

REPORT TO HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

FROM: Bruce A. Knight, Planning Director

DATE: September 26, 2003

**SUBJECT: Case No. HPC 03-0051: Application for Landmark Designation for
122 N. Walnut Street (Rick Orr Florist)**

A. Introduction: The Historic Preservation Commission is requested to make a recommendation to the Plan Commission to designate 122 N. Walnut Street as a landmark.

B. Recommended Action: Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission recommend to the Plan Commission that the nomination and findings be approved as proposed.

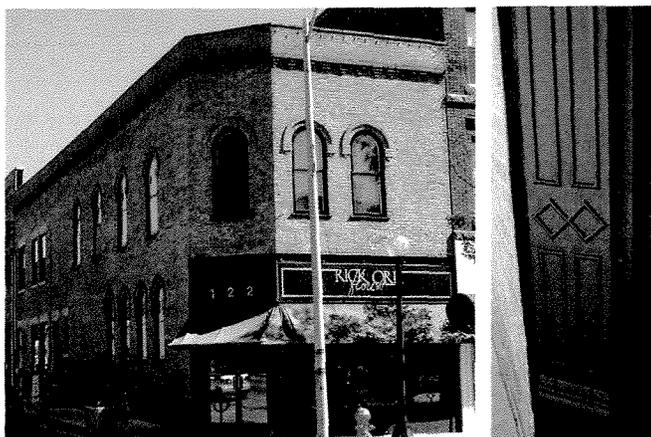
C. Background:

1. Applicant. Nathan A. Darga

2. Owner. Jeffrey Mellander

3. Location. 122 N. Walnut Street

4. Description of Property. The building at 122 N. Walnut Street, located in downtown Champaign, is an example of a Romanesque Revival building that retains its original cast iron elements, including cast iron framed picture display windows.



The building is two stories with a basement, and the Sanborn maps would indicate that the building was constructed circa 1887-1890. These same maps would indicate that the rear third of the building is an addition constructed circa 1902-1909. The western (original) section of the building features 1/1 round-arched windows on the second floor and on the first floor's secondary street frontage (Taylor). Near the roofline of this American Bond brick structure runs a simple decorative corbel string course of bricks.

5. Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Plan. The Comprehensive Plan and the Downtown Plan recognize historic preservation as a tool for achieving healthy neighborhoods and commercial areas. The Plans encourage the preservation of buildings that have historical and architectural significance as a means of promoting visual environments of high aesthetic quality and variety. According to the Downtown Plan, "The structures and the street context in which they are set make Downtown distinctive and generate a positive emotional response among members of the community."

6. Historic Criteria. The applicant proposed the following findings and has requested that the Commission make a determination that 122 N. Walnut Street meets the following criteria from Sec. 37-491 of the City Code:

(c) The property or structure is representative of the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type inherently valuable for the study of a period style, craftsmanship, method of construction or use of indigenous materials.

This building is one of only three buildings to retain its cast iron storefront. Commercial buildings of the past have relied on storefronts to market the products inside. The cast-iron detailing and storefront designs contribute to making the building unique and assists in attracting customers. The cast-iron columns and pilasters are an example of such unique storefront characteristics.

(f) One of the few remaining examples of a particular architectural style or use, or is an example which clearly represents a major architectural style, and has undergone little or no alteration since its construction.

With its cast iron storefront this building reflects very early commercial architecture from downtown Champaign's turn-of-the-century period. Unfortunate alterations have been removed from the building during its 1980's renovation, and its appearance today is much as it was in its earliest years. The only two other buildings of note in this Romanesque Revival style are the Women's Town Club at 112 W. Hill, and the Salem Baptist Church at 500 E. Park, both local landmarks.

D. Alternatives:

1. Recommend to the Plan Commission that the nomination be approved and make findings on all applicable designation criteria.

2. Recommend to the Plan Commission that the nomination be denied based on all designation criteria.

E. Discussion of Alternatives:

Alternative 1 should be chosen if the Commission determines that the application meets at least one criterion listed in the Zoning Ordinance, Section 37-491, Criteria for Designation of Landmarks. The designation of 122 N. Walnut Street as a landmark would be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

a. Advantages

- Recognizes the historic character of this community resource.
- Consistent with the Comprehensive and Downtown Plans.

b. Disadvantages

- None.

Alternative 2 denies the recommendation for the designation of 122 N. Walnut Street as a local landmark. The Historic Preservation Commission should choose this alternative if it determines that the application for 122 N. Walnut Street meets none of the criteria listed in the Zoning Ordinance for designation as a landmark.

a. Advantages

- None

b. Disadvantages

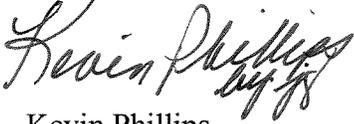
- This would indicate that the Commission believes that 122 N. Walnut Street does not meet any of the criteria for designation.

F. Community Input: A public notice advertising today's public hearing for this case appeared in the September 18, 2003 edition of the News Gazette.

G. Budget Impact: There is no significant budget impact for a historic designation.

H. Staffing Impact: In the future Staff may be requested to review an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness, but the processing of such occasional individual applications falls well within the Planning Department's routine baseline services.

Prepared by:



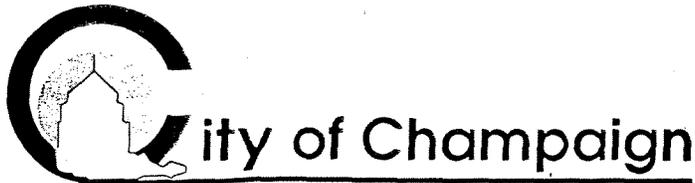
Kevin Phillips
Zoning Administrator

Reviewed by:



Bruce A. Knight, FAICP
Planning Director

Attachments: Application for Landmark Designation
Aerial Photograph
Proposed Findings



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HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
C/O PLANNING DEPARTMENT
102 N. NEIL ST.
CHAMPAIGN, IL 61820

Phone: 217/403-8800
Fax: 217/403-8810

Designation
Case No.: PL 03-051

APPLICATION TO NOMINATE (LANDMARK)

PLEASE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION (please print or type):

PROPERTY INFORMATION

1. Common street address of Property to be nominated:

122 North Walnut

Champaign, IL 61820

2. Legal description of property to be nominated:

Lot 18 of Assessor's Subdivision of lots 9 and 10 in block

7 of the Railroad addition to Urbana, now a part of the City

of Champaign in Champaign County, IL.

3. Property Index Number:
(from tax assessor's roll)

40 - 20 - 12 - 435 - 001

4. Name of Property Owner:
(from tax assessor's roll)

Jeffrey Mellander

5. Address of Property Owner:
(from tax assessor's roll)

33 East Taylor Street

Champaign, IL 61820

6. Attach a location map showing the boundaries and location of the property.
7. Attach/enclose photographs and 5 – 8 color slides of the property. Each facade and any significant features of the property or structure should be shown in the set of photos and slides.
8. Indicate which of the following criteria apply to the property or structure (check all that apply):
 - The property or structure has significant value as part of the historical, cultural, artistic, social ethnic, or other heritage of the nation, state or community.
 - The property or structure is associated with an important person or event in national, state or local history.
 - The property or structure is representative of the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type inherently valuable for the study of a period style, craftsmanship, method of construction or use of indigenous materials.
 - The property or structure is the notable work of a master builder, designer, architect or artist whose individual genius has influenced an era.
 - The property or structure is identifiable as an established and familiar visual feature in the community owing to its unique location or physical characteristics.
 - The property or structure is one of the few remaining examples of a particular architectural style or use, or an example which clearly represents a major architectural style, and has undergone little or no alteration since its construction.
9. Attach a general statement describing the property and its historical significance and the reasons why it should be designated as a historic landmark. Include a statement describing how the property meets the criteria listed above in #8. At the end of these statements, please list your sources of information, including bibliographic references.

PLEASE NOTE: Additional detailed information and photographs to support this application may be required if the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the property merits consideration.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

APPLICANT'S NAME: Nathan A. Darga
ADDRESS: 111 Temple Buell Hall 611 E. Lorado Taft Drive
CITY: Champaign ZIP CODE: 61820
PHONE(day): (217) 333 - 3890

APPLICANT SIGNATURE: *Nathan A. Darga* DATE: 5-8-03

Applications should be submitted to the Planning Department three weeks prior to the next Historic Preservation Commission meeting for consideration at that next meeting.

The Historic Preservation Commission meets the first Thursday of each month at 4 p.m. in the City Council Chambers at 102 N. Neil St. in Downtown Champaign.

Summary:

Address: 122 North Walnut Street
Parcel Number: 42-20-12-435-001
Owner: Jeffrey J. Mellander

This building is a good example of the Romanesque Revival style, and one of the few examples of the style in the downtown. Additionally, the building is an excellent example of a late nineteenth century commercial building, a particularly significant example due to its intact storefront which retains original cast iron elements. It is being nominated for local landmark status under the third criteria "representative of the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type," and the sixth criteria "one of the few remaining examples of a particular architectural style." The only other two properties in this style of note are the Women's Town Club building at 112 West Hill and the Salem Baptist Church at 500 East Park Avenue. Both of these buildings are designated local landmarks. The building is in excellent condition due to a substantial rehabilitation in the late 1980's by the current owner, Jeff Mellander. The building currently includes the Rick Orr Florist on the first story and an apartment on the second story.

Property Description:

The building as is seen today covers the entire property. The front two thirds, fronting on North Walnut and Taylor Street, was built between 1887 and 1890 according to the Sanborn maps. The Sanborns show that the back third, fronting on Taylor only, was built between 1902 and 1909. The building is two stories with a basement. It is constructed mainly of American bond brick with some use of cast iron. The original section of the building is a good example of the Romanesque Revival style.

The main storefront faces North Walnut Street. It is made of cast iron with three large front sash with metal frames. The columns between the windows do not have a uniform style. The column farthest from the door (south) has much more detail. It is unclear whether this is original or the result of later alterations.

This storefront is particularly significant. Cast iron storefronts began to be used in the 1840's. By the end of the nineteenth century advances in the manufacture of both iron and glass allowed the type of large windows seen on the property. Cast iron, however, is very susceptible to the elements and often oxidizes quickly. Another problem lies in the changing business patterns. Owners frequently alter the storefronts to modernize their business (Jandl, Preservation Brief 11). This indeed happened to the property. For



several decades the storefront was covered over with a tile wall. The tile did not destroy the storefront, however, and during the rehabilitation of the building in the 1980's the original storefront was uncovered. Thus, this is an original feature of the building and the time period. It is in good condition and adds a great deal to the historic integrity of the building.

The northwest corner of the building is chamfered. On the first story, the chamfered corner is part of the storefront, serving as the main entrance. The large single-light double entrance doors are modern replacements. A black metal panel spans the transom space above the doors and storefront windows. Light blue neon outlines the panel which is interrupted with "Rick Orr Florist" which extends down the panel. Above the panels is a cast iron lintel. There is a course of header bond bricks above that after which the masonry returns to the American bond style used on the majority of the building. There is a black retractable awning over both the windows and the door.

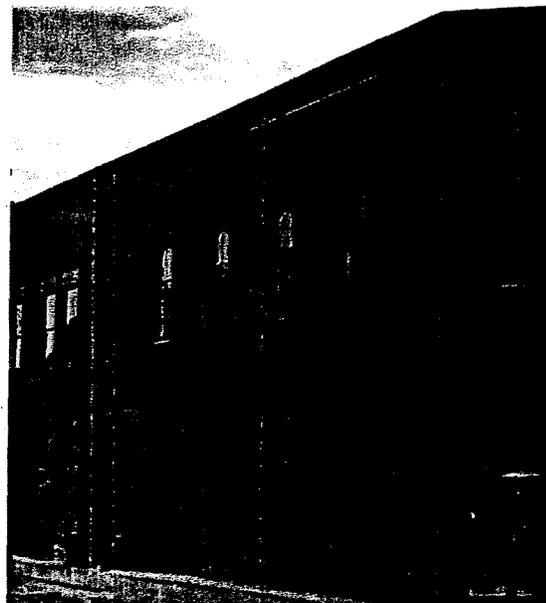


The upper story of the North Walnut Street façade has two round arched windows facing the street and one in the chamfered section. The windows are wood, replacement 1/1 double-hung sash. They are recessed into the brick. The arches are stilted, double rowlock corbelled arches with spring blocks and are projected out from the wall. The windows have a metal lug sill, likely made of cast iron.

At the top of the building the masonry steps out to form a corbelled cornice. Above that there is a low parapet. The parapet is not detailed and hides a shed roof. The top of the parapet has stone coping. This pattern at the top of the building continues all the way around to the Taylor Street facade, including on the section that was an addition. This may mean that the design was not original but added when the addition was constructed.

The Taylor Street façade has two distinct sections. The western section corresponds with the original building. That section has the same style windows as the North Walnut Street façade. The early 1900's addition changed the style of the windows and doors. The cornice and parapet features are identical.

The western (original) portion of the Taylor Street facade has four 1/1 double-hung windows on both the first and second story.



Those on the first story are tightly grouped towards Walnut (west) creating an arcade-like effect. Those on the second story are more equally distributed. The first story windows are set high enough that it is unlikely that they were ever used for display space. This corresponds to the raised elevation of the store interior (upon entering the store there is a step up).

On the rear historic addition, the windows are no longer round-arched. The rear store front in the addition has two large fixed sash windows with transoms. There are single doors on either side of the windows. Both the windows and the doors have rough cut limestone lintels and smooth cut limestone lug sills. The east entryway was originally twice as large as it is today. The brick infill is clear. This would have been the store entrance. The doors are aluminum replacements. The west entryway was likely added as a back door to the original building. The seam connecting the two portions of the building runs up the right-hand (west) side of the west entryway and continues up to the top of the building.



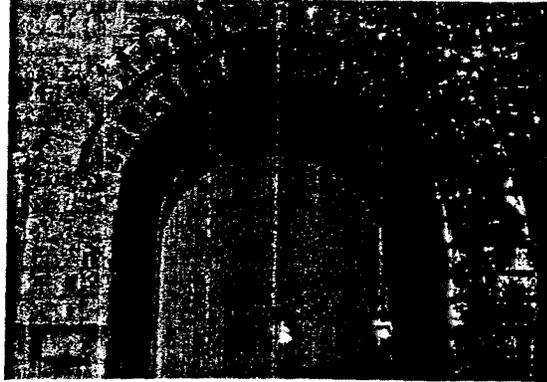
The second story of the addition has two small paired double-hung windows (above the bricked in door). West of that there is a pair of larger double-hung windows more evenly spaced. The second story windows have the same sills and lintels as the first story. The seam where the original building and the addition were joined is clearly visible. However, the brick of the two sections matches well. The building is generally in excellent condition thanks to a major renovation that occurred in the late 1980's.

Significance:

The Romanesque Revival style became popular around 1850. The style was similar in many respects to Gothic Revival but was easier to build. The arches and other features did not require the time or workmanship that features of the Gothic Revival style demanded. By the 1860's and 1870's Romanesque Revival was the most common architectural type used in churches and in many public buildings. There are not many examples of this style in Champaign because most of the city was built after the 1880.

By the late 1880's the Romanesque Revival style was declining from use. Towards the end of the period, however, the elements of the style began to move out from churches and public buildings and into the common commercial architecture of the time (Whiffen, 1992). 122 North Walnut as well as the Women's Town Club building are good examples of commercial buildings adopting the institutional styles.

The original section of the building was constructed between 1887 and 1890 according to the Sanborn maps. It was one of the first substantial buildings on the block. The block to the north, between Taylor and Main Street, was heavily developed by 1887. It included the local landmark buildings at 201 and 203-5 North Market Street. The block this building was on, however, only had six buildings covering about a quarter of the total area of the block. Only two of those buildings were built next to each other on zero lot lines. The block developed south along Walnut after 122 was built. By 1915 the block was full of zero lot line buildings.



The original business was an abstracting company run by Frank Wilcox. Wilcox was one of the early businessmen in Champaign: He started as a Colonel in the Union Army during the Civil War and moved to Champaign in 1865 after a brief attempt at prospecting out West. He formed the abstracting business in partnership with another early Champaign businessman, A.D. Eads. The company was at that location from the building's construction until 1900.

According to city directories, between 1901 and 1922 there were a string of unrelated owners as well as considerable periods when the building was vacant. Some of these businesses include a druggist and a billiard hall. Then, in 1923 the Champaign and Urbana Water Company opened its office in the building. They stayed at this location for 36 years. The company changed names several times and in 1952 became the Northern Illinois Water Corporation.

After 1960 the building housed several businesses including the Four-U Wig Shoppe and the Red Barron Barber Shop. In 1987 the building underwent a major rehabilitation. This work repaired and preserved many of the architectural features of the building. Work was done to the brickwork and the cast iron storefront windows which had been covered up were restored. These windows are original features to the building and are in good condition. This is unique in that most commercial buildings have had their storefronts replaced at least once over the years. The result of all this work has been that the building is now in an excellent state of repair. The original architectural features are clearly visible and well preserved. The current owner has shown interest and support for designating this building and this nomination is being done at his request.

Conclusion:

This building was built towards the end of the Romanesque Revival period. The original section represents the elements of that style very well. Foremost among them are the round arched windows and the cornice. The addition incorporated some of the aspects of the style like the cornice but did not include the main feature, the arched windows. However, the building overall is a good example of the style. It is one of the few examples we have in Champaign. The other major example, the Women's Town Club building, has already been landmarked. The building also has well preserved features like the brickwork and the storefront. The storefront is especially noteworthy as those types of storefronts often are highly deteriorated or altered with each new business.

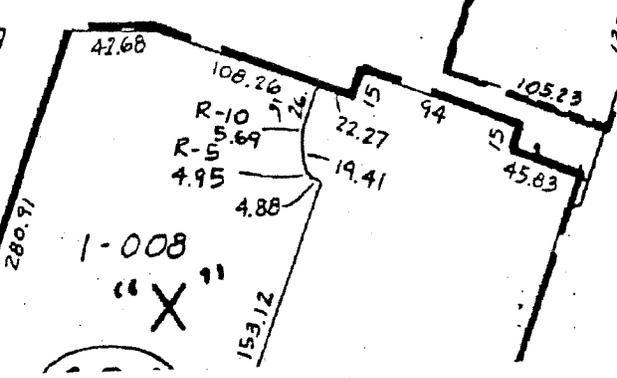
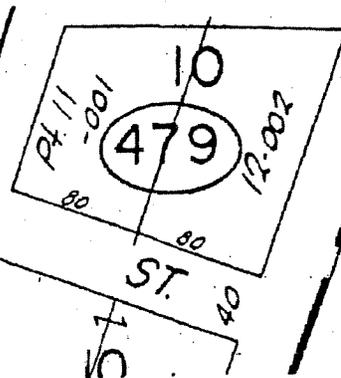
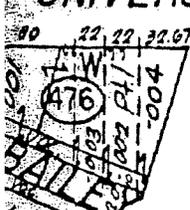
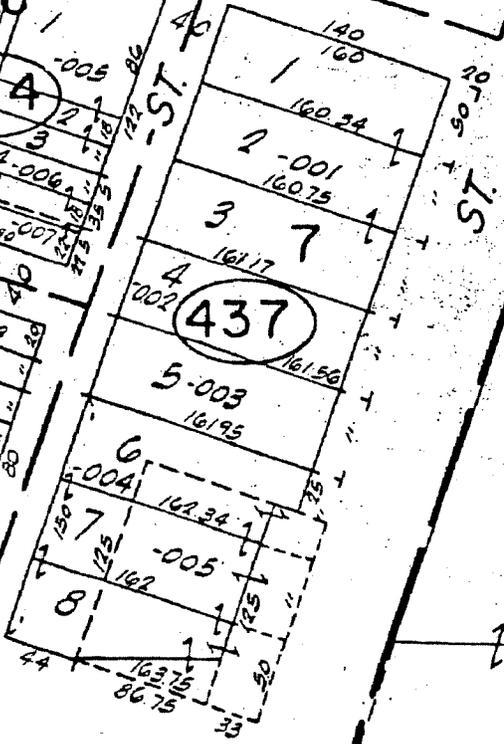
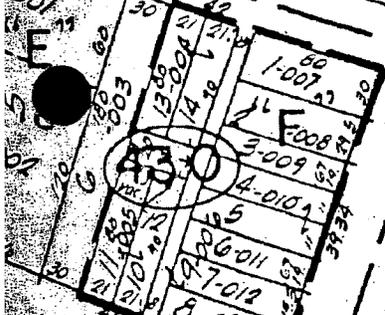
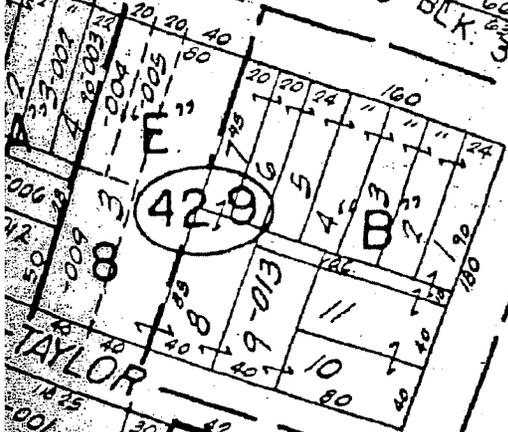
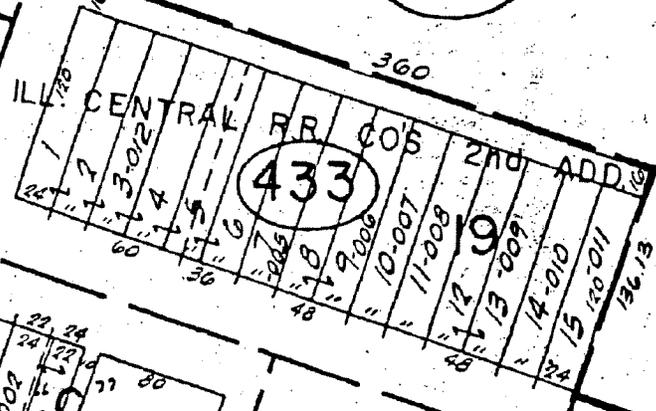
122 North Walnut represents Romanesque Revival well. There are only a few examples of that style in the city. It is in good condition and the owner has expressed a desire to have the building landmarked. Designating this building would help ensure that this style remains visible in Champaign. It will also protect the investments and commitments that have been made to preserve this unique building.

Bibliography:

- 1) Champaign County Historical Archives. Wilcox Family File, Northern Illinois Water Corporation Clipping File.
- 2) Champaign Tax Assessor's Office. Property Record for 122 North Walnut Street.
- 3) Champaign and Urbana Illinois City Directory. Every year available from 1887 to present.
- 4) Gordon, Stephen C. How to Complete the Ohio Historic Inventory. Ohio Historical Society, 1992.
- 5) Jandl, H. Ward, National Park Service. Preservation Brief 11: Rehabilitating Historic Storefronts. Available online at: <http://www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/briefs/brief11.htm>
- 6) Lambert, Michael A. Preservation and Conservation Association Historic Property Inventory, 435-18-001, 1984.
- 7) Sanborn Maps, 1887, 1892, 1897, 1902, 1909, 1915, 1924, 1951.
- 8) Whiffen, Marcus. American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to Styles. The MIT Press, 1992.

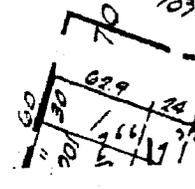
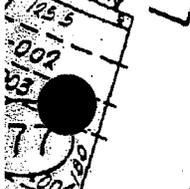
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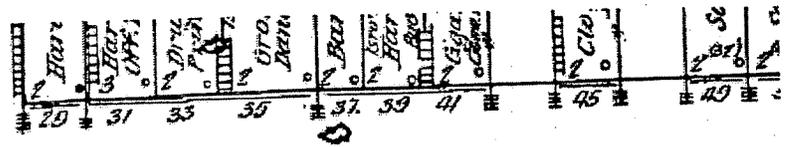
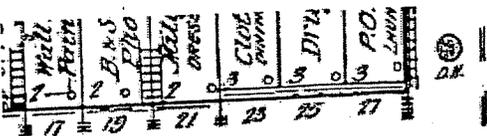
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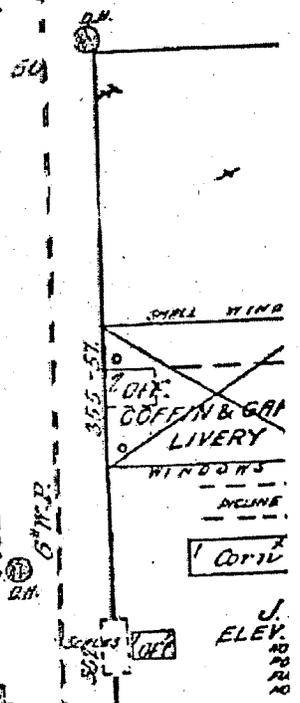
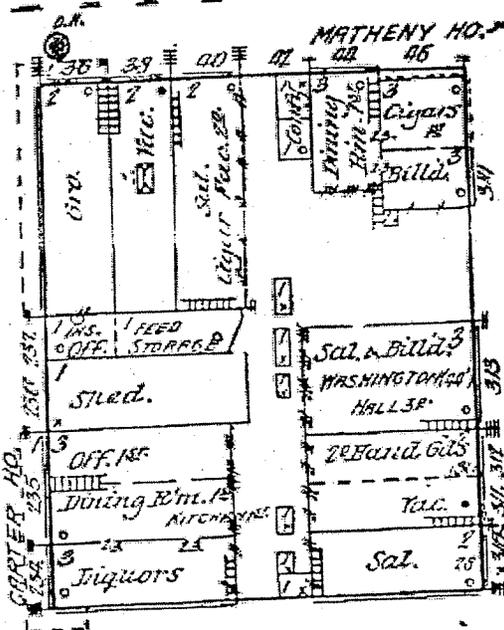
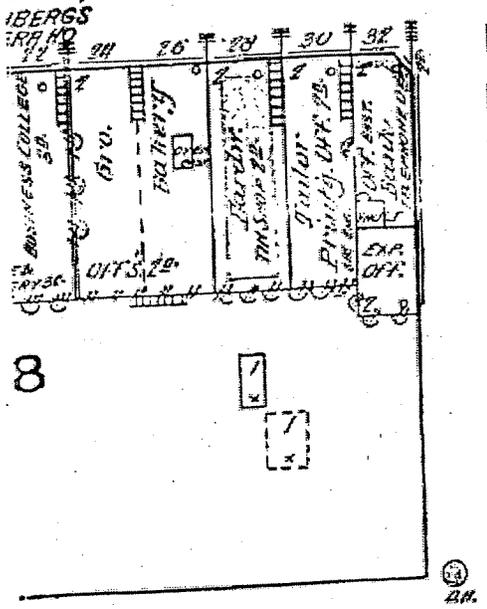
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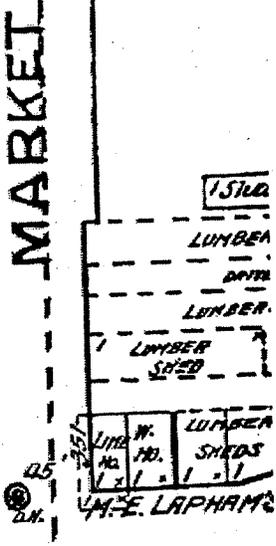
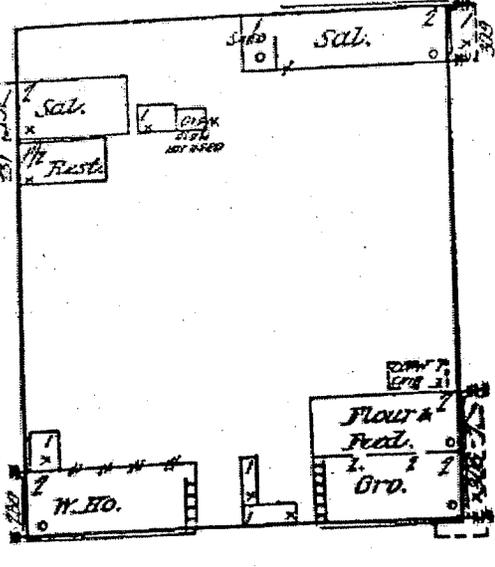
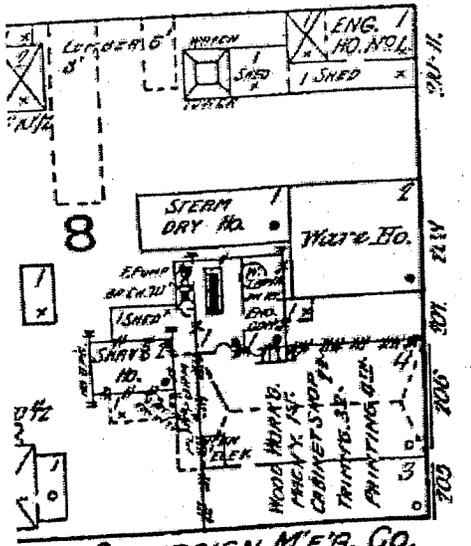




MAIN



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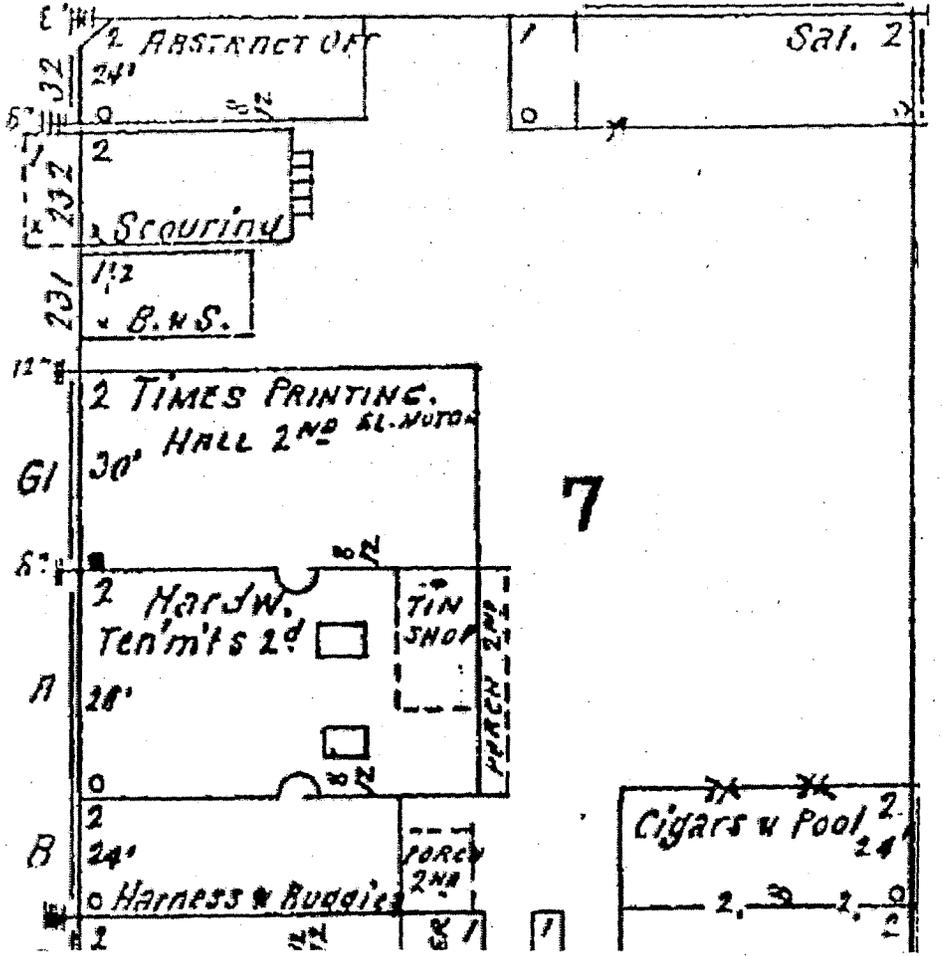
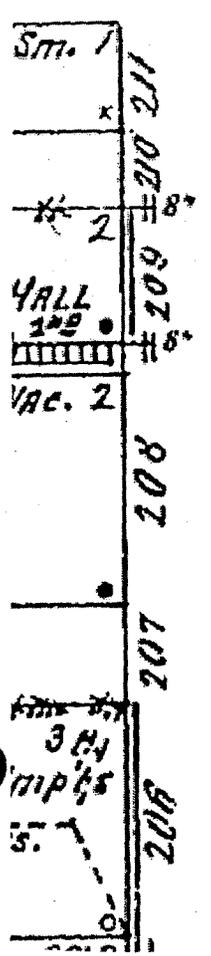
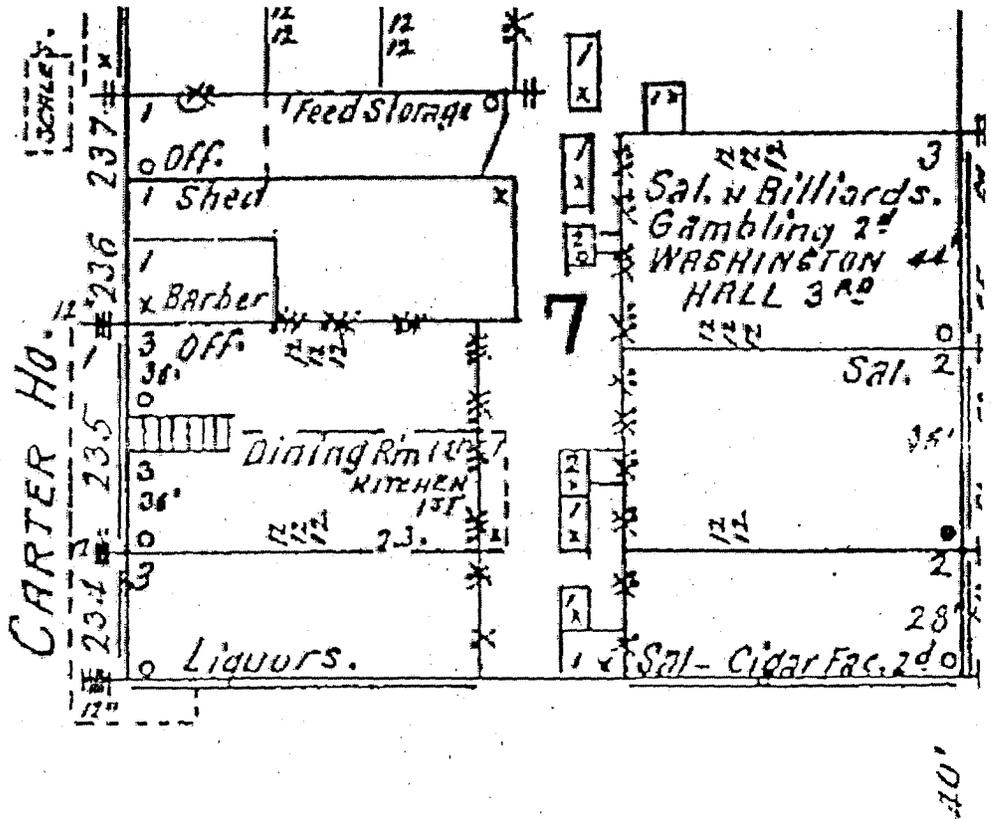
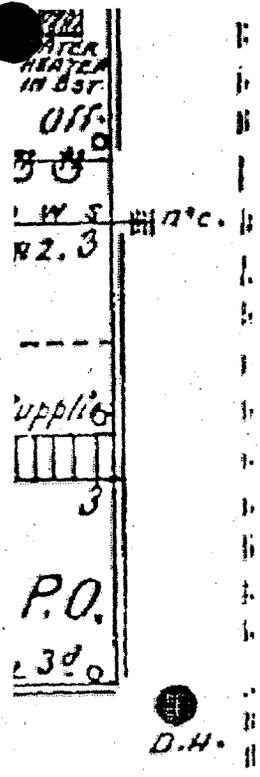
CHAMPAIGN M.F.B. CO.
60 WILSON - NO LIGHTS.
40 WEST ST. CORR. FUEL SHEDS & BURN
CORR. REAR STAIRS. INTO SHED NO. 2 PUMP & 600 2' HOSE.

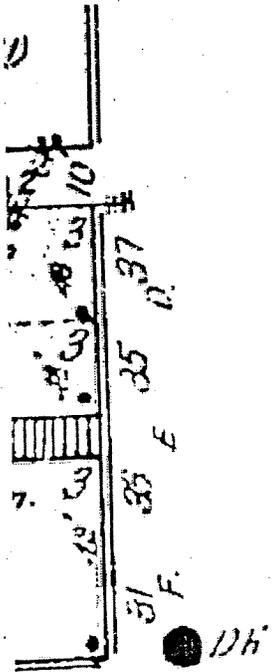
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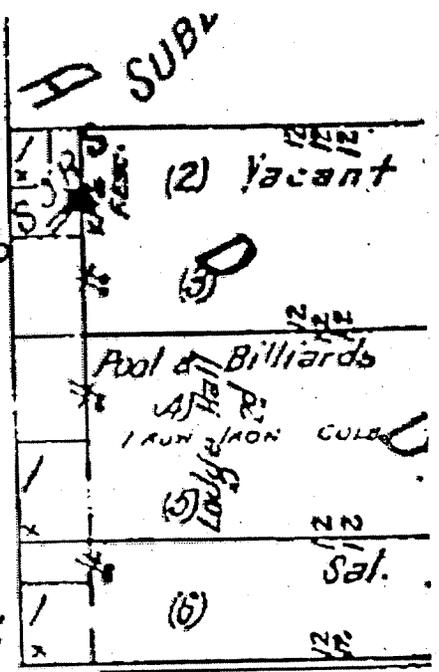
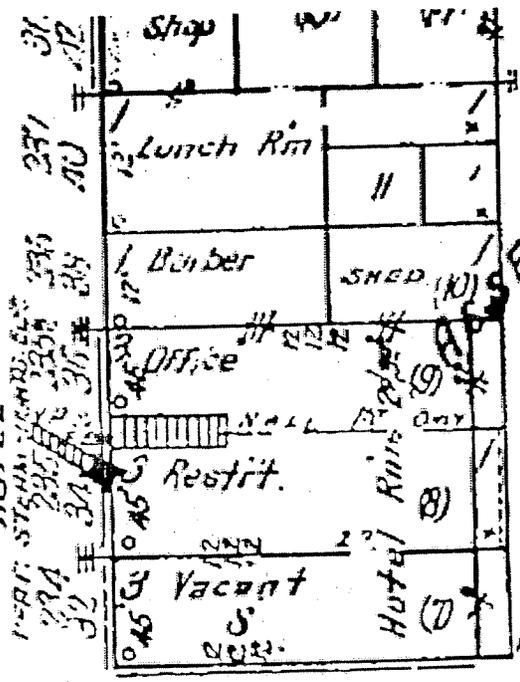
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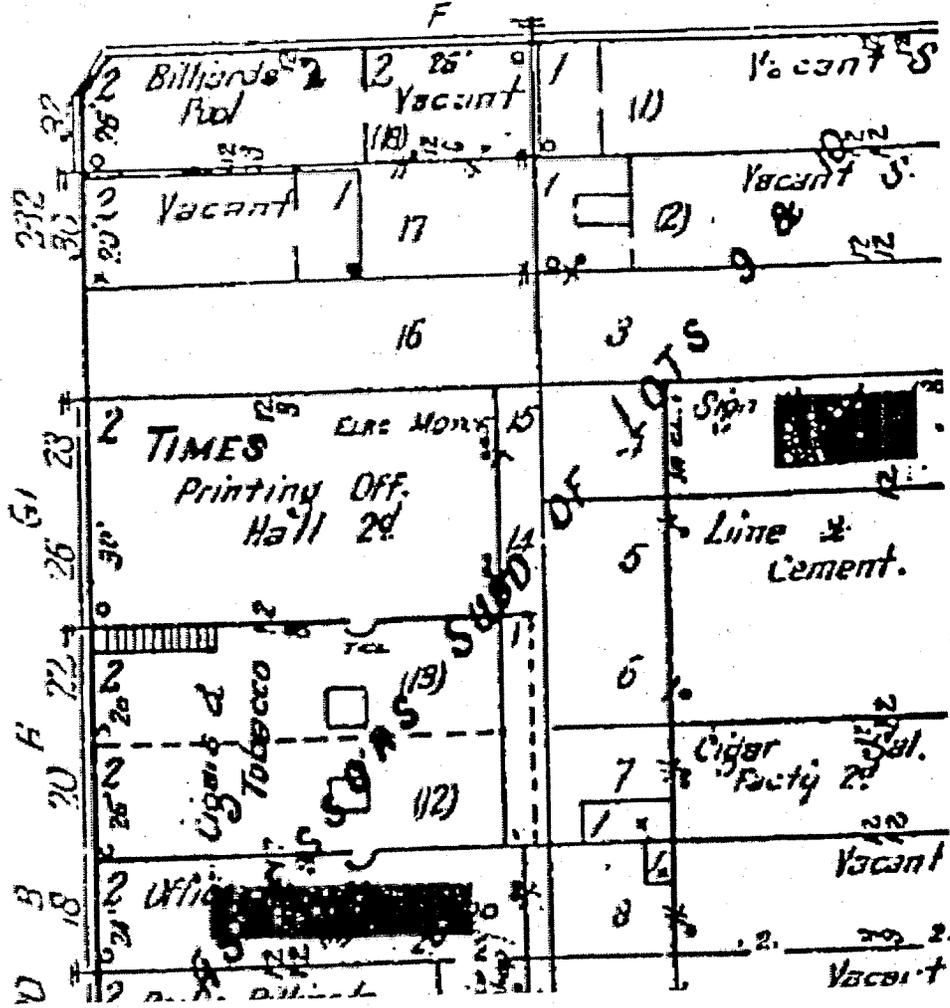
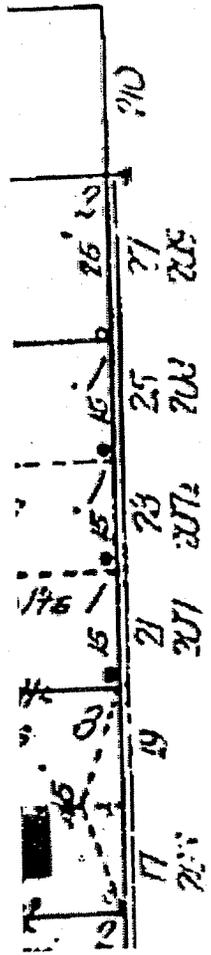




ILLINOIS
HOTEL



FIRE
DETECTOR



ATTACHMENT A



**Findings of Fact
122 N. Walnut Street
Landmark Designation**

(c) The property or structure is representative of the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type inherently valuable for the study of a period style, craftsmanship, method of construction or use of indigenous materials.

This building is one of only three buildings to retain its cast iron storefront. Commercial buildings of the past have relied on storefronts to market the products inside. The cast-iron detailing and storefront designs contribute to making the building unique and assists attracting customers. The cast-iron columns and pilasters are an example of such unique storefront characteristics.

(f) One of the few remaining examples of a particular architectural style or use, or is an example which clearly represents a major architectural style, and has undergone little or no alteration since its construction.

With its cast iron storefront this building reflects very early commercial architecture from downtown Champaign's turn-of-the century period. Unfortunate alterations have been removed from the building during its 1980's renovation, and its appearance today is much as it was in its earliest years. The only two other buildings of note in this Romanesque Revival style are the Women's Town Club at 112 W. Hill, and the Salem Baptist Church at 500 E. Park, both local landmarks.