

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

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

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Continuation sheet Inventory N. 3591

Item number

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PROPERTY NAME: Govatos'/McVey Building  
800 North Market Street

The Govatos'/McVey Building is a turn of the century commercial/office building which has been converted into a restaurant, candy factory/shop by removing original storefronts along East Eighth Street during the first half of the 20th century.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

Quadrangle Name: Wilmington South  
Quadrangle Scale: 1:24,000  
UTM Coordinate: 18-452940-4399200

Description and Justification: The area nominated includes parcel 26 035.40 026, which is .06 acres, and is described as follows: Beginning at a point at the northeast corner of North Market Street and East Eighth Street; thence easterly along property line 137.3 feet; thence northerly along property line 20 feet; thence easterly along property line 137.3 feet; thence southerly along North Market Street 20 feet to the beginning point.

OWNER: Richard Govatos  
800 North Market Street  
Wilmington, DE 19801

DESCRIPTION:

Location: 800 North Market Street  
CRS Number: N.3591  
Built: 1895

The Govatos'/McVey Building is a three-story commercial building with a rectangular plan built of the bearing wall brick construction. On the Market Street facade, the first floor has three small display cases with black granite foundation. Two recessed doorways are between display cases with wood frame glass doors and a canvas canopy is over the storefront. Ashlar-scored stucco arch with Govatos sign in individual metal letters and illuminated plastic sign are over storefront. Second and third floor is a tan brick wall. The pressed copper half-octagonal bay on second and third stories with double-hung 30-over-1 windows are capped with pediment supported by two brackets. It has a flat roof and pressed metal denticulated cornice with parapet wall. On the East Eighth Street facade, the first floor Market Street storefront extends approximately 20 feet along the East Eighth Street facade with black granite foundation and ashlar scored stucco over display window. Storefronts of 1, 3, and 5 East Eighth Street have been bricked over and stuccoed.

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The 7 East Eighth Street storefront has a large display window and a recessed wood frame doorway. Second and third floors have half-octagonal bays, similar to the one on the Market Street facade, separated by paired double-hung 30-over-1 windows with lugsills and a continuous rusticated stone lintel. Corbelled brick dentils are below pressed metal denticylated cornice and parapet wall.

In the interior of the building, a 1930's soda fountain is near the entrance with brushed chrome surround featuring Holograms of three 1930's movie stars, left to right, Virginia Grey, June Presser (holding a glass of Dr. Pepper), and Barbara Stanwyck. 1950's vintage wood grained linoleum counter with bar stools. Display case doors are of polished hardwood with windows and an arched wood surround. Dining room to rear of store is a 1950's vintage restaurant with wood grain linoleum booths.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The Govatos/McVey Building, 800 North Market Street, is being nominated under Criterion B for its association with John Govatos and under Criterion C as an example of the late 19th century Victorian office/commercial building which shows the influence of the Queen Anne style, and a 1930's vintage restaurant. Located on the northeast corner of Eighth and Market Streets, the McVey Building was built in 1895 by John McVey, a shoe store owner and a former City Councilman. The Queen Anne influence can be seen in the large half-hexagonal pedimented copper bays on the second and third stories. In addition to the bay and pediment on the Facade, there are four bays on the South wall, each over what was formerly a storefront opening onto East Eighth Street.

According to the 1896 City Directory, the Market Street storefront was shared between John McVey's shoe store and a fruit stand owned by Frank Galato. On the East Eighth Street side of the building, 1 East Eighth Street, were offices used by Baileys and Arthur's Buyers and Merchants Benefit Bureau; Full-Fledged Letter Carriers; W. B. Caswell; a civil engineer; the 96 Club; Weir Incorporated, stockbroker; and the Delaware Beneficial Association. Three East Eighth Street was a cigar shop, Five East Eighth street was a barber shop, and Seven East Eighth was a bicycle shop. Between 1900 and 1903, Five and Seven East Eighth Street were occupied by the Standard Cafe and Restaurant which had a businessman's cafe on the first floor, a dinner restaurant, four small dining rooms, and a banquet room which seated 175 people, on the second floor.

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In 1900, John Govatos, who had started making and selling hand dipped chocolate candy in Wilmington in 1894, moved his shop to the McVey Building. It was the first store in Wilmington to serve ice cream sodas. In 1932, Govatos added a restaurant to the candy store. The brushed chrome soda fountain with the Hologram of three 1930's movie stars; Virginia Grey, June Preisser, and Barbara Stanwyck, was added around this time. Gradually, Govatos' business expanded to the rest of the building, incorporating the East Eighth Street storefronts. By 1934, only Seven East Eighth Street remained as a separate store, the Annex Grill and Bar which closed in 1961 and is now Govatos Tavern and package store. Govatos' United Candy Company is the last candy making firm in the City and still makes hand-dipped candy by the same method as in 1894.

In addition to his candy business, John Govatos was very active as a real estate developer. He was the owner of the Ford Building at Tenth and Market Streets, one of the first large office buildings in the City, and was mainly responsible for the development of Rehoboth Beach as a major resort. He was also the founder and president of the Rehoboth Trust Company, the first bank in that town, and the founder and President of Citizens Savings Bank.