

700 BLOCK UNIVERSITY



Fig. 1. This 1924 photo shows the 700 block of University Avenue, looking west, and includes Tiedeman's Drug Store, and a horse and buggy. The second utility pole from the left of the picture is at Fitch Court, which marks the current limit of the buildings that remain. [Meuer photo vol. 3 p. 27, M5-5294]

Home to a series of neighborhood businesses beginning in the 1900s, the 700 block of University Avenue was gradually taken over by the University in the usual manner: that is, first by renting space as offices and specialized uses, then purchase when the properties came on the market.

In spite of its variegated appearance from the front, there are only three or four buildings on the block. The Cardinal block, built to house the Cardinal Creamery about 1902, makes up all addresses from 702 to 708 University Avenue. The name "Cardinal Building" can still be seen over the door at 706. The next set of addresses from 714 - 724 are housed in the second building, built about 1920. Next comes a tiny storefront that has housed a number of marginal businesses since the mid 1950s. This "building" is actually infill between the two adjacent business blocks, and occupies a space that was originally an outside stairway that provided joint access to the larger buildings. It is said to be the narrowest commercial space in Madison. The third major building on the block contains 730 and 734 University Avenue. It was evidently built near 1900.

Older residents will doubtless remember the longer lived businesses that inhabited this block. The Cardinal building housed Tiedeman Drugs and Restaurant, Klein Dickert Paint, Dunkell Shoes and the wide range of small businesses expected in a prime commercial location in a bustling city. The second building housed Kleinheinz dry goods, Evans Radio and Television, the Diamond Grocery, and a further assortment of cleaners, restaurants and retail stores. The third building, held Burger Hardware from 1902 to 1943. The infill space first appears in 1955 (although it may have been built much earlier) as the home of Bill's Key shop.

The infiltration of the University began as early as 1955 with the leasing of the space at 730 University as space for UW computing. The University presence grew nearly yearly after that until by 1970 only four independent business remained on the block. Five years later, only the restaurant at 704

remained. Commercial buildings often have more than one owner and the Cardinal building is shared by the University and the owner of the corner section (704) that has held a restaurant or tavern since 1950. The University has also not purchased the inter-building space at 728 University. The current UW occupants of the block include Student Services, student organizations, Veteran's Services, UW Inventory, Risk Management and some academic art programs. Because of its central location, there are long-term plans to acquire the rest of the block and eventually rebuild there.¹

1) Madison City Directories, Dane County Records, and Regent's legal records.