OMB No. 1024-0018 Exp. 10-31-84

NPS Form 10-900-a

### **United States Department of the Interior National Park Service**

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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#### V. DESCRIPTION OF THE DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

This district includes the most significant architectural and/or historical commercial buildings in Galesville. The streetscapes of the district are clustered around the Public Square and Bandstand and extend along Gale Avenue. The buildings are sited close together along most of the streetscapes and possess a continuity of scale and design which gives the district its form and character. While some unsympathetic alterations have occurred, most of the buildings in the district have retained enough of their turn-of-the-century details to indicate what Galesville's commercial district was like during the height of the community's development. This turn-of-the-century character is evident throughout the district beginning with the Bandstand and Public Square, which forms the core of the district. While the Public Square, which was a slightly larger open space when it was originally platted in 1854, has been surrounded by pavement and parking, it and the Bandstand are significant reminders of the importance of the central commercial area at the turn of the century.

The continuity of design and scale of the buildings in the district is reflected in their form and architectural detailing. Most buildings are two-story, of various shades of red brick, have flat roofs, and simple to elaborate cornices of wood, stone, cast iron, or pressed metal highlighted with dentils, brackets, and modillions. Gable-roofed buildings in the district have "boomtown" false-fronts with cornices, which make these buildings highly compatible in scale and design with their neighbors. Many buildings have additional decoration, including belt courses; decorative brickwork; round, semi-circular, or segmental arched windows; polychromy; and parapets.

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Roughly Gale Ave., Main and Davis Sts.

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DESCRIPTION OF DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT (continued)

Many of the district's storefronts have been altered in an effort to "modernize" their appearance. Wood and metal siding has altered many of the large windows and transoms, turn-of-the-century commercial buildings. Some buildings and streettypical of scapes have fared better than others in regard to alterations. Main Street, Court Street, and Davis Street have the most altered buildings, along with buildings from 130-230 E. Gale Ave. However, the remainder of Gale Avenue shows the least amount of alterations on storefronts and gives a much better sense of the original appearance of buildings of this period. Despite first-floor alterations, most of the upper floors of the buildings have retained their original architectural detail and this provides the district with much of its character and charm. It is at this level the cornices, in particular, some of them elaborate; the parapets; and decorative brickwork stand out. Unfortunately, most of the windows of the upper floors in the district have been covered with aluminum combination storm windows. Although the alterations to the buildings in the district contribute to a loss of integrity, overall, enough of the turn-of-the-century character of the district remains to make this district a good example of a small Wisconsin community which possesses a relatively intact example of a thriving commercial district over a century old.

This district is divided into three types of buildings. Pivotal buildings are the most elaborate and/or historically significant buildings in the district. Contributing buildings are the large group of buildings in the district which have less elaborate architectural detail or historical significance, but because of their compatibility of design and scale, contribute to the overall character of the district. Non-contributing buildings are the obvious intrusions into the district's historic streetscapes. Each of these categories will be fully explored in turn.

#### Pivotal Buildings

The pivotal buildings in this district were easily identified. The focal point in this district is the <u>Bandstand</u>, located in the small <u>Public Square</u>. The Public Square was laid out in the original plat of the city and was an open space used as a public park, market, and fairground into the twentieth century. The Bandstand was constructed in 1912 and is octagonal in plan with a concrete foundation and floor, and stuccoed square piers supporting a bell-shaped roof which is capped by a slender finial. The design of the Bandstand indicates the popular bungalow style of the period of construction. The Public Square has been significantly cut down in size for parking purposes, but the essential form and character remain making it a pivotal contribution to this district.

The most ornate commercial building in the district is the <u>Clark Block</u>, 143 S. <u>Davis Street</u>. Built in 1886, this building sits on a prominent corner lot and is a two-story, rectangular red brick structure with a flat roof. It is highlighted with a prominent wood cornice, compound brick corbelling, grouped windows with semicircular arches and sunburst decoration or stone lintels, and stone belt courses. The centers of each street elevation are defined by vertical brick piers culminating in brackets and small sunburst pediments which are enclosed by the cornice. The building has a bevelled corner entrance with a small wooden cornice over the entryway which mimics the design of the large cornice. The exterior is largely unaltered, although the north section of the west first-floor facade has had its windows

altered and vertical wood siding has been applied. The building's interior was

as a cafe.

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DESCRIPTION OF DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT (continued)

first altered in 1925 when the outside stone steps were removed and the entrance was brought down to the street level. A marble staircase was built inside to provide access to the main floor. While these alterations remain, the interior was altered again in the 1960s when it was converted from a bank to two separate businesses. The Clark Block housed the Bank of Galesville from its date of construction to the 1960s. This bank was the most significant financial institution in Galesville, surviving to the present day. The building is now occupied by printing and insurance businesses on the first floor, and residential units in the upper floor.

The Galesville Building and Realty Company Building, 212 S. Main Street is the second most elaborate commercial building in Galesville. It is a plain interpretation of the commercial Neo-classical style and also sits on a prominent corner lot. It is a two-story, rectangular structure of red-orange brick with a flat roof with four prominent parapets separated on the front facade by shallow reveals. A bracketed cornice extends across the entire building and the ground and second floors are defined by a denticulated belt course. The storefront has been altered with metal siding and the entrances replaced with modern glass doors. The first-floor interior has also been completly altered by the current hardward business occupants. The upper floors are currently used as apartments and remain largely unaltered. This building was built in 1911 by the Galesville Building and Realty Company, an early twentieth century real estate and development company. A short-lived bank, the Farmer's and Merchants State Bank, occupied one section of the first-floor of this building. The building is now a hardware business with residential usage on the second floor.

A third pivotal building in the district is the Gilbertson-Myhre Company Store, 106 E. Gale Avenue. Originally built in 1884 as a two-story building with a mansard roof, turret and spire, after 1913 a third story was added and the building took on its current appearance. It is a three-story building with a flat roof, belt courses, a large, semi-circular polychrome arch over the central second-story windows, and an early twentieth century intact storefront which features a small bracketed cornice, tall windows, and a full span multi-paned glass transom extending across the storefront. The interior retains its turn-of-the-century details and the first-floor is highlighted with a mezzanine with a wooden railing. This building housed the Gilbertson-Myhre department store, and for a short time, an "Opera House", and public hall. Later, a roller skating rink replaced the hall, until in the 1890s the business expanded its merchandise selection taking up the space these recreational facilities possessed. In the early twentieth century, this store was a large, thriving department store and continues to exist as such today, known now as Casberg's Department Store.

The final pivotal building in the district is a good example of an attempt to use popular Romanesque commercial design elements in a small-town, small-scale building. Jensen's Cafe, 112 E. Gale Ave. was built in 1902 and designed by the Racine architectural firm of A. L. Flegal and Company. It is a two-story building of brown brick with a flat roof and simple step parapet at the top of the building. The second floor windows have semi-circular corbelled arches springing from paneled brick "capitals". The storefront has been slightly altered with wood panels around the entrance, although the decorative cornice between the first and second floors remains. The building was built as a confectionary-ice cream parlor and is still used today

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DESCRIPTION OF DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT (continued)

#### Contributing Buildings

The contributing buildings help maintain the character of the district by their continuity of scale and design. While not as detailed as the pivotal buildings, they possess, as a whole, a turn-of-the-century character important to the overall look of the district. They are best described in groups as they occur in their streetscapes, as that is where they contribute the most to the district. The best streetscapes of contributing buildings are the Davis Street group and the W. Gale Avenue group. With the pivotal Clark Block on the corner, the Davis Street buildings (121-135 Davis St.) possess the most elaborate upper story architectural details in the district, including cornices with brackets and modillions and window decoration. Most of the storefronts have been altered, with the notable exception being 127 Davis St.; however, together, these buildings form the most attractive group in the district. The buildings on both sides of W. Gale Ave. (107,115,119, 120 W. Gale Ave.) are much plainer in detail (simple cornices, segmental arch windows), but their relatively intact storefronts with large windows and transoms, original entrances, and few alterations are the best examples of turn-of-the-century storefronts in the district. The streetscapes of Court Street and 118-124 Main Street have suffered from more inappropriate alterations than the previously mentioned areas. However, the scale of these buildings and their compatibility of design with the better examples in the district make them contributing to the overall character of the downtown. The elaborate cornice, for example, of 118 Main Street rivals any in the district. The group of buildings on East Gale Avenue (212, 218, and 230) are contributing even though they have suffered the most from alteration and neglect, and are the buildings, unfortunately, which have been punctuated with the intrusions of the district. Even with these shortcomings, though, they add to the overall character of the district by their use of similar construction materials (brick), their size and form (two-story, rectangles), and their detail, such as the bay window, bracketed cornice, and end piers of 230 E. Gale Ave.; and the Queen Anne decoration over the entry of 212 E. Gale Ave., along with the building's corbelled brickwork and polychromy visible above the deteriorated porch. All of the contributing buildings have housed a wide range of commercial and/or service enterprises during the period of significance for the district and continue to do so today.

### Non-Contributing Buildings

The two non-contributing buildings in the district (130 & 224 E. Gale Ave.) are clear intrusions into the streetscape where they occur. The building at 130 E. Gale Ave. has been given an inappropriate "colonial" exterior which neither fits in with the design of the other buildings in the district, nor adds to the turn-of-the-century character the other buildings possess. The small, more recently constructed building at 224 E. Gale Ave. is also intrusive because it lacks the scale and design appropriate to the rest of the buildings in the district and is devoid of any significant architectural detail.

Of the 20 structures located within the Downtown Historic District, 5 (25%) are pivotal, 13 (65%) are contributing, and 2 (10%) are non-contributing to the district. Details of this district are shown on the accompanying district map.

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7. DESCRIPTION (continued)

#### VI. JUSTIFICATION OF DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT BOUNDARY

The boundary was selected on the basis of the following factors: (1) the number of historically and architecturally significant buildings is greater inside the District than outside of it; (2) fewer non-contributing structures are found in the District; (3) the District is denser than the excluded commercial areas, where buildings are more widely spaced; and (4) the buildings found within the District have retained more integrity than the buildings outside of the District. A primary factor used in determining the boundary of the District is that it includes the older structures that form the commercial "heart" of the city, that is, buildings which flank and visually define the Public Square along with the buildings which have retained their integrity along the city's traditional commercial streets. Buildings which have been left out of the District, particularly those along E. Gale Ave. west of the District boundary were left out because they have lost more integrity than their immediate neighbors and if included, would detract from the overall character of the District. The buildings which are included in the District boundaries have retained the most integrity and help define the character of turn-of-the-century downtown Galesville.

#### VII. BOUNDARY OF DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Downtown Historic District is limited to all properties with frontage on Main Street with street addresses 212 South to 118 North, on the west side of the street; with frontage on Davis Street with street addresses from 143 to 121 North on the east side; with frontage on Gale Avenue from 120 West up to but not including 225 on the north side and from 119 West to 230 East on the south side; including 125 on Court Street; and including the Public Square and Bandstand.

The boundary of the Downtown Historic District is formed in the following manner: Commencing at the east lot line of 230 E. Gale Ave., thence southwest along said lot line bordering on Mill Road; thence west along the south lot lines of 224, 218, 212, 130, 112, and 106 E. Gale Ave., and continuing along the same line across Main Street; thence along the south lot lines of 212 Main Street, 107, 115, and 119 W. Gale Ave.; thence north along the west lot line of 119 W. Gale Ave.; crossing West Gale Avenue; then along the west lot line of 120 W. Gale Ave.; thence along the south lot line of 120 W. Gale Ave.; thence along the south lot line of 120 W. Gale Ave.; thence along the north lot line of 118 Main Street to the center line of Main St.; thence running north along the center line of Main Street to the center line of the intersection with the center line of Court Street, running along the center line of Court Street; thence north along the west lot line of 125 Court St.; thence along the north lot line of 125 Court Street to the center line of Davis Street; thence south along the center line of Davis Street; thence to the

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BOUNDARY OF DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT (continued)

east lot line of 121 Davis Street; thence running along the east lot lines of 121, 127, 135, and 143 Davis Street to the point of beginning. The area thus enclosed is equal to approximately 3.5 acres.

This area is shown on the District map that accompanies this inventory-nomination form.

#### VIII. INVENTORY OF DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT PROPERTY OWNERS

ADDRESS	OWNER	LEGAL DESCRIPTION
125 Court Street	Frank L. Smith 118 S. First St. Galesville, WI 54630	Original Plat, Block 2, East 50' Lot 4 less street; W 33' of E 50' Lot 5, block 2.
121 Davis St.	John C. Quinn 913 W. Gale Ave. Galesville, WI 54630	Mons Anderson Sub-Div, Lots 6-7, Block 1; Lot 9
127 Davis St.	Alfred O. Anderson 125 S. Davis St. Galesville, WI 54630	Mon's Anderson Sub-Div, Lots 6-7 Block 1; Lot 9
135 Davis St.	Robert Krueger 1702 Wood St. La Crosse, WI 54601	Mon's Anderson Sub-Div, Lots 6-7 Block 1; Lots 6-7
143 Davis St.	Ristow Realty, Inc. Box 217 Galesville, WI 54630	Mons Anderson Sub-Div of Lots 6-7 Block 1, Lots 4 & 5
106 E. Gale Ave.	Kendall & Kathy Casberg Box 128 Galesville, WI 54630	Original Plat of Galesville, Pt. Lot 2, Block 3, WN 40' of N 65' Lot 2
112 E. Gale Ave.	Borghild Jensen P. O. Box 143 Galesville, WI 54630	Original Plat of Galesville, Pt Lot 2, Blk 3, E 21' of W61' of N 65
130 E. Gale Ave.	A. T. Lahmayer Box 408 Black River Falls, WI 54615	Original Plat of Galesville, Pt. Lots 1 & 4, Block 3; com. at a pt. 6.2' E of NW Cor. Lot 1, S 90' E 18' N 22' E 25'3" N 68'.

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VIII.	INVENTORY	OF	DOWNTOWN	HISTORIC	DISTRICT	PROPERTY	OWNERS (	(continued)	)

ADDRESS:	OWNER:	LEGAL DESCRIPTION:
212 E. Gale Ave.	Tom McMahon Box 153 Galesville, WI 54630	Original Plat of Galesville, Pt. Lots 1 & 4, Block 3, E 26'9" of W 51.2' of Lot 1, com. SE cor. above desc. th. 514' W27' N12' E3" N 2' th. E to beg.
218 E. Gale Ave.	Myron & Betty Olson Box 413 Galesville, WI 54630	Original Plat of Galesville, Lot 1, Block 3, E 24' of W 75.2' of N 62' lot 4, less part sold to Larson.
224 E. Gale Ave.	Dr. Leonard J. Larson Box 458 Galesville, WI 54630	Original Plat, pt lots 1 & 4, block 3, E 20' of W 95.2' lot 1, E 20' of W 95.2' of N 14' lot 4, also incl. parcel 35' x 42' x 100.
230 E. Gale Ave.	Galesville Ind. Dev. Corp. Galesville, WI 54630	Original Plat, pt lots 1 & 4, block 3
107 W. Gale Ave.	Galesville Building & Realty Galesville, WI 54630	Original Plat, Block 5, Lot 1
115 W. Gale Ave.	Galesville Building & Realty Galesville, WI 54630	Original Plat, Block 5, Lot 1
119 W. Gale Ave.	Kenneth Olson Rt. 1, Box 328 Blair, WI 54616	Original Plat, W 33' lot 1, block 5 East 12.5' lot 2, block 5
120 W. Gale	Bank of Galesville Galesville, WI 54630	Original Plat, Block 4, lot 1
124 Main St.	Rolf Hammer 507 W. Clark St. Galesville, WI 54630	Original Plat, Block 4, lot 1 N 31.5 of S 67'
212 Main St.	Galesville Building & Realty Galesville, WI 54630	Original Plat, Block 5, Lot 4
118 Main St.	Norma Smith 322 S. Atwood Janesville, WI 53045	Original Plat, Block 4, Lot 1, beg. 66' N of SE cor. th. N 33' th. W 66'
Bandstand/Public Square	City of Galesville Galesville, WI 54630	th. S 33' th. E to beg. Original Plat, Public Square

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SIGNIFICANCE OF HISTORIC DISTRICTS:

Downtown Historic District (Period of Significance: 1875-1934)

The Downtown Historic District is significant for both commerce and architecture. The Downtown District encompasses the heart of Galesville's commercial activity which was intimately connected to the prosperous flour mill located only a block Throughout its period of significance, the Downtown District included many kinds of commercial services to residents and travellers alike. Some of the most significant businesses were housed in the pivotal buildings of the district. The Clark Block (143 S. Davis St., 1886) housed the most important financial institution in the community, the Bank of Galesville, from its date of construction to the 1960's. The largest department store in Galesville, the Gilbertson-Myhre general store (106 E. Gale Ave., 1884) occupied the present building throughout its business existence, and provided not only a wide variety of merchandise but, briefly, recreational facilities for the community. Another significant business, the Galesville Building and Realty Company, was housed in the third pivotal building, 212 S. Main Street (1911), and for a time, included another Galesville bank. The Downtown Historic District today still is the center of Galesville's commercial activity, and unlike many other small Wisconsin communities, it is a fairly stable commercial center continuing to provide much needed services to residents of the community.

While the buildings of the Downtown Historic District do not necessarily reflect the highest form of commercial architectural design, there are several notable buildings in the district, and, as a whole, the district is a good example of turn-of-the-century commercial building practices in a small Wisconsin community. Again, the three pivotal buildings mentioned previously possess the most significant architectural details in the district. The Clark Block, with its ornate details, is the most outstanding example. Several of the district's streetscapes, moreover, possess a continuity of scale and design which lends itself to the overall character of the district, the best example being the Davis Street streetscape. With the Public Square as its focal point, the Downtown Historic District retains much of its turn-of-the-century character, particularly in the second floor facades of the buildings, where "modern" storefronts have not penetrated.

