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NPS Form 10-900 (Rev. 8/86) Wisconsin Word Processor Format (1331D) (Approved 3/87)

United State Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in <u>Guidelines for Completing</u> <u>National Register form</u> (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. Use letter quality printer in 12 pitch, using an 85 space line and a 10 space left margin. Use only archival paper (20 pound, acid free paper with a 2% alkaline reserve).

1. Name of Property

historic name

Conrad Cottages Historic District

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number	various, see inventory	<u>N/A</u>	not for publication
city, town	Janesville	N/A	vicinity
state Wisconsin	code WI county Rock	code 105	zip code 53545
3. Classification			
Ownership of Prope	rty Category of Property	No. of Reso	urces within Property
private	building(s)	contributin	g noncontributing
public-local	<u>x</u> district	7	buildings
public_State	site		sites
public-Federal	structure		structures
	object		objects
Name of related mu	ltiple property listing:		<u>0</u> Total ributing resources
N/A		National Re	listed in the gister 0

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4. State/Federal Agency Certification		
As the designated authority under the l		
amended, I hereby certify that this x		
eligibility meets the documentation st		
National Register of Historic Places an		
requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part		
does not meet the National Register	criteriaSee continuatio	n sheet.
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Signature of certifying official Historic Preservation Officer-WI	Date	
State of Federal agency and bureau		
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In my opinion, the propertymeets	_ does not meet the National Re	gister
criteria See continuation sheet.		
Signature of commenting or other offic:	ial Date	
State or Federal agency and bureau		
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5. National Park Service Certification		
I, hereby, certify that this property :	is:	Let it shows
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Architectural Classification	Materials		
(enter categories from instructions)	(enter categories from instructions)		
	foundation	stone	
Greek Revival	walls -	brick	
Second Empire		weatherboard	
	roof	asphalt	
	other	wood	

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Conrad Cottages Historic District is a small group of largely intact residential buildings fronting historic Milton Avenue in Janesville, a medium-sized community in south-central Wisconsin. The district is made up of four nearly identical workers' cottages, along with three mid-nineteenth century houses of differing architectural styles. All of these buildings are single-family houses, except for one of the cottages, which has been subdivided into three apartments.

Milton Avenue is one of Janesville's major thoroughfares. The topography of the district is relatively flat, lying east of the large hill that makes up much of Janesville's near east side. Milton Avenue, as it runs through the district, is a two-way street with parking on one side of the street, and it is improved with concrete curbs, gutters, and sidewalks. Because Milton Avenue is a major artery, traffic is heavy throughout the day.

The houses on the south side of Milton Avenue sit on relatively large urban lots, while the two houses on the north side of the avenue sit on smaller lots. All lots have mature lawns, trees, and bushes. Setbacks on the south side of the avenue are much deeper than those of the houses on the north side of the street. Other than the large lots, there are no open spaces in the district. The two houses on the north side of Milton Avenue are separated by modern and remodeled older houses, and by a large, modern fire station.

The four houses constructed for Charles B. Conrad in 1882, are built of brick. Of the other three houses in the district, two have clapboard siding and one is covered with asbestos shingles. The four cottages are primarily front gabled vernacular forms with a few simple late Italianate details. The other houses feature Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, or Second Empire details. The Greek Revival house was constructed around 1845; the Gothic Revival-influenced house was built in 1855; and the Second Empire house was constructed in 1870.

The Conrad Cottages Historic District is distinguished from its neighbors because of the age and stylish character of its buildings. Development along Milton Avenue occurred earlier than in much of the surrounding neighborhood because it was an early historic thoroughfare out of the city. The appearance of the Conrad Cottages is also an unusual feature in the city of Janesville, and it is part of the reason why this district stands out from its surroundings.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7 Page 1 Conrad Cottages Historic District, Janesville, Rock County, WI

DESCRIPTION OF BUILDINGS IN THE DISTRICT

306 Milton Avenue Hiram Taylor House c.1845 (1)

The Hiram Taylor house is a one and one-half story Greek Revival house with an L plan. It has a very low-pitched multi-gable roof, a plain wooden frieze, and returned eaves. The house is covered with asbestos shingles. The windows are sixover-six light double-hung sashes decorated with white shutters. The main entrance is decorated by a wooden architrave surround and sidelights. A veranda covers much of the first story of the main facade. Probably constructed around the turn of the century, the veranda has Tuscan columns and a plain balustrade.

This house was built for attorney Hiram Taylor. He and his family lived in this house until he died in 1875. After that, the house was purchased by Desdemona Moon, who lived there with Frances and Betsey Moon until the turn of the century. During most of the first half of the twentieth century, John and Mary Lynch owned the house, and since the 1940s, it has been the home for James and Sylvia Finnane. (2)

235 Milton Avenue Ole Meyher House 1855 (3)

This one-and-one-half story rectangular plan front gable form house has details that suggest the Gothic Revival style. The steeply-pitched gable roof has wide eaves and a simple wooden frieze. The windows of the second story are six-over-six light double-hung sashes trimmed with very thin label moldings. Windows on the first story are tall, nine-over-nine light double-hung sashes with the same trim. The main entrance is decorated with a transom, sidelights, a wood surround, and a thin label molding.

The house was built for Ole Meyher, who owned it until 1861. Between 1862 and 1867, it was owned by Ann Bagstram. Since neither owner appears in city directories, it is possible that this house was a rental property. Between 1873 and 1882, Jacob Nelson owned it, and between 1883 and 1925, it was the home of John and Helen Manning. The house has been restored by its current owner. (4)

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327 Milton Ave. John C. Jenkins House 1870 (5)

This one-and-one-half story frame house has a mansard roof with three gable-roofed dormers projecting from the front facade. There are round-arched windows in the dormers and the projecting gables are decorated with brackets. Under the wide eaves of the mansard there is a wide molded frieze decorated with modillions. The house is sided with clapboards and the tall windows have single-light double hung sashes decorated with cornices and shutters. The main entrance features paired wooden doors surmounted by a transom. Pilasters curve upward to support the roof of the front porch, which also features thin columns, an arched cornice, and a paneled balustrade.

This house was built for John C. Jenkins, who owned it until 1876. It was then owned by the Zeininger family between 1877 and 1939. (6)

312 Milton Ave. 318 Milton Ave. 324 Milton Ave. 330 Milton Ave. Conrad Cottages 1882 (7)

These four almost identical cottages are all built of cream brick and have details that suggest the late Italianate style. All four buildings are two-stories in height and have a low-pitched gable roof with wide overhanging eaves. Cottages 312 and 318 have two-story hip roofed rectangular bays that project from the west walls of the buildings. Cottages 324 and 330 have one-story rectangular bays projecting from the west walls. Windows on all the cottages are tall, single-light, double hung sashes decorated with brick label moldings.

The entrances vary slightly from cottage to cottage. Cottage 312 has a simple wooden door accented with sidelights. It is covered with a Queen Anne style porch featuring turned posts and a spool-and-spindle balustrade. Cottage 318 has a simple door decorated with sidelights. It is sheltered by a simple Colonial style broken pediment entrance hood. Cottage 324 has a simple door and its sidelights have been filled in. It is sheltered by a Colonial style full pediment entrance hood. Cottage 330 has a double-door entrance decorated with a transom. It is sheltered by a Colonial style broken pediment entrance hood.

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These cottages were constructed in 1882 for Charles B. Conrad, a local grocer. Conrad was the son of Charles H. Conrad, who was a carpenter, grist mill owner, local politician, and grocery store owner. Charles H. Conrad owned the land that these cottages sit on until his death in 1877. In 1882, his son, Charles B. Conrad erected these four cottages. In 1884, Charles B. Conrad had the land replatted under his ownership. The cottages have been primarily rental properties throughout their history. Today, cottages 318, 324, and 330 are still single-family rentals. Cottage 312 has been divided up into three apartments, and the current owner lives in one of the units. (8)

There are several garages and/or outbuildings within the boundaries of this district, but they are not significant and are not included in the building inventory.

#### Notes

(1) Tax Rolls for the City of Janesville, on file at the Rock County Historical Society, Janesville, Wisconsin; field observation.

(2) Tax Rolls; City Directories for the City of Janesville, on file at the Janesville Public Library, Janesville, Wisconsin.

(3) Tax Rolls.

(4) Tax Rolls, City Directories.

- (5) Tax Rolls.
- (6) Ibid.
- (7) <u>Ibid</u>.

(8) Tax Rolls; C. W. Butterfield, <u>History of Rock County</u>, <u>Wisconsin</u>, Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1879, p. 702.

#### Building Inventory

Address	Name	Style	Date of Construction	Status
235 Milton Ave.	Ole Meyher House	Gothic Revival	1855	С*
306 Milton Ave.	Hiram Taylor House	Greek Revival	c.1845	С
312 Milton Ave.	Conrad Cottage	Italianate	1882	С
318 Milton Ave.	Conrad Cottage	Italianate	18 <b>82</b>	С
324 Milton Ave.	Conrad Cottage	Italianate	1882	С
327 Milton Ave.	John C. Jenkins House	Second Empire	1870	С
330 Milton Ave. *C=contributing	Conrad Cottage	Italianate	1882	С

8. Statement of Significance						
Certifying official has considered the s	significan	ce of thi	s prope	rty in	relat	ion to
other properties:nationally	S	tatewide		<u>x</u> 10	cally	
Applicable National Register Criteria	A	B <u>x</u> C	D			
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)	AB	C	D	E	F	G
Areas of Significance						
(enter categories from instructions) Architecture		f Signifi 45-1882 (		-	ficant N/A	Dates
						······································
	Cultural N/A	Affiliat	ion			
Significant Person N/A	Architect Unknown	-			<u></u>	
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State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Conrad Cottages Historic District is being nominated to the National Register for its local significance under criterion C, Architecture. This small residential district contains fine representative examples of Greek Revival and Second Empire style houses, and good examples of Gothic Revival and Italianate style-influenced gabled ell form vernacular houses. Especially noteworthy are the four cream brick houses located side-by-side on the south side of Milton Avenue. These houses are variations on a single design and were built in 1882 as rental housing by Charles B. Conrad. They are of particular significance for being rare examples of nineteenth century tract development in Janesville.

#### Historical Background

When the first white settlers came to the area of the Rock River that was to become Janesville, they found the site to be attractive for early settlement because of the abundant water power and the transportation route provided by the nearby Rock River, one of the most important waterways of south-central Wisconsin. In 1835, the federal government made the land at the Janesville site available for sale, and much of the west side of the Rock River was platted and purchased by speculators. But, a small community began to develop on the east side of the river. (2)

Among the early settlers on the east side of the river was Henry F. Janes. Janes' cabin was an early inn along the river and Janes also operated a ferry service. Janes' platted some of the east side of the river, and the land in his plat was the first to be developed in the city. This resulted in Janes' name becoming attached to the community, even though Janes soon moved farther west. (3)

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				Janesv	ille, Rod	k County,	WI

In the winter of 1836-37, the territorial legislature established the Rock County seat at Janesville. This and the water power of the Rock River boosted Janesville's growth. The state legislature incorporated Janesville in 1853, at the beginning of what would be a boom decade in the growth of the city. The mills erected along the Rock River provided employment for city residents and a place for the pioneer farmers of the surrounding "Rock Prairie" to bring their grain and other produce to market. The farmers boosted retail trade in the city and many commercial blocks were erected during the 1850s as well. (4)

Prior to the 1840s, most of the pioneer buildings in Janesville were clustered near Janes' cabin on the east side of the Rock River. In 1845, there were 157 buildings in the city, and only four were located on the west side of the river. But, by 1850, large residential neighborhoods were beginning to develop in two areas on the west side of the river. Residential growth on the east side of the river was quite slow in the mid-nineteenth century, due to the difficulties of building on a steep rise just east of Janesville's downtown. (5)

After the Civil War, and on into the late nineteenth century, technology and road improvements in the city allowed for the development of the area east of Janesville's downtown into a prestigious neighborhood of large homes. Most of this prestigious neighborhood is included in the Courthouse Hill Historic District (NRHP, 1986). The rest of the neighborhood, along with a large area of middle-class homes is located in the Prospect Hill Historic District (NRHP, pending).

The houses in the Conrad Cottages historic district were built during different periods of Janesville's history. The Hiram Taylor House (306 Milton Ave.) is the oldest, built for a pioneer-era attorney. Taylor was able to build at this location for two reasons. First, his large lot was just on the other side of the hill, making construction easier. Second, the site was located on a major road into Janesville, so Taylor did not have to wait for street construction in the area before he could build.

In the mid-nineteenth century, this part of Milton Avenue was on the rural outskirts of the city. Taylor owned about four acres of land, making his home a "country estate." Eventually, his lot was subdivided and included into Prospect's Addition, an east side plat. The house has retained its deep setback and wide sideyards that still suggest a rural setting.

The Mehyer House (235 Milton Ave.) was built in 1855, during the boom decade in Janesville's history. It was built at the edge of the original plat of

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Section number 8 Page 2 Conrad Cottages Historic District, Janesville, Rock County, WI

the city, and again, its early construction date was due to its location along Milton Avenue. The Second Empire Jenkins House (237 Milton Ave.) was built as part of the first wave of construction on the east side of the city, when builders were able to conquer the hill.

The four Conrad Cottages were built in 1882, during a period in which rapid development of the the area east of the Courthouse Hill neighborhood occurred. Tract development such as this were never popular in Janesville in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the Conrad Cottages Historic District is one of the rare examples of such a development in the city.

Other houses subsequently filled in the lots between the houses in this district, but they are either too remodeled or too new to be a part of the district. A modern fire station and apartment complex have been recent intrusions in the neighborhood.

#### Architecture

The Conrad Cottages Historic District is architecturally significant both for the design of its individual buildings and because it contains four buildings that comprise a rare resource type in Janesville. Two of the houses in the district are good representative examples of the Greek Revival and Second Empire styles, and a third is a good example of a Gothic Revival style-influenced vernacular form house. The remaining four buildings are nearly identical Italianate style-influenced cream brick houses that were built in 1882 as rental housing. Nineteenth century "tract" development in Janesville, even on this small a scale, is quite rare. The Conrad Cottages are significant as Janesville's most intact example of this type of development.

The Greek Revival style was the first national style commonly seen in Wisconsin; it was popular between 1830 and 1870. Greek Revival buildings are formal, orderly, and symmetrical. While Wisconsin has a number of elaborate Greek Revival houses, more commonly the style is seen on vernacular houses in the form of symmetrical massing, regular fenestration, simple cornices, and returned eaves, and entrances decorated with a transom and/or sidelights. (6)

The Hiram Taylor house (306 Milton Ave.) is a fine example of a commonly seen Greek Revival house type in Wisconsin. It has a vernacular gabled ell form, and its details include returned eaves, six-over-six light windows, and a fine entrance with sidelights and an architrave trim. Even though the Taylor house is a simple one, it is still one of the most intact houses with Greek Revival details in a city whose

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Greek Revival-era houses have almost all been remodeled, and where the Italianate style is pervasive.

The Gothic Revival style was popular in Wisconsin between 1850 and 1880. Characteristics of the style are steeply-pitched roofs, pointed arch windows, pinnacles, finials, bargeboard, turrets, and label moldings. Gothic Revival houses are not overly common in the state, and the more elaborate examples are rare. (7)

The Meyher house (235 Milton Ave.), built in 1855, is a good example of a front gabled vernacular form house that expresses the Gothic Revival style primarily in its form and massing rather than elaborate details. The very steep gable roof, the tall first story multi-light windows, and the unusually thin label moldings combine to make this an interesting example of the style.

The Second Empire style was popular in Wisconsin between 1870 and 1880, although it was not as popular as the Italianate or Queen Anne styles. Second Empire buildings feature mansard roofs, often with projecting dormers, and elaborate details that are similar to Italianate style details. (8)

The Jenkins house (327 Milton Ave.) is one of the few examples of the Second Empire style in Janesville, as the Italianate style maintained its hold on city buildings throughout the 1870s and 1880s. It is a small building, but it has all the hallmarks of the style, including the mansard roof with dormers, and Italianate style details. While not the most elaborate example of the style in Janesville, the Jenkins house has a high level of integrity, with most of its details intact.

The Italianate style was very popular in Wisconsin between 1850 and 1880. Early Italianate houses generally have square plans, low-pitched hip roofs, wide eaves with brackets, tall windows with round arches or label moldings, and, often, a cupola. Later Italianate houses often were more rectangular than square in plan, and were taller with gable as well as hip roofs. Like other styles, the Italianate style in Wisconsin is seen on many buildings only in its form and massing or in its use of brackets or window moldings. (9)

The Italianate style was the most popular nineteenth century style in Janesville, and its use continued well into the 1880s. The Conrad Cottages suggest the late Italianate style in their vertical form and massing and in the shape and decoration of their windows. The use of cream brick in these buildings is also typical of many of Janesville's Italianate houses.

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The Conrad Cottages are more important as a type of development than as examples of architectural style. Despite having a strong commercial base, Janesville has always been known as an industrial city. From the mills of the nineteenth century to the giant auto assembly plant of the late twentieth century, Janesville historically has been a city of factory workers. None of these historic industries, however, were responsible for building tract housing or planned communities for their workers. Instead, local builders constructed a wide variety of vernacular houses that were occupied by working-class families. A large concentration of this type of housing is located in the Old Fourth Ward Historic District (NRHP, 1991).

The Conrad Cottages are a small group of late nineteenth century working-class houses. These almost identical cottages have minimal architectural detail, but exhibit solid masonry construction and contain room for a good-sized family. There are only a few places in Janesville where groups of identical houses were built next to each other, and none dates earlier than the Conrad Cottages. Because this building group is so unusual in a city with a history that suggests the possibility of many such building groups, the Conrad Cottages are architecturally significant in the city.

#### Notes:

(1) Because the district is significant for its architectural character, the period of significance encompasses the construction dates of the houses included in the district.

(2) Orrin Guernsey and Josiah F. Willard, <u>History of Rock county and</u> <u>Transactions of the Rock County Agricultural Society and Mechanics' Institute</u>, Janesville: Rock County Agricultural Society and Mechanics' Institute, 1856, pp. 153-160.

(3) Ibid.

(4) Ibid.

(5) C.-W. Butterfield, <u>The History of Rock County, Wisconsin</u>, Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1879, p. 534; Alasco D. Brigham, "A Brief Sketch of the History of Janesville," in the 1859-1860 <u>Janesville City Directory</u>, Janesville: Wright and Erving Printers, 1859, p. 22.

(6) Barbara Wyatt, ed., <u>Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin, Vol. II</u>, Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986, Architecture, p. 2-3.

- (7) Ibid., p. 2-5.
- (8) <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 2-11.
- (9) Ibid., p. 2-6.

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#### ARCHEOLOGICAL STATEMENT

Historical sources indicate that there was considerable Native American activity in the Janesville area. However, no survey of this activity was undertaken as part of this nomination. Although there has been surface activity in this district for the last 150 years, a thorough study and excavation of the area may still reveal potential archeological and historic resources in the district.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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Previous documentation on file (NPS)	):			
preliminary determination of	· ·			
individual listing (36 CFR 67)				
has been requested				
previously listed in the National	1 Primary location of additional data:			
Register	State Historic preservation office			
previously determined eligible by				
the National Register	Federal agency			
designated a National Historic	x Local government			
Landmark	University			
recorded by Historic American	Other			
Buildings Survey #	Specify repository:			
recorded by Historic American	Comm. Develop. Dept. City of Janesville			
Engineering Record #				
	-			
10. Geographical Data				
Acreage of property4.0 acres	· · · 			
UTM References				
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<u>x</u> See continuation sheet

x See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

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<u>x</u> See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By	
Name/title Carol Lohry Cartwright, Consultan	nt
organization for the City of Janesville	date 5/24/91
street & number 18 N. Jackson St.	telephone (608) 755-3107
city or town Janesville	state WI zip code 53545

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Section number 9 Page 1 Conrad Cottages Historic District, Janesville, Rock County, WI

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES, CONTINUED

#### **Primary Sources**

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- City Directories for the City of Janesville. On file at the Janesville Public Library, Janesville, Wisconsin.
- Plat Maps for the City of Janesville. On file in the Archives of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.
- Tax Rolls for the City of Janesville. On file at the Rock County Historical Society, Janesville, Wisconsin.

#### Secondary Sources

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- Brigham, Alasco D. "A Brief Sketch of the History of Janesville." In the 1859-1860 Janesville City Directory. Janesville: Wright and Erving Printers, 1859.
- Butterfield, C. W. The History of Rock County, Wisconsin. Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1879.
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NPS Form 10-900a (Rev. 8-86) Wisconsin Word Processor Format Approved 2/87 United States Department of the Interior National Park Service NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET Section number 10 Page 1 Conrad Cottages Historic District,

#### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the intersection of the east lot line of 330 Milton Avenue and the rear lot lines of 306-330 Milton Avenue, then west along that line to the west lot line of 306 Milton Avenue, then north along that line to the south right-of-way (ROW) line of Milton Avenue, then west along that line to the west lot line of 235 Milton Avenue, then north along that line to the rear lot line of 235 Milton Avenue, then east along that line to the rear lot line of 235 Milton Avenue, then south along that line to the north ROW line of Milton Avenue, then east along that line to the west lot line of 327 Milton Avenue, then north along that line to the rear lot line of 327 Milton Avenue, then east along that line to the east lot lines of 327 and 330 Milton Avenue, then south along that line to the point of beginning.

Janesville, Rock County, WI

#### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

This boundary includes the architecturally significant houses in the 300 block of Milton Avenue, along with the Conrad Cottages, an architecturally significant building group. It draws out the modern intrusions along this street, along with the less distinctive houses that do not meet the criteria for the formation of this district; that is, that it includes four architecturally distinctive elements of this part of Milton Avenue. The result is a compact district that represents an architecturally significant group of buildings in this area of Janesville.

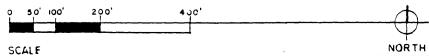


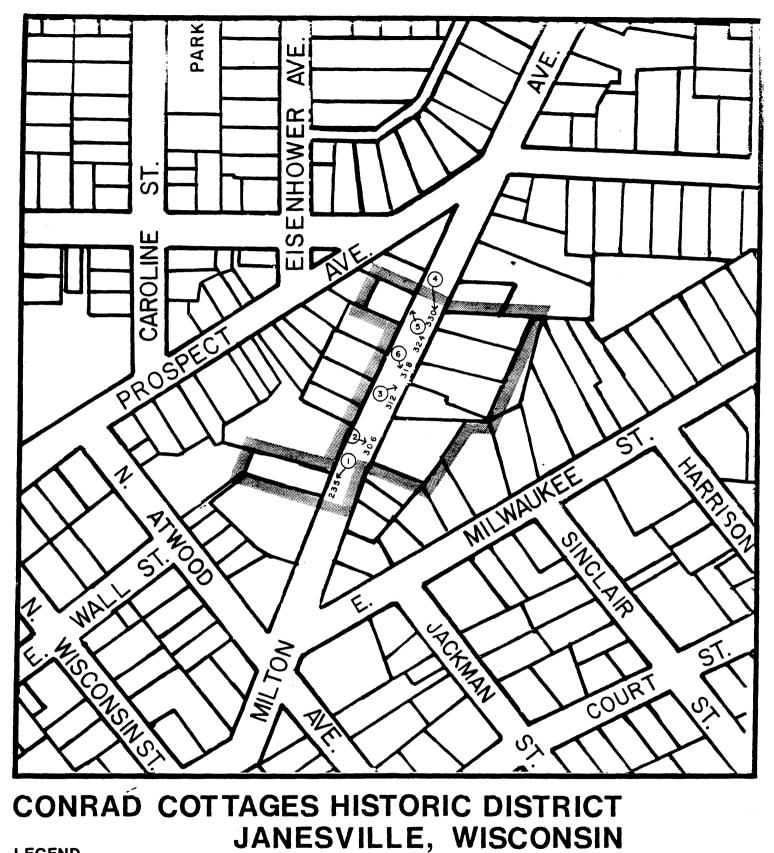
# CONRAD COTTAGES HISTORIC DISTRICT JANESVILLE, WISCONSIN

### LEGEND

DISTRICT BOUNDARY PROPERTY ADDRESS

PREPARED FOR THE JANESVILLE HISTORIC COMMISSION BY THE CITY OF JANESVILLE PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENTS JUNE, 1991





## LEGEND



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ROCK COUNTY **CONTRIBUTING** DISTRICT BOUNDARY PROPERTY ADDRESS AND VIEW

PPEPARED FOR THE JANESVILLE HISTORIC COMMISSION BY THE CITY OF JANESVILLE PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENTS JUNE, 1991

50'	100'	200'	4 90
1	,		1

SCALE

NORTH