

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 **COPY**  
 DATE ENTERED

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

Lexington Main Post Office

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

1661 Massachusetts Avenue

N/A NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Lexington

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

N/A VICINITY OF

Seventh Congressional District

STATE

Massachusetts 02173

CODE

0615

COUNTY

Middlesex

CODE

017

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	N/A <input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

New England Field Real Estate and Building 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.

Cambridge Registry of Deeds, Cambridge Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

208 Cambridge Street

CITY, TOWN

Cambridge

STATE

Massachusetts 02140

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

None

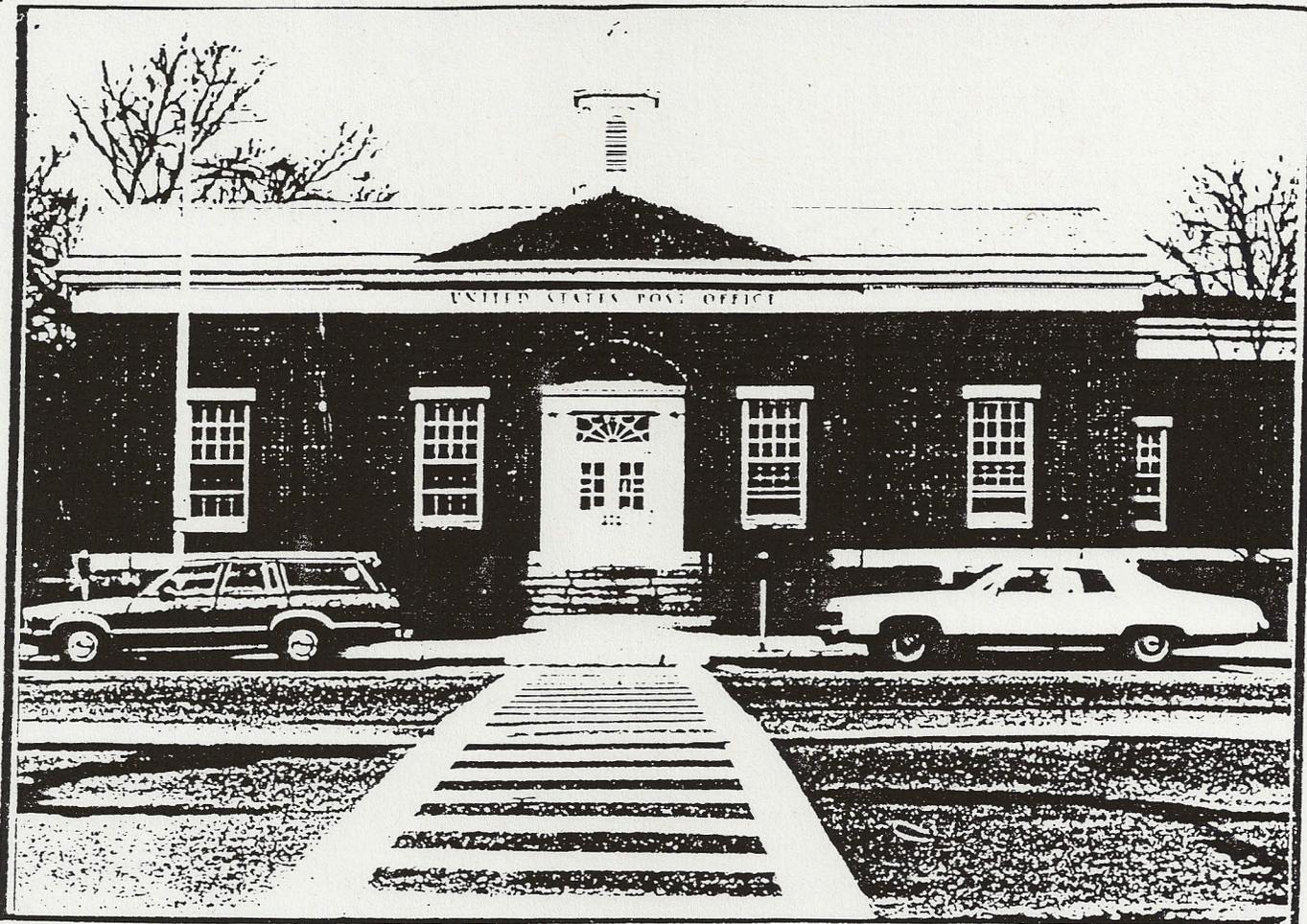
DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

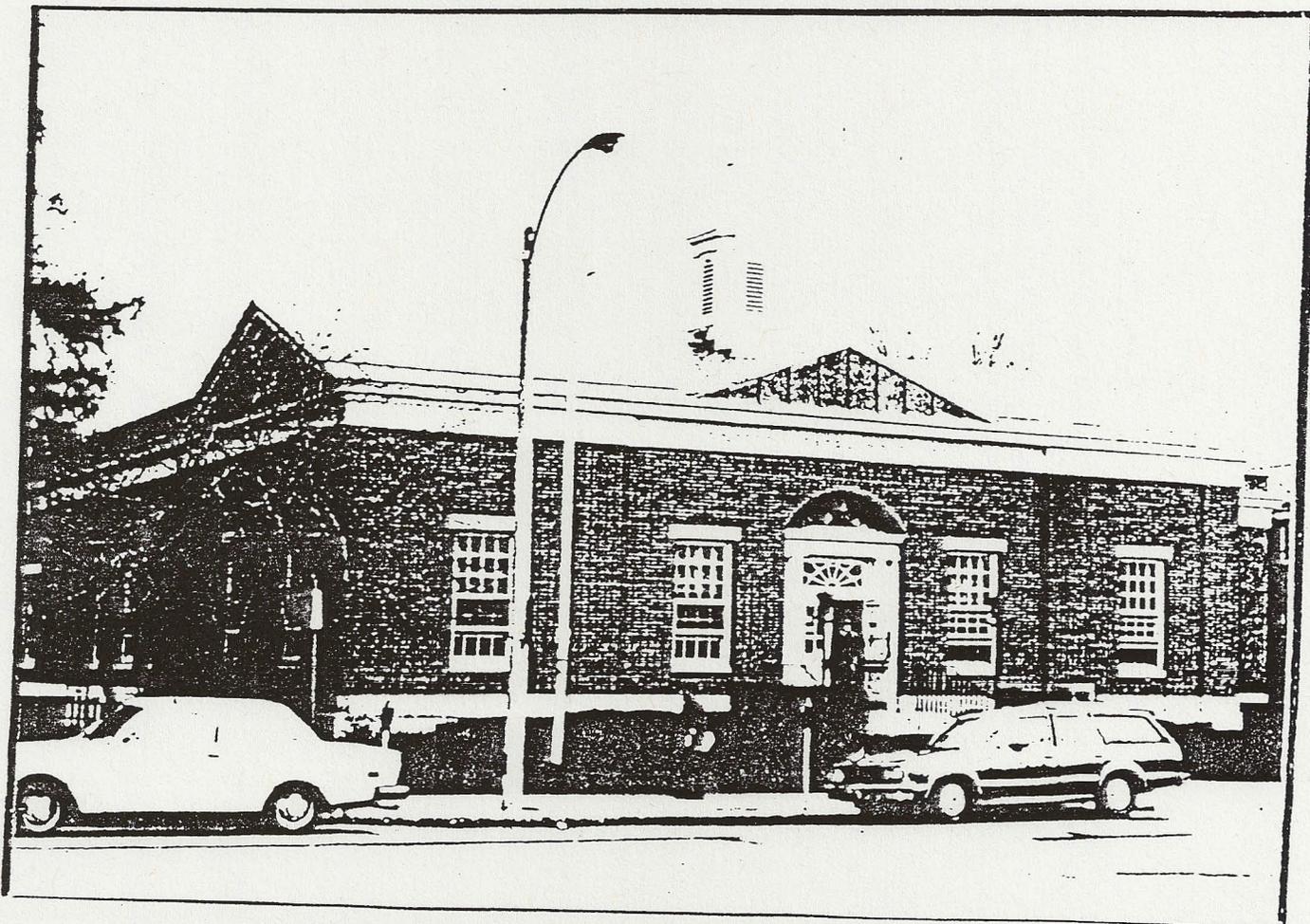
DEPOSITORY FOR  
 SURVEY RECORDS

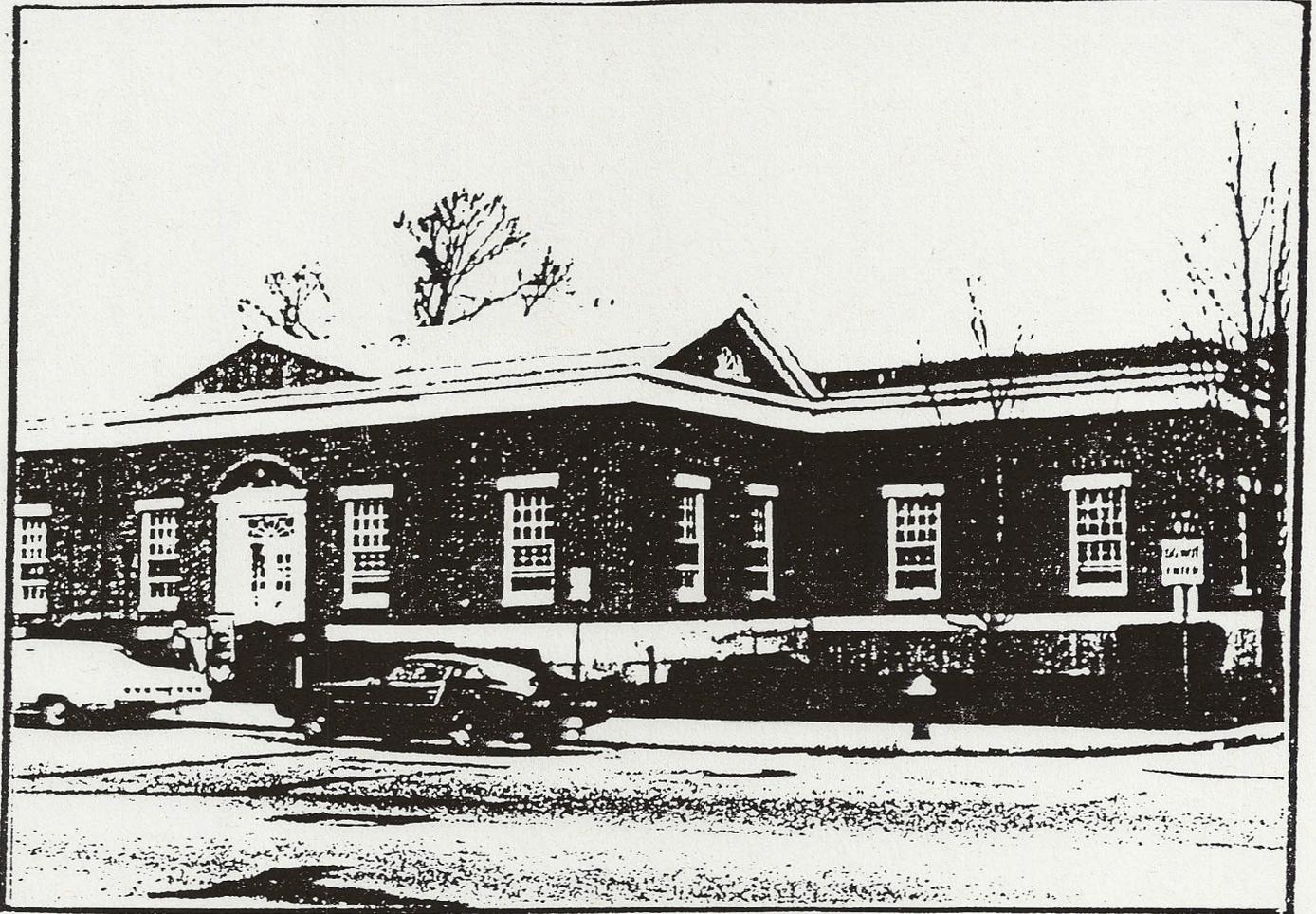
CITY, TOWN

STATE

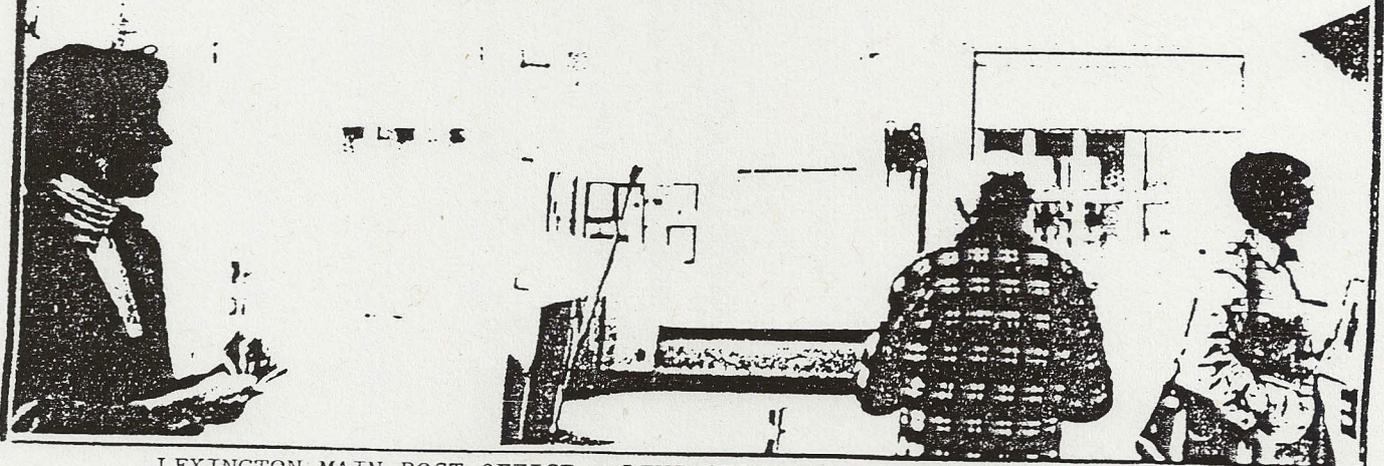
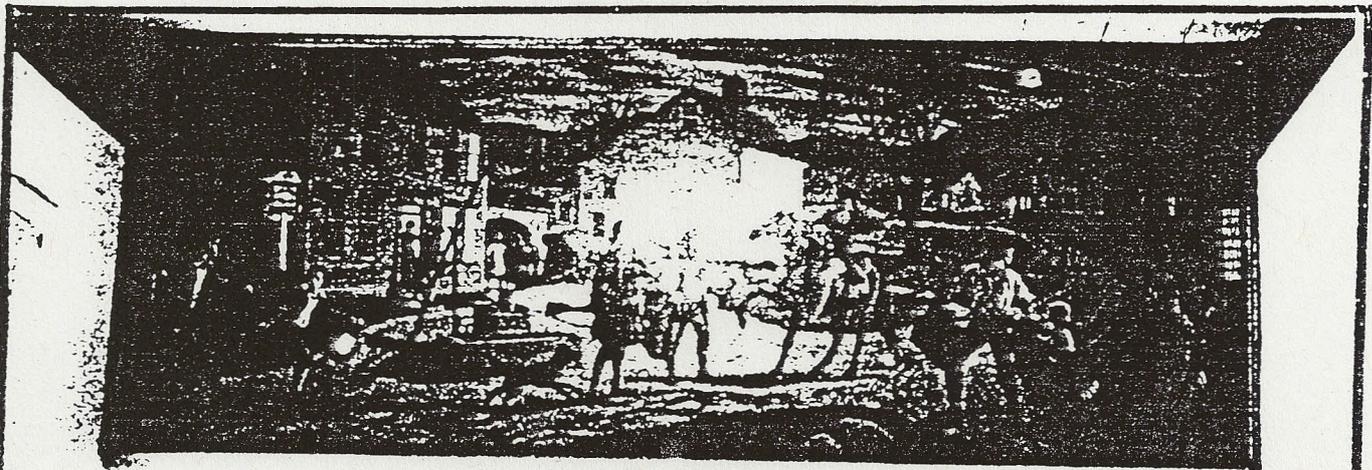


LEXINGTON MAIN POST OFFICE - LEXINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS

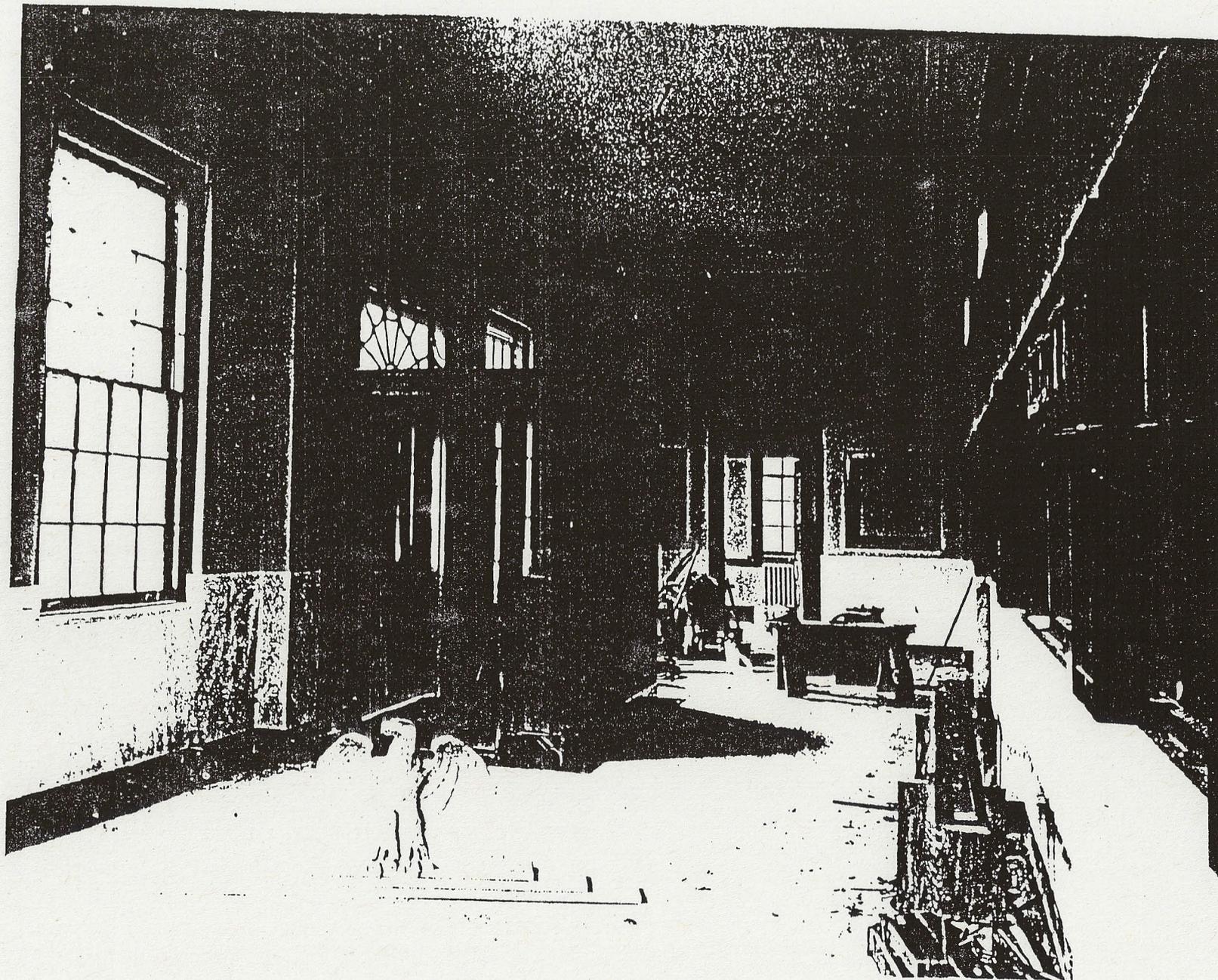




LEXINGTON MAIN POST OFFICE - LEXINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS



LEXINGTON MAIN POST OFFICE - LEXINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS



UNITED STATES POST OFFICE - LEXINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS  
Original lobby and vestibule as it appeared November 2, 1938 - No longer existing as of 1964.

## 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 (exterior)	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR (interior)	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

### PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Post Office is on the front portion of the site with the vehicle maneuvering area to its rear accessed from Grant Street. The east side of the lot is bounded by a driveway for the town offices. The site is landscaped with lawn and shrubs. Prominent features include a pitched roof, wood cupola, and a strong architectural entrance. A 1964 addition wraps the rear two-thirds of the building, changing the original symmetrical plans and elevation into one of asymmetry. The lobby was completely remodeled at this time; it no longer possesses the robust quality of the original 1930's handcrafted interior. In plan, the building is fronted with a public lobby, behind which is the Postmaster's office, workroom, mail vestibule, and platform.

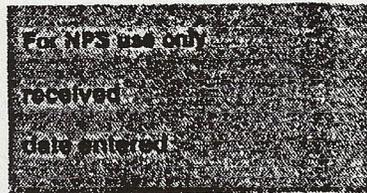
Four low granite steps and a deep landing create the main approach. They are framed by wrought-iron railings which terminate with a lamppost. The original building rests on a granite base topped with a band of ashlar granite stones. The public area of the building is marked by its asphalt shingled gable room (formerly of slate), five bays by two bays, with an added metal rain diverter above the entry doors and a wood cupola behind. The rest of the building is topped by a flat roof and parapet wall. The elevations are red brick laid in Flemish bond with a wood entablature and granite sills and lintels. The wood entablature surrounds the entire structure with a plain frieze and denticulated cornice. The wood cupola, square in plan, has fixed metal louvers and metal weathervane.

The front (south) elevation consists of the original five-bay building with a two-bay addition added to the east, recessed two bays from the original surface. The original building uses flat projecting brick pilasters to distinguish a three-bay entry from the outer bays; these pilasters also mark the corners of the old portion. All windows are wood frame, double-hung with 12/12 light; the original building has recessed brick panels below. The brick arched entrance, in a simple Georgian Style, has fluted engaged wood columns with a wood base and capitals flanking the double doors and rectangular fanlight above; the columns support a plain entablature. In the tympanum is a stucco and wood panel set behind a cast aluminum eagle with half-spread wings.

Within the gabled ends are half-circular, wood framed windows. The addition has a poured concrete base and continues the ashlar granite band from the original part. The north elevation contains the covered mail platform. The side elevations are similar in detail to the front of the building. The flat pilasters of the original building end abruptly at the new section.

One enters the building into the public lobby, separated into two sections by a plaster, glass, and wood partitions. The lobby, which now occupies the entire length of the original building, has a three bay postal box area to the west and lockable service area to the east. The floor consists of terrazzo panels with a black marble border; the walls have an off-white marble wainscot and window sills with a black marble base and

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet LEXINGTON MAIN POST OFFICE Item number 7

Page 2

plaster walls above. The ceiling is of suspended acoustical tiles. The Postmaster's office, once occupying the first bay along the front elevation, is now accessed through a small hallway connecting to the box area. The service area consists of two large aluminum-framed service counters with a marble-like Formica base.

### ALTERATIONS

Alterations include the 1964 addition and lobby/Postmaster's office renovations, the roof addition of a metal rain diverter, and the covering of a skylight in the workroom

### ART

A gold painted wood frame surrounds the heavy canvas mural hung above the doors of the lobby partition, on the service area side. Entitled "The Arrival of Paul Revere in Lexington, April 19, 1775," it was painted by Aiden Lassell Ripley of Lexington. The former location of the mural was over the Postmaster's office door to the west end of the original lobby. It is in excellent condition.

# 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 checked="" 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	Construction began: 1937 Dedication: Nov. 28, 1938	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Louis A. Simon, Sup. Architect Sandros & Co., Contractor
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE	Addition: 1964		Harold M. Turiello, Architect for Addition

Although less than 50 years old, the Lexington Main Post Office merits inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places as an example of the type of standardized construction and design advocated by the Public Works Administration (PWA) during the 1930's. Built in 1938, it is located in a transitional area between commercial and residential districts in Lexington Center. Its modest, domestic scale and red brick, white stone trimmed exterior treatments render their building compatible with residential and low-rise commercial buildings in the area.

Lexington's historical associations with the early British and American skirmishes of the American Revolution evidently dictated the choice of Colonial Revival for their building's style. It was designed within the office of supervising architect Louis A. Simon. Standardized construction procedure following a seven-area plan typical of 1930's post office buildings, is one of the key features of this building. This structure was started in late 1937. The cornerstone was laid on May 20, 1938 and only seven months later it was dedicated on November 28, 1938. Construction costs totalled \$65,000. The cornerstone reads "Henry Morgenthau Jr., Secretary of the Treasury; James A. Farley, Postmaster General; Louis A. Simon, Supervising Architect; Neal Melnick, Supervising Engineer, 1937."

This building is a product of the office of U.S. Supervising Architect Louis A. Simon. During his tenure (1933-1941), emphasis was placed on streamlined construction so as to bring economic benefits to a community during the Depression. Louis Adolf Simon was born in 1870 in Boston. He attended M.I.T. and entered private practice in Washington, D.C. in 1894. He began work in the office of the U.S. Treasury Supervising Architect in 1896. He served as the chief architect in their office from 1905-1933. From 1933 until his death in 1941, he was the U.S. Supervising Architect. He was responsible for numerous U.S. Post Offices, customs houses and courthouses. During his years as Supervising Architect 406 Post Offices were designed in his department. In addition he designed the Federal Building at the New York World's Fair of 1939-40.

This building contains a well-executed mural depicting Paul Revere's alerting the town folk of Lexington to the coming of the British. It is a product of the section of Fine Arts of the U.S. Treasury Department. It was painted by Aiden Lassel Ripley of Lexington. Born in Wakefield, Ripley

0.471

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National Park Service

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Continuation sheet Lexington Main Post Office Item number 8

Page 2

studied at the School of Museum of Fine Arts, and received a Paige Travelling Fellowship and Logan prize and medal. He is represented in a number of American museums and painted a mural in the Winchester Public Library. He is known for his series of 14 paintings which constitutes a cycle depicting the life of Paul Revere - this work was commissioned by the New England Corporation.

The construction of the Lexington Main Post Office provided a boost to the local economy during the last years of the Depression. Lexington, however, did not suffer as severely as other eastern Massachusetts communities during the financial crisis of the 1930's. By the mid 1930's Lexington was well on its way to becoming an affluent "bedroom suburb" of Boston. During the 1920's several housing developments were constructed on former farmland. The Lexington Main Post Office was needed to serve these new residential enclaves. Farming of all kinds, including dairies and a profitable flower industry conducted in green houses scattered across the town provided jobs for local residents.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"Lexington Minute-Man", Vol. LXVII, No. 51, December 1, 1938; 5-19-38; 5-26-38; 11-24-38  
History of Post Office Construction 1900-1940, July, 1982  
Lexington Historic Resources Survey, Ann Grady and Nancy Seasholer (section of 1920;s and 30;s residential development)

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.895

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,9	31,69,6,5	4,70,15,9,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

East to West - 142.0' along Massachusetts Avenue  
 South to North - 282' along side lot line  
 West to East - 139.4' along rear lot line  
 North to South - 284.3' along Grant 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

Steven M. Smith, Project Manager

ORGANIZATION

SULLIVAN DESIGN GROUP, INC.

STREET & NUMBER

44 Adams Street

CITY OR TOWN

Braintree

DATE

September 24, 1985

TELEPHONE

(617) 848-1545

STATE

Massachusetts 02184

# 12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_ NONE \_\_\_

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

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

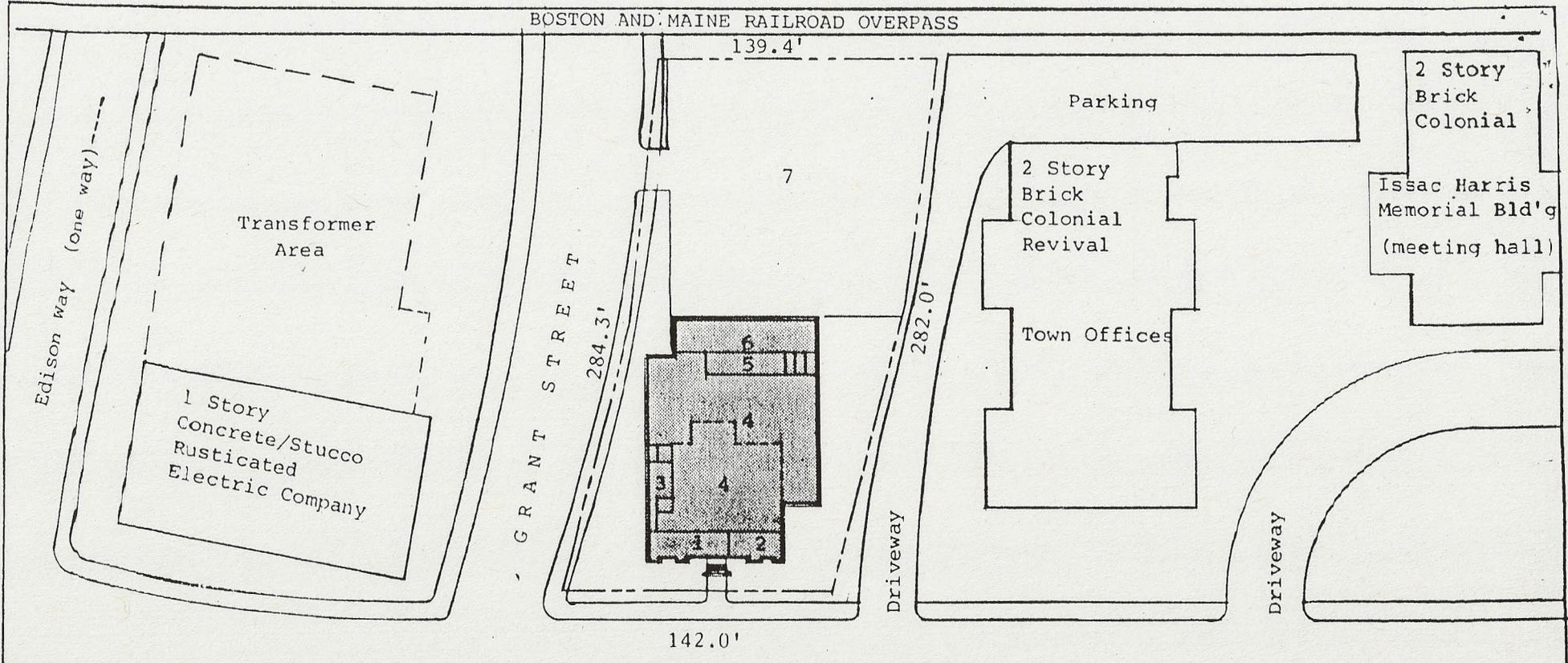
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

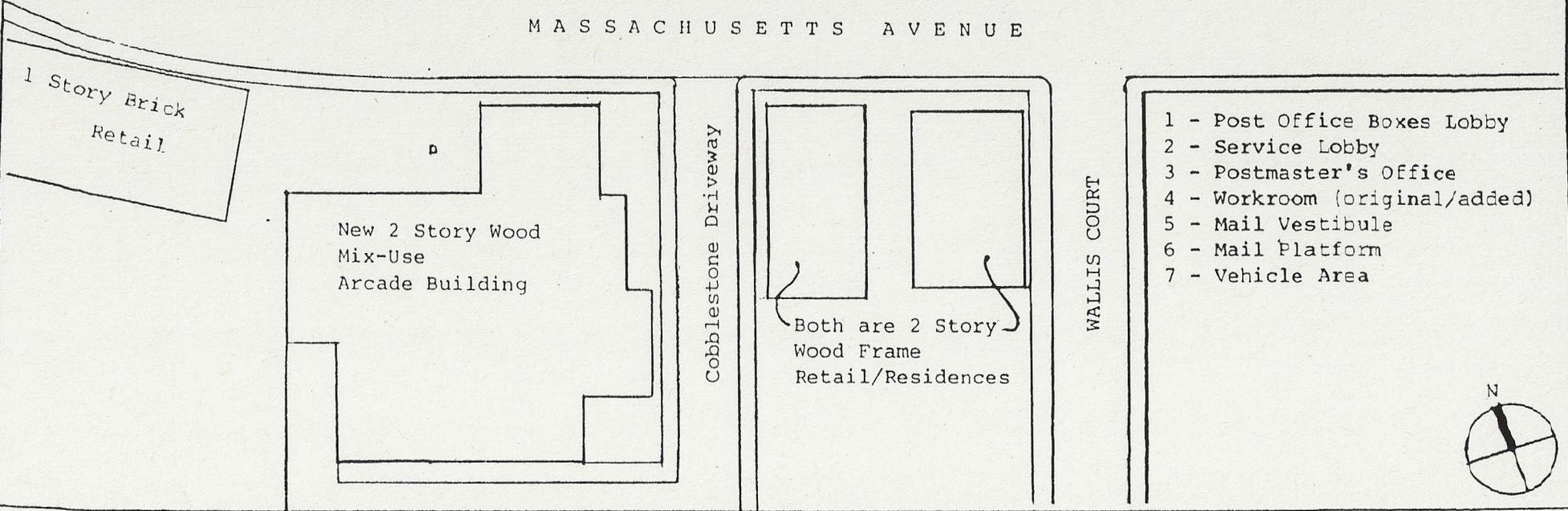
DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

BOSTON AND MAINE RAILROAD OVERPASS



MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE



UNITED STATES POST OFFICE - LEXINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS

