

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:

Massachusetts

COUNTY:

Essex

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY DATE

MAY 8 1974

1. NAME

COMMON:

West End Buildings

AND/OR HISTORIC:

Front Street Block (to be used for publication)

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

West End, 55 - 71 Main Street

CITY OR TOWN:

Gloucester

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:

Sixth

STATE

Massachusetts

CODE

025

COUNTY:

Essex

CODE

009

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
☒ District ☐ Building ☐ Site ☐ Structure ☐ Object	☐ Public ☒ Private ☐ Both	Public Acquisition: ☐ In Process ☐ Being Considered	☐ Occupied ☐ Unoccupied ☒ Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
☐ Agricultural ☒ Commercial ☒ Educational ☐ Entertainment	☐ Government ☐ Industrial ☐ Military ☐ Museum	☐ Park ☐ Private Residence ☐ Religious ☐ Scientific	☐ Transportation ☒ Other (Specify) <u>residential</u> ☐ Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:

Harold Bell

STREET AND NUMBER:

Brier Road (no number)

CITY OR TOWN:

Gloucester

STATE:

Massachusetts 01930

CODE

025

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:

Essex County Registry of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER:

32 Federal Street

CITY OR TOWN:

Salem

STATE

Massachusetts

CODE

025

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

Inventory of Historic Assets of the Commonwealth

DATE OF SURVEY:

1974

☐ Federal☒ State☐ County☐ Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

Massachusetts Historical Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:

40 Beacon Street

CITY OR TOWN:

Boston

617-727-8470

STATE:

Massachusetts 02108

CODE

025

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Massachusetts
COUNTY: Essex
ENTRY NUMBER: 1014
DATE: APR 16 1974
FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	☒ Excellent	☐ Good	☐ Fair	☐ Deteriorated	☐ Ruins	☐ Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	☒ Altered	☐ Unaltered	☐ Moved	☒ Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Front Street Block is a group of four buildings that were constructed soon after Gloucester's first Great Fire which, on September 16, 1830, destroyed all of the structures between Front Street and the harbor, an area containing many of the business establishments of the town. Work is believed to have started on them in 1831. Assessors records show increases of between 60% and 90% in the valuations of these four properties from 1831 to 1833, and one assessor's entry of 1833 specifically mentions "Brick Building, Front Street" under the real estate holdings of Henry Smith, then owner of the present #55-59 Main Street building. Since none of the common party walls between the buildings could ever have been used as an exterior wall (due to the unpointed and unsealed mortar between the bricks) and considering the simultaneous increase in assessed valuations of all four parcels of land, it appears that all of the buildings were built by 1833. In any case, a map of Gloucester's waterfront gives proof that all four brick buildings were completed by 1845.

The four buildings were designed in a smoothly coordinated Federalist style, though one was later substantially altered. Brick is the principal building material, with granite framing the entryways and separating the street level from the upper floors, creating a pleasing contrast. One pair of buildings is three stories high, and the remaining pair was two stories -- though one of this pair was updated in 1890 with a Victorian facade, becoming three stories high -- with individual hip roofs now covering three of the buildings and party walls extending beyond the moderately pitched roof line. Accenting the clean lines of the roof are four massive brick chimneys and four smaller ones necessary to accommodate the many fireplaces of the four buildings. One end building uses a granite gutter, while the others rely on wood. A slightly projecting brick cornice with a dentil motif formed by alternately projecting "headers" crowns the exterior walls. Each of the street level store fronts is accompanied by an entryway to the upper floors. The graceful straight facade of the buildings is given an interesting twist when the last building angles away slightly from the first three due to a bend in the street, providing an unusual nonparallel arrangement of the interior walls of the last building. Upper floor windows hold double hung, six light sashes, second story lights being considerably larger than third story ones; window lintels vary from granite, to sandstone, to brick. Floor areas vary from 600 and 700 square feet in the smaller buildings, to 900 square feet in the Victorian-fronted building, and to 1300 square feet in the largest building.

Exact details of the original appearance are hard to document, but one major alteration and other minor ones are known. The #61-#63 building was substantially remodeled about 1890, its Federalist front being updated in favor of a Victorian facade. The two story structure was enlarged to three with the top floor windows displaying arching brick lentils and the window sashes

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Massachusetts	
COUNTY Essex	
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	MAY 8 1974

(Number all entries)

7. Description (continued)

changed to the much smaller lights -- three rows of six or eight -- in the upper sash and one solid plate of glass in the lower. The Victorian-style trim of cut, turned, and shaped wood was added to the window openings and a band of wooden trim separated the first floor from the second. At the same time an addition was added to the rear of the building, increasing the size of each floor by about one third.

Another alteration was the elimination of basement entryways in the exterior fronts of the buildings. It isn't known exactly what the street level store fronts looked like, but these basement entrances were done away with. Very little appears to have been changed in the upper floors, with the exception, of course, of the Victorian building.

The setting today is basically the same in character as it was in 1831. Main Street (then Front Street) is still the principal commercial artery of the town; the town landing and the harbor are nearby; the local fishing fleet still docks within view, and the Sargent-Murray-Gilman-Hough House, built in 1768, overlooks all from the hill across the street. The architectural coherence of the Front Street Block is accentuated by its location, separated from other structures by Main Street, a parking lot, and a public way.

Having nearly completed extensive exterior renovation, the buildings will have commercial and residential occupants once interior work is finished. Present tenants include the Isabel Babson Memorial Library, a privately endowed lending library specializing in the prenatal care of mothers and their children, and The White Rainbow, a small gourmet restaurant. Office and retail space, as well as apartment space, is planned for the remainder of the buildings.



8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| ☐ Pre-Columbian | ☐ 16th Century | ☐ 18th Century | ☐ 20th Century |
| ☐ 15th Century | ☐ 17th Century | ☒ 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) C. 1831

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| ☐ Aboriginal | ☐ Education | ☐ Political | ☒ Urban Planning |
| ☐ Prehistoric | ☐ Engineering | ☐ Religion/Philosophy | ☐ Other (Specify) _____ |
| ☐ Historic | ☐ Industry | ☐ Science | _____ |
| ☒ Agriculture | ☐ Invention | ☐ Sculpture | _____ |
| ☒ Architecture | ☐ Landscape Architecture | ☐ Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| ☐ Art | ☐ Literature | ☐ Theater | _____ |
| ☒ Commerce | ☐ Military | ☐ Transportation | _____ |
| ☐ Communications | ☐ Music | | |
| ☐ Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the buildings of the Front Street Block lies in two areas. First, from a purely architectural viewpoint, they represent outstanding examples of Federalist Architecture. Their innate simplicity produces a fluidity of style when viewed both individually and as a group. The distinctive characteristics of Federalist Architecture blend harmoniously to effect an architectural unity in the smooth streetscape even though the four abutting buildings have separately styled fronts and roofs. The insertion of a potentially discordant Victorian facade into this Federalist grouping does not lessen the overall effect, but rather its contrast and proximity serve to heighten the appreciation of the qualities of each style.

The second and possibly greater area of significance lies with these buildings and their development within the historic context of the city of Gloucester. After the devastating Great Fire of 1830 destroyed many of the town's stores and shops, particularly in the West End, major changes occurred in the city's building styles and materials when reconstruction began. With the memory of the fire still fresh in mind, brick and granite were chosen over less expensive and more popular wood construction. The strong will of the people to recover from adversity and to continue to grow with the prospering town are symbolized by this brick and granite construction. Urban development showed a measurable advance when the individual land owners cooperated in constructing abutting buildings using common party walls. Efficiency was gained, but not at the cost of individuality; separately styled fronts, roofs, cornices, lentils and gutters testified to the individuality of each owner. The completion of the construction represented a significant addition to the town; this can be seen by the repeated reference to "brick buildings" in the land deeds, assessors records, and maps from 1831 to 1851. As time passed, these buildings have provided sturdy examples of New England urban society; human in scale and modest in expression, these nineteenth century buildings compare favorably with the eighteenth century homes of the area, such as the Sargent-Murray-Gilman-Hough House. The contrast between the two periods, with the added flavor of the nearby dock area, combine to accentuate the New England seaport character of Gloucester.

(cont.)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"White Houses and Gardens Once Distinguished the West End"
by Alfred Mansfield Brooks
Gloucester Daily Times, April 8, 1954

American Building James Marston Fitch, Boston, 1948.

"The Domestic Architecture of Beacon Hill 1800 - 1850"

by Carl J. Weinhardt, Jr.

The Proceedings of the Bostonian Society, Annual Meeting, 1958

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE			
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	0 0 0	0 0 0	42	36	45
NE	0 0 0	0 0 0	70	39	55
SE	0 0 0	0 0 0			
SW	0 0 0	0 0 0			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: c. 1/3 acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Elizabeth Amadon, State Survey Director, By Mindy Arbo		
ORGANIZATION Massachusetts Historical Commission	DATE 4/9/74	
STREET AND NUMBER: 40 Beacon Street		
CITY OR TOWN: Boston 617-727-8470	STATE Massachusetts 02108	CODE 025

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☐ Local ☒

Name Honorable John F.X. Davoren
Secretary of the Commonwealth
Title Chairman, Massachusetts Historical Commission

Date 4/10/74

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 5/8/74

ATTEST:
Keeper of The National Register

Date 5.7.74

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Massachusetts	
COUNTY	
Essex	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	MAY 8 1974

(Number all entries)

8. Significance (continued)

Front Street Block, Gloucester

Equally significant, the Front Street Block provides a vivid example of the feasibility for preservation of all the many worthwhile historic buildings found throughout the West End portion of Gloucester.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Massachusetts	
COUNTY	
Essex	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	MAY 8 1974

(Number all entries)

Front Street Block, Gloucester

9. cont.

History of the Town of Gloucester,
by John J. Babson, Gloucester, 1860

"Map of Gloucester Waterfront - 1845" located at
Cape Ann Historical Society, Gloucester

Land Deeds for these buildings from 1830 to 1860 located
at Essex County Registry of Deeds, Salem, Mass.

Valuation Tax Books 1831 - 1837 located
at Assessors Office, City Hall, Gloucester, Mass.



PROPERTY West End Buildings Front Street Block STATE Mass.

WORKING NUMBER 4.16.74.601

TECH REVIEW
PHOTOS 1
MAPS 2

Essex

74000369

CONTROL REVIEW

cm
4.18
74

OK

HISTORIAN

Accept
W.R. Luce
4/30/74

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN / have serious reservations about this
as a "district" - it should be nominated as "building,"
no? Will talk to Mass Hist. Comm. about this.
(see over) ~~otherwise~~ accept. Hudgell 4/22/74

ARCHEOLOGIST

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

Accept
Colz
5/3/74

BRANCH CHIEF

KEEPER

NOT A DISTRICT

LD
5/5

National Register Write-up June 12, 1974

Federal Register entry June 4, 1974

Send-back _____

Re-submit _____

Entered MAY 8 1974

Betty Amadon agrees this is a bldg. nomination, not a district. Huj. 4/25/74

The store fronts, stone links & posts, are original to block, according to Betty Amadon, not later alterations. 5/2/74 Huj



Front Street Block
#55-71 Main St
Gloucester, MASS

Photo b

Mar

Atla

Glou

Streets

3/10/74

FORM 10-301 A
(6/72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

1. NAME		
COMMON	AND/OR HISTORIC	NUMERIC CODE (Assigned by NPS)
West End Buildings	Front Street Block	8
2. LOCATION		
STATE	COUNTY	TOWN
Massachusetts	Essex	Gloucester
STREET AND NUMBER		
55 - 71 Main Street		
3. PHOTO REFERENCE		
PHOTO CREDIT	DATE	NEGATIVE FILED AT
Marietta Lynch	March 10, 1974	Atlantic Road Gloucester, Mass. 01930
4. IDENTIFICATION		
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.		

Streetscape view, looking southeast, of Front Street Block.

1 of 1

GPO 932-009

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

1. NAME		
COMMON	AND/OR HISTORIC	NUMERIC CODE <i>(Assigned by NPS)</i>
West End Buildings	Front Street Block	MAY 8 1974
2. LOCATION		
STATE	COUNTY	TOWN
Massachusetts	Essex	Gloucester
STREET AND NUMBER		
55 - 71 Main Street		
3. MAP REFERENCE		
SOURCE	DATE	SCALE
City of Gloucester Assessment Map #7	1973	1 inch=40 feet

REQUIREMENTS: PROPERTY BOUNDARIES, WHERE REQUIRED, AND NORTH ARROW

APR 11 1974

NATIONAL
REGISTER

MIDDLE ST.

LEGEND:



FRONT STREET
BLOCK
GLOUCESTER
MASS.

SARGENT-
MURRAY-
GILMAN-
HOUGH
HOUSE

SHORT ST.

MAIN STREET

55-59 61-63 65-67 69-71

PUBLIC WAY

PARKING AREA



PORTER ST.

ROGERS STREET



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

1. NAME		
COMMON	AND/OR HISTORIC	NUMERIC CODE <i>(Assigned by NPS)</i>
West End Buildings	Front Street Block	MAY 8 1974
2. LOCATION		
STATE	COUNTY	TOWN
Massachusetts	Essex	Gloucester
STREET AND NUMBER		
West End, 55-71 Main Street		
3. MAP REFERENCE		
SOURCE	DATE	SCALE
U.S.G.S.Gloucester, Mass.	1960	1:24,000

REQUIREMENTS: PROPERTY BOUNDARIES, WHERE REQUIRED, AND NORTH ARROW

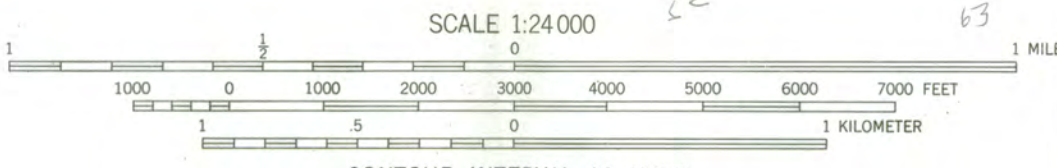
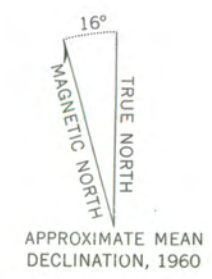




H5
2419
363130
477840

FRONT STREET BLOCK,
GLOUCESTER
Latitude 42° 36' 45"
Longitude 70° 39' 55"

Maped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USC&GS and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Topography by planetable surveys 1942. Revised 1960
Selected hydrographic data compiled from USC&GS Charts 243 (1959)
and 1206 (1960). This information is not intended for navigational
purposes
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 19, shown in blue
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET-DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 8.6 FEET

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON 25, D. C.
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———
Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt ———
State Route

GLOUCESTER, MASS.
N4233.75—W7037.5/8x7.5
1960

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE **MASSACHUSETTS**

Date Entered **MAY 8 1974**

Name

Location

**Quadrangle-Mattoon Street Historic
District**

**Springfield
Hampden County**

Suffolk County Court House

**Boston
Suffolk County**

Front Street Block

**Gloucester
Essex County**

Also Notified

Hon. Edward M. Kennedy

Hon. Edward W. Brooke

Hon. Edward P. Boland

Hon. John J. Moakley

Hon. Michael J. Harrington

**Regional Director, North Atlantic
Region**

State Historic Preservation Officer

Hon. John F. X. Davoren

Secretary of the Commonwealth

**Chairman, Massachusetts Historical
Commission**

40 Beacon Street

Boston, Massachusetts 02108

*Control Sheet missing 6-7-74
Federal Register entry - Aug. 6, 1974*

5/13/74

MMott

PR