

PH0508527

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED NOV 1 1977  
DATE ENTERED MAY 23 1978

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

J.B. Brown Memorial Block

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Congress and Casco Streets

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Portland

VICINITY OF

1st-Hon. David Emery

STATE

Maine

CODE 23

COUNTY

Cumberland

CODE 005

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

STRUCTURE

SITE

OBJECT

PUBLIC

PRIVATE

BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS

BEING CONSIDERED

OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCIAL

EDUCATIONAL

ENTERTAINMENT

GOVERNMENT

INDUSTRIAL

MILITARY

MUSEUM

PARK

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

RELIGIOUS

SCIENTIFIC

TRANSPORTATION

OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

J.B. Brown & Sons

STREET & NUMBER

57 Exchange Street

CITY, TOWN

Portland

VICINITY OF

STATE

Maine

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Cumberland County Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

142 Federal Street

CITY, TOWN

Portland

STATE

Maine

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input 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		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The J.B. Brown Memorial Block of Portland, built between 1883 and 1884, is an impressive example of the Queen Anne style adapted to a commercial building. In plan the block is U-shaped, with its principal facade facing south-east and a secondary facade north-east. A courtyard in the rear contains service entrances. The block is constructed of brick, contains  $4\frac{1}{2}$  stories, and carries a hipped roof pierced by elaborate gabled dormer windows. A granite-faced foundation supports the structure.

The main facade is about 120 feet in length with four individual store fronts and street level entrances. Six bays are present, containing two, three, or four  $2\frac{1}{2}$  windows, except for the third bay from the left, which contains five windows per story and the most elaborate dormer on the roof. The brick walls contain horizontal banding created by string courses of sandstone which demarcate each story above and below the windows. Brick pilasters flank each window at every story. A frieze containing floral relief is present, again in sandstone. Below the windows of the nearly central bay are panels with floral relief; one of these panels contains the inscription "J B Brown" in ornate script. Two brick chimneys rise flush above the facade and are ornate, in keeping with the Queen Anne taste. The first story of the facade has been modernized with large plate glass windows and recent signing. In the third story of the off-center bay is an arched window with scrolled keystone and spandrels decorated with floral relief; the window is divided into thirds by turned wooden posts, painted brick red.

The north-east elevation (the secondary facade) is five bays wide and is similar to the main facade, but for the following differences. A single chimney is present and fenestration is symmetrical. There is nothing here equivalent to the ornate off-center bay of the main facade.

Fenestration in the various rear walls of the block, contrasting with the south-east and north-east elevations, is functional and simple. Here the majority of the windows have granite sills and are slightly arched with brick headers. Most of the first and second-story windows are covered with iron bars for security reasons.

In addition to alterations on the street level, the only other change to the external appearance of the block was the construction about five years ago of a brick wall added to the roof above the eaves, which links all the dormers together and hides the sharply pitched roof. This was designed to prevent snow from tumbling to the sidewalks below, but unfortunately gives the roofline a Mansard appearance which it was never intended to have.

Internally the building has been extensively modernized for sales areas and offices, although this work is only a veneer (panelling and suspended acoustical ceilings).

The J.B. Brown Memorial Block is a dramatic piece of architecture and is rightly considered to be one of the key landmarks of the revitalized Congress Street area of Portland.

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input 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		

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SPECIFIC DATES      1883-1884      BUILDER/ARCHITECT      John Calvin Stevens

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## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The J.B. Brown Memorial Block of 1883-84 is one of the few commercial buildings in Portland designed in the Queen Anne style. This style was more commonly employed in residential buildings where its large architectural vocabulary could be applied with greater breadth of expression. The irregularity of surface textures, attention to detail, asymmetrical massing, and broken roofline of this building all contribute to the picturesqueness associated with the style. The general massiveness of the block is pleasingly tempered by these features.

The design was the work of the noted architect, John Calvin Stevens of Portland. During a career distinguished for its length as well as its brilliant productivity, Stevens achieved national recognition for his unusual skill in blending styles and for his contribution to the development of the Shingle Style. From 1873, when he began as a draftsman in the office Portland architect, Francis H. Fassett, until his death in 1940, he wrought for himself a reputation of enviable proportions. He was the first Maine architect to become a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects.

The block was erected as a memorial to John B. Brown, founder of the Portland Sugar Company in 1855 and builder in 1868 of the Falmouth Hotel on Middle Street, center of Portland's social life for half a century.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Portland City Guide. Portland, 1940

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1

UTM REFERENCES

A 

1	9	3	9	8	2	5	0	4	8	3	4	2	2	0
ZONE	EASTING				NORTHING									

B 

ZONE	EASTING				NORTHING									

C 

ZONE	EASTING				NORTHING									

D 

ZONE	EASTING				NORTHING									

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Frank A. Beard, Historian  
Robert L. Bradley, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION Maine Historic Preservation Commission DATE October, 1977

STREET & NUMBER 242 State Street TELEPHONE 289-2133

CITY OR TOWN Augusta STATE Maine

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL  STATE  LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE Earle S. Fretterworth Jr

TITLE S.H.P.O. DATE October 27, 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION [Signature] MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: Walter Cole DATE 5-23-78

MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER DATE 5-5-78