

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

received JUN 16 1987
date entered JUL 16 1987

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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

1. Name

historic Albert Lea Commercial Historic District

and/or common name same

2. Location

street & number North Broadway Avenue between Water and East Main Streets N/A not for publication

city, town Albert Lea N/A vicinity of

state Minnesota code 22 county Freeborn code 047

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple (see continuation sheets pages 1-6)

street & number N/A

city, town N/A N/A vicinity of state N/A

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds

street & number Freeborn County Courthouse

city, town Albert Lea state Minnesota 56007

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Minnesota Statewide Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1984-85 federal state county local

depository for survey records Minnesota Historical Society - Fort Snelling History Center

city, town St. Paul state Minnesota

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Albert Lea Commercial Historic District stretches for a little over three blocks down Broadway from approximately Water Street on the north to Main Street on the south. Broadway is the main commercial north-south avenue in Albert Lea, and the heart of the central business district. The district includes both sides of Broadway for half a block on the east and west to the alley, with most of the buildings facing Broadway rather than the cross streets.

The buildings within the district are predominantly two stories tall, although there are several three story buildings and one block at the southeast end of the district of predominantly four story buildings. Most of the buildings in the district have red brick facades with rusticated sandstone or molded stone trim. Side and rear walls are usually common cream brick. The architecture of the district reflects styles popular from the 1870s until the mid-1920s. They include: Italianate, late 19th century commercial, Richardsonian, Classical Revival, early 20th century commercial, and Craftsman.

The district contains a total of 48 buildings, of which 42 buildings are contributing and six are non-contributing. The 1903 Albert Lea City Hall is the only building in the district on the National Register. Virtually all buildings in the district have had storefront alterations at the street level, but much of this is reversible, although not all. In general, these buildings are in remarkably original condition above the first story, although several contributing buildings are missing elaborate metal cornices and parapets or have had window changes. The six non-contributing buildings are either post-1940 construction or older buildings with a total loss of integrity. The district has no vacant lots or open green spaces, and the streetscapes present solid storefronts along the sidewalks. New small boulevard trees have been planted between the sidewalk and street curbs in recent years, but they do not obstruct views of the building facades.

The district is distinguished from the surrounding area by solid storefronts, building integrity, and uniformity of materials, mass, height and age. On the north, the district is bounded by parking lots a block south of Fountain Lake. Only one building south of Main Street is in the district. Along Broadway Avenue south of Main, the architectural quality of the commercial buildings falls off sharply and the character of South Broadway reflects strip development. Flanking Broadway, buildings on Newton Street to the east and Washington Street to the west are predominantly one and two stories, dating from after 1900. Within two blocks east and west of Broadway, older residential sections of the city begin.

Individual buildings are listed below from north to south. The address is listed first followed by the historic name (underlined), date of construction, current name (in parentheses), and physical description. Buildings are contributing unless otherwise noted.

(see continuation sheets pages 7-12)

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1874-1928

Builder/Architect various (see Significance Statement)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Albert Lea Commercial Historic District is a large and intact concentration of late nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial structures in southern Minnesota. Significant buildings in the district were constructed between 1874 and 1928, and represent unusually fine examples of early commercial architecture from the Italianate style through the Craftsman style of the late teens and early twenties in this century. Historically, Broadway Avenue encompasses the heart of the retail district, which by 1879, had spread along both sides of Broadway from Water Street on the north to Main Street on the south. Retailers along the avenue are particularly stable, and the businesses have been run by pioneer and leading Albert Lea families for many years. This fact, in large part, accounts for the stability of the downtown and the integrity and quality of the buildings in the district.

Since 1878 when Albert Lea received its city charter from the State Legislature, the city has been a major manufacturing, transportation, jobbing, and retail center for southern Minnesota. Four of its five railroads had division quarters there, with lines radiating out in ten directions. Manufacturing, wholesale groceries, sheet metal businesses, agricultural and housewares manufacturers, dairy products, meat processing, banking houses, and agricultural supply businesses provided an increasingly diversified economy from the 1870s onward. By 1935, over forty wholesale and manufacturing businesses provided over 3,000 jobs in the city. Retail businesses along Broadway Avenue provided goods and services for the city and the surrounding agricultural region.

As early as 1874, the earliest wooden structures along Broadway were being replaced by solid brick structures, a trend that picked up speed during the 1880s. The retail heart of the city along Broadway took on its present appearance by the mid-1920s, but by 1905 the district presented a solid front of brick buildings and thriving businesses. Fires, rather than urban renewal, have shaped much of the present appearance of Broadway. Nine business establishments were destroyed or damaged on the east side of Broadway south of E. William Street in the Spring of 1922. As a result, the city gained two beautiful terra cotta-faced buildings: the Albert Lea State Bank (#31) and the adjacent Henry J. Harm Building (#32), both designed by Minneapolis architects Larson and McLaren. A few years after this fire, the Skinner-Chamberlain Company decided to upgrade their image by erecting a new four story department store on the south end of the block (#35). Another fire in January,

(see continuation sheets pages 13 and 14)

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation sheet - page 15

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 10.5

Quadrangle name Albert Lea East, Minn.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	5	4	7	0	2	2	0	4	8	3	2	9	3	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

1	5	4	7	0	2	2	0	4	8	3	2	8	5	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

1	5	4	7	0	3	4	5	4	8	3	2	6	3	5
Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

1	5	4	7	0	3	4	5	4	8	3	2	9	9	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet - page 16

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Norene A. Roberts, Ph.D.

organization Historical Research, Inc. date 1/30/86

street & number 7800 Tessman Drive telephone (612) 560-4348

city or town Minneapolis state Minnesota 55445

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Nina Archabal

Nina Archabal
title State Historic Preservation Officer date 6/10/87

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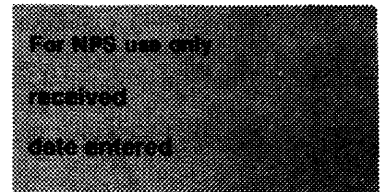
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

J. Andrew Byer
Keeper of the National Register 7-16-87
National Register

Attest: _____ date _____
Chief of Registration

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

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



Albert Lea Commercial Historic District, Albert Lea, Minnesota
Continuation sheet Freeborn County Item number 4

Ownership List:

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| 206 North Broadway | City of Albert Lea
City Center
231 Clark Street
Albert Lea, MN 56007 |
| 202 North Broadway | City of Albert Lea
City Center
231 Clark Street
Albert Lea, MN 56007 |
| 138-148 North Broadway | Leo Carney Post No. 56
American Legion
142 North Broadway
Albert Lea, MN 56007 |
| 132 North Broadway | Bertram Cooper and Company
115 North Newton Avenue
Albert Lea, MN 56007

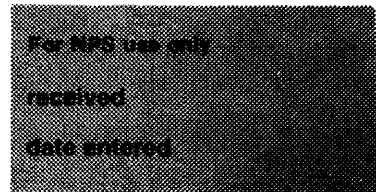
Adrian C. Hestness
130 North Broadway
Albert Lea, MN 56007 |
| 100 North Broadway | Interstate Power Company
100 Main Street
Dubuque, Iowa 52001 |
| 143-147 North Broadway | City of Albert Lea
City Center
231 Clark Street
Albert Lea, MN 56007 |
| 137 North Broadway | Philip D. Stewart
114 North Shore Avenue
Albert Lea, MN 56007

Bob A. Goldman and Craig Nelson
146 West Clark
P.O. Box 1009
Albert Lea, MN 56007 |
| 131-133 North Broadway | David J. Wick
402 South Broadway
Albert Lea, MN 56007 |

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Albert Lea Commercial Historic District, Albert Lea, Minnesota
Continuation sheet Freeborn County Item number 4

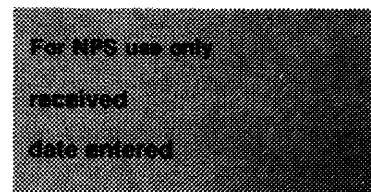


- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 125 North Broadway | David J. Wick
402 South Broadway
Albert Lea, MN 56007 |
| 123 North Broadway | David J. Wick
402 South Broadway
Albert Lea, MN 56007 |
| 121 South Broadway | Robert J. Johnson
1706 Roberts Drive
Albert Lea, MN 56007 |
| 101 North Broadway/
102 West Clark | Darwin and Carolyn Van Riper
107 North Broadway
Albert Lea, MN 56007 |
| 106-110 West Clark | Harvey G. and Ferne E. Johnson
Rt. 1, Box 40B
Clear Lake, MN 55319 |
| 116-120 West Clark | Harvey G. and Fern E. Johnson
Rt. 1, Box 40B
Clear Lake, MN 55319 |
| | Truman Thron
205 South Lane
Albert Lea, MN 56007 |
| 101-105 South Broadway | Gertrude Gordon ET AL
1414 Martin Road
Albert Lea, MN 56007 |
| | Robert F. and Anne M. Dickerman
1815 Brookside Circle
Albert Lea, MN 56007 |
| 115 South Broadway | Ehrhardt Enterprises
P.O. Box 127
Albert Lea, MN 56007 |
| | Eileen and Robert Schmitz
327 2nd St.
Albert Lea, MN 56007 |
| 117-119 South Broadway | Michael G. Felling
Michael's Hair Styling
P.O. Box 209
Albert Lea, MN 56007 |

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121 South Broadway

David J. Wick
402 South Broadway
Albert Lea, MN 56007

127 South Broadway

Allen J. and Virginia L. Rudolph
411 Giles Place
Albert Lea, MN 56007

129 South Broadway

Holger F. Knudsen, Jr. and
Harriet A. Knudsen
Rt. 2
Albert Lea, MN 56007

133 South Broadway

Strand, Hammer, Danielson and Westlund
Certified Public Accountants
135 South Broadway
Albert Lea, MN 56007

137 South Broadway

Arnold Stadheim
215 South Broadway
Albert Lea, MN 56007

139 South Broadway

Niles and Oral I. Shoff
139 South Broadway
Albert Lea, MN 56007

104 South Broadway

Mark S. Jones
Wedge-Jones Building
302 South Broadway
Albert Lea, MN 56007

Leila M. Marlow
Wedge-Jones Building
302 South Broadway
Albert Lea, MN 56007

108 South Broadway

Loren L. and Diane K. Kaiser
1617 Elmwood Terrace
Albert Lea, MN 56007

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112-114 South Broadway

George Ehrhardt, Trustee for
Albert Lea Seed House, ET AL
P.O. Box 127
Albert Lea, MN 56007

Flowers by Curt
112 South Broadway
Albert Lea, MN 56007

Gloria M. Kopet
306 S.E. 20th Street
Austin, MN 55912

118-126 South Broadway

Barbara Mary Mimmack
c/o Donald W. Petran
Box 409
Albert Lea, MN 56007

128 South Broadway

Gary and Marilyn Hillman
1666 South Broadway
Albert Lea, MN 56007

134 South Broadway

John W. and Eileen Guildner
132 South Broadway
Albert Lea, MN 56007

136-138 South Broadway

Corrine S. Astrup
505 22nd Street Northwest
Austin, MN 55912

George Ehrhardt
Rt. 2, Box 90
Albert Lea, MN 56007

201-203 South Broadway

Monica B. Bjorness, Trustee
2222 Pillsbury Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55404

211 South Broadway

Alfred O. Bjorness, Trustee
2222 Pillsbury Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55404

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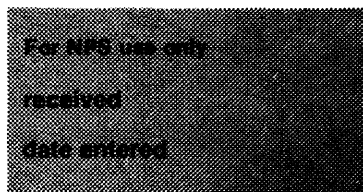
Albert Lea Commercial Historic District, Albert Lea, Minnesota

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215 South Broadway

Arnold Stradheim
215 South Broadway
Albert Lea, MN 56007

L.R. Lilja
c/o R.L. Lilja
10209 Rich Road
Bloomington, MN 55437

223-241 South Broadway

Donald J. Brick
711 Southwest 4th Street
Austin, MN 55912

243-245 South Broadway

Joel L. and Charles J. Upin
244 South Broadway
Albert Lea, MN 56007

107 East Main

Joel L. and Charles J. Upin
244 South Broadway
Albert Lea, MN 56007

208 South Broadway

Kathleen S. Kelly
6221 Contra Costa Road
Oakland, California 84618

202-204 South Broadway

Walgreen Drug
Sterling Shopping Center
Austin, MN 55912

214 South Broadway

Genevieve H. Vollman
Hollandale, MN 56045

Carlyle B. Lageson
Hollandale, MN 56045

216-218 South Broadway

Herbert K. and Barbara C. Anderson, ET UX
1305 Lakeview Blvd.
Albert Lea, MN 56007

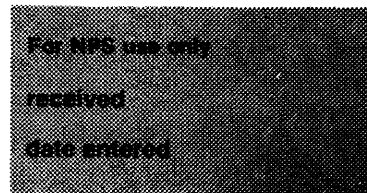
220-222 South Broadway

Albert Lea Art Center
P.O. Box 946
Albert Lea, MN 56007

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228 South Broadway

Barbara Mary Mimmack ET AL
c/o Don Petran
P.O. Box 409
Albert Lea, MN 56007

232 South Broadway

Herbert K. and Barbara C. Anderson
1305 Lakeview Blvd.
Albert Lea, MN 56007

238 South Broadway

Herbert K. and Barbara C. Anderson
1305 Lakeview Blvd.
Albert Lea, MN 56007

242 South Broadway

Americana State Bank
P.O. Box 515
Albert Lea, MN 56009

244 South Broadway

Charles Upin
224 South Broadway
Albert Lea, MN 56007

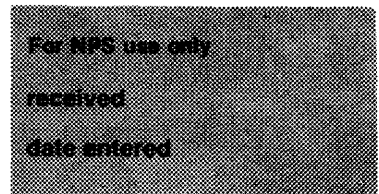
302-308 South Broadway

Mark S. and Mildred S. Jones
Wedge Jones Building
Albert Lea, MN 56007

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East side of N. Broadway north of Clark

1. 206 N. Broadway, Johnson Laundry Co. Building, 1928 (vacant): 2 story, symmetrical facade, brown brick with yellow stone trim; display windows and arched transoms infilled at street level.

2. 202 N. Broadway, Albert Lea City Hall (1903), (old Albert Lea City Hall): Richardsonian-Romanesque; E. F. Warren, Albert Lea architect; low sprung arches on first and second stories; tower removed in 1929. Entered on the National Register: May 17, 1984).

3. 138-148 N. Broadway, Lex Burglund Garage and Auto Showroom, 1923 (American Legion): one story, red wire-faced brick, totally refaced in 1960 with metal and aggregate panels. (Non-contributing.)

4. 132 N. Broadway, Morlea Dairy Building, 1919-1920 (R & R Sports): 2 story, tile brick faced, yellow stone trim; Craftsman style; storefront altered; glass brick infill in second story windows

5. 100 N. Broadway, Southern Minnesota Gas and Electric Co. Building, 1921-22 (Interstate Power Co. Building): 2 story, Classically detailed with pilasters between the bays; heavily detailed cornice; Kasota stone facade; aluminium canopy above 2 street corner facades with infill at transoms.

West side of N. Broadway north of Clark

6. 143-147 N. Broadway, Firemen's Hall and Masonic Lodge, 1909-1910 (Civic Theater; Masonic Temple): 3 story, red brick, stone trim, dentilled brick cornice, 4 bays between brick pilasters; first story arched arcade; renovated in 1980-81.

7. 137 N. Broadway, printing shop, 1913, (Tuveson, Goldman, and Nelson): 2 story, dark red brick with 3 asymmetrical bays, white wood trim at storefront with pent roof awning.

8. 131-133 N. Broadway, Ludvig Olson Tailor Shop, 1899 (Coral Reef Pet Center): 2 story, red brick, dentilled cornice, second story arched windows with keystones; storefront altered.

9. 125 N. Broadway, boot and shoe store, ca. 1886-1891 (Shirley's Attic):
3 story red brick with raised parapet, storefront altered.

10. 123 N. Broadway, furniture store, ca. 1886-1905 (Shirley's Budget Shop): 2 story, red brick, dentilled cornice, segmented arched windows on second story, storefront altered.

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11. 121 N. Broadway, bindery and printers, 1892 (Lori's Boutique for Brides): 2 story, red brick painted beige, dentilled cornice of brick with 2 recessed brick panels below cornice; storefront altered.

12. 101 N. Broadway (also 102 W. Clark), dry goods and grocery store, ca. 1879 (Unique Cleaners; Barber Shop): 2 story, storefront altered on southeast corner with metal canopy; segmented arched brick hood molds with stone keystones on second story with new smaller windows and brick infill up to the hood molds; above windows are recessed brick panels and dentilled cornice. A dentilled brick running course defines the first and second stories.

North side of W.Clark

13. 106-110 W.Clark, drug store and grocery, ca. 1884-1886 (Coast-to-Coast store): 2 story, red brick, arched hood molds of brick, yellow stone sills, dentilled cornice; storefront altered.

14. 116-120 W. Clark, furniture and printing shops, ca. 1923-1925 (Gambles): 2 story, dark red brick, corbelled cornice, continuous stone header and sill course at second story windows; storefront altered.

East side of S. Broadway north of William

15. 101-105 S. Broadway, commercial building, 1946 (Dickerman Appliances): 1 story; newer building with aqua panels in transom area to parapet; storefront altered. (Non-contributing.)

16. 115 S. Broadway, commercial building, 1883; refaced after 1912 (Puff N Stuff): 2 story, dark red brick, newer orange brick from second story window headers to top of cornice, storefront altered.

17. 117-119 S. Broadway, commercial building, 1878; refaced in 1923 (Michael G.): 2 story, Craftsman style; brown wire-faced brick with glazed square tile details at second story window headers and at brick panel above; storefront altered.

18. 121 S. Broadway, paint and wallpaper store, ca. 1883; refaced ca. 1940s after a fire (Sullivan Paint Co. store): 2 story, yellow brick; two new pairs of casement windows on second story; storefront altered.

19. 127 S. Broadway, bakery, ca. 1887 (Xerox) 2 story; red brick with stone header course and four narrow windows on the second story; elaborate metal dentilled cornice with raised parapet and finials; storefront altered.

20. 129 S. Broadway, boot and shoe store, 1893 (Plymouth Shoe Store): 2 story; red brick with stone header course and four narrow windows on the second story; elaborate metal dentilled cornice with raised parapet with date block and finials; storefront altered.

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21. 133 S. Broadway, men's clothing store, 1888 (Hammer, Danielsen, and Westland): 2 story; red brick; three recessed bays each containing a window with segmented arch and stone keystone; panelled and dentilled cornice; storefront altered with grey polished granite panelling and slit windows.

22. 137 S. Broadway, butcher shop, ca. 1880 (Courtly Manor): 2 story, red brick, single bay with 3 arched windows on second story and stone trim; small arched brick pattern at the cornice; storefront altered.

23. 139 S. Broadway, First National Bank, 1902-1903 (Broadway Building; State Farm Insurance): 2 story; tan brick laid to look like stone; Albert Moorman, St. Paul architect; Classical Revival style highly ornamented with fluted 2 story columns, raised basement, swagged frieze, keystones in flat arched windows, ornamented parapet; large circular stone finials removed from parapet.

West side of S. Broadway north of William

24. 104 S. Broadway, Wedge-Spicer Drug Store, 1874 (Sports-in-Store): 2 story, red brick, Italianate with stone trim; round arched second story windows with brick Italianate hood molds; dentilled brick running course above the first story; alterations to cornice and parapet (plain brick) and storefront.

25. 108 S. Broadway, confectionery store, ca. 1905-1918 (Trades Office Products): 2 story, red brick; one bay; continuous rusticated yellow stone header course and sill course at second story ties the windows together; molded metal cornice; storefront altered, wood shingles in transom area over display windows.

26. 112-114 S. Broadway, commercial building, 1925 (Flowers by Curt; The Other Music Store): 2 story, red wire-faced brick; red tile sloping roof at the parapet; running courses above and below the second story windows; one bay; ceramic tile insets with swags above the second story windows; the facade may have been completely rebuilt in 1925 from an older building.

27. 118-126 S. Broadway, Armstrong Block, ca. 1883-1886 (Leuthold's): 2 story, 3 bays; red brick painted yellow; the central bay has one round arched window surmounted by a panel for name or date block. It is flanked by two slightly recessed bays with 3 round-arched windows each; dentilled and corbelled brick cornice; storefront altered; original metal bracketted, dentilled cornice and parapet missing.

28. 128 S. Broadway, Blackmer Building, pre-1884 (Tiger City Sports): 2 story, red brick with stone trim; Italianate; one bay with 4 tall narrow windows with segmented brick arches. Brick piers between the windows have horizontal stone bands; parapet and cornice are highly ornamented with dentils and finials projecting above the parapet.

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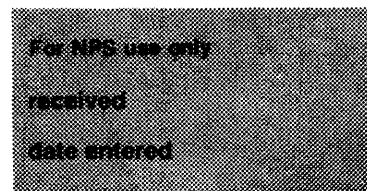
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29. 134 S. Broadway, commercial building, ca. 1880; refaced in 1946 after a fire destroyed much of the structure (LET Electronics/ Radio Shack): 2 story, tan brick, no windows on second story; older building with entirely new facade. (Non-contributing.)

30. 136-148 S. Broadway, Woolworth Building, 1942 (Magnavox; vacant; Bible Book Store): 2 story, 3 storefronts; tan brick, Art Moderne-flavor with recessed brick panels above second story windows. (Non-contributing.)

East side of Broadway north of Main

31. 201-203 S. Broadway, Albert Lea State Bank, 1922 (Associated Insurance Brokers; Medical Arts Building): 4 story, richly ornamented cream-colored terra cotta and marble facade; Larson & McLaren, Minneapolis architects; 4 bays along Broadway and 12 along E. William; symmetrical facade; Classical Revival details include cartouches, medallions, and stylized pilasters; original integrity.

32. 211 S. Broadway, Henry J. Harm Jewelry Store, 1923 (Benson's): 4 story richly ornamented light blue/grey terra cotta; 2 bays; bracketted cornice; Larson & McLaren, Minneapolis architects; new display windows.

33. 215 S. Broadway, Borland Grocers/ Ransom Building, 1923 (Stradheim Jewelers): 2 story; 2 bays; dark brown wire-faced brick; windows altered on second story; metal canopy over first floor.

34. 219 S. Broadway, North Annex to Skinner-Chamberlain Store, 1909, (Gildner's): 4 story, one bay; red brick with rusticated cream-colored stone sills and window heads; corbelled cornice; storefront remodelled in 1950.

35. 223-241 S. Broadway, Skinner-Chamberlain Department Store, 1925 (Breck Furniture); 4 story, red wire-faced brick and terra cotta tile trim of white and green squares; Craftsman and Classical Revival influences; 4 bays between slightly projecting brick piers; white terra cotta cornice; storefront altered with wood infill in transom area over display windows.

36. 243-245 S. Broadway, Upin Building, 1955 (Vacant)
2 story; tan brick and stone trim in horizontal banding at sills and headers of second story windows. (Non-contributing.)

37. 107 E. Main, telephone exchange, ca. 1918 (Vacant) 2 story; red brick painted beige on south and red and yellow on the east facades; parapet and cornice altered; hood molds visible over new smaller second story windows; storefront altered.

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West side of S. Broadway north of Main

38. 202-204 S. Broadway, Wiegand Building, 1892 (Central Walgreen Drugs): Richardsonian Romanesque inspired; C. A. Dunham, Burlington, Iowa, architect; 3 story, dark red brick, cornice and parapet altered and corner tower missing its top; rusticated red sandstone window sills, heads, and banding; storefront altered with metal and new windows; interior remodelled in 1912.

39. 208 S. Broadway, Bessesen Building, ca. 1880-1884; refaced ca. 1915 (Kelly's): 2 story, red brick painted white; 3 bays divided by brick pilasters; dentilled brick cornice and metal raised parapet with finials and name block; storefront altered.

40. 214 S. Broadway, harness shop, 1899, (Anderson's Hallmark): 2 story, yellow brick with brown rusticated stone trim; two second story windows grouped under an ovoid arch of darker sandstone; storefront altered.

41. 216-218 S. Broadway, commercial building, ca. 1899, refaced ca. 1915-20 (Spurgeon's): 2 story; 2 bays with sets of windows in each; brown wire-faced brick with stone trim at headers and above; plain cornice; stone coping; front facade appears to have been refaced ca. 1915-20; storefront altered with diagonal wood infill at transom and new display windows.

42. 220-222 S. Broadway, Beatrice Bessesen Theater Building, 1916 (Rivoli Mini Mall; Braaten Jewelers): French Classical style; Van Kirk and Cederburg, St. Paul, architects; 3 story; red brick, white stone trim; symmetrical facade; three tiered, columned facade topped with a segmental pediment, dentilled freize, and balustrade; storefront altered.

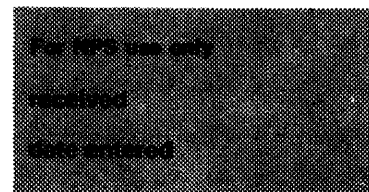
43. 228 S. Broadway, Century Building, 1902 (CBM Computer): 2 story, Classical Revival style; cream-colored brick, one bay; dentilled and bracketted cornice; brick corner quoining; rusticated stone window sills; brickwork around the bay creates reveals and keyed flat arches over the windows; metal balustraded parapet and raised name block missing; storefront altered with wood infill and new glass.

44. 232 S. Broadway, saloon, ca. 1880-1881 (north half of Anderson's LTD): 2 story, red brick, sandstone sills on second story windows; one bay; original 3 second story windows had round arches, but are new windows with brick infill in arches; new brick has replaced original metal cornice and parapet; storefront altered.

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45. 238 S. Broadway, commercial building, ca. 1899 (south half of Anderson's LTD): 3 story, Romanesque style; red brick with cream colored rusticated sill courses and banding; arched arcade formed by second story windows; third story windows form palladian motif with center arched window; panelled and corbelled cornice with center raised parapet; storefront altered.

46. 242 S. Broadway, Walter Thompson Shoe Store, 1890 (vacant) 2 story, Romanesque; red brick with rusticated cream-colored sandstone trim; round-arched windows form an arcade on second story; cornice is formed by panelled small arcade with a small turret at the north end of the front facade; storefront altered with new glass and applied material in 1962.

47. 244 S. Broadway, Syndicate Block, 1888 (St. Paul Clothier): 2 story, red brick; Romanesque style; entire front facade is covered in cedar shakes (in 1971) including the south corner turret, but facade is intact except for parapets and turret roofs removed in 1955; name, date blocks, and all east facing windows intact, but windows infilled with chipboard and insulation. (Non-contributing.)

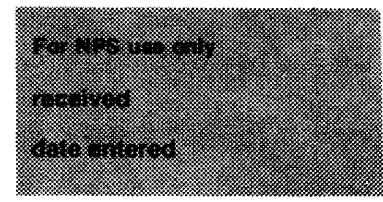
West side of S. Broadway south of Main

48. 302-308 S. Broadway, Wedge-Jones Building/ Lembke Department Store, 1903 (Wallace's): 2 story, 3 bays; red brick; round arched second story windows; running courses of brick; panelled parapet; partially rebuilt after 1908 fire; storefront altered with aluminum fascia and canopy and new display windows.

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1942 destroyed four early buildings at the south end of the 100 block on the west side of Broadway just north of W. William Street. The Woolworth Building (#30) was subsequently erected in 1942. Four years later, the building (#29) immediately to the north of Woolworth's, built around 1880, was partially destroyed by fire and totally refaced to its present appearance in 1946. In fact, several individual buildings in the district have been completely refaced as a way of upgrading or after fires: including the Besessen Building (#39), refaced ca. 1915 after a fire; and commercial buildings on the east side of Broadway in the 100 block (#16, #17, #18).

Architecturally, the outstanding buildings in the district include several early Italianate (#12, 13, 24); Classical Revival and classically-inspired (#5, 23, 34, 42, 43) High Victorian (#19, 20, 28); Romanesque (#2, 6, 45, 46, 47, 48); and 20th Century Commercial (4, 14, 31, 32, 35) styles. Almost all the structures were erected by local contractors, including H. A. Paine; John Hansen; Thomas McCormick; Baker and Baker; and Tapanger and Hansen. Local architects undoubtedly practiced in Albert Lea, but E. F. Warren is the only local architect known to have designed a building in the district in the early years: the 1903 Albert Lea City Hall (#2). Out-of-town architects seem to have fared better in the local press. Beside Larson and McLaren, who designed the 1922 Albert Lea State Bank (#31) and the Henry J. Harm jewelry store building (#32), St. Paul architects Van Kirk and Cedarburg designed the Beatrice Bessesen Theater (#42) in 1916; and C. A. Dunham of Burlington, Iowa is known to have designed the Wiegand Building (#38) in 1892.

Historically, the buildings in the district are associated with some of Albert Lea's leading pioneers and business families: pioneer doctor and Albert Lea mayor in 1885, Albert C. Wedge, the Wedge-Spicer drug store, #24, and the Wedge-Jones Building, #48; Adam Wiegand, businessman and city assessor in the 1890s, the Wiegand Block, #38; the Bessesen family (pioneer jeweler, John, and son Dr. W. A. Bessen), Bessesen Building #39, and the Beatrice Bessesen Theater, #42, named for opera singer and wife of Dr. W. A. Bessesen, Marie Gjertsen Fischer Bessesen; Robert Skinner and W. G. Skinner, pioneer department store owners, #12, #34, and #35; and Henry J. Harm, jeweler (#32) and director of the Albert Lea State Bank (#31). The district has been unusually stable from the standpoint of established businesses with a long history of trading on Broadway Avenue. Among the current businesses, many located in the area for well over 60 years, are: the Sullivan Paint Co. (#18); St. Paul Clothiers (#47); Plymouth Shoe Store (#20); Spurgeon's (#41); Stradheim's (#33); Leuthold's (#27); Guildner's (#34)

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Preservation of the downtown has come naturally to the citizens of Albert Lea. Although storefronts have been altered at street level, the district has remained a vital retail area for the entire region of south central Minnesota. Buildings in the district are largely intact above the ground floor and there is a great deal of pride in the city's history. Unfortunately, the Broadway Avenue Commercial District is now threatened by a large shopping mall, "Northbridge," which will open in the late spring of 1986. In the past few months, several store buildings in the district have lost tenants, and eight major merchants have decided to move to the mall. Several of these are already having going-out-of-business sales, and more may follow. The mall is a major threat to the integrity of the building stock and the commercial vitality of the district.

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Item #10., Geographical Data:

From the NE curb line of Block 8, Original Plat of Albert Lea, 122 ft. W to the west side of the alley; thence, S 1079.4 ft.; thence E 122 ft. along the S side of Lot 4, Block 30; thence, N 143 ft. to the SE curb line of Block 21; thence, E 221 ft. across S. Broadway along the curb line between Block 22 and E. Main; thence N 264 ft. along the west side of the alley in Block 22; thence, W 42 ft. along the N curb line of Block 22; thence, N 409.6 ft. along the west side of the alley in Block 13; thence, W 36 ft. along the N curb line of Block 13; thence, N 138 ft. to a point on the north edge of the alley in Block 9; thence E 100 ft. along the north side of the alley in Block 9; thence, N 245.25 ft.; thence, W 132.25 ft.; thence, S 119.25 ft. along the E curb line of Block 9; thence W 99 ft. across N. Broadway to the place of beginning.

Albert Lea Commercial Historic District

