

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

For HCRS use only

received FEB 25 1980

date entered MAY 15 1980

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

1. Name

historic Woodsville Opera Building

and/or common The Opera Block

2. Location

street & number 67 Central Street _____ not for publication

city, town Town of Haverhill
Woodsville _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district _____ second _____

state New Hampshire code 33 county Grafton code 009

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	Public Acquisition	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 Woodsville Opera Building Association

street & number 67 Central Street

city, town Town of Haverhill
Woodsville _____ vicinity of _____ state New Hampshire 03785

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Registry of Deeds, Grafton County Courthouse/Vol. 402/p. 374

street & number Route 10

city, town North Haverhill state New Hampshire 03774

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date _____ federal _____ state _____ county _____ local _____

depository for survey records _____

city, town _____ state _____

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" 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

The Woodsville Opera Block is a three-story, multi-purpose commercial structure combining storefronts, upper level offices and a three and one-half story opera wing. Constructed of red water-struck brick laid in English Bond with untinted lime mortar, the Opera Block is an eclectic combination of the Romanesque Revival and Panel Brick architectural styles. The building is rectangular in plan with principal facades on the north and east elevations.

The main block is roughly trapezoidal in plan, 4 bays wide on the east elevation and 3 bays on the north. The most salient architectural feature of the main block is a two-story oriel located on the northeast corner and surmounted with a clock tower with ogival cap and belfry. The oriel is supported by brackets flanking the transom of the corner plate glass window of the E.B. Mann & Co., drugstore. Above the brackets are recessed panels with egg and dart moldings beneath a cornice. The oriel is articulated with fluted pilasters on plinths with caps on the second and third floors. The paired sash are one over one with transoms. The roof line of the main block is delineated with a panelled brick parapet which is stepped on the north elevation and contains a rectangular granite date block with the incised year "1890." The parapet has molded concrete or granite coping and is carried across the facade of the oriel and forms the panelled base for the clock-tower above. Both the oriel and clock tower are clad in pressed sheet metal with a tooled finish painted gray to resemble stone masonry.

The clock tower rests upon a short, panelled base with pilasters containing recessed panels. The four planes of the clock face are enframed with fluted pilasters with caps but without plinths. Panels with arcs articulate the four corners of the clock dial. The cap of the clock tower is of sheet metal painted black and rests upon a cornice with plain brackets. The belfry above, of the same color, is framed with four massive, square corner posts with a 'pagoda' shaped cap adorned at the peak with a decorative ornament in the form of a wheat kernel. A bell is also contained within the structure.

The cornice of the main block is of molded concrete or granite and has a partial entablature. The 24 windows of the third story on the north, east and west elevations are either single, triple grouped or paired and have one over one sash with plain transoms. All have rockfaced granite sills and lintels. A transom string course of brick is carried around the three elevations as is a sill course with molded brick.

The fenestration of the second floor repeats that of the upper level but has slightly smaller apertures with corbelled Romanesque arch transoms with the extrados uniformly relieved with one brick course. Transom and sill string courses are repeated and the corners are hinged. All sash bars and rails on the upper levels are painted black and jambs are white.

The principal entrance to the Opera Block, on the north elevation, is formed by a large two-story Romanesque arch with glazing on the second floor. The arch accents a slightly projecting central pavilion on this facade and is adorned with pateras of terra cotta in the spandrels. The arch extrados is detailed with 2 courses of corbelled brick. Flanking the recessed entrance on the first floor and bearing the arch are 2 massive pulvinated granite impost blocks with vermiculated finish. A sign reading "Opera Block" above the recessed entrance belies the function of this aperture. The recessed entry is panelled with diagonal matched boarding and has chamfered bars and rails, now painted yellow. The doors and transoms are aluminum and not original.

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RECEIVED FEB 25 1980	
DATE ENTERED	MAY 15 1980

CONTINUATION SHEET

1

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE

2

This entry also provides access to a one-story addition which originally served as expansion of the offices of the Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank. The addition is presently used by the Grahm Insurance Agency and is of sympathetic design with the main block. Constructed of red brick with a stepped parapet and heavy sheet metal cornice, the structure projects northward onto what was formerly the sidewalk and is distinguished by 3 large plate glass windows with multi-paned paired transoms and granite foundation and coping. Flat brick arches over the large windows each have 3 rockfaced granite keystones. An early sheet metal 'Vault Alarm' box still adorns the parapet in the center of the north elevation. A contemporary 'E.B. Mann & Company Drugs' sign projects streetward from this facade.

The west elevation of the main block on the first level has 8 windows and one (1) service door which bear no architectural details except rockfaced granite window lintels. A coal chute opening at ground level with original cast iron door, is also extant. The storefront on the north elevation is characterized by large plate glass windows with multi-paned tinted glass transoms. Several early signs denote the presence of the E.B. Mann & Company. Basement windows with rockfaced granite lintels and granite water tables under bearing piers define the interface between sidewalk pavement and building. On the east elevation there is one group of square, single paned, triple windows at transom level which provide natural illumination for the drugstore interior.

The remaining 2 storefronts on the east elevation are similar to the E.B. Mann & Co., storefront but have recessed entries and plate glass transoms. A large signband or architrave is carried above the storefronts from the southeast corner of the middle of this facade where there is a recessed side entry access to offices on the upper levels. A second entrance for E.B. Mann & Co., is also situated here.

The opera building itself is also rectangular in plan and the principal facade is parallel with the east elevation of the previously described main block. This (east) wall plane contains the most significant architectural details of the three elevations visible. Four (4) bays in width, the roof is delineated with panelled brick parapets with 5 piers and sheet metal coping. The cornice is of heavily corbelled brick and molded cast concrete or granite. The corners of the wall plane are defined by brick pilasters with corbelled caps supported by granite brackets at transom level on the second story. Four (4) large Romanesque corbelled arches form an arcade pattern and contain paired eyebrow windows on the third floor. Corbelled panels with granite sills and lintels and a string course of brick at sill level complete this ensemble. Windows on the second floor are full height and have one over one sash with transoms and are trimmed in rockfaced granite identical to above.

The opera building is 6 bays deep and has minimal architectural details on the south elevation. The parapet however, is stepped near the southwest corner and brick pilasters combined with corbelling at top and bottom, create the effect of 6 recessed panels within the wall plane. Corbel bracketing is carried around the building from the facade. Window fenestration is irregular, except for transom windows on the first floor which naturally illuminate the commercial space of Scruggs Hardward. Splashback has caused severe erosion of pointing up 12 courses from the pavement on this elevation.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	FEB 25 1980
DATE ENTERED	MAY 15 1980

CONTINUATION SHEET

2

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 2

The western side of the building, while technically a rear wall, best expresses the simplicity of the Panel Brick Style and is especially significant now because adjacent clearance has opened a public vista to this side of the building. Fortunately, the quality of design and workmanship was consistent on all elevations and this has allowed a uniformly aesthetic condition to exist. The west wall of the opera building is divided into two large vertical panels articulated in the middle and at the corners with brick pilasters. The panels are corbelled at top and bottom and a string course divides these horizontally. Another string course defines the line at the bottom of the panels. There are four (4), one over one sash at the top of these panels and one (1), one over one sash at the bottom of same on the second floor. Twin rear entrances and windows serve needs for deliveries and light on the first floor for the commercial space. The last feature of note in this area is the second story panelled double-leaved stage access door on the northern elevation of the opera building. It was through this opening that an elephant was once hoisted 20 feet to stage level when a one-ring circus visited Woodsville.¹

Several landscape appurtenances also contribute to the stable and pleasant setting of the Woodsville Opera Block. To the west of the structure bounding the rear access road is a granite retaining wall and grassy bank forming a gradual interface between the Opera Block property and the parking lot of the Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank. Iron rings for hitching horse-drawn vehicles may also be found imbedded in stone forming the retaining wall.

On Court Street the stepped sidewalk bordering the side access drive to the Opera Block is defined by large horizontal slabs of rockfaced granite with margins which create a significant contrast to the bituminous street pavement. It also appears that the entire bi-level granite sidewalk (at least the curb stones) may be intact in front of the building. Each of these elements is significant from the 19th century design standpoint and should be retained.

The interior of the main block consists of individual offices with access from a central hall on both the second and third floors. The main entry stairway on the north elevation is in nearly original condition with wide risers, oak treads, match board wainscoting and maple stair rail. Fluted columns flank the second floor stair landing and are integrated with the balusters and rail. Floors are of oak and walls and ceilings are plain, painted plaster surfaces. Most of these surfaces and details are presently painted white.

A second stairwell, located in the center of the main block on the east side, lends access to the third floor and clock tower. The clock mechanism, built by Seth Thomas, dates from 1927 and is still in operable condition and should be retained.²

The opera hall has been extensively modified, having been used for a movie theater at one time and then closed for twenty years to eliminate competition for the only other theater in town.³ Remaining seats are not original and stud partitions were in-

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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CONTINUATION SHEET 3

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

stalled in the rear of the mezzanine some years ago to create more office space on the second floor. There is evidence of water leaks in several places on the walls and floor. The original circular balcony, suspended from the roof trusses with 8 iron rods, is intact with a heavy varnished hardwood rail and turned balusters. There is a cove plaster ceiling, painted cream yellow with blue and tan banding and pinstriping combining brown, red, green and blue colors. The coving is stencilled with flowers and swags. There are two-story boxes in the corners adjacent to the stage embellished with round arches with cartouches. These are painted gold and flanked with fluted, cream-colored pilasters with gold Scamozzi caps. The proscenium arch has a plaster rope molding of gold and is embellished with plaster relief fleur-de-lis detail in gold and white. The stage floor is canted while that of the mezzanine is level. All wainscoting, trim and doors in the opera are of varnished hard pine. The original ticket booth in the second hall and second and floor dressing rooms are original and intact. A horizontal light well over the Court Street entrance provides natural illumination for the second floor landing.

FOOTNOTES

1. Statement of Shirley Cobb - Haverhill Historical Society
2. Statement of E.B. Mann II, Woodsville, New Hampshire
3. Statement of Shirley Cobb - Haverhill Historical Society

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 type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input 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	Built by E.B. Mann and the			

Specific dates	Built 1890	Builder/Architect	Woodsville Opera Building Association Contractor: S.S. Ordway and Company Architects: C.W. & C.P. Damon Haverhill, MA.
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Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Woodsville Opera Block is both significant architecturally and in the social and commercial history of the community because of its design and prominent location and for its role in the development of the local economy. Begun in 1890, by Ezra B. Mann, local entrepreneur and drug manufacturer, for the purpose of containing the offices of the newly-formed Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank (1889), the building was completed under the auspices of the Woodsville Opera Building Association.¹ Built for \$25,000, the original tenants included the Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank, Woodsville Loan and Banking Co., the drugstore of E.B. Mann & Co., the U.S. Post Office, General Merchandise store of Howe & Gordon, all on the first floor; offices of attorneys C.H. Hosford, Fred S. Wright, and the dental rooms of Dr. F.G. Weeks and Dr. P.E. Speid, on the second floor; and on the third floor, the Railroad Club, an organization of railroad employees.²

The timbers used in construction were cut from E.B. Mann's land in Benton, New Hampshire, and hauled by ox team to the building site.³ The Opera Block with its prominent clock tower was considered "the monument in town" and for many years was the center of community activities including all high school graduations, proms and similar events.⁴ The opera hall had a seating capacity of 600 and its level floor permitted great flexibility in its use.

The E.B. Mann & Co., principal tenant in the building since its opening in 1890, also has the distinction of allegedly being the oldest family-owned drugstore still operating in the same location in the United States.⁵ Ezra B. Mann II, the founder's grandson, is the current manager of the property. The Opera Block also has the distinction of being the location of the first long-distance telephone call ever placed from Woodsville, the occasion being a call made in 1899 by A.I. Willoughby, E.B. Mann's partner, to Mann himself in the Parker House in Boston, to inform him of a fire which had occurred in the building.⁶

The tower clock was presented to the Precinct of Woodsville by the Woodsville Women's Club in 1927, and a plaque on the corner of the northeast elevation of the building commemorates this event.⁷ Original equipment in the building also included two hydraulic, water-powered elevators. Both E.B. Mann and his brother, died as a result of injuries suffered in falling down the elevator shafts in the building.⁸ The addition for the expansion of the Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank was constructed in 1918. The canted floor of the stage in the opera is said to have been the only one of its kind in New Hampshire's North Country.⁹ Small operas, plays, vaudeville acts and even a one-ring circus were held in the opera hall. The interior furniture and cabinetry of the drugstore is original and intact and serves as an important record of late nineteenth century interior commercial decor.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Statements, recollections, pictures and articles of Extra B. Mann, II, Woodsville, NH
 "Records of the Woodsville Opera Building Association"
 Witcher, William - Story of the Town of Haverhill, New Hampshire-Rumford Press, Concord, NH
 Statements of Shirley Cobb and Chip Waterman (1919)
 Woodsville, New Hampshire

10. Geographical Data

ITEM NOT VERIFIED
 ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Acreege of nominated property less than 1 acre
 Quadrangle name Woodsville VT-NH Quadrangle scale 7.5' series

UMT References

A	<u>1</u> <u>8</u>	<u>7</u> <u>3</u> <u>6</u> <u>8</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>8</u> <u>9</u> <u>2</u> <u>8</u> <u>3</u> <u>0</u>	B	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	D	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
E	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	F	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
G	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	H	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>

Verbal boundary description and justification

The Opera Block is located on a polygon-shaped lot bounded on the norby by Central Street and on the east by Court Street. The westerly bound runs 175' + - perpendicular to Central Street and the southerly bound runs 118' + perpendicular to Court Street. The full description of the property and a plat plan are included in the attachments (from Town of

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries Haverhill Tax Map-1979)

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Christopher W. Closs, Community and Preservation Planning Consultant

organization Independent Consultant date December 3, 1979

street & number Box 293 telephone 603-483-2666

city or town Candia state New Hampshire 03034

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

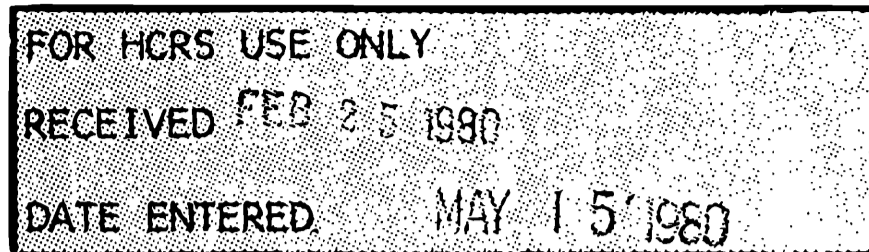
State Historic Preservation Officer signature [Signature]
 Commissioner-Department of Resources and Economic Development
 title NH State Historic Preservation Officer date FEB 2 1980

For HCERS use only

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

[Signature] date 5/15/80
 Keeper of the National Register
 Attest: [Signature] date 5/13/80
 Chief of Registration

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**



CONTINUATION SHEET 1 ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

The architectural exterior of the Opera Block is significant because it occupies an anchor position in the downtown business area and is well related in scale and massing to the former Grafton County Courthouse (now the town office) on Court Street, a Romanesques Revival structure, and the former Boston & Maine railway station (now a building supply and hardware store) on Central Street. The Opera Block is the physical, geographical and symbolic center of the business district and its conservative, timeless architectural style makes it an extremely important contribution to the built environment of the Woodsville community.

FOOTNOTES

1. "Records of the Woodsville Opera Building Association: Photostats from original records presently in possession of Roland Currier, Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank.
2. Whitcher, William, Story of the Town of Haverhill, New Hampshire Rumford Press, Concord, New Hampshire - 1919, p. 405.
3. Statement of E.B. Mann II, Woodsville, New Hampshire.
4. Statement of Chip Waterman, Woodsville, New Hampshire.
5. Pictures and articles from collection of E.B. Mann, II.
6. Statement of E.B. Mann, II, Woodsville, New Hampshire.
7. Ibid
8. The Manchester Union, August 10, 1922 (obituary) and recollections of E.B. Mann, II, Woodsville, New Hampshire.
9. Statement of Shirley Cobb, Haverhill Historical Society (member).
10. Ibid.