

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

DEC 2 1989

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Maine Publicity Bureau Building  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number 3 St. John Street  not for publication  
city, town Portland  vicinity  
state Maine code ME county Cumberland code 005 zip code 04102

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	_____ buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official: *Janet S. Peterson* Date: 12/15/89  
Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. Entered in the  
National Register  
 See continuation sheet. *Melora Byers* 1/26/90

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet. \_\_\_\_\_

determined not eligible for the National Register. \_\_\_\_\_

removed from the National Register. \_\_\_\_\_

other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper *[Signature]* Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade/Business

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/Not In Use

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brickwalls Brick

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roof Stone/Slateother Wooden Cupola

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**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The Maine Publicity Bureau Building is a handsome one-and-a-half-story Colonial Revival style brick structure comprised of a five-bay central block and projecting one-story gable front wings. A cupola rises above the main building which also features gable and chimneys. The publicity bureau, which is presently vacant, occupies a lot on the west side of Portland in close proximity to major thoroughfares. Wide concrete steps lead up to the building which rests on a slightly elevated site.

The building's front (west) elevation is dominated by the mass and detailing of the main block. This symmetrically composed unit features an ornate broken segmental pediment supported by columns with Scamazzi capitals. Paneled reveals frame the two-leaf door and its transom. The flanking nine-over-nine double-hung sash windows, which are located below smooth granite panels, have flat lintels with pronounced keystones. (These windows are presently covered with protective plywood.) A thin cornice with scroll modillions carries across the elevation. Two round arched dormers are located above and astride the entrance and also frame the cupola. This latter feature has a rusticated square base with a clock on its front side, an octagonal belfry that has round arched louvered openings on four sides and a dome roof. Raking parapets rise to the broad chimneys, and the roof is covered with slate. There are five windows and a door on the rear elevation as well as a broad shed dormer. A bulls eye window punctuates the north chimney at a point below the cornice.

Forming a "U" with the principal block, the low one-story wings are detailed with quoins and centrally-located Palladian windows in brick surrounds. They extend across the gable end of the principal building but not beyond its rear elevation. Each wing has five symmetrically placed nine-over-nine windows along the side elevation, one on the wall surface that faces the entrance and one on the rear.

Inside, the main block has a vestibule that projects into a large open space. To the right of the vestibule is an area delineated by a low paneled wall; to the left is a handsomely detailed fireplace with a paneled over-mantel; and in front is the main information counter. This room, whose floor is tiled, is fully paneled in darkly stained trim which, in combination with the ornate fireplace, lends the whole a rich Colonial Revival appearance.

 See continuation sheet

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## **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

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A stair with turned balusters located at the southeast corner of the room leads to the simply finished second floor rooms.

The north wing contains an office in the west end which has paneled wainscot and a heavily molded door surround. Public restrooms adjoin this room to the east. Simply finished offices occupy the south wing.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Entertainment/Recreation

Period of Significance

1936-39

Significant Dates

1936

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Thomas, John P., Architect

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Constructed in 1936 from plans drawn by Portland architect John Pickering Thomas, A.I.A., the Maine Publicity Bureau Building is significant not only for its refined architectural statement but equally for its association with the development of the tourist industry in Maine. For these reasons it meets National Register criteria A and C.

As early as the mid-nineteenth century Maine had become a destination for summer visitors. These travelers were taking advantage of newly established railroad and steamship lines to reach a variety of locations where the State's scenic beauty could be experienced first hand. This seasonal influx of tourists gave rise to a new industry as well as a variety of resort areas ranging from middle class meccas such as Old Orchard Beach to places like Bar Harbor where sprawling "cottages" were built by the swelling ranks of the wealthy. This pattern continued unabated up to World War I.

In 1921, reacting to what they sensed was a need to reassert the State's tourist business, industry leaders met in Portland where they established the Maine Publicity Bureau. This "privately supported, state-wide, non-profit, non-partisan body" was given as its primary mission "the promotion and development of Maine's agricultural, industrial, and recreational resources." It proposed to achieve these goals by operating an office through which information could be gathered and disseminated. The Bureau was listed in the 1922-23 edition of the Maine State Year-Book with offices at 676 Congress Street in Portland. Additional information centers were subsequently established in Kittery (York Corner), Bangor, and Fryeburg.

By the mid-1930s the Bureau had outgrown its Congress Street office and was involved in selecting a site upon which a building designed especially for its needs could be erected. It chose a parcel of property along Route One at the corner of Danforth and St. John Streets and at the southern gateway to Portland. Title to the lot was transferred to the State which subsequently erected the existing building with \$28,000 in WPA funds. The

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Bachelor, Peter D. "An Historical Overview of the Maine Publicity Bureau."  
Unpublished material on file at the Maine Historic Preservation Commission,  
Augusta.

John P. Thomas Architect File. Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta.

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

**Specify repository:** \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 1.25

**UTM References**

A 

1	9
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3	9	7	0	3	0
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4	8	3	2	9	2	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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B 

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Zone Easting Northing

D 

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See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The nominated property occupies the City of Portland tax map 70, Block C, Lot 2.

See continuation sheet

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary embraces the building and entire city lot historically associated with this property.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Kirk F. Mohny, Architectural Historian  
organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date 10/89  
street & number 55 Capitol Street telephone (207) 289-2132  
city or town Augusta, state Maine zip code 04333

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**National Register of Historic Places  
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State leased the facility to the Bureau until 1979 when new quarters were secured in Hallowell.

Having been built especially for and used by an organization whose sole mission was to promote Maine as a destination for tourists and a location for business, this building derives significance by virtue of its association with an important aspect of the State's twentieth century development.

Architecturally, the intact building is representative of John P. Thomas' skill in executing the Colonial Revival style. Thomas (1886-1944) was born in Portland. He attended Milton Academy in Massachusetts, and received his A. B. and graduate degree from Harvard in 1909 and 1912, respectively. His initial professional experience was as a draftsman for a number of firms in Boston and New York prior to his service in the U. S. Navy during World War I. Between 1919-22 he was a partner in the Portland architectural firm of Poor and Thomas, and continued on his own after Poor's death in 1922. From that point until his retirement, Thomas had a prolific career with a variety of commissions mostly in the Portland area. The Publicity Bureau commission came in the latter years of his practice and it illustrates his refined sense of overall massing and detail that distinguishes his work.