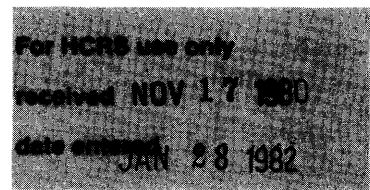


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

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



1. Name

historic Roak Block

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 144-170 Main Street^{ST.} NIA not for publication

city, town Auburn _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district 2nd

state Maine code 23 county Androscoggin code 001

3. Classification

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

street & number One Canal Plaza

city, town Portland _____ vicinity of _____ state Maine

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number

city, town Auburn _____ vicinity of _____ state Maine

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Auburn Landmarks has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1977 _____ federal _____ state _____ county local

depository for survey records Maine Historic Preservation Commission

city, town Augusta _____ vicinity of _____ state Maine

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 Roak Block in Auburn, Maine, is a large commercial building in the Mansard style. The block is constructed of brick with granite trim, and it consists of 3 1/2 stories.

The facade faces west and is thirty-six bays long, divided into nine sections. Fenestration is 2/2. The half-story bays are dormers with low arched roofs and decorative brackets. An entablature between the half and third stories contains recessed brick panels equal in number to the building's bays. Third story bays are capped with low bracketed arches with keystones, while in the second story the arches are semi-circular.

The first story of the Roak Block has been modified with modern storefront detail, but this is a veneer which would be easily reversable. More serious are alterations to the half-story in four of the building's nine section. There are plans, however, to reverse these changes.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1871-72 **Builder/Architect** William H. Stevens and George M. Coombs

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

At the time of its construction in 1871, the Roak Block was the largest commercial-industrial structure ever erected in Maine. Over 1,800,000 bricks were used in this, for its time, enormous Mansard building designed by Stevens and Coombs, prominent Lewiston architects, and built by Norton and Edwards, local contractors.

The Roak Block also proved to be a momentous development in the City's shoe industry, then only beginning to emerge as the major industrial feature in its economic structure. Jacob Roak who, in addition to being a shoe manufacturer, was a banker, businessman, and foremost in community development, conceived the idea of constructing a four-story brick factory in the principal business center. He did not retain this project himself but secured the cooperation of eight other citizens, all connected in some way with shoe making, to invest in and own a separate vertical section of the combined structure. It was in that sense a "row factory" and it served a great purpose. In addition to some stores on the first floor it furnished nine sections on the other floors for beginning shoe firms or modest ones to get started and there continue operation until their trade dictated a move to larger quarters, usually new ones they became able to finance.

The venture continued actively for nearly 90 years until it finally experienced the wane of Auburn shoe manufacture. But during the long active period, Roak Block became known as, and virtually was, "the cradle of the Auburn Shoe Industry." Still standing for 270 feet along Main Street, the building has been recently retenanted on the first floor by several stores but has deteriorated. It has now been purchased by a developer who is rehabilitating the structure according to the Secretary of the Interior's "standards" for use as elderly housing so that Roak Block will once again resume its former imposing facade.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Auburn Centennial History Committee, Auburn, 1869-1969, Lewiston, 1968
 Auburn Heritage, Inc., Auburn Landmarks: Auburn, 1977.

10. Geographical Data

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Acreege of nominated property 1

Quadrangle name Lewiston

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UMT References

A

1	9	4	0	1	9	5	0	4	8	8	3	0	0	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B

Zone			Easting					Northing						

C

Zone			Easting					Northing						

D

Zone			Easting					Northing						

E

Zone			Easting					Northing						

F

Zone			Easting					Northing						

G

Zone			Easting					Northing						

H

Zone			Easting					Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

Assessors Map 7-1, Parcels 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34A, 34B, 35, 36.

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

state	code	county	code
<u>N/A</u>			
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Frank A. Beard, Historian / Robert L. Bradley, Architectural Historian

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date October, 1980

street & number 55 Capitol Street telephone 207/289-2133

city or town Augusta state Maine

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 *Earl S. Feltworth* date 10/30/80
 title S.H.P.O.

For HCRS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
<u><i>Silvanus Byers</i></u>	Entered in the National Register date <u>1/20/82</u>
Keeper of the National Register	
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	