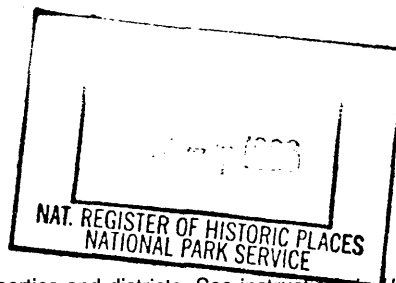


1307

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name WAIT BLOCK

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Main Street N/A not for publication

city or town Manchester (Manchester Center Village) N/A vicinity

state Vermont code VT county Bennington code 003 zip code 05255

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Elva Gulbrecht National Register Specialist 9/30-1996
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Vermont State Historic Preservation Office
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

11-7-96

Entered in the National Register

Wait Block
Name of Property

Bennington County, Vermont
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Health Care - medical business

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade - specialty store

Commerce/Trade - professional

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Italianate

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation marble

walls brick

marble

roof asphalt

other glass

wood

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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Wait Block
Bennington County, Vermont

DESCRIPTION

Situated in the Main Street business district of Manchester Center, the vernacular Italianate style Wait Block stands in a row of diverse commercial buildings. The three-story (plus an exposed basement on the rear), four-by-three-bay, flat-roofed block of rectangular plan is constructed of load-bearing brick masonry and trimmed with marble components. The asymmetrically arcaded main (north) facade includes a storefront with a recessed double-leaf central entrance flanked by large four-light display windows; decorative brickwork on the upper stories culminates in a corbeled parapet. Nearly all the window and door openings are segmental-arched above marble sills. Rebuilt in 1995 from its original (c. 1940) three-story height, a four-story, wood-framed and clapboarded, shed-roofed fire stair wing conceals most of the rear (south) facade. The brick block has been extensively rehabilitated in 1995, and retains historic integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

The Wait Block stands next to the southeast side of Main Street (Vermont Route 7A) diagonally opposite the intersection with Bonnet Street (Route 30) in the central business district of Manchester Center. Other commercial buildings abut the Wait Block on its east and west sides. Along the rear (south) side of this row of commercial buildings, a gravel driveway parallels Main Street at basement level. The driveway follows the north bank of the West Branch of the Batten Kill (river) that flows in a curving southeasterly course.

The Wait Block rises three stories on its main (north) facade adjoining the concrete sidewalk along Main Street. Both the east and west sides of this building are exposed only above the roofs of the abutting three-story and one-story commercial buildings, respectively. The rear (south) facade gains a fully exposed basement story owing to the lower level of the ground along the West Branch.

The building rests on a mostly invisible foundation built of random marble ashlar under the main (north) facade and mortared rubble under the other facades. The walls are constructed of load-bearing red brick masonry laid in five-course American bond. The shallow-pitched shed roof is sheathed with rolled asphalt; it

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Continuation Sheet

Wait Block
Bennington County, Vermont

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slopes toward the rear (south) facade, hidden behind a stepped brick parapet that surmounts all except the rear facade.

The vernacular Italianate style of the building is expressed especially by the segmental arches of the window and door openings. The arcaded main (north) facade exhibits a variety of decorative brickwork concentrated on the parapet. (The other facades lack such embellishment.) Providing contrast of color and texture, smooth white marble appears in the forms mostly of small structural elements within the masonry; these include sills, impost blocks, and keystones.

The wall surface of the Main Street facade is articulated by brick piers into three bays of differing width. The widths of the bays are indicated by a discontinuous course of corbeled brick sawteeth that separate the halves of the blind round arch (consisting of one header course) crowning each bay. The left (east) bay has the widest span, extending twelve sawteeth; the right (west) bay extends seven sawteeth and the right-central bay only three sawteeth.

The brick piers ascend from marble bases that rest on the marble ashlar foundation now exposed only as a single course above the concrete sidewalk adjoining this facade. The piers have uniform width and smooth surface until they reach the impost level of the arches, where one corbel table forms the basic surface of the parapet above the arches and a second corbel table forms the upper ends of the piers. Crowning the individual bays, a discontinuous rank of stylized corbeled modillions extends between the piers. Finally, another corbel table spans the entire facade below a row of alternating flush and recessed square surfaces surmounted by the metal coping.

The storefront occupies the first story with the exception of the upper-story entrance next to the east (left) corner. The main (storefront) entrance is placed within the middle of the three bays defined by the brick piers, slightly to the right of center on the overall facade. Display windows of unequal width (broader in the right bay) but matching form and division flank the storefront entrance.

The entrance proper is recessed behind the wall plane in a three-sided alcove with canted sides. The historic - if not original - double-leaf, hinged doors are fitted with two rectangular lights each (one above the other) over a single rectangular molded

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Continuation Sheet

Wait Block
Bennington County, Vermont

Section number 7 Page 3

panel. (Each of these lights has been cosmetically divided into four smaller sections by the surface application of molded wood strips, yielding the visual effect of eight lights per door.) Crowning the doorway, an attenuated wood cornice bears stylized modillions echoing the corbel treatment of the parapet crowning this facade. The cornice is surmounted in turn by a segmental-arched transom that is divided into two mirror-image lights by a central vertical muntin.

Flanking the doorway, the canted side walls of the alcove are fenestrated also with two lights (one above the other) that have been cosmetically divided by surface strips into four sections each. The sill level of these windows corresponds to that of the front display windows, and a molded square panel underlies each window. The coved ceiling of the alcove is sheathed with beadboard. Conforming to the segmental-arched opening, a metal-framed fabric hood has been installed (c. 1987) at the main wall plane. This hood serves partly to shelter the single marble-slab step that separates the alcove floor from the concrete sidewalk adjoining the front of the building.

The display window in the right bay displaces most of the brick wall surface between the vertical piers, exceeding the breadth of the counterpart window on the left side of the entrance. Other than that, the large display windows are treated the same. Above the heavy marble sill, a molded panel of short height extends the width of the opening. The four-light, segmental-headed sash rises to a marble-trimmed segmental arch whose crown is slightly lower than that of the entrance arch.

The upper-story entrance at the left corner retains the original single-leaf door hung in the plane of the display windows. The solid four-panel door has twin vertically elongated molded panels over twin small square panels. A segmental-headed transom surmounts the door.

The second story possesses a symmetrical arrangement of its fenestration. Opening virtually the entire width of the central bay, a coupled pair of one-over-one sash rise from a marble sill at a level slightly below those of the windows in the flanking bays. Like the transom lights of the main entrance directly below, the head of each sash takes the form of half a segmental arch below the single marble-trimmed brick arch that crowns the opening. In the right and left bays, the identical

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Wait Block
Bennington County, Vermont

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windows consist of single segmental-headed, one-over-one sash slightly shorter in height than the central sash.

The third story follows the symmetrical arrangement of the second although with shorter windows and simpler treatment in the central bay. The latter consists of a single square-headed, one-over-one sash; the square marble impost blocks at its upper corners carry a marble lintel that supports in turn a blind round brick arch with a marble keystone. The flanking right and left bays repeat the treatment of the windows in the corresponding second-story bays.

The west-side facade presents a markedly plainer appearance. Only its second and third stories are exposed above the flat roof of an adjoining one-story, wood-framed and clapboarded building. An iron fire ladder ascends vertically from that roof to the third story on the left side of the windows in the right (south) bay to provide the only means of egress.

The three-bay second story is fenestrated asymmetrically with the middle bay in the right-center position between the left and right bays. All share the treatment of segmental-arched (two-header-course) openings with marble sills but lacking the marble impost blocks and keystones of the main facade arches. The original segmental-headed, one-over-one sash remain in place although visually concealed by the square-headed, metal storm sash of the same division that have been added on the exterior.

The third story differs by the omission of the middle bay; the left and right bays are aligned vertically with those on the second story. The original segmental-headed, third-story sash remain exposed; wood storm sash of the same form and division have been added on the interior. Between the second and third story openings and also above those on the third story, horizontal series of iron tie-rod anchors punctuate the wall surface. Atop this facade, a simple stepped parapet lacking decorative brickwork descends toward the rear of the building, indicating the shallow slope of the roof.

The east-side facade of this building contrasts by being exposed only at the level of the parapet. The adjoining three-story, brick commercial block possesses a slightly smaller scale such that the cornice of its flat roof reaches the level of the third-story window arches on the Wait Block. Above the level of the adjoining roof, the east facade consists essentially of a

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Wait Block
Bennington County, Vermont

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plain brick stepped parapet with metal coping like that on the opposite facade.

The rear (south) facade of the brick block is concealed except on the upper right quadrant by the fire stair wing that was built originally c. 1940 and then rebuilt and enlarged in 1995. The lower ground level next to the stream bank exposes fully the basement story on this facade. From ground level, the wing rises two original stories the full width of the building and then continues upward two stories added in 1995 on the left two-thirds of the facade.

On the right side, the third story of the brick block is lighted by two closely spaced bays of the segmental-headed, one-over-one sash common to the building; the fourth story has only a single bay. These openings share the undecorated treatment of those on the west facade. Flush with the wall surface next to the upper stories of the wing, an interior chimney interrupts the eave in a rectangular plan above the roof.

The fire stair wing contrasts with the brick block by its concrete foundation, wood frame, and clapboard sheathing (replaced in 1995). It carries shallow-pitched shed roofs, the higher one being slightly below the roofline of the brick block. Only its south facade is fenestrated, and the single exterior entrance with a steel door is centered at ground level. The window openings are arranged in a staggered half-story pattern reflecting the interior stairs, and are fitted with new one-over-one sash and peaked lintels.

Prior to the 1995 project, the wing differed in height and fenestration. The lower two-story block possessed the same form but was lighted with six-over-six sash arranged horizontally by story. A third story surmounted and overhung slightly the left half of the lower block; it consisted of a shed-roofed enclosed porch with large-light sash and screens. This porch was removed in 1995.

The rear brick wall of the main block is exposed inside the wing. Original exterior segmental-arched window openings now infilled with brick exist on the left side of all four stories plus the right side of the basement, and a former door opening occurs in the center of the second story.

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Wait Block
Bennington County, Vermont

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The entire interior of the building has been somewhat altered by renovations performed in 1971, 1987, and 1995. The storefront was adapted from the original drugstore to a legal office in 1971, and its interior was remodeled at that time. In 1987, the storefront was adapted to an ice cream parlor and renovated into its present appearance. The upper stories were modified in 1995 to provide for an expansion of the legal offices into both floors from their previous second-floor occupancy. (The third floor had been in residential use prior to vacancy in recent decades.)

The storefront interior was been almost entirely refinished since about 1971. The suspended ceiling of acoustic tile was installed at that time; the historic stamped-metal sheathing remains partly in place on the higher original ceiling. The small octagonal floor tile, beadboarded wainscoting, molded chair rail, and gypsumboarded upper wall surfaces represent the renovation of 1987. Also in 1987, a small room was partitioned in the northeast corner of the storefront behind the left display window. Entered from the stair hall, this room was created to provide a street-level office for legal clients unable to climb the stairs to the primary office on the second floor.

The front (north) wall(s) of both the storefront and the office retain their original woodwork. The display windows are enframed by heavily molded, segmental-arched surrounds. Above the main double-leaf doors, an attenuated modillion cornice matches the one on the exterior. Each spandrel of the segmental transom bears a small raised triangular panel absent from the exterior.

The upper-story entrance leads to a straight flight of closed-well stairs covered with new vinyl flooring. On each side of the stairs, historic single-beaded matchboard wainscoting is surmounted by a molded softwood handrail attached to the wall and surmounted in turn by a parallel softwood board with a groove along its upper edge.

On the second floor, a large office/conference room occupies the west two-thirds of the front half. This room shares the finish materials of carpeted floor and gypsumboarded walls and ceiling that were installed throughout this floor in 1995. The remaining historic woodwork includes heavy segmental-arched molded window surrounds and a cap-molded baseboard. A new door with a large etched light over two molded panels enters the southeast corner of this room.

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Continuation Sheet**

Wait Block
Bennington County, Vermont

Section number 7 Page 7

The rear (south) half of the second floor now serves mostly as unpartitioned clerical space. Its segmental-arched window surrounds are not molded. The brick chimney is fully exposed against the south wall. Replacing a rear stair to the third floor, a half-bathroom was installed in 1971 in the southeast corner at the head of the first-floor stair.

Flanking the east side of the conference room, a passageway with a curved west wall (built in 1995) leads to an historic door with four recessed panels that opens into the closed well of the third-floor stair in the northeast corner. The historic softwood steps remain exposed on this straight flight in addition to the woodwork matching that of the lower flight.

The third story now contains an office in each of the northeast, northwest, and southwest corners. These offices share the finish materials of narrow tongue-and-groove softwood floor boards and gypsumboard on the walls and ceilings. The baseboards and segmental-arched window surrounds are not molded. The offices are entered by new doors with four raised panels. Separating the two front (north) offices, a waiting area differs by its vinyl tile floor covering. The latter extends also into the southeast kitchen/service area, where the brick chimney is exposed against the south wall. A new half-bathroom has been installed in the southeast corner at the head of the second-floor stair.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Commerce

Period of Significance

1884-85

Significant Dates

1884-85

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Manchester Historical Society

Wait Block
Name of Property

Bennington County, Vermont
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.06

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 | 1 | 8 | 6 | 57 | 9 | 50 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 20 | 6 | 0 |
Zone Easting Northing
2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
Zone Easting Northing
4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Hugh H. Henry, Historic Preservation Consultant

organization N/A date May 1996

street & number Route 2, Box 226 telephone 802-875-3379

city or town Chester state Vermont zip code 05143-9418

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Campbell/Rennie Associates

street & number P. O. Box 1999 telephone 802-362-2560

city or town Manchester Center state Vermont zip code 05255-1999

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

Wait Block
Bennington County, Vermont

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Wait Block holds primary significance under National Register Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an excellent example of vernacular Italianate style applied to a marble-trimmed, brick commercial block. Constructed in 1884-85, the Wait Block constitutes a relatively late expression of that style on a three-story, flat-roofed block attached to other buildings in a commercial row and displaying nearly all of its stylistic features on the main facade. The Wait Block holds additional significance under Criterion A in the area of Commerce for representing the vigorous expansion and somewhat urban character of commercial development that occurred in Manchester Center during the quarter-century before a devastating fire in 1893. Contextually within Vermont, the Wait Block relates to the statewide contexts primarily of Historic Architecture and Patterns of Town Development and secondarily of Commercial Development in Urban Areas.

While used predominantly for residential buildings in Vermont, the Italianate style was applied to many wood and masonry (mostly brick) commercial buildings erected between the 1850s and 1890s. The Wait Block lacks the most diagnostic Italianate feature, an elaborate bracketed cornice crowning the main facade. However, within an arcaded main facade, it exhibits the typical segmental-arched openings, decorative corbeled brickwork, and large storefront windows flanking a double-leaf entrance. Furthermore, marble components enrich and distinguish its design; these reflect the extensive industry that quarried and milled this stone in the Manchester region especially during the latter half of the 19th century.

The village of Manchester Center achieved only marginally urban character during the historic (pre-1950) period even in the context of rural Vermont with its small-scale urban centers. Several small industries emerged around the cascades of the West Branch of the Battenkill prior to the Civil War, creating the industrial center of Manchester township. Commercial activities increased during the 1870s in the expanding cluster of commercial buildings along Main Street. The owner of the single drug store, Clark Wait, married a New York City woman, and a marked urban influence appeared in his new brick commercial block built in 1884-85. The Wait Block was barely saved from the catastrophic

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Wait Block
Bennington County, Vermont

fire in 1893 that destroyed much of the business district. The contemporary decline of the local industries undercut the commercial redevelopment that followed the fire. Only two other small brick blocks were ever built (only one survives), and the business district did not exceed its pre-fire extent until after 1950. Subsequent rapid commercial expansion has occurred outside the historic village center.

The drugstore that would exist here for a century originated during the autumn of 1870. Charles Buckley and Dr. Seneca S. Clemons opened their business in a building occupied by a confectionery and owned by Daniel P. Walker. Known as the People's Drugstore, the business underwent a series of changes in ownership during the next two years. Vincent Grover, who started as a clerk, became the sole proprietor in 1872. The following year, he purchased the building and its lot from Walker for the amount of \$1,200. Two years later, he added a novel attraction to the drugstore by installing the first soda fountain in Manchester.

The village was then known as Factory Point owing to the several water-powered industrial enterprises at the cascades of the West Branch of the Batten Kill (river) near the Main Street bridge. The Bennington County atlas published by F. W. Beers in 1869 shows a knitting factory with its dam and pond upstream of the bridge. Downstream of the bridge, a grist mill, a marble saw mill, a tannery, and a carriage shop flanked another pond behind the site of the Wait Block. Immediately downstream of the tannery dam, another dam and pond served a group of marble saw mills and shops. The marble came mostly from quarries in the adjoining town of Dorset to the north.

In 1873, the partners Clark J. Wait and Jesse N. Hard purchased Levi C. Orvis' drugstore business in the predominantly residential Manchester Village, about one and one-quarter miles to the south. Their success at that enterprise apparently enabled them to acquire in 1877 the Factory Point drugstore from Grover, who accepted \$1,200 for both the business and the building. Hard remained in charge of the Manchester Village store while Wait became the manager of the Factory Point store.

The Pocket Directory of Manchester published in 1877 contains a full-page advertisement for the firm. Its text describes their diverse offerings: "Wait & Hard, Druggists & Apothecaries, Wholesale and Retail Dealers in Patent Medicines, Chemicals,

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Continuation Sheet

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Wait Block
Bennington County, Vermont

Dye Stuffs, Perfumery, Toilet Articles, Fancy Goods, Toys, Soda and Mineral Waters, Tobacco, Cigars, Canned Goods, &c. Stores at Manchester, Vt., and Factory Point, Vt." The partners' division of responsibility lasted two years until 1879, when Hard sold his interest in the Factory Point store to Wait for \$500.

Clark Wait was a native of the Manchester area, having been born here in 1845. He attended the local secondary school, Burr and Burton Academy. In 1881, he married Anna Catherine Kircher (1856-94), a native of New York City where her family lived. Undoubtedly Wait traveled there (then a trip of only some hours by train from Manchester), and observed the contemporary commercial building development.

Wait entered into another endeavor during the latter 1870s that yielded financial success. As early as 1871, he assisted in the Western Union telegraphy at L. C. Orvis' drugstore in Manchester Village, where telegraph service had existed since 1846. Then in the autumn of 1878, a partnership of Wait, J. N. Hard, and two others opened the Popular Telegraph Line between Manchester Village and Factory Point. The Bennington County gazetteer and business directory published by Hamilton Child in 1884 notes that "The line is popular, not only in name but in fact, for the small charge of ten cents for local messages of moderate length...." The following year (1879), Wait and a different partner extended the American Telegraph Line from Manchester Depot through Factory Point to Dorset, about six miles to the northwest. Child states that "besides being a great convenience to the people along the line, it has proved a good investment for the owners."

The listing for Clark J. Wait in Child's directory for the Town of Manchester records that, along with being a druggist, he was the manager of the two telegraph lines. It also reveals yet another of his economic activities, that of farmer with 80 acres of land. That land was presumably located outside the village, but Wait then boarded at M. S. Colburn's hotel diagonally across Main Street from the drugstore.

By the early 1880s, the drugstore business apparently expanded to the extent that it needed larger quarters. The origin of the present brick block is recorded in the "Local Intelligence" section of The Manchester Journal newspaper for October 16, 1884: "Clark Wait is laying the foundation for a new drugstore." Construction proceeded apace, and the Journal of December 4

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Wait Block
Bennington County, Vermont

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declares that "Clark Wait's new brick block is nearly completed and is one of the best business buildings in town." Advertisements placed by Wait in succeeding issues refer to the business as "The Peoples [sic] Drug Store."

The phrase "nearly completed" undoubtedly referred to the exterior shell of the building. The work then shifted indoors during the winter months, and the February 12, 1885 issue of the Journal reported its progress. "The inside work of C. J. Wait's new block is nearly completed, and everything about it will be very convenient." The building would accommodate both the drugstore on the first floor and residential space on the upper floors for Wait and his wife.

The final completion took about two additional months. The Journal of April 16 comments that "Clark Wait has removed his drug store into his new and commodious building. Give him a call and see how fine he looks."

Although not elaborate, the exterior of the building displays a distinctive expression of vernacular Italianate style. The segmental arches crowning the door and window openings constitute the most typical features of that style. These arches, furthermore, are highlighted by the contrasting color and texture of marble impost blocks and keystones that complement the marble sills. These and other marble components undoubtedly came from a local shop. Indeed another member of the Wait family and resident of Factory Point, John D., was a dealer in marble and may have supplied the same for Clark's building. The identities of the contractor/builder and designer are not known.

The new Wait Block contributed a relatively sophisticated architectural presence to the Main Street of Factory Point. Coincidentally this reflected a contemporary effort by "a number of the influential men of the village (for the place is not lacking of such)," as Aldrich's Bennington County history of 1889 drolly comments, to change its name to Manchester Centre. Observing the steadily expanding summer recreational business in Manchester Village, these men desired to make their village more attractive for the same kind of development and thought the name of Factory Point as not conducive to such. Hence in 1886 the name of the post office was officially changed to Manchester Centre [sic], and popular usage gradually followed. [The spelling of "Centre" later devolved into "Center."]

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Wait Block
Bennington County, Vermont

Clark Wait's fortunes changed for the worse during the early 1890s. Apparently needing a substantial amount of money, he and Anna mortgaged the drug store property in May, 1890, to Charles J. Kircher of New York for \$4,300, payable in five years.

Then at Christmastime in 1893, Wait lay "sick and helpless" in his upper-floor apartment while the worst fire in Manchester history erupted in the commercial row extending northeastward from his block. Deep snow hampered the primitive fire engines, and several buildings along both sides of Main Street were destroyed. Wait was rescued from his building, and the flames were stopped at the point of charring beams in its basement.

Less than three months after the fire, Wait's wife, Anna, died in March, 1894. The cause recorded on the death certificate was "congestion of lungs," presumably tuberculosis.

Only two years later, his own failing health caused Clark Wait to sell the drugstore business to John H. Whipple. Wait then moved to New York to receive care from his father-in-law, John Kircher. In January, 1896, he transferred title to the building to Josephine A. Weissback and Elizabeth A. Kircher of New York. The stated value was one dollar plus the payment by Josephine and Elizabeth of the \$4,300 mortgage to Charles. Clark Wait remained alive only until 1898.

The purchase of the drug store by John Whipple brought to the business the name that it would carry thereafter for a century. John Whipple, however, operated the grist mill adjacent to the Wait Block; his son, Harris, became the druggist, receiving his license in 1899. John also served as postmaster of Manchester Center from 1897 until 1914, and the post office was installed in the drugstore.

Meanwhile, the Kircher family continued to own the building for several years. In 1903, they sold it to Ellen F. Wyman of Jamaica, Vt., and it remained in her possession for a quarter-century. Harris Whipple acquired the drugstore business from his father in 1922, and would continue as the active pharmacist for another quarter-century after that point in time.

The initial use of the Wait Block for legal offices came in 1929. Frank C. Archibald (1857-1935) started his law practice in Manchester in 1888. Subsequently he served in many State, Bennington County, and municipal positions during a prominent

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career that spanned a half-century. Archibald purchased the Wait Block for \$6,219 in July, 1929 (only months before the stock market crash), and moved his office into the second floor above Whipple's pharmacy. A bachelor, Archibald followed Clark Wait's example by boarding at the Colburn House across the street.

After Archibald's death six years later (1935), Dr. Claude M. Campbell acquired the building for the Depression price of \$5,000; Dr. Campbell (1872-1950) had moved his medical practice from Rochester, Vt., to Manchester in 1915. Thus began the Campbell family ownership of the Wait Block that has extended to the present and become the longest-term in its history. Harris Whipple continued to operate the drugstore until he retired in 1947, being the oldest licensed pharmacist in Vermont. Subsequent owners carried onward the Whipple name for the business.

The second floor of the Wait Block resumed being a lawyer's office during the late 1930s. After graduating from law school and completing his clerkship with another lawyer, James B. Campbell (1911-82), the doctor's son, opened his practice above the pharmacy. This usage of the storefront and second floor would continue for three decades.

The original occupancy of the storefront by the drugstore approached its conclusion in 1969 when Ronald Wilcox purchased the business. Two years later (1971), impelled probably by the limited interior space and scarce parking along the street, he moved the pharmacy to a new building in a shopping plaza. Thus ended the eighty-six-year continuity of Clark Wait's drugstore in his commercial block.

The storefront was then renovated, and James Campbell moved his law office to the first floor. Subsequently another lawyer used the second-floor office. James Campbell maintained his legal practice here until his death in 1982. His son, Edgar T., joined the practice after receiving his law degree in 1978.

The next change in occupancy of the storefront, accompanied by more substantial alteration, occurred in 1987. The Campbell law office was moved back to the second floor, and the storefront was renovated into a franchised ice cream parlor. The latter returned usage to a retail enterprise somewhat similar to Clark Wait's drugstore and soda fountain.

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The interior of the upper floors received little more than cosmetic refurbishing during the first century of the building's existence. By the early 1990s, roof leaks and random cutting of structural members had caused substantial damage. An extensive rehabilitation designed by the architects Keefe and Wesner, North Bennington, Vermont, was performed in 1995. The project was focused on structural repairs and adaptation of the formerly residential third floor to office space. Safety codes required the addition of appropriate fire stairs, and the rear wing was rebuilt to the full height of the brick block for that purpose.

Aside from some minor work not included in the 1995 project, the Wait Block has been restored to excellent physical condition. Furthermore, the rehabilitation has restored the economic viability of the building by enabling remunerative occupancy of all three floors. The Campbell law firm merged in 1995 with a larger Bennington, Vermont, counterpart to become its Manchester affiliate, and now uses both upper floors.

The original exterior design and materials of the Wait Block have remained virtually unaltered throughout the various changes of ownership and usage. The building, therefore, continues to convey its significant architectural qualities as expressed in vernacular Italianate style by the unknown designer. Moreover, it reflects tangibly both the period of its origin (1884-85) and the commercial optimism of Clark Wait and his contemporaries in the local business community. By its essentially urban character, the Wait Block anticipated a future setting in an intensively developed urban business district but that pattern of development never came to fruition in Manchester Center.

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Wait Block
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Wait Block
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BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The property being nominated consists of the Wait Block and its 0.06-acre lot adjoining the southeast side of Main Street. The four-sided lot extends 40 feet along its north side (the southeast edge of the right-of-way), 48 feet along its west side, 48 feet along its south side, and 60 feet along its east side. The deed to the property is recorded in Book 38, Page 94 of the Town of Manchester Land Records. The property is recorded in the Manchester tax maps as map 32, block 52, lot 2.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary of the property being nominated coincides with the original lot of land occupied by the Wait Block since its construction in 1884-85.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

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The following information applies to all photographs:

Wait Block
Manchester Center, Bennington County, Vermont
Credit: Hugh H. Henry
Date: May 1996
Negative filed at Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

Photograph 1
Setting along Main Street; view looking southeast.

Photograph 2
Main (north) and west facades; view looking southeast.

Photograph 3
Storefront on main (north) facade; view looking southeast.

Photograph 4
Rear (south) facade; view looking west.