

NEENAH LANDMARKS COMMISSION



Neenah

HISTORICAL TOUR

The Neenah Landmarks Commission welcomes you to the Neenah Historical Walking Tour.

The Neenah Landmarks Commission protects Neenah's historical resources by promoting their appreciation, use, and preservation. The commission was created in 1986 to support the efforts of private property owners and the public sector in the preservation and thoughtful redevelopment of the community's historic and architectural resources.

For additional information please contact
Neenah Landmarks Commission at 920-886-6125 or
email communitydevelopment@neenahwi.gov.

Add a FREE Museum to Your Tour!

Neenah Historical Society

343 SMITH STREET | THE OCTAGON HOUSE
neenahhistoricalsociety.com

Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass

165 NORTH PARK AVENUE
bmmglass.com

Doty Cabin

701 LINCOLN STREET
neenahwi.gov/departments/parks-recreation/doty-cabin/



Scan this QR
code to learn
more about
Neenah's
history.



211 Walnut Street, PO Box 426, Neenah WI 54957 | 920-886-6125 | www.neenahwi.gov

Cover photo: Christopher Rand / errantartist.com

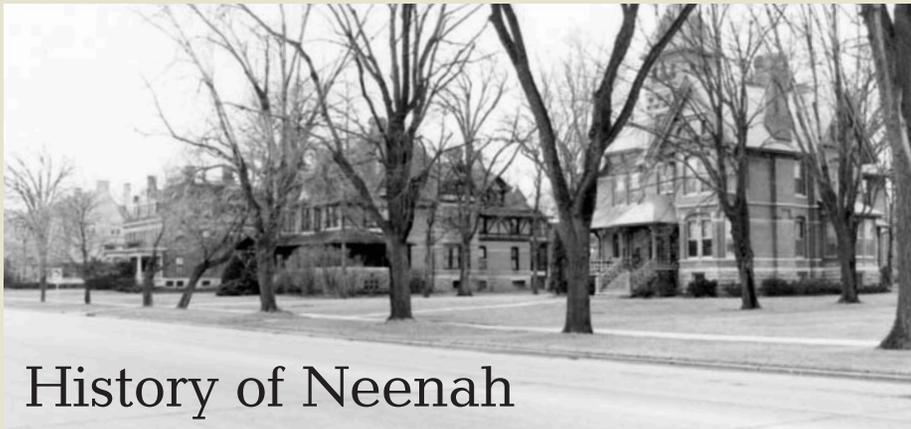


Photo courtesy of Neenah Historical Society.

History of Neenah

The Neenah Landmarks Commission welcomes you to the Neenah Historic Tour of properties listed in the Neenah and National Registers of Historic Places. We are proud to support the efforts of private property owners and the public sector in the preservation and thoughtful redevelopment of the community's historic and architectural resources. We invite you to take a closer look at the vibrant Neenah community as we journey back in time.

The land we now live on has been lived on by others for centuries. The Menominee, who call themselves Omeaqnomenewak ("People of the Wild Rice"), consider themselves one of the most ancient tribal groups in Wisconsin, and archaeological digs have found their artifacts dating back to prehistoric times. The history of the Ho-Chunk ("People of the Big Voice") is also closely tied to this location. In the early 1830s, the federal government established an agricultural mission here for the Menominee, but later forced their removal to the Menominee Reservation 70 miles northwest of Neenah.

The power generated by the Fox River attracted white settlers to the area then known as Winnebago Rapids. Flour and lumber milling were the first industries to appear. The name "Neenah," meaning "water" or "running water" in the Ho-Chunk language, came into use later. The community was established as the village of Neenah in 1856 and incorporated as a city in 1873.

After the Civil War, renewed economic vigor and the availability of rail transportation helped to create a boom in local industry. Neenah's role in the paper industry began during this period, with the notable formation of Kimberly-Clark Corporation in 1872. The success of numerous paper companies enabled Neenah to prosper and become a major player on the national landscape.

After World War I, local industry diversified from commodities such as wood pulp and paper to successful consumer products like facial tissue and waxed paper. The resulting stable economic environment produced commercial and residential neighborhoods that were sophisticated and elegant. The homes displayed remarkable craftsmanship and innovative design. These historic buildings represent a collection of work by some of Wisconsin's most notable architects and serve as a constant reminder of our rich heritage along with inspiration for the community spirit that continues today.

Our community's history is ancient, and although we ourselves live in a very small portion of the on-going story of this place, we are reminded that many people have come before us and many will follow.

The Neenah Landmarks Commission hopes that this guide will provide a glimpse of Neenah's history and our continued pride in the present. We invite residents and visitors alike to discover what makes Neenah a place to call home.

Architectural Styles

ITALIANATE | 1850-1880

This gothic but classic style is heavily decorated with cornices and cast-iron scrolls. The roof line is flat or low-pitched. The facade has round arches, tall first-floor windows and ample porches.

STICK STYLE | 1870-1890

The wood construction has vertical, horizontal, or diagonal boards applied over clapboard siding, giving an overall vertical and asymmetric feel. Details include a large veranda or porch, simple corner posts, roof rafters, brackets, porch posts and railings.

ROMANESQUE STYLE | 1870-1900

Massive stone construction with a rock-faced finish, often with a single massive tower. The bold style includes round arches, broad roof planes and eyebrow dormers with deep-set windows. The doors and windows are defined by contrasting colors or short robust columns.

SHINGLE STYLE 1880-1900

A two- or three-story Shingle style home spreads low against the ground with a heavy stone foundation. Turrets and verandas are integrated into the architecture, and details are used sparingly. The most recognizable feature of this style is rough shingles covering the entire building.

QUEEN ANNE REVIVAL | 1885-1900

The varied eclectic look is asymmetrical with bay windows, balconies, turrets, porches and an abundance of decorative details that combine in unexpected ways. This picturesque style of architecture can be seen in cities from Boston to San Francisco.

TUDOR REVIVAL | 1890-1940

This style became popular in the U.S. in the 1920s and 1930s as a romanticized version of late medieval and early Renaissance architecture of England. It features half-timbering, steeply pitched roofs, and prominent chimneys.

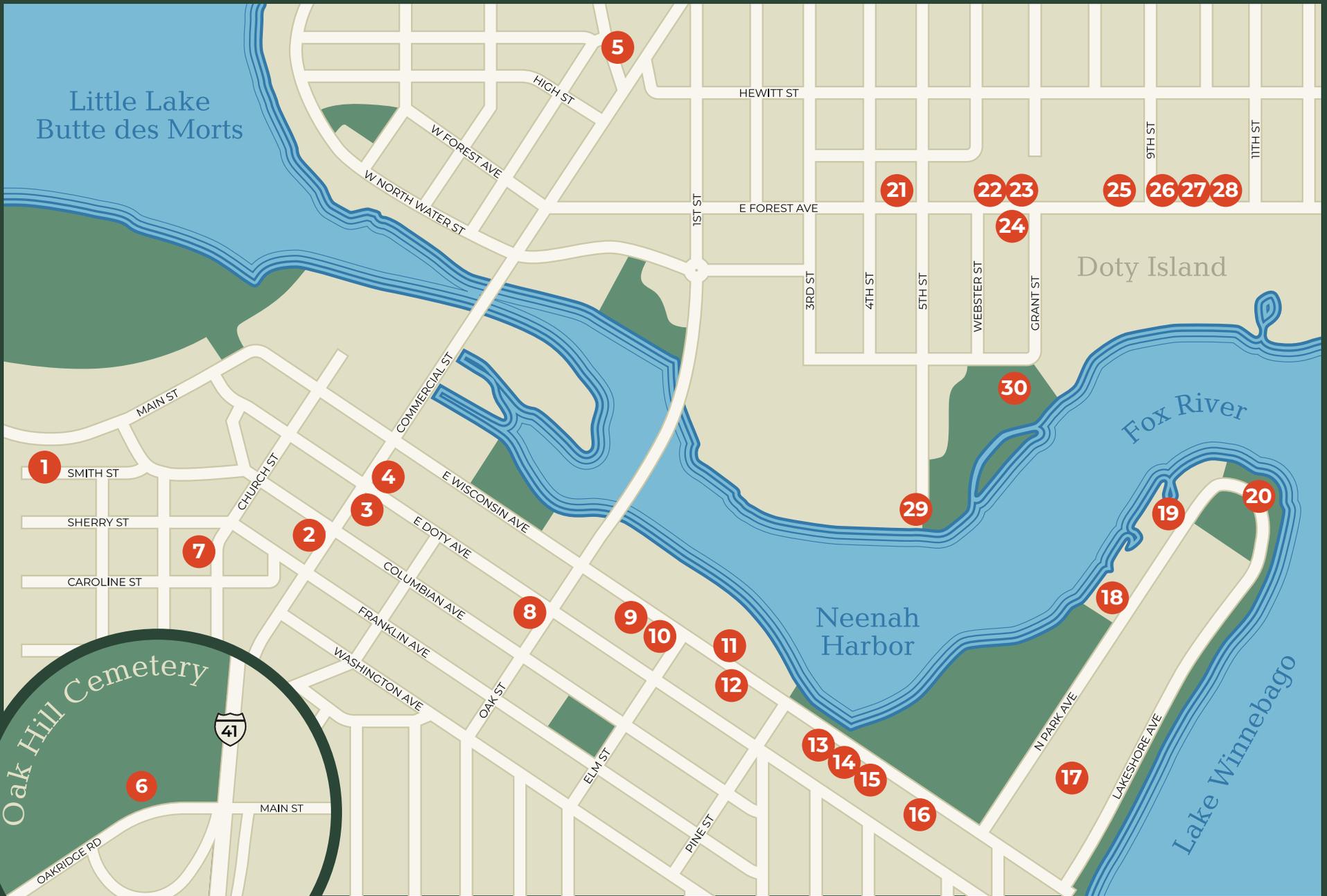
ARTS AND CRAFTS 1900-1920

This architectural period emerged in mid-19th century England and gained popularity in the early 20th century. It was influenced by leading figures like William Morris, who disliked mass production as a result of the Industrial Revolution. The movement emphasized natural materials, horizontal lines, and craftsmanship. Simple architectural elements were used to create elegant designs, a response to ornate Victorian décor, thus bridging historical styles to modern movements. Key exterior features include prominent front porches, terraces, and large windows. Open floor plans and built-in cabinetry further connected buildings with their natural surroundings.

PERIOD GEORGIAN REVIVAL | 1900-1940

Borrowed from the classical forms of Georgian and Federal architecture, the style was fostered by the 1876 Centennial Exposition and the public's interest in the past. Formal, symmetrical facades, rectangular plans, and hipped roofs are characteristic of the style. The main entrances are emphasized with columns and crowned with a pediment. The materials used on the exterior are either brick or wood with classical cornice detailing.

William Waters (1843-1917) was the best-known and most prolific architect in the Fox Valley in the late 1800's. Born in Delaware County, New York, he attended the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and moved to Oshkosh in 1867. Working in the Queen Anne, Shingle, Richardsonian Romanesque, and Neo-classic styles, Waters was responsible for designing much of historic Oshkosh and the Wisconsin building for the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Several Waters homes are on the Neenah Register of Historic Places as well as the State and National Register of Historic Places. He is buried at Riverside Cemetery in Oshkosh.



Please remember that private properties may only be viewed from the sidewalk or street. Public properties include the Hiram Smith House/Octagon House (1), Clocktower (3), Oak Hill Cemetery Mortuary Chapel (6), Kimberly Point Lighthouse (20), Whiting Boathouse (29), and James D. Doty House/Doty Cabin (30).



1

HIRAM SMITH HOUSE (Octagon House)

343 SMITH STREET | 1856

Only 1000 Octagon-style houses were built in the U.S. (100 of them in Wisconsin). The 1856 Hiram Smith House, the only example in Neenah, was owned first by Edward Smith and later by his brother Hiram, founder of the first Neenah Paper Mill and the Manufacturers' National Bank. The octagonal design, designed for efficiency, was attributed to architect Orson Squire Fowler. The building is home to the Neenah Historical Society since 1993.

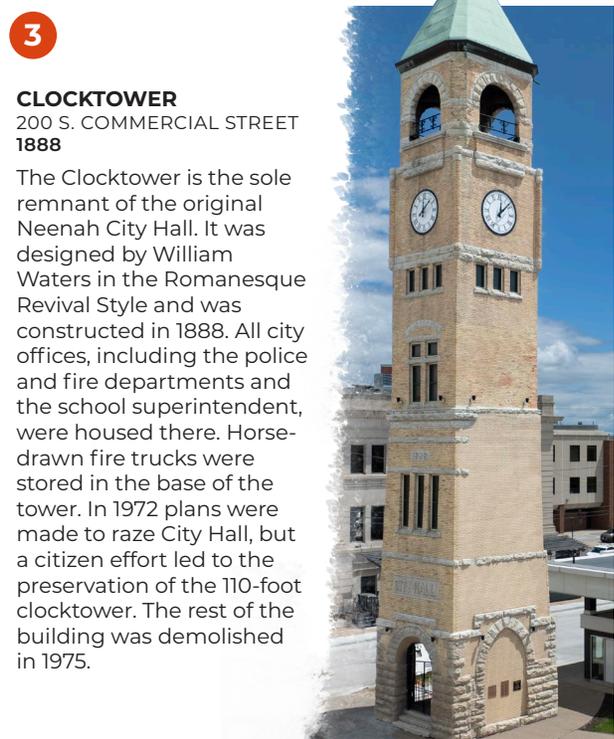


2

U.S. OLD POST OFFICE

307 S. COMMERCIAL STREET | 1916

Built in 1916 as the US Post Office, the building is a fine example of Georgian Revival architecture. Architects William A. Wetmore and William Sample designed the floorplan of the building. Up to 1963, it was the Post Office. It then became a discoteque and restaurant in the seventies, and was saved from demolition in 1987. The building now contains business offices.



3

CLOCKTOWER

200 S. COMMERCIAL STREET
1888

The Clocktower is the sole remnant of the original Neenah City Hall. It was designed by William Waters in the Romanesque Revival Style and was constructed in 1888. All city offices, including the police and fire departments and the school superintendent, were housed there. Horse-drawn fire trucks were stored in the base of the tower. In 1972 plans were made to raze City Hall, but a citizen effort led to the preservation of the 110-foot clocktower. The rest of the building was demolished in 1975.



4

EQUITABLE FRATERNAL UNION BUILDING

116 S. COMMERCIAL STREET | 1909

Designed by Oshkosh architect William Waters, the Neo-Classical style Equitable Fraternal Union Building is significantly intact. The Equitable Fraternal Union was a life insurance society previously located in the Winnebago Building at W. Wisconsin Avenue and N. Church Street. In 1930, this organization merged with the Fraternal Reserve Association—another fraternal life insurance society—and it became known as the Equitable Reserve Association.



5

CHICAGO & NORTHWESTERN RAILWAY DEPOT

500 N. COMMERCIAL STREET | 1892

The Chicago & Northwestern Railway Depot was built in 1892 at the height of the paper industry boom. It was larger than the Appleton and Oshkosh depots and reflected the importance of the commercial connection to the Chicago market in the late 1800's. The red brick Richardsonian Romanesque Style building was designed by Charles Sumner Frost, a noted depot architect. It is a similar building to the South Milwaukee Depot. Passenger service on the line was ceased in 1971.



6

OAK HILL CEMETERY MORTUARY CHAPEL

OAKRIDGE ROAD & US 41 | 1924

The chapel was built in 1924 in the Tudor Revival style and is made of Eden stone. It has beautiful stained-glass windows and chandeliers. Designed by the Milwaukee firm Eschweiler & Eschweiler, it was a gift to the city from Dedrick W. Bergstrom (1847-1928), the founding member of the Bergstrom Paper Company. His funeral was held at the chapel. Neglected for years, the chapel was restored to its former glory in 2023 due to the generosity of a local benefactor, and can again be used as originally intended.



7 DEWITT CLINTON VAN OSTRAND HOUSE
413 CHURCH STREET | 1861

Italianate in design, the Dewitt Clinton Van Ostrand House is one of the best examples of this style in the City of Neenah, and was the home of one of Neenah's earliest prominent merchants. Dewitt Van Ostrand was the founder of Neenah Paper Mill (now part of Kimberly-Clark), Neenah Stove Works, and one of the founders of the National Manufacturers Bank. He was also a lifelong business partner and friend of Hiram Smith.



8 HENRY PAEPKE HOUSE
251 E. DOTY AVENUE | 1885

The Paepke House, built in 1885, is a rare two-story Stick Style residence with Queen Anne references and a Colonial Revival porch. Henry Paepke was a local building contractor, known for the construction of the Menasha City Hall Fire Station and other prominent buildings in the area.



9 REV. JENS N. JERSILD HOUSE
331 E. WISCONSIN AVENUE | 1886

This Queen Anne residence was built in 1886. It was purchased in 1902 by Rev. Jens N. Jersild, who played a highly visible role in the community, supporting the educational, spiritual, and economic efforts of Neenah's immigrant Danish Community. He also was the founder of prominent business enterprises, including Jersild Knitting Company.



10 HANS GRAM HOUSE
345 E. WISCONSIN AVENUE | 1887

This residence, built in 1887, is one of a declining number of middle-class vernacular residences incorporating Queen Anne and Italianate periods of construction, with second Empire references. Hans Gram operated a dry goods store in the Russell House Hotel with P.H. Miller.



11 KIMBERLY DOUBLE HOUSE
404-406 E. WISCONSIN AVENUE | 1849

One of the oldest structures in the city, the Kimberly Double House was built for John Robbins Kimberly and his brother Harvey Latimer Kimberly. This double house is a rare example of this type of property in Neenah. The house was originally considerably smaller, being only two stories in the center portion. It had large additions in 1901 and 1913. Among the earliest settlers of Neenah, the Kimberlys brought wealth to the community and shaped the social structure of the area.



12 FRANK WINCHESTER HAWKS HOUSE
433 E. WISCONSIN AVENUE | 1904

This home, built in 1904, is an outstanding example of the Shingle Style with Colonial Revival details. It was built by Frank Winchester Hawks, an Indiana furniture manufacturer who later was associated with Neenah's nationally prominent paper industry. The Hawks' eldest child, Howard Hawks, directed more than forty Hollywood films.



13 HENRY SHERRY HOUSE
527 E. WISCONSIN AVENUE | 1883

Henry Sherry hired William Waters to design and build this eclectic-style Queen Anne home in 1883. Henry Sherry was one of Wisconsin's best-known lumbermen, a paper manufacturer, flour miller, and was responsible for much of Neenah's residential and commercial development.



14 HAVILAH BABCOCK HOUSE
537 E. WISCONSIN AVENUE | 1883

Havilah Babcock was a founder of Kimberly-Clark Corporation and Bergstrom Stove Works. This house is an Americanized English Queen Anne style with a Romanesque Revival veranda, designed by William Waters. Still owned and occupied by the family, it is one of the most intact examples of late 19th-century interior design in the United States.



15 FRANKLIN C. SHATTUCK HOUSE
547 E. WISCONSIN AVENUE | 1895

Built in 1893, this excellent example of Georgian Revival architecture, with veranda and porte-cochere, was built by Franklin C. Shattuck, one of the four founders of Kimberly-Clark Corporation. He was also a founder of the Manufacturer's National Bank. His son Arthur Shattuck was a world-famous concert pianist, and his wife, Clara Merriman Shattuck, donated the land for Shattuck Park in 1915.



16 GEORGE O. BERGSTROM HOUSE
579 E. WISCONSIN AVENUE | 1894

This Queen Anne residence was built in 1894 by George O. Bergstrom, the son of blacksmith Johannes J. Bergstrom who came to Menasha from Norway in 1852. George and his brother, Dedrick Waldemar, purchased the Neenah Stove Works in 1878 and operated it until 1904. That year, D.W. Bergstrom purchased the Winnebago Paper Mills and formed the Bergstrom Paper Company. George Bergstrom's son, George Edwin, became an architect and is credited with the design of the Pentagon.



17 WILLIAM C. WING HOUSE
143 N. PARK AVENUE | 1918

This Period French Revival residence, with Arts and Crafts, Neo Classic and Mediterranean references, was built in 1918 by Chicago broker George S. Gaylor. The Chicago architectural firm of Childs and Smith designed the house, which Gaylor sold to Neenah native William C. Wing. William was a founder of Hardwood Products Co, George Banta Company, and president of the Fox River Paper Company in Appleton.



18 EDWARD D. & VINA SHATTUCK BEALS HOUSE
220 N. PARK AVENUE | 1911

Four years after industrialist Edward Duncan Beals married Kimberly-Clark Corp. heiress Vina Shattuck, the couple began construction of an imposing Arts and Crafts mansion overlooking the Fox River in Neenah. Designed by Milwaukee architect Alexander C. Eschweiler and completed in 1911, the house is distinguished for Eschweiler's incorporation of architectural elements popularized by British architect C.F.A. Voysey, one of the defining reformist designers of the Arts and Crafts movement. The house, altered over the years, remains one of the last Arts and Crafts examples of architecture in the city.



19 J. LESLIE SENSENBRENNER HOUSE
256 N. PARK AVENUE | 1932

This waterfront home, a notable example of Period Colonial Revival design, was originally constructed for Chicago industrialist George Gaylor in 1932. It was greatly enlarged and remodeled by J. Leslie Sensenbrenner, son of Kimberly-Clark President F.J. Sensenbrenner. Distinctive elements of this design include molded brick quoins at the building corners, and the Georgian swan's neck pediment on the entrance porch.



20 KIMBERLY POINT LIGHTHOUSE
270 LAKESHORE AVENUE | 1945

Mrs. Helen Kimberly Stuart, whose family arrived here in 1849, donated Kimberly Point Park to commemorate her father, Kimberly-Clark founder John A. Kimberly. The park overlooks the flow of the Fox River at Lake Winnebago. The lighthouse, a 49-foot octagonal pyramidal tower, was erected in 1945 from funds donated by James C. Kimberly, Helen's brother.



21 JUDGE J.C. KERWIN HOUSE
516 E. FOREST AVENUE | 1885

This two and a half story unusual Italianate Queen Anne house, with early Georgian revival influences, was built in 1885. Judge J.C. Kerwin was a native of Menasha and served Neenah as City Clerk and City Attorney for twelve years. In 1904 he was elected to the State Supreme Court, reelected in 1914, and served until his death.



22 FRANK B. WHITING HOUSE
620 E. FOREST AVENUE | 1885

Originally constructed for building contractor David Barnes, the home was purchased in 1910 by Frank B. Whiting, who added a two-story rear wing. The son of paper manufacturer George A. Whiting, Frank skillfully guided Whiting Mills through the Great Depression. The Queen Anne style reflected the extravagant lifestyle he enjoyed with his third wife, Broadway actress Merle Stevens. This property and the Whiting Boathouse are the only two remaining structures associated with the industrially prominent Whiting family.



23 HENRY SPENCER SMITH HOUSE
706 E. FOREST AVENUE | 1892

Henry Spencer Smith was the second son of Elisha Smith, founder of Menasha Wooden Ware Company. In 1880, Henry and his brother Charles, who lived next door, became directors of the company. Henry became Chairman of the Board in 1916, following the death of his brother Charles. He resided in this house until his death in 1931, and numerous additions were made to the home during his tenure. His wife Ella remained in the home until 1946.



24 ELLIS JENNINGS HOUSE
711 E. FOREST AVENUE | 1893

The Ellis Jennings House, built in 1893, is a distinctive example of the Queen Anne period of construction for its classical Revival influence. The wrap-around veranda was removed in 1963, but rebuilt in 1985 on top of the original stone porch supports which had been left in place. Ellis Jennings was a partner in the Neenah lumber company of Wheeler & Jennings. Interestingly, his partner Wheeler lived next door. While little is known about Jennings, a great deal is known about the architect, William Waters.



25 CHARLES R. SMITH HOUSE
824 E. FOREST AVENUE | 1891

Charles R. Smith built this Queen Anne and Eastlake Style home in 1891. He was the eldest son of Elisha D. Smith, founder of Menasha Wooden Ware Company. Smith became president of the company at his father's death in 1899, and the company became one of the largest manufacturing sites in the state. After his first wife Jennie Mathewson's death, Smith married Isabel Bacon in 1900. Bacon extensively expanded the house, including the construction of the large carriage house. The house lost its original third-floor tower.



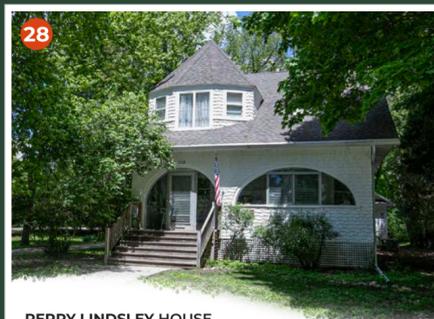
26 BACON-JOHNSON HOUSE
1002 E. FOREST AVENUE | 1918

The Bacon-Johnson House is the last unaltered Arts and Crafts building left in Neenah. Even more remarkable, its original heated three-car attached garage was the first in the city. This house was originally built in 1901 by Isabel Bacon Smith (second wife of Charles R. Smith, president of Menasha Wooden Ware Company) for her mother, Elizabeth Bacon. Isabel lived with Smith in his stately home at 824 E. Forest Ave until his death in 1916. Two years later, she married silent film star Orrin Johnson, rebuilt her mother's cottage, and moved into her large new Arts and Crafts house in 1918. She resided there until her death in 1950.



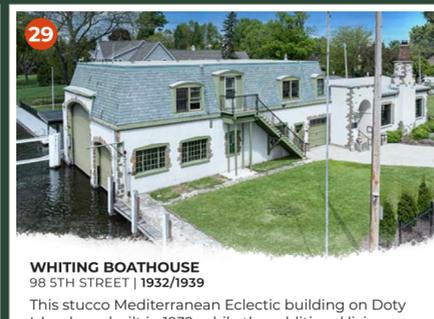
27 GILBERT/LACHMANN HOUSE
1010 E. FOREST AVENUE | 1904

Originally the home of Albert Gilbert, son of William Gilbert, who sold paper mill supplies. Albert built it two doors down to his father and brother, and died at 50 years old with only three years living in the house. It was then sold to former mayor Edmund J. Lachmann, an early milling businessman who joined a flour-milling firm and eventually incorporated as the Krueger-Lachmann Milling Company in 1885. He also was one of the organizers of the State Bank of Neenah. The original porch roof and twin dormers, removed by previous owners, were rebuilt in 2024.



28 PERRY LINDSLEY HOUSE
1102 E. FOREST AVENUE | 1893

William Waters, one of Wisconsin's notable 19th century architects, designed this Shingle Style home for Perry Lindsley in 1893. The Shingle Style design is characterized by its extensive use of wood shingles and sparse decorative elements. The house is also distinguished by Romanesque Revival arches on the veranda. Little is known of Perry Lindsley, a clerk working in Appleton, who resided on East Forest Avenue from 1893 until at least 1905.



29 WHITING BOATHOUSE
98 5TH STREET | 1932/1939

This stucco Mediterranean Eclectic building on Doty Island was built in 1932, while the additional living quarters were added in 1939. It was built for Frank B. Whiting, president of George A. Whiting Paper Company, as a second home (first home on E. Forest Ave). In addition to his business concerns, he was active in boating and yachting. The building includes many nautical symbols and is said to epitomize the extravagant lifestyle that the paper industry supported at one time. At his death in 1952, the Boathouse was given to the city and is now made available to the public by the Neenah Parks and Recreation Department.



30 JAMES D. DOTY HOUSE (Doty Cabin)
701 LINCOLN STREET | 1845

In 1845 James Duane Doty, Wisconsin's second territorial governor, built his summer home originally called "The Grand Loggery" on the Island. The dog-run style double log house was located several hundred yards northeast of its present location. After the governor's death, the house became part of the new Robert's Resort, before being given to the City of Neenah to become a museum. Doty Cabin was moved to Doty Park in 1925. In 1948, the building was found no longer safe for public use. It was accurately reconstructed with original trim and other salvageable material from the original cabin.