

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

I. Name of Building or Site

(1) Common
GALLERY 853

(2) Historic (if applicable)
BREITENBACH GROCERY

II. Location

(1) Street Address
851-853 Williamson Street

(2) Ward (available @ City Clerk)
Ward 1 District 6

III. Classification

(1) Type of Property (building, monument, park, etc.)
Building - Commercial

(2) Zoning District
C2

(3) Present Use
Art Gallery

IV. Current Owner of Property (available at City Assessor's office)

(1) Name(s)
Daniel Yopack

(2) Street Address
851 Williamson Street

(3) Telephone Number
256-0841

V. Legal Description (available at City Assessor's office)

(1) Parcel Number
0709-134-1401-0

(2) Legal Description
Original plat NE two feet of lot
8 and all of lot 9. Block 148

VI. Condition of Property

(1) Physical Condition (excellent, good, fair, deteriorated, ruins)
GOOD

(2) Altered or Unaltered?
Altered slightly

(3) Moved or Original Site?
Original site

(4) Wall Construction
Red brick

(5) On a separate sheet of paper, describe the present and original physical construction and appearance (limit 500 words).

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

VI.(5) Describe Present and Original Physical Construction and Appearance:

Because of records which report two important fires on or near the site in the nineteenth century, it is difficult to firmly fix a date at which Charles Biederstadt built the current structure. He is listed in the 1868 directory as operating a dry goods and grocery store at 90 Williamson. In 1885 the business is described as a "saloon and grocery" owned by Biederstadt situated at 851-853 Williamson Street. It seems probable that in 1873 when the rear portion of the Jaquish House burned that the first Biederstadt store was also consumed. That would put the construction date at 1873-74, logically enough given the style of the building.¹

The Breitenbach Grocery is a brick building situated on the SE corner of Paterson and Williamson Streets. It is of Italianate design. The building is constructed of red brick which has since been whitewashed. Presently, the front of the building, (on Williamson St.) is painted pleasing shades of blue-grey. The depressed arches over the windows, brackets and other details are done in a dark contrasting shade. The gently sloping gabled roof is partially obscured by a parapet with ornate brackets and cornice. Detail on the windows on the side walls is the same as in front, however only the facade is painted grey.

Very little has been changed since the original construction of the building. On the first floor (ground floor) there are 4 large storefront windows. There are two front entrances. What is now number 853, the entrance closest to the corner, is set back from the street, while the other (now number 847) is flush with the sidewalk. The adjoining lot is vacant. The second story of the building has 6 tall windows in front. One of these (the third from the left) has been changed into a door with an iron platform (fire escape) in front of it. In the back of the building (second story) there is a wooden, enclosed porch which partially covers an oculus.

¹Other chroniclers report (Alexius Baas?) that there was a fire in 1889 after which Biederstadt re-built. This is also possible.

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

VII. Significance

(1) Original Owner

Charles F. Biederstaedt

(2) Original Use

Grocery

(3) Architect or Builder

(4) Architectural Style

Italianate

(5) Date of Construction

1874? 1889?

(6) Indigenous Materials Used

Red brick

(7) On a separate sheet of paper, describe the significance of the nominated property and its conformance to the designation criteria of the Landmarks Commission Ordinance (33.01), limit of 500 words.

VIII. List of Bibliographical References Used

1. Alexius Baas (The Capital Times, Feb. 19, 1949.)
2. City of Madison Directories, various years.
3. Sanborn Insurance Map
4. City of Madison Tax Assessment REcords
5. "A Guide to Styles," Meyer, R.P; Stith, D.J. and Dean, J.M.; U.W. Extension, October 1974.
6. Mrs. O.C. Breitenbach
History of Dane County: Biographical & Geneological, Madison, 1906.
- 7.
- 8.

IX. Form Prepared By:

(1) Name and Title

Jacquelyn Star and Lance Neckar

(2) Organization Represented (if any)

Research Committee, Staff - Landmarks Commission

(3) Address

701 Schiller Court
Madison

(4) Telephone Number

241-4754

(5) Date Nomination Form Was Prepared

March 14, 1977

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

VII.(7) Significance of Nominated Property and Conformance to Designation Criteria:

The primary significance of the Biederstadt/Breitenbach Grocery is its historic function in the nineteenth century German speaking community that lived in the west end of Third Lake Ridge. It serves as a reminder of the social and economic order of the period and of the distinctive ethnic characteristics of that order. It is a wonderfully adaptive and vigorous building which has been an important community node for about 100 years. It deserves to be kept at least another 100. It is also important at a community level of significance because of its association with the Breitenbach's, a large merchant family with significant ties to the history of the Third Lake Ridge area and other German families in the City.

Charles Biederstadt began the grocery business on Williamson Street in a period after the German speaking population had gained a firm foothold in the area. Typical of such establishments on the street, it served a multiplicity of functions: it purveyed a variety of goods and services - dry goods, food and liquor - and was also a community gathering place and a home. One suspects that the combination of saloon and grocery may have been an ethnically derived phenomenon, rather than a nineteenth century combination, per se.

The Bavarian Breitenbach's came to Madison via Rochester, New York and Milwaukee in 1850. Adam Breitenbach began the family business of teamstering upon his arrival. He was associated with other German speaking people of the area in his business. One partner, Ulrich Brockmiller, lived at the corner of Williamson and Livingston. For some years Breitenbach's sons(?) George C. and Michael, were also working as teamsters; then in 1868 George also entered into the wagonmaking business at a location on Williamson between Blair and Blount. Throughout this time the family residence was on Williamson between Livingston and Paterson. George went on to become a plowmaker and was for some years an employee of Fuller and Johnson, a foreman in the wood department. In 1890 he took over the grocery business from Charles Biederstadt located at 851-53 Williamson. The business became "George C. Breitenbach and Son". His oldest son was George H. For some years the corner of Williamson and Paterson was known as Breitenbach's corner.

George C. Breitenbach had married Bertha Mayer, daughter of Casper Mayer, proprietor of a well known Madison saloon and restaurant. She was also the sister of Mrs. Stephen Baas who lived on Paterson Street. By Bertha Mayer, George C. fathered fourteen children, the oldest of whom was George H. Another son, John P., was alderman of the Sixth Ward in 1901-2. He later married into the Schubring family, another German merchant family, and moved to Sauk City.

The Breitenbach's were members of Holy Redeemer Church, the German Catholic Church in the City. The elder Breitenbach, George C., was a member of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks.