

237 Langdon Street

This building was built as a Queen Anne style, two-story, frame, single-family residence in 1891 for Professor Joseph Jastrow and his wife, Rachel. In 1909 the Jastrows rebuilt the house to add the upper two stories to serve as their own residence. After they moved upstairs, they rented out the rooms on the lower two stories to students. The building is a contributing element in the Langdon Street National Register historic district.

Before the fire, this house was one of the most historically significant buildings in Madison. Professor Jastrow was a pioneer in the field of psychology. He was the first professor of psychology at the University of Wisconsin. He was also "psychology's first media star." He traveled the lecture circuit giving hugely popular self-help mental health talks. In 1927 he moved to New York and had the first radio show on popular psychology and a daily news column, syndicated in 150 newspaper across the United States. Rachel Jastrow was active nationally in Jewish woman's affairs. The local chapter of Hadassah is named after her.

The Jastrows considered their home to be a "palace of culture." Its upper two floors were filled with art and antiques and their home was so lavish that the Jastrows went bankrupt funding its construction and décor. Trying to salvage their finances was the major impetus for Prof. Jastrow's lecture circuit career. The house was so beautifully decorated that it was featured in *House Beautiful* magazine, the only house in Madison that I know of that earned that honor. The top two floors featured beautiful and intricately detailed woodwork, including an upper study decorated with pearl inlaid carved screens imported from the Middle East. Although the building had been renovated twice in the last couple of decades most of the interior woodwork, leaded glass and Turkish screens in the upper two floors remained.

The most recent fire tragically destroyed the upper two floors of the house, leaving it a mere shell of its former excellence. The building has been destroyed to the point that it would make no sense to try to bring it back.

The building is adjacent to the Woman's Building, which is a designated Landmark. If plans for a new building on the site require review by any city commissions or boards, the Landmarks Commission will be asked to advise the others boards and commission on whether or not it is so large or visually intrusive as to detract from the historic character of the Woman's Building.

K. H. Rankin
September 9, 2008



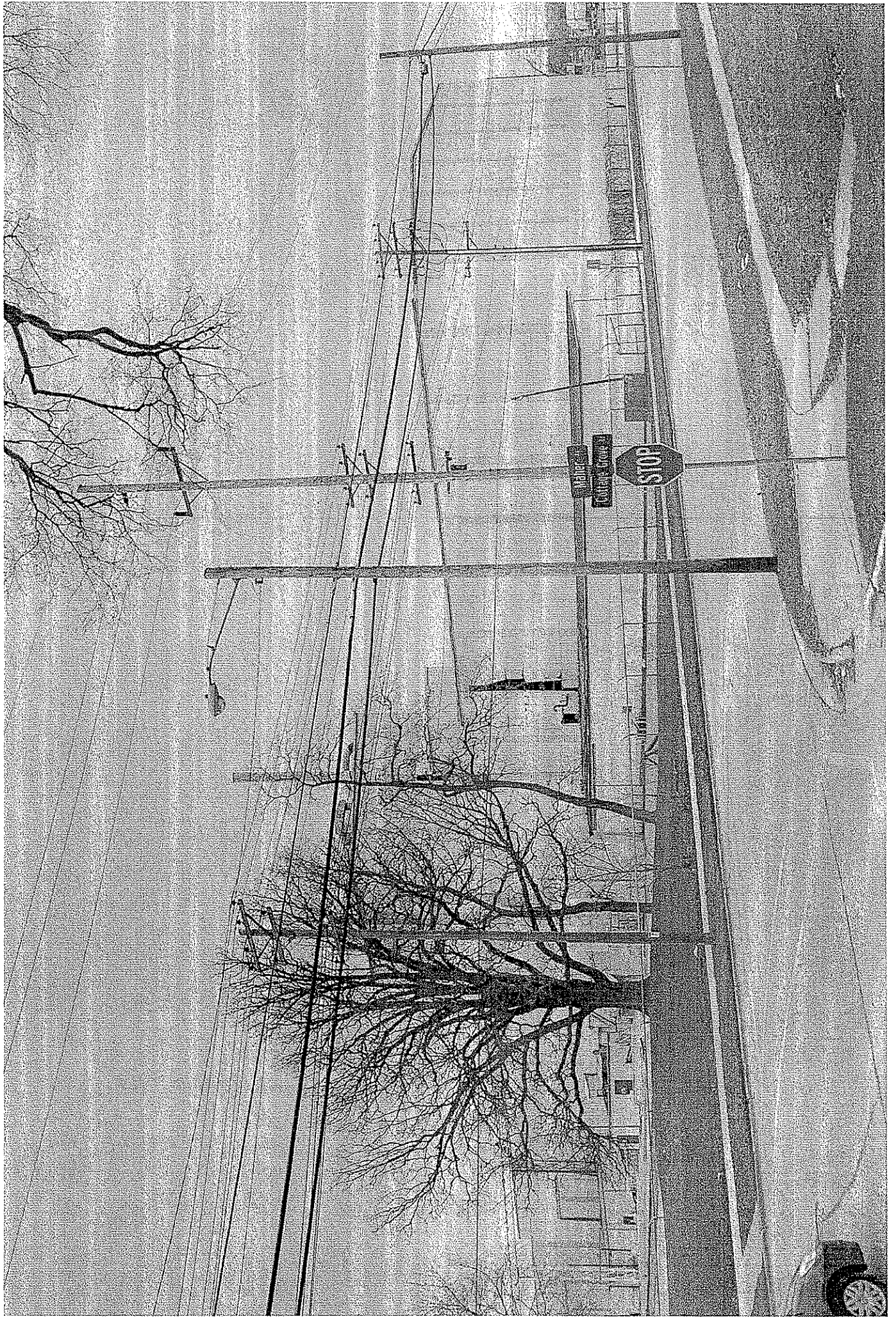
237 Langdon Street May 15, 2008

Royster Guano Company
904 Dempsey Road

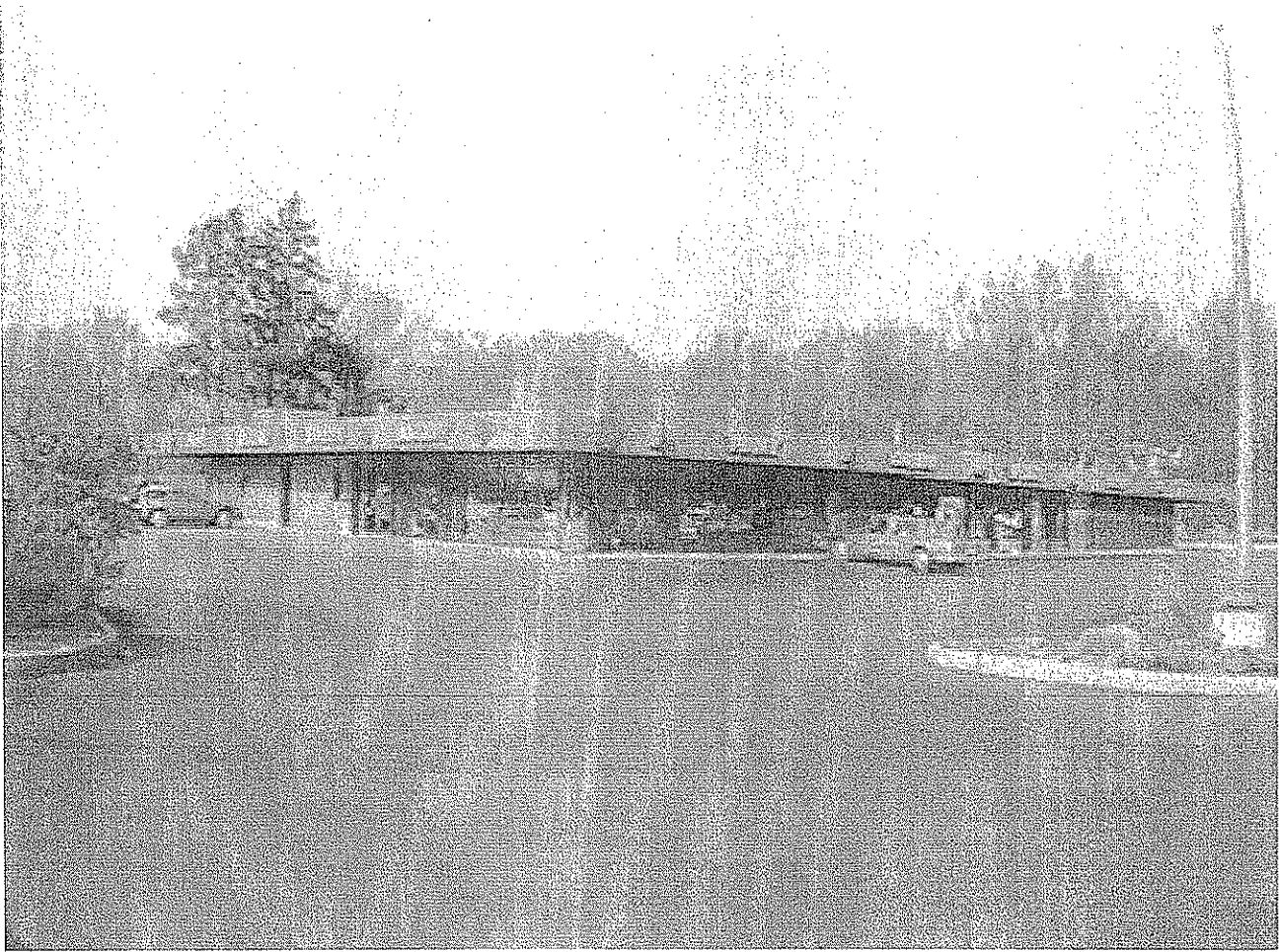
This very large but totally non-descript building was constructed in 1948 for the F. S. Royster Bat Guano Factory. It remained as such until a couple of years ago, when the building was vacated. The site is now the subject of a City planning committee which is addressing the redevelopment potential of the site.

The F. S. Royster Co. began in 1885 in North Carolina. They built large factories around the country. In 1958 they had 23 factories and 14 sales offices.

The building is of little historical interest and no architectural interest. It is proposed for demolition to enhance the safety of the site.







1422 Northport Drive

This one-story frame commercial building was erected in 1977 for Brennan's Market. Except for the fact that Brennan's sold pumpkins with cute painted-on faces, the building is of no architectural or historic interest.