

City of Madison Landmarks Commission
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (1)

Name of Building or Site	
Common Cardinal Hotel	Historic (if applicable) Cardinal Hotel
Location	
Street Address 416 E. Wilson Street	Aldermanic District Sixth
Classification	
Type of Property (building, monument, park, etc.) building	
Zoning District C2	Present Use residential and tavern
Current Owner of Property (available at City Assessor's office)	
Name(s) Cardinal Associates Ltd. Partnership I	
Street Address 2817 Fish Hatchery Road Madison, WI 53713-3120	Telephone Number
Legal Description (available at City Assessor's office)	
Parcel Number 0709-133-1822-0 (notation parcel) 0709-133-1828-8 and 0709-133-1829-6	Legal Description see attached
Condition of Property	
Physical Condition (excellent, good, fair, deteriorated, ruins) good	
Altered or Unaltered? altered	Moved or Original Site? original site
Wall Construction brick load-bearing with wood frame interior walls	

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Legal Description

Part of Lots 8 and 9, Block 268, Original Plat, described as follows:

Beginning at a point of intersection of the northwest line of S. Franklin St. and the southwest line of E. Wilson St.; thence southwest along said line 69 feet; thence northwest 118 feet; thence northeast 69 feet to the northwest line of S. Franklin St.; thence along said line 118 feet to the point of beginning.

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Describe Present and Original Physical Construction and Appearance.

Overlooking Lake Monona, the Cardinal Hotel is a rectangular, five-story, red brick structure, forty-six feet by eighty-two feet, with the straight front and level roofline reminiscent of the neo-classical style. The rounded facade at the corner of Wilson and Franklin streets points toward the site of the railroad passenger stations that were the origin of many of the hotel's guests. The first floor of the building is built into the contour of the hill that leads up to the Wisconsin State Capitol. Built as a three-story building in 1908, it was expanded to its present height the following year.

The narrow stone courses that accentuate each floor create a layering effect that complements the projecting denticulated cornice below the flat roof. The building is generously fenestrated. A fairly even balance is maintained between horizontal and vertical lines on the upper floors, through the windows appear more as voids in a masonry plane than as glass infill in a pier-and-spandrel lattice. The large sash windows are arranged in vertical bands; the second floor windows have plain stone lintels and the third through fifth floors have brick and stone relieving arches. Alternating stone voussoirs and quoins frame all windows.

The red brick and stone on the northeast (Franklin Street), and the southeast (Wilson Street) facades veneer the wooden beams and joists that constitute the frame of the building. The exterior walls are brick load-bearing with wood interior walls. Fire escapes are attached to the Franklin Street wall. Common brick covering the first floor and rising to the roofline at the south corner of the building forms a reversed ell-shaped plane. The remainder of the southwest wall on the second through fifth floors is recessed and is veneered with silver-painted tin pressed to resemble brick. There are balconies off the second and fourth floors.

The commercial entrances are on the Wilson Street side of the building; the canopied hotel entrance at the south corner is separated from the tavern entrance at the rounded east corner by three large display windows. Early photographs show an all-encompassing canvas canopy over these windows and entrances. A second entrance to the tavern is located on Franklin Street; on the second floor above this entrance is another doorway to the apartment at the corner that was built for the original owner. Markings on the building denote the former presence of a small balcony.

The first floor is divided between the hotel lobby and restaurant and the tavern. The tavern containing many elements reflective of the Craftsman movement, is almost entirely original. The high wainscotted walls, the paneled doors, and recesses to either side of the mirrored back bar all become part of the same decorative scheme that is accentuated by leaded windows and lighted glass panels designed by the architect. Ceiling fans and lanterns of brass and leaded glass hang from dark wood beams and girders and above the back bar. The floor is tile.

Most of the south half of the first floor originally was used as the

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hotel restaurant and lobby. This was extensively altered in the mid-1970s when the space was converted to a dance floor. However, the wood beams and girders still remain behind the dropped ceiling. The kitchen is in back of the former restaurant. Of the original lobby, only the bracketed wood-trimmed arch with denticulated cornice and some of the ceiling beams and girders were not altered during the remodeling of the lobby in the 1960s. The ceramic tile floors here and in the restaurant and kitchen are original. This space now is used primarily for storage.

Originally, fifty-six guest rooms were located on the second through fifth floors. Entrance to the central hall of each floor was made through a stairwell or the elevator, both connected to the lobby. Undistinguished in style, the halls and rooms suffered from years of neglect and abuse. A fire made these rooms uninhabitable. These floors have been entirely remodeled as apartments.

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Original Owner Ernest Eckstedt	Original Use hotel
Architect or Builder Ferdinand Kronenberg	Architectural Style neo-classical revival
Date of Construction 1908-1909	Indigenous Materials Used not applicable

List of Bibliographical References Used

Madison city directories, 1886-1950.
City of Madison tax assessment records, 1907-1911.
United States manuscript census, 1900, Dane County, Wisconsin.
Capital Times, August 31, 1928.
Wisconsin State Journal, August 31, 1928.
Wisconsin: Its History and Its People. Edited by Milo M. Quaife.
(Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1924) Volume 3.
Williamson Street, Madison, Wisconsin: An Historical Survey and Walking
Tour Guide. By Gary Tipler. (Madison, Wisconsin: Madison
Landmarks Commission, 1978).

Form Prepared By:

Name and Title

George C. Brown and Katherine Rankin, Preservation Planner

Organization Represented (if any)

City of Madison

Address

P. O. Box 2985
Madison, WI 53701-2985

Telephone Number

266-6552

Date Nomination Form Was Prepared

March 5, 1993

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Significance of Nominated Property and Conformance to Designation Criteria:

The major significance of the Cardinal Hotel is the commercial role that it played in the East Madison business and railroad vicinity. Completed in 1909, and built directly across Wilson Street from the Milwaukee and St. Paul railroad depot that had stimulated the development of the area with its construction in 1869, it was the last and the largest of the railroad hotels. It quickly became a popular resting and eating place for the railroad men and for the commercial men headed for the King Street business district and the Wisconsin State Capitol. The Cardinal also is significant because it is a visual landmark for those traveling to Madison via the main, Williamson Street route or by train, and it is a good vernacular example of neo-classical building design, in transition from Victorian style to the Craftsman style. The integrity of original construction in the Craftsman style tavern probably is unique in Madison.¹

Commerce

Ernest Eckstedt, the builder and original proprietor of the Cardinal Hotel, provides an excellent example of the development of a successful working class entrepreneur. Raised in a German immigrant family, he worked on the railroads for over twenty years before beginning his rise toward becoming a "well-known" Madison hotel proprietor and president of a successful local manufacturing concern.² Eckstedt was born in Milwaukee on February 29, 1864, and worked in a flour mill and a tannery before joining the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad as a switchman in the early 1880s. From the mid-1880s to 1902 he worked in various positions in both the train and passenger service of the Chicago and Northwestern Railway. He moved to Madison in 1885 and quickly settled into life in the German-dominated Williamson Street neighborhood on Madison's east side. It was here that Eckstedt established himself as a successful Madison businessman.³

In 1902, having heard for years "the complaints regarding hotel accommodations at Madison, he decided to meet the situation by entering the hotel business." Eckstedt built the Atlas Hotel at 221-23 South Baldwin Street, on the corner of Baldwin and East Wilson. Within a few years he sold that enterprise and became the proprietor of one of the German community's favorite gathering places, The Tivoli Gardens, located only a block south of the Atlas at the corner of Williamson and Baldwin. In the meantime, he had begun to acquire various parcels of property on Madison's east side and in the nearby community of Fair Oaks. In 1907, Eckstedt purchased two split lots on the western corner of South Franklin and East Wilson Streets. Popularly known as the LaFayette Smith corner, it was one of the few underdeveloped lots left in the downtown area. Its potential is evident in that Eckstedt paid \$12,200 for property that was assessed for \$7,900. After tearing down the one-story frame barbershop situated on the corner, Eckstedt erected his hotel on the site.

The Cardinal Hotel that opened on July 1, 1908 was designed and built as a three-story structure. Tax assessment records show that the original building cost \$20,000 to erect. The two stories that Eckstedt added the

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following year cost another \$16,000. One of the tallest hotels in the area, the Cardinal provided visitors an unobstructed view of Lake Monona and boasted hot and cold running water, tub or shower baths as desired, and an elevator. Conveniently located across the street from the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul east side railroad depot and within a block of the Chicago and Northwestern depot, it quickly became "a headquarters for railroad men and also was well known to hundreds of traveling men." From the family apartment on the second floor at the rounded corner, Eckstedt could watch the arrival of the trains carrying his patrons and manage the hotel.⁴

Over the next twenty years Eckstedt became an increasingly prominent member of the Madison business community, joining both the Elks and the Eagles service clubs while maintaining his ties to the German community through membership in the Madison Maennerchor. In 1917, about the time of United States entry into World War I, Eckstedt was named president of the Valecia Condensed Milk Company. He directed the restructuring of the company into the Valecia Evaporated Milk Company, with plants in Middleton, Sparta, and Footville, Wisconsin (the Footville plant was nominated to the NRHP, January 1982). In 1927, Pet Milk Company bought out the Valecia Company.⁵

Eckstedt remained the proprietor of the Cardinal Hotel until his sudden death on August 30, 1928. Eckstedt's son, George, became the proprietor until his early death four years later on July 15, 1932. Since then the hotel has had numerous owners. Beginning in the 1930s, the hotel offered weekly and monthly rates.⁶

Architecture

The Cardinal Hotel has stood for years as a visual landmark to Madison-bound visitors traveling from the east along Williamson Street, the main corridor to the capitol for the north and the east, and to commercial travelers and railroad men arriving at Madison's east side depots. Today, although its visual dominance has been subdued by larger buildings behind it, it is no less impressive. It is one of only two hotels of the many that once stood in the area that is extant and relatively unaltered. Of the two, it retains the higher degree of original design features in both the interior and the facade. The striking contrast of red brick and stone in combination with the flat roof, level skyline, and the evenly balance vertical and horizontal lines signifies the Cardinal Hotel as a transitional building style between the late Victorian style and the prairie-craftsman, and later period revival styles. The Craftsman style interior of the tavern is probably singular among Madison public places both in its style and the high degree of integrity of original construction.

The hotel was designed by Ferdinand Kronenberg of Madison, Wisconsin. Born in 1877, Kronenberg emigrated from Germany in 1885 and settled into Madison's east side German community fifteen years later. At the time the Cardinal Hotel was built, he lived less than two blocks from his client, Ernest Eckstedt. Kronenberg's own home stands today at 1456 Williamson Street. Never a "high-style" architect, Kronenberg designed many buildings for the German and the Catholic communities of Madison during the early twentieth century.⁷ Nearly eighty of his designs,

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including St. James Church, the Washington Hotel (whose window treatments are similar to those of the Cardinal), as well as the Cardinal, are in the possession of the Madison Trust for Historic Preservation.

¹Williamson Street Madison, Wisconsin, pp. 9-10, 17-18.

²Wisconsin: Its History. . . p. 665. Obituaries: Capital Times, August 31, 1928, p. 1; Wisconsin State Journal, August 31, 1928, p. 1.

³Madison city directories, 1886-1902. Wisconsin: Its History. . . pp. 662-666.

⁴Madison city directory: 1909, p. 486; 1911, p. 528. City of Madison tax assessments, 1907-1911. Obituaries: Capital Times, August 31, 1928, p. 1; Wisconsin State Journal, August 31, 1928, p. 1. Wisconsin: Its History. . . pp. 662-666. Williamson Street. . .passim. Register of Deeds, Dane County, Wisconsin, warranty deed entries (1904-1915), numbers 261543, 261906, 270915, 273487, 273487, 281659, 282546, 303977, 322985.

⁵National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form (FHR-8-300), "Historic Resources of Footville, Wisconsin," Footville Condensory.

⁶Madison city directories, 1927-1950, passim.; 1933, p. 229.

⁷Madison city directories, 1900-1910. United States manuscript census, 1900, Dane County, Wisconsin, v. 12, e.d. 53, sheet 15, line 98. Williamson Street. . . pp. 18, 34-35.