York, Maine

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Saco Central Fire Station
City or Vicinity: Saco
County: York State: Maine
Photographer: Scott Hanson & Matthew Corbett
Date Photographed: September 27, 2012

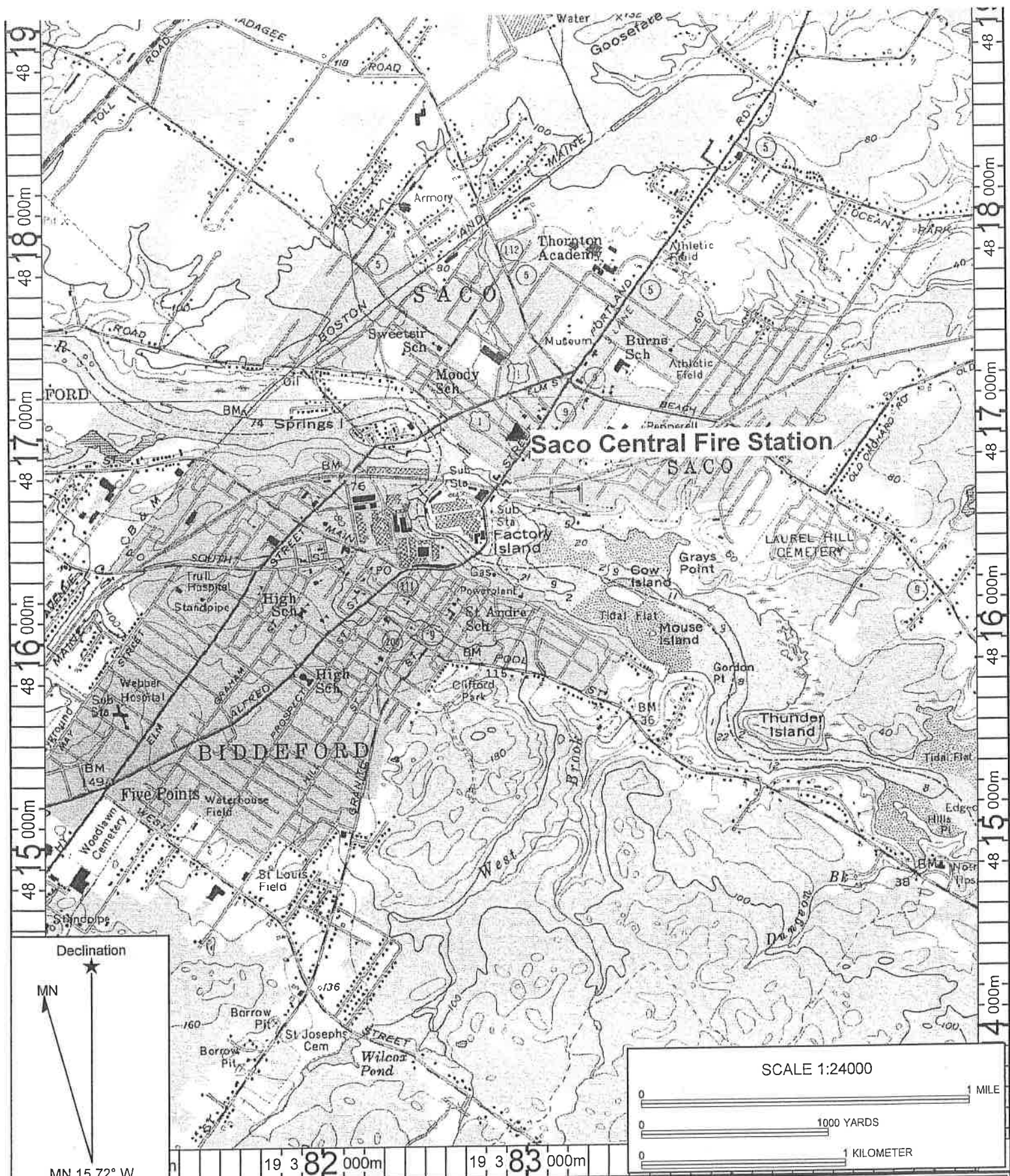
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 16 *ME_YorkCounty_SacoCentralFireStation_0001.tif*
View west at the east façade and south elevation of the Saco Central Fire Station.
- 2 of 16 *ME_YorkCounty_SacoCentralFireStation_0002.tif*
View east at the rear elevation of the Saco Central Fire Station with the attached one-story Street Department garage.

- 3 of 16 *ME_YorkCounty_SacoCentralFireStation_0003.tif*
View south at the main pedestrian entry with original door.
- 4 of 16 *ME_YorkCounty_SacoCentralFireStation_0004.tif*
View south along the front (east) façade with dispatch booth at center.
- 5 of 16 *ME_YorkCounty_SacoCentralFireStation_0005.tif*
Detail view of a typical cast stone horse head above the bay doors on the front façade.
- 6 of 16 *ME_YorkCounty_SacoCentralFireStation_0006.tif*
Detail view of historic iron light fixture at the north end of the front façade.
- 7 of 16 *ME_YorkCounty_SacoCentralFireStation_0007.tif*
View southeast in the fire truck bays of the fire station with staircase to the second story at center.
- 8 of 16 *ME_YorkCounty_SacoCentralFireStation_0008.tif*
View northeast in the former Street Department garage with door at center to the fire station apparatus room.
- 9 of 16 *ME_YorkCounty_SacoCentralFireStation_0009.tif*
Detail view west of arched door from the fire truck bays of the fire station to the former oil room and battery room.
- 10 of 16 *ME_YorkCounty_SacoCentralFireStation_0010.tif*
View west from the recreation room through the corridor leading to the former hall.
- 10 of 16 *ME_YorkCounty_SacoCentralFireStation_0011.tif*
View east down the main corridor of the second floor with sleeping rooms on the right and community rooms on the left.
- 12 of 16 *ME_YorkCounty_SacoCentralFireStation_0011.tif*
View east in a typical sleeping room on the second floor.
- 13 of 16 *ME_YorkCounty_SacoCentralFireStation_0013.tif*
View west from the top of the central stair.
- 14 of 16 *ME_YorkCounty_SacoCentralFireStation_0014.tif*
View south in the bathroom with original fixtures and tiling.
- 15 of 16 *ME_YorkCounty_SacoCentralFireStation_0015.tif*
View northeast in the basement at the concrete hose washing basin.
- 16 of 16 *ME_YorkCounty_SacoCentralFireStation_0016.tif*
View east near the top of the hose tower showing hose hoists equipment.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden



**SACO CENTRAL FIRE STATION
YORK COUNTY, MAINE**

Name: BIDDEFORD
Date: 10/30/12
Scale: 1 inch = 2,000 ft.

UTM: 19 / 383035 / 4916978
NAD 27

SACO FIRE STATION

SACO
250
ANNIVERSARY







OPEN
DOOR
FOR
EMERGENCY



























UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Saco Central Fire Station
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MAINE, York

DATE RECEIVED: 3/01/13 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 3/22/13
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 4/08/13 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 4/17/13
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13000168

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 4-16-13 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



PAUL R. LEPAGE
GOVERNOR

MAINE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
55 CAPITOL STREET
65 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333



26 February 2013

Keeper of the National Register
National Park Service 2280
National Register of Historic Places
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, NW,
Washington D.C. 20005

To Whom It May Concern:

Enclosed please find two (2) new National Register nominations for individual properties in the State of Maine:

Saco Central Fire Station, York County
Phi Gamma Delta House, Penobscot County

If you have any questions relating to these nominations, please do not hesitate to contact me at (207) 787-2132 x 2.

Sincerely,

Christi A. Mitchell
Architectural Historian

Enc.