

Address: 103 Congress Street
Approximate/Documented Date of Building: 1887
Surveyed: 8/17/2018
Historic Name: Munjoy (Murdock) Block
Contributing or Noncontributing: Landmark



Introduction

The mixed use building at 101-103 Congress Street is an excellent example of its style and form on Munjoy Hill. The first floor storefronts are separated from the upper floors by a projecting cornice supported by brackets, typical of the Italianate style. The upper levels retain additional Italianate details like the two-story projecting bays with narrow 1/1 sash windows and bracketed cornices, hoods over the single window openings, decorative window surrounds, and the deep projecting cornice at the parapet on the east, west and south elevations. The building is a significant presence on Congress Street. Because it is physically separated from the contiguous area identified for historic district designation, it is proposed for individual landmark status.

The Munjoy block is an early example of an apartment building built in 1887. At first the wooden plaque in the center of the main façade read “Murdock” after its builder David Murdock (1845-1916), but was altered to read Munjoy at an early date. David Murdock is listed in census records as a “soda manufacturer” or “proprietor of a bottling company” but operated a fancy good store at 101 Congress Street. He was born in Nova Scotia to Scottish parents and came to the United States in 1863. The structure has been rehabilitated and the first floor houses law offices.

In 1920 the property was conveyed to Marie E. Rankin and Nellie G. Connolly. In 1924 the tax record describes it as “a four family and stores”.

Current Architectural Description

The three-story building is six bays wide by two bays deep and rests on a low foundation. Most upper story windows are 1/1 replacement sashes, while the first floor windows are 6/6 sashes. Concrete steps lead to the recessed entries.

Additions and Alterations since 1924

Typical of most commercial storefronts, the first floor storefronts of 101-103 Congress Street have been altered over time with infill panels and windows. The upper floors of the building remain largely intact, except for the replacement window sashes. The building retains a high level of detail and its parapet cornice and the projecting bays give the building a strong visual presence on Congress Street.