

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

<u>Name of Building or Site</u>	
Common	Historic (if applicable)
Burrows Block	Van Bergen's Block

<u>Location</u>	
Street Address	Aldermanic District
120-128 S. Pinckney Street Madison, WI 53703	6

<u>Classification</u>	
Type of Property (building, monument, park, etc.)	
building	

Zoning District	Present Use
C4	commercial / apartments

<u>Current Owner of Property (available at City Assessor's office)</u>	
Name(s)	
see attached sheet	

Street Address	Telephone Number
see attached sheet	

<u>Legal Description (available at City Assessor's office)</u>	
Parcel Number	Legal Description
see attached sheet	

<u>Condition of Property</u>	
Physical Condition (excellent, good, fair, deteriorated, ruins)	
fair	

Altered or Unaltered?	Moved or Original Site?
altered	original site

<u>Wall Construction</u>
load bearing

Current Owner / Legal Description

120 S. Pinckney St.:

William and Frances Titley (608) 255-9277
128 N. Butler St.
Madison, WI 53703

Parcel: 0709-242-0413-7

Original Plat. NW 19.6 feet of SE 84 1/2 feet of lot 5, NW
19.6 feet of NE 22.8 feet of SE 84 1/2 feet of lot 6, Block 89.

122 S. Pinckney St:

Thomas M. Neujahr and Bradley A. Binkowski (608) 251-0706
301 N. Broom St.
Madison, WI 53703

Parcel: 0709-242-0412-9

Original Plat. SE 22.4 feet of NW 42 feet of SE 84 1/2 feet of
lot 5, SE 22.4 feet of NW 42 feet of NE 22 feet of SE 84 1/2
feet of lot 6, Block 89.

126 S. Pinckney St.:

Hooley Opera House Partnership (608) 251-4466
c/o Urban Discovery, Inc.
124 S. Pinckney, #200
Madison, WI 53703

Parcel: 0709-242-1411-1

Original Plat. SE 22.2 feet of NW 64 feet of SE 84 1/2 feet of
lot 5, SE 22.2 feet of NW 64.2 feet of SE 84 1/2 feet of lot
6, Block 89.

128 S. Pinckney St.:

Orlando Buskager (608) 255-2322
128 S. Pinckney St.
Madison, WI 53703

Parcel: 0709-242-0410-3

Original plat. SE 20.6 feet of lot 5 and SE 20.6 feet of NE
22.8 feet of lot 6, Block 89.

City of Madison Landmarks Commission
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (2)

Describe Present and Original Physical Construction and Appearance:

The Burrows Block, located at 120-128 S. Pinckney Street, has undergone many changes since its construction in 1856. Built as a three story block by Peter Van Bergen, the Renaissance Revival style building added a fourth story in 1858 when it became an opera house. In 1884 the top two stories were removed and the building achieved much of its present appearance. The main facade is of ashlar sandstone construction, while the secondary elevations are of brick.

The once single large block has been subdivided into four ownerships with variations in facade treatment on the ground floor. Unifying this story and marking the transition between ground floor partitions are Tuscan pilasters. The pilasters, and all of the original decorative features of the building, are of stone. The pilasters are covered with plaster to give them a smoother appearance. A pilaster is located at each corner of the main facade, and one at each vertical division of the ground floor facade. Variation in spacing occurs at the center, where a pilaster is located on either side of the central doorway, leading to the stairway to the second floor. The pilasters support a blank entablature of two horizontal bands. It functions as a stringcourse between stories. The areas between the pilasters vary in treatment. Current tenants (1995) for these ground floor spaces are (left to right): Gus's Grocery (#128), Opera House Restaurant (#126), vacant office (#122), and Breaktime Video (#120). With the exception of the restaurant, the businesses have variations of plate glass storefronts and recessed entries. At Gus's Grocery the upper and lower thirds of the ground floor Pinckney Street elevation have been closed off by a wall; a sign with the business name obscures part of the entablature above the store. At the office and video shop the facade remains predominantly glass with wood panels below and a central entrance at #122 and a right entrance at #120. At the restaurant, a wood facade has been added, repeating the pilaster motif.

The second story retains much of its integrity despite variations in windows. Above each shop area is a grouping of three tall windows with cornice window heads supported by brackets. The brackets and window heads are carved stone. The windows above the grocery store have three horizontal lights. Those above the restaurant and the empty office are of a single pane. The windows above the video store are the oldest. Each window opening is a pair of four light windows with a thin mullion between them. The area above the central

entrance is of blank ashlar masonry. The bottom course of stone at the right third of the second story facade has been damaged. In 1880 a covered walkway was added and may be the source of the damage.

Before 1884, the third and fourth stories repeated the second story treatment.(1) A projecting wood cornice topped the block. Sometime after the removal of the top two floors, the present painted metal cornice was added. It is elaborate in appearance and may date from the remodeling. Large brackets with dentils between them support the projecting portion of the cornice. The brackets are single at the outer edges and paired elsewhere. Between the brackets and below the dentils is a rosette between two rectangular panels. As with other aspects of the building's design, there is a variation at the center. The rosette is replaced by a quatrefoil and currently there is no projecting cornice. Originally a segmental arch at the center provided a pediment like cap.(2) The second story is currently used as offices and apartments.

The secondary elevations are of brick and are utilitarian in nature. The walls show modifications, with windows and entrances boarded up or bricked in. The brickwork shows deterioration.

(1) Stockham and Vandewalle, "Block 89 Building Reuse Study" (Madison, 1983), Photograph p.53.

(2) Undated photograph, "Corner of E. Main and S. Pinckney Streets." Historic Madison Photo Collection, Madison Public Library.

City of Madison Landmarks Commission
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (3)

Original Owner	Original Use
Peter van Bergen	commercial
Architect or Builder	Architectural Style
Peter van Bergen	Renaissance Revival
Date of Construction	Indigenous Materials Used
1856	sandstone, brick

List of Bibliographical References Used

see attached sheet

Form Prepared By:

Name and Title

Daina Penkiunas
214 Acewood Blvd.
Madison, WI 53714 243-8144

Organization Represented (if any)

Madison Trust for Historic Preservation

Address

Telephone Number

PO Box 296
Madison, WI 53701

251-4615

Date Nomination Form Was Prepared

March 17, 1995

City of Madison Landmarks Commission
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (4)

Significance of Nominated Property and Conformance to Designation Criteria:

The significance of the Burrows Block is as the site of an early Madison post office, for the role the building played in the development of theatrical entertainment in Madison, as a site associated with a nineteenth century African-American business, and as a surviving example of nineteenth century commercial sandstone construction.

When first erected in 1856 by Peter van Bergen, the block was noted for the location of the Madison post office on its ground floor, with John N. Jones as the postmaster. Jones was appointed Madison's postmaster in April 1853 by President Franklin Pierce, and served a second term ending in 1861 under President Buchanan. On the completion of the sandstone building, Jones moved the post office from a small wood building to Van Bergen's Block. The post office remained there until 1861 when the new postmaster, Elisha W. Keyes, moved the post office to West Main Street.(3) In the early years, the upper three stories were used as offices and the ground floor spaces housed shops.

Van Bergen was a carpenter-joiner and was active in local politics. From 1852 to 1856, he was on the Village of Madison Board, serving as the Village President in 1855. He became an alderman in 1856 when Madison was chartered as a city.

While the Burrows Block has been home to many Madison businesses, it is primarily associated with the succession of theaters located on its upper floors. Prior to 1851 the Territorial Capitol building was used for large assemblies, including shows and concerts. In 1851 Jehu Lewis erected a large frame building at the corner of Wisconsin Avenue and Johnson Street whose upper story was a public hall. In 1852 General Simeon Mills and John Catlin erected a three story stone building at 106-108 King Street whose upper floor was known as Badger or Mills' Hall. In 1854 a larger hall was installed on the top story of a stone block at the corner of Pinckney and Main streets.(4)

(3) "The Postoffice," Madison, Past and Present (Madison: Wisconsin State Journal, 1902): 29-30.

(4) George Burrows, "Theatrical and Entertainment Reminiscences," in Madison, Past and Present (Madison: Wisconsin State Journal, 1902), 57.

In 1858 Van Bergen raised the third floor ceiling of his building by 10 feet, creating the fourth story. He converted the enlarged space to a theater, known as the Madison Lyceum. The auditorium seated 800-1000 patrons and the stage measured 60 feet by 30 feet with a 28 foot proscenium. Despite its size, the theater was lacking in comfort. In 1862 cushioned seats and stoves were installed by the new owner, P.H. Pater, Jr. of New York. By 1868 the roof had weakened and people considered the building unsafe.

A great turnaround came in 1870 when L.B. Bryan and Richard M. Hooley bought the property. Bryan was a Washington, D.C. theater owner, and Hooley a minstrel and theater promoter from Chicago.(5) George Burrows, whose name the block acquired, arranged the purchase. Burrows was a local businessman and former state senator and speaker of the assembly who had made his money in lumber and real estate.

On acquiring the theater, Hooley contracted Madison builder John Hyland and theater architect Wallace Hume to rebuild the theater at a cost of \$6000. Construction began in late 1870 and on 28 February 1871 the theater reopened to the public. The new theater occupied the top three floors and had a new, large entrance off Pinckney Street. The new hall was oval in shape with a balcony and dress circle. The stage measured 60 feet by 35 feet with a proscenium opening of 28 feet. George Burrows acquired the Hooley Opera House in 1872. Burrows replaced the seats, redecorated the interior, and added a covered walkway.(6) From 1871 until 1884 the opera house was Madison's major auditorium. Few original interior features remain, with no remnants of Madison's grand opera house.

Despite the upkeep, by 1884 the building was again considered unsafe. Water from a Turkish bath and a dye house, operated at #122 from 1868 to 1883 by Nels Peterson, had weakened the rear outer wall. The January 1885 Sanborn map shows the "Opera Block" to be condemned. This same year, the block was reduced to two stories housing apartments and shops. Long term tenants included George Burrows, who had his office at the Burrows Block from 1873 to 1909, a private billiard parlor

(5) The somewhat complicated ownership deal by Hooley and Bryan is detailed in footnote #142 of David Mollenhoff, Madison; A History of the Formative Years (Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1982), 458.

(6) Much of the general information on the theater and the changes to the building came from Henry C. Youngerman, "Theater Buildings in Madison, Wisconsin, 1836-1900," Wisconsin Magazine of History 30 (March 1947), 279-281.

at # 126, a steamship company and then travel agencies at #126, and Kindschi Leather at #120 from 1923 to 1987.(7). On his death in 1909, Burrows bequethed the building to the State Historical Society, who then sold it in 1923.(8)

The Burrows Block is also the only 19th century building remaining in Madison connected with a pre-Civil War African-American family. George and Carrie Williams, a barber and a hairdresser, had their businesses (for a while known as the Bazar [sic] of Fashion) and residence in the block at #120 from 1864 to ca. 1884. George Williams was also in charge of maintaining the building. In 1850 (or 1851) George Williams came to Madison with his brother-in-law William Noland to work as barbers. In 1855 Williams moved to Portage, but in 1858 returned to Madison. Ca. 1860 he married Mrs. Carrie Larson, who had three children with her first husband. In 1863 George and Carrie Williams began a hair goods manufactory and dealership. Little is known of George Williams before his arrival in Madison, still less about Carrie. Sources give George Williams place of birth as Mexico, others as Poughkeepsie, N.Y., in 1828. George Williams died of alcoholism in 1893, Carrie in 1891.(9)

The architectural merit of the Burrows Block lies in the remaining sandstone construction of the exterior. While stone blocks were once popular around the Capitol square, it is one of the few remaining examples of sandstone commercial buildings in Madison. Other examples include the 1855-1856 Willett S. Main Building on State Street, the 1852 and 1855 Mills Block on King Street, and the 1875 Schoen Block on East Main Street. The interest in the Burrows Block is not simply one of survival, but also of the application of the Renaissance Revival vocabulary to the building in the form of carved pilasters, entablature, and cornice window heads.

(7) The numbering of addresses of the Burrows Block has changed since the turn of the century. The Sanborn-Perris maps list the storefront addresses as 120-126 in 1892, and as 120 1/2-126 in 1898 and 1902. I have indicated the present numbers. Number 124 is currently the mailing address for the second story.

(8) "Burrow's Block, City's Oldest Theater House, is Sold for \$60,000," Wisconsin State Journal, 26 March 1923.

(9) C W Butterfield, History of Dane County (Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1880), 1046, and files of Madison Department of Planning and Development. Williams' Aunt Jane lived in the former territorial governor's residence, a wood building that had served as the home of James Duane Doty from 1841 to 1844. The building also was owned by George Burrows and was replaced by the Madison Community Center at 16 E. Doty, also no longer extant. "Then, Now," Wisconsin State Journal, 9 January 1955.

List of Bibliographical References Used:

- Burrows, George. "Theatrical and Entertainment Reminiscences." In Madison, Past and Present, 57-58. Madison: Wisconsin State Journal, 1902.
- "Burrows Block, City's Oldest Theater House, Is Sold for \$60,000." Wisconsin State Journal, 26 March 1923.
- Butterfield, C.W. History of Dane County, Wisconsin. Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1880.
- Custer, Frank. "Madison's First Theater." Madison (April 1981), 48-55.
- Department of Planning and Development files. City of Madison.
- Mollenhoff, David V. Madison: A History of the Formative Years. Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1982.
- Noll, Henry. "Noted Stage Stars Trod the Boards at Hooley's Opera House Long Ago." Wisconsin State Journal. 4 March 1945.
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- Sanborn-Perris Fire Insurance Maps. Madison. 1885, 1892, 1898, 1902.
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- Tipler, Gary. "The First Settlement Neighborhood: A Walking Tour." Madison: Madison Landmarks Commission, 1988.
- United States National Youth Administration. "A Study of Madison Architecture from Madison Newspapers." State Historical Society Archives.
- Youngerman, Henry C. "Theater Buildings in Madison, Wisconsin, 1836-1900." Wisconsin Magazine of History 30 (March 1947): 273-288.