

# Restoration of Cast Iron Details

510 & 519 Congress Street, Portland



## Significance

The Congress Street Historic District is the main pedestrian and vehicular artery in downtown Portland. Many of the buildings in the commercial center of the district have been altered to accommodate changes in retail architecture or have deteriorated from a lack of maintenance. The district was locally designated in 2009 for the richness and diversity of its architecture and its record of Portland's commercial development. While the district contains many landmark buildings, like the Italianate style Mechanics Hall built 1857-1859 at 519 Congress Street, it also contains buildings that lack individual architectural distinction but contribute to the overall social, cultural, and architectural development of the district like the W.T. Grant Block built in 1942 at 510 Congress Street.

## Project Scope

The cast iron balconies on the W.T. Grant Block were severely deteriorated and structurally deficient. Prominent features of the building's upper story, their preservation by StandFast Works Forge retains one of the few character defining features on a building that has been altered by numerous architectural changes. Across the street at Mechanics Hall, the original cast iron storefront bases had been inappropriately altered to accommodate modern mechanical features and suffered from long deferred maintenance. As part of a larger façade restoration project undertaken by the Maine Charitable Mechanics Association, StandFast Works Forge restored the beautiful bases and made subtle changes to the mechanical features to improve the appearance of the

## Recognition

Through careful restoration and selective replacement, StandFast Works Forge has beautifully restored the cast iron base of Mechanics Hall and the cast iron balconies of the W.T. Grant Building. Although both projects are small in scale, they have a large impact on the visual character of the Congress Street Historic District.