

Warehouse
North Front Street and Rose Alley
(southwest corner)
New Bedford
Bristol County
Massachusetts

HABS No. MASS-688

HABS
MASS,
3-NEBED,
22-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. MASS-688

WAREHOUSE

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Address: North Front Street and Rose Alley (southwest corner), New Bedford, Bristol County, Massachusetts.

Present Owner and Occupant: New England Boiler Repair and Welding Company, North Front Street, New Bedford, Massachusetts.

Present Use: Repair and machine shop.

Brief Statement of Significance: A nineteenth century commercial building of attractive architectural and structural character.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners: History of the ownership is undetermined; purchased by the New England Boiler Repair and Welding Company in 1954 [interview with owners].
 2. Date of erection: Not determined; possibly the second quarter of the nineteenth century.
 3. Original plans: A single rectangular room on each floor; four-bay front with a single doorway [from observation].
 4. Notes on alterations and additions: Apparently altered very little until recent years, when a large, high, doorway was opened in the front, and part of the second floor removed to gain height at the new entrance. At an undetermined earlier time some wooden posts had been placed under the girder of the third floor framing. [from observation].
 5. Sources of information: Insurance Maps of New Bedford, Massachusetts (New York: Sanborn Map and Publishing Company) show it occupied by Brownell and Company, print manufacturers, at that time.
3. Likely sources not yet investigated: Search of deeds and insurance records might well reveal the history of ownership.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: A sturdy granite warehouse building with most of the heavy timber framing intact, expressive of regional character.

2. Condition of fabric: Structurally sound. The nature of its use is not conducive to maintenance of finish but there is little finish other than the natural materials.

B. Technical Description of exterior

1. Overall dimensions: Approximately 40' frontage (four bays) x 45' depth. Three stories, facing east.
2. Wall construction: South and west walls, once largely masked by adjoining buildings, of granite rubble. North and east fronts of roughly squared granite ashlar, with single blocks forming jambs, lintels and sills of openings; thickness at first story is 20", third floor walls 16". There is a large upright block forming the north-east corner of the first story, obviously to avoid damage by vehicles.
3. Chimney: A single brick chimney part way back along the south wall.
4. Openings:
 - a. Doorways: The original entrance doorway occupies the second bay from the south--a plain masonry opening. Several feet inside this entrance is a hatchway about 5' square opening through all floors, for hoisting and lowering goods. There is a large modern door opening in front, occupying the north half.
 - b. Windows: Wood sash, double hung, twelve lights over twelve lights; several sash retain very narrow muntins and old panes of glass.
5. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Gabled, with gable on the alley side. Now covered with asphalt composition shingles.
 - b. Construction: Two heavy trusses, and one lighter one near the north end; The heavier trusses are located to carry the load of hoisting goods through the hatchway, and are framed with 10" x 12" principal rafters and a tie beam of the same size. They are joined to a heavy timber plate with iron straps and bolts. Intermediate rafters are about 3" x 5", 26" on centers. Sheathing is of wide boards; there is no ridge pole.
 - c. Cornice: Along the south front is a simple granite cornice.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: Each floor was originally a single room; a steep, narrow stairway, perhaps original, ascends near the southwest corner, in a straight flight.
2. First floor: Modern Concrete flooring.
3. Second floor:
 - a. Framing: A single girder, 11" x 24", spans from the north to the south wall, bearing on the walls (and on a small projecting corbel). Joists are said to be 5" x 12" [owners of building].
 - b. Flooring: Modern finish flooring
4. Third floor:
 - a. Framing: 12" x 14" girder spanning from north to south wall, with stone corbel at each end. This has been reinforced at an undetermined date by three wooden posts. Joists are about 4" x 12", 16" on centers.
 - b. Flooring: Wide planks, up to 16"
5. Attic floor:
 - a. Framing: There is some indication that this was added after the original construction. 3" x 7" joists, 24" on center, rest on notched planks bolted to the sides of the three main tie beams of the roof.
 - b. Flooring: This not floored in a permanent way, but a number of loose boards lie across the joists.
6. Rough hardware: The girders are reinforced by a succession of 1 1/4" round iron rods, one to each story, in the center. The topmost rod is hung from the apex of the central truss; near the bottom it is split to form a loop at each side of the girder, through which passes a heavy iron pin beneath the girder. This kind of suspension is repeated down to the girder supporting the second floor.
7. Interior doors: The hatchway doors on the second floor remain. They are double, made of plank, with iron strap hinges, and open upward.

- D. Site: This building occupies all of the site, at the southwest corner of the intersection of Front Street with Rose Alley. Its principal front is to the east, and the secondary one to the north. The west wall adjoins a lower building. The south wall formerly served as a party wall, but the adjoining building on that side has been demolished, leaving traces of its former shape, on the wall.

The neighborhood is the old waterfront area.

Prepared by Harley J. McKee, Architect
National Park Service
September 1961