

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received MAY 16 1984
date entered JUN 14 1984

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Great Fire of 1911 Historic District

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Harlow, Center, Park, State, York, and Central Sts. N/A not for publication

city, town Bangor, N/A vicinity of congressional district

state Maine code 23 county Penobscot code 019

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Various

street & number

city, town N/A vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Penobscot County Registry of Deeds

street & number Hammond Street

city, town Bangor, state Maine

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? N/A yes ___ no

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The "Great Fire of 1911 Historic District" consists of roughly half the downtown commercial district of Bangor. It comprises 48 buildings, 5½ of which are considered "intrusions", and 3 city parks. Excepting the intrusions, each of which has been built or remodelled since 1945, all but 5 of the district's historic buildings were constructed in the period 1911-1915; the great bulk of these were constructed in 1911-12. Two historic buildings pre-date the fire (1892 and 1907), while three antedate it by more than four years (c. 1915-20, 1921, 1930). The buildings in these later two categories are very much in keeping with the character of the buildings constructed after the fire.

Every building save one is of brick, although the facades of two are faced with terra cotta, and two are completely sheathed in granite. The one wooden building is an apartment block of c. 1911. The coloration of bricks is extremely varied, as is their patterning. Other common materials besides those mentioned above are copper (for roofs and flashing), bronze (for grills, light fixtures, statuary), cast stone (for ornament), limestone (for ornamenting bases), sheet metal (molded into cornices and banding), granite (for steps and some ornament), marble, and cast iron (a few storefront columns).

The district relies heavily upon the Renaissance Revival style, although the following styles or influences are also present: Romanesque Revival, Chicago School, Commercial, Khanesque, Praire Style, Art Deco, Beaux Arts, Classical Revival, and Colonial Revival.

The following buildings and parks are included:

Central Street

1. Frey, Dugan, Staples Block. 1911. Victor Hodgins of Bangor, architect.
3 buildings with common facade. 3 stories. Brick with white terra-cotta facing in modernist pattern. Chicago School windows.
2. Kirstein Block. 1911. C. Parker Crowell of Bangor, Architect.
3 stories. Red pressed brick with Renaissance Revival and Colonial Revival details. Brick panel decoration. Rehabilitated in 1983 with window changes.
3. Stetson Block. 1913. Parker, Thomas, and Rice of Boston, architects. (C. Parker Crowell of Bangor, supervising architect.)
3 stories. Polychromatic brown brick with Classical Revival cast stone and brick panel decoration.
4. Central Building. 1912. Wilfred Mansur of Bangor, architect.
3 stories. Polychromatic red brick with Romanesque Revival windows and Renaissance Revival detailing. Burned 1983; only walls remain.
5. Temporary Post Office and John R. Graham Stores. 1911, 1916. Wilfred Mansur of Bangor, Architect.
1 story. Red brick with brick panel decoration. One unit remodelled with plastic front, c. 1965 (Intrusion).
6. Building. c. 1912.
Brick with plastic facing (remodelled c. 1970). Intrusion.

Kenduskeag Stream (Parkway)

7. Norumbega Mall. Laid out 1933.
Classical Revival with decorative concrete rails and WWI memorial statue. Arched concrete bridging.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1892-1930 **Builder/Architect** Various

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The "Great Fire of 1911 Historic District" preserves Maine's most significant collection of early 20th-century commercial buildings, and commemorates an urban re-building campaign matched only by Portland's after its own conflagration of 1866.

On April 30, 1911, a fire which started in a dockside warehouse laid waste almost half of Bangor's commercial downtown (100 business blocks), as well as 7 churches and 285 houses. The majority of the burned buildings being wooden and crowded closely together, Bangor's small fire department - although bolstered by units from as far away as Portland - scored no victories in fighting the blaze. The Bangor Fire was Maine's last, and one of her most devastating, urban conflagrations, a phenomenon virtually unique to the period before World War I.

Although only 2 people were killed, the city's economy and services were naturally paralyzed following the fire. The post office, customs house, telephone exchange, central fire station, telegraph station, library, and a number of banks had perished. Only 60% of the commercial loss was insured. Nonetheless, the first new house began rising on burned ground within days, and on May 11th the first new commercial building (Graham Building) was commissioned. There began a period of re-building which, although typical of the nineteenth century in its tremendous speed, was unprecedented in its employ of national talents and the attention given to city planning. The result was Maine's first (and still most significant) completely 20th-century urban space.

Bangor in 1911 had long been divorced from the lumber business, her raison d'être through most of the 19th century. The city's economy had remained dynamic not only because Bangor commercially serviced a large rural hinterland (the automobile had not yet tapped her full potential in this respect), but because of cheap electric power provided by the pioneer plant of the Bangor Hydro-Electric Company at Veazie. Boasting that she was "The best-lighted city on earth" in 1911, with 1½ light bulbs per person (an astounding average at the time), Bangor provided small manufacturing firms with a cheap and easy alternative to water-power. Small local factories manufactured everything from shoes and mocassins to fishing rods and good 5¢ cigars. Bangor had one of the largest and most productive trunk-manufacturing plants in New England. It was not surprising that the first building commissioned after the fire, and one of the largest constructed in the rebuilding, was the Graham Block, owned by John R. Graham, president of the Bangor Hydro (a subsidiary of General Electric Corp.). Graham, who lost his own house in the fire, was one of the prime movers in the rebuilding, constructing 7 new buildings, including a new house for himself, a new post office and two small factories, in addition to company buildings. The Hydro's new electrical sub-station, a prairie-style bobble by Jardine, Kent, and Hill of New York, was one of the most progressive and stridently modernistic designs of the rebuilding.

The downtown that was burned had been a conglomerate of small businesses in wooden buildings which were beginning to share space with brick office blocks. The post-fire downtown that arose in the burned area was quite dominated by office buildings, with commercial space available only on the ground floors of multi-storied structures. The larger buildings were corporate-owned, either by the Hydro, banks, trust companies, or real estate firms. Many of the ground-floor retailers catered to office workers: druggists, restaurateurs, grocers, beauticians, etc. The area had become an office or business, as distinct from a commercial district, a character it still retains today. It is the perfect physical

9. Major Bibliographical References

Industrial Journal, 1911-1916
Bangor Daily News and Bangor Daily Commercial
Files of Maine Historic Preservation Commission

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 24

Quadrangle name Bangor

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	1	9
5	1	8
1	1	9
0	4	9
6	1	1
6	0	

Zone Easting Northing

B

1	1	9
5	1	8
2	4	0
4	9	6
0	7	3
0		

Zone Easting Northing

C

1	1	9
5	1	7
9	9	0
4	9	6
0	7	8
0		

D

1	1	9
5	1	7
9	2	0
4	9	6
1	0	8
0		

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

Beginning at the north corner of the Old High School (14) property, the district boundary runs southeasterly along the rear property lines of said school, the Library (13) and Pierce Park, emerging on Center Street which it follows north, thence easterly along

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Gregory K. Clancey, Architectural Historian

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date January, 1984

street & number 55 Capitol Street, Station #65 telephone 207/289-2132

city or town Augusta, state Maine 04333

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Earle S. Platt*

title S.H.P.O. date 5/10/84

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

date 6/14/84

J. A. [Signature]
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Kenduskeag Stream (Parkway), continued...

7. Kenduskeag Mall. 1912. Warren H. Manning of Boston, landscape Architect (attribution) Classical Revival (Renaissance) with wrought-iron enclosing fence. Bronze statue of Hannibal Hamlin.
8. Morse Building. 1914-15. Victor Hodgins of Bangor, Architect. 3 stories. Red pressed brick with Renaissance Revival windows and brick panel decoration. Remodelled c. 1955 by Sears Roebuck and Company.

Harlow Street

10. Building. c. 1912. Brick with polished granite facing. (Remodelled c. 1955). Intrusion.
11. Graham Building. 1911. Wilfred Mansur of Bangor, Architect. 6 stories. Yellow pressed brick with Romanesque Revival windows (top story) and Beaux-Arts sheet metal cornice and entry surround.
12. Pierce Park. c. 1912. Renaissance Revival. Bronze logging statue, by Charles A. Tefft of Brewer, on white granite base.
13. Bangor Public Library. 1912. Peabody and Stearns of Boston, Architects. 2 stories with dome. Yellow brick with granite trim, porch and steps, copper roof, copper and glass dome. Renaissance Revival massing and detail. Some Beaux-Arts decoration. Preserved interior.
14. Bangor High School. 1912. Peabody & Stearns of Boston, Architects. 3 stories. Yellow brick. Renaissance Revival massing and decoration, brick panel decoration.
44. Adams Building. 1911. Designed by owners. 3 stories. Red brick.
45. Building, c. 1912.
46. Building, c. 1923.
47. Building, c. 1912.
48. Sears Building Extension. c. 1945-50. Brick with granite facing. Intrusion.

Park Street

15. Building, c. 1912. 3 stories. Red pressed brick. Renaissance Revival and brick panel decoration.
16. Bangor Railway and Electric Company Sub-Station. 1912. Jardine, Kent, and Hill of New York, Architects. 2½ stories. Red brick with Prairie Style massing and ornament.

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Park Street, continued...

17. Apartment House. c. 1911.
2 stories. Wood frame with clapboard sheathing. Vinyl siding applied 1984.
18. Universalist Church. 1860, burned 1911 and remodelled by C. Parker Crowell of Bangor, Architect.
Red brick with twin towers. Romanesque Revival.
20. Tarratine Club. 1907. Parker, Thomas and Rice of Boston, Architects.
Red brick with white terra cotta trim and wrought-iron balconies. Beaux-Arts decoration
21. Telephone Exchange. 1931. Densmore, LeClear & Robbins of Boston, Architects.
7½ stories. Polychromatic brown and yellow brick, limestone and terra-cotta ornament, decorative bronze grills, etc. Art Deco massing and decoration. Rear addition c. 1980. Preserved lobby.
22. 100 Associates Building. 1911. Victor Hodgins of Bangor, Architect.
3 stories. Thomaston red brick with black headers. Renaissance Revival details.

State Street

23. Cutter Building. 1911. Leslie W. Cutter of Bangor, Architect-builder.
3 stories. Red Brick. Non-stylistic.
24. Building, c. 1960.
1 story. Brick and glass. Intrusion.
25. Lynch Building. 1912. C. Parker Crowell of Bangor, Architect.
3 stories. Red pressed brick. Commercial style.
26. First National Bank Building-Bangor Hydro Electric Company Building. 1915.
Wilfred Mansur of Bangor, Architect.
3 stories with mezzanine. Classical Revival. Tan pressed brick with cast stone columns and other ornament. Preserved interior.
35. Exchange Building. 1913. Peabody & Stearns of Boston, Architects.
6 stories. Commercial/Chicago style. Polychromatic brown brick with colored terra-cotta tile and cast stone trim.
36. Bacon & Robinson Building. 1912. Jardine, Kent, & Murdoch of New York, Architects.
3 stories. Brick with beige terra-cotta facing. Classical Revival.
37. Bangor Savings Bank. 1912. Carrere & Hastings of New York, Architects.
2½ stories. Renaissance Revival. Brick with Hallowell white granite facing. Brass fixtures.
38. Eastern Trust Building. 1912. C. Parker Crowell of Bangor, Architect.
6 stories. Saco red wire-cut brick. Vianlhaven granite base. Metal cornice. Brick panel decoration.

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State Street, continued....

39. Clark Building. 1912. C. Parker Crowell of Bangor, Architect.
4 stories. Tapestry brown brick. Brick panel decoration.
40. Lynch Building. 1912. C. Parker Crowell of Bangor, Architect.
4 stories. Polychromatic yellow and orange brick. Brick panel decoration. Storefront
joined to building, 1983.
41. Bangor Cigar Manufacturing Company Building. c. 1915-20.
Brown and red tapestry brick. Copper trim.
42. Adams Building. 1911. Designed by owners.
3 stories. Red brick.
43. Pearl Building. 1911. Jardine, Kent, & Hill of New York, Architects.
5 stories. Red brick with cast stone ornament.

Exchange Street

27. Building, c. 1912.
28. One-story brick building, c. 1945-50. Intrusion.
29. Building, c. 1912.
30. Building, c. 1912.
31. Nichols Block. 1892. Wilfred Mansur of Bangor, Architect.
4 stories. Romanesque Revival. Polychromatic red brick.
32. Stetson Block. 1911. Wilfred Mansur of Bangor, Architect.
4 stories. Yellow pressed brick (Brewer) with Renaissance Revival details, brick
panel decoration.
33. Sterns Block. 1911. Wilfred Mansur of Bangor, Architect.
4 stories. Brewer brown tapestry brick with Romanesque Revival details, brick panel
decoration.
34. Hall Block. 1911. Wilfred Mansur of Bangor, Architect.
3 stories. Red brick with granite courses. Brick panel decoration.

Center Street

49. Post office (now City Hall). 1914-15. Oscar Wenderoth, U. S. Treasury Department
(supervising Architect).
Brick with Frankfort granite facing. Classical Revival massing and detail.

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representation of the "office-world" that was just being created in America at the turn of the century.

A powerful yet benign presence was exercised by city government. Immediately following the blaze, a municipal planning committee was formed, and they in turn retained a landscape architect. In his report to the committee and city fathers, Warren H. Manning of Boston made the first comprehensive proposals ever offered in Maine on the design of a city center. Manning's suggestions included the widening of certain streets to accommodate the motor traffic that he foresaw as inevitable, the closing of select streets, re-routing of trolley lines, siting of the city high school and library side-by-side on the lots they now occupy, and, most importantly, the creation of parks on the two artificial malls in the Kenduskeag Stream. The parks were envisioned as providing unique breathing space for the district's office workers as well as serving as a break against future fires. Although it is unclear what part Manning played in the actual design of the Kenduskeag and Norumbega malls (1914 and 1933 respectively), he must be credited with their conception, and thus providing Maine with a unique urban park.

City government's presence was also felt in two of the district's major commissions, the High School and Public Library, both constructed in 1912. A remarkable growth in the powers and responsibilities of city government had been occurring since the 1890's, when city hall moved from a small wooden Federal-era structure to an immense Renaissance edifice; now those responsibilities included educating youth to serve business and providing an ever-increasing and literate middle-class with reading materials. The Boston firm of Peabody & Stearns drew the plans for both the new High School and Library, dual essays in Renaissance styling and monstrously expensive. The library ranks with Maine's most inspired works of the early 20th century, and was the crown jewel of the re-building.

The range of architectural talent employed in the burned area was wide and surprising. Local architects, namely Wilfred Mansur, C. Parker Crowell, Victor Hodgins, and Frederick Patterson, received most of the commissions, with the first three being particularly active. The Graham Building, Eastern Trust Building, and Morse Building are perhaps their master-pieces respectively. Close to a dozen buildings, however, were designed by prestigious East Coast firms, some with no history of practice in Maine. Peabody and Stearns of Boston, that city's leading designers, planned the progressive Exchange Building in addition to their work for the city. The Bangor Savings Bank was designed by Carrere & Hastings of New York, rivaled in stature at the time only by McKim, Mead, and White. Other large firms who shared their talents included Jardine, Kent, & Hill (Murdock) of New York, and Parker, Thomas and Rice of Boston. New York designer Louis Tiffany supplied a number of artistic finishings, although only one of his works survives: the splendid stained glass window in the First Baptist Church (1912 and outside of the district). Nationally known architects were also recruited for church designs in the residential burned areas (also outside of the present district), namely Cram and Ferguson (All Soul's Congregational Church, 1912) and Hobart Upjohn (St. Johns Episcopal Church, 1912). Significantly, not even in the face of 300 razed buildings did a Portland architect attempt to practice in Bangor.

Stylistically the Renaissance Revival predominates in the district as a unifying theme. The Bangor Savings Bank is perhaps its purest expression in Maine. Nonetheless the area shows a kaleidoscope of other influences, fascinating in their contemporaneity.

Prairie Style decoration occurs on Parker, Thomas and Rice's Stetson Building as well as the Bangor Hydro Sub-Station already mentioned. Bangor architect Wilfred Mansur persists in using arched Romanesque windows on otherwise Renaissance facades. Colonial window cornices appear on the block of the Kirstein Agency, prominent developers of Bangor's two

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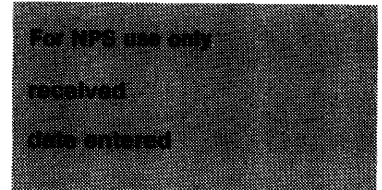
3

"streetcar suburbs", who probably wanted to give their building a domestic feeling. Victor Hodgins created, in the Frey, Dugan, Staples Block, a bold statement with white terra cotta and Chicago- style windows that may have been the first in the state to eschew all historical associations and ornament. Most poignant, however, is the use all architects made of brick. The district is aglow with every conceivable shade of the material, from Thomaston red, to Flemish Black, to wheat, honey, beige, and dark brown colorings. Additionally, bricks are laid in every conceivable direction and pattern, with Hodgins's Morse Building being outstanding for its range - round circles to diagonals to herringbone, etc.

Also enclosed by the district are two buildings which survived the fire and three (excluding the intrusions) built after World War I. Some of these are important in their own right. The Nichols Block (Wilfred Mansur, architect, 1892) is one of Bangor's earliest and best Romanesque Revival works. The Tarratine Club (Parker, Thomas, and Rice of Boston, architects, 1907) is an ornate and very well-preserved early 20th century men's clubhouse. The Telephone Exchange (1930) is Maine's finest (and virtually singular) example of the fully-developed Art Deco style. Two other small buildings were constructed shortly after the war to replace original structures which had burned, yet closely echo in character the district's post-fire buildings.

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the north property line of building 15, and southerly along Park Street to the north property line of the Tarratine Club (20) where it turns east along said line. The line then runs along the rear property lines of buildings 20, 21 and 22 and westerly along the south property line of said building 22 to Park Street which it follows south to State Street thence easterly to the east property line of the Cutter Building (23) and south along this and the rear property lines on the east side of Park Street to York Street. The line then turns westerly along York Street, crossing Park Street and then runs northerly along the rear property lines on the west side of Park Street and westerly along the rear property lines on the south side of State Street to the west property line of the Bangor Savings Bank(37) and north along this line to State Street which it follows west to the west property line of Kenduskeag Mall. Following this line northerly, the line turns easterly along the south property line of the Stetson Block (3) to Central Street, north along this to the south property line of the Frey, Dugan Block (1) and thence westerly along this line and north-easterly along the rear property lines on the northwest side of Central Street to Harlow Street, including the Norumbega Mall. The boundary then runs north-west on Harlow Street to the point of beginning. This boundary includes all the buildings which were built following the Great Fire of 1911.

