

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

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

received MAR 6 1986  
date entered APR 3 1986

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

**1. Name**

historic Grimm Book Bindery

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number 454 W. Gilman St. not for publication

city, town Madison vicinity of

state Wisconsin code 55 county Dane code 025

**3. Classification**

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

**4. Owner of Property**

name Grimm Book Bindery

street & number 454 W. Gilman St.

city, town Madison vicinity of state WI

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds, City/County Building

street & number Monona Avenue

city, town Madison state WI

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Wis. Inventory of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1985  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records SPHO, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

city, town Madison state WI

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## 7. Description

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

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### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Grimm Book Bindery sits on a commercial street in downtown Madison, Wisconsin. Designed by local architect Alvan Small, and constructed in 1926, the one-story red brick building with a raised basement is considerably smaller than many of its neighbors. It was built for the long-time Grimm family book-binding business and is a plain commercial building featuring simple Georgian revival details such as a "classical" frontispiece; an applied metal cornice with large modillions; and large front facade windows topped with fanlights. The long, narrow building extends back to a neighboring street and the rear features a half-story loading dock. There is also a tall, plain red brick chimney visible from the rear. The original windows on the rear facade are six-over-six-light metal sashes, while on the north wall they are paired, six-over-six light metal sashes. The south wall is of solid tan brick, probably built with the anticipation of new construction on that side at some time in the future. Basement openings are nine-light metal windows which are covered with decorative iron grills on the front facade. The main front windows are constructed in three sections: a lower eight-light metal casement, topped with a four-light metal casement, then topped with the fanlight. These windows have the appearance of the central portion of a large palladian window. The building has a flat tile roof, except where the front facade rises above the roofline. This raised facade is a steeply pitched metal gable section with stepped gable ends trimmed with concrete. The building's entrance has a simple concrete classical frontispiece with a complete pediment and brackets. A "lantern" light fixture extends from the center of the pediment. The wooden door has six panels and six lights and is decorated with a transom. Two bronze plaques inscribed "Grimm Book Bindery Established 1874" are placed under each front window and have brick surrounds. A neo-colonial style business sign is applied to the upper facade, completing the building's exterior details.

The interior is almost entirely unaltered, despite the firm's use of the structure for 60 years. The entrance leads up a staircase, decorated on each side with ceramic tile, either to the small office on the left, or to the binding room on the right. The small office is well lit by the large arched window and has its original wood floor and plain woodwork consisting of wooden wall trim and a plate rail. The binding room is not plastered (exposing the brick walls) and has most of its original trim, doors, and wooden floor. The basement, now used as a sewing room, has the original furnace, and the ceiling is exposed, revealing the early use of pre-stressed concrete for the first floor foundation.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900- <sup>36</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

<b>Specific dates</b>	1926 <sup>1</sup>	<b>Builder/Architect</b>	John J. Flad & Associates, Alvan Small, designer <sup>2</sup>
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### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Grimm Book Bindery is significant for architecture because it is a good example of the Georgian revival style executed in a commercial design for a small business in Madison, and because it is the work of a locally important architect, Alvan Small.

The building was constructed in 1926 as a new facility for the Grimm Book Bindery family business which has roots extending back to the earliest days of the development of commerce and industry in Madison. In 1850, Charles Weed brought Gottlieb Grimm, a recent German immigrant, to Madison as his bookbinding employee. Reportedly, Grimm bound the first book in Madison while under Weed's employ. In 1855, Grimm left Weed and with Daniel Maul opened the Madison New Bookbindery. The Panic of 1857 forced Maul and Grimm to sell their business to the publishers of the Wisconsin State Journal, but Grimm remained as a bookbinder in their employ. In 1860, B. W. Suckow established the Madison Book Bindery and employed Grimm as foreman. In 1874, Grimm became head of this firm and changed its name to the Grimm Book Bindery. The firm was located in the Journal Block until 1909, then on Carroll St. until 1916 when they built a building at 324-328 W. Gorham St. (extant). It proved to be too large, and the current building was built in 1926. By this time, the second and third generation of the Grimm family firm had an extensive business, binding volumes for the state government, the university, other community libraries, city directories, student theses, and private libraries. Throughout their history, they were the only firm in Madison to exclusively bind books. Other firms in Madison advertised book-binding, but only as an adjunct to their printing or other business activities. Throughout the years, the Grimm business maintained a high reputation for its quality work. Today, the family still owns and works in the business, binding books, theses, private libraries, and magazines and journals. Five generations of the Grimm family have been involved in the business since 1874. Their "new" building on Gilman Street has been the firm's most identifiable location, and it took advantage of a site between the University of Wisconsin campus and the State Capitol building, from where much of its business was generated. While the business existed well before and beyond the 1926-1936 period of significance, the Grimm Book Bindery building is important because it has been associated with the family business for much of the twentieth century, and because its attractive appearance represents the firm's quality work in the bookbinding business.<sup>3</sup>

The Grimm Book Bindery is an unusual and attractive example of the popular Georgian revival style of architecture, which uses classical details from the earlier Georgian style of American colonial times in an attempt to make almost identical copies of earlier designs, or to create new types of designs. The Grimm Book Bindery building is an example of how a number of Georgian elements were used to create a charming building design for a basically functional structure. These details include a raised facade with metal roof; applied metal cornice decorated with modillions; large, multi-paned, fanlight-topped windows flanking an entrance with classical frontispiece, and red brick exterior.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

see continuation page

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1

Quadrangle name Madison West, Wis.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 

1	6	3	0	5	0	0	0	4	7	7	1	5	8	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

B 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

C 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

D 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

E 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

F 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

G 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

H 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The verbal boundary description is equal to the legal description of the building:  
Wells Subdivision of Block 9, University Addition. NE 28' of Lot 17, Block 9

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carol Lohry Cartwright, Historic Preservation Consultant

organization Prepared for the Alexander Company date 10/1/1986

street & number 945 Dane St. telephone (608) 251-4784

city or town Madison state WI 53713

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local


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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title \_\_\_\_\_ date 2/2/86

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

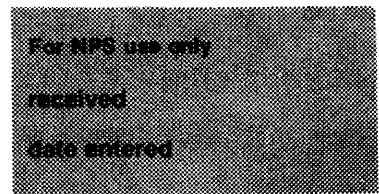
 Entered in the National Register date 4/3/86  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
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Grimm Book Bindery, Madison,

Continuation sheet Dane County, WI

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The result is probably the best small Georgian Revival commercial building in Madison. The level of preservation of the building is high, considering its continuous use as a small industrial structure for 60 years. The Grimm business made no alterations to the exterior during their long stay at this address, and only minor alterations have been made to the interior.

The Grimm Book Bindery is also significant as the work of a locally important architect, Alvan Small (working for John J. Flad and Associates at the time). Small designed a number of fine buildings in Madison in both the Prairie and period revival styles. Small (1869-1932) began his architectural career with Conover and Porter in Madison, in their employ between 1887-1899. HE spent the year 1899-1900 in Chicago, reportedly working for Louis Sullivan, then returned to Madison, and worked for Lew Porter from 1900-1907. Between 1907 and 1922, he practiced alone in Madison, then between 1922 and 1925 he was partnered with John J. Flad, who had earlier worked for him in 1916 and 1917. It was at the end of this partnership that the design for the Grimm Book Bindery was done. In failing health at this time, he was designing under the John J. Flad and Associates name. Between 1927 and his death in 1932, Alvan Small practiced alone in Madison.<sup>4</sup>

Alvan Small is particularly noted for his modest Prairie style houses, and these designs, which include the Louis Hirsig house (1914), 1010 Sherman Avenue, Madison, listed on the National Register in 1974, can be considered his finest overall work. Other than the Grimm Book Bindery building, Small designed three other known commercial buildings, the L. L. Olds building, 702 Williamson St., done in the commercial style; a warehouse at 905 E. Washington St. (1915), in the prairie style, and the E. W. Eddy store building, at 317 State Street (1914), probably his best commercial prairie building, featuring Sullivanesque medallions, and terra cotta columns with decorated capitals on a relatively plain brick facade. There are three known Small Georgian Revival designs in Madison. At 2121 Kendall (1923) Small designed a cottage-sized Georgian Revival house, with little detail. At 2016 Van Hise (1924), Small's design is a combination of both the Mediterranean and Georgian revival styles, resulting in an attractive, but not really significant house. By far his best and most true to the style Georgian revival house is the Royston house at 1918 Regent (1924), a red brick structure with steeply-pitched roof, and elegant Georgian entrance. Small's design of the Grimm Book Bindery is like that of the Royston house in that Small, as he did with his modest Prairie houses, did not just scale down a large high-style Georgian revival mansion for his smaller designs, but carefully used the style's details in a manner that was appropriate to the scale of the building. This attention to proportion is what made the best of his designs of such fine quality. The Grimm Book Bindery falls into this category because of its fine sense of proportion and refinement, especially for a small, industrial/commercial building. Because of the quality of the design, and the high level of integrity, the Grimm Book Bindery is a significant contribution to Madison's architectural heritage.

The Grimm Book Bindery business is moving its operations from this building to a new facility in Monona. The Alexander Company plans to remodel the interior into efficiency apartments, maintaining all details of the original exterior except along what is now the plain south wall, which will become entrances for the apartments.

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Grimm Book Bindery, Madison, Dane County Wisconsin

Continuation sheet

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Notes

<sup>1</sup>Building Permit, on file, City of Madison Planning Department, Municipal Building.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>City Directories for Madison, Wisconsin, 1858-1955; Custer, Frank, "Five Generations of Grimms Have Been Bookbinders Here," The Capital Times, May 8, 1962, "Green Section", p. 1; Grimm, Gottlieb, Biographical Sketch, In History of Dane County Wisconsin, Part 2 (Chicago: Western History Company, 1880), p. 994; Grimm, Henry G., Jr., interview, July 25, 1985; Grimm, John J., Biographical Sketch, History of Dane County Biographical and Genealogical (Madison: Western History Association, 1906), pp. 340-341; Quaife, Milo, Wisconsin. Its History and its People 1634-1924, Vol. IV (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1924), pp. 284-285.

<sup>4</sup>Architectural Files, City of Madison Preservation Planner, Municipal Building, Madison, WI; Historic Preservation Office, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, WI; Hirsig, Louis, house, National Register of Historic Places nomination form, 1974, on file, Historic Preservation Office, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, WI.

ITEM 9. Major Bibliographical References

- A. Custer, Frank, "Five Generations of Grimms Have Been Bookbinders Here," The Capital Times, May 8, 1962, "Green" Section, p. 1.
- B. Grimm, Gottlieb. Biographical Sketch. In, History of Dane County Wisconsin, Part 2 (Chicago: Western History Company, 1880), p. 994.
- C. Grimm, John J. Biographical Sketch. In, History of Dane County Biographical and Genealogical (Madison: Western History Association, 1906), pp. 340-341.
- D. Grimm, Henry G., Jr., Interview, July 25, 1985.
- E. Quaife, Milo. Wisconsin. Its History and Its People 1634-1924, Vol. IV. (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1924), pp. 284-285.