

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For NPS use only
received DEC 22 1982
date entered

1. Name

historic Atkinson Building

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 220 Lisbon Street N/A not for publication

city, town Lewiston, N/A vicinity of ~~congressional district~~

state Maine code 23 county Androscoggin code 001

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Atherton Furniture Company c/o William F. Hayes

street & number Bayview Street

city, town Saco, N/A vicinity of state Maine 04072

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Androscoggin County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Auburn, state Maine

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? N/A yes ___ no

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Atkinson Building is a six-story, Romanesque Revival business block of red brick, with granite and terra-cotta trim. The building was the tallest business block in Lewiston when constructed in 1892-93, and is still one of the most prominent structures on commercial Lisbon Street. Elmer I. Thomas of Auburn was the architect, and W. A. Libbey of Lewiston and John W. Burrowes of Portland, the contractors.

The building is of the "flatiron" type, and occupies a corner lot at one of the major downtown intersections (Lisbon and Pine Streets). The Lisbon Street facade is three bays across, the corner facade one, and the Pine Street facade five. The building's east wall faces a back alley, but retains fenestration similar to that of the street facades, minus the brick and terra-cotta decoration. The south wall abuts a three-story building on Lisbon Street, but shows two thin chimney-stacks and two upper floors of iron-shuttered window openings.

The first-story storefront shows very little alteration since its construction. As originally designed, the building was entered at the corner through a doorway flanked by simple granite columns. The first three bays of the Pine Street facade and the first two on Lisbon Street were occupied by large plate-glass windows, each topped by two mottled-glass screens. The bays were separated by simple wooden pilasters. The two outer-most bays on the Pine Street side constituted a brick wall into which were cut two small windows, one arched doorway and one rectangular. The outermost bay on Lisbon Street held an arched doorway above which was a terra-cotta sign reading "Atkinson Building". A metal course, running above the windows on all three facades, held signs reading "Atkinson Home Furnishing Company".

Three minor alterations have been made to the storefront since the time of construction, namely: 1) The two-bayed brick wall on Pine Street has been replaced by two display windows identical to those of the other three bays; 2) The arched entrance on Lisbon Street has had its original opening glassed over and is now an arched display window; 3) The metal course has been covered with a course of plywood. None of these alterations seriously effects the character of the original storefront.

A thin granite course separates the first and second stories. Each second-story bay is occupied by doubled rectangular windows with granite sills and brick lintels. Above these runs a raised band of brick capped by another thin granite course.

The third, fourth, and fifth floor windows are enclosed in tall Romanesque arches. Brick pilasters separate each bay, and end in arches over similarly arched fifth floor windows. The third and fourth story windows are doubled rectangles with granite sills. The arches and pilaster capitals are outlined by thin terra-cotta courses.

A thin granite course sets off the sixth story, whose doubled arched windows are also traced by terra-cotta. Above the windows runs a raised brick band which, on the Pine Street side, holds a terra-cotta sign reading "Atkinson Building". The wall ends with a shallow wooden cornice supported by dentils.

The building's brick are of various red shades, and have a subtle, mottled effect. The granite, from North Conway, New Hampshire, is of a red-gray hue. The terra-cotta is a light rust color and was supplied by Fiske, Homes, & Company of Boston.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1892-93 **Builder/Architect** Elmer I. Thomas

Statement of Significance (In one paragraph)

Designed in 1892 by Elmer I. Thomas of Auburn, the Atkinson Building is one of Lewiston's earliest and best Romanesque Revival structures, and her tallest Victorian business block. When completed in 1893, the six-story building was also the tallest commercial block in Maine, and one of the state's first Romanesque Revival "flatirons". Bangor's Columbia Building by W. E. Mansur and Rockland's Syndicate Block by Thomas were also erected that same year, but unlike the Atkinson Building, both have been substantially altered on their ground floors, and the later has been seriously altered in its upper stories.

The building occupies half of the lot previously taken by the Lewiston City Building, which burned in 1888. In 1890-92, a new City Building was constructed on half of the old lot, and the other half, abutting a busy intersection of the main commercial street, was sold with the stipulation that any building erected must be of brick, iron, or stone, and not less than three stories tall. The Atkinson Home Furnishings Company's Building actually rose to the unprecedented height of six stories, adding its presence to an already strong grouping of buildings: The City Building with its nine-story tower, next door; the unusual mansard-roofed Savings Bank Block across Lisbon Street; and the massive tower and walls of the Bates Mill, visible at the end of Pine Street. The City Building and Savings Bank Block are currently listed on the National Register.

The relationship between the Atkinson and City Buildings goes beyond mere height and presence. Thomas chose a number of architectural devices for the former which replicate those used in the latter. The red-grey North Conway granite used to face the first story of the City Building - but rarely seen elsewhere in Lewiston - was also used to trim the Atkinson Building. The major granite and brick separating courses of the Atkinson are roughly equivalent to the separating courses of the City Building. The Atkinson's Romanesque windows are of the same height and character, and in the same position in the facade, as the single Romanesque window in the facade of the City Building. Of widely different sizes, styles, and bearings, the two buildings were nonetheless made to cooperate.

While the Romanesque Revival style is usually characterized by heaviness - either in material, or massiveness of decorative and architectural features, or both - the wall surfaces of the Atkinson building are pointedly light and thin. The granite and terra-cotta courses are extremely narrow, as is the dentiled cornice. The bays between the pilasters and arches of the middle stories have a very shallow recess. The pilaster capitals and arches are so thin and unadorned that they seem not to be supporting any weight - the pilasters look to be stretched rather than compressed. Even the paleness of the brick is in contrast to the robust coloration of contemporary Romanesque buildings. Architect Thomas either was not attuned to the spirit of the Romanesque Revival, or he deliberately sought to "lighten" his walls to emphasize the building's uncommon height.

9. Major Bibliographical References

"Atkinson Building, Lewiston, Maine". prepared by Alberti, LaRoche, & Hodson. Industrial Journal, April 7, 1893.

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 1/4

Quadrangle name Lewiston

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	9	4	0	2	6	1	0	4	8	8	2	9	1	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

Assessor's Map #18D, Lots 220, 228

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Gregory K. Clancey, Contract Assistant/Frank A. Beard, Historian

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date September, 1982

street & number 55 Capitol Street telephone 207/289-2132

city or town Augusta, state Maine 04333

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Eula S. Stetson

title J.H.P.O.

date 12/7/82

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

for Juli McCullum

date 2.2.83

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

EXP. 12/31/04

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ATKINSON BUILDING
Continuation sheet

Item number 7

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The only decorative features of the building's interior are a pressed-tin ceiling on the ground floor, and a cast-iron ornamented staircase. The staircase is located near the former Lisbon Street entrance, so as to provide easy access after hours to the "society hall", located on the third floor. The hall, as well as the first, fourth, fifth, and sixth floor - formerly used by the Atkinson Home Furnishing Company - were always simple open spaces. The second floor, originally finished with offices, is now similarly open.