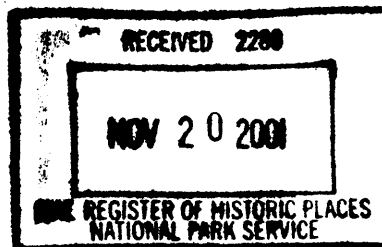


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



1418

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Hanson, Asa, Block

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 548-550 Congress Street N/A not for publication

city or town Portland N/A vicinity

state Maine code ME county Cumberland code 005 zip code 04100

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 11/9/01
Signature of certifying official/Title 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 for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. 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): _____

[Signature] 12/3/01
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Hanson, Asa, Block
Name of Property

Cumberland, Maine
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)
 private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)
 building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Non-contributing	
<u>1</u>		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
Commerce/Trade/Specialty Store

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
Commerce/Trade/Specialty Store
Commerce/Trade/Business

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)
Late Victorian

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)
foundation Brick
walls Brick
roof Asphalt
other _____

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

HANSON, ASA, BLOCK

CUMBERLAND, MAINE

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The Asa Hanson Block is a symmetrically composed, three-story, seven-bay brick commercial building whose sloped roof is framed by a low parapet. Its first story is composed of a central entrance leading to the second floor with flanking recessed entrances providing access to the two stores. These recently remodeled storefronts contain trios of large rectangular windows surmounted by transoms. The central door and its large transom is framed by paneled iron posts that meet decorative projecting brickwork at the wide stringcourse between the first and second floors. Within the center bay of this course is a rectangular stone containing the name PERRY. The center bay formed by the posts continues into the upper stories with brick pilasters that frame one-over-one double-hung sash windows located within segmentally arched openings. Similar pilasters delineate the corners of the facade, and they rise to a wide denticulated frieze featuring terra cotta rosettes and corbeled brackets that support a wooden cornice. The center bay is further distinguished by a small gable that frames a rectangular stone containing the name HANSON. Six one-over-one double-hung windows are located on the second and third stories, and decorative brickwork panels are located below the lintels of the upper windows.

The south side elevation has an asymmetrical fenestration pattern. At the southwestern most bay the storefront design wraps around the corner and is framed by paneled iron posts similar to those on the facade. The upper windows (one on each story) are recessed, as are the equivalent pair at the southeast corner of the block. Between these two end bays are a pair of small segmentally arched openings on the first story, a trio of one-over-ones on the second story, and two one-over-ones on the third story. Two projecting brick shafts that commence at a point between the first and second stories are the remains of chimneys which originally extended above the roof on this elevation. The decorative frieze that is located on the front elevation extends across the side elevation.

With the exception of the pressed metal walls and ceilings in the first story of the back hall, all interior finishes are modern.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or a grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1889

Significant Dates

1889

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Fassett & Tompson, Architects

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 #

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

HANSON, ASA, BLOCK

CUMBERLAND, MAINE

Section number 8 Page 2

[The following narrative history was prepared by MHPC staff member Amy Cole Ives]

The 1889 Asa Hanson Block meets Criterion C of the National Register Criteria for Evaluation because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of the commercial structures that were being built on Congress Street between Monument Square and Congress Square during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. This period of economic growth resulted in the replacement or remodeling of many earlier buildings into commercial buildings of taller proportions with storefronts on the ground floor and rooms above for offices, studios, dental parlors, tailors and other commercial endeavors.¹ Maine's most prolific architect of the mid to late nineteenth century, Francis Fassett and his various architectural partners, designed twelve commercial blocks along this section of Congress Street during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The Asa Hanson Block, at 548-550 Congress Street, was designed by Francis Fassett and his partner Frederick Tompson to replace an earlier structure at 548 Congress Street.

Francis Henry Fassett (1823-1908) was born in Bath, Maine, and received his initial architectural training there during the 1840s from Isaac D. Cole, an architect-builder who had moved to Bath from South Boston. Fassett continued his studies with various architectural offices in Boston and New York.² He moved to Portland in 1863 where, following the city's disastrous fire of 1866, he found great demand for his design skills.³ Between the years of 1865 and 1880, Fassett designed eighteen commercial blocks within the City of Portland, eleven of which have since been demolished.⁴ Two of these buildings, the Farrington Block of 1876 and the Cushman Block of 1877, were built just east and west of Monument Square respectively. The third floor gabled parapet over the center bay of the Cushman Block is a design motif that was used on a number of other commercial blocks designed by Fassett and his partners over the next twenty years, including the Asa Hanson Block.

John Calvin Stevens, another of Maine's noted architects, was a partner with Fassett from 1880 to 1884, during which time their firm designed eight commercial blocks in Portland. Three of these blocks are located between Monument and Congress Squares. The J.B. Brown Memorial Block 1882-1883, which is attributed solely to Stevens, is considered to be one of the finest Queen Anne style commercial blocks in Maine. The William Hammond Heirs Block was originally an Italianate residence that was remodeled by Fassett in 1880 into a Queen Anne style commercial building. The Lancaster Block 1881-1882 in Monument Square was designed as a four story, seven bay commercial building with two storefronts on the street level, a center entrance for the upper floors demarcated by heavy brick piers framing the door, a gabled parapet over the center bay, and detailed with stone and terra cotta accents. The three story Asa Hanson Block is more modest in scale than the Lancaster Block, but the same design vocabulary and organization of two storefronts with a clearly framed center entrance for the upper floors, a gabled parapet over the center bay, and details in stone and terra cotta accents are unmistakable similarities with the Lancaster Block.

Francis Fassett designed two large brick commercial blocks on the south side of Congress Street on either side of Brown Street in 1885. One is the Franklin Block at 500 Congress Street, which was remodeled beyond recognition in the 1940s and 1950s, and the other is the Beaver Block at 496 Congress which has two storefronts separated by a central entrance to the upper floors, with this center bay again being clearly identified by framing pilasters up to the fourth floor, and terra cotta accent details.

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HANSON, ASA, BLOCK

CUMBERLAND, MAINE

Section number 8 Page 3

Frederick A. Tompson, who had graduated from Portland High School in 1876 and immediately became an architecture student in Fassett's office, moved up to partner in the office in 1886 and remained so until he left in 1891.⁵ During this time Fassett and Tompson designed nine commercial blocks in Portland, of which five have been demolished. The J.H. Rines Block 540-542 Congress, the James Lunt Block 546 Congress, and the Asa Hanson Block 548-550 Congress, were all built between 1888 and 1889, and share the design motif of the gabled parapet above the center bay of the building. These contiguous buildings, including 544 Congress Street, whose architect remains unknown, also have a tripartite vertical organization of the upper story windows and horizontal demarcation of the floor levels with either decorative patterns in the masonry or intermediate cornices. The Hanson Block appears to be the only one of the these buildings with a center entrance for the upper stories and flanking storefronts. The photograph captioned "A Bit of Congress Street" from 1904 illustrates these three Fassett and Tompson buildings and 544 Congress with their commercial sign boards and heavy stripped awnings shading the storefronts.⁶ The three buildings at 540-546 Congress Street adjacent to the Hanson Block in this photograph were replaced with a two story art deco building for F.W. Woolworth Company in 1946.

The dual name stone blocks on 548-550 Congress Street are also very prominent in the 1904 photograph. The name Perry is carved on the brownstone block above the center entrance doorway and the name Hanson is carved on the brownstone block below the third floor gabled pediment. At this time all that is known about Asa Hanson is that in 1870 he is listed in the Portland Directory as an agent of J.B. Brown, (Portland's leading industrialist of the mid nineteenth century), at 244 Commercial Street with his home address at 352 Congress Street. In 1875 Asa Hanson is listed as a merchant at 548 Congress Street (550 Congress is listed as Oak Street), and in 1883 the occupants of 548 Congress Street include a Mrs. Asa Hanson. On November 17, 1888 the Portland Daily Press reported that "Mr. Perry's new building, corner of Oak and Congress Street, will be a three storied brick building designed by Fassett & Tompson." The connection between Asa Hanson and Charles Perry remains illusive until one reads Perry's obituary, in which he is remembered as "one of Portland's oldest and best known citizens."

Mr. Perry who was in his 83rd year has been a typical Yankee in his life history passing from one occupation to another always with an eye to "the main chance," but never making a pronounced success until he went into the real estate business. [He came back] to Portland in 1886 and entered upon the unique real estate enterprise with which he has been connected since.

The plan consisted of building buildings on other people's land with other people's money and holding them for a certain time until the agreement expired when he returned the land to the original owner together with the buildings erected thereon. The first block he built was the one on the corner of Congress and Oak streets, known as the Hanson building. His second venture was the block next above the engine house on the other side of the street. These proved to be successful beyond his original plans and Mr. Perry was enabled to buy the Frank O. Libby estate on Free street opposite the Jefferson Theatre, where he built the Everett Chambers, the well known model lodging house.⁷

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HANSON, ASA, BLOCK

CUMBERLAND, MAINE

Section number 8 Page 4

Based on Directories of Portland from 1890 through 1912, the storefront at 548 Congress was occupied by George Waterhouse, Millinery, while the storefront at 550 Congress was occupied by William Nash until 1900, Grand Union Tea Co., until 1909, H.S. Erlick & Co. Jewelers until 1911, and Columbia Phonograph in 1912. The address of 548 ½ Congress was the listing for the rooms on the second and third floors. These rooms were listed in the early 1890s as boarding rooms with a few offices, including one held by Charles Perry from 1890 until 1903. In the mid 1890s and early 1900s the rooms on the second and third floors were increasingly used for commercial purposes which included Benjamin Davenport tailor, Custis Shirt Co., King Dental Parlors, Portland Dental Manufacturing, Miss Curlin Hair Goods, Misses Upton dressmaking, Charles Moses watchmaker, Dr. Austin Tenney oculist and Charles Jackson's photographic studio.

The commercial usage of the Asa Hanson Block has been constant and varied over the past 110 years, resulting in a building that has been modified on many occasions. A city assessor's photograph of 1924 shows that the configuration of the storefronts had already been changed by that date. In its current condition there are no historic materials that survive on the interior of the building. The exterior masonry, however, has a high level of historic integrity as it has remained entirely intact, including the center entrance to the upper stories and the one over one window sash configuration. The cast iron storefront piers were recently found to be extant beneath later storefront modifications, as well as the carved brownstone name-block that says Perry directly over the center entrance door.

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National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

HANSON, ASA, BLOCK

CUMBERLAND, MAINE

Section number 9 Page 2

Bibliography

Daily Eastern Argus (Portland), December 12, 1907.

Fassett, Francis H., Architect file, Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta.

Mohney, Kirk F. National Register of Historic Places nomination for the South Bridgton Congregational Church, Cumberland County, Maine, 1987.

Obituary of Frederick A. Tompson, *Portland Evening Express*, February 3, 1919.

Portland Directories, 1880s-1910s.

Views of Portland. Portland, Maine: L. H. Nelson Company, 1904.

Hanson, Asa, Block
Name of Property

Cumberland, Maine
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less Than 1

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	9	3	9	8	2	4	0	4	8	3	4	1	4	0
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Zone Easting Northing

3

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Zone Easting Northing

2

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Zone Easting Northing

4

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

Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kirk F. Mohney, Architectural Historian

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date October, 2001

street & number 55 Capitol Street, 65 State House Station telephone 207/287-2132

city or town Augusta, state Maine zip code 04333-0065

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service

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HANSON, ASA, BLOCK

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Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property occupies the City of Portland tax map 37, block H, lot 1.

Boundary Justification

The boundary embraces the entire city lot that is historically associated with the Asa Hanson Block.

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National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet

HANSON, ASA, BLOCK

CUMBERLAND, MAINE

Section number ____ Page ____

Photographs

1 of 2

Kirk Mohny

September 18, 2001

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

West facade, looking Northeast.

2 of 2

Kirk Mohny

September 18, 2001

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

West facade, south elevation, looking Northeast.