

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only
received DEC 30 1981
date entered FEB 1 1982

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Finch, VanSlyck and McConville Dry Goods Company Building

and/or common Finch Building

2. Location

street & number 366 Wacouta Street ___ not for publication

city, town St. Paul ___ vicinity of congressional district 4th

state Minnesota code 22 county Ramsey code 123

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name James P. Gardner, Gardner Management Company

street & number 366 Wacouta Street

city, town St. Paul ___ vicinity of state Minnesota

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Registry of Deeds/Ramsey County Courthouse

street & number 15 West Kellogg Blvd.

city, town St. Paul state Minnesota

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes ___ no

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Visually and logistically, the Finch Building defines the eastern perimeter of Mears (formerly Smith) Park in the Lowertown area of St. Paul. This area is located within the central business district and is within two to six blocks of railroad lines and the Mississippi River for easy access to these transportation systems.

The Finch Building is an eight-story reinforced concrete structure with a buff brick exterior facing. It is executed in a simple Neo-classic style, as is evidenced by the formal entries and pilaster arrangements on the Wacouta and East Fifth Street facades. The original (southern) portion of the building was constructed in 1911 by the George Grant Construction Company of St. Paul in accordance with designs by architect James F. Denson. In 1923, the building was extended fifty feet (two bays) to the north to East Sixth Street. This work was accomplished under the direction of St. Paul architect C.H. Johnston, Jr., and gave the structure a total ground floor area of nearly an acre. Presently, the Finch Building measures 245 feet by 150 feet, not including loading docks.

Physically, the Finch Building is a reinforced concrete post and beam system supporting reinforced concrete floors capable of supporting loads of 250 pounds per square foot. Its fireproof construction was a major requirement for the dry goods operations housed in the building. Expansive double-hung windows provide great amounts of natural light into the office and interior work areas.

On the exterior, distinguishing design features include a regular progression of bays. Prior to the 1923 addition, the principal (Wacouta Street) facade was totally symmetrical, with the central eight of the ten bays accentuated by pilasters, a projecting cornice, and segmental arches (on the seventh story). This treatment conveyed the impression that the central portion of the building projected slightly from the main body. The 1911 and 1923 sections of the Finch Building are unified by the sympathetic use of identical brick for facing material and by the continuation of water-tables, band courses, and parapets throughout.

Although no longer occupied by the original tenants (and owners), the Finch, VanSlyck, and McConville Dry Goods Company, the Finch Building serves a variety of commercial and wholesaling interests and continues to be the largest structure of this function in the Lowertown area of St. Paul.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1911, 1923

Builder/Architect James Denson (1911); C.H. Johnson, Jr. (1923)

Builder: George Grant Construction Co.

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Constructed in 1911 and expanded in 1923, the former Finch, VanSlyck and McConville Dry Goods Company building is significant both as one of the largest wholesaling/commercial structures erected in St. Paul, and as a symbol of St. Paul's reputation as one of the major wholesaling cities in the Midwest in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The firm which became Finch, VanSlyck and McConville began as a small retail operation in 1856 and by 1863 pioneered in becoming exclusively wholesale (this took place at the time which George R. Finch joined the firm). Operations continued to expand, resulting in a widespread distribution of products throughout the northwest, and combined sales and assets reached a record \$8 million. The construction of the mammoth reinforced concrete and brick structure at Wacouta and East Fifth Streets marked a major plateau in the firm's career and contributed to establishing St. Paul's reputation as a major wholesaling center. In 1926, the firm merged with another major St. Paul dry goods firm, Lindeke, Warner & Sons, to become the largest such establishment in the city. (The building was purchased in 1941 by the Davidson and Gardner Companies and developed into quarters for offices and mercantile and light manufacturing establishments.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Newspaper Clipping File. Finch, VanSlydk, & the McConville. St. Paul Public Library. Castle, Henry A. History of Saint Paul and Vicinity, (1912), 3 vols. pp. 680-81, 1167-68. St. Paul Dispatch: Illustrated Saint Paul (1892).
 Brochure: "Finch Building" (ca.1943) by Davidson & Gardner Co's., Managers.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approx. 1 acre

Quadrangle name St. Paul East

Quadrangle scale 7.5

UMT References

A	<u>15</u>	<u>493140</u>	<u>4977160</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C			
E			
G			

B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D			
F			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

Beginning at the southwesterly corner of the intersection of East Fifth Street and Wacouta Street; thence northerly along Wacouta Street a distance of 295 feet to its intersection with East Sixth Street; thence easterly along East Sixth Street a distance of 200 feet to the

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries (see continuation sheet)

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Charles W. Nelson, Historical Architect		
organization	Minnesota Historical Society	date	January 1981
street & number	240 Summit Avenue	telephone	(612) 296-9073
city or town	St. Paul	state	Minnesota

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Russell W. Fridley
 title State Historic Preservation Officer
 date 12/10/81

For HCRS use only
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
William H. Bowman date 2-1-82
 Keeper of the National Register
 Attest: Bruce McClelland date 1/28/82
 Chief of Registration

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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Finch, VanSlyck and McConville Dry Goods Company Building, St. Paul, Ramsey Co.

CONTINUATION SHEET

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alley; thence southerly along the alley a distance of 80 feet; thence westerly along said alley a distance of 50 feet; thence southerly along said alley a distance of 215 feet to its point of intersection with East Fifth Street; thence westerly a distance of 150 feet to the point of beginning.