

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

Name of Building or Site

Common Name

Historic Name (if applicable)

Hobbins Block/Olson and Veerhusen Bldg

Location

Street Address

7-9 North Pinckney Street

Aldermanic District

4

Classification

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

building

Zoning District

C4

Present Use

Office and retail

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

Name(s)

Owen Keith Decker and Jane M. Decker

Street Address

7 N Pinckney St, Suite 120

Telephone Number

Legal Description (available at City Assessor's Office)

Parcel Number

070913330034

Legal Description

NW 66 ft of Lot 8, Block 101, Original Plat,
exc. NE 12 ft used as alley.

Condition of Property

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

Excellent

Altered or Unaltered?

Altered

Moved or Original Site?

Original Site

Wall Construction

Brick

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

Historical Data

Original Owner

Olson and Veerhusen Company (7)
Louis Hobbins (9)

Original Use

Olson and Veerhusen Men's Clothing (7)

Architect or Builder

(Louis) Claude & (Edward) Starck (7)

Architectural Style

Mediterranean Revival (7)
NeoClassical Revival (9)

Date of Construction

1899 (7 North Pinckney Street)
1906 (9 North Pinckney Street)

Indigenous Materials Used

List of Bibliographical References Used

Madison City Directory. Madison: G.R. Angell and Company, 1904, 1907, 1911, 1914, and 1919.

Madison City Directory. Milwaukee: Wright Directory Company, 1921, 1923, 1925, 1929, 1931, 1935, 1945, 1950, and 1951.

Madison, Wisconsin. City of Madison Department of Planning and Development. Building Permit Records.

Madison, Wisconsin. City of Madison Office of the Historic Preservation Planner. Survey File and Tax Rolls.

Madison, Wisconsin. Wisconsin Historical Society. Archives.

Mollenhoff, David V. *Madison: A History of the Formative Years.* Second edition. Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003.

Rankin, Katherine H. "Madison Intensive Survey: Master Architects." Report Prepared for the City of Madison and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1996.

Williams, Zane. *Double Take: A Rephotographic Survey of Madison, Wisconsin.* Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2002.

Form Prepared By

Name and Title

Elizabeth L. Miller

Organization Represented

Madison Trust for Historic Preservation

Address

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Madison, WI 53711

Telephone Number

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Date Nomination Form Was Prepared

November 2007

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

Describe Present and Original Physical Construction and Appearance.

This property originally consisted of two buildings. The building at 7 North Pinckney Street was erected in 1899 for the men's clothing store, Olson and Veerhusen. It was designed in the Mediterranean Revival style by the prominent local architectural firm of (Louis W.) Claude and (Edward F.) Starck.¹ The (Louis) Hobbins Block at 9 North Pinckney Street, which displays the influence of the NeoClassical Revival style, was constructed in 1906.² Both are of brick construction, two stories tall, and tucked into a block of contiguous commercial structures, leaving only the front (southerly-facing) facades visible.

The Olson and Veerhusen Building/Hobbins Block is unified by the storefront of coursed, smooth-faced masonry extending across both facades. Apparently installed in 1951,³ the storefront is surmounted by a projecting belt course of the same material, and the signboard area above has been veneered with similar, coursed, smooth-faced masonry that is lighter in color. The entrance is recessed in a broad, rectangular portal, off-center in the Olson and Veerhusen Building. Display windows flank the entrance.

Originally, the Olson and Veerhusen Building possessed a Mediterranean Revival storefront with a central entrance and simple display windows, framed with pilasters of glazed terracotta.⁴ The pilasters were richly decorated with lacy motifs inspired by Italian Renaissance ornamentation. The second story of the Olson Veerhusen Building retains its original appearance. It is finished with brick and features an arcade of five, 1/1 windows in a continuous surround of glazed terracotta. The surround displays pilasters and columns embellished with Italian Renaissance ornament, ornate capitals, and running arches enriched with delicate classical moldings and each holding a shell ornament. Above, the frieze exhibits bead-and-reel, tongue-and-dart, dentilled, and egg-and-dart moldings in glazed terracotta. Glazed terracotta foliated modillion blocks support the projecting cornice. The parapet features a glazed terracotta balustrade with paneled piers and turned balusters.

The original storefront of the Hobbins Block was composed of a central entrance set between polygonal bay display windows.⁵ Brick veneer appeared at each of the first and second stories. The Hobbins Block is largely intact at the second story. A narrow belt course of smooth-faced white stone extends across the façade and forms a continuous sill for the five regularly-spaced, 1/1 windows. Above, pale brick infill shows where the original, projecting, classical cornice was located. A stone coping caps the parapet.

¹ Survey file, 7 North Pinckney Street, on file, office of Historic Preservation Planner, City Department of Planning and Development, Madison, Wisconsin.

² Survey file, 9 North Pinckney Street, on file, office of Historic Preservation Planner.

³ "Olson & Veerhusen to Hold Open House Thursday Night," *Capital Times*, November 7, 1951, p. 9, in the survey file.

⁴ Drawing by Claude and Starck, in the survey file.

⁵ Photo by Angus McVicar, 1934, published in Zane Williams, *Double Take: A Rephotographic Survey of Madison, Wisconsin*, (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), pp. 102-103.

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Despite the alterations to the storefront, and the loss of the cornice on the Hobbins Block, the Olson and Veerhusen Building/Hobbins Block retains good integrity. Alterations to the storefront are common among commercial buildings, and do not impair the property's ability to convey its historic character as an early twentieth century business block. In addition, the fine details and exuberant ornamentation of the second story of the Olson and Veerhusen Building outweigh the changes to the storefront.

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

Significance of Nominated Property and Conformance to Designation Criteria.

Statement of Significance

The Olson and Veerhusen Building/Hobbins Block at 7-9 North Pinckney Street, now considered one property, is eligible for Madison Landmark status under Criterion 3. This property is part of one of the few groupings of nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial buildings remaining on the Capitol Square, which was Madison's prime commercial district from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. It conveys a sense of what downtown Madison was like in the early twentieth century, when the city's commercial district had become a sophisticated, urban center. The Olson and Veerhusen Building/Hobbins Block retains good integrity.

The Olson and Veerhusen Building, on its own, presents a good example of urban commercial architecture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Urban commercial architecture of the period typically displays a long, rectangular footprint, with the narrow end overlooking the street. Architectural style for these buildings is typically confined to the street façade(s) and consists of window sash patterns and applied ornamentation drawn from popular architectural styles of the day. A review of the architecture/history inventory database of the Wisconsin Historical Society suggests that there are at least 13 Mediterranean Revival retail buildings in Madison. All but the Olson and Veerhusen Building were erected in the 1920s or 1930s, and display simpler decoration, such as barrel tile pent roofs and twisted columns, inspired by Spanish and Spanish American architecture. One of these, the Woldenberg Building at 639-53 State Street (1923-24) was also designed by Claude and Starck. The Woldenberg Building is a very plain brick commercial block, with Mediterranean Revival flavor limited to a shell motif in the semi-circular pediment that rises above the parapet. In contrast, the Olson and Veerhusen Building is an early commercial example of the style, with lavish decoration, and the only one that exhibits Italian Renaissance ornamentation.

The Olson and Veerhusen Building, individually, is also fine example of the commercial work of the noted Madison architectural firm, Claude and Starck. Louis W. Claude (1868-1951) and Edward F. Starck (1868-1947) were in partnership from about 1896 until 1929. Theirs was the most prolific architectural office in Madison between 1900 and 1920. Claude and Starck specialized in residences, libraries and schools, but did also execute at least 12 designs for retail buildings in Madison. One (the Levitan Building, which stood at 15 West Main Street) has been demolished. Of those that remain, the Olson and Veerhusen is among the best preserved.⁶ The Lamb Building, a Queen Anne design at 114 State Street (1905) is the only one presently listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

History of the Olson and Veerhusen Building/Hobbins Block

The Olson and Veerhusen Building at 7 North Pinckney Street was erected for the Olson and Veerhusen, a men's clothing store, in 1899. The firm began as Olson, Winden and Company (Veerhusen), in 1877. The name was changed to Olson and Veerhusen in 1888. The company

⁶ Katherine H. Rankin, "Madison Intensive Survey: Master Architects," report prepared for the City of Madison and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1996, pp. 22-44.

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maintained its merchant tailor shop at 23 South Pinckney Street (demolished) until the existing building was completed. Torgrim Olson (1838-1915) was a Norwegian immigrant. He managed the tailoring department for the company. Herman Veerhusen (?-1918), a native of Germany, supervised the ready-made clothing segment of the business. At the time that 7 North Pinckney Street was built, Olson and Veerhusen was considered the leading tailoring firm in Madison. In 1902, the company employed 35 clerks and tailors. Olson and Veerhusen expanded into the Hobbins Block in 1951. The Olson and Veerhusen company continued to own and occupy this property until c. 1975.⁷ This makes 7 North Pinckney Street the building with the longest association with retail menswear in the city of Madison.

The Hobbins Block at 9 North Pinckney Street was constructed for Louis Hobbins (1874-1957) in 1906. He owned the building until 1915. A department of the Keeley, Neckerman dry goods store appears to have been the first tenant of the Hobbins Block, remaining in residence until 1921. The Hobbins Block was the home of Harry S. Manchester's men's clothing store from at least 1923 until at least 1930. Tittle and Sons Meat Market then occupied the retail space until Olson and Veerhusen expanded into the space in 1951.⁸

Currently, the Olson and Veerhusen Building/Hobbins Block is known as the Centre Seven office building. The storefront at 7 is vacant, while 9 houses Wait Chiropractic.

⁷ Survey file, 7 North Pinckney Street.

⁸ *Madison City Directory*, (Madison: G.R. Angell and Company, 1904, 1907, 1911, 1914, and 1919); and *Madison City Directory*, (Milwaukee: Wright Directory Company, 1921, 1923, 1925, 1929, 1931, 1935, 1945, 1950, and 1951).

