

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED DEC 11 1985

DATE ENTERED JAN 21 1986

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

United States Post Office

AND/OR COMMON

Holyoke Main Post Office

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

650 Dwight Street

N/A  NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Holyoke

N/A VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First Congressional District

STATE

Massachusetts 01040

CODE  
0500

COUNTY

Hampden and Hampshire 013

CODE

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERICAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

New England Field Real Estate and Buildings Office

STREET & NUMBER

1050 Waltham Street

CITY, TOWN

Lexington

N/A VICINITY OF

STATE

Massachusetts 02173

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Hampden City Hall of Justice

STREET & NUMBER

50 State Street

CITY, TOWN

Springfield

STATE

Massachusetts 01103

**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 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

The Main Post Office in Holyoke, Massachusetts is located on the northern edge of the Central Business District of Holyoke in the heart of a diverse blend of activities. Commercial ventures such as banks, department stores, funeral homes, a theater, and an auto dealership are in the immediate vicinity along with a church, a school, and a number of apartment buildings. Most are three and four story structures. Apartment buildings were once located where the Post Office stands today.

At the time of its construction in July of 1933, it was considered a "modernistic" building. It occupies approximately 20,500 square feet of the one acre lot. The central portion of the building is two stories in height with one story wings on either side. The exterior facade is limestone with five windows, the middle three being two stories in height.

This large limestone edifice has two entrances located at opposite ends of the two story main section of the Post Office. The original bronze frame and transom is complimented by the new bronze colored aluminum and glass doors. Framing each set of doors is a simple yet dominating pediment. Also above the transom of each entrance is a carved panel depicting an eagle with wings spread. Between the two entrances are three sections of an "industrial type" metal frame and glass windows. The windows start at approximately writing table height in the lobby and continue through to offices on the second floor. At the second floor level is an opaque spandrel panel. The windows are set in a recess which step back five times at the jambs and once at the head and sill. The sill section protrudes beyond the face of the building to the face of the granite foundation which runs continuous but slopes in at sections that are not under windows. The platform and stairs at the entrance are pink granite, as is the foundation. Two large plinths sit on either side of stairs and the stairs warp around them in the front. The handrail is an unornamented brass pipe rail. Above the entrance and windows of the main section is carved section of this impressive entablature is the name of the facility and on either side of it is a small carved section depicting birds flying over the earth. The "cap" of the building is a zigzag pattern which recesses back to the fascia strip at the roof level. The two wings are similar but are one story.

The front doors lead into the vestibule and lobby. Directly in back of the postal screen is the main post office workroom, some 79 feet by 186 feet long, lighted by its large windows and originally, by generous skylights. These skylights have been covered over due to leaking and energy efficiency. At the rear of the workroom are toilet accommodations, smaller workrooms, and two stairways to the basement at the employee's entrance. Four double doors lead from the central vestibule to the large mailing platform with its protective marquise.

The second floor occupies approximately 5,400 square feet with wood and glass partition offices that were once utilized by selective service agencies, civil service, and post office inspectors. Due to the lack of a second means

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

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

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet HOLYOKE MAIN POST OFFICE

Item number 7

Page 2

of egress, this area is virtually unused today. Its only access is served from a staircase on the northwest end of the lobby.

The lobby is not in as pristine a condition as is the exterior. The floor and base are terrazzo, with a marble wainscot. The wainscot extends above the service windows and post boxes and is carved and painted with gold leaf telling how each section is utilized. The pediment at the Postmaster's door is also marble with his title carved and painted gold. Around the pediment is a mural done in 1936 by Ross Moffett depicting a landing by early settlers. At the ceiling is an elaborated molded plaster frieze which is painted.

The building is in good condition. Alterations have been minimal and incorporated as the need for energy efficiency for working conditions dictate. All of the original steel and plate glass windows have been replaced with bronze, metal frame, insulated ones that do not detract from the original intent of the building design. In 1981, a new roofing membrane was installed and in a previous year a lift was added to the loading platform. Part of the basement has been converted into a garage for mail delivery vehicles.

# 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899        | <input 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 Designed: 1933 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Tremaglio Brothers, Builders  
 Began Constr. Nov. 1933 and Completed 1934 George P.B. Alderman & Co. of Holyoke and Thomas M. James & Co. of Boston, MA

The Main Post Office on Dwight Street in Holyoke, Massachusetts is a fine example fo Art Deco style of Architecture.

Considered a modernistic building of its time, the Holyoke Post Office was styled after the Art Deco Folger-Shakespeare library in Washington, D.C., then one of the new prize winning showplaces of the capitol.

The building was designed to be dependent on simple architectural effect rather than on cornices, columns, and lavish ornamentation. Such an effect is produced through the use of proportion, stone jointing, slight breaks, and shallow reveals. The use of lines and uncomplicated carvings gives one a sense of appreciation of puristic design. Given its immense size, it would be very easy to become overwhelmed with an abundance of complex and inappropriate detail.

From its initial conception, the building has been recognized and appreciated by the general public of Holyoke. When construction funding appeared to be a limiting factor, the architects, George P.B. Alderman and Company of Holyoke and Thomas M. James and Company of Boston, proposed that the rear be constructed of brick rather than limestone; a savings of \$4,000.00. This sparked a large outcry that swept the front and editorial pages of local newspapers. Appeals of "the New England tradition of building a house four-square" and committees dedicated to the beautification of Holyoke's buildings besieged Mayor Henry J. Toepfert's office. Fortunately a low bid from the Tremaglio Brothers Contracting Company of Waterbury, Connecticut ensured the four-sided limestone construction.

The site location was also a controversial issue on the local and national scene. The present site at Dwight Street was originally opposed by the Mayor's office and several citizens groups, each with their own prejudices. Some twenty (20) sites were considered and only when the Treasury Department threatened to withdraw the entire project did the Dwight Street site win unanimous approval.

The Main Post Office building at Holyoke is a significant example of the Art Deco style and construction. The entry of this building on the National Register of Historic Places will aid the preservation of a unique building in revitalized streetscapes of Holyoke.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

History of Post Office Construction 1900-1940, July, 1982

Craig, Lois, ed., The Federal Presence: Architecture, Politics and Symbols in the United States Government Building, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1979

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1

UTM REFERENCES

|   |      |                  |                     |   |      |         |          |
|---|------|------------------|---------------------|---|------|---------|----------|
| A | 1, 8 | 6, 9, 7, 2, 6, 0 | 4, 6, 7, 5, 4, 3, 0 | B |      |         |          |
|   | ZONE | EASTING          | NORTHING            |   | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |
| C |      |                  |                     | D |      |         |          |

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Located between Chestnut and Elm Streets along Dwight Street, the site is rectangular with the 110'-6" x 190'-0" building. Frontage along Dwight Street is approximately 260' with 210'± on Elm Street and 180'± on Chestnut Street.

## 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

Robert W. St. John, Architect

ORGANIZATION

SULLIVAN DESIGN GROUP, INC.

DATE

July 15, 1985

STREET & NUMBER

44 Adams Street

TELEPHONE

(617) 848-1545

CITY OR TOWN

Braintree

STATE

Massachusetts

# 12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES

NO

NONE

*Valerie A. Talmage* 9/19/85  
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is  National  State  Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE *James T. Coe* Director, Office of Real Estate

DATE 12/6/85

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

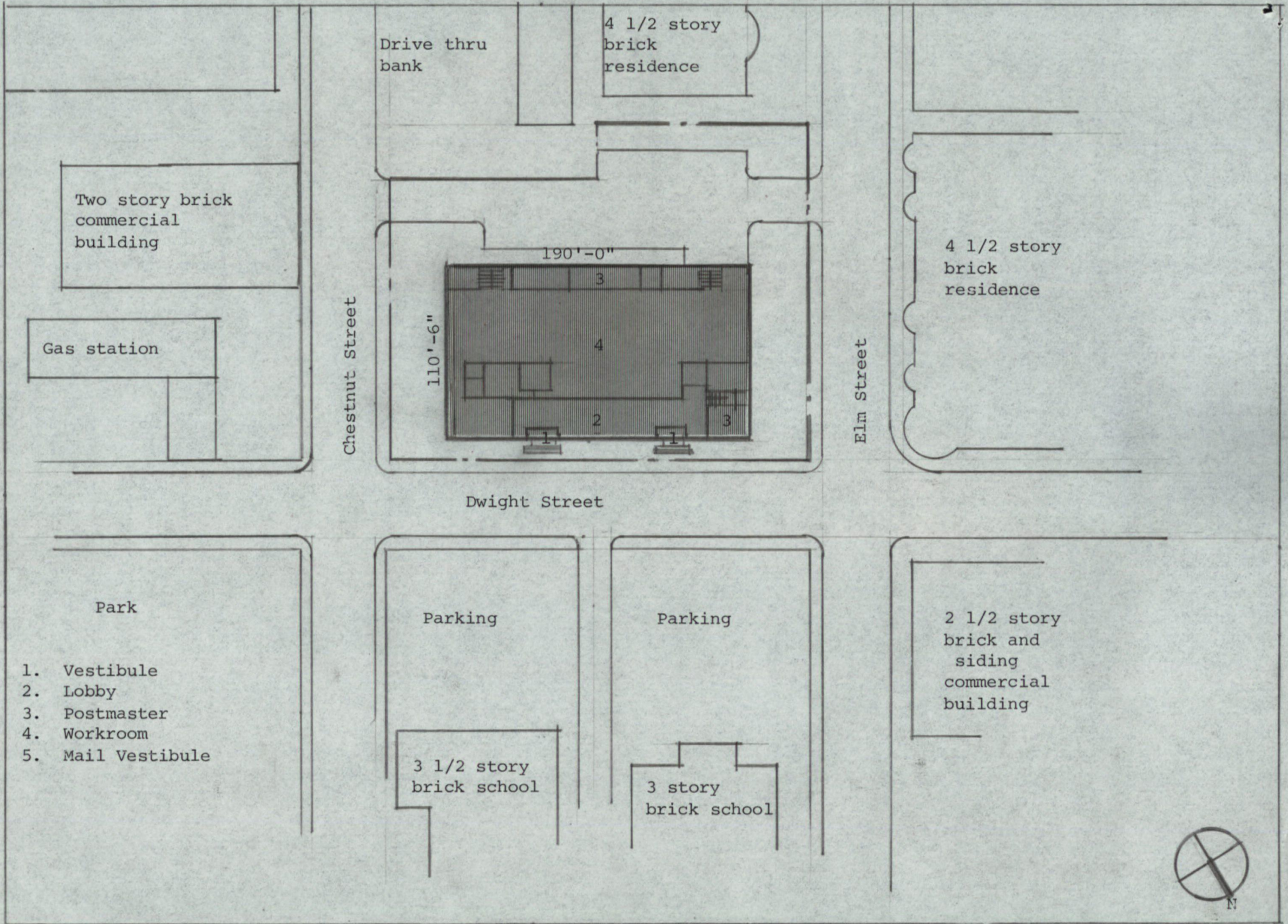
*Patrick Andrews*

DATE 1/21/86

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: *Betty L. Savage*  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 1-16-86



Drive thru bank

4 1/2 story brick residence

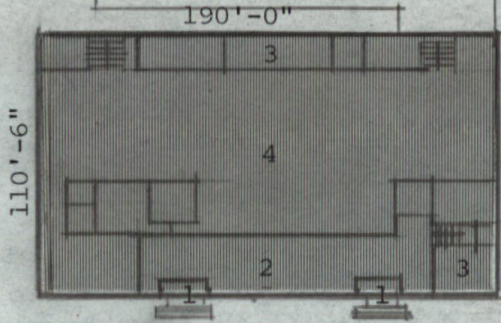
4 1/2 story brick residence

Two story brick commercial building

Gas station

Chestnut Street

Elm Street



Dwight Street

Park

Parking

Parking

2 1/2 story brick and siding commercial building

- 1. Vestibule
- 2. Lobby
- 3. Postmaster
- 4. Workroom
- 5. Mail Vestibule

3 1/2 story brick school

3 story brick school



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

United States Post Office--Holyoke Main  
Hampden County  
MASSACHUSETTS

Substantive Review Working No. 12-11-85

Fed. Reg. Date: 2/3/87

Date Due: 1/16/86 - 1/25/86

Action:  ACCEPT 1-21-86

RETURN

REJECT

Federal Agency: U.S. Postal Service

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

Substantive Review:  sample  request  appeal  NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

*Nine locally significant examples of institutional architecture rendered in the Art Deco mode. understated detailing includes metal mesh windows, decorative carved corona molding, bas relief eagles above entrance doors, and aluminum and glass doors. On the interior is a 1926 mural by Ross Knoffelt depicting the landing of early settlers.*

Recom./Criteria Accept C  
 Reviewer Savage  
 Discipline Architectural History  
 Date 1-17-86  
 see continuation sheet

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

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

|          |                    |            |             |
|----------|--------------------|------------|-------------|
| Category | Ownership          | Status     | Present Use |
|          | Public Acquisition | Accessible |             |

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

7. Description

Condition

- excellent
- good
- fair
- deteriorated
- ruins
- unexposed

Check one

- unaltered
- altered

Check one

- original site
- moved date \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

---

**8. Significance**

Period \_\_\_\_\_ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates \_\_\_\_\_ Builder/Architect \_\_\_\_\_  
Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- applicable criteria
- justification of areas checked
- relating significance to the resource
- context
- relationship of integrity to significance
- justification of exception
- other

---

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_  
Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_  
UTM References \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal boundary description and justification \_\_\_\_\_

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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**12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification**

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

\_\_\_\_ national      \_\_\_\_ state      \_\_\_\_ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature \_\_\_\_\_

title \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

---

**13. Other**

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



MAIN POST OFFICE  
HOLYOKE, MA 01040

Holyoke Main Post Office  
Holyoke, MA  
Dennis Griggs  
August 1983  
Sullivan Design Group, Inc.  
Front elevation. Left view



MAIN POST OFFICE  
HOLYOKE, MA 01040

Holyoke Main Post Office  
Holyoke, MA  
Dennis Griggs  
August 1983  
Sullivan Design Group, Inc.  
Front elevation. Right view



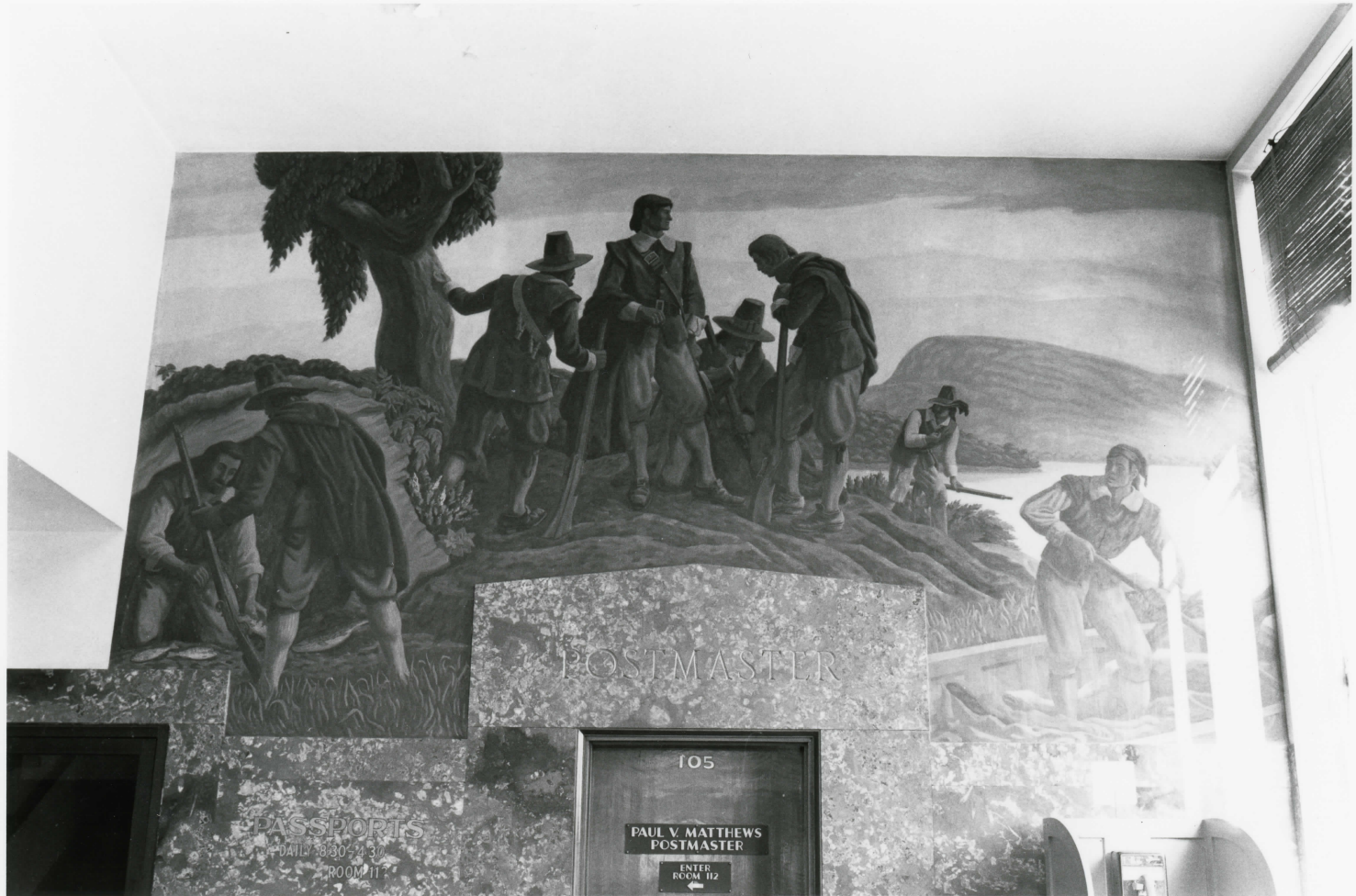
MAIN POST OFFICE  
HOLYOKE, MASSACHUSETTS 01040

Holyoke Main Post Office  
Holyoke, MA  
Dennis Griggs  
August 1983  
Sullivan Design Group, Inc.  
Front elevation



MAIN POST OFFICE  
HOLYOKE, MASSACHUSETTS 01040

Holyoke Main Post Office  
Holyoke, MA  
Dennis Griggs  
August 1983  
Sullivan Design Group, Inc.  
Entrance Detail



POSTMASTER

PASSPORTS  
DAILY 8:30-4:30  
ROOM 112

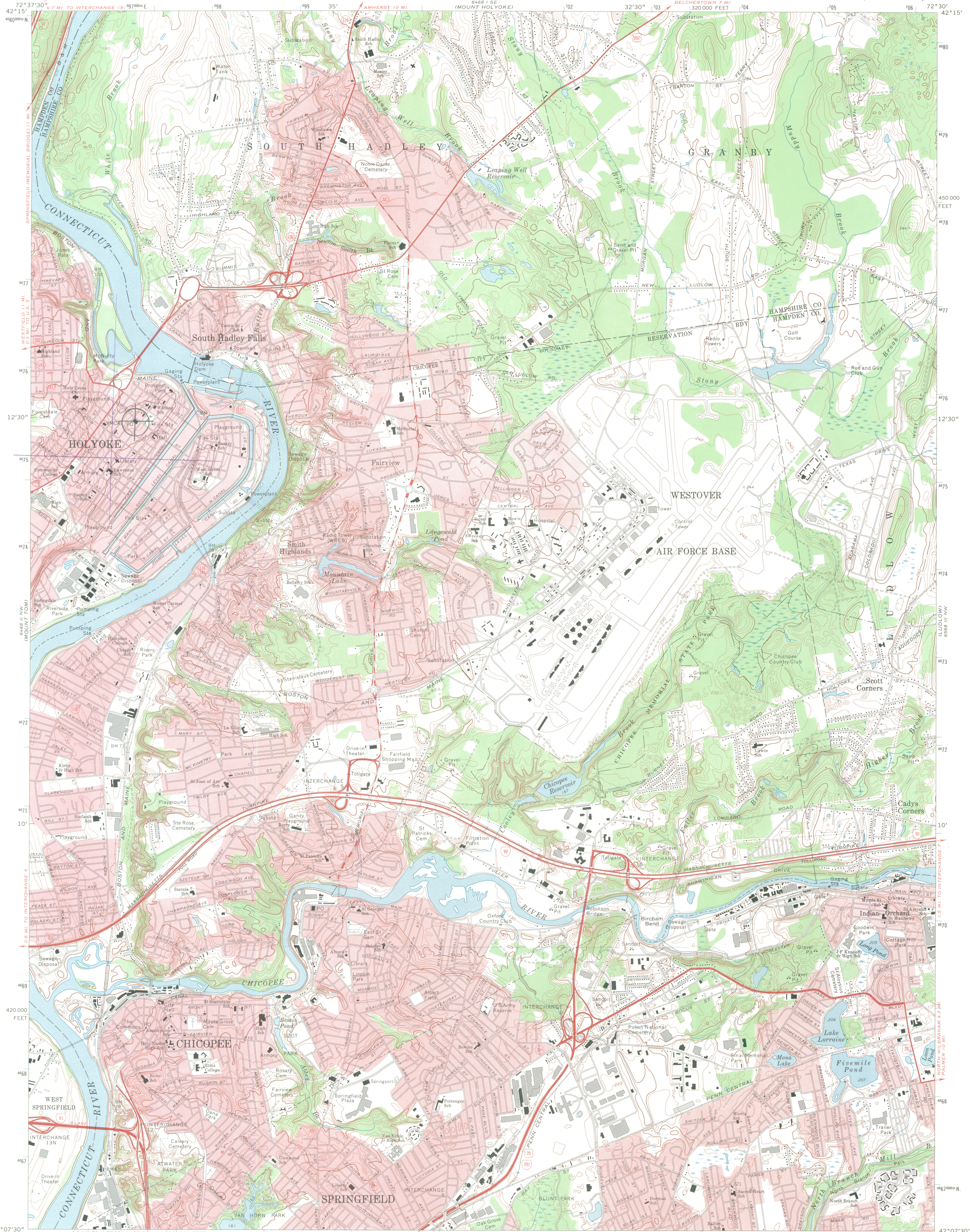
105

PAUL V. MATTHEWS  
POSTMASTER

ENTER  
ROOM 112  
←

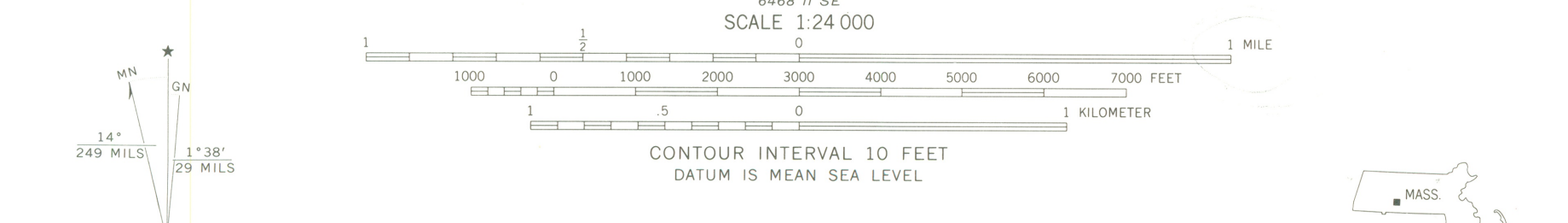
MAIN POST OFFICE  
HOLYOKE, MA 01040

Holyoke Main Post Office  
Holyoke, MA  
Dennis Griggs  
August 1983  
Sullivan Design Group, Inc.  
Mural



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey  
Topography by planetable surveys 1933. Revised from  
aerial photographs taken 1971. Field checked 1972  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,  
mainland zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
zone 18, shown in blue  
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

U.S. POST OFFICE  
HOLYOKE, MA  
UTM REFERENCE:  
18/697260/4675430



ROAD CLASSIFICATION  
Primary highway, hard surface  
Secondary highway, hard surface  
Light duty road, hard or improved surface  
Unimproved road

○ Interstate Route  
□ U. S. Route  
○ State Route

SPRINGFIELD NORTH, MASS.  
N4207.5-W7230.7.5

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



FIELD REAL ESTATE AND BUILDINGS OFFICE  
P.O. Box 324  
Lexington, MA 02173-0324

June 17, 1985

The Honorable Ernest E. Proulx  
Mayor, City of Holyoke  
City Hall, Room 1  
Holyoke, MA 01040

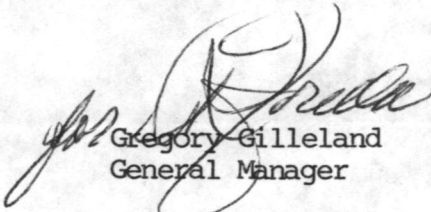
Dear Mayor Proulx:

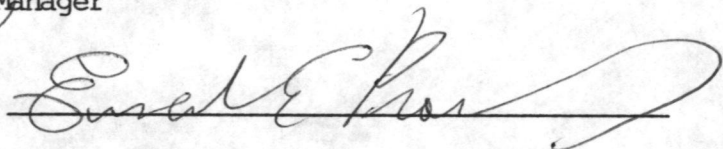
The U. S. Postal Service in conjunction with the Massachusetts Historical Commission in Boston has evaluated the Main Post Office in Holyoke and has determined it is significant from a historical viewpoint.

In view of the above evaluation, the U.S. Postal Service intends to nominate this building to the National Register of Historic Places. We would, prior to our taking formal action, appreciate receiving your concurrence.

If you concur with our proposed action, kindly return a signed copy of this letter in the enclosed envelope.

Sincerely,

  
Gregory Gilleland  
General Manager

Concur: 

Enclosure

JPC/ljr

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RECEIVED  
U.S. POSTAL SERVICE

JUN 26 9 09 AM '85

NEW ENGLAND FIELD REAL  
ESTATE & BLDGS. OFFICE  
LEXINGTON, MA 02173



UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE  
Real Estate and Buildings Department  
475 L'Enfant Plaza, SW  
Washington, DC 20260-6400

December 6, 1985

Ms. Carol D. Shull  
Chief of Registration  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
Department of Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240-1002

Dear Ms. Shull:

The Postal Service hereby submits a nomination for the post office located at 650 Dwight Street, Hampden County, Holyoke, Massachusetts.

If you have any questions concerning this nomination, please call me at 202/268-3107.

Sincerely,

John S. Sorenson  
Realty Specialist, Senior  
Office of Real Estate

Enclosure

DEC 11 1985