

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

### SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 97001134 Date Listed: 09/26/97

Augusta City Hall, Former Kennebec ME  
Property Name County State

N/A  
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

*for Bob Savage*  
Signature of the Keeper

9/26/97  
Date of Action

-----  
Amended Items in Nomination:

**Photographs**

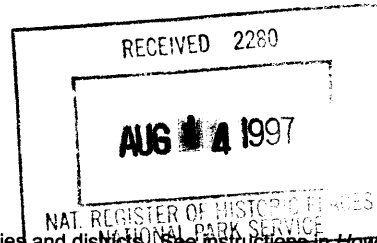
Despite their age, the 1988 photographs included with the nomination depict the current conditions of the building accurately.

This information has been confirmed with Kirk Mohny, National Register Coordinator, MESHPO, by telephone.

**DISTRIBUTION:**  
National Register property file  
Nominating Authority (without attachment)

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 (Former) Augusta City Hall  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 1 Cony Street N/A not for publication  
city or town Augusta, N/A vicinity  
state Maine code ME county Kennebec code 011 zip code 04330

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.)  
Carol S. Thibault Signature of certifying official/Title Date 8/6/97  
Maine Historic Preservation Commission SHPO  
State or 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 certifying official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this 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): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper Beth L. Savage Date of Action 9/26/97

(Former) Augusta City Hall  
Name of Property

Kennebec, Maine  
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	
<u>1</u>		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	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)

Government/City Hall

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Government/Correctional Facility

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Second Renaissance Revival

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Brick

roof Stone/Slate

other Terra Cotta Capitals and Metal

Cornice

**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

AUGUSTA CITY HALL

KENNEBEC, MAINE

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Augusta's former city hall is a tall two-story five-bay brick building with classical detailing. Its L-shaped configuration is covered by a hip roof. The well-preserved structure stands on the east bank of the Kennebec River opposite Fort Western (NR 12/2/69, NHL 11/7/73).

Facing south, the facade of the building is symmetrically divided into a recessed three-bay central section framed by projecting end bays. The rusticated first story rises from a tall basement and gives way to an auditorium level featuring a trio of centrally located round arched windows positioned between pilasters with Corinthian capitals.

Focus on the first story is directed to the tall, broad entrance whose modest entablature bearing the words CITY HALL is supported by tapered posts and a pair of columns with Ionic capitals set in antis. Behind this the modern replacement doors are flanked by granite panels, an entablature with modillions and large square windows. Paired segmentally arched, one-over-one double-hung sash windows frame the entrance. Two taller one-over-one windows occupy the outer bays. The first and second stories are separated by a broad belt course that carries around all but the rear and a portion of the east elevations. The round arched windows in the three recessed bays feature multi-pane upper windows above two broad panels and paired windows. (Originally these were one-over-one units that were altered by adding a smaller one-over-one window in the lower frame.) The windows which punctuate the projecting bay walls are composed in a manner similar to those in the center with the exception that the arched windows are replaced by rectangular ones. These bays are further articulated by the use of brick quoins. The pilasters that frame the arched windows rise from tall plinths to a broad entablature that carries around the building. This entablature is detailed with a dentil string and egg and dart molding in the frieze and a cornice whose modillions are decorated with acanthus.

The west, river elevation of the building is a full three stories plus basement in height. It has an L-shaped configuration that features the projection of the front block at the southwest and the recessed leg of the ell at the north end. Between the two blocks is a flat roofed rounded bay rising to the mid point of the upper story. The fenestration in this elevation consists of symmetrically placed one-over-one windows that match those used on the facade. The projecting three-bay wall has four windows and a door in the basement, paired windows flanking a single unit in the middle section and two round arched windows in the upper floor. The latter frame a large opening containing a door and a large window unit that repeats elements of those on the front. Both the rustication and quoins are repeated here. On the west wall of the ell there are six windows and a door in the basement, three pairs and one single window in the next two levels and a trio of the large round arched windows in the upper level. There are four windows in each level of the bay.

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KENNEBEC, MAINE

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The building's east elevation is separated into two architecturally distinct sections: 1) a slightly projecting three-bay unit at the southeast which marks the east side of the front block, and 2) an unornamented five-bay wall on the ell. the former is articulated in much the same manner as is the west side although the fenestration consists of a trio of paired windows in the first story and four openings on the upper level. The recessed wall has three segmentally arched windows, a door and two garage openings at basement level, eight one-over-one windows in the first story and five large symmetrically placed round arched windows in the auditorium.

The rear elevation is the least ornamented. Its basement level is punctuated by four windows, the first story with a pair of coupled one-over-ones, while the upper level features two asymmetrically located doors and a window. The doors open out to an exposed metal fire escape and abut the square exterior flue stack. A mid-twentieth century, flat roofed brick addition housing a garage and offices extends from the northeast corner of the building.

On the interior, the former city hall contains an L-shaped hallway with the main staircase located at the west end. Numerous offices are located along the hall, and the woodwork is modest and utilitarian in its design. The most elaborately detailed interior space is the auditorium that occupies the entire upper half of the building. This large open space contains galleries along three sides, a remarkably well-preserved pressed tin ceiling of small square blocks within larger ones, and a classically detailed proscenium arch. The stage curves gently into the auditorium, and sheathed wainscot extends around the room.

(Former) Augusta City Hall

Name of Property

Kennebec, Maine

County and State

**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 a 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

Politics/Government

**Period of Significance**

1896-1947

**Significant Dates**

1896

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Spofford, John Calvin, Architect

**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:

\_\_\_\_\_

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AUGUSTA CITY HALL

KENNEBEC, MAINE

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Augusta's former city hall is a modestly scaled Renaissance Revival style building constructed in 1895-96 from designs by the Boston architect John C. Spofford. The building housed the municipal offices until 1987 when it was replaced by a new facility located to the southeast of this site. However, the city's police department continues to occupy a portion of the building. It meets National Register criterion A for its role in local politics/government and criterion C for its architectural significance.

On February 20, 1797, the Town of Augusta was set off from Hallowell, but it was not until 1849 that the city became an incorporated municipality.<sup>1</sup> By that time Augusta was a thriving river port community with a moderately-sized commercial district, textile mills located along the banks of the Kennebec River, and the State Capitol building as well as other governmental facilities. In 1850, when the city government was organized, the population stood at 8,232 persons.<sup>2</sup> The initial meetings of the new government were held in Winthrop Hall. Prior to the completion of the new city hall offices were located in the Opera House.

In 1895 the city officials proposed that a new building be constructed to house the various city departments and to provide a public auditorium space. A lengthy article that appeared in the November 13, 1895, issue of the *Kennebec Journal* enthusiastically described the progress on the new facility:

Augusta will soon have a city building of which she may well feel proud. It will be essentially commodious, and always perfectly suited to the wants of the City Department and officers. It will be constructed of the best material and its style of architecture is modern, substantial and pleasing.<sup>3</sup>

The description of the building that followed emphasized the prominent siting of the building on the east bank of the river with unobstructed views toward the business district on the opposing side.

Dedication of the completed building took place on July 4, 1896. The resultant dual celebration of Independence Day and dedication was fully described in the *Kennebec Journal*. The reporter commented that "the building is certainly a credit to the city, and the people have every reason to be proud of it."<sup>4</sup> In preparation for the occasion:

The appearance of the exterior was beautiful with bunting draped on the front and end facing the river, where a picture of George Washington was framed in American flags. The entrances to the bridge were also decorated with arches of bright color and on the city side, the seal of Maine and the motto 'Dirigo' was set.<sup>5</sup>

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KENNEBEC, MAINE

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Less than a year after its dedication, the new city hall played host to a concert by John Philip Sousa and his band. In the midst of what was proclaimed as a 21,000 mile tour, the Augusta performance was scheduled for the early afternoon of May 1, 1897. Having played the previously announced selections, the band performed a rousing unnamed march which a *Kennebec Journal* reporter described as "...superb...and it didn't matter much what the name was"(KJ, May 3, 1897). Musical scholar James R. Smart concluded in his *Perspectives on John Philip Sousa* (1983), that this march was in fact the first public performance of "The Stars and Stripes Forever", a piece that was formally premiered by this name at a concert in Philadelphia on May 14, 1897. In this way, Augusta's former city hall occupies a place in the history of one of the nation's most reknowned musicians.

Within a year of its being largely vacated, the building was closely evaluated for its potential conversion to an arts center. However, this plan did not materialize and the building's future remained in doubt until 1996 when the residents of Augusta voted to save the building. At present, several options are being examined to achieve this intention.

The architect of the former city hall, John Calvin Spofford (1854-1936) was born at Webster, Maine.<sup>6</sup> After a brief career as a teacher and principal in the local schools, Spofford moved to Boston where he was employed by architect H. J. Preston and later by the firm Sturgis and Brigham. In March, 1887 he became partners with Willard M. Bacon under the firm name Spofford and Bacon. This short-lived partnership was followed by Spofford's association with Charles Brigham. Between the years 1892 and 1898 Spofford practiced alone. It was during this period that most of his known Maine commissions were undertaken. The city hall in Augusta followed designs for similar (and much larger) governmental offices in Lewiston (1890-92, National Register 10/21/76) and Bangor (1892-93, demolished). Spofford designed a number of other buildings in Augusta including the west wing, Maine State House (1889), the Masonic Temple (1894), and the P. O. Vickery Block (1895). The Augusta city hall remains as an important example of his mid-to-late 1890s work.



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## Endnotes

1. James W. North, *The History of Augusta, Maine*. A facsimile of the 1870 edition with a new forward by Edwin A. Churchill (Somersworth, New Hampshire: New England History Press, 1981), page 679, hereinafter cited as North, *History of Augusta*.
2. North, *History of Augusta*, page 680.
3. *Kennebec Journal* (Augusta), November 13, 1895.
4. A description of the city hall which appeared earlier in the *Lewiston Evening Journal* was not as enthusiastic. In that account the author wrote that "While it is not highly ornate and does not appeal to the senses with imposing effect, it is not a structure to be ashamed of and will compare favorably with others of the kind." *Lewiston Evening Journal*, March 14, 1896.
5. *Kennebec Journal*, July 6, 1896.
6. Information on Spofford's career and a list of his known commissions in the state is on file at the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta.

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(FORMER) AUGUSTA CITY HALL

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*Kennebec Journal* (Augusta). November 13, 1895.

North, James W. *The History of Augusta, Maine*. A facsimile of the 1870 edition with a new forward by Edwin A. Churchill. Somersworth, New Hampshire: New England History Press. 1981.

Spofford, John Calvin, architect file. Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta.

(Former) Augusta City Hall  
Name of Property

Kennebec, Maine  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreege of Property** Less Than 1

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

1	9	4	3	8	4	6	0	4	9	0	7	1	4	0
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Zone Easting Northing

3 

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Zone Easting Northing

2 

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4 

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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 Kirk F. Mohney, Architectural Historian  
organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date July, 1997  
street & number 55 Capitol Street, 65 State House Station telephone 207/287-2132  
city or town Augusta, state Maine zip code 04333-0065

**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 \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

(FORMER) AUGUSTA CITY HALL

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## Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property occupies the City of Augusta Tax Map 38, Lot 193.

## Boundary Justification

The boundary embraces the entire city lot that is historically associated with the (former) Augusta City Hall.