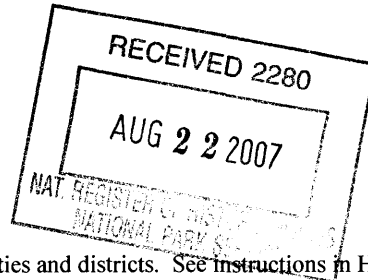


1047



United States Department of Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Confluence Commercial Historic District
other names/site number

2. Location

street & number	2-28 South Barstow Street (east and west sides of block), 206-316 Eau Claire Street (north side of block), 8 South Farwell Street	N/A	not for publication
city or town	Eau Claire	N/A	vicinity
state Wisconsin	code WI county Eau Claire	code 035	zip code 54701

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets _ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _ nationally _ statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Michael Stevens
Signature of certifying official/Title

Aug 20, 2007
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer - Wisconsin

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _ meets _ does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Name of Property

County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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.

See continuation sheet.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Edson H. Beall

10.3.07

for

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (check as many boxes as as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	contributing	noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	10	1 buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> site		structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		objects
		10	1 total

Name of related multiple property listing:
(Enter "N/A" if property not part of a multiple property
listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources
is previously listed in the National Register

3

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
DOMESTIC: hotel
COMMERCE/TRADE: financial institution
COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store
COMMERCE/TRADE: department store
COMMERCE/TRADE: warehouse
RECREATION AND CULTURE: theater

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling
COMMERCE/TRADE: professional
COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store
RECREATION AND CULTURE: theater
VACANT

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate

Foundation STONE
BRICK

LATE VICTORIAN: Romanesque

walls BRICK
STONE

MODERN MOVEMENTS: Art Deco

roof METAL
ASPHALT

other TERRA COTTA

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Confluence Commercial Historic District
Name of Property

Eau Claire
County and State

Wisconsin

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria
qualifying the property for the National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE
COMMERCE
ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

Period of Significance

1881-1957

Significant Dates

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Nason, Joseph E.
Liebenberg, Jack and Kaplan, Seeman
Pear, Charles

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Confluence Commercial Historic District

Eau Claire

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

9. Major Bibliographic References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):

- 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 #

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately 2.5 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 15 618550 4963065
 Zone Easting Northing

3 15 618630 4963100
 Zone Easting Northing

2 15 618575 4962975
 Zone Easting Northing

4 15 618655 4963000
 Zone Easting Northing

See Continuation Sheet

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Joanne Raetz Stuttgen and Eric J. Wheeler/ Consultants for:			date	July 2006
organization	City of Eau Claire – Landmarks Commission			telephone	715-839-4914
street & number	203 South Farwell			zip code	54701
city or town	Eau Claire	state	WI		

Confluence Commercial Historic District
Name of Property

Eau Claire
County and State

Wisconsin

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
 A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name/title	Various (see attached list)				date
organization					telephone
street&number					zip code
city or town		state	WI		

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 2050

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 1

Confluence Commercial Historic District
Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin

DESCRIPTION

The Confluence Commercial Historic District is centered on the first block of Barstow Street east of the confluence of the Eau Claire and Chippewa rivers. It is bounded on the north by the Eau Claire River, on the east by the west side of Farwell Street, on the south by Eau Claire Street, and on the west by the rear property lines of the buildings fronting Barstow Street. The total number of resources is 14: ten contributing buildings, one noncontributing building, and three buildings previously listed on the National Register. The period of significance is 1881-1957. The period of significance begins when the first extant building in the district achieved its current appearance and ends with the historic period.

The City of Eau Claire is located approximately 90 miles east of the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St Paul, Minnesota in west-central Wisconsin. Eau Claire has a population of nearly 62,000. Located on the northern edge of the "driftless zone" at the confluence of the Chippewa and Eau Claire rivers, geography shaped the early development of the city. Long a meeting ground for native people of the region, the first Euro-American activity in the area was related to the fur trade. Soon after statehood in 1848, Yankee entrepreneurs moved into the Chippewa basin to set up sawmills and lay claim to vast tracts of pinelands that lay to the north. Settlement of the Chippewa Valley accelerated in the 1850s and after a brief pause due to the Civil War, Eau Claire rapidly established itself as an important transportation and industrial hub in the west-central region of the state. Through the 1870s and 1880s the economic and population growth was tied to the booming logging industry and by 1890 Eau Claire was the second largest city in Wisconsin.

The Confluence Commercial Historic District is a concentrated area in Eau Claire's commercial core that represents diverse functions associated with a vital city transitioning from the post-settlement period to twentieth-century maturity. The confluence of the Chippewa River flowing from the north and the Eau Claire River flowing from the east is the historic point of origin for the city of Eau Claire. French voyageurs had identified the "clear water" of the Eau Claire River in the pre-settlement period and the first inhabited site was established in the 1830s by a French-Canadian fur trapper directly across from the Confluence Historic District on the west bank of the Chippewa River. As immigrants flowed into the Chippewa Valley in the 1850s and 1860s a steamboat landing was established in the district and later, in the 1870s, several rail lines were extended into this area that was recognized as the heart of commercial activity. The continued significance of this downtown district is indicated by the fact that three automobile bridges were built to connect the south and north banks of the Eau Claire River just upstream from the confluence of the rivers. These three bridges on Dewey, Farwell and Barstow streets are still major downtown arterials well maintained by the city. (Note that the streets were named for the first three governors of the State of Wisconsin 1848-1856).

The street layout of the Confluence Commercial Historic District is affected by the riverbank of the two rivers that define the north boundary of the district. Because of the location of the Barstow Street bridge the first block of South Barstow Street and South Farwell Street meet Eau Claire Street at an acute angle to the east. The slightly off-center appearance of the South Barstow block, and to a lesser degree South Farwell differentiates this district from the more grid-like layout of the rest of the downtown area. Farwell, Barstow and

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Continuation Sheet

Confluence Commercial Historic District
Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin

Section 7 Page 2

Eau Claire streets are major downtown arterial roadways each approximately 66 feet wide. All of the buildings in the district have standard set-backs from the curb and are accessible from 10 foot wide sidewalks. Stoplights are located at the intersections of South Barstow and Eau Claire Street and South Farwell and Eau Claire Street. Street signage is typical of urban arterial intersections as seen on corner poles and overhead stop lights. Mercury vapor lights positioned on 60 foot metal poles provide street illumination. There are three small, approximately 30 foot tall hardwood trees in concrete planters on three corners in the district.

A 10 foot-wide blacktop alley provides access to the rear of all of the buildings in the main block of the district bounded by South Barstow on the west, Eau Claire Street on the south, South Farwell Street on the east and the Eau Claire River on the west. A large parking lot covers nearly ¼ of this block and is excluded from the district. This parking lot is the site of a row of buildings on the east side of South Barstow Street that were burned or razed in the 1970s. There is no alley along the rear of the buildings on the west side of South Barstow Street. The most commanding natural feature in the district is the Eau Claire River, which defines the north boundary of the Confluence Commercial Historic District. Two buildings in the district sit atop the south bank of the Eau Claire River, but face away from the river to the street. There is no public access to the river in the district and currently the importance of the Eau Claire River to the district is visual and not functional.

Although some loss due to fire and street level alteration has taken place, the Confluence Commercial Historic District has excellent intact examples of several architectural styles representative of the historic role and development of this area from the post-Civil War period up until the Great Depression. The oldest existing building in the district, the Kneer House (1861, 1881, 1886) 18-28 South Barstow shows elements of the Commercial Italianate style widely used in downtown brick commercial buildings in the last three decades of the 19th century. A late Victorian and somewhat transitional interpretation of the Commercial Italianate is seen in the upper stories and cornice of the Derge Building (1898) at 12 South Barstow.

The highly ornate and visually imposing Romanesque Revival style was used selectively by owners who wished to convey an image of opulence and stability in their building. This style originated in Europe in the early 19th century, and was used in urban settings across the United States in the late 1880s and then abruptly fell out of favor by about 1900. The pivotal landmark buildings in the district, the Drummond-Cameron Building (1893) 17-21 South Barstow and the Cameron-Slagsvol Building (1895) 15 South Barstow, known collectively as the Barnes Block (NRHP), are highly visible and well preserved examples of the commercial interpretation of the Romanesque Revival style.

Two fine examples of an early 20th century abstract expression of traditional architectural motifs can be seen in two very different buildings both built in 1925. Kline's Department Store (1925) 8 South Barstow was an infill between the Derge Building (1898) to the south and the Eau Claire Gas Light Company Building (1907) to the north. This two-story retail store building has a distinctive terra cotta façade with elements of an early modern expression of Gothic Revival and Art Deco commercial styles. More simple but equally impressive early modern motifs are evident in the two-story brick State Theatre (1925) at 312 Eau Claire and the Bus Station/Bowling Alley (1925) at 316 Eau Claire.

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Confluence Commercial Historic District
Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin

A detailed architectural description of seven of these highlighted buildings follows the building inventory.

INVENTORY

The following inventory lists every resource in the Confluence Commercial Historic District numerically by street. Street names appear in alphabetical order. The Inventory includes building survey number, street address, historic name, date of construction, architectural style, and whether the property is contributing (C) or non-contributing (NC) to the district. Boldfaced properties are featured in the Architectural Description and all properties are described in the Statement of Significance. Underlined resources are depicted in photographs. Numbers in brackets refer to photograph number.

CONFLUENCE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

#	Address	Name	Date	Style	Contributory Status
East Side of Barstow Street					
1	17-21 S Barstow	<u>Barnes Block</u> [4]	1893	Romanesque Revival	NR
2	15 S Barstow	<u>Barnes Block</u> [6]	1895	Romanesque Revival	NR
3	13 S Barstow	Horrigan Building	1895	Romanesque Revival (alt)	NC
West Side of Barstow Street					
4	2 S Barstow	Eau Claire Gas Light Co.	1907	Commercial Vernacular	C
5	8 S Barstow	<u>Kline's Department Store</u> [7]	1925	Commercial Gothic Revival	NR
6	12 S Barstow	<u>Derge Building</u> [8]	1898	Late Victorian Commercial	C
7	18-28 S Barstow	<u>Kneer House</u> [9]	1861, 1881, 1888-1889	Commercial Italianate	C
8	206 Eau Claire	Carlson Building	c.1936	Commercial Vernacular	C
9	208 Eau Claire	Becker Building	1875, 1936	Commercial Vernacular	C
10	210 Eau Claire	Erity's Market	c.1925	Commercial Vernacular	C
11	308 Eau Claire	Classen/Jackson Building	c.1936	Commercial Vernacular	C
12	312 Eau Claire	<u>State Theatre</u> [10]	1925, 1936	Art Deco	C
13	316 Eau Claire	<u>Northern States Bldg</u> [10]	1925	Art Deco	C
14	8 South Farwell	Stacy Fruit Co Warehouse	1919	Commercial Vernacular	C

The following architectural descriptions highlight some of the most characteristic and finest resources in the district from the list above. A detailed building history is found in the section on significance.

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Confluence Commercial Historic District
Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin

17-21 South Barstow Street Barnes Block / Drummond-Cameron Building 1893

The Barnes Block /Drummond-Cameron Building is a three story commercial building that dominates the main intersection in the center of the historic downtown commercial area. This grandiose building is faced with ashlar limestone blocks on the first level and muted red brick at the second and third levels. Features that particularly distinguish this building include the round corner tower with conical slate roof and the round arched motif seen in the main entry on Barstow Street and below the three stone gablets, one on the Eau Claire Street facade and two on the Barstow Street façade. The three gablets, trimmed with rusticated stone finials, sit atop three bays defined by pairs of narrow two-story stone molded brick piers. Rusticated limestone sills, lintels and belt-courses highlight the windows and façade in general and provide an appealing horizontal balance to the soaring verticality of the towers, piers and gablets. These stylistic features and building materials link this building with the Richardsonian variant of the Romanesque Revival. The Drummond-Cameron Building is the finest surviving example of grand-scale commercial design of the Richardsonian Romanesque Revival style in the city of Eau Claire.

Unsympathetic alterations on both sides of the street level façade were removed in the early 1980s soon after the Drummond-Cameron building was listed as the Barnes Block on the State and National Register of Historic Places in 1980. A succession of owners has undertaken extensive exterior and interior remodeling since that time. The current appearance of the building is a good match with the historic exterior as seen in numerous archival photos. The Drummond-Cameron Building/Barnes Block is the most visible and readily identifiable historic building and the centerpiece of the Confluence Commercial Historic District.

15 South Barstow Street Barnes Block / Cameron-Slagsvol Building 1895

The Barnes Block/Cameron-Slagsvol Building is located just north of the Drummond-Cameron Building. This building is very similar in mass, scale and design to 17-21 South Barstow and it was included in the 1980 NRHP nomination of that building. The two buildings share a party wall and there is access between the buildings at the second floor. However, this building and the Horrigan Building adjacent to the north at 13 South Barstow, were both built in 1895, two years after the Barnes Block/Drummond-Cameron Building. The rusticated limestone street level piers, red brick façade and central bay with ornamental gablet link the Cameron-Slagsvol Building stylistically with the larger Drummond-Cameron Building to the south. However, there are some differences.

The two-story Cameron-Slagsvol Building has rectangular brick pilasters capped with round finials dividing the central and two flanking bays on the second story level. The triangular central gablet projects completely above the cornice and is more highly ornamented than the building to the south. Additionally, a well-defined cornice frieze is ornamented with insets of brick squares and arches. A belt-course below the frieze is ornamented with dentiling below and finely detailed terra-cotta tiles are set in the façade of the bays directly over the transom. Finally, the current street level display windows and entry, although not original, are sympathetic to the historic character of the building. The Cameron-Slagsvol Building is another fine example of

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Confluence Commercial Historic District
Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin

the Richardsonian Romanesque Revival style and contributes to the architectural integrity of the district.

8 South Barstow Street Kline's Department Store 1925

Kline's Department Store is a two-story brick building with a glazed terra-cotta façade that displays a distinctive blend of styles popular in the early modern period "between the wars", commonly referred to as the Roaring Twenties. Built by a would-be retail entrepreneur in the heart of the downtown business district, this architect-designed store presents an exotic blend of commercial Neo-Gothic Revival, Mediterranean Revival and Art Deco styles. The façade consists of terra-cotta tiles glazed to a cream color with slight turquoise overtones dominated by two vertical bays or pavilions that project above the roofline. These pavilions and the flanking pilasters are ornamented with trefoil and quatrefoil motifs and bas-relief emblems that evoke neo-Gothic stylistic elements. The stepped parapets, which allude to setbacks, and the repetition of stylistic elements, show some Art Deco influence. A clay tile pent roof barely visible above the roofline adds a Mediterranean Revival flavor to the mix. The dominant influence, however, in this fine early modern commercial building is Neo-Gothic Revival. The architect, Charles A Pear, lived and worked in Eau Claire for a short period of time from 1923 to 1929. A commercial building with a similar terra-cotta facade built in the same year as Kline's Department Store is located four blocks to the south at 403 South Barstow. This building, referred to as the Hobbs Realty Company Building was designed by noted local architect, E. J. Hancock.

Significant alterations to the Kline's Department Store building include replacement of all the original upper story 18/1 multi-paned windows with aluminum framed single pane glazing, after a fire in an adjacent building in 1979 blew out all of the glass in the storefront. The original raised letters of the "Kline's" name were chiseled flush and the opaque transom window was covered up by black metal panels sometime prior to 1958.¹ The current owner has removed the metal panels, exposing the remnants of the "Kline's" name and the original transom window. Interior historic restoration has uncovered several of the original features and décor. The Kline's Department Store was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984 and contributes an unusual and readily recognizable façade that adds to the architectural heritage of the district.

12 South Barstow Street Derge Building 1898

The Derge Building is a two-story brick commercial structure currently painted white that extends the architecturally intact block-long streetscape on the south side of Barstow Street. The second story features nine bays arranged singly or in pairs flanked by pilasters that extend to a projecting metal cornice. A projecting parapet, defined by the extended pilasters, is punctuated by rectangular or square insets overtopped by two more projecting cornices spanning two bays spaced one bay in from each corner. Brick corbelling runs the width of the façade just below the cornice. The nine sets of double hung windows with transom windows above appear to be original. The street level façade has been significantly altered with new single pane windows and carrara glass panels overtopped by a hipped metal canopy of late 20th century vintage.

¹ National Register Nomination, James Schuh, 15 February 1984.

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Confluence Commercial Historic District
Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin

No particular architectural style is evident in this simple, yet mostly intact and attractive storefront. More ornate than strictly vernacular commercial buildings of the same time period, the Derge Building shows decorative elements of the late Victorian period that contribute to the architectural significance and integrity of the district.

18-28 South Barstow Street Kneer House 1865, 1880s

Built during the final year of the Civil War, the two-story painted brick Kneer House is the oldest of the highlighted architecturally and historically significant buildings in the district. Historical research indicates that the Kneer House was added to and rebuilt several times during the decade of the 1880s. Archival photos suggest that the existing upper level façade as it appeared in the early 1890s has remained mostly intact. The long rectangular Kneer House extends over 100 feet along the west side of Barstow Street to the intersection with Eau Claire Street. The rear portions of the 18-24 South Barstow section extend to the west behind the buildings at 206-210 Eau Claire Street. The upper story façade is defined by a symmetrical rhythm of window size, scale and placement. A corbelled projecting brick cornice is accented by double rows of brick dentil. Alternating bays of double and triple windows are defined by corbelled drops that punctuate the frieze at the corners and at regular intervals along the cornice. The tall narrow double-hung windows are ornamented with projecting metal hoods each highlighted by a central raised keystone. These elements are very typical of the commercial interpretation of the Italianate style commonly seen in downtown commercial buildings of the same utility, design and vintage of the Kneer House.

The street level façade has been altered significantly and shows none of the shape, placement or ornamentation of the original windows and doors. Plate glass windows and modern recessed entries now typify the storefronts along Barstow Street. A storefront was added on the Eau Claire Street façade highlighted by ornamental brickwork that appears to date from the early to mid 20th century. A metal cornice cap of more recent application runs atop the façade on both street-fronts. In spite of numerous alterations of the street level façade, the Commercial Italianate style Kneer House contributes to the architectural integrity of the South Barstow streetscape and provides a historic as well as architectural foundation to the district.

312 Eau Claire Street State Theatre 1925
316 Eau Claire Street Northern States Theater Bldg 1925

The two-story, dark brown brick State Theatre building with a four-section facade is actually composed of two separate buildings constructed at the same time and each defined by historic and current function. The State Theatre building is actually a large L-shaped building with the main entry in the western-most section. The entry section of the theatre is approximately 35 feet wide and the lobby extends back to the main theatre, which runs east to west at the rear of the building. The other building, known historically at the Northern States Theatre Building, is a square building with a three-section façade facing Eau Claire Street that had historic use, as a bus station, bowling alley and restaurant.

The second story façade facing Eau Claire Street is divided into four bays defined by five brick pilasters that

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Confluence Commercial Historic District
Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin

terminate at the roofline. These pilasters are crowned with decorative cut limestone square capitals supported by geometric drops and topped by spherical elements. A limestone capped stepped parapet runs along the top of all four bays. The brick façade is decorated with a triple blind arch in the western-most bay that is articulated by a brick soldier-course. This brick string-course continues from the west bay and follows along the lintels of the triple double-hung windows in the three bays to the east, broken only by the dividing pilasters. A checkerboard pattern of brick-work ornaments the three blind arches in the theater bay, providing definition to the entry. Adding even more decorative detail to the theater bay are two carved stone lion-heads positioned halfway down the flanking pilasters. This ornamental flair softens the appearance of metal rods that emanate from the lion-heads and extend structural support to the cantilevered marquee.

Historic photos show that extensive alterations have taken place to the street level façade. The original marquee with Art Deco elements matching the façade and the illuminated tower were removed in the mid 20th century. The historic façade of the bus station in the Northern States Theatre Building had fine Art Deco elements, including curvilinear windows, “streamlined” cornice detail and contrasting carrarra glass façade. All of that ornamental detail has been removed and currently the street level façade is mostly covered with wood paneling.

The buildings were designed by Minneapolis-based architect/engineer and theater entrepreneur J. E. Nason in the Art Deco style that was very popular in the 1920s, especially for movie theaters. Although much of the historic Art Deco exterior appearance has been lost, the upper façade retains the abstracted neo-Classical elements that are the hallmark of the Art Deco style. The State Theatre and Northern States Theatre Building have had interior renovation in recent years and the two buildings retain sufficient architectural integrity to be included in the district. Additionally, the two buildings provide architectural variety as well as a visual anchor to the south-east corner of the district.

Most of the remaining seven buildings in the district date from the 1890s to the 1930s and are of the Commercial Vernacular style. The Commercial Vernacular buildings in the Confluence Commercial Historic District have plain dark-colored brick facades, uniform door and window placement and minimal architectural ornamentation. The appearance suggests an emphasis on low design cost, availability of building material and functionality over style. The oldest, largest and most historically significant of the Commercial Vernacular buildings is the three story brick Eau Claire Gas Light Company (1907) at 2 South Barstow. The street façade has a single bay with three symmetrically placed rectangular windows on the second and third story. This façade is defined by plain brick pilasters that extend up the facade to a pressed metal projecting cornice supported by a row of modillions. The street level has two entries that have been greatly altered and windows currently covered with plywood. The north façade facing the Eau Claire River has five bays with three stories above grade and a basement below the street level. The east bay is slightly larger than the other four and is angled about 15 degrees to the south to accommodate the angle of the river bank that the building sits upon. Each of the bays has pairs of equal sized rectangular windows on the second and third stories. The window openings on the first floor have been altered or covered up. At the street level along the north, river-facing façade is a cantilevered concrete “catwalk” with a metal handrail. The catwalk is in unstable condition and not currently used. Below the catwalk and extending down to the river is the basement wall that has a pressed metal

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Confluence Commercial Historic District
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covering at the waterline. There is a pair of equal sized windows in each of the five bays below the catwalk. These windows are currently boarded up. As in the street facing façade, the bays are defined by plain brick pilasters that extend to the decorative pressed metal projecting cornice that runs the length of the north façade.

The Stacy Fruit Company Warehouse (1919) at 8 South Farwell is a two-story, brick, Commercial Vernacular building that anchors the northeast corner of the district. The plain brick façade is punctuated on the second story by square, wood frame double-hung windows in pairs or groups of three. Several of these window openings appear to have been altered from the original configuration. At the second story on the corners and at regular intervals between the windows, squares composed of contrasting light colored brick decorate the otherwise plain red brick east and south façades. Also on these two facades just below the projecting brick parapet wall, is a pressed metal projecting cornice with equally spaced modillions. The street level recessed entry and flanking vertical windows do not appear to be original. The north, river facing side of the building has plain functional brick with similar window placement as the east and south facades. The basement wall of the building on the north side extends to the riverbank.

The remaining four Commercial Vernacular buildings are the Carlson Building (c.1936) at 206 Eau Claire Street, the Becker Building (1936) at 208 Eau Claire Street, Erity's Market (c.1925) at 210 Eau Claire Street and the Classen/Jackson Building (c.1936) at 308 Eau Claire Street. They all have plain dark brown brick facades and are one or two stories in height with equal sized window openings. Both 206 and 210 Eau Claire Street have plain brick pilasters and a corbelled cornice, and 208 Eau Claire Street has three tall, narrow windows in the second story with segmental arched lintels. All three of these adjacent early 20th century vernacular buildings in the 200 Block of Eau Claire Street have rectangular brick detailing for sign display. Sharing a common wall with the Eau Claire Theatre building, 308 Eau Claire Street has a brick façade with a similar color and texture, but lacks the Art Deco ornamentation of its neighbor to the east.

The six buildings identified as Commercial Vernacular all retain sufficient architectural integrity to be included in the Confluence Commercial Historic District as contributing to the historical and architectural integrity of the district.

The non-contributing Horrigan Building (1895) at 13 South Barstow, was one of a block-long succession of Romanesque Revival buildings on the east side of Barstow Street that extended from Eau Claire Street to the top of the bank of the Eau River. Two of the buildings, located on the north end of the block were destroyed by fire in the late 1970s and the Horrigan Building has been altered beyond recognition of its late 19th century Romanesque Revival style. Sadly, the fate of the Horrigan Building is all too typical of many architecturally significant buildings that succumbed to the mid-20th century desire to "modernize" and "renew" the appearance of the downtown commercial center in many mid-sized cities in the United States. The Horrigan Building is included in the district as a non-contributing resource.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Confluence Commercial Historic District retains the greatest degree of architectural integrity of any other area of comparable size in Eau Claire's downtown commercial area, which extends southward for approximately 23 square blocks. The District is eligible at the local level for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C. It consists of a notable collection of mid-nineteenth to early twentieth-century commercial buildings ranging from vernacular to Italianate and Art Deco styles. The District is also eligible under Criterion A. It is a concentrated area in Eau Claire's commercial core that represents diverse functions associated with a vital city transitioning from the post-settlement period to twentieth-century maturity; as such it is significant in the area of Commerce. It is also significant in the area of Entertainment and Recreation for the large theater located within the boundaries of the district. The period of significance is 1881-1957. The period of significance begins when the first extant building in the district achieved its current appearance and ends with the historic period.

Located at the confluence of the Eau Claire and Chippewa rivers, the District was perfectly situated to take advantage of early steamboat travel. Barstow Street is one of the main north-south arteries in downtown Eau Claire, the other being Farwell Street located one block east. In the early years, ferries connected the north and west sides of the village. Construction of the first bridge over the Eau Claire River at Barstow Street occurred in 1868.² In 1879, the first lines for an electric railway were laid, with the first cross-town run occurring ten years later. The rail line ran down the center of Barstow Street and brought people downtown from all parts of the city. By 1932, the electric railway had been entirely replaced by the personal automobile and service was discontinued. The earliest roads, including Barstow, Eau Claire, and Farwell streets, all located within the Confluence Commercial Historic District, were dirt. Then came wood planks, followed by brick about 1915. Asphalt came many years later.

A popular form of road transportation beginning in the 1920s was the inter-city bus. Eau Claire's bus station was located in the Northern States Theater building, located adjacent to the State Theatre, between about 1929 and 1966. In the early 1940s, the building's first floor façade was remodeled in a streamlined style that reflected efficiency and speed for the Greyhound line.

The railroad arrived in Eau Claire in 1871. By 1880, three rail lines criss-crossed the north side, across the Eau Claire River. The passenger depot for the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad was located just one block north of the Confluence Commercial Historic District. Its proximity to the district contributed greatly to the establishment of hotels and other lodging houses, including the Kneer House, owned by Matthias Kneer, at the northwest corner of Eau Claire and Barstow streets. (Another important hotel was the Eau Claire House located on the southeast corner of the same intersection. It no longer exists.)

² "New Bridge," *Eau Claire Weekly Free Press*, 7 May, 1868; "The Bridge Question," *Eau Claire Weekly Free Press*, 12 March 1868; "The Bridge Case," *Eau Claire Weekly Free Press*, 5 March 1868.

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In 1861, Matthias Kneer erected a frame building—a combination private residence and hotel—he named the Chippewa House. In 1865, he added a two-story brick “tenant house” described in the *Eau Claire Weekly Free Press* as the first in the city. As the city grew, so did Kneer’s business. By 1881, it had been enlarged at least three times to consist of 21 rooms, the Kneer’s private residence, a dining room, saloon, billiards parlor, and a grocery store.

As other buildings filled the District, upper floors were outfitted with offices and living quarters. With the exception of the Kneer House, however, domestic use was not a dominant historic function in the District. After Kneer’s son-in-law, Fred Raddatz, vacated the Kneer House about 1923, few people called the District home. Domestic function has returned to the District with the recent conversion of the second floor of the Kneer House into apartments and the establishment of Hope Gospel Mission, a men’s shelter, in the former Stacy Fruit Company building on Farwell Street.

COMMERCE/TRADE

As a popular hosteller, Mathias Kneer expanded his enterprise with the addition of a grocery store, saloon, and billiards parlor. Beginning in 1893 with the construction of Barnes Block across Barstow Street, the Kneer House was joined by other commercial businesses. The first were the Chippewa Valley Bank and Samuelson’s Department Store, both located in the original portion of the Barnes Block. Within a few years a variety of other merchants appeared, including men’s clothiers, tailors, and the Eau Claire Book and Stationery store—all located on the east side of Barstow.

In 1925, Kline’s Department Store briefly occupied the new Commercial Gothic/Art Deco style building at 8 S. Barstow, followed by The Fashion, which remained for more than 50 years. Next door, in the Owen-Derge Building, Stevenson’s women’s clothiers remained a fixture in the District for nearly as long. Smaller businesses included fruit, shoeshine, and milliner shops, a restaurant, and specialty clothiers.

With the 1972 opening of London Square Mall on Eau Claire’s far southeast side, major, longtime retailers abandoned the Confluence Commercial Historic District. Samuelson’s moved to the mall and opened a smaller “branch” store a few blocks south on Barstow. Stevenson’s moved its entire retail operation to the mall. The Fashion closed for good. A few retail stores, including Weiner Shoes, held on, while others moved in to vacant buildings. One such business is Scandinavian Imports; it has occupied the former quarters of Stevenson’s, in the Owen-Derge Building, continuously since the early 1980s.

Built in 1907 by the Eau Claire Gas Light Company on the south bank of the Eau Claire River, opposite its gas field and plant on the north bank, the Eau Claire Gas Light Company building originally had an administrative function. The company’s offices occupied the first floor. As the technology of electric lighting advanced, the company expanded in scope—adding the development of water reservoirs on the Chippewa and Flambeau rivers --and staffing to fill the entire building. The company eventually evolved into Northern States Power,

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which built a new facility on the site of the former gas fields, and, in the late 1950s, abandoned this building.

The Stacy Produce Company warehouse built on Farwell Street in 1919 served as a cold storage building for produce and other groceries and liquor until about 1956. The building was home to the L. E. Phillips Senior Center for many years and is now operated by a private non-profit organization that serves the indigent and homeless.

The Drummond-Cameron portion of the Barnes Block was built in 1893 for use by the Commercial Bank of Eau Claire. However, the bank went into receivership while the building was under construction and never occupied the building. Instead, in late 1893, the recently reorganized Chippewa Valley Bank took occupancy of the corner unit. In 1906, the bank merged with Bank of Eau Claire to become Union Savings Bank. It remained at this location until 1933 when it was liquidated and closed. The upper floors of the Drummond-Cameron Building, as well as many other buildings in the district, have historically been used as office space for various professionals, including dentists, physicians, and chiropractors (and one "magnetic healer"), lawyers, and real estate companies. Perhaps the most historically significant business located on an upper floor was the First Wisconsin Land Mortgage Company and related enterprises owned by Benjamin Faast. With offices on the second floor of the former Kneer House, Faast played an important role in the sale, settlement, and development of the cutover lands of northern Wisconsin. Faast's enterprises faltered during the 1920s and went into bankruptcy in 1928. Faast and his company are documented by UW-Eau Claire history professor Robert Gough in his book "Farming the Cutover." Service-oriented businesses in the District have included barber and shoe black shops.

Other buildings served a modest industrial function. The oldest is the vernacular brick building at 208 Eau Claire Street built in 1875 by John W. Becker, a traditional craftsman engaged in cabinetmaking. The building served as his shop until his death in 1890.

The Owen-Derge building on Barstow Street was erected in 1897-98. A son-in-law to Matthias Kneer, Julius Derge was a German immigrant and a manufacturer of fine handmade cigars. He established Derge Cigar Company in 1875; it continued in operation under his son, Frank, until 1947. During the early years, Derge Cigar Company occupied the entire building, then moved to the second floor, expanded to include a cigar store on the first floor, and finally, toward the end, occupied a single second floor room. After Frank Derge closed the business, he retained an office on the second floor where he operated Derge Holding Company, a real estate management firm.

Although education never played a significant role in the Confluence Commercial Historic District, it is twice represented. From 1907 to about 1920, the third floor of the Eau Claire Gas and Light Company building was home to a private business college. It provided a specialized post-high school education for men and women. From 1937-1940, the School of Cosmetic Arts was located on the second floor of the Northern States Theater Company Building, part of the State Theatre.

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RECREATION AND CULTURE

Over the years, the Confluence Commercial Historic District has been home to a variety of entertainment venues. Foremost is the State Theatre, built 1925-26 as a thoroughly modern “amusement palace” combining live vaudeville and musical performances with motion picture showings. It evolved along with the motion picture industry, discarding first live performances and then silent, 3-D, and black and white pictures--along with its original Art Deco interior and towering marquee. Remodeled in the Art Deco style in 1935, and updated in 1945, the State Theatre remained in use until 1982, when it closed. Following a partial restoration, it reopened in 1988 as a regional arts center with an emphasis on live performances.

The State Theatre was Eau Claire’s “grand dame.” Other single-screen theaters—among them the O’Klare, Wisconsin, Badger, Cameo, and Hollywood--were scattered throughout the downtown area. The Cameo, located on Barstow Street three blocks south of the State, remains in operation as a budget theater. The Hollywood, four blocks south, is now a non-denominational church. All other city theaters are multi-screen complexes at London Square Mall and Oakwood Mall. The State Theatre project included the Northern States Theater Building fronting Eau Claire Street. A basement bowling alley operated here from 1926 to the mid-1970s. The State Garden Roof Ballroom was in use for a few years following the Theater’s 1926 opening. In the 1970s, it was home to an Arthur Murray dance studio.

Although non-historic in function, an adult theater/entertainment center was located in the former Eau Claire Gas Light Company building from 1979 to 2005. Before this, it was home to a pool hall. Decades earlier, Mathias Kneer had a billiards parlor at the Kneer House. Other forms of entertainment in the Confluence Commercial Historic District included, at the Kneer House, a restaurant/dining room and saloon especially popular with German immigrants. Years later, popular eating and drinking places included the Savoy Café on Barstow Street, Baum’s Café - later the State Café -next to the State Theatre, the bus station café, and the bowling alley snack bar and tavern. Since the early 1980s, the Stone’s Throw nightclub, located in the Drummond-Cameron Building of the Barnes Block, has been a popular gathering place.

The upper floors of other buildings were also used for a variety of social functions, most importantly, perhaps, as lodge halls. The third floor of the Drummond-Cameron Building of the Barnes Block was used at various times from approximately 1908-1931 as a meeting hall for the Valley Club, Eagles, Norden Club, and IOOF. For a few years during the mid-1940s, the Moose Lodge occupied an upper room on the second floor of the Northern States Theater Company Building.

BUILDING HISTORIES

Histories of the individual buildings follow below.

- 1 17-21 S. Barstow Street ▪ Drummond-Cameron Building (C)
- 2 15 S. Barstow Street ▪ Cameron-Slagsvol Building (C)

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These buildings were listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982 as the Barnes Block. Their individual histories are delineated here.

The three-story Romanesque style Drummond-Cameron Building was built by local contractor Henry Laycock for David Drummond and David Cameron, investors. The building was intended for use by the Commercial Bank of Eau Claire; however, the bank went into receivership while the building was under construction and never occupied the building. Instead, in late 1893, the recently reorganized Chippewa Valley Bank took occupancy of the southernmost unit of three first floor units. In 1906, the bank merged with Bank of Eau Claire to become Union Savings Bank. It remained at this location until 1933 when it was liquidated and closed.³ From about 1940-1975, this first floor unit was occupied by a variety of restaurants and taverns.

In the early 1980s the building was purchased by Frank Stone, who had the building listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982. Using Grant-in-Aid Restoration funds from the National Park Service, the Wisconsin Historical Society and the City of Eau Claire, Stone began an ambitious rehabilitation/restoration project. Among other things, he created office space on the third floor, restored the oak woodwork on the second, created a night club he called the Stone's Throw on the first floor, and crafted and installed the stained glass windows and other accents. Stone filed Chapter 11 bankruptcy in about 1987. In 1989 the building was purchased by William C. Anderson and Fred Kappus who completed the certified restoration.⁴ The Stone's Throw still occupies the first floor. The second and third floor contains offices. The second floor has always been occupied by offices. Until the early 1920s the third floor was used as a lodge and/or fraternal hall by the Eagles, IOOF, Valley Club, and Norden Club, a Norwegian fellowship.

From 1893-1913, the two northernmost first floor units were occupied by Samuelson's Department store. Incorporated in June 1893 by William Samuelson, Philip Federn, and Thorval Slagsvol, Samuelson's originated as a dry goods store and evolved into one of Eau Claire's finest locally owned and operated department stores. It expanded into the southernmost unit of the Cameron-Slagsvol Building immediately to the north (see below), and then moved into the Laycock Building (see below).⁵ Above Samuelson's were a number of office units. (For more about Henry Laycock see the section on architects and contractors/builders below.) Clearwater Partners is the current owner of the building.

The Cameron-Slagsvol Building of the Barnes Block and the Horrigan Building, located next door at 13 S Barstow, were both built in 1895. The owner of the first was David Cameron and Thorval Slagsvol. The owner of the second was John Horrigan. The contracts were let separately to John J. Harstad and the Madison Street

³ See "City and County" news items found on the front page of the *Eau Claire Weekly Free Press* on the following dates: 20 April 1893; 1 June 1893; 3 August 1893; 5 October 1893; 2 November 1893; 18 January 1894. The Commercial Bank reopened in January 1894 at its former location on North Barstow Street. For more about Chippewa Valley Bank, see Judge William F. Bailey, *History of Eau Claire County, Wisconsin* (Chicago: C. F. Cooper Co., 1914): 538, 660.

⁴ Fred Kappus, telephone interview with Joann Raetz Stuttgen, 27 January 2006.

⁵ "City and County" news 15 June 1893;

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Manufacturing Company, respectively. The first floor business room in the Cameron-Slagsvol Building was built and finished for Charles Alber, clothier and furrier. From 1903-1913, Samuelson's Dry Goods occupied the building. It was later used as an optometrist office from about 1929-1980.

The first floor business room in the Horrigan Building was occupied by Horrigan and Son, tailors until 1920.⁶ It was home to First Federal Savings and Loan from about 1955-1970, followed by optometrist Arthur Petzwold. In 1979, Petzwold's office was severely damaged by the fire that destroyed the Drummond-Laycock Block, since then an empty lot, immediately to the north (see below). The current appearance of the building dates to the remodel that followed. According to William C. Anderson, an architect with an office on the second floor of the Drummond-Slagsvol Building, the original stone facade exists beneath the current covering.⁷ The existing Cameron-Drummond, Cameron-Slagsvol, and the altered Horrigan Buildings are what remain of an entire block of once complementary Romanesque buildings. When these buildings were first completed, the *Eau Claire Weekly Free Press* of 26 September 1895 gushed: "The days for doing business in old and rattle trap buildings is fast passing away in Eau Claire."

4 2 S. Barstow Street ▪ Eau Claire Gas Light Company (C)

Built in 1907, this three-story building was the office of the Eau Claire Gas Light Company organized in 1894. The company's predecessors were the Eau Claire Dells Gas and Coke Company and the Eau Claire Gas Company, with gas works located on the west bank of the Chippewa River at the end of Hudson Street. The Eau Claire Gas Light Company evolved into the Wisconsin-Minnesota Light and Power Company and later into Northern States Power (NSP).⁸ The gas works plant appears to have been moved in 1894 to North Barstow Street, on the north side of the confluence of the Eau Claire and Chippewa rivers. The office was then at 124 S. Barstow. In 1907-08, it moved to the first floor of the new building at 2 N. Barstow. The second floor was occupied by a dentist office and two apartments. Union Business College was located on the third floor. Between 1920 and 1926, Wisconsin-Minnesota Power and Light Company occupied the entire building. It was succeeded by NSP about 1926. From 1929-1956, the building was home to NSP and the Chippewa and Flambeau Improvement Association, organized in 1910 by David L. Douglas, president of the former Eau Claire Gas Light Company, to build reservoirs on the Chippewa and Flambeau rivers.⁹ In 1958, NSP moved to new quarters on the north side of the confluence. The building stood vacant for a few years. From 1965-1985, it

⁶ "City and County" news 4 July 1895, 11 July 1895, Owners of both building sites were David Cameron and Thorval Slagsvol. See the Landmark Nomination on file with the Department of Community Development, City of Eau Claire.

⁷ Personal interview with Joanne Raetz Stuttgen, 9 January 2006.

⁸ Date of construction derived through research and city tax records.

⁹ *The Rivers Flow On*: 282. Douglas's obituary identifies him as a founder, in 1894, and president of the Eau Claire Gas Light Company; *Eau Claire Leader*, 29 April 1913.

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was the home of Golden Q Billiards. From 1985-2005, it was an adult entertainment center. The building is now owned by the Eau Claire Redevelopment Authority.

5 8 S. Barstow Street ▪ Kline's Department Store (C)

This two-story building with a distinctive cream-colored glazed tile facade was designed by Charles Pear, an architect who practiced in Eau Claire from 1923-29. It was built by the Hoepfner-Bartlett Company in 1925. Property owners were John S. Owen and Julius Derge. The building's first tenant and occupant was Kline's Department Store. The 1926 city directory identifies the proprietor as Sidney Kline, a resident of the Eau Claire Hotel. Kline's must have fallen victim to the Depression, as neither the store nor the man appear in the 1929 city directory. Instead, The Fashion, owned by Robert Levine is located at 6-8 S. Barstow.¹⁰ (For more about Charles Pear and the Hoepfner-Bartlett Company, see the architects and contractor/builders section below.) Levine must have assumed the remainder of Kline's ten-year lease with the property owner, O & D Realty. In 1936, Levine entered into a lease of his own. It was probably about this time that the building was remodeled for the first time. In 1950, the store was enlarged by 4,000 square feet by expanding into the north unit of the neighboring Derge Building (see below). At this time, the store occupied three floors and employed 40 people.¹¹ Subsequent remodeling occurred in 1959 and 1979. The Fashion occupied the Kline's building until it closed in 1973. After three years of vacancy, the building was home to Fering's gifts and furniture store (1977-1991). Owner R. Wesley Fering had the building listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984. The current occupant is Corporate Technologies (second floor) and C-Tech Computer Outlet (first floor). The owner is Barstow 6 LLP.

The Kline's Department Store building is one of two terra cotta faced Commercial Gothic/Art Deco style buildings in downtown Eau Claire. The other, located at 403 S. Barstow St., was designed by local architect Edward J. Hancock. This three-story building has been altered on the street level with metal siding and modern display windows.¹²

6 12 S. Barstow Street ▪ Derge Building (C)

This two-story brick building was erected in 1897-98 for Julius Derge, a German immigrant, cigar manufacturer, and son-in-law of Matthias Kneer, owner of the neighboring Kneer house (see below). Kneer had contemplated replacing his hotel livery with a business building in July 1895, but his death a few months later postponed construction. Julius at last tore down the "antiquity" in April 1897.¹³

Julius Derge and his brother, Ferdinand, learned the cigar making trade in their native Germany. Upon arriving

¹⁰ National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1984. Hoepfner-Bartlett is identified as the contractor in the State Theatre Opening Section of the *Eau Claire Leader*, January 19, 1926. This article identifies the building as the Owen-Derge Building.

¹¹ Barland, *The Rivers Flow On*: 291.

¹² Intensive Survey form.

¹³ See "A Building Contract," *Eau Claire Weekly Free Press*, 4 July 1895, and "Will Build on Barstow," *Eau Claire Leader*, 17 April 1897.

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in Eau Claire in 1875, they immediately launched their business at 124 S. Barstow. In 1879, Julius married Anna Kneer, a daughter of Matthias Kneer (see Kneer House below). After Ferdinand's death in 1891, Julius conducted the business of manufacturing and selling cigars alone. Derge's popular brands were the Eau Claire Club and the D & B; both were in demand locally and in neighboring states. From about 1916-1928, Derge Cigar Company was known as Madora Cigar and Tobacco Company, with Julius's son, Frank, as secretary. In 1929, Derge Cigar Company, with Frank as owner, reappears in the city directory. Frank ceased making cigars in 1947, citing the lack of skilled workers as the demise of the 72-year-old business.¹⁴ Frank, and after him, his son, Julius, operated Derge Holding Company, a real estate firm, at 12 ½ S. Barstow St. until 1987.

After the Derge/Madora Cigar Company moved to the second floor of the Derge Building in 1928, the two first floor units were home to various tenants. Among them were the Savoy Café, Tradehome Shoes, and The Fashion. Scandinavian Imports has been located in both units since 1977. The building is currently owned by Barstow Street LLC (John Mogensen).

7 18-28 S. Barstow Street ▪ Kneer House (C)

Since before the Civil War, the intersection of Eau Claire and Barstow streets has been dominated by the Kneer House, the oldest building on Barstow Street and quite possibly in all of downtown Eau Claire. Research appears to show that dates of construction and expansion are 1861, 1865, 1868, 1872, 1881, with extensive remodeling in 1888-89.

It was in 1861 that Matthias Kneer erected a combination frame hotel and private residence and named it the Chippewa House. In 1865, immediately following his second marriage, he expanded by adding a two-story brick boarding or tenant house—the first in the city. Brick came from the kiln operated by Tobias Bellesbach, a fellow German.¹⁵ In February 1868, the stone foundation for a two-story brick building was “on the ground.”¹⁶ In June 1872, building was underway on yet another addition to the Chippewa House, apparently the grocery store advertised as “just opened” in a “new building” in issues of the *Eau Claire Weekly Free Press*.¹⁷ In 1882, “Kneer's place” underwent “extensive internal improvements in which the various buildings were converted into a 22-room hotel he named the Kneer House.”¹⁸ Kneer's grocery store occupied the corner unit, as shown on the 1883 Sanborn map. A second significant remodeling and “refitting” appears to have occurred about 1888-89, as boasted in advertisements in the city directories between 1889 and 1894. The different periods of expansion are evident in the undulating front façade. The cast iron window hoods likely date to the 1881

¹⁴ News clipping from the *Eau Claire Leader* dated only 1947 in the files of the Chippewa Valley Museum.

¹⁵ “County and City” news item, 26 October 1865. Also, Forrester: 264 and Bailey: 543. Bailey's history is a near-verbatim repeat of Forrester's.

¹⁶ *Eau Claire Weekly Free Press*, 27 February 1868.

¹⁷ The name file at the Chippewa Valley Museum reports that an article about this building project appears in the Eau Claire newspaper in June 1872. The article could not be found.

¹⁸ “Improvements: Building in Eau Claire commenced during the first half of 1882,” *Eau Claire Daily Free Press*, 18 July 1882. Kneer is credited with “addition and repairs” valued at \$1,000. See also news item in “City News,” *Eau Claire Daily Free Press*, 10 November 1882.

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remodeling.¹⁹

In his 1891-92 history of the Chippewa Valley, George Forrester writes that Kneer tore down the frame structure and replaced it with a brick building. The writer of a 1947 *Eau Claire Leader* article reports that he tore down the frame structure in 1881 and replaced it with a brick building. The Sanborn maps contradict this, as they show a frame structure veneered with brick north of the corner unit/building; however, 1881 may be the date when the building was given the brick façade.²⁰ Forrester reports in 1891-92 that the Kneer House “is one of the most popular hostelries of Eau Claire, contains twenty sleeping rooms with a pleasant office and dining room. . . . Its central location and reasonable rates make it a desirable [sic] stop for strangers.” At various times, the Kneer enterprise consisted not only of the hotel and private family living quarters, but also a grocery, restaurant/dining room, a billiards parlor, and saloon operated by Matthias’s son, Frank.

According to Louise Schlegelmilch, the Kneer House was a popular dining place for Germans. As the oldest German settler in Eau Claire, as identified by Forrester, Kneer, and the Kneer House, appears to have had a prominent role in the celebration and promotion of German culture. At the time of his death in 1895, he was a member of the Frieden lodge and president of the Schuetzenverein. Kneer filled a number of other public positions, including two terms as trustee before the city was incorporated. He was also a member of the county board and a councilman of the Second Ward.²¹ Kneer’s son-in-law, Fred Raddatz, became proprietor of the Kneer House after Kneer’s death. It appears to have remained in operation until about 1920. The 1923 city directory shows Fred Raddatz as no longer residing at the Kneer House. Instead, it is occupied by various first floor merchants and, on the second floor, by the First Wisconsin Land Mortgage Company and related enterprises owned by Benjamin Faast, who played an important role in the sale, settlement, and development of the cutover lands of northern Wisconsin. Faast’s president was Thomas Keith.²² Faast’s enterprises faltered during the 1920s and went into bankruptcy in 1928. By 1933, Thomas Keith had rebounded and become head of a family-owned real estate company located on the second floor of the Kneer House. In 1946 he was joined by his cousin George Barland. George’s son, John, took over the Barland Agency in 1966. When he retired in 1998, the building—long since dubbed the B-K Building-- was sold out of the family.

During the Barland-Keith period of ownership, the first floor units were occupied by a variety of merchants.

¹⁹ The various secondhand accounts of the history of the Kneer House do not agree. See “Many of Eau Claire’s First Hotels Now Mere Memories; Some Were Noted Hostelries,” *Eau Claire Leader*, 30 June 1947. Also, memories of Louise Schlegelmilch, in Lois Barland, *Sawdust City* (Stevens Point, WI: Warzalla Publishing Co, 1960:102. A photo on file at the Chippewa Valley Museum shows the corner unit—the Kneer House saloon--refitted with cast iron columns and bulkhead, display windows, and recessed entry. A later photo shows the Campen Clothing store in this same unit; see *Eau Claire and the Valley: Where Rivers Meet* (Eau Claire: Eau Claire Press Company, 1997): 48. The Campen Clothing Company was located here, at 22 S. Barstow St., from about 1910-1920.

The precise periods of significant expansion and remodeling are inconclusive in the tax assessment rolls. For the most part, increases in Kneer’s taxes correspond to the dates given in Forrester, Bailey, the 1947 news article, and Barland. The earliest available tax roll is from 1860, the year Kneer bought the lot, valued at \$100, from E. J. Marvin. By 1869, the property is valued at \$2500. Significant tax increases followed in 1871, 1872, 1873, and, it appears, in 1882. Kneer was overtaxed in 1881, and subsequent years show an attempt to correct the mistake.

²⁰ Bailey: 543.

²¹ *Eau Claire Illustrated, 1891-1892*, reprint of the original published by the Eau Claire Leader, Chippewa Valley Museum, 2000: 70. The page includes a photo of Mathias Kneer.

²² See Robert Gough, *Farming the Cutover: A Social History of Northern Wisconsin, 1900-1940* (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 1997): 101-102.

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Most significant was Stevenson's women's clothing store, located in the two units north of the staircase to the second story (18-20 S. Barstow), which opened in 1930. The concrete block expansion on the west side of the building dates to this time. Stevenson's departed for London Square Mall in 1976. Eau Claire Barstow Street LLC (John Mogensen) is the building's current owner. Occupants include the Christian Science Reading Room and the Eau Claire Children's Theater. Apartments are located on the second floor.

8 206 Eau Claire Street (no address currently) • Carlson Building (C)

A two-story frame house built by John W. Becker about 1875 originally stood on this lot.²³ From about 1905-1920, it was George Fraley's tin shop. The house is listed as the residence of John Kalnos in the 1931 city directory; however, it does not appear on the 1931 Sanborn map. The existing one-story building appears to have been built about 1936, perhaps by Gustav A. Carlson, who operated a confectionery. From about 1943-1954, it was home to George Hendrickson's jewelry store, followed by Jack and Jill's children's clothing store until 1965. In 1966, Clifton Husberg expanded H & L Men's Shop at 208 Eau Claire Street (see below) into this building and the address was dropped. The building has remained a part of 208 Eau Claire Street since that time.

9 208 Eau Claire Street • Becker Building (C)

John W. Becker, a German immigrant who came to Eau Claire in 1857 built this two-story, brick, vernacular building in 1875. This was the shop for his cabinet making/furniture and undertaking business. Becker died in 1884. He built and resided in a two-story frame house located at 206 Eau Claire Street (see above).²⁴ From 1929-1943, John Kalnos's Waffle Shop occupied the first floor; Kalnos lived on the second. H & L Men's Shop was located here from about 1946-1978.²⁵ The brick façade may date to about 1936, as it matches the façade on the building adjoining it on the west.

10 210 Eau Claire Street • Ery's Market (C)

Built about 1925, this one-story vernacular building was home to Ery's Market, owned by Irving and Mabel Ery, from 1925-1940. Long's Sporting Goods occupied the building from about 1945-1963, when it became part of H & L Men's Shop (see above). H & L remained until 1978, followed by Zip-Print until 2000. The existing building replaced a rectangular, one-story frame dwelling that appears on the 1883 Sanborn map.

11 308 Eau Claire Street • Classen /Jackson Building (C)

Prior to the construction of this brick building about 1936, there stood on this site a two-story frame building,

²³ George Forrester, ed., *Historical and Biographical Album of the Chippewa Valley, Wisconsin* (Chicago: A. Warner Publishers, 1891-92): 543.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Clifton Husberg (the H of H & L), telephone interview with Joanne Raetz Stuttgart, 6 January 2006.

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the original home of Matthias Kneer. (See Kneer house above.) In 1860, Kneer sold it to Herman Schlegelmilch; it then became the Schlegelmilch home (upper floor) and hardware business (lower floor).²⁶ This two-story brick building was home to Classen paint and wallpaper store from 1936-1968, followed by Jackson Insurance Agency from 1968-2005. The current occupant is Interior Arts. The business and building is owned by Edmund and Susan Jakober.

12 312 Eau Claire Street • State Theatre (C)

13 316 Eau Claire Street • Northern States Theater Building (C)

No mere theatre when it opened on January 20, 1926, the State Theatre was a majestic “amusement palace,” and “the brightest gem” in the Finkelstein and Ruben circuit. The Minneapolis theatrical enterprise considered the State its third finest theater, behind the State Theatre in Minneapolis and the Capitol Theatre in St. Paul.²⁷ In Eau Claire at the time of its opening, the State joined the O’Klare, Unique, and Wisconsin theaters, all significantly smaller and modest venues. Architect-engineer Joseph E. Nason of Minneapolis, founder and owner of the Northern States Theater Company, designed the State’s architectural plans and engineered its heating, ventilation, and cooling systems. The Eau Claire firm of Hoepfner-Bartlett was the contractor. (For more on Nason and Hoepfner-Bartlett, see the architects and contractor/builders section below.)

Financed entirely without local capital, the \$315,000 State Theatre was operated by the Finkelstein and Ruben chain, which booked vaudeville and musical acts, theatrical performances, motion pictures, and supervised the day-to-day operations. The grand opening included a showing of “Classified” starring Corinne Griffith and a Jazz Review with a “syncopated menu” of 18 singers, dancers and comedians. Adult admission was 40 cents, with children paying a dime. The State Concert Orchestra was directed by Mike Deglman, with Richard Bach, “Wizard of the Wurlitzer,” playing the \$20,000 concert organ. With a seating capacity of 1300 on both the slanting main floor and the mezzanine, the State Theatre boasted views of both stage and screen unobstructed by columns, rails, and other patrons. The seats were deep blue leather with armrests and ample leg-room. Proscenium walls and ceiling were paneled. An orchestra pit fronted the stage. Outside, the State Theatre was illuminated by a large electrified sign that used white bulbs to spell out S-T-A-T-E; red globes with a flashing device bordered the sign.

Tucked into the elbow of the L-shaped theater was the Northern States Theater Company Building fronting Eau Claire Street. Consisting of two stories over a full basement, this recreation center included Pat Boyd’s bowling alley below street level, offices on the second floor, and, on the third, the State Roof Garden ballroom. Boyd’s bowling alley, with an entrance on the east end, featured eight Brunswick lanes, two billiard tables, three pool tables, one snooker table, a soda fountain, 70-seat gallery, and locker rooms with 80 lockers for bowlers. Access to the upper ballroom was made through two entrance doors on Eau Claire Street. Just how

²⁶ Susan Jakober, telephone interview with Joann Raetz Stuttgart. Susan was told this information by Tom Barland, a Schlegelmilch descendant. See also *Sawdust City*: 65.

²⁷ All details and descriptions of the new State Theatre, including individuals and companies involved with its construction, are from the “State Theatre Opening Section,” *Eau Claire Leader*, January 19, 1926.

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long the ballroom remained in use is unknown. Within two years of the State's opening, the Northern States Theater Company Building began to be used as the city bus station, a use that continued until about 1965. In 1946, the first floor facade had been entirely transformed into a modern streamlined bus station featuring smooth panels of glass or enameled steel. After the departure of the bus station, various offices occupied the first floor. The third floor was an Arthur Murray dance studio. The basement bowling alley remained until the mid-1970s.²⁸

The Minneapolis firm of Jack Liebenberg and Seeman Kaplan, with offices at 710 McKnight Building, was engaged to remodel the State Theatre in both 1936 and 1945. In 1936, the State received an extensive makeover in the Art Deco style. The foyer, lobby and the theater itself received engaged wall columns, new lighting fixtures, and stylized wall panels. Solid wood doors, each with a single round light and carved detail, replaced the original entrance doors. Outside, the original marquee and canopy were replaced with stylish new models. The mechanical plant was also upgraded.²⁹ In 1945, Liebenberg and Kaplan were again commissioned for the State's remodeling. Elaborate drawings were drafted showing the Art Deco style replaced with a modern, streamlined style. The house walls are shown stripped of 1930s ornament and covered with flat acoustical panels. A grand staircase climbed to a mezzanine lounge above the lobby. None of these changes was made. Instead, the 1945 remodeling appears to have been limited to an alteration of the entrance and foyer and front signage. The box office was relocated to the east side of the entrance, a concession area with cabinets and display cases was added, and a more contemporary canopy and marquee was installed.³⁰

Little subsequent remodeling occurred between 1945 and 1982, the year the State Theatre was purchased by Eau Claire residents Gene Grengs and Warren Barberg. They planned to restore the State Theatre, which had been in continuous use since its opening, as a venue for live theater. In 1984, Grengs donated the theater to the Eau Claire Regional Arts Council on the condition that it be renovated into a regional arts center. In 1986, the Arts Council initiated a drive to raise \$650,000 for the project. A \$150,000 challenge grant came from the L. E. Phillips Family Foundation. The renovation project architect was Kenneth Ziehr of Ayres Associates. General contractor was Market and Johnson of Eau Claire.³¹ Restoring the State Theatre to an exact replica of its former self was neither possible nor desirable, according to Ziehr. "The original walls and ceiling were obscured by later renovations and pulling down that work would have been a project in itself. We're approximating what was originally built by restoring the classical style within an Art Deco shell." In order to determine the building's past appearance, Ziehr spent hours talking with former theater employees, reading

²⁸ Barland writes that the grand opening of the Union Bus Station occurred in 1946; see *The Rivers Flow On*: 281. The streamlined bus station appears in *Eau Claire and the Valley: Where Rivers Meet* (Eau Claire Leader-Telegram, 1997): 57. The Wisconsin SHPO database attributes the design of the bus station to Nason; see www.wisconsinhistory.org. This information is not verified.

²⁹ Kenneth Ziehr, personal interview with Joanne Raetz Stuttgen, 20 January 2006. Copies of Liebenberg and Kaplan's drawings are on file in the archives of Ayres Associates, Eau Claire. Originals are held by the University of Minnesota Architecture Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

³⁰ *Ibid.* It's very possible that Liebenberg and Kaplan were responsible for other changes to the State Theatre, as drawings and materials dated 1941 and 1949 are also found in the Liebenberg and Kaplan collection at the Northwestern Architectural Archives. The full collection has not been viewed by the authors of this nomination.

³¹ Discussion of the renovation of the State Theatre is from Pamela Wilmet, "State Theatre Revival Plays to Rave Reviews," *Trends* [a publication of Ayres Associates], Summer 1988: 6-7.

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descriptive newspaper clippings, and examining the vacant theater for authentic motifs and patterns to duplicate. Gene Leisz, a local artist, used photographs of the original ceiling to re-create stencil patterns on walls throughout the lobby. Major work included installation of a new roof, repair of the parapet, stabilizing the building, and upgrading the infrastructure; reconstructing the theater floor to provide audiences with a better view of the stage; enlarging the stage, dressing rooms and restrooms; redesigning the balcony for additional seating; and restoring the stage for live performances, including installation of a new floor, lighting, and rigging systems. The Northern States Theater Building was also rehabilitated. The basement is now used for theater storage and contains a workshop. The first floor houses Art Council offices and a small gallery. The third floor contains offices and a dance studio. In 2006, the Eau Claire Regional Arts Council is embarking on a multi-million dollar fundraising campaign for the State Theatre's future expansion and renovation.

14 8 S. Farwell Street ▪ Stacy Fruit Company Warehouse (C)

This brick building was built in 1919 as a branch warehouse for the Stacy Fruit Company, a Minneapolis company purchased by Gamble Robinson in 1931. For two years following the sale, this building stood vacant. (Gamble Robinson had relocated to a building adjacent to the Northwestern Railroad Depot.) From about 1935-1970, it was used as a liquor warehouse. In 1979, it became the L. E. Phillips Senior center. In 2006, it is home to Hope Gospel Mission, a men's shelter, the building's current owner.

ARCHITECTS

Jack Liebenberg and Seeman Kaplan: 1936 and 1945 remodeling of the State Theatre, 312 Eau Claire.

Liebenberg and Kaplan were noted for designing (and redesigning) more than 200 motion picture theaters in the Upper Midwest, many of the early ones featuring an Art Deco style. These include the Hollywood Theatre in La Crosse, WI. The firm also designed private residences, including the Tudor Revival style house at 340 Garfield in Eau Claire's Third Ward³², radio and television stations, commercial structures, hospitals and synagogues, including Temple Israel in Minneapolis.

Jack Liebenberg was born in Milwaukee in 1893 and educated at the University of Minnesota, where he was in the first graduating class from the school of Architecture (1916). The following year he was granted a Master of Science in Architecture from Harvard. After service in the U. S. Army Air Corps, he returned to Minneapolis and entered the firm of D. C. Bennett. In 1921, Liebenberg joined formed classmate Seeman Kaplan in partnership and remained in the firm until his retirement in 1980. Liebenberg died in Edina, MN, on 23 March 1985.

A native of Minneapolis, Seeman Kaplan graduated with honors from the University of Minnesota in 1918. Kaplan managed the engineering and business details of the firm of Liebenberg and Kaplan until his death in

³² National Register of Historic Places nomination for Third Ward Expansion Area, 2004.

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1963. The Northwest Architectural Archives at the University of Minnesota has voluminous records of Liebenberg and Kaplan donated by Jack Liebenberg in 1975. They include 50 drawings of the State Theatre dated 1936, 1941, 1945 and 1949, and seven black and white photographs (6 interior, 1 exterior).³³

Joseph E. Nason: Architect-engineer of the State Theatre and Northern States Theater Building, 312 Eau Claire.

With an office on Hennepin Avenue in Minneapolis in January 1926, Nason had been the chief architect of the Chicago and Great Western Railroad in charge of depot and other construction before turning to theater design. As founder and president of the Northern States Theater Company, he specialized in theaters in the northern and midwestern states beginning about 1915.³⁴ Minneapolis properties attributed to Nason include an apartment for Mrs. Hannah Schorling at 1401 Park Avenue (1912), and the Fisher Paper Box Company at 221 N. 1st St. (1905). A May 1929 letter from Nason to Finkelstein and Rubin, operators of the State Theatre in Eau Claire, indicates that he had other dealings with the theater chain. Nason's letterhead gives his office as 615 to 622 Corn Exchange, Minneapolis.³⁵ In Eau Claire, Nason also designed the Epiphany Lutheran Church (1927), located at 1223 Bellinger Street before its demolition in 1997.³⁶

Charles Pear: Architect of Kline's Department Store/The Fashion Building, 8 S. Barstow.

The 1978 Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places attributes the Herman and Frances White House (1923) at 437 Lincoln Avenue to Pear. This information is not verified. Pear is listed in the 1923-29 Eau Claire city directories, with an office in the Culver Building.³⁷ Little is known about Charles Pear. He is listed as an architect in the 1910 St. Paul, MN, city directory. His residence was located at 220 W. Grand Avenue. In St. Paul, he designed the Henry Jacke residence at 917 Laurel (1914).³⁸

CONTRACTOR-BUILDERS

Henry Laycock

A native of Scotland, where he learned the building and contracting trade from his grandfather and father, Henry Laycock came to the United States at the age of 18. He worked in Canada, Chicago, St. Louis, Omaha,

³³ Contents Summary, Liebenberg and Kaplan papers, 1919-1969, Northwest Architectural Archives, University of Minnesota. A partial list of Liebenberg and Kaplan theaters in the Upper Midwest is found at www.cinematreasures.org. For more on Liebenberg, see "The Phantom of the Movie House: Jack Liebenberg's forgotten legacy," www.citypages.com/databank/19/914/prints5284.asp.

³⁴ See "State Theatre Opening Section" of the *Eau Claire Leader*, January 19, 1926.

³⁵ Information provided by Barbara Bezat, curator, Northwest Architectural Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. Telephone interview with Joanne Raetz Stuttgen, 20 January 2006.

³⁶ Mary E. Taylor, Intensive Survey form, 17 November 1981.

³⁷ Mary E. Taylor, *Final Report: Intensive Historic/Architectural Survey of the City of Eau Claire, Wisconsin, 1983*: 114.

³⁸ Bezat.

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Council Bluffs, and other cities before coming to Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin, in 1870. He built the Chippewa County Courthouse (not extant) before relocating to Eau Claire in 1878. He developed a large and successful contracting business, erecting some of the city's finest and largest buildings including the Barnes Block at 17-21 S. Barstow and the residences of David Drummond, W. K. Galloway, and A. A. Cutter at the corner of Summit and State streets. All of these remain standing. Other Laycock buildings that no longer exist include the Laycock-Drummond Block on S. Barstow (destroyed by fire in 1979), the old Eau Claire High School (at Fourth and Grand), the Light Guards Amory (on site of current post office) and Third Ward School (S. Farwell Street).

Laycock appears to have had a long and successful business partnership with David Drummond, owner of the Drummond Packing Company on Galloway Street, among other enterprises, including the Eau Claire Gas Light Company. Consequently, Laycock may well have been responsible for building the Drummond packing plant in 1880, the neighboring Eau Claire Grocer Company Building in 1882, and the Eau Claire Gas Light Company Building in 1907. As a 32nd degree mason in Eau Claire Lodge No. 112, Laycock may also have built the Masonic Hall building on the corner of Main and S. Barstow Street in 1898-99. He was veteran of the Civil War, state assemblyman from 1908-1916, and member of the Eau Claire Commandery No. 8, Knights Templar and Eagle Post No. 52, GAR. By 1914, Henry Laycock was retired. He died in 1929.³⁹

John J. Harstad: Contractor-builder of the Horrigan Building at 13 S. Barstow.

Very little is known about Harstad. He is listed as a carpenter in the city directories between 1884 and 1896.

Hoepfner-Bartlett Company: Contractor-builder of the Derge Building, 12 S. Barstow, and the State Theatre, 312 Eau Claire.

Founded in 1898 by Julius Hoepfner and William Bartlett and incorporated in 1906, the Hoepfner-Bartlett Company remains in business by the Hoepfner family in 2006. Among the structures erected by the firm and still standing are the Eau Claire Public Library (now City Hall), additions to the Sacred Heart Hospital on the city's north side, Luther Hospital, the Owen-Derge Building and Schofield Hall on the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire campus.⁴⁰

Madison Street Manufacturing Company: Contractor-builder of the Barnes Block, 13-15 S. Barstow.

The Madison Street Manufacturing Company was organized and incorporated in March 1885 by Samuel C. Converse and Edward Churchill. Both men were experienced contractors and builders and mechanics. The

³⁹ George Forrester, ed., *Historical and Biographical Album of the Chippewa Valley, Wisconsin* (Chicago: A. Warner Publishers, 1891-1892: 746; Judge William F. Bailey: 769-70; and obituary of Henry Laycock, *Eau Claire Leader*, 3 May 1929. Henry Laycock's only heirs were a niece and a great-nephew, Dean Efner Laycock, whom he had adopted. Dean's daughter, Joan Laycock Carter, lives in Eau Claire; personal interview with Joanne Raetz Stuttgen, 26 January 2006.

⁴⁰ Bailey: 481. See also *The Rivers Flow On*: 292.

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firm's plant was located at the corner of Forest and Madison streets. The company specialized in "fitting up stores and offices. They manufacture sash, doors, blinds, moulding, brackets, base castings, and kinds of interior house and store furnishings." The 1901-02 city directory also identifies the company as "contractors and builders." The city directory contains no listing for the Madison Street Manufacturing Company after 1901-02. However, Samuel C. Converse is identified as a contractor for several more years. He died in 1918.⁴¹

SUMMARY

The Confluence Commercial Historic District contains the highest concentration of architecturally significant buildings in Eau Claire's downtown commercial district. The District is eligible at the local level for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in that it is a concentrated area in Eau Claire's commercial core that represents diverse functions associated with a vital city transitioning from the post-settlement period to twentieth-century maturity, including a hotel, banks, specialty stores, and a theater. The District is also eligible under Criterion C in that it consists of a notable collection of mid-nineteenth to early twentieth-century commercial buildings ranging from vernacular to Italianate and Art Deco styles.

In 2006, more than 140 years after Matthias Kneer established the Chippewa House at the corner of Eau Claire and Barstow Street, the Confluence Commercial Historic District has adapted to the changing times, technology, and uses that have created a vital, viable city. Still a beautiful and important multi-functional area, the district retains a great degree of integrity in terms of architecture and function. For these reasons, and to encourage and assist property owners with sensitive rehabilitation, the City of Eau Claire desires to have the District added to the National Register of Historic Places.

PRESERVATION ACTIVITY

A fire in 1979 destroyed the Drummond-Laycock Block on the east side of Barstow Street south of the Eau Claire River, lying outside of the boundaries of the District. This fire, especially the damage it caused to buildings nearby, stimulated the first preservation activity in the District. The Barnes Block and the Kline Building were listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980 and 1982, respectively. Sensitive rehabilitations followed. Since these beginnings, the District has experienced a slow but steady renaissance. The 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s have been distinguished by increasing interest and activity in preserving the historic buildings and returning them to productive use.

ARCHEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

⁴¹ Quoted in *Eau Claire Illustrated, 1891-1892*, a reprint of the original Eau Claire Leader publication by the Chippewa Valley Museum, 2000: 95. For more about Samuel C. Converse, see Forrester: 681-82 and *The Rivers Flow On*: 412.

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The extent of any archeological remains within the district is conjectural at this time. Most of the district's buildings replaced earlier commercial buildings located on the same sites, and it is likely that the later construction activities seriously compromised any remnants of earlier buildings. It is possible, however, that some archeological remains from these earlier buildings may still be extant.

No information about possible prehistoric remains in this area was found during the course of this research. It is likely, however, that any remains of pre-European cultures once located within the district would have been greatly disturbed by the building activity associated with the subsequent development of this area.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

All the property in the district is located in Blocks 1 and 2 of the Drummond, Cameron and Eau Claire Lumber Company's Subdivision and Addition to the original plat of the Village of Eau Claire (heretofore referred to as D.C. and E.C. plat) and Blocks 58 and 59 of Ritzinger and Lenz's Subdivision (heretofore referred to as R. and L. plat)

The district begins at the northwest curb-line at the intersection of South Farwell Street and Eau Claire Street being also the southeast corner of Block 59 of the R. and L. plat and the southeast corner of a small parking area used by employees in the State Theatre buildings at 312-316 Eau Claire. The line then continues in a north-westerly direction along the east line of Block 59 of the R. and L. plat across the alley and continuing northwesterly along the east side of Lots 11-14 Block 2 of the D.C. and E.C. plat (also 8 South Farwell) approximately 265 feet to the north-east corner of Lot 11 Block 2 D.C. and E.C. plat to a point above the south bank of the Eau Claire River. This point is the northeast corner of the district and the previously described line defines the east boundary of the district.

From this point at the northeast corner of Lot 11 Block 2 D.C. and E.C. plat the line turns 90 degrees to the west and proceeds southwesterly a distance of 139 feet along the north line of said lot continuing past the north-west corner of Lot 11 Block 2 D.C. and E.C. plat to the east side of a vacated alley that runs north-south along the back of Lots 11-14 Block 2 D.C. and E.C. plat. The line then turns 90 degrees to the south and follows along the back lot line of Lots 11-14 Block 2 D.C. and E.C. plat (also 8 South Farwell) and continues approximately 118 feet across the alley between the Stacy Fruit Company Warehouse and the State Theatre Building to a point on the north line of Block 59 of the R. and L. plat, being a point on the back lot line of Lot 3 Block 59 of the R. and L. plat (and the north wall of the State Theatre Building).

From this point on the rear of Lot 3 Block 59 of the R. and L. plat the line turns 90 degrees to the west and continues southwest about 40 feet along the back lot line of Lots 1, 2 and part of Lot 3 Block 59 of the R. and L. plat to the northwest corner of Lot 1 Block 59 of said plat (also known as the Classen/Jackson Building at 308 Eau Claire). From this point the line turns 90 degrees to the south and continues along the west side of Lot 1 Block 59 of said plat southeast about 40 feet to a point on the west lot line of Lot 1 Block 59 directly across the alley from the northeast corner of the property at 13 South Barstow (also known as the Horrigan Building at 13 South Barstow) that includes Lot 4 and a part of Lot 5 Block 1 of D.C. and E.C. The line then turns 90 degrees west and continues west crossing the 10 foot alley that separates the west wall of the Classen/Jackson Building from the back wall of the buildings at 13-21 South Barstow and continues south-west 80 feet along the north line of the property known as the Horrigan Building and further continues a distance of about 66 feet south-westerly across South Barstow to the curb-line on the west side of South Barstow Street at the southeast corner of the building at 12 South Barstow (also know as the Derge Building) which is also the north-east corner of Lot 4 Block 58 of the R. and L. plat.

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From this point on the north-east corner of Lot 4 Block 58 of the R. and L. plat the line turns 90 degrees to the north and continues north approximately 150 feet along the east side of the buildings at 12 through 2 South Barstow to the northeast corner of the Eau Claire Gas Light Building (also known as 2 South Barstow) on the south side of the Eau Claire River. The line then turns about 120 degrees to the south-west and continues in a southwesterly direction along the north wall of 2 South Barstow about 105 feet to the rear lot line of said building which is also on the south side of the Eau Claire River.

From this point at the northwest corner of the back of the lot of 2 South Barstow the line then turns about 60 degrees to the south and continues south about 270 feet along the rear lot line of the buildings at 2 through 28 South Barstow and continuing along the west lot line of 206 Eau Claire Street (also know as the Carlson Building) to the curb-line at the southwest corner of the east half of Lot 2 Block 58 of the R. and L. plat and Eau Claire Street.

From this point on the curb-line at the junction of the southwest corner of the Carlson Building property (also known as 206 Eau Claire Street) the line turns 90 degrees to the east and continues north-east along the south line of the east half of Lot 2 and Lot 3 and Lot 4 Block 58 R. and L. plat (also know as 206, 208 and 210 Eau Claire Street and 28 South Barstow) continuing northeast across Barstow Street and along the south line of Lot 1 Block 1 D.C. and E.C. plat (also know as 21 South Barstow) across the small alley between the Drummond-Cameron Building and the Classen/Jackson Building, continuing northeast along the curb-line of 308, 312 and 316 Eau Claire Street, which is also the south line of Block 59 of the R. and L. plat, approximately 400 feet to the point of beginning. Said boundaries enclose approximately 2.50 acres.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries of the district enclose the land that is historically associated with the district's resources. The district contains an architecturally and historically significant group of buildings that retain a good degree of integrity in the commercial area of Eau Claire.

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Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin

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PHOTOGRAPH DESCRIPTIONS

The following information pertains to all 11 photographs:

**Confluence Commercial Historic District
Eau Claire County, Eau Claire, Wisconsin
Photographer: Eric J. Wheeler, April 2006
Negatives in the collection of the Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin**

Photograph 1 of 11
South Barstow Street at Eau Claire Street, looking north

Photograph 2 of 11
West side of South Barstow Street, looking north-west

Photograph 3 of 11
Intersection of Eau Claire Street and South Farwell Street, looking north-west

Photograph 4 of 11
Drummond-Cameron Building, looking north

Photograph 5 of 11
Façade detail of Drummond-Cameron Building, looking north-east

Photograph 6 of 11
Cameron-Slagsvol Building, looking north-east

Photograph 7 of 11
Kline's Department Store, looking west

Photograph 8 of 11
Derge Building, looking west

Photograph 9 of 11
Kneer House, looking west

Photograph 10 of 11
State Theatre/Northern States Theater Building, looking north-west

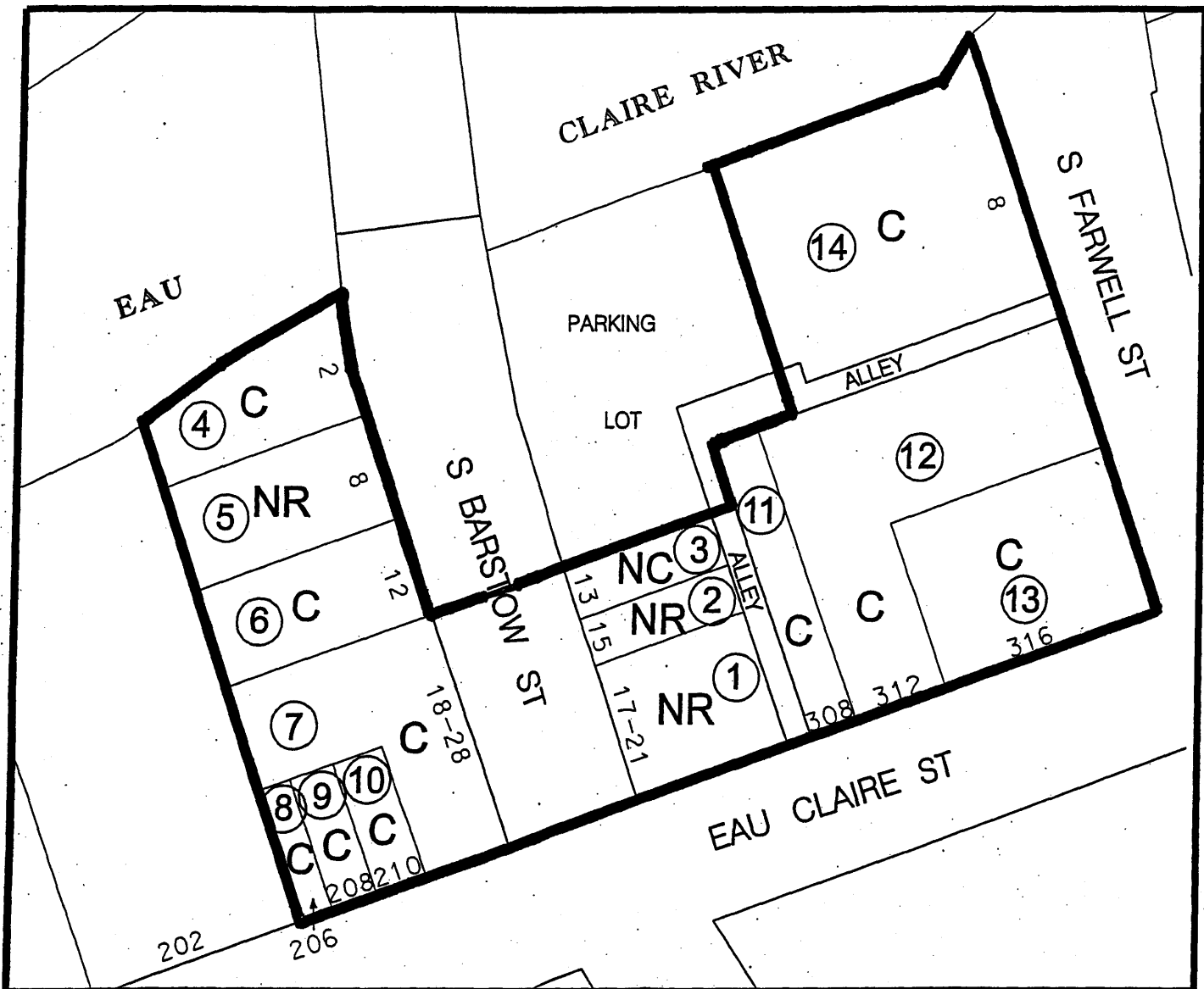
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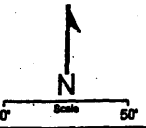
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Photograph 11 of 11
Façade detail of State Theatre/Northern States Theater Building, looking north



CONFLUENCE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, WI



— District Boundary
 (10) Property Number

C
 NR
 NC

Contributing Properties
 National Register Properties
 Non-Contributing Properties