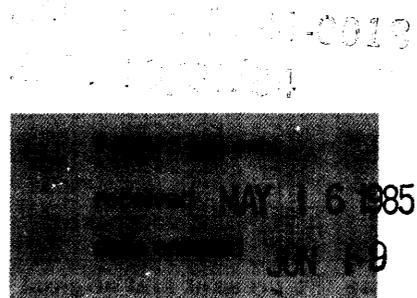


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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



1. Name

historic E.R. Barron Building

and/or common N.A.

2. Location

street & number 426-430 Main St.

not for publication

city, town La Crosse

vicinity of

~~Congressional district~~

state Wisconsin

code 55

county La Crosse

code 063

3. Classification

Category

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

Ownership

- public
 - private
 - both
- Public Acquisition**
- in process
 - being considered
 - N/A/

Status

- occupied
 - unoccupied
 - work in progress
- Accessible**
- yes: restricted
 - yes: unrestricted
 - no

Present Use

- agriculture
- commercial
- educational
- entertainment
- government
- industrial
- military
- museum
- park
- private residence
- religious
- scientific
- transportation
- other:

4. Owner of Property

name City Square Partners

street & number 444 Main St.

city, town La Crosse

vicinity of

state Wisconsin 54601

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. La Crosse County Courthouse-Register of Deeds

street & number 400 No. 4th St.

city, town La Crosse

state Wisconsin 54601

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Wisconsin Inventory of
Historic Places
La Crosse Intensive Survey

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1977, 1983

federal state county local

depository for survey records State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 816 State St.

city, town Madison

state Wisconsin 53706

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

DESCRIPTION

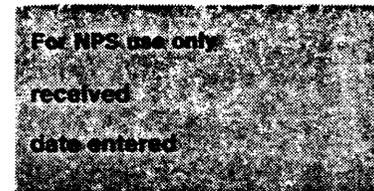
Prominently located with a 120' front on Fifth Avenue and with a 64' front on Main Street in the historic commercial district of La Crosse, the E. R. Barron Building is a massive three-story painted brick commercial structure (originally of red brick color with white stone trim to be restored in current rehabilitation project) designed in the picturesque Romanesque style of the 19th century. (1) The rectangular gable and flat roofed building with the rear wall angled to conform to the shape of the corner lot has taller elevations originally designed to accommodate the 16' ceilings of the Masonic lodge room on third floor at the northeast end of the structure. The west end of the Main Street elevation is characterized by a rectangular pediment at the roof line, by a two-story window filled with glass block (formerly the site of a two story bay window that will be restored) and short Romanesque columns with capitals decorated by geometric designs flanking the pedimented entrance to the second story. Wall enrichment include an arcade of round arched windows on second floor, decorative brick work at the top of the facade, belt courses, and a row of dentil trim that divide the surface horizontally into three parts as well as an east corner tower (formerly capped by a pyramidal roof) paired in an asymmetrical arrangement with a gable roofed tower formation on the west side of the facade. (2) E.R. Barron inscribed on the frieze and a design featuring the Masonic star in the small gable breaking the roof line are additional elements ornamenting the Main Street facade. Brick piers dividing the east facade vertically and storefront windows along the Fifth Avenue and Main Street facade further characterize the exterior of the building. A gabled attic structure is visible on the roof of the building. Additional entrances to the building are located at the rear of the building and at the south end of the Fifth Avenue facade.

The interior of the E.R. Barron Building currently undergoing extensive rehabilitation is divided into three floors of basically single large spaces with an elevator centrally placed on the west wall and an open stairway at the rear of the store. Original iron columns are on first floor while wooden posts remain on third floor. Brick walls divide the basement area into three main areas including a west section, a central main section, and a vault extending under the sidewalk along the east elevation of the building. Original rectangular wooden windows remain in the second story. More notable cornice ornamented rectangular windows and grooved rectangular window frames with round arched windows along the north and east walls, formerly the site of the Masonic hall, have been preserved in the third story. Pressed tin in a floral design covers the ceiling of the second story while pressed tin in a rectangular geometric design is found on the ceiling of the third story.

Some alteration of the original structure of the E.R. Barron Building has occurred over the years. (3) Undergoing its first alteration in 1900, the storefront for the building was remodeled in July of 1932 by local architect, Otto Merman, extending the display windows across the east Fifth Avenue facade to the southeast corner of the structure. (4) During the same period, the pyramidal roof of the east tower was removed, iron supports were added on the second floor, an elevator was placed along the west wall, and an automatic sprinkler system was installed. (5)

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E.R. Barron Building, La Crosse, La Crosse County

Continuation sheet Description

Item number 7

Page 1

Between 1942 and 1950, the two-story oriel or bay window was replaced by glass block and concrete was substituted for the wooden floor in the basement. (6) During a four part redevelopment plan of the interior executed from 1953 to 1957, the first floor balcony was removed to permit construction of the new basement entrance and an open stairway to the second floor. (7) When the Barron Building was purchased by the Herberger chain in 1965, the interior was again remodeled although no significant structural alterations occurred at that time nor when Barron Court, a collection of small shops grouped in an open plan, was opened in 1980. (8)

The E.R. Barron Building is located in the proposed La Crosse Commercial Historic District established slightly to the east of and adjacent to the crowded industrial and transportation center (now demolished) on the waterfront located on the west bank of the Mississippi River. The potential historic district is comprised of densely packed two-story, mostly brick commercial structures interspersed by three, four and up to eight storied historic structures constructed from the late 1860's to 1940. Located on the corner of Main Street and Fifth Avenue, the three-story E.R. Barron Building is a pivotal structure at the eastern end of the La Crosse Commercial Historic District.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 La Crosse (WI) Daily Press, 21 May 1891, p. 1.; La Crosse (WI) Daily Press, 30 September 1891, p. 1.; La Crosse (WI) Daily Republican and Leader, 3 October 1891.
- 2 Early photograph of structure, see negative #22851, A.R.C. Murphy Library, UW-La Crosse.
- 3 La Crosse (WI) Daily Press, 15 March 1900.
- 4 Bentley-Merman Collection, A.R.C. Murphy Library, UW-La Crosse.
- 5 Sanborn-Perris Maps, City of La Crosse, (New York, 1906, revised 1934).
- 6 La Crosse (WI) Tribune, 7 November 1962, p. 11.
- 7 Ibid., 14 March 1954.
- 8 Ibid., 13 October, 1980, p. 1.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1891;¹ 1932

Builder/Architect Hugo Schick and Gustav Stoltze¹

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The E.R. Barron Building is architecturally significant as one of the best remaining example of its type and period of construction. Exhibiting the wall enrichment and form clearly placing the style in the "traditional" mode of the 19th century Romanesque Revival, the three-story business block and Masonic Temple was designed in 1891 by locally significant architects, Schick and Stoltze. (1) Commercially, the Barron Building represents the booming growth era of La Crosse during the 1880's and early 1890's when wholesale and retail trade and distribution rose to substantial importance in the local economy. One of two dry goods establishments remaining in business from the 19th century till recent times, the E.R. Barron Company continued in business on the corner of 5th and Main until 1965.

ARCHITECTURE

Schick and Stoltze designed most of the substantial buildings constructed during the years of their partnership, 1887–1899, in downtown La Crosse. Gustav Stoltze, a German immigrant, received his architectural training in Boston. After his technical course was completed, he worked in the offices of Ware and Van Brunt and also in the offices of Rotch and Tilden for two years. He came to La Crosse in 1885. (2) Hugo Schick, a native of Austria, was a graduate of the Polytechnical School and Academy of Arts of Vienna, completing a course in architecture in 1877. Arriving in America in 1880, Schick worked in New York City, Chicago, and St. Paul before settling in La Crosse in 1886. (3) Schick worked in partnership with another local architect, Andrew Roth, from 1901 until Schick's death in 1909. (4) The firm of Schick and Stoltze designed buildings in La Crosse in an eclectic manner, creating the Richardsonian Romanesque influenced Tillman Brothers Furniture Block, 1889; (5) the Neo-classic styled C.F. Klein Building, 1891; (6) the Gothic Revival styled Our Lady of Sorrows Chapel, 1891 in the Catholic cemetery; (7) and the highly eclectic Rehfuss Building in 1894. (8)

Built by contractors Davis, Sorenson and Company with brick work by Wallace and Son in 1891, (9) the E.R. Barron Building is the best remaining Schick and Stoltze design showing the influence of the more traditional mode rather than the Richardsonian mode of the Romanesque revival of the 19th century. Highly visible on a prominent corner on Main Street, the E.R. Barron Building is located in the potential La Crosse Commercial Historic District, the site of a significant collection of buildings representative of the architectural development of the city from the earliest known extant brick vernacular commercial structure, the John Voegle Building constructed on Pearl Street in 1866 through the early modern period when the last significant historic structure in the district, the Exchange Building on 5th Avenue was built. The extant buildings in the proposed district built during La Crosse's boom period, 1880–1905 (10) when the E.R. Barron Building was constructed, reflect a definite taste for the Romanesque style and late 19th century eclecticism.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name La Crescent

Quadrangle scale 1: 24,000

UMT References

A

1	5	6	4	0	7	1	5	4	8	5	2	2	5	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

East 64 feet (Lots 8,9,10) of Block 34, original Plat of the Village (now City) of La Crosse, Wisconsin

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

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Joan M. Rausch

organization Architecural Researches, Inc.

date January 31, 1985

street & number 2540 Sherwood Dr.

telephone (608) 788-5932

city or town La Crosse

state Wisconsin

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title DIRECTOR OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

date MAY 2, 1985

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the National Register

date 6/19/85

Keeper of the National Register

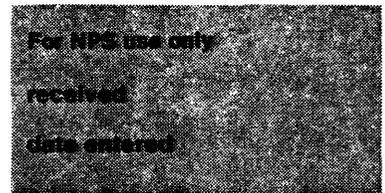
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
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E.R. BARRON BUILDING LaCrosse, La Crosse County

Continuation sheet Statement of Significance Item number 8

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The massive arches of the Richardsonian Romanesque style characterize the large Romanesque influenced structures as the McMillan Building, 401 Main Street, 1885; the Batavian Bank, 319 Main Street, 1887, and the Tillman Furniture Block, 116 South 4th Street, 1889. (11) The E.R. Barron Building is significant as one of the remaining substantial commercial representative of the earlier mode of the 19th century Romanesque Revival in the potential historic district as well as in the city of La Crosse.

Of the completed store, the La Crosse Daily Press of September 30, 1891, wrote, "Among the business houses there is one which stands out prominently among all others, because it is larger and handsomer and because it is destined to be one of the features of our city...The building is a handsome structure of pressed brick built in romanesque style with trimmings of granite terra cotta and iron...The building is heated throughout with steam, lighted by electricity..." (12) The E.R. Barron Building is being rehabilitated and developed for use as mixed retail and office space as part of the effort revitalize Downtown La Crosse.

COMMERCE

The site of one of two dry goods companies established in the 19th century that continued in business until recently, the E.R. Barron Company Building is associated with the boom period in the economic history of La Crosse. Leaving the original Barron store established in 1856 in McGregor, Iowa, under the management of his brother and partner C.H. Barron, Edwin R. Barron, a native of New England, came to La Crosse in the fall of 1886. (13) In partnership with J.T. Van Valkenburg, a long time resident of La Crosse, formerly associated with the Mons Anderson store, Barron rented quarters at 401-407 Main Street. When larger quarters were needed in 1891, Barron dissolved his partnership with Van Valkenburg (14) and constructed the E.R. Barron Building designed to house his dry goods store on the first floor and in the basement, with offices on second, and the Masonic Temple on the third floor. (15) When E.R. Barron died in 1898, a few years after the business was incorporated in 1895, the Barron Building became the property of the E.R. Barron Company. (16) In 1911, the stock of the Barron Company was purchased by two employees of the Barron Brothers, Joseph and Charles Felber in association with Elizabeth Livingston. Charles Felber was president of the firm until 1925. Joseph Felber succeeded his brother as president remaining until 1946 when Felber's nephew Ben Fox began his tenure as president. (17) Ben Fox continued to hold the position of president until 1964, shortly before the firm sold to the Herberger chain of stores in August, 1965. (18) Herbergers, a chain of stores located in the upper Midwest, originated in St. Cloud, Minnesota. The store continued to operate in the Barron Building until 1980 when the Herberger Department Store moved to the newly constructed Valley View Mall. (19) The building had been previously sold to Davis Nudd and Ronald McGavock by the Felber Realty Company in 1978. (20) The structure became the property of City Square Partners in late 1984.

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The Barron and Valkenburg store at 401-403-405-407 Main Street in the McMillan Building offered a stock of dry goods that included cloaks, underwear, and fabric. (21) When Barron opened his new store in 1891 on 5th and Main, he expanded his stock of dress goods, silks and flannels, table linens, gloves, yarns, and underwear, all located on the first floor of the new building. The south end of the first floor was used for a cloakroom and office. The basement was used to store surplus stock and housed the carpet, upholstery and drapery department. The west end of the basement was divided into a work room and a boiler room. (22) After the Masons vacated the third floor in 1902, it was eventually incorporated for use by the Barron Company. According to the La Crosse City Directory, ladies ready-to-wear was added to the merchandise in 1928. (23)

E.R. Barron expanded his business interest from McGregor, Iowa, to La Crosse during the decade of the 1800's when the population of La Crosse increased by 79% from 14,505 to 26,000 and the value of merchandise rose 378%. (24) Located on the Mississippi River at the mouth of the Black River and La Crosse River and at the intersection of six railroads, La Crosse's role and continued potential as a manufacturing and trade center was assured. (25) Of six large retail dry goods stores in La Crosse during the boom period (Park Store later known as Doerflinger's Store, 1881-1984; Trade Palace, 1884-1898; Mons Anderson, retail 1852-1885; wholesale only until 1902; C.F. Klein, 1869-c.1900; L. Coren, 1881-c. 1906), only the E.R. Barron Company and the Doerflinger's Store continued in business gradually increasing in size and leadership among the La Crosse retail stores until recent times, both closing within the last twenty years. (26) A Barron catalog business flourished in the early 20th century extending the already substantial tri-state trade territory. (27) The E.R. Barron Company continued to serve a tri-state area until 1965 at which time the company and 75 full-time employees served a trade area stretching from Wisconsin Dells to Preston, Minnesota, and from Black River Falls to Prairie du Chien and Decorah, Iowa. (28)

The E.R. Barron company clearly reflects the economic history of La Crosse. Established in 1886 and located in the same structure for 75 years from 1891-1965, the E.R. Barron Company is a significant representative of the commercial trade in La Crosse because it survived the stages of the city's economic growth and recessions until its incorporation into the Herberger chain in 1965 while other mercantile firms terminated. (Doerflinger's closed in 1984.)

The Barron Company building is located in a potential La Crosse Commercial Historic District. Historically significant as an early regional wholesale and retail center supplying the Minnesota and Dakota Territory and the Black River Pinery, which led to the city's growth as the "second city" in Wisconsin in the late 19th century, the proposed commercial historic district continued to be a regional center for the tri-state area in the 20th century until the advent of the local shopping mall in 1980. The E.R. Barron Company Building is one of the best preserved examples of a large 19th century dry goods store in the proposed historic district and in the city as well.

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Continuation sheet Statement of Significance

Item number 8

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For NPS use only

received

date entered

FOOTNOTES

- 1 La Crosse (WI) Republican and Leader, 3 October 1891.
- 2 La Crosse City Directory, (La Crosse, 1885-1902); Biographical History of La Crosse, Trempealeau, and Buffalo Counties Wisconsin (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1842) pp. 179-180.
- 3 Ibid., p. 179.
- 4 Roth's biography taken from: Rick Nordstrom, The Bible Baptist Church on the Salzer Memorial Church, unpublished paper, n.d., Area Research Center, Murphy Library, UW-La Crosse.
- 5 Biographical History, p. 179-180.
- 6 La Crosse (WI) Daily Press, 4 July 1891.
- 7 La Crosse (WI) Daily Republican, 14 October 1891.
- 8 La Crosse (WI) Weekly Chronicle, 14 February 1894.
- 9 La Crosse (WI) Daily Republican and Leader, 3 October 1891.
- 10 Rausch J., R. Zeitlin, Intensive Architectural/Historical Survey Report, 1983-1984, (La Crosse, 1984), pp. 356-361.
- 11 Source of construction dates: McMillan Building, La Crosse (WI) Daily Republican, 4 October 1886; Batavian Bank, La Crosse (WI) Chronicle, 1 January 1888; Tillman Bros. Building, Biographical History, p. 179-180.
- 12 La Crosse (WI) Daily Press, 30 September 1891.
- 13 La Crosse (WI) Daily Republican and Leader, 20 October 1886.
- 14 La Crosse (WI) Daily Press, 3 August 1891.
- 15 Ibid., 21 May 1891; 30 September 1891.
- 16 La Crosse City Tax Records, 1891-1910, Murphy Library, UW-La Crosse, La Crosse (WI) Tribune, 14 March 1954.
- 17 Ibid.; La Crosse City Directory, (Milwaukee, 1911-1932)
- 18 La Crosse (WI) Tribune, 3 November 1966; Ibid., 26 August 1965.
- 19 Ibid., 16 January 1978.
- 20 Ibid., 19 June 1978.
- 21 La Crosse (WI) Daily Republican and Leader, 20 October 1886; La Crosse (WI) Daily Press, 4 July 1891.
- 22 Ibid., 30 September 1891.
- 23 La Crosse (WI) Tribune, 29 April 1977; La Crosse City Directory, 1891-1930.
- 24 Annual Report of Board of Trade of the City of La Crosse, Wisconsin 1891 (La Crosse, 1891), p. 24.
- 25 Pen and Sunlight Sketches of the Principal Cities in Wisconsin (Chicago, n.d.) [c.1892] p. 179.
- 26 La Crosse City Directory, 1881-1910; Doerflinger Store: Memoirs of La Crosse County (Madison, 1907), pp. 281-283; Mons Anderson: Rausch and Zeitlin, La Crosse Survey, p. 193; Klein: History of La Crosse County, Wisconsin 1881 (Chicago, 1881), p. 768; Coren: La Crosse City Directory, 1885-86, p. 64.

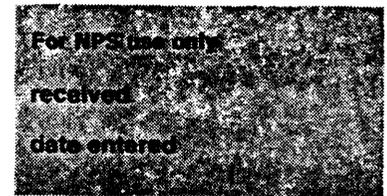
**United States Department of the Interior
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E.R. BARRON BUILDING, LaCrosse, LaCrosse County

Continuation sheet Major Bibliographical References item number 9

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Annual Report of Board of Trade of the City of La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1891,
(La Crosse, 1891)

La Crosse (WI) Daily Press, 21 May 1891, 30 September 1891, 4 July 1891 ; La Crosse
(WI) Daily Republican and Leader, 20 October 1886; Ibid., 3 October 1891.

La Crosse City Directory 1880-1984

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Clipping Files, Archives, La Crosse City Library, La Crosse, Wisconsin

Rausch, Joan and Zeitlin, Richard, Intensive Architectural/Historical Survey Report,
(La Crosse 1984)

Pen and Sunlight Sketches of the Principal Cities in Wisconsin, (Chicago, n.d.)
[c. 1892]