United States Department of the InteriorNational Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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26.(N-5641):

- A. Property Name: Exchange Building
- B. Location and Verbal Boundary Description: The Exchange Building is located at 154/158 East Main Street. The property being nominated includes the building and parcel of land which fronts 70 feet on East Main Street with a depth of 91 feet on Choate Street (Property Tax Map, City of Newark, no. 20, lot no. 131.)
- C. Owner: Frank Cairo, 154/158 East Main Street, Newark, Delaware 19711

D. <u>Property Description</u>:

This property is a three story rectangular building with a five bay facade and a deep mansard roof enclosing the third floor. The building is constructed of brick; exterior walls are finished with stucco and painted mustard yellow with gray trim. The windows have segmental arched openings (probably built of brick lintels with wooden sills) and are the two-over-two double hung sash type. Paneled shutters flank the first and second story windows at the south main facade. The third floor windows, projecting from the mansard roof, feature heavy pedimented cornices. Patterned slate covers the roof exterior and a molded wooden cornice with notched brackets outlines the perimeter of the building at the base of the roof. A narrow exterior chimney rises up the center of the building at the main facade. Three entrances are located on East Main Street including: a single door with a rectangular panel of glass; a set of double doors with raised panels and overhead stained glass transom; and modern plate glass doors. A handsome set of double doors, with raised panel woodwork probably original to the building, is located at the northeast corner of the rear facade.

E. Historical Background:

According to Scharf's History of Delaware, the Newark Hotel formerly stood on this site until 1880. In that year the Hotel was demolished, and the present structure newly erected. When first complete, the building was known as "The Exchange." Other historical references to this site also include the "Center Building" or "Center Hall," and the "Grange Building." The building was initially the location of a cooperative store and a grange hall. An 1891 Sanborn Insurance Survey Map indicates this structure with a post office, meat and oyster outlet, and a general store occupying the ground floor; a hall is located on the third floor. Subsequent Sanborn maps for succeeding years, including 1907, 1915, 1922 and 1929, illustrate a variety of commercial outlets and some dwelling space located on the ground floor, with a hall/lodge room on the third floor. Among the commercial operations once carrying on business here were a pool and tobacco store, a barber shop and a tailor shop. A jail cell located in the building's basement remains from a period when, reportedly, a courthouse was located at this address c. 1905.

E. Significance:

The Exchange Building is one of two Second Empire structures on Main Street. When first built in 1880, this site served both business and community functions

