

DAWSON & DOUGLASS BUILDING
294 State Street
New Haven
New Haven County
Connecticut

HABS No. CT-421

HABS
CONN,
5-NEWHA,
46-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

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46 -
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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Location: 294 State Street, New Haven,
New Haven County, Connecticut.

USGS New Haven, Connecticut Quadrangle
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:
18.673820.4574420

Present Owner: PAL Realty/Horowitz Bros. Inc.
760 Chapel Street
New Haven, CT 06510

Present Occupant: Vacant

Significance: This four-and-a-half story Italianate style commercial building is significant because it is one of the few surviving commercial buildings on lower State Street, once one of the city's most prominent commercial streets. It is also only one of three commercial buildings with a brownstone facade still extant in downtown. As a result of massive urban renewal clearance along lower State Street in the 1960's, the Dawson & Douglas Building is surrounded by vacant lots.

Part I. Historical Information:

A. PHYSICAL HISTORY:

1. Date of erection: c. 1855. An 1851 map shows a building on the site at "47" State Street and owned by Dawson & Douglass. The present building appears in an 1865 photo (DANA, v.45, p.61) flanked by "45" State Street of c. 1851 and "51" State Street of c. 1840. In its present isolated condition it is apparent that the brownstone facade of the Dawson & Douglass Building is of a later date than its missing neighbors. Its style post-dates the 1850 purchase by Dawson & Douglass, but shares stylistic details with the Palladium Building at 141 Orange Street of 1855, which is attributed to Henry Austin.
2. Architect: unknown
3. Original & subsequent owners: Reference is to the City Clerk's Office of the City of New Haven, Connecticut.

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- 1837 Deed January 20, 1837, recorded in Volume 92,
page 273.
Thomas Cooke of Thomas Cooke & Company, Carriage
Manufacturers, at "37" Orange Street,
To
William H. Dawson and Solomon Johnson
- 1850 Deed February 19, 1850, recorded in Volume 132,
page 1.
William H. Dawson
To
Henry S. Dawson and Benajah H. Douglass
- 1874 Deed April 17, 1874, recorded in Volume 289,
page 360.
Henry S. Dawson, sells business and property for
\$20,000,
To
Benajah H. Douglass
- 1878 Deed October 4, 1878, recorded in Volume 332,
page 4.
Benajah H. Douglass
To
Mary E. Holt and Hattie E. Holt, widow and child
of John H. Holt, who worked at B. H. Douglass &
Sons
- 1882 Deed February 23, 1882, recorded in Volume 352,
page 53.
William H. Johnson
To
Franklin S. Bradley, owner of F. S. Bradley & Co.
- 1920 Deed October 18, 1920, recorded in Volume 893,
page 464.
Ella C. Bradley, widow of F. S. Bradley, and
George D. Watrous, trustees of F. S. Bradley
estate
To
Minott E. Chatfield, owner of Chatfield Paper
Company at 298-302 State Street
- 1922 Deed December 29, 1922, recorded in Volume 966,
page 203.
Minott E. Chatfield
To
William R. Shaffer
- 1925 Deed January 8, 1925, recorded in Volume 1043,
page 328.
William R. Shaffer
To
F. E. Spencer Company

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1966 Deed September 2, 1966, recorded in Volume 2314,
page 294.
F. E. Spencer Company
To
PAL Realty/Horowitz Bros Inc.

4. Original and Subsequent Tenants: Reference is to the
city directories of the City of New Haven, Connecticut.

1837-1850	William H. Dawson, grocery & fruits
1850-1868	Dawson & Douglass, confectioners
1868-1881	B. H. Douglass & Sons, successors to Dawson & Douglass
1882-1891	F. S. Bradley & Co., hardware & paper warehouse
1892-1899	Buckingham, Clark & Jackson, successors to F. S. Bradley & Co.
1900-1901	Buckingham Hardware Co., successors to Buckingham, Clark & Jackson
1902-1917	Bronson & Townsend Co., wholesale hardware (lease went until 1921)
1918	vacant
1919	M. Berman, stationery
1920-1922	vacant
1923-1968	F. E. Spencer Paints Co.
1966-1968	Carpenter-Morton Co. Paints
1969-1971	vacant
1972-1989	Costume Bazaar, costume rentals
1989	vacant

5. Builders, Suppliers: unknown

6. Original Plans & construction: unknown

7. Alterations & Additions: An L-shaped addition to the
west elevation (rear) of the Dawson & Douglass Building

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and across the west boundary (rear) of the property at 298-302 State Street. F. S. Bradley bought the neighboring property at 298-302 State Street from the heirs of James E. English in 1885 (deed, v.369, p.433). In 1887 he closed his 410-417 State Street office and consolidated his business at 294-302 State (floor space was measured at 120' x 65' for each floor, in 1887). In 1890 he leased 298-302 to Chatfield Paper Co. In 1894 he sold 298-302 State Street (35' on State Street and 120' long) to Chatfield retaining the rear section of the property and passway on the north side of 302 State Street. Research suggests that Bradley built the rear addition between 1887 and 1890.

The address of this site changed from "47" (traced to 1837) to "174" in 1861 and to its present address of "294-296" in 1877.

B. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Dawson & Douglass Building was built c. 1855 for Henry S. Dawson and Benajah H. Douglass, owners of the prosperous confectionery merchandise and manufacturing business, Dawson & Douglass Company.

Henry Shepherd Dawson was born in New Hartford, Connecticut in 1813 and in 1841 he became a clerk in his brother William's grocery store at "47" State Street. In 1850, Henry and his nephew, Benajah H. Douglass, bought out William H. Dawson and went into the confectionery business at "47" State Street. They became involved in the West India Trade with ships going to Puerto Rico and San Domingo. In eight years, they went from one to three vessels and their business increased from \$30,000 to \$800,000 per annum. Henry became involved in political matters and served as the first president of the Derby Railroad and, in 1859, he helped to found the New Haven Water Company, becoming its president in 1866. In 1874, Dawson sold his interest in the confectionery business to his partner, Douglass, and resigned his position with the railroad to devote his energy fulltime to the water company. (Atwater, pp 412-413)

In 1882, Benajah H. Douglass sold the Dawson & Douglass Building to Franklin S. Bradley of F. S. Bradley & Company, hardware and paper warehouse. In 1885, Bradley bought the property to the north at 298-302 State Street from the heirs of James E. English and in 1887 his business is listed solely at 294-302 State Street. It is believed that at some point between 1887-1890, Bradley constructed the addition that connects the Dawson & Douglass Building across the rear elevation of 298-302 State Street. This supposition is based on 1887 measurements of 294-302 State Street and Bradley's action in leasing 298-302 State Street to the Chatfield Paper Company in 1890. In 1894, Bradley sold 298-

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302 State Street to Chatfield, but retained the rear addition and north side passageway. The 1920 deed of sale to Chatfield describes the Dawson & Douglass Building as including a large addition behind 298-302 State Street.

A series of hardware stores occupied the Dawson & Douglass Building from 1882-1917. From 1918-1923, the building was mainly vacant until the F. E. Spencer Company located here. This paint company occupied 294 State Street for 45 years, the longest running tenant of the Dawson & Douglass Building.

Lower State Street was hit hard by urban renewal in the 1960's. The 1968 State Street Redevelopment and Renewal Plan ". . . provided for the virtual eradication of the existing 19th century streetscape in the lower State Street area. Large blocks of land along the western side of the street and the entire eastern side of the street were slated for acquisition by the city for later sale and re-development." (NHHRI, phase 3, essays & methodology, p 27) Even before 1968, neighboring buildings around the Dawson & Douglass building were falling. The Mersick Building at 266-292 State Street was torn down in 1964 and the Chatfield Paper Company Building at 300 State Street in 1966. In 1966, the Dawson & Douglass Building was acquired for speculative purposes by PAL Realty, a subsidiary of Horowitz Brothers, Inc.

The Urban renewal program was never realized for State Street. In its wake were left a wasteland of parking lots and a few surviving commercial buildings, like the Dawson & Douglass Building.

Sources:

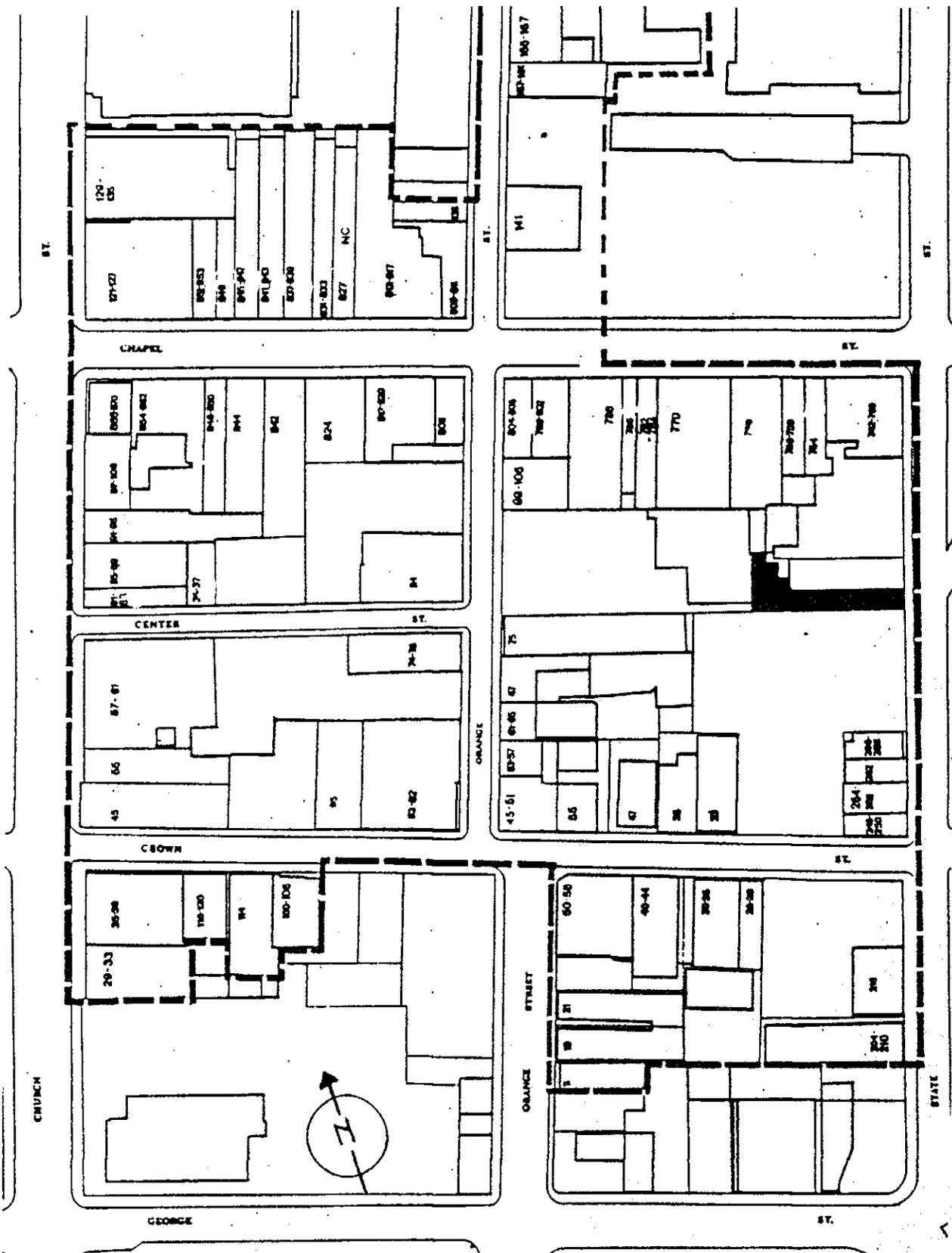
9th Square National Register Historic District
Nomination, 1984.
1851, 1859, 1868, 1880, 1888, 1911 maps
New Haven Building Department permits
New Haven City Directories
New Haven Colony Historical Society:
DANA collection: v.45, p.43,59,61; v.123, p.113
New Haven Historic Resources Inventory, phase III:
Lower State Street area essay and survey form #2657
New Haven Land Records deeds

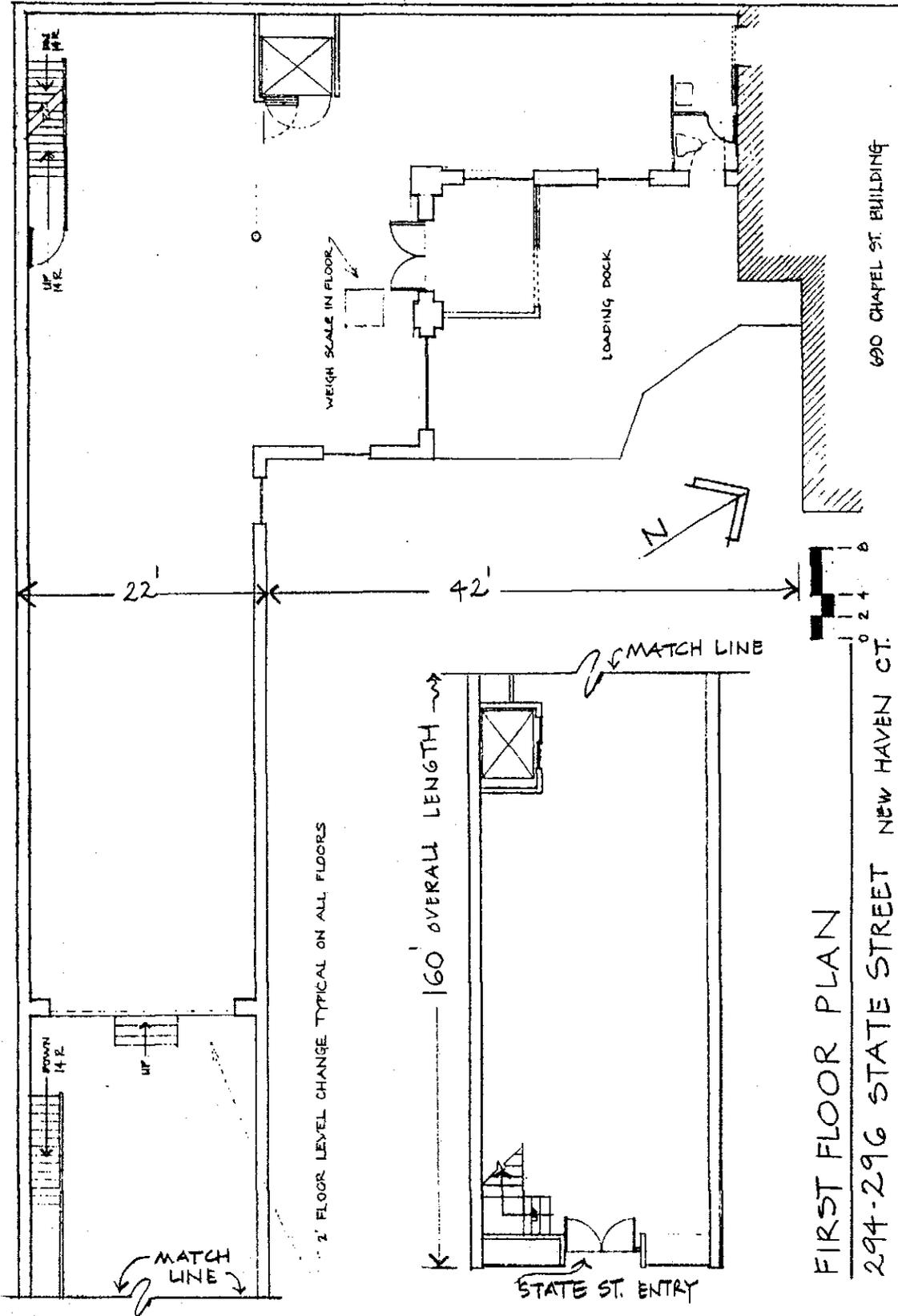
Atwater, Edward E., History of the City of New Haven to the Present Time. W. W. Munsell & Co., 1887.

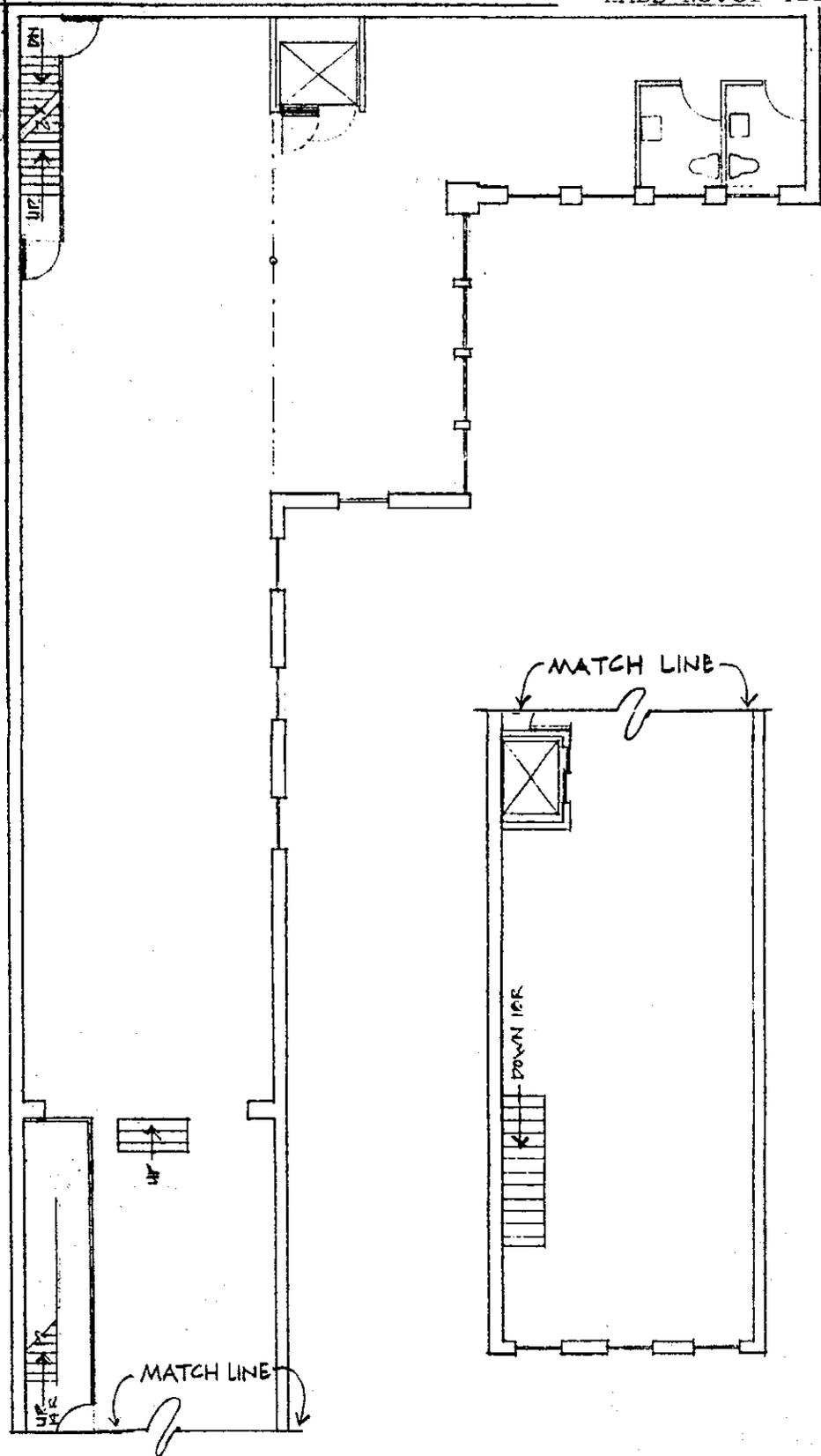
Leading Business Men of New Haven County. Mercantile Publishing Company, 1887.

Historian: Kathleen A. Maher and Preston Maynard
New Haven Preservation Trust
May 20, 1990

DAWSON & DOUGLASS BUILDING
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SECOND-FOURTH FLOOR TYP. PLAN
294-296 STATE STREET NEW HAVEN CT.

ADDENDUM TO:
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294 State Street
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New Haven County
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HABS CONN,5-NEWHA,46-

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

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This report is an addendum to the eight-page historical report previously transmitted to the Library of Congress. It is also a correction to the record. In the original historical report for the property, the name of the architect for the project was not known. Research by Nancy McNicol revealed that Sidney Mason Stone (1803-1882) designed the building in 1854. Stone's practice included commissions for a number of churches, institutional buildings, and houses; he worked in a number of the revival styles popular in the period, including the Greek Revival, Romanesque, Gothic and Italianate. The mid nineteenth-century Dawson & Douglass Building is an example of the Italianate style of design with its brownstone façade, street-level store front windows and hooded sash windows above, and a pronounced cornice with brackets.

For more information about the life and work of Sidney Mason Stone, see the research report written and posted by Nancy McNicol: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sidney_Mason_Stone.