

MANHATTAN'S HISTORIC LANDMARKS & DISTRICTS

Downtown Manhattan Historic District

The Downtown Manhattan Historic District was first established as a Certified Local Historic District in 1982 and is now listed on



Poyntz Ave, 1940s

Courtesy of the Riley County Historical Society

the National Register of Historic Places. The district is just over six blocks in area,

encompassing the concentration of extant historic commercial and civic buildings within



Poyntz Ave, 2005

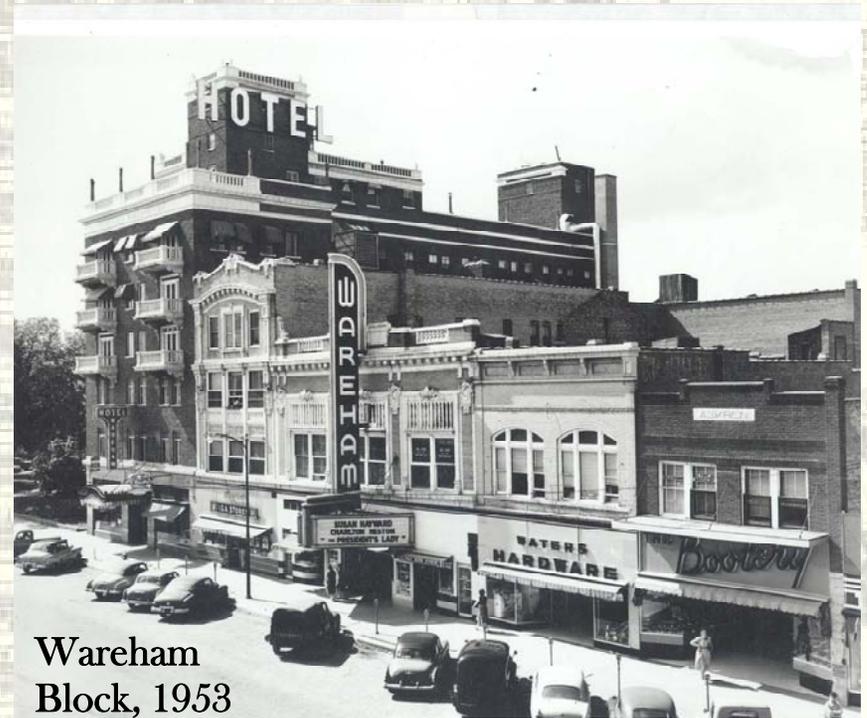
the central building district. The district generally spans from Pierre Street on the south, Humboldt Street on the north, and from 3rd Street to 5th Street. The downtown historic district also includes the historic commercial buildings located on the

northeast corner of 3rd and Poyntz (on the Manhattan Town Center plaza) and the Carnegie Library located west of the Courthouse at 5th and Poyntz.

In July of 1855, the townsite of Manhattan was platted and the town founders named the east-west street that separated the two floats “Poyntz”, after Colonel Poyntz, financier of the steamboat Hartford. The street south of Poyntz was named after Sam Houston, the first white settler in the Manhattan area.

Poyntz Avenue has been the commercial and civic center of town since the 1850s, and while no buildings remain from this period, there are a number of excellent buildings within the District from 1880 to the 1920s. The earliest existing structure is the Powers’ Residence, built in 1869. The 300 block of Poyntz Avenue, as it basically exists today, was established between 1879 and 1910. Also of

importance is the ‘Wareham Block’, constructed between 1884 and 1928 (a stone



Wareham Block, 1953

Courtesy of the Riley County Historical Society

opera house was built in 1884 on the site of what was to become the Wareham Theater, which was constructed in 1909). Today, the Downtown Manhattan Historic District is

comprised of 61 buildings and two outbuildings, combining for a total of 63. Of the total number of structures, 44 are



300 Block of Poyntz, 2005

contributing resources. Among the contributing buildings, three are individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places and one listed on the Kansas Register of Historic Places. Among the styles

prevalent within the Downtown Historic District are Italianate, Vernacular Victorian, Richardsonian Romanesque, Queen Anne, Classical Revival and Moderne.

Downtown Manhattan was comprised, historically, of a wide range of uses including light industrial, agricultural, transportation-related, service and professional offices, and retail stores as well as civic, social and governmental uses. Housing also constituted a prominent use in the district, historically, including apartments above businesses, private residences, and at least five hotels. Today, the composition of the district continues to be a mix of uses, although the uses do vary from those historically.

Sources:

1. *National Register of Historic Places - Nomination Form (2006)*
2. *Nomination of Manhattan's Downtown Historic District to the National Register of Historic Sites and Places (1981)*