

RECEIVED
MAR 07 1990

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

DIVISION OF
NATIONAL REGISTER PROGRAMS
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Metropolitan Block
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 772 Main Street N/A not for publication
city, town Lake Geneva N/A vicinity
state Wisconsin code WI county Walworth code 127 zip code 53147

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	1	0 buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site		sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		objects
		1	0 Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

X [Signature] Date 2/20/90
Signature of certifying official
State Historic Preservation Officer- WI
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Beth Boland 4/19/90

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/business

COMMERCE/TRADE/Specialty Store

SOCIAL/Meeting hall

COMMERCE/TRADE/department store

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/ business

COMMERCE/TRADE/Specialty Store

SOCIAL/Meeting hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Italianate

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Brick

roof Synthetic: Rubber

other Limestone

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Metropolitan Block is prominently located at the southeast corner of the intersection of Lake Geneva's two main streets, Main and Broad, in the heart of the commercial district. Built in 1874¹ of cream-colored Racine pressed brick, the three-story Italianate commercial building stands a story taller than all but one of the other late nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial buildings nearby.

Like many of its neighbors, the Metropolitan Block experienced a number of remodelings to its ground floor while its upper floors appeared to have changed little. However, in the recent renovation a number of its features have been restored and its storefront character reinstated.

Originally, the ground floor had a typical storefront featuring large windows on Main Street, the principal facade, a large side window on Broad Street and an angled corner entrance. The upper stories of the Main Street facade have proportionately balanced, paired, double-hung two-over-two windows with limestone sills and segmental-arch lintels which have incised detail. The upper stories of the Broad Street facade have taller windows which generally line up vertically with those of the ground floor windows and doors. The cornice and three chimneys are built of corbelled brick as a triple-course denticulated frieze with a course of recessed cruciform blue-stones. A course of small blue-stone arches with incised detailing cap the largest of the bracket-like dentils of the base of the cornice. A horizontal banding through the upper third of the masonry on each of the upper levels is created by courses of vertically set brick turned 45 degrees and set off by a brick border. Brick belt courses also demarcate the sills of the second and third floors. The two interior block faces of the building are unornamented and are pierced by only a few windows.

The first floor interior and exterior were rebuilt in 1945, significantly altering all original window openings and all door openings. Most of the Broad Street ground floor windows and doors were then replaced by large retail windows spanned by a steel beam. These were later blocked up and covered.

The building's first floor originally housed three stores, a side entrance and stair to upper floors. The second floor was originally partitioned as office suites and a meeting hall and the third floor was a large single-space, high-ceiling meeting hall with tall windows. The halls were partitioned when the building was remodeled as a hotel. Prior to the recent remodeling almost nothing remained of the original store interiors or finishes throughout. The entry stair had been altered to remove much of the original ballustrade. An interior light well above the old stair was all but closed. An original stair to the basement level rebuilt and enclosed in the 1945 remodeling remains now without the enclosure.

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1Metropolitan Block
Lake Geneva, Walworth Co., WI

Description, continued

A recent rehabilitation of the building took place which was largely completed in 1986. The interior bearing structure was rebuilt, new stairs and all new systems were installed. On the exterior the steel fire escape, a later addition, was removed, and the paint carefully removed from the brick. Large sections of the brick masonry were rebuilt to repair structural damage and deteriorated and damaged stone lintels and sills were replaced with new blue-stone pieces carved to match the originals. Bricked up windows were reopened on the lake side and windows previously made into doors to the fire escape were restored to window openings. The parapet wall was reconstructed and the chimneys rebuilt to match those shown in photographs. New windows detailed to match the originals were installed. On the ground floor of the Broad Street side, the beam was retained due to structural considerations and the original piers rebuilt above and below it recreating the historic window and door pattern. On the Main Street facade, the storefront was reopened and glazed. At the entrance to the basement the enclosure was removed and the stair rebuilt. In retrospect, the renovation by Karl Otzen has restored the general appearance which the building had for many years offered, as well as the intensive use and vitality associated with it in years past.

Notes for Section 7

1. "Geneva Lake Herald," October 31, 1874.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Architecture

1874

1874¹

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person N/A

Architect/Builder
Architect: Jenney, William LeBaron
Builder: LaSalle, O. T. 2

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Metropolitan Block is locally significant under Criterion C as an excellent local example of Italianate influenced commercial design. It is an excellent example of the commercial buildings erected during Lake Geneva's boom period, 1871-1890. The building boom was a result of the Chicago fire when the village quickly became a summer home for Chicago's wealthy families. Lake Geneva's debt to influential Chicagoans for its success is further exemplified in the Metropolitan Block, in that it was designed by William LeBaron Jenney, a prominent Chicago architect whose work was the foundation of the "first Chicago school" of architecture.³

Historical Background

The village of Geneva Lake, as it was called until 1883, began to experience most of its growth following the Chicago fire and the completion of a rail line from Chicago, both in 1871. (New commercial buildings, most of which were built on the 700 block of Main Street soon thereafter, were "fire-proof" two-story Italianate cream-colored brick buildings which often replaced earlier frame buildings. A few brick stores were built in the early 1870s (T. J. Hann's Furniture Store, 711 Main, 1871, the first and now oldest brick building on the block, and A. Walker's Block, 703 Main Street, 1871-1872.⁴) The building boom which followed was tied to the growth in popularity of the locale as a summer resort. In 1873, the "Lady of the Lake," the first local excursion steamer, set sail. The following May, in 1874, the first lakeside hotel, the very posh Whiting House Hotel, opened at the foot of Broad Street, one block from the Metropolitan Block, then under construction. In that same year a regatta was held and the Lake Geneva Yacht Club was formed. One of the principal founders was former Chicago Mayor George Sturges, who influenced friends to build summer homes there.⁵ A number of great summer houses on large estates were developed in the following decade, along with many of the commercial blocks.

By the late 1880s, the commercial development boom had peaked and the construction of large summer homes had slowed due to the increasingly limited availability of lake-side acreage.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

Metropolitan Block
Lake Geneva, Walworth Co. WI

Significance, continued

The Metropolitan Block was built for D. S. Allen and H. H. Curtis by Chicago builder O. T. LaSalle, who later built a home for himself in Lake Geneva.⁶ Construction commenced in October, 1873, and was complete in October, 1874. Allen, a local investor, sold his interest to Curtis in 1875. Curtis had been the proprietor of a drugstore which was the oldest (in 1874) in Walworth County, having been established in 1840 by Lewis Curtis, his father. Curtis' drugstore (later Arnold's, 1878-1910) prominently occupied the front or Main Street half of the ground floor of the building.⁷

Other occupants at the opening of the building were H. M. Hicks Harness Shop, Frank Valentine's New Cash Metropolitan Store (groceries), John Carlton's barber shop, the Geneva Lake Herald, and Dr. Catlin. The building also housed a lecture room on the second floor which seated 150 people, a ticket office, and the Metropolitan Hall, an assembly hall which occupied the entire third floor. The Metropolitan Hall was 106 feet long, seated four hundred people, and had a stage with scenery.⁸ Little is known of the utility of the lecture hall and Metropolitan Hall except that the latter was popular for fraternal organizations.

Over the years there was little turnover in the commercial tenants of the Metropolitan Block. In 1910, Max Lazzaroni's Lake View Ice Cream Parlor took over Arnold's drugstore space and remained there until 1937. In 1918, Lazzaroni bought the building and opened a lunch room in part of the Broad Street frontage. In 1933, the basement was remodeled as a tavern and bowling alley. In 1937, when the ice cream parlor was closed, the space was again remodeled as the Clair Lounge and the upstairs as the Clair Hotel, both operated largely as such until the building was sold in 1978. In the 1940s the rear portion of the building was joined with that of the adjacent building for the Schultz Bros. variety store on Main Street.⁹

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 2Metropolitan Block
Lake Geneva, Walworth Co., WILake Geneva's Early Commercial Boom

The Metropolitan Block is outstanding among the other commercial buildings built during the boom years of Lake Geneva's growth following the Chicago fire. During this period, 1871-1890, three-quarters of the Italianate buildings remaining on the principal commercial block, the 700 block of Main Street, were erected. The balance were built or rebuilt over the following 40 years.

Although the 700 block of Main Street, between Broad and Center Streets, was a site of commercial activity since the late 1830s, the "fire proof" brick commercial buildings which largely characterize the block, weren't built until 1871 (T. J. Hanna's Furniture Store, 711 Main Street, Italianate). Soon the second followed next door on the corner at Center Street, A. Walker's Block, 703 Main, 1872. Walker's was a three-story cream brick High-Victorian Italianate building featuring round-arched window hoods with a public hall on the third floor.

Opposite the Walker Block is perhaps the best and most intact Italianate building on the block. It is believed to have been erected in the 1870s for E. D. Richardson's Bank of Geneva, 704 Main. Richardson's Bank was among the first banks opened in the State in 1848 (site unknown). The building features a pair of bays, largely glazed, projecting from the second floor.

Across the alley and also on the south side of Main from the Bank of Geneva is an Italianate brick building, the First National Bank, 712 Main (by 1882). Other Italianate buildings of somewhat simpler detailing or with a lesser degree of integrity remaining on the block include the buildings at 720, 724, 730, 736, 752, and on the north side of the street, the buildings at 719, 737, 741 remain from the early boom period. Other later buildings of note which contribute to the character of the area include the concrete block building at 731 Main, 1903; the cut stone storefront at 725-729 Main, 1908; and the Southern Wisconsin Gas Company (771 Main Street, 1930) built on the site and in the likeness of the Lake View Hotel, Lake Geneva's earliest commercial building (1837).

Of the buildings erected in Lake Geneva's early building boom, 1871-1890, for which Italianate is the common identifying stylistic reference, the most originally intact is the Bank of Geneva building. Although the Walker Block has been altered, it too retains a fair degree of its identifying character. While it doesn't possess the same degree of integrity of original materials as the Bank of Geneva building, the Metropolitan Block is a major contribution to the historic character of the block due to its location, stature, and the quality of the restoration of the historic materials, features and reinstatement of the traditional appearance overall.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 3Metropolitan Block
Lake Geneva, Walworth Co., WI

Architecture

The Italianate style was frequently and prominently expressed in the development of Lake Geneva's Main Street commercial buildings during its greatest period of growth, 1871-1890. The romantic and somewhat exotic Italianate style, upheld as a modicum of good taste in design by numerous publications of the 1850s, became the predominant medium of commercial design by the late 1860s in communities throughout the United States. It continued to play an important role in commercial building design through the high Victorian Italianate commercial styles of the 1870s and 1880s and later sometimes merged with Queen Anne stylistic characteristics in the commercial buildings of the early 1890s, though considerably more rarely, before almost completely disappearing soon thereafter.

In Lake Geneva's commercial district there may be considered to be three differing types of the Italianate style. There is the early high style Italianate represented by the Bank of Geneva. There is a commercial vernacular style which comprises the largest group of commercial buildings of the period, all of which employ the vocabulary of the style, most often with readily available materials, manufactured ornament and pattern-book type detail. The third type features characteristic brick corbelled banding and surface texturing, carved stone lintels, and strong vertical, or bold, massing. It is more than a merely ornamented facade. The Walker Block and Metropolitan Block represent this variation of the Italianate style. The Italianate style is manifest in the Metropolitan Block in its segmental arched windows, carved stone lintels, corbelled brick cornice, and belt and sill courses. Their simplicity in form, texture, scale, and material color portray a sophisticated variation of the Italianate mode. In addition, the building's verticality, reflected in its tall two-over-two windows (especially the meeting hall windows on the third floor) and extra-wide cornice all further attribute a greater stateliness and understated elegance to its appearance, further setting it apart from its neighbors.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

Metropolitan Block, Lake Geneva
Walworth Co., WI

Architect

The building's association with the prominent Chicago architect, William Le Baron Jenney (1832-1907), further exemplifies the relationship between Chicago's rebirth following the great fire of 1871 and the growth of Lake Geneva as a resort community for Chicago residents. While the mainstay of Jenney's work was in Chicago, some of his commissions brought him to the summering grounds of his clientele.

Although Jenney's architectural office had been in business in Chicago since 1867, greater commissions, came following the fire (Mason Building, Chicago, 1872; Portland Block, Chicago, 1872; Lakeside Building, Chicago, 1873). Of these, the Portland is considered to have been innovative among its contemporaries in that the architectural stylistic statement of the building was said to have "remained secondary to formal and functional expression."¹⁰ His work drew attention due to his compositional delineation of the building facades which came out of his French schooling. And beginning with that building, Jenney's work began to depart from that of his peers. Jenney had studied engineering and received a degree from the Ecole Centrale des Arts et Manufactures in Paris. He was one of only a few American architects among his contemporaries to have studied architecture in Europe.

Through his work following the Chicago fire, he experimented in skeletal framing methods to increase the fenestration of building surfaces thereby maximizing natural lighting. His development of the post and beam framework in construction during the late 1870s through the mid-1880s led to the eventual elimination of masonry bearing walls. He first employed iron and steel in a serial post and beam construction of the Home Insurance building in Chicago, 1884-1885. This important innovation in tall building design paved the way for further development of the modern skyscraper.

Jenney's significant influence in architectural theory and practice is also credited to his teachings and writings.

Jenney published books and numerous articles in the leading professional journals (Inland Architect, among others), thus dispersing his theories, insights, techniques and methods of the architectural profession.

Jenney's office is considered to have been a workshop for the "first Chicago school" of architecture, and a training ground for five men who made significant contributions to the field of architecture. They were William Holabird, Martin Roche, Daniel Burnham, Louis Sullivan, and George Grant Elmslie. Of these, Roche and Sullivan were employed in Jenney's firm at the time of the design and construction of the Metropolitan Block.¹¹

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

Metropolitan Block, Lake Geneva
Walworth Co., WI

His reputation in the midwest as a leading architect, planner and park designer was early established. In 1869 he was appointed chief engineer by the West Chicago Park Commission and laid out Douglas, Central (now Garfield) and Humboldt Parks and proposed a greenbelt (never built) around the rapidly growing city. In association with Shermerhorn and Bogart, park engineers of New York, he built Riverside, the romantically-inspired garden city west of Chicago, designed by the landscape architectural firm of Olmstead and Vaux. He also designed a number of buildings in Riverside.

Jenney was also an early supporter of the American Institute of Architects, and served as its president, 1893-1894. And perhaps one of his later and better known works was the Horticultural Building at Chicago's Columbian Exposition of 1893. That building marked the end of his influence. Jenney's partner William Mundie, played an increasing role in the firm's work, little of which is notable, until Jenneys' retirement in 1905. Jenney died in 1907.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Metropolitan Block is locally significant under Criteria C as an excellent local example of Italianate style commercial design. Notable for its stately simplicity and majestic stature among its contemporaries, the building is easily the most impressive of Lake Geneva's Italianate-styled commercial buildings built during the boom period, 1871-1890, following the great Chicago fire.

During this period, influential Chicagoans helped to build-up Lake Geneva as a resort community. The relationship between the local entrepreneurial businessmen and the Chicago community is evidenced in the design of the Metropolitan Block for local investor D.S. Allen and merchant H.H. Curtis by the prominent Chicago architect William LeBaron Jenney and by its construction by the prominent Chicago builder O. T. LaSalle, also a summer resident of Lake Geneva.

Although the decidedly understated simplicity of the Metropolitan Block sets it apart in one regard from some of its more ornamented neighbors, it is additionally the majestic proportions, siting, and newly renovated condition which all give it considerable importance in representing Lake Geneva's Italianate commercial buildings.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

Metropolitan Block, Lake Geneva
Walworth Co., WI

Notes for Section 8

1. "Geneva Lake Herald," October 31, 1874.
2. Ibid.
3. Grube, Oswald, 100 Years of Architecture in Chicago: Continuity of Structure and Form, Chicago: Follett, 1976, p. 10.
4. Simmons, James, Annals of Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, 1835-1897, Office of the Herald, 1897, p. 88.
5. Lake Geneva Yacht Club: 100th Year, 1874-1974, Lake Geneva, 1974, p.6.
6. "Geneva Lake Herald," October 31, 1874.
7. Simmons, pp. 150,156,161, and 177.
8. Op. cit. "Herald"
9. "Lake Geneva Regional News," April 13, 1978.
10. Turak, Theodore, William Le Baron Jenney, A Pioneer of Modern Architecture, Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1986.
11. Grube, pp. 17, 23, 24.

Brooks, J. Allen, Prairie School Architecture: Studies from "The Western Architect", Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975, pp. 22, 120.

Withey, Elsie R. and Henry F., A.I.A., Biographical Dictionary of American Architects, (Deceased), Los Angeles: New Age Publishing Co., p. 324.

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Grube, Oswald, 100 Years of Architecture in Chicago: Continuity of Structure and Form, Chicago: Follett, 1976, pp.10, 17, 23, 24.
2. Simmons, James, Annals of Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, 1835-1897, Office of the Herald, 1897, pp.88, 150, 156, 161, 177.
3. Lake Geneva Yacht Club: 100th Year, 1874-1974, Lake Geneva, 1974, p.6.
4. "Geneva Lake Herald," October 31, 1874.
5. "Lake Geneva Regional News," April 13, 1978.
6. Brooks, J. Allen, Prairie School Architecture: Studies from "The Western Architect," Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975, pp. 22, 120.
7. Withey, Henry F., A.I.A., and Elsie R., Biographical Dictionary of American Architects, (Deceased), Los Angeles: New Age Publishing Co., p. 324.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one.

UTM References

A

1	6
---	---

3	8	2	2	6	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	7	1	6	2	5	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

 Zone Easting Northing

C

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

B

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

 Zone Easting Northing

D

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The property is described as follows:

The West 32 feet of the North 108 feet of Lot 6, Block 30 in the Original Plat of the City of Lake Geneva.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated property consists of the entire parcel which has historically been associated with it.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Gary Tipler
 organization _____ date 3/9/1989
 street & number 511 E. Main Street telephone 257-2318, 255-1523
 city or town Madison state WI zip code 53703

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

Metropolitan Block, Lake Geneva
Walworth Co., WI

Major Bibliographical References, continued

8. Condit, Carl W., The Chicago School of Architecture. A History of Commercial and Public Building in the Chicago Area, 1875-1925, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964.
9. Turak, Theodore, William Le Baron Jenney, A Pioneer of Modern Architecture, Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1986.
10. Wyatt, Barbara. Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin. Architecture section, Vol. 2. Madison: State Historical Society, 1986.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Photos _____ Page 1

Metropolitan Block
Lake Geneva, Walworth Co., WI

The following information pertains to the contemporary photographs included with this nomination.

Property: Metropolitan Block
Location: Lake Geneva, Walworth Co., WI
Photographer: Gary Tipler
Date of photographs: November 26, 1988
Negatives location: WI Historical Society

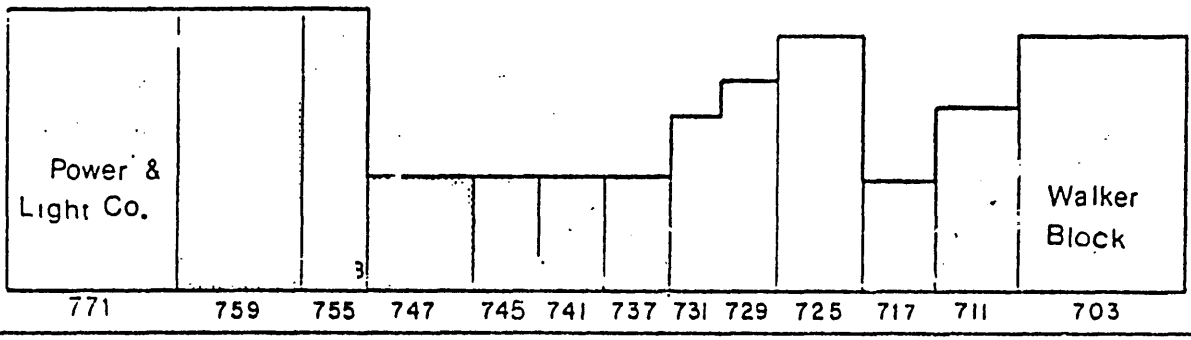
<u>Photograph No.</u>	<u>Direction camera is pointing</u>	<u>Notes</u>
1.	Southeast	Main St.(left), Broad (right)
2.	Southeast by East	Main St.
3.	Northeast	Broad St. facade
4.	Southeast by East	Broad St. facade
5.	Southwest by South	Main St. facade

METROPOLITAN BLOCK LOCATION

MAIN STREET, LAKE GENEVA

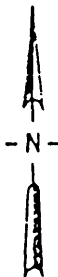
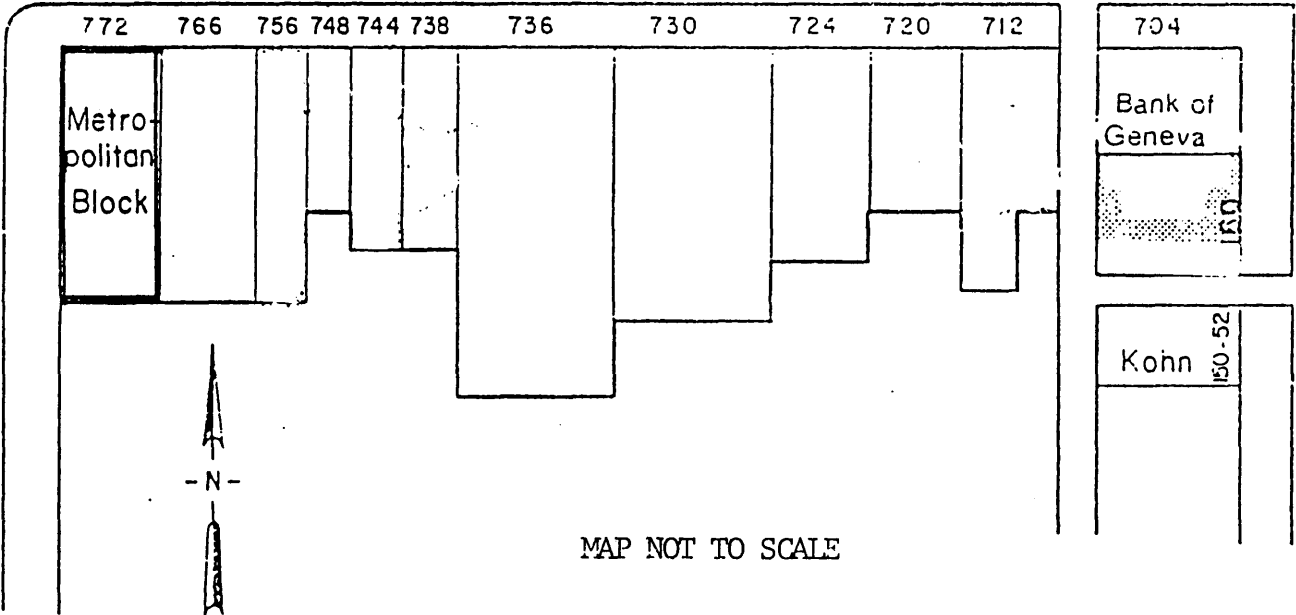
WALWORTH COUNTY, WI

BROAD STREET



CENTER STREET

MAIN STREET



MAP NOT TO SCALE







