

# District Survey Form

<b>1</b> <u>DISTRICT</u> Second Street Commercial Historic District	<u>SURVEYOR</u> R. LaRowe	<u>SHSW STAFF</u>	
	<u>CITY</u> Hudson	<u>COUNTY</u> St. Croix	<u>SURVEY</u> Hudson/North Hudson Intensive Survey

FILM ROLLS/NEGATIVES

SC 8/2-10, 15-17, 21; SC 19/21; SC 36/31, 32; SC 37/19, 22; SC 38/2

<u>STREETS:</u>	<u>NUMBERS:</u>	<u>STREETS:</u>	<u>NUMBERS:</u>
Second Street	421-429, 422-430, 501-517, 502-528		
Walnut Street	112		
Locust Street	206-212		
<i>Roughly 1st, 2nd, Walnut, and Locust Sts.</i>			

**2** BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION The Second Street Commercial Historic District is an irregularly shaped district described as follows: Commencing at a point of intersection of the east property line of 212 Locust Street and the center line of said street, the boundary follows the center line of Locust Street to its intersection with Second Street; then continues south to the north property line of 517 Second Street; then west along said property line to the west property line of the same property. From this point, the boundary continues south along the west property line of the west side of Second Street to the center line of Walnut Street; then west along said center line to the west property line of 112 Walnut; then south along the west property line of 112 Walnut Street to the south property line of said property; then east to the west property lines of properties on the west side of Second Street. The district boundary then continues south along the west property lines of those properties on the west side

**3** BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION The Second Street Commercial Historic District is the architectural and historically significant nucleus of the locality's central business district. Development between 1866 and 1932, this collection of late 19th and early 20th century commercial buildings and business blocks possess a high degree of integrity only slightly compromised by "modern" alterations which are generally limited to the first story. The character and feeling of the district is strengthened by cohesive workmanship, compatible building materials, and overall scale. Buildings in the district are two stories, with the exception of three single story structures standing along the south side of Locust Street. Harmony is created through

- 4** SOURCES OF INFORMATION
- A. LaRowe, Hudson/North Hudson...Final Report, March, 1984.
  - B. Miller, 75th Anniversary of the Great Fire... (Hudson: Hudson Star-Observer, 1941).
  - C. "Terrible Conflag.", Hudson Star-Times, May 24, 1866, p. 1.
  - D. Miller, This Was Hudson. (Hudson: Hudson Star-Observer, 1972).
  - E. Solheim, It Happened in Hudson. (Hudson: Hudson Star-Observer, 1962).

**5** MAP REFERENCE

USGS quad: HUDSON/Zone 15  
scale: 1:24,000

<u>UTM references:</u>	
A. 519230/4980090	H.
B. 519120/4980040	I.
C. 519085/4979930	J.
D. 519220/4979900	K.
E.	L.
F.	M.
G.	N.
	O.



HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION  
STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WISCONSIN

**6** OPINION OF NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBILITY  
date: 2/14/84 initials: \_\_\_\_\_

eligible  not eligible  unknown  
 national  state  local

SECOND STREET COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT -- Hudson/North Hudson, St. Croix County

Continuation Sheet # 1

Boundary Description (cont.)

of Second Street to the south property line of 421-423 Second Street. The district boundary then turns east, following the south property lines of 421-423 and 422 Second Street to the east property line of 422 Second Street; then north along the east property lines of properties along the east side of Second Street to the point of beginning.

Total Acreage: 5.25 acres (228,500 sq. ft.)

Boundary Justification (cont.)

the use of brick, compressed stone, and cast iron in the construction of architectural details. Property lines, alleys, and parking lots serve as boundaries for the Second Street Commercial Historic District. Buildings surrounding the district further define the boundaries, as they have lost most of their original architectural integrity through severe modernization. Many of these outlying buildings are also smaller in scale and, in some cases, have been constructed in recent decades.

# 7 Description

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General character, building types, styles, environment, important natural and man-made features, qualities that distinguish district from surroundings, nature of intrusions and generally excepted properties.

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Design, scale, and integrity signify the Second Street Commercial Historic District. Builders and bricklayers of the late 19th and early 20th century combined essential and compatible materials such as brick, stone, compressed stone, cast iron, and concrete into an harmonious blending of architectural style. The Italianate period is the dominant style as many structures in the district were erected on a cusp of transition between Italianate and later 19th century designs. Corbelled cornices and brick or cast iron hoods over second story windows accentuate the Italianate commercial styling of buildings such as Frank D. Harding's former book and stationery store (520 Second Street), the old Music Hall (512 Second Street) and a series of old mercantile buildings along the west side of Second Street (509-517). The First National Bank's original headquarters (427-429 Second Street) is another fine Italianate which incorporates elements from Italian Renaissance Revival, such as the single cast iron pediment over a second floor window.

Several structures within the irregularly shaped district are the only commercial representatives of other architectural periods. The Taylor-Goss Block (501-503 Second Street) features an elaborate cast iron cornice which conforms to a center gable. Extensive ornamental brickwork emphasizes Queen Anne design influence by presenting a variety of textures and patterns. A unique expression of Romanesque architecture is the old True Republican newspaper office (421-423 Second Street). East facade arches are crowned with molded terra-cotta tiles depicting dandelions and oak leaves with acorns.

Alterations, made in the name of progress and modernization, are evident in the Second Street Commercial Historic District. These have been limited to the street level of storefronts, for example, relocating and replacing entrance doors and display windows, obtrusive signage, and constructing mansard-style cedar shake awnings. In some cases, second story windows have been replaced, and a non-contributing addition, built in smaller scale with less compatible materials after 1934, is situated on the west facade of the Hudson Star-Observer office (112 Walnut Street). But when compared to the architectural quality, craftsmanship, and ornamental elements on the upper floors, and on buildings surrounding the district, the overall integrity of the district has not been severely reduced.

Several buildings within the Second Street Historic District have been preserved and continue to reflect 19th century design principles. The rehabilitation of the Opera Hall Block (516 Second Street, National Register of Historic Places, 1979) and the restoration of the old First National Bank Building (427-429 Second Street) and Music Hall (512 Second Street), currently in progress, has strengthened the integrity of the district. It is further enhanced by wide sidewalks paved with brick and concrete as well as small trees planted primarily along the east side of Second Street between Walnut and Locust. The district, comprised of 21 brick buildings standing generally two stories, is distinct from its surroundings by the smaller scale, incompatible materials, and recent construction of buildings lying outside the Second Street Commercial Historic District.

# 8 Significance

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## Areas of significance

architecture: Type, period of construction history: commerce  
(late nineteenth, early  
twentieth century commercial)

Period of significance: 1857-1934

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## Historical development and statement of significance.

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### Significance:

The historic and architecturally prominent core of downtown Hudson, being nominated as the Second Street Commercial Historic District, is a visual excursion into the community's historical development. It represents a cross-section of commercial and cultural establishments which catered to the needs of local citizens. Pivotal buildings include two former rival banking institutions, the original permanent headquarters of the First National Bank (427-429 Second Street) and the old Hudson Savings Bank (426-430 Second Street), the Opera Hall Block (516 Second Street, National Register of Historic Places, 1979), a Queen Anne Commercial building with three storefronts known as the Taylor-Goss Block (501-503 Second Street), the E.E. Gatchell Building (212 Locust Street), and the present Hudson Star-Observer office at 112 Walnut Street. The remaining structures greatly contributed to the historical and architectural fabric of the district and include two former hotels, the defunct True Republican newspaper building, Hudson's first cultural center referred to as the Music Hall, and a variety of old mercantiles.

### Historical Background

The significance of Second Street as a thriving business center is rooted in Hudson's early settlement period. A ferry landing located at the foot of Buckeye Street, coupled with the tremendous influence of the St. Croix River for transportation, trade, and industry, Buckeye Street developed as the community's original commercial district. Business ventures mushroomed along Buckeye, serving the needs of mid-nineteenth century settlers: blacksmiths and livery stables, hardware dealers, drug and grocery stores, and general mercantiles. In addition, pioneers erected meeting halls for religious, social, municipal, and educational functions, hostelrys for overnight guests, and office space for physicians and attorneys.

With the growth of business northward from Buckeye Street during the prosperous decade of the 1850's, Walnut Street became a hub of commercial activity. As population increased, so did the need for goods and services. In Willis H. Miller's compilation of Hudson Star-Observer news articles entitled This Was Hudson, references to Walnut Street lead to the conclusion that professional services centered along this street, although various mercantile establishments existed there also. (Miller, This Was Hudson, 1972, pp. 1, 2). Several legal offices located on Walnut Street between First and Second Street were operated by attorneys whose names are closely associated with Hudson's historical development: A.D. Gray, the community's first mayor (1857); Herman L. Humphrey, Gray's partner who aspired to become a district and circuit court judge, Wisconsin State Assemblyman, and later a U.S. Congressman; and L.P. Weatherby and James B. Gray, who stepped into positions as a circuit court judge and state assemblyman, respectively.

As an industrial center for lumber milling, a community where outlying prairies attracted many agricultural pioneers, and the seat of St. Croix County government, Hudson flourished, resulting in an expanding and prosperous commercial district. From Walnut Street, tradesmen and merchants built frame establishments northward along Second Street, between Walnut and Locust Streets. By the end of the Civil War, the main thrust of business activity took place on Second Street. "The com-

munity was just beginning to revive from the economic panic of 1857 and the disastrous effects of the Civil War. Discharged soldiers were returning to their jobs and duties on the farms, in the mills, in the warehouses, and mercantiles..." (Miller, Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the Great Fire of 1866...Hudson, WI, 1941, p. 1) Scores of Scandinavians, primarily Norwegians, journeyed to Hudson and throughout western Wisconsin; men took positions in the lumber industry and women worked as domestics. (IBID)

May 19th, 1866 was a fateful day in the history of Hudson, especially for early business interests. At 5:30 p.m., a small fire erupted in a back shed adjacent to the Horace A. Taylor and Co. building on Walnut Street which housed a furniture store and the Hudson Star-Times. Hastened by forceful west winds and the closeness of wooden stores and offices, the fire manifested into a conflagration ravaging 65 businesses and 25 residences at an estimated cost of \$325,000. ("Terrible Conflagration...", Hudson Star-Times, May 24, 1866, p. 1) One enterprise escaped the fire; a stone structure occupied S.J. McCartney's dry goods store (112 Walnut Street).

Shortly after the disaster, municipal legislation restricted the use of flammable materials in new construction within prescribed limits of a fire district set by city council, a district which exists today encompassing Hudson's commercial center. The ordinance had a profound impact on physical reconstruction of commercial Hudson. Enterprising merchants and professionals began rebuilding almost immediately after the fire, employing limestone and brick as construction materials in accordance with the law.

Historic photographs and Sanborn-Perris Insurance maps reveal the progress and redevelopment of the Second Street Commercial Historic District. Hudson continued as a bustling industrial and trade center into the early decades of the twentieth century, a development symbolized by late nineteenth and early twentieth century architectural styles.

Hudson's population steadily increased through 1900, with an influx of Danish immigrants settling in the community and surrounding county just as the Scandinavians, Irish, and Dutch had migrated during the locality's pioneer period. Many came as farmers, but the majority flocked to the Hudson area to take advantage of opportunities opened by the arrival of the railroad in 1871.

With the railroad came a more efficient mode of importing raw materials and exporting manufactured goods. As a result, the commercial district rebounded from the fire and major economic setbacks and flourished, offering better products and services to local consumers. The introduction of the automobile allowed people to travel at their leisure and necessities could be obtained from the larger market in the greater Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota area. Commercial Hudson has since been on steady decline.

Significance: Architecture

The blocks along Second and Locust Streets, designated as the Second Street Commercial Historic District, is a collection of late nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial buildings. A number of "modern" facade alterations, limited generally to the first story, have interfered with original design concepts, but the architectural integrity of the district is not severely compromised.

Significance: Architecture(cont.')

Continuation Sheet #2

Two buildings in the district are significant representations of later nineteenth century commercial architecture. The Taylor-Goss Block (501-503 Second Street) was erected in 1880 and originally featured three storefronts. Reflecting Queen Anne design concepts, the building's facade is a striking assemblage of textures and patterns framed by decorative brickwork and cast iron. The details are particularly noticable at the iron cornice which features brackets and a heavily embellished center gable. The E.E.Gatchell Building (212 Locust Street) is Hudson's primary example of nineteenth century commercial design. Unrivaled in integrity, the building was constructed in 1895 with a recessed central entrance flanked by large display windows and framed with decorative ironwork. Crowned by an elaborate iron cornice emblazened with the name of the original owner, the second story fenestration has been individualized by clustering the windows, inserting arching leaded and stained glass transoms, and capping the unit with stone voussiors.

Significance: Associated with Commerce

Historically, the Second Street Commercial Historic District is a complex of buildings which stand as the last remaining evidence of the commercial development of Hudson. Individually, these buildings reflect the ideals of the merchants, entrepreneurs, and commercialists who built them and the services they offered. Collectively, the district represents Hudson's historical evolution as a center of commerce.

Four buildings within the district are designated as pivotal for their historical significance as representatives of the commercial and cultural development of Hudson. The Opera Hall Block (516 Second Street, NRHP-1979) was built in 1880 and served as the community's second culturally associated building. It replaced the former Music Hall (512 Second Street), erected in 1872, as the cultural center of the vicinity. (Loss of integrity prohibits the Music Hall from being selected as a pivotal property.) For many years, the Opera Hall Block sponsored musical, dramatic, and political events in its second floor auditorium.

The old First National Bank Building (427-429 Second Street) symbolizes the origination of formal financial services in Hudson. Chartered under state law in 1863, the First National Bank survived every major federal economic "panic", including Franklin D. Roosevelt's "banker's holiday" in 1933, to become the oldest continuously operating banking institution in the Ninth Federal Reserve District. Their first permanent headquarters, the subject of this brief sketch, was erected in 1870. It served as the bank's business building for nearly a century, having moved to a new location in 1972. Second floor office space in the old building has been occupied by a number of successful legal firms, the first of which was the partnership of Henry C. Baker and John C. Spooner. Spooner, who remained with the firm until 1880, used the office through most of his career as a solicitor for the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Omaha Railroad and his single term in the Wisconsin State Assembly (1872). The building is currently under renovation.

In 1870, the Goss-Boyden Block (426-430 Second Street) was built directly across the street from the First National Bank. The north storefront was utilized by the Hudson Savings Bank, organized by the Goss family in 1870, until 1893 when the economic panic of that year forced the bank's closing. The venture was sold in 1897 to a similar interest, the National Bank of Hudson, which operated until the Roosevelt Administration closed their doors in 1933. The south storefront

SECOND STREET COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT--Hudson/North Hudson, St. Croix County  
Continuation Sheet #3

Significance: Associated with      Commerce

became the permanent quarters for pioneer druggist Philo Q. Boyden's pharmacy, known by the company name of Boyden and Martin.

These historically significant structures exemplify the theme of the Second Street Commercial Historic District, standing as pivotal emblems of Hudson's commercial development. The move to restore and preserve these architectural and historical resources is evident in the number of projects which have become apparent in recent months. Originating with the rehabilitation of the Opera Hall Block in 1979 (516 Second Street, NRHP-1979), individuals interested in tax investment incentives are in the process of renovating several of these structures which, in turn, could lead to economic revitalization of commercial Hudson. The thrust of the movement has been spurred by the Hudson/North Hudson Intensive Survey, the delineation of the Second Street Commercial Historic District, and its nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

SECOND STREET COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT Boundary Justification Continued

West Side of Second Street, South from 422 Second:

Large parking lot separates 422 Second Street from 412 Second. Buildings south of said lot date from the mid-nineteenth century through the 1960's and have either been extremely altered, reducing their architectural integrity, are of much smaller scale, or post-date the period of significance.

East Side of Second Street, South from 421-423 Second:

Buildings seriously defaced, of smaller scale, or post-dating the period of significance.

South Side of Walnut Street, West from 112 Walnut:

Buildings constructed in recent years of smaller scale and design integrity.

North Side of Walnut Street, West of 501-503 Second Street:

Commercial properties which have been seriously defaced and smaller scale.

South Side of Walnut Street, East of 426-430 Second:

Two buildings erected since 1934.

North Side of Walnut Street, East of 502-510 Second:

An alley and parking space separating the Second Street Commercial Historic District from the Hudson Municipal Building, nominated to the NRHP as an individual property.

West Side of Second Street, North from 517 Second:

Buildings of much smaller scale, design quality, and reduced architectural integrity.

East Side of Second Street, North of Locust Street:

A single commercial property with a building erected in the late 1960's and a large municipal parking lot.

North 200 Block of Locust Street:

Two commercial buildings dating between 1915 and 1930 with less architectural integrity which would diminish the collective character of the district, a building post-dating the period of significance, and the Hudson Post Office.

South 200 Block of Locust Street, East of 212 Locust:

Separated from the district by an alley, the south 200 block of Locust contains several smaller scale commercial buildings, many post-dating the period of significance and one seriously altered, and a single nineteenth century Italianate commercial building of reduced architectural integrity.



OWNERS LIST FOR

SECOND STREET COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

MULTIPLE RESOURCES OF HUDSON AND NORTH HUDSON, ST CROIX COUNTY, WISCONSIN  
Second Street:

422 Second St.: Arnold Bertelsen  
St. Croix Heights  
Hudson, Wisconsin 54016

520 Second St.: Ruth Kees  
520 Second Street  
Hudson, Wisconsin 54016

421-23 Second St.: Mary R. Rusch  
420 Orange Street  
Hudson, Wisconsin 54016

522 Second St.: C.A. Richards  
522 Second Street  
Hudson, Wisconsin 54016

424 Second St.: Arnold Bertelsen  
St. Croix Heights  
Hudson, Wisconsin 54016

524 Second St.: John Heywood  
800 Vine Street  
Hudson, Wisconsin 54016

426 Second St.: Richard Troutman  
426 Second Street  
Hudson, Wisconsin 54016

528 Second St.: Lew Mickelsen  
528 Second Street  
Hudson, Wisconsin 54016

430 Second St.: Hugh F. Gwin  
430 Second Street  
Hudson, Wisconsin 54016

Locust Street:

429-31 Second: H.G. Erickson and Trustees  
c/o Erickson Diversified  
509 Second Street  
Hudson, Wisconsin 54016

206 Locust St.: Paul Anderson  
RR #3, River Ridge Road  
Hudson, Wisconsin 54016

501-03 Second: David R. Pressler  
P.O. Box 355  
River Falls, Wisconsin 54022

208 Locust St.: James Gilbert  
RR #5, County Trunk A  
Hudson, Wisconsin 54016

502-10 Second: James Tulgren  
P.O. Box #7  
Hudson, Wisconsin 54016

210 Locust St.: Brian and Sandy Berg  
210 Locust Street  
Hudson, Wisconsin 54016

507 Second St.: Arnold Bertelsen  
St. Croix Heights  
Hudson, Wisconsin 54016

212 Locust St.: Burt Nordstrand  
1207 Coulee Road  
Hudson, Wisconsin 54016

509 Second St.: Erickson, Inc.  
509 Second Street  
Hudson, Wisconsin 54016

512-514 Second: Burt Nordstrand  
1207 Coulee Road  
Hudson, Wisconsin 54016

516 Second St.: Burt Nordstrand  
1207 Coulee Road  
Hudson, Wisconsin 54016

517  
715 Second St.: Westin, Inc.  
c/o Victor Fenner  
1202 Third Street  
Hudson, Wisconsin 54016

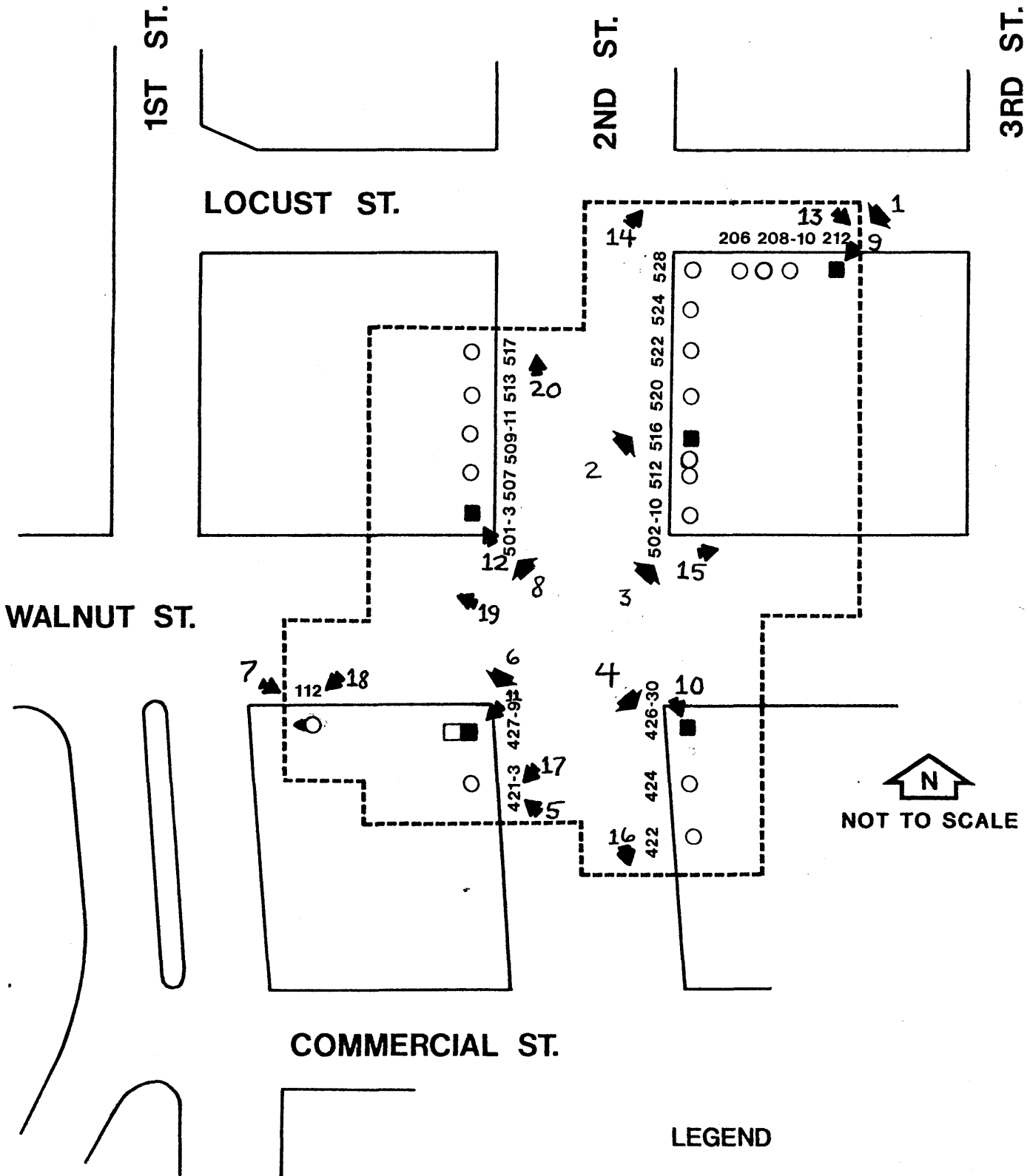
*112 Walnut St  
Hudson, WI  
1207 Coulee Rd  
Director  
1207 Coulee Rd  
Burt Nordstrand  
112 Walnut St  
Hudson, WI*



# SECOND ST. COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

Hudson/No. Hudson Intensive Survey

AUGUST 1983



## LEGEND

- 701 Address Number
- ▲ Photo View
- ◄ Non-contributing

- Pivotal
- Contributing
- District Boundary

# HUDSON