

**21** Phillip Weimer Building, 602-602A W. National Ave. (1892). NR. Members of the Weimer family were operating a wine and liquor business on this site in 1879. The present building appears to have been under construction when Phillip Weimer died on June 4, 1892. His widow continued the business through 1894, and the building was later leased to various pharmacists and confectioners. The contrast of brick and rusticated stone trim and the tourelles, the small cylinder-like projections on the facade, are typical of the Romanesque style.

**22** Kroeger Bros. Department Store, 611 W. National Ave. (1901) Architect: Leenhouts and Guthrie. NR. The large red brick building at the southwest corner of Sixth and National housed the Kroeger Bros. Department Store through World War I. One little known fact is that poet Carl Sandburg worked briefly for Kroeger Bros. at this location during his residency in Milwaukee. In 1917 the business was sold to a group of investors who relocated the store to Mitchell St. and subsequently went bankrupt. From 1919 through 1980, the building housed the Clum Manufacturing Company. The Neoclassical style structure with its large arched fourth story windows once had an elaborate sheet metal cornice and was said to have had the largest expanse of display windows in Milwaukee. After decades of neglect, it is now being restored as a mixed use commercial building.

**23** J. C. Pfeiffer Block, 517 W. National Ave. (1892). NR. Shoe store proprietor J. C. Pfeiffer had been in business for 11 years at the time he commissioned this building. His store was said to be one of the largest in the city and the best fitted out on the South Side. The lively Queen Anne storefront contrasts with its more sedate neighbors and features a fanciful paneled and shingled corner turret with a conical faceted roof.

**24** Christian Conrad Building, 516-518 W. National Ave. (1879). NR. Christian Conrad erected this cream brick Italianate building to house his butcher shop and the family flat. Conrad's business operated continuously until his death in 1913 at the age of 64, and the store was subsequently leased to a men's clothier and then became a machine shop. Conrad family members lived upstairs through 1971. The building's storefront was restored in the late 1970s and now houses a photographer.

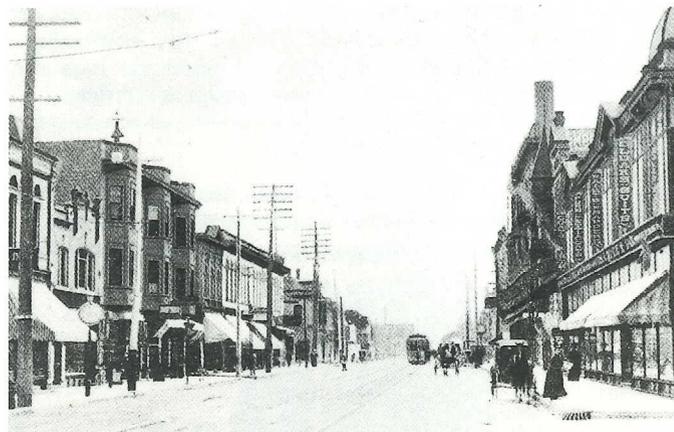
**25** Stumpf and Langhoff Building, 511 W. National Ave. (1899). NR. Architect: Otto C. Uehling; 3-story west addition (1904) Charles L. Lesser. Men's clothiers Charles J. Stumpf and Henry J. Langhoff built this substantial commercial block to house their business and various tenants including architects and dentists. The upper floor had a lodge hall. The Stumpf name continued in men's clothing in Milwaukee into the 1980s. This rather restrained Classical Revival building features a delicate swag design in the cornice and ornamental carving around the S. 5th St. entrance.

**26** Tivoli Palm Garden, 504 W. National Ave. (1901). NR. Architect: Kirchhoff & Rose. This impressive block was built by the Schlitz Brewing Company to house retail shops, offices, and a popular indoor beer hall, the Tivoli Garden. The entrance to the elaborately decorated Tivoli was located on S. 5th St., below the Schlitz logo of a belted globe. Later used as an industrial warehouse and nearly destroyed in a 1979 fire, the Tivoli was restored and has since served as the home of the Milwaukee Ballet Company.

**27** M & I Marshall & Isley Bank, 414 W. National Ave., west section 1905-1906, east section 1922, Architect: Henry J. Rotier. NR. M & I, one of Milwaukee's oldest banks, was established in 1847 by Samuel Marshall who took on Charles F. Isley as his partner in 1849. This Classical Revival style structure was built as a branch bank. The 1922 addition to the east doubled the size of the building with a slight variation in the stone being visible just to the right of the entrance. The interior features a large backlit art glass ceiling.



Published by City of Milwaukee Department of City Development  
reprinted June, 1995



ABOVE: National Avenue looking East from South 6th St., 1911. (Courtesy of Hugh Swofford)

Front cover: Kroeger Brothers Department Store, 611 West National Avenue, c. 1905. (Courtesy of Milwaukee Public Library)

Inside: South 5th Street looking South from National Avenue during Yahrmarkt of 1902. (Courtesy of Ray Johnson)

### Brochures in this series include:

Avenues West  
Yankee Hill

Juneautown: The Heart of Old Milwaukee

Juneautown: Preservation, Revitalization and Adaptive Reuse

Kilbourntown

Walker's Point: Residential Tour  
West End

North Point Neighborhood

Bay View

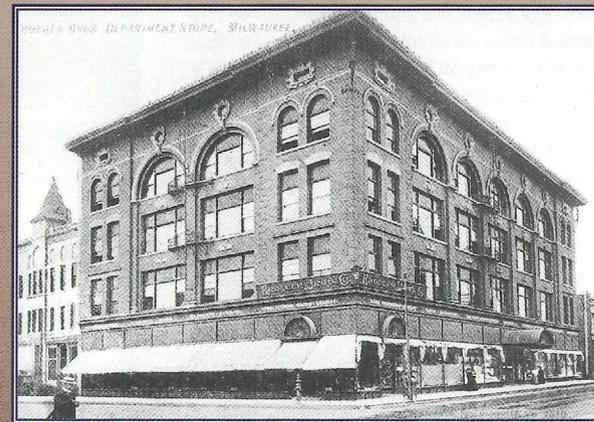
### Key to symbols:

NR National Register of Historic Places  
ML Milwaukee Landmark  
HPC Designated by the Historic Preservation Commission of Milwaukee, successor to the Milwaukee Landmarks Commission

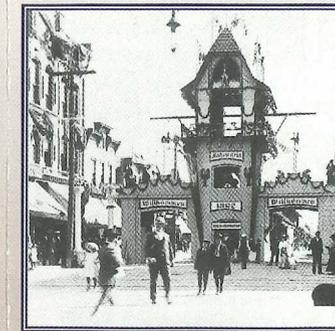
The original production of this tour pamphlet was financed in part with Federal funds from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, and received assistance from the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. This printing was made possible by contributions from the City of Milwaukee Community Development Block Grant Program.



# Milwaukee Historic Buildings Tour Walker's Point



A self-guided  
driving tour of  
commercial &  
industrial  
buildings in the  
Walker's Point  
neighborhood



## Walker's Point COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS TOUR

A narrow tongue of dry land surrounded by swamp seemed an unlikely place to begin a settlement. However, with a vision equal to that of Solomon Juneau and Byron Kilbourn, George Walker set up his trading cabin overlooking the confluence of the Milwaukee and Menomonee Rivers at a spot near today's E. Seeboth, S. Ferry and S. First Streets. The Virginia-born pioneer came to Wisconsin when he was in his early 20s to seek his fortune. Rotund (300 lbs.), genial and well-liked, Walker was also shrewd. He realized that his 75-foot-wide peninsula was the natural overland gateway from the south to both Juneautown and Kilbourntown. It was its role as the southern access point to the other settlements, the rivers and to Lake Michigan that ultimately ensured the success of Walker's settlement.

Unlike Juneautown, Walker's Point's was not a pioneer boomtown. Settlement proceeded slowly at first. Swamp land had to be filled, and Walker ran into problems obtaining clear title to his 160-acre claim. Claim jumpers and legal entanglements surrounding the land reserved for the Rock River Canal project forced Walker into a 7-year court battle for his land. Congress finally resolved the title in Walker's favor in 1842, but Walker's small settlement had been greatly overshadowed in size and importance by Juneautown and Kilbourntown by the time that the three communities were united to form the City of Milwaukee in 1846.

As Walker's Point evolved, most of the original high and dry peninsula became the prestigious residential thoroughfares of S. 3rd and S. 4th Streets, while industry located in the low-lying, former swamps east of S. 1st Street and north of Virginia Street.

The original point area where Walker's cabin had stood served as the South Side's first commercial center. A railroad depot at Florida and Barclay Streets (1855) and a larger passenger station on S. Second Street (1866-1886) spurred the construction of numerous commercial buildings housing retail shops, wholesalers, hotels and small manufacturers. After the railroad relocated its station to Kilbourntown, manufacturing and wholesaling took over the point, while retail activity shifted south to 5th and National. Many of Milwaukee's most notable industries had their start here: Allis Chalmers, Filer & Stowell, Johnston Co., Nordberg, Kearney & Trecker, Harnischfeger, and Mueller Climatrol.

Densely developed by the turn-of-the-century, Walker's Point had lost its desirability as a residential area and many of its burgeoning industries left for the suburbs where there was room for expansion. Already in 1914 the local *Free Press* was lamenting the decline of Walker's Point whose position as the center of the South Side had been usurped by Mitchell Street. Fortunately for us today, Walker's Point did not disappear. The original Yankee, German and Scandinavian settlers were followed by Welsh, Irish, Serbian, Croatian and Balkan peoples. Mexicans were brought in to work in the Pfister & Vogel Tannery in the 1920s and other Hispanics followed. The newest residents are immigrants from Southeast Asia who settled in the area in the 1970s.

Today, Walker's Point is the only one of the three original town settlements to retain most of its 19th century character with its mixture of commercial, residential, industrial, religious and educational buildings. Industrial encroachment into the old residential areas has slowed and preservation of the neighborhood's historic character is now emphasized. The historical importance of the neighborhood was acknowledged when a good portion of Walker's Point was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1978 as Milwaukee's first historic district.

**South 2nd Street.** South 2nd Street was once the main thoroughfare and commercial heart of old Walker's Point and was originally called Reed Street. Development was spurred by the construction of the Union Railroad Depot and the inauguration of streetcar service, both in 1866. The depot, no longer extant, stood in the 100 block, on the west side of the street. When commercial activity declined after the depot moved to downtown Milwaukee, many merchants and retailers moved their shops to the neighborhood's new heart at S. 5th Street and W. National Avenue. Large warehouses and manufacturing buildings gradually replaced many of the smaller commercial blocks. The remaining buildings located in the area north of Oregon Street date from the 1850s to the early 1900s and comprise the South 1st and 2nd Streets National Register Historic District.

**1 Lindsay Brothers Agricultural Implements.** 126 S. 2nd St. (1892) Architect: R. W. Williams.

NR. This impressive, almost block-long building, was constructed for the Lindsay Brothers Agricultural Implements Company, one of the largest agricultural machinery dealers in the country. Founded in 1868, the company distributed tools, wagons, harnesses, plows and twine, among other goods, and had facilities in Illinois and Missouri. It operated in Milwaukee into the 1970s. The simple cream brick facade is typical of many industrial and commercial buildings of the era, and its chief feature is the corbelled cornice. At the center of the cornice is a plaque with the company name and date.

**2 George Burnham Block,** 170 S. 2nd St. (1873) Architect: John Rugee. NR. Brick manufacturer George Burnham erected numerous income properties throughout the city. This one was leased to John Nazro & Company, one of the largest hardware firms of its time. Built on reclaimed marsh land, the building received accolades for both its design and engineering. The Burnham Block later housed Edward Ascherman's cigar factory. Although today missing its elaborate sheet metal cornice and pediments, the handsome Italianate building still retains its original window openings and the cast iron Corinthian pilasters on the first story.

**3 Mabbett & Breed's Block,** 188 S. 2nd St. (1859) NR. Historian James Buck wrote that this venerable building was constructed in 1859 for Messrs. Mabbett & Breed whose names are still visible above the second story windows. This remarkably preserved Italianate structure still retains its arched first story store fronts which originally housed a leather goods shop, a dry goods store, a retail boot and shoe store, an apothecary, and a furniture dealer.

**4 Stamm Building,** 221-227 S. 2nd St. (1865) NR. C. T. Stamm & Son erected this building in 1865 to house the company's hardware firm. On the fourth floor was Stamm's Hall, a public hall rented by many South Side fraternal groups including the Odd Fellows, Masons, and Sons of Herman. The simple Italianate commercial block still features its original and nearly-intact display windows on the first floor.

**5 Fuldner Building,** 324 S. 2nd St. (1892) Architect: Schnetzky & Liebert. This 4-story structure beside the railroad tracks was built for the wholesale wine and liquor business, L. Fuldner & Company. Founder Louis Fuldner started the business in 1855, and the company was run by his nephew/successor Herman at the time this structure was built. Both Fuldners lived nearby in the 900 block of S. 4th St. The Fuldner Building is a fine example of the Classical Revival style with Corinthian pilasters, stone banding, and urns set atop pedestals above the cornice.

**6 Frederick Bahr Building,** 801-805 S. 2nd St. (1887) NR. Grocer Frederick Bahr built this structure in 1887 at what had become an important streetcar turning point. Although Bahr died the following year, his sons carried on the grocery business here until 1917 with the family living upstairs. The second storefront was leased to Henry F. Fishedick, a cigar manufacturer. One of the most flamboyant Queen Anne style storefronts in Walker's Point, the building features an unusual corner tower, elaborately pedimented windows, and an almost helmet-like cupola at the center of the cornice. A similar feature can be seen on the Nitz Building down the street (No. 922-924). The elaborately scrolled brackets flanking the tower are similar to those on the Schlitz Brewery-built tavern across the street at No. 812-814.

**7 Allen-Bradley Company,** 1201 S. 2nd St. (1920s-1960s) Architect: Fitzhugh Scott. The large 2-block complex of concrete buildings crowned by an immense clock tower is the home of the Allen-Bradley Company, Walker's Point's largest employer. From modest beginnings at this site in 1903, Allen-Bradley has grown into the leading worldwide supplier of industrial automation controls and electronic and magnetic products and employs over 14,000 persons across the globe. Fascinated by towers and clocks, founder Harry Bradley had the enormous clock tower built as part of a 1962 office and research lab addition. One of Milwaukee's most prominent landmarks, the clock tower rises some 280 feet high and the clock face is twice the size of London's Big Ben.

**8 Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Church,** 202 W. Scott St. (1882) Architect: Andrew Elleson. NR. The Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Church was organized by Milwaukee's Norwegian Community in 1852, the South Side's oldest Lutheran congregation. The present building, built in 1882, was the congregation's second church on this site and was used for worship until 1923. Now known as Ascension Lutheran, the congregation is located today on Layton Boulevard. This building was subsequently used as a candy factory and warehouse, and, as a result, its graceful spire was removed and the lancet shaped windows were altered. The former church still retains exceptionally fine iron studded doors and its original name plaque.

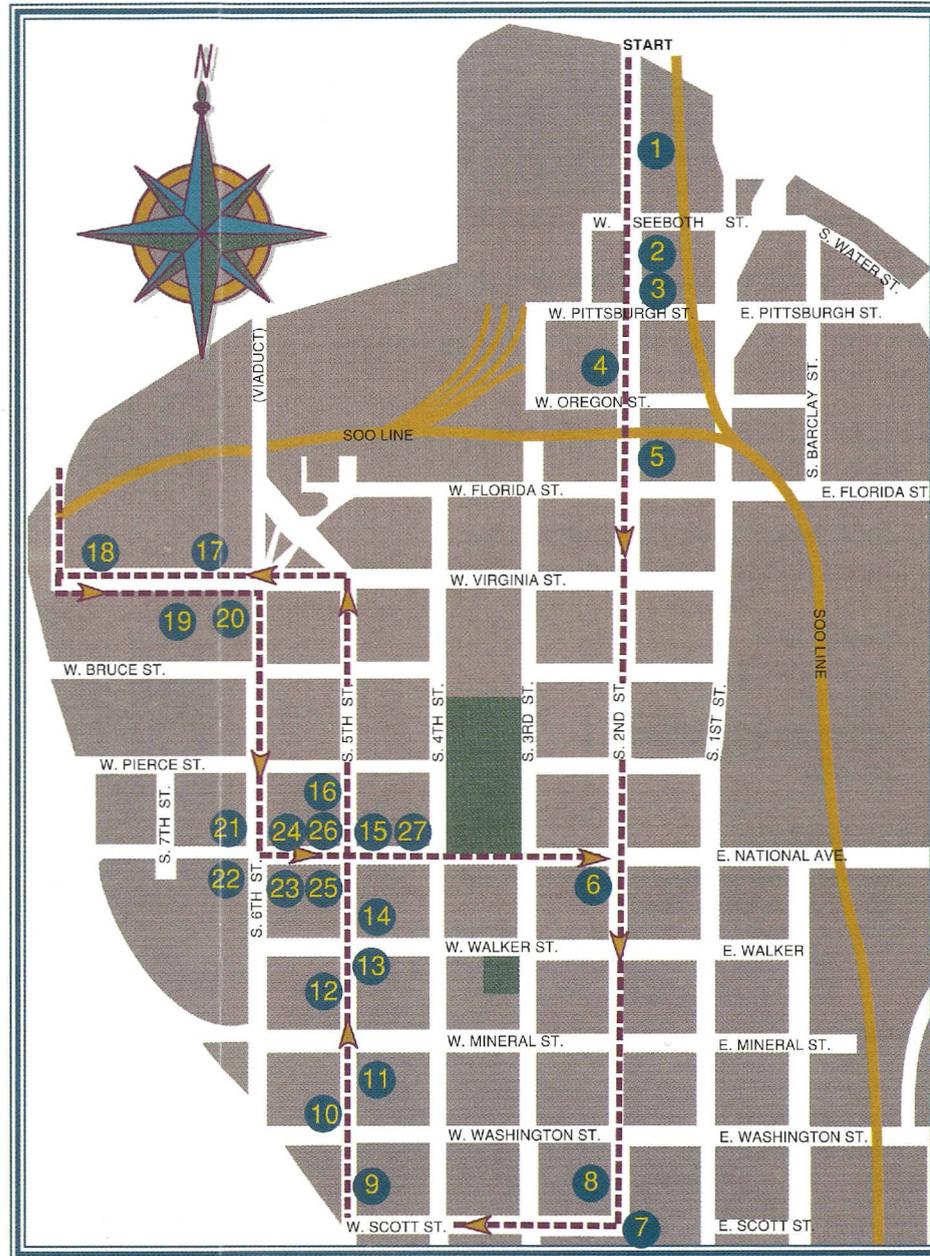
**South 5th Street.** Once known as Grove St., South 5th became the retail hub of Walker's Point from the 1880s through World War I. Area residents could find everything from shoes and clothing to drug stores, doctors, dentists, architects, and photographers here. With the growth of commercial activity, the simple Greek Revival and vernacular storefronts gave way to flamboyant Victorian Gothic, Italianate, Queen Anne, and Classical Revival style buildings. The merchants were overwhelmingly of German descent and typically lived above their shops. Many stayed at the same site for decades, upgrading their property with a new facade or a completely new building. Beginning in the 1920s, small factories started occupying the old storefronts, but the district has enjoyed a recent commercial renaissance with trendy ethnic restaurants and taverns moving into the old structures.

**9 St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod,** 1136 S. 5th St. (1901) Architect: Otto C. Uehling; tower and spire date to 1879; St. Stephen's School, 1126 S. 5th St. (1892) Architect: Schnetzky & Liebert. NR. The South Side's first German Lutheran Church, founded in 1853, is today southeast Wisconsin's first Spanish mission church of the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church. The congregation moved to this site in 1866. In 1901 work began on the present building, which incorporated the 1879 tower and spire from an earlier building. The present building is said to be one of the city's first churches to use steel skeleton construction. St. Stephen's is one of Milwaukee's most striking Victorian Gothic churches. Its rich red brick contrasts with the exceptionally fine limestone and sheet metal trim and delicate wood tracery in the stained glass windows.

**10 Frederick Schroeder Building,** 1035-1039 S. 5th St. (1887). NR. Frederick Schroeder and his son occupied this corner as far back as 1878 and operated a grocery and blacksmith shop on the premises. The original structures were replaced by the present \$10,000 building in 1887. Schroeder had his grocery store in the building and lived upstairs. The flamboyant corner tower with its prominent brackets and the finely detailed bay window exemplify the exuberant Queen Anne style of architecture favored by small shopkeepers.

**11 Simon Schaefer Building,** 1014-1018 S. 5th St. (1891) Architect: John Paul. NR. This double store with upper flats was built by Simon Schaefer, the proprietor of the Farmer's Home, a small boarding house once located next door. Schaefer moved his boarding house to this building and opened a saloon in the north storefront while leasing the south storefront to various pharmacists. Although missing its original flame-like finials at the top of the building, this handsome Queen Anne style building still retains its original storefronts, corbelled cornice, and dogtooth brickwork on the second story.

**12 Kroeger Bros. Co. Building,** 917-919 S. 5th St. (1886) Architect: Henry Messmer. NR. The tremendously successful Kroeger Brothers Department Store had its start in 1853. After numerous



expansions, brothers Herman and Casper Kroeger built this new Queen Anne style block in 1886. It features a fine sheet metal cornice and sheet metal bay window with a denticulated pediment. The brothers moved to an even larger store at the southwest corner of 6th and National in 1901.

**13 David Reik Building,** 900 S. 5th St. (1907) Architect: Leiser and Holst. NR. This beautifully restored structure was built for wholesale grocer David Reik and later occupied from 1926 through 1976 by Goodwill Industries. The Classical Revival style building features russet spatter brick, uncommon in Milwaukee, and has one of the finest modillioned cornices of sheet metal in the city.

**14 Matthias Lamers Building,** 830-832 S. 5th St. (1883) Architect: Andrew Elleson. NR. Few people realize that Holland-born Lamers never actually occupied this building, but constructed it as a rental property next door to his shoe shop/residence. Early tenants here included a carpet and wallpaper store and a men's clothing shop. Lamers' heirs later moved the family shoe shop into this building in 1902. This picturesque Victorian Gothic structure features a beautifully detailed cornice complete with finials and an alternating band of red and cream colored brick sets off the building's name and date plaque.

**15 William Ritmeier Building,** 438 W. National Ave. (1877). NR. In use as a pharmacy for over 100 years, this structure was built by pharmacist William Ritmeier on the site of an early blacksmith shop. The prominent mansard roof features distinctive dormers framed by bold, scrolled brackets, portions of which are now missing. Brick quoins accent the corners, and a plaque with Ritmeier's name and date appears above the center window on the second story.

**16 William Gudert Building,** 719 S. 5th St. (1876). NR. William Gudert occupied this site from 1865 through 1885, first operating a blacksmith and wagonmaking business here and then selling real estate beginning in 1870. Gudert replaced his earlier structure with the present brick block in 1876 and lived upstairs, while renting out the ground floor space to such tenants as Charles Millman (a dry goods merchant) and Sam Sing Ring (a Chinese laundry).

**17 Pfister and Vogel Tannery Complex,** 600 block W. Virginia St. and 600 block W. Oregon St. NR. The fine Classical Revival style building at 647 W. Virginia St. was built in 1912 and designed by Herman Esser as the headquarters for the Pfister and Vogel Tannery, once the city's largest processor of leather, with branches across the country and in Europe. The business was founded here in 1847 by Frederick Vogel who later merged with tanner Guido Pfister. The complex of buildings across the street housed the main operations of the huge tannery, and date chiefly from the 1880s through the early 20th century. Since P & V ceased tanning here in the 1920s, the buildings have been leased to other manufacturers.

**18 Philip Best Brewing Co. Bottle House,** 748 W. Virginia St. (1881). NR. The castellated battlements and date stone identify this as part of the South Side brewery of the Philip Best Co., later known as the Pabst Brewery. An earlier brewery, run by Carl Melms, had been on this site since the 1850s and was acquired by Best after Melms' death in 1869.

**19 Orlandini Studios,** 633 W. Virginia St. (pre-1876; 2nd story added between 1888-1894; remodeled to present appearance 1964-1965). NR. Julian Orlandini is a regionally noted ornamental plaster artisan who has continued the business his father, Matthew, started in 1941. The company has been at this location since 1964. Orlandini's projects include work at Villa Terrace, the Pabst Theater, the Day Mansion in Wauwatosa, and many other landmark structures.

**20 Daniel Newhall Rowhouse,** 607-609 W. Virginia St. (1850) NR. The pioneer era doublehouse was once part of a 4-unit rowhouse block whose west half has been razed. Although difficult to envision today, Virginia St. was once lined with fashionable doublehouses and rowhouses like this one, virtually all of which have been lost to industrial expansion and road improvements. The parapet end walls, end chimneys, and simple treatment of the windows identify this as a local example of the late Federal style.