

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

Name of Building or Site

Common

Baskerville Apartments

Historic (if applicable)

Same

Location

Street Address

121-129 S. Hamilton Street

Aldermanic District

6

Classification

Type of Property (building, monument, park, etc.)

Building

Zoning District

C-4

Present Use

Apartments

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

Name (s)

David and Inez Baskerville

Street Address

3-3-11 Aobadai
Meguro-Ku
Tokyo 153 Japan

Telephone Number

011-81-33-770-8827

Legal Description (available at City Assessor's office)

Parcel Number

0709-242-0901-2

Legal Description

Original Plat, Lot 1 and the
southwest four feet of Lot 2,
Block 72

Condition of Property

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

Excellent.

Altered or Unaltered?

Slightly altered.

Moved or Original Site?

Original site.

Wall Construction

Brick bearing.

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

The Baskerville Apartment Building is a Neo-Classical Revival inspired four-story triangular-shaped apartment block that sits on a corner lot in a dense block of downtown Madison. The best general description of the building comes from the architect's (Robert Wright) own words on the plans. "[The building has] 24 apartments and 2 flats in basement. [It was] erected during 1913-14. All exterior walls and interior bearing walls [are of] brick and tile. [There are] separate floor and ceiling joists throughout [and there are] double partitions between adjacent apartments. [The] exterior [is of] tan brick with white belt courses and a cornice of Atlas white cement. [The] balcony floors [are of] reinforced concrete. All trimmings and balcony painted grey."¹

The building sits on a triangular lot and has a flat-iron shape. There is a raised brick foundation and flat roof. The cornice mentioned above is a simple classically influenced cornice. The two street facades are slightly recessed in the center to allow for placement of the balconies that still have their original iron balustrades. A close look at the balconies reveals a diamond pattern dispersed throughout the balustrades. Windows are symmetrically placed and repeated in patterns on the facades and are all versions of a single type: six-over-one double-hung sashes. Wood and glass doors are exits to balconies that are also used fire escapes.

The raised entrance to the Baskerville consists of double wood and glass doors decorated with multi-paned sidelights and a large multi-paned transom. The frontispiece of the entrances is of concrete and two sash windows are embedded in it flanking the entrance. Above the entrance is the inscription, "The Baskerville." At the corners of the building's raised basement are concrete "quoins" that define each corner and flank the entrances. Other details on the building include concrete sills, deeply recessed windows, corner notching of bricks, and a distinctive chimney.

The main entrance is raised and leads to a vestibule that is paneled in marble veneer. A set of stairs leads to the first floor to accommodate the raised basement of the building. The first floor hallway is paneled with dark wainscotting and there are two columns with capitals in the Composite order flanking the staircase to the exit. The main staircase leading to the upper floors is stained dark like the wainscotting, and it consists of turned posts in the balustrade and heavy railings. The basement floor plan (now vacant) originally consisted of two large apartments, a storage room, a boiler room and a laundry. The first floor plan is similar to the other three floors. It consists of five one-bedroom apartments and one studio apartment. The second through fourth floors are six one-bedroom apartments.

The apartments are decorated sparingly. Each unit has a galley kitchen with wooden cabinets, sink, stove, and refrigerator. Wooden doors have long, narrow panels. They are all identical except for the plain apartment entry doors and the doors leading to the balconies that are made of wood and multi-paned glass. Woodwork around doors and windows is simple, stained dark, as are the doors. The sizes of the rooms are slightly different in each apartment.

The interior has a high level of integrity, as does the exterior. Currently the first through fourth floors are rented and occupied. The basement has been partially renovated and is being offered as commercial space, since the original apartments there have been removed.

¹Robert L. Wright Collection. Wisconsin Architects Archives, Milwaukee Public Library, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

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

Original Owner David and Inez Baskerville	Original Use Apartments
Architect or Builder Robert L. Wright	Architectural Style Neo-Classical Revival
Date of Construction 1913-1914	Indigenous Materials Used Unknown

List of Bibliographical References Used

City of Madison Directories. On file at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.

Mollenhoff, David V. Madison: A History of the Formative Years. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 1982.

"Three Million Is Being Spent for Buildings Here." Wisconsin State Journal, 21 May 1913, P. 6.

Wright, Robert L. collection of plans. On file at the Wisconsin Architect's Archives, Milwaukee Public Library, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Form Prepared By:

Name and Title

Carol Lohry Cartwright and Randall P. Alexander

Organization Represented (if any)

Alexander Company

Address

660 W. Washington Avenue
Suite 303

Telephone Number

(608) 258-5580

Date Nomination Form Was Prepared

March 3, 1992

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

Significance of Nominated Property and Conformance to Designation Criteria:

The Baskerville Apartment Building is being nominated as a Madison Landmark because it is one of only two fine intact examples of early apartment house construction in Madison. There are a group of pre-Depression era apartment buildings in Madison. These buildings helped densify downtown Madison and other large cities before the widespread use of the automobile made suburban living even more desirable. The early apartment buildings made the most of limited central city space and allowed more people to have a downtown residence, convenient to all city services.

Architecture

During the 1910s, a new type of housing sprang up in Madison's downtown. This type of housing--the small apartment building--met several housing needs in the city. It provided a larger number of housing units on a small city lot than did a single-family residence or even two and three story flat buildings. Apartment houses increased the housing capacity of Madison at a time when the central city was still the hub of the community and before the widespread use of the automobile made suburban living more desirable. The apartment house provided convenient housing for a growing population of white collar workers in Madison, many of whom were middle-level professionals and/or state government workers. The apartment was also a smaller alternative for the middle classes who were unable to purchase an expensive residence downtown, and the upper classes, who no longer wished to live in a large residence, but still desired an attractive alternative. The convenience and practicality of the apartment house made them immediately popular.¹

The Baskerville was a part of this growing trend in Madison. Between 1910 and 1920, 29 apartment houses were listed in the Madison city directory for the first time. Using city directories for Madison, it was discovered that most apartment buildings in the downtown were built between 1914 and 1917. The Baskerville was built in 1913, so it is one of the oldest built during the boom years of early apartment house construction in the city. It was also one of the largest of the early apartment houses in Madison. A city directory search revealed that there are only a few apartment houses from this era that come close to the Baskerville in size. One has been demolished, and the other large apartment building is the Bellevue (29 E. Wilson St.), with 32 units. It was erected in 1913-1914 for the estimated cost of \$90,000. The Baskerville is next at 24 units and was erected at an estimated cost of \$50,000. The other apartments in this group of early apartment buildings in downtown Madison are much smaller. The Stratford (433 W. Gilman) has 18 units; the Pinckney Apartments (204 N. Pinckney), has 15 units; the Cass (202 N. Pinckney) has 14 units; the Hamilton (222 N. Hamilton) has 12 units, and the Eleanor (405 N. Frances), has 13 units. As can be seen by the above, the Baskerville is the second largest of the apartments built during the height of the apartment house boom between 1910 and 1930.²

The first city directory listing for the Baskerville Apartment Building indicates that this apartment house was erected for a less affluent clientele than the Bellvue which housed more middle class persons. Persons residing in the Baskerville included clerks, a janitor, a nurse, and cook. The Bellevue was constructed for a more affluent clientele and has a somewhat more elaborate interior than the Baskerville. The simple interior in the Baskerville speaks to the clientele it attracted.

The architect for the Baskerville Apartment Building was Robert L. Wright. Wright was a Wisconsin native who worked for the Madison architectural firms of Gordon and Paunack and Claude and Starck. In 1909 he began practicing alone. Wright designed a number of residences in a simple

City of Madison Landmarks Commission
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (5)

Prairie style or Craftsman style. He was interested in more updated methods of construction such as the use of stucco surfaces, concrete construction, and fireproof buildings. He moved to Milwaukee during World War I and worked for the Falk Corporation until he retired. His best known extant work is the City Market, a building constructed in concrete and brick masonry and done in the Prairie style. While City Market is an impressive architectural and historical complex, the Baskerville is also a significant design for Wright, compared to his other known extant buildings in Madison. As an example of Wright's work, the Baskerville indicates that Wright was a talented architect in the relatively new field of apartment house construction.³

The Baskerville Apartment Building is significant for type of construction because it is a good example of the apartment building type found in Madison's downtown between 1910 and 1930. Apartment buildings in Madison during this era were generally of brick construction, simply ornamented in the Neo-Classical style (with the exception of the Pinckney Apartments which are in the Mediterranean Revival style), and making the best use of their downtown space as possible. The Bellevue, which is the largest of these early apartment buildings has a Craftsman interior with an abundance of woodwork, even though its style is sparse on the exterior. The Baskerville, built the same year as the Bellevue, has a more simple decor with plain wooden moldings in apartments and few built-in conveniences that the Bellevue has. The Bellevue is the best example of the more luxury apartment house, while the Baskerville is the best example of the less affluent apartment house. Because the Baskerville is one of the two best examples of apartment house construction between 1910 and 1920 in Madison's downtown, it should join the Bellevue as a Madison Landmark.

¹David V. Mollenhof, Madison A History of the Formative Years, Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 1982, pp. 352-253.

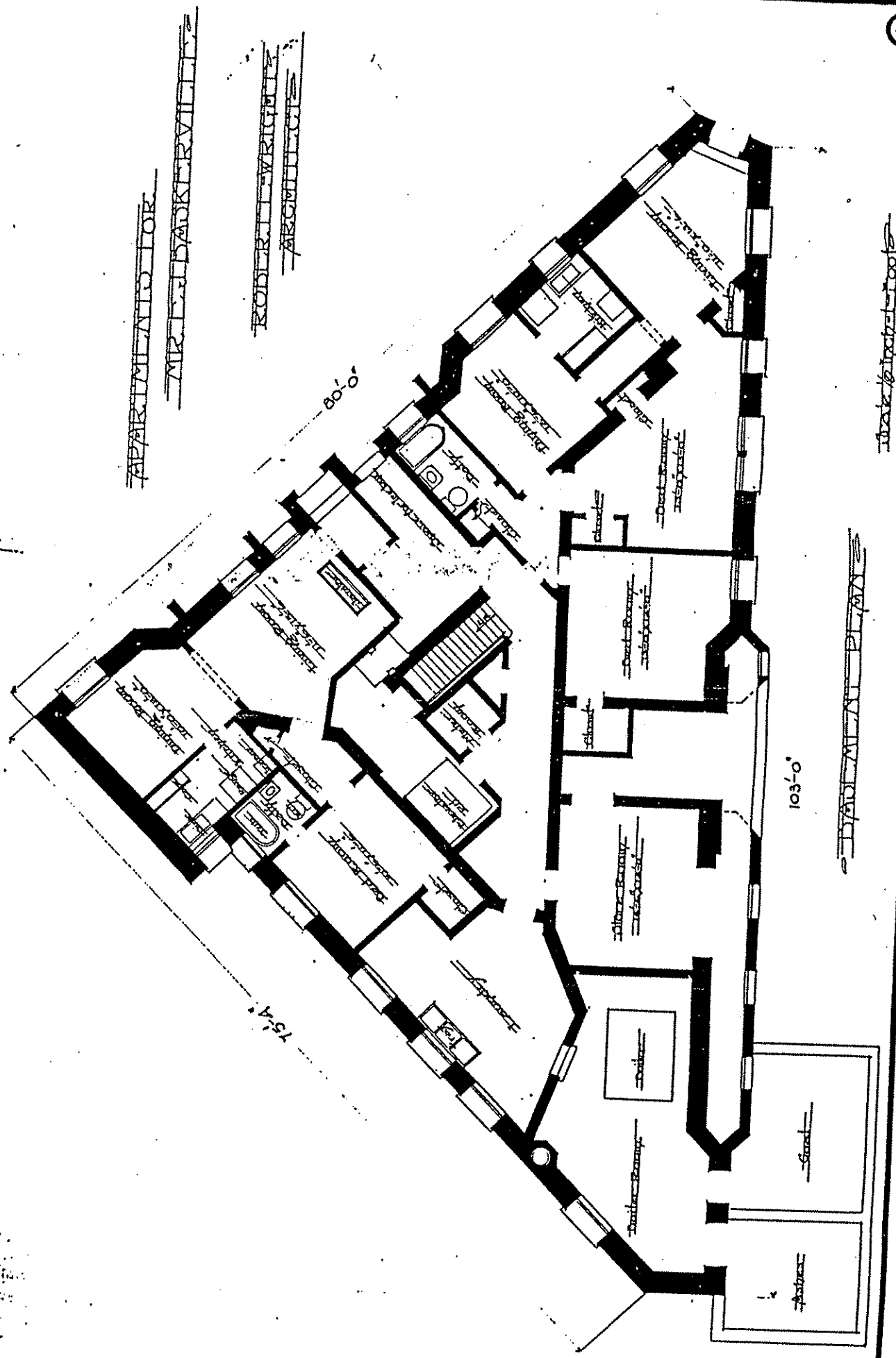
²"Three Million;" Madison City Directories, on file at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.

³Information from the City of Madison Preservation Planner, Municipal Building, Madison, Wisconsin.



View from Northwest





APARTMENT FOR
 MR. BASKERVILLE

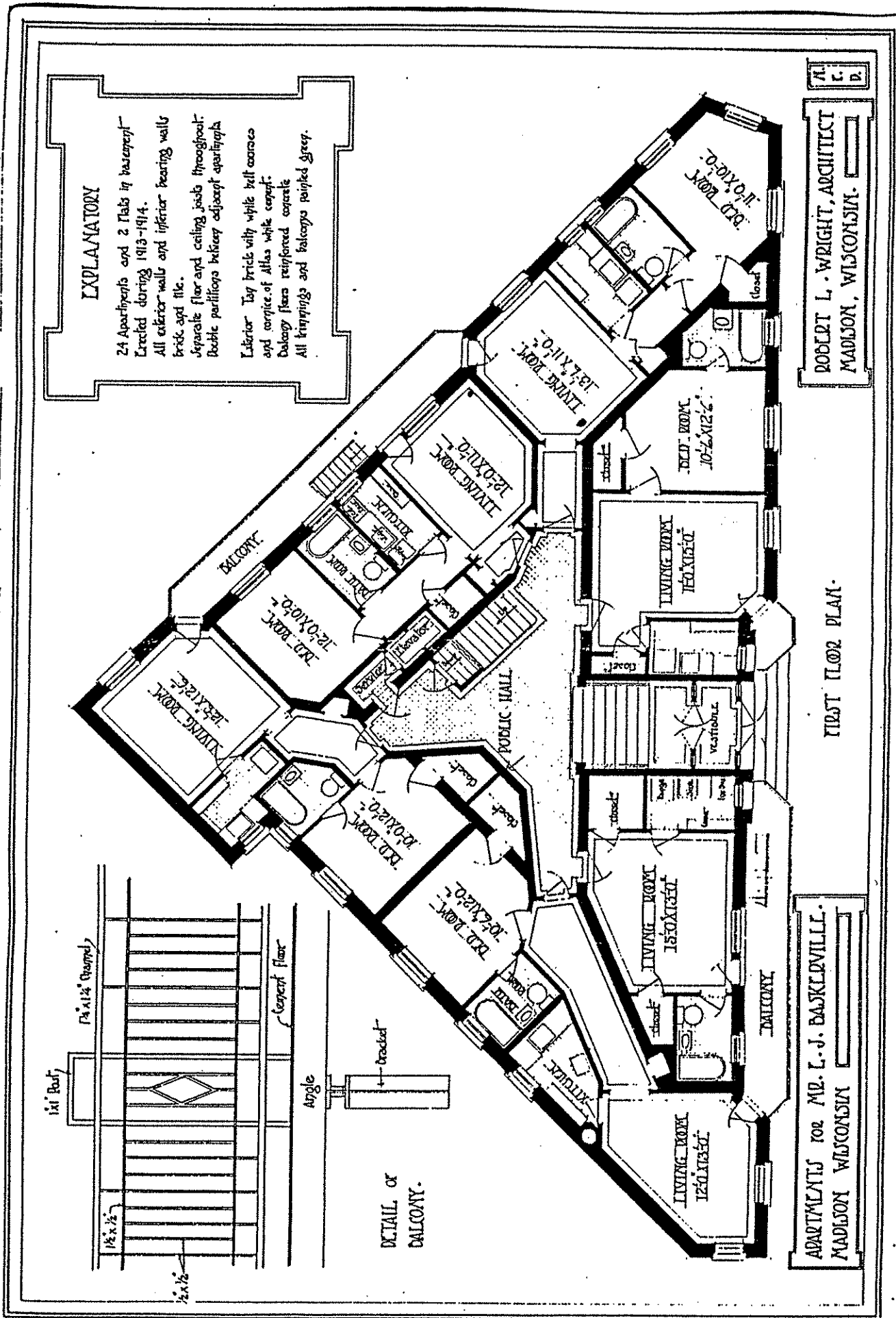
ROBERT WHITE
 ARCHITECT

Water Pump

134'-0"

103'-0"

Figure 1: Baskerville Apartment Building, basement floor plan.



EXPLANATORY

24 Apartments and 2 Flats in basement—
 Erected during 1913-1914.
 All exterior walls and inferior bearing walls
 brick and tile.
 Separate floor and ceiling joists throughout.
 Bubble partitions between adjacent apartments.
 Exterior: Top brick with white bell courses
 and cornice of Atlas white cement.
 Balcony floors reinforced concrete.
 All trimmings and balconys painted grey.

ROBERT L. WRIGHT, ARCHITECT
 MADISON, WISCONSIN.

APARTMENTS FOR MR. L. J. BASKERVILLE.
 MADISON WISCONSIN

FIRST FLOOR PLAN.

Figure 2: Baskerville Apartment Building, first floor floorplan.

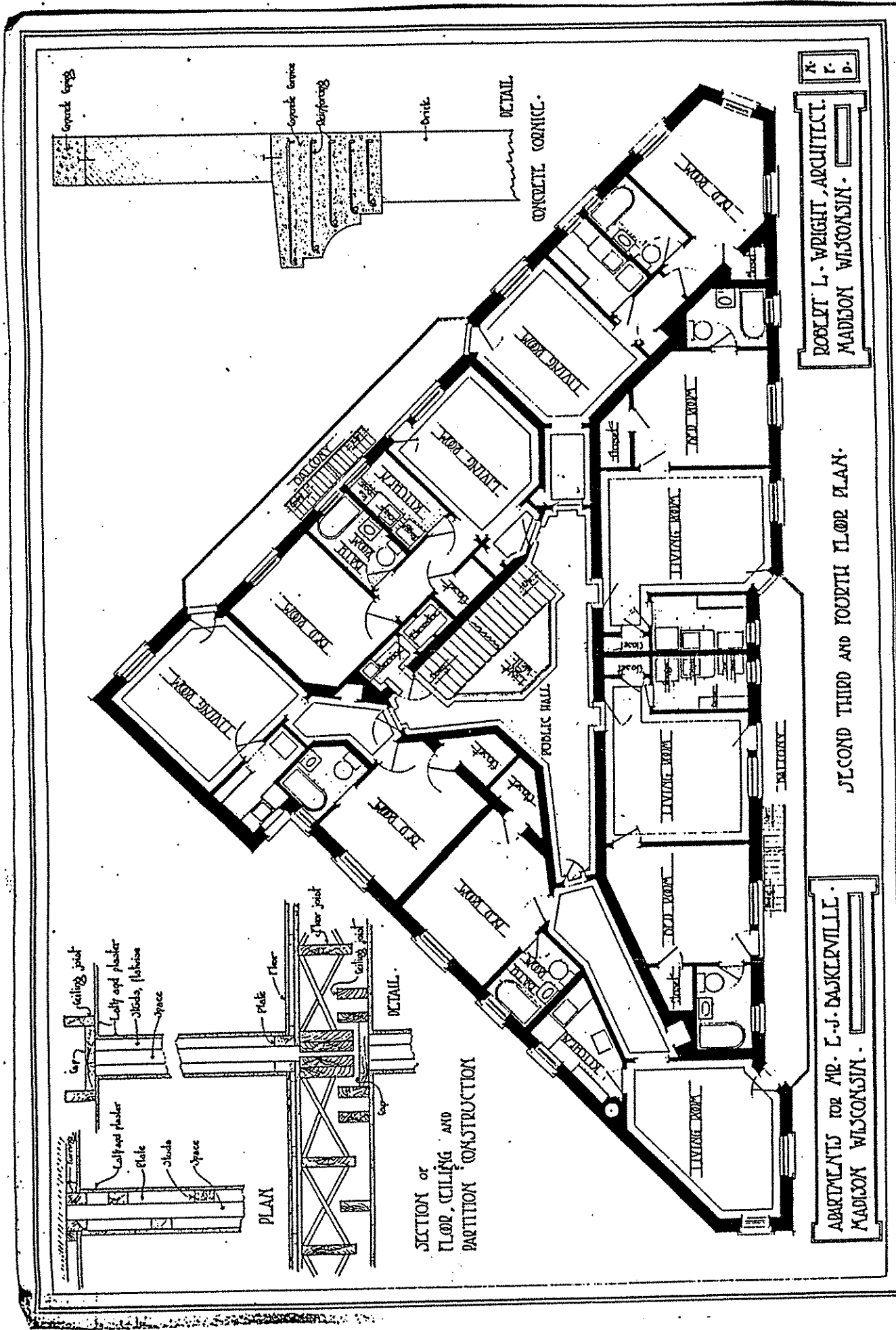


Figure 3: Baskerville Apartment Building, second, third, and fourth floor floorplan.