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### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

|                  |             |
|------------------|-------------|
| STATE:           | Maine       |
| COUNTY:          | Kennebec    |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY |             |
| ENTRY DATE       | JUL 18 1974 |

#### 1. NAME

COMMON:  
**Old Post Office**

AND/OR HISTORIC:

#### 2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Water Street**

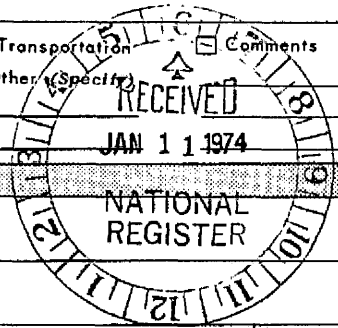
CITY OR TOWN:  
**Augusta**

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:  
**1st: Hon: Peter N. Kyros**

STATE: **Maine**      CODE: **23**      COUNTY: **Kennebec**      CODE: **011**

#### 3. CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY<br>(Check One)   | OWNERSHIP  | STATUS   | ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC  |
|---|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building<br><input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure<br><input type="checkbox"/> Object | <input type="checkbox"/> Public<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private<br><input type="checkbox"/> Both                                    | Public Acquisition:<br><input type="checkbox"/> In Process<br><input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied<br><input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied<br><input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress |
| PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)  |  |  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial<br><input type="checkbox"/> Educational<br><input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment             | <input type="checkbox"/> Government<br><input type="checkbox"/> Industrial<br><input type="checkbox"/> Military<br><input type="checkbox"/> Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Park<br><input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence<br><input type="checkbox"/> Religious<br><input type="checkbox"/> Scientific | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)   |



#### 4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
**Mr. Andrew Innes**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**% Minuteman Insurance Company**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Concord**

STATE:  
**Massachusetts**

#### 5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:  
**Kennebec County Courthouse**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**95 State Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Augusta**

STATE:  
**Maine**

CODE:  
**23**

#### 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
**None**

DATE OF SURVEY:       Federal       State       County       Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:      STATE:      CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: \_\_\_\_\_

COUNTY: \_\_\_\_\_

ENTRY NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

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JUL 18 1974

7. DESCRIPTION

|           |   |  |                                |   |                                |                                    |
|-----------|---|--|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| CONDITION | (Check One)                                 |  |                                |   |                                |                                    |
|           | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair  | <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated             | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins | <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed |
|           | (Check One)                                 |  |                                | (Check One)                                       |                                |                                    |
|           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered | <input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered       | <input type="checkbox"/> Moved | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site |                                |                                    |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The U.S. Post Office and Court House in Augusta is a massive rectangular granite building in the late nineteenth century Romanesque Revival style. The structure is built primarily of rough granite with finished details. The facade extends at length on Water Street. Its composition is symmetrical with a large central tower flanked on either side by a wall and a smaller tower. At the right there is a later twentieth century addition of three bays.

The Post Office is entered on the first story of the central tower through a Romanesque arch supported on either side by a semi-detached Romanesque column. To either side of the entrance is a colonnade with three Romanesque arches supported by Romanesque columns. At either corner of the main facade is a projecting tower with three Romanesque arched windows.

The symmetry of the first story is continued on the second. The central tower contains a three part vertical rectangular window. To either side is a series of three vertical rectangular windows. In front of each of these is a balustrade ornamented by three panels of pierced circles. The panels are in line with the windows. Each of the two facade corner towers has three rectangular windows on the second story.

Between the second and third stories is a cornice of brackets and horizontal molding which surrounds the building. The third level of the Post Office is actually a half story within a hipped roof. The central tower possesses a small three part window on the facade and an arched window above it. Over this are placed three small rectangular windows. These windows also appear on the side walls at this level. At either side of the tower is a gabled dormer with an arched Romanesque window and Romanesque trim. Beyond this is a rectangular chimney with a bracketed cornice near the top. The roof of each corner tower is conical and is topped by a metal pinnacle.

The central tower rises a level above the rest of the Post Office. The final stage is circular with an opening on four sides. Each opening contains two Romanesque columns. A bracketed cornice surrounds the top of the tower. Like the corner towers, the roof of the central one is conical and has a metal pinnacle at the top. The roof of the entire building is covered with slate.

The left side elevation is composed of three parts, a small rear corner tower, the side wall itself, and a large front tower already described as part of the facade. The small rear corner tower has two stories, each of which possesses two windows and a bracketed cornice. Like the other towers on the building, this one has a conical roof with a metal pinnacle at the top. The first story of the side wall contains a door and a window, both of which are capped with Romanesque arches. The sheltered mail ramp is a twentieth century addition. The second story has

( See Continuation Sheet )

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

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|--------------------|-------------|
| STATE<br>Maine     |             |
| COUNTY<br>Kennebec |             |
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(Number all entries)

7. DESCRIPTION

two rectangular windows. The bracketed cornice appears between the second and third levels. At the third level is a gabled Romanesque dormer identical to the two on the facade.

At the far right is a small two story twentieth century granite addition. Its three bay facade has an arched central entrance and an arched window at either side on the first story. The second story possesses three rectangular windows. The bracketed cornice is continued from the main facade.

Augusta's U.S. Post Office and Court House is basically unchanged from its construction in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The powerful architectural forms of the Romanesque Revival are dramatically expressed in this monumental granite building.



**3. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

|  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century            | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1886-1890

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

|  |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>adaptive use</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |  | _____   |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

The U. S. Post Office and Court House in Augusta is the most monumental example of Romanesque Revival architecture surviving in Maine. The building is also one of the state's most successful cases of adaptive use. When it ceased its Federal functions in the 1960's, it was creatively reused for a bank, a restaurant, and offices.

Federal postal service started at Augusta in 1794 with the appointment of James Burton as first postmaster. Although the city became the capitol of Maine in 1827, it did not have a substantial separate postal building of its own until the present structure was erected in the late nineteenth century. This was built in response to the growing volume of mail being sent from Augusta because of the city's booming publishing business. For example, Augusta was the headquarters of William H. Gannett's weekly family magazine Comfort, which enjoyed a nationwide circulation of more than a million copies by 1892.

In February of 1885, Congress appropriated funds to begin the Augusta Post Office and Court House project. A centrally located site at Water and Wirthrop Street was purchased in October of 1885 for \$17,500. Mifflin E. Bell, (1846-1904) Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department, planned the building in the Romanesque Revival style made popular by the works of H. H. Richardson (1838-1886). Bell's picturesque designs with its great tower assymetrically placed at the northwestern corner was published in the American Architect and Building News on July 17, 1886. Construction started that summer. Bell served as Treasury Department architect from 1883 to July of 1887. The project was carried almost to its completion by Bell's successor, William A. Freret (1833-?) who held the post into 1889.

Augusta's U.S. Post Office and Court House was finished and occupied in January of 1890. Constructed of Hallowell granite, it had cost a total of \$178,281. A year later on January 28, 1891, the Portland Transcript described the building in the following terms:

Augusta has one of the most picturesque public buildings that the government has bestowed upon any city of the Union. Built of the beautiful Hallowell granite which is more attractive to the eye than any marble, it is set off with all the graces that

(See Continuation Sheet)

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

American Architecture and Building News, #560 U.S. Court House and Post Office, Augusta, Maine, July 17, 1886.

Augusta Centennial Souvenir, Augusta, The Daily Kennebec Journal, June 9, 1897

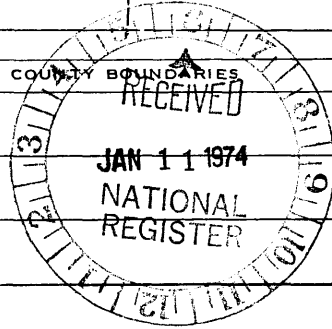
**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

| LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES<br>DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY |                         |                         | O<br>R | LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES<br>DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY<br>OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES |                         |  |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------|---|-------------------------|--|
| CORNER   | LATITUDE                | LONGITUDE               |        | LATITUDE  | LONGITUDE               |  |
|  | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds |        | Degrees Minutes Seconds   | Degrees Minutes Seconds |  |
| NW   | ° ' "                   | ° ' "                   |        | 44 ° 18 ' 51 "  | 69 ° 46 ' 28 "          |  |
| NE   | ° ' "                   | ° ' "                   |        |   |                         |  |
| SE   | ° ' "                   | ° ' "                   |        |   |                         |  |
| SW   | ° ' "                   | ° ' "                   |        |   |                         |  |

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: two acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|--------|------|--------|------|
|        |      |        |      |
|        |      |        |      |
|        |      |        |      |
|        |      |        |      |



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE: Farle G. Shettleworth, Jr.

ORGANIZATION: Maine Historic Preservation Commission DATE: December, 1973

STREET AND NUMBER: 31 Western Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: Augusta STATE: Maine CODE: 23

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name James H. Mundy

Title State Historic Preservation Officer

Date January 7, 1974

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

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

AKWortensen  
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 7/8/74

ATTEST:  
Compton  
Keeper of the National Register

Date 7.17.74

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*(Continuation Sheet)*

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*(Number all entries)*

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

modern architecture can lend it, with none of the stiff, conventional, carefully balanced lines of the public buildings of former days.

However, Mifflin E. Bell's assymetrical composition, so praised in 1891, was to be short lived. During the tenure of James Knox Taylor (1857-1929) as Treasury Department architect from October, 1897 to mid-1912, the Augusta Post Office and Court House was enlarged. The tower at the Northwest corner became the central feature with the northern wall receiving a wing identical to the southern section of the building. The tower became the major entrance and the central point of a symmetrical design which belonged to the Beaux Artes style. Yet Bell's details and material were retained. A small and sympathetic later twentieth century addition was made to the south wall. It used architectural features and granite compatible to the rest of the building.

The U.S. Post Office and Court House was utilized into the 1960's when it was replaced by a larger Federal Building. Fortunately, the government located the new structure on another site and sold the Post Office as surplus property to a private interest which has successfully adapted it for a bank, a restaurant, and offices. Thus, the exterior integrity of this monumental landmark has been preserved, while the interior continues to serve the community of which it has been so long a part.

