

**Preserving the Most Intact Grouping of 19th and Early
20th Century Commercial Buildings
on the Square**

North Pinckney Street



Postcard of North Pinckney Street at night, ca. 1910.

Prepared by the Madison Trust for Historic Preservation
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We're Down to One



North Pinckney Street, 1910.

The buildings on the first block of North Pinckney Street form the most intact grouping of commercial buildings on the Capitol Square, which was Madison's most important business district for more than 100 years. There are no local commercial historic districts in Madison.

This block of intact buildings is one of the most important in the city, given its architecture, history, and the excellent preservation of many of the properties. The storefronts have changed over time, but these alterations are common on commercial properties. Anchored by two city landmark buildings, the 1923 Belmont Hotel at 101 E. Mifflin St. and the 1871 American Exchange Bank at 1 N. Pinckney St., the block conveys a sense of what downtown Madison was like in the early twentieth century, when the city's commercial district had become a sophisticated, urban center.

The Pinckney Block 2008



Belmont Hotel 1923	Winterbotham Building 1897	Ellsworth Block 1871	Maeder Building 1871	Grube Building 1880	Modern retail	Hobbins Block 1906	Olson and Veerhusen Building 1899	Modern retail	American Exchange Bank 1871
City landmark	-----Proposed city landmarks-----			None		-----Proposed city landmarks-----			City landmark



North Pinckney Street, 1954.

The most current city plans, like Downtown 2000 identify several buildings on the block as historic resources and/or potential city landmarks. The Madison Trust for Historic Preservation has sponsored city landmark nominations for three of these.

7-9 N. Pinckney Street (Considered to be one property)

7 N. Pinckney St., 1899 Olson and Veerhusen Building
9 N. Pinckney St., 1906 Hobbins Block

21-25 N. Pinckney Street (Considered to be one property)

21 N. Pinckney St., 1871 Maeder Building (*Harvest Restaurant*)
25 N. Pinckney St., 1871 Ellsworth Block (*Old Fashioned*)

27 N. Pinckney Street 1897 Winterbotham Building (*L'Etoile, Café Soleil*)



7-9 North Pinckney Street

The 1899 Olson and Veerhusen Building at 7 N. Pinckney is one of the best preserved Claude and Starck retail buildings in Madison.

Style: Madison's earliest Mediterranean Revival retail building, and the only one to use Italian Renaissance motifs

Materials: brick construction, glazed terracotta ornamentation

Alteration: the second floor retains its original appearance. The first floor storefront has been modified

Olson and Veerhusen, German and Norwegian immigrants, owned the leading tailoring firm in the city in 1899. The company expanded into 9 N. Pinckney in 1951, and owned both buildings until 1975.



7 N. Pinckney, 1934, Angus McVicar

The Hobbins block at 9 N. Pinckney was constructed in 1906 and remains largely intact, despite alterations to the first floor storefront. It also housed a clothing retailer – Harry S. Manchester – though other tenants included a dry goods retailer and a butcher shop.

Style: Neoclassical Revival

Materials: brick veneer, stone

Alteration: First floor storefront.







21-25 North Pinckney Street 1871

Maeder Building (*Harvest Restaurant*)

Original: Fritz Maeder's confectionary

Style: Neoclassical Revival

Materials: Originally Madison sandstone. Glazed brick dating between 1905 and 1920.

Alteration: first floor storefront, updated 2002

Ellsworth Block (*Old Fashioned*)

Original: Ellsworth Brothers Grocery

Style: Italianate

Materials: Madison sandstone

Alteration: first floor storefront, remodeled 2005

The soaring atrium that remains intact in this building's interior is believed to date to 1899, when the local architectural firm of Porter and Small had second floor offices.



Both buildings housed a variety of businesses, including Northwestern Business College, a photo of which is displayed prominently in Madison Downtown 2000 plan (p. 15). Three other photos highlight the importance of this block to downtown Madison.

27 N. Pinckney St. 1897
Winterbotham Building (*L'Etoile, Café Soleil*)



Style: Richardsonian Romanesque - one of Madison's best examples

Storefront last remodeled in 2002 – note the ornate detail of the upper stories

Social History

This building is one of only two surviving buildings associated with labor unions during a tumultuous period in Madison's history. When the United States entered World War I in 1917, many local factories converted to the production of war materials, creating thousands of jobs. But low wages, 10 work days 6 days per week and alleged war profiteering by owners prompted a large-scale walkout in July 1918. On April 1, 1919, 2,000 machinists and molders went on strike. Union ice haulers, carpenters, plumbers, and packing plant employees joined them. The 7-week strike was characterized by hostility and violence. While workers won the arbitration, the strike failed and hundreds lost their jobs. It took years for unions to recover.

So Much Has Been Lost

Neighboring buildings – and entire blocks – have been demolished.



South Pinckney Street 1870, demolished

The Last Block

The first block of North Pinckney is one of Madison's best known blocks, a key component of the Capitol Square, and the heart and soul of the city's downtown. This block is the most intact 19th and early 20th century block on the square. These buildings deserve to be recognized by being designated as local landmarks. Our city deserves to enjoy into the future this connection to our past.

