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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Owosso Downtown Historic District

Other names/site number: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: Generally bounded by Shiawassee River and Water St., Comstock St., Park St., and Mason St. in downtown Owosso.

City or town: Owosso State: Michigan County: Shiawassee

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide x local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

 x A B x C D

<u>Brian Alley</u>	<u>2/10/14</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<u>MI SHPO</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

Owosso Downtown Historic District
Name of Property

Shiawassee, MI

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: _____ **Date** _____

Title : _____ **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government** _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

For Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

4.7.14
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District

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Site

Structure

Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>91</u>	<u>18</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>91</u>	<u>19</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 2

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic: single dwelling, secondary structure

Commerce/Trade: business, professional, organizational, financial institution, specialty store, department store, restaurant

Industry/Processing/Extraction: communications facility, manufacturing facility

Social: meeting hall, club house

Government: city hall, post office

Education: school

Religion: religious facility

Recreation/Culture: theater

Health Care: medical business/office

Defense: military facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic: single dwelling

Commerce/Trade: business, professional, organizational, financial institution, specialty store, department store, restaurant

Social: meeting hall, club house

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Government: city hall, post office
Education: school
Religion: religious facility
Recreation/Culture: theater
Health Care: medical business/office

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late Victorian: Italianate, Romanesque
Late 19th and Early 20th Century Revivals: Classical Revival, Jacobean, Gothic Revival,
Renaissance Revival
Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements: Commercial Style
Modern Movement: Modern, International Style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick, Stone, Stucco, Terra Cotta, Ceramic Tile,
Glass, Concrete

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Owosso Downtown Historic District comprises the historic core of Owosso's central business district. The irregularly shaped district extends a maximum of four and one-half blocks, from the east bank of the Shiawassee River to mid-block east of Park Street, east and west, and four and one-half blocks, from Williams Street to mid-block south of Comstock, north and south. It encompasses ten entire blocks and parts of seven others. The district contains buildings dating primarily from the 1850s to the 1960s. The great majority are commercial buildings, but the district also contains a number of the city's important historic governmental, school, church, and lodge and club buildings including the Municipal Building/City Hall, Owosso Armory, former High School, Congregational and Lutheran churches, Masonic Temple, and others. The buildings are typically two and three stories in height, but include two four-story buildings and a number of one-story ones. Italianate and Late Victorian commercial are the most common among the district's buildings, but vernacular Greek Revival, Neoclassical, Commercial Brick, and Mid-century Modern buildings are also present.

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Narrative Description

The primary entrances to the district are at its east and west ends along East and West Main Street. The broad street, state trunkline highway M-21, passes through the city and this district in an east-west line. Coming from the west, M-21 passes through a smaller separate historic business district known as the West Side or West Owosso that, located a half mile west of this downtown district, grew up in the late nineteenth century where factories clustered along the railroad lines. Between the two business districts, M-21 intersects another state highway, M-52, which runs north-south. Modern commercial development has grown up between the two older commercial areas along M-21, but shares the frontage with older landmarks: the 1920s Johnson (Buick Sales) Building located along West Main just west of the Shiawassee River, the city's early twentieth-century Public Library, located at the northwest corner of the M-21/M-52 intersection, and the distinguished St. Paul Catholic Church complex, with its Mid-century Modern church and older Neo-Gothic buildings, a quarter mile west. The perhaps 200-foot wide Shiawassee River, here flowing generally northwestward on its way toward the Saginaw River and Saginaw Bay of Lake Huron forty-five miles north, forms the district's west edge.

M-21 or Main Street forms the primary entrance to the district. Three blocks east of the river and one block west of the district's east edge it intersects Washington Street, a primary north-south street. Washington forms the division between East and West Main and other east-west streets in the city, and Main forms the division between the north and south portions of the east-west streets. Additional east-west streets in the district include, south of Main Street, East and West Comstock Street and, north of Main Street, East and West Exchange and Mason streets, with the next street north, Williams, forming part of the district's north boundary. The north/south roadways beginning near the river and moving east include North and South Water, Ball, Washington, and Park streets.

The terrain in the historic district is relatively flat, except for a short, steep slope down to the Shiawassee River that cuts through the land west of N. Water, particularly in the northwestern corner of the district. Here the land slopes dramatically, requiring a long stairway to access the green area southwest of a modern band shell from the adjacent parking lot.

The district occupies all or parts of seventeen blocks. The blocks are rectangular, except for the two west blocks, with their irregular river frontage, and parts of several blocks that adjoin South Water Street. South Water, which angles north-northwest to south-southeast, follows part of the former alignment of a millrace that powered early industrial development (the race was filled in during the later 1880s). Main, Washington, and Exchange Street are the district's main streets, initially platted in the 1830s and still today wider than the others: Main Street carries four lanes of traffic, Washington and Exchange two traffic lanes plus angled parking on either side. Other streets are narrower two-lane roads, typically with parallel parking along one or both sides.

The commercial buildings along the primary streets – Main, Washington, Exchange – and also along Ball Street typically stand side-by-side and directly on the sidewalk line. The majority are two to three stories in height and of brick or brick and concrete block construction. The district's

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non-commercial buildings are situated around the edges of this most tightly built-up historic commercial core, at the west edge near the Shiawassee River or at the district's northeast edge. In these areas where the buildings stand back more from the sidewalk line and street and have some physical separation from one another, there are small grassy frontages and side yards and more in the way of trees.

Streets are uniformly asphalt-paved and sidewalks are of concrete. Street lights include a mix of typical cobra head poles and shorter streetlamps with octagonal lanterns, or even newer posts with ornamental shepherd hook suspending the lamp. Many of the octagonal lantern lamps are also fitted with brackets which hold large baskets of hanging plants and other seasonal decorations. Extensive streetscaping has also occurred in the historic district, including the addition of raised flower beds (high enough to serve as a comfortable resting place for area visitors), curb-side gardens, decorative brick inlay in the concrete sidewalks, and the addition of metal sculptures including a large bumble bee, bicycle, and two different clocks set atop poles. Young trees are part of the newly streetscaped portions of the district, while other areas include mature trees and plantings.

A number of open parking lots are present in the historic district, two of which – one on the south side of West Exchange Street between North Ball and North Water streets and the other on the southwest corner of the Main/Washington intersection – have been aesthetically improved with iron and brick fences, brick inlays, park benches, plantings, and a fountain. Plantings and shade trees increase the amount of green space within the downtown area. The largest green space in the district is located on the east bank of the Shiawassee River, northwest of the Middle School. A modern band shell stands in the northeast corner of the green space. The space itself is largely lawn, with some trees growing on the bank of the river.

Inventory

For each of the following entries, a number of standard references were consulted. These include city directories, Sanborn fire insurance maps, and the 2010 Owosso Downtown Historic District Study Committee (HDSC) report. Additional unique sources for each site, where applicable, are cited at the end of each inventory entry; however, the standard sources have not been individually cited. The following entries are placed in order as they appear on each street, with even number addresses placed in numerical order first, followed by odd number addresses. All buildings contribute to the district unless otherwise specifically noted.

Ball Street, North (East Side)

114. Commercial Building (Built between 1908 and 1915)

Two-story red brick commercial building occupying a small square-plan footprint between the back (south) wall of 121-23 W. Exchange and the mid-block alley to the south. Its corbeled brick cornice and two-part brick entablature complement the adjacent side façade of 121-23 W.

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Exchange. There are three square-head upstairs windows with flat-arch brick heads and stone slab sills. The ground story contains a modern Colonial "storefront" with large multi-light windows and the entry at left, and there is a second-story entry at the building's far left end, the storefront and upstairs entry both capped by a simple wooden cornice.

The 1908 Sanborn map shows an empty lot. The next, 1915 map shows this building in place. Its exterior design closely matches 121-23 West Exchange. The directories list the Neal Real Estate Company from 1928 until the late 1940s followed later by Craig Insurance and Real Estate through about 1964. Community Evangelical Presbyterian Church has owned the building since 1990.

224. Dr. Hume Office (Built 19th C., expanded between 1930 and 1946)

One-story upright-and-wing-form office building, the gable-front section with a taller gable roof than the side-gable part. The west-facing fronts and south end of the wing are faced in red brick, the gables and other facades in aluminum siding. The building is finished in a simple Colonial style, with a small entry porch in the front of the side-gable section and double-hung, horizontal multi-light, and a broad slant-sided bay window. The gable-front section stands on a rock-faced concrete block foundation.

The 1900 Sanborn map shows the site vacant, while the 1908 map shows the northern, gable-front part of the current building in place. Owosso historian Lorraine Wechwerk reports that this north part of the building was a much older building, and was moved here by the Humes from a location near the old armory that stood at the E. Mason/N. Park intersection. She states (email to Christensen 10/22/2013): "I have photos from the family which appeared in a 1920's University of Michigan newspaper of the Doctor who moved his practice and I believe his Greek Revival building from Mason [St.] to make way for construction. ... The interior attic and basement also tell the story of its age."

The building at the present location first housed Drs. A. M. and H. A. Hume's office. Between 1930 and 1946 the single-story side-gable wing was added to the south side. Dr. Hume's office was here through at least 1951, and physicians and dentists have been the occupants for much of the building's history, followed most recently by a real estate and now a law firm.

Ball Street, North (West Side)

207. Commercial/Apartment Building (Became two stories between 1908 and 1915)

Photo 32, 2nd bldg. from L

Two-story brick building with four windows upstairs and a storefront under a unifying awning across most of the first story that spans the front of the next two buildings to the north as well. The building has a corbeled brickwork band, similar to 200 W. Exchange's, beneath a simple molded cornice and segmental-arch brick hoods above the second-story windows and a single window on the first story. The storefront features a slightly recessed central entry and large display windows to its right (north).

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It is unclear whether the current building expanded or replaced a single-story building which stood in this same location. The single-story building is illustrated in the 1890 Sanborn as housing a plumber's shop, followed by an office in 1894, and a doctor's office in 1900. The 1908 map shows the building still a single story, but the 1915 map shows the earlier building either replaced with the present building or raised to two stories. Izor Printing was the occupant from roughly 1924 to 1948, followed by the Collier Printing Co. as of 1950 and various other businesses. The 1964 directory lists the Kelly Manor Apartments as the occupant here and in adjacent 209, presumably in the upper story.

209. Commercial/Apartment Building (Built between 1908 and 1915)
Photo 32, 3rd bldg. from L

This narrow two-story brick building has projecting side piers and a raised frieze beneath a simple cornice similar to 207's that is supported on corbeled brickwork. Projecting from the second story wall is a box bay oriel double window, the opening in the brick façade capped by a segmental arch partly visible above the window. The first floor of the building includes a storefront with an entrance to the south and a large display window to its north. A modern common awning fronts this and the storefront in the building to either side – all three buildings' first stories housing a single business.

A two-story building first appears at this location on the 1915 Sanborn, replacing an earlier one-story building. The 1915 map lists it as a dwelling. The earliest known occupant was H. E. Poland who operated a transfer and trucking company from the building between 1924 and 1945. By 1948 through 1950, the building housed the Avalon Studio, a photography studio, followed by Collier Printing Company in 1955 through the early 1960s. Like 207 North Ball Street, this building housed part of the Kelly Manor Apartments in 1964. Savas Travel Bureau was the occupant from around 1980 through 2012.

211. Commercial Building (Built between 1884 and 1890; expanded between 1915 and 1930)
Photo 32, 4th bldg. from L

Two-story three-bay brick Late Victorian building capped by a corbeled brick frieze and brick dentil band below a metal strip coping for the parapet. The building façade is divided into a broader two-bay north section that contains two double-hung windows with segmental-arch brick caps in the second story and a narrow south-end section that contains a single square-head window. The south part's ground story is combined with the business that occupies the buildings to the south (207-09), and its part of the upper façade painted to match the light brown hue of those buildings' upper facades, while the rest of 211's upper façade is painted a whitish hue. The northern two-thirds contains the 211 storefront, which has its entry directly below the central upstairs window, an upstairs entry just to its left, and a broad display window filling most of the space between the store entry and north (right) end of the building. The façade from the tops of the first-story door and window to the base of the second-story windows is faced in a wide band of vertical boarding.

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This building first appears in the 1890 Sanborn as a print shop, followed by a blacksmith shop in the 1894 through 1915 maps. The 1894 through 1915 maps show a "platform" at the south end's second-story level where there is now a square-head window that doesn't match the two windows to the north with their segmental-arch brick caps. This platform or narrow alley space between 209 and 211 N. Ball was built in between 1915 and 1930. Since the 1920s the building has housed a broad variety of frequently changing businesses.

213 N. Ball. John R. Kelly Plumbing (Built between 1890 and 1894)
Photo 32, 5th bldg. from L

This is a two-story three-bay painted brick Late Victorian building with a c. 1950s-looking storefront with aluminum-trim windows and door and an upstairs entry at the right end. Vertical boarding clads the former transom area up to the second-story windows. Three one-over-one windows, with stone slab sills and stone hoods carved with incised plant-form detail, light the second story, and there is a simple cornice with corbeled brick frieze.

The 1890 Sanborn lists this building as "being built." In 1894 the two-story building housed a plumbing business and by 1900 a woodworking business. By 1900 a single-story rear extension was added, and by 1930 a part of this rear wing raised to two stories. In the 1908 through 1946 maps the building is shown housing a plumbing business. In 1910 John R. Kelly, plumber, and Jay Matteson, insurance, shared the building. Kelly's plumbing business was here until 1951, and was joined by Evan's Appliance Shop in 1942. A variety of businesses have followed.

215. Edward Carr Real Estate (Built between 1894 and 1900)
Photo 32, 6th bldg. from L

This two-story Late Victorian painted brick building has a brick storefront with large windows flanking a center entry and a second entry accessing the upper story located at the north end of the façade. A slant-sided oriel window with three one-over-one windows projects from the second story. It is adjacent to a single one-over-one window with a limestone sill and segmental-arch brick cap. A corbeled brick frieze and a simple pressed metal cornice matching 213's embellish the roofline.

This building does not appear in the 1894 Sanborn but it is present on the 1900 one. It housed a plumbing business as of 1900 and office space in 1908. A single-story rear extension was added by 1908 and raised to two stories by 1915. One of the earliest occupants, according to the *City Directory*, was Edward Carr's real estate business in 1910-1911. A few years later, the building became a tailor shop, in the late 1930s and 40s it was the home of the Trading Post, a second hand shop, and then a laundrette followed by an auto parts firm. Succeeding uses have been as varied, but Stewart Graphics occupied the store space in 1995 through 2005 and the Stewarts have lived in the apartments above the building since the early 1990s.

217-23. Phillips & Taylor Building (Built between 1908 and 1915)
Photo 32, 7th bldg. from L, and Photo 33

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Two-story four storefront long flat-roof concrete block commercial building, the blocks with flat recessed margins. Raised piers subdivide the front in half, with each half divided into two sections in the ground story. Each of the four section's second story displays two double-hung windows. The storefronts have been rebuilt/infilled using T-111 siding and brick bulkheads and retain no historic finishes. The building's broad north end contains a large old wooden vehicular entrance and a pedestrian door, and there are more four square-head upstairs windows. The rear has many more windows, most of the ground-floor ones boarded up. A 1979 survey photo shows the Ball Street ground story's southernmost section faced in cement or stucco and containing two broad segmental-arch-head window openings containing cottage windows, the section next north displaying a pedestrian entry at left and garage door to its right, the next section containing a central window as well as the still present one to either side.

The building first appeared in the 1915 Sanborn map, listed as a garage but with a single store space in its southeast corner. The 1917-18 directory lists the Phillips & Taylor Transfer Co., with Richard Phillips and son-in-law Wayne E. Taylor as proprietors, at 221-23. In addition to operating the garage, the firm ran a taxicab and baggage transfer service and had autos for hire. Wayne Taylor and wife Cora established a jitney/cab service in the early 1910s that expanded into bus service to Flint in 1915 and ultimately into what became known as the Indian Trails Bus Line in 1940 (see *Owosso, A to Z*, 400, 474-75). The 1924 directory doesn't list the garage (by then the bus service was operating out of the Wildermuth Hotel, 119 S. Washington), and the 1928 through 1942 directories list Frank A. Phillips' agricultural implements business here.

From the first the second story contained apartments. By 1928 and through at least 1936 the apartments were listed as the Pulver & Bush Apartments, owned by local attorneys Seth G. Pulver and Walter M. Bush. The 1928 directory lists eight apartments, A-H.

By 1948 and into the early 1960s the Wiley Motor Company occupied the ground story and the upstairs contained the Wiley Apartments. By 1964 and until about 1980 the main floor housed Montgomery Ward Auto Service. The apartments became the Gem Apartments in the 1970s and the Smith Apartments by 1995.

Ball Street, South (West Side)

102. Commercial Building (Built between 1915 and 1930)

Single-story red brick building, with a simple Commercial Brick front, which rests on a concrete foundation and has a roughly finished tile block south side elevation. The asymmetrical façade has a garage door at its south end and is flanked by a paneled pedestrian door with a transom. Different red brick infill adjacent to the pedestrian entry suggests the former existence of a second garage door, and two horizontal glass block windows now light the northern half of the building, forming the top quarters of two square windows, now otherwise bricked in. A soldier brick beltcourse runs the length of the building above the doors and windows. There is a simple four brick high corbel detail in the front just below the plain brick parapet. The south side contains a second entry.

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The first building on this site appears in the 1890 Sanborn and originally functioned as a warehouse. It was demolished between 1908 and 1915. The present single-story building was erected between 1915 and 1930 and was listed as an auto shop in the 1930 Sanborn. The next occupant of this building, according to the directories, was Robert F. Graham's chiropractic practice, which was present here through 1951.

Comstock Street, East (North Side)

109. Part of Wildermuth Hotel. See 119-25 South Washington Street

123. State Farm Insurance / Reeves Wheel Alignment (1955); George Hoddy, builder; Non-contributing

Single-story commercial building with smooth EIFS or stucco finish and broad vinyl projecting fascia. The building has a central glazed entry with flanking piers and a broad double window on either side and paired windows and raised piers on its long east side elevation. **Non-contributing because no historic finishes are visible.**

This building was constructed on the former site of a Studebaker garage which was demolished in the early 1950s. George Hoddy built the current building, now occupied by Sunnyside Florists. Two of the earliest occupants of the building were State Farm Insurance and Reeves Wheel Alignment Service in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Reeves Wheel Alignment was present here through 1980. Sunnyside Florists occupied a variety of other buildings in Owosso before moving into the current building in the late 1980s. They continue to operate at this address. The Owosso Community Players utilize a portion of the building and installed a door fronting North Park Street in 2010.

Exchange Street, East (South Side)

108. Commercial Building (pre-1884);

Two-story commercial building now largely faced in c. 1950s-60s metal siding. A narrow vertical pattern metal siding covers the end piers, low bulkheads, and transom area in the mostly display window ground-story storefront, and wider vertical ribbed siding spans the entire windowless second-story façade, including a left-hand (east) part spanning an alley that passes through the building line next to the storefront. The storefront has a door at the right-hand end and a projecting flat-top aluminum canopy. The present storefront and ground-story finishes are likely fifty or more years old and contributing, while the present upper façade finish may have been installed later and is a non-contributing feature. It is not clear with the information currently available what historic material remains in place beneath the upper façade. The two-story rear façade is of brick. The rear façade of the second-story part spanning the part of the alley near the street is faced in brick-pattern metal sheeting that has deteriorated, showing some of the vertical wood sheathing beneath.

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The building appears in the first, 1884 Sanborn map, listed as housing a printing operation. By 1890 the building was listed as containing a Chinese laundry, and in 1894 it was again a printing shop. The 1908 map shows a tailor shop and the 1915-46 ones list a photography shop. City directories list Dorr H. Day's photography shop here from 1910 until 1957. Burdette Shattuck then continued the business at this address until the 1990s. The 1915 map is the first to show the second story spanning the alley to the building's east.

110. Commercial Building (Built between 1884 and 1890)

The two-story red brick Italianate commercial building features a storefront with modern brick bulkhead below large display windows and two recessed doors at the right-hand end, one giving access to the first story, the other leading to the second story. A prism glass transom spans the width of the building above the storefront. Above, low arches in the front's masonry indicate the former division of the storefront into three equal sections. Three one-over-one windows define the three fenestration bays of the second story, which are flanked by raised piers that transition into a brick corbel table below the plain parapet. Each window features a simple stone sill and a low gabled and bracketed metal hood.

What seems to be a different building shows at this site in the 1884 map. The current building was present by 1890. Occupants shown in the 1890 map were a grocery and, in the second story, printing business. In 1894 the building housed a tin shop. Other early occupants included the E. A. Alinghams & Co. Meat Market, *Shiawassee American* newspaper, and Michael H. Rourke's saloon and soft drink shop. From 1955 to 2008 the building housed George's Beauty Salon.

114. Kroger Store / Firestone (pre-1940); Non-Contributing

Broad-fronted single-story yellow brick commercial building, with a nearly end-to-end glazed storefront above very low bulkheads, but now with the right-hand half (six sections) enclosed. The building has a double-door entry and four window sections at the left and a broad white paneled fascia displaying the FIRESTONE name on the front and side. The long side elevation contains entrances to garage bays. **Extensive renovations make the building non-contributing.**

The building first appears in the 1946 Sanborn map; the 1930 map shows a house at this location. It may have been constructed in the mid-1930s. Between 1936 and 1942 Owosso Maytag Sales and Service, washing machines, had a store at this address. The building also housed a Kroger grocery from 1940 to 1959. The Firestone Tire Store relocated to this building from their other location at 209 North Washington Street in 1959 and has been located at this address since that time.

Exchange Street, East (North Side)

201-205. Argus Press Building (Built between 1894 and 1900; c. 1919; 1965)

Photo 26

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A two-story Late Victorian painted brick building with a rectangular footprint that includes a one-story extension along the entire east (right) side. The first story of the south front and west side has been refaced with newer tannish brick and this same finish also wraps around the east side of the building, extending to the east in the single-story addition. The façade is divided into four bays on the first story, three forming a symmetrical central-entry front to the two-story building, and two bays on the second. A short flight of stairs leads to the broad recessed entry in the center of the two-story part, and the bay to either side as well as the one in the one-story section's front each is lit with three closely spaced windows. The entry is framed by large sidelights and transoms. "ARGUS PRESS" and the address numbers are spelled out in individual metal letters and numbers on a broad brick band that spans the façade between the first and second-story windows. Raised piers edge the second-story front and divide it into two bays, each capped by a band of triangular or "inverse-pyramid"-pattern corbelled brickwork below a broad brick frieze and plain parapet. The two second-story bays each features three one-over-one windows, the central broader than the one to either side, with very low flat-topped brick segmental-arch heads.

In the west side facing N. Park a very slightly taller front section is framed by corner piers and the lower rear section also has a raised pier at the back (northwest) corner and another a short distance south of it that likely marks the rear corner of the building prior to the c. 1920 addition of this northern bay, this entire side also displaying the inverted-pyramid corbelled brickwork and plain frieze and parapet of the front. Like the front, the side displays groups of triple closely spaced windows downstairs and windows with the same brick caps upstairs. The east elevation includes the single-story addition, which is lit with six narrow one-over-one windows and two prominent groups of single-light windows. The second story on the east elevation is set back from the first-story addition. Brick piers divide the elevation into the same three sections as the west side, with more one-over-one windows with caps of the same design except for the two windows in the later rear section, which have simple brick segmental-arch heads.

The building first appears on the 1900 Sanborn as the "Joe Amos Hack & Livery." Joseph Amos ran a hack or (omni)bus service from the 1880s into the early 1900s, briefly partnering, apparently, with Albert Sax about 1895 (1895 state gazetteer). Amos died by 1905, and the building was by then occupied by the Union Transfer Co., hacks, transfer company, and storage, and the Huron Transfer Co. livery. Succeeding directories through 1913 continue to list Union Transfer. The 1917 directory lists Ernest G. Westphal's auto salesroom. The building became the headquarters of the *Argus Press* in 1919 after it merged with the *Evening Argus* and continues to house the only newspaper published in Owosso.

As late as the 1915 Sanborn the building had a large section at its north end that extended east beyond the east wall of today's two-story building. This was replaced, it appears, most likely soon after the *Argus Press* bought the building, with the present back end of the two-story part and the one-story section behind it, these showing in the 1930 map – the one-story part first showing as a store but now containing a garage door. The eastern single-story addition was constructed in 1965. The two-story building's present brick lower façade may date from the same time; a 1920s city directory photo shows the recessed entry containing a pair of classical columns.

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Exchange Street, West (North Side)

110. Goodyear Building (Built between 1890 and 1894)

Photos 27 and 28, bldg. at R

Two-story three-bay painted brick Late Victorian commercial building. The building has a c. 1950s storefront with the store entry and second-story entrance side by side in a right-hand recess. A horizontal ribbed aluminum strip fills the former storefront cornice location up nearly to the second-story windows. Raised brick piers separate three window bays in the upper story, the outer ones containing single windows, the central a paired one – all with rock-face stone sills. The windows are topped by wood lintels, with their own modillioned cornices, below large boarded-up transoms. These windows are capped by smooth stone lintels/beltcourse, above which are rock-face brick panels capped by bands of corbelled and sawtooth brickwork below a plain frieze which caps the piers and window bays. There is an otherwise simple metal cornice displaying end blocks, one capped by an onion dome finial.

This building first appears in the 1894 Sanborn. The Sanborns and directories show that it housed meat shops during its early years down to 1931 – N. A. Goodyear Meats from 1905 to 1907, Bowers & Underwood 1910-21, and Bart's Meat Market 1921-31. Later long-term occupants included the Owosso Dairy Store between 1932 and 1953 and Family Optical (later Owosso Optical) between 1953 and 1975.

112. Amos Block (Built between 1890 and 1894)

Photos 27 and 28, bldg. 2nd from R; Photo 29

Three-story painted brick Late Victorian commercial building with end brick piers and rockface and molded brick details. It has a c. 1950s-60s storefront with central recessed entry and upstairs entry at right, all sheltered by a flat-top aluminum canopy, and a smooth-finished transom area containing store signage above the display windows. There are two broad c. 1950s metal windows in the second story beneath a broad brick segmental arch, with molded brick cap, that spans the front. In the third story, four now boarded up windows separated by narrow brick piers are topped by scalloped-bottom stone lintels. The front displays bricks faced in a distinctive projecting "hip-roof" form in the second and third stories above the second-story arch, above the third-story lintels, and in narrow vertical panels in the corbelled brickwork-capped end piers. The height of the parapet has been reduced and a simple cornice with beefy finial at each end that shows in old photos has been removed. The broad second-story arch contained a four-section transomed double-hung window.

The 1884 and 1890 Sanborn maps illustrate a two-story building on this site, occupied by a restaurant with a bake house in the rear. The current three-story building first appears in the 1894 Sanborn map and also housed a bakery. It became a grocery by 1900, when the Sanborn maps label it the Amos Block. One of the earliest occupants identified for the building is Bunting & Miller Groceries, which operated here from 1905 through 1911. The 1915 Sanborn lists the

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occupant as a "Racket" store, presumably William A. Sherman's notions store (1911-1928). The building has housed Sobak's Home Health Supplies since 1989.

114. Dimmick Building (Built between 1890 and 1894; present façade 2011). Non-contributing

Photos 27 and 28, 3rd bldg. from R

Three-story commercial building now with its upper façade completely rebuilt in a style that emulates its Late Victorian neighbors but retains none of its historic design and finishes. The upper façade is now sheathed with smooth finish EIFS over concrete block and displays raised end piers and frieze and raised strips, topped with arches, outlining and capping two adjoining vertical bays of modern paired windows – narrower raised horizontal bands form beltcourses at window sill and lintel level. The windows are paired one-over-one type, the second-story ones with transoms. The street level has a nearly all glass storefront topped by a projecting horizontal canopy – the storefront and canopy pre-dating the 2011 work – between the EIFS-clad end piers. **Non-contributing due to the loss of historic façade materials.**

The three-story building first appears on the 1894 Sanborn, replacing a two-story structure illustrated in the 1890 map. This and 116 may have been built at the same time; the two had virtually identical three-bay facades, with square-head transomed windows in the second story and arched windows in the third – the center second-story window in each once a slant-sided oriel window. The façade of 114 has been rebuilt twice. This second rebuilding took place in 2011 and replaced a c. 1960s-70s façade treatment with dark blue enameled metal panel end piers and upper façade cladding and paired slider windows in a vinyl sided low second story just above the storefront. In building this earlier front, the original stone-trimmed brick Late Victorian front was entirely removed and replaced by a concrete block structural system.

The first recorded occupant of the building was Nicholas Goodyear Meats (1892-94). Other occupants have included G. N. Finch (dentist, early 1900s); Harry Putterville's Bazaar (1905-08); the Star Bargain House Store (1910-21); Owosso Cooperative Association of Grocers (1921); Lee & Candy Wholesale Grocers (1930-32); Grant-Bitting Company women's furnishings (1932-36); Carl Bekofski bowling alley (1945); and the Sears Roebuck and Company Mail Order Center (1948-63).

116. Schuknecht Building (Built between 1890 and 1894)

Photos 27 and 28, 4th bldg. from R

Three-story three-bay stone-trimmed red brick Late Victorian commercial building with round-arch-head third-floor windows with keystone-detailed brick arch heads. The building has a recessed center-entry mid-20th-C. storefront and an upstairs entry at the right end. There is a tall signboard above in the transom location. The symmetrical upper stories each displays three windows, the center broader than the one to either side, and they are separated by raised brick piers – the second-story windows square-head one-over-one with margin-light transoms, third-story boarded up except for their multi-light round-arch transoms. The front displays rock-face stone window sills and smooth-finish stone second-story lintels/beltcourse and third-floor

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springblocks. There are panels of brick in a pebble finish below the third-story windows and the wall face above the third-story windows displays sawtooth brickwork below a tile-capped brick parapet. As in 114, the upper parapet and a simple metal cornice with large finial at each end have been removed. A slant-sided oriel window once projected from the front where the broad central second-story window is now located.

This building first appears on the 1894 Sanborn map as a three-story building, replacing a two-story building illustrated on the 1890 map. Like the neighboring building at 114 W. Exchange, this building is three stories on its south elevation and steps back to two and one story toward the rear of the lot. Between 1908 and 1915, a single-story porch and stairs were added to the rear of the building.

The HDSC inventory form reports that Joseph Schuknecht constructed the building after entering into an agreement with Guerdon Dimmick and Charles Duff, who respectively owned a grocery and dry goods shop at 114 W. Exchange, and a tea and coffee shop at 118 W. Exchange. The 1894 map lists the building housing a boot and shoe store, and the 1900 map shows "to be hardware." Subsequent occupants have included a variety of clothing and shoe, hardware, tire, and appliance stores; the Salvation Army (1924-42); the United Auto and Aircraft Workers of America union (1948); and Josling Tire and Appliance (1955). By 1959 Montgomery Ward, which occupied 118 and 120-22 to the west, expanded into this building as well, remaining in business in the ground story of these three buildings until about 1980. A 1979 survey photo shows the building façade painted a light color – this perhaps done during the Montgomery Ward years (118 and 120-22 were painted to match).

118 W. Exchange. Duff Block (1890)
Photo 28, 2nd bldg. from L

Three-story red brick Late Victorian commercial building with a recessed central entry storefront. The second-story façade features two pairs of one-over-one wood windows under brick segmental arches, the windows resting on a continuous rock-face limestone sill. The third-story façade has four one-over-one wood windows that, separated by thin brick piers, rest on another continuous rock-face limestone sill. The piers separating the window bays support a scalloped-bottom smooth limestone beltcourse that spans the front just below a brick frieze. The building's front features three types of unusual decorative brick, including bricks faced in projecting pyramid forms (three pyramids to the brick), in the parapet and in vertical panels in the end piers. A since removed simple metal cornice with finial-topped pedestal at each end shows in a 1979 survey photo. The Duff Block is already individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The building first appears in the 1890 Sanborn, with a single-story rear wing. Charles Duff had this building constructed in 1890 to house his grocery, coffee, and tea business. He operated the business in this building until his retirement in 1922. Duff was born in Monroe County, Michigan, and moved to Owosso after he was discharged from the army at the end of the Civil War in 1865. In 1924 the building housed Carl W. Bartz's meat market. It was succeeded by Telfer's Meat Market. By 1948 the Montgomery Ward store, previously located in 120-22,

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expanded into this building as well, remaining until about 1980. Like 116 and 120-22 W. Exchange, this building front shows as painted a light color in a 1979 survey photo.

120-22. Grow Block (1890)

Photo 28, far L bldg.

This three-story two-storefront red brick Late Victorian building has a modern traditional-looking wood-finish storefront with a recessed central double entry. The storefront spans the width of the building and wraps around the southwest corner. Wooden piers separate the single-light storefront windows, and there are prism glass transoms beneath the storefront cornice. Raised brick piers subdivide the second and third stories of the façade into halves, and each half into three bays. In the second story a single one-over-one window is present in each bay – the center one in each half broader than the one to either side – and rests on a rock-face limestone sill that forms part of a continuous stringcourse. Another continuous broad smooth limestone beltcourse acts as lintels for the window. Another rock-face limestone stringcourse runs the width of the building on the third story, providing another continuous window sill for the third story's six one-over-one windows. These windows each feature a half-moon, multi-light transom. The brick arches over the transoms spring from limestone blocks at the arch springlines. The arches have limestone keystones and the broader center arch on each side also displays voussoirs of whitish limestone alternating with red brick ones. The spandrel panels and arches above the third-story windows feature more of the unique projecting "hip-roof" brick that forms a distinctive feature of the downtown's 1890-era buildings. A large bracketed wood cornice adorns the roofline of the façade. The west elevation is nine bays deep, defined by the window pattern. The first story of the west side elevation has few windows save for a second small storefront near the north end. This storefront has a recessed entry, prism glass transoms, and a decorative cornice. The second and third-story windows are one-over-ones with limestone sills and segmental-arch heads with limestone caps. The building is already individually listed in the national register.

The building was constructed for Manderville Grow and his wife. A brick wall divided the two store spaces on the first and second floors, but the third floor was open to accommodate a hall. A single-story wing was added to the rear of the 122 section between 1894 and 1900. By 1908 this was raised to two stories. By 1915 the 120 store had been lengthened to match 122 and the rear additions were raised to a uniform three stories and an elevator installed. The third floor was used as a meeting hall and classroom space for the Owosso Business College (1905-21) while the ground story housed the U. S. Post Office from the building's completion until c. 1909. The lower stories also housed a barber shop, music shop, confectionary at various times and the W. E. Hall Son & Company grocery and dry goods in 1910-24. The Montgomery Ward store occupied the building from approximately 1930 to 1980 (expanding into 118 by 1945 and 116 as well by 1959). A 1979 survey photo shows that, like 116 and 120-22, this building's façade was also painted a light color.

200. The Evening Argus Building (pre-1884; ca. 1912 addition)

Photos 31 and 32, corner bldg.

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This is a two-story painted brick Italianate building with raised brick piers at the corners on the W. Exchange and N. Ball facades and brick corbel tables below the roofline supporting paneled brick friezes with plain parapet caps. The front contains three square-head windows, with stone slab sills, beneath raised brick segmental-arch-head caps, with stone keystones, above a modern vertical-board-finish storefront with recessed entry at the N. Ball corner. The east side facing N. Ball displays more of the square-head double-hung windows set beneath brick segmental-arch heads in both stories. The east façade also contains a single entry, and there is a much broader hoodmold incorporated into the wall near the north corner of the elevation, with what seems a more recent square-head window beneath it toward one side. The present brickwork beneath the arch *may* be later infill for a former broad entry. A stairway alongside the east wall down to basement level from the sidewalk leads to a nearly as broad basement-level opening, capped by a segmental-arch brick head, directly beneath the larger arch. A photo of the building in the 1908 Owosso *Souvenir* shows the entry in the cut-out corner as at present. The building then had double-hung segmental-arch-head windows and a bracketed cornice below broadly projecting eaves. The present side entry was then a window (the now north window on that side was an entry), and the broad arch capped paired windows.

The building first appears in the 1884 Sanborn map. The southern half, fronting W. Exchange, was then a woodworking shop and the northern half fronting N. Ball a blacksmith shop. In 1890 and 1894 the building housed a boot and shoe shop. The building was occupied by *The Evening Argus* and its successor *The Owosso Argus-Press* newspaper offices and printing plant from 1895 until 1919 when *The Argus-Press* moved to its present location at 201 E. Exchange.

The Izor Printing Company then occupied part of the building until the 1950s. W. C. Cadwallader Insurance Agency, since 1937 Cadwallader-Lord-Hahn, Inc., established in 1903, have occupied the ground-floor storefront since 1920 (*Souvenir of Owosso* 1986, 57).

202 W. Exchange. Commercial Building (Built between 1900 and 1908)

Photo 31, center L

Two-story two-bay painted red brick Late Victorian commercial building, with two narrow nearly all-glass storefronts with their fronts recessed from the upper façade, and a second-story entry at the right end. The upper story contains two short square-head one-over-one windows. The current windows appear to occupy the original locations but the upper third of each opening has been bricked in. A 1979 survey photo shows these windows containing metal casement windows within the same openings. Raised end piers with a corbelled brick detail support a plain brick upper façade and parapet.

This building first appears in the 1908 Sanborn map. Early occupants included the Pacific Express Company, United States Express Company, Wells Fargo, Dominion Express Company, and Western Express in the 1905-16 period. Since then the building has housed a broad variety of businesses. The HDSC inventory form reports that in the 1950s Christian's Garage occupied a portion of this building and 204, providing parking for customers of the D. M. Christian Department Store located one block south on W. Main at Ball. At some point after 1946 the

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building was remodeled to accommodate two storefronts. The second story window openings were also altered, possibly around the same time as the storefront renovations.

**204-06. Christian Science Reading Room (early 1950s); Non-Contributing
Photo 31, far L**

Broad-fronted two-story commercial building with a buff brick front, topped by tall very sharply pitched asphalt-shingled pent roof. Its front displays a modicum of modern white-painted wooden Colonial detailing. The ground story has the entrance at the right end and separate seven and four-section windows, each capped by a bubble canopy, to the entry's left extending nearly side to side across the façade. A wooden cornice spans the front below the second story. There are four widely separated double-hung windows, each with ornamental shutters and sheltered by an awning, upstairs. The building's exposed west side and rear façade are of concrete block. The rear contains a slightly off-center garage door entrance with pedestrian door adjacent.

This building was constructed after 1946 on previously vacant ground. There is no listing in the 1950 directory, but the 1953 one lists the Christian Science Reading Room in 204 and the D. M. Christian Garage, associated with the department store on W. Main, under the 206 address. The HDSC inventory forms for 202 and 204 report that the garage occupied "portions" of those two buildings during the 1950s. The 1960 directory no longer lists either the Christian Science or Christian's Garage use. Various real estate, law, and medical offices have been occupants for most of the time since then.

208-12. Owosso Gas Light Company (Built between 1884 and 1886)

Two-story three-storefront wide painted brick Italianate commercial building, now containing two storefronts at street level. The asymmetrical ground-floor façade has a red brick-faced Colonial restaurant area, with fluted-pilaster and broken-pediment-framed door and a large multi-light window at the left and a broad projecting "greenhouse" dining area across the center of the front, occupying the left four-fifths of the front. The right-hand-end fifth contains a paired entry beneath a projecting mansard-roof canopy. The right-end entry area and the greenhouse bulkheads are faced in vertical wood boarding. An original wooden storefront cornice displaying paired brackets separated by singles spans the front separating the ground from the second story. The upper story displays three groups of three one-over-one windows, with rock-face stone sills and round-arch raised brick caps, with stone keystones. The present windows have square heads, with the former round-arch heads now infilled with boarding. A simple *cyma recta* metal cornice is supported on an intricate corbeled brick detail that includes a dentil-like band at the base. The 1928 city directory contains a photo (18) showing the building with round-arch windows and the same simple roofline treatment as today. The west third of the brick rear façade has been expanded with a short three-quarter width two-story block extension.

Vertical joints in the brick upper façade between the building's three sections make it clear what now reads as a single building was built as three. The Sanborn maps show the middle and western sections in place by 1884, with the eastern third added between 1894 and 1900. The 1884 map shows a wagon and blacksmith shop occupied the first floor of 210, with "painting"

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upstairs, while a harness shop was located in 212. The 1890 map shows "gas plumbing" office in 210. The Owosso Gas Light Company's offices occupied 210 as of the 1899 directory but moved to 208 by 1905 and used this location until the mid to late 1920s. The 1928-32 directories list the Michigan Federated Utilities, which had perhaps absorbed Owosso Gas Light, having offices at 208-10. The 1928 directory illustration shows the 208-10 section with a recessed entry below the third window from the east and large display windows to the east and west over to 212. By 1936 and until at least 1955 Consumers Electric Power Co. used this space for a warehouse. A long time occupant at 212 was Henry W. Martin. The harness shop shown in the 1884 Sanborn may have been his, and the 1899 directory lists his robes, blankets, and horse goods business there, with residence upstairs. Later directories list Martin's business as a harness shop and then list him in 1917 as a rug weaver. By 1924 no business is listed, but the Martins still had their residence upstairs.

Part or all of the ground story housed an Elias Brothers Big Boy restaurant between about 1970 and 1990, followed by Oliver's Restaurant by 1995.

214 W. Exchange. John's Brothers Wholesale Produce Company (c. 1947); Non-Contributing

One-story commercial building with completely modernized front with red brick and wood trim and a three-part storefront window and entry to its right. The upper facade is clad in a tall vinyl siding mansard roof. **Non-contributing because no historic finishes are visible.**

The HDSC inventory form reports that this building stands on the site of Alexander Johnson's 1882 dwelling. It states that Johnson was a former slave who established a barber shop in the Grow Block basement in the late nineteenth century. His house at 214 West Exchange Street was demolished between 1930 and 1946. John's Brothers Wholesale Produce Company occupied the present building between 1948 and 1951. Later occupants have included the Automatic Laundry Self-Service, Erv's Upholstery, Sagebrush clothing in 1980, and an expansion of Oliver's Restaurant.

216. George Martin Harness Co. (ca. 1911)

Two-story two-bay brown Commercial Brick commercial building. It has a c. 1960s storefront with inward-slanting sides and off-center, recessed entry. A shingled pent roof spans the width of the facade over the storefront. The upper story is asymmetrical, with one paired window and one single one-over-one window with stone slab sills. A corbeled brick band supports a frieze displaying a basketweave brickwork band. The building is topped by a low stepped parapet with stone coping.

Constructed between 1908 and 1911, the building was the home of the George Martin Harness Company by 1911 and continuing until the mid-1930s. The father and son team ran the longest surviving harness shop in Owosso. By 1946 the building housed Chander's Studio photography shop. In about 1955-60 the building served as an annex to the U. S. Post Office. Clifford A. Trethewey's podiatry practice has occupied this building since 1989.

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224. General Telephone / Verizon (Built between 1955 and 1960)

Large rectangular two-story salmon brick International Style building with shallow projection across one half of the narrow front end. The main entry is located below a flat-top canopy in an angle next to the front projection, whose narrow end overlooking the entry contains a tall horizontal-light window. There is a 13-section nearly floor-to-ceiling window strip, with brick piers at the ends and a flat-top metal canopy, along the south end of the long west elevation facing N. Water. Most other elevations contain no windows. A large section at the building's north end appears to be a later addition based on a slight change in brick hue.

The building was originally constructed as commercial offices and a telephone store for General Telephone, which was located here from about 1960 until the early 1990s. In 2005 the building housed the D & D Auto Sales used car dealership. O'Reilly Auto Parts occupied the building in 2012. Currently the site is utilized as a Verizon equipment storage building.

Exchange Street, West (South Side)

113. Fletcher Building (Built between 1915 and 1919)

Photo 30, L

Three-story three-bay limestone-trim red Commercial Brick building. It has a modernized asymmetrical storefront with entry and large windows outlined by vertical ribbed anodized bronze-finish aluminum siding. The upper stories each contains three recent paired windows (top halves paneled in) resting on continuous sill/beltcourses. Limestone or concrete blocks mark the upper window corners and midpoints, and there are lozenge-shaped details of the same material between the second and third stories aligned with the window midpoints. A broad plaque bearing the "Fletcher" name is centered below a band of corbeled brick beneath the parapet. The side and rear windows have segmental-arch heads.

The 1915 Sanborn illustrates the footprint of this building, noting that there were building plans, but no structure had as yet been erected. The 1919 directory is the first to list the building (1917 does not), listing the Star Bargain House, two apartments above, and the Knights of Pythias Hall (third story) – the Knights listed through the 1928 edition. The longest "early" store tenant was Suber's Dry Cleaners, from about 1940 into the 1960s, and the apartments were known as the Suber Apartments during the 1940s and 50s. Since about 1975 the building has housed a succession of accounting firms.

117. Jackson Block (Built between 1890 and 1894)

Photo 30, 2nd bldg. from L

Two-story four-bay red brick Late Victorian commercial building topped by an intricately detailed pressed metal cornice. It has a modern storefront with windows and central pedestrian entry outlined by vertical ribbed vinyl siding and topped by a pent roof of the same material covering the former transom location, the whole matching the Fletcher Building storefront next door to the east. The second story has brick piers edging the façade and separating four one-over-

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one windows with rock-face stone sills and smooth stone lintels spanning between the piers. Above each window and below a corbelled brick detail between each pair of piers is a panel containing bricks faced in a pattern of small rounded stones that is outlined by a molded brick frame.

This building first appears in the 1894 Sanborn map, with occupants then listed as a printing business in the basement and a jewelry and book shop on the main floor. The 1899 directory lists Charles Jackson, insurance, Dora Kenton & Co., millinery, and Farrand B. Holman, jeweler and optician, as occupants, with Jackson's residence also in the building. The Jackson agency remained until about 1920, a jeweler and optician until about 1918, and a millinery shop, run by Lulu Reuss by 1910 and by Dora Reuss by 1919 and until at least the mid-1930s. The building's address shows in the Sanborns as 117 through 1908, then as 117-19 in the 1908 map. When the building now numbered 119 was constructed in the early 1910s, the Jackson Block became 117-117 ½ W. Exchange.

By 1936 the Owosso City Club occupied quarters in the building's upper story. Established in 1934 and in operation until the mid-1980s, the club came to occupy the entire second stories of 117-123 by the 1950s if not before. Their address was listed as 117 ½ W. Exchange in 1936, but by 1948 the directory listed two addresses for the club, 117a W. Exchange and 116 N. Ball. For several years in the early 1950s the primary entrance listed in the directory was 128 N. Ball, located in 121-23 W. Exchange's west side, but by 1955 and until the club disappears from the directories after the 1985 edition, the address listed was 117 ½ W. Exchange.

119. Commercial Building (Built between 1910 and 1913)

Photo 30, 3rd bldg. from L

Three-story three-bay red brick Late Victorian commercial building. It has a modern brick storefront with slant-sided recessed central entry with a tall shake cedar shingle pent roof over the transom area and extending up to the second-story window sills. The upper stories each contains three square-head window openings, with double-hung windows topped by transom sash (the third-story windows are reduced in height by wooden infill and the transoms boarded up). There are continuous stone sills and lintels. A tall frieze of corbelled headers supports a bracketed pressed metal cornice. A broad second and third-story pedestrian bridge spans the alley south of this building and 121 connecting with the former Christian's Department Store fronting on W. Main, the three-story east half directly behind 119 (the bridge's west half has only a second-story level). The bridge's east face is clad in smooth cement or stucco and contains large glass block windows.

This building first appears in the 1915 Sanborn map filling a formerly vacant lot, with the use then listed as undertaker. The 1913 directory lists Knapp & Smith, undertakers, at 119 ½ W. Exchange – perhaps the building was briefly given that address when first built since the Jackson Block then had the 117-19 address. The 1915 Sanborn shows the Jackson Block by then with a 115-17 address, and in the 1917 and 1919 directories Knapp & Smith is listed at 119. The building's second story housed part of the Owosso City Club quarters from at least the 1950s until the club's closing in the mid-1980s.

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121-123 / also 128-30 N. Ball. Connor-Struber Block (Built between 1890 and 1894)
Photo 30, bldg. at R

Three-story two-storefront red brick Late Victorian commercial building with broad brick piers marking the façade's ends and midpoint and the upper façade displaying paneled and corbelled brick detailing. The two brick storefronts with their slant-sided recessed central entries appear to date from the 1850s or 60s and match 119's. They are also topped by a tall cedar shake shingle pent roof matching 119's covering the transom area up to the second-story window sills. This treatment is carried around the corner on N. Ball one bay. The second story features two sets of three windows separated from one another by narrow brick piers, each set with broad central and narrower side windows with boarded up transoms, a fixed single light window in each center and 15-over-15-light windows on either side. There are continuous stone sills and lintels. The broad lintel band forms a base for corbeled brickwork that supports continuous sillcourses for the third-story windows. The third story contains a single broad segmental-arch-capped opening in each half that each now holds four short double-hung windows below a tall boarded-up upper portion. In the third story the piers, rising above rock-face "capitals" for the lower piers, project outward a bit more and have rounded corners and narrow vertical paneled centers displaying ornamental brickwork. There is a corbeled brick frieze and simple pressed metal cornice. The piers marking the façade ends and midpoint display stone trim, vertical panels of decorative brickwork, and (two of them) low domical caps. The deep west side elevation on N. Ball repeats the same architectural elements on the first bay near Exchange. The rest of the side elevation presents six upper façade bays containing six segmental-arch-head windows in the third story and five square-head windows in the second story, all now with boarded up upper sections above modern double-hung windows. A broad pier at the corner rises to a corbelled brick detail below a two-part entablature topped by simple cornice. The street level contains two center-entry transomed storefronts, framed by piers supporting an entablature with metal cornice, at the south end away from Exchange. At 128 there are twisted columns at each end of the storefront and framing a recessed double-door center entrance; these support a metal entablature with rosette-decorated architrave, egg-and-dart molding, and projecting cornice. The doors lead into a lobby with double-run staircase with decorative wrought-iron balustrade up to the second floor. The 130 storefront has a broad square-plan recessed center entry with c. 1920s metal window trim.

In back, the 121 section of the building extends back (south) to the mid-block alley, while the 123 section is not as deep and abuts on the south the 114 N. Ball building, whose south side faces the alley. A broad second and third-story pedestrian bridge spans the alley between 119 and 121 W. Exchange and the former Christian's store fronting on W. Main, the west half, only at the second-story level, directly behind 121. Its west side is faced in brick and contains a large multi-light window.

This building first appears on the 1894 Sanborn map. HDSC inventory forms state that the building's east half (121) was constructed for Charles A. Connor and initially housed his business, while the west half (123) was owned by Ludwig Struber, who owned a boot and shoe store on Main Street. *Owosso, A to Z* (269) states that Connor's part of the building was designed and built by local architect/builder Edgar Ingersoll.

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The 1894 map shows a cigar shop (the maps 1900 through 1915 list lunch room or restaurant) in 121 and a furniture store in 123. The 1899 directory lists the Connor business at 121 as "Wholesale and Retail Ice Cream, Oysters, Cigars and Tobacco, Confectionary, Restaurant and Lunches," with the Connor residence also in the building. By 1908 the Conner family also operated the Conner Ice Cream and Dairy Company, an ice cream distributor, with its factory nearby. No. 121 contained Connor's Popular Café until the early 1920s.

The 1899 directory lists the Foster Furniture Co., furniture and undertaking, in 123, and by 1913 and through at least 1924 James E. Everden's second-hand goods and then furniture store was the occupant. Since then the building has housed a broad variety of businesses.

The building's second floor housed Christian's Restaurant, operated as part of Christian's Department Store located on W. Main across the alley to the south (a pedestrian bridge spanning the alley provided a direct connection between store and restaurant). The restaurant was listed in the 1930 through 1941 directories but later became part of the Owosso City Club operation and served that use until the club's closing in the mid-1980s. The club came to occupy the second story of the buildings at 117-23 W. Exchange by the 1950s if not before. Its main entrance was at what is now 128 N. Ball in this building's west side toward the south end. An entry hall with staircase led to a second-story foyer, and these and the club's main dining room (the former Christian's) and a smaller dining room were all located in this building. The third story housed the Christian Apartments, first listed in the 1930 directory, until at least the late 1980s.

Main Street, East (South Side)

100. State Savings Bank / Chemical Bank (1907; expanded 1926; rehabilitated 2008-09) **Photo 2**

Two-story nine-bay long red-orange Roman brick Neoclassical commercial building with broad rusticated brick piers separating bays containing two-story round-arch window openings now containing modern anodized bronze-finish aluminum windows. The piers rise from mauve sandstone beltcourse sections that span the wall sections about two feet above the window sills and have metal capitals. There are seven window bays across the front, with a third bay from the west, originally in the center prior to a 1926 east-end addition, containing the front entrance beneath another arched window. The windows and doors rest on limestone sills. The narrow S. Washington west-side elevation's north half near Main contains another two-story round arch window framed by classical piers, while the south half is plain, containing only a side door to the upstairs office space. The building's two street-facing facades display a classical entablature, with simple metal cornice, topped by a low brick parapet. The south or old rear side faces the bank's parking lot and contains what is today the primary entrance. The building's ground story contains the banking room while a second story houses office space. The building received an extensive rehabilitation in 2008-09 that included reconstruction of the arched window treatment, previously replaced by square-head upper and lower windows set in enameled aluminum paneling that entirely filled the spaces between the piers.

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The building was constructed to house the State Savings Bank in 1907. In 1909 it became the Owosso Savings Bank. The bank was extended to the east in 1926 in matching style. The bank was known as the State Savings Bank until the late 1970s when it became Key State Bank. It became Chemical State Bank in the early 1990s.

114. Miner Building / Studio Theater (1953)

Photo 4, R, and Photo 13, R

Two-story five-bay tan brick commercial building of crisp Mid-Century Modern design except for a classical cornice – the front's overall height, classical cornice, and stone beltcourse (not the same stone as in 100 but fairly close in hue) at the same height as 100's match those of the State Bank Building next door to the west. The building displays a nearly symmetrical five-bay façade with a glazed double-door entry deeply recessed in the center bay. There are two-story window bays displaying alternating groups of two and three windows per bay, with aqua-hue enameled metal panels below, between, and above the sets of windows. A secondary entrance forms a narrow sixth bay on the east end of the façade. The building extends much further back (south) than the adjacent bank building to the west, closing off the east end of the bank parking lot.

The building replaced the former "New" Miner Building which was destroyed in a fire in 1953. Attorney James Miner owned the present building and operated his law offices in the second story. Kline Brothers Department Store was located here in 1955 through 1960. The 1970 city directory lists Greenley's Furniture; Danielson, Storr, Lake & Schultz accountants; attorneys Miner & Reiter; the Farmers Home Administration; and the Selective Service System at this address. Greenley's, the Miner law firm, and various offices were present through 1980. Key State Bank (later Chemical Bank) purchased and occupied the building around 1985, with rental office space upstairs. When a fire severely damaged the Capitol Theater next door in 2007, the bank deeded the annex to the Owosso Community Players.

**120. Capitol Theater / Joseph H. Lebowsky Center (1925-26; Reconstruction 2007-2013);
George J. Bachmann, Flint, architect**

Photo 1

With its reconstruction well under way after a devastating fire in 2007, the Joseph H. Lebowsky Center is the only theater in Owosso's downtown. The four-five-story building has red-brown brick walls and cream-color terra-cotta trim in the tall two-story flat-top front section that gives it a gently Neoclassical character. The main body of the building has a shallow-pitched front gable roof and displays patterns of tall blind, shallow recessed arches in the upper auditorium front overlooking the two-story entrance section and in the long four-story east side wall facing S. Park St. The flat-roof rear backstage area rises another story above the auditorium. The first-story façade of the building's two-story front section is clad in eye-catching bright red enameled metal paneling presumably installed sometime between the late 1930s and the early 1950s. The central recessed entry consists of three pairs of doors with single-light transoms. The front wall on either side contains a multi-section tall window flanked on either side by shorter poster display cases. The enamelled metal paneling wraps around the northeast corner and contains three additional windows on the east elevation. Two rows of theater lights run the width of the

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façade above the windows and extend across the lower edge of a large triangular marquee located in the center of the façade over the central entry. Two more rows of lights line the top of the marquee. The marquee partially obscures the second story of the façade. The second story of the front retains its original 1920s character and presents a group of five six-over-six windows in the center immediately above the marquee flanked by a trio of six-over-six windows to either side. The windows have terra cotta surrounds. A stringcourse of terra cotta runs the width of the façade and acts as a continuous lintel for the windows. It features a rope molding from side to side and four lion heads spaced out near the center. Modern signage spells out "Joseph H. Lebowsky Center" in large raised letters in a broad architrave above the string course.

A terra cotta bead-and-reel molding runs the width of the building separating the architrave and frieze above the name. This is surmounted by a frieze of soldier brick, which is in turn surmounted by a terra cotta cornice highly embellished with classical details – egg-and-dart and acanthus bands and fluting. A brick parapet rises above the cornice and has a very slightly gabled terra-cotta coping.

The long windowless east side wall also displays recessed brick arches. Roughly three stories tall, these divide the auditorium portion of the east elevation into nine bays. The five-story rear backstage unit contains five recessed rectangular openings that have since been bricked in. Five entrances, composed of single or paired panel doors, are located on the east elevation. The brick south (rear) elevation has no windows.

The building was commissioned by Owosso businessman Joseph H. Lebowsky, and replaced Owosso's first City Hall, which had stood here since 1885. Flint architect George J. Bachmann designed the building. Begun in 1925, the Capitol Theater opened on March 4, 1926. It initially hosted vaudeville as well as movies. A major interior renovation took place in 1952, and the enameled metal paneling on the front may date from then or sometime earlier in the late 1930s or 40s. The movie theater closed and in 1985 was sold to the Christian Independent Fellowship for use as a worship venue. In 1990, with the help of the Lebowsky family, the Capitol became the home of the Owosso Community Players and was renamed the Lebowsky Center. A devastating fire in 2007 destroyed the interior, roof, and much of the east side wall, but the Owosso community has made the building's reconstruction a prime civic endeavor. The exterior shell has been rebuilt and work on the interior is proceeding as funds become available.

200. Owosso Federal Savings and Loan / Charter One Bank (1955-56; expanded/remodeled 1969)

This broad-fronted single-story International Style building has a flat roof and a nearly rectangular footprint. It is dominated by a massive flat-top stone pylon that rises well above the roof back from the front near the building's midpoint and displays name signs for the bank. The front's central entry area, including the pylon, and projecting windowless end areas at the east end of the front and south (rear) half of the west side facing S. Washington are finished in orange-tan rockface random ashlar masonry. These masonry zones are separated by areas of broad window strips with teal enameled metal panel bulkheads and transom panel strips that extend around the west side elevation as well as across most of the front. The front and side

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window strips and central entry area are spanned by a broadly projecting horizontal aluminum canopy. Above the window strip and central entry area the upper façade is set back and its fascia also clad in the metal paneling. The building now houses a bank, with a convenience store in the streetcorner part, and the central masonry zone contains separate entrances for them, the bank's entry set against the pylon's slightly projecting lower front end.

As built in 1955-56 the building formed only the western half of the present building, east to and including the sign pylon. In 1969 the entire east end was added and the west end substantially renovated, with the part of the front where the bank and store entries are located pushed forward and the canopy extended to shelter this area, whose front was originally set back and contained windows. The main front entrance was located toward the right (west) in what is now the store area and the windows in this part of the front ran practically to ground level. The present metal paneling dates from the 1969 addition/renovations.

The building was built for Owosso Federal Savings & Loan. The bank became First Federal Savings & Loan of Owosso in 1964 and continued as such until roughly 1985 when it became First Federal of Michigan. It operated under that name until the first decade of the 2000s, when it became Charter One Bank. The building's east end was added about 1969. The northwest corner section of the building now houses a separate commercial use – the directories suggest this use began only after 2010.

Main Street, East (North Side)

111. Commercial Building (Built between 1884 and 1890)

Photo 4, to R of 4-story bldg.

Three-story red brick Late Victorian commercial building. It has a modern buff brick storefront with a slant-sided recessed, left-side entry. The second story features a broad and low segmental-arch opening that, spanning the entire façade between the end piers, contains four one-over-one windows that, separated by wood mullions, are topped by a low wooden panel with incised plant details. The third-story façade also displays four more one-over-one windows under a square head and resting on a continuous limestone sill. The upper façade is now faced in vertical boarding or T-111. A substantial bracketed cornice that shows in a picture in the 1908 *Souvenir* is now absent.

This building appears on the 1890 Sanborn map, but not on the 1884 map, indicating it was built between those years. The 1890 map lists the occupants as a paints and oils business, with furniture storage on the second floor and upholstery on the third. The 1894 map shows a grocery, with offices in the second story and furniture in the third. By 1899 the ground floor housed John Jones' lunchroom and billiard parlor. The 1905 directory lists the Owosso Opera House Saloon, run by the proprietor of the opera house – then located a block away at the N. Washington/E. Exchange corner – Conrad Mehlenbacher. The saloon use ended before 1913, and a succession of meat markets occupied the store space from the mid-late 1910s to the late 1930s. These were followed by Arthur Ward's used furniture store in 1936-1960.

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113-15. Commercial Building (ca. 1890)

Photo 3

This is a large Late Victorian three-story two-storefront wide red brick building. Paneled broad brick piers mark the ends and midpoint of the front and narrower ones define three bays in either half, the middle wider than the outer ones. No. 113 has a broad recessed center-entry storefront, with light red brick bulkheads. The 115 storefront is finished in vertical paneling and has a double door, with sidelights, at its left end and a small triple window at the far right. The second and third stories are lit with replacement single or paired one-over-one windows, some with transoms, the paired windows in the center on each side. The second and third-story windows have rock-face stone sills and lintels, the second-story windows' sills forming a continuous sill-course that extends across each half of the façade between the broad piers. Horizontal panels in the brick façade between the second and third-story windows contain "hip-roof" bricks in the side sections and pebble-finish brick in the broader center sections. The upper façade below a plain tile-capped brick parapet features a broad band of corbeled brickwork. Old photos and post card views show that large urn-like finials capped the ends and center piers and that each half of the façade was topped by a large cornice with central raised area capped by a gable form. A c. 1940 post card view shows these still in place. As built the back end of 113 extended farther north than 115. The 1915 Sanborn is the first to show 115 extended so that its rear wall aligned with 113's.

The 1890 Sanborn map shows a foundation in place, suggesting that the building was under construction that year.

- 113: The 1894 map lists a millinery shop in the first floor and cigar manufacturer in the third floor of number 113 and the 1900 directory lists a hardware store. Ira G. Curry's hardware store occupied 113's storefront from the 1890s until about 1920, followed by the Dignan & McIntyre (later Dignan's) hardware in the 1920s and 30s. The HDSC inventory form reports that I. G. Curry came to Owosso in 1887 and ran his store at 108 N. Washington before moving here. Curry also served as Owosso's mayor in 1896. Herman Dignam operated his hardware store in storefront 113 from 1924 into the early 1940s. Dignam was a state representative from 1935 to 1938; state senator from 1939 to 1942; and Michigan Secretary of State from 1943 to 1946. Later, in 1948 through 1960, in addition to occupying storefront 111 East Main Street, Arthur Ward's hardware shop was also located at 113 E. Main. The Charles Lamp Studio has occupied 113 since 1968.
- 115: The 1894 map lists an American Express office in 115 and the 1899 directory lists American and National Express, the Western Union Telegraph office, and J. M. Beckwith, dealer in Kimball pianos and organs (Beckwith was the Western Union agent) there. This storefront then also then housed the office and waiting room for the Owosso & Corunna trolley line. The 1907 directory lists Wallace D. Burke's liquor store/saloon, with Burke's Hall and the Central Labor Union Hall (one and the same hall?) upstairs. The Burke liquor store/saloon was gone by 1910 and the Labor Hall by 1913. A clothing and then grocery store followed in the 1910s to the mid or late 1930s. By 1908 a saloon had replaced the express offices and by 1915 a grocery replaced the saloon. A millinery shop occupied storefront 115 in the 1920s. Byerly's grocery store was present here in the mid-1920s through 1936. In the early 1940s through 1970, storefront 115 housed the Elite Restaurant.

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- While the 1894 map lists a cigar manufacturer occupying the third story of 113, no directory listings for one were located prior to 1910, when Paul Siess & Co. is listed in 115. This firm was followed by C. E. Pollock and then Shodell & Reed, cigar manufacturers, at the 113 or 115 address until the early 1920s.

117. Commercial Building (Built between 1915 and 1930); Non-Contributing

Photo 3, R edge

Single-story commercial building with a c. 1950s storefront with broad square-plan central recess containing the entry. A shake cedar shingle pent roof covers the upper façade. The exposed east side is clad in vertical metal siding and contains a second entry. **Non-contributing because so little in the way of historic finishes are evident.**

The 1915 Sanborn shows a smaller building here; the 1930 map is the first to show this building. An early tenant may have been Graham's Drugstore, first listed in the 1931 directory (the 1928 directory lists an A & P grocery). Graham's remained in business here until the late 1940s, followed by William's Drug Store until 1964.

Main Street, West (North Side)

102-04. Kresge's / Jupiter Store (Pre-1884; front early 1950s)

Photo 5, 2nd bldg. from R

Two-story symmetrical-front beige brick commercial building with two reversed-plan storefronts with side-by-side recessed central entries, flanking storefront windows, and red brick piers and bulkheads. It has a painted aluminum awning roller/canopy below diagonal board paneling across the signboard area up to the second-story window-sill level. The second story contains four paired narrow windows in a shallow recess outlined by flush pinkish terra cotta side and top strips and with broader piers of the same material between the window pairs. There is also another strip of the pinkish terra cotta forming the parapet coping.

This building may have formed part of the Thomas Block located to the immediate west (see 106-10 below) – old photos show the same Italianate front. This building appears in the 1884 Sanborn map housing a grocery with a cigar factory on the second floor of this and the two storefronts to the west, 106 and 108. By 1894 the building housed a barber shop and tailor shop in the west and east storefronts, respectively. J. T. Walsh's cigar and tobacco business occupied number 102 through the early 1920s, and the Foresters' Hall occupied the second floor. The Greene & Greene (later simply Greene's) cigar store and Caruso's Fruit Store were here from the 1920s to the early 1950s.

The building front was likely remodeled in its present form in the early 1950s when Kresge's expanded into the building from its store fronting on N. Washington. The 1953 directory is the first to list them at the 102-04 address. Kresge's was replaced by its Jupiter Store discount subsidiary by 1963 and operated here until about 1977.

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106-10. Thomas Block (Pre-1884)

Photo 5, 3 middle low bldgs.

Two-story red brick three-storefront wide Italianate commercial building, with right-hand (west) section painted white. The three sections' upper facades are divided by raised piers and feature tall and narrow round-corner windows framed by raised stone-trimmed brick piers that rise to elaborate wooden hoods with flat-top cornices. The upper facades at 106 and 108 West Main have two windows in the second story while the larger one at 110 West Main includes three windows. No. 106 appears to retain its original one-over-one upper-story windows while the others have been replaced, 110's with boarded-in upper sections above lower double-hung windows. Raised brick piers between the sections in the upper façade rise to a raised frieze that, resting on a double row of corbelled headers and stretchers, has a plain concrete or stone cap. Old photographs show a bracketed cornice spanning the entire front.

The c. 1950s-60s storefronts at 106 and 108 W. Main feature aluminum-trim large windows and entries at the right and signage panels occupying tall transom areas, with Victorian metal storefront cornices above. The 1930 storefront at 110 is a polished and highly intact example of its era's storefront design created for and still in use by a jewelry store. It displays a recessed central entry with tall matchbook marble bulkheads that flank the entry and support narrow and not very tall windows below an understated cloth awning sheltering just the middle half of the front. Short inward-slanting sections of wall on either side contain small separate display windows with decorative bronze frames. The slanting wall surface directly above the awning contains a painted depiction of griffins facing inward toward a shield bearing a stylized C for J. L. Cerveny Jeweler and flanked by curvilinear plant forms. The storefront is framed by flat piers that rise to a stylized classical entablature topped by a dentiled cornice – the whole of unglazed or matt-finish terra cotta. The entablature features a central medallion, framed by swags, in relief. The medallion displays a female figure in classical garb, holding what may be a lyre. The words "Jeweler" and "Watchmaker" are spelled out in metal letters on either side of the medallion.

Owosso, A to Z (481) states that Owosso businessman George Thomas built a row of five stores along W. Main, including these and apparently also the now largely rebuilt 102-04. Old photos show these buildings had identical Italianate fronts. But the date of construction given, 1886, seems inaccurate, since this row with its wooden cornices shows in the 1884 Sanborn and the 1890 map shows no changes.

- 106: The 1884-1900 Sanborns shows a cigar shop, the 1908 one a saloon. Later occupants included several shoe stores in the 1910s to 1930s.
- 108: The 1884-1908 maps show a saloon, listed as L. H. Sanderhoff's as of 1900. By 1910 a real estate office replaced the saloon. Storefront 108 has housed a variety of businesses, too, including a saloon and fruit store (1915), with D. H. Wren and then Campbell Jewelers from the early 1920s to the late 1970s.
- 110: The Sanborns list the occupants of storefront 110 as a hardware, with tin shop upstairs, in 1884, a meat market as of 1890, fruit markets in 1894 and 1908, a "Bazaar" in 1900 (this may have been the E. G. Westlake 5 & 10); and Harry Capitan's confectionery by 1915. This was the first home of Skestos and Krust's Candy Land or Candyland confectionary, which moved next door to 112 in 1930. No. 110 has housed jewelry shops continuously since 1930.

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C. H. Maliskey remodeled the storefront in its present form in 1930 for Leo Paul Ball's jewelry store and optometry practice, which was located there until 1955. Vernon L. Schmidt's jewelry store was located here from 1955 through 1964. Cerveny Jewelry has been present in storefront 110 since 1975.

112 W. Main. Candyland (Pre-1884; front c. 1947)

Photo 5, 2nd bldg. from L

Two-story red Commercial Brick building. It has a broad double-door recessed entry centered in a modern wood-trimmed storefront and a second-story entry on the left (west) end of the façade. A broad sign panel fills the transom area and rises almost to the second-floor windows. The upper façade contains three broad windows with modern casement windows. The windows rest on a continuous rowlock sill and rise to a soldier course continuous lintel that spans the façade. A horizontal brickwork panel across the upper façade the width of the second-story windows is outlined by header and rowlock strips. Raised piers edging the facade run up to a brick frieze resting on corbelled brickwork and topped by a concrete coping.

This building shows in the first, 1884, Sanborn map. The 1884 map shows the occupant as a drug, book, and jewelry store, and the 1890 and 1894 maps list a drugstore. Subsequent businesses have included Roth & Sullivan, tailors and haberdashers (1895-1911), and the Wright Clothing House in the middle and late 1920s.

The 1930 directory is the first to list George Skestos and John Krust's Candy Land or Candyland confectionary at this location. Founded in the early 1920s, it moved here from next door at 112. Candyland is listed in the directories through the 1953 edition, followed by the Photo Spot photography shop into the mid-1960s.

The building was part of a row of Italianate buildings with virtually identical details at 102-114 W. Main. Its upper façade detailing was virtually identical to what survives in the buildings at 106-110 today. This front still shows in a 1925 photo. The HDSC inventory form states that collapse of the party wall between 112 and 114 in 1947 when the D. M. Christian store was rebuilding 114 resulted in severe damage to 112's front façade as well, resulting in rebuilding of 112's façade then in its current Commercial Brick form.

114-22. D. M. Christian Department Store (Various parts built prior to 1884, between 1890-94, 1899, between c. 1913-25, and c. 1947; upper facade renovated in present form c. 1947)

Photo 5, L edge, and Photo 6, R edge

Massive three-story 15-window-bay broad commercial building that incorporates several late 19th-century buildings with a unified façade brought largely to its present form c. 1947. Its exterior wall surfaces above the ground story are entirely faced in brick with a thin cement sheathing. The ground floor façade has a triple-door entry near the center and deeply recessed slant-sided storefront and entry near the east end. The ground story front otherwise contains large window areas outlined by EIFS or other smooth stucco-like finish. This finish is different from what shows in a 1979 survey photo. The frieze area up to the second-story windows is faced in

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enameled metal paneling, with a large bubble canopy across the center. In the upper stories narrow projecting piers form fifteen bays containing upper and lower windows comprised of metal casements outlined by large areas of glass block extending nearly to the pier on each side. The westernmost bay is slightly narrower than the rest. The window bays are capped by corbelled brickwork that, except in the three easternmost bays, predates the c. 1947 façade renovation. A broad plain frieze is topped by a parapet that rises in very low flat-topped steps to a three-bay wide section in the center. The deep west side elevation is more simple with the same corbelled brick detail but mostly smaller, more widely separated clear and glass block windows. The building's east side wall and the rear wall of the easternmost fifth are of concrete block above the brick first story, while the rest of the rear façade is of brick. The east wall contains several steel sash windows, the rear glass block windows and, west of the east fifth, mostly infilled segmental-arch-head window openings.

The 1884 and 1890 Sanborn maps show five two-story buildings already standing at the present 114-22 W. Main site (the present street numbering system didn't come into use until the early 1890s).

- 114: The easternmost part, now 114, then had an Italianate upper front with details identical to the surviving part of the Thomas Block to the east at 106-10 W. Main. The 1884-1915 Sanborns all show the building housing a boots and shoe store. The HDSC inventory form states that the building was built for brothers Ludwig and E. Stuber in 1873 and housed Ludwig Stuber's shoe store until 1923 and then Immerman's and finally the Economy Shoe Store. The 1946 Sanborn still shows 114 as a separate two-story building, but c. 1947 Christian's acquired the building – this acquisition completing the Christian store's five-storefront frontage. During 1947 remodeling the two-story 114 building suffered structural problems and was largely demolished and a three-story concrete block structure built in its place (the side and rear facades are brick in the ground story, possibly retained from the older building).
- 116: The 1884 Sanborn shows a grocery here and in 1894 and 1900 the building housed a saloon. By 1908 the building at 116 was incorporated into the Christian store at 118-120. A c. 1913 photo shows 116 with a two-story front remodeled to match 118-20's, and by 1915 it was raised to three stories, the third story and cornice matching 118-20's.
- 118-20: The 1884 Sanborn shows two two-story buildings, 118 containing a dry goods store and 120 a grocery and drug store. Between 1890 and 1894, 118 and 120 were replaced with a single three-story D. M. Christian dry-goods store building which extended north to the alley, twice the depth of the previous buildings.
- 122: The 1884-90 maps show a saloon here, but by 1894 the building housed a grocery. In 1899 the two-story building at 122 was remodeled with a corner entrance and new storefront and the "second story wall ... entirely removed to give place to a heavier one capable of supporting" an added third story (*Owosso Times*, 9/15/1899). Hall Brothers Grocery then occupied the building, followed by Hall & Byerly and then Byerly's Groceries until 1923. The building at 122 was absorbed into the department store by 1924.

In 1947, when Christian's purchased 114, the last part of its W. Main frontage, the store undertook a major remodeling. The entire building front was remodeled in a unified sleekly

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modern International Style-inspired vein, with steel sash windows outlined by large areas of glass block filling the historic window locations, the angled corner of 122 rebuilt without the angle, the brick piers and wall surfaces covered in a smooth skim of cement, and the broad frieze stripped of the cornice and made smooth and topped by a low, symmetrical stepped parapet. In the end the only decorative element of the older front still visible was the corbelled brickwork.

Daniel M. Christian (1857-1933) settled in Owosso in 1885 and opened a dry-goods store. The 1887-88 state gazetteer is the first to list it. It is not clear whether the dry goods store at 118 W. Main was Christian's first place of business, but that location formed part of the 118-20 site of Christian's larger store building constructed during the 1890-94 period. Christian's expanded into 116 W. Main and in 1914 reorganized as D. M. Christian & Co., with Daniel as president and son Leigh as vice-president. A brief story in the 3/21/1914 *Dry Goods Reporter* explained that the store would be enlarged and remodeled, with elevators added, and that "a complete stock of dry goods and department store merchandise will be featured." D. M. and Leigh Christian expanded the store to cover half the frontage in the 100 block and came to own the buildings behind at 117-23 W. Exchange as well. The store remained in operation until 1980, but it became one of several Michigan department stores owned by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation of Flint in the 1950s and then was sold to the West Virginia-based L. S. Good & Co. chain in 1970. L. S. Good's bankruptcy in 1980 resulted in the D. M. Christian store's closing. Through much of the 1980s Wiechmann's Department Store occupied the building.

Source: "J. W. Knapp Company," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J.W._Knapp_Company.

200-06 W. Main. Haarer Block / Hall Block (1899)

Photo 6, bldg. L of intersection

Two-story four-storefront wide red brick Georgian Revival commercial building with brick quoins at the building corners and midpoint of the façade and at several points along the side elevation. The quoined piers rise to a narrow corbelled brick band, with dentils, that once supported a now gone metal cornice. The facades are topped by plain brick parapets with corbelled brick caps. A rectangular panel in the center of the parapet once displayed the building's HAARER BLOCK name. The upper façade's east half is now painted white, while the west half's brickwork is unpainted (a 1979 photo appears to show both halves with the brick painted). A continuous pent roof spans the entire modernized street level.

The front's east half is divided into two red brick storefronts with a common recessed central entry, and the west half has a single broad storefront with its front of aluminum-trim windows over low brick bulkheads slanting gently inwards to a central double-door entry. Each of the front's four sections upstairs contains three one-over-one windows, the six in each half resting on a continuous limestone sill. The side elevation contains eleven more windows. The upper-story windows are all topped by flat brick arches with limestone keystones. The north end of the side elevation contains three storefronts and an upstairs entry. The present storefronts, with the pent roofs, show in the 1979 survey photo.

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An item from the *Owosso American* reported in the March 11, 1899, *Ann Arbor Daily Argus* stated that "City Attorney Hadsall returned from Chelsea yesterday, where he counseled with Miss Kate Haarer, in regard to the construction of a fine brick block on her property, corner of Main and Ball streets. He was instructed by her to place the contract for erecting four stores, on West Main street, with a frontage of 22x75 feet, and two on Ball with a frontage of 26x38 feet. The block is to be one story high, surmounted by battlement cornice, to cost \$6,000. Plans will be drawn allowing another story if necessary." The September 8 *Owosso Times* noted the building's brickwork "rapidly approaching completion," and the September 22 edition the roof being built. The 1900 Sanborn map shows the building in its present two-story form. Knapp & Smith, furniture store and funeral directors, moved their furniture store into the west half of the first floor during November and had their "morgue" in the back part (*Times*, 11/3 and 11/24/1899). The 1899 and following directories until 1924 list it as the Haarer Block. The 1899 directory lists the Dutcher & Hall "bazaar" at 200, the Owosso Paint & Wall Paper Co. store in 202 – these in the building's east half – and Knapp & Smith in 204, the west half, plus Case & Pfeifle, merchant tailors, in 107, the southerly of two storefronts facing N. Ball. The 1900 map shows a cigar factory in the 109 N. Ball storefront and a two-story upholstery shop extension off the back at the west side. By 1930 the rear N. Ball frontage was divided into four small storefronts (the southern, 105, disappears by 1946). Following Knapp & Smith, additional furniture stores occupied 204-06 to the mid-1920s – Jennings, Foster & Co. as of 1905 and then the Foster Co. In the 1920s the Great A & P Tea Co. and several other groceries and a meat market were among the building's tenants. The second story, accessed at 105 N. Ball, contained office space.

The April 26, 1902, *The Argus-Press* reported that "E. A. Gould and Mrs. C. S. Allison of this city have purchased the Haarer block on West Main Street. That is, they have signed papers and put up the price. With both in his pocket, H. S. Hadsall, agent for the owner, Miss Kate Haarer, went to Chelsea this morning to close up the deal." Despite the change in ownership, the directories continue to list the building as the Haarer Block until 1924. The 1924 and subsequent directories through 1980 list it as the Hall Building.

208. Barie Building (Built between 1900 and 1908)

Photo 6, next bldg. L of Haarer Block

Two-story red brick Late Victorian commercial building with pressed metal cornice with swag-decorated frieze. The building has a modern storefront with off-center entry and a second adjacent door accessing the upper story. The low bulkhead and the transom area are faced in vertical board or T-111. The second story features three square-head double-hung windows, with large transoms above stone slab window lintels. There is a broad stone beltcourse above the transoms. The upper façade contains a horizontal band and three panels of rock-face brickwork below the pressed metal frieze and cornice.

The front part of this building first appears in the 1908 Sanborn map. Converse & Sons meats occupied a single-story building on this site as early as 1884, and their one-story rendering and sausage plant in the back that shows in the 1884 map may have been retained and expanded to two stories as part of the new building. The new front part of the building replaced the front or

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shop section of the older building between 1900 and 1908. Jacob A. Barie's meat market, which occupied the former building as of 1899, was the first occupant of this new building, through at least 1911, and then during the 1930-48 period. One two-story and two single-story additions were completed between 1908 and 1915. The northernmost addition was a one and one-half-story livery which was raised to two stories between 1900 and 1908. It ceased to function as a livery by 1915. The northernmost addition is presently a single story in height, with a central entrance, flanking fixed windows, and a slant-side storefront rear entrance for the Vineyard Church.

**210. John V. Evens Livery Stable / Siminski Chiropractic Clinic (1871; c. 1959 and later)
Photo 6, 4th bldg. from L**

Two-story masonry commercial building with beige brick mid-twentieth-century front. The building has an asymmetrical aluminum-trim ground floor façade with an off-center door with flanking floor-to-ceiling storefront windows. The upper-story front is symmetrical, with two broad horizontal-light windows, now with false shutters. The façade is capped by a plain concrete coping. A 1979 survey photo shows the front nearly as at present, but with a projecting flat-top aluminum canopy and dark enameled metal paneling at the transom location. The rear façade is faced in dark red brick and presents ground-story and upstairs off-center sections, with an aluminum door and window below black enameled metal panel band in the ground story and a large aluminum panel with repeating decorative design upstairs. A shallow projecting horizontal canopy is topped by a large horizontal enameled metal panel sign for the Siminski Clinic.

A building at this site appears in the first, 1884 Sanborn map, listed as a livery stable. The building as it presently stands likely incorporates portions of this building, including the side walls. Early twentieth-century post card views show a red brick building of the same height as the present one, with three round-arch windows in the second story and a wooden storefront below with broad central vehicle entry. The HDSC inventory form notes that an 1898-99 city map labels it a "brick livery." John V. Evens, an Owosso marshal, deputy, and fireman, owned it. *Owosso, A to Z* (166-67) states that Evens settled in Owosso in 1868 and in 1871 built a brick livery on W. Main. The southern half was then two stories in height and the northern half was a single story and extended to the alley. By 1890 a second story had been added to the northern section. Evens died in 1894 and by 1899 William Jopling was the owner. Jopling operated Jopling's Livery and also ran a veterinary surgery and dentistry practice here until about 1914. By 1915 the livery was gone, and the building then housed primarily electrical supply stores until about 1959, when Clark's Drug Store moved in. Clark's, which followed Fulmer Electric's nearly twenty-five year use of the building, may have installed the present sleek 1950s front. Montgomery's Pharmacy and several other drugstores followed until about 1985. Siminski Chiropractic has been located here since 1990 and now occupies the entire building.

The West Main Street and alley storefronts were rebuilt in the mid-twentieth century. The alley storefront is also constructed of a dark brown, wider brick in running bond, which is different from the older beige, narrow brick on the West Main Street façade.

212-14. Schlieder Building (1899; c. 1914)

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Photo 6, 3rd bldg. from L; Photo 7

Two-story two-storefront painted brick commercial building with piers and entablature of Neoclassical inspiration. The building has a modern storefront with an off-center entry and brick bulkheads. A second entry at the left (west) end accesses the upper story, and separate bubble canopies cap the entries and the two separate window areas. Broad piers marking the ends of the façade are fluted downstairs and smooth upstairs, rising to simple dentiled capitals that support a broad metal entablature with narrow architrave, broad swag-decorated frieze, and a dentiled cornice. A third smooth pier subdivides the second-story façade above the storefront into two parts each containing three tall, single-light windows now with individual awnings. The painted brick rear facing a parking lot has been extensively renovated to serve as the primary façade for the Chinese restaurant that now occupies the building.

This building was constructed in two sections. The 1900 Sanborn map shows only the west half, built since 1894. The April 21, 1899, *The Owosso Times* contains a brief notice that “Haug & Scheurmann, Saginaw architects, are drawing plans for the three story brick building to be built on West Main street by John Schlieder for Sunnyside Greenhouse....” The paper’s September 8 edition reported the brickwork on the “Sunnyside greenhouse” block rapidly approaching completion. The 1908 map continues to show what must have been the Sunnyside or Schleider Florist complex, with a florist shop building at 214 and their one-story greenhouse at 212, and a 1910-postmarked post card shows the west half of today’s 212-14 with the one-story greenhouse.

The present east half of the building was added c. 1914. It shows in the 1915 Sanborn map. The 1913 directory still lists Sunnyside Greenhouses/Florists (formerly Schleider) at 212-14, while the 1917 directory lists the Grinnell Bros. music store in 212 and 214 vacant. The Chas. A. Lawrence or Lawrence’s Department Store occupied 112 by 1930 and eventually occupied the entire building, including the basement, into the 1940s according to the HDSC inventory form. Kapao and Kaying Hang purchased the building in 1993, and it currently houses Fortune House Restaurant.

216-18 W. Main. Coliseum Theatre Building (c. 1909)

Photo 6, L edge

Two-story two-storefront red brick commercial building with main cornice of Neoclassical inspiration. The building has modern storefronts with red brick piers and bulkheads and EIFS finished piers edging the recessed entries at either end – a second right-hand door accesses the upper story. There are modern sign panels in the old transom locations. Brick piers create a symmetrical two-bay upper-story façade, with each side filled with a broad window divided into four single-light units between wooden mullions and topped by a six-light transom strip. Each whole window rests on a continuous stone sill and is capped by a wooden classical cornice lintel. The upper façade between the raised piers rises to corbeled brickwork beneath a brick entablature with wide overhanging wooden classical cornice. A shallow one-story rear extension was added between 1915 and 1930. This back portion now contains a modern parking lot-side center-entry storefront, beneath a wood shingle pent roof, for the two first-floor tenants.

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The 1908 Sanborn map shows a vacant site where this building is now located, but the 1910 directory lists the Coliseum Theatre. The theater closed by 1913, but the 1915 directory lists the Family Theater. By 1917 the space was again vacant, and by 1919 the occupant was the City Market, a group of food retailers including one or more grocers, a baker, etc., under one roof. The C. H. Gorte grocery replaced the market by 1930, with the YMCA and quarters for the Business and Professional Women's Club upstairs in the late 1920s/early 1930s. By 1936 the main floor space was for the first time divided into two storefronts as at present, with Fulmer's Drug Store in 216 and the Paramount Café in 218. Radio Shack has occupied 216 W. Main since 1970.

220-22. Crowe & Payne Building (1899)

Photo 8

This is a two-story, two-storefront wide painted brick Late Victorian building with brick piers defining the corners and the front's midpoint. There is a recessed central entry flanked by large display windows, on non-original brick bulkheads, from end to end. The upper front features two narrow nine-over-nine windows in each half beneath flat-topped segmental-arch-head brick caps and resting on rock-face stone sills. The upstairs windows now contain 9-over-9 windows rather than the 1-over-1s that show in a 1979 survey photo. The front's piers rise to a low frieze supported by a muscular corbelled brickwork detail formed of stacked headers seven courses tall separated by half-brick recesses. The parapet is capped by a low rock-face stone coping. The long west side elevation facing Water Street is divided into three sections with parapets that step down toward the rear with the roof slope. The side has matching detailing except for simple brick segmental-arch window caps in the two rear sections. A first narrow bay on the west side contains its own display window, and the west side also contains two storefronts in the broad middle section and another in the shorter rear section.

The HDSC inventory form reports the original building on this site was destroyed in a September 1898 fire that also destroyed the Mueller Bros. Brewery across the street to the west and the Woodard factory and planing mill southwest across Main Street. The January 1900 Sanborn map shows the present building in place. It initially housed the Crowe & Payne agricultural implements business. The company advertised in the 1900 directory that it offered threshers, surreys, wagons, harnesses, robes, and blankets. The short north end section of the building contained a livery stable. Subsequent directories list successor firms, with William E. Payne offering autos as well as agricultural implements, carriages and wagons, etc., by 1917. The 1924 directory lists Bob Wilcox Sales & Service, an Oakland dealer, but by 1928 and until about 1950 the building housed auto accessory and supply businesses.

300-12. Mueller Bros. Brewery / Matthews Building (Built/expanded c. 1899-1928, late 1950s)

Photo 12

Complex of two interconnected two to four-story brick buildings initially constructed after a fire destroyed the original buildings in September 1898, and now much expanded and renovated. Standing at the Main/Water intersection, the main east part of the building is shaped like a T lying on its side, with the north-south head of the T fronting on N. Water north of the W. Main

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corner, the lower end of the head forming the narrow front on W. Main, and the leg or shaft of the T projecting west from the midpoint of the north-south main section. An L-shaped section along the head of the T's north two-thirds on its east side and across the north end is four stories in height, while the south end and part of the west side of this main (head-of-the-T) section plus the western ell (leg of the T) are two stories in height. The south-facing two-story front section has enameled metal panel piers and bulkheads in a mottled light greenish granite-look finish outlining a broad entry in the second (of four) bays from the right and large display windows in the other bays, and there are two more bays of display windows outlined by metal paneling on the two-story part's east side. The upper story in this two-story front section contains bays of triple windows between raised brick piers that rise to corbelled brickwork below a plain wall coping. The four-story section's south part is nearly square in plan, with raised piers at the corners supporting a low attic displaying corbelled brick in a stacked header pattern separated by recessed stacked headers. The north-end four-story part's east N. Water Street side is divided into two narrow bays by raised piers and has a low parapet – several feet lower than the south part's "attic" – supported on corbelled brickwork. The four-story sections display paired double-hung windows. The east side's ground story is also largely clad in enameled metal panels, and a flat-top aluminum canopy projects broadly from the south front and south half of the east side as far north as an entry in the center of the four-story part. The north and west rear façades are covered in vertical ribbed metal sheeting. The west extension is two stories high in front and has a concrete block one-story rear section. Its brick south front displays small square-head windows and a canopied corner entry downstairs and three large windows with double-hung centers flanked by glass block sidelights upstairs.

A second narrow-fronted and deep two-story building stands west of the main section, connected at the midpoint of its east side with the east building's west wing. The west building's west side angles west-northwest parallel with the directly adjacent riverbank. The building has brick walls, but all three sides at its south end and all of the long west side except a small area at the north end are faced in enameled metal panels in zones of gray and white. Its narrow south end displays what may have been a storefront or broad window area that is now infilled with paneling below and advertising signage above, and the short east side contains a broad window area – the south and east side window/storefront capped by a projecting horizontal aluminum canopy. The second story directly above has more broad windows above paneling, and is also capped on the south and east sides by another projecting canopy. A short stretch of the building's original brick Late Victorian west side wall remains exposed at the far north end. This area contains two segmental-arch-head window openings, one infilled with concrete block, and upper and lower corbelled brick details below the roofline. The west building's east façade is of brick with some bricked-in segmental-arch-head openings, while the north end is of concrete block but with some old brick in place at the base.

This complex stands at the site of the Seiler Bros./Roberts & Fletcher grist and flour mill, which was converted to the Owosso Brewing Co. or Mueller Bros. Brewery in the early 1890s but burned in 1898. By 1900 Mueller Bros. had rebuilt. The 1900 Sanborn map shows a new brewery building, a one-story section of the present main building, and a bottling house, the northeast part of the west building, in place. By 1908 the brewery (today's main building) was expanded into a three-story brewhouse, the square south part of the present four-story section; a

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two-story section directly north, now the east part of the north four-story section; and a two-story beer cellar, now the western projection, and the bottling house was expanded into a two-story bottling works that encompassed the entire present west building. The brewhouse acquired the present fourth story by late 1915.

The brewery closed by 1913 – that year’s directory lists the property as vacant – and the 1915 map shows the buildings housing a variety of occupants and uses. *Owosso, A to Z* (345) reports that local attorney Roy D. Matthews purchased the building in March 1915, and by 1917 the brewery building itself was listed as the Matthews Building. Matthews may have added the two-story east half of the south end fronting on W. Main, which shows in the Dec. 1915 map. A photo in the 1928 city directory (18) shows the west half of the two-story south end added and the north end section raised to four stories. The building housed commercial uses in the ground story (Consumers Power Co. had offices and showroom there from 1924 or earlier until at least the 1960s) and offices in the upper stories, accessed from N. Water, including by 1917 those of Matthews & Clark, attorneys (the 1928 directory lists twenty-four office tenants).

Following the demise of the Mueller Bros. Brewery, the west, bottling works building also served various tenants, with an upholstery shop in the front part and a poultry house and processing plant in the back part (the 1917 directory lists Fred Smith, upholstery, and S. D. Emery, poultry, at 310 and 312 W. Main). Albert Palmer & Sons/A. E. Palmer & Sons had their glue clamp factory there from the early 1920s until about 1956. By 1960 it was serving as part of the Matthews Building. The exterior renovations presumably date from the late 1950s. The two now interconnected buildings continue to serve as the Matthews Building today.

Main Street, West (South Side)

113-17. Western Auto / Gilberts True Value (Pre-1884; expanded between 1884 and 1890; front remodeled c. 1955, c. 1975)

Photo 9, L edge

Two-story three-storefront wide brick commercial building whose upper façade is now clad in horizontal enameled metal panels in white outlined by dark blue. The three-part modern storefront is divided into three broad sections by piers, with a large display window at either end and a recessed central window flanked by display windows in the center part. The first-floor piers and low bulkheads are faced in modern dark brown brick. A tall but shallow mansard roof of vertical metal panels spans the front at transom level and bears the Gilbert’s True Value Hardware store name. The enameled metal panel upper façade is subdivided by slightly projecting piers into three sections aligned with the lower ones, the end piers and top frieze strip in dark blue and the central piers and rest of the façade in white. Each section contains two low square-head double-hung windows. The exposed east-side façade is faced in smooth EIFS finish. An early twentieth-century post card view shows the building in the background. It shows as a bracketed Italianate or Late Victorian brick structure with front divided by raised piers into three sections, each containing three second-story windows.

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The west, 117 part of the building appears in the 1884 Sanborn as a livery stable, perhaps for the no-longer-extant National Hotel located a half block to the east. By 1890 the building at 117 had become a printing plant, and the 113 and 115 stores been constructed, with 115 housing a boot and shoe store. The 1899 directory has no listing for 113, but shows the Owosso Outfitting Co., new and second-hand furniture, in 115 and the Globe Lunch Room and Billiard Hall in 117. The 113 storefront contained a succession of cigar store/billiard parlors between about 1915 and 1930, 115 the Owosso & Corunna Electric Co. and then Consumers Power Co. between about 1906 and the early 1920s, and 117 housed the Temple Theatre from about 1906 to 1916, followed by the B. C. & L. A. Grant dry-goods store and a Kroger's grocery, each for a few years, into the early 1930s. Between 1915 and 1930 a large two-story extension was added across the entire back of the building. A Western Auto store moved into 113 by 1955 and expanded to occupy all three storefronts by the mid-1970s. A 1979 survey photo shows a large Western Auto sign extending across the entire façade below the second-story windows. This building and the adjoining one to the west, 119-123 W. Main, have been combined since 1980 as Gilberts True Value Hardware. The present enameled metal panel upper façade may date from c. 1955 when the Western Auto store moved in. The building's rear façade has been refaced in red brick with a modern central entry.

The present enameled metal panel upper façade is likely more than fifty years old and thus should be viewed as a contributing resource. However, no information is currently available about what earlier material may remain in place beneath this present cladding, and historic photographs to document earlier appearances have been hard to find. Labeling the upper façade contributing should not preclude restoring the upper façade to an earlier appearance, based on surviving material and photographic documentation, if that proves feasible in the future.

119-23. Gilbert's True Value Hardware (Built between 1890 and 1894)

Photo 9, center L bldg.

This two-story three-section painted brick Late Victorian building is divided into two storefronts, a broad modern brick-clad storefront at the east end and a recessed center-entry one at the west end at S. Ball St. The east storefront has a tall vertical metal-panel pent roof matching 113-17's. The narrow west storefront retains its old pressed metal storefront cornice above a shake shingle pent roof that spans the transom area. In the second story, raised piers divide the front into three sections and support a projecting frieze from which the main cornice rises. Each bay contains three square-head openings with modern one-over-one windows below modern infill. The windows have elongated rectangular wooden caps, supported by simple corbel blocks flanking the window opening, and are detailed with raised edges, a zigzag design across the bottom over the window opening, and a central incised detail. The second story's northwest corner facing the intersection with S. Ball is angled (above the squared-off storefront corner) and displays another one-over-one window with the same wooden cap. The window is set into a shallow arched recess in the façade between the corner piers. The front and corner bay are topped by an elaborate bracketed wood cornice. The building's west side facing S. Ball contains a rear entry and more windows with the same caps. A one-story concrete block rear extension was under construction as of October 2013.

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The July 1890 Sanborn map shows the western third of the building (number 123), which was thus constructed between 1884 and 1890. It then housed a furniture and undertaking business. The 1890 map shows the middle and eastern units "Being Built." In 1894 storefront 119 housed a millinery, 121 a furniture and hardware business, and 123 a saloon. The 1899 directory lists Emery Arkles' restaurant in 119, the Blackwood Bros. hardware in 121, and Charles F. Reinsberg saloon in 123. No. 123 briefly housed the Crystal Theater, listed in the 1907 directory but gone by 1910. True Value Hardware expanded into part of the building by 1990 and now occupies the entire ground floor. The upper story contained the Christian Apartments from the later 1940s through the early 1980s.

201 W. Main. Owosso Floral Co. Building (Built c. 1912)

Photo 9, R edge

Two-story red Commercial Brick building. The building's modern center-entry aluminum-trim storefront is outlined on the sides and top former transom area by white EIFS and capped by a soldier brick beltcourse. The upper story displays two sets of paired six-over-one windows with concrete or stone slab sills and soldier brick beltcourses at lintel level and spanning the rest of the façade either side of the sills. A lozenge-shaped concrete or stone form is centered over each pair of windows. There is a corbelled brick detail below a plain parapet on both the front and long S. Ball elevation. The S. Ball side has brick-infilled former door openings, short downstairs windows, and double-hung windows plus a slant-sided oriele window upstairs. The soldier brick beltcourse across the front extends across this entire side as well. A rear second-story addition over an adjacent one-story building has a shed roof and asbestos and wooden siding. The back, south wall is built of plain, lighter hue brick.

A small cluster of buildings around this corner along W. Main and S. Ball that shows in the 1908 Sanborn map disappeared by the time of the next, 1915 map. This building has much the same footprint as the previous building at this site, the former Barie saloon, but has a slightly deeper footprint and appears to be a replacement building. Long time occupant the Owosso Floral Co., with Herman Thiemann as proprietor, was first listed at this address in the 1913 directory, suggesting the present building was built for them about 1912. By 1924 and until the business disappears about 1949, C. Marcus Anderson was the proprietor. Shippee & Smith Sporting Goods then had its store here from about 1950 until the late 1990s. The single-story building at 102 South Ball Street was added to the rear (south) of 201 West Main Street between 1915 and 1930.

203-13. Commercial Building (Built early 1920s)

Single-story six-storefront long commercial building with east three storefronts (203-07) each with a separate finish and west three (209-13) now forming a single store with unified storefront.

- No. 203 has a c. 1950s grayish-white enameled metal panel finish with a recessed center-entry storefront with square side on one side and angled one on the other. The aluminum-trim display window on either side projects outward above the recessed bulkhead beneath. A very shallow projecting horizontal aluminum canopy spans the storefront. The upper façade is faced in vertical boarding that displays the store name sign.

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- No. 205 has a storefront that slants gently inward from west to east, with the entry at the east side, and its end piers and low bulkheads are clad in vertical boarding below a low shake shingle-clad pent roof that covers the upper façade.
- No. 207 also has its entry at the east and a large display window to the west. Its upper façade is clad in vertical boarding.
- No. 209-13 retains what seems to be its original variegated beige/buff brick piers that separate the three storefront sections – all part of a single store since the late 1950s, with the entry at the east end of the middle section. The large display windows and entry are outlined by narrow vertical metal siding. An asphalt-shingled pent roof spans the front and covers the upper façade. A 1979 survey photo shows the upper façade with what appears to be simple Commercial Brick detailing. The rear of this part of the building has a utilitarian finish of white-painted brick with square-head door and window openings.

This row of stores was built in street frontage that shows as mostly vacant in the 1915 Sanborn. While the 1930 Sanborn shows a divider wall between the east and west halves of the building, suggesting the row was built as two separate three-store buildings, the utilitarian rear brick façade shows no break in the masonry at the midpoint. The 1924 directory is the first to list most of the addresses. Occupants listed then were the Michigan Mutual Savings Ass'n. in 203; Sinclair Refining Co., 205; Charles F. Beehler, barber, 207; and William H. Ross, wallpaper, 209. By 1928 there was also a listing for 211A, Mrs. Mary E. Benson, millinery (the 211 street address was already in use for the next building to the west, the two-story building now identified as 215, with Miller's Creamery at 211 and upstairs apartments at 211 1/2; the 215 address first appears in the 1939 directory).

The west half of the building is notable for its long use by office supply houses. The 1928 directory lists Baxter & Blowers office supply at 209, and Baxter & Larsen followed at that location into the 1940s. The E. L. Larsen Co. then expanded into 211 as well by 1948 and successor firm the Central Business Supply Co. began to occupy 109-13 by 1959. Selleck Office Supply Inc. followed Central in the early 1960s and remained in business there until the early 2000s.

215. Hollis Building (1891?; c. 1906)

Photo 10

Trapezoidal-footprint two-story painted brick Late Victorian commercial building with rear façade facing S. Water Street at a 45-degree angle to the front and the east side longer than the exposed west side facing the Main/Water intersection. The building has raised brick piers at the ends of the front and west side façades and edging the front bay of the west side elevation containing a display window. The piers frame a storefront with a central entry and flanking display windows with brick bulkheads and an upstairs entry at the east end. The west front corner pier contains a date stone at ground level bearing the date "1891" in incised numerals. A cloth bubble canopy spans the front and first (storefront) bay on the west side. The upper front displays four one-over-one windows under a broad and low brick segmental arch. A low parapet along the front and west side is supported on a six-brick tall corbelled brickwork band of stacked headers separated by half-brick wide recesses. The west elevation has two entries toward the rear

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flanking another large display window and five one-over-one windows with stone sills and segmental brick arch heads in the upper story. The slanting rear (southwest) façade and a single bay wide section that faces south contain only two small windows plus another entry.

This building was reputedly built by Woodard Bros. to house the Woodard Manufacturing Co. and Owosso Casket Co. offices in 1891. To support this is the 1891 date stone now built into the northwest corner at ground level. However, the building appears at the current location for the first time in the 1908 Sanborn map, and a search of earlier Sanborns shows no Woodard building matching its footprint. The 1908 map shows the building housing a tin shop and plumbing business. The 1907 directory lists Amos F. Hollis, plumbing and heating and sheet metal worker, at 211 W. Main, and Hollis' business was located there through the 1919 edition. The 1924 through 1936 directories list Miller's Creamery, butter, eggs and milk, wholesale and retail, under 211, with proprietor Clare L. Miller residing at 211 ½, presumably upstairs. The 1939 directory for the first time includes the 215 address, then listed as vacant, but in the early 1940s an electrical appliance and hardware and then a tire and battery shop occupied this and part of the adjoining building to the east. Stoner's Drive-In Cleaners was one of the occupants from about 1955 til 1995 or later, and the building has housed Ruthy's Cleaners since 2005.

301. Municipal Building / Owosso City Hall (1924-25); Lane, Davenport & Peterson, Detroit, architects

Photo 11

Symmetrical-fronted two-story Indiana limestone-trimmed yellow-buff brick Neoclassical building standing on a raised, smooth dressed limestone ashlar foundation well back from the street. The building has a roughly rectangular form, but with a projecting portico in the center third of the front and with the central section of the east side also projecting slightly (the west end facing the river does not have this projection). A stone water table and stringcourse denote the first and second stories, respectively. The broad north-facing front contains a central four-column Tuscan portico at the head of a broad flight of steps leading to a square-head central entry with console-supported cornice topped by a narrow balconnet with wrought-iron railing. The building's front behind the portico also features five large windows. The portico's entablature, with a low architrave and taller frieze below a dentiled cornice, continues all the way around the building's front and two ends, though the portico's frieze displays a circular sunburst decorative form above each column not present elsewhere. The portico's cornice is capped by a raised paneled parapet whose central part rises in a small vase or bowl-topped half-circle holding a round clock-face. Raised panels flanking the clock face display the building's name, MUNICIPAL to the left and BUILDING to the right. Two-story stone pilasters subdivide the building front on either side of the portico into two bays, each containing a square-head window set into a shallow arch below and a square-head window above. Similar pilasters divide the east side elevation into single outer bays, each with the same square-head windows, the lowers in arched recesses, and a three-part center section containing a window-topped entrance in the center and upper and lower windows in a much narrower section on either side. The west side is a simplified version of the east elevation, without the central part being slightly raised and without a central entry or the windows in the narrow section either side of the center. All the windows are double-hung one-over-ones with transoms. The rear south façade has plain brick

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walls and lacks the front's symmetry. The interior retains its original finishes primarily in the central lobby area, with its marble dados and classical detailing.

A tall metal flagpole, with ball finial, stands in the center of the broad central front walkway at the head of a short flight of steps from the curbside sidewalk.

This new Municipal Building was built to replace the former City Hall located three blocks to the east where the Capitol Theater/Lebowsky Center now stands. The fine site overlooking the river had remained mostly vacant since the Woodard furniture and sash, door and blind factory there burned in 1898. The cornerstone-laying ceremony took place July 10, 1924. The Municipal Building remains Owosso's City Hall today. Lane, Davenport & Peterson's original plans included a dome over the central entry, but this was eliminated due to cost overruns during construction.

Mason Street, East (South Side)

120. Knapp & Smith Funeral Home / now Nelson-House Funeral Home (early 1920s)

Two-story large rectangular brick building now with a modern stucco-like finish. The building's symmetrical front faces north on E. Mason, with a much longer side elevation on N. Park. The front contains a central paneled entry flanked by four pairs of one-over-one windows in the ground story and a symmetrical second story displaying five one-over-one windows, the two on either side grouped closely together. There are broad paneled pier forms at the ends of the façade, a raised beltcourse below the second-story windows, and raised bands below a low stepped parapet giving the appearance of an entablature – all the detail being modern and formed in the stucco-like material. The broad east side elevation displays the same paneled corner “piers,” beltcourse, and raised “entablature” bands below a parapet that rises in an asymmetrical low stepped pattern with raised areas near the front and centered over a canopied entry toward the rear façade. The side elevation contains an irregular pattern of one-over-one windows in both stories, but with no windows south of the canopied entry. The rear (south) end displays a simplified pattern of raised vertical and horizontal bands, without the entablature treatment, and more square-head windows above a blank ground story. There is a one-story extension along the building's west side, and the west façade of the two-story building behind displays the same simplified treatment as the south end and has more one-over-one windows. The tall upper façade displays a few small square windows in an attic space on the non-street-facing facades.

Just west of the building near the street stands a small glass-fronted modern “Carriage House” housing an 1870 hearse purchased by the funeral home in 1980 from a funeral home in upstate New York. The hearse is made available upon request; one important use was in Rosa Parks' funeral in Detroit.

The 1889 state gazetteer lists Peters & Knapp – John T. Peters and Myron H. Knapp – furniture and undertakers. By the 1893 edition the business is listed as Knapp & Smith, owned by Myron H. Knapp and Frank C. Smith. Knapp & Smith purchased the former armory, most recently housing an auto sales garage and before that the Odd Fellows Temple, and replaced it with this

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building, using the brick from the armory for the new building's walls. The new building is usually dated 1928 or 1929, but was more likely built in the early 1920s, since an advertisement in the 1924 city directory notes Knapp & Smith's "New Funeral Home" at the present location. The single-story addition on the west elevation was added after 1946. Funeral home personnel indicate the present EIFS coating over the brick was installed in the early or mid-1990s.

Source: *Souvenir of Owosso* 1986, 78.

Mason Street, East (North Side)

201. American Legion Post 57 (1924; expansion/renovation 1955)

One-story flat-roofed brick building of simplified Neoclassical design, set on a raised basement, with a much later, lower flat-roof extension across the entire front that contains a central entry beneath a deep open gabled porch. The original 1924 building features a broad classical entablature and cornice that extends across the sides and part of the front at each end. The sides of the 1924 building each display a paired central window with a single on each side. The flat-roof front addition contains two windows in either end that complement those on the older part's side walls in matching the outer windows' widths, rising from sills at the same height, and being of double-hung form topped by transoms – though the windows in the addition are shorter. The glazed central entry has sidelights and a transom and its porch a gable roof supported at the front corners by thin Tuscan columns on short brick piers. The front southwest corner in the addition now contains the original building's 1924 cornerstone, and "American Legion Post 57" is spelled out in individual metal letters on the front west of the main entry and on the western side of the façade's frieze.

The original building was completed in 1924 and dedicated in 1925. It is reputed to have been the first American Legion hall constructed in Michigan after the First World War. The American Legion Auxiliary also met in the building at 201 E. Mason in the late 1930s. Originally the building had a cruciform footprint. A single-story portico with central stairs and four Ionic columns supported a pediment on the E. Mason façade. The building's roof was uniform in height. In 1955 the building was renovated. The façade was altered by replacing the southern bay and portico with a single-story barrier-free addition which spans the entire façade. The roof of the new addition is several feet lower than that of the original building. A gabled stoop provides shelter over the sidewalk and entrance. Evidence of the former bay is still evident in the broken cornice on the original wall of the façade.

Mason Street, West (North Side)

114. First Baptist Church (1895-96; 1942-46; and 2004)

The present church is an amalgam that combines a stone-trimmed auditorium, Gothic in inspiration, that was constructed in the 1942-46 period, with a deep gabled narthex of complementary design built in front of it in 2004, and a two-story brick building behind that, originally the rear part (behind the auditorium) of the congregation's 1895-96 Romanesque

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church, was retained and remodeled following a 1942 fire that destroyed the rest of the church. The south-facing gabled auditorium and narthex occupy the site of the former church's auditorium, with the 1895-96 building behind (north of) it. The 1942 red brick auditorium has a steeply pitched gable roof. Its walls display concrete-capped projecting brick buttresses on either side, the space between each set containing paired pointed-arch windows in square-head openings. The auditorium stands atop a partly above ground basement so that there are low square-head windows below the auditorium's windows. The auditorium's front is now hidden from view, except for a cross-tipped parapet that rises above the slightly lower narthex. The 2004 narthex has a gable roof that matches the roof slope of the auditorium and contains a triple pointed-arch window, set in a shallow arched recess, in the street-facing front of the otherwise windowless front. Its east side contains a double door beneath a projecting gabled canopy.

The 1895-96 church was a stone-trimmed, brick Romanesque auditorium church with front and side-facing gables and taller and shorter pyramid-roof front corner towers and a triple-arched central entry. The surviving part of that church, what was the north or back end behind the auditorium, is a two-story (on raised basement) building that forms an L around the north and west sides of the present auditorium. The building retains much of the basic form and fenestration and the massive brick arches from the old building, which formed the back part, behind the auditorium, of the previous Romanesque church that burned in 1942, but a flat roof replaced the tall hip and gable roofs after the fire. The west-facing front retains paired broad arches in its center, a right-hand one containing a double-door entry, the left now leading into a recess that contains a large bench. The front of the second story above the arches is recessed between square-plan projecting sections on either side. That on the left contains three closely spaced square-head windows in each story, including lower ones in the raised basement. This part of the building was topped by a tall pyramid roof before the fire. The block to the arches' right displays a projecting square-plan brick chimney structure that visually separated this rear part of the building from the north end of the pre-fire auditorium with its tall side-facing gable. The chimney once rose nearly twice as tall as at present, rising above the height of the gable. The building's north and east facades contain single, paired, triple, and quadruple window openings and the east façade a central broad Romanesque brick arch over a window opening. The present Neo-Gothic auditorium constitutes the third First Baptist Church building to be located at this site.

Baptists were among Owosso's earliest settlers, holding services in Elias and Lucy Comstock's cabin as early as 1835. The congregation was organized in 1838 and reorganized in 1856. The first church, dedicated in 1859, was located on the corner of Oliver and North Washington Streets. The first Baptist church on the present site was constructed in 1876 and dedicated in 1877. That building was demolished in 1895 in order to make space for a much larger brick building, part of which survives today. The new church was dedicated on May 3, 1896. A major fire destroyed much of the building in 1942. The present church, built in the 1942-46 period, incorporates the back part of the older church building that was not destroyed. In 2004 the congregation added a larger narthex on the south elevation, with a small gabled entry stoop accessing the parking lot to the east.

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107. Kolache Kitchen (pre-1884 with many renovations); Non-Contributing

This commercial building is comprised of two parts: (1) a broad-fronted single-story shed-roof light orange brick building, with two central storefronts, that fronts north on W. Mason and occupies one half of the lot's depth from north to south, and (2) a flat-roof block building of similar size behind (south of) it, that has a vehicle door in its exposed west end. **Non-contributing because no historic finishes are evident.**

The 1884 Sanborn shows a two-story agricultural implements building occupying part of this site behind the building at 221-23 N. Washington. Subsequent maps through the last, 1946 one continue to show what may be the same building here, used as a marble shop and by 1915 as a Salvation Army Hall, and by 1930 the space between the two-story building and the back of 221-23 N. Washington was infilled with one-story additions. The present building here may be a much modernized version of these older buildings. Owosso historian Lorraine Weckwerk reports that the building was serving as the kitchen area for White's Bakery, which occupied 221-23 N. Washington, as of 1978, and that later owners Roger and Bonnie Snyder remodeled the building to house the Mason Street Eat Rite Café (email 10/22/2013). This was first listed in the 2005 directory. By 2010 it had become the Kolache Kitchen bake shop.

Park Street, North (East Side)

218. Mark Woodbury Building (1922)

Photo 25

This two-story red brick building has a broad-fronted and deep rectangular footprint. The front is divided into three sections, with the center section rising slightly above the others and the sections separated by raised brick piers. The piers rise to dome-finial-crowned square-plan pedestals above the molded metal classical cornices that top the sections. The three storefronts have low non-original brick bulkheads, nearly full-width display windows divided into large vertical lights with a door at one end of each (there is a second recessed right-hand second-story entry in the center section), and molded metal classical storefront cornices similar to but lighter than the main cornices. The second story above each storefront is lit with two one-over-one windows, and above each window in the low attic below the cornice is a small oval window. The center section below the cornice contains a date plaque reading "1922" and a name plaque reading "Mark. Woodbury." The long, plain side elevations are also built of red brick and contain single double-hung windows.

Mark Woodbury had this building constructed. It initially housed his Woodbury Sheet Metal Company, founded in 1914, along with rental space. In 1924 the building also housed Johnson's Buick auto sales and the Owosso Business College. The 1930 Sanborn shows the sheet metal shop in the southern third, with a garage occupying the northern two-thirds and the business college upstairs. The 1946 Sanborn map shows the western third of the building fronting N. Park had been subdivided into three storefronts, with the back part used for household goods storage

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and the upstairs still housing the business college and also the YMCA. Uses since then have been varied, with the second story converted into apartments.

220-22. Dr. Wade, Dentist / Dr. William Knetch DDS (c. 1955; 1974; 1978); Original northwest part Contributing, south and east sections Non-Contributing

Single-story Ranch-style side-gabled pale red brick office building with a broad and low vinyl siding-clad subsidiary front gable in the longer northern section. This part of the front contains a central entry with a broad window on one side and a smaller double window on the other. A gable-roof wing projects from the back of the building's north end. The building's side-gable south end is both slightly shorter and lower than the north end. Part of its front, containing a door and broad window, projects slightly outward toward the street and is topped by a low shed roof. The original building was constructed c. 1955 and expanded with the rear wing in 1974 and the south end in 1978.

One of the earliest recorded occupants was Dr. Leonard W. Wade's dental practice, here in 1964. It was replaced by Dr. William E. Knecht's dental practice, still located here, by 1970. George's Barber Shop was located here in the 1975-90 period followed by the Wanna Grind Coffee Shop.

310. Gaylord Finch Dental Office (c. 1948)

This small but elegant one-story gable-roof yellow-buff brick building has its narrow gabled west end facing the street and its broad front, containing an entry at the east end, facing south on a narrow piece of lawn behind the American Legion Hall. The Colonial-style building has single-course high raised brick quoins every fourth course at the corners.

The earliest recorded occupant of this building was Dr. Gavlord Finch, who housed his dental practice here in 1948. In 1955 through 1970 it contained Dr. Hartley Hermanson's dental practice. From 1975 through 2010 Dr. Terrence W. Ryckman had his dental practice here.

Washington Street, North, East Side

100-02. Miner Building (1912)

Photo 4, R, and Photo 13, R

Four-story red brick Chicago Commercial Style building with a three-bay façade along N. Washington and seven bays along E. Main. The facades above the modern ground story are divided into broad window bays by raised piers, displaying sculptural T-shaped concrete "capitals," that rise to a broad brick frieze topped by a simply detailed metal cornice and broadly projecting eaves. The front's slightly narrower bays each contains a transomed triple window, with the central light broader than the one to either side, in the second story and triple double-hung windows in the third, the center wider than the one each side. Six of the side's seven bays contain similar windows, the second-story ones transomed and with a paired center and single each side, the third with quadruple double-hung windows. The fourth-story windows are enclosed with white vinyl siding. The narrower east-end bay on the E. Main side spans a narrow

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drive-through and contains a paired double-hung window in the second story and vinyl-sided window openings upstairs. The piers rise from concrete bases at the second-story level and the windows have concrete slab sills. The building's ground story has red-brown brick outlining a symmetrical central-entry storefront in front, with large display window either side, and a series of broad display windows along most of the long E. Main side. There is a pedestrian entry near the drive-through on the E. Main side. A shallow mansard canopy rises over the ground story across the entire front and side (except for the drive-through) up to the second-story windows.

An earlier large building at the site was destroyed by fire in 1911. This building was erected the following year for owner Seldon S. Miner. Miner was an attorney and real estate agent who moved from Corunna to Owosso in 1892. The 1913 directory lists the Arthur Ward Co. store, offering hardware, stoves, furniture, and carpeting, as the primary tenant, apparently occupying the two lower stories, with Welch & Woodbury, tanners, in the basement, and floors 3 and 4, accessed from 109 E. Main, containing office space. One of the early office tenants was attorney Leon F. Miner, Seldon's son. Early office tenants were dentists, attorneys, and insurance agents. The Arthur Ward Co. furniture store remained the primary occupant until about 1963. Storrer's men's clothing store occupied the two lower floors and basement from 1966 until the mid-1980s. The firm originated as Wicking & Storrer in 1891 and became Storrer's six years later. The present street-level façade dates from their 1966 reconstruction.

Source: Helen Harrelson, *Owosso, Michigan A to Z* (Owosso, Michigan: Shiawassee County Historical Society, 1993), 354.

104-08. Wesener Block (1886)

Photo 13, 2nd bldg. from R

This is a three-storefront wide, three-story painted brick Late Victorian building with a modern red-brown brick storefront. The modern storefront spans the width of the façade and features large windows and a broad asphalt-shingled pent roof with a central low gable over the center entry. The ground story's finish features an "Olde English" look, with a little half-timber gabled turret at each end of the pent roof. The upper façade is divided into three sections, the southern two narrower than the northern one, by raised thin paired piers rising to rectangular sheet metal "capitals" supporting a simple metal cornice and brick parapet. Each of the three bays in the second story features a broad segmental-arch window beneath a brick cap trimmed with rock-face stone keystone and springblocks. The south window is divided by wooden mullions into three single lights beneath low arched transoms. The middle one, presumably originally identical, now is boarded in below the transoms. The wider north window is divided into four parts. The transoms retain their multi-light configurations. Each third-floor bay contains four tall and narrow, now boarded-in window openings with continuous sills. A broad stacked stretcher band of corbeled brickwork above the windows rises up to the cornice. The building's upstairs interior suffered major damage in a 2007 fire resulting from arson.

The building is not present in the 1884 Sanborn map, but shows in the next, 1890 map. The HDSC inventory form states that Hugo Wesener had the building constructed in 1886. The three storefronts in 1890 were occupied, from south to north, by a dry-goods, grocery, and hardware

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store. The 1890 Sanborn map also reveals that there was a tin-shop in the rear of the hardware store and that a hall occupied the entire third story of the building.

- The 1899 directory lists the Davis Dry Goods Co. and barber B. C. Miller in 104, the Crowe-Wesener Shoe Co. (with Hugo Wesener's son August as one of the partners) in 106, and J. C. Kerby, dressmaker, in 108, along with the Owosso Business College upstairs at 104-06.
- Davis and then the C. Z. Robinson & Co. dry goods in 104 were followed in the 1930s by the C. J. Weisenberg & Co., Raymond, and then Conover hardware stores in the 1930s-60s.
- In 106 the Crowe-Wesener shoe store was followed by Rolla L. Chase shoes and the Chase Boot Shop until the late 1960s.
- No. 108 housed the Loomer & Osmer and then A. E. Osmer Co. groceries and the Osmer Market from before 1910 until the 1970s.
- The third story contained the Woodmens' Hall during the 1910s and the upper stories also housed the Wesener Apartments as late as the 1960s.
- In the 1960s and 70s the building served as the Administration Building for John Wesley College, the college installing the current storefront with its Olde English affectations. In the early 2000s then owner, Dave Miller, refurbished the building, including five apartments on the third floor and the street-level storefronts. However, a fire in July 2007 resulted in severe damage and one death, and the building has been unoccupied since then.

Source: Art Bukowski and Liz Shepard, "Apartment Fire Kills 1," *Argus-Press*, July 5, 2007.

110 N. Washington. Storrer's Building (Built between 1884 and 1890; upper façade late 1930s)

Photo 13, 3rd bldg. from R

The three-story tall Storrer's Building was refaced in the late 1930s with the current windowless beige brick upper facade. The present storefront, perhaps dating from the 1960s, contains a very broad and deeply recessed slant-sided central entry with glass sheet display windows on either side above low ceramic tile bulkheads in light and dark blue. The door is located at one end of the entry's rear wall, to the left of more display windows. The entry's floor is of tile matching the bulkheads'. The ground-floor end piers and the side walls behind the display cases are finished in rock-face random ashlar buff-brown sandstone. The front is capped by a projecting horizontal aluminum canopy. The former store name, STORRER'S, is displayed in simple raised metal lettering across the center of the brick upper façade.

This building first appears in the 1890 Sanborn map as a Bazaar, with the YMCA using the second and third floors (the Y moved out by 1900). The W. H. Bell Bazaar, the tenant in 1899, was replaced by the Kaufman & Meinstein clothing store by 1910 and the Capitan Bros. and then Blue Bird confectionaries in the later 1910s, 20s, and 30s. Storrer's men's clothing was then the occupant from the late 1930s (the 1939 directory shows it here) to 1966, then moving to 100-02 N. Washington. Storrer's returned to this location in the late 1980s and remained in business here until 2007, when a fire in the adjacent Wesener Block also resulted in this store's closing. When Storrer's was remodeling 110 as their new store location in the 1930s, owner Robert L. Storrer, trained as a civil engineer at the University of Michigan, had the building's upper façade rebuilt

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in its present form to replace the original brick façade, which, separating from the side walls, was becoming dangerous (1986 *Souvenir*, 99; Weckwork, email 9/3/2013). The rear (eastern) third of the building was two stories in height.

112. Williams Block (1855)

Photo 13, 4th bldg. from R

Three-story painted brick building with upper façade containing three tall vertical square-head window strips that fill the former second and third-story window openings and the former wall areas between each upper and lower pair. Each window is comprised of large single upper and lower lights. The ground story presents a wooden storefront, with central recessed entry and paneled piers and bulkheads that appear to be of relatively recent construction despite having a prism glass transom above each display window. A simple box cornice with brick dentil detail below forms the roofline. A photo of the adjacent 114 N. Washington building from the late 1920s-late 1930s era shows the edge of the Williams Block. It shows the cornice with its present, or a similar, brick dentil detail in place and separate second and third-story windows, the upper-story ones then with low gabled caps – both features likely part of the building’s original Greek Revival-inspired finishes. A 1979 survey photo shows the second and third-story windows replaced with vertical window strips filling the present openings. Sometime after that these windows were replaced with double-hung second and third-story windows. These post-1979 second and third-story windows had flat wooden molded caps that featured raised keystone devices and dentils. There was metal paneled infill between each aligned second and third-story window and above each third-story window. The present upper-story windows were installed in 2013.

The HDSC inventory form states that Benjamin O. Williams, one of Owosso’s founders, had this building constructed in 1855, making it the downtown’s oldest building. The city’s then newly established Masonic lodge leased the building’s third-story hall in October 1855 and used it as their lodge hall until early in 1879. The HDSC form states that the storefront initially housed Eli Gregory’s hardware store. The 1899 directory lists the Josiah Thompson hardware, with T. S. Williams’ insurance, the C. S. Williams real estate, and A. Lee Williams’ offices upstairs. Thompson’s hardware was followed by Henry R. Beswick’s by 1910, Southard & Densmore’s by 1917, and Weisenberg’s hardware by 1924 and into the 1930s. Various women’s clothing stores occupied the building in the late 1940s through the mid-1960s. The Vernon L Schmidt jewelry store occupied the store beginning about 1964. The street-level façade may have been altered to its current configuration then.

114. Commercial Building (Pre-1884; c. 1920s)

Photo 13, 4th bldg. from R

Two-story commercial building with smooth cement skim upper façade finish. The building has a broad and deeply recessed slant-sided center entry with a narrow display window, slanting gently inward, at either outer edge facing the sidewalk, and a much longer slanting display window flanking either side of the entry. The first-floor end piers and storefront bulkheads are faced in EIFS and given a paneled treatment. The façade below the second-story windows is clad

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in horizontal wood panels. The second story has smooth-finish piers and tall façade above the windows and displays three single-light square-head windows, the central slightly broader than the one to either side, and each with a permanent awning. Each window is topped by a now boarded-up transom that an old photo shows contained prism glass. A low square-head shallow recess in the wall above each window is now faced in a wooden panel. The flat-topped upper façade has a plain concrete coping.

The 1884-94 Sanborn maps show a three-story building, with single-story rear section, at this location. The 1900 map is the first to show a two-story building, occupying the same footprint, and subsequent maps continue to show the two-story size – this even though the 1908 Owosso *Souvenir* shows a three-story Victorian building with bracketed cornice, and the building today retains the same three-story height it had then. A photo from the late 1920s-1930s era when the building housed Storrer's men's clothing shows a two-story front with proportions similar to today, including the transomed second-story windows and shallow recessed areas above them. The front's piers and upper façade were then faced in a light-hued material (most likely terra cotta or limestone) in coursed ashlar finish. It had a deeply recessed central entry storefront, with large prism glass transom. The smooth cement upper-façade finish may date from around 1950, the wood-panel finishes presumably much later.

The 1884 map lists a grocery store, 1890 a clothing store, 1894 a tailor shop, 1900 dry goods, and 1908 a general store. The 1899 and 1910 directories list Lyon & Pond dry goods, 1917 and 1924 Lyon & Son dry goods. Storrer's men's clothing moved here from across the street around 1927 and stayed until the late 1930s. The building then housed Silverman's Cut Rate Dry Goods Store from the late 1930s until the mid-1950s and then R & H Shoe Store and Schiff Shoes until the late 1970s.

116-20 N. Washington. Charles Loring Building (1881)

Photo 13, 3 lower bldgs. at L

This is a two-story, three-storefront long brick Italianate building. All three c. 1950s aluminum-trim storefronts have recessed slant-sided central entries, but each front has a distinct finish. No. 116's features low bulkheads displaying mauve-hued larger upper and lower stone tiles flanking a central band of colorful encaustic tiles – larger square ones interspersed with a mosaic of inch-square ones. No. 118's bulkheads are finished in white brick. No. 120's recessed entry has 45-degree slanting outer display window sections, but then the inner part expands outward on either side in a wide V-footprint form. The bulkheads are faced in square off-white stone tiles, but also feature a narrow strip of small square encaustic tiles near the top. Its floor is paved in large square mauve-tinted concrete tiles but has a band of lighter tiles, with encaustic tile strip, across the outer entry.

Raised piers divide the upper front into three sections and transition into a raised frieze supported on brick corbelling. Each section displays three square-head windows with stone slab sills and console-supported gabled caps with cornices. A bracketed roofline cornice has been removed (a late 1920s-late 1930s photo of 114 N. Washington illustrates 116's south end bracket).

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The HDSC inventory form states that Charles Loring had the three-storefront building constructed in 1881 and that Loring ran his insurance office at 118. The 1884 map shows for 116 what appears to read "Wholesale Coffee & Cigar," with "Gun Shop & Cobbler" in the basement; jewelry and books in 118, and a dry-goods and grocery store in 120. The 1899 directory lists Joe Gerson's clothing and boot and shoe store (and A. L. Rindge, barber) in 116; S. T. Van Dusen's book store and T. O. Christian's jewelry store in 118; and J. C. Johnson's drug and book store in 120. At least two insurance agents had upstairs offices. No. 116 housed Bullard & Hagan and then Willis E. Bullard's clothing stores from around 1910 into the 1930s, and 118 H. F. Steck Jewelry/Steck the Jeweler from 1910 through August 1984.

Some of the early occupants of the storefront at 116 N. Washington included Bullard & Hagan Trunks and Valises, who operated their business at this address in 1892, sharing the space with Glynn & Monroe Crockery. In 1899 A. E. Williams' saloon was located here. The building housed J. Gerson's clothing shop between 1900 and 1904. By 1905 and into the mid-1930s, Bullard & Hagan again had their business here, and had expanded into a clothing shop. Cook Paint and Varnish occupied the building from the mid-1940s through the early 1970s.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the storefront at 120 North Washington Street was the location of J. C. Johnson Druggist and Dr. Walter E. Ward's practice. Mr. Johnson remained until 1921, followed by additional drug stores through the late 1930s. In the 1940s this storefront housed Joseph Lebowski's Quality Shop, men's clothing.

122. Knill Block / Burhans Block (1868)

Photo 13, L, and Photo 14

This three-story painted brick building with its diagonal corner facing the intersection and a long side facing E. Exchange Street is one of the downtown's oldest and most intact Italianate buildings. The storefront features its original fluted cast-iron columns supporting a decorative, bracketed storefront cornice. There are large display windows between the columns on low modern bulkheads, and the former transoms are boarded up. The entry is located in the angled northwest corner. The second and third stories of the N. Washington façade are evenly divided into three fenestration bays that contain single one-over-one windows with stone slab sills and decorative iron caps that have central gables and consoles supporting the ends – the window cap design matching 116-20's. Two similar windows light the angled corner. The first story of the long north elevation has no windows but contains a single pedestrian door at the east corner. The second and third stories are lit with single one-over-one windows in the same style as those on the corner and façade although two third-story windows lack the hood moldings. Slightly raised piers mark the ends of the front, corner, and side elevations and transition into corbeled brickwork-supported low tile-capped parapets. The building once displayed a large bracketed cornice along the street-facing sides, with a raised, gabled section over the angled corner.

The HDSC inventory form reports a November 1867 *Owosso Press* brief noting that "H. C. Knill, Esq., has purchased the property on the southeast corner of Washington and Exchange and is making arrangements to erect, next spring, a three story brick building for his hardware business." The 1884 Sanborn map lists the post office here, with an express office in the main

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floor's east end, a restaurant in the basement, and the Odd Fellows Hall in the third story. The post office moved to the Grow Block, 120-22 W. Exchange, in the early 1890s, and a gymnasium replaced the IOOF Hall in the third story. The 1894 map shows a cigar store in the main store space. The 1899 directory lists August Stephan, cigar manufacturer and wholesaler/retailer, and Edward Martin's billiard hall, along with offices of an attorney, dentist, and optician in the upper stories. The corner store housed a succession of cigar stores/billiard halls – Stephan's, followed by Brown & Gray and then by Gray's – into the 1950s (the HDSC form notes well known author and Owosso resident James Oliver Curwood was reputedly a frequent billiards client during the 1920s). Several barbers, including Clarence G. Taylor and Boyle and Maxted, occupied part of the building between 1916 and 1932. Nu (later New) Vision Optical of Michigan has been the ground-story occupant since about 1974.

200-08 N. Washington. G. C. Murphy Store Building (1956); Perrin Construction
Photo 17, far R edge

One-story beige brick (in stacked stretcher bond) commercial building with a broad angled corner containing the main entrance. The corner and west front are entirely glass windows and doors below the tall brick upper façade. There are additional entries at the north end of the west façade and east end of the south. The south side facing E. Exchange contains no windows east of the corner entrance.

Erected for owner Robert Brewer, the building occupies the former site of the Salisbury Opera House. The HDSC inventory form states that the Salisbury Opera House was demolished in 1953 and the present building built in 1956. The G. C. Murphy department store was one of the earliest occupants of the new building, listed in the directories from 1957 through the mid-1990s. The present occupant, the Springrove Variety Store, moved in between 1995 and 2000.

210. Jo-Ann Fabrics (Built between 1970 and 1974); Non-Contributing
Photo 17, 2nd bldg. from R

Broad-fronted flat-roof one-story concrete block commercial building with a stacked red-orange brick façade. Between the brick end piers and below a projecting flat-top aluminum canopy, the front is nearly all display windows above low brick bulkheads, with a central double-door entry. The store name, "Jo-Ann Fabrics," is spelled out in individual letters centered in the upper façade above the canopy.

According to the HDSC inventory form, older buildings here were demolished in the 1970s to make way for the current building. Jo-Ann Fabrics is listed at this address beginning in 1974.

308. Owosso Eagles Aerie 851 Hall (Built between 1908 and 1915; front section 1950)
Photo 20

Large two-part building combining a single-story brown brick International Style front section with an older painted brick two-story rear section. The central half of the symmetrical front section contains a central entry that is outlined by sidelights and transom. The entry is flanked by

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a band or strip of windows on either side – now infilled with wood shingling except for a central window in the center of each section – that extends around the sides of the projecting center section. The entry and window strips are outlined by raised limestone strips. The front of the recessed section on either side displays a paired double-hung window, and the side facades more single and paired windows.

The building's two-story plus raised basement rear section projects slightly beyond the front section on either side and is nearly square in plan, with painted brick walls that display square-head upper and lower windows, now mostly bricked in, with rock-face stone sills, many of which are no longer present. Stepped parapets, with three steps as each end, in the front and back, frame a roof with a short and steep outer slope on each side and a broad, flat or very low gable center. The south side is fronted by a modern shed-roof open porch, while the north contains a second-story fire door reached by a black metal fire escape.

The Owosso Eagles Post 851 was established in 1904. Their first headquarters was located in a house at 308 N. Washington. The Sanborn maps show that the house was expanded with a small one-story rear section by 1915 and a second time by 1930, with the one-story addition expanded in footprint and raised to two stories that included a dance hall or ballroom in the second story. When a fire heavily damaged the house, the Eagles replaced it in 1950 with the present single-story western brick front section. In the 1960s the building also included an Eagles bowling alley.

320. Jaynes House (c. 1875; interior renovations in 1980s)

This broad-fronted two-story clapboarded Italianate building has a shallow hip roof and is fronted by a full-length single-story enclosed porch with a half-hipped roof. The porch has a central recessed entry, protected by a flat roof over a stoop with two square-plan posts. Four one-over-one windows with false shutters light the porch. The second story displays four one-over-one windows with false shutters and low gabled lintels. On the north side elevation two pairs of one-over-one windows light the first story, and two one-over-one windows with shaped lintels light the second story. The wide eaves are supported with broadly spaced wooden brackets.

Originally constructed as a residence, the building was later owned by the Struber family, who held the property for approximately fifty years. Ludwig Struber and his brother moved from Germany to the United States in 1857, and settled in Owosso in 1864. They owned and operated a shoemaking business on 114 W. Main until the 1940s. From 1932 to 1981 Dr. Edwin McKnight occupied the building for his residence and family practice. Dr. Douglas Strong purchased the building in 1985 and renovated it to house his medical practice.

326-28. Dr. Avery Knapp House / Shattuck House (c. 1885)

Photo 21, R edge

Large two-story frame house, complex both in its form and Eastlake detailing. The main front section has a cross-gable form, and there is a large cross-gable rear extension. The walls are finished in clapboard, except for the gables and tops of the walls just below the eaves, which are

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clad in vertical board-and-batten siding with cut-out slotted "teardrop"-design lower ends. A two-story gable-front section projects from the center of the side-gable building behind. It has broadly projecting eaves and a slotted, stickwork gable ornament. An open shed-roof entry porch with chamfered posts and slotted vertical boarding below the eaves flanks the gable-roof upright on either side. The left (north) side elevation displays a second gable end behind the first that projects beyond it. The upper side wall between the two side-facing gables has an angled corner and is capped by a mansard roof. There are various small hip and shed-roof appendages that expand the house's footprint along the north side, including bay windows with one-over-one windows and bracketed eaves.

A two-story carriage house with a steeply pitched front gable roof stands at the back end of a drive along the house's south side. The carriage house has been converted into a garage, and a modern garage door spans the width of the façade (west) elevation. Directly above near one end of the façade is a wide wooden hayloft door, with a simple wooden sill and lintel. A two-over-two window is centered under the gable. The gable itself is embellished with a simple stickwork truss and slotted woodwork gable ornament.

The house was constructed for Owosso physician, Dr. Avery Knapp. It was later sold to Dr. H. B. Peterson, a dentist. For a time in the 1920s and mid-1960s it housed the "Peterson Apartments." The Shattuck family has occupied the residence since the 1960s and carried out restoration work on the interior and exterior.

330 N. Washington. Salem Lutheran Church (1893; 1911; 1964 addition; 1978)

Photo 17, tower middle R, and Photo 21

Salem Lutheran Church is a gable-roof red Gothic Revival brick building with a symmetrical front dominated by a partly projecting pyramid-roof square-plan central tower. It stands on a coursed fieldstone foundation. Projecting stone-trimmed brick buttresses mark the tower and building corners and the bays on the side elevations containing tall pointed arch windows. The church is entered via twin staircases from either side that lead to a double-door central entry through the tower. The stairs have turned baluster railings and rise above a coursed ashlar fieldstone base. The main entry is located under a pointed-arch opening topped by a keystone. A quatrefoil is present under the arch, above the rectangular paneled doors. Above in the tower front is a pair of lancet windows. The top of the tower below its roof contains large circular louvered openings in the front and side faces. A large white metal cross rises above the peak of the tower roof. The front to either side of the tower and the sides displays tall pointed arch stained glass windows, with stone slab sills and stone keystones. Brick buttresses divide the side elevations each into six bays displaying stained glass windows. The front and side elevations display intricate corbeled brick detailing under the eaves. The church's cornerstone, a sandstone block located at the southwest corner, contains the carved inscription: "EV. LUTH. SALEMS KIRCHE U.A.C. 1893." Two small additions along the north/left side provide an accessible entrance to the church proper and a basement entry. Directly behind the church and extending outward slightly beyond the church's side wall on either side is a story-and-a-half tall flat-roof parish house. This building has red brick walls interrupted at regular intervals on the north and

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east sides by vertical window strips. There is a double glass door entry, topped by a large window area, at the west end of the north elevation.

The current church building stands on the site of the first schoolhouse constructed in Owosso. The schoolhouse was built in 1840. The community constructed a new Union School in 1858, and in the 1860s sold the older building to the small German Lutheran congregation which formally organized Salem Lutheran in 1869. They used this building until the present church was erected in 1893. A tall octagonal belfry and spire fell in the tornado of 1911, puncturing the church roof. The present shorter steeple was constructed after this storm. The second exterior renovation occurred in 1964, when the congregation added an administration-education wing, Sunday school rooms, offices, an altar guild room, sacristy, storage rooms, and a radio broadcasting room. The church doors were replaced in 1978.

Source: Salem Lutheran Church, *Salem Lutheran Church, Anniversary Edition* (Owosso, Michigan: Salem Lutheran Church, 1993), 3-5; 7-8; 13.

Washington Street, North (West Side)

101-03. Thomas Block (1888)

Photo 4, L, and Photo 5, R

Large square-footprint three-story red-orange brick Italianate building, with six window bays in the upper stories along N. Washington and eight along W. Main. The modern first story, constructed of brownish brick, has no fenestration save for a corner storefront with recessed corner entry. The upper street-facing facades rise above the old projecting limestone storefront cornice. The N. Washington façade has raised limestone-trim piers at the corners and center, separating three window bays to either side, and similar piers mark the ends of the W. Main façade, with a third separating a six-bay wide east end and two-bay wide west end. The second and third-story windows rest on limestone beltcourses and have segmental-arch heads, the second-story ones having a much more shallow arch. Each window is framed by a slightly raised brick pilaster on each side that rests on a limestone base above the beltcourse and rises to a limestone-trimmed "capital" that also serves as a springblock for the limestone-keystone brick arch spanning the opening. There is a simple corbelled brick detail below a metal classical cornice with broad plain frieze beneath. Low parapets top the east and west end walls. The present cornice and parapet replaced a more ornate cornice and parapet treatment after 1908. A 1979 survey photo shows the upper façade painted a light color, now removed. The present ground-story front shows in the 1979 photo; it may have been built in the 1970s for then tenant Hope's Hallmark Shop.

George Thomas had this present building constructed in 1888, replacing a two-story wooden Greek Revival store building that at one time contained his own residence. The 1890-1908 Sanborn maps show the downstairs containing a clothing store and a hall in the third story. The 1899-1907 directories list the Murray & Terbush clothing store here. The second story contained offices. By 1907 and until at least 1913 the third-story hall served as Foresters' Hall. By 1910 the building's first floor housed the Owosso Savings Bank and the building was being called the

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Owosso Savings Bank Block. The bank occupied these quarters until 1938, when they moved to 121-23 N. Washington. A Cunningham's Drug Store followed until well into the 1970s. The Elk's Lodge #357 met on the second floor of the building in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

109-11. S. S. Kresge's / Jupiter Store (Pre-1884; Built between 1890 and 1894; Altered in 1952 and 1980s); Non-Contributing

Photo 15, far L edge

Broad-fronted one-story brown brick commercial building combined from two buildings. It has large display windows with low brick bulkheads and glass doors with sidelights. A heavy brick pier separates the two storefronts. The upper facade is sheathed in diagonal siding. The side and rear walls are not exposed to view.

The building occupies the site of three older buildings. Its south half, storefront 109 N. Washington, occupies what were two buildings at 105-07 N. Washington. The southern building was three stories in height and in the 1884 Sanborn housed a dry goods store and a cigar factory, while the next building north was two stories high and occupied by a jewelry shop. By 1900 both buildings show as three stories in height. Occupants of storefronts 105-07 in 1910-11 included Thorne & Frisbie shoes; A. R. Knapp and Company; Sprague & Company drugs; and Christian Rentscher photography.

A single three-story building stood at 109-11 N. Washington. The site was vacant as of 1890 but contained the three-story building by 1894. It then housed a dry goods store. The Knights of Pythias met on the upper floors in 1910. The 109-11 building was referred to as the Williams Block in early city directories. This Williams family was not related to the pioneer Owosso family but arrived in Owosso in the early twentieth century and established the Columbia Candy Works, once located in the building.

The Kresge's store is first listed occupying the whole 107-111 N. Washington frontage in the 1928 city directory. In the early 1950s the buildings and store were rebuilt, with what were 105 and 107 combined into one building and both this and the 109-11 building reduced to a single story and given new facades. By the 1960s the store became Jupiter's, part of a Kresge's discount chain. In the 1980s with Jupiter's gone, then-owners Jerry and Jane Idle gutted the interior of the building and created a mini-mall in the space.

113. F. H. Banister Grocery / Knepp's Building (Pre-1884); presently Non-Contributing
Photo 15, 1st 3-story bldg. at L

Three-story brick commercial building with a flat enameled metal panel upper facade, now pierced by three modern double-hung windows at the second-story level. The ground story contains a recessed slant-sided central entry beneath a wood shingled pent roof. The piers and bulkheads are faced in vertical wood boarding, and a low strip of vertical boarding spans the facade above the pent roof up to near the second-story windows. A 1979 survey photo shows the present enameled metal panel front, but in a dark, shiny finish, without the windows. A store

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name, Knepp's, is spelled out in large light-colored letters across the façade at about the level of the top of the current windows. Though the façade's predominant feature, the enameled metal panel upper façade, may well be more than fifty years old, it is a plain and unprepossessing example of this type of façade alteration and is compromised by the modern windows inserted into it. **With this upper façade and the non-historic first-floor storefront, the building is non-contributing in its present form despite its great age.** Historic photographs show a brick Italianate building with round-arch windows in the second and third stories and a bracketed wood cornice.

The 1884 Sanborn map shows this three-story building already present and the 1884-94 maps indicate it housed a grocery store. The 1899 directory lists the Hookway & Sons grocery, the 1905 the W. E. Hall & Son general store, offering groceries, dry goods, shoes, etc. In the 1910s and 20s the Murray & Terbush clothing store was located here. The building housed a Kroger's grocery from the late 1920s into the mid-1940s, and the W. R. Knepp & Co. women's clothing store followed in the late 1940s to the 1970s.

115-117. Laubengayer Block / J. C. Williams Block / Norm Henry Shoes (Built between 1884 and 1890)

Photo 15, 2nd and 3rd 3-story bldgs. from L, and Photo 16

Three-story two-storefront wide red brick Late Victorian commercial building, the south half now painted white. The ground story contains two storefronts with recessed entries and flanking storefront windows. No. 115's is finished in red brick and appears to be of relatively recent date, while 117's appears to date c. 1920s and has a broad slant-sided center entry with painted low tile bulkheads and a plastered ceiling coved around the edges. A small four-sided lantern, presumably also part of the 1920s finish, hangs in the center. No. 115 retains its original narrow brick piers, with rounded edges and rock-face stone trim, flanking the storefront.

Brick piers divide the upper facade into six fenestration bays, the central one in each half broader than the one to either side, topped by round brick arches, with stone keystones, above the third-story windows. The windows in each story rise above a continuous rock-face stone sill and the second-story windows are capped by a broader continuous smooth stone lintel. The piers are capped by large squared smooth stone blocks that also serve as springblocks for the arches capping the third-story window openings. The brick spandrels between the second and third-story windows feature sunken panels filled with brick faced in a pebble pattern. There is brick corbelling on either side of the piers below the caps and below the plain brick parapet, and decorative brick whose centers are raised in a hip-roof-like form appears in the upper façade above the arches, as the inner of three courses of brick in the arches, and in small vertical panels in the piers.

This building is first illustrated in the 1890 Sanborn. A drug store was then located in 115 and a dry-goods store in 117. The HDSC inventory form identifies this as the Laubengayer Block. The building may have been constructed for Theodore A. Laubengayer, whose father John H. established a drugstore business in 1857. John H. Laubengayer died in 1887, and Theodore then ran the drugstore until about 1893, when he sold to Will E. Collins & Co. The 1899-1913

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directories list Collins at 115, followed by King's Drug Store. The 1899-1917 directories list the C. S. Allison & Son jewelry store in 117 (in 1899 Henry W. Mann's book and stationary, wallpaper, paints and oils, window shades, and artists' materials shop was also housed there). There were offices upstairs and for a time a hall in the third story, used as an Odd Fellows' Hall as of 1910 and as Foresters' Hall in at least the 1913-19 period. The upper floor was used as the Locomotive Engineers Hall in the early 1930s. In the 1980s Norm Henry expanded his shoe store from 119 into the lower level of the building. The storefronts have been altered, but the second and third-story facades retain their historic feeling and materials. According to the HDSC inventory form, the building's wood windows are present beneath the boarded voids.

119 N. Washington. Sharpstene / Savings Bank Block (Built between 1884 and 1890)
Photo 15, 2nd bldg. from R

Three-story Late Victorian painted brick commercial building displaying broad arched window openings in its upper stories. The c. 1950s ground-story storefront is faced in white-painted enameled metal panels and features a square-plan recessed central entry. The panels rise to the base of the second-story windows. The second story contains a broad window comprised of four double-hung windows, with transoms, beneath a single round arch that spans the front nearly from side to side. The windows are separated by paneled mullions and the transom lights rise above a dentil-trimmed wood lintel. The arch is constructed of four courses of brick headers, plus two courses of half bricks around the opening and a strip of raised, molded brick forming a drip molding around the outer side. Two large medallion details embellish the spandrels of the arch between the second and third stories. Two broad round-arch-head windows, each comprised of a pair of square-head windows below an arched transom formed of multiple small square lights, light the third story. Their arches are constructed of four courses of brick in header bond. Both pairs of windows have rock-face stone sills and springblocks. Corbeled brickwork caps the ends of the facades and, with a raised brickwork band, with dentil-like detail, between, spans the width of the façade immediately above the third-story arches. Above is a plain brick parapet with smooth concrete or stone cap.

This building is illustrated for the first time in the 1890 Sanborn map. The 1894 Sanborn shows the building housing a bank. This was the Owosso Savings Bank, founded in 1891. The 1895 county atlas (90) refers to this building purchased by the bank as the "Sharpstene Block." The bank moved to the Thomas Block, 101-03 N. Washington, about 1909. The 1899 directory lists several offices upstairs. The 1894 Sanborn shows a hall in the third story, and the 1900 one lists it as the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) Hall. It was used by the Modern Brotherhood of America as of the 1910-13 directories. Woolworth's occupied the store space from about 1915 to 1945, along with another storefront (perhaps connecting to it) around the corner at 109 W. Exchange. Since then the building has housed a succession of shoe stores down to the present Norm Henry Shoes.

121-23/107-11 W. Exchange. Keeler Block / Owosso Savings Bank, now Fifth-Third Bank
(1895-96; c. 1914-15; c. 1964-70)
Photo 15, bldg. at R edge, and Photo 27, L edge

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This large mostly three-story building is today a hybrid, displaying an early twentieth-century Neoclassical exterior on the front and side at street level and International Style upper facades clad in alternating vertical strips of white marble panels and enameled metal panels in rectangular vertical grids above horizontal-light paired windows at the second-story level. The building actually combines under a common façade the 1895-96 Keeler Block fronting on N. Washington and W. Exchange with two single-storefront wide buildings to its west on W. Exchange. The Neoclassical base appears built of sandstone but with a thin smooth lighter coating – now peeling in places low in the wall – designed to look like limestone. The N. Washington front's ground story contains a broad central entry flanked by broad paneled pilasters supporting an entablature with cornice that extends across the front and side. The ground story's walls in front and as far back on the side as a west-of-center entry are rusticated, with sunken horizontal joints between courses. The front contains one window on either side of the central entry, the side six nearly square windows back to the west-of-center entry and two broad display windows, with small doorway between, farther west toward the back. The second and third stories are divided into four vertical window bays on the N. Washington front and thirteen on the north (W. Exchange) elevation. The vertical metal panel strips are uniformly four panels wide and the marble panel strips mostly three or four panels broad.

The back (west) part of the building fronting on W. Exchange has the same exterior finishes, but the two broad first-floor windows, with door between, and the upper façade's narrower strips of marble and metal panels separate this section visually from the rest. They mark the location of the two single-storefront buildings, refaced to match the main building sometime in the 1965-70 period. What was 109 W. Exchange, a three-story brick building whose Late Victorian exterior complemented the Keeler Block's, forms the east half of this west extension, while a one-story building at 111, its rear façade of concrete block, forms the west part. While 109's upper front has windows in its second-story facing, 111's does not. In fact 111's entire upper façade is simply a screen rising above the one-story building, its back connected on either side to adjacent buildings with struts.

The Keeler Block was built in 1895-96 for the Keeler brothers of Grand Rapids. The Keelers were primary investors in the Citizens' Savings Bank of Owosso, established that year, and had the building constructed to house the bank and as income property. Isaac H. Keeler, who came from Grand Rapids, became the first president. The bank initially occupied the corner storefront, 123 N. Washington, with its entrance facing the intersection. The 1899 directory lists J. F. Storrer men's clothing in the 121 storefront, but also extending out in an L to 105 W. Exchange. The Day & Havens barber shop occupied a small 103 W. Exchange storefront, and 107 contained Charles J. Thorn, wholesale/retail cigars, and G. H. Grahame, cigar manufacturer/cigar and tobacco dealer. The building's second story contained rental office space – the 1899 and other early directories list a number of attorneys, physicians, real estate and insurance agents, and firms – and the third story contained the city's Masonic Temple from the building's completion in 1896 until 1928, when the Masons occupied their present temple. The third-floor temple quarters has remained unused since the Masons vacated and retains much of its historic finishes.

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The 1908 *Souvenir of Owosso* shows the stone-trimmed brick building as originally built, with paired round-arch and also five oriel windows in the second story and two large-scale Palladian windows in the Washington side in the third story and paired and broad round-arch windows on the Exchange side. The roofline displayed intricate corbelled and paneled brickwork. Old photographs make clear that, in a downtown containing numerous architecturally distinguished Victorian buildings, the Keeler Block was one of the most outstanding. **The present International Style upper façade is much less distinguished architecturally than the original one beneath it. It should be viewed as a Non-Contributing feature unless and until it can be demonstrated that restoring the original upper façade is infeasible.**

The present Neoclassical ground story post-dates the 1908 photo and may date from approximately 1914-15; the 1913 directory continues to list a store at 121, while the Dec. 1915 Sanborn shows the bank occupying the building's entire Washington frontage. The Citizens' Savings Bank closed for good during the Depression and the Owosso Savings Bank moved to this location in 1938, becoming Pacesetter Bank and Trust by 1980, Old Kent Bank by 1985, and most recently Fifth Third Bank.

The HDSC inventory form states that Owosso Savings began a major expansion/modernization program in 1960 and that by 1970 the bank was also occupying quarters in the two buildings to the west (109 and 111 W. Exchange). A c. 1964 Owosso Savings Bank leaflet celebrating the bank's "modernized main office" makes reference to the "modern exterior," suggesting the exterior refacing was then recently constructed. Owosso historians believe the refacing of the 109 and 111 buildings may have taken place a few years later, by 1970.

The now covered-up building at 109 W. Exchange was also built in the 1894-1900 period, and its design very much complemented the adjacent Keeler Block's even to having matching floor heights and storefront and cornice detail. An interesting piece of 109's history is its long time association with Felix O. Schlag, an artist and photographer known for having been the designer of the Jefferson nickel. Schlag won an open competition for the new coin's design in 1937, and the Jefferson nickel was minted by the U. S. Treasury Department from 1938 until 2003. Schlag made the design while living in Chicago, but he and wife Ethel moved to Owosso in the early 1940s. The 1945 Owosso directory has the Schlag residence and photo studio at 109 ½ W. Exchange, and succeeding directories through 1970 list their home at 109 ½, with later entries showing 107 ½. The 1948 and 1950 directories also show Schlag's Photo-Art-Center at 109, presumably the ground-floor storefront. Felix Schlag died in 1974, but widow Ethel continued to reside at 107 ½ well into the 1980s. The back of 109's second story contains the Schlags' large glass block window overlooking the alley.

No. 111 W. Exchange shows as a two-story building in the Sanborns down to the 1946 update of the 1930 map, which shows a one-story building with the same footprint. Whether the present building is a remodeled and lowered remnant of the old two-story building or a newer building constructed in the 1930-46 period, it now retains no historic character.

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Sources: *The Evening Argus*, 7/27/1895, 2/15/1896. James Broughton, *A Genealogy of the Families of John Rockwell, of Stamford, Conn., 1641, and Ralph Keeler of Hartford, Conn., 1639*. (New York, New York: William F. Jones, 1903), p. 448.

**201-05 N. Washington. Gute's Drugs / Capitan's Restaurant (1948; c. 1990 combined);
Non-Contributing
Photo 17, far L edge**

Two one-story 1948 buildings at 201-03 and 205 now combined into a single office building. These much modernized single-story commercial buildings have EIFS-clad walls. The former 201-03 has lower walls than 205 and is capped by a metal-clad mansard roof on the front and side elevations. The angled southeast corner facing the intersection with Exchange contains the entry. There are three display windows on the front (east) elevation and five windows and a second entry on the south elevation all separated from one another by wide expanses of wall. The former 205 is also faced in EIFS and features a single broad central picture window below a façade wide awning. The upper façade rises perhaps five feet above 201-03's and is faced in vertical metal sheeting.

Older buildings on this corner were destroyed by fire in 1948. Shortly after the fire, the owner at the time of the corner building (201-03), Gute's Drugs, had a new building constructed at the site. Gute's Drug Store operated here until it was succeeded by Stone's Drug Store in 1960. Stone's Drug Store was located here until the early 1980s. The directories suggest the two buildings were combined as Howe's Drug Store about 1990.

A separate building at 205 housed Alex and James Capitan's Capitan's Restaurant before the fire, and Capitan's occupied this 1948 replacement building until about 1990. Later the building was remodeled and became part of Voight's Pharmacy and Gift Shop located next door at 207-09 N. Washington.

**207-09. Shattuck Block (1891; 3rd story removed 1970s)
Photo 17, 2nd bldg. from L**

This two-story building's upper facade is Richardsonian Romanesque in inspiration, faced in rock-face coursed ashlar Ionia sandstone. The building's ground-story façade is recessed between end piers now faced in vinyl siding and contains a center-entry storefront at the right and upstairs entry at the left – the wall between the storefront and upstairs entry also faced in vinyl siding. The former transom location up to the base of the second-story windows is clad in wood paneling that displays a centrally positioned store signboard. Above the rebuilt ground story, the masonry second story features five alternating narrow rectangular and broader arched one-over-one windows. The two arched windows feature multi-light transoms beneath the arch. Four short stone piers project from the upper façade, two of them rising as keystones above the two arched windows, the other two marking the ends of the façade, and rise to the height of the slightly projecting parapet cap. These piers once subdivided the front of a now removed third story into three parts, the center containing a broad round-arch double window and each outer a

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single square-head window. The third story was capped by a three-part parapet displaying a repeating pattern of arches. A 1979 survey photo shows the building's third story removed.

The building was constructed for J. C. Shattuck to house his Michigan Sewing Machine & Organ Co./Shattuck Music House business. The business, founded by his father C. E. Shattuck in 1869, offered, according to a story in the 1908 *Souvenir of Owosso*, "a very large stock of pianos, organs, sewing machines, phonographs, moving picture machines, small musical instruments of all kinds, sheet music and musical merchandise." J. C. Shattuck had this new building constructed shortly after taking over the firm from his father in 1890. A date stone in the now removed third story listed the date of construction, 1891, according to a tour pamphlet and the HDSC form. The Shattuck Music House – in its early days the business was alternatively known by the "Sewing Machine & Organ" name – was located here until the early 1940s. The now removed third floor contained a meeting hall. The 1900 Sanborn lists the Knights of the Maccabee's Hall on the third floor and the directories list the Maccabee's Hall here through the 1930 directory followed by the Knights of Pythias Hall in the 1936-59 editions.

**211. Parkhills Drug Store / Voights (ca. 1870); Non-Contributing
Photo 17, 3rd bldg. from L**

Two-story commercial building with upper façade now clad in vertical metal paneling that contains a single casement window off-center to the right. The modern storefront displays broad arcade-like rounded-corner red brick storefronts below a projecting horizontal aluminum canopy (the same storefront treatment continues into the next building to the north). The present front masks what were historically two individual buildings, 211 and 213 N. Washington. No. 211 shows in old photographs as a two-story brick Italianate building with three round or segmental-arch-head second-story windows and a bracketed wooden cornice, 213 as a Late Victorian block with a single broad four-part transomed segmental-arch-head window spanning the second story beneath a bracketed cornice with central gable. A 1979 survey photo shows the south half of the upper façade faced in square enameled metal panels and with a large centered square-head window opening, the north half in 1960s-looking patterned aluminum paneling.

The Sanborn maps indicate the southern half of the present building (211) was built prior to 1884. The HDSC inventory form reports that Charles Parkhill established his drug store business in 1868 and later occupied this building. Since Parkhill's time the building housed a succession of drug stores owned by Wade Canburn, Lloyd D. Owens, Samuel Voight, Jerry Voight, and Dick Sobak into the 1990s.

The 1890 map shows the north half (formerly 213) then being built. Storefront 213 contained a bakery in 1894 and 1900, an "electric [i.e. movie] theater" in 1908, and a boot and shoe store in 1915. Hartwell & Hart shoe store was present in storefront 213 in 1924, followed by Gabriel's Ladies' Wear in 1928 through the early 1930s. Wachter Shoe Co. occupied storefront 213 in the late 1930s through the late 1950s. Individual city directory listings for 213 N. Washington cease after 1964, indicating that storefronts 211 and 213 may have been combined into one around that time. Voight's Rexall Pharmacy occupied 211 from the early 1950s through the mid-1980s, presumably expanding into the former 213 space in the mid-1960s.

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213. G. Tannehill Bakery/Confectionery (c. 1856)
Photo 17, 4th bldg. from L, and Photo 18, L edge

Three-story red brick commercial building of vernacular Greek Revival design. Its single storefront has a central entry within a modern arcade-like brick storefront matching 211 next door to the south. The upper stories each contains three square-head window openings, two in the second story containing modern one-over-one windows, the other four openings now filled with concrete block and boarding. Ghost marks indicate the former presence of shaped, perhaps low gabled lintels, where today there is simply horizontal white brick and concrete block. A brick frieze displays three sunken panels below a simple corbeled brick cornice with stone or concrete coping. An old post card view shows a broadly projecting plain wooden cornice with brackets aligned with the stiles between the frieze's panels.

This building was historically number 215 N. Washington, according to Sanborn maps through 1946. It appears in the 1884 Sanborn map, but the HDSC inventory report claims it as one of the downtown's oldest surviving commercial buildings, constructed c. 1856, and the simple vernacular Greek Revival/Italianate design as seen in the old photos seems to support an early date. The 1884-94 Sanborn maps list a hardware store here, with a tin shop on the third floor, and the 1908 to 1915 maps show a grocery store. The HDSC inventory form reports that G. Tannehill had his bakery and confectionery here from 1899 to 1906, followed by George Caruso's fruit and candy shop in 1911. City directories list J. A. Byerly's grocery at this address in 1924 through 1957, followed for a few years by Eberhard's Grocery. Individual listings for 215 N. Washington cease by 1970, indicating the building may have been renumbered around that time.

217-19 N. Washington. Gould's Hall Building / Osburn Block (1867; remodeled 1979)
Photo 17, middle L, and Photo 18

Three-story broad-fronted painted brick Italianate building divided into five fenestration bays in the two upper stories. The first-story storefront is clad with brick and features a central recessed entry and a flanking modern four-part display window centered in the façade on each side. The storefront is capped by a bracketed wood cornice, reportedly part of a 1979 façade refurbishment that restored some lost historic features (a summer 1979 survey photo shows the front as it is today). Five one-over-one windows with simple sills and decorative caps displaying a fleur-de-lis design light the second-story front. The third story contains five wide and tall double round-arch windows, each beneath a rounded head. The broadly overhanging bracketed wood cornice has large brackets separating five recessed panels in the brick frieze. The rear of the building was originally one story in height, but was raised to two stories between 1908 and 1915.

Constructed in 1867 for Owosso pioneer and the city's first mayor, Amos Gould, the building had as its first storefront occupant the Osburn & Sons clothing and dry goods store, which moved in in January 1868 and remained in operation until the mid-1920s. Osburn was followed by the W. R. Knepp & Company department store in the late 1920s and early 1930s and by the Morris Five Cents to One Dollar Store in the late 1930s to late 1940s. It housed the Murphy Department Store by 1955 and housed Pabst Brothers Furniture in the 1960s and 1970s.

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The building's third story originally contained a meeting hall space known as Gould or Gould's Hall. The third story served as Owosso's Masonic temple from 1879 until 1896, when the Masons moved to the Keeler Block, 123 N. Washington. The Knights of Pythias used the third story as their quarters between about 1932 and 1955.

221-23. Gould Block (original Gould's Hall) / First National Bank Block (1857; upper two floors removed late 1960s); Non-Contributing
Photo 18, R edge

This single-story flat-roof commercial building now displays no historic features. Its vertical boarding-clad three-section front displays a recessed-entry storefront in each end bay and a five-section window in the center bay; the windows have rounded upper corners and false shutters. The storefront is capped with a cedar shake roof with flared eaves. Above is a broad horizontal sign panel containing business signs. The side elevation contains a second entry and window and is faced in a stucco and half-timber treatment.

This building is the remnant of one of the earliest surviving commercial buildings in Owosso. The HDSC inventory form reports that the building was constructed for Amos Gould around 1854. The Owosso history in the 1880 county history calls the building simply the "bank block" and states that it was constructed in 1857 and had as one of its early tenants the D. Gould & Co. private bank (David Gould was Amos Gould's nephew, but Amos was the prime investor). The 1st National Bank, founded in 1865 with Amos Gould as its majority stockholder, was the successor to D. Gould & Co. and continued to occupy the north or corner storefront until the late 1880s. This Gould or Bank Block contained the first Gould's Hall in its upper stories (a second Gould's Hall was later constructed at 217-19 N. Washington). The 1884 Sanborn shows a millinery shop in 221 and the 1890 map a grocery store occupying the entire front. Howard White opened his bakery in this building in 1921, and the family continued to run the bakery into the late-1990s. The upper floors of the building were removed and the building remodeled in the late 1960s by Mr. White of White's Bakery.

301. Masonic Temple (1925-1928; remodeled 1952); George W. Graves, Detroit, Architect;
J. J. Olson & Sons, contractor
Photo 17, middle, and Photo 19

The Masonic Temple is a four-story limestone-trim beige brick building of simplified Neoclassical design. The rectilinear-form building has its narrow face on N. Washington, while the longer side elevation extends along the north side of W. Mason. The building's two-story tall base is finished in rusticated brickwork, with every tenth course deeply recessed. Above a thick limestone beltcourse the upper façades are faced in plain brickwork, but with rusticated limestone piers outlining three central bays in each façade.

Stone piers divide the front into five bays while wide beltcourses separate the base at the top of the second story from the upper façade and cap the fourth story below a low attic. This upper beltcourse strip is flat and broad and displays the incised words MASONIC TEMPLE across the

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center. The attic parapets are also capped by plain limestone copings. The entry is located at the north end of the façade. A limestone cornerstone is located at the southeast corner of the building. The two-sided stone bears the inscriptions A.D. 1925 and A. L. 5925 on the south face of the stone and the Masonic emblem on the east face. Remaining fenestration on the façade within each fenestration bay consists of a pair of single-light windows at the first story, pairs of double-hung one-over-one windows in the second and third stories and a low horizontal four-light window in the fourth story.

Similarly, the long south side elevation above the base is divided by four banded stone piers to create three central bays between an outer bay at each end; the two end bays are twice the width of the three center bays. Storefronts with deeply recessed entrances occupy the central part of the facade at grade level, and there is an additional pedestrian door situated near the southwest end of the façade. The front's first-to-third-story paired windows and fourth-floor's horizontal windows continue around the corner in the ground story and in the south side's whole upper façade.

Beyond the details of the brick and stone on the building, the Masonic Temple features little in the way of decoration. The exception to this are the round medallions carved in low relief present in the center three bays on both the east and south elevations. Each set of medallions is set high on the wall in the otherwise blank rectangle created by the crossing of the upper belt course, the banded stone piers, and the stone coping. Although there are six medallions present on the building only two different designs are utilized. The center medallion on each elevation features teacher and student each with a scroll placed in their laps and seated in front of a Greek temple of the Ionic order. The two flanking medallions on each façade are of the second design. These medallions feature a projecting armor helmet or mask at the upper edge with a shield below. The shield is divided into four sections to form a coat of arms utilizing Masonic symbols. The upper right image on the shield is that of a boat or ark at sea, the lower right a symbol associated with the Royal Arch, the lower left an image of a beehive, and the upper left features "the sun in its splendor" with a sun and radiating rays. Surrounding the shield is a string of flowers and ribbons.

The Owosso Masonic Lodge, F. & A.M., was established on May 2, 1855. By October 1855 the lodge had taken steps to lease suitable quarters, making the Williams Block at 112 N. Washington their first formal home. It wasn't until the following year, on January 25, 1856, that the Owosso Lodge was entered by the Grand Lodge of Michigan as the eighty-first lodge in Michigan. On March 7, 1879, the lodge moved to larger quarters in the Osburn Block, 217-19 N. Washington. This site served until, having reached an active membership of nearly 200, the lodge occupied the third story of the Keeler Block, dedicating these new quarters May 15, 1896. This remained their home until November 1, 1928, when the move was made to this present building.

Although the exact date the Masonic Temple construction began is unclear, it was reported in 1928 that "nearly a score of years in planning, looking ahead, financing proceeded the actual erection of the structure." Early in the process architect George W. Graves of Detroit was hired to develop the design. An undated document entitled *Owosso Temple Prospectus* presented by the Masonic Temple Association to the members of the Owosso Lodge No. 81, F & A. M.;

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Owosso Chapter No. 80, R. A. M.; Owosso Commandery No. 49, K. T.; Abigail Chapter No. 206 O. E. S.; and Owosso White Shine No. 52 noted that that full membership of the organizations included approximately 1200, and the current space could no longer accommodate them. The proposed new building provided four stories of space for both lodge work and social activities. Incorporated into the design were two mezzanine levels over what are today known as the second and third floors – the floor at street level was called the “ground” floor with three additional stories above. Spaces for a cafeteria and banquet hall were provided on the ground floor. While the plan is essentially what was later constructed, the exterior of the building was greatly simplified from the original drawings, which included Ionic capiteled pilasters instead of the banded stone piers and a hipped roof clad with tile instead of a flat roof. The building did have a stone/concrete urn placed above the parapet coping above each of the eight stone piers on the east and south elevations – these urns have been removed.

Although the exterior plan for the proposed building was simplified, Graves’ overall concept was approved and the architect appointed to complete design work. Born in Buffalo, New York, in 1876, George W. Graves was graduated from the Buffalo Preparatory College with degrees in architecture and engineering. In 1906 he was in charge of the architectural department of the American Radiator Company in Chicago for two years before moving the Detroit where he worked as an architect and engineer for approximately twenty years. During his architectural career Graves designed commercial spaces, such as a store for Joseph Withowski & Son that was featured in a 1918 issue of *The Architectural Forum* and the decorative scheme for the annual Detroit Automotive Dealers Association show of 1916. Graves’ retention as the lodge’s architect was doubtless abetted by his being a fellow Mason. Not just a member, he rose through the order to the level of Most Worshipful Grand Master of the state Grand Lodge in Detroit from 1927 through 1928 and served as the Master of Ceremonies at the dedication of the Detroit Masonic Temple on Thanksgiving Day, 1926. He had previously also fulfilled the role of Acting Senior Grand Warden at the Masonic ceremonies at the 1924 cornerstone dedication for the Owosso Municipal Building (City Hall).

The cornerstone for the Owosso Masonic Temple was laid on April 15, 1925, in a ceremony featuring a great number of high-ranking dignitaries of the Masonic fraternity, including George L. Lusk, Bay City, who also was the featured speaker at the laying of the cornerstone for the new municipal building in July 1924. Another similarity between the ceremony at the Municipal Building and the Masonic Temple was the use of a trowel with a history. First used by Judge Hugh McCurdy when he was the Grand Master of Michigan Masonry in the placement of the cornerstone of the Michigan State Capitol building in the 1870s, the trowel was later presented to George T. Campbell and shared by his widow for the Owosso ceremony.

The new temple featured fireproof construction of steel, pressed brick, tile and concrete. Inside the first floor included a large auditorium with a hardwood floor to enable the space to be used as either a ballroom or banquet hall. The second story contained a number of club rooms and a library, while the main lodge occupied the majority of the third floor of the building. A second lodge room and the Commandery locker rooms as well as a dining room were situated on the fourth floor. Over time circumstances of the different lodges that occupied the building changed. Several of the original lodge occupants left while others were added. In 1952 the building

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underwent extensive remodeling so the first and second stories could be leased to the Union Telephone Company for commercial and executive offices. The phone company occupied the lower two floors until the mid-1980s. Since that time a variety of different businesses have held space on the lower two floors while the upper portion of the building remains intact and occupied by Masonic Lodge No. 81.

Sources: *The Owosso Argus-Press*, "A Brief History of the Owosso Lodge," (Owosso, Michigan: Argus-Press, May 10, 2006), 3; *The Argus-Press*, "Masonic Temple Dignified Token of the Fraternity" November 1, 1928, 1; "Foundation Stone of New City Hall Put in Place Today," July 10, 1924, 1; Masonic Temple Association, "Owosso Temple Prospectus," (building prospectus, Owosso Masonic Temple, n.d.); "George W. Graves," *Masonichistory.org* accessed June 17, 2013, http://www.masonichistory.org/masonic_wiki/index.php?title=George_W._Graves; "Linotile" Advertisement, *The Architectural Forum*, 28 (November 1918):18; Robert Szudarek, *The First Century of the Detroit Auto Show* (Warrendale, Pennsylvania: Society of Automotive Engineering, Inc., 2000), 65.

307-13 N. Washington. Laverock Block / (c. 1909; altered c. 1982); Non-Contributing

The building is a much remodeled four storefront long concrete block-wall commercial building whose various sections now exhibit different storefront and façade treatments. It was originally a two-story building, but the second story was destroyed in a fire in the 1980s. The c. 1950s south (307) storefront has a recessed entry at the right end and display window bulkheads and former transom area clad in buff-brown random ashlar stone. A rusticated concrete block pier separates this from the 309 storefront to the north. The 309 front has a recessed slant-sided center entry with display windows each side above more random ashlar bulkheads of the same material. A former second-story entry area at its south end is now faced in smooth concrete or EIFS and a pier separating 309 from 311 is also now similarly finished. The north end of the front now forms a single red brick-faced storefront with two central recessed entries separated by a narrow display case and with a broad display window to either side. The fronts are all capped by pent roofs of different height. The building's rear façade shows a small remnant of rock-face block at the north end, but most has been rebuilt in smooth-faced block and several block rear extensions have been made.

This building first appears in the 1915 Sanborn map as a two-story, four-storefront building. Listings in the 1910 directory for this property, which shows as vacant in the 1908 map, suggests the building was constructed about 1909. Between 1915 and 1930, a single-story addition was completed on the rear (west side) of number 307 N. Washington. The second story was destroyed in a fire in March 1982.

The building was originally known as the Laverock Block for owner James Laverock, who owned a real estate, coal and wood company. The company is listed as Laverock & Tudeno Coal in 1924. The 1910 directory lists Norris Albert, merchant tailors, in 307, the Owosso Flora Co., florists, in 309, and Charles H. Jewell Co., plumbers, in 311, and the 1915 Sanborn lists "Paint, Glass, Wallpaper" in 307, insurance offices in 309 and 313, and a dry-goods store in 311.

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319. United States Post Office (1961)

The Post Office is a very broad-fronted single-story International Style building that, set back from the street behind a narrow strip landscaped with lawn, shrubs, and trees, is faced in smooth limestone but with a rubble fieldstone section at its south end. The asymmetrical front has a projecting limestone-clad north end section that, resting on a low rubble fieldstone base, displays in raised metal letters, UNITED STATES POST OFFICE, OWOSSO MICHIGAN 48867. The broad central section, containing a double-door central entry, is faced almost entirely in windows and set back from the front of the north end section. It is fronted by a flat-top canopy that, supported by square-plan columns, projects outward to the front of the north section. The upper façade over the canopy is also faced in limestone. The short south-end section, its front aligned with the center section's front behind the canopy, is clad in rubble fieldstone masonry. The building's side and rear walls are of buff-colored brick. The present building replaced Owosso's 1906 Post Office that, located on E. Mason, has since been demolished. It has served as Owosso's Post Office since its 1961 construction.

327. First Congregational Church (1891; addition and remodeling 1958); Malcomson & Higginbotham, Detroit, architect for 1891 building; Robert H. Snyder, Architects, Bloomfield Hills, architects for 1958 expansion/renovation.

Photo 17, center (L side of street)

The First Congregational Church is a cross-gabled building with rock-faced random ashlar fieldstone walls and a pyramid-roof square-plan tower at the street corner end of the facade. Its design is Romanesque in inspiration. The church's broad gabled east front faces N. Washington with its southern eave low to the ground. The front contains three round-arch stained glass windows, the center significantly taller than the others, in the gable above the main entrances. A massive square-plan tower, with pyramid roof with flared eaves, stands at the building's northeast corner. The tower's east and north (street-facing) sides each contains three tall, narrow round-arch windows at mid-level and a round louvered belfry opening in each face below the roof. Behind the tower, along the church's west side, stands another gable containing three more large round-arch windows. Opposite, on the church's east side, another gable-roof "transept" displays a jerkinhead roof. Behind (south of) the auditorium's southern gable end is the matching fieldstone Sunday school part of the building, with a hip roof merging into the auditorium's and a gable facing the street on the north. A mid-century modern two-story addition stands directly south of the church fronting on Washington, set back from the street behind a small garden area. The addition complements the original building in its rock-faced random ashlar fieldstone walls on the narrow west and east elevations, but presents a dramatic nearly all glass façade featuring repeating cross forms below a folded plate roof to the south. A connector between the folded-plate-roof section and original building is faced in alternating solid limestone panels and narrow vertical strip windows.

The First Congregational Church began as a Presbyterian church in 1840. First Congregational was organized in 1853. The congregation met in homes and a schoolhouse prior to building a white brick meeting house on this site in 1854-55. The present building, designed by Detroit based architects Malcomson & Higginbotham, was begun in 1891 and dedicated on September

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21, 1892. It is an excellent example of Romanesque Revival architecture. In 1958 the building was remodeled and also expanded with the modern addition on the south side of the building. Robert Snyder, head of the architecture faculty at the Cranbrook Institute between 1951 and 1965, was the architect while West Construction Company of Flushing was the general contractor. Snyder's 1958 addition is sympathetic in its design and materials to the 1891-92 church and itself a fine example of Mid-Century Modern architecture.

Sources: "Cranbrook Academy of Art, Artists-in-Residence and Faculty, 1929-Present," Cranbrook Academy of Art Library, <http://www.cranbrookart.edu/library/research/past-fac.htm>, accessed June 19; Mitch McLosky, et. al, *Owosso Sesquicentennial Area Church Histories: 1836-1986* (Owosso, Michigan: Church Histories Committee, 1986), 24-25; Helen Harrelson, *Che-boc-way-ting: Owosso Bicentennial* (Owosso, Michigan: Owosso Bicentennial Committee, 1976), 8.

Washington Street, South (West Side)

112. Richardson Building (Built between 1890 and 1894)

Photo 23, center

Three-story stone-trimmed red brick Late Victorian commercial building. It has a modern recessed slant-sided center-entry storefront with second-story entry to the left but retains its metal storefront cornice with broad bracket at each end. A raised pier at each end of the façade supports a raised frieze now with plain coping. Between the end piers additional piers divide the upper façade into three sections, each containing second and third-story windows, the center broader than the one to either side. The second-story windows have square heads with transoms, while the third-story ones have arched heads with multi-light tinted glass transoms. The piers rise to corbelled brick springblocks from which rise broad brick arches, with stone keystones, that cap the window bays. The windows stand on rock-face stone sills and have broad, smooth stone lintels (second story) and springblocks (third). Between each second and third-story window is a panel of pebble-finish brickwork, and the spandrel area above the arches and beneath the frieze displays headers with the "hip-roof" faces seen elsewhere in the district. The building's exposed long side wall has a cement coating in the third story. Beneath, in the front half of the second story, is the partial painted "ghost" of an old Quaker Oats advertisement. The rear façade contains segmental-arch-head window openings filled with modern square-head windows.

This building first appears in the 1894 Sanborn map and then housed a grocery store. The first known business in the building was Richardson's Grocery Store, which operated here from about 1890 to 1908. The 1900 Sanborn designates the building as the Richardson Building. By 1908 B. M. Dawes & Co. operated their grocery and clothing store at this address. Subsequent occupants have included several clothing and boot and shoe stores into the 1970s.

114. Keyte Building (Built between 1890 and 1894)

Photo 23, 2nd bldg. from R

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Two-story red brick Late Victorian commercial building with raised piers dividing the second-story façade into three bays, each containing a square-head window with multi-light transom. The windows have smooth stone slab sills and lintels that form part of a continuous beltcourse. Like 112 next door, 114 displays panels of pebble-finish brick above the second-story windows. Bands of corbelled and sawtooth brickwork support a simple cornice with paneled frieze and angular “bracket” at each end. The ground story retains a c. 1920s storefront with broad slant-sided central entry, upstairs entry at the right, and a prism glass transom. The storefront is capped by a cornice duplicating the main roofline one. The building’s rear displays segmental-arch-head door and window openings, some partly infilled and containing reduced-size windows.

This building is first illustrated in the 1894 Sanborn map housing a harness shop, and the 1900 Sanborn designates it as the Keyte Building. Moses Keyte, a harness maker who is believed to have been the original occupant of the building, had his shop here until 1921. Subsequently the building housed the Amos Juhl Billiards Parlor (1921-42) and Irving’s Men’s Clothing Store (1938-80s).

116. Willover Building (Built between 1894 and 1900)

Photo 23, 3rd bldg. from R

Two-story red brick Late Victorian commercial building displaying four square-head second-story windows with broad stone slab caps and a panel of darker “hip-roof” brick above each window. The c. 1960s-looking storefront has a recessed slant-sided central entry, a right-end second-story entry area now made into a narrow display window, brown enameled metal panel bulkheads, and a projecting horizontal aluminum canopy. Synthetic sheeting covers the transom area up to the second-story windows, and ribbed metal siding now clads the upper façade up to a simple coping.

The Sanborns indicate this building was erected between 1894 and 1900, with the first known occupant being A. E. Willover’s saloon and Willover’s residence as of 1899. For a brief time around 1910 the Wildermuth Café, associated with the Wildermuth Hotel across the street, operated here. In 1914 John Spaniola moved his family, including twelve children, into the building and opened a fruit and candy business, which later expanded to include groceries and sundries. Son Fred continued the business here until his death in 2008, and new owners continue to operate a food, beverage, candy, and cigar store today under the Freddie’s name.

118. Charles Gabriel Saloon (Pre-1884)

Photo 23, 4th bldg. from R

Two-story red brick Italianate commercial building with two round-arch second-story window openings in a single broad bay and a narrow blind bay at the left above a closed-up second-story entry. Raised piers mark the ends of the façade and separate the window bay from the upstairs-entry one and rise to a low raised frieze supported by simple corbelled brickwork. The upstairs windows are modern double-hung ones with the arches paneled in. The downstairs features a c. 1950s recessed center-entry storefront with low bulkheads. The upstairs entry has a broad

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paneled door, with transom, between painted brick piers. The ground story is capped by a tall shake shingle pent roof.

This building appears in the first, 1884 Sanborn map. The Sanborns through the 1908 edition list the use as a saloon. The HDSC inventory form lists the Charles Gabriel Saloon in the 1892-95 period, A. G. Sax Saloon in 1896-97, and Conrad Mehlenbacher Saloon as of 1899, with Mehlenbacher then living upstairs. The 1915 map shows a grocery. The HDSC form reports that the Spagnuolo family ran a grocery here, living upstairs, by 1921 and into the 1970s.

***120 S. Washington. Sears Store (1963); Perrin Construction Company, builders
Photo 23, 5th bldg. from R***

Broad-fronted single-story buff brick building with front containing a slightly off-center double door entry flanked by triple display windows to the right (north) and double to the south – there is another large display window around the corner on the otherwise blank south side façade fronting W. Comstock. The storefront and the side window area are capped by a broad horizontal aluminum canopy. The rear or west elevation contains a bubble canopy-topped broad central entry off a parking lot and a broad paired window to one side.

Robert Brewer had the Perrin Construction Company build this building in 1963. According to city directories, the building functioned as a Sears & Roebuck appliance sales room and catalogue store from 1963 through roughly 1990. The Jade Buffet Chinese Restaurant has been the occupant since around 2005.

***200-06. Commercial Building / Jumbo's Burger Bar (North part pre-1884, early 20th C.,
between 1908 and 1915; South part between 1915 and 1930)
Photo 23, bldg. at L edge***

This building contains a two-story north section with its north side facing W. Comstock plus a large one-story south section. The entire ground story of the east-facing S. Washington front displays a unified non-historic vertical-boarded storefront – with two entries and several mostly horizontal slider windows – topped by a tall concave mansard asphalt shingle roof. The two-story north-side building is comprised of a half-length eastern part, shorter and slightly lower central section, and a square-plan western section.

- East part of north section: The single storefront wide brick upper façade of the two-story north section rises above the mansard roof, the lower ends of its two second-story windows cutting through the topmost part of the mansard roof. This upper front and the front half of the north side wall are finished in dark red-brown brick and display raised piers at the two front corners, at the west end of a narrow window bay west from the corner on the north side, and at the west corner of this section near the north side's midpoint. Corbelled brickwork formed of stacked headers across the front and side of the front section supports a simple moulded wood cornice across the front and first bay on the north side and a plain parapet beyond the cornice's end to the north façade midpoint. The upper story contains a few square-head windows of different sizes set on plain concrete or stone slab sills. The window openings are capped with horizontal steel plates rather than window caps.

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- Central section: The shorter two-story central section has white-painted walls of plain red, apparently older brick and displays no piers or corbelling. Its three second-story windows, like those in the front section's north side, have square heads. One downstairs windows has been bricked in.
- West end of north side: The small two-story rear section is finished in dark red brick on the north façade and displays a northwest corner pier and simple corbelled brick band supporting a plain frieze. The exposed west/rear side is now clad in vertical wood boarding. The north side contains an entry and an infilled window downstairs and slider windows upstairs and the west side a few more upstairs windows.
- The single-story south part of the building has a brick south side façade, with a center entry off a narrow paved alley/parking area.

The footprints of the eastern and central units of the two-story building remain unchanged in the Sanborn map from the first, 1884 map to the last, 1946 one, but the exterior design and finish of the east front section suggests an early 20th-C. construction date for this part of the building. The middle section is built of what appears to be an older brick and may be part of the pre-1884 original building. The Sanborns show the small two-story western unit was constructed between 1908 and 1915. The single-story unit fronting S. Washington was built as a block of three storefronts between 1915 and 1930.

The entire ground story now houses Jumbo's Burger Bar. The restaurant/bar interior displays no historic finishes, but retains wall sections and piers that clearly mark the former south side wall of the two-story north building and the divisions between the three former store spaces in the one-story building.

This complex has housed a variety of tenants over the years. The Sanborn maps through the 1908 edition list the two-story building's east section as housing saloons. The 1910 directory lists O. F. Hein's restaurant, with Theodore F. Sheehan's shoe shop. In the 1900 and 1908 maps the central two-story section is labeled as a dwelling. The 1963 directory lists the Paramount Café at 200. In 1964 James R. Mahaney's Jumbo's Bar replaced it. Under a succession of owners Jumbo's expanded over the years into 202-06, apparently absorbing the 206 space by the mid-1990s. The business, now Jumbo's Burger Bar, remains the occupant.

210. Commercial Building (Built between 1915 and 1930); Non-Contributing
Photo 24, 2nd from L bldg.

The broad-fronted single-story building is clad in vertical siding in front and on the long exposed north side elevation and has a cut-away northeast corner containing a modern colonial entry with sidelights and fanlight. The front contains three small widely separated double-hung windows, the side one broad horizontal window and a second entry. The front is capped by a broadly projecting standing seam metal pent roof. The rear façade slants at a 45-degree angle parallel with Water Street. **Non-contributing because no historic finishes are visible.**

The present building, with its angled rear facade, first appears in the 1930 Sanborn map as a two-storefront concrete block building. The 1924 directory lists Jason Lynch's soft drink

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establishment. The 1930 directory lists Bob's Tire & Repair, and the 1946 map shows a restaurant. Between the 1950s and the 1970s the building was occupied by the Royal Cleaners.

212. Clarence G. Milster Barber Shop (Built between 1915 and 1930)

Photo 24, bldg. at L edge

Single-story beige brick commercial building on triangular footprint. In front light tan or buff roman brick piers mark the ends of the façade, separate a broad storefront at the right from a separate broad window area at the left, and outline a broad area of slightly darker standard brick in the upper front. The window at the left and recessed-central-entry storefront at the right have their windows infilled with vertical paneling, but each now contains a small horizontal slider. The windows rest on low rock-face random ashlar stone bulkheads. The storefront displays a red, white and blue barber pole over the entrance and a window signboard for Barber Shop. The exposed southwest side is clad in vertical wood siding.

Like 210, this building first appears in the 1930 Sanborn. The 1924 directory lists Clarence G. Milster's barber shop, and other barber shops followed into the 1940s. By 1946 this building and 210 housed a single restaurant. George and Sam's Barber Shop was located here in the 1950s through the 1970s.

Washington Street, South (East Side)

111-13. Commercial Buildings (Pre-1884)

Photo 22, two L-edge bldgs.

This is actually two two-story red brick Italianate buildings that read as a single two-storefront long building because of their identical upper facades. Raised piers at the ends and between the storefronts rise to a broad plain frieze supported on intricate upper and lower corbel tables. The 111 storefront has its entry at the left and a triple display window to the right – all topped by four transom windows with tinted glass margin lights. A broad wooden signboard strip above is capped by a simple bracketed cornice that rises to the base of the three second-story windows. The 113 storefront contains a single entry at the right and a paired display window, the whole outlined by dark-painted vertical wood paneling. The covered transom displays a central sign panel. The second-story windows – three over each storefront – are tall square-head double-hung ones with ornamental stone caps. An old photograph shows what appears to be wooden bracketed cornices, but these have been gone at least since the 1960s.

The first, 1884 Sanborn map shows the two buildings, 111 housing a meat market, 113 a general store. The 1890 through 1908 maps list 111 as a saloon (except for 1900) and 113 a tailor shop. Louis Steadman ran his cigar shop and saloon/wine and liquor shop in 111 and lived upstairs as of 1894. In 1910 M. F. Growe had a restaurant at 111 while Joseph Bryan had his dry goods store at 113. The 1915 map shows 111 as a cigar store and 113 housing a waiting room for the interurban. Beginning in the 1920s the building was under the ownership of John T. Walsh, and later his son Harry, who operated a candy and tobacco shop in the building until the 1950s. Byerly's grocery occupied 113 South Washington in the late 1920s to late 1930s.

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The buildings have been enlarged since their initial construction. Between 1894 and 1900 a single-story addition was made on the rear (east end) of 113 so that its east wall was nearly flush with that of 111 S. Washington. No. 111 was expanded to the east between 1908 and 1915, and again between 1915 and 1930. The HDSC inventory form cites a 1980 *Argus Press* article reporting restoration activities at 111 S. Washington. The restoration architect was Elmer Manson of Lansing and the contractor the Mid-Michigan Construction Company.

115. J. C. Penney Store (1922); Non-Contributing
Photo 22, lower middle bldg.

Broad and tall one-story commercial building with a symmetrical façade displaying paired central entrances in a slant-sided recess fronted by a round centrally positioned column at the sidewalk line. The glass doors and large display windows extend nearly from end to end, with a brick pier at each end and low bulkheads beneath the windows. The tall upper façade is clad in vertical metal paneling. Old photos show a Commercial Brick front, but this was remodeled with an enameled metal panel upper front displaying the Penney's name in raised light-hued letters by the 1960s. While the basic storefront configuration and the brick bulkheads with their metal grills remain the same as in the 1960s, the tall upper façade and the end piers no longer display either the Commercial Brick or enameled metal panel finishes. **Non-contributing because little historic material is now evident.**

The building was constructed in 1922 for the J. C. Penney Co. In 1984 Penney's constructed its present store at 201 S. Washington and vacated this building. Most recently it housed Risto and Betty Nicevsky's restaurant, Risto's Bistro, in business there from the mid-1980s to 2012.

119-25 (and 109 E. Comstock). Wildermuth Hotel / Indian Trails (Built early 1870s; expanded between 1884 and 1890; expanded/remodeled 1909; 109 East Comstock front remodeled c. 1950)
Photo 22, 3-story bldg. toward R

Three-story three storefront wide red brick Late Victorian building, with two-story section on the rear, E. Comstock side that has its own address.

119-25 S. Washington: The upper front is divided into thirds by raised paneled piers, with the second story's center section divided into two sections by another, slightly off-center paneled pier, and the two side sections each divided into three sections by narrower raised piers. The center section contains two broad windows containing tall sliders, the sides three narrower windows each now containing a single light. The windows have stone slab sills and taller rock-face caps that each spans the space between the piers. Corbelled brickwork bands above the lintels support the third story. The third story's three sections each contains three square-head window openings, all now boarded up. There is a smooth stone beltcourse below the stone slab window sills, and the window caps are of stone, projecting, with a corbel each side of the window opening and a low gabled center. Corbelled brickwork of stacked stretchers in the frieze supports a plain non-original slab cap. The first floor front (and extending one bay around the E.

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Comstock side) has a c. 1960s storefront with white vertical ribbed aluminum paneling outlining two recessed entries and large display windows. The entire storefront and first bay around the E. Comstock side is capped by a single bubble canopy.

The building's south side facing E. Comstock displays five widely spaced square-head window openings each in the second and third stories (the third-story windows boarded up), with raised piers outlining a narrow window bay near the front corner and marking the southeast corner. The windows have simple stone slab sills and lintels. The roofline displays a corbelled brick detail similar to the front's. There is a broad recessed entry, topped by a bubble canopy, near the east end, with two display windows to its left, and a single display window in the narrow west end bay near the building front.

The **109 E. Comstock** part of the building is two stories in height and its front faced in red-brown brick. It has a recessed central entry, with a broad window each side. The windows are capped by glass block transoms, outlined top and bottom by broad maroon flat strips, the top ones of enameled metal panels, and the entry has glass block sidelights as well. The second story contains three broad windows. The windows have concrete slab sills and are topped by a concrete slab beltcourse. A plain metal or vinyl strip caps the plain brick upper façade. The long exposed east side is faced in vertical ribbed metal siding and contains several pedestrian doors, small windows, and five broad picture windows of double-hung windows flanking a single-light center.

This complex housed the Hotel Wildermuth or Wildermuth House during its early days. According to biographical sketches in the 1895 county atlas and 1908 *Owosso Souvenir*, J. Fred Wildermuth, a German native, came to the U. S. with his parents in 1850 at the age of nine and settled in Owosso in 1863. The 1870 *Michigan State Directory* lists the F. Wildermuth saloon, and succeeding state gazetteers through 1881 list the J. Frederick Wildermuth saloon or restaurant. *Owosso, A to Z* reports that the corner previously contained the Schneckenberger Hotel, a wooden structure that burned in 1871. Wildermuth, whose first wife was Rudolph Schneckenberger's daughter Ann, built a new building on the site after the fire, according to *A to Z*. The 1908 *Souvenir* photo shows a two-story brick Italianate building, presumably the first part of the later Wildermuth House, occupying the southern third of the site at 125. The 1884 Sanborn map shows this building plus a two-story extension to the east at the current **109 E. Comstock** that housed the kitchen and one-story extensions to the north that are not apparently part of the existing structure (an early twentieth-century photo of the Wildermuth shows a piece of the 109 E. Comstock building in its Italianate form, with bracketed cornice and small round-arch windows). The 1883 state gazetteer (only) lists the European Hotel, with Frank J. Wildermuth as proprietor.

The 1887 state gazetteer is the first to list the Wildermuth House hotel. This accords well with the 1895 atlas' and *Owosso, A to Z's* statement that Wildermuth established the hotel in 1886 (539-40). The 1890 map shows the three-story northern two-thirds section fronting on S. Washington in place – the north end front then containing the bar, the center a sample room, and the older south end the office. The two-story **109 E. Comstock** section had also been doubled in depth to what shows as late as the 1946 map. The narrative in the 1908 *Souvenir* noted that Mr.

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and Mrs. Wildermuth were together responsible for the hotel's success: "In fact, it is the table which has given this house a reputation far and wide,... Mr. Wildermuth owns a fine farm only about one mile distant from the hotel, and from this he secures all his vegetables, milk, butter, etc., and the hungry traveler finds set before him a meal to which he can do full justice." *A to Z* states that it was Helen Louise Menshardt, who became Wildermuth's second wife in 1880, "who was responsible for the expansion and good reputation" of the hotel (435).

The HDSC form reports that Fred Wildermuth's son-in-law Edward Hoffman took over the hotel in 1909 and that in that year he remodeled or replaced the two-story south end Italianate building with the presently existing three-story south end section (the 1915 map shows the three stories). A. G. Berner bought the hotel in 1918 and ran it until at least 1936. Between 1942 and 1945 and until about 1951 the building housed the Hotel Milner.

By the 1910s the hotel was leasing some commercial spaces in the building's S. Washington frontage. By 1919 and until the late 1940s the southwest corner space housed Whitehead's Drug Store, one of what became a three-store local chain of Whitehead Drug Stores. The 1924 directory shows the north (119) storefront serving as a passenger depot for both the Michigan Electric Railroad interurban and Owosso-Flint Bus Line and housing a news stand. By 1930 it was divided into two small stores that served the Geo. Pappan tailor shop and Boyles & Maxted, barbers (Pappan held forth into the 1950s). The first-floor space has housed a variety of commercial tenants since the Milner Hotel closed in the early 1950s.

The 1930 and 1946 maps both show the **109 E. Comstock** building still as part of the hotel. While the 1924 city directory lists nothing at the 109 address, the 1930 one lists the Owosso-Flint bus station and the 1936 directory the Indian Trails Bus Station and Main Office. Indian Trails began to operate from this location in 1928 and continues to occupy the 109 E. Comstock building as their headquarters today. The present front appears to date from c. 1950.

Water Street, North (West Side)

201. Owosso Armory (1915-16); Edwyn A. Bowd, Lansing, architect/Rickman Construction Company, Kalamazoo, contractor
Photo 27, center, in distance, and Photo 34

The Armory is a broad and deep 2 ½-story limestone-trimmed red brick structure with a gable-roof drill hall behind a taller "headhouse" front section with "towers" at the ends capped by crenellations. The front with its octagonal corner towers and battlements is designed to impart a Tudor, fortified or military character, but has as much or more an Arts-and-Crafts feel in its inventive forms that is characteristic of some of its architect's best work in the early twentieth century. The broad-fronted but not very deep front administrative section rises well above the side walls of the 1 ½-story drill hall behind. Its front features an octagonal tower form – the angled corners only half the length of those facing front and side – at each front corner that rises above the central front parapet between them. The towers' angles display raised piers with slanting stone caps and their front and side faces are topped by stepped crenellations with

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limestone caps. The tower faces contain decorative limestone shield forms and small arched-head recesses in their angled corner sections.

More raised piers divide the central front into three sections, and the main front entrance is set at the back of a deep arched recess in the central one. To its immediate right is the building's granite cornerstone, displaying the 1915 date. Smooth limestone beltcourses at the window sill and lintel level in the two stories span the front and tower faces, and the headhouse section has paired and triple windows plus five closely spaced windows – separated by projecting limestone mullions – in the section above the main entrance. The central part of the front parapet also features a small raised crenellated segment that contains within it a limestone tablet carved with the incised word ARMORY. The headhouse's short section of side wall behind the tower on each side is simply treated without beltcourses or piers, and with three square-head window openings in each story.

The drill hall's side walls display a regular pattern of broadly projecting square-plan brick piers that, separating five bays each containing three more square-head windows in each story, support the roof's steel trusses. The brick peak of the gable for the front end of the hall's roof rises over the headhouse roof (only visible from a distance). There is a large brick chimney at the rear of the building.

The interior is arranged in the standard armory form of the time, with administrative quarters in the two-story front headhouse section and a large drill hall/auditorium filling most of the rest of the building above the raised basement. The 1 ½-story tall space has a wood floor, a tile ceiling that has a flat central section and slants gently downward toward the wall on either side, and a raised stage area across the central third of the back topped by a massive projecting canopy.

The Owosso National Guard Armory was constructed in 1915-16 to house the Owosso-based Michigan National Guard unit, Company H of the Thirty-third Michigan Infantry. It was built to replace the previous armory, built in 1893, that was located at the southwest corner of E. Mason and N. Park, where the Knapp-House Funeral Home now stands. Construction of a new Owosso armory was under discussion as early as 1909, and by mid-1914 the county board had contributed \$8500 and the city \$4500 in addition to Owosso citizens raising part of the purchase price for the property. The building's large drill hall was intended to serve both a training function and as a space for public events. The State Military Board approved plans for the new building in October 1914, but bids came in too high for the available funds. By the end of the year the city raised its support to \$12,500. The legislature added another \$15,000 to their previous \$30,000 appropriation early in 1915. The armory's cornerstone laying ceremony took place September 6, 1915, and the building was opened with a formal ball April 25, 1916. Some work was apparently left incomplete: there was a final appropriation of \$3500 in February 1917 "for completion" of the armory. The building remained the home of Owosso-based Michigan National Guard units until 2008 when they relocated to a new facility in Corunna. In addition to its role as an armory, the building was used for a multitude of social and community events.

Sources: *Saginaw News*, 10/21/1893, "A Brilliant Success, The Opening of Owosso's New Armory Last Night"; *Grand Rapids Press*, 1/29/1909, "Plan a New Armory"; *Flint Journal*,

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4/18/1913, "Seek New Armory"; *Flint Journal*, 6/27/1914, "Owosso Armory Is Now Assured"; *Kalamazoo Gazette*, 10/4/1914, State Short Stories, "Approves Armory Plans"; *Flint Journal*, 11/9/1914, "Work on Owosso Armory Will Not be Started Yet"; *The Wakefield Advocate*, 12/26/1914, "Rally to Aid of Guard"; *Flint Journal*, 4/2/1915, "More Money for Armory"; *Flint Journal*, 5/17/1915, "Site for Armory Is Not Suitable"; *Grand Rapids Press*, 9/6/1915, "Cornerstone of Armory Laid Monday at Owosso"; *Grand Rapids Press*, 2/28/1916, "Owosso's New Armory to be Opened April 25"; *Traverse City Record-Eagle*, 2/8/1917, "Budget System in Legislature Causes Trouble"; Michigan Adjutant General's Department [MAGD], *Historical and Pictorial Review, National Guard of the State of Michigan* (Baton Rouge: Army and Navy Publishing Co., Inc., 1940, p.xxv-xxxii); John K. Mahon, *History of the Militia and the National Guard* (New York, New York: Macmillan, 1983), p. 118-19; Kristine M. Wilson, Pennsylvania National Guard Armories National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form (Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission, Harrisburg, 1989); Susanne Moore, Maryland National Guard Armories National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form (Maryland Historical Trust, Annapolis, 1985).

215 N. Water. Shiawassee Regional Chamber of Commerce (1968-69); Non-Contributing Photo 27, in center distance, and Photo 34, hint at R

Standing directly in front of the Armory near Water Street, the single-story low ranch-type building has brown smooth wood paneled walls above a low brick base and a broadly projecting side-gable roof. The asymmetrical façade contains a central entry with adjoining large bay window on one side, and broad and narrow windows. Windows in the sides include a broad and low lunette in each gable end. Plantings edge the building on the front and sides. A sculpture of a tree trunk in bark-like oxidized metal pieces, *Tree Trunk*, by artist Eddie Louch, stands near the building's southeast corner. A small plaque near its base lists the project's sponsors.

The Shiawassee Chamber of Commerce rented a variety of meeting spaces before constructing this building in 1969. Dedicated on May 21, 1969, it continues to house the Chamber of Commerce.

The Chamber of Commerce Building's broad and low form is out of character with the downtown district. Its real fault, however, is not the building, but its placement directly in front of the Armory. Like most Michigan towns, Owosso has a grid-plan downtown such that views along the main streets mostly extend into the far distance rather than terminating in some visual focal point. The great exception is Exchange Street, where the view west past some of the downtown's most outstanding buildings should terminate with the Armory, one of the city's greatest buildings from an architectural standpoint, but instead leads to the C of C Building, with only the armory's top visible above. This is squandering what may be the downtown's greatest visual asset.

**219. Owosso High School / Owosso Middle School (1928-30 and later); Warren S. Holmes Company, Lansing, architects for 1928-30 building
Photo 35**

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The former Owosso High School is a large and complex red brick building that occupies an irregular footprint and is comprised of one, two, and three-story components. The L-shaped main part of the building that fronts the street exhibits Collegiate Gothic styling. Its walls are faced in red brick laid in garden wall bond, but also feature slightly raised diaperwork panels or strips of contrasting brownish brick in lozenge patterns. The building has a two and three-story south wing set back from Water Street and a three-story north auditorium wing that projects out to the sidewalk line along Water. A buttressed tower whose crenellated top rises slightly above the parapet to either side stands in the angle between the wings, its front projecting slightly forward of the south wing's front wall plane. The tower contains the main front entrance, set into a pointed-arch portal trimmed in limestone. A limestone panel above the modern doors displays the building's one-time name, Owosso Junior High. Above in the tower face is a large slant-sided limestone-trimmed oriele window containing pointed-arch windows. A simple cornice separates a flat-topped brick parapet from the façade below.

The south wing is three stories in height except for the southernmost of its seven bays. The bays are formed by broad square-head window openings separated by brick piers. The front windows in the north six bays are modern triple windows, each with a light-color infill panel above, while the south end bay contains a single five-section window. In the front's ground story (only) the windows are set into shallow recesses with low pointed-arch heads. The south wing's narrow south end contains few windows but displays a square-plan brick central open entry porch with buttressed piers supporting the low pointed arches spanning the openings.

The north or auditorium wing of the original building displays three doorways, each faced in limestone trim that rises to a pointed-arch head, located in its south façade directly adjacent to the main entrance in the tower base. The entrances are set into a taller portal treatment finished with raised brick piers and entablature. The auditorium's narrow east front facing Water Street is divided into five bays by narrow raised piers that outline the central three. The three central bays each contains a rectangular panel filled with a limestone screen of triple, four-section high pointed arch-head window-like but blind panels. A simple cornice spans the auditorium's south, east, and north facades well below the parapet, below a tall "attic" that displays more recessed blind arch panels in the brickwork above the east side's three central limestone panels. A later one-and-one-half-story band wing, of simple design but built with walls of red brick in garden bond matching the original building, projects from the north façade of the auditorium.

The building also contains a two-story gable-roof field house or gymnasium and a more recent one-story red brick addition of contemporary design at the southwest corner of the complex.

The main part of the building was constructed as the Owosso High School and dedicated February 10, 1930. By the following September student enrollment numbered 741. The building has been expanded and renovated several times. Between 1946 and 1959 a band wing was added onto the north elevation of the auditorium. Other alterations have included the addition of a cafeteria, new library, and industrial science classrooms at the southwest end of the building. This building served as the Owosso High School from 1930 to the early 1960s when a new high school was constructed on E. North Street. This N. Water building then became the Junior High

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School. Today the school serves as the Middle School housing classes for students in grades six through eight.

Mitchell Amphitheater (1982 or 1983; Non-contributing because less than fifty years old)

Located north of the school building, this band shell, built into the hillside at the northeast corner of the level athletic field grounds next to the Shiawassee River, is a triangular-footprint structure, with its broad front containing the stage facing southwest onto the lawn, an east rear façade facing a parking lot located along Water Street's west side immediately north of the school's auditorium/band wing, and an east-northeast rear façade facing the backs of houses along W. Williams Street. The band shell has walls of square-face concrete block. It sports a broad conical-roof round turret at its northwest front end that echoes Curwood Castle's turret across the river. The stage is large enough to accommodate a ninety-piece orchestra and the lawn seating area in the park has a capacity for 5000 (the seating area does double duty, still also serving as a field for the school). The band shell contains a rehearsal space as well as performer stage.

This band shell was built on part of the middle school property as a partnership between the city and school district to provide an outdoor venue for performing arts. The band shell was constructed with private funding from members of the community, the largest donor being William Mitchell in honor of his parents Don and Metta Mitchell. The amphitheater and its grounds are connected to Curwood Castle Park directly west across the river by a pedestrian suspension bridge.

Sources: Email from Lorraine Weckwert 12/31/2013.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Commerce

Industry

Transportation

Government

Education

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- Social History
- Recreation/Entertainment
- Military History
- Architecture

Period of Significance

1855-1963

Significant Dates

1855, 1859, 1868, 1885, 1888,
1890, 1892, 1893, 1896, 1912, 1916,
1925, 1926, 1928, 1930, 1934, 1947

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

George J. Bachmann, Flint
Edwyn A. Bowd, Lansing
Malcomson & Higginbotham, Detroit
Warren S. Holmes Company, Lansing
Robert H. Snyder, Bloomfield Hills
George W. Graves, Detroit
Lane, Davenport & Peterson, Detroit

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

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The Owosso Downtown Historic District is significant at the local level under National Register Criteria A and C. The district meets criterion A under Commerce, Industry, Transportation, Government, Education, Social History, Recreation/Entertainment, and Military History. The area contained in the district has served as Owosso's central business district since the community's establishment in the 1830s and remains today a key business center for the city even though the usual commercial strips have developed on the city's outskirts. Its buildings have housed the leading local stores and businesses over the years. The district possesses historic significance under Industry for containing a former brewery building and several buildings that housed cigar manufacturing operations. The district contains the city's Municipal Building that has housed city government since its construction in the early 1920s, its High School building that served in that capacity nearly forty years and continues to serve as a public school after ninety years, and its Armory that served as the home of the area's Michigan National Guard units from its completion in 1916 until recent years. The district contains numerous buildings that over the years have housed meeting places for many fraternal and social organizations and also a variety of movie theaters and other places of entertainment and recreation. Several buildings in the district have served in important capacities in relation to horse-drawn, trolley/interurban, and motorized vehicle transportation. The district also meets criterion C for its diverse and often distinguished architecture. Dating from the 1850s to the 1960s, the district's architecture contains commercial buildings ranging from vernacular Greek Revival and Italianate to Neoclassical and International Style. A particularly distinctive feature, and one that separates downtown Owosso from other small city downtowns around Michigan, is its concentration of Late Victorian buildings displaying intricate brickwork, often using highly distinctive types of bricks, dating from the 1885-95 period. The district's notable architecture also includes public, educational, social, and church buildings and the city's 1920s movie theater building. The district's period of significance begins with the 1855 date of construction of the district's oldest known building and ends fifty years ago.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The earliest Euro-American settlement in what is now the City of Owosso may have been a trading post established in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century by a French Canadian trader, Henri Bolieu, near the later residence of Benjamin O. Williams near what is now the corner of First and Oliver Streets (Ellis, 11). Harrelson (*Che-boc-way-ting*, 6) states that it was one of several shelters he built along the Shiawassee River, which served as a primary transportation route in the area. In 1823 United States surveyors Joseph Wampler and William Brookfield platted township and section lines in what became Shiawassee County (Schenck, 144). White settlement in southern Michigan increased dramatically with the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, bringing settlers from New York state and the east coast. In 1829 fur traders Alfred L. Williams and his brother Benjamin O. Williams visited the area with a view to settling there permanently. The Williams brothers established a fur trade post known as the Shiawassee Exchange near Bancroft, about twelve miles southeast of Owosso, in 1831 and ran it until 1837 (Ellis, 12).

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In 1833 Benjamin O. Williams passed through the area that would become downtown Owosso. The winding Shiawassee River running north and west between the future sites of Bancroft and Owosso dropped roughly 100 feet, and Williams saw the potential for water power development, saw and grist mills, and a prosperous community at *Che-boc-way-ting*, or the "Big Rapids," where downtown Owosso is now located. In 1833 Benjamin O. and Alfred L. Williams made two purchases totaling 200 acres of land at the site in sections 13 and 24, and in 1835 they and others, including Elias Comstock, an Oakland County teacher, farmer and justice of the peace, bought up additional lands nearby. In July 1835 Comstock and a small party from Oakland County made the beginnings of the first settlement at the site. Henry S. Smith built the first house in the early village area, a log building located near the armory site west of Water Street (Schenck, 144-45, 159; Harrelson, *Che-boc-way-ting*, 6). In 1837 Owosso Township, which briefly included the whole north half of Shiawassee County, was formed (Ellis, 263).

The Williams brothers planned to build a millrace to encourage the establishment of water-powered industry and thus promote development of a town at the rapids. To this end in 1836 they made an agreement with Daniel Ball & Co., from Rochester, New York, by which Ball, a millwright, agreed to build the dam and millrace and build and operate a sawmill in return for one third of their lands at the site, plus the water power rights and title to the strip of land between the river and race suitable for more mills. Ball came out from Rochester in the fall of 1836 with a group of settlers who became known as "Ball's colonists" (Schenck, 146-47). The millrace, built in 1837, ran in a straight line to the northwest from just east of the S. Washington Street river crossing along the route of present day Water Street and back to the river just north of W. Exchange Street. The dam associated with the race spanned the river just east of the current crossing of S. Washington between it and the entrance to the millrace and backed up a narrow millpond along the river to the east. The race was soon powering a grist mill and saw mill.

The Williams brothers closed their "Shiawassee Exchange" in 1837 and opened a store in Owosso. They had Daniel Gould, elected county surveyor in 1837, create the original plat, encompassing the central part of the settlement, in 1838 (Schenck, 147, 159). The place was originally named Big Rapids, but the name was changed to Owosso in 1839 after Wasso, a sub-chief of the local Black River-Swan Creek Chippewa tribe (Historical Publishing Assoc., 41). Gould's plat included the first north and south-running streets, Mulberry, Pine, Adams, Water, Ball, Washington, Park, Saginaw, and Hickory, and the first east and west-running streets, North, Oliver, Williams, Mason, Exchange, Main, and Comstock. This area included the entire downtown area encompassed by the district.

Owosso's early industrial development primarily occurred along the millrace. Saw and grist mills were established in the late 1830s, and a furnace/foundry and a woolen mill opened by the mid-1840s. The saw mill, established by Daniel Ball & Co. in 1837, may have been located at the upper end of the millrace behind the armory building site, 201 N. Water. The grist mill, constructed in 1839 and operated by Messrs. Green, Ball & Company, was located in the same area. The Daniel Gould & Co. furnace and foundry was established on the east side of S. Washington between the race and river by 1844, and Felix Casper's woolen mill, opened by 1844, stood on or near the present city hall site at 301 W. Main (Schenck, 151-52). Additionally,

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a woolen mill was located on the river near the present location of the current Middle School on N. Water. After burning twice, it was rebuilt in the 1860s and the wool produced there was then used in uniforms for Union soldiers during the Civil War. By 1855 the Gould-Tillotson Foundry was established on South Washington Street between the river and mill race (Harrelson, *Souvenir of Owosso* 1986,4).

Owosso looked to have a thriving future, but transportation to it from the more settled parts of the state was limited and difficult. As one means of improving transportation to Owosso, in 1837 Owosso businessmen led by Daniel Ball worked together with men from Saginaw to organize the Owosso & Saginaw Transportation Company to improve navigation for commercial traffic on the Shiawassee River between Saginaw and Owosso by clearing debris and obstacles from the river and building dams and tow-paths where needed to allow flat-bottomed boats to reach Owosso. Much work was soon done to improve the river, and it served horse-drawn and poled boats. The company, reincorporated in 1846, served its purpose until the introduction of railroad service in the late 1850s made it unnecessary (Schenck, 147). A little later other transportation options came on the scene such as the steamboat *Shiawassee* and a stage coach line between Owosso, Corunna, and Pontiac (Harrelson, *Souvenir of Owosso* 1986, 6).

By 1852 Owosso had a population of 500 and by the late 1850s the population had reached 1,000 and the residents petitioned the State of Michigan for incorporation as a city. The petition was approved and the City of Owosso was incorporated on February 18, 1859, with Amos Gould serving as the first Mayor (Schenck, 148). Owosso was highly unusual – though not unique – in moving directly from unincorporated status within a township to becoming a city without first incorporating as a village. Lansing, the state's capitol city, followed a similar path, also incorporating as a city in 1859.

Railroads fueled the city's growth beginning in the late 1850s and 1860s. The first railroad to build to Owosso was the Detroit & Milwaukee Railroad, later known as the Detroit, Grand Haven & Milwaukee Division of the Grand Trunk. The Detroit & Milwaukee resulted from the merger in 1855 of two other railroads, the Detroit & Pontiac and the Oakland & Ottawa, the latter planned to link Pontiac, in Oakland County, with Grand Haven, Ottawa County, on Lake Michigan. The merged roads would provide a connection between Detroit and Lake Michigan via Pontiac. Construction on the road reached west to Owosso in July 1856 and to Grand Haven in late 1858. Twenty years later the road was reorganized as the Detroit, Grand Haven & Milwaukee Railway and in 1882 it became a division of the Grand Trunk Western Railroad (Ellis, 34-35).

The second railroad in Owosso was the Amboy, Lansing & Traverse Bay, begun in Owosso in 1858 and completed southwest to Lansing in 1863. This line was popularly known as the "Ram's Horn," due to its curving, indirect route that invited the comparison. Work on a Jackson, Lansing & Saginaw Railroad northward from Owosso to Saginaw, West Bay City, and ultimately the Straits of Mackinac was next, with the line to Saginaw completed by 1867 and to the Straits by 1881 (Ellis, 35-36). In 1884 the Toledo, Ann Arbor & North Michigan Railroad was completed to Owosso and their offices moved from Toledo to Owosso. This line was completed through to Frankfort on Lake Michigan in 1889 and railroad car ferries across Lake Michigan soon linked it

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with routes west, providing a railroad route for western freight that avoided congested Chicago. By 1908 these lines had become the Detroit, Grand Haven & Milwaukee Division of the Grand Trunk Railway; the Saginaw Division of the Michigan Central; and the Toledo, Ann Arbor & North Michigan Division of the Grand Trunk (Dunbar, 75-78; Meints, 59-63, 120; Seibold, 364). These lines greatly benefited the community, connecting it to a wide range of markets and shipping centers – Detroit, Chicago, New York, Toronto, and more. The railroads converged in an area southwest of the downtown, south of W. Main Street between S. Chipman and S. Cedar Streets.

Owosso's fine railroad connections powered the growth of industry in the coming years. The first, 1884, Sanborn fire insurance maps show the increasing development of water and steam-powered mills and plants along the millrace and railroad lines. Clustered along the millrace were the Owosso Foundry & Machine Shop, pump, plow, and agricultural implements manufacturers (a continuation of the old Daniel Gould & Co. furnace/foundry); Shiawassee Iron Works, an engines and agricultural implements manufacturer established c. 1865; George W. Oakes' planing mill and sash, door and blind factory (the buildings also housing a separate cigar box factory); Seiler Bros. flour mill; Dewey & Stewart's Owosso City Roller Mills and saw and feed mill, established in the 1850s and early 60s; and the L. E. Woodard furniture and sash, door and blind factory, whose complex fronted north on Main Street at the present site of city hall, 301 W. Main. A woolen mill at the site was converted to a furniture factory in 1855, then purchased by Woodard in 1866 (Schenck, 151-52). The 1884 Sanborn notes a work force of 100, making Woodard one of the city's largest employers. Other industries, primarily wood products firms, including the Estey Manufacturing Co. furniture factory (in 1884 employing 150 workers), J. H. Robbins table factory, Owosso Casket Company, M. Wood & Co.'s handle factory, White Bros. planing mill and furniture factory, Parmalee & Gear sawmill and spoke factory, and Owosso Snath Factory, located mostly along the railroad lines on the city's south and west edges.

Succeeding Sanborn maps illustrate the continuing growth of the city's industrial economy into the twentieth century. By 1900 Estey Manufacturing, with two large furniture plants; the Owosso Manufacturing Co., screen door, window screen, scythe snath, and snow shovel manufacturers; the Owosso Carriage (becoming in 1906 Owosso Carriage and Sleigh) Works, and the Owosso Casket Works, along with the Ann Arbor Railroad shops, established in 1888, dominated the city's economy. These were soon joined by a new Woodard Furniture plant, American Sugar Co. beet sugar refinery, and other industries that also located around the city's edges, and older firms such as the Robbins furniture plant also expanded.

Trolleys and interurbans expanded Owosso's transportation connections into the early twentieth century. The Owosso & Corunna Street Railway connecting those two nearby cities was completed in 1893. In 1911 the Jackson-Lansing interurban line of the Michigan United Railway (later Michigan Electric Railway) was extended to Owosso. This line ran from Kalamazoo to Jackson and then to Owosso and also connected with an interurban line to Ann Arbor and Detroit, from which there were connections to Toledo and eastward in Ohio. An extension from Owosso east to Flint was planned but never constructed (Hilton and Due, 287-89). The rapidly growing reliance on the automobile in the 1920s made most interurbans unprofitable by the late

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1920s, and the Owosso-Corunna line and Owosso-Lansing-Jackson line shut down in 1926 and 1929, respectively (Hilton and Due, 289).

Electric lights were installed in 1890, powered by a city-owned power plant. Consumers Power Company (now Consumers Energy) purchased the municipal power plant in the early twentieth century and assumed its operation. The city began to install wooden plank sidewalks, and Washington Street gutters were paved in paving stone through the business district between Mason Street and the mill race in 1870 (*Owosso Weekly Press*, 8/17/1870). Washington Street was paved in brick between Main Street and Mason Street in 1898, and by 1908, three miles of streets had been paved (Harrelson, *Souvenir of Owosso* 1986, 21).

In 1910 Wayne Taylor and his wife Cora began operating a baggage transfer company which eventually became a taxi service called the Phillips-Taylor Auto Livery Service. At first it functioned as a taxi and baggage service between Owosso area hotels and the three railroad depots. Business grew and soon service to Flint was added. Because many Owosso area residents also worked in Flint, by 1911 many were using the service for transportation home on the weekends. In 1916 the service was expanded into the Owosso-Flint Bus Line, and two years later the line extended service to Lansing and Ionia as well. In the 1920s the line grew with runs to Battle Creek, Saginaw, Muskegon, Grand Rapids, Chicago, Detroit, Toledo, Cleveland, and Buffalo. In the 1930s the bus line was given the name Indian Trails. By 1986 the bus line had a fleet of forty-two motor coaches and had diversified its programs to include charter and tour services (Harrelson, *Owosso, A to Z*, 400, 474-75; *Souvenir of Owosso* 1986, 74-75). Indian Trails, with busses each named for a different Indian chief, still maintains its headquarters in downtown Owosso at 119-25 South Washington Street.

The impact of transportation improvements and industrial development is reflected in the city's population statistics. In 1860, Owosso had a population of 1,160. By 1880, this figure had more than doubled to 2,501. Just ten years later, it jumped to 6,564, and by 1910, there were 9,639 people reported living in Owosso. Another significant increase occurred by 1920, when the population was 12,575, and by 1928, it had increased yet again to 16,347.

The Second World War spurred another period of significant growth in the city and throughout mid-Michigan and the United States at large. Manufacturing in Owosso included the production of ice; metal products; electric motors; castings; stoves; caskets; furniture; screens; doors; meats; gas; wood and paper products; boilers; tanks; bronze bearings; and auto parts. Horticulture, rail roads, and advertising were also major employers. By 1950 the mid-county population had reached 22,000 (Harrelson, *Souvenir of Owosso* 1986, 22).

Downtown Owosso

The present downtown area formed part of the larger area encompassed by the 1838 original plat of the city. The first few buildings in the downtown were likely built even before the area was platted. The 1880 Owosso history notes Daniel Ball occupying a log building built by Henry S. Smith as a store, and it may have housed the post office when Ball was appointed the first postmaster in 1838 (Schenck, 146). Harrelson's *Owosso, A to Z*, contains a photograph of this

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building, which stood at the northwest Exchange/Ball corner into the 1870s. Alfred L. Williams also reportedly moved into Owosso in 1837 and established a store, presumably in what is now the downtown. The 1880 history also notes Ebenezer Gould and David D. Fish establishing themselves as merchants in 1838 (Schenck, 146-47).

The 1838 original plat set aside Main and Washington and also Exchange west to Water as six rods wide rather than the four-rod width of the other streets – thus the Williams' intent and expectation must have been that those streets would become the main roads and business streets. The first Shiawassee River bridge, at S. Washington just south of the district, was built in 1839 (Schenck, 148). Early commercial development seems to have focused along the same streets that form the heart of today's downtown. The city map in the 1859 Geil & Jones *Wall Map of Shiawassee County*, the earliest map of Owosso, already shows the thickest development along Washington between Exchange on the north and Comstock on the south – even today the heart of the downtown – with significant development in the next block to the north up to Mason Street and also along W. Exchange west of Washington to Water, particularly on the south side. Development along Main Street and N. Ball seems to have been only scattered, and there was little development at all east of Washington.

The downtown's first store buildings were wooden. Old photographs show only a few survivors in the late nineteenth century: a two-story gable-front Greek Revival building at the northwest Main/Washington corner where the Thomas Block was built in 1888 and four along the west side of N. Washington south of the Exchange corner. The four were two-story buildings with square-head second-story front windows and bracketed falsefronts.

The Ament Hotel, a two-story building once located at the southwest Main/Washington intersection, built in 1844, is stated to have been the business district's first brick building (*Souvenir of Owosso*, 1986, 42). The downtown's oldest documented buildings appear to be the 1855 Williams Block, 112 N. Washington, built for pioneer settler and entrepreneur Benjamin O. Williams, and the c. 1856 building at 213 N. Washington. These are brick buildings of vernacular Greek Revival character. Another early building is the 1857 Gould Block, 221-23 N. Washington, but this three-story building has been reduced to a single story and now retains none of its historic character (see Schenck, 152, regarding early history of this building).

The city's post Civil War boom, along with fires that burned some of the older buildings, resulted in a general rebuilding over the late 1860s to the 1890s and into the early twentieth century that provided many of the buildings that give today's downtown district its character. An 1873 birdseye view by Strobridge & Co. shows much more intensive development, with nearly solid building rows now along both sides of Washington between Comstock and Mason that include a number of three-story buildings. W. Comstock, Main, and Exchange, along with the first block of N. Ball, now appear more densely built up with generally smaller-scale buildings.

The three-story 1867 Gould's Hall or Osburn Block, 217-19 N. Washington, and 1868 Knill Block, 122 N. Washington, are likely the oldest surviving of this post-Civil War generation of commercial buildings. The first, 1884 Sanborn map shows at least ten more two and three-story brick commercial buildings along Washington, Exchange, and Main probably built in the 1865-

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84 period. This figure counts as only one each the 1881 three-storefront broad Loring Building, 116-20 N. Washington, and the Thomas Block, which may have included the five storefronts at 102-110 W. Main.

The 1890, 1894, and 1900 Sanborn fire insurance maps show the rapid progress of downtown building during the fifteen years after 1884. The short 1885-95 period was particularly important. Of commercial buildings still standing today in the downtown district, at least twelve on N. and S. Washington were built during these years, mostly replacing smaller wooden buildings, and seven were built on E. and W. Main, twelve on E. and W. Exchange, and three on N. Ball, greatly transforming what had been relatively lightly built-up streets.

The 1885-95-period buildings include the following downtown landmarks:

North Washington:

1886 Wesener Block, 104-06

1888 Thomas Block, 101-03

1884-90 period Laubengayer Block and Sharpstene Block, 115-17 and 119

1895-96 Keeler Block, 121-23

1891 Shattuck Block, 207-09

South Washington:

Wildermuth Hotel, 119-25. The north two-thirds of the front section facing N. Washington likely date c. 1886.

W. Exchange:

1884-86-period three-building group at 208-12

1890-94-period six-building row at 110-122

1890-94-period buildings at 117 and 121-23.

The 1895-1900 period produced several more landmark buildings in the district:

Amos Hack & Livery/now Argus Press Building, 201-05 E. Exchange

1899 Haarer Block, 200-06 W. Main

1899 Crowne & Payne Building, 220-22 W. Main

The years from 1900 to 1915 saw a continuation of more intensive development, with brick commercial buildings replacing older wooden buildings and occupying previously vacant sites. About a dozen still standing buildings in the district were constructed during this time frame. North Ball saw the most new development, with four brick buildings constructed in the 1908-15 period. The four-story Miner Building, 100-02 N. Washington, the State Savings Bank, 100 E. Main, and the building at 216-18 W. Main date from the 1900-15 period. Another large building, 212-14 W. Main, was built in two phases – the west, 214 half in 1899, the matching east half c. 1914.

By about 1915 the downtown was thoroughly built up with substantial brick commercial buildings. The next fifteen years down to 1930 saw construction of fewer of the standard single-

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storefront wide store buildings than previous years – the later 1910s Fletcher Building, 113 W. Exchange, is the primary one. But, on the other hand, this prosperous period did see the construction of a number of the district's large landmark buildings. These included:

1915-16 Owosso Armory, 201 N. Water
1922 Mark Woodbury Building, 218 N. Park
Early 1920s Knapp & Smith Funeral Home, 120 E. Mason
1924 American Legion Post 57 Building, 201 E. Maon
1924-25 Municipal Building, 301 W. Main
1925-26 Capitol Theater/Lebowsky Center, 120 E. Main
1925-28 Masonic Temple, 301 N. Washington
1929 Owosso High School/now Middle School, 219 N. Water

COMMERCE

The Owosso Downtown Historic District reflects the downtown's long history as the city's commercial heart. The 1880 county history lists the earliest merchants in Owosso as Alfred L. Williams, who moved part of the stock from the Shiawassee Exchange to Owosso in 1837, and Ebenezer Gould and David D. Fish, who opened stores in 1838. These were apparently located in what became the downtown area, but the specific locations are not clear. The history also makes reference to the log house Daniel Ball occupied in 1837, located at the northwest corner of N. Ball and W. Exchange, as having been built by Henry S. Smith to serve as a store, but it may never have served that purpose.

A business directory in the 1859 county map's Owosso map section, the earliest business directory for the city, reveals the substantial growth in the business community that took place over the next twenty years. The 1859 directory lists over thirty businesses under the categories of clothing merchants; dry goods merchants; dealers in dry goods, groceries, crockery, etc.; druggists; dealers in groceries and provisions; dealers in hardware, tin and copper ware, etc.; blacksmiths; boot and shoe makers and leather dealers; and cabinet makers, in addition to various attorneys, "agents," physicians and surgeons, carpenters and joiners, masons and builders, millers, dealers in plaster and lime, and hotel proprietors, plus two civil engineers.

Editions of the *Michigan State Gazetteer and Business Directory* in the 1870s to 1890s and the earliest Owosso directories published in the 1890s show a rapidly growing business community. By the late nineteenth century the downtown district contained a very broad and full variety of businesses. There were groceries, meat shops, bakeries, fruit and confectionary stores, dry goods and hardware stores/tin shops, men's and women's (and general) clothing and furnishings stores, tailor and millinery shops, boot and shoe stores, harness and "horse goods" shops, furniture stores with associated undertaking establishments, drug stores and jewelry shops (both often combined with other sidelines such as books), musical goods stores, and restaurants. There were various newspaper offices and printing establishments and laundries, photo studios and shops, and plumbing and heating concerns. At any one time in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries before Michigan's and then the national Prohibition in the late 1910s saloons were common, some listed as "liquor store" in one directory and saloon in the next, and cigar stores

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and billiard parlors (often in combination). By the beginning of the twentieth century department store expansions of the old dry goods stores and specialty agricultural implement businesses were coming on the scene, and in the 1910s and 20s auto garages and dealerships were replacing the older livery stables. National brand grocery and other chain stores also made their appearance by the 1920s and became more common in the next few decades. Although Owosso had its West Side or West Owosso business district that grew up along W. Main Street west of the river in the late nineteenth century, the downtown district remained the city's primary commercial district from its beginnings in the late 1830s to recent years.

The following buildings and their occupants (listed in street address order) illustrate the downtown's broad variety of businesses and showcase some examples of leading and long time businesses:

Stores

The following is a sampling of downtown buildings that have housed important or long-time stores of various kinds (see inventory entries):

- 213 N. Ball: The John R. Kelly plumbing business was here in the 1910-51 period.
- 108 E. Exchange: Photography shops occupied this building from about 1910 until the 1990s – the Dorr H. Day shop until 1957 followed by the Burdette Shattuck shop (HDSCR, 275).
- 110 E. Exchange and 110, 112, 114, 118, and 120-22 W. Exchange: The 100 blocks of East and West Exchange formed an epicenter for grocery shopping, with these buildings all housing grocery store and provisions and meat shop businesses at various times from the 1890s to the 1920s.
- 116-22 W. Exchange: These three buildings housed the Owosso Montgomery Ward department store, 120-22 from about 1930 to 1980, 118 also by 1948 and 116 by 1959.
- 200 W. Exchange and 201-05 E. Exchange: These two buildings have housed Owosso's daily newspaper, *The Argus-Press*, and its predecessors for well over a century. Today's *Argus-Press* traces its origins to the *Owosso American*, first published in 1854. Through several mergers the newspaper became the *Owosso Press-American* in 1890. Another paper, *The Evening Argus*, was founded in 1892. By 1895 it moved into the building at 200 W. Exchange. In 1916 *The Evening Argus* and the *Press-American* merged and assumed the present *Argus-Press* name. The combined operation occupied the 200 W. Exchange location until 1919. Since 1919 the paper has occupied the present building at 201-05 E. Exchange (*Souvenir of Owosso* 1908; *Souvenir of Owosso* 1986, 54-5).
- 212 and 216 W. Exchange: These two buildings housed what was said to be Owosso's longest existing harness shop business. No. 212 predates 1884 and may have been built for Henry W. Martin, whose harness shop and horse goods business occupied the ground story until the mid-1910s, with the family residence upstairs until at least the mid-1920s. Son George Martin had his harness shop business in the building at 216 from about 1910 until the mid-1930s (HDSCR, 314).
- 113-15 E. Main: The east, 113 storefront contained a succession of hardware stores – Curry's followed by Dignan & McIntyre, Herman Dignan's, and then Arthur Ward's – that operated

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from the 1890s until about 1960. Early occupants of the 115 storefront in the 1890s and early twentieth century included the Western Union Telegraph and several express offices and then saloons.

- 110 W. Main: The present artistic storefront was constructed in 1930 for Ball's Jewelry, and jewelry stores have continued as occupants down to the present, J. L. Cerveny Jewelry having been here since 1975. Joseph Cerveny founded the store in 1944, and it was located at 203 W. Main from 1949 until the move to 110 (*Souvenir of Owosso* 1986, 62).
- 112 W. Main: The downtown has contained a number of confectionaries, often combined with fruit stores, but Candy Land or Candyland remained in operation the longest. This building was the second home of the Candyland confectionary from 1930 into the early 1950s. George Skestos and John Krust began the business next door at 210 by 1915 and moved here in 1930.
- 114-22 W. Main: This large building, actually four buildings with façade renovated in matching style in 1947, housed the downtown's largest store, the D. M. Christian Department Store, until 1980. Founded by Daniel M. Christian in 1885, what was originally a dry-goods store moved into a building at 118-20 in the early 1890s and, broadened in scope into the department store in 1914, gradually expanded into several other buildings around it, under the direction of Daniel and his son Leigh Christian. The Christians came also to own several buildings on W. Exchange behind the store, and one contained a café and restaurant associated with the store. Leigh Christian was instrumental in founding the Owosso City Club in the mid-1930s, and the club came to occupy quarters in the second story of 117, 119, and 121-23 until its closing in the mid-1980s (*Dry Goods Reporter*, 3/21/1914; "J. W. Knapp Company"; Lorraine Weckwert, emails regarding City Club, 8/12 and 8/14/2013, in working file).
- 208 W. Main: This building housed Jacob A. Barie's meat market by 1908, the building having replaced the earlier Converse & Sons meat shop and sausage plant present at this site by 1884.
- 216-18 W. Main: During the late 1910s and 20s the building contained the City Market, a group of independent food retailers that included grocers, a baker, and others in a common space. The C. H. Corte grocery followed the City Market in this space.
- 220-22 W. Main: This building's earliest occupants were the Crowe & Payne and then William E. Payne agricultural implements business, which included wagons and carriages – and later autos – along with farm equipment, from about 1899 to the early 1920s.
- 113-17 W. Main: Hardware stores have occupied this building since about 1955, when a Western Auto store moved in. Charles Gilbert acquired the Western Auto store in 1965 and expanded the business to occupy the entire first floor in the early 1970s. Since 1979 the Gilberts have run the business as Gilbert's True Value Hardware (*Souvenir of Owosso* 1986, 72).
- 209-13 W. Main: This west half of a larger building is notable for its long-lasting succession of office supply businesses beginning with Baxter & Blowers in the late 1920s down to Selleck Office Supply into the early 2000s.
- 120 E. Mason: This building has housed a funeral home since its construction in the 1920s. The present Nelson-House Funeral Home is the successor to Knapp & Smith, whose furniture and undertaking business began as Peters & Knapp in the 1880s and became Knapp

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& Smith by 1893. A history of the funeral home in the 1986 *Souvenir of Owosso* (78) states that Knapp and Smith sold both the furniture and undertaking business in 1911, but established a new undertaking business on W. Exchange in 1916. Fred W. Smith became sole owner of the business in 1922 by buying out the interests of his deceased father, Frank C. Smith, and father-in-law, Myron H. Knapp. He soon built the present funeral home building. The building stands on the site of the former armory, built in 1893, and reportedly used the bricks from that large building for its walls. The building has a rectangular, commercial building form, and, the history states, was built with the idea that it could be converted to store or office use if the funeral home concept – then still relatively new at a time when most funerals were still being held at home – proved unsuccessful from a business standpoint. The funeral home has been run as the Knapp and Smith Chapel of the Nelson-House Funeral Homes since 1980.

- 100-02 N. Washington: The Arthur Ward Co. furniture store occupied two stories of this four-story building from its 1912 construction until about 1963. Early listings show the store offering hardware, stoves, and carpeting, as well as furniture.
- 104-08 N. Washington: The Wesener Block was built for Hugo Wesener in 1886. Shoe stores, an early one being the Crowe-Wesener shoe store in which Hugo's son August was a partner, held sway in one of the storefronts from the late 1890s or before until the late 1960s. Another of the building's storefront housed a succession of groceries, the Loomer & Osmer and then A. E. Osmer Co. and finally the Osmer Market, from before 1910 until the 1970s.
- 110 N. Washington: This Storrer's Building is one of four buildings on N. Washington that housed Storrer's men's clothing for over one hundred years, this building from the late 1930s to 1966. Then owner Robert L. Storrer installed the present brick International Style upper façade when the store moved in (*Souvenir of Owosso* 1986, 99; Lorraine Weckwert email about 1930s front, 9/3/2013).
- 112 N. Washington: The 1855 Williams Block, the downtown's oldest building, housed hardware stores for much of its early history – Eli Gregory's down to Weisenberg's into the 1930s.
- 122 N. Washington: This building's ground story contained cigar stores, sometimes combined with a billiard parlor, from the early 1890s into the 1950s.
- 115-17 N. Washington: John H. Laubengayer established his drugstore business in Owosso in 1857, and this building housed son Theodore A. Laubengayer's and other drugstores from its mid-1880s construction at least into the 1910s (Harrelson, *Owosso, A to Z*, 307; HDSCR, 406-07).
- 119 N. Washington: This building served as the first home of the Owosso Savings Bank from 1891 until 1909 and later, from about 1915 to 1945, housed the local Woolworth's store.
- 207-09 N. Washington: This building, the Shattuck Block, housed the Shattuck Music House musical instruments and music goods store, alternately known in its early days as the Michigan Sewing Machine & Organ Co., from its 1891 construction until the early 1940s. The business was founded by C. E. Shattuck in 1869, and son J. C. Shattuck had this building constructed after assuming the business from his father in 1890. An 1895 sketch of the business explained that it then had four departments – pianos, organs, sewing machines, and bicycles, and had "an extensive business through the central part of the state." By 1908

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phonographs and "moving picture machines" were added to the inventory (Atlas Publishing Co., 89; *Souvenir of Owosso* 1908; HDSCR, 425-26).

- 217-19 N. Washington: One of the downtown's early landmarks, the 1867 Gould's Hall or Osburn Block is important for its direct association with pioneer Owosso businessman and citizen Amos Gould. A lawyer who came to Owosso from New York state in 1843, Gould acted as an attorney for both the Detroit, Grand Haven & Milwaukee and the Amboy, Lansing & Traverse Bay (Rams Horn) Railroad. He was a state senator in 1852-55 and a Shiawassee County probate judge in 1860. He served as the first mayor after the city was incorporated in 1859, helped establish the Congregational Church in 1853, and was the primary investor behind Owosso's first bank, D. Gould & Co., and its successor, the First National Bank of Owosso, founded in 1865. He served as First National's first president until his death in 1882. Gould had the first Gould's Hall Block, 221-23 N. Washington, built in 1855. One of the downtown's largest buildings when it was built, it housed the D. Gould & Co. Bank and First National Bank – for which it acquired the name Bank Block – until the 1880s. In its now removed upper story the building contained the original Gould's Hall, an important early meeting place. While this original Gould's Hall or Bank Block is now only a much altered remnant of the original building, Amos Gould's second, 1867 Gould's Hall Block, also known as the Osburn Block, at 217-219 N. Washington, retains its historic character and is one of the downtown's early landmarks. The building for nearly sixty years housed the large Osburn & Sons clothing and dry goods store. The store moved in during January 1868 and remained in operation until the mid-1920s (Harrelson, *Owosso A to Z*, 198; *Souvenir of Owosso* 1986, 24; Schenck, 152, 161).
- 116 S. Washington: The Freddie's food, beverage, candy, and cigar store is a continuation of a fruit and candy (later also groceries and sundries) business established in 1914 by John Spaniola and continued later by son Fred (HDSCR, 462-63).
- 118 S. Washington: The 1884 to 1908 Sanborns and directories into the 1910s show a succession of saloons here, including those of Charles Gabriel, A. G. Sax, and Conrad Mehlenbacher, followed by grocery stores until the 1970s.

Banks

The district contains buildings associated with several banking institutions established in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Banks occupied prime locations in the business district as they did in business districts across the country. Owosso's first bank was the D. Gould & Co. private bank, located in the original Gould or Bank Block, 221-23 N. Washington. Founded in 1854 by a group of investors of which Amos Gould was the principal, the bank was reorganized in 1865 as the First National Bank and then reorganized again in 1885 as the Second National Bank. The bank occupied the Bank Block location until the 1885 reorganization, then moved to a new demolished building at 201 N. Washington. It closed during the 1933 Bank Holiday (Owosso Chamber of Commerce, 1936; *Souvenir of Owosso* 1986, 88).

What was originally the State Savings Bank of Owosso built the Neoclassical bank building at the southeast corner of the prime Main/Washington intersection in 1907, the year the bank was founded, and doubled its length in matching style to the east along E. Main in 1926. The bank

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changed its name to Key State Bank in 1977 and is now part of Chemical Bank, but continues to occupy the same building (Harrelson, *Souvenir of Owosso* 1986, 79).

Another downtown building that has housed banks for almost its entire history is the 1895-96 Keeler Block, 121-23 N. Washington. This building was built for the Keeler brothers – Isaac H., George L., and Miner S. – Middleville and Grand Rapids businessmen who owned the Keeler Brass Works of Grand Rapids. In part the building was constructed to contain the offices of the Citizens' Savings Bank, in which the Keelers, along with many leading Owosso citizens, were investors. Citizens' opened its doors in 1896. The bank expanded from a small office in the building's front at the Washington/Exchange corner to occupy the whole 121-23 front by 1915, but became insolvent and closed during the Depression of the 1930s (Citizens' opening day adv, *The Evening Argus*, 2/15/1896; *Souvenir of Owosso* 1908; Harrelson, *Souvenir of Owosso* 1986, 88).

The Owosso Savings Bank, founded in 1891, first had its quarters in the building at 119 N. Washington, but moved to the Thomas Block, 101-03 N. Washington, by 1910 and until 1938. When the Citizens' Savings Bank closed, Owosso Savings moved to its location. The bank has merged with other banks over the years and, currently part of Fifth Third Bank, continues to occupy the 121-23 N. Washington location. The bank carried out a major renovation of the building that included the marble-clad International Style façade in the 1960s (Harrelson, *Souvenir of Owosso* 1986, 88-89).

Offices

The 1859 map's business directory lists seven attorneys, six physicians, and two civil engineers. Some may have operated out of their homes, but several had offices in the "Post Office Block." Two of the civil engineers, James B. Safford and L. B. Quackenbush, had their offices in the still standing Williams Block, 112 N. Washington. Then newly built (in 1855) and one of the few brick buildings in the downtown, it probably provided what was then some of the best office quarters in the business district.

The city directories that begin in the 1890s show that the upper stories of many buildings contained residential quarters, sometimes those of the building owner or the proprietor of the street-level commercial space (sometimes one and the same person). But the upper stories of many downtown buildings also contained office space. While many buildings may simply have offered space, upstairs rooms that could be rented for residential, commercial, or office uses, a few downtown buildings were clearly designed with prime office space in mind. One example was the 1912 Miner Building, 100-02 N. Washington. Built for attorney and real estate agent Selden S. Miner, the four-story building contained a large store in the two lower stories, with the upper two stories housing office space, including the offices of his son, attorney Leon F. Miner. Another example is the Matthews Building, the former Mueller Bros. Brewery building. Attorney Roy D. Matthews bought the vacant building in 1915 and renovated and expanded it to include commercial space downstairs and office space above. By 1917 Matthews' own law firm, Matthews & Clark, had its offices there. The 1928 directory lists twenty-four office tenants (Harrelson, *Owosso A to Z*, 344-45).

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Hotels

The business district contained a number of hotels located along Main, Washington, and Exchange Streets for most of its history. The prime hotel location over the years was the southwest corner of the key Main/Washington intersection. The community's first hotel, the Ament Hotel, was built there by Winfield Scott Ament in 1844. It was reportedly the downtown's first brick building. The Ament became the Exchange and then the National Hotel and was expanded with a third story in the early 1870s. Though much modernized about 1907, the hotel was considered less than a credit to the city by the 1920s. The Chamber of Commerce led a drive for a new hotel, and a hotel company in which many leading citizens were involved formed to raise money by stock subscriptions and the issuance of bonds to build an up-to-date hotel. The result was the five-story Hotel Owosso, built in 1928-29. Though rarely a financial success over the years, the hotel served as the city's leading hostelry and an important gathering place for most of its life (Harrelson, *Souvenir of Owosso* 1986, 42). The building, by then ruinous, was demolished in the early 2000s.

While the business district had other hotels during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, such as the Exchange Hotel at the southwest corner of W. Exchange and N. Ball, the only old hotel building now surviving is the one-time Wildermuth Hotel, 119-25 S. Washington. J. Fred Wildermuth opened a saloon by 1870 and established his hotel by 1887. Wildermuth and wife Helen Louise ran the hotel until 1909, when son-in-law Edward Hoffman took over (Atlas Publishing Co., 95; *Souvenir of Owosso* 1908; Harrelson, *Owosso A to Z*, 435, 539-40). The building was expanded in increments, the three-story front section built in three construction episodes between the early 1870s and about 1910 or 15. The hotel remained in operation until about 1951, the last few years as the Hotel Milner.

INDUSTRY

Owosso's substantial industrial base was concentrated along the mill race in the community's early days but expanded into areas near the railroad lines in the later nineteenth and early twentieth. The mill race itself was filled in during the later 1880s, and that area's industries gradually disappeared. But the downtown area encompassed by the district contains buildings that did house two locally significant industries. One of these was cigar-making, the other brewing.

Cigar manufacturing in the United States grew from a relatively small industry that employed fewer than 5000 workers and produced about 200,000,000 cigars annually as of 1863 to a huge one that employed 90-110,000 workers and produced about 6.7 billion cigars in 1909. The 1884 Michigan census shows the state then having 148 cigar factories employing about 2050 workers (1884 Census, II, 392). But by 1909 Michigan was an important cigar-making state, its production and employment the sixth highest in the nation after Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio, New Jersey, Florida, and Illinois, in that order (Cooper, 10, 12). Detroit became a leading cigar-manufacturing center in the national context, with thousands of cigar-makers, many of them Polish women workers, but the cigar industry also took root at a much smaller scale in many

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other Michigan cities such as Kalamazoo and Lansing. Owosso's earliest cigar manufacturer may have been Gibson's tobacco and cigar factory, referred to in an *Owosso Weekly Press* article during 1865. The 1873 state gazetteer lists H. M. Imhoff, cigar manufacturer, corner of Washington and Exchange; the 1883 gazetteer Burck & Sherman and Henry C. Gates; and the 1887-88 one the Owosso Cigar Co. (A. D. Chase, L. F. Burk (same initials as the above Burck), and Charles Cole) and Augustus Moreland, manufacturer of "Fine Havana Cigars."

As in most Michigan communities where the industry has been identified, Owosso's cigar-manufacturing firms were apparently few in number and small in number of workers. Some seem to have been small shops, associated with cigar stores. Most occupied upstairs quarters in downtown commercial buildings. As in the other Michigan cities, cigar manufacturing in Owosso seems to have disappeared by the 1920s and 30s. Cigar-making operations took place in at least the following standing buildings within the district:

- The c. 1890 building at 113-15 E. Main was one location for cigar production. The 1894 Sanborn shows a cigar factory in the third story of 113. The directories list cigar manufacturers, Paul Siess & Co., followed by C. E. Pollock and then Shodell & Reed between 1910 and the early 1920s.
- The Haarer Block, 200-06 W. Main, had a cigar factory or shop in its 107 N. Ball store space, according to the 1900 Sanborn map.
- Knill Block, 122 N. Washington: The 1899 directory lists as a building tenant August Stephan, cigar manufacturer and wholesaler/retailer. This building housed a succession of cigar stores from at least as early as 1894 into the 1950s – Stephan's business may have included the cigar store business as well as a manufacturing operation, perhaps located upstairs.
- Keeler Block, 121-23 N. Washington: The 1899 directory lists G. H. Grahame, cigar manufacturer and cigar and tobacco dealer, as a tenant in the building's 107 W. Exchange section.

Brewing in Owosso apparently began with John Gute, who established a small brewery on Corunna Avenue (outside the district) in 1855. Gute (1830-81) was born in Wurttemberg and settled in Owosso in 1854. By 1863 Gute's brewery was labeled the Owosso Brewery. *Owosso, A to Z*, cites an 1868 newspaper advertisement for the brewery's "XX Mineral Ale and Beer." The 1880 Schenck history notes son Albert Gute's Owosso City Brewery, which had by then been producing lager beer the past fifteen years, with a capacity of 2000 barrels per year (Schenck, 152; Harrelson, *Owosso A to Z*, 225-26). This brewery may have closed with John Gute's death; later state gazetteers no longer list it.

The 1894 Sanborn map is the first to show a brewery in the area encompassed by the district. The map shows an Owosso Brewing Company plant, capacity 26,000 barrels per year, located near the river northwest of the W. Main/N. Water intersection, occupying part of the space on which the Matthews Building now stands. The plant, minus an ice house on its north side, has the same footprint as the former Seiler Bros.' Owosso Steam Flouring Mill, labeled in the 1890 map as closed, and presumably occupied the same building. The 1895-97 state gazetteer lists its proprietors as Waterhouse & Burgy.

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In the 1897 state gazetteer Mueller Bros. (Charles and Louis) are listed as the proprietors. The two (Charles was born 1861 and Louis in 1857) were both natives of Germany. Their plant was destroyed in a September 1898 fire that also burned several other buildings around the Main/Water intersection, but was soon rebuilt in larger form and shows in the January 1900 Sanborn as the Mueller Bros. Brewery, with a brew house at the east end of the property and separate bottling works farther west near the river. The 1905 state gazetteer's entry lists the brewery's primary product as "State Seal Export Bottled Beer," for hotel and home. The complex's buildings were enlarged by 1908, but by 1913 the brewery was no longer in operation (Harrelson, *Owosso A to Z*, 357-58; Polk, *Michigan State Gazetteer*, 1893-1913 editions). Although the brewery operation closed down about one hundred years ago, the brew house and bottling plant remain standing as components of the present Matthews Building.

TRANSPORTATION

While the district contains no properties that relate directly to the community's early transportation, it does retain several buildings that possess direct associations with significant aspects of the city's transportation history from the early twentieth century. In addition to its railroad connections, the city was linked with Corunna, a nearby city and the Shiawassee County seat, between 1893 and 1926 by the five mile long Owosso & Corunna street railway or trolley and with Lansing, Jackson, and other southern Michigan cities (and also Ohio) via the Michigan United Railway (later Michigan Electric Railway) interurban line, which ran from 1911 to 1929. In the 1899 city directory the east storefront of the building at 113-15 E. Main contained offices for the Owosso & Corunna Electric Co. and electric railway as well as for the American and National Express companies and also the Western Union Telegraph office (J. M. Beckwith, the Western Union agent, was also listed at this address as a dealer in Kimball pianos and organs). This location fronted on the trolley line to Corunna, which passed down E. Main Street. The 1915 Sanborn map shows 113 S. Washington as the "Interurban Waiting R'm" for the line to Lansing and Jackson. The 1924 directory lists the north, 119 storefront of the Wildermuth Hotel, 119-25 S. Washington, housing the interurban passenger depot.

Another significant aspect of Owosso's transportation history is the city's direct association with the Indian Trails Bus Line, the largest bus line headquartered in Michigan – and founded and still based in Owosso. The line's history dates back to the 1910 establishment of a taxi and jitney service that subsequently became Indian Trails. The district contains two buildings that possess direct associations with this business' long history. The former garage building at 217-23 N. Ball housed the Phillips & Taylor Transfer Co. from the mid-1910s to the early 1920s. Richard Phillips' and son-in-law Wayne E. Taylor and wife Cora Taylor's Phillips & Taylor Transfer Co. was the predecessor to today's Indian Trails Bus Line. The Transfer Co., which operated out of this building in its earliest days, ran a jitney, taxicab and baggage transfer service in Owosso and also had autos for hire. Wayne Taylor and wife Cora established the business in 1910. Cora Taylor obtained Michigan's first commercial chauffeur license in 1914, and did much of the driving. The jitney service, providing transportation for Owosso residents working in Flint, expanded into bus service, initially to Flint in 1915 but soon to Lansing and other Michigan

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cities and beyond. No. 217-23 housed the business into the early 1920s (Harrelson, *Owosso A to Z*, 400, 474-75; *Souvenir of Owosso* 1986, 19, 74-75).

The 1924 directory shows the 119 N. Washington storefront of the Wildermuth that housed the interurban depot also serving as the bus station for the Taylors' Owosso-Flint Bus Line. In 1928 the bus line moved into the part of the Wildermuth Hotel at 109 E. Comstock, and in the 1936 directory 109 is listed as the Indian Trails Bus Station and Main Office. No. 109 E. Comstock continues to serve as Indian Trails' main office and bus depot today.

GOVERNMENT

The district contains three buildings that do or have served long governmental use. In addition to its association with Owosso's commercial history, the Downtown Historic District is significant for its association with the city's political and governmental history. The present Municipal Building/City Hall, located at 301 West Main, has housed Owosso's city government since its completion in 1925, replacing an earlier city hall and fire station that, built in 1885, stood on the site now occupied by the Capitol Theater/Lebowsky Center. Lane, Davenport & Peterson of Detroit designed the 1924-25 limestone-trimmed yellow brick Neoclassical building on its spacious site next to the Shiawassee River. Owosso's early city government was headed by a Mayor and Common Council. Later the City Charter was revised to create a City Commission, with a Mayor and Public Improvements Commissioner and Street Commissioner. Since 1964 the city has been run under a Council-Manager form of government, with an elected Mayor and Council and an appointed City Manager, who today has charge of city Departments of Public Safety, Finance, Public Services, and Community Development. These governmental functions remain housed in the Municipal Building/City Hall (HDSCR, 369; *Souvenir of Owosso* 1986, 22).

Owosso's Post Office was established in 1838, with Daniel Ball as the first postmaster. Over the years the post office has been housed in several buildings that still stand within the district. The first, 1884, and 1890 Sanborn fire insurance maps show the post office then located in the Knill Block at 122 N. Washington. By 1892 the post office moved to the west, corner storefront of the newly built Grow Block at 122 W. Exchange. It remained in those rented quarters until the federal government built a new post office building in 1909. The 1909 building (demolished), a fine Neoclassical structure, stood at the northwest corner of Exchange and Park Streets. It was replaced by the present 1961 limestone and fieldstone-finished International Style Post Office, located at 319 N. Washington. The 1961 Post Office remains in use.

EDUCATION

The district also contains the city's former high school building, now used as the Owosso Middle School. The building formed and forms a key element of the city's public school system, which dates back to the pioneer years of the 1830s. Some of the earliest classes were conducted in a small log building located within the district area near the southeast corner of Washington and Williams Streets. This was replaced with a frame building on the same site in 1840. Soon outgrown, this frame school later became the first meeting place for the Congregational,

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Methodist, and Episcopal churches before these congregations built their respective church buildings. Salem Lutheran Church now stands on the site.

A two-story brick school building, Union School, was constructed in 1854 to accommodate 100 students. By 1864 the enrollment had grown to 295 and the school employed five teachers. A larger building was constructed in 1867-68 and was expanded in 1875 and 1895.

The first high school class graduated from the school in 1870. Between 1870 and 1907, 639 students were graduated from the high school. The main 1867-68 section of this building burned in 1900, and a new Central School was constructed to replace it. The new building housed twenty-two classrooms, two auditoriums and five offices. In 1907 two new departments, Domestic Science and Manual Training, were added to the curriculum, with courses including wood shop, meal preparation, sewing, and basket weaving. In 1904 a County Normal School was established here in order to train rural school teachers. Upon graduation, trainees were licensed to teach for three years, with the option to renew their certification. By 1908 Owosso's school system was comprised of the Central School, which included the high school, and three other substantial brick school buildings. The system had fifty teachers and 1600 students (Harrelson, *Souvenir of Owosso* 1986, 25).

Continuing enrollment growth required another expansion by the mid-1920s. The city built a new Owosso High School building, now this Owosso Middle School, on N. Water Street within the nominated district in 1928-29. Designed by the Lansing architecture firm the Warren S. Holmes Company, school design specialists, the school has red brick walls trimmed in brown brick and Indiana limestone and a Tudor-inspired design. The new school was dedicated on February 10, 1930, and the following autumn had an enrolment of 741. The building was later expanded to include a band room on the north side of the auditorium, as well as a cafeteria, library, and industrial science wing on the southwest portion of the building. In 1962, when a new high school was built, this former high school building became the Owosso Junior High School.

One other long-standing educational institution housed in still-standing downtown buildings was the private Owosso Business College. Founded in 1893, the school trained students to meet "the increased demand ... for bookkeepers, stenographers and experts in all kinds of clerical work" and to be "perfectly competent to discharge the duties of any commercial position in all kinds of clerical work" (*Souvenir of Owosso* 1908). The school's early home was in the upper story of the Grow Block, 120-22 W. Exchange. The curriculum focused on business, clerical work, shorthand, penmanship, typewriting, bookkeeping, accounting, spelling, and business law, among other subjects (Han, 81; *Souvenir of Owosso* 1908). By the early 1920s the school was renamed the Owosso Business Institute and Conservatory of Music. It then offered both day and night classes in courses such as bookkeeping, accounting, typewriting, banking, and shorthand, and had added voice, piano, and violin instruction. By 1924 the school moved to the second story of the Mark Woodbury Building at 216-18 N. Park Street.

CHURCHES

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Name of Property

First Congregational Church

The district contains church buildings associated with three early congregations. The community's first formally established church was a Presbyterian church, organized in 1840 by residents of both Presbyterian and Congregational background under the Plan of Union adopted by those denominations in 1801. The two denominations held very similar religious beliefs, and the Plan of Union was designed as a means of avoiding the inherent weakness of having separate competing Congregational and Presbyterian churches in the same community rather than a single stronger body of one or the other denomination. The Plan of Union tended to favor the establishment of Presbyterian churches west of New York state, but growing numbers of settlers with origins in New England, where the Congregationalists were dominant, resulted in growing interest in forming Congregational churches in "western" states such as Michigan. As in a number of other southern Michigan communities, Owosso's early Presbyterian church was reorganized as Congregational. Members of the church reorganized as the Owosso First Congregational Church in 1853.

The Presbyterian and then Congregational church met in Owosso's two-room wooden school house, which stood on the site of the present Salem Lutheran Church, until 1855, when the Congregationalists completed a white brick church building, the first church to be built in Owosso, at a cost of \$2,400. Amos Gould donated the bell and, because it was the only bell in Owosso, it was used to sound curfew and fire alarms. This original church building was outgrown and replaced on the same site with the present fieldstone building of Romanesque design in 1891-92. The cornerstone was laid on July 28, 1891. The fieldstone came from the Gould and Getman family farms. The present church was completed in the summer of 1892 and dedicated in September of the same year.

The building was remodeled and enlarged in 1958. The remodeling consisted of re-orienting the sanctuary to the west from the south; leveling the amphitheater-style floor; installing new white oak wainscoting, a black oak altar, and a white oak organ screen. A new Kilgen organ replaced the original organ. The renovation included the addition of a parish house/education building on the church's south side. The addition's low form and exterior finishes, including limestone and areas of fieldstone, complement the original building, while a dramatic folded plate roof over the end opposite the church gives the addition its own distinctive visual character. Robert Snyder of the Cranbrook Institute was the architect and West Construction Company of Flushing was the general contractor (McLosky, *et al.*, 24).

Salem Lutheran Church

Salem Lutheran Church, whose building is located on N. Washington opposite the First Congregational Church, resulted from the settlement of Germans of Lutheran heritage in the Owosso area beginning around 1850. Pioneer German Lutheran missionary pastor Rev. Christian Eberhardt began the first local services, and in 1867 the small Evangelical Lutheran Society bought the old wooden school used by the Presbyterians to serve as their first church building. The church was formally incorporated as Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church of Owosso in 1869. Pastor J. Haas served as the congregation's first pastor, conducting the church's school and confirmation classes.

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The present brick church building was constructed in 1892 and dedicated in 1893. Its Gothic Revival styling and rectangular gable-roof form, with projecting centrally positioned front tower, places it within the mainstream of German Lutheran church design in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The older wood frame church which had occupied the site was relocated to East Mason Street and in 1894 became the church's first Christian day school. Efforts to establish a day school had begun as early as the 1880s, but these did not materialize until the church moved the frame building and began using it as a school. This was the beginning of a day school that remains in operation today, with an enrollment of approximately 90 students. The school is located at 520 W. Stewart Street, outside of the district.

A tornado that struck Owosso in November 1911 felled Salem Lutheran's original 140-foot octagonal belfry and spire and left a large hole in the roof. The present pyramid roof capping the tower replaced the old belfry and spire. The church was remodeled in 1946, the work including rebuilding the balcony and chancel. In 1964 the church added an administration-education wing, with fourteen Sunday school rooms, pastor's and secretary's offices, an altar guild room, sacristy, storage rooms, and a radio broadcasting room. Another renovation took place in 1965, which included chancel remodeling, extension of the balcony, and the addition of new pews and carpeting (McLosky *et al.*, 35-6; *Salem Lutheran Church Anniversary Edition*, 3-5, 13; "Salem Lutheran School," Private School Review, accessed 5/24/2013).

First Baptist Church

The present First Baptist Church was established in 1856, although local Baptists began holding services in 1835 and organized an earlier church in 1838. This original church flourished at first, but died out in the early 1840s. The revived congregation began meeting in a rented hall before dedicating their first building in 1859. The building was located on the corner of Oliver and N. Washington Streets. The 12/26/1866, *Owosso Weekly Press* reported that the church had started raising money to build a new building in order to accommodate its growing membership. In 1869 the church purchased three lots at the present site on the northeast corner of W. Mason and N. Ball for the construction of a larger building. The cornerstone was laid in 1876 and the church was dedicated in 1877. This building also proved too small for the growing membership, and a much larger auditorium church was built in 1896-96 and dedicated May 3, 1896.

The same tornado in November of 1911 that damaged Salem Lutheran caused "serious damage" to First Baptist as well, putting additional strain on a congregation that struggled under the debt of the new building. However, the years between 1912 and 1925 proved to be years of exceptional growth in membership. In 1917 Sunday School attendance peaked at 500. By 1922 the building debt was paid off and the church even made \$8,000 worth of building improvements.

Alas, this 1896 building was all but destroyed by fire on February 3, 1942. Due to wartime restrictions that made obtaining building materials difficult, the congregation decided to salvage as much of the old building as possible. While reconstruction was under way, the congregation met in the Capitol Theater and the basement of the Congregational Church. The part of the old building that was salvaged and rebuilt was extended with a new main sanctuary, completed in

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1946. A larger narthex at the south end of the building was added in 2004 (*The First Baptist Church of Owosso, Michigan. One Hundredth Year, 1856-1956*; McLosky et al., 15-7).

SOCIAL HISTORY

Like other cities of similar size, Owosso has a rich social history. Buildings in the district reflect two aspects of that history: fraternal organizations and other social and public service organizations.

Fraternal

Fraternal organizations became an integral part of American society in the nineteenth century and reached a high point in membership in the early and mid-twentieth century. As in many Michigan communities, Owosso residents founded and participated in local units of a great many such organizations. By bringing together people of similar social and cultural backgrounds, they helped provide members with a sense of cohesion, order, and social stability.

The Freemasons (Masons) are the oldest fraternal organization in the United States. Freemasonry's origins can be traced to medieval European guilds, and the order was brought to America from England as early as 1730. By 1776 the Masons had been firmly established in the eastern United States. As settlers moved westward, they established local Masonic chapters in their communities. The Independent Order of Odd Fellows was also brought to America from England. It was first established in America in 1819 in Baltimore and gradually spread further west.

Fraternal activity increased dramatically from previously low levels in the post-Civil War period. Older established organizations expanded dramatically in membership and a vast array of additional organizations appeared, including the Knights of Pythias, Fraternal Order of Eagles, Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, Independent Order of Foresters, Modern Woodmen of America, Woodmen of the World, and others. Fraternal organizations often combined a purely social function with involvement in specific social causes and also often had a mutual benefit/insurance function by which members obtained some form of health, unemployment, or death benefits. Membership in many of these organizations has dropped dramatically since World War II, and local units have often merged or disappeared altogether.

Owosso's history of fraternal organizations has included the Masons, Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias, Elks, Modern Woodmen, Maccabees, the American Legion, the Eagles, and others. . The local Masonic Lodge 81 was organized in 1855, and the Odd Fellows organized in 1865 (Harrelson, *Che-boc-way-ting*, 8-10). Owosso's fraternal organizations commonly met in upper floor halls and meeting rooms of commercial buildings in the downtown district. For example, the Masons had their Masonic Temple in several buildings over the years since 1855: the Williams Block, 112 N. Washington, in 1855-79; the Gould's Hall or Osburn Block, 217-19 N. Washington, in 1879-96; and the Keeler Block, 119 N. Washington, in 1896-1928, prior to opening their present temple. The Odd Fellows had their hall in the third story of the Knill Block, 122 N. Washington, as of 1884. The Elks Lodge #357 met on the second floor of the Thomas Block, 101-103 North Washington Street, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth

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century. The Knights of Pythias occupied quarters in the Shattuck Block, 207-09 N. Washington, as of 1900 (Sanborn map) and in the Fletcher Building, 113 W. Exchange, later on in the early twentieth century. The Foresters had their Foresters' Hall upstairs at 102-04 W. Main and 115-17 N. Washington at various times in the early twentieth century, the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) their hall at 119 N. Washington.

In the early twentieth century a few of the organizations were able to build or purchase their own buildings. The Fraternal Order of Eagles' Aerie 851, established in 1904, has occupied quarters at 308 N. Washington Street since at least 1908. The house they initially used was expanded with a large ballroom at the rear by 1930, and a new front section was built in 1950 when the former house burned – the present facility is comprised of the 1950s front section and 1920s dance hall part.

The queen of fraternal buildings in the downtown and the city is the present Masonic Temple, 301 N. Washington. As was the standard practice in building Masonic temples, Owosso's Masonic organizations, Owosso Lodge No. 81, F & AM, Owosso Chapter No. 80. Royal Arch Masonry, Owosso Commandery No. 49, Knights Templar, Abigail Chapter No. 206, Order of the Eastern Star, and Owosso White Shrine No. 52, organized a Masonic Temple Association to finance, build, and operate the building. The association retained Detroit architect George W. Graves. Graves had ideal credentials for the task both as an architect with twenty years of design experience and as a Mason. Graves served as master of ceremonies at the dedication of the Detroit Masonic Temple, then and still considered to be the world's largest, in 1926 and rose to the level of Most Worshipful Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Michigan in 1927-28. Construction of Owosso's Masonic Temple began in 1925 and the building was occupied in 1928. It continues to serve as the city's Masonic Temple.

The Owosso City Club

A leading social institution in Owosso's downtown for fifty years was the Owosso City Club. The club was founded in 1934 at the instigation of Leigh Christian, successor to his father Daniel as head of the downtown's leading store, the D. M. Christian Department Store. Christian's proposal for a "downtown City Club with the necessary social, recreation and cuisine features that go to make up such a club" met with approval from downtown businessmen. Christian offered space for the club in his buildings behind the department store on W. Exchange. By the 1950s the club's quarters expanded to include rooms for meeting space, a card room, and bar and lounge and occupied much of the second story of the buildings at 117-131 W. Exchange. Members were required to fill out an application, pay a fee, and pay annual dues. The Club elected a board of governors; a President (initially Ward Cobb, district manager for Consumers Power); and a secretary/treasurer. The former D. M. Christian store's restaurant became part of the club operation. Slot machines helped pay for the club's expenses for a brief time in the late 1930s. By the time the club celebrated its 50th anniversary in October of 1984, membership stood at 277 and dues had risen from \$20 to \$200 per year ("Owosso Club Has 50th Anniversary," *Owosso Argus Press*, 10/20/1984; Lorraine Weckwert emails 8/12 and 8/14/2013 – she was the last club manager). Despite this apparent success, the club closed down by the end of that year.

RECREATION/ENTERTAINMENT

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Name of Property

Shiawassee, MI

The Owosso Downtown Historic District has played a key role in Owosso's entertainment history. The halls that occupied spaces in the upper stories of a number of downtown buildings sometimes saw use for musical or other entertainment events in their early years. Gould's Hall in the third story of the Gould's Hall or Osburn Block, 217-19 N. Washington, built in 1867, was likely a prime location for such events prior to becoming the Masonic Temple in 1879. What was probably the city's leading performance venue in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Salisbury Opera House, located at the northeast corner of Washington and Exchange, no longer exists.

In the early twentieth century a new form of entertainment, motion pictures or movies, made its appearance in Owosso. The early movie theaters were often small, single-storefront "vaudeettes" that, typically with impermanent, easily removable finishes and equipment, tended to have short life spans. The Crystal Theater, listed in the 1907 directory at 123 W. Main but gone by 1910, may have been one of these. The same short stretch of W. Main Street contained two other early theaters. The Temple Theater, located at 117 W. Main from about 1906 to 1916, shows as an "electric" or movie theater. The 1915 Sanborn shows the entire footprint of the c. 1909 building at 216-18 W. Main occupied by a large theater with stage and scenery. This space held the Coliseum Theatre briefly in the early 1910s followed by the Family Theater, which also closed by 1917.

These movie theaters had fleeting existences, but what was the downtown's pre-eminent movie theater still stands within the downtown district. The Capitol Theater was built for Owosso businessman Joseph H. Lebowsky. Flint architect George J. Bachmann designed the building, which was begun in 1925 and opened on March 4, 1926. The W. S. Butterfield Theatres chain operated the theater for fifty-nine years. It hosted motion picture and vaudeville performances in its early years but was soon refitted for "talkies" only. In 1952 the building was modernized inside and out, the exterior work presumably including the bright red enameled metal paneling and the marquee that give special sparkle to the front. The movie theater closed in 1985 but was then purchased by the Christian Independent Fellowship Church from the family of Joseph H. Lebowsky. They used the facility, which was renamed the Joseph H. Lebowsky Center, for worship services and community programs. The Owosso Community Players occupied the building beginning in 1990. A devastating fire destroyed the roof, a major portion of the east wall, and the majority of the interior in 2007 but the facility's reconstruction has become a community project. The exterior has been rebuilt and work on finishing the interior continues (Harrelson, *Souvenir of Owosso* 1986, 67).

MILITARY HISTORY

The district contains Owosso's 1915-16 Michigan National Guard Armory, which housed Owosso-based Guard units for much of its history. The Michigan National Guard as it exists today is the outgrowth of organized citizen militias dating back to a militia organized shortly after the 1805 establishment of Michigan Territory. It was reorganized numerous times in succeeding decades and then reconstituted in 1870 as the Michigan State Troops. The initial three companies in 1870 were expanded to twenty-four, with 1792 troops, by 1876. In the 1870s

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and 80s growing public concerns over civil unrest and, particularly, strike-related disturbances across the nation led to greater efforts to increase the size and improve the training of the state militia forces. These state forces were increasingly being viewed as part of a home defense force that came to be labeled the National Guard. In 1891 the Michigan State Troops were renamed the Michigan National Guard.

In January 1903 President Roosevelt approved the Dick Bill, named for Major General Charles Dick, which mandated increased funding for the National Guard and increased training periods of twenty-four days of drill per year, as well as five days of summer encampment. In 1909 state legislation was passed providing for (among other things) payment for attendance at drills and for the building of armories by the state. The December 31, 1910, report of the state Adjutant General noted new Michigan National Guard armories completed at Ionia, Saginaw, and Bay City, contracts let for armories at Pontiac and Ann Arbor, and deeds filed for armory sites at Kalamazoo, Grand Rapids, Coldwater, and Owosso (MAGD 1940, xxix, xxxi; Moore 1985; Wilson 1989).

For six months during 1913 and 1914, the Guard units of the State of Michigan were called to duty in the Upper Peninsula's Keweenaw region during a strike that affected most of the region's copper-mining companies. Following this service the Guard used the opportunity to impress upon businesses the importance of National Guard duty. A statewide campaign was created to educate employers about the Guard and to encourage them to allow their employees to serve in it without penalties (MAGD 1940, xxxi).

The next major piece of legislation to impact the organization of the National Guard was the 1916 National Defense Act, which made the National Guard a reserve component of the United States Army. This act allowed the President to draft individual Guardsmen for federal duty, and the number of annual drill days was increased to forty-eight, with fifteen days of summer encampment. On June 18, 1916, just fifteen days after passage of the National Defense Act, the Michigan National Guard was called into federal service to maintain security at the Mexican border. Michigan's troops returned home in November of that same year, only to be called into service once again May 1917, this time to be part of the United States troops fighting in World War I (MAGD 1940, xxxi-xxxii; Wilson 1989).

Michigan's troops, combined with those from Wisconsin, made up the 32nd Division, commanded by Major General William G. Haan. The 32nd was engaged in three major offensives, fought on five fronts, defeated twenty-three German divisions, and took 2153 prisoners. The 32nd also suffered 14,000 casualties, third in the number of battle deaths of any division in the Army. Nicknamed "Les Terribles" by the French, the 32nd boasted more than 800 American, French, and Belgian-decorated officers and men. The colors of all four Infantry regiments, three Artillery regiments, and three Machine Gun battalions received the French *Croix de Guerre*, and every flag and standard in the division was authorized to display four American battle bands. The 32nd left Germany in April 1919 and was demobilized in May 1919.

Under federal law, the members of the National Guard, when drafted into federal service, were no longer members of the state Guard, and their state enlistment contracts were terminated at the

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time of their federal conscription. Consequently the men discharged at the end of World War I were no longer members of the state military service, and the Michigan National Guard thus consisted only of the state Adjutant General, the United States Property and Disbursing Officer for Michigan, a Judge Advocate, and one officer of the Medical Corps. In 1920 reorganization was undertaken. Although Americans were in an anti-military mood following World War I, Michigan's reorganization and reconstitution of old units (as provided in legislation passed in June 1920) was successfully completed within the next two years.

In 1933 the federal government approved another amendment to the National Defense Act, which organized the National Guard as part of the United States' permanent military and provided that Guard units were to be called intact into federal service (Wilson 1989). With the 1933 amendment, the Guard enjoyed continued service to individual states, but also recognition by and service to the United States.

For the Michigan National Guard, the years of the Great Depression mirrored those of the early twentieth century. As with the copper-miner strikes of 1913-14, the Guard was called upon to maintain law and order during the 1937 Flint sit-down strike against General Motors plants, where they served for forty-two days (MAGD, 286). In contrast to earlier strike duty, where the Guard was often viewed with hostility by striking workers and their supporters for their strike-breaking role, the Guard during the Flint strike was placed by Gov. Frank Murphy's direction around the auto plants containing the sit-down strikers, separating the two sides to the dispute in the wake of earlier violence but effectively protecting the workers from renewed attacks by the local police sent to dislodge them.

On October 15, 1940, exactly twenty-three years after its organization in World War I, the 32nd Division (including Michigan and Wisconsin Guard troops) was ordered into federal service to participate in World War II. Originally scheduled as players in the European theater, the 32nd was suddenly shipped west, via rail, to fight in the Pacific. By the end of the war, the 32nd had the distinction of serving the longest of any American division (654 days), but had also suffered 7,268 casualties, including 1,985 fatalities (Mahon 1993, Table 13.2, 192-93).

The Guard has played a major role in securing life and property during social upheavals, and the units have faithfully provided material and moral support following natural disasters. After World War II, Guardsmen continued to play an important role in federal military operation. The Guard participated in the wars in Korea and Viet Nam and most recently in the Middle East as an essential component of the Persian Gulf War.

Owosso's units headquartered at the Owosso National Guard Armory prior to its closing in 2008 were involved in all of these actions.

The Owosso Armory

The state Armory Building Fund, established in 1909, led to a boom in armory construction, and soon numerous armory buildings were constructed. The architectural style and fortress-like building form was meant to convey a message of strength, security, and permanency, and a commitment to protect their communities.

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Owosso's National Guard unit, Company H of the Third Infantry, was organized in 1891 (Han, 15). In October 1893 the Owosso unit occupied a substantial Richardsonian Romanesque armory building at the southwest corner of Mason and Park (*Saginaw News*, 10/21/1893). By 1910, while still retaining the Armory name, the building was serving as the Odd Fellows Building or Temple and housed the IOOF Colfax and Colfax Rebekah lodges, the city's other IOOF lodges meeting at Odd Fellows Hall, 123 E. Main.

Efforts to improve or replace the 1893 armory began in 1909, and by October 1914 plans for a new building were approved by the State Military Board. Construction of the building was delayed by funding issues and discussions over the adequacy of the proposed site, but got under way in mid-1915. The armory's cornerstone was laid September 6, 1915, and the building completed in March or April 1916. A ball marking the formal opening was planned for April 25, 1916. In the end the new armory cost a reported \$45,000, with \$30,000 appropriated by the state legislature, \$8500 provided by the county through a bond issue, \$4500 by the city, and the site donated. An additional \$3500 state appropriation was later needed to completely finish the building (*Grand Rapids Press*, 1/29/1909; *Flint Journal*, 4/18/1913 and 6/27/1914; *Kalamazoo Gazette*, 10/4/1914; *Flint Journal*, 11/9/1914, 4/2/1915, 5/17/1915; *Grand Rapids Press*, 9/6/1915 and 2/28/1916; *Traverse City Record-Eagle*, 2/8/1917). Edwyn A. Bowd of Lansing, who had designed the Ionia armory, was the architect and Rickman Construction Company of Kalamazoo the general contractor.

Like most of the state's early twentieth-century armory buildings, Owosso's is no longer used by the Guard. The Guard moved to a new armory in Corunna in 2008, and the Owosso building has been sold. Plans are under way for rehabilitation for another use.

ARCHITECTURE

Downtown Owosso is lie-on-your-back-on-the-sidewalk-and-look-up country. The downtown district's upper facades above the modernized storefronts display a feast of often intricate ornament in brick, stone, wood, and iron. The district contains buildings dating from the 1850s to the 1960s and later. Its commercial building stock includes architecturally distinguished buildings illustrating a broad spectrum of architectural styles from Italianate and Late Victorian to Neoclassical, Chicago Commercial Style, and Commercial Brick, and to International Style and Mid-century Modern. The special glory of the downtown is the large number of Late Victorian buildings from the later 1880s and 1890s with their highly intricate detailing that includes corbelled brickwork and brick in highly diverse shapes and finishes. The district also contains a number of non-commercial buildings of architectural distinction including Gothic and Romanesque Revival churches, the Neoclassical Municipal Building/City Hall, the Armory, with its distinctive Arts-and-Crafts exterior, the Capitol Theater/Lebowsky Center with its delicate terra cotta in combination with bright-hued enameled metal paneling, the High/Middle School, and the Masonic Temple. Especially for a city of its size, Owosso's downtown historic district possesses a distinctive and impressive architectural character.

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Interest in preserving Owosso's distinctive architectural heritage dates back at least to the 1970s work of residents such as Sallysue Gale and Helen Harrelson. *A Study in Time: The Historic Architectural Excellence of Owosso, Michigan*, published in the wake of the late 1970s work of Stephen Burns to bring this heritage to the attention of the public, seems to mark a beginning in historic preservation efforts and activities in the city. The book's Chapter Seven – Architectural Suicide or Restoration? – may have been a bugle call to action:

Like many other American cities, downtown Owosso has been structuring its architectural development along guidelines that are at best mediocre. What is saddening is that it is destroying a magnificent patrimony in exchange for a new world that falls far short of its old standards. The gains that are made are generally overcome by the losses. The desire to "remodel" old buildings has resulted in "remuddling," often at a higher price than sensible restoration.

There is hope, however, because downtown Owosso's buildings have been able to survive the attack of plastic, plywood, paint and paper-thin aluminum with at least a small measure of grace and style. Moreover, much of the damage is quite easily reversible. Downtown Owosso can be restored to its former beauty and more importantly, to its former economic health. With the design assistance of truly knowledgeable persons, such as architects and historic preservationists, restoration can be both effective and economic, because one is working with, not against, the building's fabric (37-38).

The chapter's mid-1970s photographs illustrating buildings along West Exchange and North Washington and a series of survey photographs of downtown buildings from 1979 show that much progress has been made since those days. A prime purpose of this nomination project is to encourage a continuation and expansion of this progress.

Italianate

Most of the district's oldest commercial buildings are Italianate in style. Italianate as a "revival" style first developed in England as part of the Picturesque Movement. Inspired by rambling farmhouses in Italy, the Italianate style was a reaction against rigidly formal architecture of the early nineteenth century. Architect Andrew Jackson Downing popularized the style in residential architecture in the United States in the mid-nineteenth century and it remained popular into the 1870s. The Italianate style also came to dominate commercial building design, and found expression through wide bracketed cornices, quoining, belt courses, pedimented and segmental-arch windows, and rusticated stone.

The Owosso Downtown Historic District contains a number of examples of commercial Italianate architecture. The earliest surviving commercial Italianate buildings are the 1868 second Gould's Hall Block, at 217-19 N. Washington, and Knill Block, 122 N. Washington. Built by Owosso pioneer and first mayor Amos Gould in 1868, this Gould's Hall or Osburn Block displays wide eaves supported by wooden brackets and tall arched windows. The first floor storefront has been rebuilt, but the upper two stories remain virtually unchanged. The Knill or Burhans Block has tall, narrow windows and features heavier, pedimented lintels with end

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brackets and simple sills. Its large cornice is gone, but the building retains its original iron storefront columns and bracketed storefront cornice. The two-story buildings at 116-20 N. Washington, the Knill Block's next door neighbors, feature the same Italianate detailing in their low gabled second-story window caps and the corbelled rick detail below the roofline (the Sanborn maps indicate these buildings also once had now-lost cornices). Additional Italianate buildings are located at 200 and 210-12 W. Exchange and 108-112 W. Main.

The largest and most elaborately detailed commercial Italianate building in the district is the Thomas Block, located at 101-103 N. Washington. Its architectural detailing and its location on the prime corner of North Washington and West Main make this one of the downtown's prime landmark buildings. Built in 1888, the Thomas Block displays tall, narrow segmental-arch and round arch windows in the second and third stories. The wall surfaces display a highly textural look, with raised detailing that includes broad brick piers and narrow, coupled ones between the windows, brick corbelling, and limestone sill and beltcourses, keystones, drip moldings, and other details that provide a strong contrast of light and shadow.

"Picturesque" Late Victorian

Commercial buildings of the later 1880s and 90s displaying intricately decorative stone-trimmed brick "textural" finishes form a distinctive and important architectural feature of Owosso's downtown historic district. One prime distinguishing feature of these buildings is their corbelled brickwork below the eaves. The earlier Italianate buildings of the 1850s-70s typically displayed a modest treatment of corbelled brickwork capping the slightly recessed façade between the raised piers at the ends of the façade – such as in 116-22 N. Washington – with the masonry wall topped by a decorative wooden or metal cornice. By the 1880s and 90s corbelled brickwork just below the eaves was becoming a common replacement for decorative wood and metal cornices. Wooden cornices, with their wide overhangs and elaborate brackets, themselves began to go out of fashion by the 1870s in favor of metal ones. The reasons seem to be two-fold: the need for frequent repairs and painting and the danger from fire as demonstrated by urban fires such as those in Chicago and Boston.

The International Library of Technology manual *Masonry – Carpentry – Joinery* (1903), coming out of the International Correspondence Schools curriculum and reflecting common views and practice, noted that for brick buildings with flat roofs, "a brick cornice is generally the most satisfactory ... and is much better than a galvanized-iron or wooden cornice, for besides being more durable, it does not, like them, require painting at frequent intervals" (143). The manual illustrates several forms of simple corbelled brick cornices, including one that features a pattern of alternating vertically stacked, corbelled headers and recessed stacked headers above a dentil band formed of alternating projecting and recessed rowlock headers.

Owosso's downtown is far from unique in its buildings' use of corbelled brick cornice detailing, but the downtown buildings display not only an unusual number of buildings with corbelled brick cornice details but also what seems an unusual robustness to much of it. Typical corbelled details seen in the Owosso buildings include stacked, corbelled brick headers alternating with recessed stacked headers – in 213-15 N. Ball, 119, 200, and 202 W. Exchange, and 215 W. Main

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– and corbelled stacked stretchers separated by recessed stacked headers – in 117 and 121-23 W. Exchange, 113-15 E. Main, 220 W. Main, and 104-08 N. Washington. A few buildings, such as 119-25 S. Washington, utilize stacked stretchers in both stacks. The corbelled detailing is often six or seven bricks in height, but rises to a maximum of ten bricks high in the building at 104-08 N. Washington. Another corbelled detail used in several downtown Owosso buildings is an inverted “pyramid” design. No. 110 W. Exchange and 114-16 S. Washington have three brick tall corbelled pyramids, with the base course of each a header and top a stretcher. The single projecting course of stretcher brick that tops this series of inverted pyramid forms is itself then topped by a band of sawtooth brickwork.

But the robust corbelled brickwork details are only the beginning of the visual interest the district’s late 1880s and 90s buildings display. This time period across the nation was a high point of interest in decorative effects in architecture – using a variety of materials, colors, forms, and textures to create picturesque effects and contrasts of light and shadow. The Owosso buildings’ facades mirrored this interest in picturesque effects. Not only did the building fronts display a pattern of raised piers between sections, but the piers themselves were sometimes subdivided by a narrow recessed vertical strip, panel-like, down the center, to provide an additional contrast of light and shadow. Windows were frequently capped with round or segmental-arch heads, as in the earlier Italianate buildings, but the windows were often much broader. Stone was used to heighten the decorative effect. In the Grow Block, for example, smooth stone of light hue contrasting with the red brick was used to form a highly visible window-head-level strip, and rock-face stone used as continuous sillcourses and for impost blocks for the arched third-story windows and as alternate voussoirs (separating brickwork voussoirs) over the arched central window on each side. Beefy slabs of rock-face stone were frequently used as window sillcourses and lintel-level bands, as in 113-15 E. Main and 115 and 117 N. Washington.

Different types of brick were also used to create visual contrasts. The Grow Block (120-22 W. Exchange), 112 W. Exchange, and 113-15 N. Washington use what seems a unique form of brick that has a raised “hip-roof” decorative facing. These bricks are used primarily above top-floor arched windows, but also as vertical stacked headers in recessed strips in the upper façade piers of three of the buildings and as header strips within arched window heads in three of the buildings. The building at 111 W. Exchange utilizes no fewer than three distinctive types of brick as decorative accents, none of them used elsewhere in the downtown. The upper façade above the third-story windows displays what appear to be stretchers each finished in three side-by-side raised pyramid forms, while the third-story end piers contain panels of vertical stacked headers displaying paired rounded forms and the second-story piers similar panels featuring headers faced in paired raised button forms. Five buildings – 116 E. Exchange, 113-15 E. Main, 115 and 117 N. Washington, and 114 S. Washington – display panels faced in brick displaying a pebble-like finish.

One characteristic of the commercial architecture of the later 1880s and 90s was a preoccupation with providing ample windows and light for the upper floors. While windows in the upper stories of earlier commercial buildings tended to be single double-hung windows positioned sparingly across the façade, the new generation of buildings often had single windows, but more closely

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spaced, as in the 1890 Grow Block, 120-22 W. Exchange, or the buildings at 113 and 115 N. Washington and 112 S. Washington, or had broad multi-part windows, as in 111 E. Main, with its quadruple windows in each story. No. 104-06 N. Washington with its triple and quadruple windows in the second story and groups of four tall closely spaced windows in the third story combines the two concepts. The result is a front façade that is largely window.

The 100 block of West Exchange provides the district's most concentrated display of these 1880s-90s Late Victorian buildings in the district, but other examples appear along E. and W. Main and N. and S. Washington as well, such as the particularly fine Wesener Block at 104-08 N. Washington.

What was once one of the most architecturally distinguished of the Late Victorian buildings is the 1895-96 Keeler Block/now Fifth Third Bank, at 121-23 N. Washington (109 W. Exchange, apparently built at the same time by an adjoining owner, complemented the Keeler Block in its exterior finishes). Though hidden behind a 1960s marble curtain wall screen, the building's upper facades reportedly retain much of their historic finishes, so that a future restoration might be feasible. In its front the three-story stone-trimmed brick building displayed paired round-arch second-story windows and, in its third story, overscaled side-by-side windows in a palladian window design. The North Washington façade had projecting bay windows in its second story and broad round-arch ones in the third. The ground story was rebuilt in Neoclassical form in the early twentieth century when a bank expanded into the whole front – for about fifty years the original upper façade remained visible above this Neoclassical base. Restoring the upper facades of 121-23 N. Washington/109 W. Exchange, if feasible, would bring back to view one of the downtown district's most important landmarks.

The number of downtown Owosso buildings exhibiting this intricate brickwork and using these unusual if not unique brick forms suggests the possibility that local Owosso talent may have been involved in their design and locally made bricks used in their construction. The R. L. Polk & Co. *State Gazetteer and Business Directory* editions that precede the first city directories in the 1890s list no local architects, but Helen Harrelson's *Owosso, A to Z*, does provide information on Edgar Ingersoll, an Owosso "Architect" – probably in the old sense of chief builder – during the 1880s and 90s who apparently did design work as well. Ingersoll (1851-99) was born in the Rochester, New York, area and came to Owosso about 1885 after sojourns in Ovid and Greenville, Michigan. He died January 6, 1899, while working on the Mueller Bros. Brewery building. Ingersoll reportedly designed and built the 1891 Connor Building and the 1899 Mueller Bros. Brewery in the district – the brewery building forming part of the present Matthews Building (*Owosso A to Z*, 269). The Connor Building, at least, exhibits some of the architectural characteristics that make these 1880s and 90s buildings so notable from an architectural standpoint. Harrelson's information about Ingersoll's career may be largely culled from his obituary. A thorough study of the Owosso newspapers from the late 1880s and early 90s might provide additional information on who designed and built these buildings.

Owosso did have its own brick plants at this time period. The 1883 and 1887-88 state gazetteers list two firms: J. and H. Friezeke (Julius and Herman Friezeke), brick and tile manufacturers, and Parker & Belford (Charles F. and then David Parker and James M. Belford), brick

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manufacturers. In the 1893-94 directory Miles L. Parker advertised as a manufacturer of building, well, and sewer brick and drain tile, including "Ornamental brick, side cuts, half round, beaded, extra lengths, 18 to 20 in. and over, made to order." A short sketch of the Frieeseke firm in the 1895 Shiawassee County atlas states that the brothers Julius and Herman Frieeseke were born near Brandenburg, Germany (*Owosso, A to Z*, 120, states Brandenburg, Prussia), and migrated to Owosso with their parents in 1858. They entered into the brick business in 1865 when they bought [Charles] Shattuck's brickyard. Herman C. manufactured brick in Jacksonville, Florida, in the 1883-87 period, but the Frieeseke brickyard in Owosso apparently operated until shortly before 1910 (Harrelson, *Owosso, A to Z*, 170-71, 180; Atlas Publishing Co., 84). (The artist, Frederick C. Frieeseke (1874-1939), was Herman C. Frieeseke's son, and born in the family home at 654 N. Water Street.)

Richardsonian Romanesque

The Owosso Downtown Historic District also features a small number of buildings whose designs were inspired by the Richardsonian Romanesque architecture of the 1880s. Recalling the round-arched styles of medieval Europe, the Romanesque Revival was introduced in the eastern United States by architects James Renwick and Richard Upjohn in the 1840s. In the middle of the nineteenth century, it became a popular style in American public and ecclesiastical buildings. American architect Henry Hobson Richardson in the 1870s and early 80s popularized a form of Romanesque that, characterized by broad arches, massive masonry construction, and the use of Romanesque motifs most typically following southern French and Spanish models, came to be known as Richardsonian Romanesque. Masonry construction; broad, round arches; floral and decorative details to column capitals and wall surfaces; and deeply recessed windows are some of the character-defining features of the style. It was in vogue from the 1880s into the early 1900s. Used most often for churches and public and institutional buildings, it also saw substantial use in commercial construction.

The district's prime example of a building reflecting the Richardsonian Romanesque influence is the Sharpstone Block at 119 North Washington Street which was constructed between 1884 and 1890. Although the building front is of brick rather than the massive rock-face stone so characteristically used, it presents the broad arches, a pair of them side by side at the third-story level rising above a single second-story one that spans the entire front almost from floor level.

Concrete Block

The construction of buildings with walls formed of concrete block, relatively rare before 1900, quickly became popular in the new century. The use of concrete in construction can be traced to the Romans, who mixed quicklime, volcanic material, stone, sand, and water to create a substance that was as hard and durable as stone. With the collapse of the Roman Empire knowledge of how to make concrete was lost (Yarwood, 147). It wasn't until the eighteenth century that experimentation with concrete resumed specifically as a means to make cement which would set quickly and be strong and durable. The first notable application of concrete in the United States occurred when builders of the Erie Canal applied hydraulic cement to the facework of the canal in 1810. However, the use of hydraulic lime was limited in the United

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States because it was unavailable in most areas. Orson Fowler's 1854 book *A Home for All, or the Gravel Wall and Octagon Mode of Building*, helped popularize the use of a form of concrete in architecture. The advent of Portland Cement in 1872 really began the modern period of use of concrete as a building material, but it wasn't until the invention and patenting of a cast-iron machine with a removable core and adjustable sides by Harmon S. Palmer that the concrete block became a readily available construction material. The patent was granted in 1900, although Palmer tested and experimented with the machine for ten years before that (Simpson, 11). The result was a cast, lightweight building unit which was insulated and moisture resistant. Concrete block became enormously popular because it was easy to make and use, it had the benefits of masonry construction over wood but was cheaper than stone and stronger than brick. Concrete block became an important form of construction after 1900 and remains one today.

Numerous early and mid-twentieth-century buildings in the district have side and rear walls constructed of concrete block, but plain block was typically deemed too plain for building fronts prior to the 1930s. To fill the need for a more decorative finish, concrete blocks could be cast with a variety of finishes on the outer face, most commonly a rough "rock-face" look that resembled rough-finished stonework. In one major building in the district, the Phillips & Taylor Garage, 217-27 N. Ball, built c. 1910, the front as well as the side and rear walls are built of block. Rather than plain block, this building is faced in block with a rusticated finish, where the flat center of each block's face is outlined by an angled band around all four sides that is in turn surrounded by a narrow flat strip around the outer edge of the block.

Commercial Brick

"Commercial Brick" – this apt term was apparently invented by Huntsville, Alabama, planner Linda Bayer (see Bayer in bibliography) – is an early twentieth-century equivalent to the late 1880s/early 1890s Late Victorian "style" that used the brickwork itself – such features as corbelled brickwork and panels, bands, and areas of brickwork of highly decorative design that imparted a highly textural finish – as the style more than some one of the historic styles of architecture. It was built primarily in the 1910s and 20s – though one Owosso example, 112 W. Main, dates from c. 1947. Commercial Brick still used the brickwork itself as the decoration, but in a different way. The brick was primarily of standard shapes, without the unusual decorative finishes sometimes seen in the late nineteenth-century buildings. While corbelled brickwork was still sometimes used under the roofline, most characteristic was the use of brick in vertical and horizontal strips to outline the windows or to form rectangular panels in the façade, typically aligned with the windows between stories or in the upper façade below the roofline. The panels often contained standard bricks laid in decorative patterns such as checkerboard or herringbone. The brick strips outlining the windows or panels often had square blocks of contrasting whitish limestone or cast concrete marking the corners or the corners and centers, and often there were additional limestone or concrete pieces in square or lozenge shapes marking the midpoints of panels or portions of the façade. Concrete or limestone was also used sometimes as cross-façade stringcourses at window-sill level.

Examples of early twentieth-century Commercial Brick include 216 W. Exchange, with its corbelled brickwork and strip of checkerboard brickwork above; 201 W. Main, with its lozenge

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panels and horizontal brick strips; and the above-noted 112 W. Main. The late 1910s Fletcher Block, 113 W. Exchange, despite its modern blocked-in windows, is the finest downtown example of Commercial Brick, exhibiting many of its characteristic features. These include the brick strips outlining the window openings and brickwork panels below the second and above the third-story windows, the panels filled with contrasting Flemish bond brickwork; continuous concrete window sillcourses; lozenge or diamond-shaped concrete details centered at mid-facade over the three second-story windows; and square and rectangular concrete details at the windows' upper corners and centers.

Chicago Commercial Style

The 1912 Miner Building, 100-02 N. Washington, is the one building in the Owosso Downtown Historic District that can be classified as Chicago Commercial. Developed in the late nineteenth century as a response to new building technologies which allowed for more intensive use of land through greater building height, the Chicago Commercial Style was largely used in commercial and office buildings. It is associated with iron and then steel framing systems that removed the need for load-bearing masonry walls, using instead lighter-weight wall systems supported floor-by-floor by the framework. This allowed for greater expanses of windows, which in turn permitted greater light and ventilation. Fenestration patterns are generally regular, large, rectangular windows – frequently the “Chicago window,” a three-part window with a large fixed central light flanked on either side by a narrow flanking double-hung window. Exteriors often retained some features of historical architectural styles, but typically treated in a creative, non-traditional way that underplayed the “style” in favor of decorative scheme that emphasized the structure’s verticality. Chicago Commercial buildings, popular between roughly 1895 and 1930, were generally five or more stories in height, with exterior decoration kept to a minimum.

The Miner Building has four stories – small by Chicago standards but tall for Owosso – but otherwise displays standard Chicago Commercial Style characteristics. It displays projecting piers that, emphasizing the framework within, rise to a nominally classical cornice – all suggestive of classical architecture – but the piers are tall and narrow and topped by “capitals,” but of a inventive form more suggestive of Commercial Brick than classicism. The building’s simplified styling and large expanses of rectangular windows give it the appearance of a glass box in comparison to the neighboring Italianate and Late Victorian buildings in the same block. The windows have been replaced or closed up, but in old photographs the second-story ones show as similar to the typical “Chicago window.”

Neoclassical

Neoclassical or Classical Revival architecture became popular beginning in the late 1890s, and its rapidly ascending popularity was due in large part to the overwhelming success of the 1893 Worlds Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Millions of Americans attended the fair and saw and admired its central feature, a display of large and imposing classical exhibition buildings that, known as the White City, were designed by a who’s who of leading Chicago and New York architects. Neoclassical architecture with its connotations of strength, stability, culture, and

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authority, was very popular in civic buildings, banks, institutional buildings, and large homes. Neoclassicism remained popular from the 1890s through 1930 and beyond.

The prime commercial example of Neoclassical architecture in the district is the State Savings/Chemical Bank, 100 E. Main Street. The State Savings Bank, built in 1907 and doubled in length in matching style in the late 1920s; displays the tall and broad round-arch windows and massive Doric piers supporting a broad entablature and projecting cornice that are hallmarks of the style. The long lost arched window openings that show in old photos were reconstructed as part of a recent rehabilitation that brought back much of the historic exterior appearance.

The building at 212-14 W. Main displays a less formal Neoclassicism, but has some appealing Neoclassical features. Antae-like piers, with dentiled capitals, support a swag-decorated entablature with dentiled cornice. No. 212-14's history is unusual in that the building with its unified front was actually constructed in two building episodes, the west half c. 1899 and east half c. 1913.

The 1925 Capitol Theater/Joseph H. Lebowsky Center at 120 East Main Street also exhibits Neoclassical detailing. The theater presents downtown Owosso's pre-eminent display of decorative terra cotta in its upper front facade. Terra cotta was frequently used beginning in the 1880s for decorative accents in building facades, but it came into much more extensive use in the early twentieth century both as a cheaper substitute for masonry and for the intricate shapes and ranges of color that were possible. The Capitol's front is capped by a luxuriantly intricate entablature of inventive Neoclassical design that displays lions' heads plus bands of subtly hued terra cotta in a variety of classical motifs such as acanthus and egg-and-dart and bead-and-reel moldings – as well as a (not really Neoclassical in derivation) cable molding. This lightheartedly Neoclassical, delicate cream-colored terra cotta work contrasts splendidly with the bright red hued 1950s enameled metal paneling that clads the ground story to make the building front one of the downtown's and district's key visual treats. The building is a dramatic Event along Owosso's Main Street.

The Capitol's architect, George J. Bachmann, was born in Muskegon, Michigan, in 1878 and studied architecture in Grand Rapids (Wood, 630). Early in 1914 Bachmann moved to Flint where he continued his architecture practice. Bachmann's career is not currently well known. He designed buildings for Baker University, stores, and an apartment building in Flint, and he also designed at least one other building in Owosso, the 1920s Johnson (Buick Sales), now Dollar Daze, Building on W. Main just west of the Shiawassee River (plans in possession of the owners). But Bachmann gained prominence in at least the local area centered around Flint for his theater designs. He is credited as the architect on nine different theaters in mid-Michigan, including the Capitol Theatre in Lansing; Della, Kearsley, Rialto, and Strand Theatres in Flint; Eagle and Orpheum Theatres in Pontiac; and the Capitol/Lebowsky and Strand Theatre in Owosso (Cinema Treasures, "George J. Bachmann"). Of these, it appears that only Owosso's Capitol survives.

Like the front of the Capitol Theater, J. L. Cerveny Jewelry's artistic front at 110 W. Main is also lightheartedly Neoclassical. The 1930 construction of this ground-floor storefront – on a much

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older building – came at the beginning of the Great Depression, but just at the conclusion of the later 1920s period of national prosperity when vast amounts of building went on and achieving stylishness and elegance through elaborate decoration became a key goal in commercial building design. The Cerveny's storefront – originally built for the L. B. Ball jewelry store – reflects the often opulent design of the 1920s with its use of carefully matched pieces of marble for the window bulkheads, the bronze display windows flanking the entry, limestone piers and entablature decorated with carved dentils and classical figure in oval flanked with swags, and the decorative painting in classical style, including griffins, above the entry. Cerveny Jewelers' front is itself an architectural jewel.

Modern

The 1930s saw the rise to popularity of a new and innovative architecture that turned its back on most historic precedents. The Modern Movement in architecture is usually said to have had its origins in early twentieth-century Europe, but there were forward-thinking American architects, too, including Frank Lloyd Wright and also Detroit's own Albert Kahn, and some of the leading lights of modern architecture in Europe themselves migrated to the United States, including Eliel Saarinen, located in Michigan at Cranbrook, and Walter Gropius and Mies van der Rohe. Michigan played its own important role in the Modern Movement as the home of influential Modernist architects such as Eliel Saarinen and his son Eero, Kahn, Minoru Yamasaki, and Alden Dow. The new Modern architecture emphasized sleek lines and smooth, unornamented wall surfaces, and new building materials such as glass block for windows and enameled metal paneling came into frequent use in achieving the streamlined look. Modernist architectural impulses began asserting themselves in the United States in the Art Deco and Moderne architecture of the late 1920s and 30s, but the real boom came in the early post World War II period.

The austere solid brick upper façade of the then Storrer's men's store, 110 N. Washington, seems to be the oldest example of Modernism in architecture in the district. The starkly simple windowless brick front was designed in the late 1930s by Storrer's proprietor, Robert L. Storrer, trained as a civil engineer at the University of Michigan before he turned to retailing, as part of an *avant garde* modernization of a much older building into which the store was moving.

In Owosso's downtown, as in downtowns across the nation, Modernism manifested itself primarily in renovations to existing buildings. Thrifty building owners chose to go for up-to-date looks, but not to throw away perfectly sound older construction beneath. A handsome example of c. 1950 remodeling is the building front at 210 W. Main, now housing the Siminski Chiropractic Clinic. Originally a red brick Italianate building constructed for a livery stable, the building was remodeled with the present yellow-buff brick front, with its square upstairs windows accented by raised horizontal brick strips above and on either side.

Another simple but artistically effective modernist renovation of an older building front was the early 1950s renovation of the ground-story front of the Capitol Theater/Lebowsky Center with its present marquee and bright red enameled metal paneling. Whether or not one thinks, reviewing historic photos, that the original front better complemented the Neoclassical character of the

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upper façade, the present one draws attention to itself – as was intended – and adds coloristic vibrancy and drama to the building and the Owosso streetscape.

Another important product of the period, though anything but a “typical” Modernist renovation, is the former D. M. Christian Company Department Store building at 114-24 W. Main Street. The largest commercial building in the entire historic district, it is the end-product of combining, expanding, and renovating four older two and three-story buildings into one with a unified façade that displays a Mid-Century Modern character. The present 1947 upper facade retains architectural elements from the older buildings, such as the vertical piers and corbelled brickwork, but is dominated by large rectangular windows with metal-frame casement windows outlined by large areas of glass block and with a thin smooth cement coat covering the older brickwork. The present no-nonsense upper façade has character and should be retained in any future renovation.

An entirely new building constructed originally during the mid-twentieth century, the Charter One Bank, is located at the eastern terminus of the historic district. The building was constructed in 1955 and opened in 1956 and was expanded and remodeled in 1969. With its low, horizontal character and flat, cantilevered roof; corner windows; random ashlar masonry accents; and vertical pylon, the single-story building exemplifies International Style architecture. In a commercial district largely dominated by more traditional commercial architectural styles, the Charter One Bank building stands out.

Non-Commercial Buildings

Several individually significant non-commercial buildings in the district have already been noted in connection with the architectural styles they illustrate so well. The district contains several non-commercial buildings significant in terms of their architectural distinction. These include churches, a house, and several public buildings. The 1891-92 First Congregational Church, 327 N. Washington Street, is a fieldstone building of Romanesque Revival design by Detroit architects Malcomson & Higginbotham. The building is a fine example of the Protestant auditorium church form at the height of its popularity in the 1885-1920 period. Its broad and low form topped by tall gables and tower at the corner, its colorful fieldstone walls – rock-face random ashlar, with many very large blocks, in the superstructure and rubble in the tall base – and its lack of ornament in favor of simple deep-set round-arch door and window openings that harken back to Romanesque give it a massive and ageless quality. Its architects, Malcomson & Higginbotham (William Malcomson and William E. Higginbotham) of Detroit, were best known for their school buildings, having designed several dozen public school buildings for the Detroit School Board between 1894 and 1923, including the 1890s Detroit Central High School, now Old Main at Wayne State University, but also designed many churches, including the Cass Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church in Detroit, built about the same time as this building (Eckert, 151; Meyer and McElroy, 72).

First Congregational’s 1958 south-side addition is also a distinguished piece of architecture. It was designed by Huntington Woods/Bloomfield Hills architect Robert Harter Snyder. Like the work of many other Mid-Century Modern Michigan architects, Robert Harter Snyder’s work is

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as yet little known. Snyder was a graduate of the Cranbrook Academy of Art, with a Master of Architecture and Urban Design, and came back to serve as head of the school's architecture department after Eliel Saarinen, from 1951 to 1965. He worked for others beginning in the early 1940s, including Eliel Saarinen and Albert Kahn, before establishing his own firm in 1953. Snyder's bio in the 1962 *American Architects Directory* lists his work for First Congregational among his primary commissions, which also included the Barat House, a home for girls in Detroit, Episcopal churches in Gaylord and Grayling, and the offices of the Shatterproof Glass Corporation in Detroit (Koyle 1962, 660). Snyder's design for the First Congregational Church parish house is an attractive and sympathetic addition to the original church building, utilizing rock-face random ashlar stonework matching the church's to achieve some architectural continuity with that building and keeping the addition low and unobtrusive so that the church remains the focus of attention, while at the same time giving the parish house its own distinctive and dynamic architectural character.

The 1893 Salem Lutheran Church, located across the street at 330 N. Washington, is a fine example of the by then already traditional brick Gothic churches with projecting towers centered in the front end that German Lutheran congregations so typically built from the 1850s into the early twentieth century across the nation. The church long ago lost its original octagonal belfry and spire, but overall retains well its assertively German character, including its EV. LUTH. SALEMS KIRCHE U. A. C. 1893 cornerstone.

The district also contains one Stick Style house, located at 326 N. Washington Street. The Dr. Avery Knapp or Shattuck House, it was constructed c. 1885. A melding of features loosely borrowed from the old wooden architecture of France and Switzerland as well as England, what has come to be known as the Stick Style only since the mid-twentieth century first appeared in the mid-nineteenth century but came into its own in the late 1860s, 70s, and 80s. Stick Style buildings generally have tall proportions, steep roofs, and complex, irregular massing. They are characterized by an abundance of assertively wooden trim such as truss-type ornament in the gables, and raised vertical, horizontal, or diagonal stickwork in the wall surfaces suggestive of the building's underlying structural system. Vertical board and batten is frequently used to ornament the gables or the upper wall surfaces just below the eaves, and the lower edges of this kind of ornamental upper façade woodwork often display cut out or slotted detailing. Porches typically also feature similar slotted and cut-out detail. One of only two houses in the district, the Dr. Avery Knapp/Shattuck House, with its stickwork gable ornaments and incised eaves and porch trim, is a key example of the Stick Style in Owosso.

The district's architecturally distinguished public buildings include the Owosso Armory, 201 N. Water Street, Municipal Building/City Hall, 301 W. Main, Post Office, 319 N. Washington, and former High School, 219 N. Water. The Armory, built in 1915-16 as part of a Michigan National Guard armory building program that extended into the 1920s as well, exhibits the standard armory form of the time, with a two-story administrative "head-house" in front of a large drill hall/auditorium. A 1996 Michigan National Guard armory survey report lists twelve armory buildings constructed by the state in the 1908-25 period, with nearly all exhibiting some hint of castellated or Tudor architecture in the head-house front section. Owosso's building also displays

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a modicum of "fortified" appearance, but in Owosso – unique among these buildings – the front has an Arts-and-Crafts feel with nothing overtly Tudor.

The building was designed by Edwin A. Bowd of Lansing and built by the Rickman Construction Company of Kalamazoo. Bowd (1865-1940), who had designed the 1908-09 Ionia Armory, perhaps the most "military" looking of them all in contrast to Owosso's, was a prolific designer known for his public and academic buildings in southern Michigan. Born and raised in England, Bowd began his career in architecture in 1883 when he worked in the architectural offices of Gordon W. Lloyd of Detroit. Among his many important commissions were city hall buildings in Lansing, Hillsdale, and Holland; the Ingham County Courthouse, Mason, Montcalm County Courthouse, Stanton, and Wexford County Courthouse, Cadillac; and the public library buildings in Lansing, Sault Ste. Marie, and Owosso. During his partnership with Orlie A. Munson under the name of the Bowd-Munson Company, the firm was also responsible for the design of the Lansing Board of Water and Light Ottawa Street Power Station. Bowd died on Wednesday, July 17, 1940, from a massive heart attack (Eckert, 289; "Veteran Architect is Death Victim," *The State Journal*, 7/18/1940). Many of Bowd's largest commissions were for Neoclassical buildings such as the city halls and county courthouses, but these tend to be somewhat formulaic in exterior design, with large-scale but often prosaic detailing. Far more interesting are some of his earliest buildings, including the long-ago-demolished Richardsonian Romanesque City Hall in Lansing, and the Arts-and-Crafts-influenced ones, including Lansing's North Presbyterian Church and the Owosso Armory, built about the same time, where a more inventive streak of design tended to exhibit itself.

The 1924-25 Municipal Building/City Hall, designed by Detroit architects Lane, Davenport & Peterson, is the district's most full-bodied Neoclassical building, with its portico of Doric columns and Doric pilasters and antae decorating the two primary facades and supporting a dentil-ornamented entablature and its carved limestone corbel and panel details above the main entrance. The Lane, Davenport & Peterson firm – Horace H. Lane, Harold D. (or H. Daziel) Davenport, and Arthur A. Peterson – was then relatively new, having been established about the beginning of 1921 as a general architecture and engineering practice. By then Lane already had a long record as a New York and then Detroit-based engineer designing and supervising the erection of industrial plant buildings and power houses throughout the nation and in Canada. Peterson, a structural engineer trained at Purdue, was associated with Lane for ten years prior to the LP & D firm's establishment. Davenport, a University of Michigan graduate, had his own practice in Grand Rapids and then Detroit before joining the firm (*Michigan Architect and Engineer*, Jan. 1921, 10). Lane, Davenport & Peterson and the successor firm of Lane, Davenport & Meyer, with architect Earl G. Meyer replacing Peterson in 1933, made a specialty of academic buildings. These include the 1927-29 Grass Lake Public School in Jackson County, a 1937 addition to the Michigan Union in Ann Arbor and the Allen-Rumsey Dormitory, also at the University of Michigan (Grass Lake Public School national register nomination form).

The present International Style U. S. Post Office building, constructed in 1961, replaced a fine Neoclassical post office building dating from the early twentieth century. One may regret the loss of the Neoclassical building, which stood at a different location, but the present building at 319 N. Washington is itself a quality job. Its broad horizontal L-plan front uses a variety of

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quality materials, Indiana limestone and multi-hued chunks of fieldstone in an uncoursed rubble pattern, and is crisp and clean in its lines, exemplifying high design standards. The building is a notable example of the International Style.

Among the district's public buildings, the former High School, now the Owosso Middle School, stands out as the only school in the Owosso Downtown Historic District. Located at 219 N. Water Street, it was designed by the Warren S. Holmes Company and completed in 1929. It served as the high school until the early 1960s, at which time it was converted to the junior high. The building is the only example of Collegiate Gothic architecture, inspired by the medieval universities of England, in the district. It became enormously popular for college, high school, and even elementary school design in the early twentieth century. Medieval precedents were loosely referenced with such typical features as a central "keep" entrance and battlements. The primary entrance to the school is an imposing three stories in height, with a keep-like appearance, prominent brick buttresses, a broad pointed arch door surround, and battlements. Other Collegiate Gothic elements are the oriele window above the main entrance as well as pointed Gothic and Tudor arch windows on the first floor, and three groups of pointed arch panels on the east elevation of the auditorium.

The Warren S. Holmes Company, specialists in school building design, planned the High School. This Lansing-based firm, founded in 1920, promoted itself through extensive advertising and publishing on school building design and planning for an effective educational program. Holmes was remarkably successful, quickly becoming and remaining one of the leading school architects in Michigan from the 1920s into the 1970s and also designing many schools in other Midwest states and beyond (ICON Architecture, Inc., 102; Ontonagon School national register nomination). The massive J. W. Sexton High School in Lansing, completed in 1943, was one of the firm's largest projects.

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Owosso Downtown Historic District

Shiawassee, MI

Name of Property

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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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

Owosso Downtown Historic District
Name of Property

Shiawassee, MI

9. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 40.0

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|--------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 16N | Easting: 730200 | Northing: 4764800 |
| 2. Zone: 16N | Easting: 730840 | Northing: 4764780 |
| 3. Zone: 16N | Easting: 730800 | Northing: 4764220 |
| 4. Zone: 16N | Easting: 730400 | Northing: 4746200 |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Owosso Downtown Historic District boundary begins at the northwest corner of 219 W Water St. From here, the boundary extends east along the lot line to the center point (pt) of N Water St; thence (th) south along said (sd) centerline until it reaches a pt even with the N side of W Mason St. From here, the boundary turns east following the N side of W Mason St until it reaches the center pt of N Ball St; th north along the centerline to a pt even with the N lot line of 327 N Washington St; th turns east along the lot line, crossing the st then continuing on the N lot line of 330 N Washington St. At the NE corner (cr) of 330 N Washington St the boundary turns S along rear lot lines of 300 block of N Washington St to

Owosso Downtown Historic District

Shiawassee, MI

Name of Property

the SE corner of 308 N Washington St where it turns west along the lot line to the centerpoint of N Washington St and turns south along the centerline (cl) to the centerpoint of E Mason St and turns east until it reaches the centerline of N Park St; th N along sd line to a pt even with the N lot line of 310 N Park St. Th, the boundary continues along N, E, and portion of S lot lines of 310 N Park St to the NE cr of 201 E Mason St; th S along E lot line, crossing E Mason St th turning to follow E line of 220-222 N Park St, th S along N and E lines of 218 N Park St and 201-205 E Exchange St. At the SE corner of 201-205 E Exchange St the boundary extends to the centerline of N Park St ; th S along cl to a point even with NW cr of 200 E Main St; th follows N, E, and S lot lines and extends to cl of S Park St and turns S to cl of E Comstock St. Th the boundary extends W to cl of S Washington St; th S along S Washington St to pt even with SE corner of 212 S Washington St. Here, the boundary turns NE to follow the rear lot lines of the 200 block of S Washington St. At the NE corner of 200-206 S Washington the boundary extends N to cl of W Comstock St and continues W to cl of S Ball St. Th, the boundary turns N along cl of S Ball St to a pt even with the S lot line of 102 S Ball St; th west along S lot lines of 102 S Ball St, 203-213 and 215 W Main St. At S corner 215 W Main the boundary moves W to cl of S Water St; th NW along cl to a pt even with the S lawn of 301 W Main St; th W along sd line east bank of the Shiawassee River. The west boundary of the historic district then turns N, following the E bank of the Shiawassee River N to the POB.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries were drawn to include the historic downtown while omitting surrounding residential areas and areas containing parking lots and non-historic commercial buildings. The irregular north edge was drawn mainly at the edge of the city's old north side residential area. The area directly north of the former high school (219 N. Water), the block bounded by Water, Mason, and Ball just east of it, the area north of the 300 block of N. Washington, and N. Park Street north of Mason is part of this north-side residential area. The property at the northeast corner of Washington and Mason was excluded because it contains a large modern building.

The district's east side adjoins modern commercial development and parking lots, except for residential development at its north end. The east side of Washington south of Comstock contains the large modern J. C. Penney store.

Water Street's southwest side, once the site of early industrial development along the early millrace, now contains mostly modern one-story commercial and industrial buildings of no historic interest.

West of the Shiawassee River is a park area. Beyond, but too far distant to be included in this district, is a single large 1920s commercial building that will likely be nominated on its own in the near future.

10. Form Prepared By

Owosso Downtown Historic District

Shiawassee, MI

Name of Property

name/title: Robert O. Christensen, National Register Coordinator, MI SHPO
with Elaine H. Robinson and Shelley Greene/Architectural Historians
organization: Commonwealth Cultural Resources Group, Inc.
street & number: 702 W. Kalamazoo St.
city or town: Lansing state: MI zip code: 48909
e-mail christensenr@michigan.gov
telephone: 517/335-2719
date: Dec. 20, 2013

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

See Owosso Downtown Historic District, Photograph Directions, Owosso, Shiawassee County, Michigan for a map of the historic district which includes photo numbers and direction arrows.

Name of Property: Owosso Downtown Historic District
City or Vicinity: Owosso
County: Shiawassee
Photographer: Shelley Greene, unless otherwise noted
Date Photographed: August 2012, unless otherwise noted
Description of Photograph(s) and number:

Owosso Downtown Historic District
Name of Property

Shiawassee, MI

The photographs were printed using Hewlett-Packard Viverra Inks (95 tri-color cartridge) on HP Premium Plus Photo Paper (high gloss).

- 1 of 35: Capitol Theatre / Joseph H. Lebowsky Center, 120 East Main Street, looking southeast
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso_Downtown HD_0001.tif
- 2 of 35: State Savings Bank / Chemical Bank, 100 E. Main, looking southeast
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso Downtown HD_0002.tif
- 3 of 35: 113-115 E. Main, looking northwest
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso Downtown HD_0003.tif
- 4 of 35: Streetscape, North Side Main St., 100-102 N. Washington (R), 101-03 N. Washington (L), 100-02 W. Main (far left), looking northeast
Photographed by Elaine H. Robinson
April 2013
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso Downtown HD_0004.tif
- 5 of 35: Streetscape North Side 100 Block W. Main St. (even numbers), looking west
Photographed by Elaine H. Robinson
April 2013
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso Downtown HD_0005.tif
- 6 of 35: Streetscape North Side W. Main St. about Ball St. intersection; D. M. Christian Building (114-124) right to 220 W. Main, far left, looking northwest
Photographed by Elaine H. Robinson
April 2013
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso Downtown HD_0006.tif
- 7 of 35: 212-214 W. Main St., looking north
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso Downtown HD_0007.tif
- 8 of 35: 220-222 W. Main St., looking northeast
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso Downtown HD_0008.tif
- 9 of 35: Streetscape South Side W. Main St.; 201 W. Main St., right, to 113-117 W. Main St., left, looking southeast
Photographed by Elaine H. Robinson
April 2013
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso Downtown HD_0009.tif
- 10 of 35: 215 W. Main St., looking southeast
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso Downtown HD_0010.tif

Owosso Downtown Historic District
Name of Property

Shiawassee, MI

- 11 of 35: Municipal Building / Owosso City Hall, 301 W. Main St., looking southwest
Photographed by Elaine H. Robinson
April 2013
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso Downtown HD_0011.tif
- 12 of 35: Mueller Brothers Brewery / Matthews Building, 300-312 W. Main St., looking
northwest at main east part of complex
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso Downtown HD_0012.tif
- 13 of 35: Streetscape, East Side N. Washington St., Miner Building (100-102, right) to
Knill Block (122), left, looking northeast
Photographed by Elaine H. Robinson
April 2013
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso Downtown HD_0013.tif
- 14 of 35: Knill Block, 122 N. Washington St., looking southeast
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso Downtown HD_0014.tif
- 15 of 35: Streetscape, West Side 100 block N. Washington St., Keeler Block (123), right, to
109-111, left
Photographed by Mary L. Jeakle
January 2013
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso Downtown HD_0015.tif
- 16 of 35: Detail, Laubengayer Block, 115 N. Washington St., looking west
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso Downtown HD_0016.tif
- 17 of 35: Streetscape, 200 Block N. Washington St., with Masonic Temple (301, center)
and church steeples in 300 block in distance, looking northwest
Photographed by Mary L. Jeakle
January 2013
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso Downtown HD_0017.tif
- 18 of 35: Gould's Hall/Osburn Block, 217-219 N. Washington St., looking west
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso Downtown HD_0018.tif
- 19 of 35: Masonic Temple, 301 N. Washington St., looking northwest
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso Downtown HD_0019.tif
- 20 of 35: Eagles Building, 308 N. Washington, looking northeast
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso Downtown HD_0020.tif
- 21 of 35: Salem Lutheran Church, 330 N. Washington St., looking northeast
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso Downtown HD_0021.tif

Owosso Downtown Historic District
Name of Property

Shiawassee, MI

- 22 of 35: Streetscape East Side S. Washington St., 111-113, left, to Wildermuth Hotel, 119-125, right, looking southeast
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso Downtown HD_0022.tif
- 23 of 35: Streetscape West Side S. Washington St., Richardson Block (112), right, to Jumbo's Burger Bar (200-06), left, looking southwest
Photographed by Mary L. Jeakle
January 2013
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso Downtown HD_0023.tif
- 24 of 35: Streetscape, West Side S. Washington St., Clarence G. Milster Barber Shop (212, left), looking northwest, with 200 S. block at L, 100 S. block (middle), 100 and 200 N blocks further to R
Photographed by Mary L. Jeakle
January 2013
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso Downtown HD_0024.tif
- 25 of 35: Mark Woodbury Building, 218 N. Park St., looking east
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso Downtown HD_0025.tif
- 26 of 35: The Argus-Press Building, 201-05 E. Exchange St., looking northwest
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso Downtown HD_0026.tif
- 27 of 35: Streetscape, W. Exchange Street from N. Washington, looking west. 121-23 N. Washington (L), Armory in distance, 100 W. Exchange (even nos.) block (far right), 200 W. block to its left.
Photographed by Mary L. Jeakle
January 2013
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso Downtown HD_0027.tif
- 28 of 35: Streetscape North Side 100 Block W. Exchange; Grow Block (120-122, left) to 110, right, looking northeast
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso Downtown HD_0028.tif
- 29 of 35: Amos Block, 112 W. Exchange St., looking north
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso Downtown HD_0029.tif
- 30 of 35: Streetscape South Side 100 Block W. Exchange; Fletcher Building (113), left, to 121-123, right, looking southwest
Photographed by Elaine H. Robinson
April 2013
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso Downtown HD_0030.tif

Owosso Downtown Historic District

Shiawassee, MI

Name of Property

- 31 of 35: Streetscape N side 200 block W. Exchange and North Ball Street; 208-212 W. Exchange, left, and 215 N. Ball, right, looking northwest
Photographed by Elaine H. Robinson
April 2013
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso Downtown HD_0031.tif
- 32 of 35: Streetscape North Ball Street from West Exchange Street; 200 W. Exchange, left, and Grow Block (120-122 W. Exchange), right, with W side 200 block of N. Ball between, looking north
Photographed by Mary L. Jeakle
January 2013
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso Downtown HD_0032.tif
- 33 of 35: 217-227 N. Ball St., looking southwest
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso Downtown HD_0033.tif
- 34 of 35: Owosso Armory, 201 N. Water St., looking northwest; part of Chamber of Commerce Building at right.
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso Downtown HD_0034.tif
- 35 of 35: Owosso High School / Owosso Middle School main and auditorium entry area, 219 N. Water St., looking west
MI_Shiawassee_Owosso Downtown HD_0035.tif

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



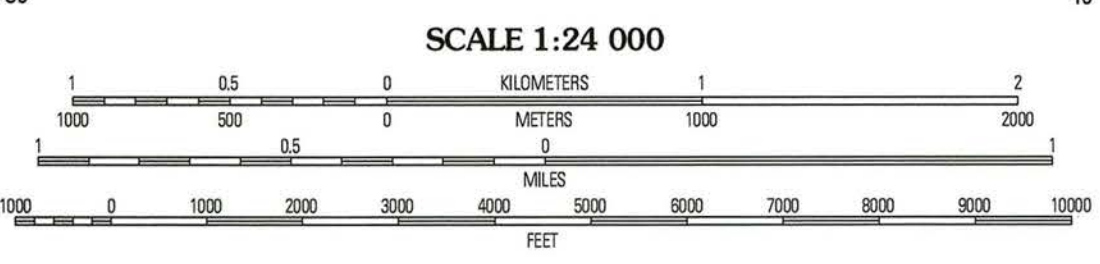
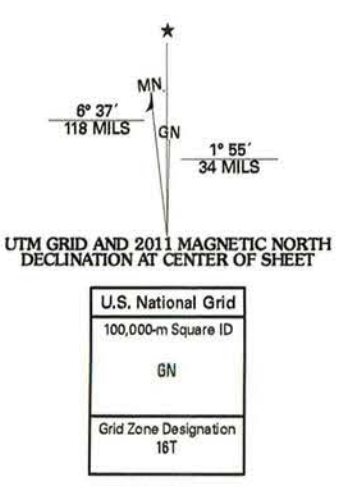
Owosso Downtown Historic District, Owosso, Shiawase County, Michigan



Owosso
Downtown HD
Shiawassee Co.
MI

1	16	730 200
2	16	4764 800
3	16	730 840
4	16	4764 780
5	16	730 800
6	16	4764 220
7	16	730 400
8	16	4764 200

Produced by the United States Geological Survey
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83)
World Geodetic System of 1984 (WGS84). Projection and
1 000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, Zone 16T
Contours: National Elevation Dataset, 2009
Boundaries: Census, IBWC, IBC, USGS, 1972 - 2010
(seach zone)

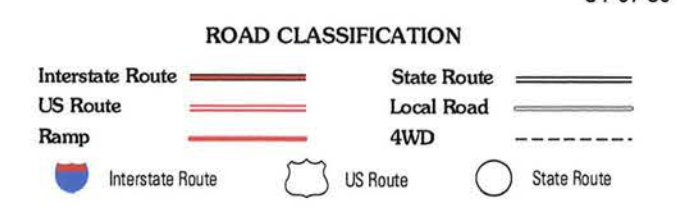


CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NORTH AMERICAN VERTICAL DATUM OF 1988
This map was produced to conform with version 0.5.10
of the USGS US Topo Product Standard.
A metadata file associated with this product is draft version 0.5.16



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

Ovid East	Owosso North	Easton
Lansburg	Owosso South	Corunna
Shafterburg	Perry	Corunna SE



OWOSSO SOUTH, MI
2011

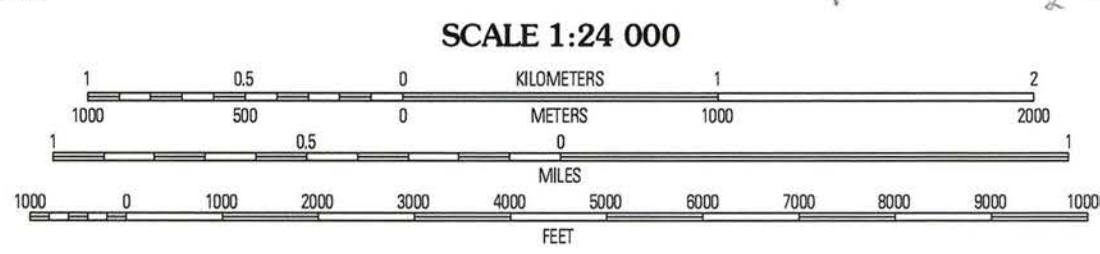
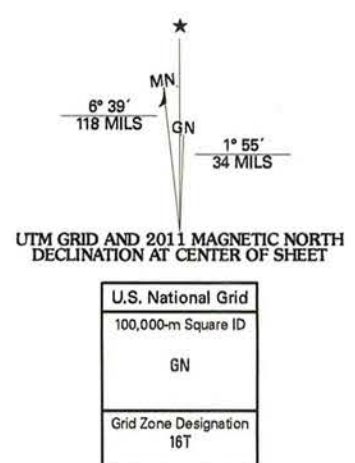
ADJOINING 7.5' QUADRANGLES



Owosso
Downtown HD
Shiawassee Co.
MI

1 IG	730 200	4764 800
2 IG	730 840	4764 780
3 IG	730 800	4764 220
4 IG	730 400	4764 200

Produced by the United States Geological Survey
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83)
World Geodetic System of 1984 (WGS84) Projection and
1 000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, Zone 16T
10 000-foot ticks: Michigan Coordinate System of 1983
(south zone)



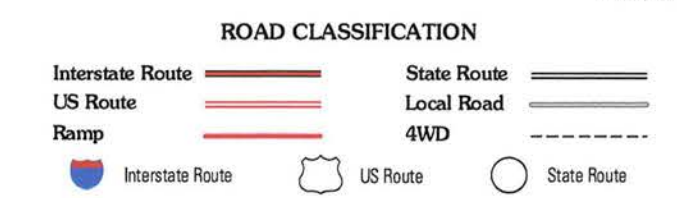
CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NORTH AMERICAN VERTICAL DATUM OF 1988

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A metadata file associated with this product is draft version 0.5.16



Chapin	Chesaning West	Chesaning East
Ovid East	Owosso North	Easton
Lansburg	Owosso South	Corunna

ADJOINING 7.5' QUADRANGLES



OWOSSO NORTH, MI
2011

JOSEPH H. LEBOWSKY CENTER

BOX
OFFICE
214000

KNOCK. EM DEAD

ROMAS
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Hempstead & Design Firm

WEST



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Edward Jones



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E. EXCHANGE
WASHINGTON

EYE EXAM

WALK IN'S
WELCOME
723-8174



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Fifth Third Bank

Green Jones

Home of Stone

NO PARKING

ANYTIME







 **ColeTaylor M**
A Division of Cole T



Decorative medallions on the upper facade of the building.

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Title Insurance & Escrow Services

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Owosso Downtown Historic District
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MICHIGAN, Shiawassee

DATE RECEIVED: 2/18/14 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 3/18/14
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 4/02/14 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 4/06/14
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 14000126

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 4.7.14 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

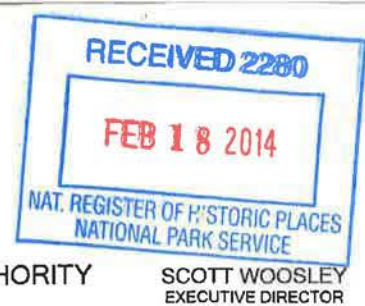
If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



STATE OF MICHIGAN

MICHIGAN STATE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR



SCOTT WOOSLEY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

February 3, 2014

Mr. J. Paul Loether, Chief
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street, NW, 8th Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

Enclosed is a national register nomination form for the Owosso Downtown Historic District in Shiawassee County, Michigan. This property is being submitted for listing in the national register. No written comments concerning this nomination were submitted to us prior to the submission of this nomination to you.

Questions concerning this nomination should be addressed to Robert O. Christensen, national register coordinator, by phone at 517/335-2719 or email at christensenr@michigan.gov.

Sincerely yours,

Brian D. Conway
State Historic Preservation Officer

State Historic Preservation Office

Michigan Library and Historical Center • 702 West Kalamazoo Street • P.O. Box 30740 Lansing, Michigan 48909-8240
michigan.gov/shpo • 517.373.1630 • FAX 517.335.0348 • TTY 800.382.4568