

National Streetcar Museum – Mack Building
1886

Building History

Built by the W.A. Mack & Company, a fabricator and dealer in iron work including stoves, ranges, and furnaces, the company most likely also fabricated the building's cast iron columns, sheet metal sign fascia, and corner finials. Designed in the Queen Anne style, it exhibits design features typical of the style with mixtures of materials, colors, and textures such as brick, brownstone, and decorative panel brickwork between the floors. Its positioning next to a railroad spur line was important in receiving raw materials and shipping out finished goods. Loading doors and the hoist beam used to move these heavy items to and from the original upper floors still remain in the left-side wall on the alley along the railroad spur.

Originally three stories when built in 1886, a fourth story was added around 1905. Although it was not uncommon in Lowell for a floor to be added to textile mills to provide additional square footage, the need for increased space in the business district normally resulted in buildings being replaced with larger ones. The Mack Building is one of the few examples downtown of a commercial building being raised a story.

The building was acquired by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and fully rehabilitated as part of the Lowell Heritage State Park in 1979 including a new addition housing code compliant stairways and an elevator. In addition, surrounding plaza and garden areas were also created. After rehabilitation, the Mack Building originally housed upper floor offices for the Lowell Heritage State Park with a two-floor exhibit on waterpower in Lowell below. The exhibit space became a satellite location for the The Sports Museum in the early 2000s and the building presently houses the National Streetcar Museum at Lowell with the Commonwealth's Department of Conservation and Recreation's district offices located on the upper floors.



This advertisement for the W.A. Mack & Co. is from the 1900 Lowell City Directory.