

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

For HCRS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received FEB 25 1980

date entered

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

**1. Name**

historic Sawyer Building (or Flat Iron Building)

and/or common Same as above

**2. Location**

street & number 4 - 6 Portland Street \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Dover \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district First

state New Hampshire code 33 county Strafford code 017

**3. Classification**

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

**4. Owner of Property**

name Sawyer Block Trust

street & number P.O. Box 664

city, town Dover \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state New Hampshire 03820

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Strafford County Courthouse (Registry of Deeds)

street & number County Farm Road

city, town Dover \_\_\_\_\_ state New Hampshire 03820

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title N/A has this property been determined eligible?  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 Sawyer Building or Flat Iron Building is located in the central part of the City of Dover, New Hampshire, on a triangular lot bounded on the east by Main Street and by Portland Street on the west. The building is situated in a very conspicuous location, as it faces Lafayette Square and is adjacent to the main northbound artery in the city (Main Street is designated State Highway 16).

The Sawyer Building has an irregular 52' x 62' x 38' triangular shape (hence the name Flat Iron Building) which closely corresponds to the shape of the lot. Built on a cut granite foundation, it is a three-story round-cornered brick structure in the Federal style. The building's southeast and southwest elevations contain a combined total of seventeen bays, including five entries. All these doorways are accented by granite door surrounds. Windows have wooden sills, granite lintels and double hung sash with 12/8 and 6/6 lights. The roofline features a low third story, a hipped roof and 4, high narrow chimneys near the end walls.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates**

**Builder/Architect**

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Sawyer Building is significant not only as an excellent example of Federal style brick architecture in the Great Bay area of New Hampshire but also for its association with and role in Dover's history.

The Sawyer Building is both a product and striking reminder of one of Dover's most dynamic periods of economic development. Dover's cotton manufacturing industry, begun in 1812 as a reaction to the Embargo and War of 1812, rapidly expanded during the 1820's; in large part due to the high protective tariffs legislated by the Whigs and the City's advantageous location on the Cocheco River. By 1830, Dover boasted one of the largest manufacturing establishments in the country.

With this industrial expansion came rapid increases in both population and mercantile trade. The Sawyer Building, built in 1825 for \$8,766, was one of the first business blocks constructed during this period. Serving initially as a commercial center, it dominated what was then the center of trading activity in the village: the "Landing."

The "Landing" also served as the major means of ingress and egress for goods and people, in essence providing Dover with access to the world. It was a busy port; at one time more vessels entered Boston from Dover than from any other place east of New York except Portland. The Sawyer Building played a major role in this maritime trade, serving for years as a processing center for immigrants and customs house.

Unfortunately, numerous factors, not the least of which was the railroads, led to the decline of the "Landing." Today most of the area is a parking lot.

In summary, the Sawyer Building is a significant historical structure because it is:

1. An excellent example of Federal style brick architecture in the Great Bay area of New Hampshire;
2. One of Dover's oldest existing commercial structures;
3. A vivid reminder of one of Dover's most dynamic periods of growth; and
4. One of Dover's few remaining links to its maritime heritage.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Foster's Daily Democrat (Dover) "Once Prosperous Sawyer Block Neglected Now," December 26, 1978. -- New Hampshire Profiles "Dover Architecture and Industry," March 1973. Scales, John. History of Dover, NH, John Clarke Co., Manchester, NH 1923. Grimes, Gordon F. A History of Dover, New Hampshire 1790-1835, unpublished thesis on file at Bowdoin College Library, Dover Public Library, Old Sturbridge Village. (May, 1971).

## 10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property .173 **ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**  
 Quadrangle name Dover NH-ME Quadrangle scale 15' series       

### UMT References

A	1 9	3 4 7 8 5 0	4 7 8 4 1 5 0	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property occupies city lot 3-1 and is a triangular lot roughly 100' by 120' by 137' in size.

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

state	code	county	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Jack Donovan*		
	Bernard Hiatt		
organization	Dover Planning Department*		date
	Strafford/Rockingham Regional Council		August 21, 1979
street & number	Municipal Building, Central Ave.*		telephone
	99 Water Street		(603) 742-5259*
city or town	Dover, New Hampshire 03820*		state
	Exeter, New Hampshire		New Hampshire 03820*
			New Hampshire

## 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Commissioner, Dept. of Resources & Economic Development  
 title NH State Historic Preservation Officer

date FEB 2 1980

For HCRS use only

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

for Sally J. Oddy  
 Keeper of the National Register

date 5/23/80

Attest: Patrick Andrews  
 Chief of Registration

date 5/13/80