

FORM B – BUILDING

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

Photograph



View looking northwest.

Locus Map



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

D4/ 3/ 2/ 1

Brockton

AVO.101

Town/City: Avon

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):

Address: 491 West Main Street

Historic Name: Doherty Brothers Shoe Factory –
Brockton Cooperative Egg Association

Uses: Present: Lumberyard, Offices

Original: Factory

Date of Construction: 1916

Source: Public Safety Records; Hanna

Style/Form: No Style

Architect/Builder: George W. Eldridge

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Brick

Wall/Trim: Vinyl Siding; Veneer Brick/ Wood Trim

Roof: Not visible

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: None

Major Alterations (*with dates*): Rows of windows infilled;
Vinyl Siding; 1-story ell with brick-facing (between 1916 and
1944); Replacement windows (late 20th C).

Condition: Fair

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 1.0

Setting: Located at a busy intersection of two through
routes. Surrounding buildings are light industry and a small
commercial block. Avon Department of Public Works
buildings are located on the adjacent lot to the southwest.

Recorded by: Stacy Spies

Organization: Avon Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): December 2022

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

AVON

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☐ 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.

The frame building is located on a level lot covered with asphalt paving. The building rests on a brick foundation and rises three stories to a shallow gable roof with exposed rafter tails and a shallow overhang. The south elevation is nine bays wide. The north elevation is four bays wide with a large, square, 4-story tower at the banked west end of the building. A small, gable-roof vestibule is attached to the base of the tower. The tower contains a small rectangular window on each of the first three stories. Windows throughout the rest of the building are 1/1 sash replacements with external metal-frame storm windows. The north elevation contains a row of vehicle bays with overhead metal doors; these appear to be enclosed loading docks. A 1½-story addition is attached to the east (Main Street) elevation. The addition rests on a poured concrete foundation and is faced with brick veneer. The irregularly-spaced fenestration consists of 1/1 vinyl sash at the first story and rectangular hopper windows at the basement level. The entrance on this elevation is sheltered by a pedimented wood roof supported by wrought iron posts. A small 1-story addition attached to the northeast corner of the building contains a pair of side-hung metal doors with full lights that lead to a retail space. A large poured-concrete ramp is located at the west end of the building.

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.

491 West Main Street was constructed as the Doherty Brothers Shoe Factory. The business began in upstairs rooms “over L.G. Littlefield’s in [Goeres] Square.”¹ Initially, brothers Michael (1876-1957)² and Philip (ca. 1868-1953) Doherty “came from other jobs at night to work in their own business.”³ In 1915, George W. Eldridge was hired to design the building, which was constructed the following year. The Doherty factory closed in 1922, after having been in business for just eight years.⁴

In 1937, the Brockton Cooperative Egg Association, commonly known as the Brockton Egg Auction, expanded operations and purchased the building at 491 West Main Street to hold egg auctions.⁵ (In 1937, the Association also constructed a building on Memorial Drive in Avon for poultry processing and poultry auctions.) The Brockton Cooperative Egg Association was incorporated in 1932 and had its first egg auction in Brockton on August 1 of that year. Sanford E. Alger, “one of the leading New England poultrymen,”⁶ was installed as president of the organization, which had more than 75 egg producers in southeastern Massachusetts as members. The Massachusetts State College in Amherst (now UMass Amherst) and the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture helped organize the association.⁷ In the 1930s, “egg and poultry auction associations ... fill[ed] a need for a new type of cooperative in the specialized and semi-commercial egg- and poultry-producing areas adjacent to the large eastern consuming centers. A number of egg-marketing associations of the pool type had been formed in the East prior to the auctions and several of these [were] still operating [in 1939], but the pool method of operations apparently [had] not appealed to producers generally. The first cooperative egg auction was organized at Toms River, N.J. in May 1930. ... The second auction...at Flemington, N. J....in August 1930... From 1930 to 1937 inclusive, 25 similar auctions were organized in 8 of the Northeastern States. All were patterned directly or indirectly after the Flemington association.... The number of egg and poultry auction associations at the end of 1937 in each State was as follows: New Jersey, 5; Pennsylvania, 5; New York, 3; Connecticut,

¹ Hanna: 95.

² <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/159491178/michael-l-doherty>. Accessed Dec. 19, 2022.

³ Hanna: 95.

⁴ Hanna: 96, citing interview with Madolyn Doherty Graham, 1988.

⁵ Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 2160, p. 401.

⁶ “New Egg Auction Thronged...”

⁷ U.S. Bureau of Agricultural Economics: 179.

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3; Massachusetts, 2; Ohio, 2; New Hampshire, 1; and, Rhode Island, 1.”⁸ The two auctions in Massachusetts were in Avon and in Springfield.

As described in 1939, the auction process began at the farms, where farmers graded the eggs according to size, color, and cleanliness. “Delivery to the auction is either by the producer or by private truckers at the producer’s expense. The producer also pays for the containers. The association inspects the eggs and poultry to determine the grade and to check on the producers’ grading and packing.”⁹ “The auction room in which the eggs are sold is usually on the first or ground floor, separate from the room where the eggs to be sold are stacked. The room is arranged so that the buyers sit in seats as in a theater, facing the auctioneer, who stands on a raised platform.”¹⁰

The Association remained active into the 1950s. The Association sold the 491 West Main Street building in 1962.¹¹

George Warren Eldridge (1854-1930)¹² was “for more than 40 years a leading building contractor” in Brockton. He “erected many of the largest and best private residences [in Brockton], as well as many of the largest shoe factories and business blocks.”¹³ The Massachusetts Division of Public Safety Building Inspection Records identify Eldridge with the Easton Shoe Company in Brockton (BRO.36 – demolished ca. 1990), some work for the Packard shoe factory in Brockton BRO.50 – demolished), and the Wright shoe factory in Rockland (RCK.87). In Brockton, the inspection cards also attribute St. Jean de Baptiste Society Hall on Court Street (1909) to him.

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Frank Noyes Scrapbook. Robbins House Museum Collection, Avon, Massachusetts.

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https://books.google.com/books?id=_1RbQhEzlyIC&newbks=1&newbks_redir=0&dq=John%20Scanlan%20and%20Roy%20Lennartson%20Farm%20Credit%20Administration%20Bulletin%2037%20June%201939.&pg=PP3#v=onepage&q=John%20Scanlan%20and%20Roy%20Lennartson%20Farm%20Credit%20Administration%20Bulletin%2037%20June%201939.&f=false

Town of Avon. Tax Assessor records.

⁸ Scanlan 1940: IV.

⁹ Scanlan 1940: v.

¹⁰ Scanlan 1940: 33.

¹¹ Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Certificate of Title No. 71285.

¹² <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/141673664/george-warren-eldridge>. Accessed April 25, 2023.

¹³ “George W. Eldridge,” *The Boston Globe*, 7 August 1930, p. 15.

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United States Bureau of Agricultural Economics. "We Have Been Told That..." *State and Federal Marketing Activities and Other Economic Work*. Vol. 12, No. 30. August 3, 1932.
United States Census.

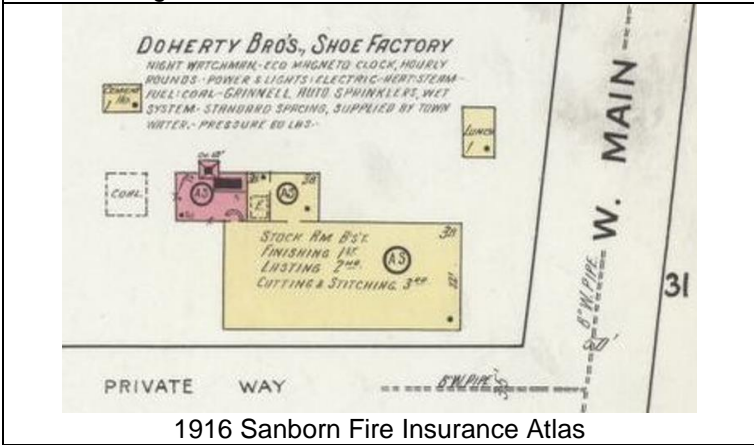
Note: An internet search uncovered the existence of a book produced in 1942 by the Brockton Cooperative Egg Auction Association, Inc. entitled, "Brockton Egg Auction, 1942, Ten Years of Progress." The book could not be located during this survey. More research is recommended.



View looking west.



View looking south.



1916 Sanborn Fire Insurance Atlas



Circa 1939 view looking south as shown in Scanlan, 1940.

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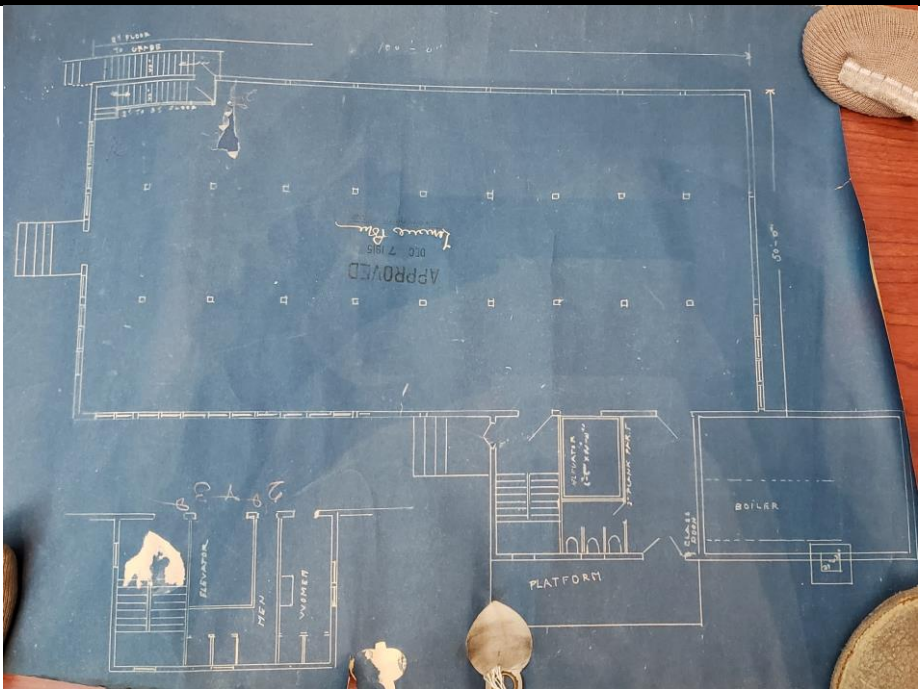
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1915 Plan. Public Safety Inspection Plans. Massachusetts State Archives.