

FORM B - BUILDING

NRDIS 8/2/1984

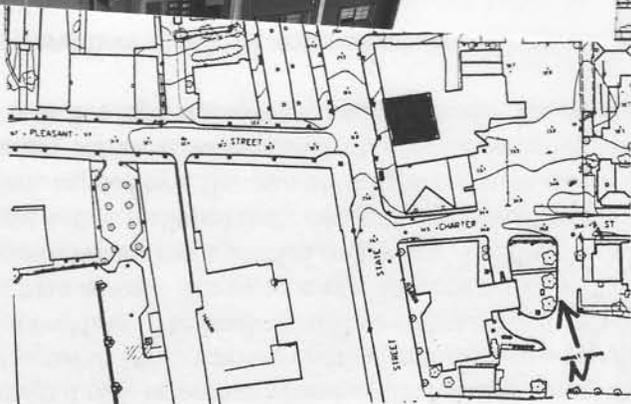
Assessor's number
6-27

USGS Quad
Newburyport

Area(s)
L,U

Form Number
2180

Massachusetts Historical Commission
Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125



Town Newburyport

Place (neighborhood or village)

Address 51-55 1/2 State Street

Historic Name First and Ocean Bank

Uses: Present Bank

Original Bank

Date of Construction 1961

Source Daily News 9/12/61

Style/Form Colonial Revival

Architect/Builder Russell M. Peirce

Exterior Material:

Foundation Brick

Wall/Trim Brick

Roof Asphalt Shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures

none

Major Alterations (with dates) 1967 - drive-in bank

window

Condition good

Moved no yes Date

Acreage 5519 SF

Setting central business district

Recorded by Lisa Mausolf

Organization Newburyport Historical Commission

Date (month/year) April 1999

BUILDING FORM (51-55 1/2 State Street)

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of the building in terms of other buildings within the community.

Although it may incorporate some earlier building fabric, the First and Ocean Bank is effectively a Colonial Revival building constructed in 1961, when renovations transformed a pair of four-story, Federal-era blocks into the present 2 1/2-story, side-gabled building. The brick is laid in a common bond with some glazed headers evident. The symmetrical facade measures seven bays across. The main, center entrance displays an entablature surround supported by fluted Ionic columns. The recessed entrance has a paneled embrasure. The double multi-glass and wooden doors are capped by a semi-circular divided fanlight with a scalloped outer edge and prominent keystone. To each side of the main entrance is a wooden 8/8 window with shutters, capped by a flat arch brick lintel and fronted by a window box. The outer bays on the first floor consist of secondary entrances with tapered pilasters supporting full pediments. One of these entrances retains its eight-panel wooden door with five-light transom and paneled recess. The other now contains a modern metal and glass door.

The second floor facade windows contain 6/6 wooden windows capped by flat arch brick lintels. The center windows and the two outer bays have been fitted with modern shutters. The facade is capped by a decorative cornice consisting of a wide frieze and large dentil course. Rising from the asphalt-shingled roof are three pedimented dormers, each of which contains a 6/6 window with a recessed panel on either side. Four tall brick chimneys rise from the edges of each of the roof slopes in addition to a central weathervane of a clipper ship.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Describe the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

The present appearance of this building corresponds to extensive alterations which transformed a pair of four-story Federal-style building into the current Colonial Revival edifice. The alterations included the removal of the two upper floors of the buildings at 51-53 and 55-55 1/2 State Street, the removal of the marble quoining from the bank building and combining the two buildings into a single building. A drive-up window was installed at the rear of the building and a house which stood at the rear of the building was torn down to provide parking. Russell M. Peirce of Newburyport was the architect and City Builders of Newburyport, headed by Roy Kerkian, served as contractors.

The Ocean National Bank was organized as a state bank in 1833 and chartered as a national bank in 1865. The First National Bank was chartered in 1864. The banks merged in 1922 under the name First and Ocean National Bank and that same year the four-story building was renovated according to designs by Thomas M. James Co. of Boston (who also designed the Newburyport Five Cents Savings Bank, 63-39 State St., MHC#2182, in 1928). Alterations at that time included the addition of corner quoins as well as a new cornice and interior alterations. A drive-in bank window was added in 1967, resulting in the demolition of the former Eastman Store on Charter Street.

The American Yacht Club had its winter quarters in this building for many years and Metropolitan Life Insurance also maintained an upstairs office. Tenants of the former building at 55-55 1/2 State Street included Littlefield's Men's Furnishings and the Band Box, ladies' clothing.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

"Colonial Look to be New Look at Port's First and Ocean Bank", Daily News, Sept. 12, 1961.

"New Banking Rooms Opened", Newburyport Daily News, October 9, 1922.

Newburyport Daily News, July 22, 1967.

"The New Old Downtown Look", Newburyport Daily News, March 20, 1962.

Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, you must attached a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*