

NPS Form 10-900  
(Expires 5/31/2012)  
Wisconsin Word Processing Format (Approved 1/92)



**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**

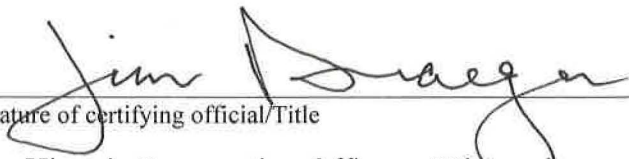
**historic name** Downtown Historic District  
**other names/site number**

**2. Location**

<b>street &amp; number</b>	Bounded by Wisconsin Street from West Beloit Street to Fremont Street	N/A	<b>not for publication</b>
<b>city or town</b>	Darien	N/A	<b>vicinity</b>
<b>state</b> Wisconsin	<b>code</b> WI	<b>county</b> Walworth	<b>code</b> 127
			<b>zip code</b> 53114

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

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

  
Signature of certifying official/Title  
Date 7/10/13  
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

Downtown Historic District

Walworth County

Wisconsin

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*

9.4.13

*[Signature]*

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- structure
- site
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

contributing	noncontributing
18	2 buildings
	sites
	structures
	objects
18	2 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 previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store

COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant

GOVERNMENT/city hall

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store

COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant

GOVERNMENT/city hall

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
AMERICAN MOVEMENTS  
MODERN MOVEMENT/Art Deco

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls brick

wood

roof asphalt

other concrete

**Narrative Description**

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

Name of Property

County and State

**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.

**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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE  
ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1890-1963

**Significant Dates**

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

UNKNOWN

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

Downtown Historic District  
Name of Property

Walworth County  
County and State

Wisconsin

### 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 2 acres

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

1 16 360860 4717740  
Zone Easting Northing

3 16 360960 4717620  
Zone Easting Northing

2 16 360960 4717760  
Zone Easting Northing

4 16 360870 4717580  
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 Carol Lohry Cartwright, Consultant  
organization Prepared for the Village of Darien  
street & number W7646 Hackett Rd.  
city or town Whitewater

state WI

Date April 1, 2013  
telephone 262-473-6820  
zip code 53190

Downtown Historic District

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Wisconsin

Name of Property

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**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**

**organization**

**street & number**

**city or town**

**state**

WI

**date**

**telephone**

**zip code**

**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 20503.

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Downtown Historic District  
Darien, Walworth County, WI

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**DESCRIPTION**

**Site Description**

The Downtown Historic District sits along a single block of Wisconsin Street in the old downtown commercial district of Darien, a small community in far southern Walworth County near the Illinois-Wisconsin border. The buildings line a wide street with modern curb, gutter, and sidewalks with sufficient room for angle parking on both sides of the street. Historically, Wisconsin Street was the route of State Highway 14 through Darien, but in the mid-twentieth century, the highway was rebuilt, bypassing Wisconsin Street and Darien's downtown; today, there is only a moderate amount of traffic in this part of the village.

The topography of the district is generally flat and there is no landscaping. All of the buildings abut the sidewalk on each side of the street and in some areas there is an extra step up from the curb to the sidewalk. There are no street tree plantings and in the places where the buildings do not share party walls, the intervening spaces are used as parking lots or left as open space. Most of these spaces are paved, but in a few instances, there are some narrow strips of grass.

This compact commercial downtown district has some important cohesive details. Most of the buildings are two stories in height, most are faced with red brick, and most date from the first two decades of the twentieth century. There are only one or two buildings with distinctive style details; most are Commercial Vernacular in style or form. Details on these buildings generally reflect the classicism popular with many commercial buildings of the early twentieth century.

The district can be easily defined from the rest of the community. For example, Fremont Street is a defined boundary to the north, and there is an abrupt change in the physical appearance of the area. A set of railroad tracks with large metal granaries on each side create a clear definition between the commercial buildings of Wisconsin Street and a residential neighborhood to the north. Physical boundaries also define the east and west boundaries of the district. Behind the buildings along Wisconsin Street are alleys that separate the district from its neighbors. On the west side, these neighbors are a group of warehouse type buildings and open spaces that sit along the railroad tracks running southwest out of the community. On the east side, the alley separates the commercial buildings from a residential neighborhood.

The south boundary of the district is Beloit Street, which as County Highway X is a main thoroughfare leading out of the village. On the south side of this street, perpendicular to Wisconsin Street, there are a few commercial buildings that were historically attached to Darien's downtown, along with a modern post office building. The commercial buildings are heavily remodeled and do not reflect their original

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historic appearance, so were excluded from the district. On the north side of Beloit Street, just east of the district boundary is an older building that is also heavily remodeled, so it was excluded from the district. To the west along the north side of Beloit Street, there is a mid-twentieth century brick commercial building. But it is both physically separated from the buildings along Wisconsin Street and is of a different type and era from the district buildings, so it was excluded as well.

The physical attributes of Darien's downtown make it a highly compact district with few intrusions. Of the 20 buildings in the district, only two do not contribute to its architectural or historical significance due to extensive alterations. This means that 90% of the buildings in the district contribute to the overall architectural and historical quality of the streetscape. Given the similarity of many of the buildings' details, this makes for a very intact downtown commercial district.

**Description of Selected Buildings**

1-5 N. Wisconsin St.  
Heyer Block, 1916  
Commercial Vernacular

The Heyer Block is a two-story Commercial Vernacular building with dark red brick facing on the main elevation and tan brick side and rear walls. In the upper level of the main elevation, there is a stone plaque that reads "HEYER." It sits over three sets of paired single-light sashes with transoms. The storefront appears original and wraps around the south side of the building. It features a brick bulkhead supporting large show windows with a transom, a central recessed entrance with period entry door, and a period entry door on the north end of the storefront. Symmetrical fenestration of primarily single light sashes (a few with transoms) runs along the second story of the south exposed elevation. The first story of the south elevation features several of these windows with transoms, a side entry with transom, and four transom sized openings.

This building was constructed in 1916 for a long-time business in Darien, the Heyer Hardware Store. Jacob Heyer started the hardware business in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and according to historic photos, had a frame building at this location. After Jacob Heyer's death, Henry J. Heyer, his son, took over the business and in 1916, he erected this new building for the business. Heyer Hardware Store operated in this building during much of the twentieth century.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Darien Bicentennial Committee, *A History of Darien, Allens Grove, and Fairfield* (Darien, WI: Darien Bicentennial Committee, 1976), 6; Ginny Hall, *Walking Around Darien* (Lake Geneva, WI: Friends of the Lake Geneva Public Library, 2004, 6; Tax Rolls for the Village of Darien, on file in the Area Research Center of the Andersen Library of the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, Whitewater, Wisconsin; *Delavan Enterprise*, August 24, 1916, 3.

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2 N. Wisconsin St.  
Young Block, 1902  
Commercial Vernacular

The Young Block is a two and one-half story classically-influenced Commercial Vernacular style building with a main elevation facing of tan bricks with cream brick side and rear walls. The building has an intact simple classical cornice with modillions. Under the cornice and above the second story windows is a row of brick corbelling suggesting brackets that sits over four half size round-arched openings and a central oculus window. The half windows are filled with single panes that are decorated with fanlight transoms. Some of the windows are damaged. The second story window openings are filled with what appear to be original single-light double-hung sashes. Shallow brick pilasters also decorate the upper floors of the building. The first floor double storefront dates from the mid-twentieth century and has a metal frame with large show windows, a metal and glass entry door, and a flat metal overhang. Along the south exposed wall of the building there are a number of segmentally-arched openings along with an undecorated side entrance.

This building was constructed in 1902 on the site of one of the longest-lived commercial businesses in Darien. In 1858, Delos Williams came to Darien and opened the village's first drug store on this site. He also operated a grocery and general type store. Williams owned this property until 1900, when it was acquired by R. S. Young, who had married Williams' daughter and taken over the business. Soon after, Young built the current building. Young operated a grocery and drug store until the 1940s, when the business was sold to H. A. Dodge & Son. It was converted into a grocery store that was still operating in 1976. The upper floors were used as a Masonic Temple.<sup>2</sup>

13-15 N. Wisconsin St.  
Hunsbusher Block, 1915  
Commercial Vernacular

This Commercial Vernacular block is two-stories in height with a double storefront, one section being larger than the other. The building has a red brick facing and its only decoration is a row of brick corbelling resembling very shallow brackets and a narrow pilaster defining the two sections of the building. The second story openings are symmetrical and filled with single-light sashes of various ages that are decorated with stone lintels and sills. The original storefronts have been enclosed with modern paneling and small windows. The main entrances have also been remodeled with modern steel doors, although there is a period wood and glass door that covers the staircase to the upper floor.

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<sup>2</sup> Darien Bicentennial Committee, 6; Hall, 6; Tax Rolls; *Delavan Enterprise*, June 26, 1902, 8.



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The Hunsbusher Block was built in 1915 and hailed by the local newspaper as a “modern” business building with up-to-date flats on the second floor. The newspaper noted that the building was faced with Chicago and Menominee brick and was designed by C. M. Confer of the local Barker Lumber Company, who had recently designed many houses in town, especially bungalows. Later, the building was used as a grocery store, confectionary, and restaurant.<sup>3</sup>

19-23 N. Wisconsin St.  
Norton Block, 1903  
Commercial Vernacular

This two-story Commercial Vernacular building is faced with cream bricks on the main elevation and light red bricks on the side walls. It has a simple classically-influenced cornice and four openings on the second story. These openings have been partially enclosed with modern single-light sashes and wood paneling. Most of the original storefront is extant, including the main structural beam and show window framing. Two large period show windows sit on original paneled bulkheads that flank three entrances with transoms. The entrances have been filled with modern steel and glass doors.

This building was constructed in 1903 for J. H. Norton’s saloon. When it opened in November of 1903, it was lauded in the local newspaper as a “fine structure, nicely furnished, having a billiard room on the north and a bar room on the south.” The newspaper also reported that at the saloon’s opening, “an elaborate banquet and all kinds of drinks and smokes were free.” By 1906, the business and building was taken over by the Langdon Brothers and it remained in their hands for a number of years. Later, it was used as a restaurant and liquor store.<sup>4</sup>

20 N. Wisconsin St.  
Reed Block, 1909  
Commercial Vernacular

The Reed Block is a two-story Commercial Vernacular building with influences from the Classical Revival style. It has a main elevation of dark red bricks and side and rear walls of cream bricks. It has a classically-influenced cornice under which are two rows of brick corbelling. The second story windows are symmetrical and filled with two period single-light sashes and two modern sashes that were made to fit into the slightly larger window openings. The windows are decorated with jack arches. An historic photograph shows that the first story storefront originally had two show windows

<sup>3</sup> Hall, 8; *Delavan Enterprise*, September 9, 1915, 8; September 23, 1915, 6; December 16, 1915, 8.

<sup>4</sup> Tax Rolls; Hall, 8; *Delavan Enterprise*, November 5, 1903, 8.

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flanking a double-door entrance with sidelights and a transom. This entire area has been enclosed with brick and vinyl siding, two pairs of modern sashes topped with fanlights and a partially enclosed entrance with a modern metal door. An enclosed staircase clad with vinyl siding sits along the south elevation.

Historic sources indicate that this is the second building for George Reed's General Store. The first building burned in 1909 and Reed quickly rebuilt the same year. The Reed block housed his grocery and dry goods store on the first floor, and included a large upstairs hall that was named "Reed's Opera House." Reed operated his store into the mid-twentieth century when it was converted into a tavern that had a bowling alley installed on the second floor.<sup>5</sup>

24 N. Wisconsin St.  
Darien Town Hall, 1938-39  
Art Deco

The Darien Town (later Village) Hall is a one-story brown brick building with details that suggest the Art Deco style. The building's main elevation features a stone cornice above which is a narrow brick parapet with stone coping. The center of the parapet is raised and is decorated with a plaque reading "Darien." Five fluted pilasters decorate the main elevation delineating the window and entry bays of the building. At the center of the building is the recessed entrance that is covered with a modern metal and glass entry door with sidelights and a transom. It replaced the original double-door entry with transom. South of the entry are two window openings, each filled with modern multi-light glazing. To the north of the entrance is an area that was originally filled with two garage-type doors that were used for fire trucks. This opening has been enclosed with bricks and a modern tripartite multi-light window.

The first Darien Town Hall was built in 1870 and sat to the north of this building. It burned in 1909, but was not rebuilt. In the fall of 1938, the Town of Darien received funding to build this modern town hall from the federal government's most important work program of the Great Depression of the 1930s, the Works Progress Administration. It was completed by May of 1939 and housed the town office, public rest rooms, the fire department, the truck and grader for the highway department, and had a public hall large enough for 300 people. It became a village hall in 1951 after Darien voted to officially incorporate. The fire department relocated to new quarters at the western edge of town in 1976 and in recent years, the building has become deteriorated and village offices are now located in a neighboring building.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Hall, 8; Darien Bicentennial Committee, 8; Tax Rolls; *Delavan Enterprise*, November 18, 1909, 8; December 23, 1909, 8; advertisements in the *Delavan Enterprise*, 1914.

<sup>6</sup> Hall, 9; Darien Bicentennial Committee, 15; "Darien's New Town Hall Sets Pace for Finest in Many Miles," newspaper article (n.d.) on file in the Village of Darien offices, Darien, Wisconsin.

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36 N. Wisconsin St.  
Hunsbusher Blacksmith Shop, 1909  
Commercial Vernacular

This one-story commercial vernacular building has a facing of dark red brick on the main elevation and brown brick side walls. It has a plain cornice that sits over a row of brick corbelling. A “ghost” sign reading “. . . Hunsbusher Shoeing & Repairing” is still visible under the corbelling. The storefront consists of two segmentally arched openings flanking a large rectangular central opening. The segmentally arched openings are covered with plywood, while the central entrance is covered with a modern vinyl garage door. There is a large mid-twentieth century addition attached to the rear elevation. The interior of the building was viewed and no elements of the shop are extant except for exposed brick walls, a concrete floor, and two intact period windows behind the plywood covering seen on the exterior.

Hunsbusher founded his blacksmith shop in the nineteenth century and historic photos show it was housed in an old frame-constructed building on this site. It burned in 1909, and was quickly rebuilt. It was a long-time blacksmith shop, then repair shop well into the twentieth century.<sup>7</sup>

31 N. Wisconsin St.  
Schrandt & Bachelet Block, 1913  
Commercial Vernacular

33-35 N. Wisconsin St.  
Frank Block, 1913  
Commercial Vernacular

37-39 N. Wisconsin St.  
Schrandt Block, 1913  
Commercial Vernacular

These buildings are very similar and share party walls. They were all built in 1913 after a fire burned several old buildings on this site. But, they were all constructed by separate owners and each building was given distinctive brick corbelling to differentiate them from each other. Each building has an identical red and tan multi-hued high gloss brick facing and plain brick pilasters separate each building façade. The south façade is a bit taller than the center façade, which is a bit taller than the north façade, creating a stepped appearance that also differentiates each building.

There are no applied cornices and a historic photograph shows that this was originally the case. Instead, the Schrandt & Bachelet and Frank Blocks each have a coping of one row of rusticated concrete blocks. The Schrandt Block probably had a similar coping, but it has been repaired with plain concrete blocks. Under the coping, each building features brick corbeling. The brick corbeling of the Schrandt & Bachelet Block suggests brackets, while the corbeling of the Frank Block is done in a pattern of inverted pyramids. The Schrandt Block has corbeling that suggests brackets that is executed both with bricks and with rusticated concrete. The Schrandt & Bachelet Block also has a belt course of

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<sup>7</sup> Darien Bicentennial Committee, 14; Tax Rolls; *Delavan Enterprise*, September 16, 1909, 8.

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two rows of rusticated concrete blocks under the corbeling, while the Frank Block has a row of rusticated bricks in a diamond pattern.

Each building has slightly different window decoration on the second story. The Schrandt and Bachelet and Schrandt Blocks have openings decorated with brick segmental arches, while the Frank Block features flat stone lintels. The windows in each building are not original and are primarily modern single-light sashes. The Schrandt Block has metal awnings over its windows, while the Schrandt and Bachelet Block's windows are partially enclosed.

The original storefronts, as seen in historic photographs, featured large show windows with transoms and each building had a central wood and glass entry door with transom. The Frank Block still has its extant paneled wood bulkhead and the flanking blocks still retain their rusticated concrete block bulkheads. The show windows are still extant in the Frank and the Schrandt and Bachelet Blocks, although their transoms have been enclosed. The Schrandt Block's show windows have been partially enclosed with vertical paneling, modern "picture-style" windows, and a metal awning. All of the storefronts have altered entry doors and some entrances have been partially enclosed.

A large fire in August of 1912 destroyed old frame buildings in this area of Wisconsin Street, but unlike the 1909 fire on the other side of the street, the buildings were not immediately rebuilt. In May of 1913, the local newspaper announced that finally a real estate deal had been made and three two-story brick buildings would be constructed on this site.<sup>8</sup>

By July, foundations for the buildings were started and Herman Schrandt moved his jewelry store into his new building in November of 1913. The next week, it was announced that the Schrandt and Bachelet Block had been rented to the Eagan Brothers for a grocery store. A few weeks later it was announced that a new hotel, called the Merchants Hotel would open in the large Frank Block. It would have an office on the first floor along with a dining room and kitchen, while rooms and a parlor would fill the second floor. Finally, toward the end of December of 1913, Henry Frank announced that he was moving his clothing store into his new building.<sup>9</sup>

The Schrandt and Bachelet Block also had a hall on the second story and the popular organization, Royal Neighbors, met there for many years. There were also dances in the hall. After the clothing store, the Frank Block housed a grocery store and eventually the Schrandt Block housed a meat market for a time.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> "Real Estate Changes Hands," *Delavan Enterprise*, May 22, 1913, 8.

<sup>9</sup> *Delavan Enterprise*, July 10, 1913, 8; November 13, 1913, 8; November 27, 1913, 8; December 4, 1913, 8; December 11, 1913, 8.

<sup>10</sup> Hall, 8-9.

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41 N. Wisconsin St.  
Thomas Block, 1914  
Commercial Vernacular

This two story Commercial Vernacular building is faced with dark red brick. Shallow projecting pilasters and a slightly projecting parapet give the building's main elevation a slightly recessed effect. The second story openings are all segmentally-arched and filled with single-light sashes in poor condition. A period door covers the entrance to the second floor and the original storefront is heavily remodeled, being enclosed with wood paneling, a very small window, and a modern entry door. The overhead storefront beam and a brick bulkhead are extant.

Roy Thomas started his new block in April of 1914. In August, it was announced that the Thomas Block was almost completed and that Charles Frey would open a barber shop in the new building.<sup>11</sup>

42, 42A N. Wisconsin St.  
Woodford Implement Shop, 1909; Addition, c.1950  
Commercial Vernacular, Twentieth Century Commercial

The Woodford Implement Shop and its later addition are connected, but make up two separate buildings along the streetscape. The earlier structure is a two story commercial vernacular building constructed in 1909. The large one-story addition was probably built around 1950 and suggests the Twentieth Century Commercial style. The two story building has a metal cornice with classical details, including brackets and modillions. The main elevation wall is faced with red brick and there are pilasters and a row of brick corbelling that suggests brackets accenting this façade. The side walls are faced with cream brick. The four openings in the second story feature segmental brick arches and are enclosed with wood panels. The storefront of the older building is in two sections. The south section once had a large opening, but it is enclosed with vertical wood paneling. The north section had a storefront with show window, transom, and entrance, but it has been enclosed with vertical wood paneling and a modern entry door.

The addition is one story in height but has a stepped parapet that rises from a low point at the north end to high point at the south end. It is topped with a tile coping. Behind the parapet, the roof is arched and slopes downward from at high point at the south end of the building to a low point at the north wall. The main elevation is faced with orange-red brick and sits on a raised poured concrete foundation. A large entrance at the south end has been enclosed with a modern garage door. To the north of this entrance there is a remodeled small storefront with two openings and an entrance. Above

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<sup>11</sup> Tax Rolls; *Delavan Enterprise*, January 8, 1914, 8; April 23, 1914, 8; August 13, 1914, 8.

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the south end of the building, where the parapet is at its highest point, the wall between the storefront and garage entry is decorated with contrasting brickwork in a diamond pattern. The north end of the building features rectangular openings filled with small multi-light industrial style windows. The north side wall of the addition is faced with tan brick and includes several randomly-sized openings.

Prior to 1909, this three-lot parcel was occupied by the old Darien Town Hall and flanked by vacant lots. In 1909, the old town hall burned along with other buildings on this end of Wisconsin Street, but the town did not rebuild the hall. In September of 1909, the town sold one of its empty lots and E. C. Woodford announced that he would build a brick building there for his implement business. The town retained its other lots north of Woodford's new building and constructed a small fire department shed and a long, narrow concrete block storage shed. Sometime in the mid-twentieth century, probably after the 1939 completion of the new town hall, these buildings were demolished and the lots sold to the implement business that constructed the new modern addition (~1950) to its original building.

**BUILDING INVENTORY**

<i>Address</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Style</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Status*</i>
<b>N. Wisconsin St.</b>				
1-5	Heyer Block	Commercial Vernacular	1916 <sup>12</sup>	C
2	Young Block	Commercial Vernacular	1902 <sup>13</sup>	C
6	Farmers State Bank- Young Building	Astylistic	1896-1897 <sup>14</sup>	NC
7	Seaver Block	Queen Anne	c.1893 <sup>15</sup>	C
10	Lindeman Block	Commercial Vernacular	1898 <sup>16</sup>	C
13-15	Hunsbusher Block	Commercial Vernacular	1915 <sup>17</sup>	C
14	Horder Building	Astylistic	1894 <sup>18</sup>	NC
19-23	Norton Block	Commercial Vernacular	1903 <sup>19</sup>	C

\*Contributing = C; Non-contributing= NC

<sup>12</sup>Tax Rolls; *Delavan Enterprise*, April 17, 1916, 3; July 13, 1916, 3; August 24, 1916, 3.

<sup>13</sup> Tax Rolls; *Delavan Enterprise*, April 10, 1902, 8; June 26, 1902, 8.

<sup>14</sup> Tax Rolls; *Delavan Enterprise*, January 7, 1897, 1; January 14, 1897, 1, September 2, 1897, 1; October 21, 1897, 1.

<sup>15</sup> Darien Plat, Plat Map for Walworth County, 1891, on file in the Archives of the Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin; Darien Bicentennial Committee, 14.

<sup>16</sup> Tax Rolls; *Delavan Enterprise*, May 12, 1898, 1.

<sup>17</sup> *Delavan Enterprise*, September 9, 1915, 8; September 23, 1915, 6.

<sup>18</sup> Tax Rolls; *Delavan Enterprise*, November 15, 1894, 1.

<sup>19</sup> Tax Rolls; *Delavan Enterprise*, September 3, 1903, 8; October 8, 1903, 8; November 5, 1903, 8.

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<i>Address</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Style</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Status*</i>
<b>N. Wisconsin St.</b>				
20	Reed Block	Commercial Vernacular	1909 <sup>20</sup>	C
24	Darien Town Hall	Art Deco	1939 <sup>21</sup>	C
25	O'Brien Block	Commercial Vernacular	1911 <sup>22</sup>	C
27	Post Office	Commercial Vernacular	c.1910 <sup>23</sup>	C
31	Schrandt & Bachelet Block	Commercial Vernacular	1913 <sup>24</sup>	C
33-35	Frank Block	Commercial Vernacular	1913 <sup>25</sup>	C
36	Hunsbusher Blacksmith Shop	Commercial Vernacular	1909 <sup>26</sup>	C
37-39	Schrandt Block	Commercial Vernacular	1913 <sup>27</sup>	C
41-43	Thomas Block	Commercial Vernacular	1914 <sup>28</sup>	C
42, 42A	Woodford Block	Commercial Vernacular	1909 <sup>29</sup>	C
	Addition	20 <sup>th</sup> Century Commercial	c.1950 <sup>30</sup>	
45	Elmo Theatre	Commercial Vernacular	1914 <sup>31</sup>	C
47	Retail Building	Front Gable	c.1880 <sup>32</sup>	C

\*Contributing = C; Non-contributing= NC

<sup>20</sup> Tax Rolls; *Delavan Enterprise*, September 16, 1909, 8; November 18, 1909, 8; December 23, 1909, 8.

<sup>21</sup> Hall, 9.

<sup>22</sup> *Delavan Enterprise*, April 20, 1911, 8; June 22, 1911, 8.

<sup>23</sup> Historic photographs.

<sup>24</sup> Tax Rolls; *Delavan Enterprise*, July 10, 1913, 8; November 27, 1913, 8.

<sup>25</sup> Tax Rolls; *Delavan Enterprise*, May 8, 1913, 8; July 10 1913, 8; December 11, 1913, 8.

<sup>26</sup> Tax Rolls; *Delavan Enterprise*, September 16, 1909, 8.

<sup>27</sup> Tax Rolls; *Delavan Enterprise*, May 8, 1913, 8; November 13, 1913, 8.

<sup>28</sup> Tax Rolls; *Delavan Enterprise*, January 8, 1914, 8; August 13, 1914, 8.

<sup>29</sup> Tax Rolls; *Delavan Enterprise*, September 30, 1909, 8.

<sup>30</sup> Sanborn-Perris Fire Insurance Map for Darien, 1933, on file in the Archives of the Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin, field observation.

<sup>31</sup> Tax Rolls; *Delavan Enterprise*, April 23, 1914, 8; September 10, 1914, 8.

<sup>32</sup> Darien Plat, Plat Map for Walworth County, 1891, on file in the Archives of the Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

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**SIGNIFICANCE**

The Downtown Historic District in Darien is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C. Under criterion A, the district is locally historically significant because it was the location of a long-time event, the growth and development of commerce in Darien between 1890 and 1963, a period when the small village was a thriving farmer's town and its commercial businesses, primarily located within this district, served most of the needs of area residents. The historic services provided by the businesses that were located in this district's buildings were broad, from retail goods, to professional and financial services. It was also the center of community social activities and the center of local government.

The district is also being nominated for the National Register under criterion C, because, as a whole, its contributing buildings reflect a specific and significant time in the growth and development of the commercial vernacular architecture of downtown Darien. The buildings have had minimal alterations to their facades and a number retain their historic storefronts and historic period windows. The bulk of the district consists of simple commercial buildings that have few, but complementary, stylistic details, but are very cohesive in their form and massing and their construction materials and methods. This is because most of the buildings were constructed between 1909 and 1920 due, in part, to two major fires, but also because this period was the most important in the growth and development of Darien's commercial economy.

The period of significance for the district is 1890 to 1963. Although Darien's downtown developed prior to 1890, all of the contributing buildings in the district were built after 1890 and the significant activities that took place in the buildings continued to have importance up to the standard 50 year closing date for historical significance.

**Historical Background**

Darien's historic downtown developed along Wisconsin Street primarily after the railroad came to the village in 1856. Prior to that year, Darien had a settlement history typical of southern Wisconsin and Walworth County. The first pioneers came in 1837 and were primarily from New England. One of these Yankee settlers, John Bruce, purchased most of the land the village sits on today. He established a park or "commons" (town square) and initially a few small businesses grew up near this open space. This early settlement was located slightly southwest of the modern-day downtown commercial district and did not grow significantly because there was no industrial development or major commercial enterprises that located in Darien prior to the coming of the railroad.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Darien Bicentennial Committee, 4-5.



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When the rail link to Darien arrived in 1856, the village was finally platted, but the rail line ran through the tiny settlement north of the small existing business district near the commons. Local residents asked for a depot near the commons, but the railroad declined, citing excess costs to build a separate track to a depot at that location. Instead, they built the depot near present-day Fremont and Wisconsin Streets and several businesses that were located near the commons moved to be near the new depot location. New businesses that came with the coming of the rail line also located close to the depot and thus, after 1856, the core of downtown Darien developed along Wisconsin Street, just south of the depot.<sup>34</sup>

The coming of the railroad also encouraged other village development. A comparison between an 1857 plat map of the village and an 1891 plat map illustrates the growth of not only the downtown in Darien, but in a surrounding residential area, as well. While Darien did not develop significant industry in the nineteenth century, the booming agricultural area surrounding the community helped the village grow. In particular, large, barn-like, granaries were built near Wisconsin and Fremont Streets for storage of local produce to be transported by the railroad.<sup>35</sup>

By the turn of the twentieth century, the modern-day limits of Darien's downtown were reached, that is, along one block of North Wisconsin Street and a small area perpendicular to Wisconsin Street along Beloit Street. But, although it was a good sized downtown for a small village, in 1900 most of the buildings were of frame construction, simple clapboard-clad front-gabled or "boomtown" style retail buildings. In historic photographs, prior to the mid-1890s, only one small building was of brick construction. During the mid-1890s, a few brick buildings were constructed along Wisconsin Street, one of the most important being the Farmers State Bank, which opened in January of 1897. Toward the end of 1897, another small brick building was built next to the bank. Of the brick buildings extant in the district, the earliest after the bank was the Lindeman Block, which was constructed in 1898 just north of the bank. In 1902, the first major retail building was completed. Other small brick buildings burned in the upcoming fires of 1909 and 1912.<sup>36</sup>

The first of the large brick blocks built along Wisconsin Street was constructed for the second generation of a long-time drug and grocery store in Darien. Delos Williams started his drug and grocery store in 1858 and operated it into the 1890s. Then, R. S. Young, who had married Williams' daughter, took over the business. Taking over a successful family business gave Young an advantage and in 1902, he built the present two and one-half story building, the largest in Darien, on a choice

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-7; 1891 plat map; *Redding & Watson's Map of Walworth County Wisconsin* (Elkhorn: T. B. Redding and J. J. Watson City & County Map Publishers, 1857).

<sup>36</sup> *Delavan Enterprise*, October 29, 1896, 1; January 14, 1897, 1; September 9, 1897 1; October 21, 1897, 1; May 12, 1898, 1.

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corner lot at Wisconsin and Beloit Streets. The upper floor, which had high ceilings due to the extra half-story of the building, was fitted out as the Masonic Temple. The Masons had a habit of renting the halls in some of the most prominent buildings in small towns, making the new Young Block the most prestigious address in downtown Darien.<sup>37</sup>

In 1903, a slightly smaller brick block with a double storefront was built in downtown Darien; in this case for a saloon. Saloons being under attack by prohibitionists at this time, it was probably not as prestigious a building as the Young Block. Still, the saloon for J. H. Norton was impressive, and apparently, well received. It continued to be a prominent saloon for the Langdon Brothers for many years.<sup>38</sup>

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, the agricultural economy of southern Wisconsin was booming with many farmers turning to dairying as a cash crop. This led to good economic times in small farmers' towns like Darien. And, over the years, it is possible that many of the old frame buildings would have eventually been replaced with brick blocks. But two major events sped up the process considerably. The first occurred in July of 1909, when a major fire burned the north half of the west side of Wisconsin Street. With almost no fire department to speak of, Darien's citizens, with the help of the fire departments of nearby Delavan and Sharon, were only able to keep the fire from spreading away from the four buildings it destroyed; the Hunsbusher Blacksmith Shop, George Reed's general store, E. L. Woodford & Son's implement shop, and the town hall.<sup>39</sup>

This might have devastated most communities and buildings would have been slow to be rebuilt. But 1909 was the start of one of the best economic times for farmers prior to the farm depression of the 1920s, and the businessmen who lost their buildings quickly made arrangements to rebuild. Hunsbusher's Blacksmith Shop and George Reed's store buildings were completed by the end of 1909. And, in the fall of 1909, E. L. Woodford and Sons had made a deal to rebuild their implement shop next to the blacksmith shop. Only the town hall did not rebuild, but did build small storage buildings on the rest of their property. Businessman George Reed even used this disastrous event to improve his business. He fitted up the upper level of his store as a hall, which he dubbed an "opera house." He opened his building with a concert and "ball" and over the years held many dances, concerts, plays, and vaudeville entertainment for the public.<sup>40</sup>

Between 1910 and 1916, almost the entire streetscape on the east side of Wisconsin Street would change from being primarily frame buildings to all brick buildings, save one. Around 1910 and 1911,

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<sup>37</sup> Darien Bicentennial Committee, 6; *Delavan Enterprise*, April 10, 1902, 8; June 26, 1902, 8.

<sup>38</sup> *Delavan Enterprise*, October 8, 1903, 8; November 5, 1903, 8; Tax Rolls.

<sup>39</sup> "Darien Devastated by Fire," *Delavan Enterprise*, July 29, 1909, 1.

<sup>40</sup> *Delavan Enterprise*, September 16, 1909, 8; September 30, 1909, 8, November 18, 1909, 8, December 23, 1909, 8.

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two small brick buildings replaced a frame building on the east side of Wisconsin Street, one for a physician and one for a post office location. Then, in August of 1912, a fire destroyed two large buildings on the north end of the east side of Wisconsin Street. By May of 1913, a major real estate deal was announced that would bring three good-sized brick buildings to the burned out lots. Three different owners would erect buildings that would share party walls and have similar architectural details. By the end of 1913, these buildings were completed and housed new quarters for a jewelry store, a grocery store, a men's clothing store, a hotel, and another public hall.<sup>41</sup>

In 1914, two more brick buildings were constructed with party walls that attached to the buildings constructed in 1913. Roy Thomas built on the north side of the 1913 buildings and next to his new block, Henry Rockwell built a movie theater in another new brick building. The completion of the movie theater was a big event in Darien. Previously, movies had been shown occasionally at Reed's Opera House, but that facility was not made specifically for this type of entertainment. Henry Rockwell's new "electric theatre" was built with a raised floor, a stage, and even dressing rooms. At the time vaudeville was still popular and often movies were shown with vaudeville acts. Rockwell's Elmo Theatre opened in September of 1914 and an early ad from November of that year promised a "special" at the Elmo Theatre-- a four-reel motion picture along with "big" vaudeville acts.<sup>42</sup>

In 1915 and 1916, the big building boom along Wisconsin Street peaked with two major construction projects on the south end of the east side of the street. The first was a building constructed for F. A. Hunsbusher that received a lot of press. The building was constructed as a two-story block with two storefronts. But the most unusual feature, at least for a small town, was the construction of "modern flats" on the second floor. The press for this building was included in a local newspaper's special builder promotional effort and boasted that this was the work of Darien's long-time lumber yard, the Barker Lumber Company.<sup>43</sup>

In April of 1916, the second generation owner of the Heyer hardware business, H. J. Heyer, announced that he would be building a new brick structure for his business. This building, too, received good press, especially when the Bedford limestone name plate was applied to the top of the building. When the building was completed in August of 1916, it boasted a regulation bowling alley in the basement. The completion of the Heyer Block brought to an end the most active development era in Darien's downtown. A modern auto garage was built on Beloit Street, and later in the mid-twentieth century, a modern grocery store was also completed on that street. But, after 1916, most of the commercial

<sup>41</sup> *Delavan Enterprise*, May 22, 1913, 8; July 10, 1913, 8; November 13, 1913, 8; November 2, 1913, 8; December 4, 1913, 8; December 11, 1913, 8.

<sup>42</sup> *Delavan Enterprise*, April 23, 1914, 8; August 13, 1914, 8; September 10, 1914, 8; November 12, 1914, 8; Darien Bicentennial Committee, 14.

<sup>43</sup> *Delavan Enterprise*, September 9, 1915, 8; September 23, 1915, 6.

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building in the downtown ended.<sup>44</sup>

The farm depression of the 1920s and the Great Depression of the 1930s stunted Darien's growth, as the village economy revolved heavily around the local farm trade. And, despite the building boom in the 1910s, the town of Darien still had not replaced its town hall. This was remedied thanks to one of the most popular and successful work programs of the Great Depression era, the Works Progress Administration (WPA). In 1938, the Town of Darien received a WPA grant to build a new town hall, which was completed in 1939. It was designed in a stripped down version of the Art Deco style, and had a very modern appearance in comparison with the mostly classically-influenced Commercial Vernacular buildings of the downtown. The new building housed the town offices and a fire department, which had finally been established in 1916. The town hall served the entire town until 1954, when Darien residents decided to establish a formal village government. At that time, the town hall became the village hall and rural residents built a new rural town hall. The village hall was occupied until recently, when village offices moved to a rented building next door. It is awaiting renovation as part of a federally-funded project to improve village offices.<sup>45</sup>

During the twentieth century, Darien remained primarily a farmer's town. The only formal industrial jobs prior to World War II came from a small milk plant constructed in 1918 and operated through 1954. After World War II, a few small industries were started in Darien, but they remained small as the farm economy was still paramount in the community. One of the most important continuing businesses in Darien is grain shipping, centered next to the north end of the district where there are numerous large round metal granaries along the railroad tracks.<sup>46</sup>

Due to changes in retailing in the late twentieth century, Darien's downtown has, unfortunately, declined, as have most downtowns. Easy automobile access to bigger communities nearby that feature more and larger stores, including shopping malls and big box retailers, has hurt Darien's traditional retail economy, and during the last 30 years, most of these businesses have closed. A few remaining businesses, such as the bank, left for the western edge of town, following the route of Highway 14, which bypassed the downtown decades ago. This has left most of the downtown commercial buildings vacant or underutilized. But, a redevelopment project that includes renovation of the 1938-39 Village Hall and the designation of Wisconsin Street as a historic district may be the catalyst for downtown renewal. Darien's downtown is a "hidden gem" with interesting and largely intact historic buildings that with the right developers could become a successful commercial area again.

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<sup>44</sup> *Delavan Enterprise*, April 27, 1916, 3; July 13, 1916, 3; August 24, 1916, 3; Darien Bicentennial, 6.

<sup>45</sup> Darien Bicentennial Committee, 8-9.

<sup>46</sup> Darien Bicentennial Committee, 15-16.

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**AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

**Commerce**

The Downtown Historic District is locally significant in the area of Commerce because its buildings represent the broad and continuing historic commercial development in Darien between 1890 and 1963. Within this district the great majority of Darien's historic commercial activities took place, including retail services, banking, and professional services. Commercial activity peaked in Darien during the first two decades of the twentieth century when the local farm economy peaked as well. This brought on a significant building boom that resulted in the historic district acquiring its current appearance. Commercial activities continued to be important to Darien, though, throughout the period of significance, ending with the general small-town commercial decline of the late twentieth century seen throughout the state.

After the railroad came to Darien in 1856, the small settlement developed a thriving commercial district centered along Wisconsin Street. This commercial district had almost all the businesses necessary for the village's commercial life, including a bank, grocery and general stores, a drug store, hardware stores, clothing stores, furniture stores, and other retail businesses during the period of significance. A few of these businesses stand out, due to their longevity or importance in the community.

One of these businesses was banking. The first formal bank was located in Darien on Wisconsin Street in 1897. Called the Farmers State Bank, it was located in a new one-story brick block. The construction of the bank was important not just as a financial institution, but its location in a brick building seemed to start the brick building boom in downtown Darien. A similar building was added to the bank building about six months later and eventually, the bank expanded into this building. The bank has survived in Darien, although it is now located on the west side of town. Although not a contributing building today, the old Farmers State Bank building (6 N. Wisconsin St.) reflects the long-time commitment by this financial institution to the historic downtown.

Retailing, of course, was the most common of all commercial businesses in downtown Darien and most of the village's retailers were located along Wisconsin Street. A drug store was common in downtowns and the one in Darien was one of the most long-lived businesses in town. Delos Williams was one of the first merchants to locate his business by the new railroad depot in 1858 and by the late 1800s, his son-in-law R. S. Young had taken over the business. Along with drugs, the business also offered a wide variety of general store type merchandize and operated into the 1940s. The large brick block built by Young in 1902 (2 N. Wisconsin St.) was the largest single brick building in town and had the distinction of housing the Masonic Temple in its upper floor. The building still housed a

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grocery store into the later twentieth century, making it one of the most commercially significant in the district.

Grocery and grocery-general stores were among the most important retailers in any downtown, and the Young Block was not the only building to house a long term grocery-general store. George Reed was in the grocery business well before 1900 and after his earlier building burned in 1909, he quickly rebuilt a substantial brick block (20 N. Wisconsin St.) with groceries on the first floor and a hall or "opera house" on the second floor. Another long-time grocery business that came to Delavan in the 1910s was Eagen Brothers, a grocery store that located in the newly-built Schrandt and Bachelet Block (31 N. Wisconsin St.) in 1913. Above this building was another hall that served as a social gathering place for the village.

Another long-lived retail business in Darien was the Heyer Hardware Store, located at 1-5 N. Wisconsin St. The business began with Jacob Heyer in the mid-nineteenth century and was located on this site in an old frame building until 1916, when Jacob's son, Henry, had a modern brick block constructed for the business. Henry Heyer operated the hardware store well into the twentieth century, making it one of the most significant retail businesses in Darien's history.

Saloons were not always the most welcome of businesses, but one of these establishments received a lot of press when it opened in 1903. Perhaps it was because the Norton Saloon opened in a double storefront, two-story, brick block that was one of the largest in town at that time. Norton only operated the saloon at this location for a few years, but the next owners, the Langdon Brothers, operated the saloon for many years and it was a significant business in the district during the historic period.

Other significant long-time retailers in prominent buildings in Darien during the period of significance include the Frank Men's Clothing Store, opened in the new block at 33-35 N. Wisconsin St. in 1913 and the Schrandt Jewelry Store, opened in the new block at 37-39 N. Wisconsin St. also in 1913. These stores, along with the Eagen Brothers grocery, were opened in one of the most stylish locations, the three block set of buildings erected after a major fire burned old frame buildings in 1912.

A significant commercial business that was also located in this same stylish group of buildings was the new Merchants Hotel that took up part of the first floor and all of the upper level of the Frank Block. Darien's previously best-known hotel, the S. K. Clark Hotel, was a mid-nineteenth century business that specialized in stage coach traffic and was located away from Wisconsin Street. The railroad, of course, eventually eliminated stage lines, and it was the railroad that brought the Merchants Hotel to Wisconsin Street, much closer to the depot, in 1913. Its name, Merchants Hotel, suggested a business

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hotel or railroad hotel, a place primarily for travelers coming into town on the rail line and doing business with local merchants, farmers, and tradesmen.

Other businesses that were popular in downtown Darien were barber shops, furniture stores, a blacksmith shop, and an implement store. One building (25 N. Wisconsin St.) was built specifically for a local physician in 1911, and typical of small communities in the historic period, the post office was housed in various commercial buildings along Wisconsin Street, including 27 N. Wisconsin St. from the 1910s until at least the mid-1930s.

Completing the goods and services available in Darien's downtown was, after 1914, a movie theater. Movies were shown in Darien prior to this time in Reed's Opera House, a hall above Reed's Store (20 N. Wisconsin St.). But, in 1914, local businessman Henry Rockwell decided to build a real movie theater in town. This building was constructed specifically for the typical entertainment package of the silent movie era, a film along with live vaudeville style acts. So, Rockwell built the theater with a stage and dressing rooms along with a projection booth that extended over the sidewalk. The movie theater operated until 1930, when Rockwell died and no one took over the theater business because better theaters in nearby towns attracted Darien's residents. The Elmo Theatre (45 N. Wisconsin St.) was the closest thing to a "movie palace" that Darien ever had.

The peak era of the village's commercial economy came in the 1910s, when local farmers who drove it were experiencing good success from dairying and grain production. The Downtown Historic District represents that peak period because half of its buildings date from the period 1909-1916. The two fires in 1909 and 1912 could have been devastating for the downtown, which might never have recovered. But, they came during Darien's most successful economic boom period and so were only a catalyst for newer, bigger, and better downtown buildings.

Because the buildings in this district housed most of the commercial activity in Darien during the period of significance, including some of the most individually significant retailers in the community, this district is locally historically significant and eligible for the National Register for this on-going economic event.

**Architecture**

The district is locally significant for its architecture because it presents a cohesive streetscape of buildings that have a similar form and massing, similar architectural details, and, especially, similar materials and methods of construction. Most of the buildings in the district are two-stories in height, have classically-influenced Commercial Vernacular style elements, and are constructed of dark red brick, an unusual dominant building material for a downtown located in Walworth County. This is

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because most of the buildings were constructed after 1909 due to two major fires and an economic boom period that resulted in Darien's commercial economy reaching its peak. Some of the buildings retain their original storefronts and historic period windows.

One of the three main architectural elements that make this district so cohesive is the use of similar architectural features on the buildings. The vast majority of the buildings can be classified as Commercial Vernacular. According to Wisconsin's *Cultural Resources Management Plan*, the Commercial Vernacular (or Vernacular Commercial) is a style term that is applied to "simply-designed commercial buildings of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries." These buildings have several common characteristics, including large retail show windows on the first story with simple wood and glass entry doors and simple applied cornices with classically-influenced details such as plain brackets, dentils, modillions or molded panels, or brick corbeling and/or belt courses in place of cornices. Window openings on upper floors are simple, the only decoration commonly being segmental brick arches or flat stone lintels. Because they are not overly stylistic, Commercial Vernacular buildings are individually significant usually when they have a high level of integrity with many historic details intact or when grouped together in a distinctive looking historic district.<sup>47</sup>

In Darien, it is the common, simple details of the district's buildings that make them distinctive as a whole. Many of the buildings have applied cornices with very simple classically-influenced details. The most decorative examples are on the Young Block (2 N. Wisconsin St.), the blocks at 25 and 27 N. Wisconsin St., and the Lindeman, Norton, Reed, and Woodford blocks (10, 19-23, 20, and 42 N. Wisconsin St.). But other blocks, primarily those from the 1910s, only feature brick corbeling, as seen in the Hunsbusher Block (13-15 N. Wisconsin St.) or very little detail except for a stone plaque, as seen in the Heyer Block (1-5 N. Wisconsin St.). The most decorative group of buildings is the one at 31-39 N. Wisconsin St. These buildings have interesting brickwork at the cornice level, including corbeling that suggests brackets and inverted pyramids as well as corbeling that features rusticated concrete that also resembles brackets.

All of these buildings, constructed between 1902 and 1916, reflect the popular classicism that often was used for commercial buildings of the era. In more stylish districts, they might be classified as High Victorian Italianate or Classical Revival, but in this district, they are Commercial Vernacular. But, even though the style elements are relatively simple, they are repeated in a similar manner in so many of the district's buildings. These cohesive style elements, as a group, make the buildings stand out as a distinctive architectural streetscape.

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<sup>47</sup> Barbara Wyatt, *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986), Architecture, 3-10.



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Downtown Historic District  
Darien, Walworth County, Wisconsin

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Like the style elements, another unifying architectural feature of this district is that the buildings, as a whole, reflect common building materials and methods. Prior to 1909, most of Darien's commercial buildings were of frame construction. Two small brick buildings were constructed in 1897 and three larger brick buildings were constructed in 1898, 1902, and 1903. Of these buildings, only the Young and Norton blocks were faced with cream bricks. And after 1909, no brick buildings were faced with cream bricks except for the O'Brien Block at 25 N. Wisconsin Street. This gives Darien a very distinctive and cohesive appearance that is unusual in Walworth County.

The reason for this difference is that unlike other Walworth County communities, the period of greatest development in Darien was much later, in the 1910s. Prior to 1900, local brick yards were usually the source of bricks for commercial buildings and these brick yards supplied almost exclusively cream colored bricks. Most Walworth County communities had their greatest commercial development from the 1850s to the 1890s, when these local bricks were the most popular with builders. This resulted in downtown streetscapes of primarily cream brick buildings that have lasted until this day. But, in Darien, the development of the downtown from frame buildings to brick blocks came primarily after 1909, when many local brick yards had closed and hard-fired red or brown bricks had become the fashion for commercial buildings. Using red bricks of similar hues, the builders of downtown Darien created a distinctive appearance that stands out in the area.

Finally, the last architectural characteristic of this district is the overall similarity of form and massing of the buildings. Most buildings are two stories in height and the overall size of the buildings are similar, meaning that the individual buildings do not overwhelm others in the streetscape. Many of the buildings share party walls, adding to the cohesive appearance of the streetscape and where the buildings are separated, the spaces in between are narrow.

There is one building that adds architectural variety to the district. That is the Darien Town Hall, built in 1938-39 with funding from the Works Progress Administration, one of the most popular and successful of the "New Deal" programs instituted during the Great Depression of the 1930s. This building continued the use of red brick in the downtown, but rather than feature a Commercial Vernacular style that reflected a simple classicism as seen in so many of the other buildings in the district, the new town hall has a very simple Art Deco design.

The Art Deco design is seen in the building in its modern looking parapet with very narrow stone cornice that also acts as a "capital" for the fluted pilasters that were placed between the building's openings. These very flat pilasters are typical of the stylized classical columns common to many Art Deco style buildings. The fluted, flat pilasters give a vertical emphasis to the building's façade that is very different from the simple classical details of the other buildings in the downtown, making the Darien Town Hall individually distinctive within the district.

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

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**Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 11

Downtown Historic District  
Darien, Walworth County, Wisconsin

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Because of the cohesive architectural details of this district, the form and massing of the buildings, the common style elements, and the common building materials and construction methods, the Downtown Historic District in Darien has a distinctive appearance. The buildings are representative of the common forms and architectural features applied to small scale commercial buildings in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is a fine example of the definition of a historic district, an area united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development. It is a fine example of a group of buildings where the sum of their parts are far more important than the individual parts, themselves.

***Integrity***

Like most small downtowns, the commercial buildings of this district have a few integrity issues. Many of the storefronts have been altered to some degree, and second story openings have seen changes. But, because of the overall cohesiveness of the district resulting from the similar form and massing of the buildings, the similar style details, and the use of similar building materials and methods, these alterations do not significantly detract from the overall architectural or historical significance of the district. The buildings, as a whole, still possess enough historic character to represent its Commercial Vernacular architectural significance and its commercial historical significance. Specifically, many important historic details of the contributing buildings are extant, including original applied cornices, brick corbeling, window opening sizes, and details of storefronts including some original glazing, bulkheads, and structural members.

**ARCHEOLOGICAL STATEMENT**

No archeological resources have been surveyed within the boundaries of this district. Since almost all of the district land has been redeveloped at least once during the period of significance, it is not likely that pre-historic resources would be found undisturbed. Historic resources, especially those related to earlier buildings on the site are more likely to be found within the district boundaries, but an examination of the potential for these sites was beyond the scope of this nomination.

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

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Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 1

Downtown Historic District  
Darien, Walworth County, Wisconsin

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**MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

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“Darien Devastated by Fire.” *Delavan Enterprise*, July 29, 1909.

“Darien’s New Town Hall Sets Pace for Finest in Many Miles.” Newspaper article (n.d.) on file in the  
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*Delavan Enterprise:*

November 15, 1894

January 7, 1897

September 2, 1897

September 9, 1897

October 21, 1897

May 2, 1898

April 10, 1902

June 26, 1902

September 3, 1903

October 8, 1903

November 5, 1903

September 16, 1909

September 30, 1909

November 18, 1909

December 23, 1909

April 20, 1911

June 22, 1911

May 8, 1913

May 22, 1913

July 10, 1913

November 13, 1913

November 27, 1913

December 4, 1913

December 11, 1913

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

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Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 2

Downtown Historic District  
Darien, Walworth County, Wisconsin

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January 8, 1914  
April 23, 1914  
August 13, 1914  
September 10, 1914  
November 12, 1914  
July 9, 1915  
September 9, 1915  
September 23, 1915  
December 16, 1915  
April 17, 1916  
July 13, 1916  
August 24, 1916

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Tax Rolls for the Village of Darien. On file in the Area Research Center of the Andersen Library of the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, Whitewater, Wisconsin.

Wyatt, Barbara (Ed.). *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*. Madison: Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 1

Downtown Historic District  
Darien, Walworth County, Wisconsin

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**Verbal Boundary Description:**

The Downtown Historic District has boundaries described as follows: Beginning at the intersection of the south curb line of Fremont Street and the west curb line of N. Wisconsin Street, then east to the east curb line of N. Wisconsin St., then north along this line to the north lot line of 47 N. Wisconsin Street, then east along this line to the rear lot lines of 31-47 N. Wisconsin St., then southeast along these lines to the south lot line of 31 N. Wisconsin St., then west along this line to the east lot line of 27 N. Wisconsin St., then south along this line to the south lot line of 27 N. Wisconsin St., then west along this line to the east lot line of 25 N. Wisconsin St., then south along this line to the north lot line of 13-15 N. Wisconsin St., then southeast and east along this line to the east lot line of 13-15 N. Wisconsin St., then south along this line to the east lot line of 1-5 N. Wisconsin St., then southeast along this line to the north curb line of Beloit St., then southwest along this line to the rear lot line of 2 and 6 N. Wisconsin St., then north along this line to the south lot line of 10 N. Wisconsin St., then west along this line to the rear lot lines of 10-42 N. Wisconsin St., then north along these lines to the south curb line of Fremont St., then northeast along this line to the point of beginning.

**Boundary Justification:**

This boundary includes the streetscape of North Wisconsin Street, the historic core of downtown Darien. It includes only commercial buildings, most of which are contributing to the district. It excludes a continuation of the historic downtown on Beloit Street, perpendicular to North Wisconsin Street because these few remaining old buildings have retained little, if any historic integrity. Beloit Street serves as a physical boundary to the south of the historic core of downtown Darien, as well and there were not important contributing buildings that could be added beyond this boundary. The district boundary on the north is also defined by a major cross street, Fremont Street. Along this street are large grain storage bins along a rail line that create another physical boundary for the district. The western boundary was defined by the fact that this area is one of mixed uses; warehouses and open spaces that do not reflect the type of buildings found in the district. The eastern boundary is defined by a clear change in the use of the buildings, from commercial to residential.

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section photos Page 1

Downtown Historic District  
Darien, Walworth County, Wisconsin

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<b>Name of Property:</b>	<b>Downtown Historic District</b>
<b>City:</b>	<b>Darien</b>
<b>County:</b>	<b>Walworth County</b>
<b>State:</b>	<b>Wisconsin</b>
<b>Date of Photographs:</b>	<b>March 2013</b>
<b>Number of Photographs:</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Name of Photographer:</b>	<b>Carol Cartwright</b>
<b>Location of Original Digital Files:</b>	<b>W7646 Hackett Rd., Whitewater, WI 53190</b>

WI\_Walworth County\_Downtown Historic District\_0001  
View of district from the south, camera facing north.

WI\_Walworth County\_Downtown Historic District\_0002  
West side of Wisconsin Street, camera facing northwest.

WI\_Walworth County\_Downtown Historic District\_0003  
2 N. Wisconsin Street, main and south elevations, camera facing northwest.

WI\_Walworth County\_Downtown Historic District\_0004  
20-42 N. Wisconsin St., camera facing northwest.

WI\_Walworth County\_Downtown Historic District\_0005  
24 N. Wisconsin St., camera facing northwest.

WI\_Walworth County\_Downtown Historic District\_0006  
31-39 N. Wisconsin St., camera facing east.

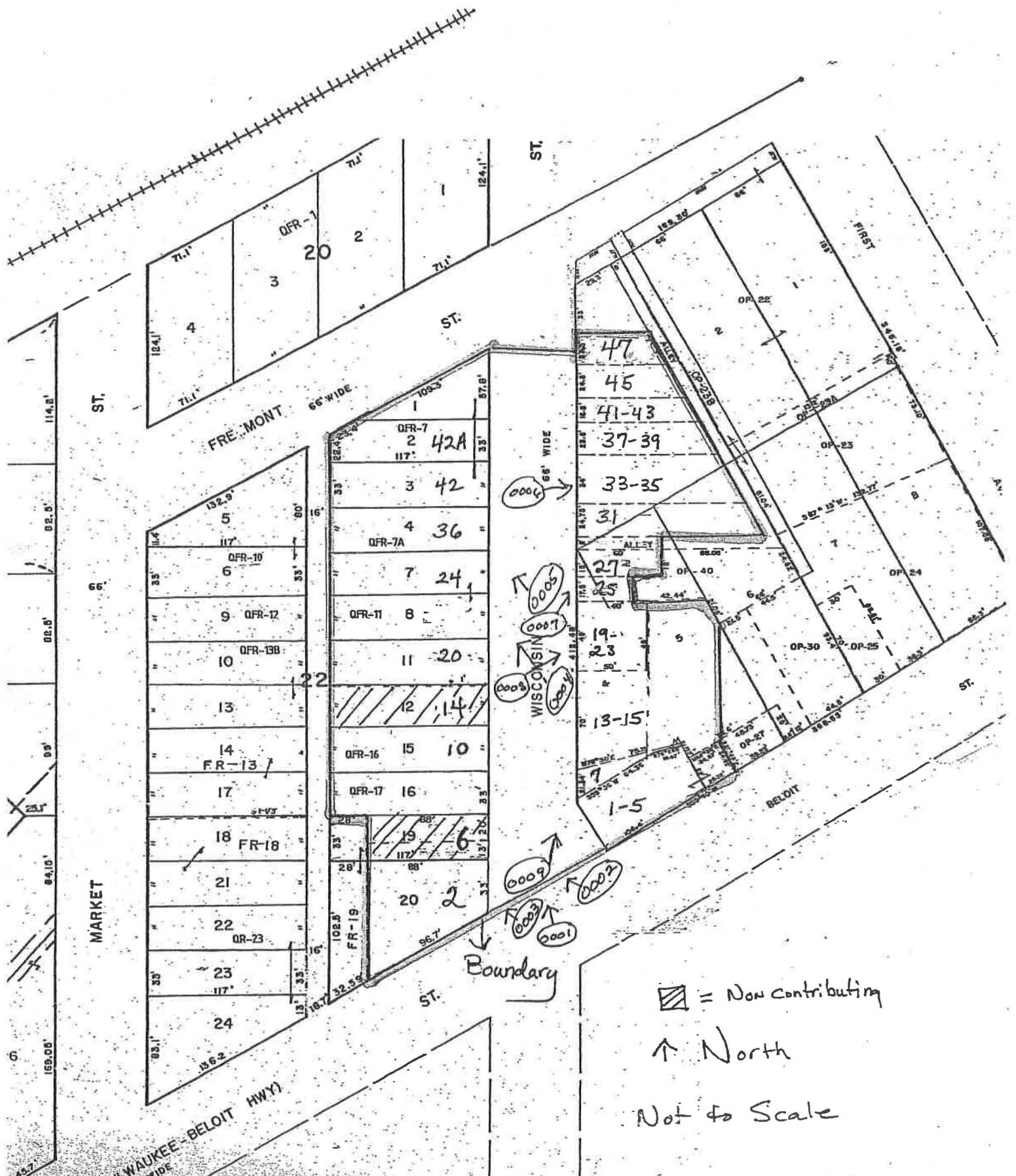
WI\_Walworth County\_Downtown Historic District\_0007  
25-47 N. Wisconsin St., camera facing northeast.

WI\_Walworth County\_Downtown Historic District\_0008  
19-23 N. Wisconsin St., camera facing northeast.

WI\_Walworth County\_Downtown Historic District\_0009  
East side of Wisconsin Street, camera facing northeast.

# MAP 1: DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT Darien, Walworth County, Wisconsin

Photo Codes →



▨ = Non contributing

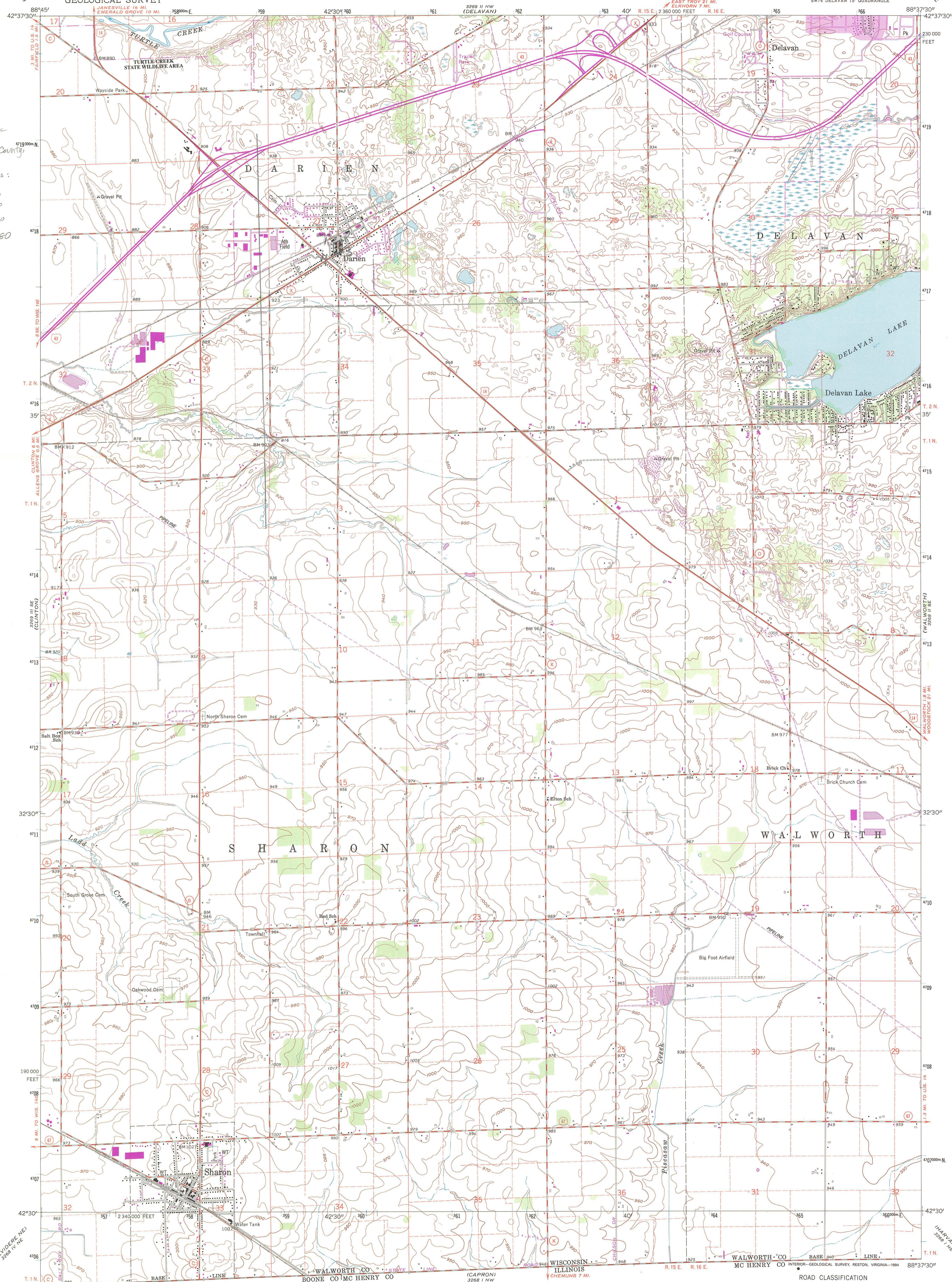
↑ North

Not to Scale

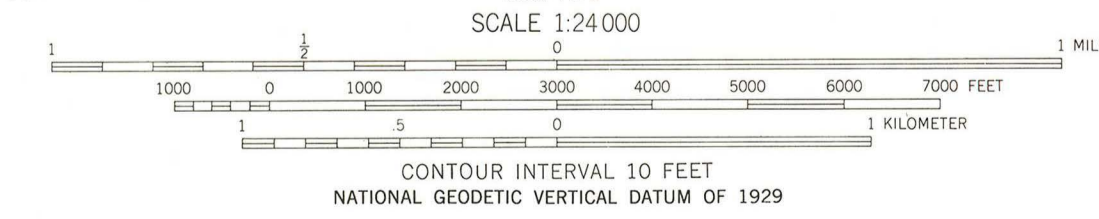
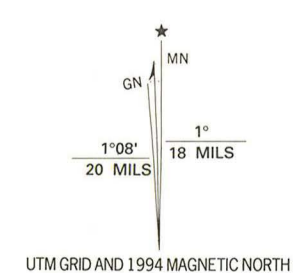
UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

SHARON QUADRANGLE  
WISCONSIN—WALWORTH CO.  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)  
SW/4 DELAVAN 15' QUADRANGLE

Downtown Historic District  
Darien, Walworth County,  
Wisconsin  
UTM References:  
1: 16360820/477740  
2: 16360860/477760  
3: 16360900/477780  
4: 16360940/477800



Produced by the United States Geological Survey  
Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA  
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1955. Field checked 1960  
Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Wisconsin coordinate system, south zone (Lambert conformal conic)  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 16, shown in blue  
1927 North American Datum (NAD 27)  
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed corner ticks  
The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83 for 7.5-minute intersections are given in USGS Bulletin 1875  
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
AND WISCONSIN GEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY, MADISON, WISCONSIN 53706  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road
Interstate Route	U. S. Route
	State Route

Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with State of Wisconsin agencies from aerial photographs taken 1992 and other sources. This information not field checked. Map edited 1994  
Information shown in purple may not meet USGS content standards and may conflict with previously mapped contours  
Purple tint indicates extension of urban area

SHARON, WIS.  
SW/4 DELAVAN 15' QUADRANGLE  
42088-E6-TF-024  
1960  
REVISED 1994  
DMA 3269 II SW - SERIES V861





Beer  
BANK





PAW PAW & BELL

WILSON  
BELL

STOP  
AHEAD

Beer  
BANK

Beer  
BANK



DARIEN  
FOOD MART  
& DELI

WISCONSIN AVE

STOP  
AHEAD

THE  
Beer  
BANK  
Saloon



VILLAGE  
OF  
DARIEN

NO U  
TURN

DARIEN



DARIEN  
MAYOR  
POLICE DEPARTMENT  
MUNICIPAL COURT

NO U  
TURN

RESERVED  
PARKING  
THIS SPACE







**HEW**  
HEATING & COOLING PRODUCTS

NO U  
TURN

**PAUL'S**  
Mower Shop



23

21

19



BE





HEYER

FARMERS INN

A person walking on the sidewalk on the right side of the image.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY     Downtown Darien Historic District  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY:   WISCONSIN, Walworth

DATE RECEIVED:         7/19/13                     DATE OF PENDING LIST:   8/19/13  
DATE OF 16TH DAY:     9/03/13                     DATE OF 45TH DAY:       9/04/13  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER:   13000686

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL:   N   DATA PROBLEM:   N   LANDSCAPE:   N   LESS THAN 50 YEARS:   N  
OTHER:    N   PDIL:            N   PERIOD:       N   PROGRAM UNAPPROVED:   N  
REQUEST:  N   SAMPLE:           N   SLR DRAFT:   N   NATIONAL:        N

COMMENT WAIVER:    N

ACCEPT     \_\_\_ RETURN     \_\_\_ REJECT     9.4.13 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places**

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



**TO: Keeper  
National Register of Historic Places**

**FROM: Daina Penkiunas**

**SUBJECT: National Register Nomination**  
The following materials are submitted on this 12th day of July 2013, for nomination of the Downtown Historic District in Darien, Wisconsin to the National Register of Historic Places:

- 1 Original National Register of Historic Places nomination form
- Multiple Property Documentation Form
- 9 Photograph(s)
- 1 CD with electronic images
- 1 Original USGS map(s)
- 1 Sketch map(s)/figure(s)/exhibit(s)/
- Piece(s) of correspondence
- Other:

**COMMENTS:**

- Please insure that this nomination is reviewed
- This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
- The enclosed owner objection(s) do          do not          constitute a majority of property owners.
- Other:
-