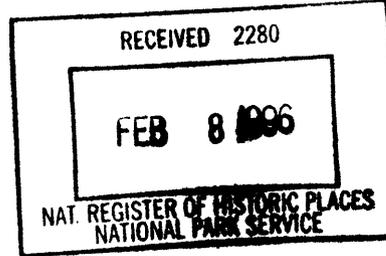


NPS Form 10-900  
(Rev. 8/86)  
Wisconsin Word Processor Format (1331D)  
(Approved 3/87)

OMB No. 1024-0018



United State Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register form (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries. Use letter quality printer in 12 pitch, using an 85 space line and a 10 space left margin. Use only archival paper (20 pound, acid free paper with a 2% alkaline reserve).

1. Name of Property

historic name Benton Avenue Historic District

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number various, see inventory N/A not for publication

city, town Janesville N/A vicinity

state Wisconsin code WI county Rock code 105 zip code 53545

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>78</u>	<u>6</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site		<u>      </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		<u>      </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		<u>      </u> objects
		<u>78</u>	<u>6</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

No. of contributing resources  
previously listed in the  
National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.      See continuation sheet.

*[Handwritten Signature]*

1/29/96

Signature of certifying official  
State Historic Preservation Officer-WI

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.  
     See continuation sheet

     determined eligible for the National Register.      See continuation sheet

     determined not eligible for the National Register.

     removed from the National Register.

     other, (explain):                     

*[Handwritten Signature: Edson A. Beall]* 3/7/99

Entered in the  
National Register

Signature of the Keeper

Date

6. Functions or Use

Historic Functions  
(enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions  
(enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)	Materials (enter categories from instructions)
<u>Bungalow/Craftsman</u>	foundation <u>concrete</u>
<u>Late 19th &amp; Early 20th century</u>	walls <u>weatherboard</u>
<u>American Movement</u>	<u>stucco</u>
	roof <u>asphalt</u>
	other <u>vinyl</u>
	<u>aluminum</u>

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Benton Avenue Historic District consists of 84 primarily Bungalow style houses sitting along the 800 and 900 blocks of Benton and Sherman avenues in Janesville, a medium-sized city in south-central Wisconsin. The district is about two-and-a-half city blocks in size and lies in the northeastern quadrant of Janesville, approximately one mile northeast of the heart of the city's downtown commercial district. The district is part of a larger residential neighborhood and is surrounded by mostly newer construction. The topography is flat, and most houses sit on very small, typical urban lots with mature lawns, bushes, and trees.

The city streets in the district allow for two-way traffic, and are fully improved with concrete sidewalks, curbs, and gutters. There are no parks or other open spaces within the district boundaries; in fact, the lots the houses sit on are uncharacteristically small when compared to other dense residential neighborhoods of the same period in Janesville. The district is lighted with standard sodium-vapor street lights sitting on wooden poles at various intervals in the district.

Almost all of the houses in the district are variations of the Bungalow style, popular at the time the houses were constructed. They were all built between April of 1919 and the end of 1920 (see note #1 at the end of the building inventory). All of the houses are either one or one-and-one-half stories in height. A few of the one-story houses have been raised or remodeled for an additional half-story of living space, and a few of the houses have been remodeled into two-story dwellings. They are all of frame construction and have either clapboard, asbestos, vinyl, or aluminum siding. Several basic designs were used in the construction of the houses in the district and this is one of the factors in the architectural cohesiveness of the district.

Besides the similarity of the style of the houses, there are other factors that distinguish this district from its neighbors. One factor is the small lots that make the district very dense. While the houses surrounding this district also have small, urban lots, the size of the lots in the district are smaller still. The surrounding houses are a combination of older houses that existed in this part of Janesville prior to the construction of this development, and newer housing built after the construction of this development; in particular, from the post-World War II era. The result is that the district is distinguished from its neighbors by its architectural style, date of development, and physical features.

x See continuation sheet

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Another factor in the cohesiveness of this district is the small number of non-contributing buildings in the district. Only six buildings were determined non-contributing because they have been remodeled so extensively that they have lost their historic character. Many houses in the district have had some remodeling, in particular, the application of asbestos, vinyl, and aluminum siding. However, in most cases, these houses have retained their overall form and massing and their major architectural details, making them contributing in the district despite these alterations.

Most houses in the district have garages at the back of their lots. Most of these garages are more modern than the houses in the district or have been remodeled, and do not contribute to the overall architectural significance of the district. Since they are insignificant in size and scale, they have not been included in the building inventory and are not shown on the district map.

DESCRIPTION OF SELECTED BUILDINGS IN THE DISTRICT

There are several basic house forms in this district, and within these basic forms are several variations. The houses described in this section of the nomination represent the basic house designs of the district, along with their significant variations. The houses that are described are the ones with the highest integrity and show the most original appearance of the design they represent. Other variations of these basic forms are mentioned along with the descriptions of the best examples.

One-Story Front Gable Bungalow

821 Blaine St.

This Bungalow form, along with several variations, is the most common in the district. The one-story house has a low-pitched front gable form with a lower gable-roofed ell projecting slightly off of one end of the front facade. The gable peaks are decorated with exposed beams and exposed rafters decorate the roof eaves. The long, narrow house is covered with clapboard siding and has an exterior brick chimney. The sash windows have vertically divided upper lights over a single lower sash. There are smaller single light openings along the side elevations and in the main gable peak. The entry porch has a hip roof with wide overhanging eaves and tapered posts sitting on square piers. The house at 918 Sherman Avenue is another good example of this design with knee brace brackets and an enclosed porch. Two examples with high integrity are located at 809 and 850 Sherman Avenue.

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960 Benton Avenue

This bungalow is a variation of the house design represented by 821 Blaine Avenue. It has a broad front gable form with a lower gable-roofed ell projecting from one end of the front facade. This ell is narrower than the example at 821 Blaine Avenue, while the front porch is broader and features a gable roof and tapered posts sitting on square piers. The porch is enclosed with single light sash windows. The house is covered with vinyl siding and openings are primarily sashes with vertically divided lights in the upper sash and single lower sash. There are also some small windows along the side elevations and an exterior brick chimney. A shallow bay with a gable roof and a pair of sash windows sit next to the chimney. A similar example of this house form with a hipped-roof porch, clapboard siding, and a jerkinhead gable roof is at 863 Sherman Avenue.

825 Sherman Avenue

This house is another variation on the basic house form of 821 Blaine Avenue. It has a long and narrow plan and a front gable form with a projecting gable-roofed entry porch that takes up much of the front facade. This house is covered with clapboards and features sash windows with vertically divided upper lights and single lower lights. A shallow gable-roofed bay projects from a side elevation. There is an exterior brick chimney on the opposite elevation. The front porch has heavy square posts sitting on square piers. The balustrade originally featured plain posts and has been filled in. Another good example of this design is at 946 Benton Avenue. An example with a shed-roofed porch is at 928 Benton Avenue.

870 Sherman Avenue

The simplest variation of the house at 821 Blaine Avenue is represented by this house, a narrow rectangular building with a gable-roofed front porch that takes up much of the front facade. This house has a main gable end with a lower gable end above the porch roof. The house is covered with clapboards and punctuated with sash windows that have vertically divided upper lights and single lower lights. The front porch is enclosed with single light sashes and features tapered wood posts sitting on square piers, and a balustrade covered with clapboards. The main entrance is at one end of the front facade and there is an exterior chimney projecting from a side elevation. A variation of this design is the house at 902 Benton Avenue, which has a central entry and an open porch. The house at 957 Sherman Avenue is another variation with a central entry and a jerkinhead gable roof.

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One-story Side Gable Bungalow

808 Benton Avenue

This house is a major variation of the one-story houses described previously. This house has a side-gabled roof decorated with knee brace brackets intersected by the gable roof of the front porch, which is similarly decorated. The house has clapboard siding and primarily sash windows with vertically divided upper lights and single lower lights. There are also several small, single pane windows punctuating the walls. The front porch is decorated in the manner described above and is enclosed with sash windows. An exterior chimney projects from a side elevation. Two variations of this form, but with narrower porches or longer main blocks, are the houses at 911 Sherman Avenue and 906 Benton Avenue.

One-and-one-half Story Front Gable Bungalow with Side Elevation Wall Dormers

875 Sherman Avenue

Another basic house form in this district is best represented by the house at 875 Sherman Avenue. This one-and-one-half story house has a moderately pitched gable roof decorated with exposed rafters and knee brace brackets. A gable-roofed wall dormer projects from each side of the roof, and on one of the side elevations, this dormer forms the second story of a shallow two-story bay. The upper story is covered with wood shingles in several different sizes laid in a horizontal pattern. The first story is covered with narrow clapboards. Windows are largely sashes, although there are small single pane fixed openings as well. The porch roof covers the entire main facade. It is decorated with large knee brace brackets and supported by grouped wood posts joined with a decorative wood strip. The balustrade has small, square posts. An exterior chimney projects from a side elevation. Two other good examples of this house, but with asbestos or asphalt siding and large front porches are the houses at 804 and 820 Benton Avenue. A variation of this house form, but with jerkinhead gable roofs and porches with battered porch piers, is seen in the houses at 801 and 874 Sherman Avenue.

One-and-one-half Story Bungalow with Hipped Roof and Front Dormer

956 Benton Avenue  
854 Benton Avenue

These two houses represent another large group of bungalow house forms in this district. These one-and-one-half story houses are both rectangular, narrow

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dwellings with low-pitched hipped roofs and projecting front dormers. The dormer on 956 Benton Avenue is gable-roofed, while the dormer on 854 Benton Avenue is hipped. The walls of both houses are stuccoed and the full-width front porch roofs are a continuation of the main hipped roof. On the example at 956 Benton Avenue, the porch is supported with battered piers, while on 854 Benton Avenue, the porch roof is supported by square posts on square piers. The main entrances to the houses are centrally located, and windows are largely sashes with vertically divided upper lights over single lower lights. Other good and similar examples of this house, with both gable-roofed and hipped-roofed dormers are found at 812 and 828 Sherman Avenue, and 862, 916, 934, and 964 Benton Avenue. An example with a high level of integrity is the house at 856 Sherman Avenue.

One-and-one-half-story Side Gable Bungalow With Front Dormer

950 Benton Avenue

This bungalow form represents a number of houses found in this district. This one-and-one-half story house has a side-gable roof with a large gable-roofed dormer projecting from the front of the roof. The roof eaves are decorated with exposed rafters and knee brace brackets. The house is covered with clapboards and punctuated mostly with sash windows with vertically divided upper lights and single lower lights. A shallow gable-roofed bay projects from a side elevation next to an exterior brick chimney. The porch spans the entire front wall and features square posts and a balustrade of smaller square posts. The building has a central entrance. Three other examples of this house in the district are the houses at 828 and 870 Benton Avenue and 820 Sherman Avenue, all with artificial siding, but retaining the basic details of this bungalow form. Two examples of this bungalow type having a jerkinhead-roofed dormer are the houses at 805 Sherman Avenue and 809 Blaine Avenue, both with artificial siding. Two examples of this bungalow type that are taller and narrower in their form and massing, but are similarly detailed, are the houses at 917 and 939 Sherman Avenue.

One-and-one-half-story Side Gable Bungalow With Gable-Roofed Front Porch

855 Sherman Avenue

A final bungalow type found in this district is represented by this house. It is a one-and-one-half story side gable form bungalow with a steeply-pitched gable roof

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decorated with knee brace brackets. A large intersecting gable forms the roof of the front porch of this house. This front porch features battered porch piers covered with artificial siding, as is the rest of the exterior of the house. Windows are primarily sashes and there is an exterior brick chimney projecting from a side elevation. Two other examples of this house form, both with asbestos shingle siding are the houses at 816 Sherman Avenue and 816 Benton Avenue. An example of this house form, but with only one story, is the house at 824 Benton Avenue.

American Foursquare

938 Benton Avenue

There are three houses in this district built in the American Foursquare style. They all have similar details. The house at 938 Benton Avenue has a two-story square plan with a hip roof. It displays wide overhanging eaves and a matching front dormer. The house is covered with aluminum siding and the walls are punctuated with single light double-hung sashes. The front porch has a hip roof with wide, overhanging eaves supported by tapered posts sitting on square piers. The balustrade consists of small square posts. A similar house with vinyl siding and a gable-roofed porch is the house at 949 Sherman Avenue. A slightly larger variation of the style with a gable-roofed dormer and brick porch piers is the house at 953 Sherman Avenue.

BUILDING INVENTORY (1)

<u>Address</u>	<u>Style</u>	<u>Status in District</u>
800 Benton Avenue	Bungalow	C*
804 Benton Avenue	Bungalow	C
808 Benton Avenue	Bungalow	C
812 Benton Avenue	Bungalow	C
816 Benton Avenue	Bungalow	C
820 Benton Avenue	Bungalow	C
824 Benton Avenue	Bungalow	C
828 Benton Avenue	Bungalow	C
850 Benton Avenue	Front Gable	NC*

C\* = contributing  
NC\* = non-contributing

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854 Benton Avenue	Bungalow	C
858 Benton Avenue	Bungalow	C
862 Benton Avenue	Bungalow	C
866 Benton Avenue	Bungalow	C
870 Benton Avenue	Bungalow	C
874 Benton Avenue	Bungalow	C
902 Benton Avenue	Bungalow	C
906 Benton Avenue	Bungalow	C
910 Benton Avenue	Bungalow	NC
912 Benton Avenue	Bungalow	C
916 Benton Avenue	Bungalow	C
920 Benton Avenue	Bungalow	C
924 Benton Avenue	Bungalow	C
928 Benton Avenue	Bungalow	C
932 Benton Avenue	Bungalow	C
934 Benton Avenue	Bungalow	C
938 Benton Avenue	American Foursquare	C
942 Benton Avenue	Bungalow	NC
946 Benton Avenue	Bungalow	C
950 Benton Avenue	Bungalow	C
952 Benton Avenue	Bungalow	C
956 Benton Avenue	Bungalow	C
960 Benton Avenue	Bungalow	C
964 Benton Avenue	Bungalow	C
800 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
801 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
804 Sherman Avenue	Front Gable	NC
805 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
808 Sherman Avenue	Front Gable	NC
809 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
812 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
813 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
816 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
817 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
820 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
821 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
824 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
825 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
828 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
829 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C

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850 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
851 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
854 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
855 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
856 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
859 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
862 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
863 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
866 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
867 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
870 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
871 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
874 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
875 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
903 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
907 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
911 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
913 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
917 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
921 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
925 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
929 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
931 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
935 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
939 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
943 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
947 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
949 Sherman Avenue	American Foursquare	C
953 Sherman Avenue	American Foursquare	C
957 Sherman Avenue	Bungalow	C
809 Blaine Avenue	Bungalow	C
817 Blaine Avenue	Front Gable	NC
821 Blaine Avenue	Bungalow	C
871 Blaine Avenue	Bungalow	C
875 Blaine Avenue	Bungalow	C

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Note to Section 7:

(1) All of the buildings in this district were constructed in late 1919 and early 1920. Tax Rolls for the City of Janesville (On file at the Rock County Historical Society, Janesville, Wisconsin) indicate that a few properties in the district had a value (not the total value of the house) in the 1919 tax roll and that all of the buildings in the district had a value in 1920. A newspaper article from April of 1919 ("Build 110 Homes in Second Ward; Work Has Started," Janesville Gazette 10 April 1919, p. 5) indicated that work would soon begin on the houses in this district. Because of the information found in the newspaper article and the tax rolls, all of the houses can be dated 1919-1920.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:    \_\_\_nationally           \_\_\_statewide           xlocally

Applicable National Register Criteria   \_\_\_A   \_\_\_B   xC   \_\_\_D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)   \_\_\_A   \_\_\_B   \_\_\_C   \_\_\_D   \_\_\_E   \_\_\_F   \_\_\_G

Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
<u>Architecture</u>	<u>1919-1920 (1)</u>	<u>1919 (2)</u>
	Cultural Affiliation	
	<u>N/A</u>	

Significant Person	Architect/Builder
<u>N/A</u>	<u>Matteson and Landstrom (3)</u>

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

The Benton Avenue Historic District is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places for its local significance under criterion C. This large tract-house development has many good examples of various interpretations of the Bungalow style. In fact, the district contains the largest and most dense concentration of working-class Bungalow housing in Janesville. The district is also significant because it is the best example of early twentieth century tract house development in the city. Built in response to the need for low-cost working-class housing for the expected influx of new workers in Janesville's new General Motors' tractor factory, this housing development's physical appearance is more typical of early twentieth century Bungalow housing developments in larger cities like Milwaukee or Chicago.

Historical Background

Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century, Janesville had a thriving industrial economy. From the grist and fabric mills of the nineteenth century to the metal products industries of the turn of the century years, Janesville was a home to many working-class families who worked in the city's factories and shops. At the beginning of 1919, a new industry was being developed that would have a dramatic impact on the city of Janesville for much of the twentieth century. At that time, the Samson Tractor Company, a division of the General Motors Corporation, was erecting a large factory for the production of a line of tractors. This factory was the foundation for the large industrial plant that General Motors has operated in Janesville during the twentieth century, assembling automobiles and trucks. This industry was, and is, the most important employer in the city.

x See continuation sheet

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As the new Samson Tractor plant was being erected, many of Janesville's leading citizens became concerned at the lack of affordable housing for the expected influx of new workers for this company. There were also concerns that outside speculators would flood into the city to build cheap housing for these workers. To that end, the Janesville Chamber of Commerce formed the Janesville Housing Corporation, an organization to raise funds for the construction of good quality, affordable housing in the city, specifically directed toward workers at the new Samson Tractor factory. (4)

In early 1919, Janesville businessmen began selling \$300,000 worth of stock in the Janesville Housing Corporation to local citizens. The money from the stock sales was used to purchase lots and to erect modestly-priced housing for workers, specifically those working at the Samson Tractor factory. The fund was given a significant boost when the General Motors Corporation purchased \$100,000 worth of stock in March of 1919. After fund-raising began, the corporation began purchasing land and making plans to erect houses. In the summer of 1919, it was reported that the corporation was completing the work on 26 houses near the new factory and making plans for other houses in other parts of the city. (5)

It was noted when the Janesville Housing Corporation was formed that one of its purposes was to try to keep outside speculators from coming into the city to build houses for workers. In this regard, General Motors, aside from giving money to the Housing Corporation, purchased land around the factory site to hold for worker housing built by a developer of their choosing. However, an outside developer did come into Janesville and constructed this district.

Responding to the same factors that brought about the formation of the Janesville Housing Corporation, a real estate development firm from Chicago, Matteson and Landstrom, purchased a portion of the Scofield Addition, a largely vacant piece of land in the northeast quadrant of Janesville, for the purpose of erecting 110 affordable houses. The firm had built similar developments in Flint, Michigan, another community with an industrial base related to the automotive industry. (6)

Matteson and Landstrom moved quickly to complete their development. First, they replatted their portion of the Scofield Addition into very small lots, then quickly began to erect the primarily Bungalow houses that make up this district. By the end of 1920, the firm had filled 79 of the 110 lots with houses, and within a couple of years more, had completed all 84 of the houses in this district. (7)

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While there is little doubt that Matteson and Landstrom built their housing development in hopes of attracting the workers in the new Samson Tractor factory, tax rolls and city directories indicate that their development was less than successful in attracting these workers. In fact, the development was less than successful altogether. Tax Rolls and City Directories show that the majority of people owning or occupying this development in the 1920s were not Samson tractor factory workers. Perhaps the development's location, which was quite a distance from the factory, or the efforts of the Janesville Housing Corporation, which was erecting houses as well, inhibited the success of the development.

By the late 1920s, a number of houses in the Matteson and Landstrom development were still unsold and being rented by the developer. Most of the other houses were in the hands of owners who also did not occupy them. By the mid-1930s, some of the houses were still in the hands of the developers, and most were still rentals. Many of the houses have remained rentals ever since they were built or have been converted to rentals in more recent years. City directories show a very high turnover in occupants in all of the houses throughout the twentieth century. And, while a number of occupants have been General Motors workers through the years, most occupants have had other sources of employment. (8)

#### Architecture

The Benton Avenue Historic District is architecturally significant at the local level because it contains a fine and dense concentration of variations of the Bungalow style. In fact, this district has more examples of the style than any other area of the city. The district is also locally significant as a pre-World War II housing development that has an appearance that is different than any other historic neighborhood in Janesville.

The Bungalow was popular in Wisconsin between 1910 and 1940. Offering economical home ownership for the middle and working classes, thousands of bungalows were built throughout the country. Bungalows are generally well-constructed houses built of high-quality materials. Generally of one to one-and-one-half stories in height, they feature wide, often sloping roofs, large porches, and simple Craftsman-like trim. Typical details are knee-brace brackets, exposed rafters and beams, and an abundance of simple wood trim. Most bungalows have clapboard siding, but many were constructed with full or partial brick walls. Many bungalows have a large brick chimney and fireplace. Bungalow interiors often feature Craftsman details like high quality woodwork and built-in wood cabinets and bookshelves. (9)

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The bungalows of the Benton Avenue Historic District are representative examples and have many of the distinctive characteristics described above. What is particularly significant is the large number of bungalows in this district, a concentration not found elsewhere in the city. And, while many bungalow neighborhoods in other cities feature streetscapes of identical houses, in this district, the houses are variations of a few basic forms, but are not all identical. While some identical houses were constructed right next to one another, different forms were scattered among each other along the district's streetscapes. The result is that this historic housing development is not as monotonous as it could be if all of the houses were identical or all of the houses in one particular group were built right next to each other. The narrow lots create a tightly clustered group of houses, a spatial quality not seen in other areas of the city.

The bungalows in the district reflect typical bungalow design of the period. For example, all of the bungalows in the "One-story Front-gabled Bungalow" category have a main front-facing gable with a lower front gable accenting the front facade, a detail that is typical of many bungalows. Many also have porches covering the main entrance, some with tapered posts and square piers, another common element of the bungalow style. Some of the houses are decorated with exposed beams or rafters and knee-brace brackets, common bungalow details. As the One-Story Front Gable Bungalow with the highest integrity in the group, the house at 821 Blaine Avenue is a fine example of the original appearance of this particular form. It also illustrates how even a simple one-story house, constructed as "affordable housing" for factory workers, could be a stylish and handsome home with a few details from the popular Craftsman style. Other Bungalows in this group have somewhat lesser integrity than this example, but they all have the same form and massing and one or more of the details from this example.

Another common form in the district is the "One-and-One-Half Story Front Gable Bungalow with Side Elevation Wall Dormers." This form is taller than most of the other bungalows in the district, but its low-pitched gable roof suggests a lower house. The house at 875 Sherman Avenue still has its original exterior features, including narrow clapboards and wood shingles, both materials that are common to bungalows. The exposed rafters and knee-brace brackets on this house are also typical bungalow details. The best feature of this house, though, is the extant original porch, with its strongly Craftsman posts, balustrade, and piers. Craftsman details are common

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features of bungalows. Other examples of this particular in the district have fewer extant details, but show many of the same features as the house at 875 Sherman Avenue.

One of the most common bungalow variations in the district is the "One-and-One-Half Story Bungalow with Hipped Roof and Front Dormer." As represented by 956 Benton Avenue, this variation has the long, low lines of the Bungalow, with the prominent front dormer and front porch that are common details. Most of the houses in this group have typical Bungalow porches with tapered posts or battered piers. As represented by 956 Benton Avenue, this Bungalow form is simple, yet has most of the basic elements of the style, executed on a small, practical house.

The above Bungalow variations are less commonly seen in Janesville, but the last Bungalow variation in this district is a house that is typical of Bungalows elsewhere in the city. It is the "One-and-one-half Story Side-gabled Bungalow." These one and one-half story Bungalows have long, sloping gable roofs that extend down to cover the porches as well. Dormers project from the front of the house. Most are decorated with exposed rafters and/or knee-brace brackets and have square bays like the example at 950 Benton Avenue. This house, with its extra half-story of space, is a popular and practical form that is repeated all over the city of Janesville.

Not only is this district significant for its concentration of bungalows, but it is also significant as one of the few pre-World War II tract housing developments in the city of Janesville. Janesville has always been a strongly industrial town, however, none of the city's historic industries built tract housing or planned communities for their workers. Instead, local builders constructed a wide variety of vernacular houses that were occupied by working-class families. A large concentration of this type of housing is located in the Old Fourth Ward Historic District (NRHP, 1991). One small exception is the small group of late nineteenth century working-class houses known as the Conrad Cottages (NRHP, 3-11-93). Consisting of four cream brick Italianate-influenced houses, the Conrad Cottages is an unusual development in Janesville.

In the pre-World War II era, only the development of the large Samson Tractor factory led to any planned housing attempts in Janesville. The formation of the Janesville Housing Corporation, described earlier in this section, was a milestone for the city. The involvement of the General Motors Corporation via their large purchase of stock made the housing corporation the most notable example of planned community

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development in the historic era of the city. And, while this topic has not been thoroughly researched, initial information indicates that the Janesville Housing Corporation primarily developed small tracts of housing in various parts of the city in a manner that was typical of previous residential development in Janesville. In any event, no other pre-World War II housing development in Janesville is like the Benton Avenue Historic District in either physical appearance or historical background, making this district unique in the community.

Notes to Section 8:

(1) Almost all of the houses in this district were constructed in 1919-1920. However, a few houses were not built until a year or so later. The period of significance reflects the period in which all of the houses of the district were built and totally completed.

(2) Tax Rolls for the City of Janesville, on file at the Rock County Historical Society, Janesville, Wisconsin.

(3) "Build 110 Homes in Second Ward; Work Has Started," Janesville Daily Gazette, 10 April 1919, p. 5.

(4) Harry V. Ross; "Property Owners Have Opportunity of Giving Aid in Housing Program," Janesville Daily Gazette, 4 January 1919, p. 4.

(5) "Here's Confidence in Janesville's Future," Janesville Daily Gazette, 3 March 1919, p. 1; "Fifty Homes Initial Step in Vast Plan," Janesville Daily Gazette 26 March 1919, p. 1; "Housing Company Increases Its Scope," Janesville Daily Gazette 18 July 1919, p. 1.

(6) "Build 110 Homes."

(7) Ibid.; Tax Rolls.

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

(9) Barbara Wyatt, ed., Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin, Vol. III, Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986, Architecture, p. 2-26.

ARCHEOLOGICAL STATEMENT

Historical sources indicate that there was considerable Native American activity in the area that is modern-day Janesville. No archeological survey of this area was done as a part of this nomination. And, although there has been much surface disturbance in this district since its development, an excavation of the area may uncover archeological resources not currently evident.

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PRESERVATION ACTIVITY

The City of Janesville and the Janesville Historic Commission has engaged in numerous historic preservation activity within the last decade. They have surveyed almost the entire city and nominated many historic districts and properties to the National Register of Historic Places. They have also prepared many informational brochures and held workshops related to historic preservation in the city. The Janesville Historic Commission also oversees a local historic district under the provisions of their ordinance. This district nomination is a part of the City of Janesville's on-going preservation activity that is funded, in part, by both private and public sources in the city.

9. Major Bibliographical References

x See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested  
 previously listed in the National Register  
 previously determined eligible by the National Register  
 designated a National Historic Landmark  
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:  
 State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other

Specify repository:  
City of Janesville Community Development

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property five acres

UTM References

A 1/6	3/3/4/9/6/0	4/7/2/8/9/4/0	B 1/6	3/3/5/2/2/0	4/7/2/8/9/4/0
Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
C 1/6	3/3/5/1/8/0	4/7/2/8/8/4/0	D 1/6	3/3/4/9/6/0	4/7/2/8/8/0/0

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

x See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

x See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

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"Here's Confidence in Janesville's Future." Janesville Daily Gazette, 3 March 1919, p. 1.

"Housing Company Increases Its Scope." Janesville Daily Gazette, 18 July 1919, p. 1.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the intersection with the east curbline of Prairie Avenue and the south curbline of Benton Avenue, then west along that line to the east lot lines of 964 Benton Avenue and 957 Sherman Avenue, then south along this line to the north curbline of Sherman Avenue, then west along this line to the west curbline of Richardson Street, then south along this line to the north curbline of Blaine Avenue, then west along this line to the west lot line of 871 Blaine Ave., then north along this line to the north lot lines of 825-863 Blaine Ave., then west along this line to the east lot line of 821 Blaine Ave., then south along this line to the north curbline of Blaine Ave., then west along this line to the west lot line of 809 Blaine Ave., then north along this line to the north lot line of 908 Blaine Ave., then west along this line to the east curbline of Prairie Avenue, then north along this line to the point of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries have been drawn to encompass a cohesive and distinctive concentration of bungalows. The surrounding housing stock differs in size, scale, and materials from the buildings in the district. It is bounded on all sides by larger lots with other early 20th century building types and is a readily identifiable and easily distinguished grouping of houses.

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BENTON AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT, Janesville, Rock, County, Wisconsin. Photos by C. Cartwright, March, 1993. Negatives on file at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.

- 1 of 12: 800-816 Benton Avenue, view from the northeast.
- 2 of 12: 854-874 Benton Avenue, view from the northeast.
- 3 of 12: 902-916 Benton Avenue, view from the northeast.
- 4 of 12: 932-942 Benton Avenue, view from the northeast.
- 5 of 12: 801-809 Sherman Avenue, view from the northwest.
- 6 of 12: 800-816 Sherman Avenue, view from the northeast.
- 7 of 12: 817-829 Sherman Avenue, view from the northwest.
- 8 of 12: 820-850 Sherman Avenue, view from the northeast.
- 9 of 12: 855-875 Sherman Avenue, view from the southwest.
- 10 of 12: 903-925 Sherman Avenue, view from the northwest.
- 11 of 12: 929-947 Sherman Avenue, view from the northwest.
- 12 of 12: 809-821 Blaine Avenue, view from the northwest.



# BENTON AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT

JANESVILLE  
 ROCK COUNTY  
 WISCONSIN



## LEGEND



Not to Scale  
 CONTRIBUTING  
 NON-CONTRIBUTING  
 ADDRESS  
 DISTRICT BOUNDARY