

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, State House, Boston

In Area no.

Form no.

0-12-26
254

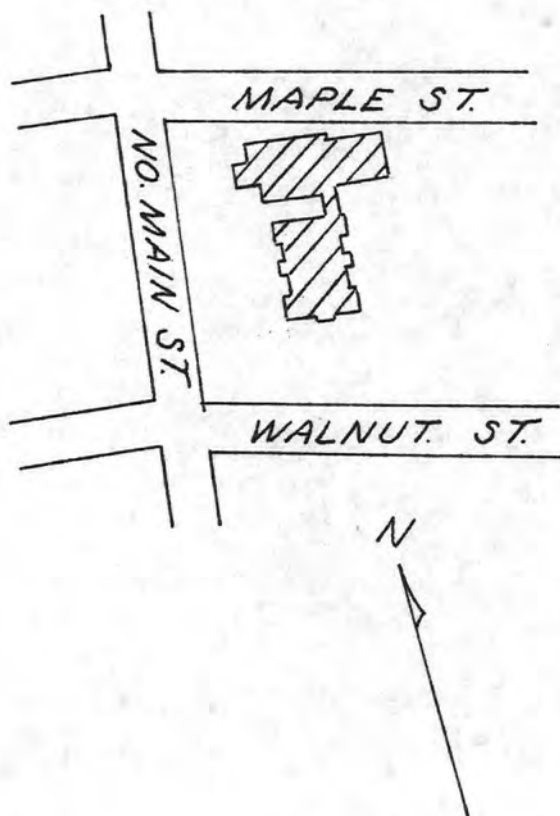
2. Photo (3x3" or 3x5")

Staple to left side of form

Photo number INST. 2-17A

COMM. I-33

4. Map. Draw sketch of building location in relation to nearest cross streets and other buildings. Indicate north.



1. Town Fall River, Mass.

Address 441 North Main Street

Name Bristol County Superior Court House and Registry of Deeds

Present use Courthouse and Registry

of Deeds

Present owner Bristol County

3. Description: Two joined bldgs. one granite one granite faced.

Date 1889, 1930

Source Phillips History of Fall River

Style Richardsonian Romanesque

Architect Robert H. Black/Edward M. Corbett

Exterior wall fabric Maine rough cut granite

Outbuildings (describe) _____

Other features square corner tower, engaged

circular turret above entrance, steep

slate hipped roof

Altered _____ Date _____

Moved _____ Date _____

5. Lot size: 79,592 sq. ft.

One acre or less _____ Over one acre x

Approximate frontage _____

Approximate distance of building from street

50'

6. Recorded by Patricia Giza

Organization FROHP

Date Jan. 19, 1981

(over)

7. Original owner (if known) Bristol County

Original use Superior Court

Subsequent uses (if any) and dates _____

8. Themes (check as many as applicable)

Aboriginal	_____	Conservation	_____	Recreation	_____
Agricultural	_____	Education	_____	Religion	_____
Architectural	<u>X</u>	Exploration/ settlement	_____	Science/ invention	_____
The Arts	_____	Industry	_____	Social/ humanitarian	_____
Commerce	_____	Military	_____	Transportation	_____
Communication	_____	Political	_____		
Community development	<u>X</u>				

9. Historical significance (include explanation of themes checked above)

The monumental Bristol County Superior Courthouse (1889) is the city's finest example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style and is among a handful of landmark civic buildings which stand out because of their size, granite construction and commanding institutional presence.

Bristol County court sessions were held only in Taunton and New Bedford until 1877, when the first session of Fall River superior court was held in the Borden Block. The courthouse was authorized in 1887 and work began in March, 1889 under the direction of New Bedford architect Robert H. Black. The impressiveness of the structure reflects the prosperity of the city and county during this textile manufacturing boom. The building is constructed of Maine rough cut granite, with the basement of a light "Hurricane Island" stone and the body of a darker shade of "Long Cove" granite with red trimmings. The walls are three feet thick and backed with brick. The contractors were the prominent local firm of Darling Brothers, and the building reportedly cost \$181,016.

The sense of weight and massiveness and use of rock-faced masonry are typical of the Richardsonian style, as are details such as the Syrian arched entrances, round turret with conical cap, and steep roof planes. The peculiarly American version of the Romanesque was developed by Henry Hobson Richardson, who is generally recognized as one of the three greatest American-born architects. Among the Richardson buildings which later inspired many imitators were Trinity Church in Boston (1872), the Allegheny County Courthouse and Jail in Pittsburgh (1884) and the Marshall Field Wholesale Store in Chicago (1885). During Richardson's lifetime, his fellow architects were loath to use the style, perhaps because they would seem to be copying a rival. His death in 1886 ended any sense of competition, and Richardson's work

10. Bibliography and/or references (such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records, early maps, etc.) (cont'd)

Atlas 1883: no structure shown

1895: structure shown "County Court House"

Bldg. Dept: no record

Phillips Hist. of Fall River-1944-46-Vol. III pg. 89

History of Fall River-Fenner-1911-pg. 36 & 42

Fall River Daily Herald-Aug. 8, 1889 pg. 4

Fall River Herald News- Sep. 19, 1953- pg. F-4

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:

Fall River, Mass.

Form No:

04-12-26

254

Property Name: Courthouse & Registry

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (cont'd)

was frankly imitated particularly for public buildings throughout the country during the late 1880's.

The adjoining Registry of Deeds Building was erected in 1930 from the designs of local architect Edward M. Corbett and is compatible with the earlier building in style, materials and setback. This sensitivity to the context of a building is rare in any period.

Because of its distinctive style, workmanship and intact quality and its nearly a century of history as an important public institution, the Bristol County Superior Courthouse and adjoining Registry of Deeds meets criteria A and C of the National Register, individually.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received 1/5/83

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page 2 of 10

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic GroupName Fall River Multiple Resource Area
State MA

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

11. Borden, Ariadne J. & Mary A., House
Substantive Review

Keeper

2/16/83 Patricia Ann Dwyer

Attest

12. Border City Mills

Substantive Review

Keeper

2/11/83 Patricia Ann Dwyer R

Attest

13. Borden, N. B., School

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

2/16/83 Delores Byers

Attest

14. Borden-Winslow House

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

2/16/83 Delores Byers

Attest

15. Brayton Methodist Episcopal Church

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

2/16/83 Delores Byers

Attest

16. Brightman, Hathaway, House

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

2/16/83 Delores Byers

Attest

17. Bristol County Superior Court

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

2/16/83 Delores Byers

Attest

18. Cadedy, Squire William B., House

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

2/16/83 Delores Byers

Attest

19. Cataract Engine Company No. 3

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

2/16/83 Delores Byers

Attest

20. Central Congregational Church

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

2/16/83 Delores Byers

Attest

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Bristol County Superior Court (Fall River MRA)
Bristol County
MASSACHUSETTS

Working No. 115/83-15

Fed. Reg. Date: 2-7-84

Date Due: 2/3/83 - 2/19/83

Action: ☒ ACCEPT 2/16/83

Entered in the ☐ RETURN

National Register ☐ REJECT

Federal Agency: _____

- ☐ resubmission
☐ nomination by person or local government
☐ owner objection
☐ appeal

Substantive Review: ☐ sample ☐ request ☐ appeal ☐ NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria _____

Reviewer _____

Discipline _____

Date _____

see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: ☐ technical corrections cited below
☐ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no

7. Description

Condition	Check one	Check one
☐ excellent	☐ deteriorated	☐ unaltered
☐ good	☐ ruins	☐ original site
☐ fair	☐ unexposed	☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- ☐ summary paragraph
☐ completeness
☐ clarity
☐ alterations/integrity
☐ dates
☐ boundary selection

8. Significance

Period _____ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates _____ Builder/Architect _____

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

- _____ summary paragraph
- _____ completeness
- _____ clarity
- _____ applicable criteria
- _____ justification of areas checked
- _____ relating significance to the resource
- _____ context
- _____ relationship of integrity to significance
- _____ justification of exception
- _____ other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acres of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UMT References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification _____

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

_____ national _____ state _____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature _____

title _____ date _____

13. Other

- _____ Maps
- _____ Photographs
- _____ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: 202 272 - 3504

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet



NAME: Bristol County Superior Court
House and Registry of Deeds

LOCATION: 441 North Main Street
Fall River, ^{MA} Mass.

PHOTO CREDIT: Pamela Shields (1981)

NEGATIVE FILED AT: Fall River Office of Historic
Preservation
One Government Center
Fall River, Mass. 02722
(PSNR-15-14)

IDENTIFICATION: Bristol County Superior Court
House, 3/4 view looking east
Photo 1 (of 2)

photo # 1 of 2



NAME: Bristol County Superior Court
House and Registry of Deeds

LOCATION: 441 North Main Street
Fall River, ^{Mass.} Mass.

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NEGATIVE FILED AT: Fall River Office of Historic
Preservation
One Government Center
Fall River, Mass. 02722
(PSNR-12-17)

IDENTIFICATION: Bristol County Registry of Deeds,
3/4 view, looking east

photo # 1 of 2



Fall River MRA, Ma

Bristol County

Superior Court 441 No. Main

Comm. I #32



INST. 2-17A
SUPERIOR COURT
441 NO. MAIN

Fall River MRA, Ma

Please refer to the map in the
Multiple Property Cover Sheet
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000279