

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**SENT TO D.C.**

7-24-07

**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 instruction. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name: West Downtown Rockford Historic District

other names/site number:

**2. Location**

street and number: Roughly bounded by Park Avenue, State Street, Church Street, and Wyman Street N/A not for publication

city, town: Rockford

N/A vicinity

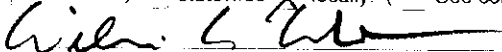
state: Illinois

county: Winnebago County

zip code 61101-1017

**3. State/Federal/Tribal 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

7-16-07  
Date

State or Federal agency or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency or Tribal Government

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other. (explain.)

**5. Classification**

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)		
		Contributing	Noncontributing	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	building(s)			
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	41	3	buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	site	0	0	sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	structure	0	0	structures
	object	0	0	objects
		41	3	Total

Name of related multiple property listing  
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed  
 in the National Register

N/A

4

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade  
 Domestic  
 Industry/Processing/Extraction  
 Recreation And Culture  
 Social  
 Transportation

**Historic Subfunctions**

(Enter subcategories from instructions)

Financial Institution  
 Department Store  
 Business  
 Hotel  
 Communications Facility  
 Theater  
 Clubhouse  
 Civic  
 Road-Related

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade  
 Domestic  
 Industry/Processing/Extraction  
 Recreation And Culture  
 Social  
 Vacant/Not In Use

**Current Subfunctions**

(Enter subcategories from instructions)

Organizational  
 Financial Institution  
 Business  
 Multiple Dwelling  
 Communications Facility  
 Theater  
 Civic

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian  
 Italianate  
 Romanesque  
 Late 19th And 20th Century Revivals  
 Classical Revival  
 Beaux Arts  
 Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival  
 Late 19th And Early 20th Century American Movements  
 Commercial Style  
 Modern Movement  
 Art Deco  
 Moderne

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation      Limestone  
                          Granite  
                          Brick  
 Walls              Terra Cotta  
                          Stone  
                          Brick  
 Roof                Ceramic Tile  
                          Asphalt

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for 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 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

1856-1956

### Significant Dates

1920

### Significant Person

(Complete if criterion B is marked above)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

### Architect/Builder

Burnham, D. H.  
Levin, Edward Paul  
Bradley & Carpenter  
Barloga, Jesse  
Buck, Lawrence  
Clausen, Kruse & Klein

Name of Property  
West Downtown Rockford HD

Winnebago, Illinois

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- 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

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property 16.00

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

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing			
1)	16 327189E	4681742N	3)	16 327250E	4682088N	5)	16 327499E	4681946N
2)	16 327153E	4681910N	4)	16 327397E	4682088N	6)	16 327423E	4681799N

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.)

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title: Victoria Granacki, Principal

organization: Granacki Historic Consultants

date: 1/3/2007

street & number: 1105 W. Chicago Avenue, Suite 201

telephone: (312) 421-1131

city or town: Chicago

state: Illinois

zip code: 60622-5701

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**Additional Documentation**

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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)

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**Property Owner**

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name: Multiple owners

street & number:

telephone:

city or town:

state:

zip code:

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**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 Program Center, National Park Service, 1849 C Street NW, Washington DC 20240; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**West Downtown Rockford  
Rockford, Winnebago County, IL**

**ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION**

**SUMMARY**

The West Downtown Rockford Historic District encompasses that part of the central business district lying on the west bank of the Rock River. The district is comprised of 44 commercial structures within an irregularly shaped area covering approximately \_\_\_\_ acres. The boundaries of the district are roughly Park Street on the north, Wyman Street on the east including two structures on the east side of Wyman Street, an irregular southern boundary which dips below State Street to Elm Street, and Church Street on the west including three structures on the west side of Church Street. Dates of construction cover a wide range, from 1856 through 1985. Of the 41 contributing structures, the largest number (19) was built between 1923 and 1930. They are all masonry, ranging from one to twelve stories, of widely varying sizes and floor plates, and are principally Two-Part Commercial Blocks, a few larger Vertical Blocks, two Theaters, and several special purpose structures. Four vacant lots are interspersed in the district.

**CONTEXT AND SETTING**

The city of Rockford is the county seat of Winnebago County, located in north central Illinois, just south of the Wisconsin border, and is the third largest city in the state. Its population in the 2000 census was 150,115 persons. It is served today by Interstate highway, intercity bus, and commercial air. US Business 20 runs east/west directly through the city from Interstate 90. Criss-crossed by a number of railroad lines built for freight and passenger service that peaked in the 1920s, the city's rail service today is for freight only. The Greater Rockford Airport accommodates limited commercial and charter flights daily.

From its inception in 1834-1835, Rockford began as two settlements, one on the east side and one on the west side of the Rock River. The decision in 1839 to locate the Winnebago County Courthouse on the west side, and in 1851 to build a dam and an industrial Water Power District on the west side just to the south, solidified the growth of West Downtown. Throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, each side of the river developed with its own tight cluster of commercial buildings filling several contiguous blocks, but by the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, West Downtown had become the city's retail center. A building boom in the 1920s added "skyscrapers" and theaters to the mix. Today the West

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Downtown Rockford Historic District contains a core of remaining commercial structures that represent many facets of the community's commercial growth and development from 1856 through 1985, with a particularly strong emphasis on 1920s design and construction.

**THE DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL DISTRICT**

The West Downtown Rockford Historic District consists of an irregularly bounded area comprised of ten full blocks and portions of five other blocks. Of the 48 properties, 44 have structures and four are vacant lots. 41 of the structures, or 93%, are contributing to the character of the West Downtown Rockford Historic District. The three non-contributing structures have all been built since 1960.

The historic district is wholly commercial in character with most structures originally constructed for business and commercial functions. 80% (35) of the structures were built for commerce/trade uses. That includes 30 for general business purposes, three department stores, and two financial institutions. There are three structures that were built for domestic purposes as hotels and two that were built for recreational/cultural purposes as theaters. Of the remaining four structures, there is one each of the following types: social/clubhouse, social/civic building, communications facility, and transportation/parking garage.

West Downtown Rockford developed as the business, financial, and retail hub of a smaller, but regionally important city. Its commercial core was densely built up on several parallel surrounding streets, with the intersection of West State Street and Main Street as its nexus. The north/south address numbering system for Main Street begins at zero at State Street. The tallest and densest structures cluster around this intersection, while those fanning out on adjacent streets such as Church, Mulberry, Jefferson, and Wyman are generally lower in height. The Winnebago County Courthouse complex is located just outside the district to the south and west, and the Metro Centre, a newer convention center is directly south. The railroad station is located several blocks farther to the south although there is no longer passenger rail service to Rockford. The Rock River has a generally north/south alignment along the eastern edge

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of the district, behind Wyman Street. Bridges span the Rock River at Jefferson and State Streets within the district, and also on Chestnut Street, one block south of the southern boundary of the district.

The commercial district is situated on an orthogonal street grid pattern with a north/south and east/west orientation. The blocks were platted in squares, with alleys running mostly north/south. The exceptions are the blocks between Main Street and Wyman Street, which are only half as wide as the other blocks. Those blocks on the east side of Wyman back up to the Rock River with an irregular edge. Streets are 66 feet wide with curb and gutter and sidewalks on all sides. There are street trees in tree pits near the curb on most streets in the downtown area. Main Street itself is a pedestrian mall on the block between Elm and State streets and on the block between State and Mulberry streets. It is paved and has trees and planter beds. Almost all commercial buildings are built up to the front property lines, creating a solid streetwall. There are just a few exceptions. Memorial Hall is sited in the middle of the block with a wide grassy lawn on both the Main and Wyman Street sides. The American Insurance Company Building is set back slightly from the property lines on Main Street and Jefferson Street and there are small strips of grass in front. There are very few curb cuts in the district, except for the parking garage at 102 N. Main Street and the parking lot at 201 N. Main Street.

The commercial buildings in West Downtown are all masonry construction, in brick, stone, or terra cotta-faced, and range from one to twelve stories in height. The majority of structures (28) are One or Two-Part Commercial Blocks, a building type (described more fully in Section 8) in which the façade has storefronts at the ground floor and may or may not have upper floors clearly divided in massing and function from the ground floor. There are 23 Two-Part Commercial Blocks and five One-Part Commercial Blocks in the district and they vary in width from a single 25-foot lot to larger structures as much as a half-block wide. The next most numerous types are Vertical Blocks, commercial structures that are five or more stories high and whose facades are divided visually into two or three parts. There are six Vertical Blocks in the district, of which four are Two-Part and two are Three-Part. Other commercial types include Office Blocks (3), Temple Front (1), Arcaded Block (1), and Enframed Block (1). There are also two Theaters with adjacent Commercial Blocks, and one Club House.



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There are just four 19<sup>th</sup> century structures in the district, the Chick Hotel from 1856, two Commercial Blocks from the 1880s, and one Commercial Block from the 1890s. Two of the Commercial Blocks are clearly Romanesque Revival in their stylistic details, while the other one and the Hotel have Italianate features. Most structures in the district date from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the decade of the 1920s by far having the greatest number – 25 structures or 57% of the total were built between 1920 and 1930. Eight of these are Art Deco in styling -- a modern, geometric-based style that often employed decorative, multi-colored terra cotta and stylized sculptural panels. One other 1920s structure – the Coronado Theater -- is Spanish Colonial Revival, an exuberantly expressive style typical of the movie palace era. In addition, there are three structures from the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and four from the second decade. This period tends to display buildings whose design features were classically influenced, whether Classical Revival or Beaux Arts. After the prosperous 1920s, construction ground to a halt and there were just five structures built between 1937 and 1953. Three of them were designed in the progressive Art Moderne style. There are three non-historic structures in the district, built in 1961, 1984 and 1985.

**OVERALL INTEGRITY**

Most alterations to historic buildings within the district involve first-floor storefront material and configuration changes, which is a typical condition in commercial buildings that have had various uses over the years. Upper-story changes are generally window replacements in original openings, or in a few cases, window openings that have been filled in with solid material. A few historic buildings from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century were modernized in the 1920s and those changes are now considered historic. Only two structures were built after the period of significance, an office block in 1961, and a parking structure in 1984. There are four vacant lots interspersed throughout the district, one of which is a parking lot.

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**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

**SUMMARY**

The West Downtown Rockford Historic District is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places locally under Criterion A for history for its association with commercial and business development between 1856 and 1956 in Rockford, and also under Criterion C for its architecture and commercial building types. Rockford was for many years the second largest city in the State of Illinois, and West Downtown was its major commercial, financial, and retail hub, containing department stores, financial institutions, theaters, and professional offices of all kinds. The architecture found in the district represents 100 years of building and development, with examples of many architectural styles and commercial types designed by prominent local as well as Chicago architectural firms.

**HISTORY OF DOWNTOWN ROCKFORD**

Rockford began as two settlements: Kentville on the west side of the Rock River founded by Germanicus Kent in 1834, and Haightsville on the east side of the Rock River founded by Daniel Shaw Haight in 1835. Rivalry between the two men and the two sides of town began almost immediately. In the spring after his arrival, Kent built a dam, race, and sawmill at the mouth of what would be known as Kent Creek. He opened a general store, a blacksmith shop, a private bank and mail system in the town he called Midway because it was located halfway between Galena and Chicago. Haight built a cabin on his side of the river, and then a store and hotel in the vicinity of what is now the intersection of State and Madison streets. His settlement soon became a trading center and the first ferry opened in 1836 to cross the river.

In 1836 Kent hired County Surveyor Don Alonzo Spaulding to survey four streets parallel to the Rock River, part of which are in this historic district. A few months later, Haight called the same surveyor for the east side. Unfortunately certain land contours

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and conditions on the east side would not permit the alignment of those streets with the west side plat. Nor would Kent agree to permit minor changes on his side to facilitate continuity of the two street grids. As a result, to this day streets on the east and west sides of Downtown Rockford are not parallel, and the three downtown bridges built across the river to connect them, jog to make the crossing. The two villages cooperated sufficiently to combine as Rock Ford in 1837 and to officially incorporate in 1839. Daniel Haight was chosen as the first president of the village board.

In those early years most businesses located on the Haightsville, or east side of the river. By 1838 there were two tailors, a saloon, blacksmith, drugstore, bakery and hotel on the east side as well as many cabins. On the west side most buildings centered around Kent's sawmill. The arrival of stagecoach service between Rockford and Chicago in 1838 prompted the construction of three new hotels, one on the east side and two on the west side. The fledgling community's first City Hall located on the east side, but the west side got a development boost when the Winnebago County seat was established in Rockford in 1839. Although Haight set aside an east side block of land for the courthouse, no public money was appropriated for construction. Within the next few years, westsiders donated a site and raised the money to build a courtroom and jail on the block bounded by West State, Elm, Church, and Court streets. Subsequent courthouses have all been built on that block, just outside the southwest corner of the West Downtown district boundary.

In the late 1830s and early 1840s, leadership in Rockford began to pass from Kent and Haight to the growing community of bankers and businessmen. Both men left Rockford -- Kent in 1844 and Haight a few years later.

By 1843 formal steps were taken to harness the waterpower of the Rock River by an act of the Illinois General Assembly creating the Rockford Hydraulic and Manufacturing Company. This spot along the Rock was particularly attractive because it was narrow enough to span within the limits of then current technology, yet wide enough to permit construction of more than one industrial building. Business leaders formed the Rockford Water Power Company in 1851, and pooled their resources to dam the Rock River and create a Waterpower District. The first permanent dam and millrace were built along Wyman Street just south of West Downtown on the west bank of the Rock River. The

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Manny Reaper Company was the first to open in 1853 and small textile mills and metal-fabricating plants of many types began to cluster here. Soon loft and factory structures were lined in tight rows alternating with the millraces that supplied the necessary hydropower.

Rail arrived in Rockford at the same time as waterpower, making a potent combination. The Galena & Chicago Union Railroad was the first to establish a line through town in 1853, and was the first railroad to cross the Rock River. With the availability of hydroelectric power and rail connections, Rockford entered a period of decisive growth. By the 1860s, the city of Rockford was a booming mill town whose foundries, machine shops, and planing mills turned out farm implements, carriages and even windmills. After the Galena line arrived, there were many other railroad proposals to connect Rockford with other northern and downstate Illinois cities, to Wisconsin and to St. Louis. Among the rail lines were the Illinois Central, Chicago and Northwestern, Chicago, Burlington and Quincy, and Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific.

Since Rockford's early settlements spanned the Rock River, crossing the river was important from its inception. The first bridge, a wooden span over the Rock River at State Street, opened to foot traffic in 1845, and replaced the ferry service that had been the only means of crossing up until then. It was seriously damaged by a break in a dam to the north and was in turn replaced by a covered bridge in 1854. The new bridge, with its two lanes of traffic, pedestrian walks, and weather protection, was to serve the burgeoning community for only 17 years.

By the time Rockford incorporated as a city in 1852, its growth on both sides of the river was assured. The eastside population at the time was 680 with 151 houses while the westside was close with 598 people and 126 houses. Municipal utilities were provided to the community in the following decades. The Rockford Gas Light and Coke Company was the first. Chartered in 1855, it built a gas plant in West Downtown where the public library now sits. As a result there were new gas streetlights in 1856 and gaslights to serve businesses in 1857. The telegraph reached Rockford in 1855. Educational advancements were also initiated with the first general taxation for public schools in 1855. The first public reading room was also opened that year, followed by fundraising of \$6000 in 1857-58 for a library of 1000 volumes.

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To keep pace, Rockford's businessmen on both sides of the river began replacing older frame buildings with more substantial brick structures. Historic 19<sup>th</sup> century photos show narrow, two and three story Italianate commercial blocks densely lining downtown streets, particularly north and south West Main Street, State Street, and Church Street. One of these structures survives in West Downtown, the 1856 Chick Hotel at 123 S. Main Street. Originally built as the home of the Rockford Insurance Company in 1857 by Dr. R. P. Lane and Rockford bankers Thomas D. Robertson and Charles H. Spafford, it was remodeled into a hotel in 1874. Early names for the hotel were the Edwards House and the Griggs House, but the longest hotel operation was under the proprietorship of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Chick (wife, Lena K.), from 1888 through 1923. English-born Mr. Chick was former a railroader with the Chicago & Northwestern railway and a miller in Rockford and Janesville who retired at age 41 to start his hotel. He and his wife were also active in many Rockford social and civic organizations.

At the time of the hotel's sale to John A. Saye of Milwaukee, the September 1, 1923 *Rockford Republic* reported: "Since it was established 35 years ago by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Chick, the Chick Hotel has become a hostelry of more than local reputation. It has housed during its day many of the leading figures in national and state public and official life. Governor John P. Altgeld, while chief executive of Illinois, stayed at the hotel several times while on speaking tours through this section. Many men prominent in the present day life of Rockford lived at the hotel during their younger days. During the war [World War I] the hotel housed thousands of Camp Grant soldiers and relatives and friends who came to Rockford to visit them."

The onslaught of the Civil War halted construction and attention to local civic improvements. But as the nation recovered in the late 1860s, so did Rockford. In 1871 an iron bridge was built to replace the old wooden State Street bridge. In 1874 a municipal water department was created and a pumping station was built. And in 1879 the first telephone exchange was established with 60 phones installed.

Swedish immigration to Rockford, which had begun as early as the 1840s and 1850s, accelerated due to the 1867-1869 famine in Sweden. Swedes settled primarily in residential neighborhoods on the east side. However they founded knitting and furniture factories in industrial districts on both the east and west sides of Rockford. The knitting

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and hosiery industry in Rockford began with a Swede, John Nelson, who came to Rockford in 1852, and invented with William Burson a fully automated machine to knit a "Seamless Sock." They eventually built the Burson Knitting building on south Main Street just outside the southern boundary of the district. The first furniture maker, Forest City Furniture Company, was started in 1874 on the east side, with its Swedish offspring, Union Furniture Company in 1876. These enterprises spawned Rockford's furniture industry. In 1879, 45 Swedish workers financed the construction of the Central Furniture Company located on the west side in the Water Power district just south of West Downtown.

As the 1880s approached, Rockford's growth resumed as new commercial construction revived in West Downtown and public infrastructure improvements kept apace. Streetcars began operating with the organization of the Rockford Street Railway Company in 1880. The first line began on the east side at the intersection of Fourth Street and Fourth Avenue. It traveled west along State Street, crossed the river and continued right through the center of West Downtown to Main Street, and then turned down South Main to Montague Street to serve the Water Power. Horse-drawn cars were replaced by electrically-powered streetcars in 1889. Interurban service later became available with the Rockford and Belvidere Electric Railway Company linking Rockford to Belvidere and Freeport in Illinois, and Beloit and Janesville in Wisconsin. The system carried 600,000 passengers a year in the early 1900s. The expanding rail network allowed residential neighborhoods to develop away from the center, while the hub remained downtown in the heart of Rockford's retail and financial community.

Rockford Electric Light and Power Company had gotten its first franchise for electrical service on the west side in 1883 and began providing lighting to businesses and then homes. About this same time, streets were paved, sewers were installed and schools were added. Population exploded, growing from 13,219 in 1880 to 23,594 in 1890, and 31,031 in 1900.

The heart of Rockford's business district by the 1880s was West State Street and Main Street where some of the city's most prominent and enduring retailers were located. The southwest corner was known as Porter's Corner, where John R. Porter operated a drug store that was to bear his name for over 100 years from 1859-1965. At first in an

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older building on the site, the drugstore relocated to the new five-story Art Deco block built in its place by S. S. Ruttenberg in 1929, which still stands today. The southeast corner housed the Second National Bank Building in a three-story Italianate structure with a corner entrance. The bank operated at that site from 1855 until 1896. The structure was demolished in 1905 to make way for the seven-story Rockford National Bank Building, which with an additional four stories from 1922, still stands today. Across State Street to the north, stood another 1870s Italianate structure, the Samuel Stern Block that housed the C. F. Henry Clothing Company until its move north a few doors into the C. F. Henry Block (1896-1983). The original structure remains today behind a 1920s Art Deco remodeling. On the northwest corner, Andrew Ashton ran Ashton's Dry Goods, another century-long Rockford stalwart from 1878 to 1974, also operating under the names, Rockford Dry Goods, and Rockford Store. The six-story "skyscraper" Ashton built to house the store in 1904 stood on this site until it was demolished for a parking deck in 1984.

The building still standing today that best represents the 1880s-1890s period of commercial development in West Downtown is the D. J. Stewart and Company building just down the block on South Main Street. The venerable Rockford Department Store was started by Charles W. Brown in 1866 in the Holland House, a hotel at 206 South Main Street. Duncan James Stewart later became Brown's partner. After Brown's retirement, Stewart renamed the company and moved to 113-117 S. Main in 1893 where he built an impressive four-story Romanesque Revival structure. Stewarts Department Store eventually expanded north in 1959 into the corner structure, adding 7000 square feet and giving the store a second entrance on State Street. The more than 100-year old establishment, with over 90 years at this location, closed its doors in 1985. The 1893 Romanesque Revival structure and the adjoining 1929 Art Deco structure have since been preserved and remodeled on the interior into Stewart Square.

Besides the Stewart Building, two other important commercial blocks from the 1880s period in West Downtown remain standing today. Around the corner at 316 W. State Street is a distinctive c.1885 Romanesque Revival block that is the sole survivor of a dense strip of storefronts that once included the Hotel Leonard. In the late 1880s and early 1890s it housed a grain and flour business. The other is the Italianate corner block at 201 W. State Street, built c.1880, which later housed the Elisha L. Thayer & Brother

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Company, a jewelry and optical business established in 1896. Located at the northwest corner of West State Street and Wyman, this intersection was known in the 1920s as "transfer corner" for the 800 streetcars that crossed here daily, where riders could transfer to and from the east side.

Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, downtown Rockford got its second bridge spanning west and east. In 1891-92, the old State Street bridge was dismantled and floated downriver where it was installed on new piers at Walnut/Chestnut streets. Then a new "Girder" bridge was built at State Street and paved with wooden blocks to match the paving of east and west State Streets and South Main Street. This bridge stood until 1949.

Unfortunately, the nationwide Panic of 1893 halted the city's further development until after 1900. Within one day during that year, 26 factories went into receivership, furniture cooperatives closed, and two hundred houses under construction were left unfinished.

As the new century dawned, the east and west sides of downtown Rockford took diverging paths. While West Downtown continued to regenerate for the next 30 years with new, larger commercial construction, the commercial face of east downtown changed very little. West Downtown began to emerge as the heart of Rockford's business, financial, and retail community. The 1905 Rockford Trust Building by famed Chicago architect, Daniel Burnham, together with the 1904 Ashton Block diagonally across the street, gave Rockford its first examples of turn of the century Chicago School commercial architecture. West Downtown was not only expanding up it was expanding out as well. A few blocks north, on a former residential site at the northwest corner of State Street and Jefferson (then Peach Street), the American Insurance Company built its elegant, freestanding Beaux Arts office building at 304 N. Main Street. The west side of the 200 block of North Main, with a large church and a few residential properties, and the residential east side of the 300 block of North Main, would not fill in with commercial structures until the 1920s building boom gripped the city.

At about the same time in West Downtown, the Classical Revival Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall was built at 211 N. Main Street (1903), and a Carnegie Library nearby on Wyman Street (1904). The idea for a monument to honor the memory of Winnebago



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County veterans was first proposed in 1875. It wasn't until 1901 that the Winnebago County Board of Supervisors voted to use local funds for the project. President Theodore Roosevelt spoke from the front steps in an elaborate dedication ceremony on June 3, 1903. At the time it was the first war memorial dedicated to veterans of all wars, not just of a particular conflict.

In the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Rockford's population more than doubled from 31,051 to 65,651. It was stimulated by immigration, a healthy industrial economy, and Camp Grant, a huge military installation on the southeast side of the city. Established in 1917 as a training center for the US Army, thousands of enlisted men being prepared for battle in World War I were housed in rows of barracks on a site that contained 1100 buildings. In July 1918, the camp had 50,000 soldiers. In their free time, these men supported the restaurants, barbershops, movies, and other commercial establishments of West Downtown. The Grand Opera on Wyman Street began offering burlesque shows to meet their demand for entertainment. Although activity at the Camp slowed after the First World War, the facility continued as a National Guard Camp from 1923 until it was reactivated for wartime training for World War II in 1940. The Camp was finally dismantled in the mid-1940s and redeveloped for Rockford's airport.

As in many other parts of the nation, the 1920s ushered in an unprecedented building boom in Rockford, and West Downtown was a particular beneficiary. Commercial building continued the pattern established at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Within the built-up core of West Downtown, buildings were expanded, and smaller, older structures were demolished for taller buildings with larger footprints. Other older structures were simply modernized by refacing in the style and materials of the period. On the fringes where large non-commercial or residential parcels remained, new commercial blocks, both large and small with storefronts, increased and intensified the retail, financial, and business functions of the district. Many of these structures remain standing today as sentinels to the vitality of West Downtown at mid-century. It was also during the 1920s that downtown Rockford got its third bridge in 1926, crossing the river at Jefferson Street.

One of West Downtown's most architecturally important structures, the Rockford Trust Building at 206 W. State Street, was increased in floor space in 1922 by removing the

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existing cornice, adding four floors, and rebuilding a new cornice at the top. The first floor of this building was the home of the Rockford National Bank from May 1907 until it suspended operations and went into receivership in 1932. Over the years the upper floors were home to a variety of doctors, dentists, lawyers, insurance companies and investment firms. During World War II the Selective Service and the US Office of Price Administration were also located in the building. The structure prevails today in excellent condition, with the offices of the Rockford Ice Hog Hockey Team on the ground floor and a wide mix of office tenants above.

Across Main Street on another of West Downtown's prime sites, Porter's Corner was rebuilt in 1929 with the impressive four-story Art Deco building at 308 W. State Street. The John R. Porter Drug Company moved back into its corner storefront when the building was completed and remained in business at that location for over 100 years. The upper floors housed the Metropolitan Store and then in 1959, the entire building was taken over by an expansion of the D. J. Stewart Department Store. The small, two-story Art Deco storefront next to it on West State Street at one time housed J. C. Penney Department store. Both of these structures are now part of the Stewart Square complex, remodeled in 1987.

West Downtown's tallest building, the Talcott Building at 321 W. State Street, is named for one of Rockford's pioneering manufacturing families. The oldest Wait Talcott came to Rockford in 1854 and was a manufacturer on the Water Power as one of the early associates of John H. Manny in the fabrication of reapers at what was to become the Emerson-Brantingham Company and later the J. I. Case Company. Wait Talcott later served as a state senator and a commissioner of internal revenue under President Abraham Lincoln's administration. His son, William Talcott was one of the founders of the Emerson and Talcott Implement Company. William's son, also named Wait, was president of the Nelson Knitting Company.

William Talcott had purchased the old three-story Armstrong Building on this site, which had originally been built as Masonic Hall by George Haskell in the 1860s. Considered a prime downtown site, the development of the Talcott Building was undertaken by his son, Wait Talcott and completed in 1927. The new development provided yet another department store for the burgeoning West Downtown. The first four floors were

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occupied by the Block and Kuhl Department Store from 1927-1970, and then by Carson Pirie Scott & Company. The upper floors contained various professional offices. At one time, West Downtown was home to eight department and/or variety stores.

Another skyscraper is the Forest City National Bank Building at 401 W. State Street, which replaced several older one-story storefront buildings in 1922-1923. The bank was founded in 1890 and moved from its home in the nearby Sumner Building at 328-330 W. State Street (now demolished) to this site. In 1932 the bank succumbed to the declining economic conditions of the Depression. Other financial institutions have been in the building in the ensuing years, including Central National Bank from 1945-1960, and later Rock River Savings and Loan, Life Savings of America, and TCF Bank. The lower two floors were remodeled in 1961.

Some buildings on prominent locations on West State and on Main Street were redone with new facades to match the popularity of Art Deco styling in the 1920s period. These include the W. T. Grant Building at 203 W. State, and the Samuel Stein Block at 211 W. State Street. 203 W. State Street appears to have been two separate commercial blocks dating from as early as 1887. Their principal façades were completely remodeled into a single structure with an Art Deco design in the 1920s when the W. T. Grant variety store took over the building. Despite changes over the years to the storefronts, the second floor retains its Deco look. Similarly, 211 W. State Street, the Stern Block, also dates from before 1890 but was completely redone in c.1930. This was an early location of C. F. Henry Clothiers before they built their own block at the corner of Mulberry Street. Busch Jewelers were the longest running occupant at 211 W. State Street, from 1932 until 1984. Around the corner, 107 and 109 N. Main Street are small Art Deco blocks both built in 1929 to replace structures of a similar size on each site that had housed a variety of small businesses over the years including a meat market, a barbershop, and an undertaker. These four structures form the Northeast State and Main locally designated historic district, an intact cluster representing the small-scale commercial blocks of the 1920s.

Also in the 1920s, new commercial structures with ground floor storefronts stretched retail and business functions as far north as the 300 block of North Main Street where residences had been located. On the west side of the street, a livery and a residence

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that had been converted to a rooming house were demolished for a One-Part Commercial Block at 120-122 N. Main Street built in 1919 and designed by Peterson & Johnson, and a Two-Part Commercial Block on the southwest corner of Main and Mulberry streets at 134 N. Main Street built in 1928. Across the street to the north, three rowhouses were demolished for another One-Part Commercial Block at 202-204 N. Main Street, and a Two-Part Commercial Block immediately next door at 206 N. Main Street. On the east side of the street a One-Part Commercial Block at 221-223 N. Main Street was squeezed into the lot between Memorial Hall and the Elks Club, also on a former residential property.

The 300 block of North Main Street was principally residential in the 1910s, with the single exception being the American Insurance Company Building on the northwest corner of Main and Jefferson, which was the first commercial structure to invade a solid street of homes in 1904. Immediately to the north, six residential structures were demolished for the Coronado Theater and Two-Part Commercial Block built in 1925-1927 at 312-324 N. Main Street, and immediately adjacent to it, the Liebling Building from 1930 at 330 N. Main Street. On the northeast corner of Main and Jefferson streets, the eight -story Gas and Electric Building was also built in 1930.

The Coronado Theater opened on October 9, 1927, at the height of movie palace development in the US. Although of moderate size with 2440 seats, it was exuberantly designed with elaborate decoration and remains an excellent example of the 1920s movie palace. Known as "Rockford's Wonder Theater," the interior was of the "atmospheric" type, with castle walls, domes, turrets and balconies along the sides of the auditorium that reach up to a gauzy blue sky with twinkling lights. Besides showing motion pictures, the venue was part of the Publix vaudeville circuit. Over the years the Coronado hosted live stage productions with stars such as the Marx Brothers, Bing Crosby, Tallulah Bankhead and Ethel Barrymore. Motion pictures were shown from 1927-1984, including the first "talkie", the 1928 *Jazz Singer*. Its last movie operator, the Kerasotes Theatre Company, donated the structure to the city of Rockford in 1997 and after an \$18 million renovation, it reopened as a performing arts center in 2001.

Filling out the west side of the 300 block of North Main Street is the Leibling Building at 330 N. Main. It was built in 1930 by prolific Rockford developer Max Liebling, an

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Austrian Jewish immigrant. It housed the Jackson Piano Company from 1938 until its purchase by the Smith Charitable Foundation in 1996.

Across the street, the imposing stature of the Gas and Electric Building fills the southern half of the block. When its construction was announced in the *Rockford Register-Republic* on November 9, 1930, it was to have the largest ground floor footprint of any commercial building in the city. The building was just one of three privately financed skyscrapers built downtown between 1931 and 1945 during the Great Depression. It has historic significance as a memorial to the Smith family, who were noted in the *Rockford Register-Gazette* on January 8, 1930 as a "popular and progressive" family who have "played an important part in the upbuilding of this city". Patriarch C. G. Smith founded C. G. Smith and Sons in 1893 to distribute paints, oils, and varnishes. A successor company, Smith Oil and Refining Company, supplied petroleum products for Rockford's metal working industry, its automobile service stations and towboat terminals, and home heating oils. The building was the location of the Central Illinois Electric and Gas Company (which existed from 1861-1966), and its upper floors housed offices for doctors, dentists, and other professionals, and small independent businesses. It was sold to Pioneer Life Insurance in 1987 but following that company's sale to Conseco Inc. in 1997, the entire building was vacated in 2002. It is being redeveloped today as a multi-tenant structure.

During the 1920s, rebuilding was also occurring in West Downtown along the west bank of the river. The *Rockford Morning Star*, which had printed its first newspaper in 1888, moved into the former P. Allen Taft Watch Case Factory at 125-129 N. Wyman Street sometime between 1897 and 1913. When the *Star* merged with the *Register-Gazette* in 1928 it built a new headquarters building at 127 N. Wyman Street on the site of the *Star's* c. 1895 structure. Ironically the *Star* was not to be in its new building for long. In just two years another newspaper merger took place and the *Star* moved to an even bigger building across the river on Water Street. Shortly after, the Pioneer Life Insurance Company moved into the Wyman Street facility where it remained until 1996.

West Downtown also expanded to fill in former residential properties all along Church Street and around the corners on Mulberry and Jefferson. In 1913 both sides of Church Street in the 200 and most of the 300 blocks were filled with homes on relatively large

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lots. By the end of the 1920s, the residential character of Church Street had been largely eroded. The new structures tended to be commercial blocks with storefronts on the ground floor, and when they were two or more stories tall, offices or residential on the upper floors. At 126-132 N. Church Street, the 1920s Hobson Drug Company Building replaced the First Baptist Church. Across the street on the northwest corner of Church and Mulberry, the 160-room Lafayette Hotel was built at 200-204 N. Church Street on the former site of three homes. Opening on June 2, 1927, it also contained Schrom's Lafayette Café and Spanish Tea Room. Once hosting former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt in 1937, it still operates today as "the last of Rockford's red carpet hotels."

Up the street, another large dwelling was replaced with a Commercial Block at 214 N. Church Street in 1928. On the north side of Mulberry between Church and Main Street, the Bliss Building was built at 317-319 W. Mulberry in 1924. It was the home of Bliss Printing through the 1950s and the Mendelssohn Club during the 1930s and 1940s. Another Two Part Commercial Block was built to the east at 305-313 W. Mulberry in c. 1920. All other homes on this street were also demolished and the commercial structures that replaced them have been subsequently demolished as well.

On the east side of Church Street between Mulberry and Jefferson streets, 205-209 N. Church, a typical Commercial Block, replaced a home in 1919. On the northeast corner of Jefferson and Church, 327 W. Jefferson Street, originally built as a public garage, stores, and a printing plant, replaced two homes on very large lots in 1927. The Shell R. Smith Building, another Two-part Commercial Block at 315-325 W. Jefferson replaced two rowhouses at Jefferson and the alley in 1925. An old sign in the rear once indicated this was the home of Black & Company Hardware.

The pattern of commercial structures replacing residential continued into the next block, with the diminutive 321 N. Church Street replacing one narrow home in 1927, and the five-story Haskell Apartments at 327 N. Church Street replacing two pair of rowhouses in 1922-1923. The Haskell Apartment Building was built by Carl O. Johnson, a real estate dealer, and brought high quality urban life to Rockford's West Downtown. Open for occupancy on October 1, 1928, the building featured fully furnished apartments. It operated somewhat like a hotel, with a spacious lobby for tenants and their guests,

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staffed by a building manager and his attendants at a hotel office counter. In a newspaper announcement of the time, proposed ground floor commercial tenants were to include a drug store, delicatessen, millinery store, and beauty parlor, providing convenient services for residents under the same roof. This level of luxurious urban living was not to be repeated in Rockford.

By the end of the decade, the Great Depression set in West Downtown Rockford as it did the rest of the country. The boom years were over and most new construction ceased. The only buildings in the district to be built in the 1930s were the Kress Building, replacing the old Orpheum Theater at 118 N. Main Street in 1937, and the Art Moderne Times Theater and Commercial Block up the street at 222-234 N. Main Street built in the same year. S. H. Kress & Company was a "5 and 10" variety store that operated at its 118 N. Main Street location until 1974. Interestingly, the site has now returned to theater use as the 282-seat New American Theater, remodeled as Rockford's regional playhouse theater in 1986. The Times Theater awaits as fortunate a fate. Although it was partially renovated in 1987 for a dinner theater when some seats on the main floor were removed, it is now vacant and unused.

On the same block, the old Central Union Telephone Company structure built c. 1915 at 216 N. Main Street got a facelift in 1942. Besides these, there was virtually no new construction that would occur in West Downtown until after World War II.

When World War II ended, huge societal forces changed the shopping and business patterns of Americans across the country. Housing was built in unprecedented numbers at the edges of urban areas and new business and retail development followed in dispersed malls and shopping centers. Although Rockford's industrial growth continued unabated throughout the metropolitan region, there was no residual benefit to downtown. General prosperity and the embracing of the automobile propelled the population away from downtown in Rockford as elsewhere. The decline of downtown may also have been accelerated by the decision to locate the I-90 Tollway on the east edge of town, pulling new commercial construction strongly in that direction.

In West Downtown, just a few modern looking buildings went up on scattered sites in the post-war period. The Nu-State Building at 119 N. Church was built in 1950 and the

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Canfield Building at 227-231 N. Church in 1953. Both were built by developer Max Liebling and designed by Edward Lewin. The Nu-State Building was home to Osco Drug Store from 1951-1983. In 1961, Illinois Bell built a tall, almost windowless facility at 211 N. Church Street, the last commercial structure to be built in West Downtown Rockford.

West Downtown's retail sector declined rapidly in the 1960s and 1970s. Beginning in the early 1970s, the manufacturing-dependent economy of Rockford, then Illinois' second largest city, was hit particularly hard. Manufacturing jobs in the county declined from 45 to 34 percent of the total between 1979 and 1987, and were replaced by low paying service sector jobs. In 1982, Rockford's unemployment rate of 19.2 percent was the highest in the nation, and in January 1983 it reached 25.5 percent. As a result, West Downtown faced serious decline. Urban Renewal took its toll, demolishing historic structures in the name of saving them and leaving behind many scattered vacant lots. A pedestrian mall was created around the intersection of State and Main in 1974-1975 but it did not stem the exodus. D. J. Stewart closed its department store in 1978. The historic Ashton Block was demolished for the construction of a parking deck in 1984, the same year State Street was reopened to traffic. In 1986 a task force was created to stabilize downtown and reposition it for business (primarily financial and insurance), government, and entertainment. Today some buildings have been rehabilitated and commercial strength is returning once again to West Downtown Rockford.

East Rockford was designated a historic district in 1979 but its character is distinctly different from West Downtown Rockford. Once co-equal downtowns, East and West Rockford began to take on separate characters at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The east side was long commercially dominant, with its fine collection of mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century structures, but after 1893 most new construction in East Rockford was no taller than two stories. This was in sharp contrast to West Downtown which got its first skyscraper in 1906. Today the East Rockford historic district contains structures built primarily between 1875 and 1910. Its collection of late 19<sup>th</sup> century commercial structures is the best representation of that period in Rockford. Handsome Italianate and Romanesque Revival designs grace East State Street. Besides commercial blocks there are various industrial structures on that side of the river due to the location of railroad access running along the river's edge. They include warehouses, printing facilities, auto service



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garages, and storage. In contrast, West Downtown contains the big, impressive downtown commercial structures, most from the 1920s, that show off the stature once enjoyed by Rockford's business community. Major business, financial, and retailing establishments turned West Downtown into the location for big city commerce while the east side persisted as a community center with City Hall, cultural institutions, and entertainment such as billiards and dance halls. Those divergent roles are still reflected today in the historic structures that stand in each district.

**THE ARCHITECTURE OF WEST DOWNTOWN ROCKFORD**

West Downtown Rockford has a good representation of commercial types and styles reflective of the community's business growth and development over the last 150 years. Several distinctive structures represent the mid- to late-19<sup>th</sup> century, and the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The district is particularly rich in its collection of 1920s-era buildings, reflecting a development boom that replaced many of the narrow, older commercial blocks with larger and taller buildings befitting Rockford's stature as the second largest city in the state. Two theaters of very different styles also remain from the 1920s-1930s. Despite a downtown commercial core that became less dense at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a remarkable range of surviving structures attest to the commercial strength of this historically vibrant manufacturing center.

The commercial building, as a distinct architectural form, did not develop until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, even though trading centers and market halls have been around since antiquity. From the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century until the age of the automobile, most commercial buildings in the United States looked alike, although there might have been slight regional differences. Commercial buildings were typically joined by side party walls with the commercial business on the first floor and offices or residences above. The commercial building, as a form, almost always fits on its entire lot, and is built to the sidewalk.

Commercial buildings characteristically have a storefront on the first floor that has often been remodeled due to changes in architectural fashion, marketing, and technology through the years. Historic storefront configurations usually follow a three-part system of bulkhead at the base, display window, and transom above. Historic display windows are often flush or recessed, with single panes and some sort of subdivision. Entry doors

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are usually centrally placed, off-center, or at the corner and can be either flush or recessed. Historic storefront materials are generally limited to wood or metal, with supporting columns and piers. Decorative storefront elements include molded cornices, column capitals, brackets, canopies, ceramic tile entries, and fascia boards. When a commercial building has more than one story, the entry door to the upper stories of the building is also integrated into the design of the storefront. The upper stories of a commercial building usually reflect some high-style elements, notably found at the cornice, in window treatments, or as applied ornament.

There is limited scholarly work that classifies the various types of commercial buildings that have been constructed in American business districts in the last 150 years. In *The Buildings of Main Street*, one of the few sources, Richard Longstreth has developed a classification system for historic commercial structures built within compact business districts prior to the 1950s. His system uses building mass as the determining factor. He classifies most commercial structures under four stories tall as either One- or Two-Part Commercial Blocks regardless of apparent architectural stylistic elements. The distinction between the two classifications is in whether there is a strong horizontal cornice, stringcourse, or other architectural feature that visually divides the facade into one or two stacked horizontal bands. A One-Part Commercial Block is almost always one-story, while a Two-Part Commercial Block may be two or more stories tall. Most historic commercial buildings fall into one or the other of these two classifications. Generally these types were built before 1950, but occasionally a contemporary commercial structure may be built on an infill parcel on a traditional commercial street. Whether or not they share party walls with the adjacent building, generally only the front of a Commercial Block has any architectural detailing. Such a building is located at the front lot line, along a public sidewalk, and has display windows facing that sidewalk. There are usually no display windows, public entrances, or architectural treatment on the side facades, although occasionally a larger Commercial Block, located on a corner, may have part or all of the side facades treated similarly to the front.

Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, increasing land values in urban areas naturally led to the construction of ever taller commercial buildings in cities like Rockford. This new building form led to the development of new compositional design types in commercial construction that dealt with the verticality of these structures. One of these types is the Two-Part Vertical Block, the most common vertical composition type in the

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district. The type emerged in the later decades of the nineteenth century, when architects of taller buildings attempted to create more unified designs by simplifying the facades and grouping the upper and lower stories into zones. These groupings, especially the upper zones, were to be viewed as a whole, giving further emphasis to the verticality of the structure. The other type is the Three-Part Vertical Block which divides the façade of a tall structure into three compositional parts, analogous to the base, shaft, and capital of a column. These parts are expressed in the ground floor/storefront base of a building, the upper office floors treated as a whole, and the cornice/capital which may or may not incorporate several top floors into an integrated building top.

Longstreth uses a few other massing types, which describe the general composition of a building's façade by the interplay of its solid wall surfaces and window and door openings. Those found in West Downtown include the Temple Front, the Enframed Block and the Arcaded Block. The survey done for this nomination classifies all commercial buildings first by the massing types defined by Longstreth and second by the architectural stylistic features. Finally those non-commercial structures found Downtown have been typed by their general use first, and then their architectural stylistic details second.

Most of the historic buildings in West Downtown Rockford are masonry, One- or Two-Part Commercial Blocks, in a rich variety of architectural styles encompassing a century of commercial development. Several are Vertical Blocks, reflecting Rockford's role as an independent regional city. Amongst the older structures, some stylistic detail is strongly classical, while most is Commercial Style, the name given to design loosely based on simplified classical motifs and employed in much commercial construction of the early 1900s. The 1920s structures display a good sampling of Art Deco and Art Moderne styles. The stylistic features and integrity of many of the older structures are generally very good, although a few building facades have been altered considerably from their original appearance. Few original storefronts remain, a condition typical in Midwestern commercial architecture as changing merchandising requires regular storefront modernization over the years.

**ONE-PART COMMERCIAL BLOCK**

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One-story commercial buildings are almost always One-Part Commercial Blocks. Two or more story Commercial Blocks may be classified as One-Part Commercial Blocks if the facade can be read as a single design element, with no projecting cornice or other strong horizontal design element dividing the first floor from the upper floors. Five commercial buildings have been classified as One-Part Commercial Blocks. They were built between 1919 and 1985.

Historic One-Part Commercial Blocks can lack a great degree of integrity if they have been altered, since it is common to frequently change the storefront details, configuration, and display windows of retail commercial structures. When commercial structures are two or more stories, an older historic character is often still evident on the upper floors. However, when the building is only one story, changing the first-floor storefront may mean substantially altering the entire front facade. The One-Part Commercial Block at 321 N. Church is unusual in retaining its original storefront configuration and materials. A recessed center entry has a wood panel door leading to each of two separate storefronts. Display windows are framed with stone rope molding and the transom is leaded prism glass. Although small in scale, this one-story 1927 structure has distinctive architectural detailing, particularly its stone façade and its ceramic tile mansard roof with stone cornice and other stone trim. Designed by Wybe van der Meer, this structure was included in the Illinois Historic Structures Survey.

Wybe J. van der Meer was born in the province of Friesland in the Netherlands, and immigrated to the United States in his youth. After working in the construction department of the United States Army in World War I, van der Meer established an architectural firm in Rockford in 1919. His first offices were in the Rockford Trust Building in West Downtown. Van der Meer specialized in the design of public and institutional buildings -- Saint Joseph's Hospital in Aurora, Illinois, and Muldoon and Saint Thomas High Schools are among his works. He was a member of the Illinois Society of Architects.

The One-Part Commercial Block at 221-223 N. Main Street also retains excellent integrity. The façade of this 1930 brick structure is divided into three bays separated

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by brick pilasters. The center bay contains two wood and glass panel entry doors with display windows in the outside bays. The stepped front parapet has stone trim and brick corbelling. The building was designed by Bradley and Bradley, a noted Rockford architectural firm.

George Bradley began his career in Rockford in the 1850s, offering design services to the city and surrounding area. Soon after, Bradley expanded his business to include construction materials and opened a sawmill. In 1880, George's son, Charles Wyman Bradley, joined his father in the business. Declining demand for lumber led to the closing of the sawmill, and by 1887 George Bradley & Son had re-invented itself as an architecture and engineering firm, designing the Garrison School in Rockford during this period. Upon George's retirement in 1897, Charles Bradley took over the firm, briefly forming a partnership with Frank A. Carpenter, another local architect, from 1899 to 1904. That partnership designed Memorial Hall (1902-1903) and the Carnegie Library (1910). In 1922, Charles' son Harold Smith Bradley became partner, creating the firm of Bradley & Bradley. The firm continued as a family-owned company until 1998, when Charles MacArthur Bradley (Harold's son) handed ownership of the company to the remaining architects. The firm continues to operate under the name of Bradley & Bradley.

**TWO-PART COMMERCIAL BLOCKS OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY**

The Two-Part Commercial Block is considered the most common type of commercial building in America. Found principally in small and moderate-sized communities between the 1850s and 1950s, the building is always a two- to four-story building characterized by a horizontal division into two clearly separated zones. These zones reflect differences of use on the interior, with the ground-floor level possessing public places such as a store or lobby, and the upper stories having the more private spaces of the building including offices, apartments, or a meeting hall. The upper stories often reflect domestic high style architecture in ornamentation. The Two-Part Commercial Block is the most numerous type found in the district.

The 25 Two-Part Commercial Blocks in the district date from as early as 1856 through 1953. There are two excellent Italianate and two Romanesque Revival

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examples from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and a particularly rich Art Deco style collection from the 1920s.

The oldest commercial structure in the district is the 1856 brick structure at 119-123 S. Main Street known as the Chick House. It is the only surviving remnant of the first wave of masonry commercial construction in West Downtown. Believed to have been built for the Rockford Insurance Company, it was converted to a hotel in 1874, and operated by Thomas Chick, a former railroader and miller, for 35 years from 1888. Rockford Office Supply has been located in the northernmost of three storefronts since at least 1912. The three-story brick structure has tall windows with arched drip molds, and a brick corbelled cornice, characteristic of the Italianate style. The storefronts are not original although the Rockford Office Supply storefront dates from a c.1920s remodeling. This structure was included in the Illinois Historic Structures Survey.

Another noteworthy Italianate Two-Part Commercial Block is the three-story brick corner structure at 201 W. State Street built c. 1880. As recently as 2004 the entire front of the building was sheathed in a windowless metal panel. The State Street façade has since been uncovered and restored to match the Wyman Street façade, with incised stone window hoods and patterned brickwork at both parapets. This structure, together with 203 and 211 W. State Street, and 107 and 109 N. Main Street, comprise the Northeast State and Main local historic district.

Also from the 1880-1890 period are two important examples of the Two-Part Commercial Block with Romanesque Revival stylistic features. One is the narrow red brick structure at 316 W. State Street with prominent corner tower, conical copper roof and battlements. The c. 1885 structure features decorative brickwork and stone stringcourses below and above the second floor windows, and just below the roofline. This building is a rare survivor of the type of commercial block that were once squeezed together and lined the streets of West Downtown in the late-19<sup>th</sup> century. The 1887 Sanborn map indicates that flour and feed were sold here.

The other Romanesque Revival structure in the area is the four-story Stewart Block, built in 1890 at 115 S. Main Street. One of the older designs in the survey area by

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prominent local architect, George Bradley, it originally housed the D. J. Stewart & Company dry goods store and the Rockford Business College on its upper floors. The original storefronts were first renovated in 1958 by projecting the base of the building beyond the upper floor façade, and then the entire building was redeveloped as part of Stewart Square in 1987 with new storefronts. The upper floors, however, retain their original rusticated sandstone, fluted columns and ornamental brackets. The façade is dominated by a large, round-arched window in the center bay of the fourth floor, flanked by triple, round-arched windows on either side. The windows are replacement sash in a historically compatible configuration. Both of these Romanesque Revival structures were included in the Illinois Historic Structures Survey.

**1920s BUILDING BOOM**

The West Downtown district was solidly built up by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with small but densely packed commercial blocks extending along west State Street from the Rock River to Court Street (except for the Courthouse Square on the south side of State Street) and on Main Street, north a block and south two blocks from State. Relatively little new construction occurred on these streets until the 1920s when a downtown building boom brought larger, taller structures and transformed the city. Two-Part Commercial blocks of three and four stories were built during the 1920s, Vertical Blocks as tall as twelve stories, and a variety of special purpose structures.

The Lafayette Hotel at 200-204 N. Church Street is a Two-Part Commercial Block with Classical Revival details. This four-story structure is faced in white terra cotta and stone. The original storefronts remain in place with decorative stonework surrounds. A cornice separates the storefront level from the upper floors where there are low-relief spandrels between windows. The building is topped with a similar cornice. Designed by Edward P. Lewin, the hotel, with its café and tearoom, opened on June 2, 1927.

Edward P. Lewin was born in Chicago, Illinois on July 17, 1895. He attended the Armour Institute of Technology (now Illinois Institute of Technology) for the study of architecture, and is listed in the 1920 Census as an architect. Lewin was a member

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of the Illinois Society of Architects, and maintained offices in the city of Chicago in the 1920s and 1930s -- in 1925 at 307 N. Michigan; in 1931-2 at 1801 S. LaSalle; and in 1938-39 at 134 N. LaSalle.

Amongst the rich number of Art Deco styled commercial blocks in the district, the building at 308 W. State Street is distinctive. Designed by Frank Carpenter and built in 1929 for S. S. Ruttenberg, the four-story brick building housed the Metropolitan Store, was later occupied by an expansion of the D. J. Stewart Company, and is now part of the Stewart Square redevelopment. Upper floor windows are spaced within spandrels that extend above the parapet, emphasizing the building's verticality. Square inset terra cotta panels reinforce the geometric theme.

Frank Carpenter (1874-?) spent his early years in Chicago. He was in partnership with Charles Bradley from 1899 to 1904 when they designed the Soldier's and Sailors Memorial Hall. After that he was in private practice and is listed in the 1925 and 1931-32 directories of the Illinois Society of Architects with an office on Main Street in Rockford, and in the 1938-39 Directory on John Street.

The Liebling Building at 330 N. Main Street is an exceptional use of Art Deco-styled terra cotta ornament on a Two-Part Commercial Block. Another design by Edward Lewin, it was built in 1930. This two-story masonry building has a dark green granite base with cream and pastel colored terra cotta covering the rest of the structure. Several design motifs are repeated across the two facades on Main Street and Park Avenue. Ziggurats are found around the Park Avenue entrance and in the transom windows of each bay and along the parapet. There are dove and shell designs as well as sunburst panels. Ribbed terra cotta surfaces emphasize the verticality of the building.

All three of the above structures were included in the Illinois Historic Structures Survey. The Liebling Building was designated a local landmark in 1997.

**THE THEATER AS PART OF A COMMERCIAL BLOCK**

Two theaters remain in the district from an era when Downtown Rockford was an entertainment center. Both combine a theater with an adjacent Two-Part Commercial



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block. Rockford is fortunate to have both these survivors, each of which showcases a clearly different aesthetic.

The Coronado Theater at 312-324 N. Main Street was designed by Frederic Klein in the Spanish Colonial Revival style and built in 1925-1927. The moderate size theater has an exuberant exterior with all the elaborate ornamentation of the most impressive movie palaces. The front façade of the building has a two-story arched window flanked by smaller multi-light metal casement windows on either side. Fluted Corinthian pilasters mark the window bays. There is a cornice with elaborate frieze topped by a symmetrically curved parapet. A large marquee overhangs the sidewalk, sheltering wood and glass panel entry doors. There is also a tall vertical sign with the name, Coronado. The adjacent Two-Part Commercial Block continues the same multi-light metal casement windows, grouped in fours, with rope molding outlining each bay. Although the storefronts have been changed, the repetition of the window bays and the parapet with inset panels creates a strong image. This structure was individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979. It has been restored as a performing arts center.

The Coronado's architect, Frederic J. Klein, was born in Michigan on June 11, 1874. It is unclear whether Klein formally studied architecture or received a degree. By 1900, however, census records show that he had moved to Peoria and was working as an architect. Klein designed a number of theaters in Illinois and Wisconsin, including the Apollo Theatre and the Madison Theatre in Peoria, the Barrymore Theatre in Madison, Wisconsin; and the Coronado Theatre and Rialto Theatre (demolished) in Rockford. He was a member of the Illinois Society of Architects and had offices in Peoria.

The other theater in the district is the Times, a very different architectural essay in the Art Moderne style. Dating from 1937-38, the theater façade has been inserted into the east façade of a streamlined commercial block. Bands of cream brick exterior walls wrap around the corner of Main and Jefferson streets, with a section of glass block marking the corner storefront. Other second floor windows are replacement double hung sash and storefronts are framed in stainless steel with black glass bulkheads. The theater entry is marked with a projecting V-shaped

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marquee. Behind the marquee, the theater parapet rises above the commercial block in an irregular profile, and is accented with three pilasters around stacks of glass block.

Architects for the theater and commercial block were Edward P. Lewin and A. Eastman. Lewin was responsible for two other moderne structures in the district, 119 N. Church Street and 227-231 N. Church Street, both Two-Part Commercial Blocks from the 1950s, as well as the earlier (1927) Lafayette Hotel and Leibling Building (1930) profiled above. This selection of architectural styles illustrates the virtuosity of Lewin working in very different aesthetics over a long and design-rich career.

The Times Theater was designed a local landmark in 1987 and was included in the Illinois Historic Structures Survey. It was converted to a dinner theater at the time of its designation with some of the seating removed for dining tables. It is currently vacant.

**VERTICAL BLOCK**

What sets West Downtown Rockford apart from suburban Illinois downtowns are its high-rise commercial structures. There are six taller buildings, ranging from five to twelve stories that are classified as Vertical Blocks. As with One and Two-Part Commercial Blocks these may or may not have recognizable stylistic elements applied to the facades.

The Two-Part Vertical Block consists of two major zones. The lower zone is made up of the first one or two stories of the building, and serves as a visual base for the upper zone. Comprised of two or more upper stories, the upper zone is treated as a unified whole, with pilasters or engaged columns often added for further vertical emphasis. There are four examples of the Two-Part Vertical Block in the Rockford downtown district, dating between 1906 and 1961.

Two of Chicago's noted and most prolific commercial architectural firms, D. H. Burnham & Company, and Graham, Anderson, Probst & White, were responsible for the design of Rockford's oldest vertical block at 206 W. State Street. The old Italianate Second

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National Bank building was demolished in 1905 by William F. Woodruff and C. F. Henry for the Rockford Trust Building. At seven stories, it was then the tallest building in the city. The top four stories were added in 1922 by the Graham firm. The first two floors form the base of the building, with storefronts with granite bulkheads at the first floor, and larger display windows on the second. Above that, the two principal facades have double or triple window bays stacked above each other. The brick pilasters that separate the window bays are topped with precast capitals; the whole is topped with a metal cornice.

D. H. Burnham & Company (1846-1912) was one of the firms operated by Daniel Hudson Burnham, nationally renowned architect and city planner, and Chief of Construction for Chicago's 1893 World Columbian Exposition. Burnham (1846-1912) apprenticed with Carter, Drake & Wight and then formed his own practice with John Wellborn Root in 1873. After Root's untimely death in 1891, Burnham practiced alone until 1896 and then in partnership with Ernest R. Graham, E. C. Shanklin, and Charles Atwood until his own death in 1912. He and his firm designed a vast number of commercial and institutional structures in Chicago and throughout the world. It is exceptional for Rockford to have one of its downtown buildings designed by so prominent a firm. Graham, Anderson, Probst, and White, the firm responsible for designing the upper floors of the Rockford Trust Building, was formed by Burnham's former partner, Ernest Robert Graham in 1917. It too designed commercial structures across the country and only dissolved as an architectural firm within the last few years.

Although in a very different style, the three principal facades of 303 N. Main Street still express the divisions of the Two-Part Vertical Block. Built as a memorial to the Smith family in 1930, the Gas and Electric Building at the time had a larger footprint than any other commercial structure in Rockford and is its only Art Deco style skyscraper. Designed by local architects, Willis Hubbard and Herman Haegar, the eight-story building has a base whose large ground floor display windows are framed in granite. The limestone tower above has paired windows separated by fluted pilasters. Art Deco-style ornamentation is found in the panels above the second floor windows and at the top of the structure. Despite replacement storefront and upper windows, the building still retains enough of its original historic character to exemplify the design

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characteristics of its period of construction. The Gas and Electric Building was included in the Illinois Historic Structures Survey.

Willis W. Hubbard was born in 1891 in Kansas and was working as an architect in Champaign Illinois in 1920. By 1925 his offices were at Rockford's Forest City Knitting Company Building according to the Illinois Society of Architects Directory, and at other addresses through 1938-1939. No information could be found on Herman Haegar.

The Three-Part Vertical Block is similar to the Two-Part Vertical Block, except with three distinct zones corresponding to the parts of a column in Classical architecture. The lower zone acts as the base, the middle zone (usually the largest) as the shaft, and the upper zone as the capital. The capital section of this building type can be highly ornamental, with elaborate cornices, rows of round arch windows with ornate surrounds. The two examples of the Three-Part Vertical Block in the district both date from the 1920s.

The Talcott Building at 321 W. State Street was also designed by a Chicago architectural firm, Howard Shaw Associates, as noted in the September 18, 1926 *Rockford Republic*. The twelve-story structure of Bedford limestone replaced the old Masonic Temple. Its two-story base has a recessed entry trimmed in marble and a second floor with inset round arches on the ends and decorative circular and scroll insets. The middle zone has a regular pattern of individual windows stacked up to the eleventh floor. A stone cornice with dentils distinguishes the top or capital of the structure.

The architectural firm was presumably an immediate successor firm to Howard Van Doren Shaw, the highly regarded Chicago architect who died in May 1926. Developer Wait Talcott was from a family of early Rockford manufacturers. He was an early associate of John H. Manny in the manufacture of the first reaper in the Emerson-Brantingham Company and later the J. I. Case Company. He was also president of Nelson Knitting Company and elected a state senator from the Rockford district.

OTHER DISTINGUISHED STRUCTURES

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There are a few commercial types that do not fit within the Commercial Block classification system. One of these, the Temple Front, was developed not primarily for commercial use, but more often for public, institutional, and religious buildings, beginning in the 1820s. The façade of this type is derived from the temples of Greek and Roman architecture. Usually two or three stories high, a Temple Front building has a row of full-height columns extending across the front, often with a triangular pediment. In the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was commonly used for banks.

An excellent example of the Temple Front type with Classical Revival styling is Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial Hall at 211 N. Main Street. Designed by Bradley and Carpenter and built in 1902-1903, this freestanding Bedford limestone structure is sited mid-block and has two principal facades, one on Main Street and one on Wyman Street. Each has a grand flight of steps up to a two-story classical portico with four fluted Ionic columns. Inscribed in the frieze are the words, "Memorial Hall." Several rows of stringcourses define the building's base while the windows have classical hoods and other stone trim. The hipped roof of the structure is red ceramic tile and the stone cornice is lined with dentils.

The architects were the partnership of noted local, Charles Bradley and Frank Carpenter. The structure was individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976 and included on the Illinois Historic Structures Survey.

Another of the less common building types by Longstreth, the Enframed Block, is exemplified by the impressive Beaux Arts American Insurance Company Building at 304 N. Main Street. In this two or three story type, the façade is punctuated by a row of columns or an arcade that are classically influenced. The main section of the façade is bracketed by end bays that create a framed effect.

The original section of the building, designed by Frederick Headley and built in 1904, was L-shaped and included the south three bays on Main Street. An addition in 1923 by Jesse Barloga filled in the structure to the north lot line with a seamless architectural statement. The Main Street façade of the structure is dominated by two-story, paired Ionic columns on heavy square pedestals. These support a classical entablature with elaborate cornice. Round arched windows at the first floor

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and casements on the second floor are on a recessed plane. There are oversized terra cotta brackets atop the window arches. The principal entry is in the center and is at the front plane of the façade. There is a simple one-story portico with pilasters and brackets. Framing the ends of the structure are massive brick corner piers on stone foundations. This structure was included on the Illinois Historic Structures Survey.

No information could be found for architect Frederick Headley. Some information is known about the architect for the 1923 addition. Jesse Barloga (1888-1947) was born in Pecatonica, Illinois and educated in architecture at the University of Illinois. He began his career in the offices of Rockford architect Frank A. Carpenter before establishing his own practice in 1910. Barloga maintained his firm for 30 years, designing mostly residential buildings, as well as educational and commercial structures in and around Rockford. He was a member of the Illinois Society of Architects.

The Security Insurance Company Building at 227 N. Wyman does not fit any of the general commercial classifications established by Longstreth. A two-story red brick Office Block in the Georgian Revival style, it was built in 1912. Located on a corner site, it is freestanding, with three finished facades. The main entry on Wyman Street is raised a few steps from the sidewalk. A stone entry has engaged Ionic columns flanking multi-light double doors. Windows on the principal façade are paired, double hung multi-lights with stone inset panels below. There is a prominent stone cornice, and brick parapet with stone coping. The side facades have two-story, round arched, multi-light windows with keystones. The stone cornice continues around the sides. The prominent corner location of this structure emphasizes its classical distinction.

Similar in exterior form is the Bliss Building at 317-319 W. Mulberry Street, built in 1924 to house the Bliss Printing Company. This three-story brick building has a raised center entrance with large display windows on either side. There is decorative brickwork and simplified stone trim at the base and below the metal cornice. This type of detailing is frequently found on vernacular commercial structures and is loosely based on classical motifs. Both of these structures were included in the Illinois Historic Structures Survey.

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The former Rockford Morning Star Building at 127 N. Wyman Street was built in 1927 to house the *Rockford Morning Star* newspaper offices. Within five years the newspaper moved out and the building was taken over by Pioneer Life Insurance Company who sold it in 1996. This Classical Revival style building, designed by Clausen, Kruse, and Klein, features engaged pilasters with composite capitals on the west façade which separate three entry doors and two display windows. There are decorative relief panels with classical, Egyptian, and Art Deco motifs, and a row of Art Deco chevrons. The façade is terra cotta made to resemble stone, with a granite bulkhead. The original cornice was replaced with a brick parapet.

Since the building was individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1999, the large recessed "bulletin" window on the west façade has been enlarged into a principal entrance for the Rockford Bank and Trust Company.

Another important structure in the district that falls outside the commercial block classification system is the Elks Club at 210 W. Jefferson Street. Designed by Lawrence P. Buck and built in 1912, this Clubhouse displays Classical Revival features in a simplified style. A brick piazza is centered on the west façade, with square brick columns and three arches. Multi-light French doors are topped with fanlights. The north façade on Jefferson Street has a recessed arched entrance in the center. First floor windows are multi-light casements with fanlights. Those on the second floor are eight over eight double-hung sash with brick arched tops. The projecting metal cornice that wraps around the structure has a wide overhang reflective of the Prairie School style.

Chicago architect Lawrence Buck was born in New Orleans in 1865 and after working as a draftsman in Alabama, moved to Chicago in 1894. He designed homes and commercial projects in Oak Park, Lake Villa, Evanston, and Highland Park as well as ten residences in Rockford. He also worked as an architectural delineator for well-known Prairie School architects such as George W. Maher, Dwight Perkins, and John Van Bergen. The Prairie School influence in his work may be the result of his membership in "Crafters," a group that kept a studio in Steinway Hall in Chicago where many of the Prairie School architects also had offices. Buck closed his

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architectural practice in 1920 to devote time to his watercolor painting. He died in 1929 in Ravinia, now part of Highland Park, Illinois.

The building was originally the home of the Rockford Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks (BPOE), Lodge #64, and was dedicated February 17, 1913. It has been vacant since it was sold by the Elks in 1990. The building was individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2004.

**OTHER STRUCTURES AND SITES**

There are three non-contributing structures in the district, an Illinois Bell Building at 211 N. Church Street built in 1961, a One-Part Commercial Block at 315 N. Church Street built in 1985, and a multi-storied concrete parking deck at 102 N. Main Street (the northwest corner of Main and State streets) built in 1984-1985. There are four vacant lots, at 206-212 N. Church Street, 201 N. Main Street (used as a parking lot), 324-326 W. State Street, and 328-330 W. State Street.

**CONCLUSION**

The history of West Downtown Rockford chronicles the commercial growth and development of Illinois' second largest city, a powerhouse manufacturing center for over 150 years. This district represents an early 20<sup>th</sup> century urban downtown, the heart of a business, financial, and retail trading area that embraced the entire Winnebago County. The structures that stand within the boundaries of the district are an excellent reflection of Rockford's most prosperous decade of downtown development, the 1920s. Important commercial building types and the corresponding architectural styles paired with those types illustrate the best of Midwestern design and development. Not only are prominent local architects represented in the mix, but a few of the most influential commercial architects from Chicago also worked here. The West Downtown Rockford Historic District exemplifies the physical appearance and presence of an important mid-20<sup>th</sup> century urban downtown.



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West Downtown Rockford Historic District  
Rockford, Winnebago County, IL

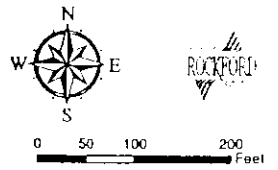
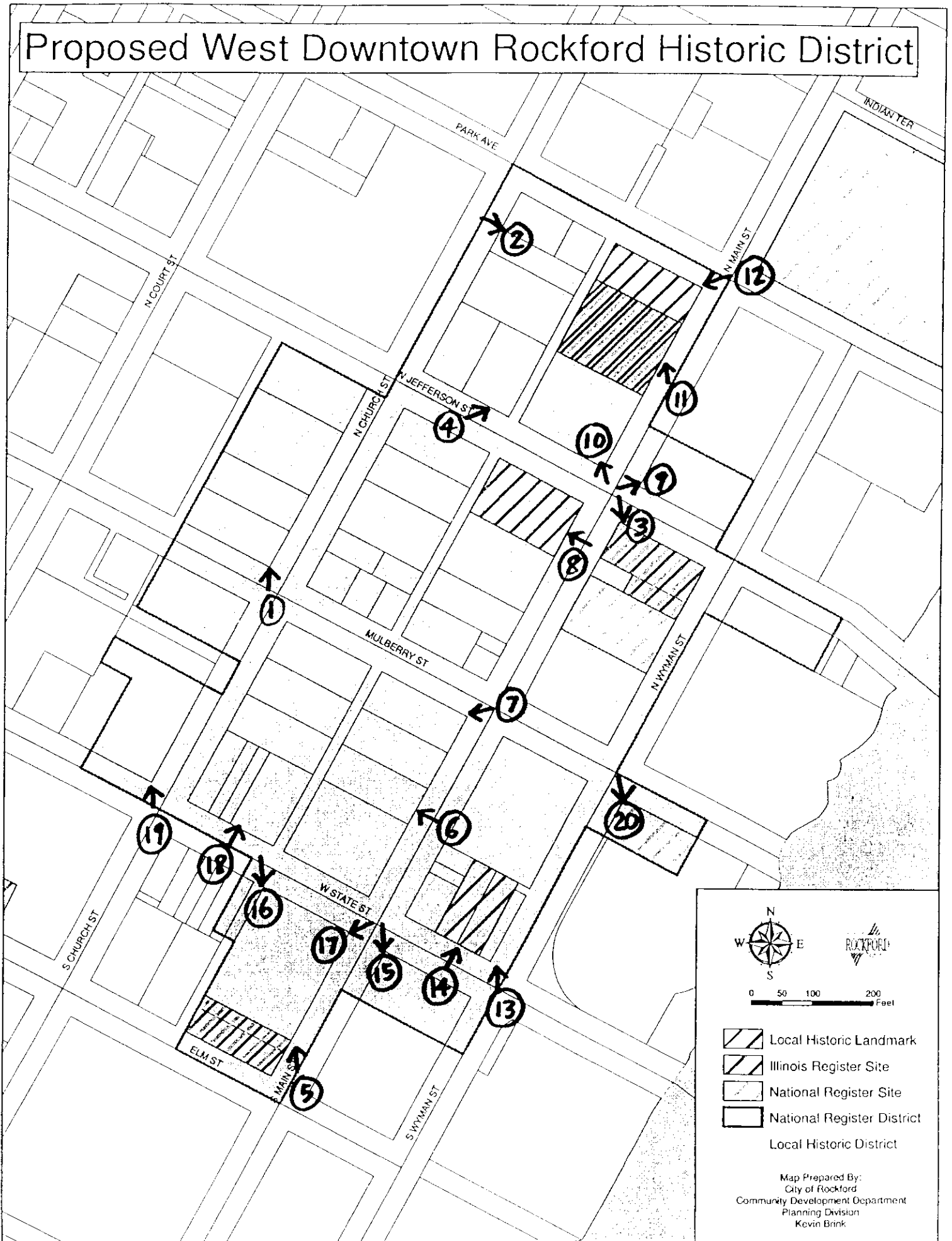
**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**





Beginning at the southeast corner of Park Street and Church Street, the boundary goes one block east to Main Street, then south to the northern property line of 303 N. Main Street, then east to Wyman Street, then south to Jefferson Street, then east to include 227 N. Wyman Street. Then it continues south along Wyman Street to Mulberry Street and east to include 127 N. Wyman Street. Then it continues south along Wyman Street to State Street. It dips south of State Street to include 206 W. State Street. Then it continues south on Main Street to Elm Street, west on Elm Street to the alley between Main and Church, north on the alley to State, then west on State to Church Street. On the west side of Church Street it is irregular to include 401 W. State Street and 126-132 N. Church Street. Then it continues from the alley between Church and Court, north to Jefferson Street, east on Jefferson to Church and north on Church to Park Street to complete the district.

**VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundary of the West Downtown Rockford Historic District encompasses the core of historic structures that comprised the commercial heart of the area. It is irregular at its edges to eliminate vacant lots and a few non-historic properties.

# Proposed West Downtown Rockford Historic District



-  Local Historic Landmark
-  Illinois Register Site
-  National Register Site
-  National Register District
-  Local Historic District

Map Prepared By:  
 City of Rockford  
 Community Development Department  
 Planning Division  
 Kevin Brink

Tallahassee vicinity, 07000897,  
LISTED, 9/05/07

ILLINOIS, COOK COUNTY,  
Hatch, William H., House,  
309 Keystone Ave.,  
River Forest, 07000898,  
LISTED, 9/05/07

ILLINOIS, WINNEBAGO COUNTY,  
West Downtown Rockford Historic District, Roughly bounded by Park Ave., State St., Church St., and  
Wyman St., Rockford, 07000899, LISTED, 9/05/07

IOWA, HENRY COUNTY,  
Lewelling, Henderson, House,  
W. Main St.,  
Salem, 82002620,  
ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION APPROVED, 8/31/07

IOWA, LEE COUNTY,  
Fort Madison Downtown Commercial Historic District, Centered on Ave. G, from near 6th St., to  
mid-900 Blk, inc. Ave. H, from 7th to 9th Sts.  
Fort Madison, 07000852,  
LISTED, 8/31/07  
(Iowa's Main Street Commercial Architecture MPS)

MONTANA, CARBON COUNTY,  
Red Lodge Brewing Company--Red Lodge Canning Company,  
904 N. Bonner St.,  
Red Lodge, 07000947,  
LISTED, 9/05/07

NEW MEXICO, BERNALILLO COUNTY,  
Horn Oil Co. and Lodge,  
1720 Central Ave.,  
Albuquerque, 97001591,  
REMOVED, 9/06/07  
(Route 66 Through New Mexico MPS)

NEW MEXICO, EDDY COUNTY,  
Sipple--Ward Building,  
331 W. Main St.,  
Artesia, 91001503,  
REMOVED, 9/06/07

NORTH CAROLINA, CALDWELL COUNTY,  
Lenoir Downtown Historic District,  
Roughly bounded by Ashe Ave., Mulberry St., Harper Ave., Church St., and Boundary St., Lenoir,  
07000905, LISTED, 9/05/07

NORTH CAROLINA, CUMBERLAND COUNTY,  
Verdery, Dr. William C., House,  
1428 Raeford Rd.,  
Fayetteville, 07000906,  
LISTED, 9/05/07