

**United States Department of 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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

**historic name** Delavan Water Tower Park Historic District  
**other names/site number**

**2. Location**

<b>street &amp; number</b>	Generally bounded by 101-137 Park Place and 104-130 East Walworth Avenue, centered on Tower Park	N/A	<b>not for publication</b>
<b>city or town</b>	Delavan	N/A	<b>vicinity</b>
<b>state</b> Wisconsin	<b>code</b> WI	<b>county</b> Walworth	<b>code</b> 127
			<b>zip code</b> 53115

**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 \_ nationally \_ statewide  locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer - Wisconsin

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property \_ meets \_ does not meet the National Register criteria.  
( \_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

Name of Property

County and State

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

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

structure

site

object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

contributing

noncontributing

11

1 buildings

1

0 sites

1

0 structures

0

2 objects

13

3 total

**Name of related multiple property listing:**

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

N/A

**Number of contributing resources**

**previously listed in the National Register**

1

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/business, specialty store

GOVERNMENT/fire station, correctional facility, public works

RECREATION AND CULTURE/outdoor recreation

TRANSPORTATION/road related

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/business, specialty store

GOVERNMENT/public works

RECREATION AND CULTURE/outdoor recreation

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commercial Style

Greek Revival

Italianate

Modern Movement

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation – Stone

Walls – Brick

Roof – Asphalt

Other - Iron

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

Property is:

- 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture \_\_\_\_\_  
 Commerce \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1851 to 1961 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

N/A \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Rothering, William \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Name of Property

County and State

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):

- 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 #

### Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State Agency
  - Federal Agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository:  
 Delavan Wisconsin Historical Society  
 Wisconsin Historical Society  
 The City of Delavan

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 2.75 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>16N</u>	<u>364839</u>	<u>4721462</u>	3	<u>16N</u>	<u>364964</u>	<u>4721338</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>16N</u>	<u>364966</u>	<u>4721460</u>	4	<u>16N</u>	<u>364837</u>	<u>4721341</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

## 11. Form Prepared By

<b>name/title</b>	Rowan Davidson & Jennifer L. Lehrke, Historic Preservation Consultants	<b>date</b>	February 13, 2015
<b>organization</b>	Legacy Architecture, Inc.	<b>telephone</b>	(920) 783-6303
<b>street &amp; number</b>	605 Erie Avenue, Suite 101	<b>zip code</b>	53081
<b>city or town</b>	Sheboygan	<b>state</b>	WI

Name of Property

County and State

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

- Maps** A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.
- Photographs** Representative black and white photographs of the property.
- Additional Items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

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

name/title	Various separate listing	date
organization		telephone
street & number		zip code
city or town	state	

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications 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. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Delavan Water Tower Park Historic District  
Delavan, Walworth County, WI

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**Narrative Description**

The City of Delavan is located in Walworth County in southeastern Wisconsin. The commercial center of downtown Delavan is situated in the northwest corner of the community, just south of Comus Lake, occupying four east-west blocks of East Walworth Avenue. The downtown is identifiable by the prevalence of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century commercial buildings arranged on deep lots facing East Walworth Avenue from both sides of the road. Towards the older, western, end of this business district is a narrow city block on East Walworth Avenue that was developed as a park centered on a water tower, in the late nineteenth century. Towards the eastern end of this business district is a collection of civic buildings and the transformation of the streetscape into a boulevard as the commercial area ends and a residential one begins. The Delavan Water Tower Park Historic District is focused on the western end of the commercial area and consists of 12 buildings, 1 site, 2 structures, and 2 objects.

This district is defined by the park with its municipal water tower and commercial buildings on either side of the park. The district consists primarily of commercial storefronts along East Walworth Avenue and Park Place, all of which face Tower Park. The district's development began in the 1840s and 1850s and continued for over a century. Representative of prevailing commercial architectural styles of the period, Greek Revival, Italianate, Commercial Vernacular, Twentieth Century Commercial, and Contemporary styles are present in the district. The majority of construction within the district took place during the historic periods of rapid economic development in Delavan, Wisconsin. The 1870s and 1880s saw the development of solid blocks of two or more story masonry storefront buildings with one to a lot. The early twentieth century was a period of civic improvement and the rise of the automobile. The post-World War II period demonstrated a renewed interest in improvement, alteration, and revitalization, often replacing existing nineteenth century structures and finalizing the commercial district. In all of these periods, the district served as an active service, civic and commercial core for the City of Delavan. The result is one of Delavan's most architecturally intact historic commercial areas.

The Delavan Water Tower Park Historic District's resources consist primarily of two-story and three-story commercial storefront buildings along East Walworth Avenue and one-story commercial storefronts and garages along Park Place. There is also a civic presence in the district with a notable vitrified brick street, a park having a water tower and sculptures, and police and fire stations. The district's 13 contributing, 3 non-contributing, and 1 listed resource were constructed between 1851 and 1961. The non-contributing resources have been excluded due to a lack of architectural integrity and construction outside of the period of significance. The resource already listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), the vitrified brick street along East Walworth Avenue, is not extensively addressed in this nomination. The contributing buildings are well constructed and reflect aspects of

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public commercial and civic life during the period of significance and the variety of styles, closely aligned with periods of construction, reflect the architectural trends of the era in which they were built. The commercial architecture displays variety in their facades, decoration, and double or single block, or single and multiple lot, formations. Most of the buildings, whether multi-floored commercial storefronts or single-level garages, are narrow and deep, typically 20 to 30 feet wide and 80 to 120 feet deep, with the first floor invariably commercial in use, with storage below and upper levels, when present, originally serving as office space, flats, or communal meeting spaces. Many of the buildings are utilitarian in their efficient use of space, materials, and decorative simplicity. Exterior alterations to the original buildings have been minimal and have generally been limited to storefront alterations, window and door replacements in their original openings, additions, and occasional siding replacement or covering. The resources within the Delavan Water Tower Park Historic District are well preserved and have much of the same appearance today as they did during the period of significance.

**Building Descriptions**

The following are brief descriptions of selected representative examples of the district's resources, in approximate chronological order by style.

Greek Revival

Smith's Blacksmith Shop

137 Park Place

1866

The two story, front gabled brick building is oriented with its entrance on the south façade facing the street. It sits on a stone foundation with a mix of bricks, a reddish brick, likely original, and a series of patches in cream brick around the structure. The first floor storefront exhibits a third brick, darker in color and with a tighter bond, than elsewhere. This brick around the aluminum storefront windows and main entry are likely from the same mid-twentieth century period. The entry door is centered on the main façade with large windows on either side set on low walls. A contemporary metal awning is directly above the storefront. The second floor on the front façade features three windows arranged symmetrically beneath the gable end. The metal windows are not original though the larger size of the original window openings is visible with wood blocking surrounding the windows. The first floor of the side (east-facing) façade has four bricked-in window openings with brick headers arranged in a soldier courses and a few contemporary metal doors. This side has four additional matching windows on the second story. The windows have brick sills with angled brick soldier courses constituting the headers. The building is capped with a pitched gable with wide wood trim under a simple wood cornice (refer to Photo #7).

A blacksmith's shop was established at the eastern end of Park Place as early as 1843, but Jacob

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Smith's brick Blacksmith Shop was constructed in 1866. The blacksmith shop continued under the Smith family's ownership until 1879, when Fishman and Vance took over ownership of the blacksmith shop. The building was sold again in 1915 to Nathan Cobb, who used it for an electric welding shop. The building served numerous businesses related to metal fabricating and repair until the 1960s.<sup>1</sup>

Italianate

Jackson Flats 104 E. Walworth Avenue 1851, 1914

The three story, brick Italianate building was one of the largest in Delavan throughout the nineteenth century. The building, which fills its entire double lot, rests on a deep stone foundation that surrounds a complete basement level. The entire building above is constructed of brick which has been painted. The first floor of the main façade is approximately fifteen feet in height and is divided symmetrically into two equal storefronts. Each storefront consists of three equal arched bays with a low wall, brick sills, large window openings, wood sashes and muntins, a half-circle transom window above and a brick arched hood with a prominent brick key-stone. In between the two storefronts is a narrower arched window opening with similar detailing. An aluminum storefront door and sidelights have been inserted in a single bay of each storefront. The eastern storefront has the entry in the eastern bay while the western storefront has the entry in the central bay. In front of the two storefronts is a high concrete curb and steps as well as a set of stairs and iron pipe railing leading to an entrance below street level. The first floor façade is capped with a belt course with dentils. On the eastern and western facades of the building are two symmetrical additions with additional arched window openings on the north façade and plain brick walls in a running bond along the first floor elsewhere. Above are two levels of wood porches spanning the length of the building with a simple wood post colonnade and low-sloped roof. There are occasional windows and door openings along these two facades leading to the upper porches. The upper two floors of the main north façade consist of four equal bays divided by shallow brick pilasters. Each bay has a window on each level; the windows are of equal size. These window openings sit on brick sills and are capped with an arched window and an arched brick hood. The building is capped with a simple brick cornice with limited brick detail at the top of each pilaster. The building has a sloped flat roof (refer to Photo #2).

The Jackson Flats Building, also known as the Exchange Building, was constructed in 1851 by the company of Lanard, Bailey, and Goff as an ambitious commercial building with a general store and

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<sup>1</sup> City of Delavan Deeds, on file at the Walworth County Register of Deeds; & City of Delavan Directories, 1922, 1937, & 1963, on file at the Wisconsin Historical Society; & City of Delavan Fire Insurance Map. Sanborn Map & Publishing Company, 1885, 1892, 1895, 1904, 1910, & 1926; & Hall, Ginny. Walk around Delavan's Business District. The Friends of the Lake Geneva Public Library, 2010, page 11; & *Delavan Centennial Celebration, 1836-1936*. Delavan, WI: City of Delavan, 1936, page 29.



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twelve rental flats on the upper two floors. In 1865, Kinner Hollister, a local businessman, took over operations with his partner Stedman L. Jackson. Jackson and his family had complete ownership after 1881 and operated a grocery and general store on the first floor. The Jackson family would go on to have an interest in the building for 114 years. The Delavan Masonic Lodge No. 12 organized in the late 1860s and made the Jackson Flats their meeting hall until 1909 when they moved to 303 East Walworth Avenue. In 1914, the building underwent major improvements and alterations, converting the rental flats into apartments, adding narrow wings to the Italianate structure with shallow verandas on the east and west facades, and installing one the first hand-operated elevators in Walworth County. Jackson's Bargain Basement, a clothing store, operated out the basement, which was at one time accessible from the street above, from the 1950s to the 1990s. A major fire in 2000 led to further alterations and repairs to the interior and exterior including new windows and doors.<sup>2</sup>

Delavan Police Station

126 E. Walworth Avenue 1878

The building is located between two other existing commercial buildings and thus the only completely visible façade is the main north façade. The two story building is constructed on a stone foundation, some of which is visible, and of yellow brick. The first floor has largely been altered with a contemporary storefront of aluminum windows, metal doors, and board and batten vertical wood siding; however, some of the brick is still visible along a long, two-story pilaster with a stone base. The openings of the storefront are arranged so that a narrow door opening on the western end of the façade is separated from the rest of the north façade by the long pilaster mentioned earlier. The remainder of the first floor façade is divided into two bays, roughly corresponding to two original openings that, according to historic photographs, originally had a pair of large stable and garage doors. The second floor begins above courses of corbelled bricks directly under a long stone sill beneath four window openings. Three of these window openings are the same size and are currently filled with small aluminum replacement windows and large wood blanks. The original window openings were quite tall and capped with a simple brick soldier bond header. The fourth window opening, at the west end of the façade is significantly narrower and currently has no fenestration in it. Each window opening is divided by a brick pilaster. The façade is capped with a large wooden cornice with a deep bracket at the top of each pilaster. The central bay of the three equal ones along the second floor does not have a cornice line above it since this was once the location of an extending brick bell and siren tower. The building has a sloped flat roof (refer to Photo #6).

The Delavan Police Department was founded in 1876 and within a couple of years constructed a two

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<sup>2</sup> Ruth-Marsicano, Patricia. *Delavan, Images of America series*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia publishing, 2004, page 12; & Ruth-Marsicano, Patricia. *Forgotten Delavan, Images of America series*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2014; & Hall, Ginny. *Walk around Delavan's Business District*, page 13.

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story brick building with a bell tower along East Walworth Avenue. The Delavan Fire Station was constructed on the lot adjacent to the west only a few years later. In 1880, Dr. George Morrison founded the Wisconsin Dental College and headquartered the college offices in the upper floors of the Delavan Police Department Building at 124 East Walworth Avenue. Before founding the dental college, Morrison had practiced dental work as an itinerant salesman and was one of the first to use nitrous oxide extensively. After working the circus business for a few years, he settled in Delavan and founded the college and a neighboring music store with his brother. The Wisconsin Dental College was a diploma mill, sending out diplomas and course work via mail for a three month, 50 dollar, set of courses and instruction. The scam was investigated by the U.S. Post Office and the Wisconsin Dental Society and closed in 1885 after five successful years. Bowling lanes were added in the basement of the Police Station Building around the turn of the century. A large siren was added and the bell tower removed after World War II. The Police Station closed and moved in 1968 to a different office in Delavan. The building has since been used as a commercial storefront and rental office space on the upper floors.<sup>3</sup>

Delavan Fire Station No. 1

124 E. Walworth Avenue

1884

The building is located between two other existing commercial buildings and thus the only completely visible façade is the main (north) façade. The three story building is constructed on a stone foundation and is of painted brick. The first floor façade has largely been altered with a contemporary façade of vertical wood siding and with aluminum storefront windows and door. At one time the first floor façade consisted of a single door and a large stable and garage door according to historical photographs. The first level is capped with a band of painted brick dentils. The upper two floors are arranged in two equal bays on the narrow building that are very similar in scale and composition to the upper levels of the nearby Jackson Flats façade. Three shallow brick pilasters frame the two bays on the upper floors. Each bay has a window on each level; the windows are the same size. These windows have brick sills and are capped with an arched transom window and an arched brick hood. The building is capped with a simple brick cornice with simple brick detail at the top of each pilaster. The building has a sloped flat roof (refer to Photo #5).

The Delavan Fire Station Building, constructed in 1884 adjacent to the Delavan Police Station along East Walworth Avenue, was also the home of George Morrison's music store when it was completed. Other businesses occupied the building during the twentieth century including a billiards hall, the Delavan Army Store, and the Park Café. The Fire Department ceased operations at this location

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<sup>3</sup> General Files, on record at the Delavan Historical Society; & Ruth-Marsicano, Patricia. *Delavan, Images of America series*, page 14; & Hall, Ginny. *Walk around Delavan's Business District*, page 11; & City of Delavan Deeds; & City of Delavan Directories; & City of Delavan Fire Insurance Map.

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sometime in the 1950s.<sup>4</sup>

Commercial Vernacular

Van Velzer Block

110-118 E. Walworth Avenue 1914

The large three-story commercial building is constructed on a concrete foundation, some of which is visible above grade, and brick. Only the main (north) façade has a significant amount of detail, with the east and west side facades having no fenestration or variation besides horizontal red brick bands spaced equally along the otherwise plain cream brick walls. The main façade is constructed of red brick. The first floor is divided into three equal bays, each one occupied by a different storefront address. These three storefronts, all approximately equal in scale, materials, and design, have been altered from their original design and presently feature concrete stoops; a different, replacement red brick; aluminum storefront windows and doors; and vertical wood siding. Originally, these storefronts were similar to one another with recessed entries and the third, western storefront had a deeper entry, marquee and brick arch over the opening for a theater. On the second and third floors there is no clear relationship to the pattern of bays on the first floor. The brick wall is flat and unadorned besides the fenestration which follows the pattern across the façade of a pair of double hung windows, a wood bay with three windows (two double-hung and a larger, fixed, center window), a single double hung window, a bay again and a pair of double hung windows creating symmetry across the façade. The bay windows are each two stories in height while the windows on the flat face of the brick have concrete sills and headers. The brick wall continues up to a large painted wood cornice that spans the façade. The wall continues above the cornice and terminates in a stepped parapet with a concrete cap. The building has a sloped flat roof (refer to Photo #4).

F.P. Van Velzer, a successful local businessman, developed the Van Velzer Block on three lots along East Walworth Avenue in 1914. Designed and built by William Rothering of Burlington, Wisconsin, the building featured three storefronts and two upper floors divided into flats. The third storefront to the west was occupied by the Rex Theater and featured a distinctive arch, ticket booth, and recessed entry. The storefronts have been occupied by a wide variety of businesses throughout the twentieth century.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> General Files, on record at the Delavan Historical Society; & City of Delavan Deeds; & City of Delavan Directories; & City of Delavan Fire Insurance Map.

<sup>5</sup> Ruth-Marsicano, Patricia. *Delavan, Images of America series*, page 13; & General Files, on record at the Delavan Historical Society; & City of Delavan Deeds; & City of Delavan Directories; & City of Delavan Fire Insurance Map.

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Twentieth Century Commercial

Delavan Motor Company Garage

127-133 Park Place

1919

Only the south facing main façade of the one story garage building is visible; the east and west facades are adjacent to the neighboring buildings on both sides along the street. The brick building sits on a concrete foundation and is divided into five bays, with the two on each end being the same size and the central one being slightly larger. The entire dark red brick building is largely unadorned with simple brick detail. The five bays are separated by shallow brick pilasters rising to the corbelled brick cornice line. Each bay currently has metal storefront windows and doors, but originally the second and fourth bay had garage doors. The brick ends abruptly at approximately twenty feet at a low parapet. The building, at one time, had twin low pitched gable roofs behind the parapet (refer to Photo #8).

The site of the Delavan Motor Company Garage had been used as a mechanical repair and sales location since the late nineteenth century, when an agricultural implements store and warehouse occupied the location. The Delavan Motor Company was established in 1918 and constructed the garage at 127 Park Place one year later. At approximately the same time, the company purchased the neighboring building at 123 Park Place for use as an annex. This adjacent building was not well suited for use as a garage so it is presumed it was used for offices, sales, and storage. By the 1960s the space was occupied by the Delavan Printing and Publishing Company which produced advertisements and catalogues.<sup>6</sup>

Contemporary

Sikes Motor Sales

106-108 E. Walworth Avenue

1961

The one story building on two lots sits on a concrete foundation and is constructed of concrete and steel. The east and west facades of the building cannot be seen as they are adjacent to the commercial buildings on either side. The finished concrete of the façade has a noticeable aggregate and texture and is limited to seven columns and a low wall beneath four large sheets of plate glass and two metal and glass doors with transoms above. The façade is arranged in two equal sections, each one with a central door and two large windows on either side. The fenestration and concrete columns terminate in a metal band protruding slightly from the façade. Above this band is a large area of black porcelain enamel, laid out horizontally in two equal rows of squares. This porcelain enamel has a large section of signage at one end and terminates in another metal band at the low parapet wall (refer to Photo #3).

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<sup>6</sup> City of Delavan Deeds; & City of Delavan Directories; & City of Delavan Fire Insurance Map.

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Edgar Sikes operated his Ford Motor Company car dealership out the Park Hotel, located at 117 Park Place, from 1940 to 1948, then moved across the park to the present location of the Sikes Motor Sales Building. At first, Sikes operated out of the existing buildings: the former Porky Sturtevant Bicycle Shop and John Bossi's Monument Company. In 1961 he demolished the two small buildings and constructed a new, Contemporary style, single story building on East Walworth Avenue.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> City of Delavan Deeds; & City of Delavan Directories; & City of Delavan Fire Insurance Map; & Ruth-Marsicano, Patricia. *Forgotten Delavan, Images of America series*; & Ruth-Marsicano, Patricia. *Delavan, Images of America series*, page 13.

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**Building Inventory**

The following inventory lists every building in the district and includes the address of the property; the historic name; the date or circa date of construction; the resource's contributing (C), non-contributing (NC), or previously listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) class; and architectural style of the building.

<u>Address</u>	<u>Historic Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Style</u>
101 Park Place	Building	c.1930	C	20th Century Comm.
107 Park Place	Koepke Automotive Garage	1948	C	Quonset
117-121 Park Place	Park Hotel	1848	NC	Greek Revival
123 Park Place	Delavan Motor Co. Annex	1908	C	Commercial Vernacular
127-133 Park Place	Delavan Motor Co. Garage	1919	C	20th Century Comm.
137 Park Place	Smith's Blacksmith Shop Building	1866	C	Greek Revival
100 block of E. Walworth Ave.	Walworth Avenue - Vitrified Brick Street	1913	NRHP	Structure
100 block of E. Walworth Ave.	Delavan Water Tower	1951	C	Structure
100 block of E. Walworth Ave.	Tower Park	1893	C	Site
100 block of E. Walworth Ave.	Historic Circus District Statue	1985	NC	Object
100 block of E. Walworth Ave.	Delavan Wisconsin Statue	1985	NC	Object
104 E. Walworth Avenue	Jackson Flats Building	1851/1914	C	Italianate
106-108 E. Walworth Avenue	Sikes Motor Sales Building	1961	C	Contemporary
110 E. Walworth Avenue	Van Velzer Building	1914	C	Commercial Vernacular
124 E. Walworth Avenue	Delavan Fire Station No. 1	1884	C	Italianate
126 E. Walworth Avenue	Delavan Police Station	1878	C	Italianate
130 E. Walworth Avenue	Building	c.1880	C	Commercial Vernacular

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**Narrative Statement of Significance**

The Delavan Water Tower Park Historic District is being nominated for its concentration of commercial, service oriented, and civic buildings arranged around a central park constructed between 1851 and 1961, having local significance under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. This district is also eligible under Criterion A in the area of Commerce having evolved into the service core of the community with a concentration of automobile service-related businesses influencing the character of these blocks, mingled with the other commercial businesses. The district has an architecturally and historically important collection of commercial and civic resources that together constitute a well-defined and visually distinct geographic and historic entity.

The proposed Delavan Water Tower Park Historic District has boundaries roughly delineated along the 101-137 block of Park Place and the 104-130 block of East Walworth Avenue between Main and Second streets and centered on Water Tower Park. The district is located near the center of the City of Delavan and is comprised of 13 contributing resources, 3 non-contributing resources, and 1 resource already listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The contributing resources include very good representative examples of several popular styles applied to commercial and civic architecture in Wisconsin during the period of significance (refer to Photo # 9 and Photo #10).

The period of significance reflects a century of commercial and civic architecture and planning, and begins in 1851 with the construction of the district's oldest extant commercial structure, the Jackson Flats at 104 East Walworth Avenue. Since the mid-nineteenth century, commercial buildings constructed in the downtown district conformed aesthetically to Greek Revival, Italianate, and Commercial Vernacular styles. The period of significance ends in 1961 with the construction of the Sikes Motor Sales Building at 106 East Walworth Avenue, the last contributing resource to be built in the district. Additionally, one building within the district is considered non-contributing as it has suffered sufficient loss of architectural integrity, and two objects in the park are non-contributing as they are too new to meet eligibility requirements.

The commercial and civic buildings within the Delavan Water Tower Park Historic District are well preserved and have much the same appearance today as they did years ago. Exterior alterations to the original buildings have been minimal and have generally been limited to window replacements in their original openings, and storefront alterations and replacements; avoiding widespread elimination of the historic brick facades, cast iron storefronts, and decorative cornices. The result is now one of Delavan's most architecturally intact historic commercial areas.

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**Historic Context**

Walworth County became a part of the Wisconsin Territory in 1836 and was rapidly settled and subdivided. The first known settler in the area was a man named Allen Perkins, though he only stayed for a few years. By an act of the Territorial Legislature in 1838, the town of Delavan was formed in the southwestern quarter of the county. Henry and Colonel Samuel Phoenix settled along Turtle Creek and named the area after the notable temperance leader E.C. Delavan. The brothers, two successful businessmen from New York State, intended to establish a Temperance Colony, pledged to “temperance, sobriety and religion; and where should a poor despised colored man a chance to set his foot, he might do it in safety,” according to Samuel Phoenix’s journal. The Phoenix brothers soon held claim on much of the land that would become the city of Delavan and founded a Baptist Church and a Temperance Hall in 1839. From these two institutions grew the first anti-slavery and temperance societies in Wisconsin. The Phoenix family established a dam and mill and invited other temperance followers from New York to settle in the area.<sup>8</sup> The temperance hall, located along W. Walworth Avenue, also served as an inn, though it was often inhospitable to those not in line with the temperance settler’s thinking. The Phoenix brothers died in 1840 and 1842 respectively.<sup>9</sup>

The temperance stand of the community was broken in 1845, and a new set of settlers came to Delavan along with Edmund and Jeremiah Mabie, proprietors of the U.S. Olympic Circus. At the time the largest travelling circus in the United States, the Mabie brothers chose Delavan for their winter quarters in 1847. By this time Delavan was already a thriving center for business in Walworth County with over two dozen businesses in the town and over 400 residents by the end of the decade. In 1846 the town’s borders were permanently established, two years before Wisconsin achieved statehood.<sup>10</sup>

The Mabie brothers took over where the Phoenix brothers left off, taking over large portions of the township, ownership of the grist mill, holding positions of leadership in the community, and organizing a plank road and later a railway through Delavan. Their circus was successful and attracted other circus entertainers encouraging the growth of Delavan as a center for circus related businesses. Twenty six different circuses wintered in Delavan from 1847 to 1894 including Harry Buckley’s National Circus and Roman Hippodrome; W.C. Coup and Dan Castello’s Egyptian Caravan; and Holland and McMahan’s World Circus. W.C. Coup created the P.T. Barnum Circus, “The Greatest

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<sup>8</sup> “History,” Delavan Lake Area Chamber of Commerce website. <[www.delavanwi.org/wp/delavan-wi-chamber/history/](http://www.delavanwi.org/wp/delavan-wi-chamber/history/)> accessed December 23, 2014; & “Some History,” Delavan Wisconsin Historical Society website. <[www.delavanhistory.org/some-history/](http://www.delavanhistory.org/some-history/)> accessed December 23, 2014.

<sup>9</sup> “Temperance House,” Delavan Wisconsin Historical Society website. <[www.delavanhistory.org/some-history/](http://www.delavanhistory.org/some-history/)> accessed December 23, 2014; & Yadon, W. Gordon, ed. *History of Delavan*. Delavan, WI: 1982, pages 3-6.

<sup>10</sup> Yadon, W. Gordon, ed. *History of Delavan*, pages 4-5; & “Some History,” Delavan Wisconsin Historical Society website; & *Delavan Centennial Celebration*, pages 3-4.



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Show on Earth,” in 1871 and was influential as the first to put circuses on railroads. The popularity of travelling circuses, and headquartering them in Delavan, came to an end in the 1890s.<sup>11</sup>

The Circus’s influence was felt throughout the commercial district of Delavan along East Walworth Avenue. Many of the local businesses, such as hotels and taverns, were directly related to the various circuses and their employees. The Park Hotel, located at 117 Park Place facing the Water Tower Park square, started in 1848 as a business interest of the Phoenix family. When the Greek Revival style building was constructed, it was one of the largest temperance hotels in Wisconsin. However, with the changing nature of Delavan away from a temperance colony and with the influx of the circuses, the nature of the hotel changed. From the 1850s to the 1890s, ownership of the hotel changed hands many times, often back and forth between those interested in maintaining it as a temperance establishment and those who encouraged the development of taverns and a transient clientele. The building’s use as a hotel discontinued in 1903 and has since been used as an upholstery business, an Odd Fellows lodge, and an office building. The Park Hotel is within the Delavan Water Tower Park Historic District, but is a non-contributing resource due to its lack of architectural integrity.<sup>12</sup>

Another nineteenth century institution that shaped the City of Delavan was the development of the Wisconsin School for the Education of the Deaf. Established in 1852, the school was situated on a hill west of the commercial center of Delavan along the western part of Walworth Avenue and was constructed on land donated by Franklin Phoenix. The school consisted of a boarding house and Phoenix Hall, designed like many other notable buildings in Delavan from the period, by Edward Townsend Mix, but was expanded many times from 1880 to 1962.<sup>13</sup>

By the time the Wisconsin School for the Education of the Deaf was well established, Delavan was growing rapidly. The settlement was incorporated as a Village in 1856, and by the 1860s, manufacturing plants such as the Trumbull D. Thomas Windmill Co., the Logan Cheese Factory, the Van Velzer Cigar Factory, the Jackson Tack Factory, and the N.W. Hoag Grain Elevators brought industry to the area. Bird’s eye views of Delavan from the 1870s and 1880s show an established commercial center with sprawling blocks of houses out in every direction.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Yadon, W. Gordon, ed. *History of Delavan*, pages 5-6; & “Some History,” Delavan Wisconsin Historical Society website; & Ruth-Marsicano, Patricia. *Delavan, Images of America series*, pages 63-64.

<sup>12</sup> Ruth-Marsicano, Patricia. *Delavan, Images of America series*, page 16; & Hall, Ginny. *Walk around Delavan’s Business District*, page 14.

<sup>13</sup> *History and Handbook of Day Schools for the Deaf and Blind*. Madison, WI: Democrat Printing Company, 1912; & “Some History,” Delavan Wisconsin Historical Society website; & “History,” Delavan Lake Area Chamber of Commerce website.

<sup>14</sup> Ruth-Marsicano, Patricia. *Delavan, Images of America series*; & “Some History,” Delavan Wisconsin Historical Society website; & Brosius, H., *Delavan, Walworth County, Wisconsin* (lithograph). Beck & Pauli, 1884.

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Development around the Village of Delavan began in earnest in the 1870s and 1880s as the lakes around the Village, specifically Delavan Lake, attracted resorts and tourists. Southeast Wisconsin offered many attractions related to the lakes, boating, mineral springs, and entertainment to city dwellers from Chicago, Milwaukee, and further east and Delavan was no exception. Private cottages and larger hotel resorts began to be built around the lake in the late 1870s and became a popular destination during the following decade. While not a part of Delavan, this development did spur more economic growth in the Village. Steamboat launches, restaurants, ballrooms, theaters, and pavilions became common and railway service to Delavan was commonplace.<sup>15</sup>

The last decade of the nineteenth century saw many more changes in Delavan as the village was incorporated as a city in 1897. Manufacturing expanded as the circuses influence waned, and the downtown commercial district experienced rapid growth at the turn of the century as many of the wooden structures were replaced with larger brick commercial blocks.<sup>16</sup> Much of this building was encouraged by a series of devastating fires, the first in 1876, and much larger ones in 1892 and 1893, which destroyed much of the downtown area. The experience of these fires encouraged the City to start a reliable source for water, and a water works, dependent on nearby springs, was introduced along with a brick water tower, reservoir, and pumping station in 1893. A new school was completed in 1894, and electric lighting made its widespread appearance in Delavan in 1896; the City was a booming and successful commercial center in Walworth County.<sup>17</sup>

The new brick water tower, located opposite the 100 block of East Walworth Avenue, was set in a new public park maintained by the City of Delavan. The park was completed with a gazebo, plantings, and park furniture around the large water tower by 1898 and named Tower Park, but is also known as Avenue Park and Haymarket Square. A newer, metal stand pipe water tower was constructed in the park in 1951 and the older brick tower demolished in 1954. This water tower, painted blue with the name 'Delavan' painted on one side, still stands in the park and is easily seen from anywhere in downtown Delavan. Additional statues in commemoration of Delavan's circus history, one depicting Romeo, the Mabie Brothers' famous circus elephant, and the other depicting a clown and giraffe, were erected in 1985.<sup>18</sup> The newer Delavan Water Tower and Tower Park are contributing resources in the Delavan Water Tower Park Historic District nomination (refer to Photo #1).

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<sup>15</sup> Ruth-Marsicano, Patricia. *Delavan, Images of America series*, pages 18-21; & "Some History," Delavan Wisconsin Historical Society website.

<sup>16</sup> Ruth-Marsicano, Patricia. *Delavan, Images of America series*, page 23; & "Some History," Delavan Wisconsin Historical Society website; & General Files, on record at the Delavan Historical Society.

<sup>17</sup> Yadon, W. Gordon, ed. *History of Delavan*, pages 7-8; & *Delavan Centennial Celebration, 1836-1936*, pages 6-27.

<sup>18</sup> Ruth-Marsicano, Patricia. *Forgotten Delavan, Images of America series*; & Ruth-Marsicano, Patricia. *Delavan, Images of America series*, page 15; & Hall, Ginny. *Walk around Delavan's Business District*, page 18.

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By the early twentieth century the commercial center of Delavan had two distinct portions, one in the east centered on the new water tower park and featuring service oriented businesses, and one to the west along East Walworth Avenue featuring storefronts, shopping, entertainment businesses, and civic buildings. Delavan had also become a recognized center for artist and professionals as a number of doctors, lawyers, and dentists, some legitimate and some not, took up residence in second floor offices of downtown Delavan. The Chicago Art Institute held its summer classes in Delavan for over fifteen years during the first two decades of the twentieth century and artists such as William T. Thorne, Adolph and Ada Schulz, Frank Dudley, and Frank Phoenix, all had studios in the City.<sup>19</sup>

The first paved street in Delavan was East Walworth Avenue from Main Street to Eighth Street. The City of Delavan chose vitrified brick as the material for the improved street, and the project was completed in 1913 by the Birdsall-Griffith Company of Racine. The red brick is laid out in a running bond pattern parallel to the street and a herringbone pattern at intersections. At the same time curbs, sidewalks, and street lights were added to the commercial center of Delavan, and East Walworth Avenue from Fourth Street to Seventh Street was converted into a boulevard. The brick pavers were repaired and replaced in 1999 and follow the same pattern, layout, and materials of the original street.<sup>20</sup> The Vitrified Brick Street along East Walworth Avenue in Delavan is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and was included in this district nomination.

The commercial success of downtown Delavan continued into the 1920s and 1930s as the eastern part of the downtown area developed a focus on service related businesses including artist's studios, repair shops, stone-cutters, and especially automotive dealerships and garages; while the western part of the downtown maintained a streetscape friendly to shoppers with restaurants, taverns, general stores, theaters, and specialty shops. While the Depression did affect Delavan, businesses continued to grow, and the city experienced increased manufacturing with the introduction of Borg Industries, Gibbs Manufacturing, Ajay Industries, and Sta-Rite Products, all of which kept business going in Delavan. Storefronts in the downtown changed considerably during this period as they were modernized and "improved." Indeed, many of the current storefronts in downtown Delavan date to the 1920s through the 1950s despite the buildings' original construction dates from the late nineteenth century.<sup>21</sup>

The 1960s through the 1990s witnessed continued growth of industries in Delavan; however, much of this growth was on the edges of the city and the downtown commercial areas stagnated. While some

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<sup>19</sup> Ruth-Marsicano, Patricia. *Delavan, Images of America series*, pages 30-31; & "Some History," Delavan Wisconsin Historical Society website; & General Files, on record at the Delavan Historical Society.

<sup>20</sup> Yadon, W. Gordon. *Delavan's Vitrified Brick Street*. National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 1995; & "Some History," Delavan Wisconsin Historical Society website.

<sup>21</sup> "Some History," Delavan Wisconsin Historical Society website; & General Files, on record at the Delavan Historical Society.

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department stores and hotels continued, others went out of business. Fires in 1978 and 1979 further contributed to damage in the commercial center of Delavan.<sup>22</sup> While the city maintained the streetscape of East Walworth Avenue with beautification projects, other planning proposals led to the demolition of resources adjacent to East Walworth Avenue, particularly along its side streets.<sup>23</sup> Despite these changes, much of the commercial center of Delavan along East Walworth Avenue remains and maintains its historic character as a late-19<sup>th</sup> and early-20<sup>th</sup> century commercial center.

### **Architecture**

The Delavan Water Tower Park Historic District is locally significant in the area of Architecture for its collection of commercial and civic buildings from the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries. As a whole, it is an area that maintains good integrity that reflects the continued development of the district during the period of significance. The following are brief descriptions of the architectural styles represented within the district, listed in the chronological order in which they were popular, as well as good examples of those styles.

#### Greek Revival

The Greek revival style is one of the earliest architectural styles seen in Wisconsin, dating from 1840 to 1870, and developed from an interest in the symbolic connotations of classical buildings. Because these buildings date so early in Wisconsin's history, they were often wood framed as it was the only readily available material of the time. Its main elements include a formal and symmetrical arrangement of columns, which may be of the Doric, Ionic, or Corinthian order, that support a triangular shaped, low sloped pediment roof. The arrangement of the fenestration is also regular and symmetrical. In some instances, Greek Revival style buildings have tall first floor windows topped by a pediment-shaped window head while the second floor windows are tied into an enlarged frieze. The front entry door may be topped with a transom and flanked by sidelights. In simpler designs, the columns are translated into fluted pilaster corner boards, and the gabled roofline has returned eaves.<sup>24</sup>

During the 1840s, 1850s, and 1860s, much of the Downtown Delavan consisted of wood frame Greek revival storefronts facing the 100 and 200 blocks of East Walworth Avenue. Many fires, combined with subsequent improvements, have taken most of these buildings. One exception is the brick

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<sup>22</sup> "Some History," Delavan Wisconsin Historical Society website; & General Files, on record at the Delavan Historical Society.

<sup>23</sup> *Preliminary Planning Report - Delavan, Wisconsin*. Chicago, IL: Evert Kincaid and Associates, 1962; & *North Second Street Redevelopment Plan - City of Delavan, Wisconsin*. Max Anderson Associates, 1982.

<sup>24</sup> Blumenson, John J.G. *Identifying American Architecture: A Pictorial Guide to Styles and Terms, 1600-1945*. Second Ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1981.

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Smith's Blacksmith Shop building located at 137 Park Place at the corner of the Delavan Water Tower Park Historic District and constructed in 1866. While the building has undergone some alterations and additions, it maintains its basic front gabled Greek Revival form. There are two Greek Revival style resources in the Delavan Water Tower Park Historic District, one contributing and one non-contributing.<sup>25</sup>

Italianate

The Italianate style was popular in Wisconsin from approximately 1850 to 1880, the period of time during which Walworth County experienced its fastest growth. Commercial variations are square or rectangular in plan and, at two or three stories in height, are often cubic in mass with 'flat' fronts. Its main elements include flat roofs with wide soffits and decorative brackets and details. The fenestration arrangement is regular and balanced with tall thin windows that are topped with decorative window heads or hood moldings. The windows may also be arched. Italianate buildings are often adorned with a decorative symmetrical storefronts featuring large windows and doors. Commercial variations feature carefully composed front facades, 'flat' roofs, and utilitarian facades away from the front, street facing, and façade.<sup>26</sup>

There are three Italianate style buildings in the Delavan Water Tower Park Historic District, all of them along the south side of East Walworth Avenue and all completed in the nineteenth century. A common style for commercial buildings of the period, the Italianate store front buildings share similar scale and detailing despite the fact that two of these in the district were originally constructed for civic use. The Jackson Flats, located at 104 East Walworth Avenue and originally constructed in 1851, has undergone many additions and alterations but maintains its Italianate character. The Delavan Fire Station No. 1, located at 120 East Walworth Avenue and constructed in 1884, has also served as a predominately commercial building for most of its history. The Delavan Police Station, located at 124 East Walworth Avenue and constructed in 1878, is also of an Italianate style. All three buildings are discussed earlier in this document.<sup>27</sup>

Commercial Vernacular

Commercial Vernacular is a general term for nineteenth century commercial buildings that do not quite fit into the high style categories described elsewhere. They may have elements of Italianate, Romanesque, or Queen Anne styles, but not enough to categorize them as that style. For instance, the

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<sup>25</sup> City of Delavan Deeds; & City of Delavan Directories; & City of Delavan Fire Insurance Map.

<sup>26</sup> Blumenson, John J.G. *Identifying American Architecture: A Pictorial Guide to Styles and Terms, 1600-1945*.

<sup>27</sup> City of Delavan Deeds; & City of Delavan Directories; & City of Delavan Fire Insurance Map.

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first floor storefront may be reminiscent of a particular period, but there is no evidence of that period throughout the rest of the facade. Second story openings may have hood moldings or be arched, and the parapet of the building may be adorned with a decorative corbelled cornice. Early Commercial Vernacular buildings were constructed of wood, but were taken by fire over the years. The remaining buildings are made of brick or stone.<sup>28</sup>

Among the three Commercial Vernacular buildings in the district the most extensive is the Van Velzer Block, located at 110 East Walworth Avenue, constructed in 1914, and discussed earlier in this document. The Van Velzer Block covers three lots on the south side of East Walworth Avenue and is one of the larger buildings along downtown Delavan's commercial strip. The plain and unadorned facade has common elements of turn-of-the-century buildings but does not clearly align with any one architectural style.<sup>29</sup>

Twentieth Century Commercial

The term Twentieth Century Commercial is a general stylistic term for twentieth century commercial buildings that do not quite fit into the high style categories described above. These are simple, undecorated buildings with little architectural detailing. The only ornamentation that may appear in the building may come in the form of decorative brickwork at the parapet.<sup>30</sup>

Of the two Twentieth Century Commercial designs in the Delavan Water Tower Park Historic District the Delavan Motor Company Garage, located at 127 Park Place, constructed in 1919 and discussed earlier in this document, serves as a good example of the style's features with its simplified and unadorned brick facade and single story utilitarian features. The Delavan Motor Company Garage is also an example of the automotive nature of the businesses in the district during much of the Twentieth Century.<sup>31</sup>

Quonset

The Quonset is a contemporary, mass-produced architectural form that reflects the need for basic, economic shelter without concern for fashionable stylistic design or detailing. The form has been commonly used for commercial and other uses in Wisconsin since 1940 and stems from the industrial

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<sup>28</sup> Wyatt, Barbara, Ed. *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin: Vols. I, II, & III, A Manual for Historic Properties*. Madison, WI: Historic Preservation Division State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986. Architecture 3-10.

<sup>29</sup> City of Delavan Deeds; & City of Delavan Directories; & City of Delavan Fire Insurance Map.

<sup>30</sup> Wyatt, Barbara, Ed. *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*. Architecture 3-10.

<sup>31</sup> City of Delavan Deeds; & City of Delavan Directories; & City of Delavan Fire Insurance Map.

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advantages of a largely prefabricated and metal building utilized during World War II.<sup>32</sup> The Koepke Automotive Garage, located at 107 Park Place and constructed in 1948, is the one Quonset hut design in the district with a large garage door opening facing the street. Its association with automotive trades is consistent with the emphasis on such businesses in the Delavan Water Tower Park Historic District during the twentieth century.<sup>33</sup>

Contemporary

The term Contemporary is used to describe mid- and late twentieth century buildings that cannot be ascribed to styles detailed previously in this chapter. Architectural historians and architects have identified names for many contemporary theories of architecture; however, buildings of these genres are now first reaching sufficient age to be evaluated for significance per National Register criteria.<sup>34</sup>

The Contemporary style section of the Architecture Study Unit of the Wisconsin Historical Society's *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin* dates the occurrence and popularity of contemporary style architecture in Wisconsin from approximately 1950 to the present. That text defines contemporary style buildings as those constructed during or after the mid-twentieth century that cannot be described in the manner of other preceding stylistic movements. It also notes that while architectural historians and architects have generated terminology for some movements within contemporary or modern architecture, these genres are just now reaching sufficient age to be viewed as historic and their scholarly value and significance recognized and understood.<sup>35</sup>

Carole Rifkind describes modern architecture in her *A Field Guide to American Architecture* as the experimental and radical product of American Modernism and the European International Style taking on a mechanical appearance. Her text identifies modern architecture's common emphasis of simple geometrical volumes, expression of structure, sculptural character, self-containment, defiance of traditional identification of front or back and interior or exterior, rejection of ornament, and heavy emphasis on surface and texture. Organization of plan tends to be organized based on functional, and often extends laterally. Modern buildings tend to favor a low-profile, enhanced by its ground floor being directly at grade and attic-less, flat roof. Roof overhangs may blur the sense of indoor and out. Plain wall surfaces are often offset by linear elements. While often large door and window openings do not violate the uninterrupted character of the walls. Windows are grouped in bands, either at full-room height or in the upper wall zones, and are often a major feature. Technical advances with

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<sup>32</sup> McAlester, Virginia and Lee McCalester. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1989, page 497.

<sup>33</sup> City of Delavan Deeds; & City of Delavan Directories; & City of Delavan Fire Insurance Map.

<sup>34</sup> Wyatt, Barbara, Ed. *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*. Architecture 2-37.

<sup>35</sup> Wyatt, Barbara, Ed. *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*. Architecture 2-37.

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construction materials and engineering during the early twentieth century are heavily represented in the expression of contemporary architecture, which often employs reinforced concrete, insulating board, and glass as both window and wall.<sup>36</sup>

Serving a similar function to the Twentieth Century Commercial style garages in the Delavan Water Tower Park Historic District, the one Contemporary style building was an automotive dealership. The Sikes Motor Sales Building, discussed earlier in this document, is located at 106 East Walworth Avenue and was completed in 1961. The contemporary style exhibits more decorative elements than the typically brick Twentieth Century Commercial designs and features 'modern' materials such as aluminum, steel, and porcelain enamel panels.<sup>37</sup>

**Architect/Builder**

*William Rothering*

In 1914 the Van Velzer Block, located at 110 East Walworth Avenue, was constructed for F.P. Van Velzer by the builder William Rothering who designed the building. The modern three story brick building consisted of two commercial storefronts and a movie theater on the first floor, apartments on the upper floors, and was designed in the Commercial Vernacular style.<sup>38</sup> Little is known about William Rothering besides that he was a successful builder at the turn of the twentieth century and was located in Burlington, Wisconsin.

**Conclusion**

The Delavan Water Tower Park Historic District is nominated under National Register Criteria A and C in the areas of Commerce and Architecture, respectively. The district represents a component of Delavan's commercial development and growth and demonstrates the range of commercial and civic architectural styles employed during its period of development between 1851 and 1961. The district conveys a sense of historical and architectural cohesiveness through its architectural designs of 7 retail storefronts, 3 garages, 2 civic buildings, a water tower, and a vitrified brick street all arranged around a central park along East Walworth Avenue in the commercial downtown area of the City of Delavan. Representative of the prevailing architectural styles of the times, Greek Revival, Italianate, Commercial Vernacular, Twentieth Century Commercial, and Contemporary styles are prominent

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<sup>36</sup> Rifkind, Carole. *A Field Guide to American Architecture*. New York: New American Library, Inc., 1980, page 212.

<sup>37</sup> City of Delavan Deeds; & City of Delavan Directories; & City of Delavan Fire Insurance Map.

<sup>38</sup> Ruth-Marsicano, Patricia. *Delavan, Images of America series*, page 13; & General Files, on record at the Delavan Historical Society.



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within the district. The business and community buildings within the Delavan Water Tower Park Historic District are well preserved, maintain architectural and historical integrity, and have much the same appearance today as they did years ago. The result is now one of Delavan's most architecturally intact historic commercial areas.

**Statement of Archaeological Potential**

Numerous effigy mounds have been identified over the last century surrounding Delavan Lake and Comus Lake flanking the City of Delavan on the south and north. Significant Native American settlement, of the both pre-historic woodland Indians and Winnebago and Pottawatomie tribes, was common in the area of Delavan and many mounds have disturbed since the settlement was established in the 1830s and 1840s. Given this fact, it is almost certain that the construction of the extant resources with the district would have greatly disturbed remaining archeological artifacts directly within their footprint. While it is possible that Native American resources may be extant with the boundaries of the district, archaeological potential within the district remains unassessed.

**Preservation Activities**

The Delavan Water Tower Park Historic District has been fortunate in consistently attracting long-term business-owners who have taken pride in their historic properties and have maintained them. In addition, the City of Delavan, and the Delavan Historical Society are proactive in promoting, protecting, and preserving Delavan's historic resources. In listing this district, the City of Delavan hopes to provide the opportunity for business owners to obtain tax credits and/or other incentives to maintain and restore their properties.

**Acknowledgments**

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There is a wealth of resources available on the history of the City of Delavan and Walworth County. The information and research already produced on these subjects far exceeds the purpose of this nomination. The following bibliography contains works with considerably more breadth and information on individual historical subjects and buildings; in particular, the work of local historians whose research can be accessed through the Delavan Wisconsin Historical Society.

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

The district consists of the legal parcels associated with the 13 contributing and 3 non-contributing resources within the district and may be defined by the general description:

Beginning at the northwest corner of the lot associated with 101 Park Place, continue east along the north edge of the lots backing Park Place, turn 90 degrees to the south at the northeast corner of the property associated with 123 Park Place, continue to the south, turn 90 degrees to the east at the northwest corner of the property associated with 127 Park Place, continue to the east, turn 90 degrees to the south at the northeast corner of the property associated with 137 Park Place, continue to the south across Park Place, along the eastern edge of Tower Park, across East Walworth Avenue, and along the western edge of Second Street to the northeast corner of the property associated with 138 East Walworth Avenue, turn 90 degrees to the west and continue along the north edge of the property associated with 138 East Walworth Avenue to the northeast corner of the property associated with 130 East Walworth Avenue, turn 90 degrees to the south, continue to the south, turn 90 degrees to the west at the southeast corner of the property associated with 130 East Walworth Avenue, continue to the west along the south edge of the lots facing East Walworth Avenue along the alley, turn 90 degrees to the north at the southwest corner of the property associated with 104 East Walworth at the western end of the alley at Main Street, continue to the north across East Walworth Avenue, along the western edge of Tower Park, across Park Place, and along the eastern edge of Main Street to the beginning.

The boundaries of the proposed Delavan Water Tower Park Historic District are clearly delineated on the accompanying district map and enclose an area of 2.75 acres.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundaries of the district enclose all the areas historically associated with the district's 17 resources. To the north, the boundary was drawn to exclude residential areas adjacent to Comus Lake, and to the west and south the boundary was drawn to exclude the historic residential portions of the City of Delavan. To the east the boundary was drawn to exclude commercial properties on the east side of Second Street that either lack integrity or were constructed well after the period of significance and to draw a clear distinction between the Delavan Water Tower Park Historic District and the rest of the historic commercial downtown along East Walworth Avenue. That commercial area, while having historic significance, has a distinctly different historic use and pattern of development, it may also qualify as a historical district in its own right and was therefore not included within the district boundaries. The result is a cohesive district with as few non-contributing properties as possible.

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Delavan Water Tower Park Historic District  
Delavan, Walworth County, WI

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Name of Property:	Delavan Water Tower Park Historic District
City or Vicinity:	Delavan
County:	Walworth County
State:	Wisconsin
Name of Photographer:	Rowan Davidson
Date of Photographs:	December 18, 2014
Location of Original Digital Files:	Wisconsin Historical Society 816 State Street, Madison, WI 53706

Photo #1 (WI\_WalworthCounty\_DelavanWaterTowerParkHistoricDistrict\_0001)  
Delavan Water Tower, camera facing west

Photo #2 (WI\_WalworthCounty\_DelavanWaterTowerParkHistoricDistrict\_0002)  
104 E. Walworth Avenue facade, camera facing south

Photo #3 (WI\_WalworthCounty\_DelavanWaterTowerParkHistoricDistrict\_0003)  
106-108 E. Walworth Avenue facade, camera facing south

Photo #4 (WI\_WalworthCounty\_DelavanWaterTowerParkHistoricDistrict\_0004)  
110-118 E. Walworth Avenue facade, camera facing south

Photo #5 (WI\_WalworthCounty\_DelavanWaterTowerParkHistoricDistrict\_0005)  
120 E. Walworth Avenue facade, camera facing south

Photo #6 (WI\_WalworthCounty\_DelavanWaterTowerParkHistoricDistrict\_0006)  
124 E. Walworth Avenue facade, camera facing south

Photo #7 (WI\_WalworthCounty\_DelavanWaterTowerParkHistoricDistrict\_0007)  
137 Park Place facade, camera facing north

Photo #8 (WI\_WalworthCounty\_DelavanWaterTowerParkHistoricDistrict\_0008)  
127-133 Park Place facade, camera facing north

Photo #9 (WI\_WalworthCounty\_DelavanWaterTowerParkHistoricDistrict\_0009)  
The corner of E. Walworth Avenue & Main Street perspective, camera facing southeast

Photo #10 (WI\_WalworthCounty\_DelavanWaterTowerParkHistoricDistrict\_0010)  
The corner of Park Place & Second Street perspective, camera facing northwest

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South side of the 100 block of E. Walworth Avenue, circa 1910.  
Delavan Wisconsin Historical Society Photograph Collection.



Tower Park, circa 1900.  
Delavan Wisconsin Historical Society Photograph Collection.