

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received AUG 12 1986
date entered SEP 25 1986

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

1. Name

historic Maine Eye and Ear Infirmary

and or common Holt Hall

2. Location

street & number 794-800 Congress Street not for publication

city, town Portland, vicinity of

state Maine code 023 county Cumberland code 005

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 type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: None

4. Owner of Property

name Ellsworth Street Associates, Realty Development Group, Incorporated

street & number 75 Market Street

city, town Portland, vicinity of state Maine 04101

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number

city, town Portland, 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		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Situated on a corner lot at the intersection of Congress and Bramhall Streets, the Maine Eye and Ear Infirmary Building dominates a densely built-up area which largely consists of smaller two and three story buildings. This physical dominance is enhanced by the terrain of the site, which slopes steeply down to the Fore River.

The nominated property is a six story masonry building constructed of brick with stone trim. It is surmounted by a hipped roof with pedimented dormers. Attached to the southside is a three story wing with a flat roof which is original and repeats the design features of the main section. Five and six story brick additions were also added to the rear elevations, including the roof, which are the north and east sides. These service wings are generally not visible from Congress and Bramhall Streets.

The windows on this building consist of square-headed two-over-two double-hung sash. The principal facades are ornamented in a Renaissance design popularly known as "Free Classic". The principal decorative feature is the large two story round arched entry on the west elevation. Constructed of quarry-faced pink granite, this feature has Romanesque impost blocks, a beaded archi-volt and a denticulated cornice. The quarry faced stone extends all along the first story on Bramhall Street almost to Congress Street, where a series of storefronts are delineated by stone piers supporting a steel I-beam. Although the original doorway configurations for these stores are intact, the plate glass windows have been replaced by plywood with small openings.

Important decorative features on the two principal elevations include third story pilasters supporting round arches with wood coquillage, a corbelled belt course above the fourth story, square panels, and Ionic columns in antis at the first story level, and a boldly projecting cornice with modillions. The dormers have alternating round arched and triangular metal pediments. Also noteworthy are the three shallow bay windows with thin engaged columns and, on the Congress Street elevation, a wrought iron balcony.

Exterior changes in 1934 include the removal of steps on the Bramhall Street elevation, lowering the main entry to grade level and adding a wooden infill for the arched entryway. The multi-panelled spandrels have also been covered or replaced on the bay windows and aluminum storm sash have been added throughout. Alterations to the Congress Street storefronts have already been noted.

The interior has been more extensively altered since 1892. The existing plaster partitions date from a variety of remodellings, the most substantial change having occurred in 1934 when the main entrance was changed and the lobby added. This remodelling is Colonial Revival in style and consists of fluted piers and pilasters, chair-rails, panels, and entablatures.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1891–92 **Builder/Architect** John Calvin Stevens

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Maine Eye and Ear Infirmary, planned and promoted by the distinguished Dr. Erastus Eugene Holt, was one of the first such institutions in the country. John Calvin Stevens, Maine's most noted architect, who was pre-eminent at the turn of the century, designed the building in a mixed Romanesque-English Renaissance style with bold commercial flourishes.

Dr. Holt (1849–1931) was one of a group of outstanding physicians and surgeons who gathered in Portland in the years following the Civil War. Graduating from the Maine Medical School in 1872, he continued his studies at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia College, New York. In Portland he became the first appointed House Physician of the Maine General Hospital. His quarterly reports of medical and surgical cases were published in the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal which early attracted attention to his scientific attainments and literary abilities. In 1881 Dr. Holt went abroad for study in special departments of ophthalmology and otology and upon returning to Portland specialized in these fields. Becoming impressed with the great need for an eye and ear infirmary in the city, he began in 1884 to secure signatures to a petition for the incorporation of such an institution. In April of 1886, the Infirmary was opened with Dr. Holt appointed Executive Surgeon. In 1891 the cornerstone of the present structure was laid, the principal address being delivered by Dr. Holt. The Maine Eye and Ear Infirmary became part of the Maine Medical Center in the 1950s when it was renamed Holt Hall in honor of the founder. It continued to serve hospital programs until 1980.

Architecturally, the building is significant as the work of John Calvin Stevens, Maine's most famous architect. It represents an important period of transition for this noted designer, in which he began to abandon the Queen Anne and Romanesque styles for the Colonial Revival. The Maine Eye and Ear Infirmary is an example of what was then known as the "Free Classic" style, being an eclectic combination of primarily English Renaissance features. Although the interior has been extensively altered over the years, the exterior still displays the essential features of Stevens' original design. The architect was especially successful in creating a structure which, although an imposing presence on the urban landscape, compliments the residential neighborhood with its hipped roof and Georgian domers.

Stevens and his son John Howard designed utilitarian additions to the building's rear in 1916. A major alteration occurred in 1934 under the direction of Portland architect E. Leander Higgins. Higgins, is responsible for the altered entry and the undistinguished Colonial Revival woodwork still surviving in the main lobby.

9. Major Bibliographical References

McIntyre, Philip & Blanding, William F., Eds. Men of Progress. Boston, 1897,
 New England Magazine.
 Portland Press Herald, October 2, 1931.
 Portland Evening Express, 24 December, 1982.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1
 Quadrangle name Portland West Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A	1 9	3 9 7 3 2 5	4 8 3 3 9 8 0	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

Assessor's Map 54, Block F, Lot 1

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

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Frank A. Beard, Historian/Roger G. Reed, Architectural Historian

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date July, 1986

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 *Emilio S. Fitzpatrick* date 8/5/86

title J. H. P. O.

For NPS use only

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

Vatick Andrus date 9/25/86
 Keeper of the National Register

Attest: *Bohys Swartz* date 9/25/86
 Chief of Registration