

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

UTM:19A 438200/4906830 B _____
C _____ D _____

IDENTIFICATION

1. Common name: Masonic Hall
2. Historic name: Masonic Hall
3. Street or rural address: 313-321 Water Street
City Augusta Zip 04330 County Kennebec
4. Parcel number: Map 33, Lot 280
5. Present Owner: York Rite Masonic Bodies Address: PO. Box 202
City Augusta Zip 04330 Ownership is: Public _____ Private XX
6. Present Use: Commercial/Fraternal Original use: Commercial/Fraternal

DESCRIPTION

- 7a. Architectural style: Renaissance
- 7b. Briefly describe the site or structure and describe any major alterations from its original condition:

The Masonic Hall is a brick structure which adjoins a row of three commercial structures to the south. It is four stories high. The west and north facades, which are visible from the street, are faced with pressed brick and have terra cotta trim. The ground floor display windows have large plate glass and cast iron columns supporting iron lintels behind a pressed metal entablature. The large round arched entry which leads to the central staircase is enframed by classical pilasters, also fabricated of metal. The second and third story windows are square-headed, while the fourth story fenestration is round arched. All are double-hung sash with one over one lights, except for the fixed oval sash in the center of the third story. Above the windows is an entablature with diapering and a simple cornice.

Attach Photo(s) Here

See Photo No. 5

8. Construction date:
Estimated _____ Factual 1894
9. Architect John C. Spofford
Boston
10. Builder _____
11. Approx. property size (in feet)
Frontage _____ Depth _____
or approx. acreage 1/4 acre
12. Date(s) of enclosed photograph(s)
12/85

Condition: Excellent ___ Good XX Fair ___ Deteriorated ___ No longer in existence ___

4. Alterations: _____
15. Surroundings: (Check more than one if necessary) Open land ___ Scattered buildings ___ Densely built-up XX
Residential ___ Industrial ___ Commercial X Other: _____
16. Threats to site: None known X Private development ___ Zoning ___ Vandalism ___
Public Works project ___ Other: _____
17. Is the structure: On its original site? X Moved? ___ Unknown? ___
18. Related features: _____

SIGNIFICANCE

19. Briefly state historical and/or architectural importance (include dates, events, and persons associated with the site.)

The Masonic Hall is architecturally significant for its distinguished Renaissance-inspired design by Boston architect John Spofford. The building stands out as an example of how a talented designer could create an interesting exterior within a limited budget that does not allow for large amounts of exterior ornament. The sheer size of the building, with its flat surface and shallow cornice, creates a monumental effect. At the same time, there is a great deal of careful attention to detail in the varied fenestration and modest trim. Only the center section of the principal facade, with its round arched entry and terra cotta window trim, suggests the opulence that was more typical of a building that size in 1894.

The south end of Water Street did not develop substantially until the construction of the Federal Building in 1889-90 (NR). One of the next earliest large structures to replace the small wooden blocks in this area was Masonic Hall in 1894. The architect, John C. Spofford, was familiar with Maine, having designed, in association with Charles Brigham,

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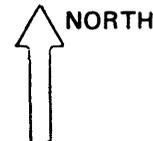
20. Main theme of the historic resource: (If more than one is checked, number in order of importance.)
Architecture X Arts & Leisure ___
Economic/Industrial ___ Exploration/Settlement ___
Government ___ Military ___
Religion ___ Social/Education ___
Other (describe) _____

21. Sources (List books, documents, surveys, personal interviews and their dates).

Industrial Journal (Bangor)
May 24, 1894, p. 8

22. Date form prepared January, 1986
By (name) Roger Reed
Organization MHPC
Address: _____
City _____ Zip _____
Phone: _____

Locational sketch map (draw and label site and surrounding streets, roads, and prominent landmarks):



No. 19 (continued)

city halls in Lewiston (NR), Belfast (NR), and Bangor (demolished), as well as the west wing of the state house (NR). Subsequently, Spofford went into practice by himself and designed the lavishly ornamented Vickery Block (NR) and the city hall, both in Augusta, in 1895. The Masonic Hall is a major monument in downtown Augusta and one of the most important examples of this architect's work.