

LOWELL CULTURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY

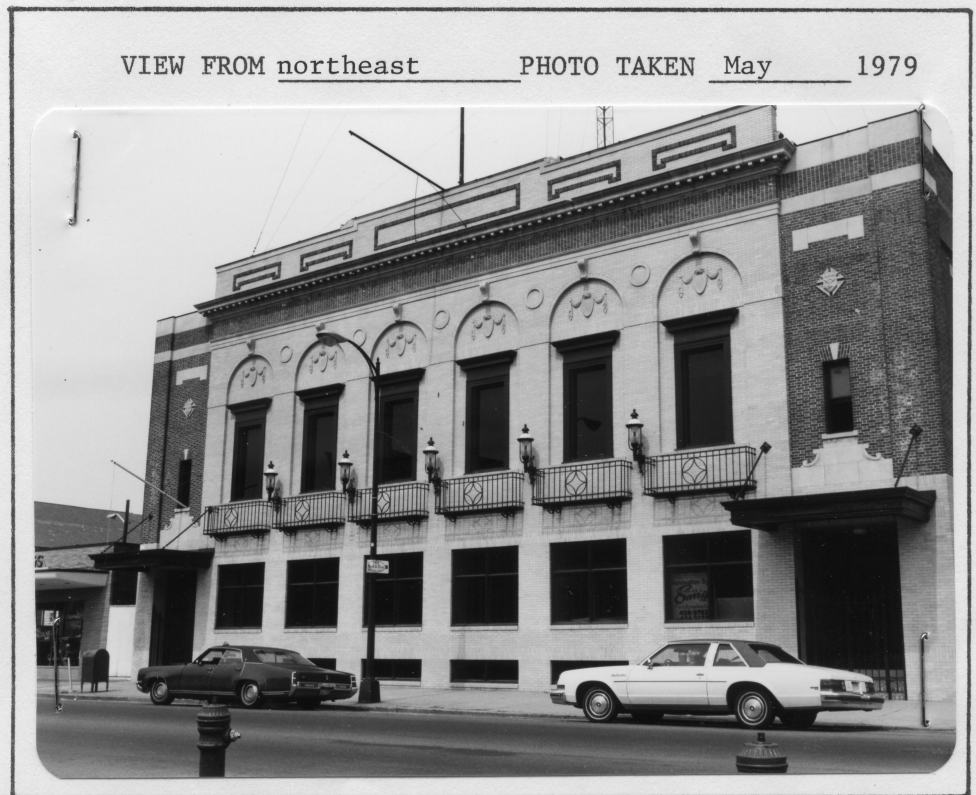
IDENTIFICATION 167 DUTTON STREET MAP SHEET # 7
 1) CURRENT OWNER Nicholas Sarris and George Eliades OWNER OCCUPIED no
 2) HISTORIC NAME Middlesex Mechanics Association Building
 3) CURRENT NAME Knights of Columbus--Genoa Club
 4) PROPERTY TYPE institutional 5) ZONING CLASSIFICATION B3
 6) TAXES: PAYMENTS current STATUS clear
 7) WITHIN BOUNDARIES OF LHPD, LNHP (partial), City Hall HD

HISTORICAL ABSTRACT

1) CONSTRUCTION DATE 1835/rebuilt 1924
 SOURCE documented: Contributions of the Old Residents, 1904, p. 296; 1924 ^{records} blids.
 2) ARCHITECT OR BUILDER Colleary & Purcell (1924)
 3) HISTORIC OWNER Middlesex Mechanics Association
 4) ORIGINAL USE: GF institutional UF institutional
 5) PREVIOUS BLDGS ON PROPERTY no DATE _____
 SOURCE _____

DESCRIPTIVE DATA

1) ARCHITECTURAL STYLE Neo-Classical Revival
 2) PRESENT USE:
 GF undergoing rehab.
 UF undergoing rehab.
 3) NO OF STORIES 2
 4) PROP SQ FT 8026
 5) PLAN rectangular
 6) ROOF flat
 7) STRUCTURAL SYSTEM load-bearing masonry
 8) OUTBUILDINGS none
 9) MATERIALS:
 FOUNDATION granite



FACADE f: red brick, Flem. bond & yellow brick, stretcher bond; s: red brick, stretcher bond
 TRIM cast iron, painted metal, granite
 10) NOTABLE SURFACE & LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS paved areas; mural of Lowell scenes on rear wall

At the height of its influence and prestige just before and after the Civil War, the Association had outlived its usefulness by the end of the century and its membership dwindled. In 1898, the property was sold to the First Trinitarian Congregational Church; the church is listed at the Dutton Street address from 1899-1919.

In 1920, the building housed the U. S. Employment Service, and in 1921-2, it was occupied by Lowell Post number 87, American Legion. In 1922, the Genoa Club of the Knights of Columbus bought the building, renovated the interior, and occupied it in January, 1923.

In April of 1924, a large fire occurred in the area, destroying the old Associate Building west of Mechanics Hall. The Building Department records an application for a permit to make alterations to the Genoa Clubhouse (permit number 998, August 29, 1924), which specifically states that renovations are to be made to replace a fire loss. Included in this renovation are mentioned new framing of the second floor and a new roof and trusses. Colleary and Purcell are listed as architects, and Frederick F. Meloy as builder. Wm. Colleary had studied under Ralph Adams Cram at M.I.T.

The configuration of the building on the atlases remains the same through 1936, the only variations being to the small rear additions.

Visible on the easterly side of the building, where the blacktop has worn away, are remnants of the old brick paved Mechanics Alley.

Sources

1841-1850 maps.

1879, 1896, 1906, 1924, 1936 maps.

1836-1837, 1897-1899, 1919-1923 directories.

Coburn, Frederick, History of Lowell, 1920.

Contributions to the Old Residents' Historical Association of Lowell, v. VI, 1904.

Kengott, George F., A Record of a City, 1912.

ARCHEOLOGICAL COMMENT

This large brick structure completely covers the site; therefore, the archeological potential is low.

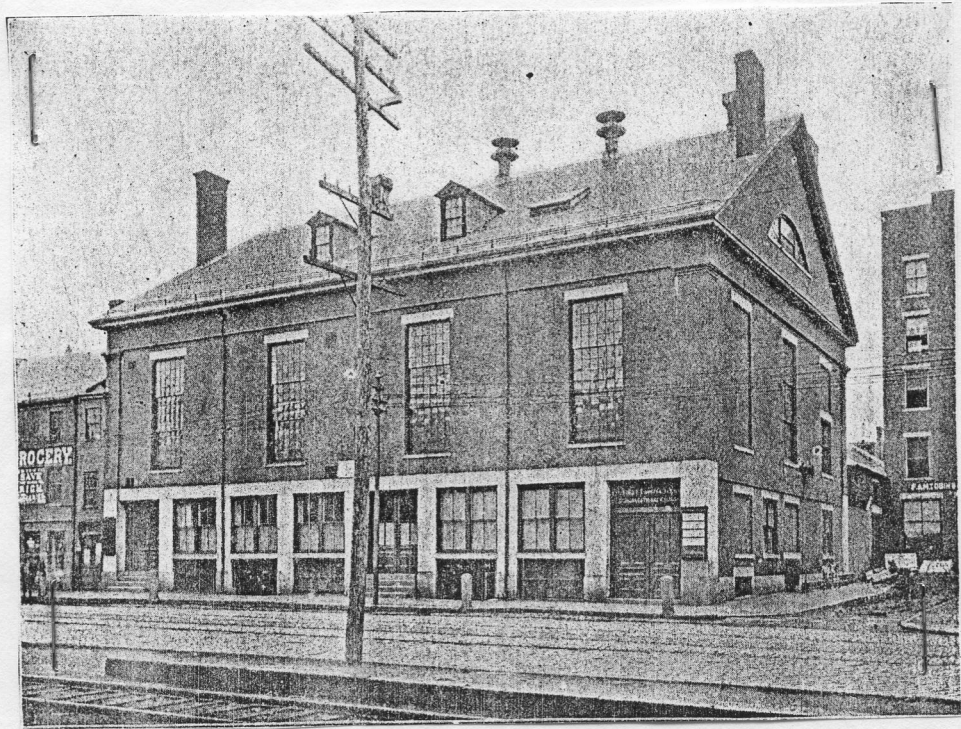


Figure 1

Contributions to the Old Residents' Historical Association of Lowell,
v. VI, 1904, opp. p. 283.

VISUAL ASSESSMENT

- 1) CONDITION OF BUILDING FABRIC good
- 2) IF DETERIORATED, CAUSES n/a
- 3) INTEGRITY OF HISTORIC BLDG FABRIC: GF major and irreversible changes
UF major and irreversible changes
- 4) SURROUNDING LAND USES commercial, industrial, railroad, canal frontage
- 5) INTEGRITY OF PROP'S HIST SETTING moderately disrupted historic setting
- 6) IMPORTANCE OF PROP TO HIST SETTING integral to character

ADDITIONAL DESCRIPTION

This 1924 alteration of an 1830s Greek Revival building is a fascinating application of the style of the Neo-classical Revival. Typical elements include a rather tightly drawn skin of yellow brick across the facade, keystoned blind arches decorated with stone medallions and swags, and a stone cornice with dentils. The rectangular windows within the arches feature a full entablature (of metal rather than stone). The individual cast iron balconies look back to the Greek Revival. The arrangement of the facade, its parapet, and the manner in which these various stylistic characteristics are utilized, however, all combine to mark this facade as a twentieth century interpretation. The easterly (right) wall of the building has two ranges of windows with granite sills and lintels, some of which are bricked in. These windows correspond with those shown in old photographs of Mechanics' Hall (Fig. 1). In addition, the flanking doors at the storefront level and six intermediate bays correspond with the openings on the original storefront. One can only speculate that at least the original trabeated system of granite piers and lintels may remain beneath the later facade. According to the present owner, the original second story windows still remain beneath the brick veneer. The rear corner of the ~~easter~~ easterly side also retains the original granite and brick pier.

ADDITIONAL HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Mechanics Hall first appears on the 1841 map, housing the Middlesex Mechanics Association. Incorporated in 1825, the Association was modeled on the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanics Association of Boston, founded thirty years previously by Paul Revere. In August, 1834 a gift of land on Dutton Street, valued at about \$4,500, was deeded to the Association by the proprietors of Locks and Canals. About \$7,000 was raised from private sources for the new building and influenced by Kirk Boott, the manufacturing companies donated \$14,015. The building was dedicated on September 26, 1835. The Association was established as a trade guild, with provisions for the mutual support of needy members, the control of apprentices, and the encouragement of good craftsmanship; and limited its membership to mechanics, meaning thereby any person who had learned a trade. (Coburn, 1920, p. 200). However, it diverged from its original intent almost immediately, becoming "something of a Lowell analogue of the Boston Athenaeum," a clearing house of literary and scientific knowledge" (Ibid, p. 264).

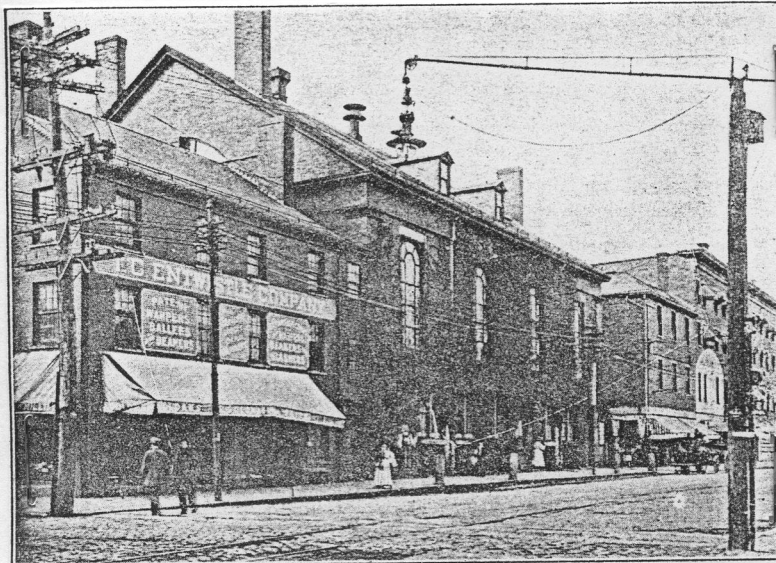
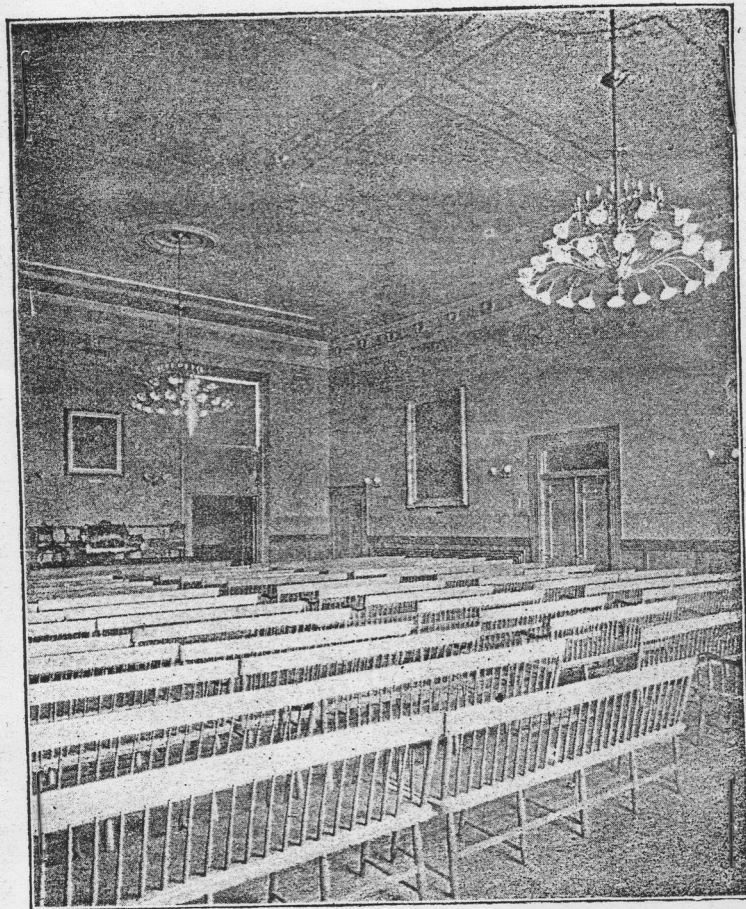


Figure 2

George F. Kenngott - A Record of a City, 1912, opp. p. 10.



MECHANICS HALL.

Figure 3

Contributions to the Old Residents' Historical Association of Lowell,
v. VI, 1904, opp. p. 299.