

PH 0685615

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED OCT 4 1978
DATE ENTERED DEC 20 1978

**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
Sterling Block and Bishop Arcade

AND/OR COMMON
Bishop Block and Post Office Arcade

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
993-1005 Main St. and 1-35 Post Office Arcade

CITY, TOWN
Bridgeport

STATE
Connecticut

VICINITY OF
CODE

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Fourth

COUNTY
Fairfield

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" 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	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<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
Connecticut National Bank et als

STREET & NUMBER
888 Main Street

CITY, TOWN
Bridgeport

VICINITY OF

new owner -
MSB Real Estate Corp. ✓
c/o Peoples Savings Bank
899 Main St.
Bridgeport CT 06602
Connecticut
(see letter 10-17-78)
sl

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Bridgeport City Hall

STREET & NUMBER
45 Lyon Terrace

CITY, TOWN
Bridgeport

STATE
Connecticut

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Landmark Architecture in Bridgeport, Connecticut

DATE
1975
 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
Historical Collections, Bridgeport Public Library

CITY, TOWN
Bridgeport

STATE
Connecticut

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 Sterling Block-Bishop Arcade is a combination Greek Revival business block/Victorian Gothic shopping mall located on Main Street between John and Cannon Streets in downtown Bridgeport. It is flanked by twentieth-century commercial structures and is diagonally across Main Street from "The Block", a proposed National Register historic district.

The Sterling Block was one of the earliest brick commercial rows in the center of the city. The northerly three-fifths of the building was erected in 1841 as a hotel (the "Sterling House") with stores underneath. It was nine bays wide and four stories high.

The upper story's fenestration was regular, that on the second floor being slightly elongated. All windows had six-over-six pane sash and were capped with brownstone lintels. The Main Street facade was surmounted by a proper Greek entablature, and side walls were step-gabled. The ground floor storefronts, originally three in number, were of standard trabeated granite post-and-lintel design.

Around 1850 the southerly two-fifths of the present structure was added, presenting a unified appearance with the earlier portion from the street although differing visibly at the rear.

Remodeling commenced immediately after the building was acquired by William D. Bishop in 1879. He originally proposed total demolition, but settled instead for extensive renovations which included replacement of the old-fashioned storefronts with plate glass. By 1886, the property was in the hands of Bishop's two sons who changed its official name to "Bishop Block". They made additional alterations, converting several of the hotel suites to business offices.

In 1889, Bridgeport's premier architectural firm of Longstaff & Hurd were hired to design an enclosed shopping arcade to occupy the underutilized space at the rear of the building. Their plan was described in the Bridgeport Standard: "There will be an arched entrance on Main Street...of Ohio stone...tiled and finished handsomely (which) will lead to the main body of the arcade, which will join the Bishop Block in the rear, and will be thirty feet by ninety feet under glass and having two tiers of stores on both sides, with light balconies running around and affording access to the upper tier...This structure which will be in some respects different from any Arcade elsewhere will be, doubtless, the show building of Bridgeport and will be a very popular place...All the work on this building and all the material will be of the best and it will be a source of pride and pleasure to the Bridgeport people when completed. The Arcade at Providence, R.I., is on somewhat similar principles, but is not so modern in its design nor so attractive in style and finish as the Bridgeport Arcade will be."

The arcade, which reputedly cost \$100,000.00 to construct, was fabricated of ornamental iron arches supported by Corinthian columns cast by the firm of Poulson & Eger in New York. The roof was entirely of glass, and the twelve storefronts contained ornamental bays with leaded glass insets. The floor was mosaic tile.

Today, both the Sterling Block and the Bishop Arcade show the results of considerable alteration. The Main Street front, although

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 checked="" 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 1841; c. 1850; 1889 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Longstaff & Hurd (Arcade)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Sterling Block - Bishop Arcade in downtown Bridgeport is the oldest major commercial block surviving in the central business district, the oldest operating hotel in the city, and the oldest enclosed shopping arcade in the state. Although somewhat altered from its original form, it remains one of the strongest nineteenth century statements in the downtown area and continues to perform its intended functions.

The original Sterling House hotel, a wooden structure, was built in 1835 as a genteel hotel in what was then an exclusively residential area along Main Street. The northerly nine bays of the present structure was erected in 1841 to join the new brick Greek Revival business structures then transforming the surrounding area. Faced with ever-increasing commerce, the owner, Captain Daniel Sterling, added the southerly six bays to replace the old wooden building around 1850. A print which survives from the period shows the tenants in 1858: P.B. Seegee, watch and jewelry dealer; J. Cornwall, books & stationery; S.S. Jarvis, drug store; M.H. Wilson; Ayre's boot & shoe store; Hatch & Beach, tailors, and George Jevesson's New York Store.

The Sterling Block is the most ambitious commercial building from its period to survive in Bridgeport.

The Bishop (Post Office) Arcade is a structure that can be said to be unique in Connecticut. It is comparable on a smaller scale to George Eisenmann's arcade in Cleveland, Ohio, built at the same time. It was conceived as an innovative plan to provide a commercial use for some idle land in the center of a downtown block and to provide a passageway between Main Street, by 1889 the leading retail street in the city, and the new post office/federal building, completed in 1892 at the southeast corner of Broad and Cannon Streets at the opposite corner of the block.

The Arcade was noted for being one of the most elite shopping places in the city. Its original tenants in 1890 were: (first floor) Charles W. McCord, carpets; W.B. Buckingham, jewelry; Grover & Co., boots and shoes; Bradley Beers, confectionery; Clarence Church, drugs, and John M. Hawley, tailor (second floor) Seeley & Warnock, photographers; H.G. Thompson, artist; A. Leu, tonsorial artist; Dr. Barden, dentist; Mrs. Alice Calhoun, artist; W.A. McPherson, broker; Mrs. L. McCarthy, dressmaking, and the Women's Exchange.

Today both the Bishop (Sterling) Block and the Post Office (Bishop Arcade) house a similar array of businesses, and the Arcade Hotel serves as a residential hotel.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Following Articles from the Bridgeport Standard, local news page:
 6 Feb., 10 Feb., 11 Feb., 10 Oct. (1879); 22 Oct. (1885); 18 Feb.,
 20 Feb., 12 Mar., 25 Mar. (1886); 10 May, 18 July (1889), 21 Jan.,
 24 Feb. (1890)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .7526

QUADRANGLE NAME Bridgeport

QUADRANGLE SCALE 7.5 minute

UTM REFERENCES

A 18 65.7 00.0 4.5 5.9 9.0
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C 18 65.1 8.3 0 4.5 5.9 9.0
 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

See Continuation Sheet 3

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE Charles W. Brilvitch Historic Sites Researcher

ORGANIZATION Bridgeport Architecture Conservancy DATE January 1978

STREET & NUMBER 128 Walnut Street TELEPHONE 203-336-5737

CITY OR TOWN Bridgeport STATE Connecticut

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE X 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 

TITLE Director, Connecticut Historical Commission DATE September 27, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER William Lebourch DATE 12/20/78

ATTEST: William Lebourch DATE 12/19/78

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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retaining most of its original fenestration, is bereft of its 19th century storefronts, window sash and cornice. A remodeling of the 1940s added casement windows and a formstone veneer to portions of the second story. At this same time, the arched terra cotta, arcaded entrance was partially blocked off to form part of a second-floor hotel lobby. In the Arcade itself, the old balcony, railings and staircase were replaced. Formstone flooring was substituted for the original mosaics, and the glassed ceiling was partially replaced with glass blocks, the rest being painted over.

Further attempts to modernize the structure were made in the 1950s. Jalousie windows were installed in places on the Main Street front and the storefronts were again remodelled. In the Arcade, ground floor storefronts were totally rebuilt; **Those** on the second floor retain basically their original design.

The original iron columns, arches and decorative scrollwork remain intact on the upper portions.

-see Continuation Sheet 2 for site plan

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

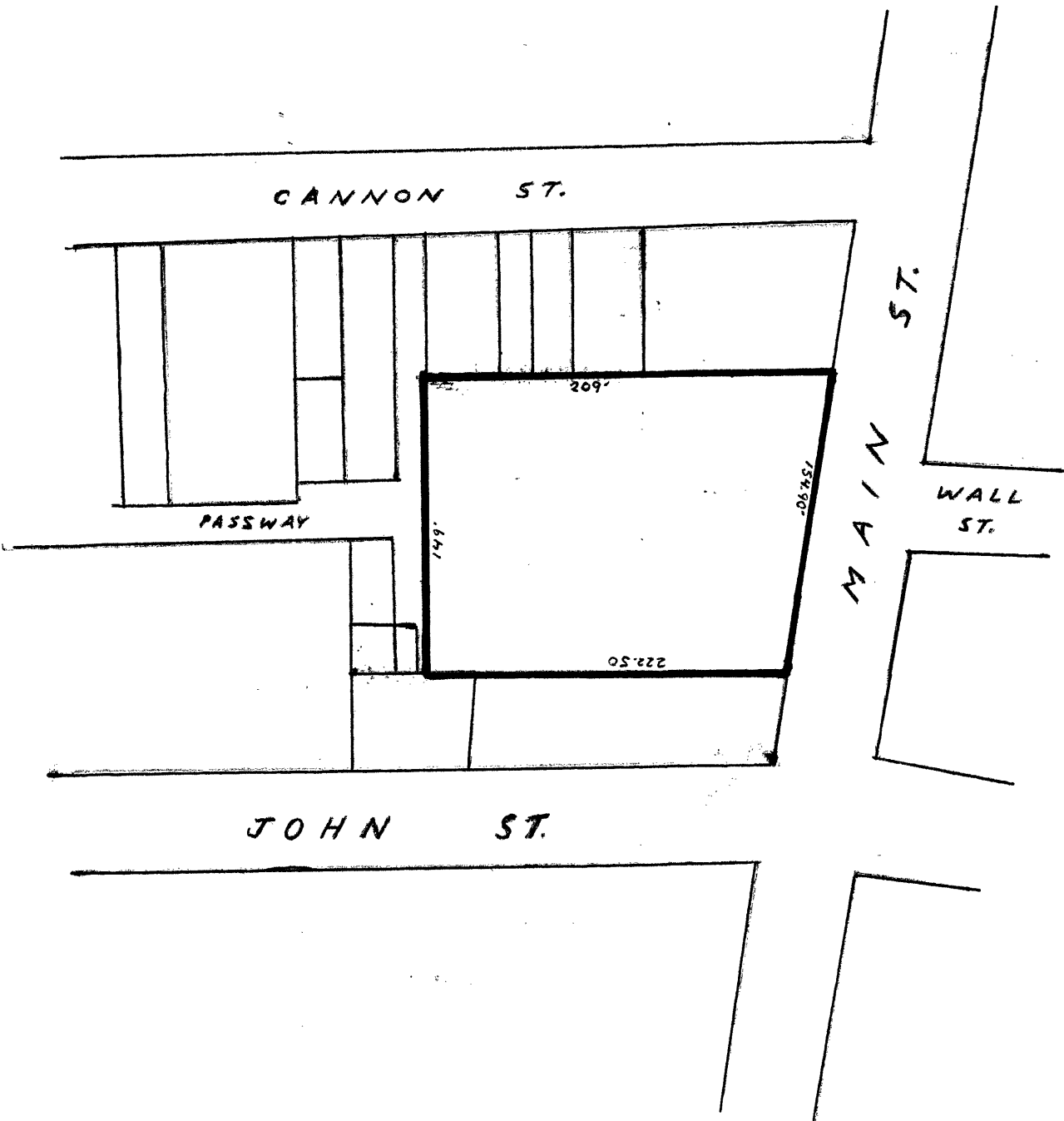
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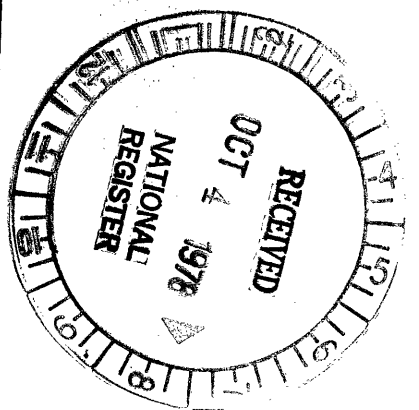
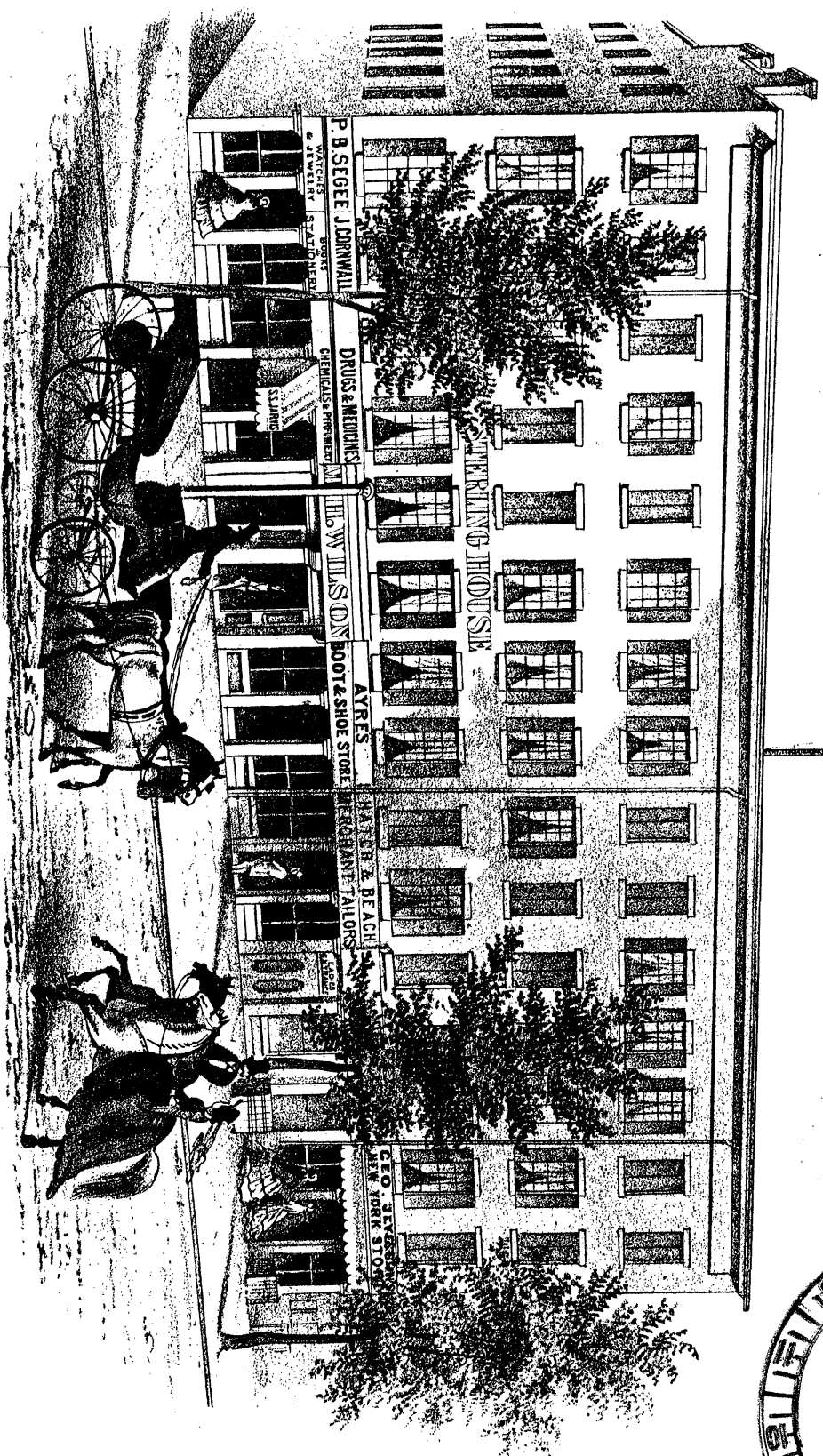
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CONTINUATION SHEET 3

ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 1

Bounded on the North for a distance of 209 feet, more or less, by property now or formerly of the S.S. Kresge Co., et als; Easterly for a distance of 154.90 feet, more or less, by Main Street; Southerly for a distance of 222.50 feet, more or less, by property now or formerly of the Main & John Street Corp., and Westerly for a distance of 149 feet, more or less, by property now or formerly of the D.M. Read Co. and the passway.

BRIDGEPORT-STERLING BLOCK/BISHOP ARCADE
ORIGINAL EXTERIOR VIEW (FROM 'LITHOGRAPH VIEWS IN BRIDGEPORT'-c. 1858)



STERLING BLOCK

Plate No. 20

Bridgeport, Ct.