

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	NWB.29
Historic Name:	Newburyport Superior Courthouse
Common Name:	
Address:	
City/Town:	Newburyport
Village/Neighborhood:	
Local No:	
Year Constructed:	
Architect(s):	Bulfinch, Charles
Architectural Style(s):	Federal; Italianate
Use(s):	Courthouse; Public School; Town Hall
Significance:	Architecture; Law; Politics Government
Area(s):	NWB.A: High Street District NWB.J: Superior Courthouse and Bartlett Mall NWB.L: Newburyport Historic District
Designation(s):	Nat'l Register District (4/30/1976); Nat'l Register District (8/2/1984)



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

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NRD15 - 4/30/76 NWB.29

FORM B - BUILDING

Area A	Form no. 29
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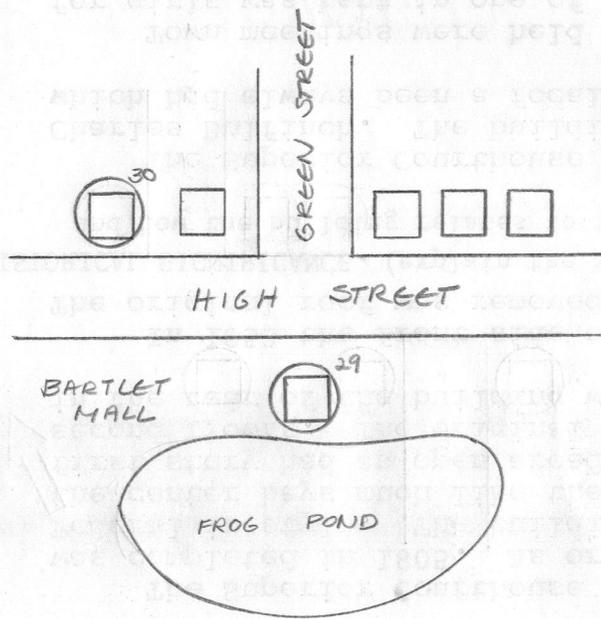
AND AREA [J] + [L]

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
294 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108



Newburyport
ess Bartlet Mall/High Street
 oric Name Superior Courthouse
 Original Courthouse
 Present Courthouse
 rship: Private individual
 Private organization _____
 Public Essex County
 Original owner Town of Newburyport

location in relation to nearest cross streets and other buildings or geographical features. Indicate north.



DESCRIPTION:

Date 1805
 Source National Register Nomination
 Style Federal/Italianate
 Architect Charles Bulfinch
 Exterior wall fabric Brick
 Outbuildings _____

Major alterations (with dates) building renovated extensively, Italianate detail added (1853)

Moved _____ Date _____
 Approx. acreage 34,510 sq. ft.

Recorded by Mary Jane Stirgwolt
 Organization Office of Community Development
 Date 9-13-80

Setting surrounded by the Bartlet Mall on Newburyport's main residential thoroughfare.

(Staple additional sheets here)

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within community)

The Superior Courthouse was designed by Charles Bulfinch and was completed in 1805. As originally constructed the building was Federal in style. The building was two stories with a pediment over the center bays much like the old Market House in Market Square. The first story had an open arcade and a belt course between the first and second floors. The original character of the building is still visible in the rear of the building which has not been altered.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community)

In 1853 the front side of the Courthouse was extensively remodeled. The original roof was removed and replaced with one of Italianate (cont.)

The Superior Courthouse was built in 1805, to the designs of Boston's Charles Bulfinch. The building was a grand addition to the Bartlet Mall, which had always been a focal point of the community.

Town meetings were held in the building until the 1830's and a school for girls was kept in one of the lower rooms during this period. On April 18, 1834, a committee was appointed to sell all of the town's interest in the building and on June 3, 1834, the property was conveyed to the County of Essex.

The Superior Courthouse has served as a meetingplace and courthouse throughout its history. It still serves that purpose for the County of Essex and is the site of many community activities. Numerous famous men have argued cases in this building among them Daniel Webster, and Newburyport's Caleb Cushing.

The Superior Courthouse located on the Bartlet Mall is a focal point for the entire City of Newburyport as well as of the High Street Historic District. The Courthouse and the Mall have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

- J. J. Currier, History of Newburyport 1764-1905, Vols. I and II., reprint, Newburyport 1977.
- Assessor's Records 1890-1980
- J. Dobbs, National Register Nomination Form, 1976.

NWB.29

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: Newburyport	Form No: 29
Property Name: Superior Courthouse Bartlet Mall - High Street	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (CONTINUED)

inspiration with heavy bracket and cornice. The brick arches were filled in and the entire building was covered with mastic. The main entrance of the building dates from this period and has rusticated columns flanking the door and supporting a segmental arch above.

In 1973 the exterior of the Courthouse was renovated.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom



Area Q746 478
 NEWBURYPORT NR X
 Bartlett Mall 4/30/76
 Head of Green on Mall
 BULFINCH COURT HOUSE
 Superior
 nal Use Court Hse [NWB.29]
 ent Use Court House of Essex Co.
 ent Owner _____
 1805 Style Federal, remodel 1853
 ce of Date 9x5 MHC, "Bulfinch's Boston"
 itect Chas. Bulfinch (possibly)
 ed Altered to Italianate (decor.) 1853

IMPORTANCE of site to area: Great Little None SITE endangered by _____

4. DESCRIPTION

FOUNDATION/BASEMENT: High Regular Low Material: granite

WALL COVER: Wood _____ Brick Stone Other _____

STORIES: 1 2 3 4 CHIMNEYS: 1 2 3 4 Center End Cluster Elaborate Irregular

ATTACHMENTS: Wings Ell Shed Dependency _____ Simple/Complex

PORCHES: 1 2 3 4 Portico Balcony _____ Recessed _____

ROOF: Ridge Gambrel Flat Hip Mansard
 Tower Cupola Dormer windows Balustrade Grillwork _____

FACADE: Gable End: Front/Side Symmetrical/Asymmetrical Simple/Complex Ornament

Entrance: Front/Side Centered Double Features: round pediment

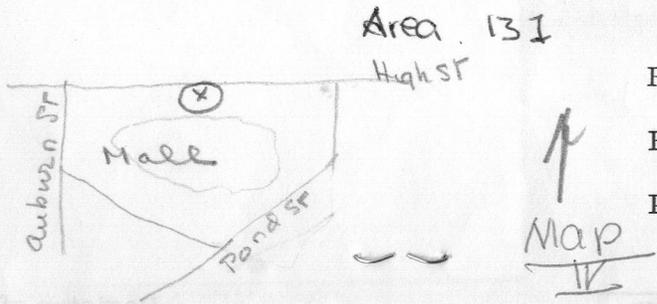
Windows: Spacing: Regular/Irregular Identical/Varied

Corners: Plain Pilasters Quoins Obscured _____

OUTBUILDINGS _____ LANDSCAPING _____

5. Indicate location of structure on map below

6. Footage of structure from street 35'
 Property has _____ feet frontage on street



Recorder _____
 CS. 72.297
 For CS. 72.298
 Photo 68.761
 Photo DIII-19A [E05 206-1-078]

NOTE: Recorder should obtain written permission from Commission or sponsoring organization before using this form. (See Reverse Side)

