



# HISTORIC KENOSHA

## Pearl Street Historic District

The Pearl Street Historic District was listed as a local historic district in 1998 for its high architectural quality. The district began as an extension of the western edge of downtown and was located in an area that had a mixture of commercial and residential buildings.

The William Seymour House and the Maple House were most popular as a boarding house and saloon that catered to railroad workers and travelers from the adjacent railroad tracks. The Winberg building housed a small grocery store and other businesses and the Cast Iron Front Building housed a grocery and furniture store.

During the 1920s, Sheridan Road became a major automobile thoroughfare and the adjacent railroad tracks were elevated, isolating the Pearl Street buildings from the downtown and surrounding residential neighborhoods. After World War II, the popularity of trains vastly declined.

The four buildings in the district had a variety of short-term occupants and became extremely dilapidated by the 1980s. The buildings were threatened with demolition until they were successfully rehabilitated in the early 1990s by private owners and developers.



**#1 CAST IRON FRONT BUILDING**  
1100-1106 – 55th Street  
(1868)

This cream brick building is divided into three bays by brick pilasters and features a corbelled cornice, patterned brick panels, and a cast iron storefront. The building dates from the late 19th Century, when the construction of facades in cast iron became widespread. Cast iron made it possible to add elaborate decorative detail inexpensively, since the decoration could

be mass produced. Window space could also be made larger, which was important to merchants.



**#2 WINBERG BUILDING**  
1109-1113 – 55th Street  
(1907) Classical Revival

The Winberg Building is a two-story brick commercial building with Classical Revival details. A cornice features heavy modillions and a row of small dentils. The building features segmentally-arched single light double

hung windows, single pane windows and large storefront windows on the front of the building. The building entrance is recessed and features one door for each of the original two storefronts and one door for the upper floor. The entrance consists of wood and glass doors accented by large transoms.

The building was built in 1907 by John Winberg to house his grocery store and room for another small business. Mr. Winberg operated his grocery store until the 1920s. Short term tenants leased the additional space in the building and the grocery store space after it closed. Often one or more of the tenant spaces were vacant. The building was rehabilitated in the early 1990s.



**#3 WILLIAM SEYMOUR HOUSE**  
1207 – 55th Street  
(1850) Greek Revival

Built in the Greek Revival style, this two-story, gable roof brick house is important because it is a simple, handsomely proportioned design characteristic of front gabled Greek Revival

houses. Its front facade is three-bay with a temple-like, pedimented gable and a heavy entrance portal consisting of a flat lintel, tall entablature supported by square Doric pilasters, and a recessed entranceway with side windows. Windows have simple wood lintels. The main entrance consists of a modern glass and wood paneled door with a historic wood lintel above the doorway.

For many years, the building was believed to be the home of C.L. Sholes, the inventor of the first practical typewriter. Research of historical documents has since disproved this local tradition and instead, has indicated that the house was first built for William Seymour, an early pioneer. By 1890, the house was converted into a boarding house and a small building connection was added, creating a complex known as the Maple House saloon and hotel. The saloon and boarding house were so successful that a new Maple House building was built, connecting the old and new buildings.

During prohibition, both buildings served as a restaurant and hotel and even as the Communist Labor Party Hall around 1930. The Seymour House portion of the complex eventually was not used and became dilapidated over the years. The building was threatened with demolition until recent years, when it was renovated. The connection to the newer Maple House building to the west was removed during the Seymour House's recent renovation. Today, the building is used for office space.



**#4 MAPLE HOUSE**  
**1213 – 55th Street**  
**(1880) Italianate**

Constructed of Cream City brick, this two-story flat-roofed commercial structure has a corner turret which is covered in sheet metal and has decorative cornice edges at the roofline.

There are distinctive round

arches over the first floor windows repeated by narrower arches over the second floor windows. The building also has a corbelled brick cornice.

The building was known as the Maple House from 1896 until the mid-1920s. In 1933, it became the Schlitz Hotel and Tavern and it was also known as the Wisconsin Hotel for a period of time. The building was vacant for almost thirty years and was threatened with demolition, until renovation plans were submitted. The building was renovated in 1990, along with two other buildings on 55th Street, and is currently used as an office building.

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