

**8-10 CONGRESS STREET  
ST. ALBANS, VERMONT**

**HISTORIC DOCUMENTATION**

***I. INTRODUCTION***

**Location:** The building to be removed is located at 8-10 Congress Street in downtown St. Albans, which is located in Franklin County, Vermont.

**Date of Construction:** The building was built c. 1865.

**Present Owner:** The City of St. Albans

**Present Use:** Vacant

**Historic Use:** Commercial on the first floor, residential on the second floor.

**Significance:** The building at 8-10 Street is a contributing building, #26, in the St. Albans Historic District which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This building is part of a collection of buildings on the east side of Main Street between Bank and Congress Streets that survived a devastating fire in 1895 that destroyed most of the buildings on the west side of Main Street from the south side of Kingman Street to Hoyt Street. While the building's front façade has been altered, it continues to convey its role in the commercial development of the City.

**Location of Documentation Report:** St. Albans Historical Society

**Historian:** Suzanne C. Jamele  
August 2018

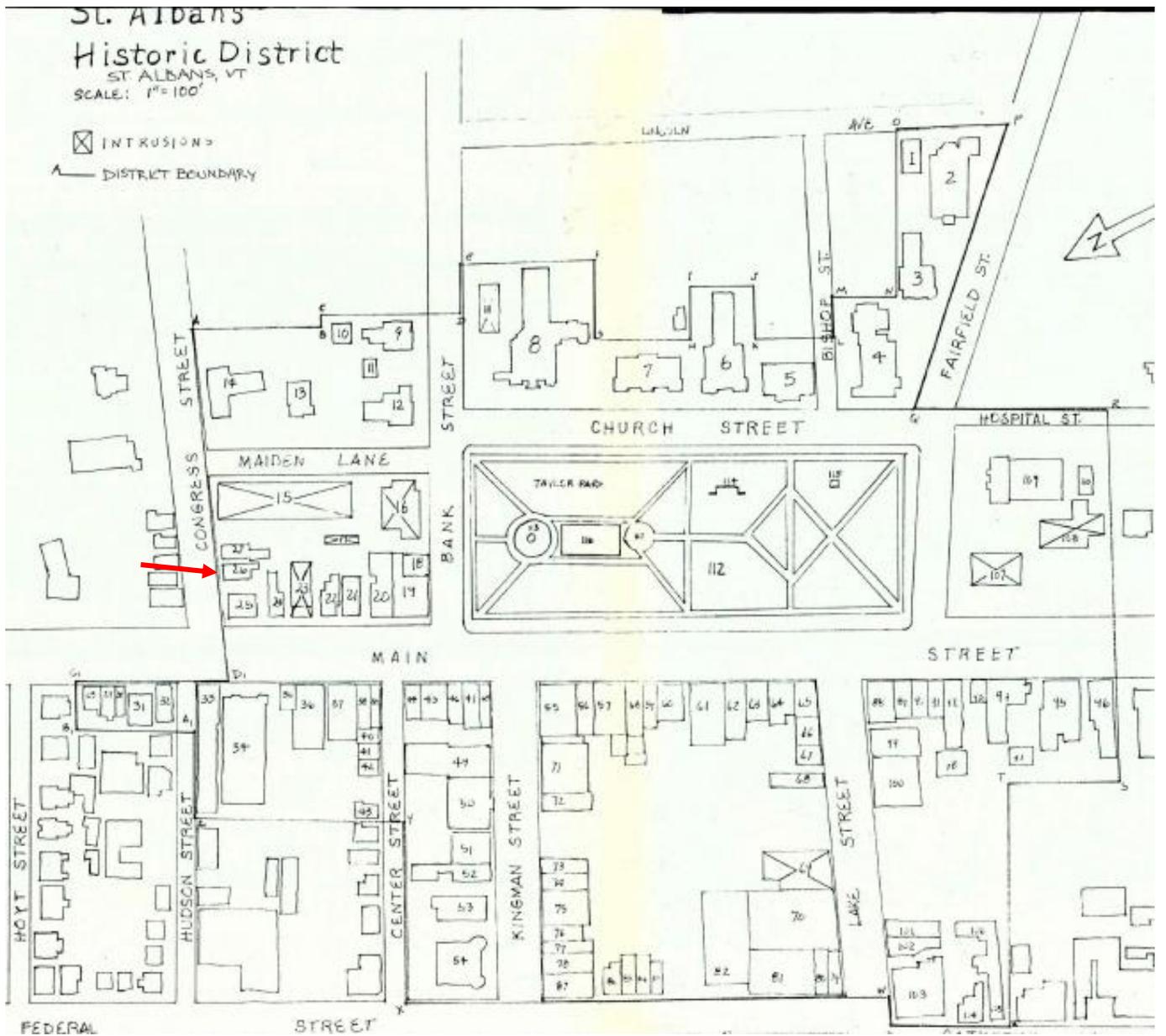
## ***II. PROJECT SUMMARY***

The City of St. Albans proposes to remove the vacant building at 8-10 Congress Street in St. Albans in order to construct a new multi-use building on several lots at the corner of North Main Street and Congress Street and on Maiden Lane. The building at 8-10 Congress Street is one of several altered historic buildings on the parcel that will be removed. The new building is expected to provide commercial and residential space that will stimulate the economy in the downtown historic district. Re-use of the existing buildings would not provide the necessary spaces to serve the program needs of the anticipated occupants of the new building; therefore, it was determined necessary to remove the existing buildings and build new.

The building at 8-10 Congress Street was built c. 1865 and has played a role in the commercial history of the City for over 150 years. Despite late 20<sup>th</sup> century alterations to its front facade, it is a contributing building, #26, in the St. Albans Historic District which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

This documentation package meets the intent of St. Albans's zoning regulations, (e) i.1, related to the demolition of historic structures. The report meets accepted historic preservation documentation standards as established by the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation's *Photographic Documentation Standards for Historic Buildings*. A copy of the report with printed photographs, and a CD containing the report and photographs saved as .jpg images, is on file at The St. Albans Historical Society.

Suzanne Jamele, historic preservation consultant, conducted a site visit of the project area on March 27, 2018. All photographs were taken at that time. Research for this documentation was conducted at the St. Albans Free Library, the Vermont Historical Society's Leahy Library in Barre, the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation's Online Resource Center, and on-line images of the Landscape Change Program of the University of Vermont.



Location Map

### III. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The building at 8-10 Congress Street is located on a small urban lot on the south side of Congress Street, near its intersection with North Main Street, and is within the core of the City's downtown. This portion of the city was developed in the early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and survived a devastating fire in 1895 destroyed many of the downtown buildings. The building is situated one block to the north of Taylor Park, a large open space that is the focal point of the city's downtown. The city sidewalk runs next to the front of the building and the structure largely fills its entire lot. The building to the east, 12 Congress Street, stands immediately adjacent to the structure. To the west is a vacant unpaved lot, now used for parking, where a c. 1910, three-story, brick, Colonial Revival style office and apartment building once stood. It burned in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and the remains were removed. An unpaved dirt drive runs along the west side of the building terminating at the back (south) side of the structure.

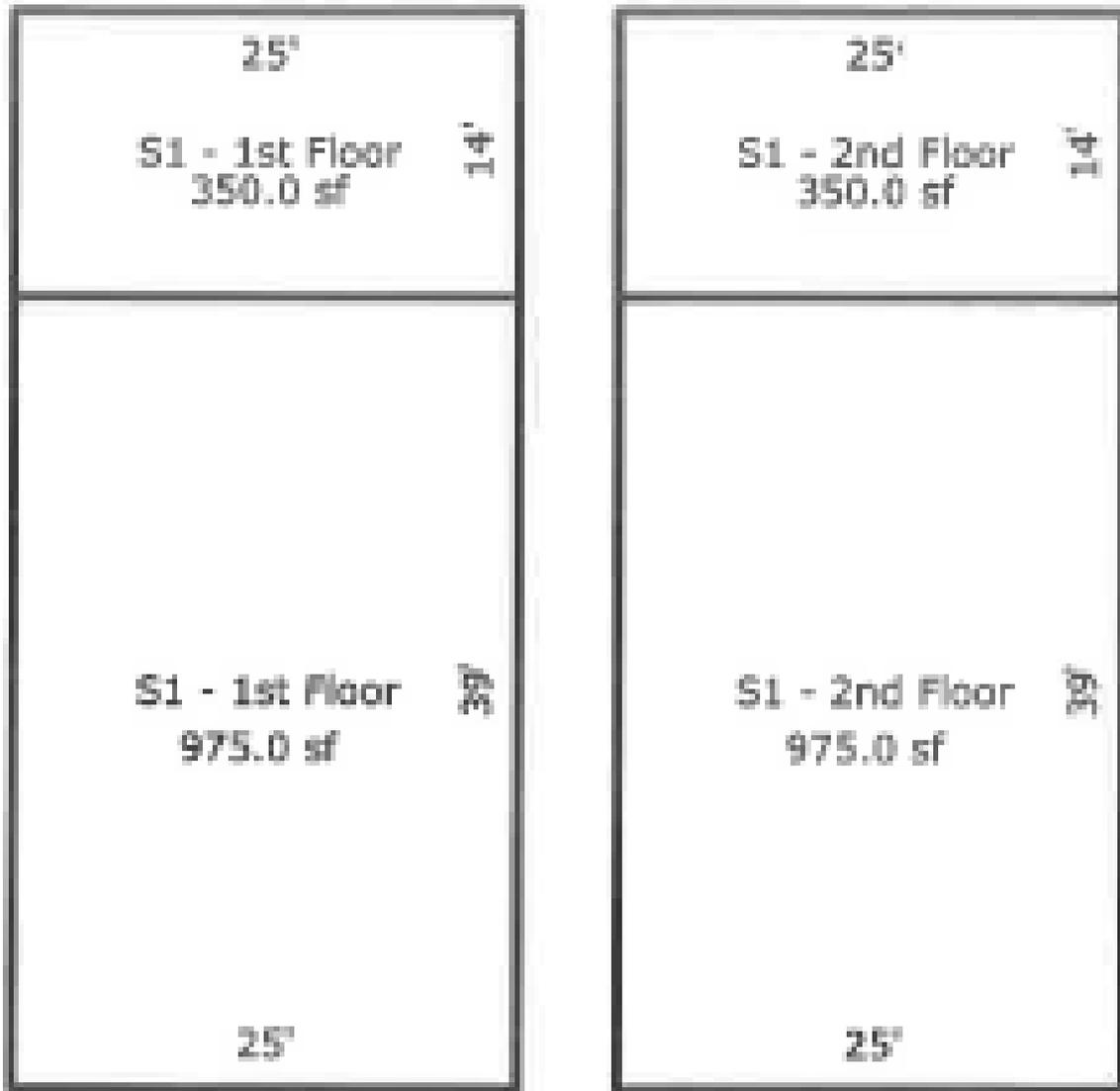


#### Exterior

This c. 1865 vernacular, 2 ½ story, gable front, rectangular building has a 3x4 bay main block and a 2 ½ story, 2x2 bay rear gable roofed addition that was constructed in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century to replace a shed roof addition. The building has wood clapboard siding, asphalt shingle roofing whose shingles have clipped corners, and a brick chimney near the ridge on the main block's east roof slope near the back of the building. The main block has a boxed cornice with a narrow molded strip at the top of the frieze board. Windows and doors have narrow trim with a very narrow drip edge. Windows are 2/2 on the second floor of the main block and 1/1 on the first

floor, except for the front (north) elevation where there are large, 20 pane fixed glass wood windows on either side of a recessed central entry. The recessed entry has clapboarded side walls and a 15 pane wood door. A window in the front gable peak is covered with a sheet of plywood. On the east side of the main block the roof slope has been extended on a shallower pitch to shelter an enclosed set of stairs to the second floor of the main block. These stairs have been extant since the 19-teens. The door to these stairs is a 15 panel wood door matching the other front door on the building. It has a modern storm door. The front (north) and west sides have modern shutters at the windows. The west side of the building is not visible as it stands several feet from the adjacent building and there is a narrow solid wall concealing the gap. The main block has a stone foundation with concrete parging tooled to look like concrete block above grade.

The rear addition has narrow corner boards and narrow trim around windows and doors. Windows are 1/1 sash and the west side windows have modern shutters. The roof is set slightly lower than that of the main block.



### Interior

The entire first floor of the building has all modern finishes and partition walls. A large open front room remains in the former storefront area. Finishes include wall to wall carpet, sheet paneling, vertical board paneling, modern molded narrow trim, and flush wood doors.

The enclosed staircase to the second floor that rises along the east side of the main block has sheet paneling on the walls and wall to wall carpeting on the stairs. At the top of the stairs, a 15 pane wood door opens into an east side office. This room has carpeting, sheet paneling on the walls, modern molded trim and an acoustic tile ceiling on a suspended metal grid. A single room spans the front (north) side of the main block's second floor. This room has a fiberboard tile ceiling with modern, narrow, molded crown molding, a carpeted floor, and flush wood doors. It retains wide flat baseboards and 19<sup>th</sup> century molded trim around the windows and doors. Behind this room, in the middle of the main block, similar molded trim remains as well as an historic four panel door. All other finishes are modern.

### **IV. SIGNIFICANCE**

The building at 8-10 Congress Street is a contributing building, #26, in the St. Albans Historic District which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The c. 1865 building has a modern rear addition and the front storefront façade has been altered. The main block's footprint appears to match that on historic maps. The main block's form, scale and placement on the street is similar to other buildings on this portion of Congress Street, an area that developed in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. While the building has been altered, the building's footprint with its gable front to the street, and east side enclosed staircase are historic. The regularly spaced double hung windows and first floor commercial windows (although modern replacements) flanking a recessed entry all convey the building's 19<sup>th</sup> century period of construction and mixed-use role. Its history helps fill out the understanding of commercial development in this portion of the downtown. This building is also significant as part of a collection of buildings on the east side of Main Street between Bank and Congress Streets that survived a devastating fire in 1895 that destroyed most of the buildings on the west side of Main Street from the south side of Kingman Street to Hoyt Street.

Both the 1853 Presdee and Edwards map and the 1857 Walling map show a long, narrow building on this lot, with its eaves facing Congress Street. The current gable front building appears to have replaced the earlier building on this site sometime between the 1857 map and the 1871 Beers map. The Beers map does not show any additions on the back of the main block. In 1871 it contained the gun shop of Henry Dexter Sabins and his residence above. The first floor appears to have been commercial throughout most of the building's history. The gun shop appears on Sanborn Fire Insurance maps through 1901. Throughout these years the shop had a 1 ½ story addition on the back of the building offset to the east with a platform on the western half. A single story shed spanned the back end of the platform and a portion of the 1 ½ story addition. The enclosed exterior stairs were built between 1885 and 1889. *The Saint Albans City Directory-1889* indicates that Henry Sabins was still running the gun shop and his son Charles worked there as a clerk. Both of them lived upstairs in the building. Henry Sabins was born in Goshen Gore, Caldeonia County and resided in Walden and Colchester prior to moving to St.

Albans. Sabins was tragically killed by a train on May 27, 1902 at age 70. The Central Vermont Railway train was approaching St. Albans from the north and struck and killed Sabins at the Elm Street crossing about one-half mile north of the depot. The train was running about 15 minutes late and Sabins drove his horse and carriage across the tracks and was stuck around 11:15 AM.

Charles Sabins, Henry's son, opened a locksmith shop in the building after his father's death. The 1906 Sanborn map record's his shop and the conversion of the 1 ½ story rear addition to 2 ½ stories. The platform was recorded as a single story structure and the rearmost shed was a finished single story space. The property remained in this configuration throughout his tenure in the building which ended some time in the 19-teens.

The 1920 Sanborn map indicates the building housed a paint shop and the single story rear space had been raised to two stories. The 1926 Sanborn shows no change to the building. The storefront space was vacant. *Houghton's Standard City Directory of St. Albans, Vermont 1928* indicates that A.O. Mossey had a barbershop on the first floor and H.M. Bullett lived on the second floor. The 1936 *Standard Directory of St. Albans City* shows the Limoge Photo Shop on the first floor of the building and Carl and Contuella Leon residing on the second floor. The 1946 Sanborn map indicates no change in the building layout and form and shows a store on the first floor.

## **V. REFERENCES**

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## ***VI. INDEX TO PHOTOGRAPHS ON CD***

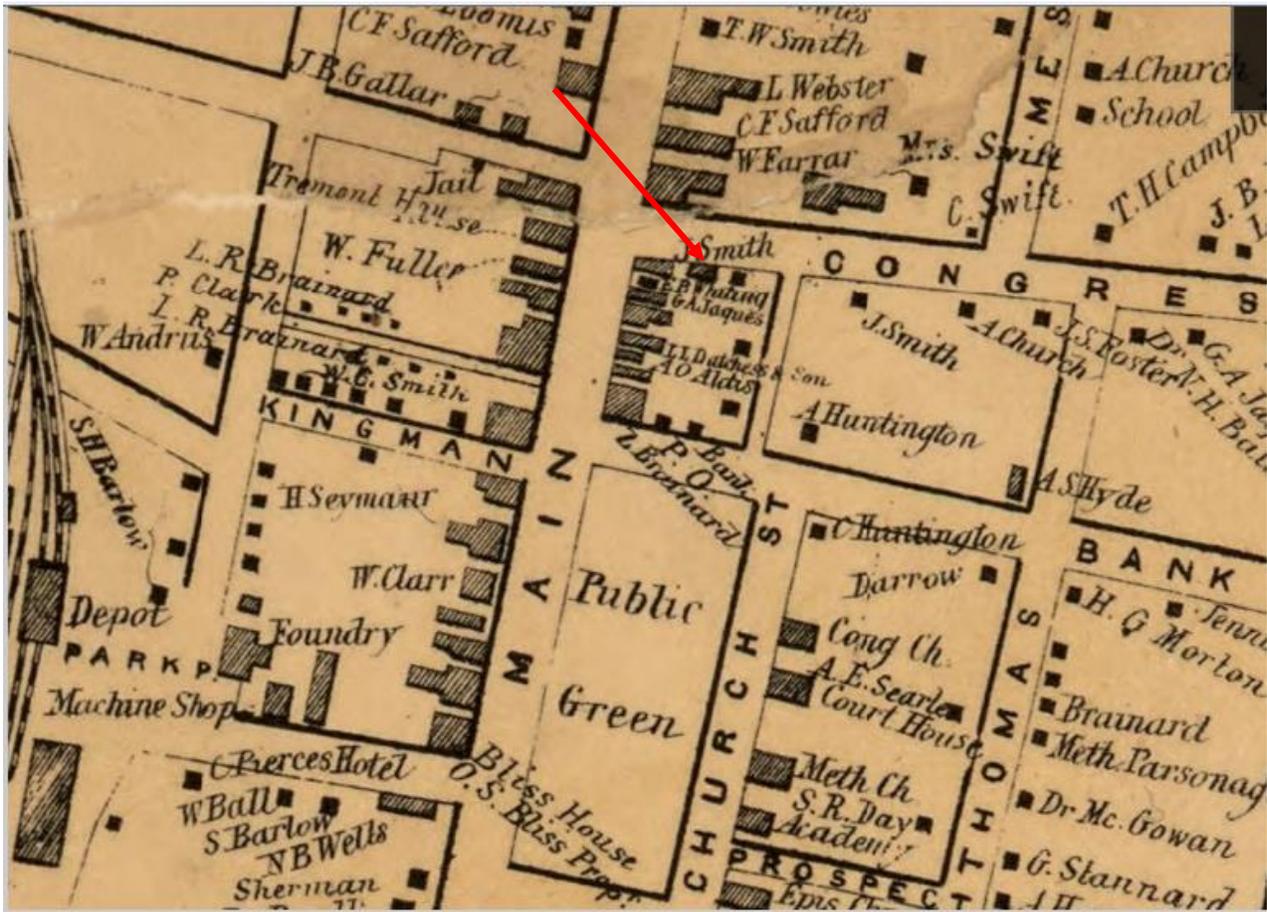
8-10 Congress Street  
St. Albans, Franklin County, Vermont

Photographs were taken by Suzanne Jamele, March 27, 2018 except for photographs #2,6, and 7 taken August 12, 2018.

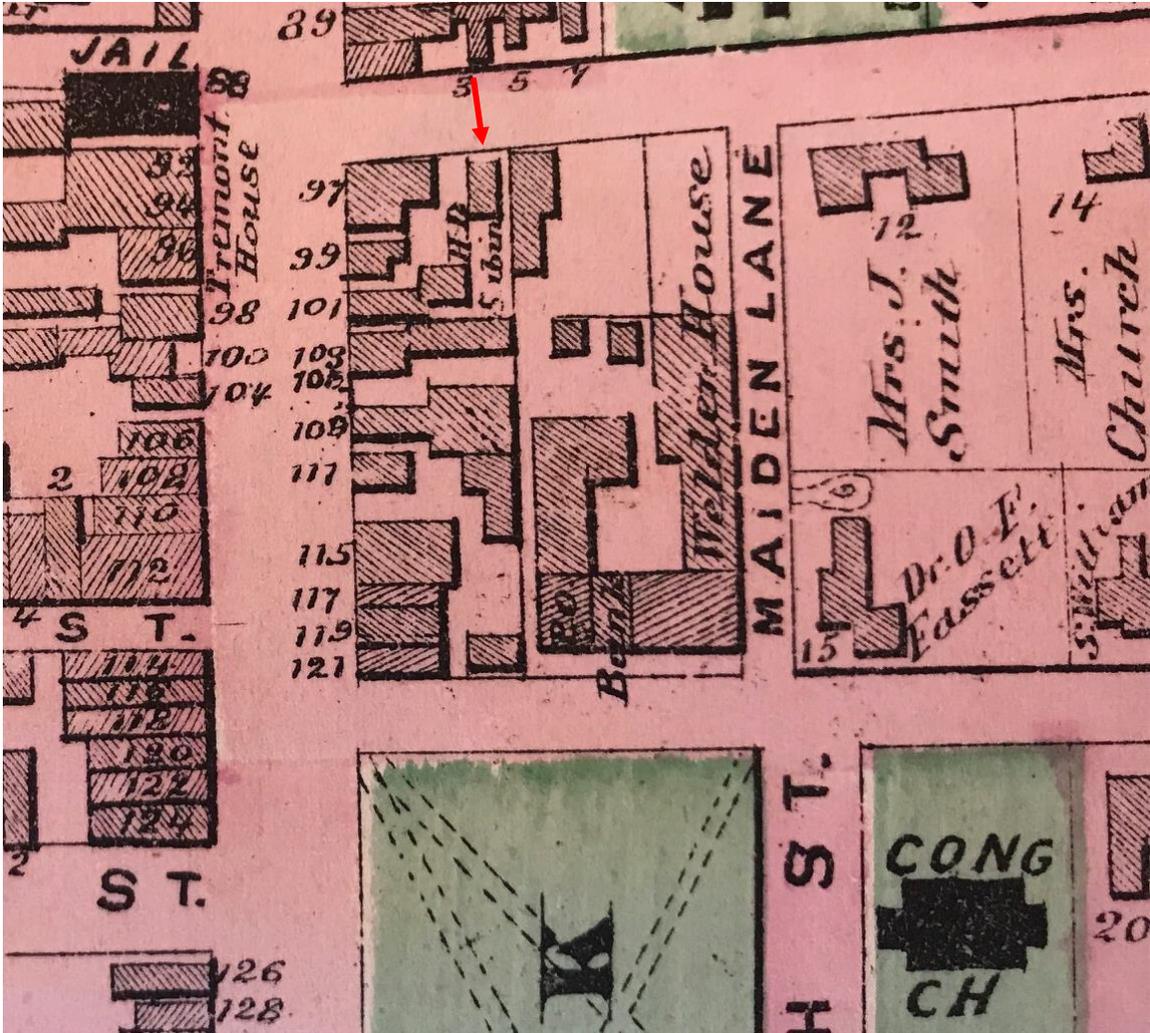
- 1.** View east on North Main Street, 8-10 Congress Street at left (blue).
- 2.** View west on Congress Street toward North Main Street. 8-10 Congress second from left.
- 3.** View south at 12 Congress (l) and 8-10 Congress (r).
- 4.** View south at front (north) side of 8-10 Congress Street.
- 5.** View east of west and rear (south) sides of building.
- 6.** View east at stone foundation with concrete parging on west side of main block.
- 7.** View northeast at rear (south) end of rear addition.
- 8.** View north at front display window in commercial space.
- 9.** View north at front door I commercial space.
- 10.** View southwest in first floor commercial space.
- 11.** View north in small west side room on first floor.
- 12.** View south at first floor back rooms of rear addition.
- 13.** View south at enclosed staircase to second floor.
- 14.** View south in office on second floor at top of the stairs.
- 15.** View south at door with 19th century molded trim in second floor front room.
- 16.** View west at window with 19th century molded trim in first floor front room.
- 17.** View north in west side room on second floor of main block. 19th century molded trim around door.
- 18.** Detail of typical 19th century trim around doors and windows in front and west side room on second floor.
- 19.** View south in middle room on second floor at door with 19th century molded trim.
- 20.** View north in center hallway of main block at 19th century four panel door.



1853 Presdee & Edwards map of St. Albans



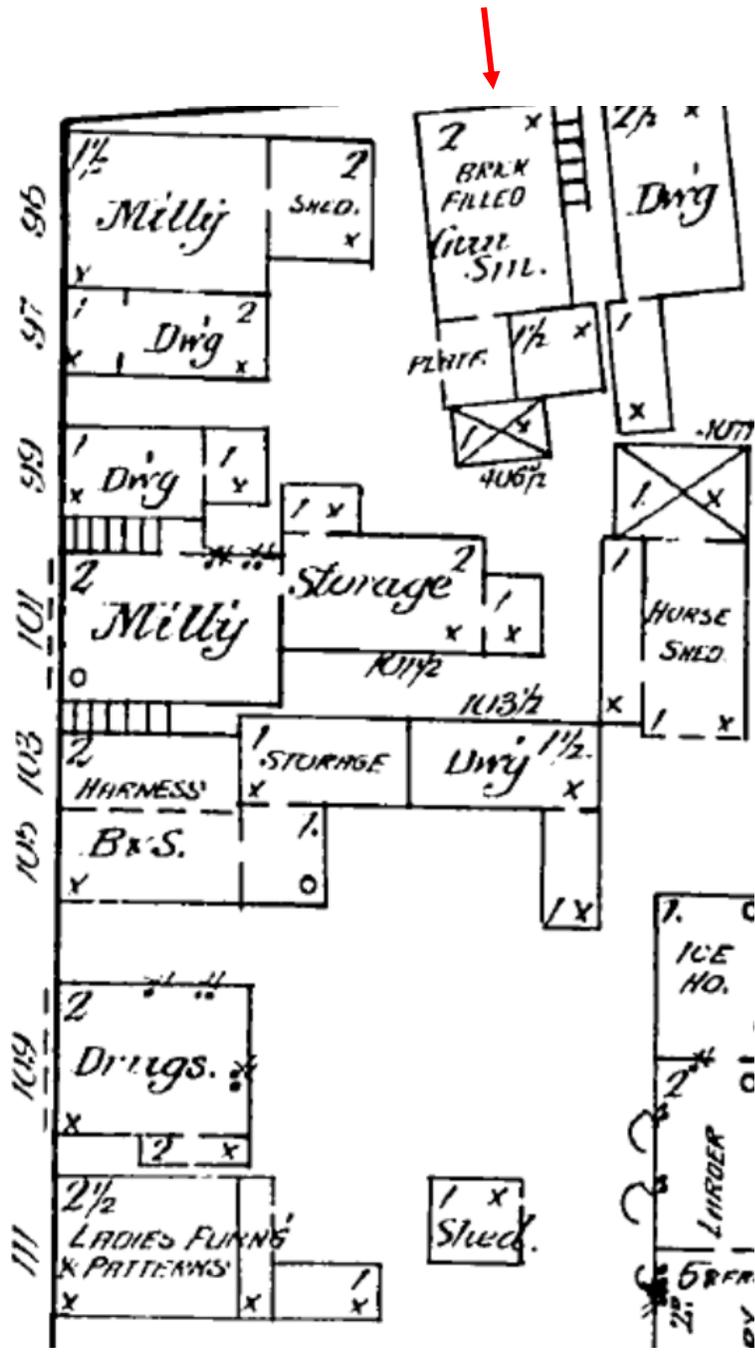
1857 H. F. Walling map of St. Albans



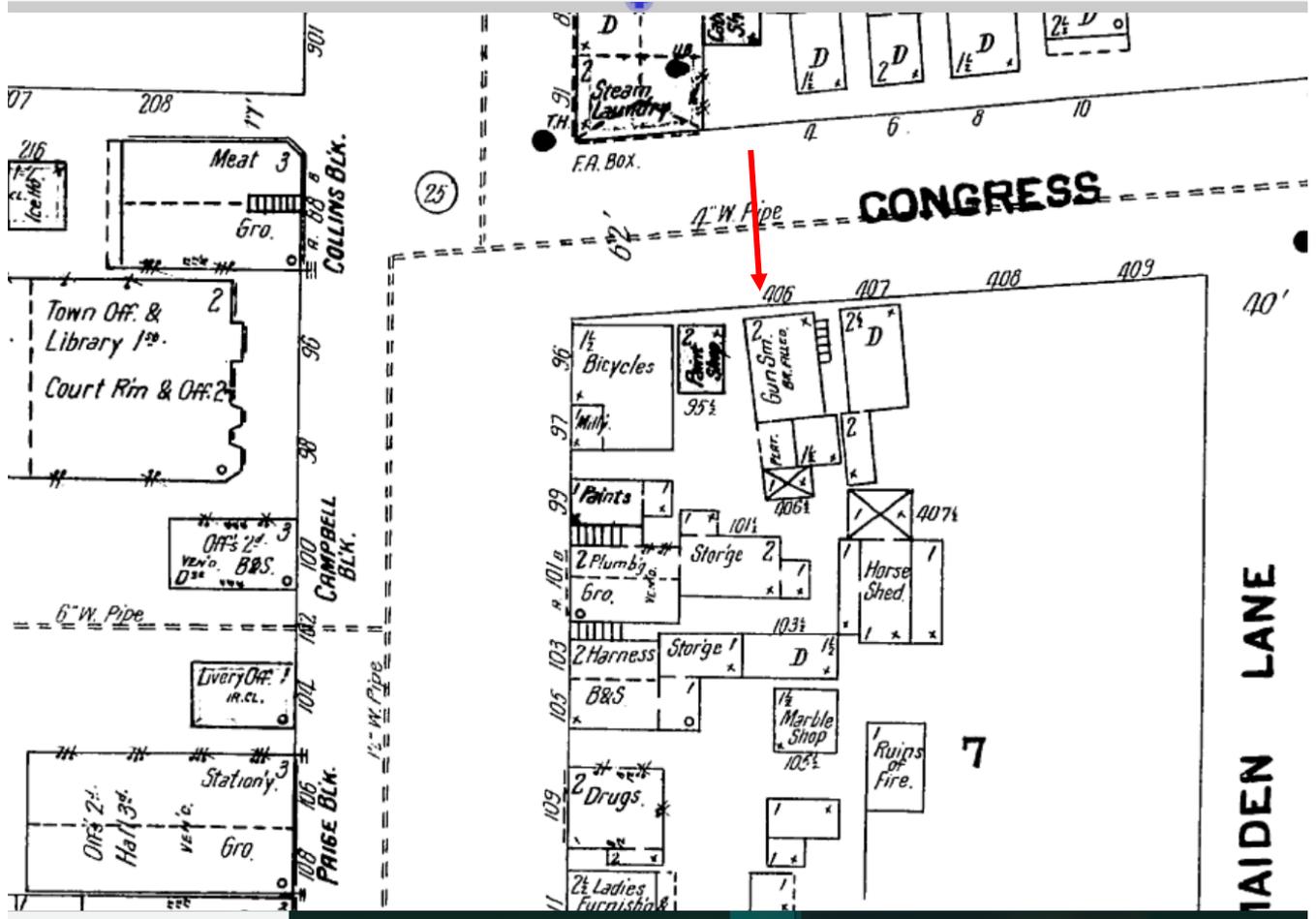
1871 Beers Atlas of St. Albans



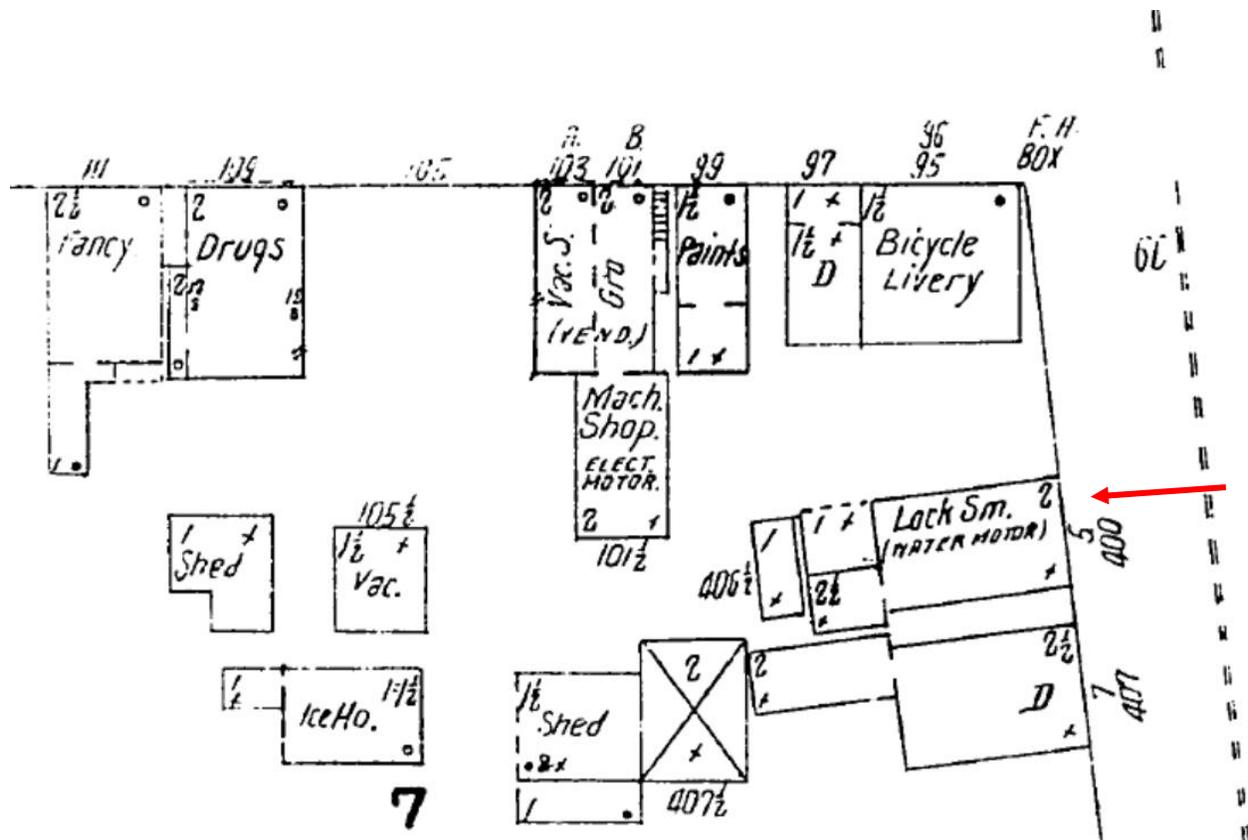




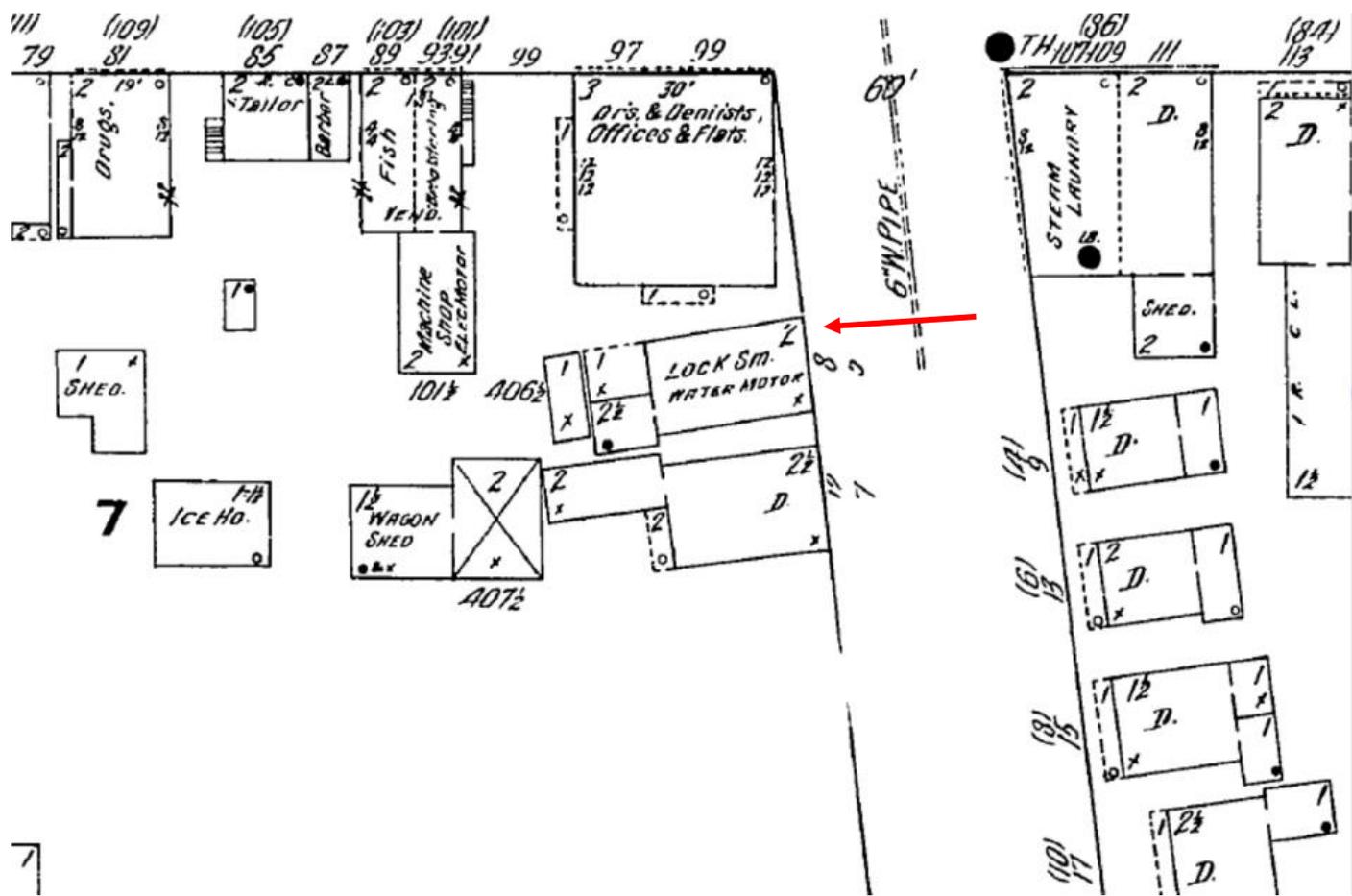
1889 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1895/96 the millinery shop is gone but the rest remains the same.



1901 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map



1906 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map



1912 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

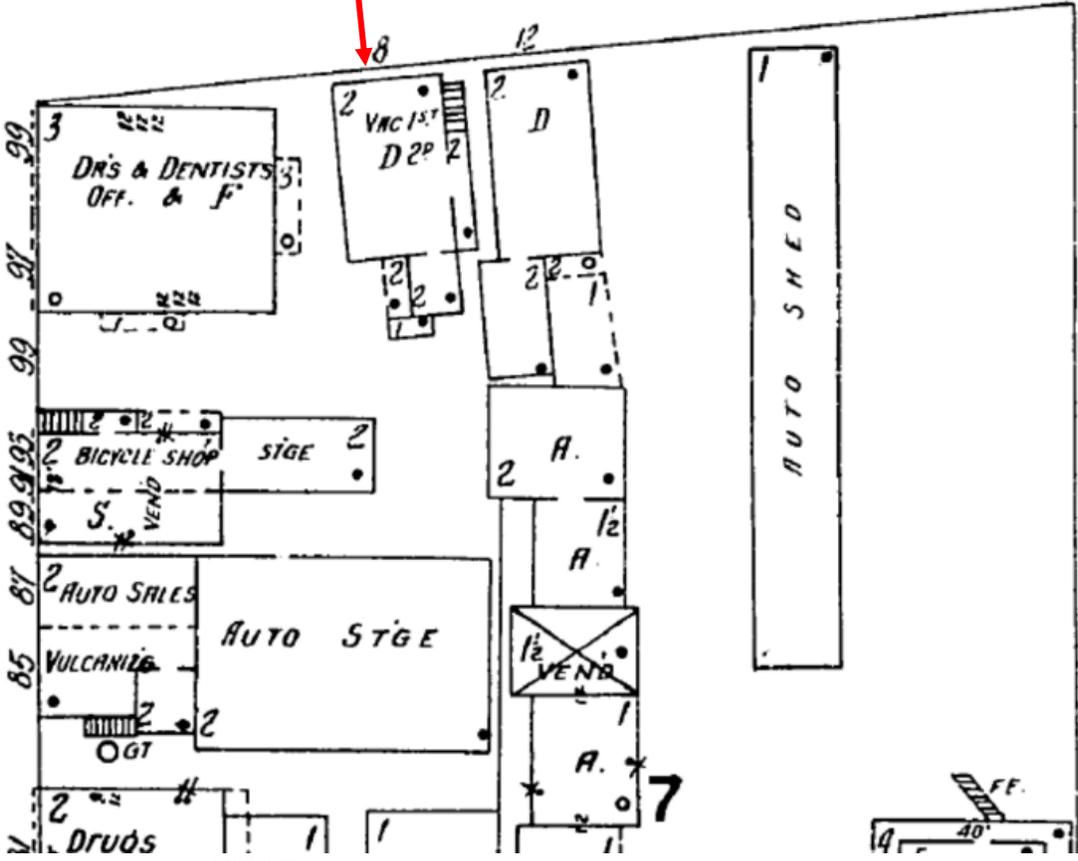


N. MAIN 12" W.P.

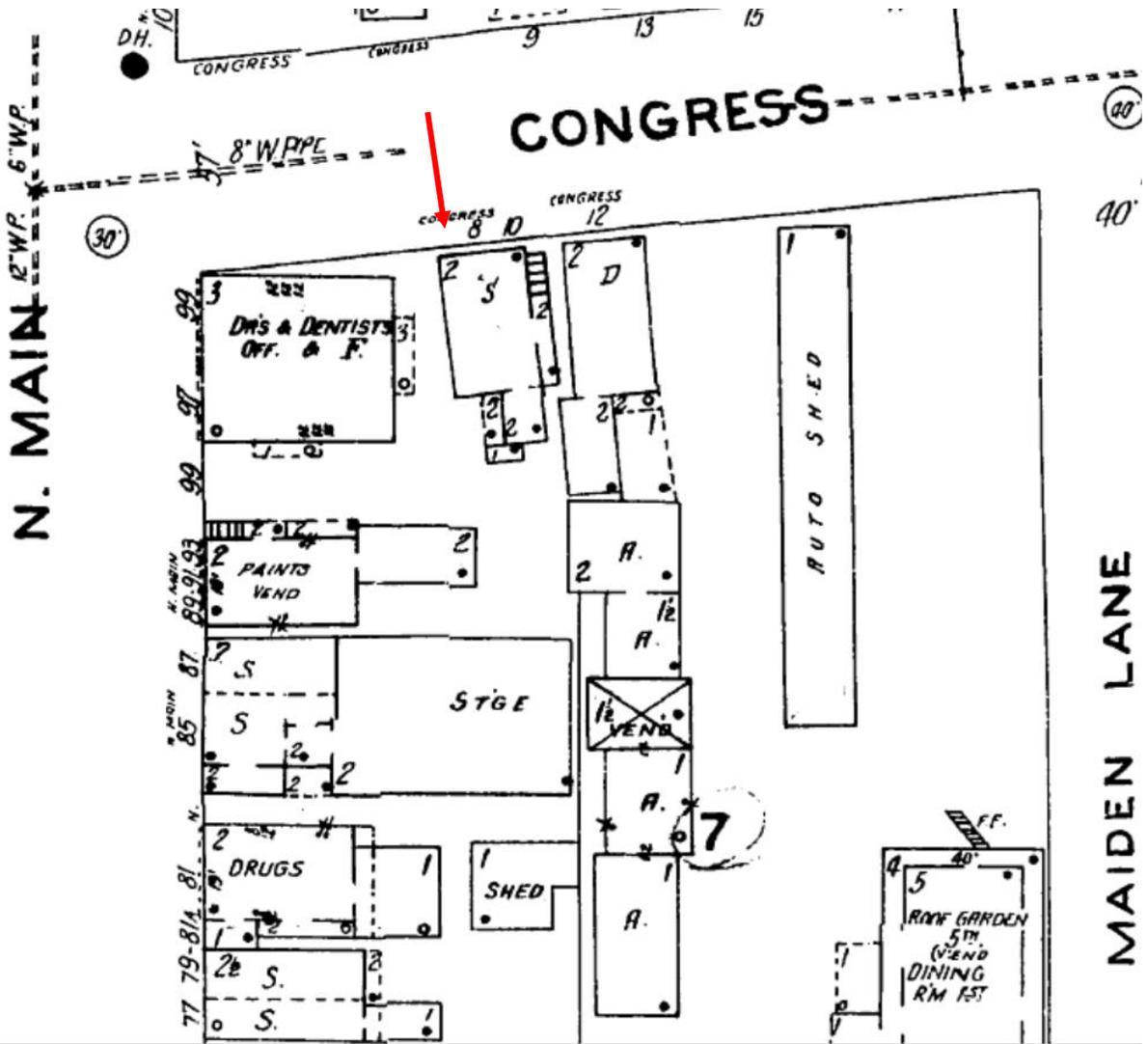
30'

6" W.P.I.P.L.

CONGRESS



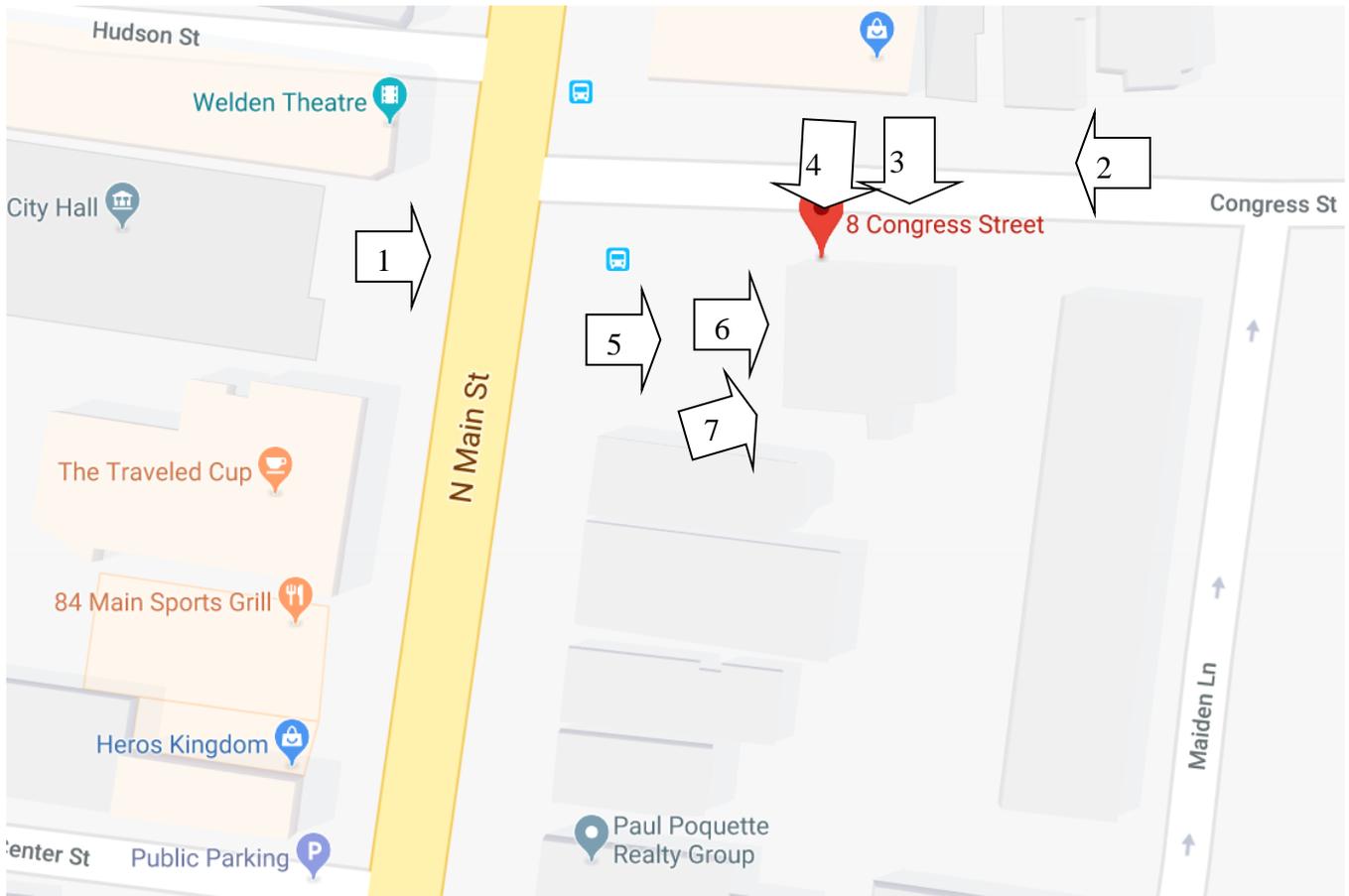
1926 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map



1946 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

# Photograph Location Map

Exterior





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2. View west on Congress Street toward North Main Street. 8-10 Congress second from left.



3. View south at 12 Congress (l) and 8-10 Congress (r).



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5. View east of west and rear (south) sides of building.



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8. View north at front display window in commercial space.



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15. View south at door with 19<sup>th</sup> century molded trim in second floor front room.



16. View west at window with 19<sup>th</sup> century molded trim in first floor front room.



17. View north in west side room on second floor of main block. 19<sup>th</sup> century molded trim around door.



18. Detail of typical 19<sup>th</sup> century trim around doors and windows in front and west side room on second floor.



19. View south in middle room on second floor at door with 19<sup>th</sup> century molded trim.



20. View north in center hallway of main block at 19<sup>th</sup> century four panel door.