

Gay Building

Dane County, Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Gay Building

Other names/site number: Churchill Building

Name of related multiple property listing: _____

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing):

2. Location

Street & number: 14-16 N. Carroll Street

City or town: Madison State: WI County: Dane

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following

level(s) of significance: National Statewide Local

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
Daina Penkiunas, Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Officer	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	
In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title:	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- Entered in the National Register
- Determined eligible for the National Register
- Determined not eligible for the National Register
- Removed from the National Register
- Other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the county)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	Buildings
0	0	Sites
0	0	Structures
0	0	Objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE / TRADE

Business

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE / TRADE

Business

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY

AMERICAN MOVEMENTS /

Commercial Style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Limestone, brick, stucco

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Gay Building is a nine-story mixed-used building located at 14-16 N. Carroll Street in Madison, Wisconsin, in a prominent location just west of the Capitol Square and the Wisconsin State Capitol. This Commercial Style office building retains its original tall, slender, and flat-roofed massing, regular fenestration pattern, brick and stone exterior cladding, and interior corridors and elevator lobbies, all typical of late 19th and early 20th century urban “skyscraper” buildings

Narrative Description

Setting

The Gay Building sits mid-block on the southwest side of North Carroll Street between West Mifflin Street and West Washington Street and faces northeast onto the Wisconsin State Capitol and the Capitol Square. The building is surrounded by other commercial, institutional, and religious buildings dating from the mid-19th century to the early 21st century that line the Capitol Square. Like all buildings along the square, the Gay Building is set close to the street, and its ground-floor storefront opens directly onto the sidewalk. A landscaped parkway with mature trees provides a buffer between the sidewalk in front of the building and the street.

Exterior

The massing of the Gay Building is rectangular, with its narrower elevations facing northeast onto Carroll Street and southwest onto a small rear parking lot. The building's poured-in-place reinforced concrete structural frame is clad in buff-colored face brick on all elevations; the concrete frame is exposed on the side and rear elevations, and covered with brick vertical piers and spandrels on the front (northeast) façade. The building features a flat roof that slopes down slightly toward the rear elevation, with a stepped brick parapet rising above the roofline. A one-story penthouse that contains elevator equipment extends from the roof at the center of the northwest elevation, and brick chimneys are located at the northwest and southwest elevations.

The front (northeast) façade of the building features the tripartite composition typical of early 20th-century commercial high-rises, with a sandstone-clad one-story base, a center shaft encompassing the second through eighth stories, and a ninth-story capital demarcated by Neoclassical cornices. The first story contains the main entrance to the building and a single non-historic storefront assembly. The main entrance is located in the northwest bay, and features double doors with single glazed panels that are slightly recessed within the opening (transom?) The entrance is protected by a non-historic cloth awning. The non-historic storefront entrance is located within a single opening that spans the two center bays and features a metal and glass door with single-light sidelight and transom flanked by large display windows. The piers, bulkhead, and sign band surrounding the entrance and display windows are stained wood; "STATE FARM INSURANCE" is spelled out in metal letters on the sign band above the window and entrance openings. A separate display window occupies the southeast bay of the first story and features a stained wood surround that matches the treatment of the center storefront entrance. The three openings at the first story are separated by gray limestone pilasters topped with simple capitals. A sandstone entablature extends above the openings and is ornamented with sandstone discs located above each pilaster.

The center section of the façade is clad with buff-colored face brick and regularly fenestrated with non-historic one-over-one double-hung replacement windows set within the original window openings. The two center bays on the façade feature paired windows separated by brick mullions, and the end bays each contain a single window opening. The structural bays of the center section

Gay Building

Dane County, Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

are articulated on the exterior through brick piers and spandrel panels. The piers begin at sandstone bases ornamented with low-relief crests at the second story and culminate in simple capitals at the eighth story. The ninth-story upper section of the façade is demarcated through dentiled metal cornices above the eighth and ninth stories, which features painted panels that flank the two end bays. Historic photographs show that the façade was originally topped with a tall parapet wall with recessed panels—this parapet was removed at some point and replaced with a shorter brick parapet.

On the southeast and northwest elevations of the building, the concrete structural frame is left exposed, and the openings filled with the same buff-colored brick seen on the front façade. The lower floors of both elevations are obscured by abutting buildings, and the floors above are fenestrated with a combination of single and paired one-over-one double-hung windows. Like the front façade, the windows on these elevations have been replaced with non-historic windows. The rear elevation also features the exposed structural frame infilled with brick and is regularly fenestrated by a grouping of two single one-over-one double-hung windows in the northwest bay of the second through ninth stories, and with paired double-hung windows at each story of the remaining three bays. A metal fire escape extends up the building at the northwest end of the elevation. Large loading dock openings on the elevated first story of the building have been infilled with brick or glass block. A single secondary entrance is located at grade on the center of the elevation; a set of concrete steps leads to a metal platform that has been installed over the entrance.

Interior

The first floor of the building contains the building's main entrance lobby along its northwest end and a retail space that occupies most of the floor.

In the lobby, an enclosed vestibule opens into a narrow entrance lobby that leads to the elevator lobby and original north staircase. The floor of the lobby is covered with non-historic colored square tiles set in a geometric pattern. The walls are clad in non-historic wood wainscoting and picture rail trim.

The retail space on the first floor has been converted to office space, with a large reception area and offices at the northeast end of the floor and additional offices arranged around a central corridor at the southwest end. The polygonal entrance vestibule and display windows at the front of the space are covered with wood paneling that was installed sometime after 1973. The remainder of the space features acoustical tile ceilings, carpeted floors, and simple painted wood trim.

The upper floors of the building contain office spaces in a variety of configurations outside of common elevator lobbies. Most spaces on these floors feature non-historic acoustical tile ceilings, carpeted floors, and painted trim.

Integrity

The Gay Building's exterior retains its original massing, roofline, exterior cladding, and fenestration patterns. The original storefront system that occupied the center and southeast bays

Gay Building

Dane County, Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

of the front façade has been replaced with a non-historic stained wood storefront entrance and display bays; a second display bay that was originally located in the northeast corner bay of the southeast elevation was also obscured (along with much of the lower section of the elevation) by additions to Grace Episcopal church constructed sometime between 1915 and 1942. The original one-over-one double-hung wood windows on all elevations have been replaced with non-historic windows installed within original openings. The configuration of the replacement windows matches the original configuration as seen in historic photographs of the building, except for the end bays on the front façade. The openings in these bays, each of which originally contained a single large double-hung window, now contain pairs of smaller double-hung windows. At the top of the building, the original paneled parapet wall along the front façade has been replaced with a shorter brick parapet.

The interior of the building exhibits alterations that are typical of early 20th-century office buildings. The basic plan of the first floor lobby, the most prominent public space in the building, appears to be intact. Finishes throughout the building appear to be mostly non-historic.

Despite these alterations, the building maintains sufficient integrity to convey its historical significance. It retains integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association, and significant design features and materials—including the massing, roofline, fenestration patterns, exterior cladding, and decorative features on the first and ninth story of the facade—still communicate the original design and workmanship of the building.

END OF DESCRIPTION, DO NOT DELETE

Gay Building

Dane County, Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Gay Building

Dane County, Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND
DEVELOPMENT

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is checked.)

Period of Significance

1915 – 1924

Cultural Affiliation

Significant Dates

1915 – year of completion

Architect/Builder

James R. Law (1885-1952)

Edward J. Law (1891-1983)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Gay Building at 14-16 N. Carroll Street in Madison, Wisconsin, is locally significant under National Register Criterion A in the areas of Commerce and Community Planning and Development for the building's associations with the commercial development of the City of Madison in the early 20th century, and for its role in the development of legislation to limit the height of buildings in the city in the 1910s and 1920s, which in turn had a significant impact on the city's built environment.

Designed by architects James R. Law and Edward J. Law and completed in 1915 for prominent local real estate developer Leonard W. Gay, the nine-story Gay Building was the first high-rise office building erected in the city, and its success showed that Madison could support denser development within its commercial core. The Gay Building's construction from 1913 to 1915 at a prominent location along Madison's Capitol Square, coinciding with the erection of the new Wisconsin State Capitol Building between 1906 and 1917, also ignited an intense decade-long debate among city officials, residents, and planners around how such "skyscrapers" might affect the visual appearance of the city and raised larger questions about the shape of civic life in Madison. Concerns over the Gay Building's height and plans for subsequent tall commercial buildings in the city eventually led the State of Wisconsin to enact legislation restricting the height of buildings around the Capitol Square, and spurred city officials to include similar height limits in Madison's first zoning ordinance passed in 1922. Although the early 1920s legal wrangling

Gay Building

Dane County, Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

surrounding building height restrictions in Madison revolved more immediately around projects like the Belmont Hotel (completed 1924), the planning and construction of the Gay Building starting in the early 1910s served as the opening shot in a protracted battle between local businessmen and boosters who wanted to literally elevate Madison to a modern metropolis, and supporters of the City Beautiful Movement who sought to constrain the scale of development in the city in order to maintain its identity as the center of state government.

Period of Significance and Justification

The Gay Building's period of significance under National Register Criterion A spans from 1915, the year of the building's completion, through 1924, the apparent end of a decade-long public conversation on the City of Madison's building height restrictions.

The construction of tall office and hotel buildings in Madison continued after the Gay Building's completion in 1915 through 1923 when the Wisconsin State Supreme Court upheld both a state law setting building height limits in Wisconsin's urban areas and the City of Madison's own permissive zoning law. The last legal challenge to the construction of downtown Madison's 12-story Belmont Hotel was ruled in the builders' favor in January 1924 and the building was completed in September 1924, shortly after the completion of the nearby 10-story Hotel Loraine in June 1924.

The resolution of state and local legal battles over building height restrictions, followed by the completion of Madison's then-tallest skyscraper, ended most public debates of the topic by the end of 1924, settling most public and government deliberations initiated by the Gay Building's appearance on the Madison skyline and presenting a logical end to the Gay Building's period of significance under National Register Criterion A for Commerce and Community Planning and Development.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Early Development of Downtown Madison, Wisconsin, and the Capitol Square

The Gay Building was completed in 1915 at the center of Madison's growing downtown government and commercial district and close to the city's original 1837 settlement on the isthmus between Lakes Mendota and Monona.

Before White settlement, the area that is today Madison, Wisconsin, had most recently been the home of the Ho-Chunk Nation, the Fox (Meskwaki), and the Sauk, though most Native Americans had been forcibly removed by the early 19th century. In 1829, former federal judge James Duane Doty (1799-1865) purchased 1,200 acres of land on the isthmus, and after Doty's promotion of this scenic and strategic location, the not-yet built future City of Madison was named capital of the Wisconsin Territory by the territorial legislature in 1836. The following year, Madison's first

Gay Building

Dane County, Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

settlers built homes along the banks of Lake Monona, just southeast of today's Capitol Square. Madison was incorporated as a village in 1846 and was named the state capital when Wisconsin became the nation's 30th state in 1848, the same year the University of Wisconsin was founded on Madison's Bascom Hill. The Milwaukee & Mississippi Railroad arrived in the city in 1854 and following a slow start, Madison was incorporated as a city in 1856.¹

The City of Madison was first platted in 1836 by James Duane Doty and surveyor J.V. Suydam, who imposed a regular street grid over the isthmus with four radial streets stretching out from a 14-acre central public square. Eventually the site of a succession of Classical-inspired domed state capitol buildings – the first was completed in 1839, then replaced with a larger 1869 building which was destroyed by fire in 1904 and replaced with the current capitol completed in 1917 – Madison's Capitol Square and its surrounding blocks became the nexus of the city's political, commercial, and social life. By the late 19th century, the four streets that enclosed the square – Main, Carroll, Mifflin, and Pinckney Streets – were a hub of activity with stores, restaurants, hotels, and houses of worship and entertainment (though at least one lot facing the capitol remained vacant until 1901). The city's first streetcar lines converged at the square, and the grounds around the state capitol were the scenes of large and regular public gatherings. The streets surrounding the capitol were also among the first in the city to be paved with brick starting in 1907.²

Though located at the heart of one of Wisconsin's most important government and commercial centers, even by the 1910s construction in downtown Madison and around its Capitol Square did not exceed four stories and was mostly composed of two- and three-story brick structures. The small scale of Madison's downtown would not remain so for long, and the city's skyline would change dramatically with the 1915 completion of the Gay Building, the new state capitol dome, and the construction of two additional "skyscraper"-style tall buildings in 1924.³

College and Government Town – or Metropolis? Madison's Development in the Early 20th Century

The early 20th century marked a period of rapid expansion and development in Madison, Wisconsin. While in 1900 the city ranked ninth in the state in terms of overall population, with just over 19,000 residents, by 1922 its population had more than doubled to approximately 42,000, making it the largest city in the state after Milwaukee.⁴ As its population grew, the City of Madison embarked upon an ambitious program of annexation beyond its historic center on the isthmus

¹ University of Wisconsin-Madison, Morgridge Center for Public Service, "A History of Madison," accessed October 5, 2024, https://morgridge.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2017/02/History_of_Madison.pdf; Leigh Mollenhoff, James R. Sanborn, and Lois Stoler, *Sandstone and Buffalo Robes: Madison's historic buildings* (Madison, WI: City of Madison Landmarks Commission, 1973); Barbara Wyatt, ed., *Cultural Resource Management Plan in Wisconsin* (Madison, WI: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986), 7-1.

² David V. Mollenhoff, *Madison: A History of the Formative Years* (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1982), 20, 150, 178, 180, 202, 246, 287.

³ Harry Wilkinson, *Pictorial souvenir of the police and fire departments and Madison, Wisconsin* (Des Moines, IA: American Lithographing & Printing Co., 1912); "Six Photos of Capitol Square, 40 Years Ago and Today," *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), November 17, 1956, 4; "Wisconsin Capitols," Wisconsin Historical Society, accessed October 5, 2024, <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Article/CS2903>.

⁴ Maurice N. Blakemore, ed. *Moody's Rating Book Service: Governments and Municipals, 1922* (New York: Moody's Investors Service, 1922), 1772.

Gay Building

Dane County, Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

separating Lake Monona and Lake Mendota, accumulating approximately 1,100 acres of additional land between 1903 and 1918 that increased the size of the city by over 30 percent. At the same time, suburban development around the city expanded, spurred by easier movement to and from the city by automobiles. Madison's University of Wisconsin campus, the flagship of the state's university system, also grew during this period, adding over 500 acres to its hilltop site in the 1910s.⁵

The city's evolution in the first decades of the 20th century was a cause for celebration for some civic leaders and for the city's business community. Madison's status as a "second-class city"—the state's official classification for municipalities with under 40,000 citizens—at the turn of the century had been a source of embarrassment for them, and they actively sought the kind of commercial and industrial growth that would transform Madison from a modest town that largely revolved around the activities of the state government and university to "a large bustling and therefore respectable city" that could rival Milwaukee.⁶ Local booster organizations like The Forty Thousand Club and the Madison Board of Commerce promoted (but ultimately failed to procure) an interurban network for the city, encouraged the establishment of factories employing highly-skilled labor in the city's East Side, and encouraged tourism by advertising Madison as the ideal convention city to state and national associations.⁷

However, another faction of Madison's citizenry largely made up of state government workers, university employees, and the city's professional class was less pleased with the changes they saw occurring within the city. These residents viewed the rising population and expansion of the city as threats to the "sophisticated, quiet, clean beautiful college town and state capital."⁸ They feared that unbridled development would destroy the natural beauty of the city, and that its governmental and educational sectors would be overrun by commercial and industrial interests. Rising commercial pressure around the Capitol Square was already evident in the evolution of State Street, which connected the square to the University of Wisconsin campus. In 1900, State Street had been largely residential, but by the early 1910s had become a bustling avenue of retail storefronts.⁹

Of greatest concern among the "anti-metropolis" faction in Madison was the effect that larger and taller buildings would have on the new Wisconsin State Capitol Building that was rising in the center of Capitol Square. When the former capitol building was destroyed by fire in February of 1904, a state-appointed Building Commission was formed to investigate replacing the 19th-century building with a new, larger structure to meet the expanding needs and reach of state government.¹⁰ Two years later, the commission selected New York architect George B. Post (1837-1913) to design the building, and construction began in 1907. Post's impressive Neo-Classical design with its 225-foot-tall center dome quickly became a point of immense pride among the citizens of

⁵ *Madison: A History of the Formative Years*, 351.

⁶ *Ibid*, 262 & 358.

⁷ *Ibid*, 286.

⁸ *Ibid*, 267.

⁹ *Ibid*, 285.

¹⁰ D.N. Anderson, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination: Wisconsin State Capitol, Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin, 1970*; "State Capitol Timeline," Wisconsin State Government Website, accessed July 8, 2024, <https://tours.wisconsin.gov/pub/Content.aspx?p=History>.

Gay Building

Dane County, Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

Madison, and the local press ran countless articles recounting the progress of construction. To Madison residents, the rising Capitol Building would not only serve as a symbol of the importance of state government to the city's identity but also as a way-finding tool for visitors and an architectural jewel in the city's crown. Many feared, however, that if commercial development was allowed to continue unchecked around the new Capitol, it would soon be surrounded by blocks of skyscrapers that would diminish its visual prominence.

With these concerns front of mind, the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association (MMPDA) commissioned Cambridge, Massachusetts-based planner John Nolen (1869-1937) to prepare a plan for the city that could guide future development.¹¹ The concept of city planning was at this time still in its infancy in the United States, initially emerging out of the late 1890s City Beautiful Movement that sought to design urban centers according to classical aesthetic principles and to emphasize ceremonial processions of buildings and ample greenspace. Like many early city planners, Nolan's planning work grew out of his interest in landscape architecture. In 1903, he abandoned his career in education to enroll in the landscape architecture program at Harvard University and opened an office on Harvard Square the next year. Although his early work focused on the design of municipal parks and subdivisions, in 1905 Nolen accepted his first commission to develop a comprehensive plan for the town of Kingsport, Tennessee.¹² Nolen's plan for the City of Madison was another early commission that marked the beginning of his 30-year career as one of the most prominent and influential city planning consultants in the country and sparked a life-long interest in the design of small cities.¹³ Under the guidance of the "Committee of Fifty," an advisory committee consisting of 50 Madison citizens including Wisconsin Governor James O. Davidson (1854-1922), University of Wisconsin President Charles Van Hise (1857-1918), and dozens of Madison business leaders, Nolen began work on the Madison city plan in early 1909.¹⁴

In his plan for Madison, released to the public in September 1910 and published the following year as *Madison: A Model City*, John Nolen identified several distinguishing characteristics on which the city should capitalize, including its unique topography and location between Lakes Mendota and Monona; its designation as the state capital; its role as the seat of the state university; and as a city of homes. These characteristics also coincided neatly with those aspects of the city favored by Madison's professional class. Among his numerous recommendations for the city, which included securing lakefront land for public use, providing playgrounds and public parks, and removing power lines and other obstruction from city streets, Nolen urged city officials "to pass suitable laws for the protection of the environs of the State Capitol."¹⁵ Nolen elaborated on this recommendation in his analysis of the city in its role as state capital:

¹¹ The MMPDA was incorporated in 1894, and Olin served as president of the organization until 1910. The MMPDA's mission, as its name suggests, was in funding and developing parks and scenic drives in and around Madison, and the organization served as the city's unofficial parks department until the Madison Park Commission was established in the early 1930s. Nolen was initially sought by Olin and the MMPDA to design a plan for Madison's park system, but at his first meeting with the organization, Nolen made an impassioned case for developing a comprehensive city plan instead. Mollenhoff, 344.

¹² Charles Birnbaum and Julie Fix, ed. *Pioneers of American Landscape Design II: An Annotated Bibliography* (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, 1995), 104-105.

¹³ Park Dixon Goist, *From Main Street to State Street: Town, City, and Community in America* (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1977), 131-134.

¹⁴ Mollenhoff, 345.

¹⁵ John Nolen, *Madison: A Model City* (Boston, MA: John Nolen, 1911), 141.

The first need is to control the upbuilding around Capitol Square. At the present time, no special restrictions are placed upon this property and yet it is of the utmost importance that not only the height but the architectural character of all buildings around this square should be reasonably regulated. . . . Action should be taken without delay for the demands upon these blocks are rapidly changing, and the ‘skyscraper’ or other offensive structures may be begun at any time.¹⁶

Developer Leonard W. Gay and the Construction of the Gay Building

Among the members of the “Committee of Fifty” tapped to oversee Nolen’s preparation of Madison’s new city plan was prominent local real estate developer Leonard W. Gay (1864-1934). A native of Madison, Gay briefly worked in his father’s tailor shop on Pinckney Street before purchasing his first property in the city in 1884.¹⁷ Through the 1880s and 1890s Gay steadily grew his real estate business, expanding from small-scale commercial and residential properties to residential subdivisions. In 1899, Gay collaborated with draftsmen O. Anson and M. B. Stone to produce the *New Atlas of Dane County Wisconsin*, a color-coded atlas of the county that provided detailed information for every municipality and township, including land parcels, buildings, and ownership information for larger holdings. Gay compiled the information for the atlas himself using existing surveys and county records.¹⁸ After an unsuccessful run for mayor in 1900, Gay again turned his attention to real estate development, establishing the Monona Bay subdivision in 1909 while continuing to purchase single parcels throughout the city for development.¹⁹ In addition to his real estate work, Gay also purchased a 481-acre parcel along Lake Wingra just southwest of the Madison isthmus in 1902 and operated a dairy farm on the property for nearly ten years.²⁰

In early 1911, less than one year after John Nolen’s plan for Madison was approved by the Committee of Fifty, Gay revealed plans for his most ambitious project yet—an eight-story office tower in a prominent location along North Carroll Street on the Capitol Square. Proposed for a narrow site then occupied by a small two-story wood frame store, Gay’s skyscraper would be the tallest in the state outside of Milwaukee and nearly twice as tall as any existing structure on the square, even rivaling the steeple of its neighbor Grace Episcopal Church. Leonard Gay’s ambitious venture directly challenged Nolen’s 1910 admonition against constructing tall commercial buildings that would visually compete with the new Capitol Building.²¹

Gay’s proposal for his new downtown office building brought into sharp focus the two competing visions for Madison’s future development. The local business community wondered if the

¹⁶ Ibid, 35-36.

¹⁷ “High Board Fence Around U. W. When Gay Family Came,” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), March 16, 1931, 4. Henry Noll, “Sunday Thoughts,” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), November 4, 1934, 4.

¹⁸ *New Atlas of Dane County Wisconsin, 1899* (Madison, WI: Leonard W. Gay & Co., 1899), title page.

¹⁹ “1900: Nolan Guilty of Slaying,” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), October 5, 1952, 77; “L.W. Gay, 70, City Realty Leader, Dies,” *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), October 27, 1934, 1.

²⁰ Jason Tish. “Historic Resource Nomination: Gay Building,” Undated draft, 5.

²¹ Stuart D. Levitan, *Madison: The Illustrated Sesquicentennial History, Volume 1: 1856-1931* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 189; *Pictorial souvenir of the police and fire departments and Madison, Wisconsin; Madison: A Model City*, 44.

Gay Building

Dane County, Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

proposed Gay Building would be economically viable, and worried that such a dense development along the square would strain city services. The *Wisconsin State Journal* calculated that “[w]hen all the floor space is occupied” in the building, “if all its offices are emptied at 5 o’clock at night, additional [street] car service would be needed to accommodate its tenants.”²² The most vocal critics of the proposed Gay Building were those who supported John Nolen’s vision for the city and the area surrounding the Capitol Building. They understood that, if erected, Gay’s new office building would set a precedent for more tall buildings on the Capitol Square and encourage other Madison developers to follow suit with even taller structures that would radically transform the city’s commercial district. In his inaugural address in August 1912, Madison’s newly-elected Mayor John B. Heim (1848-1919) summarized the opposition to Gay’s proposed tower while not explicitly mentioning the building, stating that “[w]e hope and expect to see Madison grow to a city of 75,000 to 100,000 population. This might be a temptation for skyscrapers. Buildings that might obscure the vision of the dome at a distance.” Heim went further, proclaiming that “[t]o guard against any intrusion of this kind, I would recommend the passage of an ordinance prohibiting the building of any structure higher than the cornice of the new capitol building.”²³

Simultaneously, the Wisconsin state legislature also considered taking the matter into its own hands. In March 1911, the *Wisconsin State Journal* reported that the question of limiting building heights around the Capitol Square was “agitating certain members of the legislature, and it looks as though a bill to this effect will be introduced soon.”²⁴ The newspaper included a small poll of Madison citizens to gauge support for the proposed bill along with the article, and, as expected, opinion was split. Charles J. Kirch, who in 1910 had proposed his own plans to build an eight-story hotel on West Main Street, was against the height limit measure, claiming that “I cannot see what difference the erection of an eight-story building on the square can make in the beauty of Madison. I should think if anything it would add dignity and improve the general appearance of Madison’s business district.”²⁵ Reverend F. A. Gilmore represented the other side and supported regulating buildings around the square, noting that “[t]he skyline of Chicago, New York, and Buffalo is perfectly shapeless, a mixture of long and high buildings. The skyline of Paris, as anyone can see in taking pictures, is beautiful. The buildings are of uniform height and the architecture is regulated. Such communities have a beautiful plan, strictly followed. It should be so in Madison.”²⁶

The early debates in 1911 and 1912 surrounding the proposed Gay Building echoed those taking place in other cities across the country concerning the effect of commercial skyscrapers on America’s urban fabric. While many business leaders saw the construction of ever-taller buildings as a sign of progress and economic success, opponents of the new skyscrapers argued that they blocked light from the street, and that a proliferation of such buildings created “canyon effects” and increased congestion in downtown districts. To stem the tide of skyscrapers, many cities across the country also instituted building height limits like those being proposed in Madison. Chicago established its first height limit in 1893, limiting buildings to 130 feet above grade; the limit was

²² “Gay Building Said to Be Tallest in State Outside of Milwaukee,” *Wisconsin State Journal*, February 21, 1915, 9.

²³ “Mayor Heim’s Inaugural Message,” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), April 16, 1912, 4.

²⁴ “Skyscrapers Have Foes and Friends Among Madison Men,” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), March 6, 1911, 10.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

Gay Building

Dane County, Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

later raised several times before the city adopted its first zoning ordinance in 1923.²⁷ Other cities, including Boston, Cleveland, Denver, and St. Louis also implemented height limits during this period.²⁸

With no formal city or state regulations yet in place to restrict development, Gay was free to move forward with his controversial plan. In 1913, he commissioned Madison architects James R. Law (1885-1952) and Edward J. Law (1891-1983) to design the new office building. The two architects were brothers, both born in Madison to local stone mason James R. Law II and his wife Amelia Kindschi. James Law began his architectural career as a draftsman at Claude & Starck in 1903 and studied at the University of Pennsylvania School of Architecture from 1907 to 1909. After working again for Claude & Starck (1909-1910) and under the University of Wisconsin supervising architect Arthur Peabody (1910-1913), Law founded his own firm in Madison in 1913. James's younger brother Edward followed in his footsteps, graduating with a degree in architecture from the University of Pennsylvania in 1916.²⁹

Although he did not formally join his brother's practice until 1917, Edward Law was largely responsible for the design of the Gay Building, which was the firm's first significant commission. In an interview with the *Wisconsin State Journal* in 1981, Law recalled that "Jim didn't like to design so much, so I designed the Gay Building for him." Law designed the eight-story building with a reinforced-concrete framing system, a relatively new method of construction for tall buildings. In keeping with design conventions established by earlier skyscrapers pioneered in Chicago, Law restricted ornamentation to the building's front façade, which was arranged in a tripartite composition and faced with brick and stone.³⁰

Ground was broken for the project in late 1913, and construction continued through the spring and summer of 1914. In August of 1914, Leonard Gay applied for a permit to add a ninth floor to the building, which only magnified the visual effect of the new structure. In late November, Gay announced that all but four offices in the building had been leased, putting to rest concerns among the business community on the economic viability of a tall commercial office building in Madison.³¹ The final cost of the nine-story Gay Building was believed to be \$150,000.³²

The new Gay Building brought to downtown Madison a "giant business building" more akin to those seen in Milwaukee and Chicago, offering, according to a July 1914 *Wisconsin State Journal* profile of the new office tower "[b]eauty, but not at the sacrifice of convenience."³³ The building's reinforced concrete frame accommodated open floor plans and maximum flexibility when laying out upper floor offices, and, along with the rear fire escape systems, provided tenants assurance of

²⁷ Pauline A. Saliga, Joh, Zukowsky and Jane H. Clarke, eds. *The Sky's the Limit: A Century of Chicago Skyscrapers* (New York: Rizzoli, 1990), 11.

²⁸ "War on Skyscrapers," *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), May 29, 1914, 2.

²⁹ Katherine Rankin and Tim Heggland, *Madison Intensive Survey*, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, 1994, 182-184.

³⁰ William R. Wineke, "Edward Law 'conceived' Madison," *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), July 5, 1981, 6.

³¹ "Work on Madison skyscraper begun," *Wisconsin State Journal*, December 19, 1913, 7; "Will Add Story," *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), August 3, 1914; *Wisconsin State Journal*, November 14, 1914, 2.

³² "Architects see great year in building here," *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), April 13, 1914, 1.

³³ "Madison's tallest building is nearing completion," *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), July 10, 1914, 2.

Gay Building

Dane County, Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

safety in the event of fire. Accessed from the small Carroll Street entrance lobby, two passenger elevators “embody the latest improvements in elevator construction” with speeds up to 300 feet a minute, more than double the speed of the fastest elevators in the city at the new State Capitol Building.³⁴ Gay boasted that the modern elevators converted skeptical tenants used to working closer to the ground; “Odd, isn’t it?” Gay noted to the newspaper, “that the second floor is the hardest to rent. When prospective tenants find out that the elevator service is going to be nearly perfect they prefer to go higher. The higher the better they say, hence our extra story.”³⁵ Anticipating a wide range of future tenants, “[n]o permanent partitions are to be used on a single floor, the builders believing that they can please their patrons better with movable partitions which will permit a suite to be divided as the renter sees fit.”³⁶

As the building neared completion, Leonard Gay was himself sensitive to accusations from his critics that the new skyscraper would mar Madison’s picturesque skyline. The reporter for the July 1914 *Wisconsin State Journal* profile included what was likely Gay’s own defense of his oversized real estate creation:

While from the street the building will appear immense when completed, it is really a pigmy aside the massive capitol building. The roof will be about on a level with the top of the wings of the state house. The dome of the capitol reaches many feet higher in the air. The Gay building will not obstruct the view of the dome from a single place more than a city block or two away.³⁷

At its completion, the Gay Building was a commercial success, its 35,000 square feet of new office space already fully rented. The first tenants in Madison’s first skyscraper included doctors, dentists, lawyers, realtors, engineers. The Gay Building’s developer Leonard Gay and his business partner Chandler B. Chapman set up offices on the second floor, and its architect James R. Law occupied a space on the sixth floor. Other early tenants included businesses including Madison Bond Company, the Wisconsin Guaranty Investment Company, Geisler & Neckerman Insurance Company and the Roden Florida Grapefruit Company. And with the new state capitol across the street still unfinished in 1915 (though its large dome was completed that year), several state offices made their home in the new Gay Building, including the State Boards of Immigration and Agriculture, the State Highway Commissioner, the Engineering Department of the Railroad and Tax Commission, the State Superintendent of Schools, and the Board of Normal Regents. Its large ground floor store space could house one or two retail tenants and would later be fitted out for the Bank of Madison.³⁸

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ “Office Directory of the Gay Building,” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), March 10, 1915; Jim Clark, “City’s First ‘Skyscraper’ Was Considered Risky Venture in ’13,” *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), August 28, 1957; “Madison’s tallest building is nearing completion;” “New Bank Leases Space in Gay Bldg.,” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), May 26, 1936, 20.

Gay Building

Dane County, Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

To celebrate the Gay Building's opening, on February 18, 1915 the Madison Realty Board hosted a banquet at the Park Hotel with Leonard Gay as guest of honor.³⁹ Although Gay noted in his remarks to the group "the trepidation that was at first felt when the plans for the new building were considered," the overall tone of the evening was jubilant, with the *Wisconsin State Journal* reporting that "[a]ll of the speakers were enthusiastic in their prophesies of the future of this city and the immediate continuance of the work that Mr. Gay has started by giving the city its first skyscraper."⁴⁰

Although lauded by the business community, the completed Gay Building was still viewed with revulsion and fear by Madison's City Beautiful supporters increasingly concerned about the fate of the city's Capitol Square and surrounding commercial district. In a pointed lecture entitled "Madison: What Nature has Done for It and What Man has Done to It," artist and director of the Milwaukee Art Society Dudley Crafts Watson extolled the virtues of the new State Capitol Building and directly criticized the Gay Building as a harbinger of worse to come, proclaiming "I see no excuse in a town this size for skyscrapers." Watson warned the audience that "[s]ooner or later you will as a city spend great fortunes in beautifying the surroundings of the capitol. Things seem to be necessary now from a commercial standpoint, but in a very short time you will be forced to remove these things."⁴¹

Other critics took more direct aim at the Leonard Gay's new downtown skyscraper. While visiting the city in 1916, President of the American Press Association Courtland Smith all but condemned the city for allowing the Gay Building to go up:

If this town had anything like civic pride it would allow no high building to appear here and mutilate the best capital square and capital lay-out in the country. But it wouldn't have been as bad as it is if it had been decently done. You have one of the most wonderful views in the world from University hall, overlooking the city with its wonderful dome center. And there that crude wall of raw brick stands up like a sore tooth. It's simply hideous.⁴²

In its reporting on the Gay Building and the city's reaction to it, the *Wisconsin State Journal* addressed both sides of this contentious local issue, recognizing that the building represented a tremendous economic achievement for the city even as it posed a serious threat to its unique aesthetic qualities. While warning in a February 1915 editorial that "the Gay building rises to heights which, if copied by other builders, will permanently injure the possibilities of building here the American city beautiful," the newspaper's editorial staff also marveled at Leonard Gay's boldness as a developer:

But we are glad to forget in this hour that Mr. Gay permitted his ambition to overreach the finer and artistic dreams of the city. It is because he had faith in the future

³⁹ "To Banquet Man Who Built Nine Story Building," *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), February 16, 1915, 9.

⁴⁰ "Honor Man Who Built Madison's First Skyscraper," *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), February 18, 1915, 9.

⁴¹ "Madison Lacks Aesthetic View, Says Milwaukeean," *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), April 11, 1915, 4; Helen Breen, ed., "Society," *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), March 16, 1915, 5.

⁴² "Declares City Not Wide Awake," *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), June 5, 1916, 2.

Gay Building

Dane County, Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

of Madison and dared to put up a building that measures the potential possibilities of the town, that we honor him, -- it is because, when others told him that his scheme was too big for this town, he went ahead and did a big thing; challenged the town to grow up to his dream. He has set a pace for and thrown a challenge to the commercial and industrial interests of Madison. Mr. Gay, we salute you. Let us march abreast with you for a bigger and better Madison.⁴³

The Gay Building's Aftermath: The Fight to Limit Madison's Building Heights (1915-1924)

In the years immediately following the 1915 opening of the Gay Building, the citizens of Madison waited for an inevitable influx of tall buildings into the city's commercial district. Some developers publicly considered the possibility of following in Leonard Gay's footsteps. In 1916, local grocers Howard, Samuel, Alfred, and Charles Piper (collectively known as the Piper brothers) announced plans to build an office building of seven or eight stories on North Pinckney Street.⁴⁴ But temporary labor and supply shortages brought on by World War I made ambitious speculative building more difficult, and the Gay Building remained the tallest commercial building in Madison through the 1910s and early 1920s. The Capitol Building remained unfinished for another two years after the completion of the Gay Building, and some government offices were temporarily housed in the new Gay Building as they awaited the capitol's completion, which was finally achieved in 1917.⁴⁵

Although no other tall buildings were constructed in Madison until the early 1920s, the public discourse surrounding tall buildings around Madison's Capitol Square that began with the Gay Building evolved in the late 1910s with the advent of municipal zoning laws that regulated building height, density, and land use. New York was the first American city to adopt a city-wide zoning ordinance in 1916 with the new regulations requiring that buildings be stepped back as they ascended, allowing for more light and air to reach the street below and preventing the dreaded 'canyon' effect. Although there remained questions surrounding the constitutionality of zoning, many cities across the United States enthusiastically followed New York's example in the 1920s and established their own zoning laws.

In Madison, interest in creating a city zoning ordinance of its own began in earnest around 1920, when the Common Council created the city's first Plan Commission using state-enabling legislation that had been drafted by city planner John Nolen in 1909.⁴⁶ In June 1921, the Plan Commission and Common Council officially moved forward with their zoning effort, hiring prominent St. Louis-based planning consultant Harland Bartholomew to prepare a street plan, transportation plan, and zoning ordinance for the city.⁴⁷

⁴³ "Salutations to Mr. Gay," *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), February 17, 1915, 2.

⁴⁴ "Improvement of square is underway," *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), July 19, 1916, 1; "Business Boom on in Madison; Coming Spring Will See Many Changes in Business Districts," *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), October 15, 1916, 11.

⁴⁵ "Few State Offices Outside Capitol," *Waupun Democrat* (Waupun, WI), October 1, 1915, 2.

⁴⁶ Levitan, 184.

⁴⁷ "Ask city to hire expert," *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), June 10, 1921, 2; "8 Zones Planned for City," *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), April 11, 1922, 1.

Gay Building

Dane County, Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

Just as the city prepared to take up zoning, the state legislature also moved to regulate the area around the capitol, passing a bill limiting the height of buildings around the Capitol Square to 90 feet in May 1921. Although the state assembly's justification for the height limit was ostensibly to mitigate the risk of fire around the capitol building, the public conversation surrounding the bill focused squarely on the effect of tall buildings on the State Capitol Building and the aesthetic of the city as a whole.⁴⁸ An editorial published in the April 20, 1921, edition of *The Capital Times* was typical of the rhetoric of the city's anti-skyscraper faction, and echoed the arguments against the Gay Building made nearly a decade earlier:

The people of Wisconsin have erected here a beautiful \$7,000,000 building. It is one of the architectural triumphs of the world. It is a building that fittingly typifies the dignity and majesty of the state of Wisconsin. . . . The people of Wisconsin have a right to expect a spirit of reverence from the citizens of Madison with respect to the building. They have a right to expect that the city of Madison will continue to maintain a setting and a background for the capitol building that will be in keeping with the structure itself. . . . The *Capital Times* believes that no consideration of trade or profit should permit the establishment of a sordid and jagged sky line around the capitol that will unjustly interfere with the best possible view of this great building.”⁴⁹

The newspaper also reiterated the same warnings about traffic congestion brought by tall buildings that were voiced when the Gay Building was announced, claiming that “[i]t is not a good thing from a business standpoint to congest business in Madison around the square. The loop, from a business standpoint, is a curse to Chicago. The continued erection of skyscrapers around the square will have a tendency toward congestion and some day this will present a big problem to the city.”⁵⁰

A small survey conducted by *The Capital Times* on the proposed legislation in its May 4, 1921, edition also showed the shadow that the Gay Building cast over the current zoning debate. William Ellery Leonard, a poet and professor at the University of Wisconsin, proclaimed “I am absolutely and thoroughly opposed to skyscrapers being erected around the square. I have often noticed from various points west of the city how the beauty of the capitol has already been interfered with by that rock of stone, the Gay Building.” Mrs. William Kittle concurred, saying that “[t]he Gay building is at least three stories too high.”⁵¹

On April 11, 1922, Bartholomew submitted a draft of zoning ordinance to the city, which included a 90-foot height limit around the Capitol Square and the surrounding commercial district that matched the state legislation enacted the year before.⁵² In a series of public meetings held through the following six months, local developers and businessmen came out in force to oppose the ordinance, arguing that the height limit would have a chilling effect on new development. Among

⁴⁸ “Measure by Caldwell is Given O.K.,” *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), May 26, 1921, 1.

⁴⁹ “The Capitol or Skyscrapers,” *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), April 20, 1921, 12.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ “Madison Citizens Discuss Proposal to Limit Height of Buildings,” *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), May 4, 1921, 4.

⁵² “Tentative Zoning Ordinance For Madison Received Here,” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), April 11, 1922, 1 & 18; “Suit may result from zoning rule,” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), April 14, 1922, 22.

Gay Building

Dane County, Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

the most vocal critics of the state and city height limits were the Piper brothers, whose initial plans for a tall office tower on Pinckney Street had evolved into an eleven-story hotel that would rise to 125 feet. Sam E. Piper claimed at a public hearing on the city's proposed zoning ordinance in June 1922 that "[w]e can make more money by raising potatoes on the lot and selling them in our store," than constructing a new building to the height limit.⁵³ Other developers who were in the process of planning buildings downtown that exceeded the height limits also expressed their displeasure with the new ordinance and with the state law. Charles H. Tenney, who with his brother William was planning a taller office building to replace their existing building at East Main and South Pinckney Streets, complained to in the *Wisconsin State Journal* that the state law was responsible for delaying the project, and hinted that "[i]f the new council passes the proposed zoning ordinance. . . a suit will be started to test the legality of the limitation clause."⁵⁴ Former city building commissioner Phillip Dean also held the opinion that "[n]either the state nor the city should attempt to regulate the height of buildings in capitol square," claiming that such regulations deprived property owners around the Capitol Square "of earning a reasonable return on their investment."⁵⁵

Despite these objections, the Common Council passed Madison's first zoning ordinance in November of 1922, although it increased the height limit for commercial buildings in and around the Capitol Square to 100 feet, 10 feet higher than initially proposed by Harland Bartholomew.⁵⁶ With both city and state laws to contend with, Madison's developers took the fight over building heights to the courts. The Piper brothers quickly filed suit against the state, arguing that the 90-foot height limit law was unconstitutional.⁵⁷ The case was appealed to the Wisconsin Supreme Court, who ruled in favor of the Pipers, stating that the law was not "a valid exercise of the police power of the state."⁵⁸

Although the press speculated that the City of Madison would repeal its own 100-foot limit in response to the ruling on the state law, the Common Council stood firm, claiming that "the city maintained a legal right to regulate the height of new buildings within its municipal borders."⁵⁹

In a surprise move, however, Alder D. C. Sullivan agreed with the Pipers' request to introduce an amendment to the zoning ordinance that would raise the height limit to 115 feet, which would allow the Pipers to build to eleven stories.⁶⁰ The amendment, which was approved by the council by a vote of sixteen to four at its meeting on June 8, 1923, was a compromise that the council likely hoped would prevent the Pipers from filing suit against the city. Although Harland

⁵³ "City Zone Law in Opposed at Public Hearing," *The Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), June 20, 1922, 1.

⁵⁴ "Suit May Result from Zoning Rule."

⁵⁵ "Dean Opposes Limit on Building Height," *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), June 26, 1922, 4.

⁵⁶ "Ten-foot line on both sides is recommended," *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), July 11, 1922, 1; "Experts Make New Changes in Zone Law," *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), July 31, 1922, 3; "Measure Adopted by 15-4," *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), November 21, 1922, 1.

⁵⁷ "Pipers' Test of Height Law to High Court," *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), April 13, 1923, 1; "Planning Body Is Silent On Height Limit," *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), April 13, 1923, 6.

⁵⁸ "High Court Holds Law Not Valid," *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), May 25, 1923, 1.

⁵⁹ Tish, 12.

⁶⁰ "Building Height Limit in City Raised to 115 Feet by Council Act," *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), May 26, 1923, 9; "Protest Cost of Farm Land Here Tonight," *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), June 8, 1923, 7; "Council Raises Building Height Limit," *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), June 9, 1923, 1.

Gay Building

Dane County, Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

Bartholomew argued that the amendment was “a mistake,” warning the council that it would “give others who desire to go higher a specific instance to cite that will show the ordinance was changed to accommodate an individual,” on June 12 the Pipers were issued the permit for their hotel building.⁶¹

Just as the Pipers had come to an agreement with the city, the state legislature swiftly moved to pass a new law that would regulate the height of new construction throughout the state, limiting building heights to 100 feet in second-, third-, and fourth-class cities and 125 feet in first-class cities. Because Madison was categorized as a second-class city, the new 100-foot limit mandated by the state would now apply to the Piper’s hotel building, essentially negating the gains they had made with the city’s zoning ordinance.⁶²

The Pipers again brought suit against the State, and in a ruling in October 1923, the Wisconsin State Supreme Court upheld the validity of the new law. However, the court exempted both the Piper’s hotel project in Madison, on the grounds that “operations begun in good faith before the enactment of the law are not to be affected by the law.”⁶³ The court also exempted Wisconsin hotel developer Walter Schroeder’s Hotel Loraine, which was also currently under construction in Madison along West Washington Boulevard just west of the Capitol Square, as well as the Milwaukee Telephone Building under construction in Milwaukee. Although the state attempted to have the court overturn the Pipers’ exemption by showing that they had included a contingency clause that would allow for the termination of contracts if the state passed a revised height limit law, the Wisconsin Supreme Court upheld the exemption, leaving the Pipers free to move forward with construction.⁶⁴

When the Pipers’ new building, christened the Belmont Hotel, opened in September of 1924, it replaced the nine-year-old Gay Building as Madison’s tallest building.⁶⁵ In the following years, several other buildings—including Schroeder’s Loraine Hotel (1924), the Wisconsin Power and Light Company Building (1927), and the Tenney Building (1930) – were constructed to a height of ten stories, also eclipsing the Gay Building.⁶⁶

Later History

The Gay Building accelerated the careers of both Leonard W. Gay and the Law Brothers in the late 1910s and 1920s. Gay would go on to establish numerous land companies that developed suburban subdivisions around Madison, many with his partner in the development of the Gay Building Chandler B. Chapman. Gay and Chandler’s most ambitious project, which immediately

⁶¹ Tish, 12; “Height Rule Is Safe from Court Ruling,” *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), June 2, 1923, 7.

⁶² “Bill Would Nullify City Height Law,” *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), June 12, 1923, 1; “Bill Limiting Building Height is Killed,” *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), June 15 1923,1; “Assembly Revives Height Limit Bill,” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), June 20, 1923, 1; “Assembly Changes; Passes Building Limit, 60-26,” *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), June 20, 1923, 1; “Limit on building heights wins,” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), June 29, 1923, 1; “Bill Now Goes to Governor,” *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), June 29, 1923, 9.

⁶³ “Pipers and Lorraine Exempted,” *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), October 16, 1923, 1.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ “City’s Tallest Building Opens Saturday,” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), September 19, 1924, 15.

⁶⁶ Tish, 13.

Gay Building

Dane County, Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

followed the Gay Building, was their plan for Lake Forest, a subdivision on the south bank of Lake Wingra on Gay's former dairy farm. In addition to housing, plans for the subdivision included a civic and retail center arranged around a circular hub at the main entrance to the community, as well as extensive parkland. The project got off to a bumpy start when Gay and Chandler's Lake Forest Land Company unilaterally lowered the level of Lake Wingra nearly three feet in preparation for dredging for the new subdivision. Residents in nearby Vilas Park complained that the lowering of the lake had nearly drained the newly-dredged lagoons of their subdivision, exposing rotting vegetation that "created a terrible stench."⁶⁷ The company was later forced to raise the level of the lake.

Although development in the subdivision stalled during World War I, Gay and Chandler resumed work on Lake Forest in 1920, making several substantial infrastructure improvements and launching a wide-reaching marketing campaign to attract new residents. Despite these efforts, few of the lots were sold, and Gay and Chapman ultimately abandoned the project. Gay later sold the property, which had been nicknamed "The Lost City," to the University of Wisconsin, which developed the property into the UW Arboretum.⁶⁸

Although the Lake Forest development was not among his successes, Leonard Gay was remembered at his death in 1934 as "a leading Madison real estate developer, building erector, and civic leader," and as the builder of the city's first skyscraper.⁶⁹

James and Edward Law continued to work together through the 1920s. In 1925, the brothers brought on Ellis J. Potter, who had worked for the firm for several years, as partner.⁷⁰ The firm of Law, Law and Potter, rose to become the most prominent architectural office in Madison in the late 1920s and 1930s. In 1932, James Law left the firm to serve out the unexpired term of Madison mayor Albert G. Schmedeman, and was re-elected to the position for five terms, serving through 1943. Edward Law continued practicing architecture until his retirement in 1955.⁷¹

In the years after the 1924 resolution of city and state legal challenges and the completion of the Hotel Lorraine and Belmont Hotel, only two more tall buildings were built at the Capitol Square – the Wisconsin Power and Light Company Building (1929) and the Tenney Building (completed 1930). Due to lack of desire for taller downtown buildings, Madison's builders and planners appeared at a truce, though significantly taller structures were built at the University of Wisconsin campus in the 1960s.⁷² A 1950s rule by the Federal Aviation Administration limited building heights to 160 feet above sea level within three miles of the Dane County Regional Airport, though this rule did not affect any new developments on the Capitol Square.⁷³ In 1966 the City of Madison passed the Capitol View Preservation Ordinance "to preserve as well as to promote and enhance the view of the State Capitol Building from various parts of the City and its environs." The

⁶⁷ Mollenhoff, 362.

⁶⁸ Tish, 6; Mary Nohl, "Each Year 'Lost City' Fades More Into Arboretum Wilds," *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), October 9, 1973, 29.

⁶⁹ "Leonard W. Gay, Civic Leader and Realtor, 70, Dies," *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), October 27, 1934, 1.

⁷⁰ "Firm Member," *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), February 11, 1925, 12.

⁷¹ *Madison Intensive Survey*, 182-184.

⁷² Mike Ivey, "Update: Madison's tallest buildings by the numbers," *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), June 4, 2014.

⁷³ Mike Ivey, "By design, Madison has no tall buildings," *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), April 9, 2014.

Gay Building

Dane County, Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

ordinance declared that, excepting flagpoles, communication towers, church spires, and chimneys, no buildings or structures built within one mile of the Wisconsin State Capitol Building could exceed the height of the base of the columns of the capitol, or 187.2 feet from the city's datum of 845.60 above sea level. This building height ordinance remains in effect today.⁷⁴

The Gay Building has remained a commercial hub on the Capitol Square since its 1915 completion. The ground floor storefront and portions of the interior was remodeled in the 1930s to accommodate the Bank of Madison, a longtime occupant. In 1974, the family of the late Leonard Gay sold the Gay Building to Madison developer Donald Hovde (1931-2002), who changed the name of the building to the "Churchill Building."⁷⁵ The building underwent major renovations in the early 1980s and again in 2008 and continues to house commercial tenants today.⁷⁶

Comparable Buildings – Extant Early Skyscrapers in Downtown Madison

Two tall skyscraper-style buildings were planned and constructed in downtown Madison following the construction of the Gay Building in 1915 and during the decade-long planning and legal battle the Gay Building's construction initiated:

- **Hotel Loraine**
119-123 W. Washington Avenue – Madison, WI
Completed 1924; Herbert Tullgren, architect
WI AHI #95203; Individually National Register listed

This ten-story former hotel just west of the Capitol Square was completed in 1924. The red brick-clad Classical Revival- and Tudor Revival-inspired Hotel Loraine was one of several Herbert Tullgren hotel designs across Wisconsin for hotel owner Walter Schroeder.⁷⁷

- **Belmont Hotel**
101 E. Mifflin Street – Madison, WI
Completed 1924; Balch and Lippert, architects
WI AHI #99322; Individually National Register listed

This twelve-story former hotel on the Capitol Square was completed in 1924. The Classical Revival Style red brick-clad Belmont Hotel was built by the Piper brothers whose

⁷⁴ "City Zoning Ordinance – Madison, Wisconsin – January 26, 1966," *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), January 26, 1966, 1; George E. Austin, "Capitol view ordinance has proven successful," *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), December 10, 1991, 11; Mike Ivey, "Preserving Capitol view spurred building limits," *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), May 11, 2007, 3.

⁷⁵ "Hovde Will Buy Gay Building," *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), April 24, 1974, 37; Thomas M. Waller, "Churchill Building Still a Big Part of Downtown," *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), February 4, 1986, Section 3, Page 2; Robert Gutsche, Jr., "Donald Hovde dies; was developer here," *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), February 10, 2002, C7.

⁷⁶ "New Bank Leases Space in Gay Bldg.," Waller.

⁷⁷ "119-123 W Washington Ave, AHI #95203," Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory, accessed November 4, 2024, <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Property/HI95203>; Timothy F. Heggland, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination: Hotel Loraine, Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin* (Madison, WI: Wisconsin Historical Society, 2002).

Gay Building

Dane County, Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

successful challenges against the City of Milwaukee's and State of Wisconsin's building height limit rules affirmed large-scale private development along the Square.⁷⁸

Three additional skyscraper-style buildings were constructed in downtown Madison in the late 1920s and early 1930s in the wake of the Wisconsin State Supreme Court's 1923 rulings affirming state and local building height limits:

- **Wisconsin Power and Light Company Building**

120-124 W. Washington Avenue – Madison, WI
Completed 1929; Law, Law & Potter, architect
WI AHI #115331

This ten-story office building just west of the Capitol Square was completed in 1929. This limestone-clad Art Deco style tower was designed by the same architects as the Gay Building and was the last tall office building completed in downtown Madison before the onset of the Great Depression.⁷⁹

- **Tenney Building**

110 E. Main Street – Madison, WI
Completed 1930; Law, Law & Potter, architects
WI AHI # 107875; Individually National Register listed

This ten-story office building on the Capitol Square was completed in 1930. Also completed by the same architects as the Gay Building, this limestone-clad Art Deco style building built by the influential Tenney family was the second Tenney Building to be built on this site.⁸⁰

- **State Office Building (Phase 1)**

1 W. Wilson Street – Madison, WI
Completed 1931; Arthur Peabody, architect
WI AHI #28434; Individually National Register listed

The six-story office building for state workers was planned in the late 1920s but only one-third of the building was completed in 1931. The remainder of this gray granite-clad Art Deco Style building was completed in 1942 (Phase 2) and 1959 (Phase 3). Notably, this is

⁷⁸ "101 E Mifflin St (29 N Pinckney St), AHI #99322," Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory, accessed November 4, 2024, <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Property/HI99322>; Les Vollmert, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination: Belmont Hotel, Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin* (Madison, WI: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1990).

⁷⁹ "120-124 W Washington Ave, AHI #115331," Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory, accessed November 4, 2024, <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Property/HI115331>.

⁸⁰ "110 E Main St AKA 25-29 S Pinckney St, AHI #107875," Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory, accessed November 4, 2024, <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Property/HI107875>; Timothy F. Hegglund, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination: Tenney Building, Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin* (Madison, WI: Wisconsin Historical Society, 2017).

Gay Building

Dane County, Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

the only early 20th century tall office building in Madison built by a government body and not for commercial purposes.⁸¹

All six of Madison's extant earliest skyscrapers dating from 1915 to 1931 are clustered within blocks of each other, either across from or near to the Wisconsin State Capitol.

The worldwide economic depression of the 1930s ended large scale building in Madison for over a decade. The next tall buildings constructed in downtown Madison were the State Office Building's eleven-story tower (Phase 2) in 1942 according to architect Arthur Peabody's late 1920s design; and the six-story Edgewater Hotel at 666 Wisconsin Avenue, completed in 1946 and designed by architect Lawrence Monberg (National Register listed as a contributing building in the Mansion Hill Historic District).⁸²

Conclusion

The Gay Building, located at 14-16 N. Carroll Street in downtown Madison, Wisconsin, is the city's earliest skyscraper. The nine-story office building was completed in 1915 and designed by architects James R. Law and Edward J. Law for local real estate developer Leonard W. Gay. Located prominently facing Madison's Capitol Square and the Wisconsin State Capitol, the Gay Building's construction beginning in 1913 sparked vigorous public discussions of Madison's urban aesthetic and its future as a commercial center, and prompted state and local legislation and private legal challenges that have shaped Madison's skyline to the present day.

Land Acknowledgement (will be reviewed by the Office of the State Archaeologist)

This nomination recognizes the depth of human presence here, the ancestral homeland of American Indians for millennia. From as early as the seventeenth century, Euro-American exploration and settlement, military campaigns, and government programs, all had the effect of repeated displacement of Indians of many tribal affiliations. This continuous tribal movement resulted in Wisconsin being home to many tribes who originated from other parts of the country, generating a pattern of immigration, relocation, and formation of a new homeland. Some of these tribes remain in Wisconsin but others may not. We acknowledge that the property that is the subject of this nomination is located on land long occupied by American Indians.

Before White settlement, the Madison area included the ancestral lands of Native American tribes, including the Peoria, oṭaakiwaki·hina·ki (Sauk) & Meškwahki·aša·hina (Fox), Myaamia, Očhéthi Šakówiŋ, Hoocąk (Ho-Chunk), and the Kiikaapoi (Kickapoo).⁸³

⁸¹ "1 W Wilson St, AHI #28434," Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory, accessed November 4, 2024, <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Property/HI28434>; Diane H. Filipowicz, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination: State Office Building, Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin* (Madison, WI: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1982).

⁸² "Update: Madison's tallest buildings by the numbers;" "1 W Wilson St, AHI #28434;" "666 Wisconsin Ave, AHI #29044," Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory, accessed November 4, 2024, <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Property/HI29044>; Elizabeth L. Miller, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination: Mansion Hill Historic District, Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin* (Madison, WI: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1997), Section 7, page 22.

⁸³ Native Land Digital, accessed August 5, 2024, <https://native-land.ca/>.

Archaeological Potential

OSA

Preservation Activities (for properties in CLGs)

The Gay Building was evaluated as potentially eligible for the NRHP by Wisconsin SHPO staff in 2024. As a partner with the Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the National Park Service (NPS) participating in the Certified Local Government (CLG) program, the City of Madison is required to maintain a system to survey and inventory historic properties. That entails regular surveys with updates every 20-25 years to identify properties that appear potentially eligible for the NRHP.

As of Fall 2024, the building's owner plans to rehabilitate the building using federal and state historic tax credits for adaptive reuse as a hotel.

END OF STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE DO NOT DELETE

9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory # AHI #95294
and/or Archaeological Site Inventory #: _____

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

- “1 W Wilson St, AHI #28434.” Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory. Accessed November 4, 2024. <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Property/HI28434>.
- “8 Zones Planned for City.” *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI). April 11, 1922. 1.
- “101 E Mifflin St (29 N Pinckney St), AHI #99322.” Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory. Accessed November 4, 2024. <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Property/HI99322>.
- “110 E Main St AKA 25-29 S Pinckney St, AHI #107875.” Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory. Accessed November 4, 2024. <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Property/HI107875>.
- “119-123 W Washington Ave, AHI #95203.” Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory. Accessed November 4, 2024. <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Property/HI95203>.
- “120-124 W Washington Ave, AHI #115331.” Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory. Accessed November 4, 2024. <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Property/HI115331>.
- “666 Wisconsin Ave, AHI #29044.” Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory. Accessed November 4, 2024. <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Property/HI29044>.
- “1900: Nolan Guilty of Slaying.” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). October 5, 1952. 77.

Gay Building

Dane County, Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

- “A History of Madison.” University of Wisconsin-Madison, Morgridge Center for Public Service. Accessed October 5, 2024. https://morgridge.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2017/02/History_of_Madison.pdf.
- Anderson, D.N. *National Register of Historic Places, Wisconsin State Capitol, Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin*. 1970.
- “Architects see great year in building here.” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). April 13, 1914. 1.
- “Ask city to hire expert.” *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI). June 10, 1921. 2.
- “Assembly Changes; Passes Building Limit, 60-26.” *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI). June 20, 1923. 1.
- “Assembly Revives Height Limit Bill.” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). June 20, 1923, 1.
- Austin, George E. “Capitol view ordinance has proven successful.” *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI). December 10, 1991. 11.
- “Bill Limiting Building Height is Killed,” *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI). June 15, 1923. 1.
- “Bill Now Goes to Governor.” *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI). June 29, 1923. 9.
- “Bill Would Nullify City Height Law.” *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI). June 12, 1923. 1.
- Birnbaum, Charles and Julie Fix, ed. *Pioneers of American Landscape Design II: An Annotated Bibliography*. Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, 1995.
- Blakemore, Maurice N., ed. *Moody’s Rating Book Service: Governments and Municipals, 1922*. New York: Moody’s Investors Service, 1922.
- Breen, Helen, ed., “Society.” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). March 16, 1915. 5.
- “Building Height Limit in City Raised to 115 Feet by Council Act.” *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI). May 26, 1923. 9.
- “Business Boom on in Madison; Coming Spring Will See Many Changes in Business Districts.” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). October 15, 1916. 11.
- “The Capitol or Skyscrapers.” *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI). April 20, 1921. 12.
- “City Zoning Ordinance – Madison, Wisconsin – January 26, 1966.” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). January 26, 1966. 1.
- “City Zone Law in Opposed at Public Hearing.” *The Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). June 20, 1922. 1.
- “City’s Tallest Building Opens Saturday.” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). September 19, 1924. 15.
- Clark, Jim. “City’s First ‘Skyscraper’ Was Considered Risky Venture in ’13,” *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI). August 28, 1957.
- “Council Raises Building Height Limit.” *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI). June 9, 1923. 1.
- “Dean Opposes Limit on Building Height.” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). June 26, 1922. 4.
- “Declares City Not Wide Awake.” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). June 5, 1916. 2.
- “Experts Make New Changes in Zone Law.” *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI). July 31, 1922. 3.
- “Few State Offices Outside Capitol.” *Waupun Democrat* (Waupun, WI). October 1, 1915. 2.
- Filipowicz, Diane H. *National Register of Historic Places Nomination: State Office Building, Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin*. Madison, WI: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1982.
- “Firm Member.” *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI). February 11, 1925. 12.

Gay Building

Dane County, Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

- “Gay Building Said to Be Tallest in State Outside of Milwaukee.” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). February 21, 1915. 9.
- Goist, Park Dixon. *From Main Street to State Street: Town, City, and Community in America*. Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1977.
- Gutsche, Jr., Robert. “Donald Hovde dies; was developer here.” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). February 10, 2002. C7.
- Heggland, Timothy F. *National Register of Historic Places Nomination: Hotel Loraine, Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin*. Madison, WI: Wisconsin Historical Society, 2002.
- Heggland, Timothy F. *National Register of Historic Places Nomination: Tenney Building, Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin*. Madison, WI: Wisconsin Historical Society, 2017.
- “Height Rule Is Safe from Court Ruling.” *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI). June 2, 1923. 7.
- “High Board Fence Around U. W. When Gay Family Came.” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). March 16, 1931. 4.
- “High Court Holds Law Not Valid.” *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI). May 25, 1923. 1.
- “Honor Man Who Built Madison’s First Skyscraper.” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). February 18, 1915. 9.
- “Hovde Will Buy Gay Building,” *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI). April 24, 1974. 37.
- “Improvement of square is underway.” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). July 19, 1916. 1.
- Ivey, Mike. “By design, Madison has no tall buildings.” *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI). April 9, 2014. 5.
- Ivey, Mike. “Preserving Capitol view spurred building limits.” *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI). May 11, 2007. 3.
- Ivey, Mike. “Update: Madison’s tallest buildings by the numbers.” *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI). June 4, 2014.
- “L.W. Gay, 70, City Realty Leader, Dies.” *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI). October 27, 1934. 1.
- “Leonard W. Gay, Civic Leader and Realtor, 70, Dies.” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). October 27, 1934. 1.
- Levitan, Stuart. D. *Madison: The Illustrated Sesquicentennial History, Volume 1: 1856-1931*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006.
- “Limit on building heights wins.” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). June 29, 1923. 1.
- “Madison Citizens Discuss Proposal to Limit Height of Buildings.” *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI). May 4, 1921. 4.
- “Madison Lacks Aesthetic View, Says Milwaukeean.” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). April 11, 1915. 4.
- “Madison’s tallest building is nearing completion.” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). July 10, 1914. 2.
- “Mayor Heim’s Inaugural Message.” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). April 16, 1912. 4.
- “Measure Adopted by 15-4.” *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI). November 21, 1922. 1.
- “Measure by Caldwell is Given O.K.” *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI). May 26, 1921. 1.
- Miller, Elizabeth L. *National Register of Historic Places Nomination: Mansion Hill Historic District, Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin*. Madison, WI: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1997.
- Mollenhoff, David V. *Madison: A History of the Formative Years*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt

Gay Building

Dane County, Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

- Publishing Company, 1982.
- Mollenhoff, Leigh, James R. Sanborn, and Lois Stoler. *Sandstone and Buffalo Robes: Madison's historic buildings*. Madison, WI: City of Madison Landmarks Commission, 1973.
- Native Land Digital. Accessed August 5, 2024. <https://native-land.ca/>.
- New Atlas of Dane County Wisconsin, 1899*. Madison, WI: Leonard W. Gay & Co., 1899.
- "New Bank Leases Space in Gay Bldg." *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). May 26, 1936. 20.
- Nohl, Mary. "Each Year 'Lost City' Fades More Into Arboretum Wilds." *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI). October 9, 1973. 29.
- Nolen, John. *Madison: A Model City*. Boston, MA: John Nolen, 1911.
- Noll, Henry. "Sunday Thoughts." *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). November 4, 1934. 4.
- "Office Directory of the Gay Building." *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). March 10, 1915.
- "Pipers and Lorraine Exempted." *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI). October 16, 1923. 3.
- "Pipers' Test of Height Law to High Court." *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). April 13, 1923. 1.
- "Planning Body Is Silent On Height Limit." *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI). April 13, 1923. 6.
- "Protest Cost of Farm Land Here Tonight." *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI). June 8, 1923. 7.
- Rankin, Katherine and Tim Heggland, *Madison Intensive Survey*. State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, 1994.
- Saliga, Pauline A., John Zukowsky and Jane H. Clarke, eds. *The Sky's the Limit: A Century of Chicago Skyscrapers*. New York: Rizzoli, 1990.
- "Salutations to Mr. Gay." *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). February 17, 1915. 2.
- "Six Photos of Capitol Square, 40 Years Ago and Today." *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). November 17, 1956. 4.
- "Skyscrapers Have Foes and Friends Among Madison Men." *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). March 6, 1911. 10.
- "State Capitol Timeline." Wisconsin State Government Website. Accessed July 8, 2024. <https://tours.wisconsin.gov/pub/Content.aspx?p=History>.
- "Suit May Result from Zoning Rule." *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). April 14, 1922. 22.
- "Ten-foot line on both sides is recommended." *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). July 11, 1922. 1.
- "Tentative Zoning Ordinance For Madison Received Here." *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). April 11, 1922. 1, 18.
- Tish, Jason. "Historic Resource Nomination: Gay Building," Undated draft.
- "To Banquet Man Who Built Nine Story Building." *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). February 16, 1915. 9.
- Vollmert, Les. *National Register of Historic Places Nomination: Belmont Hotel, Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin*. Madison, WI: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1990.
- Waller, Thomas M. "Churchill Building Still a Big Part of Downtown," *Wisconsin State Journal*, February 4, 1986, Section 3, Page 2.
- "War on Skyscrapers." *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). May 29, 1914. 2.
- Wilkinson, Harry. *Pictorial souvenir of the police and fire departments and Madison, Wisconsin*. Des Moines, IA: American Lithographing & Printing Co., 1912.

Gay Building

Dane County, Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

“Will Add Story.” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). August 3, 1914.

Wineke, William R. “Edward Law ‘conceived’ Madison.” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). July 5, 1981. 6.

“Wisconsin Capitols.” Wisconsin Historical Society. Accessed October 5, 2024.
<https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Article/CS2903>.

Wisconsin State Journal (Madison, WI). November 14, 1914. 2.

Wisconsin State Journal (Madison, WI). February 17, 1915. 2.

Wisconsin State Journal (Madison, WI). March 17, 1915. 7.

“Work on Madison skyscraper begun.” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI). December 19, 1913. 7.

Wyatt, Barbara, ed. *Cultural Resource Management Plan in Wisconsin*. Madison, WI: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986.

END OF BIBLIOGRAPHY DO NOT DELETE

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: Less than one acre

Provide either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude:	<u>43.074154</u>	Longitude:	<u>-89.386148</u>
2. Latitude:	_____	Longitude:	_____
3. Latitude:	_____	Longitude:	_____
4. Latitude:	_____	Longitude:	_____

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

1. Zone:	_____	Easting:	_____	Northing:	_____
2. Zone:	_____	Easting:	_____	Northing:	_____
3. Zone:	_____	Easting:	_____	Northing:	_____
4. Zone:	_____	Easting:	_____	Northing:	_____

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Gay Building's National Register boundary includes the entire parcel historically associated with the building, bound on the east by Carroll Street; on the west by a public alley; and on the north and south by adjacent buildings built along property lines.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The Gay Building's National Register boundary encompasses the building's full historic footprint.

END OF GEOGRAPHIC DATA DO NOT DELETE

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Lara Ramsey and John Cramer
organization: Ramsey Historic Consultants, Inc.
street & number: 1105 W. Chicago Avenue, Suite 201
city or town: Chicago State: IL zip code: 60642
Email: lara@ramseyhcinc.com
Telephone: 312.613.1039

Additional Documentation

Figure Log

Figure 1. Gay Building – Locator map.

Figure 2. Gay Building – GIS map.

Figure 3. Gay Building – Site photo key plan.

Figure 4. Gay Building – 1st floor key plan.

Figure 5. Gay Building – Typical upper floor key plan.

Figure 6. The Gay Building under construction in 1914. Source: Wisconsin Historical Society.

Figure 7. The Gay Building just after its completion, c. 1915. Source: Wisconsin Historical Society.

Figure 8. The Gay Building in the 1920s. Source: Wisconsin Historical Society.

Figure 9. The Gay Building c. 1973. Source: Wisconsin Historical Society.

Figure 10. The Gay Building in 1974. Source: Wisconsin Historical Society.

Figures 11 and 12. Overall (above) and zoom in (below) c. 1917 views of the Madison skyline from the southwest, showing the newly completed Wisconsin State Capitol and the 1915 Gay Building to its west (left). Source: *Madison: The Illustrated Sesquicentennial History* (2006).

Figure 13. 1918 (top) and 1956 (bottom) views of Madison's Capitol Square with the 9-story Gay Building at right. Source: "Six Photos of Capitol Square, 40 Years Ago and Today," *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), November 17, 1956.

Figure 14. A pre-1929 postcard view of the Capitol Square, looking northeast. The 1915 Gay Building is at bottom left, the 1924 Hotel Loraine is at bottom right, and the 1924 Belmont Hotel is at center left. Source: Ebay.

Figure 15. Gay Building, 14-16 N. Carroll Street. This 9-story office building on the Capitol Square was completed in 1915 and was Madison's first tall office building. Source: Ramsey Historic Consultants, Inc., 2024.

Figure 16. Hotel Loraine, 119-123 W. Washington Avenue. This 10-story former hotel just west of the Capitol Square was completed in 1924. Source: Ramsey Historic Consultants, Inc., 2024.

Figure 17. Belmont Hotel, 101 E. Mifflin Street. This 12-story former hotel on the Capitol Square was completed in 1924. Source: Ramsey Historic Consultants, Inc., 2024.

Figure 19. Wisconsin Power and Light Company Building, 122 W. Washington Avenue. This 10-story office building just west of the Capitol Square was completed in 1929. Source: Ramsey Historic Consultants, Inc., 2024.

Figure 19. Tenney Building, 110 E. Main Street. This 10-story office building on the Capitol Square was completed in 1930. Source: Ramsey Historic Consultants, Inc., 2024.

Figure 20. *Wisconsin State Journal*, December 19, 1913.

Figure 21. *Wisconsin State Journal*, August 3, 1914.

Figure 22. *Wisconsin State Journal*, March 20, 1915.

Figure 23. February 21, 1915 *Wisconsin State Journal* advertisement showing the artisans whose work could be found in the new Gay Building.

Figure 24. March 10, 1915 *Wisconsin State Journal* advertisement showing the first tenants of the newly completed Gay Building.

Figure 25. August 28, 1957 *Capital Times* article on the Gay Building, recalling Madison's "First Skyscraper."

Figure 1. Gay Building – Locator map.

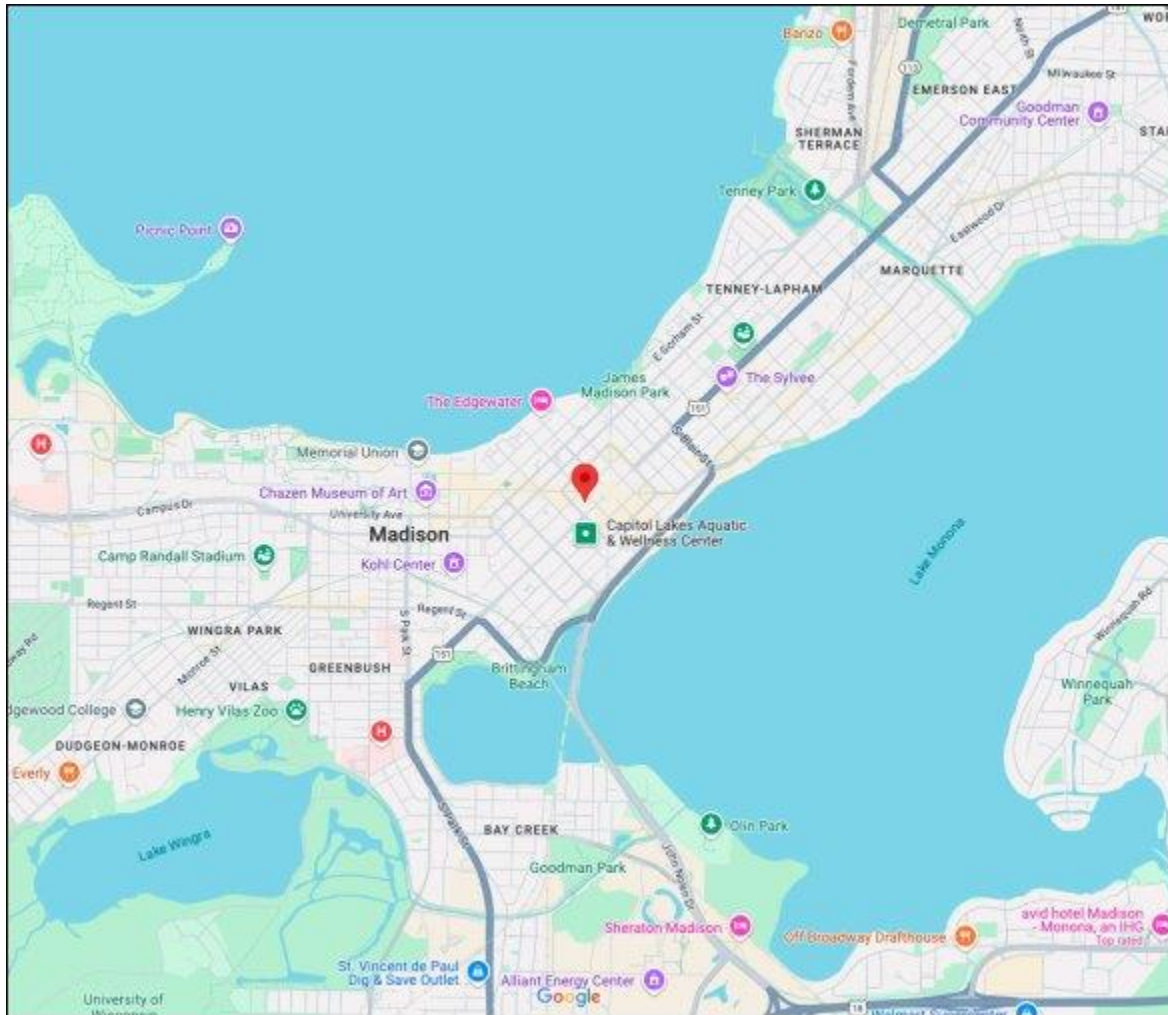


Figure 2. Gay Building – GIS map.

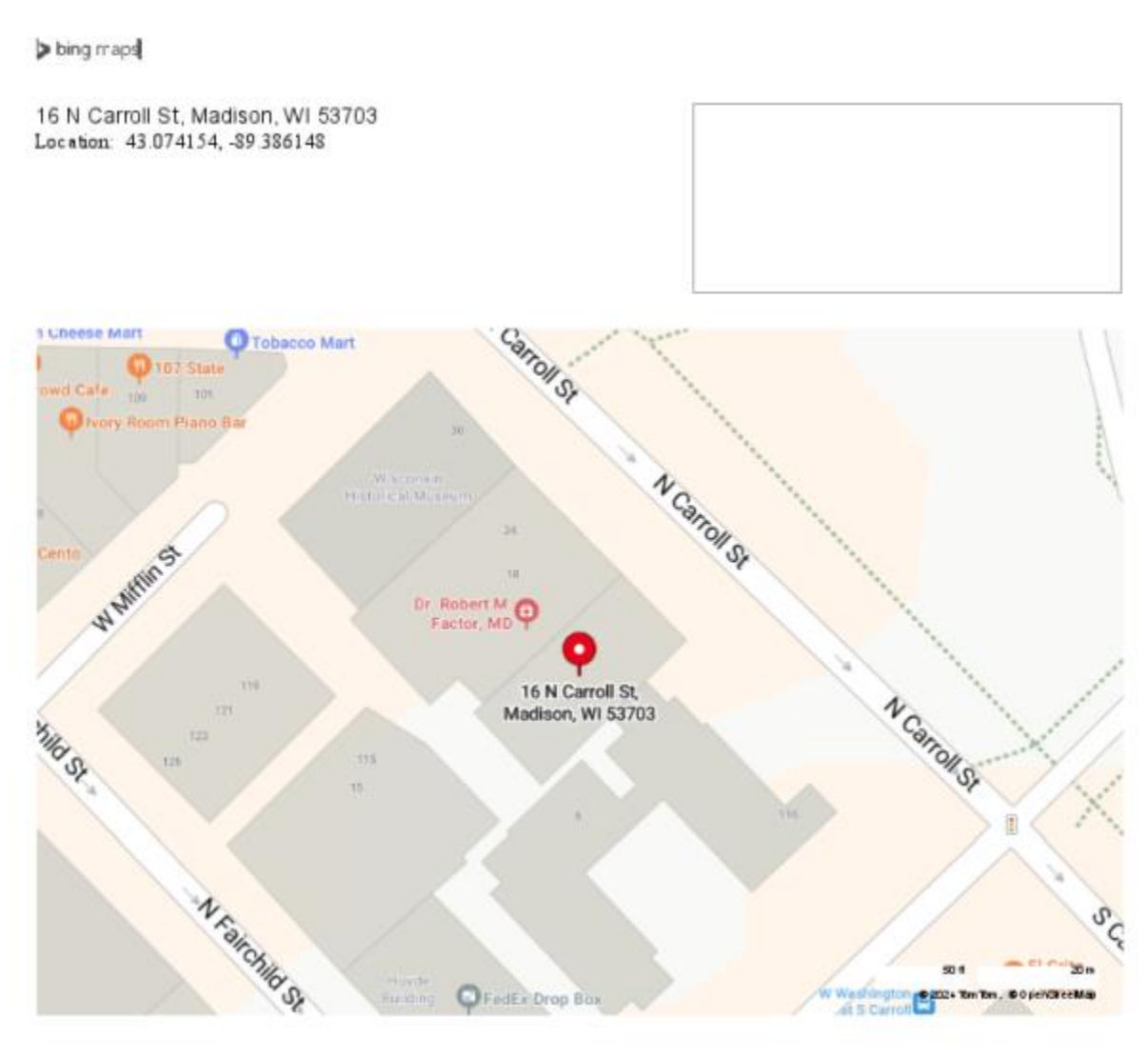


Figure 3. Gay Building – Site photo key plan with National Register boundary.

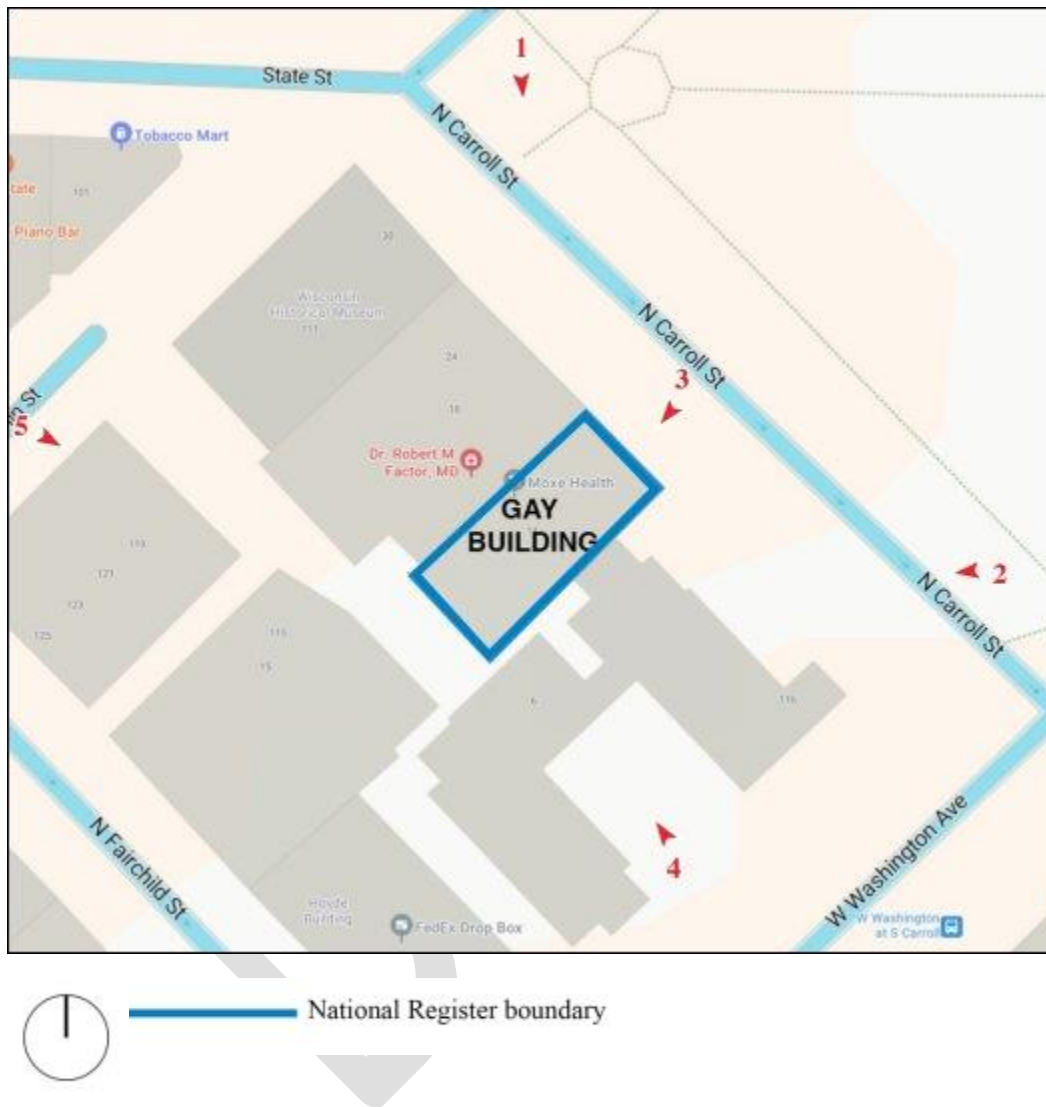


Figure 4. Gay Building – 1st floor key plan.

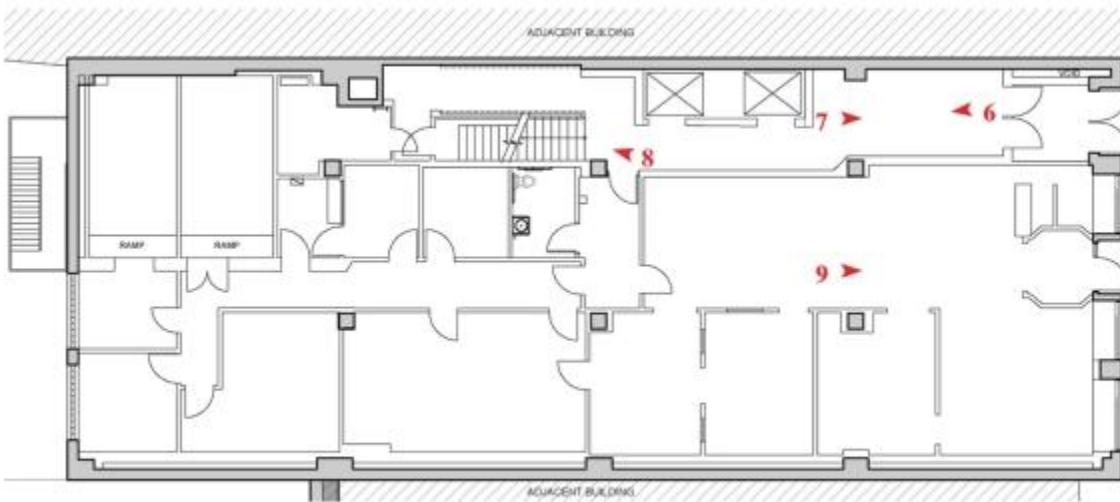


Figure 5. Gay Building – Typical upper floor key plan.

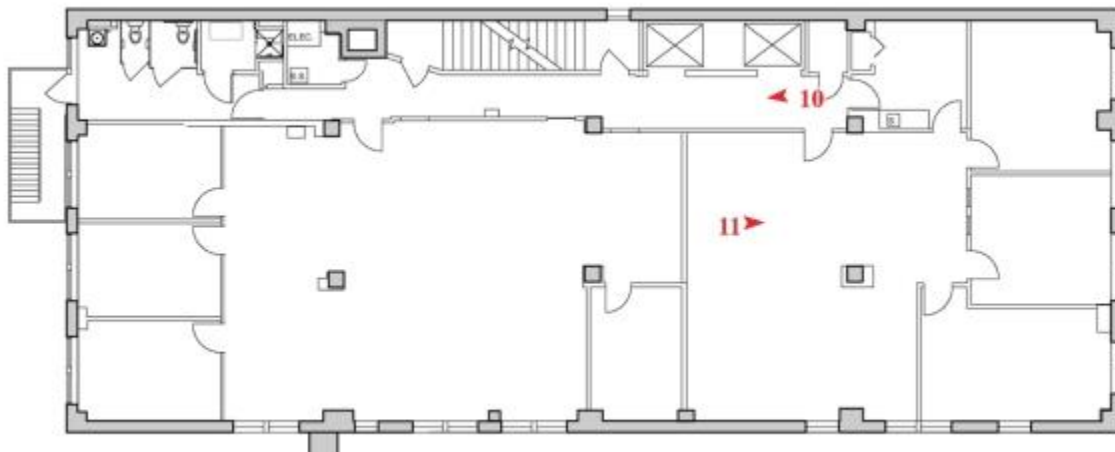


Figure 6. The Gay Building under construction in 1914. Source: Wisconsin Historical Society.



Figure 7. The Gay Building just after its completion, c. 1915. Source: Wisconsin Historical Society.



Figure 8. The Gay Building in the 1920s. Source: Wisconsin Historical Society.

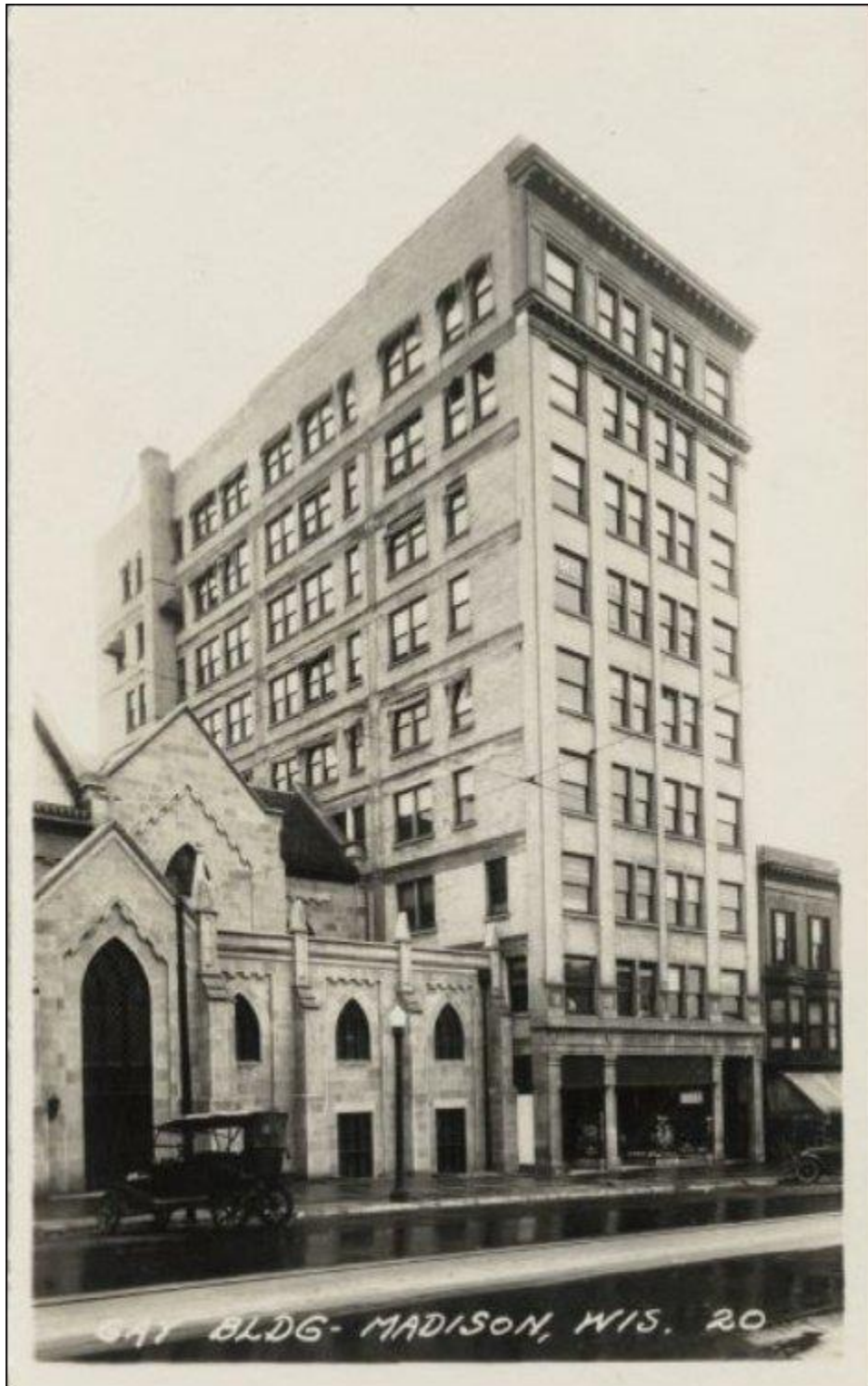
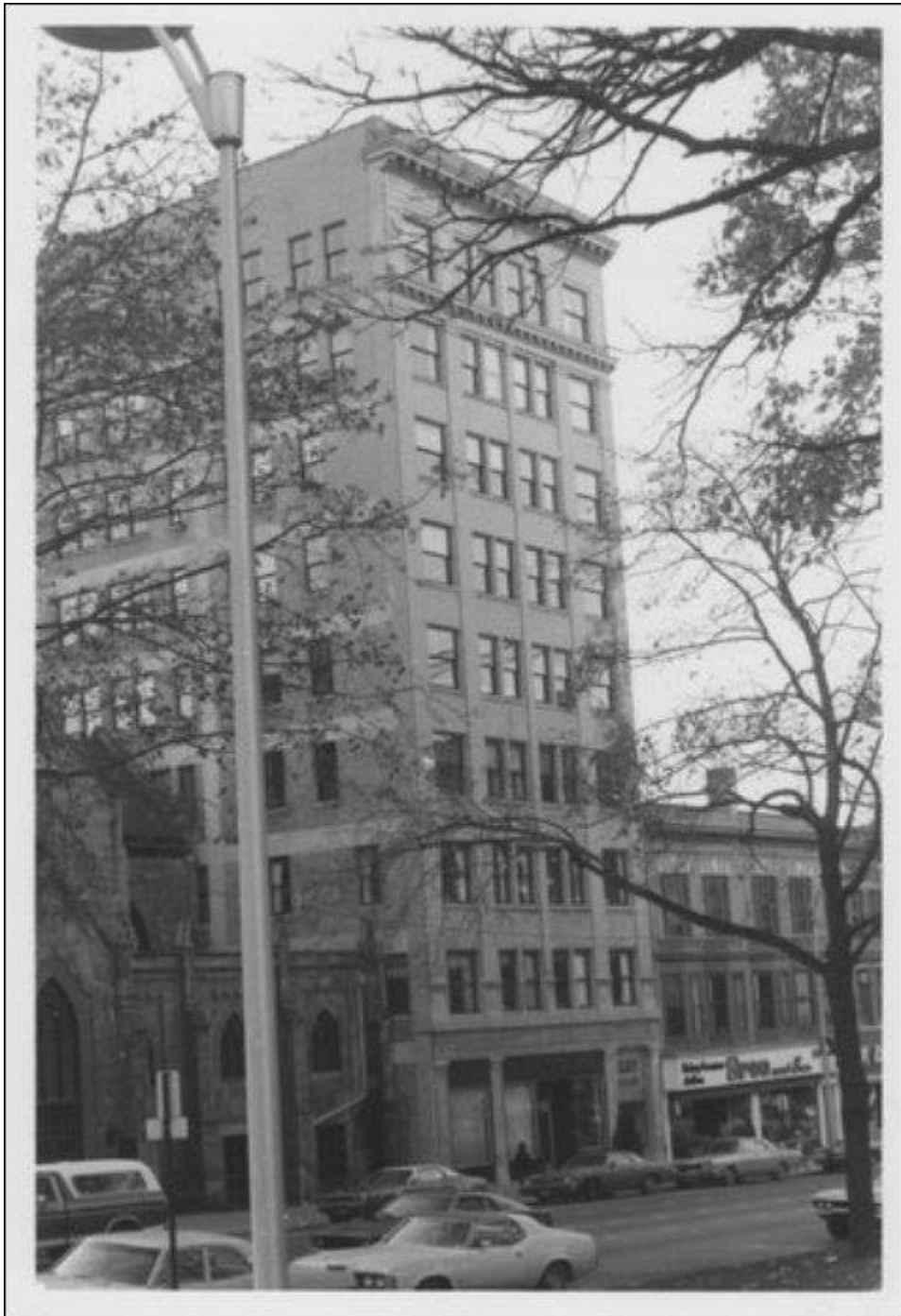


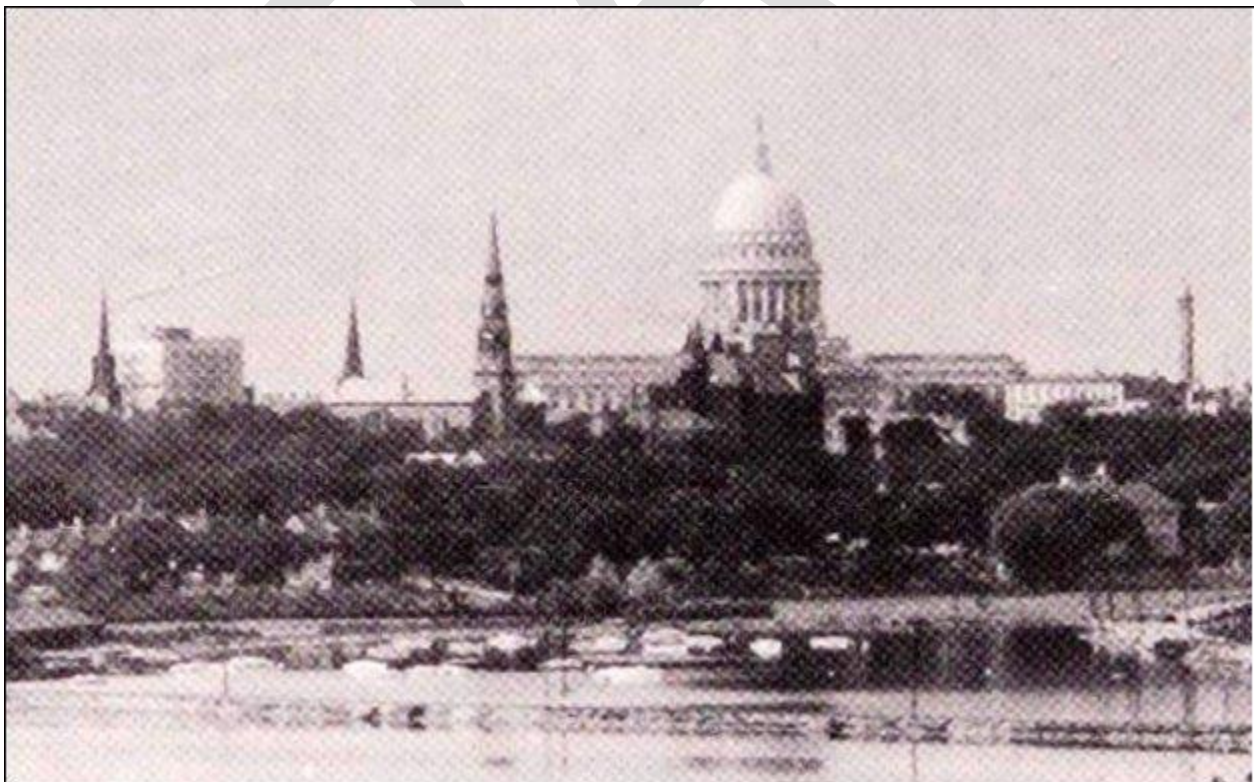
Figure 9. The Gay Building c. 1973. Source: Wisconsin Historical Society.



Figure 10. The Gay Building in 1974. Source: Wisconsin Historical Society.



Figures 11 and 12. Overall (above) and zoom in (below) c. 1917 views of the Madison skyline from the southwest, showing the newly completed Wisconsin State Capitol and the 1915 Gay Building to its west (left). Source: *Madison: The Illustrated Sesquicentennial History* (2006).



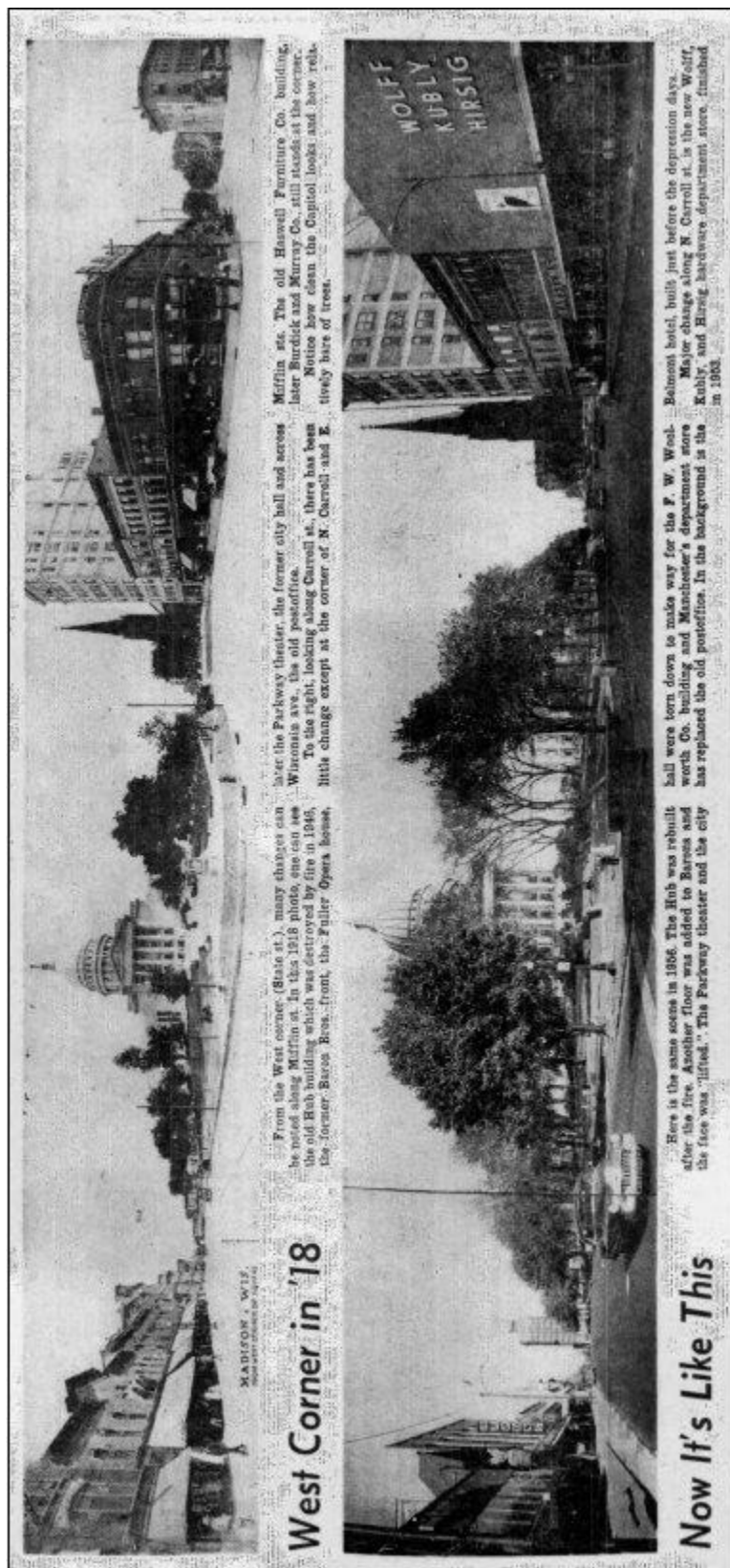


Figure 13. 1918 (top) and 1956 (bottom) views of Madison's Capitol Square with the 9-story Gay Building at right. Source: "Six Photos of Capitol Square, 40 Years Ago and Today," *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, WI), November 17, 1956.



Figure 14. A pre-1929 postcard view of the Capitol Square, looking northeast. The 1915 Gay Building is at bottom left, the 1924 Hotel Loraine is at bottom right, and the 1924 Belmont Hotel is at center left. Source: Ebay.

Downtown Madison's Significant Extant Early Skyscrapers

Figure 15. (Right) Gay Building, 14-16 N. Carroll Street. This 9-story office building on the Capitol Square was completed in 1915 and was Madison's first tall office building. Source: Ramsey Historic Consultants, Inc., 2024.



Figure 16. (Below) Hotel Loraine, 119-123 W. Washington Avenue. This 10-story former hotel just west of the Capitol Square was completed in 1924. Source: Ramsey Historic Consultants, Inc., 2024.



Downtown Madison's Significant Extant Early Skyscrapers (continued)



Figure 17. (Above left) Belmont Hotel, 101 E. Mifflin Street. This 12-story former hotel on the Capitol Square was completed in 1924. Source: Ramsey Historic Consultants, Inc., 2024.



Figure 18. (Above right) Wisconsin Power and Light Company Building, 122 W. Washington Avenue. This 10-story office building just west of the Capitol Square was completed in 1929. Source: Ramsey Historic Consultants, Inc., 2024.

Figure 19. (Right) Tenney Building, 110 E. Main Street. This 10-story office building on the Capitol Square was completed in 1930. Source: Ramsey Historic Consultants, Inc., 2024.



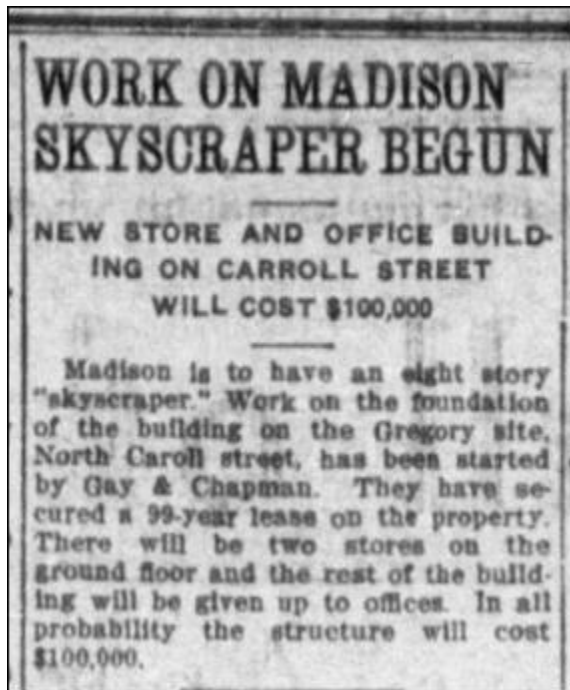


Figure 20. *Wisconsin State Journal*, December 19, 1913.

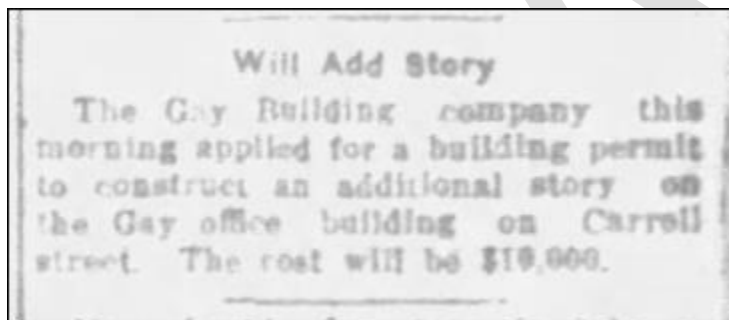


Figure 21. *Wisconsin State Journal*, August 3, 1914.



Figure 22. *Wisconsin State Journal*, March 20, 1915.

Figure 23. February 21, 1915 *Wisconsin State Journal* advertisement showing the artisans whose work could be found in the new Gay Building.

THE SUNDAY STATE JOURNAL

WOLFF, KUBLY & HIRSIG
Hardware and Sheet Metal Contractors
 Made the cornices in their shops and erected the cornices on the Gay Building
STRUCTURAL REINFORCEMENTS, I-beams and Angles for builders and contractors.
We can give you the same service we gave the Gay Building
SINAIKO BROS. 10 N. Murray St.

FRITZ BROS. 138 N. Frances St. Phone 712
Phone

The Mueller Company
HUBERT TOSUSSAINT, Manager
Contracting Engineers for Heating, Ventilating and Power Plants
Bell Phone 64 323 East Wilson Street

Estimates furnished on Bedford, Madison and Colfax Cut Stone and Mason Work
C. J. Himmeler **SCHWOEGLER & KELLY** Wilson Bldg.
Cut Stone and Mason Contractors. 639 W. Wilson St.
The entire plumbing system in the Gay Building was installed by us. We are always able to handle all contracts, large or small.

ANTON METZ, Plumber
113 W. Mifflin Phone 1660

Locks and Hardware furnished by **P. H. GROSS HARDWARE CO.**
126-128 Grand Ave. Milwaukee

We have the best
 and most complete
 stock of
 Hardware, Paints,
 Oil, Glass, etc.
 Call, please, before
 buying.

Corner
 Milwaukee
 & Belmont
 Streets
 Opposite
 the Building

Painting and Decorating in This Building Done by **Klein-Statz Co.**

PETER BURGER
 Hardware and Sheet Metal
716 University Ave. Telephone 2079

All Brick and Tile
 in the building was furnished by **Wisconsin Brick Co.**
Prepared Building the
 brick.
 21 Francis St.
 Madison

This building is plastered by **JOHN AHL**
That's All
Anybody that wants plastering done, anywhere, call 3757. Estimates furnished cheerfully without obligation.
 AGENCY FOR KELLESTONE

This building was plastered with **Kallolite Plaster**
Manufactured by the Cardiff Gypsum Plaster Company of Fort Dodge, Iowa

H. Neidner & Company
 Contractors
 For Mosaic and Encaustic Tile Floors and Wallcovering.
48 Grand St. Milwaukee

© WEBBER & GAY
 ENGRS. & CONTRACTORS

GAY BUILDING

JAMES RICHARD LAW
 ARCHITECT

Figure 24. March 10, 1915 *Wisconsin State Journal* advertisement showing the first tenants of the newly completed Gay Building.

Prog. W. Wakeland, Marshall, to

Office Directory of the GAY BUILDING

Second Floor

201 Madison Bond Company,
to
Municipal & Public Utility Bonds.
202 Victor H. Arnold, Mgr.
203 College Mills.
204 C. & S. S. S. S. S.
205 M. S. S. S. S.
206 Henry H. Morgan, Law.
207 White Cross Springs Co.
208 Wisconsin Guaranty Investment Co.
209 Delta Florida Grape Fruit Co.
210 Leonard W. Gay,
Real Estate.
211 Wings Land Company.
212 Thomas D. Williams, Mgr.
213 Office of Gay Building.
214 C. R. Chapman.
215 Lake Forest Land Co.
216 Weber & Gay,
M. L. Webber,
John W. Gay,
Engineers & Contractors.



Seventh Floor

701 Horticultural Society.
702 F. Cross-Bell, Horticult.
703
704 To rent.
705
706 Dr. Turner,
Physician.
707 Surgeon.
708 Dr. J. C. Walsh,
Dentist.
709 Dr. C. H. Woodford,
Dentist.
710 Madison Hydraulic Engineering and Construction Co.
711 E. C. Vogt.
712 Great Northern Life.
713 Dr. Dalglish,
Dr. Davis,
Eye, Ear, Nose & Throat.

Third Floor

301 Underwood Typewriter Company.
302 J. S. Mizero.
303 Dr. G. A. Roland,
Physician & Surgeon.
304 Dr. Keland, Waiting Room.
305 Dr. Barrows, Waiting Room.
306 Dr. P. E. Barrows,
Dentist.
307 To rent.
308 Suitable for doctor or dentist.
309 State Veterinarian.
310 Dr. Eliason.
311 H. H. Sobel,
Lawyer.
312 Board of Immigration.
313
314 F. H. S. S. S.
315

Fifth Floor

Engineering Department of the Railroad and Tax Comptroller.

Sixth Floor

601 Home office of the
to
Beavers' Reserve Fund.
602 Fraternity, S. A. Ozer,
Secretaries.
603 Dr. McQuillan,
Physician & Surgeon.
604 Beavers' Reserve Fund
to
Fraternity.
605 M. D. Lacey, Attorney.
606 Dr. H. E. Desjardis,
Dentist.
607 Dr. H. Fisher,
Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat.
608 Dr. R. W. Niberry,
Dentist.
609 James H. Law,
to
Ambassador.
610
611 To rent.
to
Will divide to suit tenant or 2 year lease.
612

Fourth Floor

401 State Highway Commissioner.
402
403 Board of Agriculture.
404
405 Board of Immigration.
406

Eighth Floor

801 General offices
Brittingham & Hixon
Lumber Company.
802 Hobbels Lumber Company.
803 Henry T. Shelden,
Lawyer.
804 Gysler, Neekerman &
805 Buffalo Insurance Service.
806 Travelers Insurance Company.
807 New England Family Company.
808 Babcock & Blake, Lawyer.
to
John H. Bachorn,
Chauncey E. Hays,
Wm. L. P. Aberg.

Ninth Floor

901 State Superintendent
to
of
902 Schools.
903 Board
to
of
904 Normal Depts.



Figure 25. August 28, 1957 Capital Times article on the Gay Building, recalling Madison's "First 'Skyscraper.'"

END OF FIGURES SECTION DO NOT DELETE

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once in the photograph log. The photograph order must correspond with the photograph log.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Gay Building
City or Vicinity: Madison
County: Dane State: WI
Photographer: John Cramer, Ramsey Historic Consultants, Inc.
Date photographed: June 26, 2024

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 9.** Gay Building, looking south from intersection of Carroll and Mifflin Streets.
- 2 of 11.** Gay Building, looking west from across Carroll Street.
- 3 of 11.** Gay Building's Carroll Street ground level, looking southwest.
- 4 of 11.** Gay Building, looking north from courtyard of adjacent Grace Episcopal Church.
- 5 of 11.** Gay Building, looking east from intersection of Mifflin and Fairchild Streets.
- 6 of 11.** 1st floor entrance lobby, looking west.
- 7 of 11.** 1st floor entrance lobby, looking east.
- 8 of 11.** 1st floor entrance lobby, north stairwell looking west.
- 9 of 11.** 1st floor commercial space, looking east.
- 10 of 11.** Typical upper floor corridor, looking west.
- 11 of 11.** Typical upper floor office.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

DRAFT

Property Owner

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

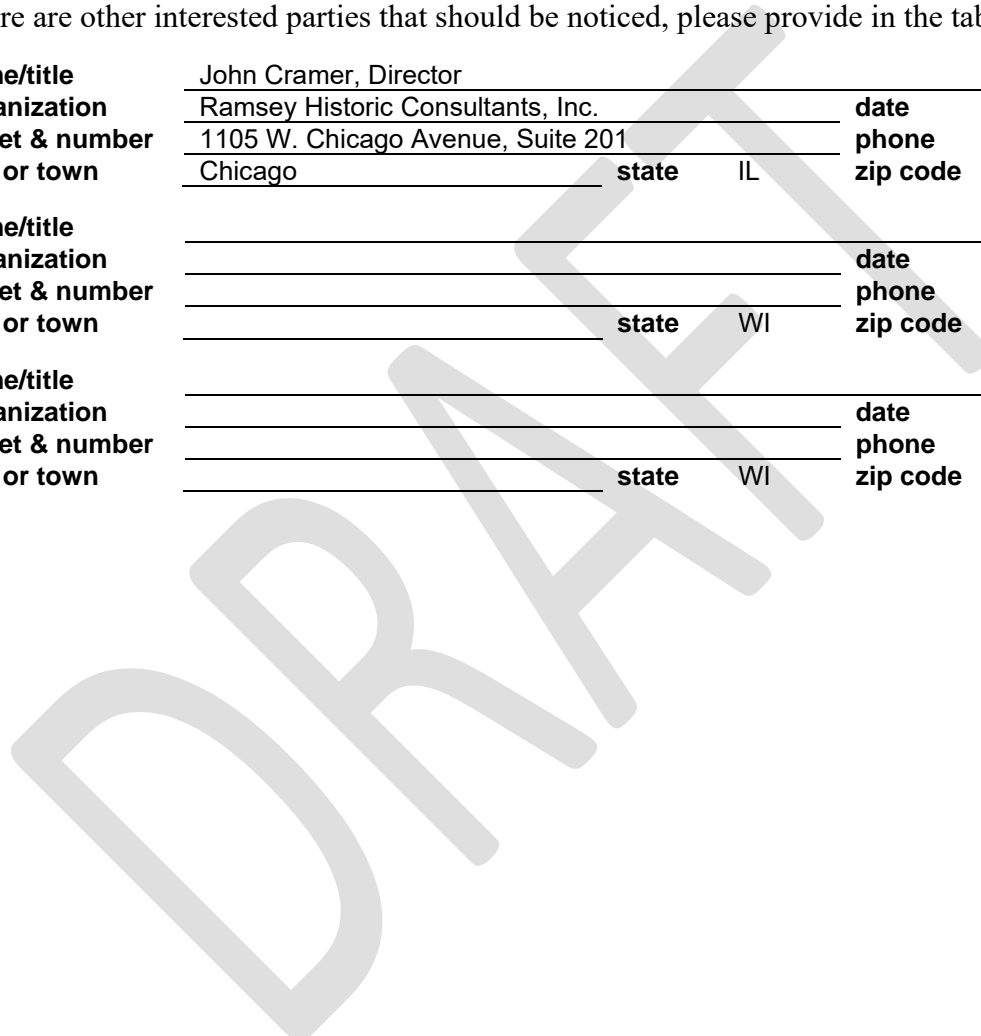
name/title	Randy Guenther, President				
organization	Hovde Realty, Inc.	date	November 18, 2024		
street & number	122 W. Washington Avenue, Suite 350		phone	608.310.1972	
city or town	Madison	state	WI	zip code	53703

If there are other interested parties that should be noticed, please provide in the tables below

name/title	John Cramer, Director				
organization	Ramsey Historic Consultants, Inc.	date	November 18, 2024		
street & number	1105 W. Chicago Avenue, Suite 201		phone	337.781.1180	
city or town	Chicago	state	IL	zip code	60642

name/title	_____				
organization	_____	date	_____		
street & number	_____		phone	_____	
city or town	_____	state	WI	zip code	_____

name/title	_____				
organization	_____	date	_____		
street & number	_____		phone	_____	
city or town	_____	state	WI	zip code	_____





Gay Building, Madison, Dane County, 1 of 11



Gay Building, Madison, Dane County, 2 of 11



Gay Building, Madison, Dane County, 3 of 11



Gay Building, Madison, Dane County, 4 of 11



Gay Building, Madison, Dane County, 5 of 11



Gay Building, Madison, Dane County, 6 of 11



Gay Building, Madison, Dane County, 7 of 11



Gay Building, Madison, Dane County, 8 of 11



Gay Building, Madison, Dane County, 9 of 11



Gay Building, Madison, Dane County, 10 of 11



Gay Building, Madison, Dane County, 11 of 11