

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Tracy-Causser Block
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 505-509 Fore Street N/A not for publication
city, town Portland N/A vicinity
state Maine code ME county Cumberland code 005 zip code 04101

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Eileen S. Fitzgerald, SHPD 10/5/89
Signature of certifying official Date

Maine Historic Preservation Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

Edson H. Beall 3/17/94
Patricia L. Savage 11-21-89

for Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade: Specialty Store

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/Not in Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)Greek Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brickwalls Brick

roof Asphaltother

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Tracy-Causser Block is a two-part two-and-a-half-story, seven-bay brick building covered by a gable roof. Its late Greek Revival style features include heavy granite posts and lintels framing the first story shop entrances as well as a wide entablature punctuated by frieze windows.

Facing southeast, the principal elevation is separated into two parts, each of which has a symmetrical fenestration pattern of three and four bays respectively. The first story has a pair of unequally sized storefronts separated by a central door that leads to the upper floors. Larger centrally located doors in each storefront are flanked by multi-pane windows. Granite sills, lintels, and thresholds are utilized throughout this scheme. Seven window openings, only two of which have sash, are located across the second story and on axis with the openings below. The openings are distinguished by granite sills and lintels. A molded string course spans the facade below the seven frieze windows which are in turn surmounted by a narrow cornice. Three brick flues rise through the roof on this side.

The building's east gable end contains one large window opening and two doors on the first story, four openings (one of which has its original six-over-six sash) on the second story, three openings in the half story and a single six-over-six window in the gable peak. Since it faced Cotton Street this elevation was secondary only to the facade. Its counterpart to the west, however, has only a pair of modest segmentally arched six-over-six windows in the half story and a single similar unit in the gable peak. A later Mansard roofed three-and-a-half-story block was formerly joined to this side, but it has been pulled down. The rear elevation has four doors and two windows on the first story, five windows and a door on the second story, and five frieze windows. Those openings in the southern block have arched heads whereas those in the north are flat. Two additional flues punctuate the roof on this side. Of additional note is the slight projection of the southern block, indicating the historic fact that the two stores, while built at the same time, were separately owned.

Inside, the building reflects the modest means of its original occupants. While the first floor commercial spaces have been modified for other uses, the upper floors continue to exhibit their residential character. The stair that leads from the central front door survives throughout its full run and much of the plaster over brick wall finishes also remain.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Commerce

Period of Significance

1866

1866-1939

Significant Dates

1866

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Tracy-Causser Block is a building of local significance for Portland. It not only possesses important associations that illustrate the broad patterns of the city's commercial history, but it also embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type and method of construction. These qualities, viewed within the context of the city's existing historic resources, are of sufficient merit to enable nomination of the building to the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C.

Portland's Great Fire of July 4, 1866, destroyed much of the city's commercial center including parts of Fore Street and most of Middle and Exchange Streets. Among the buildings lost in that conflagration were a two-story wooden dwelling and a three-story house that stood on the not now occupied by the Tracy-Causser Block. In keeping with the broad trend of immediate reconstruction in the downtown, between August and October 1866, John Tracy and William Causser erected the existing building which contained commercial space on the first story and living quarters above. For the duration of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the first story housed small businesses, including grocery stores, furniture dealers, and tinsmiths, with the owner and his family frequently residing above the store.

The pattern of use as illustrated here typifies the pre-fire conditions in the commercial district, but it was rare among the post-fire buildings erected in 1866 and thereafter. In large part this was due to the conscious decision by many merchants to build separate urban dwellings in distinct residential neighborhoods rather than inhabit the upper levels of their new commercial structures. The survival of the Tracy-Causser Block, therefore, is a tangible - and now unique - link to this particular aspect of Portland's post-fire commercial history.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Portland City Directories, 1866 - 1939.

Tracy-Causser Block File, Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Portland Landmarks

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than 1

UTM References

A

1	9
---	---

3	9	18	6	2	0
---	---	----	---	---	---

4	18	3	14	1	1	1	0
---	----	---	----	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

C

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

B

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

D

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property occupies the southeast corner of the City of Portland Chart 38, Block C, Lot 9. This boundary is drawn so as to include only the Tracy-Causser Block and not the surrounding parking lots or the detached one-story building that stands at the rear of the lot.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary of this property is limited to that portion of the existing city lot historically associated with and containing the Tracy-Causser Block.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kirk E. Mohney, Architectural Historian

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date 1/19/89

street & number 55 Capitol Street telephone (207) 289-2132

city or town Augusta state Maine zip code 04333

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 2

In addition to its historical significance under criterion A, the building possesses further distinction in that it embodies the qualities of a type and method of construction. The forthright strength and simplicity of its Greek Revival style design is evident in the remarkably unaltered storefronts with their massive granite posts and lintels and the boldness of the entablature which carries across the facade of the building. Although Greek Revival style commercial blocks built prior to 1866 do survive in Portland, this particular example appears to be unusual because it was constructed in the post-fire period. However, this does not diminish its significance. In fact, it reinforces the building's importance in the broader pattern of the city's commercial development. Its design and construction indicates that, unlike the upper class merchants who employed professional architects to design their new buildings in the latest architectural fashion, middle class businessmen such as Tracy and Causer turned to masons and builders whose traditional methods and ideas about what such a structure should look like at that time would very probably produce a Greek Revival style building.



Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr.
Director

MAINE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
55 Capitol Street
State House Station 65
Augusta, Maine 04333

Telephone:
207-287-2132

February 7, 1994

Carol D. Shull, Chief of Registration
National Register of Historic Places
P. O. Box 37127
Washington, D. C. 20013-7127

RECEIVED

FEB 14 1994

Dear Carol:

On behalf of its new owner, I am writing to request that the Tracy-Causser Block at 505-509 Fore Street, Portland, Maine be listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Commission initially sought its listing in 1989, but the owner at that time submitted a notarized objection. We subsequently requested a determination of eligibility which was made on November 21, 1989. As the enclosed copy of a letter from William J. Dowd indicates, the ownership and interest in this property has recently changed in favor of its preservation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact Kirk Mohney of my staff if you require any additional information.

Sincerely,

Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr.
State Historic Preservation Officer

Enc.

cc: William J. Dowd

EGS/slm