

FORM B - BUILDING

NRDIS 2/25/71; 8/2/84
Assessor's number
11-5

USGS Quad
Newburyport

Area(s)
L,K

Form Number
1681

Massachusetts Historical Commission



Town Newburyport
Place (neighborhood or village)

Address 4-10 Market Square
Historic Name North Row

Uses: Present Commercial/Residential
Original Commercial

Date of Construction c.1800 (by 1811)

Source Currier, p. 623

Style/Form Georgian-Federal

Architect/Builder unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation Brick

Wall/Trim Brick/Stone

Roof Asphalt Shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures

small storage building c.1980

Major Alterations (with dates) c.1830 - new granite storefronts; 1976 - rehabilitation of building including reconstruction of west end

Condition good

Moved no yes Date

Acreage 4480 SF

Setting central business district a short distance from Merrimack River waterfront

Recorded by Lisa Mausolf

Organization Newburyport Historical Commission

Date (month/year) March 1999

Follow Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey Manual instructions for completing this form.

BUILDING FORM (North Row, 4-10 Market Square)

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of the building in terms of other buildings within the community.

The North Row Building at 4-10 Market Square is a three-story, brick block which predates but is similar in scale and detailing to many of the other commercial buildings fronting the Square. Collectively, the Market Square buildings constitute one of the largest and least altered group of early 19th century commercial buildings in New England. The bulk of the North Row dates to the late 18th or early 19th century while the west end was reconstructed in 1976. All of the windows and doors appear to have been replaced as part of the 1976 renovation. Above the level of the storefronts the brick is laid in a Flemish bond. Slight variations in the brick color, bond and mortar indicate that much of the first floor brickwork has been replaced except for the eastern third of the building.

The block displays a slightly rounded corner at its west end and is capped by a low hipped, asphalt roof with a gable end to the east. The eastern half of the building has a continuous brick cornice while on the remaining half the cornice is more dentil-like in form. Visible on the windowless east gable end is faded painted signage reading "Biscuit" as well as several circular iron tie rods.

The first floor is divided into five storefronts of similar size. The three storefronts on the east end display a trabeated system of granite posts and lintels forming the storefront, a style which was popular during the Greek Revival period, c. 1830-40 and allowed for wider window openings than had previously been the case. Each of these doorways is flanked by a pair of granite posts and contains a multi-pane wooden door with a lower horizontal panel, sidelights and transom lights. To each side there is a large 3 x 2-light picture window. The next storefront to the west is more Federal in its detailing with a smaller 3 x 3-light picture window, double doors capped by a semi-elliptical fanlight, an arched fixed window and a door with semicircular fanlight. On the westernmost storefront, part of the 1976 reconstruction, the multilight windows and doors are capped by individual granite sills.

The second story facade windows contain 12/8 sash while those on the upper floor are slightly smaller and contain 8/8 sash. The windows on this building lack the splayed lintels which are prevalent elsewhere on the Square as well as a regular fenestration rhythm. Some of the windows on the North Row are capped by lintels consisting of header brick laid on end. Whereas most of the buildings on the Square display a consistent three-bay width of the row structures, the individual components of North Row display variations ranging from two to four bays wide. In two cases, where one would expect a central bay of windows there is solid wall or a window on only one of the two floors. Above the second floor window near the center of the building is a granite stone inscribed "North Row".

On the rear elevation, facing the waterfront, a series of modern, three-level decks have been constructed and the windows contain replacement 1/1 sash. Behind the building is a small c. 1980 brick storage building capped by an asphalt-shingled, hip roof. Facing the boardwalk leading to the waterfront there is a pair of four-panel double doors set in a cornerblock molding.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Describe the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

Market Square's role as a commercial center goes back to the days when Native Americans met early explorers from England, France and Holland on the banks of the Merrimack River to trade furs and fish. With the completion of the canal linking Newburyport and inland areas in 1796, Market Square became the trading center for much of interior New England and parts of the Canadian border country as well. At the height of port activity, as many as seven wharves extended from Market Square into the Merrimack River. North Row's exact date of construction is not known although it predates the 1811 fire. The May 31, 1811 fire destroyed all of the buildings in the Square area except the North Row.

Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, you must attached a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town
NewburyportProperty Address
4-10 Market Square
Area(s) Form No.Massachusetts Historical Commission
Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

L,K

1681

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE (continued):

Located between Railroad Avenue and City Wharf, North Row was historically filled with merchants filling a variety of needs. In the 19th century, additional frame buildings extended behind the building. These are no longer extant, nor is the freight depot which once stood to the east of the building. Directories indicate that in 1869, J.B. Seward, "restorator" was located at 9 Market Square. In 1872 J.B. & E. Knight sold flour, grain and meal at 6-7 Market Square. During the late 19th century and well into the 20th century, the storefront at 6-8 Market Square was occupied by a tinshop. Other stores in the Row sold hardware and paints. H.J. Plummer & Co. sold stoves and tinware at 9 Market Square in 1890. In the late 1800s the building was owned by Solomon Bachman, who owned the Caleb Cushing house on High Street as a summer home. Among the occupants of the building during this period were the New York Liquor Store and then the coffee room and reading room of the W.C.T. U.

By 1909 Robert McKinney had embalming rooms on the second floor above a pool room. By about 1920 the ground floor was occupied by an auto accessory/vulcanizing business operated by McKinney, the younger, and gas pumps were installed in 1919. Andrew "Bossy" Gillis purchased the building in 1928 or 1929 but did not occupy the building until after the Million Dollar Fire of 1934. About 1941 Gillis' gas station took over the entire ground floor at 4 Market Square. The upper floor was converted to an apartment in the mid 1940s. The last occupant of the bulk of the building in the 1960s was Dugan Supply, a plumbing and hardware business.

During Urban Renewal, this building (designated as Parcel 6) was restored by private developers according to the rehabilitation standards of the Newburyport Redevelopment Authority. In 1968 the west end of the row, consisting of Bossy Gillis' gas station was demolished. The buildings behind North Row were removed. The west end of the building was reconstructed and the remainder of the building was rehabilitated in 1976 by James MacFarland of West Roxbury.

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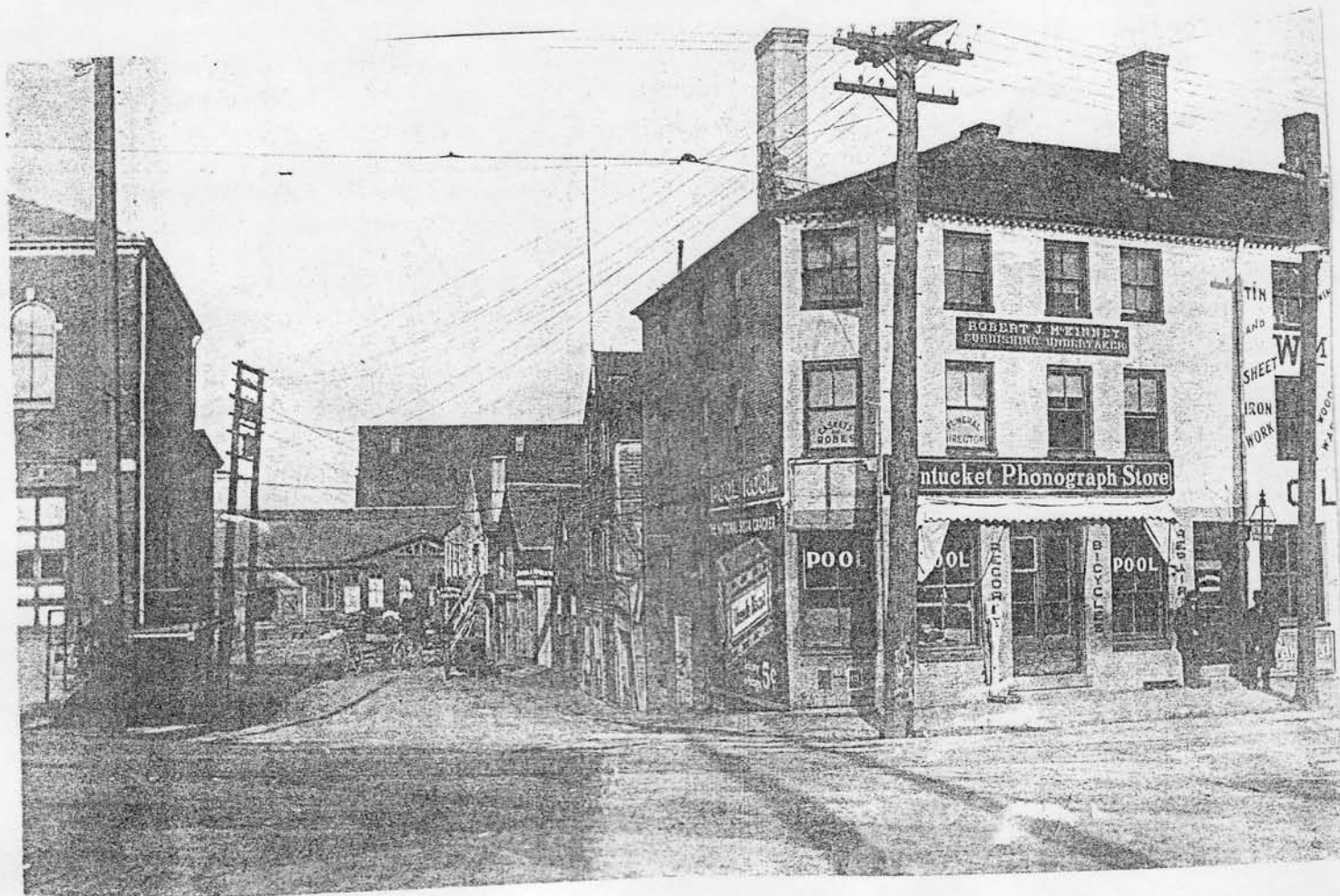
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View of west end of North Row, 1909

Source: Phillips Library, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Mass. (E.I. neg. #11,507).

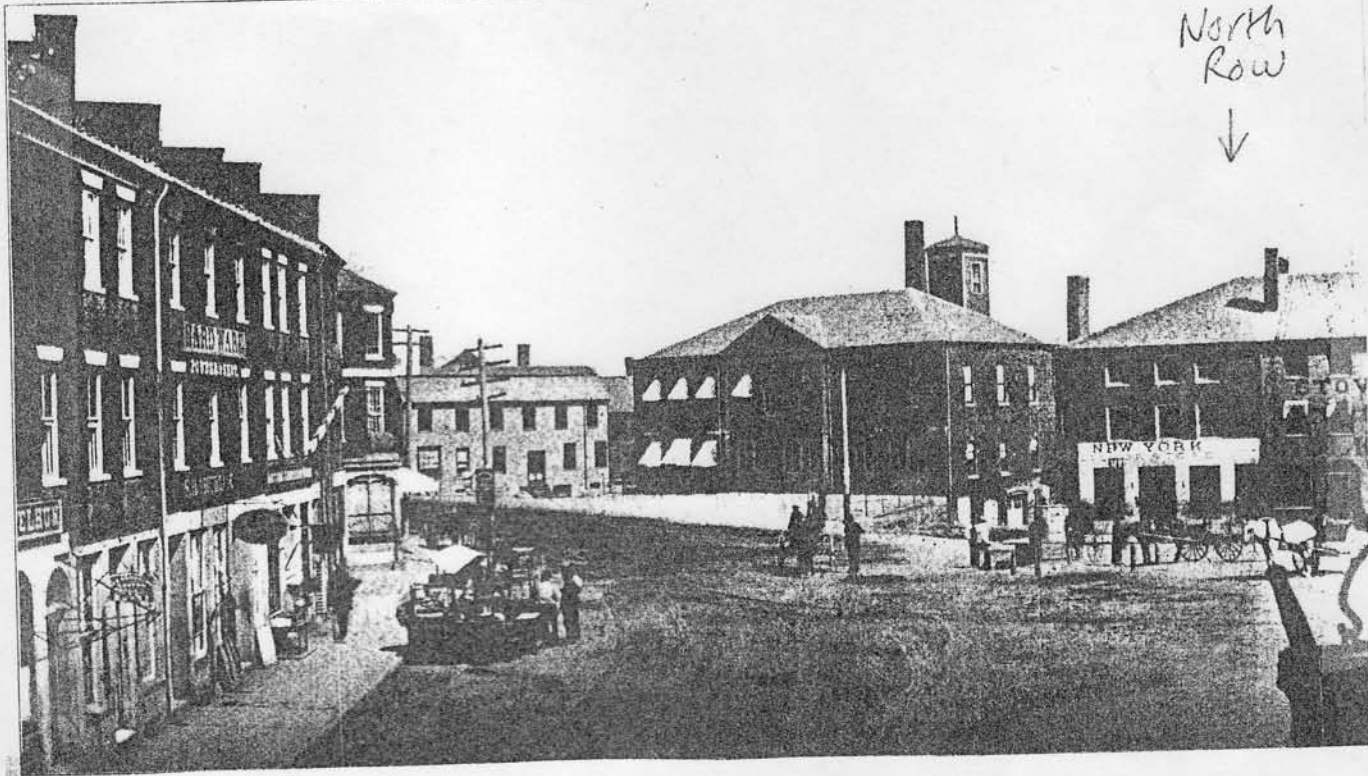
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Source: Currier, History of Newburyport.