

JUL 24 1989

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

JAN 24 1989

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Civic Center Historic District  
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Various, see inventory N/A not for publication  
city, town Kenosha N/A vicinity  
state Wisconsin code WI county Kenosha code 059 zip code 53140

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>1</u>	_____ sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	<u>1</u> objects
		<u>5</u>	<u>2</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 2

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

[Signature] 1/12/89  
Signature of certifying official Date  
State Historic Preservation Officer- WI  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature] 7/26/89  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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6. Function or Use (continued)

Historic Functions:

GOVERNMENT/correctional facility  
RECREATION AND CULTURE/museum  
LANDSCAPE/plaza

Current Functions:

RECREATION AND CULTURE/museum  
RECREATION AND CULTURE/work of art  
LANDSCAPE/plaza

7. Description (continued)

Materials:

walls: Stucco

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL/meeting hall

GOVERNMENT/courthouse

GOVERNMENT/post office

EDUCATION/school

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/professional

GOVERNMENT/courthouse

GOVERNMENT/post office

EDUCATION/school

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Limestone

walls Limestone

Granite

roof Asphalt

other Copper

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

General Description

The Civic Center Historic District is formed by a group of six Neo-Classical Revival civic, educational, and private buildings sitting around the Civic Center Plaza or Park, a contributing park that covers an entire square block. In the center of the park is a non-contributing art object, a miniature Statue of Liberty sitting on a large rough sandstone base. The Civic Center is just two blocks west of the commercial district of downtown Kenosha, Wisconsin. Kenosha is a medium-sized, primarily industrial city on Lake Michigan in southeastern Wisconsin.

The Civic Center was the culmination of a movement by Kenosha's community leaders to give the city a "City Beautiful" public place for their governmental or public buildings. This idea was further promoted by Harland Bartholomew, the noted city planner who Kenosha hired to develop a comprehensive city plan. In 1922 the newly hired city manager in Kenosha and the head of the City Council began pushing the Civic Center project. At that time sites were being acquired for the new Kenosha County Courthouse and the high school. The city convinced the county board and the school board to site these new buildings around the new Civic Center plaza. By 1933, the other two sides of the Civic Center were completed with the construction of the new post office and moving the old post office across the plaza. The old Moose Lodge, constructed in 1926, began the potential branching out of the Civic Center into additional blocks. The completion of four sides of the Civic Center represented Kenosha's commitment to city beautification and city efficiency in the progressive era.

Because the Civic Center was a planned development, the buildings are all similar in architectural style and set on large lots, some taking up entire blocks. All are sited around the plaza. Because of the size of the buildings, there is little lawn or vegetation around the buildings. The Kenosha Public Museum, a smaller building, does have a large lawn with more vegetation. The Civic Center plaza or park has a balanced mix of large, mature trees and lawn. The Statue of Liberty replica sits at the center of the park, surrounded by flower beds. Sidewalks radiate from the statue to the edge of the park. The park also contains an abundance of benches scattered throughout the green space.

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There are five contributing buildings in this district, plus one contributing site, and a non-contributing object and a non-contributing service building (behind the Kenosha Public Museum). All the contributing buildings are designed in the Neo-Classical Revival style of architecture. All the buildings are constructed or faced with gray limestone, except for the Kenosha Public Museum, which has large sections of its facades faced with a stucco-like material. Four of the buildings are three stories in height, while the other two are one story in height but appear taller because they have raised foundations and tall ceilings. All roofs are flat with the exception of the U. S. Post Office, which is hipped.

The district is effectively divided from the rest of Kenosha by the sheer size, scale, and unified design of the buildings. Out of the district is a residential neighborhood and church complex to the west and south of the district. To the north of the district is an area largely composed of parking lots, a few scattered buildings, and a modern municipal building behind the old Moose Lodge. To the east of the district is another combination of parking lots, another modern municipal building, and some commercial structures. Even though a major thoroughfare (State Highway 32, Sheridan Road) cuts through the district in front of the U. S. Post Office, it does not uncomfortably disrupt the district. In fact, the Civic Center was originally planned by Bartholomew to have vast boulevards separating buildings and park area. All the streets, except for Sheridan Road, are surprisingly quiet, different from the busy streets depicted in Bartholomew's original sketch of the Civic Center plan. (See Figure 1)

Most of the buildings in the Civic Center Historic District are well maintained and have retained most of their original appearance. A major controversy over windows in the old high school has resulted in replacements that do not change the original size or character of the openings on the building. The addition to the U. S. Post Office, while modern, does not unduly detract from the original Neo-Classical building. And, just recently, a movement to demolish the Courthouse Annex (old jail) was, at least for the time being, thwarted, and there are plans to renovate the building. And, the Kenosha Public Museum has maintained its building in all its original beaux arts glory. Only the old Moose Lodge has suffered somewhat from alterations, specifically the closing up of windows. Even so, the basic design and details of the building are largely intact.

The Civic Center plaza or park is the focal point of the district. In the modern era, when our open spaces between large buildings tend to be paved areas rather than green space, the Civic Center Park is a welcome open space. But even more interesting in assessing the unity of this district is that it was designed to be a unit, and unlike many other historic districts, it is not only coincidentally a unit. This factor, above all, makes this district so unusual.

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### Description of Contributing Buildings and Site

5516 10th Ave. Old Moose Lodge 1926-27<sup>1</sup>  
Architect: Joseph Lindl<sup>2</sup>

The Old Moose Lodge was designed by Joseph Lindl, the Kenosha architect who helped design the Kenosha County Courthouse and Jail. It is a three story Neo-Classical Revival building with a gray limestone veneer on its street facades. It is of tan brick construction on the non-street facades. The flat-roofed building is decorated with a stone cornice defining a narrow parapet. Under the cornice is a low relief triglyph-and-metope frieze. The upper two stories have shallow pilasters that divide the street facades into arcades of round-arched window openings. These window openings have been significantly enclosed so that only small square windows and spandrels remain on the second and third floors. While they detract from the buildings's original design, the closure of the windows have not altered the decorative pilasters or arches. Another cornice line separates the first and second floors. Large plate glass windows and recessed entrances comprise most of the first floor fenestration. A large metal canopy ornamented with acroteria sits over the main entrance on 10th Avenue.

The Old Moose Lodge is sited in the block that Bartholomew envisioned as a commercial block, one of several to the west of the Civic Center (see Figure 1). It was likely designed to complement the courthouse that was built right across 10th Avenue. The Loyal Order of Moose, a large fraternal group in Kenosha at the time, occupied this building until about 1943. In 1943 the building was acquired by the Kenosha Labor Association and renamed the Union Club. It still houses offices and meeting places for various labor unions in Kenosha and continues the semi-public nature of the Civic Center.<sup>3</sup>

5608 10th Ave. Kenosha Public Museum 1908-10<sup>4</sup>  
(Old Post Office) Moved: 1933  
Architect: James Knox Taylor, federal architect<sup>5</sup>

This one-story building, sitting on a raised base faced with granite stone, is richly detailed in the Beaux Arts style, a more decorative classical style, but popular at the same time and related to the Neo-Classical Revival style. The building is constructed of gray limestone, but on the four recessed facades of the building is a covering of gray stucco-like material that is applied and scored to resemble stone blocks. It is an unusual exterior material that covers all the decorative elements of the facades. These decorative elements on the front facade include four groups of attached paired colossal Ionic columns separating recessed window and door openings. Single columns and partial pilasters in the same order appear at the corners of the recessed area. The capitals of the columns feature leaves, rosettes, and darts. The openings are heavily decorated with bracketed hoods over casement windows and topped with oculus windows decorated with cascading wreaths of grapes and grape leaves and keystones. Period light fixtures flank a concrete staircase leading to the main entrance which consists of a wood and glass double door with a transom. The entrance is framed by a frontispiece of pilasters, a broken segmental arched pediment, and an eagle which obscurs the central oculus window. The side facades of this

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building are similarly decorated as the front, except that the columns become pilasters. Finally, a cornice molding runs across the top of the building, creating an unadorned parapet. A new concrete shed sits at the rear of the building and is non-contributing.

The Kenosha Public Museum was originally the old post office and was located behind the current U. S. Post Office building. In 1933, when the new post office was completed, this building was moved foot-by-foot across the Civic Center to complete the last side of the Civic Center project. It was then acquired for the Kenosha Public Museum, and has served in that capacity since that time. In fact, since it has been the museum for more than 50 years, longer than it was ever a post office, it represents not just the former post office, but the development of public museums in the community in the twentieth century.<sup>6</sup>

913 57th St.  
Architect: John D. Chubb<sup>8</sup>

Old Kenosha High School

1924-26<sup>7</sup>

Chicago architect John D. Chubb designed this three story Neo-Classical high school building. The overall square building, taking up an entire block of land, features slightly projecting corner pavilions and pedimented entry pavilions. Built of gray limestone, a prominent cornice decorated with modillions runs across the entire building and is topped by a granite parapet with balustrades at the corner pavilions. Pilasters separate window banks on the second and third floors. These windows are double-hung sashes, grouped in fours. The pilasters feature the Corinthia order. The building also features a rusticated first floor sitting on a pedestal foundation. The pedimented entry pavilion on the front facade features attached Corinthian columns between paired windows. Three openings lead to the recessed main entrance. Projecting corners of the building have recessed panels decorated by Corinthian columns and a blind arch with keystone. A separate auditorium wing at the rear of the building is similarly decorated with modillioned cornice, pilasters, and a projecting entry pavilion flanked by Corinthia columns. Period fixtures also decorate the building's entrances.

The old Kenosha High School was half of the first phase of the Civic Center construction. In fact, it was an almost unprecedented agreement between the city of Kenosha, Kenosha County, and the school board that sited this building and the courthouse complex around the Civic Center. The high school was later known as Central High School, then the Mary D. Bradford High School, named for the noted Kenosha educator. It is now the location of the Ruether alternative school.

5605 Sheridan Rd.  
Architect: George A. Daidy, federal architect<sup>10</sup>

U. S. Post Office

1933<sup>9</sup>

The U. S. Post Office is a one-story Neo-Classical Revival style building. A prominent cornice decorated with modillios runs across the entire facade, defining a decorated parapet. These decorations include very shallow paired pilasters and panels that feature eagle shields, ribbons, and swags. Under the cornice is an entablature that is decorated with medallions and is engraved "United States of America" and "United States Post Office." There are slightly projecting corner pavilions decorated by round-arched

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entrances flanked by shallow pilasters. The entrances have modern glass and metal doors topped with large multi-paned transoms. The slightly recessed central section of the front facade is accented by six groups of paired colossal Doric columns, with single Doric columns at the corners. These columns separate the multi-paned tall windows of the front facade. Decoration on the building wraps around slightly to the side facades, but the remaining side walls are undecorated. Windows on these facades are multi-paned three-part sashes and are unadorned. An addition at the south and rear facades of the building does not greatly detract from the original building because of its placement on the building and use of compatible materials.

The new post office was a result of agitation for a new facility in Kenosha during the 1920s and early 1930s. When the federal government agreed to build a new post office, the city convinced them to build it on the east end of the Civic Center. Although late for a Neo-Classical building, federal architect George Daidy designed the new post office in the style that complemented the courthouse and high school. The old post office, sitting behind the new building, was then moved across the park to complete the fourth (west) side of the center.

912 56th St. Kenosha County Courthouse and Jail<sup>12</sup>  
Architect: Joseph Lindl, Charles Lesser, Albert J. Schutte

1923-25<sup>11</sup>

The Neo-Classical Revival Courthouse and Jail was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1982 as part of the County courthouses of Wisconsin thematic nomination. The three story courthouse building is built of gray Indiana limestone in a coursed ashlar pattern. The building has a raised basement and the first floor is divided from the upper floors by a cornice that runs the length of the building. A denticulated cornice line defines the unadorned parapet at the top of the building. The main decoration of the building is on the front facade. Between projecting corner pavilions the second and third stories lie recessed behind a colonnade of 18 free-standing colossal Ionic columns. Additional columns are placed on the front facade of the corner pavilions. Tall, two-story modern windows are placed between the columns of the main colonnade except above the main entrance where there is a further recessed balcony with balustrade and three round arched windows. The first floor pavilions feature single light modern windows of a more standard size. These windows are flanked in the pavilions by more narrow modern windows. The rear and side facades of the building are more simply decorated with engaged pilasters. Entry pavilions at the side and rear of the building feature pilasters for the most part instead of columns. Although more Ionic columns appear over the rear entry pavilion.

Behind the courthouse is the three-story jail built of the same material as the courthouse and connected to it by an underground passage. The jail also features cornices defining an unadorned parapet and separating first and second floors. Windows are similar to those on the courthouse, but consist of their original sashes, instead of modern replacements. They are, however, scaled down befitting the smaller scale of the jail. Entrances feature stone architraves and bracketed cornices, and on the north and south facades, pilasters rise on the second and third stories.

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Discussion of providing the county with a new courthouse began at the Kenosha County Board as early as 1918. A commission was established and funding began for a new building with jail. In 1919 the county selected an architectural firm, but the project was cancelled because it was perceived as too costly at that time. By 1922, the idea was afloat again and land was selected for the new buildings. At the same time, the city of Kenosha changed their form of government to the council-manager plan, and the new city manager and civic leaders, who had been promoting a "City Beautiful" Civic Center plan, convinced the county to exchange their land for land the city would acquire and clear on the north side of the proposed civic center plaza to build the new courthouse. The county land would then go to the school board for the new high school. All parties agreed and construction began on the courthouse and jail in 1923. The buildings were completed and dedicated in 1925, anchoring the north side of the proposed Civic Center.<sup>13</sup>

## Civic Center Park

The Civic Center Park sits at the center of Kenosha's civic center complex. It takes up an entire block of land and is not elaborately landscaped. Large, mature trees and lawn provides a shady and attractive landscape for users. The park also has a number of benches for the public and sidewalks radiate to the corners from the central non-contributing object--the miniature Statue of Liberty.

While the Statue of Liberty was placed in the park in 1950, it still merits description. The replica measures eight feet, four inches, and sits on a rough sandstone base of almost the same height. Made from a mold, the statue is stamped from 42 sheets of copper and braced on the inside, giving it a cast bronze appearance. The Friedley-Voshardt Co. of Chicago create the mold.

The miniature is one of about 200 such statues placed in communities throughout the country by boy scout troops. An idea that began with Jack P. Whitaker, a Kansas City industrialist and scout volunteer. Whitaker paid the original cost to create the mold for the statues. Then, the national office of the Boy Scouts sold them to local groups for \$300-\$350. Bases for the statues were to be provided by the local communities. In Kenosha, the cost of the statue and base was provided primarily by fund-raising efforts of local Scout troops. It was erected in 1950 with a ceremony in the Civic Center park.<sup>14</sup>

Notes to Section 7:

<sup>1</sup>Nelson Peter Ross, "Architecture, Planning, and Transportation," in John A. Neuenschwander, ed., Kenosha County in the Twentieth Century: A Topical History, Kenosha: Kenosha County Bicentennial Commission, 1976, p. 446.



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Kenosha, Kenosha County, WI<sup>2</sup> Ibid.<sup>3</sup> Kenosha City Directories, on file at the Simmons Memorial Public Library, Kenosha, Wisconsin.<sup>4</sup> Carrie Cropley, Kenosha From Pioneer Village to Modern City 1835-1935, Kenosha: Kenosha County Historical Society, 1958, pp. 84-85.<sup>5</sup> Ross, p. 392.<sup>6</sup> Cropley, pp. 167-168.<sup>7</sup> Ross, p. 157.<sup>8</sup> Ibid.<sup>9</sup> Ross, p. 446.<sup>10</sup> Ibid.<sup>11</sup> Otis Trenary, Souvenir Kenosha County Court House, Kenosha (?): Kenosha County (?), 1925, p. 5.<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 17.<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 41; Ross, pp. 443-446.<sup>14</sup> Don Jensen, "Scouting Drive Gave City Statue," Kenosha News, 2 July 1986, on file in the subject files of the Simmons Memorial Library, Kenosha, Wisconsin.Building Inventory

<u>Address</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Style</u>	<u>Date of Construction</u>	<u>Status</u>
5516 10th Ave.	Old Moose Lodge	Neo-Classical	1926-27	C
625 52nd St.	Kenosha Public Museum (Old Post Office)	Beaux Arts	1908-10 Moved: 1933	C
913 57th St.	Old Kenosha High School	Neo-Classical	1924-26	C
5605 Sheridan Rd.	U. S. Post Office	Neo-Classical	1933	C
912 56th St.	Kenosha County Courthouse & Jail Civic Center Park	Neo-Classical	1923-25  1925	C  C
Park	Miniature Statue of Liberty		1950	NC
625 52nd St.	Service Building	Modern	c.1975	NC

Note on Interiors:

It is recognized that most of these buildings have historic interiors that could be significant. However, intensive surveying of the interiors of these buildings was beyond the scope of this nomination. Suffice it to say that potential historic interiors exist and should be noted in any compliance issues.

**8. Statement of Significance**

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

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nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

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

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

ARCHITECTURE  
 COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT  
 EDUCATION  
 POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

1910-1938<sup>1</sup>

N/A

Cultural Affiliation  
 N/A

Significant Person  
 N/A

Architect/Builder  
 Lindl, Lesser, & Schutte  
 Chubb, John D.

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

The Civic Center Historic District is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C. It is being nominated under criterion A because, as a whole, it represents a significant event in the history of community planning and development in Kenosha. Specifically, the individual buildings in this district represent significant events in the history of education and government in Kenosha. The Civic Center Historic District is being nominated under criterion C because its buildings are outstanding examples of Neo-Classical architecture in Kenosha and because, as a whole, the buildings are an outstanding example of civic architecture in the city and the state. These themes will be discussed in detail under the headings of Architecture, Community Planning and Development, Education, and Government after a brief historical overview.

Historical Overview

"It was the idea of those fostering this [Civic Center] plan that the government buildings of city, county, and nation be grouped in a harmonious unit and that by this arrangement a feature not only of great beauty but also of convenience and efficiency would be developed."<sup>2</sup> This combination of the "City Beautiful" and the "City Efficient" idea of late nineteenth and early twentieth century architects and urban planners resulted in the development of the Civic Center Historic District in Kenosha. Advocates of the physical improvement of the city banded together with political reformers in Kenosha in the early twentieth century to create a new city government, a new city plan, and the unprecedented cooperation between many governmental agencies that resulted in the Civic Center.

One historian of Kenosha begins the story of the development of the Civic Center with a speech that Mrs. George A. Yule, wife of a prominent industrialist, gave in 1905 on "The Town Beautiful." In this speech she advocated clean streets, better architecture in the community, more landscaping and parks. This speech sparked a "city beautiful" reform movement in Kenosha and the movement's first successful project was to widen Market Street (56th St.) into a boulevard between 6th and 8th Avenues. This was done in 1908, and with the development of the Civic Center, the boulevard was eventually extended all the way to 13th Avenue.<sup>3</sup>

See continuation sheet

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The second component in the development of Kenosha's Civic Center was the political reform movement that began in 1906 with the organization of the Civic Federation. This group was most specifically interested in outlawing prostitution and gambling, but were moderately successful as well in pushing reform in government. The push for the city manager form of government picked up steam after World War I, along with a call for a comprehensive city plan. In 1917 the city spent a small amount of money and hired Chicago planning consultant Myron West to do a plan. Because the funding was small, West's plan could only concentrate on some recommendations regarding parks and streets. It was a small effort and few paid any attention to it.<sup>4</sup>

After World War I the movement for new city government and a new city plan reached fruition. In 1919 the city appropriated funds for city planning and in 1920 they appointed a city planning commission. One of the earliest ideas the new commission promoted was the building of a Civic Center. In 1922, Kenosha voters approved the city manager form of government, heralding in an era of cooperation between the city council and manager that resulted in the Civic Center and a comprehensive city plan. Prominent local industrialist Walter Alford was the president of the city council when it selected Clare Osborn as its first city manager. Together Alford and Osborn pushed for both a Civic Center and a comprehensive city plan. They soon achieved both. The city hired Harland Bartholomew, at that time in the early years of his prominent and prolific consulting career as a city planner, to prepare a comprehensive city plan. While the Civic Center idea had been kicking around Kenosha for quite some time, Bartholomew put the ideas into concrete form on paper for the city in 1922, early in his firm's work on the city plan. Bartholomew saw the Civic Center as part of a larger development of the area between 8th Avenue and the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad tracks along 13th Avenue. In fact, he indicated in his discussion of the Civic Center that the new C & NW Railroad Station would be a part of a commercial district extending west of the actual Civic Center. He states, "In future years it would be possible for a visitor to Kenosha to alight from his train at a modern terminal, pass out eastward upon a broad tree-bordered avenue. . . and . . . to enter an open plaza or park, the center of a group of magnificent buildings." While not all of Bartholomew's vision was achieved, the city, beginning in 1922, made an aggressive effort to implement his plan. By the time Bartholomew published the entire comprehensive city plan in 1925, the first building of the Civic Center was just being dedicated--the County Courthouse.<sup>5</sup>

The completion of the four sides of the Civic Center took just over 10 years from the time it was officially envisioned in 1922 and the time the fourth building was placed around the plaza in 1933. Between those years an incredible amount of effort took place between several local governmental agencies along with the federal government to complete the Civic Center. Just building the first two links of the center, the County Courthouse and the High School, was a feat of inter-governmental cooperation. The county had begun planning a new courthouse and jail in 1918, and in 1919 they chose an architectural firm to prepare the plans. But the county, at that time, felt the project was too costly and cancelled it. In 1922, Joseph Lindl, a local architect, along with Milwaukee architects Charles Lesser and Albert J. Schutte were chosen to prepare new plans for the courthouse complex. The county had selected and purchased a site for the courthouse near where the high school building is now. The city, by this time, had roughly planned that the civic center would be sited around the block bordered by 56th and 57th Streets, and 10th Avenue and Sheridan Road. IN the early

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1920s, the school board had also been making plans to build a new high school and needed a site close to where the county property had been acquired. The city negotiated with both the county and the school board in the final placement selection of their new buildings. They acquired and cleared the block north of the plaza, then convinced the county to give the school board its parcel in the block south of the plaza for the new high school in exchange for the cleared land the city provided north of the Civic Center Park. The city also acquired the land for the plaza itself, in all, clearing away a number of blocks in the area. In all, the land cleared for the Civic Center project rivaled that done by urban renewers 30 years later. And, ironically, some then-historic buildings were demolished for the completion of this now-historic district. The Courthouse and Jail was completed in 1925, while the new high school was completed in 1926. These grand Neo-Classical buildings anchored two sides of the Civic Center and set the architectural tone for the rest of the project.<sup>6</sup>

In the mid-1920s the Loyal Order of Moose, a fraternal group, hired Joseph Lindl, the architect of the Courthouse, to design their new building and lodge. It was designed in the Neo-Classical style and placed just off the main blocks of the Civic Center, in the area that Bartholomew envisioned as the new commercial center of the community. It was the only expansion of the Bartholomew plan outside of the Civic Center itself.

The two other main blocks of the Civic Center were completed in cooperation with the federal government. A new post office facility was needed in Kenosha by the late 1920s, and after negotiation with the federal government, the city convinced them to locate their new building on the east block of the Civic Center. Federal architect George Daidy designed the new building in the Neo-Classical Revival style, complementing the other buildings of the center. The old post office, built in 1910, was a small beaux-arts building sitting just behind the new post office. Since a site was needed for the local historical museum, and since the architecture of the old post office fit in well with the rest of the center's buildings, the old post office was moved foot-by-foot across the park to anchor the fourth or west end of the Civic Center project. It became the art and natural history museum of the community and continues in this use today. Thus the Civic Center was completed on all four sides.<sup>7</sup>

The Great Depression and the immensity of Bartholomew's plan for the entire area probably prohibited the city from completing the entire redevelopment area up to the railroad depot. But much of the city's and Bartholomew's vision for the Civic Center was accomplished, and other municipal buildings, while not built until recent years and not in the Neo-Classical style, were constructed nearby in locations Bartholomew envisioned for them. The result is a truly efficient group of federal, county, and city civic buildings that serve the public in the way they were supposed to.

## AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Architecture

The Civic Center Historic District is <sup>locally</sup> significant for architecture because it contains five fine and outstanding examples of Neo-Classical Revival architecture, and because, as a whole, the Civic Center is an outstanding example of early twentieth century civic

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architecture. Taking its style from the "City Beautiful" idea of architects and urban planners of the turn of the century, and from the "white city" of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, the Kenosha Civic Center is a realization of many city's vision of a Neo-Classical group of civic buildings representing the highest ideals of both architecture and political efficiency.

The Neo-Classical Revival style of architecture was at its peak of popularity between 1890 and 1920, although according to Wisconsin's Cultural Resource Management Plan, the style was seen in Wisconsin between 1895 and 1935. It was spurred on in the United States by the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago that featured the famous "white city" of white buildings all executed in classical forms using classical details. The style was particularly popular for public and institutional buildings and commercial buildings in Wisconsin. It is especially interesting that Kenosha's "white city" began at the end of the style's popularity (1926) and that the U. S. Post Office, constructed in 1933, was probably one of the last grand Neo-Classical Revival buildings constructed in the state. That the Neo-Classical style was used in buildings as late as the 1920s and early 1930s indicates that the vision of the Civic Center as a classical "white city" was an integral part of the entire concept of the project.

Not only is the entire Civic Center significant for its use of the Neo-Classical Revival style as an expression of civic architecture in Kenosha, but the individual buildings, themselves, are fine examples of the style even if they were sitting alone elsewhere in the community. Most impressive are the first two buildings of the Civic Center; the county courthouse and the old high school. The courthouse is imposing and grand. The impressive colonnade on the front facade and the limestone construction give the impression of stability and importance. These details are also typical of Neo-Classical Revival buildings throughout the country. The high school expresses its classicism in its massive projecting pedimented pavilions, colossal Corinthian columns and pilasters, and its parapet with balustrade. The limestone construction of the building handles the massive details well and helps give the building the grandeur of an important civic structure. Both the courthouse and the old high school are well designed, well-proportioned examples of the style. The old jail, now called the annex, is a scaled-down version of the courthouse, but while smaller and less decorative than the main building, it is well-proportioned for its size and complements the design of the Courthouse.

Although built in 1933, the U. S. Post Office is a detailed version of the Neo-Classical Revival style. Being late for the style, it would be plausible that the design would have been more subdued, or less decorative. But this building features the paired colossal columns that mirror those of the courthouse, an enriched parapet, modillioned cornice, pilasters, and large arched windows, a level of decoration suitable and attractive for the building's size.

Finally, the diminutive Beaux Arts Kenosha Public Museum was built in 1910, at the height of the style's influence in the country. It is an unusually detailed version

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of the style. The unusual stucco-like cladding is scored to look like cut stone. The main features of the building are more elaborately decorated than the other Neo-Classical buildings of the district, hence the attribution of this building as beaux-arts rather than Neo-Classical. Nevertheless, the building's classical details and gray surface makes it blend in well with the style of the district's other buildings.

Architects. The architect for the Kenosha County Courthouse and Jail was the firm of Lindl, Lesser and Schutte. Joseph Lindl was a Kenosha native who studied architecture in Chicago and Milwaukee. He began his Kenosha practice in 1907. Besides the courthouse complex, he designed the old Kenosha city hall, the Eagles Club, the Danish Brotherhood Building, several churches, and a number of schools. Charles Lesser and Albert J. Schutte were Milwaukee architects. Lesser was the architect for the Schlitz Brewing Company and also designed many schools, hotels, and public buildings in the United States and Canada. Albert J. Schutte trained at the Armour Institute and in Chicago. He began his Milwaukee practice in 1912 and was responsible for many residential designs in Milwaukee. The well-proportioned design that embodies most of the principles of Neo-Classical architecture indicates that these architects were skilled in this areas of architectural design.<sup>9</sup>

James Knox Taylor was the supervising architect of the U.S. Treasury and executed the interesting Kenosha Public Museum. A native of Illinois, he was educated in St. Paul Minnesota. He completed a two-year program at MIT and worked in architect's offices in Boston and New York for his training. He was employed briefly by master architect Cass Gilbert. Taylor set up his practice in St. Paul in 1882, then practiced in Philadelphia in 1892. In 1895 he went to Washington and worked as senior draftsman in the office of the U. S. Supervising Architect. In 1897 he became the Supervising Architect and he served in this post until 1912. He was responsible for many designs for government buildings. Among his most noted designs were for the post offices at Annapolis, Carrollton, Maryland, Asbury Park, New Jersey, and Norwich, Connecticut. He also designed the old Federal Building in San Francisco. He set up a private practice in Boston and Yonkers, New York. He moved to Tampa, Florida in the 1920s and died there in 1929. Taylor's design for the old Kenosha post office (Kenosha Public Museum) is a fine example of the use of the beaux arts classical style in a small building. While the building is abundantly decorated with classical details, it is not overwhelmed by them and one must look closely to see all the detail put into the decorative elements of the building because they are scaled down to fit the building's size. Of most interest, though, is the use of the stucco-like material that is then scored to imitate stone. It gives the surfaces complexity that add to the elaborateness of the design. It is a fine building that shows the skill of Taylor as a federal architect.<sup>10</sup>

John D. Chubb was the Chicago architect responsible for the old Kenosha High School. He came as a boy to the United States from England. In 1898 he began his practice in architecture which extended until 1938. He was a specialist in designing schools

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and related buildings, and his work is seen in many communities of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Illinois. The old Kenosha High School is cited in the Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased) as one of his noted designs that also included the Senior High Vocational School at Two Rivers, Wisconsin; the Vocational School at Battle Creek, Michigan; the Maine Township High School in Cook County, Illinois; the Senior High and vocational School at Quincy, Illinois; and the Lincolnwood School at Skokie, Illinois. He was also responsible for designing four elementary schools in Kenosha and the McKinley Junior High School. The old Kenosha high school is a fine example of Neo-Classical design and indicates that not only was Chubb an expert in educational building design, but was a skilled architect in the Neo-Classical style.<sup>11</sup>

The Kenosha Civic Center may be the best collection of Neo-Classical buildings in a historic district in the state. However, no systematic survey of all Neo-Classical buildings in the state was done so this is purely speculative. But, to have five fine Neo-Classical buildings making up a civic center in any city in the state is significant. Kenosha has several fine Neo-Classical Revival buildings elsewhere in the city, including the Simmons Memorial Library, the Masonic Temple, and the Beth Hillel Temple, all in the Library Park Historic District (NRHP, 1988). But these buildings, while they are good examples of the style, do not rival the Civic Center Historic District in terms of fine design and grandeur. The Neo-Classical buildings of the Civic Center historic district are both individually outstanding, and together, represent the culmination of the Neo-classical "white city" ideal that had been fostered in Kenosha since the turn of the century. As such, the Civic Center Historic District is an architectural landmark in the city.

### Community Planning and Development

The Civic Center Historic District is significant at the local level for community planning and development because it was a planned development that involved both politics and planning to create Kenosha's version of Daniel H. Burnham's "white city", an idea fostered by both the "City Beautiful" architects and by the "City Efficient" planners of the progressive era. The completion of all four sides of the Kenosha Civic Center project was a significant event in the history of the city of Kenosha.

The Civic Center idea emerged from two movements in America's urban history during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The two movements were first, to physically improve the city; and second, to politically reform the city. From these movements came the development of professional city planning in America.

Before the mid-nineteenth century, cities grew on their own with little governmental intervention in land-use planning, building codes, or zoning. Plats laid out by developers and speculators tended to be done on a grid system and were located wherever a developer happened to have acquired land. The result was often a crowded, unattractive urban center of too many people, too many buildings, and not enough open space. This, coupled with urban political machines that exerted little control over the physical development of cities, created many urban areas that were in dire need of reform. The first well-known efforts at physical reform in cities came from prominent

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landscape architects such as Frederick Law Olmsted. These reformers suggested more parks and open spaces be developed in urban areas and that new plats to cities be in the form of "garden communities" That is, neighborhoods or complete communities that emphasized lots of open and park spaces, naturalistic landscaping, and a total rejection of the grid plan for laying out streets and lots.<sup>12</sup>

During the mid- and late-nineteenth century a number of reformers in cities improved parks and open spaces for their communities and several famous "garden city" plats were laid out as suburbs of cities. But little else was done to improve the city physically. It would take the movement of political reform to achieve real change in cities. This political reform had its origins in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, when groups of middle-class citizens initiated a reform movement that would come to be known as progressivism. One of the hallmarks of progressive-era reform was the reform of governments. Progressive-era reformers desired to open up the political process to professionalism. That is, remove machine style politics from all levels of government replacing it with clean political figures and civil service officials. In fact, one of the goals of the progressive-era reformers was to get rid of patronage and replace it with government workers who were professionals in their fields or hired as the result of a non-political civil service system. The result for these reformers would be government that would be efficient and clean--government that operated at the highest levels rather than the depths of machine or back room politics.<sup>13</sup>

This idea of government reform coincided with the emergence of the "City Beautiful" idea in architecture. The City Beautiful grew out of the return to classicism that characterized many architects' work at the turn of the century, especially architects who were trained in the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. It was specifically spurred on by Daniel H. Burnham of Chicago, who orchestrated the "white city" of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. This exposition contained a large group of elaborately designed classical buildings, all painted white, centered around formal green spaces, pools, and fountains. This white city was the epitomy of what the real city could be, according to Burnham and other proponents of Neo-Classical architecture. It stressed unity of design, magnitude of purpose, and seemed the ideal physical form to house the new, clean governments that reformers were advocating at the time. The "City Beautiful" movement specifically called for improvements in public architecture and the addition of monuments, arches, and statues to public spaces in order to instruct citizens in the importance of civic virtue. Architects and urban planners embraced the "City Beautiful" movement. One of the important elements of city improvement was the creation of a Civic Center, an area of public buildings executed in the Neo-Classical style sited around public green space. The Civic Center was the "white city" in microcosm and many urban reformers advocated the establishment of Civic Centers in their communities.<sup>14</sup>

The result of the "City Beautiful" movement was the construction of hundreds of Neo-Classical Revival buildings, particularly institutional buildings such as city halls, courthouses, schools, and other public buildings. But few cities could actually develop full-fledged Civic Centers, as the cost and coordination involved in such an activity was generally prohibitive. But, architects who dabbled in early city planning efforts, such as Daniel H. Burnham, pushed elaborate "City Beautiful" plans for cities such as Chicago and Washington D. C. During the early years of the twentieth



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century, urban political reform movements became more and more successful around the country. By the 1920s, many small and medium-sized cities went so far as to change their governments to the city manager or city-commission form of government. This form of government was seen as the ultimate in professionalizing the operation of a city. The city manager would be apolitical and could conduct city business without the bother of politics that created inefficiency. Even cities that maintained traditional forms of government, made strides in establishing civil service systems and reforming elections. As a result, the "City Beautiful" movement gave way somewhat to the idea of the "City Efficient." The "City Efficient" movement was less involved with monumental architecture and more involved with planning issues such as control of land use within the city, efficient street improvements, building codes, and traffic control. Planning for parks and open spaces were also important to proponents of the "City Efficient." The goal was the smooth, apolitical operation of cities that would result in better living conditions, but more importantly, professional control of the growth and development of the city. In fact, some historians consider the development of planning in cities as a result of an attempt by the middle classes and wealthy of cities to exercise control over the physical appearance of their community, particularly controlling urban immigrant villages that were often the power bases for machine-style politics. In any event, city planning and the comprehensive city plan came into vogue for cities during the early twentieth century, fostered by such early proponents as John Nolan. The call for city plans and planning efforts also resulted in the development of professional planners who began coming not from landscape architecture or architecture fields, but from engineering professions.<sup>15</sup>

One such planning professional was Harland Bartholomew, who developed the comprehensive city plan for Kenosha and laid out the plan for the Civic Center. Bartholomew was born in Massachusetts in 1889. He attended Rutgers University for two years and in 1912 entered the office of E. P. Goodrich, a consulting engineer, in New York. By 1916 Bartholomew was a planning engineer in St. Louis and by 1919 he had established his own private practice in St. Louis, Harland Bartholomew and Associates. The growth of his private practice coincided with the increasing demand for comprehensive city plans. In fact, the formative years of professional city planning were between 1910 and 1945, and because Bartholomew's career was extensive at a time when city planning departments were few in number, he had a direct impact on the development of modern cities and modern city planning. Between 1920 and 1926 alone, Bartholomew's firm wrote 20 of the 87 plans developed for cities. The next highest number was John Nolan, who wrote 12 plans. Although Bartholomew was not the early innovator in city planning as Daniel H. Burnham or John Nolan, he was the most prolific. The size of his firm and the number of his contracts overshadowed his competitors.<sup>16</sup>

Harland Bartholomew completed his comprehensive city plan for Kenosha in 1925, during the early years of his career. In this plan, he addressed all the major planning issues for Kenosha, including land use, parks, streets, traffic, and the development of a Civic Center. It cannot be said that Bartholomew initiated the Civic Center plan, as indicated in the historical background section, the impetus for such a plan began before he was hired. But he put the plan on paper, and no doubt assisted in the complex

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negotiations and specific planning involved in making the first phases of the plan come together.

The story of the development of the Civic Center is given in the historical background section and will not be repeated here, but suffice it to say, that the development of Kenosha's Civic Center was a triumph for their new city manager form of government and the city planning process. The fact that Kenosha could do what few other cities only attempted, is a tribute to the tenacity of city government officials who combined the ideas from the "City Beautiful" movement, the "City Efficient" movement, and the political reform movement to produce real reform in Kenosha. The down side of this development, however, was that it resembled the urban renewal efforts of the post-World War II era, in that in order to create the Civic Center, several blocks of land had to be acquired and cleared, and, ironically, a number of then-historic buildings were demolished to make way for this now-historic building group. And, given the economic uncertainties of Kenosha today and some of the problems the city faces, the comprehensive city plan was certainly not the cure-all for cities in the twentieth century.

The Kenosha Civic Center is significant because it was the culmination of all the above-mentioned movements of city reform. It also represents the almost unprecedented cooperation between governmental bodies that civic political reformers hoped for in their new governments that stressed professionalism rather than politics. Also, Kenosha is one of only a few communities in the state that attempted a Civic Center, and its success in the project represents a state-wide significance in the history of city planning and community development. The Civic Center Historic District is an outstanding landmark of planning and community development both in the city of Kenosha and the state of Wisconsin.

Education

The old High School in the Civic Center Historic District contributes in the area of local history because it is the only extant historic resource associated with the development of the high school program in Kenosha, the state's first public high school program. Wisconsin's Cultural Resource Management Plan discusses the development of public secondary education in Wisconsin. It indicates that before the mass movement for free public high schools, secondary education for young people was gained largely through private academies. The movement for free, public education in Wisconsin began in earnest in the 1840s, but it concentrated primarily on elementary education. Most communities, until the late nineteenth century, still depended primarily upon private academies to provide secondary school education. However, in Kenosha, this was not the case, and the city took a leadership role in establishing free public secondary education for their students. A free public high school was established in the city in 1849, the first free public high school in the state.<sup>17</sup>

Kenosha continued its progressive movement in education into the twentieth century. By 1900 elementary students had graded classrooms, and the high school curriculum was based in the classics. Students in the high school could choose from a general course of study, a classical course, or a teacher certification course. But, between 1890 and

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1920, when the city population boomed, the modern day school system of Kenosha was developed, primarily at the instigation of Mary D. Bradford. Bradford was hired in 1910 as superintendent of schools. She served until 1921 and during her tenure in office, she instituted modern, professional standards in both curriculum and teacher training in Kenosha's schools. While Bradford was not solely responsible for the erection of the high school that sits in this district, her emphasis on high-quality, professional education for Kenosha's students probably resulted in this large, grand building. Its size, prominent placement in the Civic Center area, and its elaborate and probably expensive design indicates the commitment to high school education in the community that pioneered it in the state.<sup>18</sup>

The old high school buildings in Kenosha have all been demolished. In fact, the building that preceeded this one in this district, and was still used as an annex until recent years, was demolished, only to be quickly lamented by many in the community. This building, therefore, represents the only extant historic resource related to the early development of a high school program in the community and the continued development of that program in the city. It contributes to the local history significance of this district in the area of education because it is truly an educational landmark in the community.

Government

The Kenosha County Courthouse and Jail contributes to the significance for local history of this district in the area of government, because it is the only extant historic resource related to county government in the city and county and because the construction of this complex represents an important event in the history of modern government services at the county level. According to Wisconsin's Cultural Resource Management Plan, county governments were designed to serve as subdivisions of state government and essential units of local governments. From only a few large counties in territorial Wisconsin to the modern-day 72 counties today, county governments provide the needed administrative services between state government and municipal or town governments. The Plan indicates that county courthouses, because of the wealth of important activities that take place in what is usually just one building, were instant landmarks in any community fortunate to be designated the county seat. Most were stylish buildings in the Greek Revival, Italianate, Romanesque, Neo-Classical, or modern architectural styles. Most were formally sited on courthouse "squares" in centrally-located areas of cities near central business districts. A few were part of a more grand plan, such as in Kenosha, of a Civic Center in the early twentieth century. County jails were an important component of county government and law enforcement. In old courthouses, jails were located in the same building as county offices and courts. Later separate jails and sheriff's quarters were the norm, but located near the courthouse. In the early twentieth century, the old-fashioned jail and sheriff's residence was replaced with modern jail buildings that did not include residences for sheriffs. This represented the change in penal concepts from the paternalism of the nineteenth century to the professionalism of the twentieth century.<sup>19</sup>

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The Kenosha County Courthouse is a typical example of the type of courthouse erected in the early twentieth century. It was meant to be a prominent building, an instant landmark, if you will, representing the importance of county government in the lives of all who viewed it. Its placement in the Civic Center, a project meant to provoke civic pride and civic virtue in city citizens was planned and enhances the courthouse's appearance and prominence in the community.

The Kenosha County courthouse was the fourth courthouse building for Kenosha County. In 1850 Racine and Kenosha counties were divided into their current boundaries and the first Kenosha County courthouse was built. By 1870 the building was outgrown and a new building was erected to the old structure. By 1885 the two old buildings were again outgrown and local industrialist and philanthropist Z. G. Simmons offered land and \$20,000 for a new courthouse, but the county refused his offer. They built their own new building instead. By 1918, again, the county needed more space and a committee was established to begin a funding drive and acquire an architect for a new building. In 1919 architects White, White, and White were hired, but their plans were thought too costly and the project was dropped. In 1922 Joseph Lindl, Charles Lesser, and Albert Schutte were selected to produce new plans for a courthouse and jail and with assistance from the city (outlined in the historical background), the new courthouse and jail became the first link of the Kenosha Civic Center project. Of interest was the placement and design of the new jail. It was a separate building from the courthouse, connected by a tunnel, and did not contain sheriff's quarters. Kenosha was clearly moving forward in the area of jail operations and desired a modern facility to reflect that movement.<sup>20</sup>

The Kenosha county courthouse has left an indelible mark on the political development of the county. The courthouse represents the important role of the county government as the administrative arm of state government. The state's increasing role in the ensuring the welfare of its citizen's is symbolized by the size, stature and prominent siting of this edifice. Its location in the Kenosha Civic Center is a testimony to the increasing responsibility of county government in the reform era of the early twentieth century.

Notes to Section 8:

<sup>1</sup>The period of significance encompasses the dates of construction of all the contributing buildings in the district as well as the important period of planning and completion of the Civic Center concept. The end date is the 50-year cutoff date for significance.

<sup>2</sup>Otis Trenary, Souvenir Kenosha County Court House, Kenosha (?): Kenosha County (?), 1925, p. 88.

<sup>3</sup>Nelson Peter Ross, "Architecture, Planning, and Transportation," in John A. Neuenschwander, Kenosha County in the Twentieth Century: A Topical History, Kenosha: Kenosha County Bicentennial Commission, 1976, pp. 429-30.

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid, pp. 430-31.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 434-443; Harland Bartholomew, The City Plan of Kenosha, Wisconsin, Kenosha: The City Planning Commission, 1925.

<sup>6</sup>Trenary, pp. 39-41; Ross, pp. 443-447; Carrie Cropley, Kenosha, From Pioneer Village to Modern City 1835-1935, Kenosha: Kenosha County Historical Society, 1958, pp. 165-166.

<sup>7</sup>Ross, p. 446; Cropley, pp. 167-168.

<sup>8</sup>Barbara Wyatt, ed., Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin, Vol. 2, Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986, Architecture, p. 2-18.

<sup>9</sup>Trenary, p. 17.

<sup>10</sup>Henry F. Withey and Elsie Rathburn Withey, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased), Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., 1970, p. 592.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., pp. 120-121.

<sup>12</sup>David Schuyler, The New Urban Landscape, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986, pp. 167-179.

<sup>13</sup>Robert Kelley, The Shaping of the American Past, Vol. 2, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1978, pp. 505-509.

<sup>14</sup>Schuyler, pp. 185-195; David R. Goldfield and Blaine A. Brownell, Urban America From Downtown to No Town, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1979, pp. 214-217.

<sup>15</sup>Goldfield and Brownell, pp. 215-219, 358-362.

<sup>16</sup>Norman John Johnston, Harland Bartholomew: His Comprehensive Plans and Science of Planning, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1964, University Microfilms, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan, 64-10, 386, pp. 2-8, 87-90, 122, 140, 166.

<sup>17</sup>Wyatt, Education, pp. 3-2--3-3.

<sup>18</sup>Glenn A. Doston and Marvin J. Happel, "Learning Opportunities Expanded for Kenoshans," Kenosha in the Twentieth Century, Bicentennial edition of the Kenosha News, 2-July 1976, pp. 94-100.

<sup>19</sup>Wyatt, Vol. I, County Government, pp. 8-3--8-5.

<sup>20</sup>Trenary, pp. 39-41.

## ARCHEOLOGICAL STATEMENT

Historical sources indicate that there were Native American campsites and activity in what is now Kenosha. No systematic survey of archeological sites was undertaken in this district, so it is unknown if any sites exist. There is a likelihood that excavation of the area may produce such sites, even though the surface of this district has been continually disturbed since the mid-nineteenth century.

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## PRESERVATION ACTIVITIES

The Landmarks Commission in Kenosha has identified this area of the city as an architecturally and historically significant group of civic buildings. They, along with the city's development department initiated the work for this nomination to the National Register. The commission is also working on a publication that will help publicize the significance of this neighborhood to the entire community. And, just recently, members of the Landmarks Commission and other local citizens participated in a successful effort to save the Courthouse Annex (old Jail) from demolition. The county currently plans to rehabilitate the building rather than demolish it for new construction. These buildings, because of their size, age, and use present constant maintenance problems, space concerns. The changing nature of government and educational needs in the community could threaten the buildings at any time in the future. The establishment of this historic district is an effort to maintain this area as a historic building group and help ensure its ultimate preservation.

## EXCEPTION B:

The Kenosha Public Museum is being nominated as a contributing building even though it has been moved to its current location. The movement of this building across the Civic Center Park to its current location was part of the completion of all four side of the Civic Center. Moving the building occurred in 1933, over 50 years ago, and the building has been used as a museum longer than it was ever a post office. Because of its role in completing the Civic Center, and because it has been over 50 years since it was moved, and because its architectural style is so outstanding and relevant to the rest of the district, it was decided that criterion B should be used for this building as an exception to the usual rule that moved buildings are not eligible for the National Register.

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### GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

#### Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the Civic Center Historic District are as follows: Beginning at the intersection of the west curblines of Sheridan Road and the south curblines of 56th St., then east along the south curblines of 56th St. to the intersection with the west curblines of 8th Avenue, then south along the west curblines of 8th Avenue to the intersection with the north curblines of 57th St., then west along this curblines to the intersection with the west curblines of Sheridan Road, then south along this curblines to the intersection with the north curblines of 58th St., then west along this curblines to the intersection with the east curblines of 10th Avenue, then north along this curblines to the intersection with the north curblines of 57th St., then west along this curblines to the intersection with the rear lot line of 5608 10th Ave., then generally north along this lot line, across 56th St. and along the rear lot line of 5516 10th Ave. to the intersection with the north lot line of 5516 10th Ave., then east along this line to the intersection with the east curblines of 10th Ave., then north along this line to the intersection with the rear lot line of 912 56th St., then east along this line to the intersection with the west curblines of Sheridan Road, then south along this line to the point of beginning.

#### Boundary Justification

The boundaries of this district include all extant historic properties related to the historic Civic Center. These properties were all built during the period of significance and sited around the Civic Center plaza or park between 1926 and 1933. The boundaries and inclusion of buildings within the district were made strictly for historical reasons, because they were part of the historic development of the Civic Center. All non Civic Center related buildings were excluded from the district.

#### UIM References Con't

E /16/432500/4714610

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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See Continuation Pages

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 10 acres

**UTM References**

A	<u>1,6</u>	<u>43,24,6,0</u>	<u>4,71,4,9,0,0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>1,6</u>	<u>43,26,8,0</u>	<u>4,71,4,8,2,0</u>

B	<u>1,6</u>	<u>43,25,6,0</u>	<u>4,71,4,9,2,0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D	<u>1,6</u>	<u>43,25,9,0</u>	<u>4,71,4,6,2,0</u>

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

See Continuation Pages

See continuation sheet

**Boundary Justification**

See Continuation Pages

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title	<u>Carol Lohry Cartwright, Consultant</u>	date	<u>April 28, 1988</u>
organization	<u>City of Kenosha</u>	telephone	<u>414-473-6820</u>
street & number	<u>R. 2, 5581A Hackett Rd.</u>	state	<u>WI</u>
city or town	<u>Whitewater</u>	zip code	<u>53190</u>



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceJAN 24 1989  
JUL 24 1989National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 9 Page 1 Civic Center Historic District,  
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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places  
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Section number Photos Page 1 Civic Center Historic District,  
Kenosha, Kenosha County, WI

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CIVIC CENTER HISTORIC DISTRICT, Kenosha,  
Kenosha County, WI. Photographs by C.  
Cartwright, October, 1987. Neg. at State  
Historical Society.

- #1 of 16: Civic Center Park and looking out of the district at 56th St. and Sheridan Rd.,  
view from southwest.
- #2 of 16: Kenosha County Courthouse, view from southeast.
- #3 of 16: Kenosha County Courthouse, view from southeast.
- #4 of 16: Courthouse Annex (Old Jail), view from the west.
- #5 of 16: Behind Courthouse complex, out of district, view from southwest.
- #6 of 16: Between Courthouse and Old Moose Lodge looking out of district, view from south.
- #7 of 16: Civic Center Park, view from northeast.
- #8 of 16: Old Moose Lodge, view from southeast.
- #9 of 16: Looking west down 56th St., view from east, out of district.
- #10 of 16: Kenosha Public Museum and looking down 57th St. out of district, view from east.
- #11 of 16: Old Kenosha High School, view from northeast.
- #12 of 16: Looking up 57th St., out of district, view from northwest.
- #13 of 16: 58th St., out of district, view from east.
- #14 of 16: U. S. Post Office, view from west.
- #15 of 16: U. S. Post Office, view from southwest.
- #16 of 16: 56th St. and Sheridan Road, view from northwest looking out of district.

JAN 24 1908  
JUL 24 1909

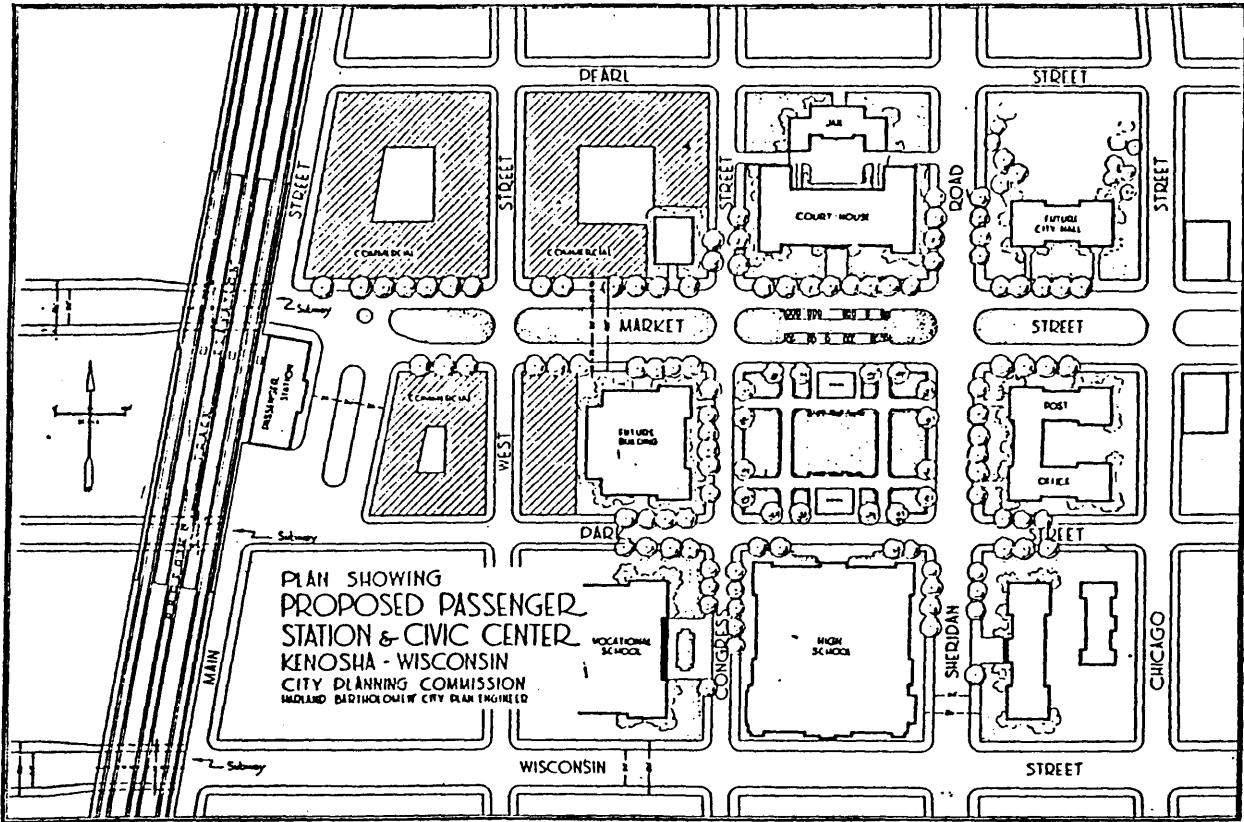


Plate 29.

Figure 1: Civic Center Plan. From Harland Bartholomew, The City Plan of Kenosha, Wisconsin, Kenosha: The City Planning Commission, 1925.

JUL 24 1989

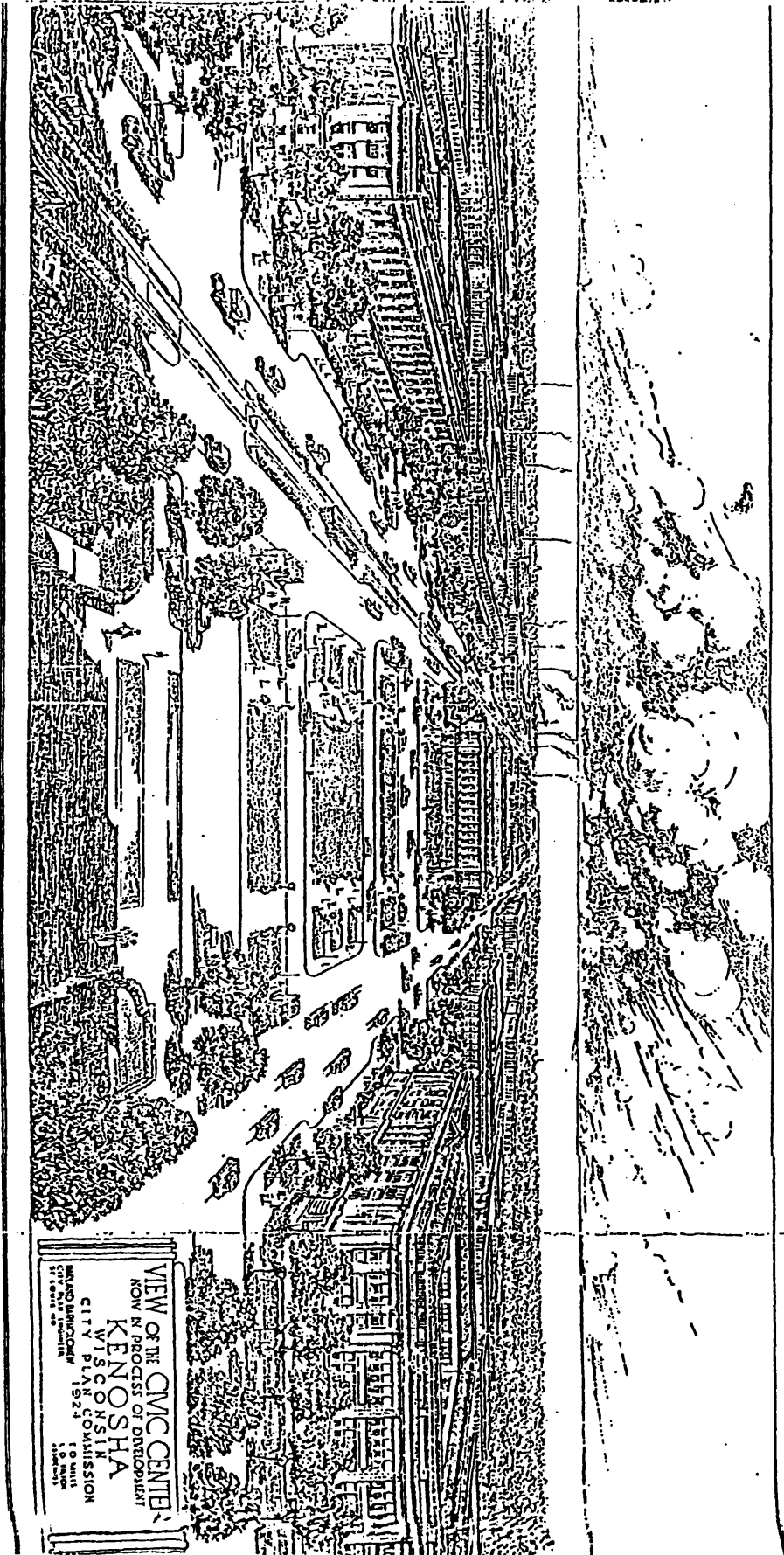
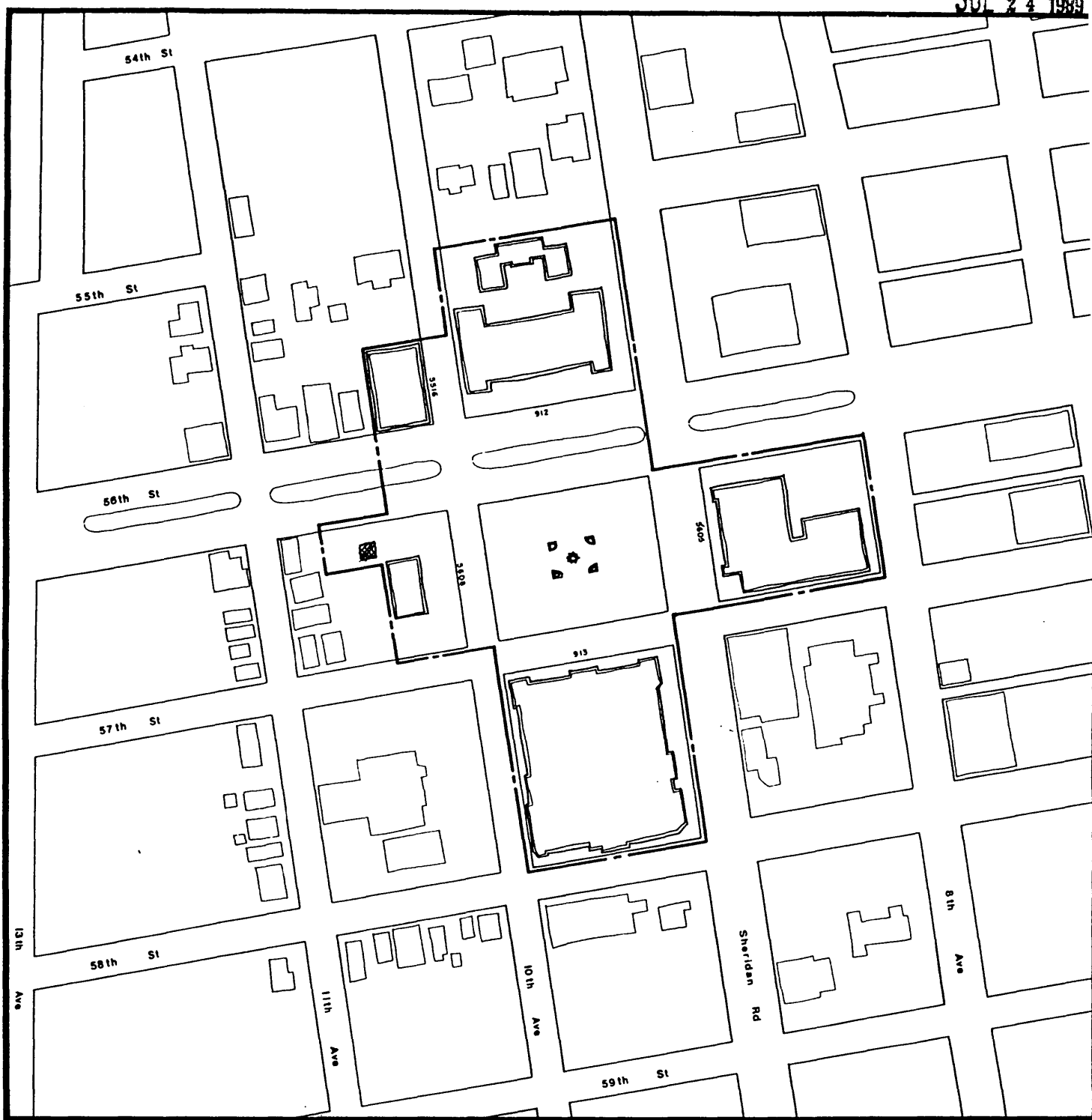


Figure 2: Civic Center Sketch. From Harland Bartholomew, The City Plan of Kenosha, Wisconsin, Kenosha: The City Planning Commission, 1925.



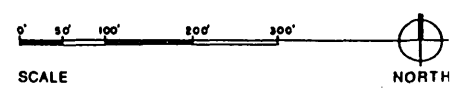
**CIVIC CENTER HISTORIC DISTRICT  
KENOSHA, WISCONSIN**

Figure 3

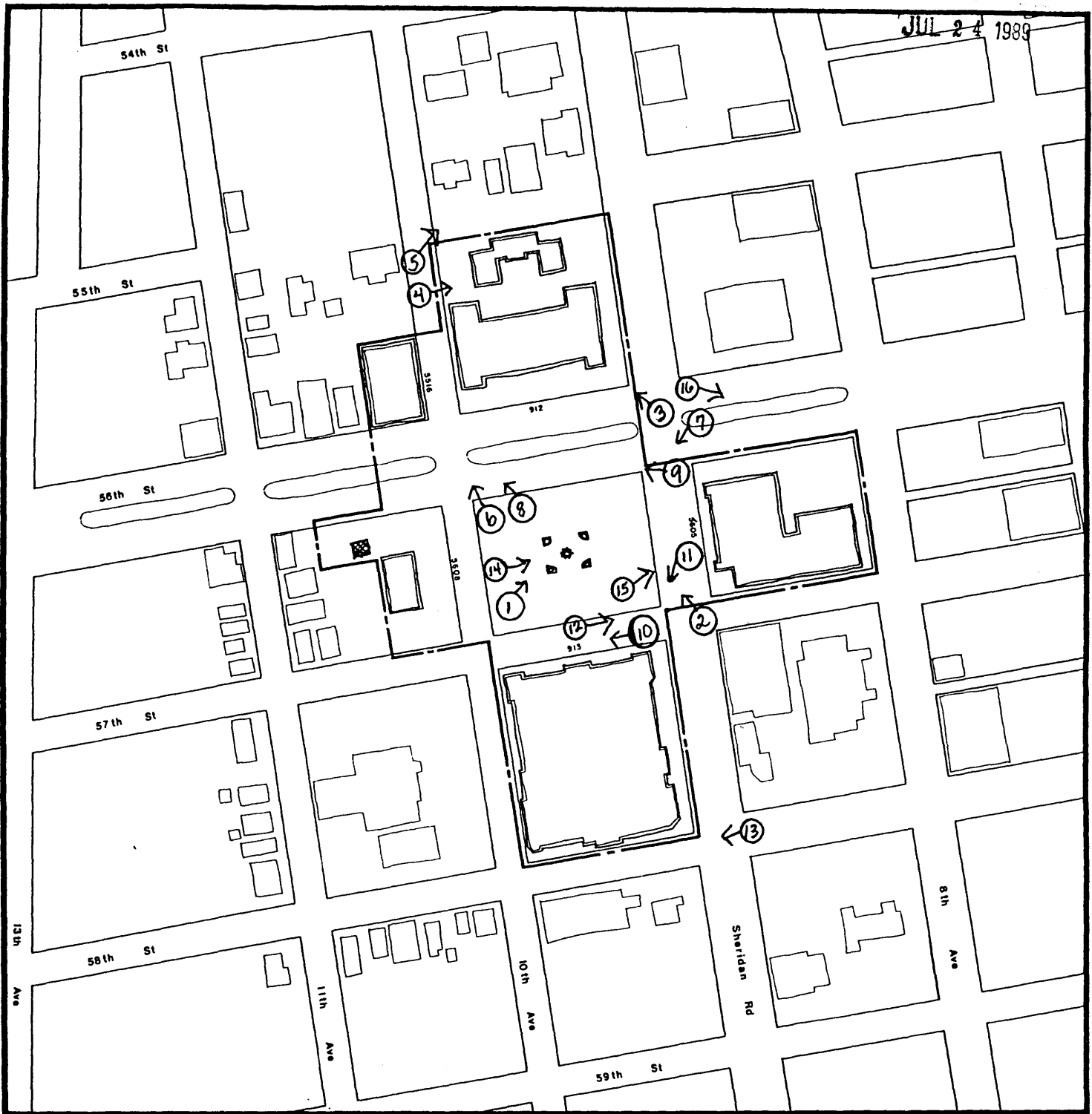
**LEGEND**

- DISTRICT BOUNDARY
- 0123  
1242  
PROPERTY ADDRESS
- 1242 SURVEY NUMBER
- CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES
- NON-CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES
- ⊙ PHOTO NUMBER AND VIEW

PREPARED FOR THE CITY OF KENOSHA, MARCH 1988








JUL 24 1989



**CIVIC CENTER HISTORIC DISTRICT  
KENOSHA, WISCONSIN**

Figure 4

**LEGEND**

-  DISTRICT BOUNDARY
-  PROPERTY ADDRESS  
SURVEY NUMBER
-  CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES
-  NON-CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES
-  PHOTO NUMBER AND VIEW

PREPARED FOR THE CITY OF KENOSHA, MARCH 1988.

