

constructed 1894 - 1895

The Winkler Block • 310 - 314 River Street



Builder/Original Building Owner – Robert Winkler

This distinctive commercial building stands today at the main entrance to downtown Manistee, its large turret highly visible from the intersection of River Street and U.S. Route 31. The structure was built by Robert Winkler for speculative purposes. As a marine engineer working during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Winkler was second in command on steam ships servicing the Great Lakes and undoubtedly had money to invest in such enterprises. Because there was no family business, however, the entire building was rented. The original tenants were a liquor store and two retail establishments on the ground floor and the Elk's Lodge at the second floor level.

The masonry building has approximately seventy-five feet of frontage on River Street and consists of three bays defined by masonry piers. A simple cornice above decorated brick corbelling tops the building. Stone lintels and sills frame each of the rounded arch double-hung windows placed in sets of three in the left and right bays. In the center bay, a group of windows composed of two small double-hung sash flanking a large fixed center window and transom is framed by a single rounded arch lintel. The most distinctive decorative element of the building is the turret at the southeast corner. Made of sheet metal, the turret has five faces, each with a double hung window. A bell shaped hip roof completed with finial sits atop a simple cornice. The roof currently is covered with wood singles, although the original roof probably was metal. An unusual molding with a rolling wave motif adorns the area directly above the windows and perhaps, serves as Robert Winkler's signature for his commercial building.

Recently the building has been restored and reconstructed. It now functions as an upscale restaurant with banquet facilities. The River Street façade has been reconstructed as three vernacular Victorian Storefronts, Painting highlights all the Victorian features. A typical Victorian Porch has been added on the main floor overlooking the river.

Manistee Commercial Historic District – listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places