

37/189/32

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
294 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108

PHOTO (3x3" or 3x5", black & white)
Staple to left side of form
Photo number _____

SKETCH MAP

Draw map showing property's
location in relation to nearest
cross streets and other buildings
or geographical features.
Indicate north:

See attached map.

Newton Quadrangle
UTM References: 19/324820/4688480
Map #: 13

Town Brookline MRA

Address 112 Cypress Street

Historic Name Ritchie Building

Use: Original Office and "Manufactory
of philosophical and nautical in-
Present Offices struments

Ownership: ☐ Private individual
☒ Private organization Brigham
Surgical Group Foundation
Public _____

Original owner E. S. Ritchie & Sons

DESCRIPTION:

Date 1883

Source Tax lists

Style Panel Brick elements

Architect Information not available

Exterior wall fabric Brick

Outbuildings None

Major alterations (with dates)
1918-One story addition 27x37
1953-Hydraulic loading dock built, side
door and metal steps added
1955-window replaced by door, foot
bridge from sidewalk constructed *
1973-Fire escape built, interior re-
modeled.

Approx. acreage 1/4 acre +

Moved na

Setting Situated next to the MBTA

tracks, this building's original ent-
rance was at ground level. A wooden
factory building stands next to it.

Recorded by Leslie Larkin

Organization Brookline Historical Comm.

Date Fall, 1980, revised May 1982

Atlas ref.
37/189/32

(Staple additional sheets here)

While this building is plainer than the Panel Brick buildings in Brookline Village and along Boylston Street, it has several elements in common with them. 112 Cypress Street is a flat roofed, three story building with a one story addition on the left side. Originally the Cypress Street crossed the railroad tracks at grade level, but when a bridge was built over the tracks, the building's second floor was made level with the raised street.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within community)

In 1955 a doorway replaced a window at that level and a footbridge was constructed to the sidewalk, probably the other bridge was built earlier. A handsome iron fence fronts the sidewalk and edges the footbridges. The design of the building is very simple, with brickwork in dentils and a string course, resembling an entablature, at the cornice. Bricks are set on end in a radiating pattern over the windows which, except at the third floor, have segmental arches. In 1973 the interior of the Ritchie Building was altered to provide small offices.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community)

Edward S. Ritchie built this structure in 1883, relocating his manufactory of "instruments and apparatus pertaining to physical science" and navigation instruments, particularly compasses, from Panter's Building at the intersection of Harvard and Washington Streets in Brookline Village. He had started the business in 1850, moving it from Boston to Brookline in 1868.

According to Burton C. Sherman, of Ritchie Navigation Instruments, now located in Pembroke, Mass., "...Edward S. Ritchie, whom we understand was a physicist from Scotland, settled in the Boston area and began the manufacture of laboratory instruments and equipment. His entry into the compass business came about as a result of the work he was doing for the Charlestown Navy Yard. At that time, no one in this country manufactured ship's compasses and therefore, most vessels were equipped with instruments made in England. When Ritchie was asked to repair some that were installed on U. S. Navy ships, he began to consider ways to improve them. He eventually went into the manufacture of a complete line of magnetic compasses for all types of vessels..."

Harriet Woods, writing in Historical Sketches of Brookline, published in 1874, states, referring to industry in the Town, "The only other business, not merely local, of a mechanical kind, is the manufacture of philosophical instruments, by the Messrs. Ritchie....Their establishment has been for many years the largest manufactory of instruments and apparatus illustrative of physical science, particularly in the higher grades, for colleges, etc., in the country. In later years the principal branch of their works has been the manufacture of marine compasses, particularly of such as are known as liquid compasses, invented and patented by the senior member of the firm, and which

Continued on attached sheet

Woods, Harriet, Historical Sketches of Brookline, 1874, p. 404

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Atlases, 1874, 1884

Brookline Directory, 1868-1895

Boston Directory, 1867-71, 1895, 1910

Tax lists, 1882-1883

Correspondence, 11/4/80, with Burton L. Sherman, sales manager, Ritchie Navigation Instruments, Oak Street, Pembroke, Mass 02359

Driscoll, James, "Industry in Brookline", BHS Proceedings, 1952

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: Brookline	Form No: 37/189-32
Property Name: Ritchie Building	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

are now solely used by the Navy of the United States, and very largely by the mercantile marine of the country."

James Driscoll, in his article, "Industry in Brookline", wrote " On September 9th, 1862 [Ritchie] took out his first patent on a nautical compass and another in April 1863. The Monitor, in its famous battle with the Merrimac used a Ritchie compass."

Ritchie moved his family from Boston to Brookline in 1855, renting the Italianate style house at #5 Lincoln Road from Samuel Crafts, and buying it two years later. Lincoln Road had not yet been laid out, and Stanton Road, with which it intersects, was then called Cypress Place. Miss Woods again: "The Messrs. Ritchie have lately built a magnetic observatory on Gorham Avenue [the street behind Ritchie's house] ; a neat octagon building, designed by T. P. Chandler, Jr., for the use of the Bureau of Navigation, of the U. S. Navy. It is built of wood and copper, no iron being employed, and is furnished by the Bureau, with the most delicate instruments known to science, for the adjustment and testing of compasses. All such instruments used by our Navy are here inspected and tested by the Superintendent of Compasses of the Navy."

Although Ritchie moved his factory to Brookline in 1868, he kept his Boston office, which was then at 313 Washington Street. The firm then consisted of Ritchie himself and his sons John and Thomas. By 1871 the office address was 150 Tremont Street and Andrew M. Ritchie, the youngest son, had joined the firm, which was listed in the Brookline Directory as making "philosophical apparatus and compasses". The compasses were always marked E. S. Ritchie Co., Boston, Mass., rather than Brookline.

When the Harvard Square location proved too small for his operation, Ritchie purchased former farmland from the Moses Jones estate (see 23-25 Elm Street inventory form) next to what was then the New England Railroad's Woonsocket line. This became the Boston and Albany's Newton Highlands line in 1890. The location was undoubtedly chosen because spur tracks and a turntable already existed nearby, on the present site of the MBTA's Brookline Hills parking lot. The brick structure Ritchie built was the first such to be built outside the Village or Boylston Street area. In 1885 a small wooden factory where fishing tackle, lines and flies were made was built next door, but the area never became intensively developed commercially.

Edward S. Ritchie died in 1895; the business continued to be family owned until 1936, when it was sold to John Negus of New York, also a manufacturer of nautical equipment, who ran the company from there. In 1951 the firm was again sold and the offices and factory moved to Pembroke* where, under the name Ritchie Navigation Instruments, it continues. The building was next used to manufacture hardware items, such as bolts, and at present houses offices.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:

Brookline

Form No:

37/189-32

Property Name Ritchie Building

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

112 Cypress Street meets criteria A, B, and C of the National Register, representing one of the few surviving examples of Brookline's industrial history; displaying elements of the Panel Brick style; and being the factory building of E.S. Ritchie, a well known inventor and creator of nationally distributed compasses and other navigational instruments.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic GroupName Brookline MRA
State MASSACHUSETTS

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

61. Milestone
(Boylston St.)Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Delores Byers 10/17/85

Attest

62. Murphy, William, House

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Delores Byers 10/17/85

Attest

63. Orrock, Rev. John, House

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Delores Byers 10/17/85

Attest

64. Paine Estate

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Delores Byers 10/17/85

Attest

65. Perkins Estate

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Delores Byers 10/17/85

Attest

66. Reservoir Park

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Delores Byers 10/17/85

Attest

67. Ritchie Building

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Delores Byers 10/17/85

Attest

68. Roughwood

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Delores Byers 10/17/85

Attest

69. Saint Aidan's Church and
RectoryEntered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Delores Byers 10/17/85

Attest

70. Saint Mary of the Assumption
Church, Rectory, School and
ConventEntered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Delores Byers 10/17/85

Attest

85003308

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Ritchie Building (Brookline MRA)
Norfolk County
MASSACHUSETTS

Working No. SEP 4 1985
Fed. Reg. Date: 2/3/87
Date Due: 10/3/85 - 10/19/85
Action: ☒ ACCEPT 10-17-85
☐ RETURN
☐ REJECT
Federal Agency: _____

Entered in the
National Register

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

Substantive Review: ☐ sample ☐ request ☐ appeal ☐ NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria _____
Reviewer _____
Discipline _____
Date _____
_____ 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 | ☐ deteriorated |
| ☐ good | ☐ ruins |
| ☐ fair | ☐ 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

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UTM References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification _____

11. Form Prepared By

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: _____



WEYMOUTH-BOSTON
CHAPTER
MAINE HEART
ASSOCIATION
HEART FUND

NO
PARKING
EXCEPT
FOR TRUCKS

Ritchie Building
112 Cypress
Brookline MRA, MA

v

NOV 1980

Prestige Prints

by Berkey

Richie Building (37/189-32)
112 Cypress St.
Brookline (Ma) MRA
Town of Brookline Map Jan '81
Scale 1/2" = 100 ft.

