



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 Courthouse Square Historic District
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number	Cherry, Jefferson, Madison, and Maple Streets	N/A	not for publication
city or town	Lancaster	N/A	vicinity
state Wisconsin	code WI county Grant	code 043	zip code 53813

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 2/14/06
State Historic Preservation Officer-WI

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 _____

Lancaster Courthouse Square Historic District

Grant 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:)

John W. Sauer

4-7-06

JWS

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
X district
structure
site
object

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

Table with 2 columns: contributing, noncontributing. Values: 34, 13 buildings, 1, 13 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

13*

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

- (Enter categories from instructions)
COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store
DOMESTIC/hotel
COMMERCE/TRADE/financial institution

Current Functions

- (Enter categories from instructions)
COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store
COMMERCE/TRADE/financial institution
COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant

7. Description

Architectural Classification

- (Enter categories from instructions)
LATE VICTORIAN
LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS
LATE 19TH & EARLY 20TH CENTURY AM. MOVEMENTS

Materials

- (Enter categories from instructions)
Foundation Stone
walls Brick
Tin
roof Asphalt
other Stone

Narrative Description

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

*Previously listed on Courthouse Grounds: fountain, 9-element monument and Courthouse. Also previously listed: Municipal Building and Post Office

Courthouse Square Historic District
Name of Property

Grant County
County and State

Wisconsin

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

1863-1955

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Claude & Starck

H. C. Koch & Co.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Courthouse Square Historic District
Name of Property

Grant
County and State

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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:

Lancaster Historical Society

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 12 acres

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

1	<u>15</u>	<u>687000</u>	<u>4746300</u>	3	<u>15</u>	<u>687220</u>	<u>4746100</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>15</u>	<u>687260</u>	<u>4746305</u>	4	<u>15</u>	<u>687005</u>	<u>4746160</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		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	Timothy F. Heggland/ Consultant for:	date	August 11, 2005
organization	City of Lancaster Historic Preservation Commission	telephone	608-795-2650
street & number	6391 Hillsandwood Rd.	zip code	53560
city or town	Mazomanie	state	WI

Courthouse Square Historic District

Grant County

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

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	Various, see attached list			date
organization				telephone
street & number				zip code
city or town	state	Wisconsin		

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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Courthouse Square Historic District
Lancaster, Grant Co., WI

Description:

The Courthouse Square Historic District consists of a single complete city block that comprises the grounds of the very fine Grant County Courthouse and also portions of six more city blocks that encircle the courthouse block and which together form the still highly intact historic downtown business section of the city of Lancaster. The district contains 50 buildings, three of which, the Grant County Courthouse, Lancaster's U. S Post Office, and the Lancaster Municipal Building, are already listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), as are two historic statuary groups that are located on the grounds of the Courthouse.¹ The 1978 National Register nomination for the Grant County Courthouse includes the courthouse, a 9-element Civil War Monument and a Civil War Soldier's Fountain. The Nelson Dewey statue on the grounds was erected in 1907 but not included in the 1978 nomination. The remaining forty-seven buildings are, for the most part, fine representative examples of the most commonly encountered architectural styles and vernacular building forms that were associated with commercial buildings in Wisconsin in the second half of the nineteenth century and the first twenty years of the twentieth. These buildings are arrayed around three sides of the courthouse square on N. and S. Madison, N. and S. Jefferson, and E. and W. Maple streets and they constitute a coherent, visually unified grouping that contains nearly all of the surviving historic buildings in the city that have been associated with commerce.

Lancaster is the county seat of Grant County and in 2000 had a population of 4070. Grant County comprises the extreme southwest corner of the state of Wisconsin and the Mississippi River forms the county's western edge. The discovery of lead in this region in the early years of the nineteenth century resulted in its being one of the earliest places where settlement occurred in the state and the places where these settlers congregated are thus among the earliest communities in Wisconsin. Lancaster owes its existence to its position near the geographical center of the county. In 1836, Grant County was created by the first Wisconsin territorial legislature and a competition then ensued to locate the new county's seat. The winner proved to be a site promoted by land speculator Major Glendower Morgan Price, who proposed a forty-seven-block plat located near the center of the county. This plat had streets aligned on a north-south, east-west grid and it also had a block specifically dedicated to the "public" located at its center. In 1837, Price's proposal won out over two other speculative town sites and several established communities located elsewhere in the county, thanks partly to its central location and thanks also to Price's donation to the county of the public square shown on his plat for a courthouse site and his further donation of \$1000.00 for its construction.

The new frame construction courthouse (non-extant) was the first real building in the new settlement of Lancaster and the subsequent growth of Lancaster's commercial district occurred around the periphery of

¹ Grant County Courthouse (1902), NRHP 10-19-78; Lancaster U.S. Post Office (1938), NRHP 1999; and the Lancaster Municipal Building (1923), NRHP 3-10-83.

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Courthouse Square Historic District
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the square on which it was located. All of the fifty buildings in the Lancaster Courthouse Square Historic District are located either on the courthouse square itself or within a block of it. With the single exception of the district's oldest building (131 W. Maple St.), which was built in 1848, the rest represent the second or sometimes even the third generation of the buildings that have occupied these lots. Eight of the district's buildings were built in the 1860s; four were built in the 1870s; twelve more were built in the 1880s; nine were built between 1891 and 1900; nine more were built between 1901 and 1909; one was built between 1910 and 1920; two were built between 1921 and 1930; one between 1931 and 1940; and three after 1960. These buildings range from one to three stories in height, almost all of them are either rectilinear or square in plan, and all are of masonry construction. Three of these buildings are considered to be non-contributing due to their late date of construction while ten others are considered to be non-contributing because they have now been greatly altered and no longer retain their historic appearance.

The earliest of the district's contributing buildings are examples of the Commercial Vernacular form (101-121 N. Madison St.; 112 and 120 E. Maple St.; and 140 and 142 E. Maple St.). Additional contributing examples of this form, which is the most commonly encountered style in the district, were built through the end of the first decade of the twentieth century and include 125 N. Jefferson St.; 144 N. Madison St.; 108, 114, 120, 122, and 126-132 S. Madison St.; 134, 135, and 150 E. Maple St.; 150, 201, and 227 W. Maple St.. There are also four fine later examples of the Italianate style in the district (125-129 N. Madison St.; 141 and 151 E. Maple St., and 125 W. Maple St.) and two examples of the High Victorian Italianate Style (137 S. Jefferson St. and 150 S. Madison St.). Other contributing nineteenth century buildings in the district include four Queen Anne style buildings (217 W. Cherry St.; 143 S. Jefferson St.; and 139 and 205 W. Maple St.). There are also two contributing examples of the Twentieth Century Commercial Style (129 E. Maple St. and 152 S. Madison St.). In addition, the district also includes two Neo-Classical Revival style buildings: the outstanding Grant County Courthouse at 126 N. Maple St., and the First National Bank building at 151 W. Maple St. There is also a single, fine Art Moderne style building located here as well, the U.S. Post Office Building at 236 W. Maple St.

As is typical of the older commercial buildings in other Wisconsin cities, most of the original first story storefronts belonging to the district's buildings have been lost to subsequent modernization. The upper stories of these facades are still largely intact, however, and many also retain their original decorative brick, wood or metal cornices. Of special note are the seven buildings in the district built between 1894 and 1904 whose facades feature elaborate, stamped, galvanized iron-clad second stories. Two of these (138 and 144 S. Madison St.) are now covered over with later materials and may no longer be extant. The others, located at 217 W. Cherry St., 137 and 143 S. Jefferson St., 150 S. Madison St., and 205 W. Maple St., are still intact and constitute a rare and unusually large group for a city of Lancaster's size.

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Courthouse Square Historic District
Lancaster, Grant Co., WI

INVENTORY

The following inventory lists every building in the district along with the names of the original owners, the construction date, the address, and also the resource's contributing (C) or non-contributing (NC) status. The abbreviations given below for architectural styles are the same abbreviations used by the Wisconsin Historical Society's Division of Historic Preservation. These are as follows:

AM = Art Moderne
COM = Commercial Vernacular
CON = Contemporary
FE = Federal
HVI = High Victorian Italianate
IT = Italianate
NA = Not a Building
NE = Neo-Classical Revival
PR = Prairie School
QU = Queen Anne
RI = Richardsonian Romanesque
RO = Romanesque Revival
TC = Twentieth Century Commercial

NC	1960	205	W. Cherry St.	Mary Bailey Commercial Building	CON
C	1900-1901	217	W. Cherry St.	Edward H. Hyde Commercial Building	QU
C	1903-1904	125	N. Jefferson St.	Edward Pollock Commercial Building	COM
NC	1998	111	S. Jefferson St.	Grant County Administration Building	CON
NC	1893-1894	129	S. Jefferson St.	S. Mitchell Commercial Building	COM/CON
C	1894-1895	137	S. Jefferson St.	Muesse & Brooker Commercial Building	HVI
C	1894-1895	143	S. Jefferson St.	Edward H. Hyde Commercial Building	QU
C	1868-1869/1883	101-121	N. Madison St.	Wright House Hotel	COM
C	1896-1897	125-129	N. Madison St.	Wright House Hotel Annex	IT
NC	1889-1890	126	N. Madison St.	C. W. Knapp Commercial Building	COM
C	1895-1896	144	N. Madison St.	C. J. Hyde Commercial building	COM

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NC	1863-1864	102	S. Madison St.	Ryland & Holloway Commercial Building	COM
C	1888	108	S. Madison St.	State Bank Building	COM
C	1880-1881	114	S. Madison St.	George Gibbs Commercial Building	COM
C	1887-1888	120	S. Madison St.	Joseph Nathan Commercial Building	COM
C	1882	122	S. Madison St.	Thomas & Orr Commercial Building	COM
C	1868	126-132	S. Madison St.	M. M. Ziegler Double Block	COM
NC	1895-1896	138	S. Madison St.	John Jeide-John Carthew Double Block	QU/CON
NC	1893-1894	144	S. Madison St.	George P. Goble Commercial Building	HVI/CON
C	1899-1900	150	S. Madison St.	Masonic Lodge Building	HVI
C	1917-1918	152	S. Madison St.	A. J. Schmidt Commercial Building	TC
C	1923	206	S. Madison St.	Lancaster Municipal Building (NRHP/3-10-83)	PR
NC	1871	107	E. Maple St.	Ryland & Holloway Bank Building	COM
NC	1871	111-113	E. Maple St.	Ryland & Holloway Commercial Building	COM
C	1868-1869	112	E. Maple St.	John Crabtree Commercial Building	COM
C	1869-1870	120	E. Maple St.	Nathan & Woolstenholm Commercial Building	COM
C	1923	129	E. Maple St.	Farmer's Telephone Co. Building	TC
C	1866-1867	132	E. Maple St.	Nathan, Schreiner & Co. Commercial Building	COM
C	1873-74	134	E. Maple St.	Stephen Johnson Commercial Building	COM
C	1883-1884	135	E. Maple St.	Washington Barlow Commercial Building	COM
C	ca.1863-1864	140	E. Maple St.	Jacob Nathan Commercial Building	COM
C	1891-1892	141	E. Maple St.	John J. Wenzel Commercial Building	IT
C	ca.1863-1864	142	E. Maple St.	W. B. Baxter Commercial Building	COM
C	1874	150	E. Maple St.	Henkel & Wenzel Commercial Building	COM
C	1882-1883	151	E. Maple St.	Jonathan Phillips Commercial Building	IT
NC	1888/1963	105	W. Maple St.	Thomas McDonald Commercial Building	IT/CON
NC	1888/1963	107-109	W. Maple St.	W. P & John M. Stone Commercial Building	COM/CON
C	1888	115	W. Maple St.	Stone & Hassell Commercial Building	COM
C	1888	125	W. Maple St.	R. B. Showalter Commercial Building	IT
C	1903	126	W. Maple St.	Grant County Courthouse (NRHP/10-19-78)	NE
C	1867	126	W. Maple St.	9 element Civil War Monument (NRHP/10-19-78)	NA
C	1906	126	W. Maple St.	Civil War Soldiers' Fountain (NRHP/10-19-78)	NA
C	1907	126	W. Maple St.	Governor Nelson Dewey Statue *	NA
NC	post-1983	ca.127	W. Maple St.	Commercial Building	CON

* Although the Governor Nelson Dewey Statue is on the grounds of the Grant County Courthouse, it was not included in the count with the other objects in the 1978 National Register nomination. The Governor Nelson Dewey Statue is being counted as a contributing object in this nomination.

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NC	1848	131	W. Maple St.	T. M. Barber Commercial Building	FE
C	1901	133	W. Maple St.	I. O. O. F. Lodge Building	RI
C	1900-1901	139	W. Maple St.	Walter S. Lathrop-Joseph J. Bennett Double Block	QU
C	1903-1904/1923	151	W. Maple St.	First National Bank of Lancaster Building	COM/NE
C	1882-1883	201	W. Maple St.	John G. Clark Commercial Building	COM
C	1903-1904	205	W. Maple St.	Louis Alt Commercial Building	QU
C	1893-1894	219	W. Maple St.	John H. Reed's Opera House Building	RO
C	1892	227	W. Maple St.	George Reynolds Commercial Building	COM
C	1938	236	W. Maple St.	U. S. Post Office Building (NRHP/1999)	AM

The following list describes some of the most characteristic and/or finest resources in the district and tells something of what is known about their history. Names given in the heading are those of the original owners and the buildings are listed in roughly chronological order, beginning with the oldest.²

<u>Historic Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Date of Construction</u>
Nathan, Schreiner & Co. Building	132 E. Maple St.	1866-1867

This two-story-tall, five-bay-wide, rectilinear plan Commercial Vernacular form building is one of the earliest surviving commercial buildings in Lancaster. The building rests on a stone foundation and has walls clad in brick and its south-facing main elevation originally featured a full-width four-bay-wide storefront that has since been replaced with one of modern design. The five-bay-wide second story, however, is still largely intact, each bay being separated from the next by a thin pilaster strip, and the whole being surmounted by a corbelled brick cornice. The window openings in these bays are tall and have semi-circular-arched heads. Historic photos show that the original windows had a four-light lower sash and a larger six-light semi-circular-arched upper sash, but these have now been replaced with modern windows.

Jacob Nathan and John Schreiner operated a general store in this building, which they built themselves in 1867; they traded in live stock as well.³ It is also worth noting that the building at the east end of this block, the Henkel & Wenzel Building at 150 E. Maple St., built in 1874, employed an identical design.

² Not discussed are the three buildings in the district that are already listed in the NRHP (See Footnote No. 1). Descriptions and the histories of these buildings can be found in their respective National Register nominations.

³ *History of Grant County, Wisconsin*. Chicago: Western Historical Co., 1881, pp. 894-895.

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<u>Historic Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Date of Construction</u>
Wright House Hotel	101-121 N. Madison St.	1868-1869/1883

The three-story-tall Commercial Vernacular form Wright House Hotel was completed in 1869 and it was Lancaster's most imposing building at that time.⁴ It was built as a hotel and features a three-story rectilinear plan main block that comprises the southwest corner of the city block on which it is located. This brick-clad building rests on a stone foundation. The N. Madison St. elevation of the building is five-bays-wide and symmetrical in design and has a centered entrance door in the first story of its middle bay. The right-hand (east) three bays of the first story of the seven-bay-wide E. Maple Street side elevation are given over to a deeply inset entrance that is flanked on its right by a two-bay-wide storefront that originally lit the hotel's restaurant. All of the bays on these two elevations are separated from one another by three-story-tall pilaster strips and both elevations are crowned by tall corbelled brick cornices. In addition, all the flat-arched window openings in these bays have dressed stone sills and lintels, but the original two-over-two-light double hung wood sash windows that filled them was replaced with one-over-one-light examples early in the twentieth century. (See Photo No. 3)

Attached to the north-facing side elevation of this building's main block is a two-story-tall eight-bay-wide rectilinear plan Commercial Vernacular form wing that fronts onto N. Madison St. This wing was built in 1883 and it too is clad in brick and rests on a stone foundation. The main facade faces west onto N. Madison St. and the right (south) half of its first story consists of a now altered storefront that originally served the hotel's sample room. Crowning the facade is a corbelled brick cornice that is identical to the one found on the three-story main block. The facade retains its original two-over-two-light windows in its second story.

This two-part building was built on the site of the Banfill House, a frame two-story building that was one of Lancaster's first hotels. The original owner of the present building was John Wright, who first leased it to Fred Phelps. Phelps called the hotel the Phelps House and it was known by this name until Wright finally took it over and ran it himself, renaming it the Wright House.⁵ Although the original storefronts have now been altered and the windows on the main block have been replaced with later ones, the building retains a highly intact appearance today, as is confirmed by comparison with numerous extant historic photographs.

⁴ City of Lancaster Tax Rolls. See also: *Grant County Herald*, April 13, 1869, p. 3.

⁵ Holford, Castello N. *History of Grant County, Wisconsin*. Lancaster: The Teller Print, 1900, p. 411.

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<u>Historic Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Date of Construction</u>
M. M. Ziegler Double Block	126-132 S. Madison St.	1868

Built in the same year as the main block of the Wright House is this fine brick-clad Commercial Vernacular form double block. Both the rectilinear plan halves of the block are two-stories-tall, both originally had first stories that consisted of a single storefront featuring a centered, inset entrance flanked by display windows, both still have their original three-bay-wide second stories, and both are crowned with identical corbelled brick cornices.

M. M. Ziegler ran a hardware store in his half of the block (126), this now being the most intact of the two halves. This half is also one of the very few historic nineteenth century commercial buildings in the district that retains its original cast iron storefront. (See Photo No. 6)

<u>Historic Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Date of Construction</u>
Jonathan Phillips Building	151 E. Maple St.	1882-1883

The Jonathan Phillips Building is the earliest of the district's Italianate style-influenced buildings. This double store building occupies the southeast corner of the intersection formed by E. Maple and S. Monroe streets and it is rectilinear in plan, two-stories-tall, and has red brick-clad exterior walls that rest on cut stone foundation walls. The main facade of the building faces north onto E. Maple St. and its first story originally consisted of two storefronts, both of which have now lost all their original features. The second story, however, is still highly intact and it is five-bays-wide and is crowned with an elaborate and highly intact bracketed metal cornice. Each of the five bays contains a single window opening that has a dressed stone sill and an elaborately carved stone or possibly metal head. Each opening also contains its original two-over-two-light double hung wood sash window.

<u>Historic Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Date of Construction</u>
John G. Clark Building	210 W. Maple St.	1882-1883

The John G. Clark Building is one of the district's largest buildings and it occupies a prominent location at the northwest corner of the Courthouse Square. The building is two-stories-tall and rectilinear in plan, has exterior walls that are clad in brick and that rest on stone foundations, and its first story was originally designed to house two separate stores. The principal facade of the building faces south onto W. Maple St. and while the storefronts that originally served these stores have now been replaced with modern ones, the second story above is still highly intact and five-bays-wide. These bays contain either single or paired segmental-arched window openings having stone sills and corbelled brick heads and several also retain

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their original two-light upper sash. The building is crowned by a fine bracketed and denticulated overhanging metal or wooden cornice and the entire building is still sheltered by an unusual hipped roof that was originally clad in slate. (See Photo No. 8, the right-hand building)

To emphasize the building's corner location, the southeast corner of the building that faces onto the Square was cut off and the main entrance to the easternmost of the building's two stores was placed into the base of the resulting canted wall surface.⁶ The resulting building is one of the district's most elaborate examples of the Commercial Vernacular form.

<u>Historic Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Date of Construction</u>
Stone & Hassell Building	115 W. Maple St.	1888

A devastating fire in 1888 destroyed most of the original buildings on this block of W. Maple St. and led to a spate of new construction later in that year that resulted in what are now some of the district's most characteristic buildings. Among them is this two-story rectilinear plan Commercial Vernacular form, brick-clad building that was built for the firm of Stone & Hassell in 1888.⁷ The building's highly intact main facade faces south onto W. Maple St. and its first story contains a single storefront that features an inset entrance containing a pair of single light over one-panel doors. This entrance is flanked on either side by a display window, while a second inset entrance that also contains a pair of single light over one-panel doors is located to the right of the storefront and provides access to the second story above. The second story is four-bays-wide and each bay contains a single segmental-arched window opening having a corbelled brick head, a stone sill, and its original two-over-two-light double hung wood sash window. The facade is crowned by a corbelled brick cornice.

Stone & Hassell operated a drugstore in the first story of their building.

<u>Historic Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Date of Construction</u>
R. B. Showalter Building	125 W. Maple St.	1888

Another of the buildings that came into being as a direct result of the 1888 fire is this Italianate style-influenced building, which is located left of and next door to the similar, but smaller and less elaborate, one built for Stone & Hassell in the same year.⁸ Like its neighbor, the Showalter building is rectilinear in plan and two-stories-tall and it too is clad in brick and rests on a cut stone foundation.

⁶ This easternmost first story store was long occupied by Lancaster's post office.

⁷ *Lancaster Teller*. September 13, 1888, p. 3 and December 13, 1888, p. 3.

⁸ *Ibid.* September 13, 1888, p. 3.

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Unlike its neighbor, the Showalter building's original first story storefront has been replaced by a modern one and only the recessed entrance to the second story at the right-hand (east) edge of this story still retains its original elements. The building's second story, however, is still intact and it is five-bays-wide and is crowned with an elaborate and highly intact brick cornice that is notably taller than the brick cornice that belongs to its neighbor. Each of these five bays contains a single window opening that has a dressed stone sill and an elaborate corbelled brick head, and each opening retains its early, but not original, two-over-two-light double hung wood sash window.

Comparing the Showalter building with the quite similar but less elaborate Stone & Hassell building next door is instructive because it shows that the things that differentiate the Commercial Vernacular form from the Italianate style can be quite subtle. The only real difference between the two is that the Showalter building has taller second story windows, slightly more elaborate corbelled window heads, and a taller and more elaborate cornice.

<u>Historic Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Date of Construction</u>
Reed Opera House Building	219-223 W. Maple St.	1893-1894

The Reed Opera House is another of the district's most intact buildings, which is especially fortunate because it is an excellent example of the kind of multi-purpose building that was sometimes constructed in communities of Lancaster's size in the mid-to-late nineteenth century. Still more impressive is the fact that the Reed building was designed in the Romanesque Revival style, an atypical choice for a building of this type. The building is rectilinear in plan and two-stories-tall, its exterior walls are clad in brick and rest on a cut stone foundation, and the main facade of the building faces south onto W. Maple St. Two stores originally occupied the building's first story, while a broad staircase located at the right-hand (east) end of the facade led up to the public hall or "opera house" that occupied all of the taller second story. Remarkably, both of the original storefronts and also the second story entrance that together make up the first story of the main facade are all largely intact, as is the remainder of the facade. The second story consists of two triple window groups that flank a centered single window of the same size and the heads of these identically sized semi-circular-arched window openings are all linked by a four-course, header brick, arcade-like feature that, like the arched windows themselves, is typical of the round arched design features that are associated with the Romanesque Revival style. Crowning the facade is an overhanging metal-clad cornice and the whole was one of the district's most impressive buildings when it was built and remains so today. (See Photo No. 9)

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<u>Historic Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Date of Construction</u>
Muesse & Brooker Building	137 S. Jefferson St.	1894-1895

Among the most interesting buildings in the district are those whose principal facades feature second stories that are clad in sheets of stamped, galvanized iron. These were the product of a late nineteenth century manufacturing method whose intent was to create—or recreate, at a much lower cost, the kind of elaborate facade treatments that the earlier cast iron storefronts that began to appear in the United States in the mid-1850s had made possible. Sheets produced by the new method could be applied directly over a conventional wood or masonry facade and they could be made to resemble elements that represented any period or style. Whole storefronts and upper stories could be purchased out of manufacturer's catalogs or individual elements could be ordered separately and then combined on the exterior of a building in much the same way that factory-made wooden trim elements could be combined in the interiors of the period. The results produced rich visual effects that appeared to be custom made but which were actually assembled out of pre-fabricated pieces.

The Muesse & Brooker double store building is an excellent example of the application of this new technology. This rectilinear plan, two-story commercial building has brick exterior walls and a main facade that faces east onto S. Jefferson St. It was originally designed to house two stores in its first story and office space in the story above. The first story's original storefronts have been replaced with modern ones, but the entire original seven-bay-wide second story is completely intact and is in excellent condition. This story consists of seven individual window openings that are flanked on either side by a pair of small Ionic Order pilasters that stand on plinth blocks, and these pilasters appear to support an elaborate fascia that is ornamented with patera and which is crowned with a tall, overhanging bracketed cornice. The classically derived designs of these elements and the high degree of elaboration that characterizes the overall design of this story places it within the High Victorian Italianate style and even the loss of its original first story does not prevent this from being one of the district's most notable buildings.

Henry Muesse, one of the owners of this building, was, along with his brother George, a notable Lancaster-based contractor and lumberyard owner and he was, in all probability, responsible for the construction of his own block as well.

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<u>Historic Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Date of Construction</u>
I. O. O. F. Building	133 W. Maple St.	1901

When the Independent Order of Odd Fellows built themselves a new lodge hall in 1901, they also built one of the district's most architecturally distinctive buildings and one whose exterior is almost totally intact today. The I.O.O. F. building is rectilinear in plan and three-stories-tall and its main facade faces south onto W. Maple St. and is faced with brick. This symmetrically designed facade features a intact first story storefront that consists of two centered display windows that are flanked on either side by inset entrances that feature paired entrance doors to the store on the right-hand side and to the second story on the left. The upper stories are two-bays-wide and each bay is two-stories-tall and is inset slightly into the facade. These bays both have semi-circular-arched heads and they feature a triple window group in each of their two stories. These groups are separated from one another by a paneled brick spandrel that is positioned between them within the bay. The edges of these bays are trimmed with small sandstone blocks that have a quarried surface, and a dressed sandstone keystone of somewhat exaggerated proportions is centered in the arched head of each bay and forms part of the stringcourse above that serves as the base for the tall corbelled brick cornice that crowns the facade. (See Photo No. 2)

The design of this building is a sophisticated one that is almost certainly the product of a still unknown architect. Whoever designed it was aware of trends then prevailing in architectural styles, but combined them in a fashion that could only have occurred at the end of the Late Victorian era. Thus, the use of semi-circular-arched window heads and the trimming of the upper story's bays with rock-faced sandstone that contrasts with the otherwise smooth brick surface of the facade are both features that are sometimes associated with the Richardsonian Romanesque Revival style, but the placement of these bays within recessed and arched two-story bays and the use of various classically derived elements such as keystones can also be found on Beaux-Arts Classical style buildings of the same period.

<u>Historic Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Date of Construction</u>
Louis Alt Building	205 W. Maple St.	1903-1904

Another fine example of a building having a second story whose facade is composed of stamped galvanized iron sheets is this Queen Anne style building built for Louis Alt in the first years of the twentieth century. This rectilinear plan, two-story commercial building has brick exterior walls and a main facade that faces south onto W. Maple St. It was originally designed to house a single large store in its first story with additional rental space in the story above. The first story's original storefront, which

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featured a centered entrance flanked by large display windows, has now been replaced with a modern one, but the entire original second story is still completely intact and is in excellent condition. This story is symmetrical in design and it is dominated by two three-sided oriel windows that are placed on either side of a single centered window. Both of these oriels have a single window placed on each of their three sides and these windows are all of equal size and are also identical in size and design to the single window that is placed between the bays. Separating these windows from one another are small Ionic pilasters that stand on plinth blocks and which appear to support a decorated fascia band above them. Crowning the entire facade is an overhanging cornice that has a triangular-shaped pediment centered on it that would typically have once borne the building's date of construction or the name of the owner.

The use of oriel windows in the upper stories of commercial buildings such as this one is typical feature of Queen Anne style commercial buildings and there are two other surviving examples in the district: the Edward H. Hyde Building at 143 S. Jefferson St., built in 1894-1895, and the Lathrop-Bennett double block located at 139 W. Maple St. and built in 1900-1901. Historic photos show that the Jeide-Carthew double block at 138 S. Madison St., built in 1895-1896, was originally an excellent example as well, but this building has now been greatly altered and no longer retains its historic appearance.

<u>Historic Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Date of Construction</u>
First National Bank of Lancaster	151 W. Maple St.	1903-1904/ca.1923

This modest size, two-story-tall, rectilinear plan building occupies a prominent lot that forms the southwest corner of this block. It was built in 1903-1904 to house the First National Bank of Lancaster. The building has walls clad in tan brick that are crowned by a bracketed overhanging cornice. The principal facade faces south onto W. Maple St. and features a first story storefront with rental space in the second story above. The appearance of this building today, however, is somewhat different than as originally built. Historic photos show that the main entrance to the bank was originally deeply inset into the southwest corner of the building's main facade and it was accessed through semi-circular-arched openings that were placed on either side of the corner. This device created what was in effect an inset open porch that sheltered the entrance and it also resulted in the appearance of a modest arcade. Placed to the right of this porch, which had just a single arched opening on either side, was a large paired window group that acted as a display window that provided light to the interior. This design remained in place until later in the second decade of the century. Eventually, the bank decided to update its entrance by having a new, classically derived, dressed stone storefront built that spanned the width of the main

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facade.⁹ This storefront is divided into four identical-width bays by five fluted Ionic pilasters and the new entrance to the bank is located in the second bay from the right and the entrance to the second story in the right-hand bay.

Interestingly, this new storefront was the work of the Madison architectural firm of Claude & Starck, whose excellent Lancaster Municipal Building was constructed on the other side of the square between 1922 and 1923 and which was designed in the Prairie School style for which they are best known.¹⁰

⁹ This storefront also turns the corner as well and there is a single bay of identical design on this elevation as well.

¹⁰ Orr, Gordon D., Jr. "Louis W. Claude: Madison Architects of the Prairie School." Chicago: The Prairie School Review. Vol. XIV, p. 31. :

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Significance:

The Courthouse Square Historic District is a commercial district in the heart of the city of Lancaster and it is centered on the block-square grounds of the Grant County Courthouse. The district is bounded by the north and south-running N. & S. Jefferson and Madison streets, and the east and west-running E. & W. Maple and Cherry streets. The district was identified by an Intensive Survey in 1985 as being a potential historic district having local significance under National Register (NR) criteria A and C.¹¹ Research was undertaken to assess the potential for nominating the district to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) utilizing the NR significance areas of Architecture and Commerce, themes identified in the State of Wisconsin's *Cultural Resource Management Plan* (CRMP). This research centered on evaluating the resources within the district utilizing the Italianate, Romanesque Revival, Queen Anne, Neo-Classical Revival, and Twentieth Century Commercial styles and the Commercial Vernacular form subsections of the Architectural Styles study unit of the CRMP.¹² The results of this research are detailed below and show that the Courthouse Square Historic District is locally significant under NR Criterion C as an architecturally and historically important collection of mostly commercial buildings that together constitute a well-defined and visually distinct geographic and historic entity and that it is also eligible for listing under Criterion A.

The Courthouse Square Historic District is believed to be of architectural significance (Criterion C) because it contains both the only intact historic collection of Victorian period and early twentieth century commercial buildings that remains in the historic business center of the city of Lancaster. These buildings also represent the historic stylistic evolution of the city's commercial buildings. Individually, the buildings in the district are good representative examples of Italianate, Queen Anne, Neo-Classical Revival, and Twentieth Century Commercial styles and Commercial Vernacular form design. Collectively, the buildings in the district have a significance that is greater than the merit they possess individually. Because intact surviving historic streetscapes of such buildings are rapidly becoming extinct in the changing economic and social reality that characterizes the downtowns of Wisconsin's cities today, the retention of the buildings in this district is essential if Lancaster's historic downtown is to be preserved. In addition, the buildings in the district are believed to be of significance to the history of commerce in Lancaster (Criterion A) because they represent not just the most intact group of surviving historic buildings in Lancaster that are associated with the community's historic retail stores and other

¹¹ Taylor, Mary. *An Intensive Architectural and Historical Survey of Lancaster, Potosi/Tennyson, Dodgeville, Belmont, and Gratiot*. Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, 1985.

¹² Wyatt, Barbara (Ed.). *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*. Madison: Division of Historic Preservation, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986, Vol. 2, pp. 2-6, 2-9, 2-10, 2-12, 2-15, 2-18, 3-10.

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service-oriented commercial enterprises, but also represent a major percentage of *all* the buildings that have ever been associated with this city's commercial history. The period of significance is 1863 the date of the first contributing buildings to 1955 the 50-year cut off date for the National Register.

Commerce

Good general histories of the early years of the city of Lancaster can be found in the 1881 and 1900 published histories of Grant County that are cited in the references. Additional information about the built history of the city as a whole is contained in the 1985 Intensive Survey Report written by Mary Taylor that includes Lancaster and four other southwest Wisconsin communities. Consequently, the history that follows deals primarily just with the history of the district itself and includes only as much of the larger history of the city as is necessary to properly understand the Courthouse Square's place within that larger context.

Lancaster's Courthouse Square Historic District is believed to be eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A for its local significance to the area of Commerce because its resources comprise the still largely intact historic commercial core of the city. The district contains 50 mostly two and three-story, masonry construction, mid-to-late nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings, most of which line three sides of the square that encircles the Grant County Courthouse in the heart of the city. These buildings still form the commercial heart of the city today and they also represent a large portion of all the buildings that were ever built in this city to serve the retail and professional needs of its citizens.

Today, Lancaster is the county seat of Grant County and had a 2000 population of 4070. In 1834, though, when Aaron Boyce, the first settler of the land that was to become the city of Lancaster arrived, all this land was included within the boundaries of the larger and as yet undivided Iowa County and was then without formal governmental organization. Shortly after his arrival, Boyce set about farming his land and the site he chose was a beautiful one whose natural beauty was apparent when it was described in the 1881 history of the county:

The site of the present city of Lancaster was originally, before the advent of the white man, a beautifully-rounded knoll, covered with low brush at intervals, through which forest trees, singly or in groves, spread their sheltering branches. At the foot of this knoll bubbled forth a limpid spring, clear as the purest crystal ... Past this spring poured a brawling brook, fed by this and lesser neighboring fountains.¹³

¹³ *History of Grant County, Wisconsin*. Op. Cit., p. 639.

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Boyce formally entered his claim for this land in November of 1834. It consisted of the east half of the southeast quarter of Section 3, T4N, R3E, an eighty-acre parcel that also included the east half of what is now the Courthouse Square district. Two years later, Major Glendower Morgan Price, a land speculator, purchased the west half of the southeast quarter, a purchase that was hardly an accident since the newly elected Wisconsin Territorial Legislature had, in the same year, created Grant County out of the former Iowa County and had appointed commissioners to select the site of the county seat. Shortly after the Legislature's decision, Price purchased Boyce's half of the southeast quarter of Section 3 and on this 160-acre parcel he had a town plan laid out on a north-south, east-west grid that contained 47 city blocks and, most notably, a block which he labeled "public." This site was then proposed to the commissioners. In 1837, Price's proposal won out over two other speculative town sites and several established communities located elsewhere in the county, thanks partly to its central location and thanks also to Price's donation to the county of the public square shown on his plat as the new courthouse site and his further donation of \$1000.00 for its construction.

Lancaster's downtown commercial district evolved where it did and when it did because of the unusual circumstances surrounding the creation of the city. Lancaster originally existed only on paper and in the mind of its developer, Major Glendower Morgan Price. Price's choice of a site was dictated solely by its geographical location near the center of what is now Grant County, which he believed would favorably influence those who were seeking a location for the county's new seat of government. To help ensure that his site would win out, Price dedicated an entire square block in the middle of his plat for the use of the public and, when his site was finally chosen in 1837, it was on this block that the new county courthouse was built and it was around this courthouse that the city of Lancaster subsequently developed. Lancaster thus evolved for very different reasons than the typical community of its time. Most of the state's earliest communities came into being because those who founded them located them on a river or stream that could be harnessed to provide power for saw mills and flour and grist mills and other industries that required water for power or manufacturing or else they were located on a road, a river or a lake and had access to some form of transportation. It was the combination of access to transportation and access to a source of power that made these new communities successful. Lancaster, however, had none of these advantages and was developed where it was solely because of its geographical position near the center of the county, which made it a reasonable choice to be the site of the county's new seat of government. This was Lancaster's only natural advantage, but it was enough.

The subsequent construction, in 1838, of Grant County's first courthouse on the block that Price had set aside for it practically guaranteed that the blocks that surrounded it would become the future site of Lancaster's commercial and professional activities.

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Unlike larger and more expansive forms of government, the affairs of the county are traditionally managed from a single building. A center of law, a storehouse of records (and hence county history), and a conduit to state government, the county courthouse inevitably becomes the center of the community and a focal point for the entire county. In addition to housing the offices of judges, commissioner, clerks, and supervisors, the courthouse also provided a forum for the politics and gossip which attends such activities, and the courthouse square was historically the center of civic life: the site of hangings, (although not often in Wisconsin), elections, mass meetings, and political rallies.¹⁴

In Lancaster's case, the courthouse was actually built before Lancaster itself, which meant that those who wished to profit by the arrival of visitors to the county seat had to scramble in order to establish places of business that would permit them to do so. That these visitors would come was a given since, in the 1830s, communication with officialdom, even for something as simple as registering a deed, was either done by using the slow and often unreliable mail of the day, or it was done in person. But travel to Lancaster and home again from other parts of the county was difficult and took time, which meant that visitors to Lancaster usually needed a place to stay upon arrival and would also probably try to combine their business there with any shopping that needed to be done. Consequently, businessmen almost immediately began to build hotels and stores to serve these visitors and these places of business were first located on the square facing the courthouse or else just off the square.

Proximity to Lancaster's most important (and, at first, only) destination was the obvious reason for building on lots that surrounded or were located close to the courthouse square but it is also worth remembering that most of the earliest settlers of Lancaster came originally from communities on the east coast, and many of these persons undoubtedly grew up in or had lived in or near communities that had a courthouse square that was surrounded by retail stores, professional offices, hotels, and churches. Thus, it would have seemed perfectly normal to them to build similar institutions on the streets surrounding Lancaster's courthouse as well.

The first "stores" in Lancaster were log buildings built by Ira Brunson and Major Price, and the first "hotels" were boarding houses run by a Mr. Richards, which occupied the former Aaron Boyce cabin, and another that was run by James Jetty. The kitchen of the latter establishment was located where the Wright House Hotel (101 N. Madison St.) now stands, while its dining room was located across E. Maple St. in a frame building built in 1838 by George Cox on the future site of the Ryland & Holloway Bank building (107 E. Maple St.).¹⁵ Another two-story frame building that was sometimes

¹⁴ Wyatt, Barbara (Ed.). Op. Cit., Vol. 1, p. 8-4.

¹⁵ This frame building also served as the first courthouse while the actual one was being built and was expanded into a

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known as the Morrell building was built in the same year on the southwest corner of the E. Maple and N. Monroe streets, this being the site of the present Jonathan Phillips building (151 E. Maple St.), and a two-story log building was also built that year on the corner where the Thomas McDonald Building is now located (105 W. Maple St.).¹⁶ This last building was known locally as the "blockhouse" and its second story housed Lancaster's first law firm, one of the partners being Nelson Dewey, who in 1848 would be elected Wisconsin's first governor.

In 1839, John P. Tower erected a building (non-extant) on the northeast corner of the intersection of E. Maple and N. Monroe streets, which he opened as an inn. In 1840, Harvey Pepper, who had, in 1838, built an addition on to the George Cox building and had run it as a boarding house, built a new brick building (location unknown) that he operated as a hotel and which was turned into store a by James Otis after Pepper's death in 1842. In 1841, Daniel Banfill built a two-story frame building on the future site of the Wright House, which he operated as the Banfill House hotel and which remained in operation until it was demolished to make way for the Wright House in 1868.

The year 1843 saw numerous changes and improvements. James M. Otis opened an extensive stock of merchandise in his new store, the first general and complete stock that had been opened. In these early times the bulk of the goods were brought across the country from Milwaukee by teams. Heavy goods, such as hardware and the like, was generally purchased in St. Louis, and brought up the river as far as Potosi, from which point it was hauled by teams to Lancaster. Groceries were also sometimes purchased at the same place, but all dry goods and fancy articles came from Milwaukee.¹⁷

A second general store was also opened in Lancaster in 1843 by T. M. Barber and James Ward, but as a later county history noted:

The settlement was still small and the two stores had a rather hard time, as they could not hope to draw trade from the south, west, and east, where the extensive stores of Potosi, Beetown, and Platteville tempted customers.¹⁸

Still, if developmental progress in Lancaster was slow, it was real never-the-less. In 1843 a tri-weekly stage line was started between Lancaster and Platteville by H. Messmore and Barber & Ward moved

boarding house by Harvey Pepper in 1838.

¹⁶ The Morrell building was taken over by James Otis in 1841 and became the first real general store in the village.

¹⁷ *History of Grant County, Wisconsin*. Op. Cit., p. 643. Potosi is located in Grant Co. near to the Mississippi River.

¹⁸ Holford, Castello N. Op. Cit., pp. 402-403.

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their stock into a new frame building located where the M. M. Ziegler building now stands (126-132 S. Madison St.). Later in the same year, A. Crosby opened a tailor shop in a small one-story frame building located where the Jeide-Carthew Building now stands (138 S. Madison St.), and the *Grant County Herald* newspaper began publication. In 1845, a second stage line connecting Lancaster with Platteville and Cassville was also established; Barber & Ward moved into a new store near the corner of Maple and Monroe streets; George Cox built a new frame hotel called the Mansion House on the site now occupied by the Masonic Lodge building and the A. J. Schmidt building (150 and 152 S. Madison St.); and Lancaster's first two doctors took offices in the Banfill House and in a building near the corner of Maple and Monroe streets.

In 1846, a blacksmith and wagon shop was built just outside the district by John Boright. N. H. Suttle opened the Grant County House (location unknown). John M. Otis started a hotel or boarding house, and Mr. McClanathan kept one as well. In 1847, Andrew Barnett came and started a hotel called the Telegraph House that was for many years known as the Lancaster House (located on the southeast corner of E. Maple and S. Monroe streets, non-extant), and new firms replaced existing ones in several of the village buildings in these years. Nevertheless, while the business affairs of the village may sound impressive when listed in this manner, the fact remains that Lancaster could actually only boast of having three real stores and three real hotels (the Banfill House, Mansion House, and Lancaster House) by the beginning of 1848.¹⁹ Mostly, the businessmen of Lancaster had to contend with problems associated with poor transportation facilities and competition from other, more established communities.

Up to the beginning of 1848, but three stores of any moment were to be found in Lancaster. Potosi, on the contrary, was not only well supplied, but did an extensive jobbing business, while Beetown had several stores carrying extensive stocks. The result of this weighting the wheel of traffic so to one side was shown in the fact that the majority of trade was done in these places; even those living within a few miles of Lancaster preferred to go where they could have a larger stock to select from. Again, transportation facilities were such that merchants were unable to take the produce brought in by the farmers and handle it successfully, owing to difficulties in transportation.²⁰

In 1848, T. M. Barber finished his new, brick Federal Style business block opposite the courthouse

¹⁹ The population of the town of Lancaster in 1848, the year that Wisconsin became a state, was 933—496 males and 437 females, this being indicative of the growth of agriculture in the town and in marked contrast to the mining communities to the south, where men predominated by a large margin.

²⁰ *History of Grant County, Wisconsin*. Op. Cit., pp. 644-645.

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(131 W. Maple St., greatly altered), which is now the oldest building in the district. No other business buildings of consequence were built in the village for the next several years. The following, written in 1881, describes the business portion of the village in 1853, when the village's population numbered about 350:

An inventory of the business houses of Lancaster, in 1853, would have shown the following: Dwight T. Parker, who occupied a store on the site at present occupied by Howe & Baxter; Alcorn & Barber, in the brick store occupied by Ivey & Webb [131 W. Maple St.]; G. Maiben, in the building now used by John P. Lewis [destroyed by fire in 1888]; T. P. Liscum & Co., who occupied a frame building standing where the store of William Baxter [142 E. Maple St.] now stands. The hotels were four in number—Banfill's, located on the present site of the Phelps House [101 N. Madison St.]; the Lancaster House, at that time comprising the north portion of the present building [non-extant]; the Mansion House [non-extant], and the Wisconsin House, kept by Myron W. Wood, which building is now occupied by Mr. McCoy as a residence. These, with the log building [non-extant] on the corner of Madison and Maple streets used as an office by Barber & Lawry [attorneys], the small frame building standing on the present site of Johnson's brick [134 E. Maple St.], and used by the *Herald* as an office, together with some twenty or thirty frame and log structures used as residences, comprised the village of Lancaster at this time.²¹

It is worth noting that up to this time most of the business-related buildings built in the village had been located just off the square on both sides of the 100 block of E. Maple St. or else on the east side of the square, rather than on the remaining three sides of the square. The reason for this was bound up with the early history of the village.

The *Herald* commented on the injury done to the place by speculators in land thus: "Soon after Lancaster was made the county seat, speculators entered all the good lands in the vicinity and held them at prices beyond the reach of incoming immigrants. In 1854, they became alarmed and sold at from \$4 to \$10 an acre. In 1855 all the lands in the vicinity are owned by actual residents. This spirit of speculation left Lancaster behind in the mercantile and business interests, and it must take some time to catch up." And again: "The high price of lots around the court-house is causing the town to move down into the valley toward Judge Colter's spring."²²

Gradually, though, the settling of the lands surrounding Lancaster and the increasing importance of

²¹ Ibid, p. 648.

²² Holford, Castello N. Op. Cit., pp. 410. Moving down the valley meant moving eastward down E. Maple St.

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agriculture to the local and regional economy began to work to Lancaster's long-term advantage. Lancaster also benefited from the high prices that farmers in the vicinity received for their produce during the Civil War years and the real growth of the village's business sector occurred during and soon after the war. In 1860, just prior to the outbreak of the war, the log building on the northeast corner of Maple and Madison streets known as "the blockhouse" was replaced with a frame, Greek Revival style building.²³ In 1863, George Ryland built the village's first three-story brick building on the southeast corner of E. Maple and S. Madison streets (102 S. Madison St., extant but altered) and Jonathan Nathan and W. B. Baxter built two-story brick buildings at 140 and 142 E. Maple St. (both extant) respectively, in the following year.

During the war period, the population of the village also experienced growth, which by 1865 numbered 853. Larger village and rural populations created a need for more and better goods and services and efforts to meet these needs began immediately after the end of the war. In 1865, the original brick courthouse building, completed in 1853, was substantially enlarged by the addition of a third story and a new two-story wing. In 1866-67, Nathan, Schreiner & Co. built a two-story brick building for their store at 132 E. Maple St. (extant) and in 1869, John Wright opened his brand new, three-story, brick hotel at 101 N. Madison St. (extant), which was called the Phelps House after the first lessee. In the following year the John Crabtree Estate built another three-story brick building next door to Wright's hotel at 112 E. Maple St. (extant) that was soon thereafter purchased by C. Horstman and run by him as a hotel. Nathan & Woolstenholm built their three-story brick store building next door at 120 E. Maple St. (extant) in the following year.

Lancaster's new prosperity was visible both in the number of new buildings being put up and also in the fact that these buildings were being built of brick rather than wood. Still more buildings followed in the 1870s, including: the two-story brick Ryland & Holloway Bank building at 107 E. Maple St. and the two-story brick Ryland & Holloway building at 111-113 E. Maple St., both still extant and built in 1871; the two-story brick Stephen Johnson building at 134 E. Maple St., built in 1873 and still extant; and the two-story brick Henkel & Wenzel Building at 150 E. Maple St., built in 1874 and also still extant. Also built in 1872 was a new Grant County jail, this being a brick Italianate style building (non-extant) that was located at 111 S. Jefferson St.

By 1875, when the only *Bird's Eye View of Lancaster* was published, brick or frame commercial buildings lined both sides of the 100 block of E. Maple St. and the north and south sides of the square,

²³ This building was subsequently replaced by the first brick-clad Thomas McDonald Block, which burned in 1888 and was replaced with the current, now greatly altered building located at 105 W. Maple St.

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and more were located along both sides of the 100 block of N. Madison St. as well.²⁴ By 1878, Lancaster had grown to the point that it could be incorporated as a city, which occurred in that same year. In the following year, Lancaster finally achieved a cherished dream when a railroad finally reached the city. The depot and roundhouse (both non-extant) were located two blocks north and one block east of the courthouse square on the 300 block of N. Washington St. The arrival of the railroad gave trade in the city a significant boost but the ones who benefited the most were farmers living in the surrounding area who no longer had to transport their produce to other locales for shipping. The railroad also gave the population of Lancaster a boost as well, which climbed to 1069 in 1880.

The growth that followed was steady and by 1885, Lancaster had a population of 1410. The continued replacement of the city's small frame commercial buildings with larger brick ones also continued throughout the decade and the boundaries of the commercial district expanded somewhat as well, two notable examples being the two-story John Clark Building at 201 W. Maple St. in 1882, which began the enlargement of the district westward down the 200 block of W. Maple St. and the two-story brick annex that was added to the Wright House hotel in 1883 (125-129 N. Madison St.). Neither was an expanding economy the only thing driving new construction in the city. On the night of August 30, 1888, fire destroyed the entire east half of the block that included the east half of the 100 block of W. Maple St. and all the west side of the 100 block of N. Madison St.. This prompted an immediate rebuilding campaign that produced the new buildings 105, 107-109, 115, and 125 W. Maple St. by the end of the year, 126 N. Madison St. the following year, and 144 N. Madison St. by 1896. The fire also produced a revised building ordinance for new commercial buildings in the district that made brick construction mandatory within its boundaries.

New construction on the square continued throughout the 1890s and the first five years of the 1900s as well. By 1905, almost all the original wood buildings in the district had been replaced with larger modern brick ones and the district had assumed the size and form that it retains today. The crowning architectural achievement of this period was, of course, the construction of the new brick Neo-Classical revival style Grant County Courthouse in 1903, which is now listed in the NRHP and is one of Wisconsin's most architecturally impressive county courthouses. Only four additional contributing buildings have been built in the district since that time: the A. J. Schmidt Building at 152 S. Madison St., built in 1917-1918; the Farmer's Telephone Building at 129 E. Maple St., built in 1923; the outstanding Prairie School style Lancaster Municipal Building, built in 1923; and the U. S. Post Office Building at 236 W. Maple St., built in 1938, the last two buildings also listed in the NRHP.

²⁴ *Bird's Eye View of Lancaster, Grant Co., WI.* Madison: J. J. Stoner, 1875. This view also showed two other buildings located on the square that have since been demolished; the stone St. Clements R. C. Church located at 210 W. Cherry St. and built in 1859; and the brick First Congregational Church, located at 201 S. Madison St. and built in 1871.

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Today, remarkably, the district's buildings are largely intact and retain much of their historic appearance, but the functions of these buildings have changed a great deal. The day-to-day retail life of Lancaster has now largely moved off the square into other areas of the city, and the retail activities that are still present are of a different kind than the ones of a century ago. Fortunately for Lancaster, the lack of construction in the downtown core of the city between 1905 and the present has resulted in the retention of most of the historic commercial buildings that were constructed in the district prior to 1938. As a result, much of the city's historic commercial history is visible in all its diversity today. The buildings within the district constitute the still intact historic business district of Lancaster and they bear witness to the way in which it has evolved from the late 1840s to the late 1930s. Besides their significance as the most intact commercial buildings in the city, these buildings have also been occupied by a good proportion of all the commercial enterprises that existed in Lancaster during the period of significance. These enterprises have included hotels, banks, restaurants, hardware stores, general stores, post offices, drugstores, harness makers, grocery stores, and other usages, all of which were once central to the life of Lancaster and the surrounding area. Consequently, the district's contributing resources are believed to be of local significance in the area of Commerce because they constitute the most intact surviving embodiment of the historic period of Lancaster's historic commercial and retail life.

Architecture

The Courthouse Square Historic District also contains an excellent collection of nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial buildings and it is believed to be locally significant under NR Criterion C (Architecture) as a result. The district's resources constitute almost all the surviving buildings within the city that were built specifically for commercial activity prior to 1923 and they also comprise a high percentage of all the buildings that were *ever* constructed for this purpose in Lancaster prior to that time.

Interestingly, the three most important buildings in the district are all public buildings and they are all already listed in the NRHP: the Grant County Courthouse at 126 W. Maple St., built in 1902 and designed by H. C. Koch & Co. of Milwaukee; the Lancaster Municipal Building, at 206 S. Madison St., built in 1922-1923 and designed by the Madison firm of Claude & Starck; and the U.S. Post Office Building at 236 W. Maple St., built in 1938 to a design by the supervising architect of the U.S. Treasury Department, Louis Simon. But if these are the district's most impressive buildings it is its 47 commercial buildings that give the district its prevailing architectural character. Lancaster's excellent collection of mid-to-late nineteenth and early twentieth century masonry construction commercial buildings is arrayed primarily around three sides of the courthouse square and along both sides of the first blocks of N. Madison St. and E. and W. Maple streets that are located just off the square. These

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buildings typically display a good degree of integrity for buildings of this type and they also have a considerable collective importance as an intact ensemble that represents the continuous evolution of the various architectural styles that are associated with commercial buildings in Lancaster from the late 1840s through 1923. All of the 37 contributing buildings in the district are good, representative, largely intact examples of their styles and vernacular forms and they include buildings designed in the Italianate, Queen Anne, Romanesque Revival, Richardsonian Romanesque Revival, Neo-Classical Revival, Twentieth Century Commercial, and Art Moderne styles, and the Commercial Vernacular form. These are all architectural styles and vernacular forms identified in the Architectural Styles study unit of the *Cultural Resource Management Plan* and the buildings in the district display many of the salient characteristics associated with each of these styles and forms.

The earliest buildings in the district that display the characteristics of recognized architectural styles are the ones that are designed in the Italianate style. Surviving Italianate style commercial buildings are quite common in Wisconsin. These buildings are usually two-to-three stories tall and typically have rather elaborate bracketed cornices, flat or shallow-pitched shed roofs, and tall, often segmental or semi-circular-arched windows that are decorated with hoods or pediments. Stone examples and wood frame examples exist but the vast majority of these buildings have main facades faced in brick and most have their other walls made out of brick as well. The district contains several fine representative examples of Italianate style commercial buildings and these are listed below:

Wright House Hotel Annex	125-129 N. Madison St.	1896-1897
John J. Wenzel Building	141 E. Maple St.	1891-1892
Jonathan Phillips Building	151 E. Maple St.	1882-1883
R. B. Showalter Building	125 W. Maple St.	1888

None of these buildings display semi-circular-arched windows, which are more commonly associated with the earliest examples of the Italianate style built in the 1850s and 1860s. One district building that *does* display such windows, however, is an example of a much rarer style. This is the Reed Opera House at 219-223 W. Maple St., built in 1893-1894, whose semi-circular-arched second story windows are arrayed in a continuous, arcade-like fashion that is associated most closely with the Romanesque Revival Style and its contemporary German variant, the "Rundbogenstil" or round-arched style. The Rundbogenstil became popular in Germany in the 1840s and 1850s and a number of German architects who emigrated to America shortly thereafter brought this style with them and designed buildings in this style that were especially popular in cities in Wisconsin that had large German immigrant populations.

The district also has several very good examples of Queen Anne style commercial buildings. The

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Queen Anne style, as used for commercial buildings, was more likely to approximate the appearance of contemporary English models than was the case with residential designs. Wisconsin examples of Queen Anne style commercial buildings are generally from one to three stories tall, have exterior walls which are usually constructed of brick, have either brick or stone trim, feature period revival style ornamentation that is often classical in inspiration but is also sometimes of Tudor Revival style origin, and have exterior elevations that feature bay windows or oriel windows placed above the first floor and/or corner towers that are either full height or treated as oriel bays.

The district contains several fine examples of Queen Anne style commercial buildings including:

Edward H. Hyde Building	217 W. Cherry St.	1900-1901
Edward H. Hyde Building	125 S. Jefferson St.	1894-1895
Lathrop-Bennett Double Block	139 W. Maple St.	1900-1901
Louis Alt Building	205 W. Maple St.	1903-1904

All of these buildings feature second story oriel windows and it is especially interesting that all except for the Lathrop-Bennett Double Block have main facades whose second stories are completely clad in sheets of stamped, galvanized iron, and while the second story of the Lathrop-Bennett block is clad in brick, its one oriel bay is also clad in this material as well.

Most of the buildings in the district, however, do not have specific stylistic features and instead are examples of what is now called the Commercial Vernacular form.

The label "commercial vernacular" is less specific to a visual type than other significant Wisconsin building forms, and can be generally applied to simply-designed commercial buildings of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries. All varieties, if not radically altered, include large retail show windows on the ground story. Upper stories, whether meant to serve business or residential uses, are characterized by simple window openings. Doors to serve ground-story shops and upper stories are simple and, when original, are generally of paneled wood with a single window above. An emphatic cornice with some decorative treatment (compound brick corbelling, wood moldings, or metal friezes, with finials or thick corbels at the ends) and a cornice or I-beam above the storefront are usually the only decorative touches. Simplified period motifs are implied, but without any overt stylistic character. Frequently, vernacular commercial buildings, as other commercial buildings, were partially illuminated on the ground floor by a transom across the facade. The transoms are

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often covered with modern signage. Although there are free-standing vernacular commercial buildings, many are joined by party walls into continuous commercial streetscapes.²⁵

As knowledge of this form increases it is probable that it will be subdivided into smaller, more descriptive categories. Until then, such buildings are, of necessity, thrown together in a somewhat undifferentiated way. Currently, the form includes many buildings which appear to share slight stylistic identities but that do not yet merit a stylistic category of their own. For now, examples of the form can be roughly differentiated from one another on the basis of their date of construction. Generally speaking, nineteenth century examples of the form grow taller as the century progresses and they are generally narrower than their early twentieth century counterparts and are somewhat more elaborately decorated. Early examples are also very much orientated toward a single street front, even when they are placed on corner lots, and decoration tends to be limited to the principal facade. Early twentieth century examples, on the other hand, are often broader and shorter than nineteenth century equivalents and frequently display some period revival style elements. Examples built on corner lots also are more likely to be designed in such a way that both the main facades are accorded a similar status and decoration is often employed on both of the principal facades.

The district contains 21 contributing examples of the Commercial Vernacular form, which is 62 percent of the total number of contributing buildings in the district that are not already listed in the NRHP. Many of these buildings are modest in terms of their design but even these are of significance to the district as representative, largely intact examples of this form. Several others, however, are of considerable interest because of their size and their prominent sites. The oldest of these and also the largest is the Wright house Hotel and its later wing. The three-story-tall Wright House was built at 102 N. Madison St. in 1868 and its two-story addition was built in 1883. Also notable is the John G. Clark Building at 201 W. Maple St., built in 1882-1883. Other notable but smaller examples are:

M. M. Ziegler Double Block	126-132 S. Madison St.	1868
Stone & Hassell Building	115 W. Maple St.	1888
R. B. Showalter Building	125 W. Maple St.	1888
George Reynolds Building	227 W. Maple St.	1892

²⁵ Wyatt, Barbara (Ed.). Op. Cit., Vol. 2, p. 3-10.

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Architects

Researching commercial buildings constructed in Wisconsin's smaller cities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries seldom produces the identities of the designers and/or builders of the buildings found in the state's historic downtowns. Unfortunately, this was also true of most of the buildings within the Courthouse Square Historic District, the only identified architects being those associated with the three buildings that are already listed in the NRHP. Nevertheless, at least one of the builders has been identified and the following is a summary of the information available about him.

Henry Muesse

Henry Muesse was born in Prussia in 1836 and he and his family emigrated to the United States and to Philadelphia in 1848. In Philadelphia he learned the trade of carpenter and joiner and subsequently came to Wisconsin in 1855 and to Lancaster the same year. In the years that followed he practiced his trade and also established a lumber business in the city and would eventually be described as "for many years the leading contractor and builder..." of Lancaster. He married in 1860, was joined in Lancaster by his brother, George Muesse, in 1870, and he headed his firm until retiring in 1895.²⁶ During his career in Lancaster he was credited as the builder of a number of buildings in the district including:

John Clark Building	201 W. Maple St.	1882-1883
Thomas McDonald Building	105 W. Maple St.	1888
State Bank Building	108 S. Madison St.	1888
Muesse & Brooker Building	137 S. Jefferson St.	1894-1895

In addition, Muesse also built the Jeide-Carthew Building at 138 S. Madison St. in 1895-1896 when in association with a builder named Hugh in the firm of Hugh & Muesse.

In summary, the 37 contributing buildings in the Courthouse Square Historic District are considered to be of local architectural significance (NRHP Criterion C) because they are good, representative examples of the architectural styles and vernacular form designs that prevailed in Wisconsin and in Lancaster and this significance is enhanced by their largely intact state. These buildings are also considered to be of architectural significance collectively because they together form the still largely intact historic

²⁶ Taylor, Mary. Op. Cit., p. 66.

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downtown commercial core of the city of Lancaster and represent a large percentage of all the buildings that were ever built in Lancaster to house the commercial needs of the city and the surrounding territory.

Preservation Activity:

The City of Lancaster's Historic Preservation Commission applied for subgrant funds through the Wisconsin Historical Society to have this nomination prepared.

Archeological Potential:

The extent of any archeological remains within the district is conjectural at this time. Most of the district's buildings replaced earlier commercial buildings located on the same sites, and it is likely that the later construction activities seriously compromised any remnants of earlier buildings. It is possible, however, that some archeological remains from these earlier buildings may still be extant.

No information about possible prehistoric remains in this area was found during the course of this research. It is likely, however, that any remains of pre-European cultures once located within the district would have been greatly disturbed by the building activity associated with the subsequent development of this area.

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Verbal Boundary Description:

All the land in the district is located in the Original Plat of the Village/City of Lancaster. The boundary of the district begins at a point on the W curbline of N. Madison St. that corresponds to the NE corner of the lot associated with 144 N. Madison St. The line then continues W along the N side of said lot to the NW corner, then turns 90° and continues S along the rear lot line of said lot and along the rear lot line of 126 N. Madison St. until reaching the NW corner of the lot associated with 126 N. Madison St. The line then turns 90° and continues W along the N side of the lot associated with 125 N. Jefferson St. to a point on the E curbline of N. Jefferson St. that corresponds to the NW corner of said lot. The line then turns 90° and continues S along said curbline to a point that corresponds to the SW corner of the lot associated with 125 N. Jefferson St., then turns 90° and continues W across N. Jefferson St. to a point on the W curbline, then continues W along the rear lot lines of 201, 205, 219, 227 W. Maple St. to a point that corresponds to the NW corner of the lot associated with 227 W. Maple St. The line then turns 90° and continues S along the W side of the lot associated with 227 W. Maple St. to a point on the N curbline of W. Maple St. that corresponds to the SW corner of said lot, then continues S across W. Maple St. to a point on the S curbline, then turns 90° and continues W along said curbline to a point that corresponds to the NW corner of the intersection of W. Maple St. and Washington St. The line then turns 90° and continues S along the E curbline of S. Washington St. to a point that corresponds to the SW corner of the lot associated with 236 W. Maple St. (U.S. Post Office-NRHP).

The line then turns 90° and continues E along the S side of said lot to a point that corresponds to the SW corner of the lot associated with 111 S. Jefferson St., then turns 90° and continues S along the rear lot lines of 129, 137, and 143 S. Jefferson St. and along the W side of the lot associated with 217 W. Cherry St. until reaching a point on the N curbline of W. Cherry St. that corresponds to the SW corner of said lot. The line then turns 90° and continues E along the N curbline of Cherry St., crossing S. Jefferson St. and continuing E along the N curbline and crossing S. Madison St. to a point on the E curbline of S. Madison St. that corresponds to the SW corner of the intersection of S. Madison St. and E. Cherry St. The line then turns 90° and crosses E. Cherry St. to the SE corner of the intersection, then continues S along the E curbline of said street to the SW corner of the lot associated with 206 S. Madison St. (Lancaster Municipal Building-NRHP). The line then turns 90° and continues E along the S side of said lot to the SE corner, then turns 90° and continues N along the E side of said lot to a point on the S curbline of S. Cherry St. that corresponds to the NE corner of said lot. The line then continues N across S. Cherry St. to a point on the N curbline that corresponds to the SE corner of the lot associated with 152 S. Madison St., then continues N along the rear lot lines of 150, 144, 138, 132, and 126 S. Madison St. until reaching a point on the W side of the alley that bisects the block from N-

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Verbal Boundary Description, Continued:

S that lies directly opposite the SW corner of the lot associated with 129 E. Maple St. The line then turns 90° and continues W across the alley to a point that corresponds to the SW corner of the lot associated with 129 E. Maple St., then continues W along the rear lot lines of 129, 135, 141, and 151 E. Maple St. to a point on the W curblineline of S. Monroe St. that corresponds to the SE corner of the lot associated with 151 E. Maple St. The line then turns 90° and continues N along said curblineline and across S. Monroe St. to a point on the curblineline that corresponds to the NE corner of the lot associated with 150 E. Maple St. The line then turns 90° and continues W along the rear lot lines of 150, 142, and 140 E. Maple St. to the NW corner of the lot associated with 140 E. Maple St., then turns 90° and continues N along the E side of the lot associated with 132 E. Maple St. to its NE corner, then turns 90° and continues W along the rear lot line of said lot and across the alleyway that bisects the block from N to S and continues W along the rear lot line of the lots associated with 120 and 112 E. Maple St. to the NW corner of the lot associated with 112 E. Maple St.. The line then turns 90° and continues N along the E side of the lot associated with 100 N. Madison St. to the NE corner of said lot, then turns 90° and continues W along the W side of said lot to a point on the E curblineline of N. Madison St. that corresponds to the NW corner of said lot. The line then continues W across N. Madison St. to a point on the W curblineline that corresponds to the SE corner of the lot associated with 144 N. Madison St., then turns 90° and continues N along said curblineline to the NE corner of said lot and the Point of Beginning. Said boundaries enclose approximately 12 acres, more or less.

Boundary Justification:

The boundaries of the district enclose all the land that has historically been associated with the district's resources. The district is also clearly differentiated from the areas surrounding it as well. All the surrounding neighborhoods are residential in character and, in addition, the edges that they share with the district have, for the most part, now been altered by the construction of new commercial buildings, churches, and public buildings. In addition, the 100 block of W. Cherry St. that comprises the south side of the Courthouse Square was not included in the district because all of its original historic buildings have now been replaced by modern ones.

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Items a-d are the same for photos 1 - 9.

Photo 1

- a) Lancaster Courthouse Square Historic District
- b) Lancaster, Grant County, WI
- c) Timothy F. Heggland, July 10, 2005
- d) Wisconsin Historical Society
- e) General View with Courthouse, View looking ESE
- f) Photo 1 of 9

Photo 9

- e) 227 W. Maple St., View looking N
- f) Photo 9 of 9

Photo 2

- e) 133 E. Maple St., View looking N
- f) Photo 2 of 9

Photo 3

- e) 100 block N. Madison St. & 100 block E. Maple St., View looking NE
- f) Photo 3 of 9

Photo 4

- e) 125-129 N. Madison St., View looking E
- f) Photo 4 of 9

Photo 5

- e) 141 & 151 E. Maple St., View looking S
- f) Photo 5 of 9

Photo 6

- e) 126 S. Madison St., View looking E
- f) Photo 6 of 9

Photo 7

- e) 150, 152 & 206 S. Madison St., View looking SE
- f) Photo 7 of 9

Photo 8

- e) 200 block of W. Maple St., View looking NW
- f) Photo 8 of 9

**COURTHOUSE SQUARE HISTORIC DISTRICT
LANCASTER, GRANT COUNTY, WISCONSIN**

Legend:

Contributing 
Non-Contributing 

Boundary 
Previously listed 

no scale...

