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.