



Brochure Published 2019 by JasmineDesignGroup.com

- Designated Main Street Historic District
- Whitewater Local Landmark (LL)
- National Register (NRHP) & (LL)
- Main Street Historic District (MSHD), (NRHP) & (LL)



Whitewater Historic Landmarks Guide

www.WhitewaterHistoricalSociety.com





1. Smith-Allen House 445 W. Center Street

1856 • LL 4/20/1983 • MSHD/NRHP

This Italian Villa style house is a subcategory of the Italianate style. It was built by Porter and Hunter for E.A. Smith a local hardware store owner. It was sold in 1862 to Nathan Allen, a lumberman from Maine. It is built with cream brick and features a tower, wide eaves with brackets, cornice with dentils, round-arched openings and tall narrow windows. It is said that on election night, Mr. Allen would place one or two candles, depending upon the outcome of the election, in the tower. From 1946-56 it was owned by Teacher's College (UW-Whitewater) President, Robert Williams.



2. Engebretsen-Dorr House 622 W. Main Street

1895 • LL 4/20/1983 • MSHD/NRHP

This Queen Anne style house was designed by George Bradley and Son and built for Edward Engebretsen, a dry goods merchant and Whitewater's first treasurer and second mayor. It features narrow clapboards and is decorated with scalloped, square and diamond-shaped shingles. Other features include an octagonal tower, projecting gables, a second floor balcony, a classically appointed veranda and leaded glass windows. It was later occupied by John Dorr, Engebretsen's son-in-law who worked as the head of the Electric Company's sales department. It was the first house in Whitewater to be wired for electricity.



3. Newton M. Littlejohn House, 429 W. Main Street

c. 1859 • LL 8/23/1983 • MSHD/NRHP

This cream brick house features Italianate details. It was built for Newton Littlejohn, a lumberman, land investor and Whitewater's first village president. It also features an Italianate porch, an elaborate bay window, oculus windows, and is decorated with brackets. It was once owned by the First English Lutheran Church and used as a parish house where Sunday school classes were held.



4. George W. Esterly House 604 W. Main Street

1876 • LL 10/20/1983 • MSHD/NRHP

This late Italianate house was designed by noted Milwaukee architect, H. C. Koch and built for G. W. Esterly, the son of George Esterly, an inventor, who founded the Esterly Reaper Works, Whitewater's leading nineteenth century industry. It is a later variation of the Italianate style with a taller and steeper hip roof and a main elevation that is dominated by a tall narrow entry pavilion with a large gable and returned eaves. It was later occupied by Teacher's College (UW-Whitewater) President, Frank Hyer. Of special note is the art glass in the inner set of entry doors.



5. Esterly Carriage House 122 N. Esterly Avenue

1885:1919 • LL 10/20/1983 • MSHD/NRHP

This cream brick carriage house was built in the same Italianate style to match the Esterly house. Like the main house, it has wide eaves with gable end returns and windows accented with round brick arches. In 1919 George Pollock remodeled this house for Easton Johnson by adding interior rooms, a Colonial Revival Style entry and a sunroom. It is one of the few extant brick carriage houses in the state.



6. Nelson Salisbury House 404 W. North Street

1874 • LL 1/12/1984 • MSHD/NRHP

This late Italianate house was constructed by Nelson Salisbury, a local builder, who also built the Sanger Marsh house at 522 W. Main and the Lucius Winchester house at 532 W. Main. It has the same kind of vertical emphasis found in the Esterly House. A massive cornice dominates the building. Windows are decorated with pedimented stonehood molds and across the front façade is an Italianate porch. Salisbury worked as a farmer, salesman, lumberman and banker. He was the first president of the Whitewater Normal School.



7. F. J. Starin Mansion 131 N. Fremont Street

1856:1878 • LL 1/12/1984

This house was originally built as a two story cream brick Italianate by the firm of Cook, Roseman and Kjuhn for Frederick J. Starin, a civil engineer and land speculator. In 1878, Starin added a mansard roof, a feature of the Second Empire Style. This enlarged the house by adding a fourth floor ballroom. Two unusual features in the basement are a "tunnel", and a "secret room" which can only be accessed by crawling through a window located near the ceiling.



9. Birge Fountain 402 W. Main Street

1903:2003 • LL 1/24/1985 • MSHD/NRHP

Julius Birge presented the Birge Fountain to Whitewater, the city of his birth, on July 4, 1903. At the time, it was one of the largest fountains in the county and there was some consternation among the city officials over the amount of water it would require. It was placed on the site where the first brick schoolhouse stood, which Julius Birge attended as a child. The fountain is 17.5 feet high with two catch basins which collect water flowing from the "Maid of the Mist" and the four cherubs riding on dolphins. It was originally cast of zinc but was thoroughly renovated and recast in bronze. The rededication of the fountain was celebrated in 2003.



11. J. J. Starin House 507 W. Main Street

1860 • LL 7/18/1985 • MSHD/NRHP

A large two-story cream brick structure with Greek Revival features, this Italianate house was built in a more vertical rather than square style. It features a cross gable roof that extends on all four sides into full pediments featuring wide eaves and brackets. Built by a Mr. Parker, it was sold to Jacob Starin. In the 1920's it became the Green Shutters Restaurant and at that time the fanlight-topped French doors and large veranda were added by the owner, Sander Hoyum. In 1841, Deacon Gerard Cutler of the Congregational Church organized the first Sunday school in Whitewater teaching a class of 12 under the trees where the home would later be built. Today it serves as a medical clinic operated by Mercy Health System.



8. Passenger Depot 301 W. Whitewater Street

1890 • LL 7/09/1984 • NRHP

With High Victorian Gothic style details, the Whitewater Passenger Depot is an unusual example of a small town railroad depot. Designed by master architect, J.T.W. Jennings, it exhibits pointed arched openings, foliated and geometric patterns decorating wall surfaces and polychromatic effects using materials of different colors and textures. Examples of this style are relatively rare in Wisconsin. The smooth vermillion red bricks are heavily accented with the rusticated grey limestone that forms the foundation. In the early 1900's a minimum of 4 freight trains and four passenger trains went through daily, with as many as 20 trains recorded in a single day. Since 1974, the depot has been the Whitewater Historical Society Museum.



10. Lyman Wight Octagon House 127 N. Newcomb Street

1862 • LL 5/16/1985

This octagon style house was developed and promoted as an economical and functional home but never became popular with only Massachusetts, New York State and Wisconsin having small concentrations of octagon houses. There are probably only twenty of them in Wisconsin. This house is a small, two-story frame structure with wide overhanging eaves, a carved frieze and brackets. The house was built by Lyman Wight, a designer/inventor at the Esterly Reaper Manufacturing Company. This house is unique because of its small size and the rarity of the octagon style.



12. Bassett House 708 W. Main Street

1857:1878 • LL 8/25/1985 • MSHD/NRHP

This cream brick house was built in the Italianate style, the rear wing being added in 1878. The house has a bracketed frieze and bay window with mansard roof, brackets, modillion blocks and keystones. The Thomas Bassett family lived in the house for seventy years. In 1926, Thomas' daughter Florence bequeathed the house to the Whitewater Federation of Women's Clubs to be used for their gatherings and so it has been to this day.



13. First United Methodist Church of Whitewater 145 S. Prairie Street

1872-73 • LL 2/29/1988

This outstanding Gothic Revival church is constructed of cream brick and features a steeply pitched gable roof of fan-vaulted construction. This building has Gothic arched openings and large buttresses. The immense steeple and large Gothic features make the church an impressive structure, one that dominates the streetscape. Improvements over the years included switching oil lamps to electricity in 1896.



14. Hamilton House 328 W. Main Street

1868:1881:1877 • LL 11/8/1990 MSHD/NRHP

In 1868 the Hamilton House was built by Dr. Greenman, an early Whitewater dentist. It was probably built as a simple gabled ell with Italianate details. In 1881 it was remodeled and the elaborate mansard roof with arched dormers was added at that time which changed entirely the style of the house. The house was again remodeled in 1887. Its details include Second Empire style bay windows with brackets, dentils, pilasters and panels; two Second Empire porches; a Queen Anne porch with turned posts, spoon and spindle work, brackets, a pediment; and a two-story Queen Anne style bay window on the west wall. Two tunnels have been discovered in the basement leading to speculation that it may have been part of the Underground Railroad. In 1991 it was renovated into commercial property.



15. Sanger Marsh House 522 West Main Street

1861 • LL 11/8/1990 • MSHD/NRHP

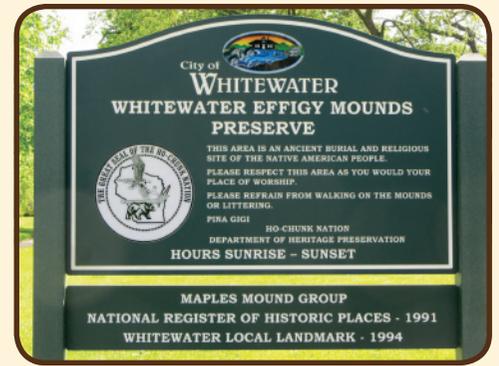
Local builder Nelson Salisbury built this Italianate house. It has a rectangular form with a low-pitched hip roof topped with metal cresting, wide eaves with paired brackets that are attached to a paneled frieze and beautiful Italianate porches. The porches feature thin, square columns and brackets.



16. White Memorial Building 402 W. Main Street

1903-04 • LL1/20/1994 • MSHD/NRHP

The White Memorial Library is an example of simple classicism with its hip roof, entrance decorated with colossal ionic columns and full pediment over a wide frieze. This design is one of the standard library designs by the noted architectural firm of Claude and Starch of Madison. These architects were well known for their prairie style houses and the interior of this building is in this style. Mary Flavia White donated this building to the city for use by the Whitewater Free Library from 1904 to 1992. It now is home to the Whitewater Cultural Arts Center and the Whitewater Public television station.



17. Whitewater Effigy Mounds Preserve 288 S. Indian Mound Parkway

c. 700 - 1200 • LL 1994 • NRHP

Whitewater's oldest landmark is a group of conical, linear and effigy mounds which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as the Maples Mound Group. Between 700 A.D. and 1200 A.D. the people of the Late Woodland Stage began building large numbers of mound clusters which included effigy mounds in the shapes of birds and other animals. This site has been a gathering place for several Midwestern Native American tribes. All the land in this public preserve is cataloged as an archaeological site and a burial site, and therefore, it is protected by federal law which states that the soil within its boundaries cannot be disturbed.



18. Hotel Walworth/ Landmark Hotel 204 W. Main Street

1890/1970's • LL 10/29/1998 • MSHD/NRHP

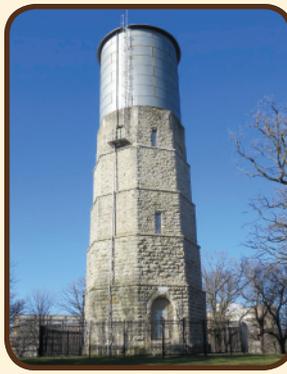
During the peak of Whitewater's nineteenth century economic prosperity, the Hotel Walworth was built. It was considered a "first class" downtown-type hotel with a dining room that, during the early years, served multi-course gourmet meals and became the leading hotel in the city. This three story Queen Anne style building was remodeled in the 1970's into small apartments with commercial spaces on the ground level with a tavern and barber shop in the basement level. It was renamed the Landmark Hotel at that time.



19. Kiernan-Yasko House
136 South Whiton Street

1882 • LL 9/15/2011

This property was sold to Bryon Moore in 1878 and the house was constructed within the next three years. The house was inherited by Elmer Kiernan in 1913. Elmer's wife Erika established "Kiernan's Candy Kitchen" and sold confections at the house. Customers would enter from the porch on the south side on the house. This two-story frame house has had no exterior modification since its original construction. Note the scalloping on the three gables, the original transom over the front door and the "Candy Kitchen" porch entrance on the south side. This home is currently owned by Richard and Caryl Yasko, Caryl being a renowned artist. Currently it is the only home listed for its cultural significance rather than architectural style.



21. Starin Park Water Tower
504 West Starin Road

1889 • LL 12/3/2015

Rising 80 feet above the landscape of one of the oldest recognized parks in Wisconsin is the Starin Park Water Tower. Built in 1889, it is the state's second oldest operating municipal water tower. At the time of its construction, it was the tallest structure in Whitewater. Its octagon shaped tower can hold 185,000 gallons of water and its base is made of limestone from a local quarry. Both the water tower and Starin Park take their names from Duane Starin who donated the park's nine acres to the City of Whitewater.



23. Walton Oaks Park
654 North Stonefield Lane

2008 • LL 8/3/2017

Walton Oaks Park is located in the Park Crest Subdivision in the northwestern corner of the City of Whitewater in Jefferson County. The 2.6 acre parcel was donated to the City in memory of Don and Ethel Walton on August 9, 2008 by Ross and Melissa Walton. This rare oak savannah park has a combination of white and burr oak trees which are as much as 250 years old as well as several second generation younger oaks.



20. Whitewater Armory
146 West North Street

1942 • LL 3/5/2015

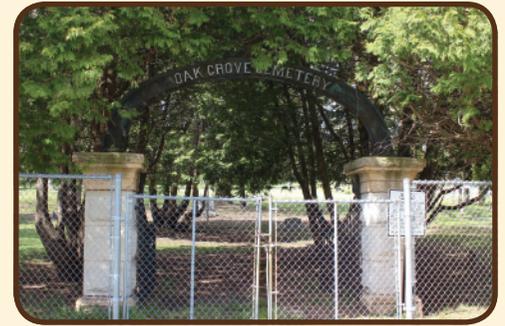
Officially opened in 1942, the Whitewater Armory served as a National Guard Armory until 1992. During and after that 50 year stint the Armory served as a hub for many community activities as well. Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, fraternal and religious groups made use of this community-oriented facility. Other community activities such as dances, roller skating, and athletic events took place here. Voting did occur and continues to take place at the Armory.



22. Moknes/Epps House
970 West Highland Street

c. 1970 • LL 5/4/2017

Designed by American architect Peter Fritz Dreger circa 1970, the Moksnes/Epps House is one of two modern/contemporary homes in the city with a "Wrightian" influence. Dreger described this house plan as a "radical" design by "turning the house around" so that the living room and dining room faced the back of the lot and the bedrooms fronted on the street side. This house features a split-level design with board and batten walls both inside and out as well as narrow windows under wide eaves and a hip roof of asphalt shingles. In addition, this house has a single carport.



24. Oak Grove Cemetery
East Main Street

1844 • LL 9/6/2018

Dr. James Trippe and his wife Rosepha donated one acre of land on a knoll in Whitewater in 1844 for use as Grove Cemetery. In 1884 George Esterly cast an iron gate and stile for a visitors entrance to the cemetery. With the installation of the gate, the cemetery was then referred to as Oak Grove Cemetery. Today, Oak Grove is regarded as an historic pioneer cemetery with over 800 burials including veterans from the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Civil War, as well as several of Whitewater's pioneer families.

WELCOME TO WHITEWATER

A community rich in history and steeped in beauty, Whitewater has always been known for its charm and ideal location. Nestled within the forest, lakes, prairies, and hills of the Kettle Moraine State Forest in southeastern Wisconsin, Whitewater is the perfect choice for biking, hiking, fishing, cross country skiing, or just exploring! We look forward to showing you our city and thank you for visiting.

THE HISTORY OF WHITEWATER

Whitewater received its name from a tribe of Potawatomi Native Americans that settled along the Whitewater River (known today as the Whitewater Creek). The name Wau-be-gan-naw-po-cat, meaning "white water", was given due to the white sands that lay at the bottom of the creek.

The area was first settled in 1836, when Alvin Foster made his stake on the land by marking his name on a tree. At that time, that was all that was needed to make a legal claim on a piece of land. In 1837, Samuel Prince built the first log cabin near the current site of Whitewater's Indian Mounds Park. After a six-day trip on foot, 20 settlers arrived here from Milwaukee and started the early makings of Whitewater. Other early settlers who arrived that first year were Johnson, Hamilton, Brewer, Collins, and Nichols. It was not until 1839, with Dr. Trippe's donation of money for the Old Stone Mill, that Whitewater started to grow. The mill helped to create the new industrial hub of Whitewater.

By 1840, three main arteries were laid out: Whitewater, Main and Center Streets. The town had a mill, blacksmith shop, store, hotel, and school, with a post office on the way. By 1844 Whitewater had grown to six stores, one grocery, two hotels, three blacksmith shops, a tailor, two cabinet shops, a cooper, a gristmill, and twenty-nine recorded homes.

In 1852, the first railway to cross Wisconsin laid its tracks through Whitewater, spurring industrial growth. Winchester and DeWolf Plow Factory (1850) Esterly Reaper Works (1857), and Winchester and Partridge Wagon Works (1860) were some of Walworth County's first and largest industries. In 1855 the population of Whitewater was 2,224. By 1888 it had grown to 3,621. Esterly Reaper Works was the largest employer in the 1880s, employing 525. Esterly employees built homes close to the factory on the east side of the city; hence the surrounding area became known as "Reaperville". Various industries fueled Whitewater's growth until 1892, when the Esterly Reaper Works moved to Minnesota and the Wagon Works shut down, thus marking the end of Whitewater's first industrial era.

With the loss of two major industries, Whitewater lost one quarter of its population and did not regain its 1890 population level until 1950. During the world wars and the Great Depression, Whitewater relied on small trade and light industries to sustain its economy. Agricultural products, including eggs, farm produce, cheese, dairy products, livestock and small game made up 66% of Whitewater's trade at the time. Meanwhile, the Whitewater Normal School (which later evolved into the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater) went about its business of training teachers. The school made several changes through the years, including diversifying its studies. After World War II, veterans returning from war boosted enrollment, sending the school well on its way to becoming the university it is today. Between the university and the manufacturing and service industries we have today, Whitewater has seen many changes. This community looks forward to this century and what the future has in store.



25. Territorial Oak West Main St. & Franklin St.

1836 • LL 3/7/2019

The site includes a burr oak tree dating to 1800 or before that was used as a fixed point from which U.S. federal land surveyors platted the village of Whitewater in 1836. Known as a survey or witness tree, it marks Whitewater's point of beginning. The city council nominated the territorial oak an historic State of Wisconsin tree on February 1, 1981 adding to its significance.

To learn more call 866-4ww-tour
or visit DiscoverWhitewater.org



LANDMARKS COMMISSION

In 1982, the Whitewater Common Council approved the Landmarks Ordinance that created the Whitewater Landmarks Commission. The intent of the Commission includes protection, enhancement, perpetuation and use of archeological sites, geological formations, structures and city-owned historically significant personal property of special character or special historical interest or value. The primary duties of the Commission include identifying and designating landmarks and historic districts, and promoting preservation and protection of all historic resources in the city.

The city of Whitewater has 25 locally designated landmarks. It has one historic district:

Whitewater Local Landmark (LL)

In order to be designated a Whitewater Landmark, a building, structure or archeological site must either represent an individual or on-going historical event that is significant at the local, state or national level; or be identified with an historic person or persons significant in local state or national history; or embody the distinctive characteristics of an architectural style or form or be the work of a master architect.

Main Street Historic District (MSHD)

The Main Street Historic District was the most prestigious residential neighborhood in nineteenth and early twentieth century Whitewater. The buildings constructed in the district between 1855 and 1935, include fine Italianate, Second Empire, and Queen Anne style homes, several outstanding Gothic and Romanesque Revival style churches and a fine Classical Revival library. Collectively the buildings form a neighborhood of religious, educational, and social activity. In 1988, the Whitewater Landmarks Commission completed the nomination of the Main Street Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places. The district runs along Main Street roughly between Fremont and Prairie Streets and along a portion of North Street and south down Church street to Center Street.

National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)

The National Register of Historic Places is the official national list of historic properties in America worthy of preservation. Through the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service's NRHP is part of a national program