

FORM B - BUILDING

NRDIS 8/2/84

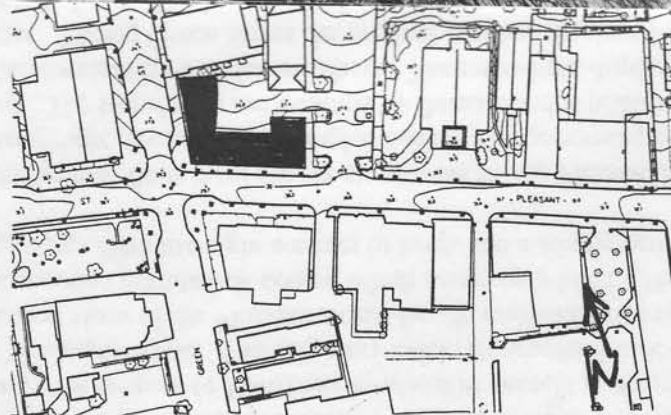
Assessor's number  
3-16

USGS Quad  
Newburyport

Area(s)  
L

Form Number  
2010

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



Town Newburyport

Place (neighborhood or village)

Address 40-50 Pleasant Street

Historic Name Alexander Block

Uses: Present Commercial

Original Commercial

Date of Construction c.1840

Source visual inspection

Style/Form

Architect/Builder unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation Granite

Wall/Trim Brick/Granite

Roof Tar

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures

none

Major Alterations (with dates) 1960 - removal of upper stories, "Colonial" remodeling, one-story addition facing Green Street

Condition good

Moved  no  yes Date

Acreage 11698 SF

Setting corner of Green and Pleasant Streets; central business district

Recorded by Lisa Mausolf

Organization Newburyport Historical Commission

Date (month/year) May 1999

## BUILDING FORM (40-50 Pleasant Street)

### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

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

Located at the corner of Pleasant, Green and Unicorn Streets, the Alexander Block was originally constructed in the early to mid 19th century (c.1840) but achieved its present appearance in 1960 after the removal of its upper stories and alterations in a "Colonial" style. The two-story brick, flat-roofed block is oriented with its long elevation facing Pleasant Street. The second story of the Pleasant Street facade measures fifteen bays across with a regular series of 6/9 windows capped by a continuous granite belt course which serves as a lintel. The facade openings are flanked by shutters. Above the second floor openings there are eight courses of brick and a simple cornice.

On the first floor there are six storefronts facing Pleasant Street and a single doorway leading upstairs. The two corner storefronts have entrances angled behind a large corner post which is quarter-round in plan at its base and chamfered at the top. The storefronts are outlined by fluted wooden pilasters applied over the original granite posts. The granite lintels are also overlaid by wooden members. The multi-light display windows are set above wooden bulkheads resting on a granite base. Facing Green Street the original building displays four storefront windows set between granite posts resting on a granite base. The lower storefront has been infilled with brick and seen the addition of a recessed Colonial Revival entablature entrance. To the north of the original building a single-story addition constructed in 1960 steps down in two sections. One of the storefronts on the addition has an entablatured surround while the other is pedimented. Fenestration on the addition consists of 6/6 windows and a bowed display window.

The east elevation facing the parking lot has seven openings on the second floor. Notable on the first floor is a single original four-panel door flanked by louvered panels. This was originally the entrance to 18 Unicorn Street.

### 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.*

This block was originally constructed in the mid 19th century and was reportedly built on the site of the former Laird brewery which was erected in 1789. On the 1851 map it is labeled as the Alexander Block and on the 1872 map the block is labeled stores with the notation "C.A.", an apparent reference to the owner, Cornelius Alexander (1828-1893). The block was later acquired by Charles Strong who had acquired a half interest from Cornelius Alexander and Alexander Dean. David M. French, sculptor of the Garrison statue in Brown Square, had a studio in the Alexander Block. In 1911 Charles Strong sold the property to Charles Davis, pharmacist. Davis operated a drug store in this building for more than 80 years until his death in 1957. In 1958 the drug store business was purchased by Haydn M. Eaton. Davis willed the property to the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society.

In 1959 the Alexander Block was sold by the American Baptist Home Mission society and the American Baptist Foreign Mission society, to L. Donald Phillips, a Green Street realtor. At that time the property consisted of stores on the ground floor and tenements above. Phillips took the upper stories of the building down and made extensive alterations to the storefronts in a "Colonial" style. The second floor windows were replaced with smaller paned 9/6 windows, the building was sandblasted and the upper story was remodeled for offices.

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