

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received MAR 19 1986

date entered

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

1. Name 10 Prop.

historic

and/or common Multiple Resources of Augusta's Central Business District

2. Location

street & number Water Street (see attached inventory forms) not for publication

city, town Augusta vicinity of

state Maine code 23 county Kennebec code

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 checked="" 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 Multiple Ownership

street & number

city, town vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kennebec County Registry of Deeds

street & number

city, town Augusta state Maine

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Augusta Historic Building Survey has this property been determined eligible? N/A yes no

date June-August, 1985 federal state county local

depository for survey records Maine Historic Preservation Commission

city, town Augusta state Maine

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

Geographically and historically the Augusta Commercial District Multiple Resource Area is a clearly defined section of the city running the length of Water Street. This narrow commercial district is bounded on the east by the Kennebec River and on the remaining sides by steeply graded hills which are predominantly residential in character. The nominated properties consist of multi-story masonry buildings scattered along both sides of the street. They are all two to five stories high and include examples of the Italianate, Renaissance and Moderne styles.

Interspersed among the nominated buildings are numerous properties which have been determined not to be eligible for listing in the National Register. Numerous historic structures have been significantly altered and there are several empty lots as a result of demolition. A survey conducted in June-August, 1985, by an architectural historian provided documentation to determine the eligibility of nominated properties.

The Augusta Commercial District Multiple Resource Area also includes two buildings already listed in the National Register. They are the Vickery Building at 265 Water Street, and the Old Post Office at 295 Water Street.

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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Augusta in the nineteenth century was a small commercial center on the Kennebec River which then, as now, was important chiefly as the location of the Maine State Capitol, the State Insane Asylum, and the Kennebec County Seat. A United States Arsenal was also located here until 1905. Notwithstanding its central location, the city did not develop a large industrial base, the textile mill at the head of Water Street being a notable exception. Augusta's small commercial district, concentrated almost entirely along the Kennebec River, is locally important as the focus of retail activity and meeting halls for the publicly-owned institutions which dominate the community. The historic resources of Augusta's central business district include all of the important surviving commercial buildings and fraternal halls which have not been significantly altered.

Although founded in the 18th century, Augusta's development did not really get under way until the state capitol was established here in 1832. In addition to state government, the city quickly became the location for the state mental hospital, a Federal arsenal and the county seat. All of these institutions constructed substantial structures which are extant and listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The city's commercial district developed along the Kennebec River both to the north and south sides of Bridge Street, which linked both banks of the river.

Water Street's location, laid out in 1785 across the river from Fort Western (1754), was a logical choice due to the terrain.

Although Augusta was the farthest point up-river which could be reached by the maritime trade, and the railroad arrived in 1851, the state capitol did not develop as an important commercial or industrial center. Only the establishment of a publishing industry, beginning in 1872, first under E.C. Allen and later under William and Guy Gannett and Peleg Vickery, earned Augusta a national reputation. Allen was particularly important as the first to utilize mail-order extensively. Although Allen constructed three large blocks on Water Street, all have been extensively altered. The Vickery Block has already been listed in the National Register.

The most prosperous period of development for the central business district was the third quarter of the nineteenth century when the Italianate style predominated. This was in part due to a major fire in September, 1865, which levelled much of the commercial district south of Bridge Street. The Williams Block (183–187 Water Street) is the only surviving element which pre-dates this conflagration. The rebuilding which followed included many fine Italianate blocks erected between 1865–1880. Many were designed

9. Major Bibliographical References

Maine Farmer (Augusta), 1860-1880

The History of Augusta, Maine, by James W. North, Augusta, 1870

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 23

Quadrangle name Augusta

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	9	4	3	8	2	3	0	4	9	0	7	4	3	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

1	9	4	3	8	4	0	0	4	9	0	7	4	3	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

1	9	4	3	8	2	5	0	4	9	0	6	6	8	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

1	9	4	3	8	0	9	0	4	9	0	6	7	2	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

See tax map.

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 Roger G. Reed, Architeccural Historian

organization Maine Historic Preservation Comm. date January, 1986

street & number 55 Capitol St., Station #65 telephone (207) 289-2132

city or town Augusta state Maine 04333

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title S.H.P.O.

date 3/13/86

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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MULTIPLE RESOURCES OF AUGUSTA'S CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
Continuation sheet

Item number

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either by Francis Fassett of Portland or John C. Tibbetts of Augusta. Much of Fassett's work has been altered or destroyed, but the Whitehouse Block (188² Water Street) can be attributed to that major Maine architect. Tibbetts, the most important designer produced by Augusta, is responsible for the Noble,³ Sturgis and Haskall Blocks (180-186 Water Street).

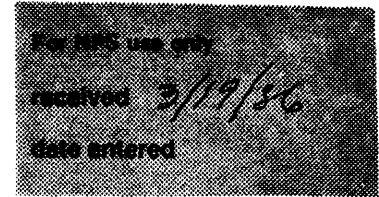
Important additions to the south end of Water Street did not occur until the end of the century with the erection of the United States Post Office and Courthouse in 1889-90 (N.R.), the Doughty Block in 1890 by local architect Charles Fletcher (265 Water Street), the Masonic Hall in 1894 (313-321 Water Street) and the Vickery Block in 1895 (N.R.), both by Boston architect John C. Spofford, and the Journal Building in 1899 by local architect Arthur Wing (325-331 Water Street).

The early twentieth century saw the construction of two important department stores which marked the street's peak as a commercial center. The first is the Busse¹ and Weston Store, constructed in 1909 (190 Water Street), which is one of the very few buildings constructed in Maine as a department store in the first quarter of this century. The second, S. S. Kresge's (241-249¹⁰ Water Street), is distinguished as a rare example of Moderne style design.

Post-World War II developments were characterized by a declining commercial base and substantial demolitions of historic structures. The loss of historic structures through destruction and demolition has left the business district with no potential for an historic district.

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Continuation sheet

Item number

Page

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Augusta Central Business District MRA
State MAINE

Substantive Review

COVER William B. Bushong

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

5/2/86

1. Doughty Block

Substantive Review

for Keeper

William B. Bushong
5/2/86

Attest

2. Adams, D. V., Co.-Bussell & Weston

Substantive Review

for Keeper

William B. Bushong
5/2/86

Attest

3. Journal Building

Substantive Review

for Keeper

William B. Bushong
5/2/86

Attest

4. Kresge Building

Substantive Review

for Keeper

William B. Bushong
5/2/86

Attest

5. Libby-Hill Block

Substantive Review

for Keeper

William B. Bushong
5/2/86

Attest

6. Masonic Hall

Substantive Review

for Keeper

William B. Bushong
5/2/86

Attest

7. Noble Block

Substantive Review

for Keeper

William B. Bushong
5/2/86

Attest

8. Sturgis & Haskell Block

Substantive Review

for Keeper

William B. Bushong
5/2/86

Attest

9. Whitehouse Block

Substantive Review

for Keeper

William B. Bushong
5/2/86

Attest

10. Williams Block

Substantive Review

for Keeper

William B. Bushong
5/2/86

Attest