

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	NWB.2015
Historic Name:	Port Cinema
Common Name:	
Address:	90 Pleasant St
City/Town:	Newburyport
Village/Neighborhood:	
Local No:	47-34
Year Constructed:	
Architect(s):	Bullock, E. C. A.; Fruge Construction Company; Green, Louis; O'Toole, C. P.
Architectural Style(s):	Moderne
Use(s):	Clubhouse; Commercial Block; Theater
Significance:	Architecture; Commerce; Health Medicine; Recreation
Area(s):	NWB.L: Newburyport Historic District
Designation(s):	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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FORM B - BUILDING

NRDIS 8/2/1984

Assessor's number
47-34USGS Quad
NewburyportArea(s)
LForm Number
2015

Town Newburyport

Place (neighborhood or village)

Address 90 Pleasant Street

Historic Name Port Theater

Uses: Present Commercial

Original Movie Theater

Date of Construction 1948-9

Source Daily News, 4/18/1949

Style/Form Moderne

Architect/Builder E.C.A. Bullock, architect

Exterior Material:

Foundation Concrete

Wall/Trim Brick/Concrete

Roof Tar

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures

none

Major Alterations (with dates) c.1975 - removal of
marquee, renovation of interior including insertion of
multiple levels

Condition good

Moved ☒ no ☐ yes Date

Acreage 12140 SF

Setting mixed use area opposite

Brown Square



Recorded by Lisa Mausolf

Organization Newburyport Historical Commission

Date (month/year) June 1999

RECEIVED

SEP 30 1999

Follow Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey Manual instructions for completing this form.

MASS. HIST. COMM

BUILDING FORM (90 Pleasant Street)

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

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

Located at the northwest corner of Titcomb and Pleasant Street, the former Port Theater at 90 Pleasant Street is a brick and concrete building dating to 1949. The irregular shaped plan of the building resembles a boat with the east elevation consisting of a brick wall which steps back in seven slight gradations. The main theater entrance is angled at the corner of Pleasant and Titcomb Streets and is emphasized by concrete verticals which contrast with the brick. The projecting canopy remains although the marquee and the large letters reading "PORT" have been removed. Two chrome-bordered display cases flank the entrance. The south wall facing Pleasant Street is punctuated by elevated square openings and a metal and glass window. A large, multi-paned, two-story window has been inserted on the north wall above the new glazed entrance. The brick walls are capped by tile coping.

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 Port Theater was constructed in 1949, Newburyport's first movie house constructed after World War II. As described in the local newspaper on opening night, the theater was "luxurious". The walls of the playhouse were covered in coral mohair on a background of dark green fabric. The broad aisles were covered with thick carpeting and the sliding seats represented a marked improvement, gliding back a few inches to permit someone to get by. Other features which were specifically noted in the article included the spacious lobby with candy stand and the ladies' lounge. The theater was designed by E.C.A. Bullock with C.P. O'Toole serving as chief engineer in Warner Brothers' New England district, Louis Green, engineer for the Massachusetts district and the Fruge Construction Company responsible for construction. The construction of the Port Theater meant the return of Warner Brothers to Newburyport after its departure in 1947. With the closing of the Strand Theater on Green Street in 1959, the Port was left as Newburyport's only movie house. The building continued to serve as a theater until September 1974.

The building was initially renovated for use as a furniture store and later housed Gabriel's Clothing Store. The building now houses a health and fitness club.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Newburyport Directories, 1900-present.

Massachusetts Division of Inspection. Building Inspection Plans. Card File. [Massachusetts State Archives, Boston].

Newburyport Daily News: April 18, 1949.

Sanborn insurance maps.

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