

REZONING REQUEST - SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

234 Wisconsin Avenue, Racine, WI

REQUEST: B-4 CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT WITH H-HISTORIC DISTRICT DISTRICT OVERLAY

LEGAL DESCRIPTION

234 Wisconsin Ave Parcel No. 00098000

State of Wisconsin, County of Racine, Township 3 North, Range 23 East (Mt. Pleasant), Section 9, NW ¼ of the SE ¼, Original Plat of the City of Racine, Block 10, Part Of Lots 5,6,7,8, and the North 30 Feet of the West 81.75 Feet of Vacated Third Street, and the Easterly 22 Feet of the Southern ½ of the Vacated Third Street, Described as Parcels 1,2,3+4, Vol 1688 of Page 819, and Part Described in Volume 1858 of Page 590.





Fig .
Guilbert Knapp
1798-1887
c. 1850

RATIONALE FOR REZONING

The Location and Its Development

The property at 234 Wisconsin Ave has been a point of activity, and associated with prominent figures, since 1847, and possibly earlier. Capt. Guilbert Knapp and associates laid out the Village of Racine in 1834 and the lands adjacent (to the south of 234 Wisconsin Ave.), are believed to be the site of Capt. Knapp's trading post.

By 1847, Racine City Directories indicate that 234 Wisconsin Ave. location was the site of the Racine City Mill. The Racine City Mill is destroyed by fire and in 1872 Thomas Emerson forms a partnership

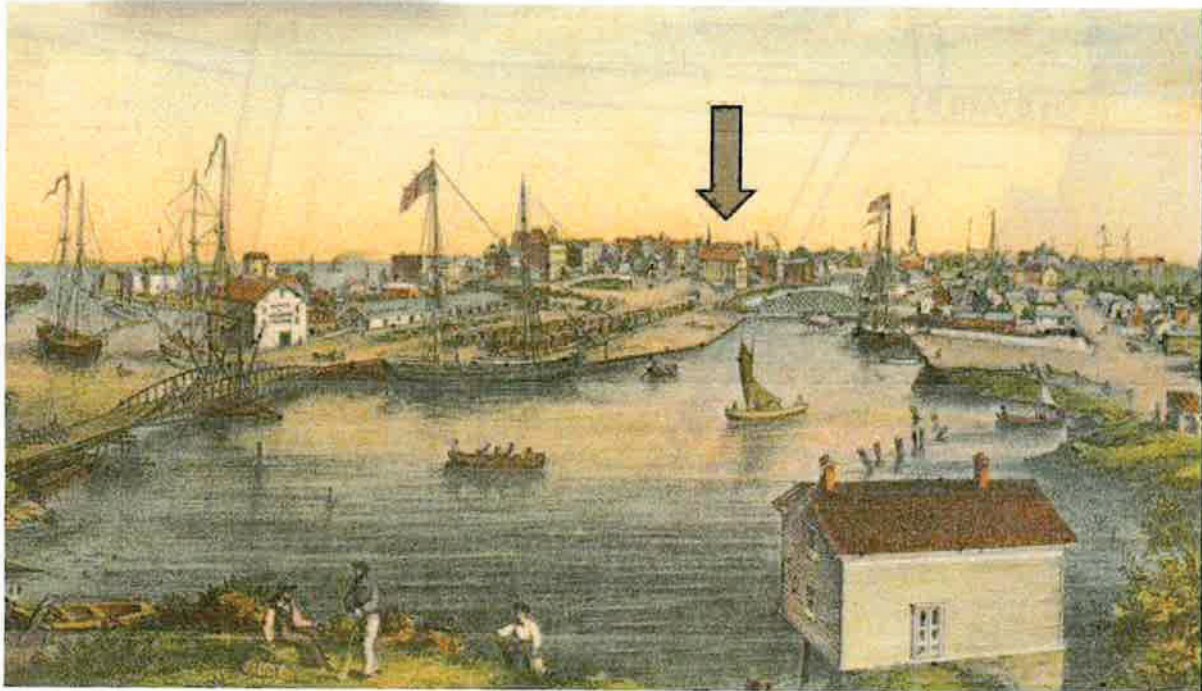


Fig .

Racine Harbor 1850 **(Racine City Mill)**

Racine Memory Lane.
Facebook 2026



Fig .

Racine City Mill 1855

Map of the City of Racine,
Wisconsin, William Hancock,
Chicago, 1855, Mendel Lith.

with Henry S. Durand, builds the initial southern portion of the present-day structure, and establishes the Emerson Linseed Oil Works. While the partnership dissolves in 1882, over the next 18 years since being established, the business thrives, multiple building expansions are undertaken, and in 1887 sons Charles and William Emerson are brought on as proprietors in the business. In 1890 the business is sold to National Linseed Oil Co. of Chicago and again in 1899 to National Linseed Oil Co. of New Jersey.

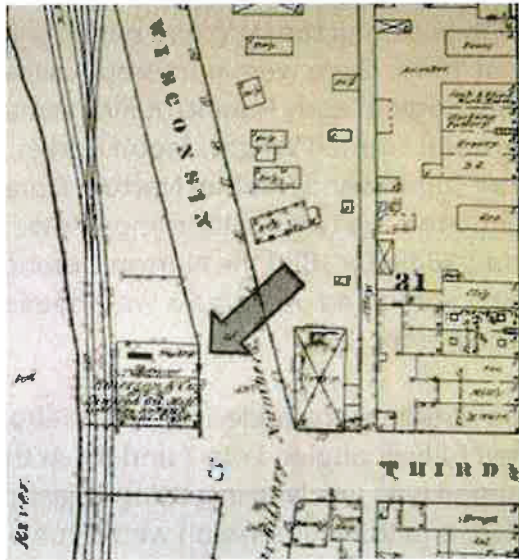


Fig .
**Emerson Linseed Oil
Works 1874**
Sanborn Map 1874
(WHS collection)



Fig .
National Linseed Oil Co. c1890
Racine History 2026

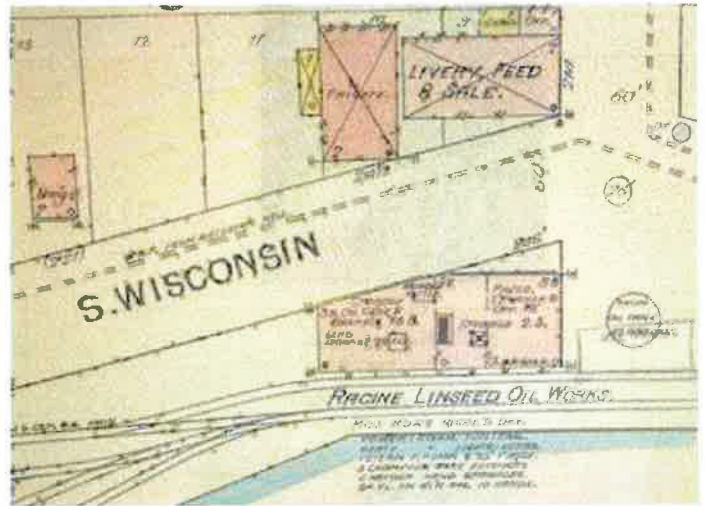


Fig .
**Racine Linseed Oil
Works 1887**
Sanborn Map 1887
(WHS collection)

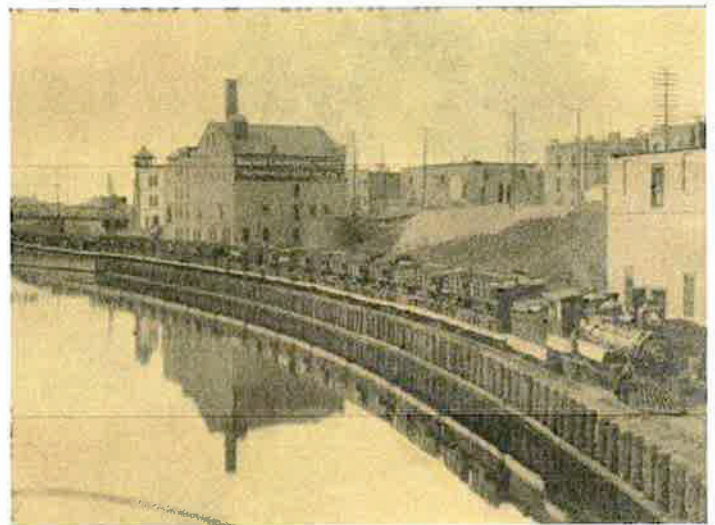


Fig .
National Linseed Oil Co. 1898
AmericanIcons 2026



In 1998, Mark and Chris Flynn purchase the property and continue the operation of D.P. Wigley not only as a construction materials and seed business, but they also expand offerings into supplies for lawn, garden, landscaping, beer brewing, and vintnering.



Fig .
Chris & Mark Flynn
LinkedIn 2026



Fig 1.
Lorenzo Janes
1801-1873
Find A Grave 5-20-26



Fig .
Henry Durand
1817-1899
Find A Grave 5-20-26



Fig .
Reuben Norton
1817-1899
c. 1849
Wikipedia May 2026

Early Ownership & Associations

Lorenzo Janes owned the land and began selling lots in spring of 1840. There were numerous sales of each lot to some notable early Racine businessmen, such as Charles and Truman Wright, Jacob Barker, George Bull, Henry Durand and Reuben Norton. Durand and Norton acquired the two southernmost lots, 7 and 8, in 1848 and 1849. By 1850 the Norton Durand Company erected and operated a warehouse on most of the parcel.(2)

In 1853 an addition was added to the warehouse which then fully occupied Lots 7 and 8. At this time Henry Durand was involved in getting Legislative approval for a railroad line which would run along this stretch of the Root River. He became president and a director of the Racine, Janesville & Mississippi Railroad Company.(3)



Fig .
WHS Collection

From 1858 through 1860 there was a great deal of financial wrangling, buying and selling portions of the property, eventually culminating in a Sheriff's sale of Lots 7 and 8. A lawsuit with many defendants including Durand, Norton and William H. Lathrop brought by Washington County Bank, was also going on.(4)

During this tumultuous time Lathrop was running the warehouse, receiving grain, mostly wheat, by wagonload and from the Racine Mississippi Railroad, successor of the Racine, Janesville & Mississippi Railroad, and shipping it out on schooners to ports on the Great Lakes, often Buffalo and Oswego, New York. The defendants eventually prevailed which cleared the way for Lathrop to buy the warehouse for \$8,500 in September of 1865, and he continued to run his grain dealership.(5)



Fig .
William H. Lathrop
 1816-1904
Find A Grave 5-20-26



Fig .
Thomas Jefferson Emerson
 1815-1909
Find A Grave 6-18-26

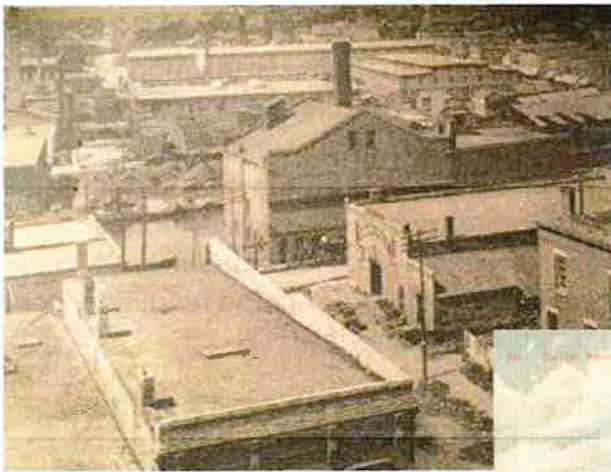


Fig .
Emerson Linseed Oil Co. 1888
View to North-East from Roof of City Hall
Facebook, 2020 Post, Jimi Mercier



Fig .
City Hall, c.1900
E.A. Bishop Publishing
Racine, WI

At the end of June in 1870 the second fire in two days in the immediate area engulfed the Lathrop grain elevator. It rapidly spread across Wisconsin Avenue to Sumner & Bassinger's Livery Stable, also owned by Lathrop. Three dwellings, numerous barns, sheds and outbuildings were also destroyed; the backs of four Main Street stores were on fire but were saved. According to the newspaper, Lathrop's wooden buildings were total losses. In June of 1873 Lathrop sold the grain elevator property to Thomas Emerson and Henry Durand for only \$1,200.(6)

Thomas Jefferson Emerson

Thomas J. Emerson was born in Maine in 1815. At eighteen years old he began learning the carpentry trade and architecture but longed for a better education. He attended a seminary for two years, spent one year at Bowdoin College and then studied law. He was admitted to the Maine Bar in 1840. He went west and looked for a suitable place to settle, trying out places in Illinois and Wisconsin. He chose a place called Snake Hollow, which became Potosi, Wisconsin. He practiced law, became president of the village board, got married, and was involved in starting numerous businesses. However, his wife did not like Potosi, so after just three years they moved to Racine. He practiced law here for twelve years and was elected justice of the peace. He amassed \$30,000 practicing law and purchased 7,000 acres north of Green Bay before it had been surveyed. He retired from practicing law and built a linseed oil mill above the Root River on the site of Lathrop's grain elevator in 1872. There is a date discrepancy here numerous sources say Emerson built the oil mill in 1872, but the deed says he and Henry Durand purchased the property on June 9, 1873.(7)

Emerson bought Durand's interest in the oil mill in July of 1883 for \$15,000. On January 1, 1886 his sons bought into the business for \$15,000. The oil works was sold to National Linseed Oil Company for \$1 in April of 1890. The Illinois company was buying all the oil mills in the Northwest, thirty-five by 1890, to unite them in a stock company and gain control of the industry. Undoubtedly, the Emersons now owned stock in the trust. Emerson continued to manage the company with his son William as the assistant manager. The oil mill was sold to the New Jersey based American Linseed Oil Company in December of 1898 for \$15,000.(8)



Fig.
David Paynter Wigley
1856-1912
Find A Grave 5-20-26

NOTICE.

FLOUR JUST RECEIVED PILLSBURY'S
Best at Kent & Smith's, 612 College ave.
february

FOR PLUMBING, GAS AND STEAM
calling go to O. O. Day
dealt

Fig.

Kent & Smith
Advertisement
2-23-1886

The Racine Daily Journal

AMUSEMENTS.

TURNER HALL.

One Night { **WEDNESDAY, MAY 12** }
The Protean Comedy, in Two Acts, entitled

AROUND THE WORLD

Introducing the Greatest and Most Versatile
Comedian in America.

Thompson,

enormous fund of
**DANCES,
JOKES.**

ie, 35 and 50c.
its on sale at Elkins's
my 34

Fig.

Turner Hall
Advertisement
5-11-1886

The Racine Daily
Journal

Don't Fail to See the
Quaker Doctors

—AT—
WIGLEY'S HALL Every Night
This Week!



The Quaker Doctors never fail. Their cures are
permanent. If you are suffering from the Quaker
Doctors, either at **Wigley's Hall**, from 2:30 to
3:30 every day, except Sunday, or on Monday, Fri-
day, or Sunday, call.

The Quaker Doctors cured when others fail.
Don't fail to attend the concert that is given at
Wigley's Hall every night.

The Quaker Doctors cured when others fail.
Don't fail to attend the concert that is given at
Wigley's Hall every night.

Don't forget your own health is carefully look-
ing for the Quaker Doctors. Try them.

Office at
WIGLEY'S HALL **NO FREE SHOW
EVERY NIGHT.**

Fig.

Wigley's Hall Advertisement
10-17-1901

The Racine Daily Journal

David Paynter Wigley

David P. Wigley was born in North Wales in 1856; he came to Racine in March of 1881 when he was twenty-five years old. He worked on a Mt. Pleasant farm for a year and went to the public school during the winter. He moved into the city and worked in the wood shops of J. I. Case Threshing Machine Company for the next eleven years. He married Jane Jones in 1884, another Welsh emigrant who had lived in Ohio with her parents. He worked a few months as a flour salesman for Star Mills before striking out on his own as a flour and feed dealer. In 1895 Wigley purchased the oldest flour and feed concern in town, Kent & Smith at 612 College Avenue. (9)

Wigley purchased old Turner Hall, 518-520 College Avenue, in 1900, one of the most valuable pieces of real estate in the heart of the city and transformed the ground floor into a modern store. The upstairs were improved and called Wigley's Hall, providing a meeting place for lodges and societies.(10)

Wigley first rented the Emerson oil mill as a warehouse and then purchased the building from the American Linseed Oil trust in 1905 for \$6,500. He totally remodeled the interior of the six-floor building and equipped it with the most modern grinding machinery works to handle the rapid processing of cereal products. He was proprietor of the only elevator in this part of the country, serving local trade and exporting trainload quantities. He incorporated his company in August 1910 with his two brothers-in-law, Howell Jones and James Fraser. He did a brisk wholesale and retail business in flour, grain, seed and feed, and expanded into building materials.(11)

David P. Wigley died on December 14, 1912 after a surgery on his head at 56 years old. His widow Jane became president of the company. After David's death his nephew, Thomas Gleason Morris, lived with and worked for his aunt as a clerk and then salesman. He was married by 1923 and moved out of Jane Wigley's house at 908 Park Avenue. He was mayor from 1939 to 1943, Racine's first mayor of Welsh descent. After his mayoral terms Morris returned to D. P. Wigley's as a wholesale manager. The company started Racine's first ready-mix concrete business in the late 1930s with eleven concrete trucks(12)

The Building

Emerson built an Industrial Astylistic Utilitarian building for \$16,000. The building has a gabled roof, but sections added later on the north side have flat roofs. The straightforward industrial building was built of cream brick and has a faint Italianate style as seen in the segmentally arched windows, lancet windows in the peak of the gable, stringcourses outlining the gabled parapet, and a heavy corbelling course between the street level story and the second story. (13)

Today we see two stories and an attic at street level. But the original entrance was a floor below; the grade of Wisconsin Avenue was changed and the street built up forcing the construction of a new entrance and the porch (note the photographs).(14)

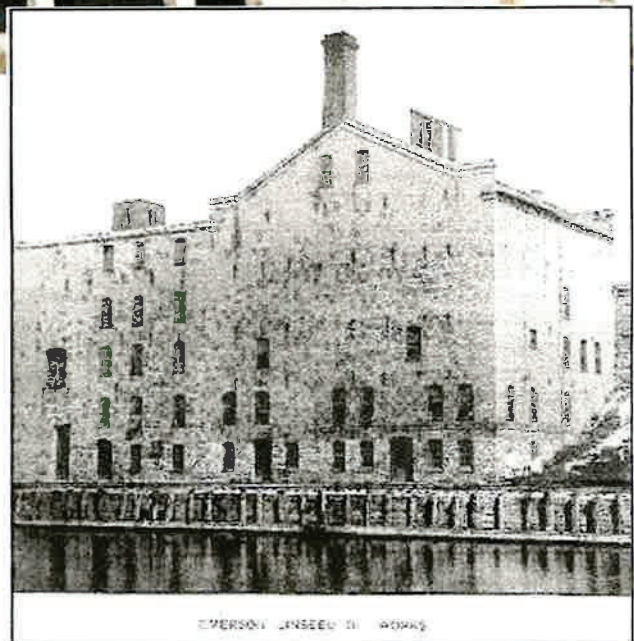
At the back of the building looking up from the river bank it rises six stories. The building had a storage capacity of 30,000 bushels and an annual processing capacity of 100,000 bushels; two presses ran day and night. It was first called Emerson & Company Linseed Oil Works, later it was Racine Linseed Oil Works. In 1874 the building was enlarged doubling its work capacity. A second addition was added in 1875 making it one of the largest linseed plants in the country.(15)



Google Street View 2012



Google Street View 2024

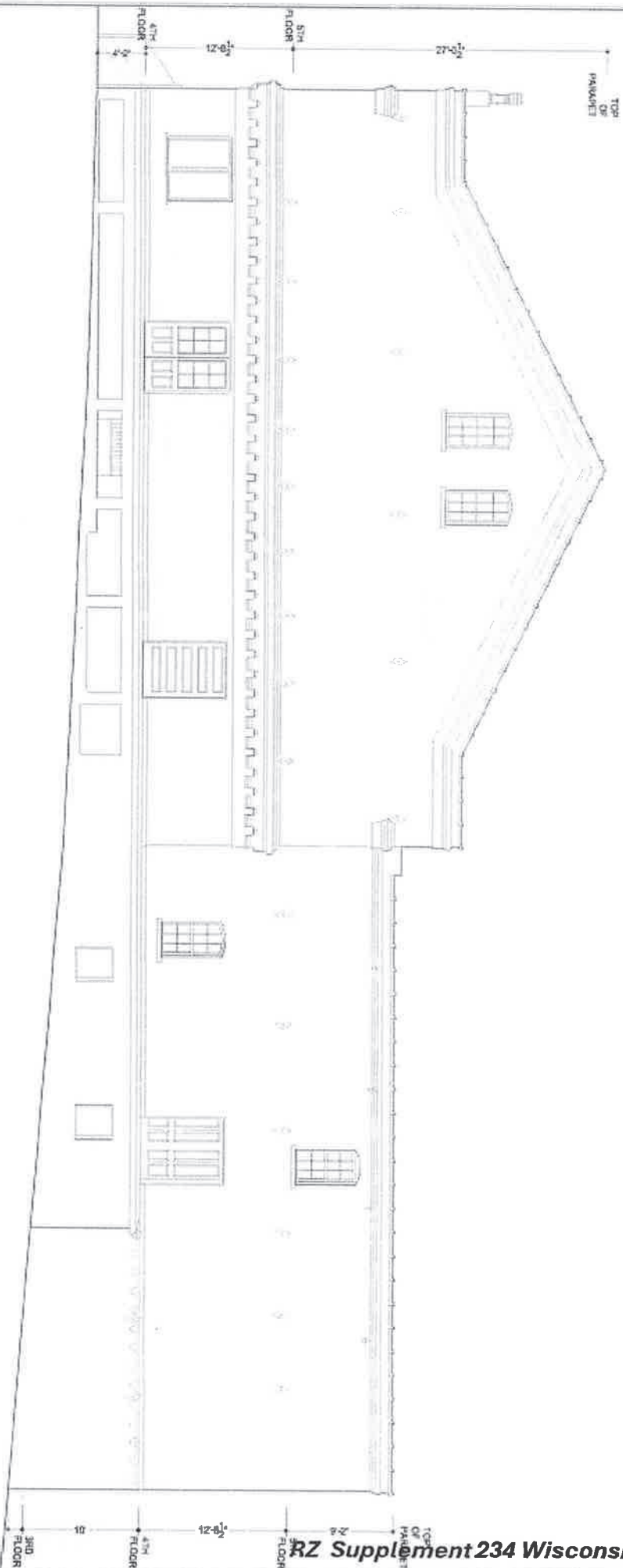


Preservation Racine News-Spring 2023

ZONING ANALYSIS TABLE	
Land Area	0.3563 Acres = 15,529.14 SQ. FT.
Building Area	6,100 SQ. FT. x 5 = 30,500 SQ. FT (APPROX)
Setback (required yards in feet)	0.0 FT.
Floor Area Ratio	1.9
Lot Coverage	0.39
Height of Building	60 FT +/-
Percentage of Green Space	12% (1,876 SQ. FT) APPROX
Parking (Off-Street)	5

(1) Haunted Racine, by Roy Graves. Charleston S.C: Haunted America, a division of The History Press. 2023

(2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) (10) (11) (12) (13) (14) (15) Preservation Racine News, Spring 2023, Volume 30. Two Heritage Buildings Part II D.P. Wigley Company. Debbie Yale.



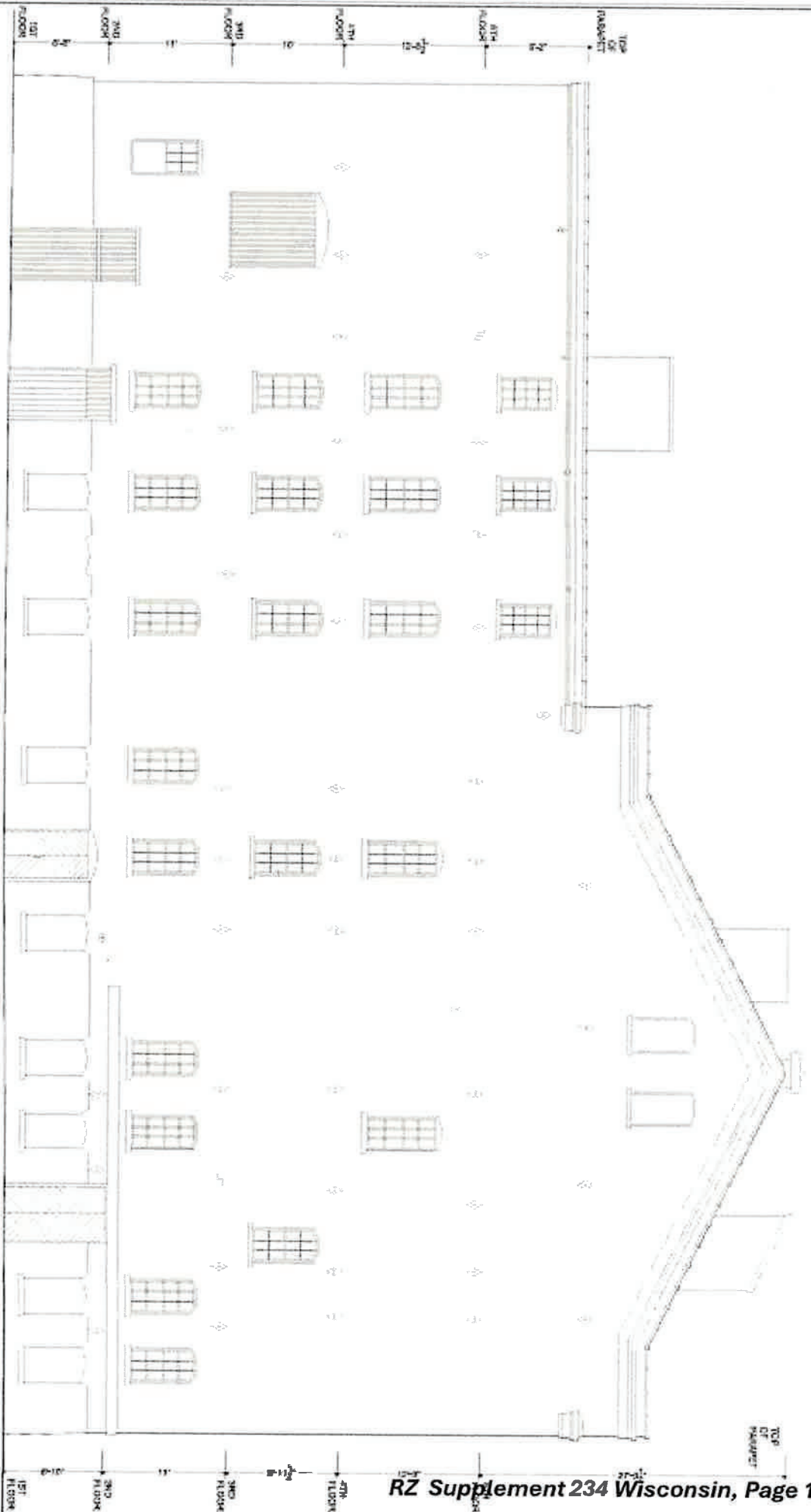
EAST ELEVATION
 WP-107

DEAN SQUARE
 ARCHITECT
 1125 1/2 ST
 WASHINGTON, DC 20004

D. P. Wigley
 MARK & CHRISTOPHER
 334 WILSON AVE
 FARMING, VT 05445

EASTING
 CHURCH STREET
 1125 1/2 ST
 2ND FLOOR
 3RD FLOOR
 4TH FLOOR

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WEST ELEVATION
ARCHITECT
www.dpw.com

D. P. Wigley
Architect
201 Wisconsin Ave
Madison, WI 53703

DATE
11-2-2000
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WEST ELEVATION

