

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Areas(s) Form Number

028-07-001	Springfield North	HLY.W	HLY.330
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Town/City: Holyoke

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): South Holyoke

Photograph



Front elevation, view from the east. Photo by Zachary Violette

Address: 401-403 Main Street

Historic Name: John Heinritz Block

Uses: Present: Social Service Agency/Apartments
Original: Stores and apartments

Date of Construction: c.1879

Source: Directories, newspapers

Style/Form: Italianate / Two-part Commercial

Architect/Builder: Not Known

Exterior Materials:
Foundation: Not visible
Wall/Trim: Brick / Brick, Granite, Cast Iron, Marble, Aluminum

Roof: Membrane

Outbuildings: None

Major Alterations (*with dates*):
Sash altered (in recent decades); extension at rear removed (in recent years)

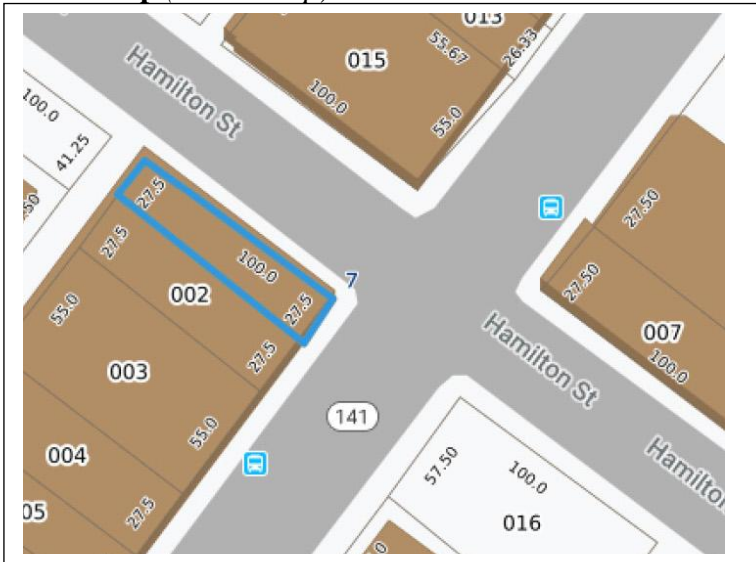
Condition: Fair

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 2,749 Sq. Ft.

Setting: Originally a dense industrial landscape made up mostly of three-to-five story masonry buildings: residential, commercial, industrial, and mixed-use. Many of these have been demolished and replaced with vacant lots or lower density construction

Locus Map (*North is up*)



Recorded By: Zachary Violette

Organization: Consultant, Holyoke Office of Planning and Development

Date (*month/year*): October 2020

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

HOLYOKE

401-403 MAIN STREET

Area(s)

Form No.

HL.Y.W

HL.Y.330

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

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

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

Built c. 1879, the John Heinritz Block is a three-story, two-part commercial and residential building. It is an example of what Richard Longstreth has classified by that name, what he terms "the most common type of composition used for small and moderate-sized commercial buildings throughout the country." He continues: "Generally limited to structures of two to four stories, this type is characterized by a horizontal division into two distinct zones...The single-story lower zone, at street level, indicates public spaces such as retail stores, a banking room, insurance office or lobby. The upper zone suggests more private spaces, including offices, hotel rooms or a meeting hall."¹ In Holyoke the upper zone was most commonly occupied by residential apartments. Situated at the corner of Main and Hamilton streets, the building has an elevation of 27 feet along Main Street and is 60 feet deep. (A one-story extension, which extended another 40 feet along Hamilton Street, was recently demolished.) Built of masonry bearing wall construction, the building rises from a low foundation. It has a single-slope roof, hidden by a tall parapet. The building has a four-bay fenestration along Main Street. Along Hamilton Street, there are 12 bays of fenestration. Two narrow paired windows at the center of this facade suggest the internal division of space into two units on each of the upper floors. There are two storefronts in the building: one facing Main Street, the other facing Hamilton. (A third was in the demolished extension.)

At the south end of the Main Street elevation is the entrance to the upper floor residential spaces. This is separated by brick piers set on granite plinths. Reached by a granite step, it retains a wooden panel door with two-light transom above. It has been sealed and painted over with murals. The storefront retains wide display windows set in wooden frames. There are wooden transoms above. The storefront bulkheads are covered in plywood. Entrance to this commercial space is through an aluminum framed door of mid-twentieth-century vintage. It has a transom of the same material. The Hamilton Street storefront retains wood-framed display windows separated into four parts by mullions. There, round cast-iron columns frame the recessed entrance. Both storefronts rise to a lintel that separates them from the space above. The upper stories are constructed of pressed red brick. Openings on the second story are headed with segmented arches. On the upper story, openings have full arches. On both levels, windows have stepped brick corbel caps and marble sills set on brick cobbles. Openings are joined by a brick belt course. The buildings' cornice has an elaborate brick corbeling pattern, with panels and multiple levels of dentil and corbel bands. Four prominent brick chimneys rise above the parapet along the Hamilton Street elevation.

Most openings have square-headed aluminum 1/1 sash, with the underside of the arches filled with aluminum panning. The westernmost six bays of the Hamilton Street elevation retain wooden sash, in poor condition. These illustrate the original 2/2 muntin pattern. The building's south wall, intended as a party wall with the adjoining building, is built of unarticulated common brick. It retains remnants of plaster from the now-demolished building that once stood on that site.

The building is set directly on the sidewalk along Main and Hamilton streets. In its original configuration, it filled the entirety of its lot. The demolition of the rear extension has resulted in the creation of a small rear yard.

The John Heinritz Block is a comparatively early and well-preserved example of the type of dense, mixed-use commercial blocks that had typified South Holyoke at the zenith of its industrial development in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

¹ Richard Longstreth, *The Buildings of Main Street, A guide to American Commercial Architecture* (Alta Mira Press, updated ed., 200) pp. 24-53

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

HOLYOKE

401-403 MAIN STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s)

Form No.

HLY.W

HLY.330

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Discuss 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.

The landscape of Holyoke's neighborhoods below the First Level Canal was shaped by the 1849 "New City" plan of the Boston-backed Hadley Falls Company, which laid out a vision of a city ideally planned for textile production, taking advantage of the abundant waterpower of the Connecticut River. The original plan had anticipated blocks of company-sponsored housing on specifically designated tenement lots appurtenant to mill sites. While for several reasons the city developed a diversity of industries beyond the control of Boston textile interests, the Holyoke Water Power Company, the Hadley Fall's Company's corporate successor, controlled many of the 1200 acres of the original plan well into the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Despite the city's rapid growth, highly inflated real estate prices, and crowded housing conditions, waterpower company backers were long reluctant to release sites for individual development, preferring the stability that corporate interests brought.² The company finally abandoned this policy in 1873, allowing the sale of lots to individuals.³ In the context of the rapid growth of paper-making in Holyoke in these years, the sale of these lots prompted a boom in tenement and mixed-use construction. This construction was most often carried out by immigrants, usually small business owners or members of the construction trade, a large portion of whom built on a small scale for their use, the use of family members, and for rental income. This building is an excellent example of that trend.

John Heinritz (1833-1916) was born in Bavaria and in 1851 and immigrated with his family as a child. He settled in Holyoke in 1866, moving from Northampton. Heinritz and his son Lebrecht G. Heinritz went into business together about 1879, establishing a drug store, and seemingly built this building to house it that year.⁴ There were four residential units on the upper floors.

The drugstore was an important center of the community. A post office substation soon opened in the store. As a result, the Heinritz family were important members of the German community in Holyoke. Lebrecht served on the Holyoke School Committee and was a president of the state pharmaceutical association.⁵ At the time of the 1900 census the upper floor units were home to eight people living in three small households. One family was Scottish, one French Canadian, and one native-born. Occupations of the heads-of-household included a night watchman, an iron molder, and a thread maker. Mrs. Charles E. Thunert, a dressmaker, was living here at the time and was listed in subsequent directories at this address.

The Heinritz family was involved in a number of other real estate projects in Holyoke, including a six-unit tenement at 620 South East Street (Demolished), built about the same time as this building. The Heinritz family lived in that building through at least the first part of the twentieth century. John Heinritz also developed a large block at 71-73 Commercial Street (HLY.715, demolished) in 1905. In 1889 Heinritz and Sons purchased the neighboring property to the south of their Main Street store.⁶ Initially expanding the drug store with a one-story storefront on that site, they eventually enlarged the building into a five-story tenement.⁷ That building was designed by architect Clough and Reid.⁸ Reduced to three stories later in the twentieth century, the adjoining Heinritz Tenement was demolished in 2014.

L.G. Heinritz founded an insurance company for druggists in the first years of the twentieth century, leaving his drug store business to other family members.⁹ He died with an estate worth over \$100,000. By 1930 the store had been taken over by W.H. Toepfert, a member of the Heinritz family. The store was later run by R.H. Vester, also a family member. It was once again called Heinritz Drugs by 1960. The post office substation remained here as late as 1950.

The property remained owned by the Heinritz heirs, and Heinritz Drug Store remained at this location through at least 1987.¹⁰ In 1990 the property was sold to Nueva Esperanza Inc. Founded in 1982 to preserve the residential character of South Holyoke at

² Green, *Holyoke*, 39-44

³ Green, *Holyoke*, 172

⁴ The transfer of this property to Heinritz has not been located. The building was standing by the time of the 1881 Bird's Eye View

⁵ "L.G. Heinritz's Career" *Springfield Republican* July 14, 1901, 8

⁶ HCRD 389:593, 1889

⁷ *Springfield Republican* October 18, 1890, 6

⁸ see Department of Public Safety Plan #10332, November 14, 1890

⁹ "Lebrecht Heinritz Dies After Illness" *Springfield Republican*, August 9, 1932, 7

¹⁰ HCRD 6350:447, 1986

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

HOLYOKE

401-403 MAIN STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s)

Form No.

HLY.W

HLY.330

a time when housing in the neighborhood was rapidly disappearing to abandonment, arson, and demolition, that group is a non-profit community development agency. It specializes in affordable housing and has redeveloped a number of properties in South Holyoke.

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INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

HOLYOKE

401-403 MAIN STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s)

Form No.

HLY.W

HLY.330

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View of the Hamilton Street elevation from the northeast. Photo by Zachary Violette

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

HOLYOKE

401-403 MAIN STREET

Area(s)

Form No.

HL.Y.W

HL.Y.330



View from the southeast showing exposed party wall. Photo by Zachary Violette

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

HOLYOKE

401-403 MAIN STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s)

Form No.

HL.Y.W

HL.Y.330

National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

Individually eligible

Eligible only in a historic district

Contributing to a potential historic district

Potential historic district

Criteria: A B C D

Criteria Considerations: A B C D E F G

Statement of Significance by: Zachary Violette

The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

The John Heinritz Block is a nicely detailed example of the type of immigrant-built, store-and-tenement blocks that marked Holyoke's distinctive development patterns in the last three decades of the nineteenth century. As a result, the building would be eligible for nomination under criterion A, association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history, and criterion C, embodying the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic value, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction, at the local level. Suffering minimal alterations, the building retains a good deal of integrity of location, setting, feeling, association, workmanship, and design. An Interior examination would be necessary to determine the extent of surviving historic fabric inside the building.