
NAME: ~~The~~ Massachusetts
LOCATION: 421-427 Massachusetts Avenue
OWNER: The 421-427 Massachusetts Avenue Company
ADDRESS: 423 Massachusetts Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

MAP NUMBER: 17

7. DESCRIPTION:

Along the east side of Massachusetts Avenue at 421-427 is the rectangular commercial/flat block now known as the Massachusetts (Photo 18 of 42). The principal facade is three-stories high and constructed of yellow brick and grey limestone. Four plain Tuscan style pilasters divide the upper two stories into four units of 3-2-2-3 bays. The first story commercial level has six recessed entrance doors - four for the ground level shops and two for the upstairs flats. Five limestone piers support the wood frame, plate glass storefronts. The windows above are one over one with three part keystone lintels and smooth limestone sills. A metal dentil cornice completes the top of the building. The functional rear east facade looks out over the court of the Alexandra.

8. SIGNIFICANCE:

The first entry in Polk's City Directory for the commercial/flat at 421-427 Massachusetts Avenue was in 1906. Listed in the "Public Buildings, Flats and Halls" section the Massachusetts, with significance in architecture and commerce/real estate development, contained eight flats in the two upper stories while the ground floor had space for four businesses. The 1913 commercial occupants were typical of the businesses that flourished all along the avenue in the first quarter of this century. L. A. Fleury Electrical Contractors, Louis A. Fleury owner, was located in 421. In addition to electrical contracting Mr. Fleury had a showroom of electrical "chandeliers." Next door was Max Gibbs' Notions. Gibbs had moved his shop from the City Market in 1909. At 425 was the R. W. McGee Co. Robert W. McGee was a dealer in "deformity apparatus," supplying everything from trusses to artificial limbs. At the northeast end of the building was Globe Soap Co., a new enterprise first opening its doors for business late the prior year. As stated in the Massachusetts Avenue Commercial District National Register Nomination, these businesses were typical of the commercial enterprises of the area. Small, single proprietor shops such as these met the daily needs of the area families and provided employment opportunities for residents of nearby neighborhoods.

The only building permit issued for construction along this section of Massachusetts Avenue in 1905, the probable year of construction for this building, was purchased by Joseph Becker. Permit #11127 was for a "three-story brick business block" located on "Mass & Vermont." Giving an estimated building value of \$20,000 the permit names J. R. Warren as contractor. Little is known about either owner or contractor. Both appear in the city directories at the turn-of-the-century and disappear ten years later.

Downtown Apartment Flats Thematic Resources
Indianapolis, Indiana

CONTINUATION SHEET

Page 54

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA:

Acreage: Less than one acre

Quadrangle Name: Indianapolis West

Quadrangle Scale: 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES:

16	572720	4402740
Zone	Easting	Northing

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

Parcel 1-01-71383. Seventy Feet Three Inches on Massachusetts Avenue, Thirty-eight Feet on Vermont Street, Square Nineteen. Key Code 81-034-016.