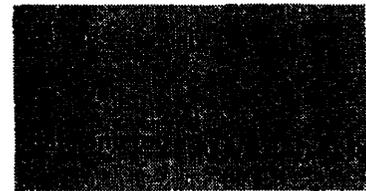


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V. DESCRIPTION OF MAIN STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT - Roughly Main St. between 1st and 3rd Sts.

This district includes the most significant architectural and/or historical commercial buildings in Trempealeau. Clustered together in a two-block area along Main Street north of the Mississippi River, the buildings of the district are relatively well-constructed turn-of-the-century structures which not only possess some significant architectural uniqueness in the pivotal structures, but also possess a continuity of scale and design in the remaining buildings even though they are widely spaced and present little streetscape density. This continuity of design may be explained by the fact that this commercial district was formed primarily after 1888, when a fire devastated the original Trempealeau commercial district along the riverfront. Unfortunately, after the fire, Trempealeau declined economically, and building density in the new Main Street commercial district was never achieved.

Most of the district's buildings are two-story frame or brick structures with flat or gable roofs and simple to elaborate cornices of wood, pressed metal, or other materials. Gable roofed buildings have "boomtown" falsefronts, are frame constructed, and show the most alterations. Brick buildings have the highest integrity overall, as well as the most elaborate architectural details including belt courses, decorative brickwork, parapets, and elaborate cornices. Many first-floor storefront alterations have been done to buildings in the district, including replacing original storefronts with the application of wood, metal, asphalt, or asbestos siding and new openings. Again, the frame buildings have fared worse in this regard than the brick buildings. However, many decorative elements on all the buildings remain, particularly at the second story level.

Despite some loss of integrity, this district maintains its turn of the century charm and character because the buildings, while widely spaced, are clustered in a small two-block area, and because they have many complementary features reminiscent of the period when this district was a stable, if not highly successful, commercial area. This district is also important for the individual distinctiveness and overall integrity of its pivotal buildings.

The district is divided into three types of buildings. Pivotal buildings are the most architecturally elaborate or unique buildings in the district, or the buildings which possess the most integrity. Contributing buildings are the less elaborate structures of the district, but because of their compatibility of design or scale, contribute to the overall character of the district. Non-contributing buildings or portions of buildings are those obvious intrusions into the district's character. Each of these categories will be full explored below.

Pivotal Buildings

The four pivotal buildings in this district were selected because they have the highest level of integrity and/or have the most significant architectural quality in the district. The Edwin Elkins Buildings at 151 Main St. (1895) is an attractive, well-constructed brick building which is decorated by an elaborate cornice. The pressed metal cornice has a central "parapet", pilaster decoration, and a date and masonic emblem inscription. Second-story windows are topped with denticulated

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lintels which match a belt course just above. The storefront features what appear to be the original entry doors, transom, and four-pane show windows, two panes each which have had a recent addition of stained glass. The integrity of this building is very good, making it a pivotal structure in the district.

Another building that is classified pivotal because of its high integrity is the W. C. Thomas Building at 201 Main St. (c. 1890). Although of a simpler design than the Elkins Building, this structure is also an attractive, well-constructed brick building with a plain cornice and original storefront. The second-story windows feature segmental arches and stone sills, while the storefront has a central entrance with double doors and a large transom, flanked by two four-paned show windows and two small, thin columns. Both the Elkins Building and the Thomas Building have housed numerous commercial and service activities from their date of construction to the present.

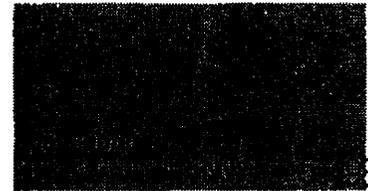
The E. J. Hankey Building at 193 Main St. (1888) is pivotal because it is a good example of a small Queen Anne commercial building. Large for this district, the Hankey Building stands out as a landmark in the district. Its roofline is highlighted with a pedimented parapet rising from the center of the Main Street facade. Another outstanding feature of the building is the oriel corner window which is topped with a turret roof covered with pressed metal "shingles" and accented with a finial. The central second-story window has a border of small, square lights, topped by a sunburst motif tympanum and a round arch. The corner entrance has the original double doors flanked by heavy piers. Piers also flank the storefront windows. A side entrance, somewhat altered by a new garage door, is flanked by less elaborate piers culminating in a parapet. This building also has stone belt courses and sills, round arch windows, and brick corbelling. While the building has suffered some from neglect, it has good integrity, with almost all its original features intact. It is also an elaborate building for a community the size of Trempealeau, making it unique and pivotal to the district. The Hankey Building housed a thriving mercantile establishment from 1888 to the 1920s.

at 240 Main St.

Housing Trempealeau's only bank, the Citizens State Bank Building is a significant architectural element of the Main Street Historic District. Constructed in 1912, the original section of this building is reminiscent of Louis Sullivan's small town bank designs, and was designed by noted Wisconsin Prairie School architect, Percy Dwight Bentley. The 1981 addition to the original building, of white stucco, features a half-arch entry, and is a contemporary but complementary design which mimics the scale and design of the original building. The addition, though, is considered a non-contributing part of the building. The one-story original building, of red brick, appears to be modeled after Sullivan's National Farmer's Bank of Owatonna, Minnesota (1906-08). It is a simple rectangle, framing an arched window crowned by a thin frieze and broad cornice. A painted reveal forms the archivolt and outlines the spandrel. Originally, the arch was glazed with clear glass surrounding the entry and divided by numerous muntins, giving a vertical expression. This has been replaced with broader but still vertically divided bronzed glass, with the entry now transferred to the addition. This building, although somewhat compromised by the recent changes, is an important example of a significant architectural style by an architect known for a number of Prairie School designs in the La Crosse area. As such, it is an important pivotal building in the district.

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Contributing Buildings

The six contributing buildings of this district complement both the pivotal buildings and each other. The brick buildings of 155 Main St. and 251 Main St. exhibit the same quality of workmanship as the pivotal brick buildings (Charles Thomas, a local mason responsible for several buildings in Trempealeau, may have built most or all of the brick buildings in the district). While these two buildings have had more alterations than the pivots, their cornices and other decoration contribute to the overall quality of the district. The frame buildings at 150, 220, 245 Main St. and 4 E. Second St. exhibit a continuity of design and scale in that they are all two-story buildings with gable roofs and falsefronts. They have all suffered from the application of siding over the original clapboards, and have all had extensive first-floor storefront alterations, but do maintain details which contribute to and complement the other buildings in the district. For example, the buildings at 245 Main St. and 4 E. Second St. have decorative wooden cornices, and the building at 220 Main St. features an interesting box bay window. All these contributing buildings have housed a variety of commercial and service activities from their construction date to the present time.

Non-Contributing Buildings

One building, 225 Main St. is an obvious intrusion in the district. It is a completely remodeled one-story structure and its exterior materials and design detract from the other buildings in the district. Also, the addition to the Citizens State Bank Building (240 Main St.) is considered non-contributing because of its recent construction (the addition). The addition at 220 Main St. is also non-contributing because of its size and construction materials, which are inappropriate to the original building and to other buildings in the district.

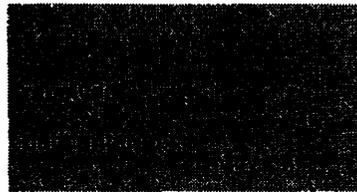
Of the 11 buildings located within the boundaries of the Main Street Historic District, 4 are pivotal (36%), 6 are contributing (55%), and 1 is non-contributing (9%).

VI. BOUNDARY OF THE MAIN STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

The boundary of the Main Street Historic District is formed in the following manner: Commencing at the intersection of the center line of Main Street with the north lot line (as extended) of 251 Main St., thence west along said lot line to the west lot line of said property, thence south along said line (as extended along the west lot lines of intervening properties to the center line of the alley just south of the lot line of 151 Main St., thence east along this center line, crossing Main Street and along the south lot line of 150 Main Street to the east lot line of said property, thence north along the east lot lines of all intervening properties to the center line of the alley just north of the north lot line of 240 Main St., thence west along said line to the center line of Main St, thence north along this center line to the point of beginning. The area thus enclosed is equal to approximately 1.63 acres.

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**VII. JUSTIFICATION OF THE MAIN STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT BOUNDARY**

The boundary of this district was selected because it includes the most significant architectural and/or historical buildings of the commercial area. The buildings in the district comprise most of the original post-1888 commercial district and have remained so to the present time. Buildings outside of the district boundaries are either residences, newer constructed buildings, or buildings which have no relationship to the historic commercial area.

**VIII. INVENTORY OF MAIN STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT PROPERTY OWNERS**

<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>OWNER</u>	<u>LEGAL DESCRIPTION</u>
150 Main Street	Thomas P. Mikrut Sr. R. 1 Trempealeau, WI 54661	Consolidated Plat, North 41' of Lot 11 & 12 Block 7
151 Main Street	Winston Elkins 401 W. 2nd St. Trempealeau, WI 54661	Consolidated Plat, South 20' Lots 8, 9, Block 6
155 Main Street	Edith Ziegler 155 Main St. Trempealeau, WI 54661	Consolidated Plat, North 20' of South 40' Lots 8 & 9, Block 6
193 Main Street	James Stull Jr. Trempealeau, WI 54661	Consolidated Plat, N 60' Lots 8, 9, less W 10' of Lot 9 in Block 6
4 E. 2nd Street	Esther & Lester Leavitt Trempealeau, WI 54661	Consolidated Plat, North ½ Lots 11 & 12, Block 7
201 Main Street	Carol Bagley 1165 Sassafrass Lane Niles, MI 49120	Consolidated Plat, East 49' of South 50' of Lot 6 and South 50' of Lot 7, Block 11
220 Main Street	Norma Roberts Trempealeau, WI 54661	Consolidated Plat, South 75' of Lots 1 & 2 Block 12
225 Main Street	Robert Beardsley 225 Main Street Trempealeau, WI 54661	Consolidated Plat, South 40' of Lot 10, Block 12
240 Main Street	Citizens State Bank 240 Main Street Trempealeau, WI 54661	Consolidated Plat, North 45' of Lots 1 & 2, Block 12
245 Main Street	David Niedfeldt 245 Main Street Trempealeau, WI 54661	Consolidated Plat, North 50' of Lot 7 and East 40' of North 50' of Lot 6, Block 11
251 Main Street	Roseann Ristow Ristow Insurance 143 Davis St. Galesville, WI 54660	Consolidated Plat, South 40' of Lots 8 & 9, Block 11

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III. SIGNIFICANCE OF MAIN STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Main Street Historic District is significant for both commerce and architecture. The buildings in the district form the post-1890 commercial hub of Trempealeau. After the 1888 fire destroyed the Mississippi riverfront commercial district, established in the 1850s, this new district was the focus of commercial activity in Trempealeau. It is significant that commercial activities moved away from the river after the fire, indicating a decline of the river shipping business, once so important to Trempealeau's livelihood. Also, the riverfront buildings emphasized shipping (warehouses) and other river-related activities. The new district was composed mainly of service and retail businesses, another significant change in the community. While the new commercial district along Main Street never reached the success level of the old riverfront district, it did house important commercial and service activities for a small turn-of-the-century Wisconsin community. Two of the most impressive buildings in the district housed two of the more important businesses. The E. J. Hankey Building (193 Main St.) housed a large and successful mercantile business into the 1920s. The Citizens State Bank building housed Trempealeau's only bank (established 1912), an institution which has succeeded until the present time. Because it represents the newer, post-1890 economic era in Trempealeau after the riverfront heyday, the Main Street Historic District is a significant part of the commercial history of the community.

The Main Street Historic District is also architecturally significant. For a small and somewhat spacious group of buildings, there is a continuity of scale and design apparent, particularly in the contributing buildings' relationship to each other. The frame buildings are all two-story with false fronts; the brick buildings are well-constructed, mostly two-story buildings which harmonize with each other, and in scale, with the frame buildings. Most buildings in the district have simple to elaborate cornices, and two of the pivotal brick buildings show high levels of preservation and integrity (Edwin Elkins Building, 151 Main St.; W. C. Thomas Building, 201 Main St.). But the architectural significance of this district does not rest solely with the buildings as a group. Two pivotal buildings are architecturally unique in the community. The E. J. Hankey Building (193 Main St.) is an ornate Queen Anne commercial building which, though neglected of late, possesses much integrity and interesting architectural detailing (ornate parapet, turret window, sunburst tympanum, brick piers, brick corbelling). The Citizens State Bank (original section) is an important local example of Sullivan's bank designs, done by a local master architect, Percy Dwight Bentley. Together, these two outstanding buildings, along with the overall continuity of the district architecturally, makes the Main Street Historic District an interesting example of a turn-of-the-century small commercial area, which has held up remarkably well under the pressure of time and declining economic conditions.

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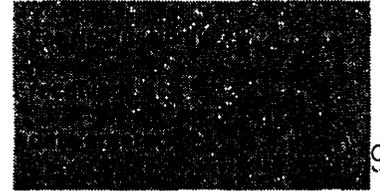
IV. AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCEA. Architecture (581 Third St. (Coman House), Main Street Historic District)

The architecture of the Village of Trempealeau reflects the primary period of growth the community went through in the nineteenth century. The housing stock consists mainly of mid-to-late nineteenth century simple structures with little architectural detail. Some houses suggest the Greek Revival or Italianate form in their plan or shape, and a few residences have Queen Anne details or massing. A notable exception is the Italianate residence at 581 Third St. (c. 1862-1872). Its architectural detailing and scale make it stand out among the less elaborate and smaller residences of the community. But its bracketed eaves, cupola, rectangular form and other details make it the best example of the Italianate style in Trempealeau, and it is also the best example of any residential architectural style in the village.

The Main Street Historic District is significant for architecture as well. Many of the buildings in the district possess a similar scale and complementary design which makes them a good example of a turn-of-the-century Victorian commercial district in a small town which thrived for a time, but never saw the success developers had in mind during that era. But not only does the district exhibit overall Victorian commercial architectural details, there are two outstanding examples of specific building styles unique for a community the size of Trempealeau. The E. J. Hankey Building (1888, 193 Main St.) is an ornate Queen Anne commercial building highlighted with an elaborate pedimented parapet, sunburst tympanum and arch, and corner turret window. While somewhat neglected of late, the building is a Trempealeau landmark and a fine example of this late nineteenth century building style. The Citizens State Bank Building (1912, 240 Main St.) is architecturally unique in the area because it is an example of a local interpretation of the Sullivan commercial style by noted Wisconsin Prairie School architect, Percy Dwight Bentley. The exterior of the original section of this building has been little changed over the years and it is an important local example of a major architectural style by a master architect.

B. Commerce (Main Street Historic District, Melchoir Hotel and Brewery Ruin)

Commercial activity began early in Trempealeau with its location on the Mississippi River. As a shipping center for the lumber and wheat industries during the 1850s and 1860s, Trempealeau experienced an economic boom, and a thriving commercial district grew up along the riverfront. With the coming of the railroad to Trempealeau in 1871, the community again experienced a growth period shipping grain by both river and railroad. By 1890, though, the railroad linkages with La Crosse and Galesville, along with the success of the Galesville flour mill, were significant in Trempealeau's decline as no new industries or economic activity replaced the shipping and milling industries which were rapidly leaving the village. A massive fire in 1888 destroyed most of Trempealeau's riverfront commercial district and new commercial buildings were built, not along the river, but further up Main Street, leaving the old district undeveloped.

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**B. Commerce (continued)**

The new buildings along Main Street form the core of the Main Street Historic District and reflect Trempealeau's new role after 1890 as a small commercial center for area farmers, and a tourist center for visitors in the area. The buildings in the district have housed a number of commercial activities since the turn of the century, including a pharmacy, confectionary, furniture factory, repair shop, grocery, as well as other service or recreational enterprises. The Elkins building (1895, 151 Main St.) housed the Masonic Lodge well into the twentieth century; the E. J. Hankey Building (193 Main St.) was a successful general store until the 1920s; and the Citizens State Bank has been in operation since its founding in 1912. The Main Street Historic District includes the only important commercial buildings in Trempealeau, and although currently suffering from some neglect and unsympathetic remodeling attempts, the district retains much of the character and purpose of the turn of the century commercial activity in the village.

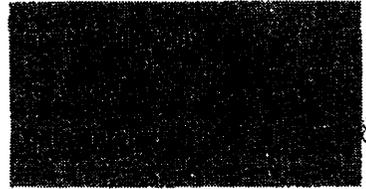
One of the individual properties reflects the riverfront commercial era in Trempealeau. The Melchoir Hotel and Brewery Ruins is the last remnant of the thriving riverfront commercial district which existed along the Mississippi River in the mid and late 1800s. Founded in 1857, the Melchoir Hotel (which at that time included a small brewing operation) was part of the old commercial district. During the early 1880s, the brewery aspect of the enterprise expanded, with Melchoir even exporting beer out of the region. By the late 1880s, though, the brewery declined, and the 1888 fire, while not destroying the stone portion of the building, was significant in the decline of the Hotel, as the new business district was built away from the riverfront. Today, the ruins stand as a significant reminder of Trempealeau's heyday as a vital riverfront community from the 1850s to the 1880s.

**C. Industrial Archeology (Melchoir Hotel and Brewery Ruins)**

The brewing of beer locally was a significant industry in Wisconsin during the late 1800s. The many German and other immigrants both desired the product and had the knowledge to make it. One such person was Jacob Melchoir, who came to Trempealeau from Prussia in the early 1850s, and began a small brewery in a log house left over from the frontier days. In 1857, Melchoir invested in a building which housed both an expanded brewery and a hotel. He built this business along the thriving riverfront commercial district in the village, and the riverfront trade soon made his business a successful one. In fact, the brewery was soon one of the largest businesses in the county. By 1880, the Melchoir Brewery produced 150 barrels of beer annually, and even shipped beer as far away as Minneapolis. But the boom ended almost as rapidly as it began. By the late-1880s, the brewery operation ended, and the 1888 fire put a dent in

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C. Industrial Archeology (continued)

Melchoir's business, as the commercial district was rebuilt away from the river and away from Melchoir. Currently, the site exists as ruins, with only three walls intact, and no interior features remaining.

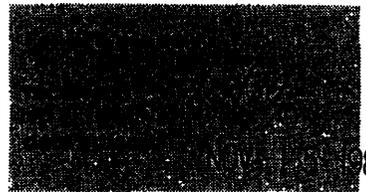
The ruins are significant, though, because they provide important historical and potential archeological evidence about the brewing industry in Wisconsin in a small community. The existing walls show a building plan, but most importantly, the original brewery caves are extant and in excellent condition. These caves were the storage area for the beer product before the era of refrigeration and show earthen "shelves" where the beer would have been stored, as well as ventilation shafts which were drilled into the sandstone bluffs. Because of its remarkably unvandalized condition (the site is open to anyone passing by), it is a valuable historical and archeological property which, with further investigation and/or excavation, could provide even more valuable insights into the construction and operation of a small nineteenth century brewery in Wisconsin.

V. PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION ACTIVITIES/USE OF SURVEY

The Village of Trempealeau, in cooperation with the County Resource Agent, has begun to use survey data in developing a central business district revitalization strategy as well as other community planning activities. This effort at downtown revitalization will focus on the Main Street Historic District, as described herein, and the fact that the survey has ascribed significance to this area--as well as to other structures in the village--has encouraged the cultivation of a stronger sense of local heritage and pride.

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Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Trempealeau Multiple Resource Area  
State Trempealeau County, WISCONSIN

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

1. Coman House

Entered in the  
National Register

for  
Keeper

*Arlene Byers* 11/15/84

Attest

2. Melchoir Hotel and Brewery  
Ruins

Entered in the  
National Register

for  
Keeper

*Arlene Byers* 11/15/84

Attest

3. Main Street Historic District

Entered in the  
National Register

for  
Keeper

*Arlene Byers* 11/15/84

Attest

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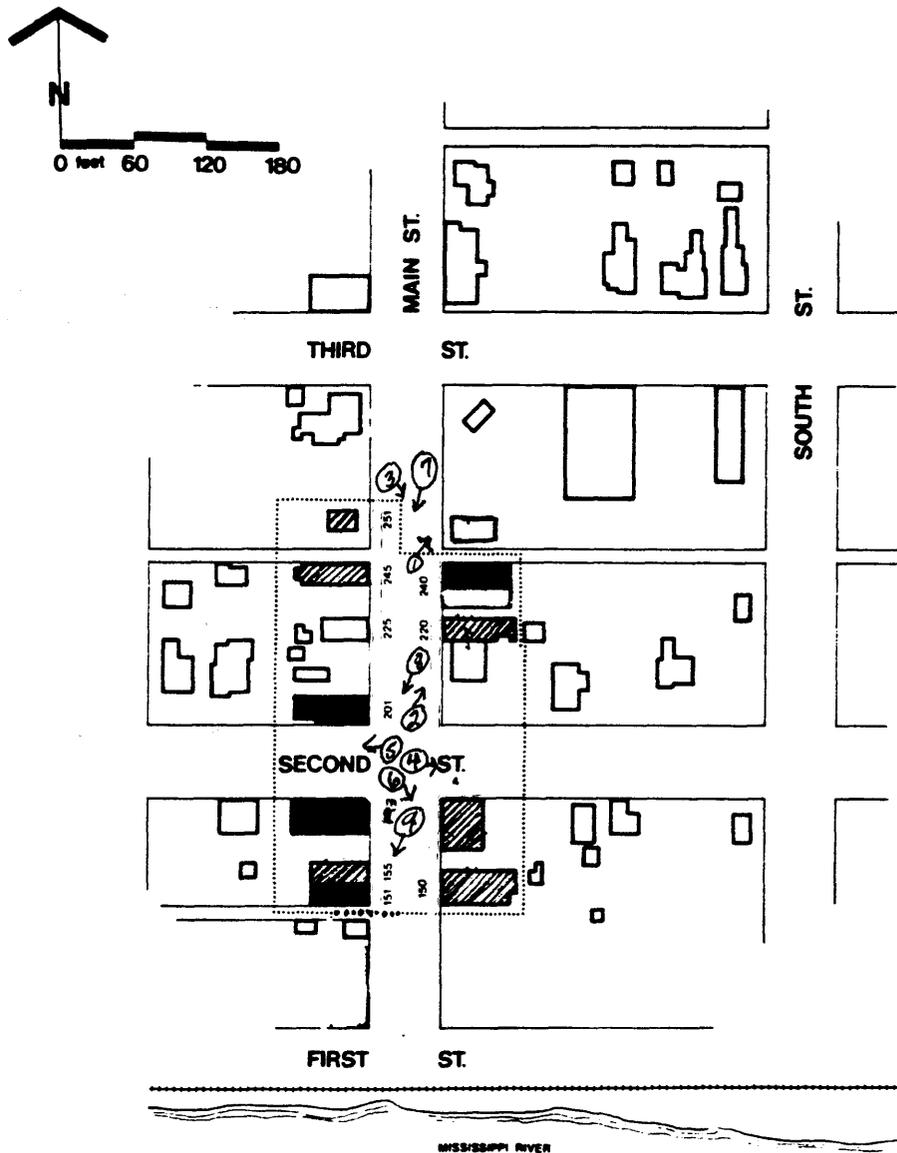
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10.

Keeper

Attest

# HISTORIC RESOURCES OF TREMPPEALEAU, WISCONSIN



C

## MAIN STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

KEY:

-  - Pivotal
-  - Contributing
-  - Non-Contributing
-  - District Boundaries

Circled numbers refer to black & white picture codes for district streetscape views.