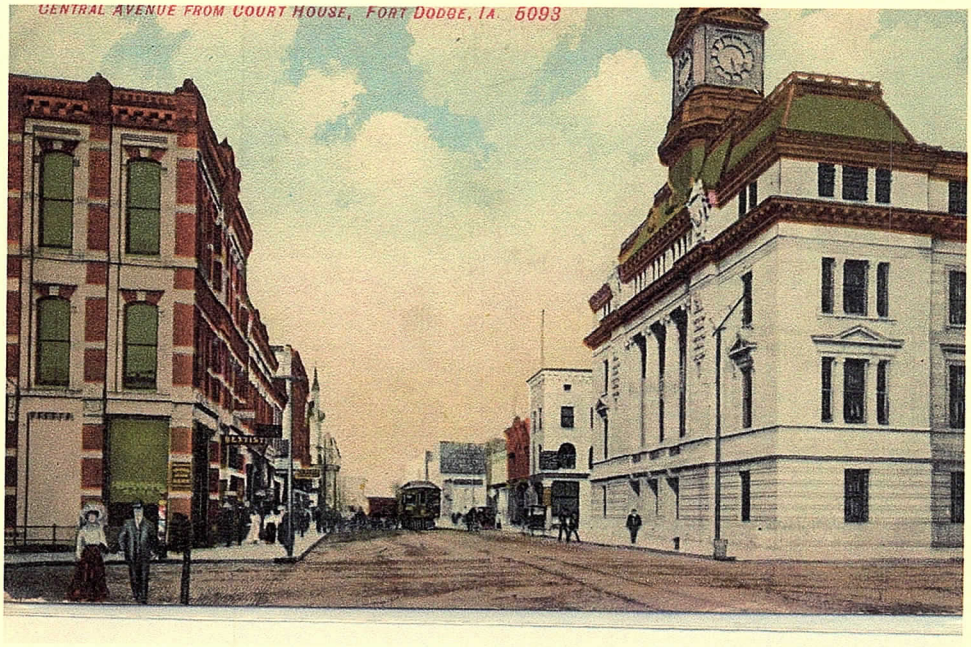
HISTORICAL & ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY OF DOWNTOWN FORT DODGE, IOWA

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Final Report – September 2006

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MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

This report presents the results of an intensive survey of historic properties in downtown Fort Dodge, Iowa, that was conducted by Pathfinder CRM, LLC for the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) of the City of Fort Dodge. The project was financed in part with federal funds from a Certified Local Government grant-in-aid administered by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) of the State Historical Society of Iowa. Background research began in July 2005 and the draft survey report was submitted for review and comment in June 2006; the final products were delivered in early September 2006. Robert C. Vogel of Pathfinder CRM served as principal investigator for the survey. Terry Lee and Roger Natte of the Fort Dodge HPC were the local project directors, assisted by Linda Von Bank.

The report follows the general format of the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form. After a brief introduction, the body of the report is divided into chapters dealing with historic context, property types, research design, survey results, and recommendations. Full bibliographical references are provided in the footnotes. A Site Inventory form was generated for each property surveyed and were delivered separately to the Fort Dodge HPC, with a duplicate set placed on file in the Historic Preservation Office at the State Historical Society of Iowa.

The boundaries of the survey area (determined beforehand by the Fort Dodge HPC and the Iowa SHPO) encompassed most of the traditional central business district and contained more than one hundred and seventy properties, predominantly commercial buildings. Survey activities focused on Central Avenue, First Avenue North, and First Avenue South from Third Street westward to Twelfth Street. Two isolated, non-contiguous historic properties were also surveyed at the request of the HPC.

The narrative of the report defines a historic context, "Development of Downtown Fort Dodge, 1854-1964," which provides a unifying thematic framework for identifying and evaluating historic properties. The influences of economic, architectural, environmental, and landscape forces are described and related to cultural resources on the ground. A range of historic property types are described in terms of architectural and landscape history themes. Significance and integrity requirements for nominating properties to the National Register are discussed. The inventory of historic property data recorded by the survey is summarized in outline form.

As a result of the downtown survey, two important conclusions were reached. First, the survey area contains a significant concentration of historic buildings and related urban landscape features that are of particular historic preservation interest and therefore warrant consideration in community development planning. Second, despite the loss of a number of important historic properties and extensive physical modification of downtown streetscapes, the central business district remains a unified entity with a unique historic character that readily distinguishes it from other part of Fort Dodge, and from other historic downtowns.

A preservation planning construct, tentatively entitled the "Fort Dodge Commercial Historic District" was developed to help define the historical, visual, and cultural character of the downtown survey area. The geographical boundaries of the district are not necessarily fixed; a number of commercial and religious properties historically associated with the central business district were not included in the survey because of time and funding constraints.

Within the Central Avenue corridor between Third and Twelfth Streets, historic properties (i.e., buildings and structures more than 50 years old) greatly outnumber non-historic buildings. The survey identified more than 140 historic properties constructed between 1854 and 1955 (the National Register cut-off date) as well as one property of historical interest that was less than fifty years old. Of these, 19 were evaluated as historically significant and individually eligible for nomination to the National Register. (Two properties, the Webster County Courthouse and the National Bank Building, had been previously listed in the National Register.) Although the remaining historic properties did not appear to meet the National Register criteria for individual significance and integrity, 65 buildings and landscape features were assessed as being of preservation interest within the framework of a possible National Register historic district (tentatively titled "Fort Dodge Commercial Historic District") with essentially the same boundaries as the Central Avenue survey area. A total of 81 non-historic and non-contributing properties were identified within the district boundaries.

The report recommends six actions to be undertaken by the city in order to implement the results of the survey. These recommendations are, in order of priority:

1. Obtain SHPO determination of National Register eligibility for individually significant properties in order to qualify them for state and federal assistance.

2. With the consent and active support of property owners, nominate individually significant buildings to the National Register in recognition of their historical importance.

3. Before taking official action on a historic district nomination, carefully consider the policy, budgetary, economic, and political implications of administering a National Register district downtown.

4. Direct city staff and advisory commissions to work with community organizations and property owners to develop an ordinance that amends the city code by creating a "downtown heritage critical area" overlay zoning district that would re-zone the downtown area for historic preservation. At a minimum, the overlay zoning would provide a mechanism for regulating demolition of historic buildings and architectural standards for new construction.

5. Adopt a policy statement that clearly articulates the city's vision for the future of downtown and the role expected to be played by the preservation community in achieving that vision.

6. In consultation with the SHPO, develop a strategy for placing a "Commercial Historic District" on the National Register of Historic Places, either as a Multiple Property nomination form for registering buildings or groups of buildings piecemeal, or a comprehensive historic district designation with fixed boundaries.

The report also offers general recommendations in the areas of policy goals, comprehensive planning, funding, preservation priorities, and community participation for improving the short-term effectiveness of the city's preservation program.

Site Inventory Forms were submitted separately, with a duplicate set of forms placed on file with the State Historical Society of Iowa.

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The author would like to thank the individuals and organizations whose generous assistance and enthusiastic support made this study possible. Charlie Laforge, Bill Griffel, Roger Natte, Jerry Row, Terry Lee, Eddy O'Farrell, and Ben Warland, citizen volunteer members of the Fort Dodge Historic Preservation Commission, participated in all phases of the survey and their specific knowledge of community history and downtown properties was of great value. HPC chairpersons Lee and Natte also served as local project directors. Associate Planner Linda Von Bank provided the Commission with highly motivated staff support and helped administer the Certified Local Government grant. Following Ms. Von Bank's retirement, Community Development Manager Vickie Reeck took over the administrative chores associated with wrapping up the grant. Kerry McGrath, Ralph Christian, and Berry Bennett of the State Historic Preservation Office staff provided guidance, technical assistance, and helpful comments at every stage of the project.

The State Historical Society of Iowa, Fort Dodge Public Library, and Webster County Historical Society provided access to their collections and lent assistance whenever requested. Fieldwork was assisted by Kathleen F. Taylor of Pathfinder CRM, who also helped prepare the site inventory forms along with our student intern Annette Housker. David Odor, GIS Specialist with the City of Fort Dodge Department of Public Works, generated the base map and downtown survey maps.

I. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of an intensive survey of historic properties in downtown Fort Dodge, Iowa. The survey was conducted by Pathfinder CRM, LLC for the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) of the City of Fort Dodge. The project was financed in part with federal funds from a Certified Local Government grant-in-aid administered by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) of the State Historical Society of Iowa, a division of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs. Background research began in July 2005 and the final report was delivered in September 2006.

The report follows the general format of the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form. After a brief introduction, the body of the report is divided into chapters on historic context, property types, research design, survey results, and recommendations. A selection of field photographs depicting individually significant properties is presented in the Appendix as a "photohistory." A Site Inventory form was generated for each property surveyed and these were delivered separately to the Fort Dodge HPC, with a duplicate set placed on file with the Iowa SHPO.

Survey Area Location & Boundaries

Fort Dodge is located on the Des Moines River in the north-central part of Webster County, approximately 70 miles northwest of Des Moines and 209 miles southwest of Minneapolis. The boundaries of the survey area (determined beforehand by the Fort Dodge HPC and the Iowa SHPO) encompassed most of the traditional central business district and contained more than 140 properties, predominantly commercial buildings. Survey activities focused on Central Avenue, First Avenue North, and First Avenue South from Third Street westward to Twelfth Street (Fig. 1). Two isolated, non-contiguous historic properties were also included in the survey at the request of the HPC.

Previous Investigations

The present investigation built upon the information generated by previous surveys and historic property studies. A reconnaissance survey of some of the city's older buildings and neighborhoods was conducted in 1973 and resulted in the identification of several downtown properties worthy of preservation

interest. At approximately the same time, the Blanden Museum sponsored a study of 101 historic homes that was subsequently published in book form.[1]

Beginning in the 1980s, several review and compliance surveys and documentation projects were undertaken at the request of the Iowa SHPO in relation to specific development projects, most of which were located outside of the central business district.[2] Information about early Central Avenue business properties was systematically assembled by Bob Dunsmoor in 1985 and in the 1990s the Webster County Historical Society secured state funding for preparation of a more in-depth study of downtown historic places that was written by Roger Natte. Intended as a guidebook for walking tours, the resulting "Tour of Discovery" represented the first organized compilation of information about individual historic buildings.[3]

In 2001, historic preservation consultant Patricia Eckhardt conducted a survey for a telecommunications tower that documented a number of downtown properties and tentatively identified two potential commercial historic districts: a Town Center District focused on Central and First Avenues between 5th and Eighth Streets, and a somewhat larger Uptown District stretching from the 800- to the 1000-block of Central and including some contiguous First Avenue properties. This survey also identified the Fort Dodge Grocery Company warehouse and Sacred Heart Church as potential National Register properties.[4]

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[1] Karl F. Haugen, *Historic Homes of Fort Dodge, Iowa* (Fort Dodge: Blanden Federation of Arts, 1975).

[2] David Arbogast, HABS documentation for 16, 18, 20, and 22 South Sixth Street (1992); Rebecca Conrad and Mary Anne Beecher, "Phase I Historic and Architectural Resources Survey in Connection with the Replacement of the Seventh Street Bridge..." (Tallgrass Historians, Iowa City, 1994); Patricia Eckhardt, "Preliminary Context: The Brick Houses of Fort Dodge, Iowa" (Eckhardt Research, Iowa City, 1999); Barbara Beving Long, "Cultural Resources Report: R&C #920394049, 16, 18, 20, 22 South 6th Street" (Four Mile Research Company, August 1992); Hans Muessig, "Open Spandrel Bridge (Hawkeye Bridge), Fort Dodge, Webster County, Iowa - An Historic American Engineering Record Documentation Project" (Dennett, Muessig, Ryan & Associates, 1985); Roger Natte, "The Bennett Viaduct, Fort Dodge, Iowa, An Historic American Engineering Record Documentary Project" (1981); and Patricia Eckhardt, "Intensive Architectural and Historical Survey: The Jacob Brown House, 510 3rd Avenue South:" (Eckhardt Research, Iowa City, 2004). Copies of these unpublished reports and other work products are on file at the Iowa SHPO in Des Moines.

[3] Bob Dunsmoor, "1859-1985: Early Tenants of Buildings on Central Avenue, Fort Dodge, Webster County, Iowa" (unpublished duplicated material, May 1986); Roger Natte, *Tour of Discovery: A Guide to Historic Downtown Fort Dodge* (Fort Dodge: Kepler & Clark Printing Company, 1993).

[4] "Architectural and Historical Survey: CIS Communications-Humes Distributing Cell Tower Site, Fort Dodge, Webster County, Iowa," unpublished report (Eckhardt Research, Iowa City, 2001).

Summary of Findings

The survey delineated a thematic historic context, "Development of Downtown Fort Dodge, 1854-1964," and a potential historic district (tentatively named the "Fort Dodge Commercial Historic District") encompassing the traditional downtown area along Central Avenue, First Avenue North, and First Avenue South between Third and Twelfth Streets. Within this area, historic properties (i.e., buildings and structures more than fifty years old) greatly outnumbered non-historic buildings (130 to 37). The survey identified 21 historically significant properties within the tentative National Register district boundaries, including two buildings (the Webster County Courthouse and the National Bank Building) that had been previously listed in the National Register. Although the remaining properties more than 50 years old did not appear to meet the National Register criteria for individual significance, 65 were assessed as contributing to the significance of the historic district. A total of 81 non-contributing properties (including non-historic) were identified within the downtown survey area.

Two National Register-eligible properties (the Fort Dodge Grocery Company Warehouse and the Sacred Heart Catholic Church) located outside the proposed district boundaries were documented at the request of the Fort Dodge HPC.

II. DOWNTOWN FORT DODGE IN HISTORIC CONTEXT

The concept of historic context is fundamental to historic preservation planning at all levels.[5] The historic context narrative presented here is organized thematically to provide a framework for identifying and evaluating downtown buildings. The objective here is not to chronicle Fort Dodge history or to catalog the events that occurred at specific properties; rather, it is to delineate and explicate the most important patterns and trends that shaped the development of the central business streetscape from the date of the city's founding until approximately fifty years before the present. As a convenience to the reader, the narrative is organized chronologically.

One thematic historic context is proposed: "Development of Downtown Fort Dodge, 1854-1964." The following context narrative emphasizes themes which reflect the broad patterns of economic, architectural, and landscape change that shaped the downtown built environment. For the sake of convenience, the study unit has been broken down into three chronologically-based sub-contexts. While the geographic focus is on the Central Avenue survey area, some of the themes and patterns probably relate to historic properties located outside these arbitrary boundaries.

Historic contexts have already been developed at a variety of scales in Iowa as part of the preservation planning done by federal, state, and local government agencies. As part of its statewide planning process, for example, the Iowa SHPO has sponsored development of a series of multiple property studies focusing on the architectural history of commercial buildings and streetscapes. Many of the themes and property types delineated here are also reflected in the Iowa's Main Street Commercial Architecture MPS.[6]

Initial Phase of Downtown Development, 1854-1869

Webster County was opened to settlement in 1846 and in 1849 the army established Fort Clarke on the Des Moines River. Renamed Fort Dodge, the post provided security for early settlers until it was decommissioned in 1853. The government property was subsequently purchased by a group of investors led

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[5] National Park Service, "Archeology and Historic Preservation; Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines," *Federal Register*, 48 (1983):44717; Anne H. Derry et al, *Guidelines for Local Surveys: A Basis for Preservation Planning* (Washington: National Park Service, 1985), 14-16.

[6] Jan Olive Nash, "Iowa's Main Street Commercial Architecture" (draft National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, July 2002).

by William Williams, the former post sutler, who platted the townsite of Fort Dodge in 1854. In 1856 the voters of Webster County elected to move the courthouse to Fort Dodge, which also held the government land office for the Sioux City district for several years.[7]

The initial settlement of Fort Dodge was first and foremost a business venture engineered by the original townsite proprietors, who had the town laid out in lots which they sold to settlers or consigned to land agents. Speculation dominated the frontier economy, a reflection of the Western mania for dealing in land and trading on the prospects of future development. The frenzy of speculation in town lots and railroad stock in the 1850s probably handicapped Fort Dodge's early development because it discouraged investment in buildings and other infrastructure. Poor transportation facilities generally hindered the growth of business activity, even during the flush times of the 1860s. The hub of commercial life during the pioneer era was a loose agglomeration of stores, hotels, mills, and shops interspersed with dwellings and agricultural buildings on the high ground bordering the Des Moines River.

The Influence of Physical Geography

Physical geography was a potent influence on the pattern of early historical development in Fort Dodge. The bedrock strata underlying the city are flat-lying Paleozoic-age sedimentary rocks buried under many feet of glacial drift, with outcrops exposed only along the Des Moines River. The availability of good building stone was a boon to construction and there are still several commercial stone quarries (as well as sand and gravel pits) operating within a few miles of downtown Fort Dodge. As early as the 1850s, geologists investigated and reported on Webster County's soft coal and gypsum deposits; coal mining was regarded as the area's primary extractive industry until large-scale commercial processing of gypsum began in the 1890s (see below).

Local drainage is controlled by the Des Moines River, which happens to be the longest river in Iowa. Situated roughly 310 miles above the mouth of the river and 110 miles above Des Moines, Fort Dodge was briefly the head of navigation

[7] Background information on Fort Dodge and Webster County history was obtained from the following secondary sources: A. T. Andreas, *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa* (Chicago: Andreas Atlas Company, 1875); William S. Doan, *A Book of Days* (Fort Dodge: Messenger, 1991); E. G. Morgan, *The Centennial History of Webster County, Its Towns and Townships, also the City of Fort Dodge* (Fort Dodge: Times Job Printing, 1876); H. M. Pratt, *History of Fort Dodge and Webster County, Iowa*, 2 vols. (Chicago: Pioneer Publishing Co., 1913); and William Williams, *The History of Early Fort Dodge and Webster County*, ed. Edward Breen (Fort Dodge: KVFD-KFMY, 1950). Two historic overviews provide contexts for downtown Fort Dodge architecture: Natte's downtown tour guide, op cit., and the Fort Dodge section of David Gebhard and Gerald Mansheim's *Buildings of Iowa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 389-393.

for river steamboats in the 1850s. Land surfaces bordering the river are rough and steeply sloped; within the downtown area above Third Street, however, the topography is flat to undulating and therefore well suited to all kinds of development. The field notes and plats compiled by the government land survey in 1855 show that the original native or pre-settlement vegetation was a cover of tall prairie grasses, herbs, and forbs. Timber was generally absent when Fort Dodge was first settled, except for scattered oak groves and the narrow gallery of floodplain hardwood forest growing along the Des Moines River and tributary streams. The lack of timber resources was a handicap for the early pioneers, who depended heavily upon wood for building construction, fuel, and fencing. The cost of imported pine lumber was one of the factors that stimulated local production of brick.[8]

The Gridiron Plat

Like most towns in Iowa, Fort Dodge was laid out on a grid (commonly referred to as a "gridiron") and the streets were named according to a uniform system to indicate their location on a Cartesian coordinate plane. The original plat of 1854 provided for named streets running parallel to the axis of the plat and numbered streets running perpendicular to them. The street nomenclature was standard, although the principal commercial thoroughfare, which would probably have been christened "Main Street" in a smaller town, was named Market Street on the original plat. In 1894 the designations of the principal thoroughfares were changed by order of the city council: thus, Market Street became Central Avenue, Williams Street was renamed First Avenue North, and Walnut Street became First Avenue South; the cross-streets were also re-numbered, with Second Street becoming Third Street, etc.[9]

From the outset, Fort Dodge was in many ways a planned community and downtown streetscapes bear the unmistakable imprint of nineteenth century urban design.[10] The first urban planners were the original property owners,

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[8] Jean C. Prior, *Landforms of Iowa* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1991); T. H. MacBride, "Landscapes of Iowa," *The Palimpsest* 7 (1926):283-293; Benjamin Shimek, "The Distribution of Forest Trees in Iowa," *Proceedings of the Iowa Academy of Science* 7 (1899):47-59; and Charles A. White, *Report on the Geological Survey of the State of Iowa*, 2 vols. (Des Moines: Mills & Company, 1870).

[9] Roger Natte, Introduction to *Tour of Discovery*, iv. The American custom of street naming and numbering is attributed to Pierre-Charles L'Enfant's plan for Washington, DC; see the insightful discussion of street names in H. L. Mencken, *The American Language* (New York, 1921). W. W. Crane, writing in *Lippincott's Magazine* (August 1897), declared, "Such a locality as 'the *corner of Avenue H and Twenty-third street* is about as distinctly American as Algonquin and Iroquois names like *Mississippi* and *Saratoga*."

[10] General overviews of nineteenth century urban design include John W. Reps, *Town Planning in Frontier America* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1980); Stanley K. Schultz, *Constructing*

individuals and corporations whose principal aim was profit: to this end, the 1854 plat and early additions maximized the area of developable land while providing convenient access to important transportation routes. There were few constraints on private land development in the nineteenth century, very little zoning, and minimal public control over private land use. Nevertheless, early development generally conformed to existing laws and traditions. The orthogonal plat, with its mechanically repeated geometric grid of rectangular blocks and lots, straight streets, and right-angle intersections, was itself a microcosm of the government survey that subdivided the public domain into townships and sections. (Except for its orientation to the course of the river, the layout of the original town ignored the natural setting.) In contrast to some other western townsites, however, the plat did provide for a Public Square "to be beautified and put in shape" as community open space (Fig. 2). The plan featured wide public thoroughfares designed to be used by wagons and other horse-drawn conveyances, and it was assumed that people would move from place to place within the platted area on foot along the streets and alleys.[11]

Early Commercial Establishments

During its initial phase of urban development, the economic profile of Fort Dodge was dominated by agriculture and related industries. Retail and artisan establishments directly or indirectly linked to farming (farm implement dealers, general stores, blacksmiths, wagon makers, feed mills, and lumber yards) clustered around the Public Square. Throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, Fort Dodge continued to hold a significant place among Upper Midwestern agricultural product processing and marketing centers.[12]

Urban Culture: American Cities and City Planning, 1800-1920 (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989); and David Schuyler, *The New Urban Landscape: The Redefinition of the City Form in Nineteenth-Century America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986). A good overview of urban landscape evolution is Larry R. Ford, *Cities and Buildings: Skyscrapers, Skid Rows, and Suburbs* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).

[11] The grid pattern "meant that the town could expand indefinitely, subject only to topographical obstacles"; Russo, *American Towns*, 66. The gridiron plat has attracted a considerable and growing literature; see John W. Reps, *The Making of Urban America: A History of City Planning in the United States* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965). The historical origins of the gridiron plat are examined from a "national design" perspective in John R. Stilgoe, *Common Landscape of America, 1580 to 1845* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 99-107.

[12] The best resources for identifying individual downtown businesses and tracking their rise and decline (and physical movements) are the city directories published since 1882 (with some gaps before 1923); the Sanborn fire insurance maps are also useful in this regard. Unfortunately, research in Fort Dodge newspapers (*Fort Dodge Messenger*, 1871-1917; *Daily Chronicle*, 1906-1917; and *Messenger & Chronicle*, 1917-1968) is made difficult by the lack of a comprehensive index, although the Fort Dodge Public Library has a fairly extensive vertical file, consisting largely of newspaper clippings, on particular businesses and properties.

Pioneer entrepreneurs housed their commercial establishments in their own homes, or built small, freestanding, multiple use buildings based on traditional designs. The central business district certainly did not start out dominated by large brick buildings. In pre-railroad days, good building materials were hard to come by and the first generation of commercial buildings consisted mostly of simple, box-like, wood-framed structures without much in the way of style. The oldest photographs of the central district show a disparate collection of business properties along Market Street, many with the high wooden "false-front" facades characteristic of nineteenth century stores. Brick commercial buildings appeared at an early date but masonry construction was not mandatory until the 1870s.

Although the first brick store was raised in 1856, most of the first generation of commercial buildings were wood-framed constructions. The army maintained a steam sawmill at Fort Dodge and the first civilian sawmill opened in 1856 (months after the first frame home was built). By the 1870s local lumber yards would have been able to offer plentiful supplies of sawn pine lumber that was shipped in by rail. Good clay for making soft-fired common brick and hollow clay tile was also available along the Des Moines River and the first of several local brickyard opened as early as 1858.[13]

Second Phase of Downtown Development, 1870-1900

Fort Dodge grew slowly until 1869, when the Iowa Falls & Sioux City Railroad was built through Webster County and provided a link to the emerging regional railway system centered on Chicago. The arrival of the railroad led directly to the incorporation of the town and served as an important stimulus for subsequent commercial and industrial development.

Throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, the majority of downtown businesses catered to the interests of area farm families who came to town to shop and the growing urban population consisting of the families of clerks, mechanics, railroad workers, and laborers. General stores, clothiers, hardware dealers, grocers, shoe stores, and other small retail outlets lined the streets, interspersed with livery stables, lumberyards, hotels, saloons, and

[13] The army sawmill is mentioned in Francis Paul Prucha, *Broadax and Bayonet: The Role of the United States Army in the Development of the Northwest*, Bison Book edition (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 167. The dates of the sawmill, brick store, and brickyard are reported in Pratt, *History of Fort Dodge*, 166, 169, 173. The first wood framed civilian building at Fort Dodge was erected in May 1855 on Lot 3, Block 8; Morgan, *Centennial History of Webster County*, 26. Roger Natte believes that the first brick building erected in Fort Dodge was located on the southeast corner of the creamery site, opposite the Wakhonsa Scholl at 330 First Avenue North; this structure was razed in 1962. Local clay deposits and their commercial value are discussed in Wilder, "Geology of Webster County," 177-179.

blacksmiths shops. The 1880s witnessed the beginnings of a shift in the types of businesses that were attracted to the downtown. Fort Dodge's first department store, Gates Dry Goods Store, opened in 1882, and was soon followed by Tuerke Mercantile Company (forerunner of the Boston Store). This period also saw the establishment of several family-owned businesses that remained downtown until the middle of the next century.

By 1870, Market Street (the future Central Avenue) was already well established as the town's primary mercantile street. After the railroad was built, undeveloped lots became a hot commodity and commercial buildings began to appear above (i.e., east of) the public square and on what had previously been residential streets. Construction of the Reynolds, Arthur, and Doud business blocks in the 1880s pushed the eastern edge of the embryo downtown past Seventh Street. With the onset of the Panic of 1893, construction of new commercial buildings came to a halt. After the economy recovered around 1896, another commercial building boom (probably the largest in local history) carried development as far east as Tenth and rebuilt much of the older commercial district (Fig. 3).

Railroads and Economic Growth

The growth of commerce and industry went hand in hand with improvements in transportation and increased immigration. The importance of railroads in shaping the broad pattern of downtown development can hardly be overstated. The first railroads were built in eastern Iowa during the 1850s but development was temporarily halted by the Panic of 1857 and the Civil War; it was not until 1869 that the state was crossed by continuous rail systems.[14] The rivalry of the prairie towns in their hope of capturing rail connections was intense. When the first train of the Iowa Falls & Sioux City (later part of the Illinois Central) rolled into Fort Dodge, it signaled the beginning of a new age.

Fort Dodgers expected that the completion of the Iowa Falls & Sioux City would trigger an immediate and sustained economic boom, but such expectations were not immediately realized. The good times brought on by the first railroad connection was soon followed by a deep and general depression known to historians as the Panic of 1873.[15] Local businesses also found themselves exposed to increased competition from outside Fort Dodge and the rise in real estate values (over-inflated since the Civil War) made investment in new buildings

[14] For background on the development of Iowa's railways, see Thompson, *Transportation in Iowa*, 18-51; and Don L. Hofsommer, *Steel Trails of Hawkeyeland: Iowa's Railroad Experience* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005).

[15] Robert Sobel, *Panic on Wall Street: A History of America's Financial Disasters* (Hopkins, MN: Beard Books, 1999), 154-196.

riskier than ever. The depression of the 1870s was also hard on the railroads themselves, but the 1880s saw tremendous growth in Midwestern railroads, which took a leading role in the development of the regional economy.

For the next half-century, the economic life of Fort Dodge depended largely on its rail connections. For their part, the railroads stimulated commerce and industry and facilitated large-scale immigration; in addition to farm products, considerable commerce developed in minerals, manufactured goods, and other commodities. Industrial production began to grow rapidly and the railroads offered connections with sources of raw materials, other industrial centers, and markets. By the 1880s, Fort Dodge merchants and manufacturers had the option of several different rail systems, and the accelerated passenger traffic also contributed to local economic growth in the service sector. From a physical development perspective, the existence and location of railroad depots played a pivotal role in determining the pattern of downtown expansion. The arrival of the first train in 1869 gave rise to the development of a compact central business district around the Public Square, and by the 1880s, the core of the trade and shopping district had gravitated eastward for several blocks along the axis of Market Street. The development of the electric street railway in the late-1890s gave further impetus to commercial building above Eighth Street. Until they were taken out of service in 1925, the streetcars were an imperative of downtown life and the Central Avenue line was the backbone of the distinctive linear pattern of dense commercial development continued during the great building boom which began around 1896 and lasted, with a few brief interruptions, until 1929.

Fort Dodge was very much a railroad town and its excellent rail links contributed to its rapid rise as a regional commercial center. Local entrepreneurs understood that rail transportation was the city's lifeline, and the means to make great fortunes. By the turn of the century, the city was served by four major railroads (Illinois Central, Chicago & Northwestern, Chicago Great Western, and Minneapolis & St. Louis), with about thirty-five trains arriving and departing daily. Railroad operations employed hundreds of workers whose wages contributed to the growth of the town's economy. The railroads and their local owners and managers were also major landowners downtown and plowed their profits into various forms of real estate development.

Industrial Development and Its Impact on Commerce

Although northwestern Iowa's economy was primarily agriculture-based, Fort Dodge quickly emerged as an important locus of industrial activity. Coal from mines in Webster County (some within a few hours' haul by steam locomotive from Fort Dodge) was extracted and shipped by rail at an early date. Local soft

coal deposits also supplied the fuel for steam locomotives and fixed steam engines used to saw lumber, grind grain, and drive other forms of machinery. Coal mining was one of the biggest industries in Iowa until the 1920s and several coal companies had offices and yards in Fort Dodge. A variety of durable goods manufacturing enterprises set up in town, many of them steam-powered, and all except those which were pursued on a small scale for local needs were dependent upon the railroads (coal-fired until the 1920s) for transporting raw materials and finished products.

First reported in 1852, the Fort Dodge gypsum beds were exploited commercially after 1872 for use as a soil conditioner, animal food additive, and for making plaster of Paris. Slabs of "land plaster" were also quarried and shaped for use in building construction.[16] There were more than half a dozen large gypsum mine operators in the vicinity of Fort Dodge by the end of the century. After 1900, many of the local gypsum mines and mills were consolidated into larger holdings; eventually, all of the locally owned enterprises were purchased by major companies, such as United States Gypsum. Gradually the uses for gypsum increased to include architectural ornamentation, wall plaster, and stucco. In 1903 the Fort Dodge-based United States Gypsum Company developed pyrobar, a fire-proof tile that it began to market as Sackett Plaster Board in 1909.[17]

In addition to the industries mentioned above, there were, of course, many others that found quarters downtown. These included blacksmithing, carriage and wagon making, cooperage, job printing, furniture making, cigar making, and farm machinery manufacturing. Some of these enterprises were small, little more than cottage industries, but an outstanding feature of the period 1870-1900 was the "Second Industrial Revolution" in which household and artisanial production of manufactured goods gave way to the factory system.[18] As more and more people turned to factory-made goods, local entrepreneurs occupied themselves increasingly with manufacturing and Fort Dodge factories took many forms. Before the 1890s, most factories appear to have been established by mechanics who provided their own capital or could obtain financial backing from local investors; only a few were controlled by absentee owners. Over time, the various types of factories developed their own particular space requirements, but most late-nineteenth century manufacturers in Fort Dodge were content to

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[16] See "Iowa Building Stones," *The Manufacturer and Builder* 10(8) (August 1886), 180, where it is reported that the Illinois Central railroad depot in Fort Dodge was built with gypsum.

[17] Frank A. Wilder, "Gypsum: Its Occurrence, Origin, Technology and Uses," *Iowa Geological Survey Bulletin* 28 (1918):47-560; R. D. Colby, R. R. Anderson, and R. M. McKay, *Geology of the Fort Dodge Formation (Upper Jurassic) Webster County, Iowa* (Iowa City, 1996); and Leo V. Rodenborn, *A History of the Gypsum Industry Fort Dodge, Webster County, Iowa...1872-1972* (Fort Dodge: Messenger Printing Company, 1972).

[18] The best history of the industrial revolution of 1871-1914 is J. D. Bernal, *Science and Industry in the Nineteenth Century* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1953).

move their work shops and warehouses into conventional, multi-purpose commercial buildings. While much of the early industrial activity was located within the original platted area, manufacturing gradually migrated away from Central Avenue as factory owners sought better transportation facilities. [19]

Population Growth

The city's metamorphosis from a rural trade center to a regional entrepot, already well underway by the early 1880s, was accelerated by the rapid influx of people after around 1885. Census returns illustrate the broad outline of urban population growth:

1856: 729
1860: 672
1865: 1395
1870: 3095
1880: 3586
1885: 4550
1890: 8470
1900: 12,162[20]

State and federal census returns indicate that much of this growth can be attributed to immigration from other parts of the Midwest, although there was a sizable foreign-born contingent in Fort Dodge by the end of the century. Fort Dodge exerted a strong centrifugal pull on rural Iowa farmers and farm laborers attracted by the higher wages (and standard of living) offered by its factories and stores. The growth of the urban wage-earning class (proportionately and in real numbers) was the outstanding social phenomenon of the era and transformed downtown Fort Dodge.

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[19] The geographical distribution of late-nineteenth century factories is documented in the contemporary fire insurance maps and early city business directories, which identify buildings by their function and relate businesses to particular locations. Unfortunately, Fort Dodge was not a large enough manufacturing center to warrant inclusion in the 1880 and 1900 censuses of manufacturers.

[20] Data are from Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population: 1950*, Vol. II, Pt. 15 [Iowa] (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1952), Table 4; Iowa Census Board, *Census Returns of the Different Counties of the State of Iowa, As Returned in the Year 1865* (Des Moines: State Printer, 1865); Iowa Executive Council, *Census of Iowa for the Year 1915* (Des Moines: State Printer, 1916) and *Census of Iowa for the Year 1925* (Des Moines: State of Iowa, 1926). See also, Ronald C. Powers and Sue Meyers, *The Population Change of the Fort Dodge Area* (Ames: Iowa State University, Cooperative Extension Service, 1966).

Nineteenth-Century Commercial Building

The pace of downtown construction activity increased sharply between 1870 and 1900. Although the cost of building probably more than doubled during this period, there was new construction all over the city, accompanied by the grading of streets, the installation of sewers, and the laying of water and gas pipes. Most of the commercial buildings from this era were probably not architect-designed.[21] Many appear to have been designed by local builders and contractors; some were no doubt designed by the original owners themselves, relying on architectural pattern books.[22] Pattern books specifically aimed at the mercantile class appeared before the Civil War as an offshoot from the popular domestic architecture pattern books of Andrew Jackson Downing, Alexander Jackson Davis, and others. These books ranged from thick, lavishly illustrated textbooks to handy pocket manuals.

Unlike frontier boom towns where commercial buildings were often built simply and cheaply, late nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial architecture in downtown Fort Dodge was durable and relatively expensive. Masonry buildings were designed to be occupied almost indefinitely and typically outlived their builders and the enterprises that occupied them. A large amount of real capital was stored up in downtown buildings, which by law were required to be built of fireproof materials.[23] Consequently, most nineteenth century commercial buildings had solid brick, fired clay tile, or concrete block load-bearing walls rising from stone or reinforced concrete foundations. Brick facades were almost ubiquitous and upscale buildings were detailed with cast-stone window sills, copings, door surrounds, and entablatures, pressed metal cornices, cast-iron columns, spandrel panels decorated with terracotta or fancy brickwork, brick parapets, and occasionally carved stone trim. Storefronts featured large plate-glass display windows, beveled glass door panels, and transom windows. Older stores and business blocks were wood-framed, some with timber posts and floor joists up to eight inches thick; most buildings constructed after 1900, however, were steel- or concrete-framed.

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[21] The survey data from Fort Dodge do not support David Gebhard's assertion (Gebhard and Mansheim, *Buildings of Iowa*, 28) that most downtown commercial buildings erected in Iowa after the 1860s were designed by professional architects or engineers (though this may have been true for large commercial projects after 1900).

[22] David Russo was one of the first American historians to suggest the influence of pattern books on the architecture of "Main Street" (*American Towns*, 74).

[23] The city council adopted its first zoning ordinance, outlawing buildings "made of combustible material within certain limits," on 18 October 1870 and eventually extended the "fire limits" to include all of the traditional downtown; in 1875 the council granted a citizen a variance to construct a frame dwelling on Williams Street (First Avenue) within the fire protection zone on condition that the house be set back from adjacent buildings; City Council Minute Books 1 and 2.

Because of their high cost, architectural metals were used sparingly on buildings constructed before 1900. Stamped tin or zinc was popular for cornices and ceilings; some of the oldest downtown roofs have strips of corrugated sheet iron or galvanized steel sheathing under layers of bitumen; both roofing systems were introduced during the 1850s. (The so-called "tin" roofs occasionally reported in old records were actually covered with *terne* roofing, made from soft steel panels that had been hot-dipped in a mixture of lead and tin.) Cast-iron, however, was popular for columns and other decorative work on Victorian-era storefronts. Iron, and later structural steel, was occasionally used in framing late-nineteenth century buildings but did not replace masonry and timber framing altogether until after 1900.

Buildings with walls built of dressed (i.e., shaped or cut) stone were never common in Fort Dodge, although the local buff to gray-colored limestone was the preferred construction material for foundation walls and footings until the early 1900s.[24] From the 1870s on, downtown Fort Dodge commercial building was primarily brick. The railroads supplied Fort Dodge contractors with hard-fired, tapestry, glazed, and molded brick for fancy work; much of this material was manufactured nearby in Kalo and Lehigh. Common brick from nearby brickyards was used for load-bearing, bonded (i.e., solid) masonry walls and sometimes for facades. Hard-fired or face brick was the predominant wall cladding material on principal facades, along with brick veneer, a kind of masonry paneling. The joints in the older brick walls are filled with soft mortar made from sand and lime, but from the 1890s on it has been customary to add Portland cement to the mortar, making the exterior brick walls less susceptible to weathering. Nineteenth century roofing was predominantly wood until asphalt shingles and other petroleum-based roofing products came on the market in the 1890s. Single-ply ready-to-lay roll roofing, made of paper and cellulose fibers saturated with pine tar or asphalt (forerunner of the modern multi-ply composition or "compo") was invented by William Griscom in 1892.

Sidewalks, Streetlights & Other Infrastructure

To a considerable extent, the late-nineteenth century built environment was shaped by engineering.[25] Alex Abell, the first city engineer, was appointed in May 1870 and the position was never left unfilled. Victorian era city engineer duties included reporting to the street commissioners and the council on the state of public works, setting the grades for public streets and sidewalks, surveying new streets, removing obstructions protruding within the public right-of-way, abating nuisances, and safeguarding the public water supply.

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[24] Wilder, "Geology of Webster County," 179-181.
[25] See Schultz, *Constructing Urban Culture*, 153-181.

Fort Dodge built its first public sidewalk, along the south side of Market Street opposite the Public Square, during the summer of 1870. It was nine feet wide and constructed of two-inch planking. [26] By 1872, all of Market between the Public Square and old Fifth Street had been equipped with rudimentary sidewalks and the system was quickly expanded to Williams, Walnut, and side streets. In addition to their essential transportation functions, sidewalks have served to buffer and connect downtown properties and to provide public spaces for social and commercial interaction. The original townsite was a specifically pedestrian-oriented environment and as early as the 1870s, sidewalks were regarded as important public places and some of the earliest city ordinances deal with the establishment of sidewalks, which were provided by the city and paid for by abutting property owners. Sidewalks were used for many activities unrelated to transportation: adults promenaded, children played, tradesmen used them as outdoor display space for their wares.

Until the 1890s, street paving and the installation of brick-paved sidewalks was sporadic and concentrated in the densely built-up lower part of downtown (i.e., below modern Seventh Street), where the property owners petitioned for the projects and were assessed the costs of construction. In 1896 the City Council ordered Central Avenue paved and curbed between Third and Twelfth streets, with the total cost of construction to be assessed to adjoining property owners and businesses over a seven-year period. The paving material used was two courses of locally manufactured vitrified brick on a sand foundation with cement filler. It was not until after 1900 that the old brick curbing was replaced.

About two dozen gas street lights served by the Fort Dodge Coal & Gas Company were installed along Central Avenue and parts of First Avenue North during the 1870s and the council paid watchmen to maintain them. Within a few years of Edison's invention of the arc lamp in 1879, the city installed electric arc street lights mounted on single poles; after 1898, these were changed over to incandescent tungsten-filament lamps that took their power off the grid supplied by the city's hydroelectric station. Thus, on the brink of the twentieth century, Central Avenue became a "white way" for evening shoppers, workers, and strollers.[27]

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[26] Council actions, engineer reports, and specifications for late-nineteenth century public works improvements are recorded in the City Council Minute Books, which are archived in the city clerk's office.

[27] Ordinances and resolutions for various street lighting systems are part of the city council record and are described in the annual reports of the city engineer. For background on commercial district "white ways," see Kate Bolton, "The Great Awakening of the Night: Lighting America's Streets," *Landscape*, 23 (1979):41-47.

Third Phase of Downtown Development, 1901-1964

The most spectacular aspect of downtown development during the prosperous years of the first two decades of the twentieth century was the extraordinary building construction boom, certainly the greatest in local history. The initial boom began in the late 1890s and lasted until the United States' entry into World War I. The war and a postwar recession held back new commercial construction, but building activity resumed in the 1920s, stimulated by high rents, a surplus of local capital, and innovations in architecture and engineering. This period saw a steady stream of new businesses setting up downtown and the construction of several downtown landmarks. To many, the opening of the Warden Hotel in 1914 symbolized that Fort Dodge had "arrived" (Fig. 4). Some of the well-known businesses established downtown during this timeframe included the Rosedale Dairy (1906), Tuerke Mercantile Company's Boston Store (1914), Fort Dodge Tent & Awning (1918), Rehder Cadillac (1923), and the Sears, Roebuck & Company and Montgomery Ward department stores (ca. 1930).

Polk's 1928 Fort Dodge city directory touted it as "the Metropolis of Northwest Iowa." Outstanding features of early twentieth-century development included the growth of large factories and commercial enterprises, the development of the electric street railway and interurban systems, and the platting of new residential neighborhoods adjacent to the original town core The same period saw dramatic social, economic, technological, and political shifts that reshaped the everyday lives of Fort Dodge residents: electricity, indoor plumbing, central heating, telephones, refrigerators, radios, and motion pictures changed forever the basic patterns of work and home life. More than any other factor, the automobile changed Fort Dodge from a pedestrian to a vehicular landscape, and its material culture had a profound impact on both land use and architecture.

Population growth during this period was tremendous, as shown by the federal and state census returns:

1900: 12,162
1910: 15,543
1915: 19,370
1920: 19,347
1930: 21,895
1940: 22,904
1950: 25,115

The explosive increase over this busy half-century was the result of the city's rapidly-expanding commercial, trade, finance, and manufacturing base; improvements in transportation also speeded up the process of urbanization,

which in turn concentrated economic development in the central business district until the personal automobile accentuated the movement toward the edges of the built-up area.

Twentieth-Century Architecture

The opening of the twentieth century saw the construction of a number of striking new architectural developments, including the Webster County Courthouse (1902), the Fort Dodge Carnegie Library (1903), the State Bank Building (1907), the Wahkonsa Hotel (1909), the Snell Building (1913), the Masonic Temple (1914), the Warden Hotel (1914), and the Prusia Hardware Building (1916). New commercial construction slowed to a trickle in the 1930s, though downtown business activity picked up during the 1940s when many older business locations were rebuilt so they could accommodate new types of commercial buildings such as gasoline service stations and broad-front stores.

Several disparate architectural trends helped to influence the design of new buildings. The influence of the French Ecole des Beaux Arts, the fountainhead of post-Victorian architectural styles, was seen most often in large civic buildings, such as the Carnegie Public Library and the Fort Dodge Municipal Building, which exhibited plans and detailing based upon "classical" (Greek and Roman) architecture. The revival of classical idioms also turned up in large commercial buildings with a "Sullivanesque" flavor (after Louis Sullivan, famous for his murky "form follows function" thesis); low-rise buildings such as the Snell Building and the Carver Building feature bold, geometric façades highlighted with sculptural ornamentation. Original works showing the influence of the Prairie School, a distinctly American movement, also appeared. Many downtown buildings, however, seem to have been designed primarily for their aesthetic appeal and are not easily pigeon-holed with respect to style.[28]

Much of this new architecture was created by a new breed of academically trained architects. There were only a handful of professional architects and engineers working anywhere in northwest Iowa before the turn of the century: until the late-nineteenth century, just about anyone who wished to call himself an architect or engineer could do so, and some (perhaps most) of Fort Dodge's nineteenth-century building designers were members of the building trades until architectural education became institutionalized until the 1880s; at any rate, few

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[28] For a contextual discussion of the academic styles, albeit often vague and contradictory, see: John J.-G. Blumenson, *Identifying American Architecture: A Pictorial Guide to Styles and Terms, 1600-1945*, rev. ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1981); Mark L. Peisch, *The Chicago School of Architecture: Early Followers of Sullivan and Wright* (New York: Random House, 1965); and Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969); see also Gebhard and Mansheim, *Buildings of Iowa*, 33-34 and *passim*.

Fort Dodge addresses appear among the members of the American Institute of Architects and its Chicago-based rival the Western Association of Architects before the early 1900s. A noteworthy hometown talent emerged in the form of E. O. Damon, Jr., a native of Northampton, Massachusetts, who began his career as a naval architect (educated in Scotland) but engaged in numerous commercial and civic building projects after moving to Fort Dodge in 1912. During the early 1900s, commissions in downtown Fort Dodge attracted the likes of William L. Steele and the Des Moines firms of Liebbe, Nourse & Rasmussen or Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson, some of the leading figures in Iowa architecture.[29]

The new century also saw the use of new building materials and construction techniques. Starting in the 1890s, local builders began erecting ever-larger, multi-storied business blocks and non-commercial structures with deep, poured concrete foundations and wrought-iron framing, which lowered construction costs by reducing the reliance upon heavy posts and beams and solid brick load-bearing walls. Structural steel and reinforced concrete revolutionized twentieth-century building and led to the creation of larger general contracting firms that used heavy machinery and employed large teams of construction specialists. Other important building technologies included running water, indoor plumbing, steam heating, electricity, elevators, window screens, factory-made doors and windows, terrazzo flooring, and (after 1920) air-conditioning.

During the first half of the twentieth century, hollow clay tile was commonly used in constructing non-load-bearing walls; some stores had glazed clay tile block walls. Glazed and unglazed structural clay tile (commonly known as terra-cotta) was frequently used as coping on parapet walls. Some hollow-cast, dark-red glazed brownstone terra-cotta was also used in conjunction with other masonry in imitation of sandstone on Romanesque-influenced buildings. Fireproof construction terra-cotta spanned the I-beam members in floor, wall, and ceiling construction. Ceramic veneer, developed in the 1930s, was also used in modern commercial construction on both exterior and interior surfaces. Glazed architectural terra-cotta, hollow units were hand-cast in molds or carved in clay and fired, popular 1890s through 1920s.[30] Most of high-quality stone (Mankato-Kasota Limestone, Bedford Limestone, marble, dolomite) used in the construction of downtown buildings was imported. The only stone product used

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[29] See Wesley I. Shank, *Iowa's Historic Architects: A Biographical Dictionary* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999); Shank identifies seven architects who had offices in Fort Dodge at various times during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including Damon.

[30] The discussion of historic building materials drew heavily on the following works: Carl W. Condit, *American Building Art: The Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960) and *American Building Art: The Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961); Donald Friedman, *Historical Building Construction: Design, Materials, and Technology* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1995); and Sara E. Wermiel, *The Fireproof Building: Technology and Public Safety in the 19th Century American City* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).

on a large scale in building construction after 1900 was gypsum, in the form of plaster, gypsum board, and stucco. Wall board or sheetrock (made from gypsum and Portland cement) was patented in 1916 and revolutionized the building industry.

Concrete made with Portland cement (first manufactured in the United States in 1874), sand and aggregate became increasingly popular during the 1890s for paving and foundation work. Reinforced concrete was used as a structural material for large buildings as early as 1900; the largest buildings constructed after 1910 utilized girderless flat slab construction. Ornamental concrete, which also appeared in the 1890s, was widely used for faux stone architraves, quoins, columns, sills, and lintels. Artistic and rusticated concrete (molded to resemble ashlar) were early twentieth century products used to dress up building exteriors. Machine-made concrete blocks were used for wall construction as early as 1910 (there were several concrete block manufacturers in the Fort Dodge area) and replaced common brick by the 1920s. With the rise of Modern architecture, exposed concrete became a design feature in its own right. A few downtown facades were coated with stucco, a very durable wall finish based on Portland cement that probably first appeared in Fort Dodge around the time of World War I. In some instances, the stucco was applied to conceal the underlying deterioration or structural deficiencies of an older brick wall.[31]

The golden age of downtown Fort Dodge coincided with major technological advances in glass-making. The earliest store windows were fitted with multi-paned sashes because large sheets of rolled plate glass, although available since the 1840s, were so expensive. The cost of machine-rolled plate glass (introduced during the 1880s) decreased steadily and as a result the standard storefront display window became almost universal. Sheet glass using the Fourcault process was available by 1914; later store windows were manufactured by the Pittsburgh process, perfected in 1928. Metal store window frames were available by the 1880s, though store windows with wooden frames, sashes, and muntins appear to have been the norm in downtown Fort Dodge until the 1960s. Etched glass for glazing doors was an expensive luxury and only a few commercial properties exhibit windows filled with leaded or stained glass. Fixed opaque or spandrel glass (flat glass with colored ceramic coating) and structural glass block was available in the early 1900s; although they were advertised locally, no examples of the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company's black and white "Carrara" (introduced in 1906) or the Libby-Owens colored "Vitrolite" (introduced in

[31] See Amy E. Slaton, *Reinforced Concrete and the Modernization of American Building, 1900-1930* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); Pamela H. Simpson, *Cheap, Quick and Easy: Imitation Architectural Materials, 1870-1930* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999); and Pamela H. Simpson, Harry J. Hunderman, and Deborah Slaton, "Concrete Block," in *20th Century Building Materials*, ed. Thomas C. Jester (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995), 80-85

1916)) were observed during the survey. Other synthetic materials found on historic commercial buildings include Perma-Stone imitation stone (first marketed in 1929), galvanized steel panel siding (1920s), porcelain enamel panel siding (1920s), and plywood (1940s).

Progressive Era City Planning & Engineering

Professionally-trained civil engineers were employed by the city from 1898 onward to draw up plans and specifications for the construction and maintenance of streets, sidewalks, sewers, waterworks, and other public utilities. Under the direction of the street commissioner (who was an elected member of the city council), the early twentieth-century city engineer's duties were numerous. He controlled and managed all work done city streets, sewers, gas and water mains, sidewalks, and street lights; and until a public works department was set up in the 1930s, his routine responsibilities also included approving all sewer connections and ensuring that the public thoroughfares were in good repair and that snow and ice were removed in the winter. It wasn't until the middle decades of the twentieth century that many of the city engineer's duties and responsibilities (e.g., garbage collection, water treatment, snow removal, street cleaning, and street repairs) were dispersed to other municipal departments.[32]

Beginning in the late 1890s, the city had been embarked on a massive program of downtown improvements including paved streets and sidewalks, street lighting, and improvements to the Public Square, which had come to be referred to as the City Park.[33] During the next two decades, all of Central Avenue and much of First Avenues North and South was entirely regarded, paved, and outfitted with

[32] There is no published history of public works in Fort Dodge. However, a wealth of information about public policy, projects, and approaches to urban infrastructure can be found in the city council minute books, especially Books 1 through 6, which cover the period 1870-1899; and in the annual reports of the mayor, city engineer, park superintendent, and fire department; these records are in the custody of the City Clerk. Charles H. Reynolds, the first professional city engineer, held the position from 1898 until his death in 1929; The city engineer reports for 1902-1934 (with some gaps) represent a significant heritage resource in their own right.

[33] The vigorous protest by city officials over the construction of streetcar tracks through the park in 1898 reveals the importance community leaders attached to this municipal amenity. When the city granted the Electric Street Railway Company the franchise to build its streetcar system in 1894, the council specifically required the company not to encroach upon the park and the map submitted with the franchise request showed the tracks going around the square; after the tracks were laid across the park in 1898, the council passed a resolution holding the railroad civilly and criminally liable, stating that "The Public Square in Fort Dodge was donated by the owners to be beautiful and put in shape for the use of the Public" (Minute Book 6, pages 148-149). The street railway obtained an injunction from the county court and continued building; the city counter-sued but the street railway was completed (including the trackage through the square) by October 1898.

modern sidewalks and street crossings. Cement and sandstone curbstones replaced the old brick curbs downtown between 1902 and 1905, though the city decided to retain some of the old treated wooden block street paving, which was preferred over masonry construction because it helped to muffle the clatter of horses hooves and iron-rimmed wagon wheels.[34] In 1902, the city engineer began urging the council to switch from brick to concrete street paving, declaring: "We can never have first class streets until we adopt the modern method of constructing our pavements; that is, to use concrete foundation, with No. 1 paving bricks or blocks."[35] The first brick-over-concrete streets were laid downtown in 1905 (the same year the city began coating some streets with bituminous asphalt), though it was not until the 1920s that all of the downtown surface streets were paved; paving of downtown alleys began in 1930.[36]

Progressive engineering introduced improved vehicular and pedestrian transportation systems and modern sanitation, the hallmarks of modern urban life—it was no coincidence that the renaissance in public works took place concurrently with other Progressive Era urban redevelopment projects such as the building of the Public Library and the creation of the city parks system.[37] New street lights were installed downtown in 1927, some of which remained in use for the next fifty years. Although there was never much in the way of street furniture, by the 1940s downtown streets and alleys were a complex maze of utility poles, trash receptacles, dumpsters, maintenance (manhole) covers, light posts, and sign posts. Traffic signals, including the modern stop sign and red-yellow-green signal light, were installed downtown before 1930, within a few years of their original deployment in much larger cities.[38] Parking meters, a 1930s invention, made their appearance shortly after World War II. The city budgets for public works more than tripled between 1895 and 1925 (there was no significant state or federal financial assistance until the 1930s. Although public works expenditures declined markedly after 1920, they returned to pre-World

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[34] The last of the wooden pavers were not removed from Central Avenue until about 1938 and some of the alleys near the Public Square were still wood-surfaced in the early 1990s, according to local historian Roger Natte (personal communication to the author).

[35] City Engineer Annual Report for 1902; for insights into the political and engineering background of early twentieth century street improvements, consult the City Engineer annual reports and the Council Minute books.

[36] In their 1932 report, the city engineering department estimated $2,203,714.29 had been spent on pavement, curb, and gutter work since 1896.

[37] For background on Iowa trends in urban design, see Walter Burley Griffin, "Town and Community Planning," *Western Architect* 19 (August 1913):67-81; and Gebhard and Mansheim, *Buildings of Iowa*, 15-17.

[38] The city street commissioner's annual report for 1905-1906 includes a notation for funds expended on kerosene "for danger signals," possibly a reference to some kind of traffic control device.

War I levels in the 1940s, and much of this public investment was dedicated to downtown infrastructure that served automobiles and trucks.

Regulation of downtown development activities by local government has been in place since Fort Dodge was incorporated in 1869. Municipal ordinances were adopted to address the wide range of land use issues typically found in urban communities, most of which dealt with nuisances, public rights of way, and the construction of infrastructure. Although Fort Dodge officials were justifiably proud that theirs "was one of the first cities in Iowa to adopt a building code,"[39] early land use control was exercised from a proprietary point of view and the majority of the actions taken by the city council emphasized the supreme right of property owners to use their estates as they saw fit. The sanctity of private property rights notwithstanding, under state law incorporated municipalities were authorized to regulate the location of certain industries in the interest of public health and safety, and from time to time Fort Dodge adopted gentle measures to restrain landowners from using their property in ways that would cause unreasonable danger or annoyance to others. The only exception was fire prevention: from the early 1870s on, wooden commercial structures were viewed as a nuisance and city ordinances authorized the marshal to tear down any building made of combustible materials within prescribed "fire limits." From the 1890s on, city officials also showed a keen interest in the improvement and use of city streets, sidewalks, and bridges. However, little effort was made to guide urban expansion, regulate building density, or to limit the height and size of buildings. Adoption of building codes and land use planning had to wait until after World War II.[40]

The exercise of the city's inherent police power to regulate land use through zoning may be a fairly recent phenomenon, but it has significantly altered the character of the central business streetscape. Changes in taxation and economic incentives for certain kinds of development have had a direct influence (both positive and negative) on downtown commercial properties. In the 1960s, Fort Dodge began to plan for the creation of dispersed business streetscapes and areas zoned specifically for industrial development. More recently, the city embarked upon a program of comprehensive planning based on strategic community development goals.

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[39] Mayor's annual report for the year ending 31 March 1931; City Clerk's office. The building code appears to have been adopted by the council in 1930.

[40] The concept of the city as a municipal corporation with certain inherent police powers was articulated as early as 1868 by John A. Dillon, Chief Justice of the Iowa Supreme Court, and became the basis for the United States Supreme Court's adoption of the "Dillon Rule" in 1907; see Schultz, *Constructing Urban Culture*, 66-67. A. Peterson, *The Birth of City Planning in the United States, 1840-1917* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004) describes the evolution of land use controls in a national context.

The "Golden Age" of Downtown

During its heyday, downtown Fort Dodge physically stretched from the Public Square all the way down Central Avenue to Twelfth Street. with important clusters of historic commercial buildings between Third and Seventh streets and between Eleventh and Twelfth streets.[41] Central Avenue was very much the heart of the district (and of the city), although commercial, civic, and institutional development also flourished along both First Avenues. The elongated central business district was densely developed and consisted mainly of one- to three-story commercial and mixed use buildings. A scattering of single-family homes was interspersed among the brick-front stores and business blocks.

Retailing was the primary focus of commercial development along Central Avenue and the dense concentration of stores and shops reflected post-Victorian era patterns of business organization and consumption (Fig. 5). Before the automobile age, the majority of households in Fort Dodge and its hinterland sent at least one member on a weekly shopping trip; late-nineteenth century city-dwellers would have generated several such trips each week, and some made daily trips to purchase convenience items. One of the consequences of this pattern of consumption was a profusion of retail and service outlets, all within walking distance of each other. There were all kinds of stores along Central Avenue: convenience stores for daily needs, specialty and limited-line stores for less frequently purchased commodities; general stores, dry goods stores, drug stores, jewelry stores, clothing stores, furniture stores, shoe stores, appliance stores, liquor stores, book and stationary stores, meat markets, bakeries, hardware stores, farm implement dealerships, grocery stores, lumber yards, florists, haberdashers, automobile dealerships, and variety stores. The department store concept reached Fort Dodge near the end of the nineteenth century and the stores themselves became prominent fixtures of the downtown landscape. Based on a creative Gilded Age sales idea, department stores like the Boston Store, Gates Dry Goods Company ("The Department Store Northwest Iowa Depends Upon"), Sears, and Montgomery Ward offered a wide variety of merchandise (organized in departments), attentive service, elegant surroundings, and the opportunity to buy on credit.[42] Department stores also helped influence

[41] According to Roger Natte, "[t]he business history of Fort Dodge from the 1890s to 1960s was largely one of filling in the area on Central from Third to Twelfth Street" (Introduction to *Tour of Discovery,* iii). The best source of graphic data which document the physical growth and architectural composition of downtown are the Sanborn Map Company fire insurance maps for Fort Dodge that were published in 1885, 1892, 1896, 1900, 1907, 1912, 1925, and 1925-1963; see also the photographic reproductions of street scenes and buildings in *Illustrated Fort Dodge* (Des Moines: Historical Illustrative Company, 1896) and other illustrated publications.

[42] See Katrina Fleener, "The Boston Store: The Image of an Old Friend," *Fort Dodge Today Magazine* (November 1993), 33-36; and Laurie Hagey, "A New Lease on Life," *Fort Dodge Today*

cultural norms by providing unprecedented opportunities for women sales workers.[43]

Most of the downtown stores offered goods that were duplicated at other nearby establishments and competed with each other for a portion of the expanding market. Indeed, there was a symbiotic relationship between large and small stores because some commodities and services generated insufficient turnover for large retailers to bother with them: department stores and "self-serving" grocery stores, for example, concentrated on mass consumption goods with large and rapid turnover, whereas smaller "mom and pop" stores could survive by concentrating on specialized items.[44] Thus, some small stores were able to survive for generations because of the quality of service they offered. Chain and franchise stores first appeared in the early 1900s but did not have a significant impact downtown until after World War II.

Scattered amongst the downtown stores were a bewildering array of consumer service establishments: banks, barber shops, tailors, photography studios, laundries, dry cleaners, real estate offices; and after 1910, automobile garages, gasoline service stations, appliance repair shops, and beauty parlors. Physicians, dentists, lawyers, engineers, and myriad other professionals carried on their practices in rented spaces, usually above street-level. Before they were rendered obsolete by twentieth century technologies, the town center also contained many small artisan and handicraft industries such as blacksmiths, wheelwrights, wagon and carriage makers, saddle and harness makers, coopers, boot and shoe makers, tinners, and furniture makers.

The Domestic Side of Downtown Life

Downtown had always been a neighborhood as well as the city's central business district, and it was home to a sizable residential population that appears not to have seen any significant decline until the late 1940s. The earliest Fort Dodge settlers built their homes between the public square and the old fort and mid-nineteenth-century stores often had residential units attached at the side or rear: the practice of building stores with residential units on the upper floors did not

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Magazine (June 1996), 22-24 [Sears Building]. For background, see Samuel Hopkins Adams, "The Department Store," *Scribner's Magazine*, 21 (1897):1-27.

[43] Susan Porter Benson, *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890-1940* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986); William R. Leach, "Transformation in a Culture of Consumption: Women and Department Stores, 1890-1925," *Journal of American History*, 71 (1984):319-342.

[44] The paradigm shift in shopping and consumer marketing is discussed in James M. Mayor, *The American Grocery Store: The Business Evolution of an Architectural Space* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1993); see also Sharon Zukin, *Point of Purchase: How Shopping Changed American Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

become standard until after the Civil War. Over time, however, the Victorian concept of the middle-class home as a plot of ground with a freestanding dwelling, outbuildings, and a small enclosure compelled new home seekers to eschew the increasingly congested commercial district in favor of building lots away from the hustle and bustle. Still, many tradesmen and their families lived on their business premises, which enabled them to work long hours and provide added security for their property. By the 1890s, most two- and three-story business properties contained at least one (and usually three or more) residential units on the upper floors which were rented to families of modest means and single workers. Until well into the twentieth century, most of these walk-up apartments shared plumbing facilities and some must have been little better than tenements.

The concept of the "French flat," first popularized in New York City during the 1870s, eventually migrated to Iowa and several multistory apartment blocks were erected above stores in downtown Fort Dodge. At the same time, the invention of the mechanical elevator and advances in building construction technology allowed for the erection of taller, steel-framed buildings, which led to the invention of the low-rise commercial building four to eight stories in height. Low-rise apartment buildings (originally called "apartment houses" to distinguish them from the boarding houses occupied by blue-collar workers and immigrants) and grand-scaled hotels with residential apartments began to appear in downtown Fort Dodge in the 1910s. Foremost among these as the Warden Hotel, which advertised itself as "Iowa's Finest Apartment Building," offering apartments with up to four bedrooms as well as "bachelor" (i.e., efficiency) apartments. Unlike the walk-up residential quarters above stores, apartment houses and residential hotels were designed around the concept of the flat or apartment consisting of one or more sleeping chambers, a sitting or living room, built-in closets, a well appointed modern kitchen, and a private bathroom—conveniences and amenities not available in most family-family dwellings or in many private homes, which (along with affordable mass transit) made apartment living especially attractive to the growing middle-class in the 1920s.

Boarding houses, also called "rooming houses," were available for lodgers looking to rent rooms for extended periods. Usually located in large single-family dwellings but occasionally operated out of commercial properties, boarding houses provided an inexpensive alternative to hotels or rented rooms for itinerant workers and immigrants until they became extinct in the early 1900s. Commercial hotels made their appearance at an early date and occupied some of the most prominent downtown locations, where they attracted a large number of business travelers and tourists. Fort Dodge was northwestern Iowa's primary provider of visitor and convention facilities (with more than 600 hotel rooms in

the 1920s and 1930s, as opposed to about 450 in 2005) and the visitor economy generated significant income for downtown hotels, as well as eating and drinking establishments.[45]

Eating, Drinking & Entertainment Establishments

Commercial eating, drinking, and entertainment establishments loom large in the cultural and business heritage of the downtown district. The venerable saloon, what one anthropologist has called the "distinctively American configuration of fellowship and immorality," has always been part of the downtown social and architectural fabric.[46] In the 1870s, saloon license fees were a major source of public revenue (nearly $1500 in 1874) and the 1882 business directory lists five saloons and no fewer than fourteen grocers, the latter being a common Victorian era euphemism for an unlicensed establishment that sold strong drink in the back room. Since the founding of the town, Central Avenue and nearby streets have housed a prodigious number of saloons, beer gardens, taverns, billiard parlors, speakeasies, bars, cocktail lounges, and nightclubs. The annual reports of the city solicitor, police commission, and other officials contain frequent references to downtown saloon culture and its attendant forms of conduct. The city police report for 1903, which was not a particularly high-crime period, lists 683 arrests for drunkenness and 189 cases of disorderly conduct; six years later, Mayor C. F. Duncombe took credit for the police force making arrests "to keep the city clean and moral," citing 28 arrests for prostitution, 21 for illegal gambling, seven for "insulting ladies," 37 for assault, and two saloon-keepers charged with violations of the mulct law.[47] According to local folklore, Fort Dodge was one of the wettest spots in the state during Prohibition (1919-1933). Eating establishments, ranging from respectable restaurants to hole-in-the-wall cafes, have also been integral parts of the commercial streetscape. Downtown hotels traditionally incorporated bars and restaurants that catered to the appetites of residents and transients alike. Drug store soda fountains and

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[45] Monica Andriano, "The Wahkonsa," *Fort Dodge Today Magazine* (January 1995), 34-35; Beth Buehler, "The Warden Plaza," *Fort Dodge Today Magazine* (February 1995), 34-36. For background, see Betsy Boehm Hsu, "Private Spaces for Public Access: The Vernacular Landscape of the American Hotel," in Richard L. Austin, ed., *Yearbook of Landscape Architecture* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1984), 25-32; Karl Raitz and John Paul Jones, III, "The City Hotel as Landscape: Artifact and Community Symbol," *Journal of Cultural Geography* 9 (1988):17-36; see also, Paul Groth, *Living Downtown: The History of Residential Hotels in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), which offers an interesting perspective on the changing patterns of urban settlement in pre-automobile America.

[46] Jim Hathaway, "A History of the American Drinking Place," *Landscape*, 29:1 (1986), 2. Hathaway's discussion of the culture history of saloons, taverns, cocktail lounges, and bars draws heavily on field work done in the Upper Midwest. See also E. M. Moore, "The Social Value of the Saloon," *American Journal of Sociology*, 3 (1897):1-12.

[47] Annual reports of the Mayor for the years ending 1 April 1903 and 31 March 1909; City Clerk's office.

sandwich counters began appearing during the 1920s and reached their zenith as their popular culture icons in the 1940s and 1950s.

Downtown Fort Dodge historically offered a number of different kinds of entertainment venues. In the nineteenth century, an assortment of meeting halls, opera houses, and public rooms, often housed in multistoried business blocks, provided performing and exhibition space for stage plays, theatricals, concerts, and other events. In the 1880s the town had an opera house with a reported seating capacity of 1,200. Old newspapers record performances by visiting troupes of actors and musicians, as well as plays, pageants, and recitals put on by hometown artists. The twentieth century witnessed the construction of large buildings with spacious auditoriums that functioned as public recreation facilities; it is no coincidence that this sudden flurry of auditorium-building overlapped the golden age of Vaudeville and the florescence of motion pictures, organized athletics, and spectator sports. The Fort Dodge Armory became famous as a venue for basketball games, musical reviews, and social dances. Downtown movie theaters existed as early as 1910 and were originally housed in storefronts and business blocks. In addition to being a center of commercial, culture, and recreation, the downtown district was also the city's social, civic, and ecclesiastical realm. The county courthouse, public library, and municipal building, as well as several important lodge halls and churches, were intentionally placed in the midst of the lively commercial atmosphere. The growth of cultural and civic institutions was very strong between the 1880s and the 1920s.

Social and Cultural Establishments

The prevailing economic, social, religious, and political currents compelled Fort Dodge men and women to join clubs in droves. Old newspapers report that the central business streetscape was regularly enlivened by lodge and club meetings, parades, dances, prayer meetings, band concerts, debates, lectures, and rallies that provided opportunities for an enriched social life. There were lodges of Masons, Odd Fellows, Elks, Moose, and Red Men, a Grand Army of the Republic post, and a Commercial Club, each with its own meeting rooms above stores or in their own freestanding temples and halls. It is worth noting that women were stakeholders to some extent in nearly all of the important community institutions, particularly in the areas of education and religion. Under state law, women who were citizens could vote in school elections and serve on library boards, although their right to cast votes in local, state and federal elections was delayed until 1920. Faint beginnings of the modern women's movement can be seen in the activities of Fort Dodge club women, though the history of women's

organizations and their role in shaping community life (to say nothing of the buildings where these activities took place) is virtually unexplored territory.[48]

Twentieth-Century Transportation Shifts

The history of the downtown built environment has probably been shaped more by changes in transportation than by shifts in architectural fashion. Before the 1880s, Fort Dodgers walked or used private horse-drawn conveyances to move about the city, which was still remarkably compact geographically. Businesses tended to regard the city streets as merchandising space and the lack of masonry paving for streets further inhibited the flow of vehicular traffic. Street traffic (and street life) was most intense in the vicinity of the city's railroad depots, and around the Public Square.

By the 1880s, the increasing concentration of people and business activity in Fort Dodge was creating a distinctively urban transportation problem. The first practical overhead trolley line in the United States was built in Kansas City in 1884 and by 1888 there were thirteen street railways, including several in Iowa; after 1890 the development of interurban rail systems was extremely rapid and the motive power quickly shifted from steam to electricity. Fort Dodge's street railway was formed in the early 1890s and in a few years electric trolleys were running up and down the length of Central Avenue. The trolley line eventually was incorporated into the interurban system, which began in 1893 as the Des Moines & Central Iowa, a steam narrow gauge railroad, and was incorporated under the name Fort Dodge, Des Moines & Southern (the "Fort Dodge Line") in 1906; by 1907 it was running electrically powered trains between Fort Dodge, Webster City, Boone, Ames, and Des Moines. Its chief business was the movement of passengers within and between Fort Dodge and outlying towns and this traffic had social as well as economic significance. In its day, the trolley helped break down the isolation of rural life (it also afforded townspeople greater opportunities to reach the countryside) and thereby improved the economic and cultural opportunities of the city. Although the interurban was able to compete with the big steam railroads for passenger traffic, the rising cost of fuel, equipment, and improvements mandated by municipal ordinances (and the tremendous growth of personal automobiles) eventually drove the trolleys out of business. The downtown streetcars were taken out of service and replaced with buses in 1925. Intercity passenger service on the FDDM&S came to an end

[48] A roster of Fort Dodge women's clubs is provided in Pratt, *History of Fort Dodge*, 201-208. The Fort Dodge Public Library has a vertical file on the Fort Dodge Women's Club, which was founded in 1912 and hosted the Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs 1941 convention.

in 1954 and the old interurban eventually passed into the control of the Chicago & Northwestern, which operated it as a branch line until 1983. [49]

In a sense, the trolleys helped to create the modern downtown by making it easier for shoppers to move from one end of Central Avenue to the other in search of goods and services. The streetcar line itself exerted a considerable gravitational pull on retailing and by 1920 Central Avenue was one of the most heavily used travel and shopping corridors in Iowa. The character of street life changed dramatically during the first two decades of the twentieth century: the increase in people and stores was accompanied by infrastructure innovations (sidewalks, paved streets and gutters, electric street lighting) and entirely new forms of street life ("rush hour," street peddlers, bicycles) that made sidewalks and street crossings the main public places of the city.

Although the physical growth and rising economic prosperity of Fort Dodge between 1880 and 1930 depended heavily upon railroads, the automobile transformed the built environment of the central business district and set in motion rapid and far-reaching changes in the basic patterns of life that reverberated down through the twentieth century. The first gasoline-powered "horseless carriages" appeared in Fort Dodge around 1900 and by 1915 downtown streets were full of cars and trucks.[50] Under the strain of motorized traffic, the old brick-paved streets were found to be inadequate and city officials quickly developed an abiding interest in concrete paving; "There seems to be a general demand for paving," reported Mayor Bennett in April 1903. While there had been considerable public investment in street surfacing and sidewalks during the late nineteenth century, the impact of the automobile on the downtown environment was dramatic, beginning with the widening and paving of Central Avenue and other commercial streets and the installation of concrete curbs, gutters, and poured in place cement sidewalks. By the 1930s, personal cars were an imperative of urban and rural life: according to census figures, in 1939 the majority of Fort Dodge households owned an automobile.

The flexibility offered by cars and buses opened up large areas of previously undeveloped land outside the original townsite for home building, which led to a rapid physical expansion of the city's residential neighborhoods. As the basic patterns of city life (home, work, school, leisure, shopping) became more geographically dispersed, the densely developed central business district came to be seen as less attractive urban space. The design, placement, decoration, and use

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[49] A. P. Butts, *The Story of the Fort Dodge Street Railway* System (Webster City, Ia.: Grant Press, 1981).

[50] Reliable figures are not available for Fort Dodge, but statewide the registration of private motor vehicles jumped from 931 in 1904 to 147,078 in 1915; in that year, Iowa ranked first among the states in the number of cars per capita.

of commercial buildings all changed to better accommodate automobile-influenced commerce. Seemingly overnight, blacksmith shops became automobile garages, general stores installed curbside gas pumps, road signs and advertising became more pervasive, and local entrepreneurs began to sell new and used cars out of downtown storefronts. Parking lots and truck loading docks appeared behind stores. In order to attract passing motorists, businesses began to put up larger signs, often in loud colors, sometimes illuminated; and in many instances, whole display windows or building walls were covered with advertising. A profusion of new building types also appeared to serve the needs of cars and the motoring public. [51]

The Business Cycle and Downtown Development

Business formation, property investment, and building construction activities followed the ebb and flow of the business cycle, with development intensifying in good times and nearly dormant during recessions. As indicated by the dates of construction of existing downtown buildings, boom years for downtown Fort Dodge tend to cluster in 1880, 1890-1892, 1895-1903, 1904-1917, 1921-1928; these dates generally correlate with recoveries from the economic crisis's or "panics" of 1869-1873, 1884, 1893-1895, 1920-1923, and 1929-1935 that mark the low-points in the various building cycles.[52] Successful business development demanded determination and purpose, and was not for the faint of heart. Many factors influenced the decisions made by individual property developers: ownership and availability of a lot suitable for building, the amount of capital available for construction, encumbrances on potential building sites, space requirements,

[51] The literature on the social, economic, and environmental impacts of the automobile is quite large; key sources of background information are John A. Jackle and Keith A. Sculle, *Lots of Parking: Land Use in a Car Culture* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004); Martin Wachs and Margaret Crawford, eds., *The Car and the City: The Automobile, the Built Environment, and Daily Urban Life* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991). The role of the automobile in the decline of "Main Street" culture is taken up by Robert M. Fogelson, *Downtown: Its Rise and Fall, 1880-1950* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001) and Carole Rifkind, *Main Street: The Face of Urban America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977); see also Kent Macdonald, "The Commercial Strip: From Main Street to Television Road," *Landscape*, 28 (1985):12-19.

[52] The Panic of 1893, for example, was probably the worst economic crisis in American history up to that time; nationally, unemployment reached as high as 18% before the depression abated in 1896-1897; see Charles Hoffman, "The Depression of the Nineties," *Journal of Economic History*, 16 (1956):137-164; Richard Jenson, *The Winning of the Midwest: 1888-1897* (University of Chicago Press, 1971); and Sobel, *Panic on Wall Street*, 230-272. More research needs to be done in primary sources to document the scale of business failures, bankruptcies, and worker unemployment in Fort Dodge between 1888 and 1897, in order to better understand late nineteenth-century development patterns.

current architectural fashion, and the skill of the architect and contractor.[53] The buildings that resulted are a testament to this business model.

After the post-World War I recession of 1920-1923, the local economy and the downtown business community revived and showed healthy growth until the onset of the Great Depression. Downtown building construction quickly ground to a halt after the stock market crash in 1929. Businesses related to agriculture and establishments serving the needs of farmers were hit particularly hard and Central Avenue began to lose some of its appeal as a retailing and service center. By the late 1930s, however, the economy was beginning to recover; there was even a brief downtown building boom around 1940, though there was relatively little new commercial building construction during World War II. Despite the postwar boom, economic and cultural shifts produced fundamental changes in the life of downtown. As Fort Dodge's commercial and industrial sectors became increasingly decentralized during the 1950s, retail businesses began to migrate outward from downtown to the new commercial strips. The opening of the Crossroads Mall in 1964 sealed the fate of many long-established downtown stores, which went out of business or relocated.[54]

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[53] For a broader contextual view of the broad pattern of American business history with special reference to "Main Street" community and environmental history, see Gunther Barth, City People: *The Rise of Modern City Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); Richard V. Francaviglia, *Main Street Revisited: Time, Space, and Image Building in Small Town America* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996); Alison Isenberg, *Downtown America: A History of the Place and the People Who Made It* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); and David J. Russo, *American Towns: An Interpretive History* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001).

[54] The Crossroads Center project was the work of Minneapolis developer Jerry Schoenfelder, who garnered the full support of city officials behind his plan to create a second major retail center in the city, which opened in 1964 (the same year as the Fort Museum). Economic trends and their effects on local development are reviewed in the 1961 comprehensive land use plan; City Plan Commission, *The Comprehensive Plan Fort Dodge, Iowa* (City of Fort Dodge, 1961). This document, which was prepared by Harland Bartholomew and Associates, St. Louis, flatly declared the downtown "poorly adapted to modern needs and relatively unattractive due to many old buildings" (p. 29); the plan proposed the creation of "a pedestrian island" on Central Avenue between Seventh and Ninth streets, "in a manner quite similar to a modern regional shopping center" (pp. 29-30). The "Central Avenue Mall" scheme won the support of the Chamber of Commerce but was rejected by the voters in a 1967 referendum; based on a downtown "revitalization" study by Twin Cities-based BRW, a larger Central Avenue pedestrian mall was made the centerpiece of the city's application for a federal urban renewal grant, which also failed; Stevens, *20th Century Community Builders*, 44-47, 53-54. Various public and quasi-public entities have since undertaken downtown revitalization projects, including the Wahkonsa Manor, Warden Plaza and other projects involving historic buildings. In 1989, the city created the Self-Supported Municipal Improvement District (SMID), a 32-square block tax increment financing district that included the historic downtown; City of Fort Dodge Planning Commission, "Downtown Self Supporting Municipal Improvement District," unpublished report prepared in 1981. By 2005, the SMID had invested more than $1.4 million in downtown improvements (*Fort*

Despite the crippling effects of the Great Depression (1929-1935), Fort Dodge was not as hard hit as some other parts of Iowa because of its diversified economy. Business activity and population growth picked up during the late 1930s and 1940s; the 1950s and 1960s saw a significant expansion of the city's built-up area. The opening of the Crossroads Mall in 1964, however, significantly reduced the economic importance of the central business streetscape, which had seen a steady erosion of its gravitational pull on local business activity since the 1930s.[55]

Dodge Messenger, 28 June 2005). See City of Fort Dodge, "Urban Renewal District" reports to the Planning and Zoning Commission for 1974-1988

[55] Local narrative histories touch on economic trends and provide a certain amount of anecdotal information about local businesses; some pertinent information on long-term development patterns is contained in Walter B., Stevens, *20th Century Community Builders: The History and Accomplishments of the Greater Fort Dodge Chamber of Commerce* (Fort Dodge: The Chamber, 1978), and Gerald L. Nordquist, "The Fort Dodge Economy," *Iowa Business Digest*, 30 (1959):5-21. Natte and Dunsmoor provide well-research data on the names and types of businesses associated with specific downtown locations in *Tour of Discovery* (1993) and "Early Tenants of Buildings on Central Avenue" (1986). A late twentieth-century perspective is provided by the articles in the glossy Heartland Communications publication, *Fort Dodge Business Today*, published in 1997.

III. HISTORIC PROPERTY TYPES

Property types are groupings of historic resources based on shared physical or associative characteristics that link the themes and patterns articulated in the historic context narrative with actual historic buildings and sites observed on the ground.[56] This section (which corresponds to Part F of the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form) defines downtown property types in broad, general terms with respect to their physical characteristics, historical significance, and registration requirements. Architectural property type designations generally follow the data categories used by the Iowa SHPO's Site Inventory Form. To the extent that character-defining details are assigned to an academic style or period, the terminology used here also follows the Site Inventory Form categories for architectural classification. The discussion of various historic resource types and their historical associations has been influenced by some of the more recent scholarly works on "Main Street" architectural and landscape history.[57]

Property Type Descriptions

Downtown historic property types worthy of preservation encompass architectural, landscape, and (possibly) archaeological resources. Buildings dominate the downtown inventory, with properties constructed between 1900 and 1930 being most numerous. Indeed, no historic buildings survive from the initial phase of downtown development (1854-1869) and only about two-dozen individually significant or contributing properties date from the late-nineteenth century (1870-1900). Architectural resources identified by the survey and evaluated as worthy of preservation interest fall into six general categories: commercial buildings, civic buildings, social buildings, industrial buildings, churches, and residences. Contextually, all of these buildings document the history and development of the downtown area and should be considered components of a commercial historic district. Within these broad categories, several important property types stand out and should provide the basis for historic property identification and evaluation of significance.

Designed and vernacular urban landscape features are also present, though only a small handful appear to be individually significant. Three historic landscape

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[56] "Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines," 44719.

[57] Richard Longstreth, *The Buildings on Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture* (Washington: Preservation Press, 1987); Chester H. Liebs, *A Guide to American Commercial Architecture* (Walnut Hills, CA: Altamira Press, 2000). The interested reader should also consult Christopher Alexander, et al., *A Pattern Language* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977); and Carole Rifkind, *A Field Guide to American* Architecture (New York: New American Library, 1980).

property types are identified: Public Open Space, Monument, and Streetscape. No archaeological sites have been recorded within the downtown survey area and the scope of the present investigation did not include below-ground cultural resources. Nevertheless, background historical data suggest that important archaeological resources could be expected to occur and may be concentrated in particular areas. A range of potential site types are briefly discussed.

Commercial Buildings

The design characteristics of downtown buildings in Fort Dodge are predominantly vernacular and consistent with the architectural personality of "Main Street" in a small provincial city in the Upper Midwest. Vernacular commercial architecture encompasses a broad spectrum of common building forms which do not "fit" within the standard period/style categorizations.[58] Although most of the historic commercial buildings in the downtown inventory should properly be classified as examples of vernacular architecture, many of them exhibit eye-catching design features or decorative detailing that reflects a particular architectural style. In most cases the stylized detailing found on downtown buildings is merely a skin-deep embellishment of an otherwise common building form. More often than not, the most enriched building facades mix and mingle elements from different academic styles, which can be a source of confusion in determining architectural classification for National Register registration purposes.

The most common of the recognized stylistic treatments are those associated with the Italianate style, a picturesque mode which was popular in commercial architecture from the 1870s through the 1890s. Characteristic Italianate style façade detailing includes overhanging brick or pressed metal cornices with large ornamental brackets, decorative brick pilasters, round and segmental arch windows with articulated headers, and recessed street entrances with double doors. A few of the older commercial facades show the influence of other Late Victorian period styles in the form of monochromatic brick walls, compound arched windows and doors, arcades, pedimented window headers, belt or string courses, ribbon windows with transoms, and architrave cornices; few, if any, would be regarded as prime specimens of any particular style, however. Most of the low-rise, twentieth-century commercial buildings are façade-oriented, functional constructions supported by steel skeletons and were embellished with

[58] Some historians have questioned the validity of the concept of style; e.g., Dell Upton, "Architectural History or Landscape History?" *Journal of Architectural Education*, 44 (1991):195-199; and Thomas Carter and Bernard L. Herman, "Introduction: Toward a New Architectural History," in Carter and Herman, eds., *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, IV* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1991), 1-6.

stylized ornamentation that showed the influence of "Sullivanesque" (also called Chicago Commercial) style.[59]

With a few notable exceptions, the facades of downtown commercial buildings built before 1964, regardless of type or style, are organized around the traditional street-level storefront (Fig. 6). Although there was considerable variation in size and materials between buildings, the design of storefronts was more or less standardized throughout North America by the 1870s. The traditional storefront consisted of the building's street entrance and ground-floor display windows. The entrance was usually, though not always, centered and the doorway was often recessed behind the plane of the wall in order to maximize display space and draw customers into the store. The most important architectural elements were the plate glass display windows (designed to make the front wall of the store transparent), wooden bulkhead panels, and glass transoms. Fortunately for preservationists, several downtown storefronts have not changed a great deal since they opened their doors, and their physical features reveal a great deal about the way people bought and sold goods and services in bygone years.

The alignment of horizontal design elements on historic commercial facades is one of the strongest visual characteristics of the downtown build environment. Although a few upper-level facades were apparently designed to complement their storefronts, most of the downtown commercial buildings constructed between 1890 and 1930 incorporate dissimilar architectural detailing in order to highlight the difference in function between the street level and upper stories. Belt and string courses, window sills and headers are the most common features used to maintain the distinction between the street level and upper floors. Many of the bigger stores and business blocks, and a few of the brick-front stores, include carved friezes or cornice inscriptions bearing the names of the original owner and date of construction. The strongest alignment of horizontal elements, however, existed at the cornice level. Facades with pretensions to artistic style often accented the cornice with brackets, dentils, or pediments; the simplest facades have nothing more than brick corbelling, low parapets, and sign-boards. In contrast to the large plate glass storefront windows at street-level, the windows on the upper floors are much smaller openings and give the appearance of puncturing the solid masonry walls. They usually have double-hung sash; older buildings typically have taller, narrower upper-floor windows than later facades. While the top of the typical storefront is between 12 and 14 feet above grade, second and third floors are usually 10-12 feet in height. Some

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[59] See Kenneth Turney Gibbs, *Business Architectural Imagery in America, 1870-1930* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1984); Richard Longstreth, "Compositional Types in American Commercial Architecture," in Camille Wells, ed., *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, II* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1986), 12-23; and Ronald E. Schmitt, *Sullivanesque: Urban Architecture and Ornamentation* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002).

of the larger brick-front stores and business blocks were intentionally designed to appear as two or more different facades, and this variation in façade detailing was usually extended to the second and third floors as well as the storefronts.

Store buildings are the ubiquitous downtown commercial building property type. In traditional architectural parlance, a *store* usually occupied an entire commercial building, whereas a *shop* was a component within a building, usually occupied by some specialized, small-scale enterprise. A typical store built in the late nineteenth century would have featured a deep, narrow sales floor at street level with a high ceiling and a long wooden counter along one or two sides of the sales floor, with shelves lining the walls behind the counter. In some stores, the counters and shelving extended along all three interior walls. There were also wood, metal and glass display cabinets, tables, and racks of merchandise placed strategically around the shop floor. Dry goods were dispensed from bins or barrels. In the larger stores, customers received personalized service, and when the practice of self-service and cash-and-carry gained momentum after World War I, customers were encouraged to select their purchases from island counters arranged in rows across the store floor, then proceed to a central cash register to "check out."[60] Behind the retail spaces were offices, storerooms, and other spaces. Some stores were built with large openings on their side and rear elevations to facilitate the transfer of bulky goods to and from wagons. Most had basements for storage, shop rooms, and back-stock merchandise.

For purposes of architectural classification, vernacular commercial buildings which historically functioned as stores are identified by type. Three common store building types occur in downtown Fort Dodge: Brick Front Store, Business Block, and Broad Front Store. The Brick Front Store, sometimes referred to as the "Main Street Building," is a vernacular form that dominates in older commercial districts throughout North America. The historic prototype of the two-story brick front store first appeared in towns along the Eastern seaboard in the late eighteenth century and migrated westward with the frontier, reaching Iowa in the 1840s. It is well represented in downtown Fort Dodge by specimens constructed between the 1890s and the 1920s, and the basic form persisted in commercial properties built up until the 1940s. Its primary identifying characteristics are the long, rectangular plan with the long axis perpendicular to the street, one to three stories in height and three to five bays wide, with brick wall cladding and symmetrical fenestration. Nearly all examples have flat roofs and most have basements, some extending under the sidewalks and streets.

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[60] Frank W. Woolworth is credited with pioneering the idea of displaying goods in open shelves in 1879 when he opened his first "five and dime" store in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. By 1911, Woolworth's was a 596-store chain, including an outlet in Fort Dodge, which also had branches of Sears, Roebuck & Company, Montgomery Ward, Boston Store, and Kresge Company

Single-story Brick Front type stores built after 1920 tend to have minimal exterior detailing; indeed, many of their facades are practically undecorated.

Examples of the Business Block property type are distinguished from Brick-Front Store buildings by their physical size, detailing, and commercial diversification. The term *business block* (believed to be British in origin) entered American English sometime early in the nineteenth century and was used to describe any large, ornate commercial building, usually found on a corner lot, that housed a combination of stores, shops, offices, and apartments. In its local historic context, the Business Block property type is two to four stories in height, brick-clad, and often has one street elevation that is larger and more ornate than the other. Much of the façade decoration is concentrated along the cornice and is often an eclectic combination of classical and picturesque elements. Fenestration varied from floor to floor, often with large round-headed window and door openings on the ground floor and segmented or pedimented windows on the upper façade; the main entrance was sometimes placed at the corner of the building and canted. Occasionally, the street-level façade was arcaded with a series of connected arches containing the doorway and window openings, reflecting a movement in commercial architecture known as Romanesque Revival. Unlike most stores, business blocks often had formal names (Corey Block, Hower Block, etc.); sometimes the name was placed on the façade along with the date of construction. Corner business blocks appeared were some of the most imposing downtown buildings constructed during the latter part of the nineteenth century.

An interesting variant of the Business Block property type is found in Fort Dodge: the Iron Front. The use of cast iron on commercial building facades was a nineteenth technical innovation that originated in New York and other Eastern cities in the 1820s and spread westward, due in no small part to the writings of engineer James Bogardus, the Iron Front building's chief American proponent.[61] Basically a brick-faced store or business block with cast iron storefront detailing, examples of the Iron-Front Store property type are scattered throughout the older sections of downtown. Cast-iron provided greater structural strength, which allowed for wider window and door openings; it also allowed for the mass production of a wide array of decorative details. A few buildings had their entire storefronts constructed of iron, but most local examples are masonry buildings to which prefabricated iron columns, spandrels, and decorative components were attached during construction. Some brick-front buildings also

[61] William Fryer, "Iron Store Fronts," *Architectural Review and American Builder's Journal*, 1 (1869):621; see Margot Gayle, *Cast-Iron Architecture in America* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1998).

incorporated cast-iron frames in order to provide better support for three- and four-story buildings.[62]

Both stores and business block facades were typically two-part compositions, with a horizontal division between the street-level storefront and the upper floors reflecting their different functions.[63] (It was also common for store buildings to connect to one another through openings in their side walls; the inventory includes several properties composed of two different building cores.) In a class by themselves are examples of low-rise commercial architecture, referred to as the Stacked Vertical Block property type, which appeared in Fort Dodge during the period 1900-1930. Low-rise commercial buildings were the visual "anchor attractions" of downtown, representing some of the most sophisticated commercial architecture constructed in Fort Dodge. Escalating land prices, improvements in metallurgy and masonry, and the introduction of mechanical elevators made it possible to erect multi-story buildings supported by wrought iron (later steel) skeletons encased in masonry curtain-walls.[64] Essentially stacked business blocks four to eight stories tall, they were designed to draw attention to themselves with strong, three-dimensional qualities that invited the public to come inside. Large expanses of plate glass continued all across the floor facades and grand street-level entrances channeled shoppers inside; the lavish display windows, designed to suggest luxurious interiors, introduced "window shopping" to the mainstream culture. As a group, these buildings exhibit wide variation in their wall, window, and cornice decoration but in general the volume and details of their facades emphasize verticality. Low-rise buildings such as the National Bank Building and the Snell Building on Central Avenue epitomized the trend toward "Chicago Commercial Style" architecture that was spreading across the country.[65]

The most common early-twentieth century commercial building type is the Broad Front Store (sometimes referred to in the literature as the "Modern Broad Front Store"), a vernacular form associated with the rise of automobile culture. Broad-front store design featured an open, one-story façade decorated with

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[62] For a detailed examination of a local specimen of iron front commercial architecture, see the Barbara Beving Long survey report and David Arbogast Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) documentation for 16-22 S. 6th St. This property is no longer extant.

[63] See the illustrated discussion of the "Two-Part Commercial Block" in Lonstreth, *The Buildings on Main Street*, 24-53.

[64] See the chapters on vertical blocks in Longstreth, *Buildings of Main Street*, 82-99, passim. Chicago architect William Le Baron Jenny is credited with perfecting the iron-framed, curtain-wall method of construction; his Home Insurance Company office building, erected in 1883-1885, is generally regarded as the first American skyscraper.

[65] Floor plans of the First National Bank Building by Liebbe, Nourse and Rasmussen were published in the October 1911 number of *The Western Architect*, inviting comparisons with other Chicago School-inspired commercial work.

panels of brickwork, brick or concrete block piers, and a continuous band of large display windows which were usually fitted with transoms. A number of substantial single-story broad-front business blocks were built downtown between the 1890s and 1920s. Some of the early twentieth-century broad fronts are quite imposing and exhibit Modern-styled detailing, although most are modest constructions with minimal façade decoration. Many built after 1920 have enframed window walls to convey a strong sense of openness; this type of downtown building was particularly well adapted to car sales and other specialized retailing. The broad front form was also widely used for variety stores, dime stores, and grocery supermarkets.

A minor variant of the Broad Front Store property type, known as the "artistic front" store, appeared in the 1920s. One or two stories in height, these buildings were more residential than commercial in scale and relied upon the creative use of ornamental brick, stucco, and even faux half-timbering to create interesting storefronts. The influence of the Arts and Crafts and Bungalow movements is readily apparent. In Fort Dodge, the few extant specimens of this vernacular form are found on the fringes of the central business district and only one example was recorded during the downtown survey.

Three functional historic property types are represented in the downtown inventory: Bank, Hotel, and Apartment Building. All of the surveyed examples date from the 1901-1964 period and their design characteristics are highly variable. Banks appeared in Fort Dodge after saloons and hotels, but before opera houses and hospitals. Bank architecture changed dramatically over time. Nineteenth-century banks were usually located in corner business blocks in order to provide lobby entrances on two streets. Their architectural detailing was not essentially different from other Victorian period commercial facades, as these enterprises tended to emphasize interior rather than exterior ornamentation. By the early 1900s, however, the architectural pretensions of banks rivaled that of department stores and hotels. In order to inspire awe and confidence, bank buildings resembled classical temples (perhaps an allusion to the banker's role of secular high priest, dispensing loans instead of benedictions). After the Great Depression, when many local banks failed, bank architecture shifted toward Modern forms.

Hotel architecture was also varied and downtown hotels took many shapes. A few, most notably the Wahkonsa and the Warden Hotel, rivaled the architecture of the better stores and institutional buildings. While the grand residential and merchant hotels were architect-designed buildings, most downtown hostelries were based on standard plans and were therefore readily adaptable for alternative uses. The preferred location for nineteenth-century commercial hotels was close to the major transportation hubs, especially the railroad stations.

Just about every one of the downtown hotels also housed stores, shops, and offices on their lower floors.

Although there were apartments and flats in downtown commercial buildings at an early date, the Apartment Building as a historic property type is essentially a twentieth-century phenomenon. Since the early 1900s, freestanding commercial buildings created primarily to provide multiple residential units have been commonly referred to as "apartment buildings" or "apartment blocks", even when they incorporated non-residential spaces such as stores and offices. In downtown Fort Dodge, the typical apartment building was a multi-story business block with stores and shops on the ground floor and two or upper floors given over to residential use. Downtown apartment buildings usually bore the names of their owners or fancy names drawn from cultural or historical sources, and typically included street-level retail space, classically proportioned facades, and eclectic detailing, with a high proportion of window to wall area.

The survey identified two property types associated with the automobile: the Garage and the Gas Station. Automotive garages and car sales stores begin to appear in Fort Dodge city directories around 1910, when motoring was still a novelty, and during the next three decades many old livery stables, blacksmith shops, utility buildings, small stores and dwellings appear to have been torn down to make way for businesses engaged in selling, repairing, or supplying automobiles. Much of this auto-related business activity was concentrated along First Avenue North, with another pocket of auto-related stores and shops on lower First Avenue South.

The earliest automobile sales and service businesses were often located in converted livery stables, blacksmith shops, or machinery sales buildings. From about 1915 on, however, automotive sales outlets were typically located in commercial buildings which appear to have been purposefully designed and built for automobile commerce. Automobile service garages were usually based on the Broad Front Store prototype. Their facades are usually plain brick walls, but some have large display windows; fenestration usually reflects distinct office, shop, and display bay divisions. Decorated garage facades feature engaged brick pilasters, corbelled cornices, and parapets. All have overhead service doors on their principal or secondary elevations; the largest are corner properties. Many of the early garages and car dealerships were short-lived ventures, especially car and truck dealerships, so many of these buildings have been recycled for a variety of uses. Over time, the tire stores, body shops, welding shops, and service garages have shown a clear preference for the single-story broad-fronted building form, which could easily be fitted with overhead doors and the interior spaces configured for use as offices, workshops, storerooms, or service bays.

Although gas stations function like stores, their architectural characteristics and preservation value set them apart from other commercial buildings. The ancestor of the gas station was the blacksmith shop and many of the first retail outlets for gasoline and other automotive products were curb-side operations in front of blacksmith shops, grocery and hardware stores. The first local bulk fuel retailers appeared sometime after 1905 and it wasn't long before Fort Dodge businessmen began to erect local versions of the "filling station" (the name was coined around 1915 by Sylvanus F. Bowser, inventor of the modern gas pump). The proliferation of automobiles in the 1920s and 1930s sparked the building of one-story gasoline service stations based on standardized plans, with service islands, shop bays, and large signs.[66] By the 1940s, the downtown landscape was dotted with gas stations. Over time, gas station architecture became more or less standardized with different companies building myriad stations, typically consisting of a paved lot, one or more masonry or metal sheds, and a large billboard. By the early 1960s, gas stations had settled on nearly every corner that wasn't occupied by a store or church along First Avenues North and South. The handful of downtown gas stations which survive are examples of functional stations, simple concrete block buildings with smooth, clean lines reflecting Modern Movement design themes; most were built with covered bays and canopies. All of the surveyed examples have been converted to other, non-automotive uses and their potential for rehabilitation and adaptive reuse is unstudied.[67]

Civic Buildings

Civic buildings were important from the very beginning in Fort Dodge, though there was not a tremendous amount of investment in civic architecture until the last decades of the nineteenth century. The first modern public building was the Webster County Courthouse, an outstanding example of a late Victorian period judicial landscape.[68] The county courthouse, municipal building, public library, and other institutional buildings generally exhibit the most architecturally enriched facades; as a group, these one-of-a-kind, architect-designed buildings

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[66] Gas station designs and trends in retailing are discussed in John A. Jackle and Keith A. Sculle, *The Gas Station in America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994)

[67] For background on the cultural and architectural history of gas stations in the United States, see Daniel I. Vieyre, *"Fill 'er up": An Architectural History of America's Gas Stations* (New York: Macmillan, 1979); and John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle, *The Gas Station in America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994); and Keith A. Sculle, "The Vernacular Gasoline Station: Examples from Illinois and Wisconsin," *Journal of Cultural Geography* 1 (1981):56-74.

[68] The earliest government offices in Fort Dodge, as in most frontier towns, were housed in multipurpose commercial buildings above stores. For the origins of the county courthouse as a specialized form of judicial landscape, see Martha J. McNamara, *From Tavern to Courthouse: Architecture and Ritual in American Law, 1658-1860* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

reflect a wide spectrum of Late Victorian, Eclectic, and early Modern design precedents. Perhaps the most treasured architectural landmarks resulted from the city's response to the City Beautiful Movement, which swept America in the wake of the World Columbian Exposition held at Chicago in 1893 (and was roughly contemporaneous with the Beaux Arts movement in Europe). Generally, these buildings are massive in scale, meticulously detailed, and incorporate many high-style Classical, Renaissance or Neoclassical-inspired details. Most are placed on large lots. The Municipal Building and Public Library were set off with open space in front, which make the facades more prominent. In the historic context of the national pattern language of the Progressive Era (1890s-1920s), these buildings illustrate the reform movement in architecture and urban planning; in their local context, they illustrate the extent to which rural Iowa was swept up in the City Beautiful movement and represent community landmarks in their own right.

Churches

For the better part of a century, downtown Fort Dodge has been conspicuous for its religious architecture. The earliest churches, of which none are extant, were small, wood framed vernacular buildings that sometimes showed the influence of the Greek Revival, Italianate, and Carpenter Gothic styles. Masonry churches exhibiting the then-popular Renaissance and Romanesque Revival elements were the norm after about 1880. Most early twentieth-century churches adopted the shallow basilica design (rectangular in plan, but not much longer than their width); conspicuous design elements include classical porticos, steeply-rising multi-tiered towers, and arched windows. The First Methodist Church, built in 1914, is designed around an auditorium and galleries under a rotunda (an adaptation of the Akron Plan in Methodist church design).

Although several of the downtown churches are roughly contemporaneous in age with the City Beautiful Movement, their architecture is dominated by the vocabulary of the period revival styles, characterized by the use of ashlar or brick masonry, pointed arch windows, towers, and steeply pitched roofs. Although they use design elements borrowed from late-medieval church architecture, St. Mark's, First Methodist, and Sacred Heart are basically modern, indigenous Midwestern renditions of much more famous specimens of Richardsonian Romanesque and Neoclassical styled buildings found in larger cities.[69]

[69] For background on the history of American church architecture see, Peter W. Williams, *Houses of God: Region, Religion and Architecture in the United States* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997).

Social Buildings

The first lodge halls and common rooms were simply that: halls and rooms above stores. The demand for meeting rooms was not so great as to warrant construction of entire buildings devoted to social intercourse until the last decade of the nineteenth-century. The wave of prosperity that broke over Fort Dodge in the 1890s led to an outburst of building sponsored by fraternal, patriotic, and social organizations. In addition to meeting halls and club rooms, these buildings also incorporated indoor recreation and cultural facilities, business offices, dining rooms, and sometimes institutional housing.

Buildings constructed by fraternal organizations, public service organizations, and social clubs are characteristic of the "golden age" of downtown. The architects and master builders employed by these groups showed a great predilection for large brick compositions in the Neoclassical, Beaux-Arts, and Classical Revival styles, but with a sturdy, sensible Midwestern flavor. This trend reflected the City Beautiful movement's design principles which emphasized symmetrical composition, monumentality, and enriched moldings. As a group, the downtown social buildings are visually impressive and exhibit consistently high quality in architectural history.

Industrial Buildings

Manufacturing, communications, and storage facilities are classified as industrial buildings. Downtown factory buildings displayed typical features of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century industrial architecture, including a vertical division into base, shaft, and attic story segments. Warehouses, of which there were several (only one specimen survives and is located outside the downtown district), were characterized by their large expanses of brick walls, minimal decorative detailing, large ground-floor openings to accommodate wagons and trucks, and small windows.

Residences

Before the downtown commercial area marched up Central Avenue from the Public Square, the central part of Fort Dodge was a residential neighborhood. Even when the commercial district was mature, there were detached, single-family houses interspersed among the stores and business blocks. Surviving residential properties are found on the periphery of the central business district. They include a pair of picturesque brick homes with Late Victorian picturesque styled detailing, a vernacular foursquare duplex, and a specimen of 1920s bungalow architecture.

Landscapes

Urban historic landscape features are ordinarily treated as sites or objects. They occur in downtown Fort Dodge in the form of both designed and vernacular resources.[70] Designed historic landscapes exemplify principles or styles in landscape architecture, urban planning, the arts, and civil engineering. Urban vernacular landscapes are commonplace features that reflect historic land uses and activities, patterns of spatial organization, cultural traditions, circulation networks, boundary demarcations, buildings, and small-scale elements such as advertising signs.

The four most important historic landscape property types are: Public Open Space, Monuments, Streetscapes, and Ghost Signs. The sole example of the Public Open Space property type is the Public Square, commonly called City Square Park. This small public commons area exhibits characteristics of both designed and vernacular landscapes, in that its spatial organization and boundaries were delimited by the 1854 orthogonal plat; as a city park, it contains structures and objects which were intentionally planned but also reflect cultural traditions and land uses. The gazebo, as well as most of the ornamental plantings, are less than fifty years old and therefore not historic resources.)

Outdoor or public art was never especially plentiful in the commercial district, though modern visitors are treated to outdoor statues of John F. Duncombe in the Public Square and William Squire Kenyon in the pocket park next to the Courthouse on Central Avenue), works by the noted Chicago sculptors Leonard Brunelle and Albin Polasek, respectively. Their heritage value as Monuments is the product of their art history and design values.

In preservation planning, the property type classification Streetscape is applied to groups of buildings and their associated outdoor landscape elements that visually imprint a specific environment with a strong identity of time and place. Distinct from works of landscape architecture, streetscapes are vernacular urban landscapes that have been shaped and reshaped by changing architectural fashions, community responses to boom and bust cycles, and shifts in the predominant forms of transportation. The gridiron plat exerted the greatest influence on the overall shape of the downtown built environment. Although the rhythm of building facades, storefronts, and rooflines visually dominate the

[70] Historic landscapes are areas that have been shaped or modified by human activity; urban historic landscape features include parks, streets, alleys, sidewalks, retaining walls, ornamental plantings, and vacant lots. For the preservation value of landscapes, both designed and vernacular, see the relevant National Register Bulletins. The seminal work calling for a landscape approach to culture history is John Brinckerhoff Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984).

viewsheds, individual streetscapes are composed of many historic features, including streets, signs, street furniture, and open spaces.

Within the organic pattern of rectilinear streets, the typical downtown urban streetscape is entirely built-over and the mass of buildings is interrupted only by pavement, sidewalks, and vacant lots, except for the historic Public Square and a few plots of urban parkland carved out of former building sites. The texture of this landscape is dominated by hard surfaces: brick, concrete, stone, asphalt, steel, and glass. None of the historic sidewalks or street paving has been preserved, through a small segment of circa 1905 Lake Superior sandstone curbstone remains embedded against the side of First Avenue South, across the street from the Municipal Building.[71] The counterparts to downtown sidewalks are the introverted passageways which connected buildings basements and upper floors with the street-level thoroughfares, most of which were privately built and maintained (and therefore virtually unregulated before the modern era): the most common examples include single- and double-leaf sidewalk doors (covered openings that provide access to store basements under the sidewalk), sidewalk staircases (metal or masonry steps leading to the sub-grade entrances of basement shops and stores), and fire escape ladders. The latter (patented by Joseph Winters in 1878) include various forms of hinged iron or steel fire escape ladders connected to grated platforms on the side and rear elevations of low-rise buildings. There were also a few above-grade passages between buildings, at least one ancestral skywalk (connecting the second stories of the two Messenger properties at 713 Central and 712 First Avenue North back-to-back above the alley). By design, these connective structures were inwardly oriented and separate from the public streets and sidewalks. Downtown alleys, some of which exist today primarily as voids for trash and illegal drug activity, were once considered essential for commercial activity.

Historic landscape features also include outdoor advertising in the form of hand-painted wall signs (commonly known as "ghost signs") on the exposed side walls of many older buildings. Some of these signs, rendered in white lead paint mixed with linseed oil, varnish, lampblack, and other pigments, are over 75 years old and have outlived the products they advertised. One of the best preserved examples of this lost art form is found on the west elevation of the historic Fort Dodge Paint & Wallpaper Company building at 814 First Avenue South. With the advent of billboards (and restrictive city sign ordinances) painted wall signs fell out of fashion, with the result that many were sandblasted off, painted over, or entombed behind new construction.

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[71] This reddish-brown stone was probably quarried near Bayfield, Wisconsin, the major source for the Precambrian-aged sedimentary rock, which was widely used in building construction throughout the Great Lakes region.

Archaeological Sites

Every downtown building is a potential archaeological site; consequently, every location occupied by a non-extant historic building could be viewed as a potential archaeological resource. Archaeological evidence of the original Fort Dodge military installation, the ruins of nineteenth-century commercial structures, and complexes of non-extant buildings such as the City Market could yield important information that would shed light on local history. Predictions of the location and potential research value of downtown archaeological sites could be easily accomplished through archival research and presented in GIS form to show where it is most likely that significant archaeological remains may be found underground. Archaeological investigation of potential sites would need to be based upon well-formulated research designs that consider the archaeological remains in their historic context.[72]

Because the entire Central Avenue commercial district was urbanized and built-up before 1920, a considerable amount of public works construction, some of it quite old, probably lies embedded within the urban landscape in the form of a tangled web of pipes, mains, lines, and conduits (water, storm and sanitary sewer, gas, telephone, and electrical), standpipes, catch basins, and maintenance covers. It would not be unreasonable to expect to encounter abandoned sections of circa 1870s iron coal-gas mains, 1880s cast-iron water mains, 1890s vitrified clay sewer pipe deep underneath Central Avenue, during excavations for public utilities and new building construction.

Property Type Significance

The period of significance for downtown Fort Dodge begins with the platting of the townsite in 1854 and ends with the opening of the Crossroads Mall in 1964. For purposes of National Register listing, properties that were built or attained significance but which are less than fifty years old cannot be considered significant; that said, any property less than fifty years old could be zoned for "historic preservation" in a locally designated conservancy or overlay district.

Buildings

Historic buildings, landscapes, and archaeological sites are historically significant under National Register Criterion A when they document or illustrate important patterns and trends in downtown development. However, a

[72] See Donald L. Hardesty and Barbara J. Little, *Assessing Site Significance: A Guide for Archaeologists and Historians* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2000), 153-159; and Edward Staski, ed., *Living in Cities: Current Research in Urban Archaeology* (Ann Arbor: Society for Historical Archaeology, 1986).

property's simple association with the broad pattern of downtown development is not enough, in and of itself, for a building or landscape to qualify for registration: the association itself must be important. In most cases, buildings and landscapes will also need to be shown significant for their design and construction values under Criterion C to be listed individually in the National Register.

Individual buildings are significant for their association with architectural history when they embody the distinctive characteristics of an important property type. This includes notable, well preserved examples of vernacular building types, buildings which exhibit the qualities associated with a particular academic style or architectural movement, and rare surviving specimens of historically important building types. Architectural resources that represent a significant and distinguishable entity, but lack individual distinction, may be considered as contributing properties in a historic district.

Landscapes

Urban historic landscapes, both vernacular and designed, have significance under National Register Criteria A and C when they are associated with important land use patterns relating to commercial development activities, architecture, transportation, response to the natural environment, and planning. Probably the best known downtown landscape feature is the Public Square (City Square Park), which comprises part of the original 1854 plat and functioned as a meeting place, market, and social center. Historic integrity considerations notwithstanding, the Public Square has undeniable preservation value as a type of designed historic landscape that illustrates the original town plat and its influence on the downtown built environment. The original intent of the design and subsequent alterations are well understood and the physical appearance of the site is documented in plans and photographs dating back to the mid-nineteenth century. Other streets, blocks, and lots created by the original plat are characteristic features of the downtown environment and contribute to the significance of the central business district as a whole, but they probably do not warrant treatment as individually significant designed historic landscapes.

Cohesive streetscapes can possess an identity of time and place that enhances the historic character of adjacent buildings. Some landscape features, such as streets and sidewalks, are still in active use, while others are functionally obsolete landscape fossils. These artifacts of past urban landscapes that can shed light on past patterns of downtown life, but usually lack the distinguishing characteristics and integrity that are required for individual National Register listing. Downtown infrastructure represents a form of landscape archaeology resource whenever undisturbed abandoned utility structures are preserved *in situ* and

their examination leads to important information that would otherwise be unobtainable. Conventional urban archaeology sites may also be present as foundation walls, floors, and refuse buried underneath existing buildings and pavement.[73]

As noted elsewhere, the overall appearance and character of the downtown commercial district was shaped in large part by the gridiron plat of the original town plat. While the street pattern is of historical interest primarily as an artifact of the original townsite, the alignment, width, and surface material of the main avenues and cross-streets continue to exert a powerful influence over the architectural impressions of individual buildings and streetscapes.

There is no natural vegetation anywhere in the downtown area. However, the Public Squares may afford preservationists with a unique opportunity to identify historic vegetation related to land use. The square probably had some indigenous trees and grass cover throughout much of its history; unfortunately, the native plants were eventually replaced with naturalized and introduced species, including ornamental shrubbery and flower beds. Although it is unlikely that any of the plantings observed in City Square Park today are historic specimens, it would probably be worthwhile to conduct a reconstruction of the site's landscape history, 1855 to present. There has also some incidental landscape planting in the form of ornamental trees, shrubbery, and flower beds in front of the Municipal Building and the Public Library.[74]

Archaeological Sites

Archaeological sites and landscapes may be eligible for the National Register if they have yielded, or may be likely to yield, important historical, anthropological, or architectural data.[75] Natural resources, paleontological finds (e.g., fossils) and geologic features are not usually considered heritage resources unless a strong case can be made that they influenced past human activities.

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[73] For approaches to designed historic landscapes, see the National Register Bulletin by J. Timothy Keller and Genevieve P. Keller, *How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes* (Washington: National Park Service, 1987).

[74] The annual reports of the park superintendent and "park florist" from the 1920s and 1930s (archived in the City Clerk's office) contain frequent references to city workers cultivating ornamental plants at the Public Square (referred to as "City Square Park" or simply "City Park") and at municipal buildings, part of an ambitious city-wide beautification program. In addition to lawn grasses, plantings at the Municipal Building and Public Library included buckthorn and barberry hedges and various flowering annuals and perennials.

[75] See the National Register Bulletin, *Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Historic Archeological Properties* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 2000).

Registration Requirements

For a downtown property to be listed in the National Register, it must be shown to meet one of the National Register Criteria for Evaluation by being associated with the historic context, "Development Downtown Fort Dodge, 1854-1964," and by retaining historic integrity of those features necessary to convey its significance in history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture.

Buildings

Commercial, civic, social, industrial, and religious buildings should be considered individually eligible for nomination to the National Register when they include the whole building and retain historic integrity, especially integrity of design, materials, and association. Date of construction should not be an important factor in determining historical significance: to qualify under Criterion A (historical association), a building must have well documented associations with the broad pattern of downtown development, or specific associations with an event or pattern of events that is considered important. When they are nominated under Criterion C (design and construction), buildings should retain the distinctive characteristics that characterize a particular style or type. Historic commercial buildings representing important vernacular forms should receive the same attention as high-styled buildings designed by "important" architects—there should be no sliding scale in assessing significance between vernacular and high-style buildings. In most cases, the critical design and construction aspects to be considered in evaluating significance will be the preservation of exterior features, particularly the facades.

In the case of historic commercial properties, the essential design features are the storefront and the upper facades visible from the street. Preservation of the historic form and materials of the storefront should have priority over the conservation of other architectural features. Stores and business blocks where the storefront has been substantially altered (by the loss of historic character-defining design elements or the introduction of inappropriate materials or features) will not qualify for individual registration. Storefronts that have been minimally altered from their historic appearance may be considered worthy of preservation interest when there is a reasonable likelihood of restoration to recover the original detailing. Commercial buildings that no longer retain historic integrity of their storefront facades should be considered contributing properties in an historic district when the important exterior features of their upper facades are preserved.

While only a relatively small handful of downtown buildings represent authentic specimens of high-style architecture, vernacular buildings which met the criteria

for significance and integrity were evaluated under National Register Criterion C (design and construction), even though the instructions for completing the National Register form do not explicitly treat vernacular buildings as a category of architectural resources worthy of preservation. Fortunately, new attitudes and methods have emerged to treat vernacular buildings as cultural forms equal in importance with buildings designed by professional architects. Integrity will be the pivot around which individual nominations of vernacular buildings turn.

In assessing historic integrity of design and materials, it should be borne in mind that through all of their history, downtown buildings were part of a dynamic environment where change was more or less constant. Old photographs, directories, fire insurance maps, and newspaper accounts provide ample evidence that the historic built environment of Central Avenue was anything but static. The traditional brick-front stores and business blocks provided a seed-bed for entrepreneurs: the flexibility of the buildings' floor plans meant that would-be merchants could establish themselves in small premises with relatively little capital outlay and for low rents. In an age when unbridled competition and *laissez-faire* dominated business decision-making, the use of any particular commercial space frequently shifted in response to changing ownership and economic conditions, or to conform to new business requirements. Economically or functionally obsolescent buildings were occasionally razed or abandoned; more often, existing structures were changed by new owners looking for ways to architecturally express their business plans and personalities. However, wholesale façade alterations and major storefront redesigns, though not unknown, were comparatively rare before the 1940s. The major difference between historic remodeling and recent improvements appears to be, before the 1940s the work was more often done with compatible materials and tended to be harmonious with traditional building composition.

Ordinarily, historic religious properties are not eligible for individual listing in the National Register. However, in certain cases downtown churches may be eligible under the theme of downtown development when a strong case can be made for the significance of their design and construction characteristics. Historic integrity considerations for church buildings will focus primarily on location, design, setting, and materials.

Landscapes

Public open spaces, monuments, streetscapes, signs and other urban historic landmark features meet the National Register criteria for significance and integrity when they reflect important patterns and themes in the physical development of the central business district.

Although the historic character of streetscapes is an aspect of historic integrity that needs to be carefully considered in evaluating a historic district, the street-level viewsheds do not need to be contiguous within the district boundaries to be considered historically significant. Because no downtown streetscape will have preserved in place all of its documented historic features, only the general character and feeling of the viewshed must be retained for National Register eligibility. When evaluated individually, designed and vernacular historic landscape features (streets, sidewalks, parks, public art, etc.) should retain their original size, scale, color, and materials to qualify for registration. In most cases, however, urban landscape features will probably lack individual distinction, but when they retain critical aspects of historic integrity they should be treated as contributing to the distinguishing characteristics of historic buildings and streetscapes.

Archaeological Sites

To be considered significant under Criterion D, archaeological sites must be able to yield important data on non-extant historic buildings, public works, industrial or engineering structures, transportation structures, or historically important sites such as the original military installation or the Public Square. The historical significance of downtown infrastructure and urban archaeology resources lies in their informational value (National Register Criterion D). Non-functional and abandoned landscape features treated as landscape archaeology resources must meet the same criteria for significance and integrity as conventional urban archaeology sites.. Undisturbed surface and subsurface features, some of which may be only detectable by means of remote sensing techniques, need to be recorded and evaluated by qualified investigators employing high-quality research designs before a determination of National Register eligibility can be made.

IV: RESEARCH DESIGN

This section of the report (corresponding to Part H of the Multiple Property Documentation Form) discusses the project objectives and the research methods employed to identify and evaluate historic properties.

Survey Objectives

The primary goal of the survey was to collect and analyze the historical and architectural data needed to plan for the wise use of historic buildings located in the city's central business district. The survey had five specific objectives:

1. Identify and gather information on downtown historic properties that will be used to assess their eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places;

2. Develop local historic contexts to provide a framework for making identification and evaluation decisions;

3. Evaluate each property surveyed to determine its historic significance and integrity;

4. Prepare an inventory of significant historic properties surveyed; and

5. Prepare a final report that serves both technical and informational needs.

This project was not intended to result directly in nominations to the National Register. Survey methods were straightforward and followed standard practice in conducting intensive architectural survey in an urbanized environment. Research adhered to the basic standards and guidelines for historic preservation surveys established by the U.S. Department of the Interior.[76] The Iowa SHPO provided advice and guidance. Several general and technical works on the identification and evaluation of historic architectural resources also provided important underpinnings for the methods and approaches used.[77]

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[76] "Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines," 44716-44740.

[77] The best primer on historic preservation survey is probably Anne Derry, H. Ward Jandl, Carol D. Shull, and Jan Thorman, *Guidelines for Local Surveys: A Basis for Preservation Planning*, National Register Bulletin 24, revised by Patricia L. Parker (Washington: National Park Service, 1985). Other influential works include Christopher Alexander, et al., *A Pattern Language* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977); Richard V. Francaviglia, *Main Street Revisited: Time, Space, and Image Building in Small Town America* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996); and David

Survey Methodology

The survey involved two primary research tasks: archival research and field survey. Archival research utilized a wide range of primary and secondary source materials to delineate a statement of historic context that covers the most important general trends, patterns, and events in downtown history. The documentary information was assembled and synthesized with reference to important local property types. The historic context statement provided the necessary framework for identifying and evaluating the significance of historic properties recorded in the field survey. Archival research also addressed the identification of individual properties and reconstructed the physical histories of significant buildings to facilitate evaluation of their historical and architectural significance.

Field survey documented all historic buildings, structures, sites, objects, and potential districts in sufficient detail to permit evaluation of their National Register eligibility. The survey was conducted on foot and involved a systematic visual inspection of every property in the survey area, including non-historic buildings and structures. Building interiors were be inspected wherever possible to identify significant historic design features. Landscape features and open space areas were also surveyed. Fieldwork generated detailed written descriptions of properties, accompanied by field photographs, sketch plans, and other appropriate documentation.

The consultant and the local project director were responsible for ensuring that all survey activities were effectively integrated. Public participation was encouraged at every step and a special effort was made to involve members of the Fort Dodge HPC, city staff, property owners and the general public in the project. All volunteer work was carried out under the supervision of the consultant who is solely responsible for all project products.

Evaluation Methodology

One of the important objectives of the survey was to determine whether individual buildings and groups of buildings were significant and therefore worthy of preservation. For a property or properties to qualify as eligible for nomination to the National Register, it needed to meet one of the National Register Criteria for Evaluation by being associated with the historic context and

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Glassbery, *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001.

be retaining integrity of those features necessary to convey its historic significance.

Evaluation followed a five-step process:

1) Categorize the property as a building, site, structure, object or streetscape.

2) Determine which historic context the property best represents.

3) Determine whether the property meets one or more of the National Register criteria.

4) Compare the property to other examples of the same property type.

5) Determine whether the property retains historic integrity of location, design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, and association.

Following standard practice, buildings less than fifty years old were not treated as historic properties unless a strong case could be made for exceptional importance.

Expectations

At the start of the survey, it was obvious that commerce had played an important and integral part in the architectural and landscape history of downtown Fort Dodge. The most important physical manifestation of that commercial heritage was the existing (if incomplete) inventory of commercial buildings. Based on our background knowledge of the history of downtown commercial development, it was anticipated that previously unrecorded examples of important architectural forms dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries would be found in the downtown survey area. In fact, the survey was able to identify a wide range of commercial, civic, and religious building property types as well as related urban historic landscape features.

V. SURVEY RESULTS

The survey identified and evaluated 169 buildings, structures, objects, and districts, including a small number of previously recorded and registered historic properties. This section of the report briefly summarizes the results of the survey by breaking down the inventory into groups of properties related to important preservation planning objectives. A "photohistory" of individually significant historic properties is presented in the Appendix. Detailed information on specific properties can be found in the site inventory forms.

Overview

Commercial, civic, and religious buildings dominate the downtown historic property inventory; brick front stores and business blocks represent the most abundant property types. The preservation value of these properties is the product of their association, both physical and historical, with the broad patterns of downtown development between the platting of the town in 1854 and the opening of the Crossroads Mall in 1964. Individual buildings and sites with well documented associations to an important historic theme and that retain historic integrity of those features necessary to convey their significance are considered significant and therefore worthy of consideration in community planning.

Historically significant buildings and landscapes include:

- Notable examples of vernacular building types and architectural period styles
- Buildings that illustrate the themes of commercial development, planning, government, and social history.
- Stores, hotels, apartments, and institutional buildings that provide a physical record of the activities of a particular business or organization
- Buildings by well-known architects and builders.
- Buildings that exemplify trends or fashions in academic architecture.
- Rare survivors of early commercial buildings.
- Buildings of cultural importance to the community.

- Designed and vernacular urban historic landscapes that reflect important historical land uses and activities.

The historic character of downtown properties was most shaped to a great extent by the vernacular pattern language associated with Midwestern Main Streets. Central Avenue is as old as Fort Dodge itself and was its "Main Street" until the era of automobiles, shopping centers, and urban sprawl turned the city inside-out. Downtown historic buildings and associated urban historic landscapes (and the visual relationships between them) physically and culturally comprise a unique and complex built environment that makes this neighborhood different from all other parts of the city. These qualities of time and place will be the basis for any historic district registration.

Various factors have influenced the preservation or loss of individual buildings. Briefly, the major causes of historic property loss and destruction have been (in no particular order of importance) fire, weathering, private and public property development, changes in business operations, changes in transportation modes, faulty design and engineering, regulatory procedures (i.e., zoning and building codes), and lack of proper maintenance. By far the most varied and damaging are those created by business decisions responding to changing market forces. Major episodes of downtown commercial property demolition and removal occurred during the 1880s and 1890s, and again in the 1970s and 1980s.

Fort Dodge Commercial Historic District

A Fort Dodge Commercial Historic District (state inventory number 94-02153) is proposed as the conceptual framework for future preservation planning in the downtown area. Although the proposed historic district derives its significance from being a unified entity, it is composed of a wide variety of historic property types and has, as yet, no clearly defined boundaries. (The boundaries of the downtown survey area being more or less arbitrary.) Although it encompasses at least twenty-one properties that would be considered individually eligible for nomination to the National Register, the district also comprises more than sixty historic properties that are not eligible but which contribute to its overall significance, and only a relatively small number of non-historic properties (i.e., buildings less than fifty years old).

Central Avenue is the heart of the Commercial Historic District and the built environment is dominated by multistory masonry buildings that were historically used for retailing, wholesaling, and other commercial purposes; a small number of non-commercial properties, including civic buildings and churches, are scattered amongst the stores and offices. Over 150 years of commercial development has created a distinctive urban landscape composed of

land, buildings, and infrastructure, and the historic character of the downtown district bears the strong imprint of the regional vernacular pattern language associated with the Upper Midwest. Architecturally, the diverse assemblage of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century buildings generally reflects traditional "Main Street" design and land use themes. The downtown inventory is dominated by conventional brick-front stores and business blocks with street-level storefronts and upper level rooms used for offices and apartments. Dates of construction tend to cluster in the 1890s-1920s, although the date-built information is somewhat ambiguous for some properties.

The linear clusters of tall masonry commercial buildings along Central and First Avenues represent the district's defining environmental feature. The masonry facades form an almost continuous wall of architecture that forms a distinct visual counterpoint to residential and modern commercial streetscapes. While there are blocks covered entirely with historic buildings, older and newer buildings are frequently intermingled. The majority of the buildings are one to three stories in height, although there are several low-rise structures up to eight stories tall. Except for the low-rise properties, facades tend to be tall and narrow, with architectural detailing that emphasizes their vertical proportions. Flat roofs and stepped parapets are the norm. With few exceptions, the older downtown buildings are built flush with the sidewalk (only civic and religious buildings were built away from the street). Modern infill construction is distinguished by the deep setbacks of the buildings, which make them appear out of scale with adjacent historic buildings.

The current state of historic building preservation is strikingly uneven within the downtown district. While there are intact building facades that have never been altered or rehabilitated, most older buildings have experienced loss or damage of historic fabric. In several cases, the richly embellished facade detailing visible in old photographs has been removed to covered over, or has been allowed to erode because of deferred maintenance. Misguided attempts to "update" commercial facades have often produced a "remuddled" effect characterized by undersized or oversized replacement windows, large expanses of blank wall surface, and the introduction of non-historic finishes such as aluminum, vinyl, particle board, and imitation brick. Many of the street-level storefronts have been altered to varying degrees from their historic appearance, disturbing the rhythm of design features; erosion of historic storefront integrity has been most often the result of covering glass transoms and sign boards, filling in display windows, inappropriate signage, and the replacement of original door trim and window sash with steel or aluminum frames. A number of historic storefronts, often part of otherwise well preserved facades, have been covered over or destroyed altogether. Rear and side elevations have also been altered by out-of-character additions, removal of back porches, and radical changes in fenestration.

Nevertheless, the proportion of preserved, historically significant buildings to blighted eyesores is quite high.

Any downtown preservation district (National Register or overlay zoning) would doubtless comprise individually significant properties, which would serve as the focal points, as well as buildings lacking in individual distinction. The only valid yardstick for measuring a potential district's overall historical significance and integrity is the number of contributing versus non-contributing properties within given district boundaries. Groups of buildings within a given area where the majority of the facades are evaluated as non-contributing should not be included in National Register historic districts but their inclusion could be justified in a locally designated overlay zoning district. The period of significance for the downtown district would begin with the date of townsite platting and close either fifty years before the date of registration, or 1964, the year the Crossroads Mall opened.

The results of the downtown survey are summarized below in outline form. The spatial relationships between component buildings have been depicted on a two-part map (Figs. 7 and 8), the purpose of which is to give a general sense of the distribution of historic and non-historic properties.

Individually Significance & Contributing Properties

The following downtown properties were found to meet the National Register criteria for historical significance as part of a commercial historic district. Several are already listed in or appear to be individually eligible for nomination in the National Register. Most, however, lack individual distinction or have lost important aspects of historic integrity and therefore would not be considered eligible for individual registration. The properties evaluated as contributing in a potential Fort Dodge Commercial Historic Streetscape are:

- 321-325 Central Avenue (94-02155), Parsons Block (Chuck's Floor Covering); two-story brick-front store built in 1906 for use as a feed store; not eligible for individual registration (facade alterations) but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 329 Central Avenue (94-00731). John Deere Implement Company Store; two-story business block built in 1921 for agricultural machinery sales; individually significant and eligible for nomination to the National Register under Criterion A for its association with agriculture-related commercial development and Criterion C for its distinguishing design details (arcaded storefront).

- 414 Central Avenue (94-02157). Hadad Motor Company Building; one-story broad-front store built in 1926; not eligible for individual registration (façade alterations), but could be considered contributing in an historic district.

- Central Avenue between 4th and 6th Streets (94-02156). Public Square; public commons laid out in 1854; not eligible for individual registration (site alterations) but would be considered contributing to the historic character of an historic district as an example of an urban vernacular landscape.

- Public Square (94-02281). John F. Duncombe Statue; bronze by Leonard Crunelle; not eligible for individual registration (more research needed to establish its art history significance), but it contributes to the historic character of the park and would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 506 Central Avenue (94-02162). Fort Dodge Mattress Works Building; three-story brick-front store; not eligible for individual registration but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 508 Central Avenue (94-02263). Habhab Building (owner); three-story brick-front store; not eligible for individual registration (facade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 510 Central Avenue (94-02164). Kautzy's Sporting Goods Store; one-story broad-front store built in 1927 and associated with Joseph Kautzy and the invention of the Lazy Ike fishing lure; not eligible for individual registration (façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 512 Central Avenue (94-2165). LaJames College Building; three-story brick-front store built in 1895 as the C. D. Koch Harness Shop; not eligible for individual registration (façade alterations) but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 514-518 Central Avenue (94-00989). Garmoe Building; three-story corner brick-front business block with picturesque detailing built in 1896 for realtor Isaac Garmoe; individually significant and eligible for nomination to the National Register under Criterion A for its association with commercial development and Criterion C as a well-preserved specimen of the property type.

- 517 Central Avenue (94-02166). Jacob Schmoll Saloon/Arnold Block; two-story brick-front business block built in 1889; not eligible for individual registration (façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 519 Central Avenue (94-02167). Strow Cigar Store Building; one-story brick-front store built in 1948 and currently used for storage; not eligible for individual registration (façade alterations) but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 521 Central Avenue (94-02171). Reynolds Building; two-story brick-front store built in 1889 for capitalist A. S. R. Reynolds; not eligible for individual registration (facade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 610 Central Avenue (94-00991). Sears Roebuck & Company Department Store; low–rise eight-story department store built in 1916 for the Prusia Hardware Company, later occupied by the Sears, Roebuck & Company department store, now vacant except for the Downtown Ballroom; individually significant and eligible for nomination to the National Register under Criterion A for its association with commercial development and Criterion C as a well preserved specimen of the low-rise department store property type and the tallest building in Fort Dodge.

- 627-629 Central Avenue (94-00992). State Bank Building/Beh Building; six-story bank and office building built in 1907 and converted to apartments (Central Place Apartments); listed in the National Register in 2003.

- 700-702 Central Avenue (94-00993). Reynolds Block; three-story corner business block built in 1882 for capitalist A. S. R. Reynolds; individually significant and eligible for nomination to the National Register under Criterion A for its association with commercial development and Criterion C as a well preserved specimen of the property type.

- 701 Central Avenue (94-00994). Webster County Courthouse; City Beautiful style courthouse built in 1902, rehabilitated in 1980-2000; listed in the National Register in 1981.

- Pocket Park next to Courthouse (94-02266). William Squire Kenyon Statue; bronze by Albin Polasek; not eligible for individual registration (more research needed to establish its art history significance), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 710 Central Avenue (94-02175). Doud Block and Baldwin Studio; two-story brick-front store built in 1880; not eligible for individual registration (façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 713 Central Avenue (94-02177). Messenger Building; two-story brick-front store built in 1906 to house the *Fort Dodge Messenger & Chronicle* newspaper; not eligible for individual registration (façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 723 Central Avenue (94-02178). Montgomery Ward Store/Ogden Building; three-story corner business block built in 1931 for use as department store, later converted to newspaper office and plant; not eligible for individual registration (façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 801-805 Central Avenue (94-00996). Snell Building; seven-story low-rise department store built in 1913 to house the Boston Store; designed by architect E. O. Damen, Jr. of Fort Dodge in association with the Des Moines architectural firm of Liebbe, Nourse & Rasmussen,; one of three low-rise commercial buildings that forms the Boston Center complex; individually significant and eligible for nomination to the National Register under Criterion A for its association with downtown commercial development and Criterion C for its embodiment of modern low-rise commercial architecture design characteristics.

- 807-811 Central (94-00997). Boston Center; three seven-story low-rise commercial buildings built in 1914 to house a department store and other businesses; historically significant for its association with the Tuerke Mercantile Company's "Boston Store" department store (established 1898, at this location 1914-1979); not eligible for individual registration (façade alterations, non-historic additions), but contributes to the historic character of the downtown area and compliments the architecture of the historic Snell Building next door.

- 815 Central Avenue (94-02179). A. D. McQuilkin Furniture Company Store; multistory brick-front store built in 1914; not eligible for individual registration (façade alterations), but contributes to the historic character of downtown.

- 817 Central Avenue (94-02180). Wyatt Building; three-story brick-front store built in 1890; not eligible for individual registration (façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 825 Central Avenue (94-02182). First Federal Savings Bank; two-story bank building built in 1973, designed by Des Moines architectural firm of Smith-Voorhies-Jensen; individually significant and eligible for nomination to the National Register under Criteria Consideration G as a locally outstanding example of Post-Modern Movement, neo-eclectic commercial architecture less than 50 years old.

- 927 Central Avenue (94-01002). Wahkonsa Hotel/Wahkonsa Manor; five-story low-rise hotel and shops built in 1909, converted to apartments in 1964, remodeled in 1972 and converted to senior housing in 1988; designed by the architectural firm of Liebe, Nouse & Rasmussen; connected to Warden Plaza; individually significant and eligible for nomination to the National Register under Criterion A for its association with downtown commercial development and Criterion C for its distinguishing construction and design details.

- 1000-1004 Central Avenue (94-02188). One-story broad-front store built in 1914; not eligible for individual registration (façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 1003 Central Avenue (94-00015). Carver Building; 8-story low-rise commercial building built in 1918 and occupied by several historic businesses; purchased and rehabilitated by Heartland Communications Group in 1985; individually significant and eligible for nomination to the National Register under Criterion A for its association with downtown commercial development and Criterion C for its distinguishing construction and design details.

- 1018-1020 Central Avenue (94-01003). Majestic Theatre/Carter Apartments; three-story brick-front store built in 1913; historically associated with the Majestic (later Dodge) Theatre movie house; not eligible for individual registration (façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 1030 Central Avenue (94-01005). Leighton Building; a two-story brick-front corner store and addition built in 1923 and historically associated with the Leighton Supply Company; not eligible for individual registration (façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 1027-1031 Central Avenue (94-01004). Bank Building; a three-story corner business block built in 1903; not eligible for individual registration (façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 1100 Central Avenue (94-01006). Fisher-Kenyon Block/Kenyon Block; a three-story corner business block built in 1890, occupied by Fort Dodge Baths 1915-1921, associated with the Wiewel pharmacy since 1945; not eligible for individual registration (façade alterations, non-historic beauty shop addition), but contributes to the historic character of the downtown area.

- 1101 Central Avenue (94-01007). A three-story corner business block built in 1903-1916 for Andrew Hower's flour and feed business; not eligible for individual registration (façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 1107 Central Avenue (94—02196). Hower Block; a three-story brick-front store built in 1894; not eligible for individual registration (façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 1108 Central Avenue (94-01008). Corey Block; a three-story business block built in 1891, occupied by the Fort Dodge Hardware Company for many years; the walls are buff-colored face brick manufactured by the Corey Pressed Brick Company; not eligible for individual registration (façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 1109 Central Avenue (94-01009). Stevens Apartments; a multistory brick-front store built in 1900; not eligible for individual registration (façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 1110 Central Avenue (94-02197). Boehm's Cash Grocery Store Building; a two-story brick-front store built in 1902 for use as hardware store, occupied by Boehm's grocery 1909-1944; not eligible for individual registration (façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 1112 Central Avenue (94-02198). C. C. Corey Building; a two-story brick-front store built in 1902, occupied by Thompson's Pharmacy (1915-1924) and the Pastime Bar (1936-1955); not eligible for individual registration (façade alterations), but contributes to the historic character of the downtown area.

- 1114 Central Avenue (94-02199). Daniel Pharmacy; a two-story brick-front store built in 1913 and occupied by the Daniel Pharmacy since 1963; one of the best preserved lighted (neon) signs on Central Avenue; not eligible for individual registration, but would be considered contributing in an historic district

- 301 First Avenue North (94-00014). Fort Dodge Creamery Company Office and Factory; a one-story creamery office and related plant buildings built between 1914 and 1920; historically associated with the Fort Dodge Creamery Company and Allen Loomis (1909-1996, owner of the Rosedale dairy and donor of the "Floyd of Rosedale" trophy (University of Minnesota-University of Iowa football); not eligible for individual registration, but the three-story factory, warehouse, and office would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 320 First Avenue North (94-02200). A one-story brick bungalow built in 1921; not eligible for individual registration, but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 330 First Avenue North (94-02088). Wahkonsa School Building; a two-story brick schoolhouse built in 1912; now the Webster County Administration Building; includes the commemorative tablet (1928) marking the site of the original Fort Dodge military post (1850-1854); not eligible for individual registration (non-historic addition and façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 605 First Avenue North (94-00618). Carnegie Library of Fort Dodge; a City Beautiful Movement-inspired Neoclassical Revival style public library building built in 1903 and used for library purposes until 2000; designed by architect H. C. Koch of Milwaukee, construction funded by a donation from philanthropist Andrew Carnegie; individually significant and eligible for nomination to the National Register under Criterion A for its association with Carnegie-financed public libraries in Iowa and Criterion C for its embodiment of classical revival architecture.

- 618 First Avenue North (94-02205). Fort Dodge Tent and Awning Company/Burch Manufacturing Company Building; a three-story brick-front building built in 1914; occupied by the Burch Manufacturing Company, manufacturer of tents, tarps, and other canvass products since the 1890s (1935-present); not eligible for individual registration (façade alterations), but is of historical interest because of its association with the family-owned Burch Manufacturing Company (founded 1918) and would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 704 First Avenue North (94-00619). Rodenborn Building; four-story brick clothing factory built in 1907; although more research is needed to document its physical history and historical associations, the building appears eligible for nomination to the National Register under Criterion A for its association with the Fort brand of work clothing and Criterion C for its design and construction values.

- 705 First Avenue North (94-02209). Johnston Hotel/Cornbelt Hotel; a two-story hotel built in 1920, historically associated with the hotel operated by William and D. G. Johnston (later known as the Cornbelt Hotel) 1931-ca. 1970; musician Buddy Holly stayed overnight in room number 20 on 29-30 January 1959; although more research is needed to better document its historical associations, it appears to be individually eligible for nomination to the National Register under Criterion A for its association with downtown commercial development and C as a well preserved example of the downtown hotel property type.

- 710 First Avenue North (94-00620). Fort Dodge Armory/Laramar Ballroom; a two-story armory built for the Iowa National Guard in 1904; designed by the architectural firm Liebbe, Nourse & Rasmussen, Des Moines; in military use until 1954, also occupied by the Laramar Ballroom, an historically significant regional entertainment venue, 1925-2005; not eligible for individual registration (façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 728 First Avenue North (94-00621). Rehder Cadillac Garage; a two-story broad-front store built in 1917 for automobile sales and service; individually significant and eligible for nomination to the National Register under Criterion A for its association with automobile-related commercial development and Criterion C as a rare, well preserved specimen of the property type.

- 816 First Avenue North (94-02212). Brooks Laundry Building; a one-story broad-front store and one-story industrial building built in 1925; not eligible for individual registration (façade alterations on the store), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 826 First Avenue North (94-00622). Young Women's Christian Association (Y.W.C.A.) Building; three-story Neoclassical Revival style-influenced institutional building built in 1914 for the Young Women's Christian Association of Fort Dodge; individually significant and eligible for nomination to the National Register under Criterion A (social history) for

its association with the Y.W.C.A.'s efforts to promote the social welfare of women and children and Criterion C for its distinguishing architectural design and construction details.

- 1002 First Avenue North (94-00623). First United Methodist Church; ornate Classical Revival-influenced church built in 1915 and loosely associated with author Hartzell Spence's novel *One Foot in Heaven*; individually significant and eligible for nomination to the National Register under Criteria Consideration A (religious properties) on the merits of its architectural distinction.

- 1018 First Avenue North (94-00624). Elks Club Building; a three-story brick-front building with four-story tower built in 1927; historically important and National Register eligible under Criterion A for its association with local fraternal organizations (Elks and Eagles) and as the location of the Fort Dodge office of the Iowa-Illinois Gas & Electric Company for over fifty years; also architecturally significant under Criterion C for its embodiment of Moderne Movement, Art Deco Style-influenced design and construction details.

- 1021 First Avenue North (94-00625). Masonic Temple; a large Classical Revival-influenced fraternal building built in 1914; associated with the Ashlar Lodge No. 11, Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, one of the oldest social clubs and benevolent organizations in Fort Dodge (established 1857); individually significant and eligible for nomination to the National Register under Criterion A for its association with community social history and Criterion C for its distinguishing architectural design and construction methods.

- 1029 First Avenue North (94-00626). Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church; a two-story brick church built in 1903 and converted to residential use after 1985; not eligible for individual registration (façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 1100 First Avenue North (94-02218). Heath Apartments; a three-story brick-front store built in 1910; not eligible for individual registration (façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 1104 First Avenue North (94-02219). A one-story brick-front store built in 1918; not eligible for individual registration (minor façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 1105 First Avenue North (94-02220). A one-story broad-front building built in 1914; not eligible for individual registration (façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 320 First Avenue South (94-02223). A one-story brick-front store built in 1915; not eligible for individual registration but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 329 First Avenue South (94-02224). St. Olaf Norwegian Lutheran Church; a brick-faced Gothic Revival style-influenced church built around 1890; occupied by the Coppin Chapel of the American Methodist Episcopal Church (established 1917) since 1969; not eligible for individual registration, but would be considered contributing in an historic district and is of cultural importance because of its association with Fort Dodge's oldest African American church.

- 413-417 First Avenue South (94-02228). A two-story brick-front store built in 1896; noteworthy for its castellated parapet and elaborate cornice detailing; not eligible for individual registration but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 419 First Avenue South (94-02229). Plensigner Blacksmith Shop; 419 First Avenue South; a one-story commercial building built in 1896 as the John J. Plensigner blacksmith shop; not eligible for individual registration (façade alterations) but it would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 425 First Avenue South (94-02256). A two-story brick-front store built around 1900; not eligible for individual registration (façade alterations), but it would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 509 First Avenue South (94-02233). A two-story brick-front store built in 1890, associated with several recent bars and clubs; not eligible for individual registration (façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 529 First Avenue South (94-02236). Carpet World; a one-story broad-front store built in 1926; not eligible for individual registration (façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 712 First Avenue South (94-02242). Messenger Printing Company Building; a two-story brick-front store connected to the Messenger Building at 713 Central Avenue; not eligible for individual registration

(façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 803 First Avenue South (94-92246). A one-story broad-front store built in 1950; not individually eligible for registration, but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 814 First Avenue South (94-02004). Fort Dodge Paint & Wallpaper Company Building; a three-story brick-front store built in 1896; side wall exhibits some of the best-preserved "ghost sings" in the downtown district; not individually eligible for registration (façade alterations), but contributes to the historic character of the downtown area.

- 818 First Avenue South (94-00632). Bockoven Building; a three-story brick-front store built in 1905, currently occupied by a bar and apartments; not individually eligible for registration (façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 819 First Avenue South (94-00633). Fort Dodge Municipal Building; a two-story Neoclassical Revival-influenced civic building built in 1914 by J. B. Evans Company, general contractors; designed by architectural firm of Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson, Des Moines; individually significant and eligible for nomination to the National Register under Criterion A for its association with the history of municipal government and Criterion C for its association with the City Beautiful Movement and its distinguishing architectural design and construction details.

- 820-822 First Avenue South (94-02247). Knights of Columbus Building; a three-story brick-front store (date of construction unknown but probably ca. 1900; not individually eligible for registration (façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 908 First Avenue South (94-00634). Warden Hotel/Warden Plaza); a seven-story low-rise commercial hotel built in 1914, converted to apartments early 1970s, renovated for senior housing and connected to Wahkonsa Manor in 2004-2005; despite minor lower-level façade alterations and additions, individually significant and eligible for nomination to the National Register under Criteria A for its association with downtown commercial development and Criterion C for its distinguishing architectural design and construction details.

- 923 First Avenue South (94-00635). Meservey House; a large house with Late Victorian period detailing built in 1890 for local businessman

Stillman T. Meservey, converted to commercial use as a funeral home in 1936; of historical interest for its association with the influential Meservey family and for President Theodore Roosevelt's visit in 1902; not individually eligible for registration (façade alterations, additions), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 1001 First Avenue South (94-00636). St. Mark's Episcopal Church; a large Romanesque-influenced stone church built in 1894; not individually eligible for registration (addition), but contributes to the historic character of the downtown area.

- 1010 First Avenue South (94-02249). A two-story brick-front store built in 1914; not individually eligible for registration (façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 1027-1029 First Avenue South (94-00637). A two-story vernacular foursquare type house built in 1891 and converted to multi-family housing; not individually eligible for registration, but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 1035 First Avenue South (94-00637). A large frame Foursquare type residence built in 1892 and converted to multifamily residential and commercial use; not individually eligible for registration (façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 20 South Fourth Street (94-02252). A one-story broad-front service garage built in 1924; not individually eligible for registration (façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 8-10 North Seventh Street (94-02258). A two-story brick-front store built in 1900; not individually eligible for registration (façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 16 North Seventh Street (94-02260). A two-story brick-front store with corner tower built in 1900; not individually eligible for registration (façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 18 North Seventh Street (94-02261). A two-story brick-front store built in 1890; not individually eligible for registration (façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 15 South Eighth Street (94-02262). Top Hat Lounge Building; a two-story brick-front store built in 1900; not individually eligible for registration

(façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 17 South Eighth Street (94-02263). A two-story brick-front store built in 1900; not individually eligible for registration (façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 10 North Tenth Street (94-02267). A one-story brick-front store. Not individually eligible for registration (façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 106 North Tenth Street (94-02131). Physicians Building/Biltwell Apartments; a six-story business and apartment block built in two stages, 1921 (lower two stories) and 1924-1927 (upper four stories); designed by local architect E. O. Damon, Jr.; individually significant and eligible for nomination to the National Register under Criterion A for its association with downtown commercial development (medical and residential-related) and Criterion B for its distinguishing architectural design and construction details.

- 16 North Eleventh Street (94-02269). Gande Building; a three-story brick-front store built in 1912; not individually eligible for registration (façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 17 North Eleventh Street (94-02270). A one-story broad-front store built in 1914; not individually eligible for registration (façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

- 16 South Twelfth Street (94-02277). A one-story broad-front store built around 1900; not individually eligible for registration (façade alterations), but would be considered contributing in an historic district.

Non-Contributing Properties

The following properties do not contribute in a potential downtown historic streetscape because either they are non-historic properties (i.e., they were constructed in 1955 or later) or they are older buildings that have been so drastically altered from their historic appearance that they can no longer be considered as historic properties in the context of historic downtown commercial development:

- 308 Central Avenue (94-02154). Sandstone Inn; non-historic property built in 1978.

- 420-428 Central Avenue (94-02158). Fletcher Wood Products Building; one-story broad-front garage built in 1928; its historic integrity has been compromised by façade alterations.

- 424 Central Avenue (94-02159). Fort Dodge Public Library; a non-historic property built in 2002.

- 500 Central Avenue (94-02160). One-story commercial property built in 1928; its historic integrity has been compromised by façade alterations.

- 501 Central Avenue (94-02161). Jill's Jazz Pizzazz Dance School; a non-historic property built in 2002.

- 520 Central Avenue (94-02168). Touch of Class; a non-historic property built in 1960.

- 524 Central Avenue (94-02169). A non-historic property built in 1961 on the site of the Lyric Theatre (1907-1955).

- 525 Central Avenue (94-02054). Three-story corner business block built in the 1890s; its historic integrity has been compromised by façade alterations.

- 609-611 Central Avenue (94-02170). Oak Hill Furniture; a non-historic property built in 1961.

- 615 Central Avenue (94-02172). Kirkberg Jewelry Store; a non-historic property built in 1961.

- 617 Central Avenue (94-02108). Laufersweiler Block; a two-story business block built around 1900; its historic integrity has been compromised by façade alterations.

- 628 Central Avenue (94-02173). Ida Grove State Bank Building; a non-historic property built in 1981.

- 704-708 Central Avenue (94-02174). Arthur Building/Bennett Building; a two-story brick-front store built in 1880, historically associated with Woolworth's five and ten cent store; its historic integrity has been compromised by façade alterations.

- 712 Central Avenue (94-02176). Doud Block; a three-story business block built in 1903 and occupied by McGregor Furniture since 1974; its historic integrity has been compromised by façade alterations and although its present-day form and exterior finishes are somewhat compatible with nearby historic buildings it no longer contributes to the historic character of downtown.

- 822 Central Avenue (94-02181). Norwest Bank/Wells Fargo Building; a non-historic property built in 1984.

- 901-905 Central Avenue (94-02183). A non-historic property built in the 1980s.

- 904-920 Central Avenue (94-02184). Trolley Center; a non-historic neighborhood shopping center built in 1964/1978 on the site formerly occupied by the Empire (later Strand) Theatre and other businesses.

- 911 Central Avenue (94-02185). A one story brick-front store built in 1910 and historically associated with the Olson jewelry store; its historic integrity has been compromised by façade alterations and it no longer contributes to the historic character of downtown. The mural on the west wall dates from 1995.

- 915 Central Avenue (94-02186). Welch Building/Charles A. Brown Store Building; a two-story commercial property consisting of two stores built in 1910 and historically associated with the Charles A. Brown (The Plymouth Clothier) men's clothing store (1940s-1970s); its historic integrity has been compromised by façade alterations.

- 924-928 Central Avenue (94-02187). A non-historic commercial building.

- 1012 Central Avenue (94-02189). Arcade Shops Building; a one-story broad-front store built in 1914, occupied by Karl L. King and Ruth King music store 1922-1957; of historical interest for its association with band leader Karl L. King (1891-1971) but its historic integrity has been compromised by façade alterations and it no longer contributes to the historic character of downtown.

- 1014 Central Avenue (94-02190). A one-story commercial building built in 1951; its historic integrity has been compromised by façade alterations.

- 1022 Central Avenue (94-02191). Hogan's Sporting Goods Store; a one-story broad-front store built in 1964; not considered an historic property.

- 1103 Central Avenue (94-02193). A one-story brick-front store built in 1910; its historic integrity has been compromised by façade alterations.

- 1104 Central Avenue (94-02194). A brick-front store built in 1909 for the Fort Dodge Auto Company; its historic integrity has been compromised by façade alterations.

- 1105 Central Avenue (94-02195). A one story brick-front store built in 1895; its historic integrity has been compromised by façade alterations.

- 302 First Avenue North (94-02279). Rosedale Apartments; a non-historic property built in 2003.

- 516 First Avenue North (94-02201). A non-historic property built in 2000.

- 522 First Avenue North (94-02202). A non-historic property built in 1991.

- 600 First Avenue North (94-02203). Frontier Communications Building; a two-story commercial building built during the 1920s; its historic integrity has been compromised by façade alterations.

- 617 First Avenue North (94-02204). Hogan Building; a one-story commercial property built in 1916; its historic integrity has been compromised by façade alterations.

- 621 First Avenue North (94-02206). Dunbar Power Equipment; a one-story modern commercial building built for use as a gasoline service station in 1954; historic integrity compromised by façade alterations.

- 624 First Avenue North (94-02207). Frontier Communications Building; a one-story commercial property built in 1954; its historic integrity has been compromised by façade alterations and additions.

- 628 First Avenue North (94-02208). A non-historic property built in 1981.

- 806 First Avenue North (94-02210). Gadbury Plumbing & Heating Company Building; a one-story commercial building built in 1926; its historic integrity has been compromised by façade alterations.

- 808 First Avenue North (94-02211). A one-story broad-front store built in 1926; its historic integrity has been compromised by façade alterations.

- 902 First Avenue North (94-02213). Pop 'N' Go Pantry; a non-historic convenience store built in 1962.

- 910 First Avenue North (94-02214). A one-story office building constructed in 1948; its historic integrity has been compromised by alterations and additions.

- 912 First Avenue North (94-02215). A three-story frame Tudor Style-influenced residence built in 1893 and converted to commercial use; its historic integrity has been compromised by façade alterations

- 920 First Avenue North (94-02216). Huseman Chiropractic Clinic; a one-story office built in 1936; its historic integrity has been compromised by façade alterations.

- 1012 First Avenue North (94-02217). Choice Printing; a two-story brick-front store built in 1915; its historic integrity has been compromised by façade alterations and additions.

- 1115 First Avenue North (94-02221). Mr. Ed's Steakhouse; a one-story commercial property built in 1952; its historic integrity has been compromised by façade alterations.

- 300 First Avenue South (94-02222). Budget Travelers Inn; a non-historic property built in 1964.

- 402 First Avenue South (94-02225). A one-story former service station built in 1915; its historic integrity has been compromised by façade alterations and additions.

- 411 First Avenue South (94-02226). NAPA Auto Store; a one-story broad-front store consisting of two units built side-by-side in 1900; its historic integrity has been compromised by façade alterations and the non-historic addition.

- 412 First Avenue South (94-02227). Johnson Auto Store; a one-story broad-front store with large rear addition; its historic integrity has been compromised by façade alterations and additions.

- 424-428 First Avenue South (94-02230). Moose Lodge; a one-story commercial building of undetermined age; its historic integrity has been compromised by façade alterations.

- 429 First Avenue South (94-02231). A two-story commercial property built in 1915; its historic integrity has been compromised by façade alterations

- 500 First Avenue South (94-02232). A non-historic property built in the 1960s.

- 509 First Avenue South (94-02233). A two-story brick-front store built in 1890; its historic integrity has been compromised by façade alterations.

- 511 First Avenue South (94-02280). A one-story brick-front store built in 1925; it lacks historic integrity and no longer contributes to the historic character of downtown.

- 515-519 First Avenue South (94-02234). A broad-front store built in 1931; its historic integrity has been compromised by façade alterations.

- 520 First Avenue South (94-02235). Daniel Tire Company; a contemporary store and garage built in 2002 on the site of the original company buildings constructed in 1932 and 1939; while, its design and materials compliment the architecture of nearby historic buildings, the property no longer contributes to the historic character of downtown.

- 530 First Avenue South (94-02237). Dodger Area Rapid Transit (DART) Office; a non-historic property built around 2002.

- 600 First Avenue South (94-02238). MIDAS Garage; a non-historic property built in 2002.

- 601 First Avenue South (94-02239). A one-story commercial property built in 1941; its historic integrity has been compromised by alterations.

- 605 First Avenue South (94-02240). Mitchell Building/Anchor Home; a two-story commercial property built in 1899; its historic integrity has been compromised by alterations.

- 702 First Avenue South (94-02241). Webster County Law Enforcement Center; a non-historic property built in 1983 on the site of the original city fire station (built in 1899).

- 716 First Avenue South (94-02243). A one-story commercial property built in 1920; attached to the Messenger Printing Company Building; its historic

integrity has been compromised by façade alterations and it no longer contributes to the historic character of downtown.

- 723 First Avenue South (94-02244). Bank of America; non-historic property built in 1983.

- 800 First Avenue South (94-02245). M. E. Fort & Company Building; a non-historic property built in 2005.

- 901 First Avenue South (94-02248). A parking garage built in 1937; although possibly associated with the Warden Hotel, it lacks historical distinction and its historic integrity has been compromised by alterations and addition of the parking lot so that it no longer contributes to the historic character of downtown.

- 1102 First Avenue South (94-02250). Leroy's Auto Repair Sales & Service; a one-story former gasoline service station built in 1962; its historic integrity has been compromised by façade alterations and additions.

- 13 North Third Street (94-02251). Credit Union Center; a non historic property.

- 15 North Fifth Street (94-02253). Mini-Cinema; a non-historic property built in 1963.

- 25 North Fifth Street (94-02254). Hoover's Body Shop; a one-story commercial property built in 1929; its historic integrity has been compromised by alterations and addition of a non-historic shop and it no longer contributes to the historic character of downtown.

- 111 South Fifth Street (94-02255). Rehder-Fleming Automotive Company; a non-historic property built in 1962.

- 111 South Sixth Street (94-02257). A non-historic commercial property built in 1959.

- 12 North Seventh Street (94-02259). A two-story brick-front store; its historic integrity has been compromised by alterations and it no longer contributes to the historic character of downtown.

- 19 South Eighth Street (94-02264). A non-historic property built in 2002.

- 24 North Ninth Street (94-02265). A non-historic property built in 1966.

- South Ninth Street (94-02279). Bus shelter; not considered an historic property.

- 24 North Tenth Street (94-94-02268). First Baptist Church; a religious property built between 1955 and 1962, designed by Gustin and Ditzenberger, architects; not considered an historic property.

- 10 South Eleventh Street (94-02271). A one-story brick-front store of undetermined age; not considered an historic property.

- 14 South Eleventh Street (94-02272). A commercial property built around 1900; its historic integrity has been severely compromised by façade alterations and it no longer contributes to the historic character of downtown.

- 18-20 North Twelfth Street (94-02273). A one-story artistic-front store built in 1926; its façade has been compromised by alterations.

- 22 North Twelfth Street (94-02274). Dodger Tap; a one-story brick-front store built in 1926; its historic integrity has been compromised by extensive façade alterations and it no longer contributes to the historic character of downtown.

- 100 North Twelfth Street (94-02275). A non-historic property built in 1962.

- 110 North Twelfth Street (94-02276). A non-historic property built in the 1990s.

- 100 South Twelfth Street (94-02278). Converted gasoline service station built in 1956; not considered an historic property.

Isolated Historic Properties

The survey identified three isolated historic properties that evaluated at the request of the Fort Dodge HPC because of their perceived historical relationship to the downtown area:

- 201 Central Avenue (94-00988). Fort Dodge Grocery Company Warehouse; four-story masonry warehouse built in 1903; individually significant and eligible for nomination to the National Register under Criterion A for its association with commercial development and Criterion

C for its distinctive vernacular design characteristics (solid brick walls, arched windows on the first and fourth floors).

- 211 South 13th Street (94-00912). Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church; Roman basilica type, Romanesque Revival style-influenced religious property built in 1916-1921; noteworthy for its association with Prairie Style architect William LaBarthe Steele (1875-1949) of Sioux City; individually significant under National Register Criteria Consideration A (religious property) on the merits of its architectural distinction and association with "Prairie School" architecture in Iowa.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Downtown Fort Dodge has a rich heritage that is represented by buildings and streetscapes. Many of these properties appear to be significant within one or more historic contexts and should be considered eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places either individually or as part of a multiple-property historic commercial district. By improving their knowledge of historic properties and their significance, city decision makers will be better able to establish priorities for dealing with historic resources within the framework of existing community and economic development programs. This knowledge will also help empower city officials, downtown property owners, developers, and citizens to increase their commitment to preserving significant historic properties that give the downtown district its special character and cultural depth.

Implementation of the Survey Results

A six-point action plan was developed to guide the City of Fort Dodge in implementing the results of the survey in a timely manner. The action items are listed below in order of priority:

1. Obtain SHPO determination of National Register eligibility for the following properties in order to qualify them for state and federal assistance:

    - 329 Central Avenue (John Deer Company Building)
    - 514-518 Central Avenue (Garmoe Building)
    - 610 Central Avenue (Prusia-Sears Department Store Building)
    - 700-702 Central Avenue (Reynolds Block)
    - 805 Central Avenue (Snell Building)
    - 825 Central Avenue (First Federal Savings Bank)
    - 927 Central Avenue (Wahkonsa Hotel Building)
    - 1003 Central Avenue (Carver Building)
    - 605 First Avenue North (Carnegie Public Library)

- 700 First Avenue North (Marso-Rodenborn Factory)
- 705 First Avenue North (Johnston Hotel)
- 728 First Avenue North (Rehder Cadillac Garage)
- 826 First Avenue North (Y.W.C.A. Building)
- 1002 First Avenue North (First United Methodist Church)
- 1018 First Avenue North (Elks Club Building)
- 1021 First Avenue North (Masonic Temple)
- 819 First Avenue South (Municipal Building)
- 908 First Avenue South (Warden Hotel)
- 116-110 North Tenth Street (Physicians Building/Biltwell Apartments)

The SHPO determination of eligibility will allow these properties to qualify for a range of state and federal tax credits, loans, grants, and technical assistance but does not require actual nomination of properties to the National Register at this time.

2. With the consent and active support of property owners, nominate individually significant buildings to the National Register in recognition of their historical importance.

3. Before taking official action on a historic district nomination, carefully consider the policy, budgetary, economic, and political implications of administering and managing a large National Register district encompassing all or part of the downtown area.

4. Direct city staff and the Historic Preservation Commission to work with community organizations and property owners to develop an ordinance that amends the city code by creating a "downtown heritage critical area" overlay zoning district that would re-zone the downtown area for historic preservation. (HPC participation in the zoning board of review should be considered.) By recognizing the unique characteristics of the downtown built environment and the failure of convention zoning to promote the

preservation, protection, and adaptive use of significant historic buildings, at a minimum overlay zoning would provide a mechanism for establishing regulations for the demolition of historic properties and architectural standards for new construction designed to enhance the historic character of the district.

5. Adopt a policy statement that clearly articulates the city's vision for the future of downtown and the role expected to be played by the preservation community in achieving that vision.

6. In consultation with the SHPO, develop a strategy for listing a "Fort Dodge Commercial Historic District" in the National Register of Historic Places.

While the survey data can help define the historic character of the central business district and its constituent buildings and sites, registration of historic buildings and districts is not the ultimate goal. Placing downtown buildings on the National Register or including them within an overlay zoning district will not guarantee their preservation; nor will preserved historic properties automatically revitalize the downtown economy - to be successful, historic preservation needs to enhance property values, stimulate economic growth, and resolve conflicts between preservation and development. Toward this goal, preservation planning work must be integrated with the development planning being carried on at all levels by government and private interests.

Preservation Program Improvements

From a public policy perspective, historic properties are best viewed as a set of scarce, highly perishable, and non-renewable community resources: once destroyed, they cannot be replaced and their value (cultural, aesthetic, and economic) is lost forever. As indicated in the survey report, there has been widespread loss of historically significant downtown buildings, building facades, and streetscapes since the 1960s. In part, this loss of community heritage has been caused by economic shifts that rendered many old buildings obsolete, making them vulnerable to decay and demolition. Some of the resource loss can be attributed directly to public policy decisions that encouraged the demolition of historic properties which could otherwise have been rehabilitated. The primary threats to downtown historic properties today comes from two activities in which the city is a participant: demolition of old buildings and construction of new infill buildings (both require city permits). In the past, these activities resulted in the removal of existing downtown buildings and new construction that is architecturally incompatible with the character of nearby historic buildings. Fortunately, a number of character-defining historic properties have

survived as functional parts of the modern-day city, and several historically significant buildings have been successfully preserved and rehabilitated.

It is possible, at this stage, to recommend a few improvements that will, in the short term, measurably improve the overall effectiveness of the city historic preservation program. Five general program areas call out for change:

- Although city plans and ordinances recognize the potential role of historic preservation in community revitalization, few preservation priorities have been established within the framework of existing programs. The city needs to commit itself to the preservation ethic: as a matter of public policy, every reasonable effort shall be made to ensure that no significant historic property will be destroyed, damaged, or defaced as a result of any activity funded, permitted, licensed, or assisted by the City of Fort Dodge. All city departments should be required to develop specific policies and procedures for meeting this goal.

- There is no comprehensive plan for integrating preservation with other city planning. At a minimum, the city needs to adopt a historic preservation plan that organizes program activities (planning, survey, registration, design review, education) in a logical sequence and uses the needs assessment process to develop strategic goals and establish clear priorities. To be effective, preservation planning must be a dynamic process and the plan will need to be refined and modified as the city preservation program matures. At the present time, it may be feasible to develop the plan only in the form of a broad outline.

- The city preservation program, despite the participation of many highly motivated individuals, is under-funded. Historic preservation is a legitimate responsibility of municipal government and deserves to be treated as a important city service. Recognizing that there will always be constraints on political will, staff time, and available funding, preservationists need to craft a consensus vision of what a "saved" historic downtown will look like; and it is imperative that this vision reflect a "real world" understanding of the financial resources (and political capital) needed to achieve specific objectives.

- Not everything that is old is worth preserving. Downtown Fort Dodge has many more old buildings than the city needs to protect. Protective measures (zoning, code enforcement, design review) should focus on the preservation of significant historic resources and on design standards for infill construction that encourage contemporary architecture that

complements the historic form and character of the central business district.

- To effectively preserve historic properties for the benefit of the community, the city will need to rely heavily upon voluntary compliance with preservation standards. In order to obtain an adequate level of voluntary compliance, the city will need to establish more effective partnerships with downtown historic property owners and preservation-minded developers.

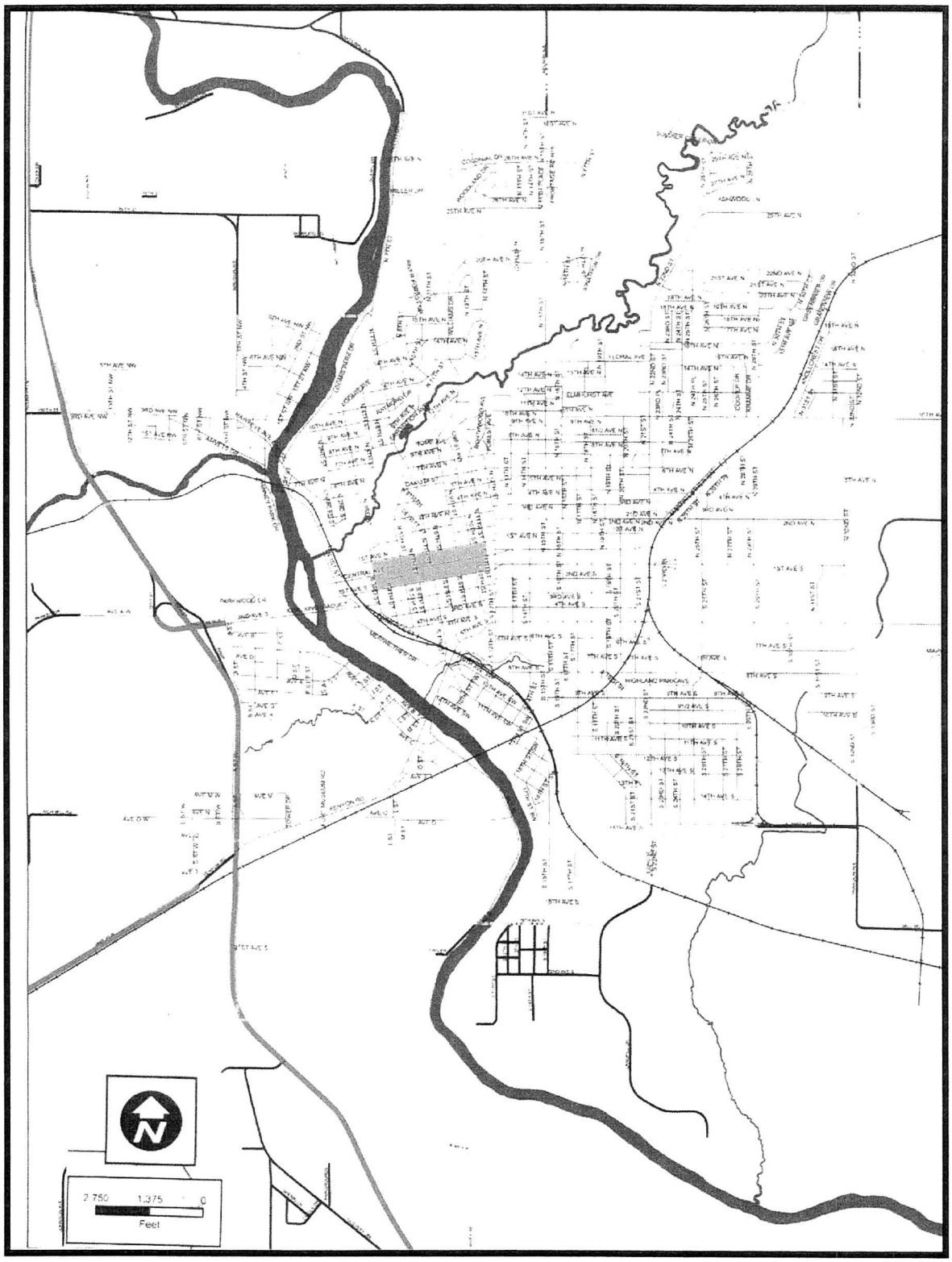


Figure 1. Location of the downtown survey area.

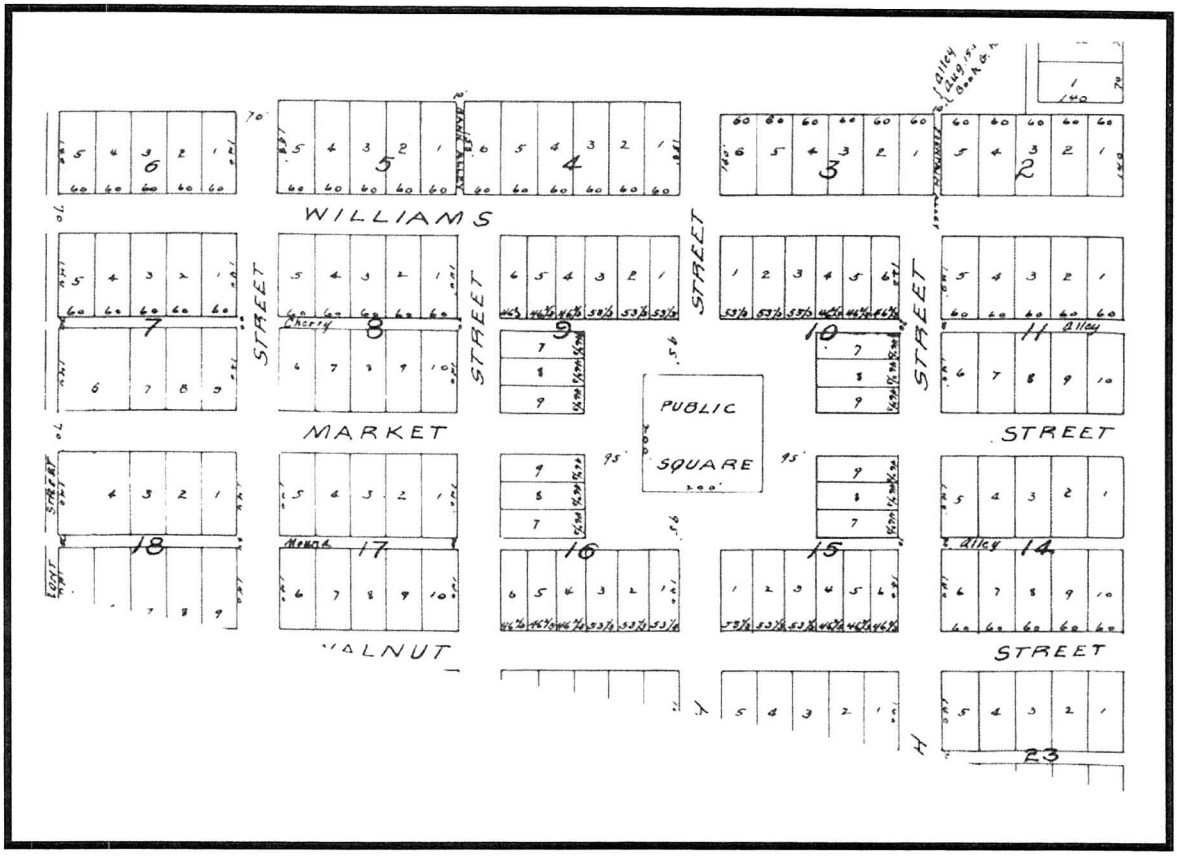
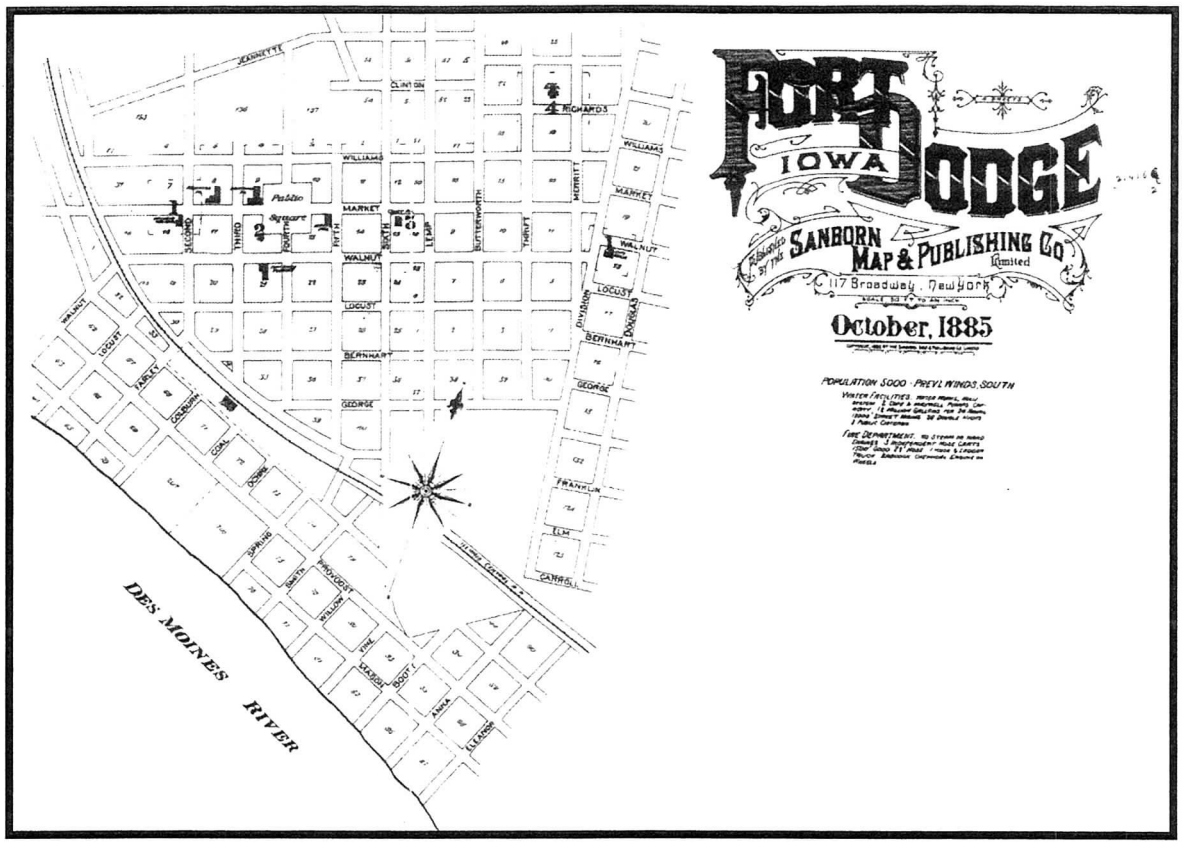


Figure 2. Excerpt from the Original Plat of Fort Dodge showing the Public Square (modern City Square Park). Note the original street names.



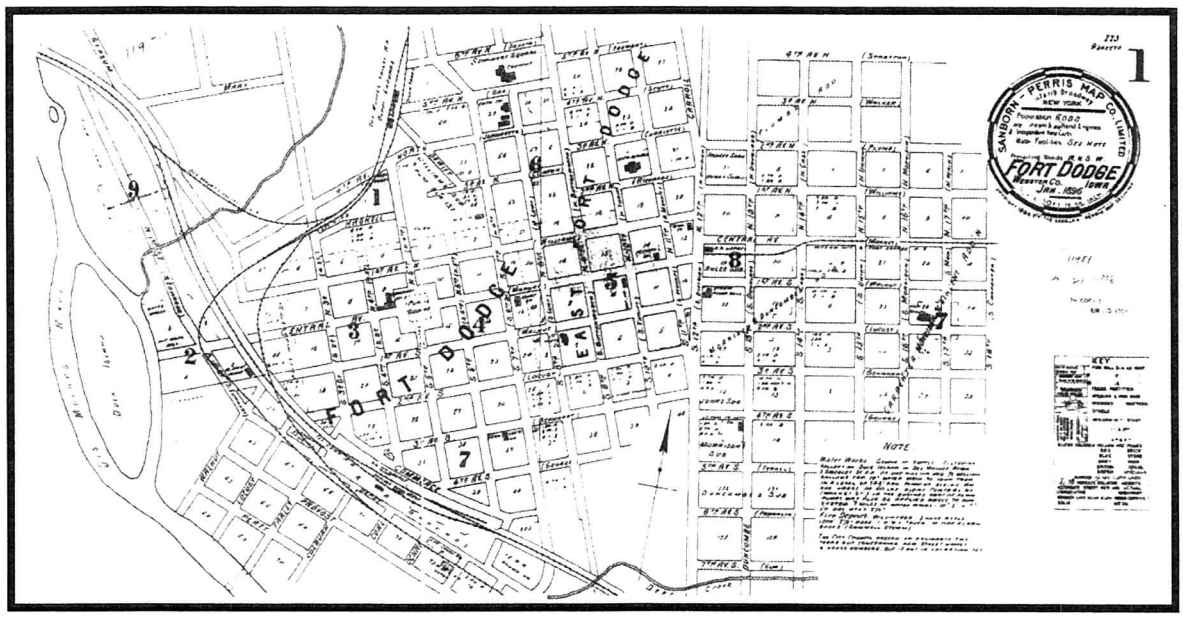


Figure 3. Historic fire insurance maps (1885 and 1896) illustrating nineteenth-century development patterns.



Figure 4. Historic postcard view of the Warden Hotel, circa 1920 (Webster County Historical Society).

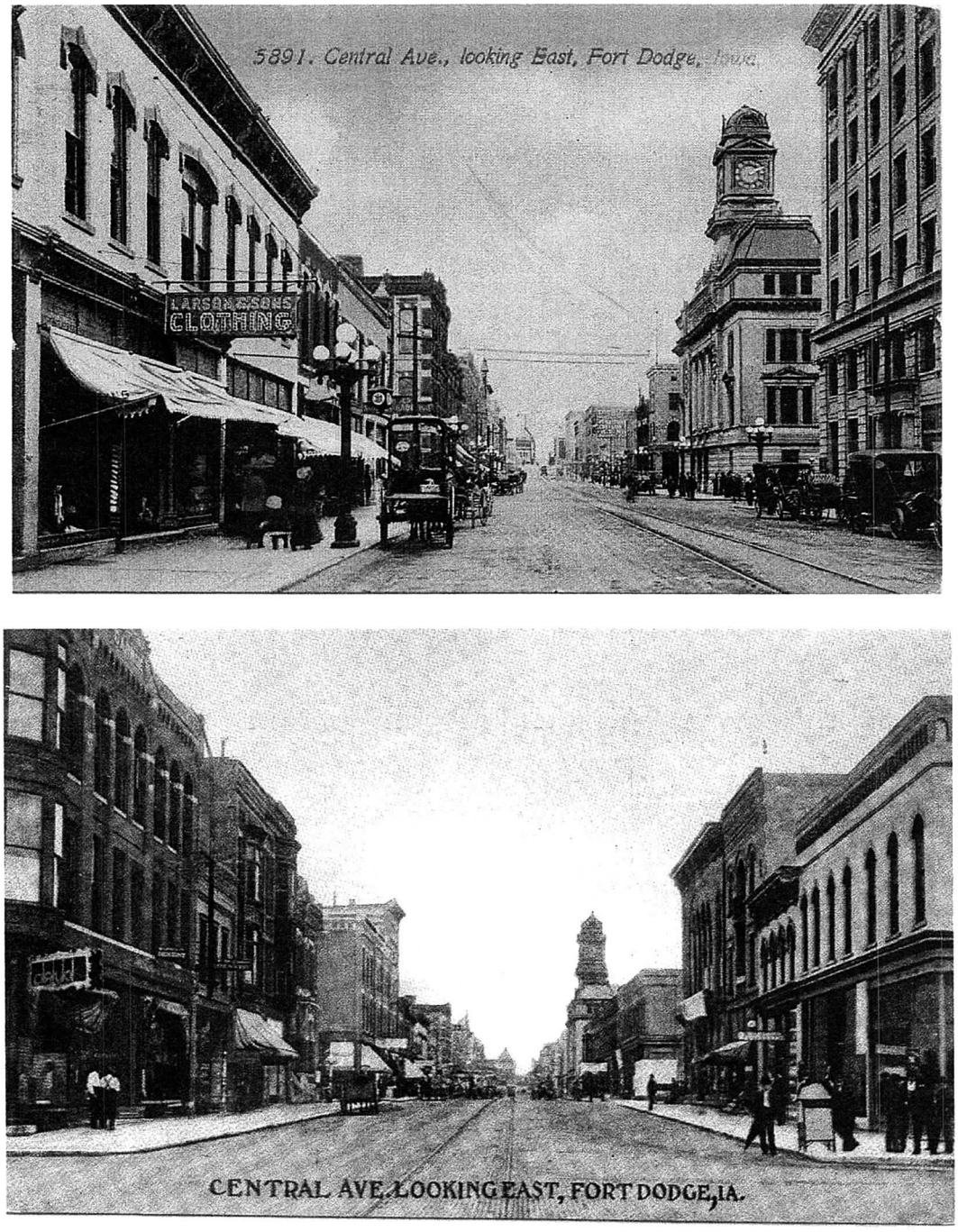


Figure 5. Historic postcard views of the downtown shopping district, circa early 1900s (Webster County Historical Society).

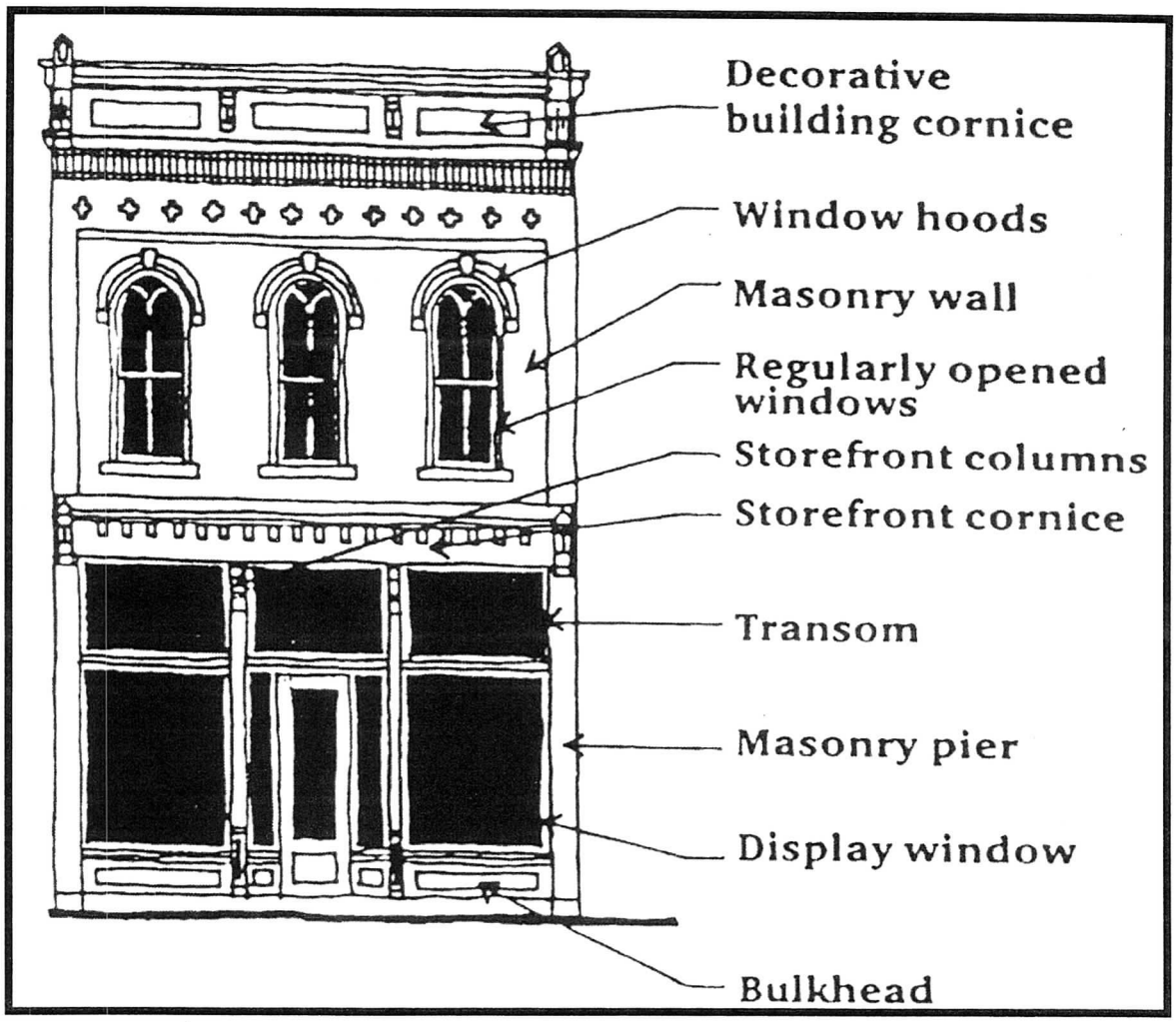


Figure 6. Typical storefront plan.

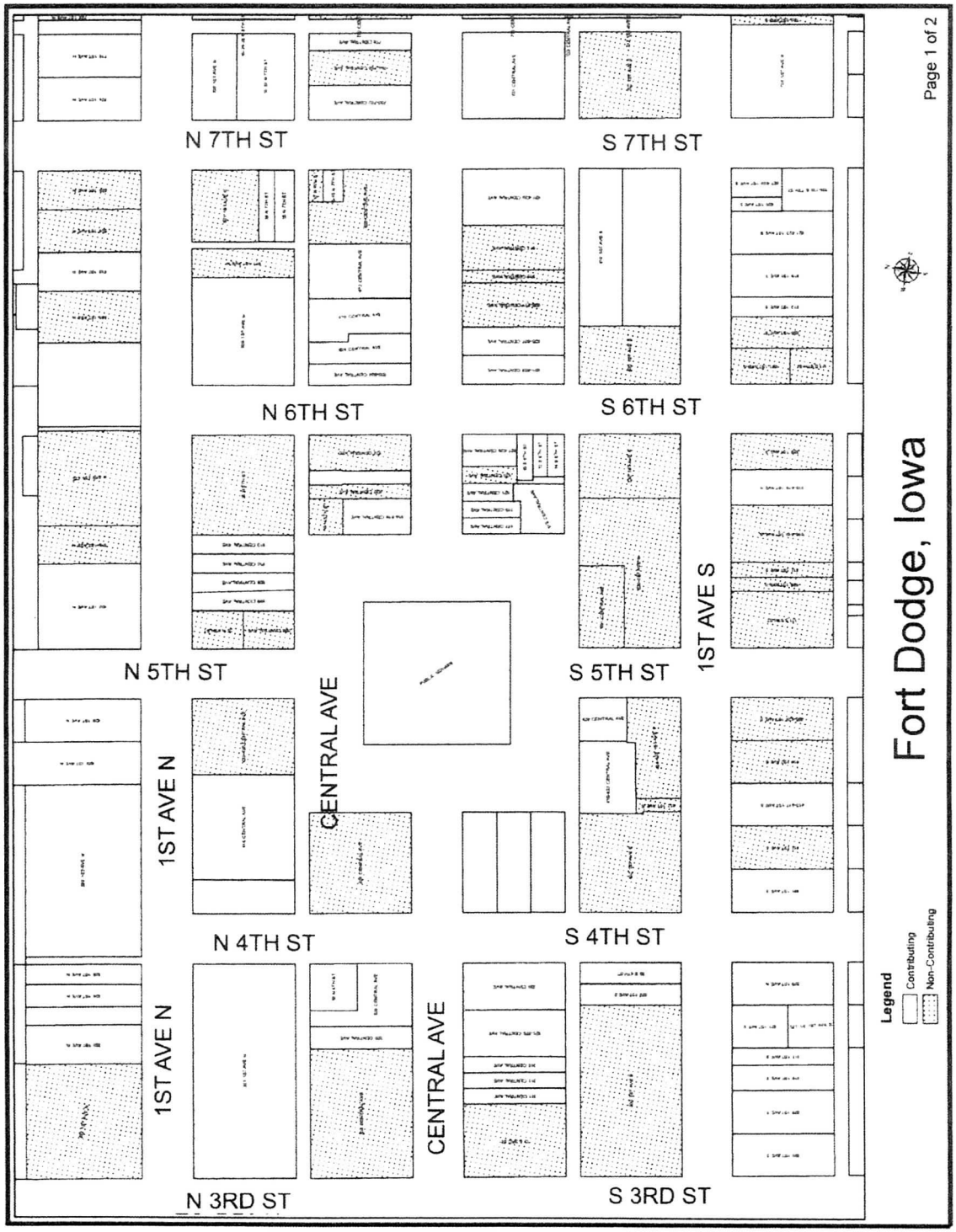


Figure 7. Downtown survey map, west section.

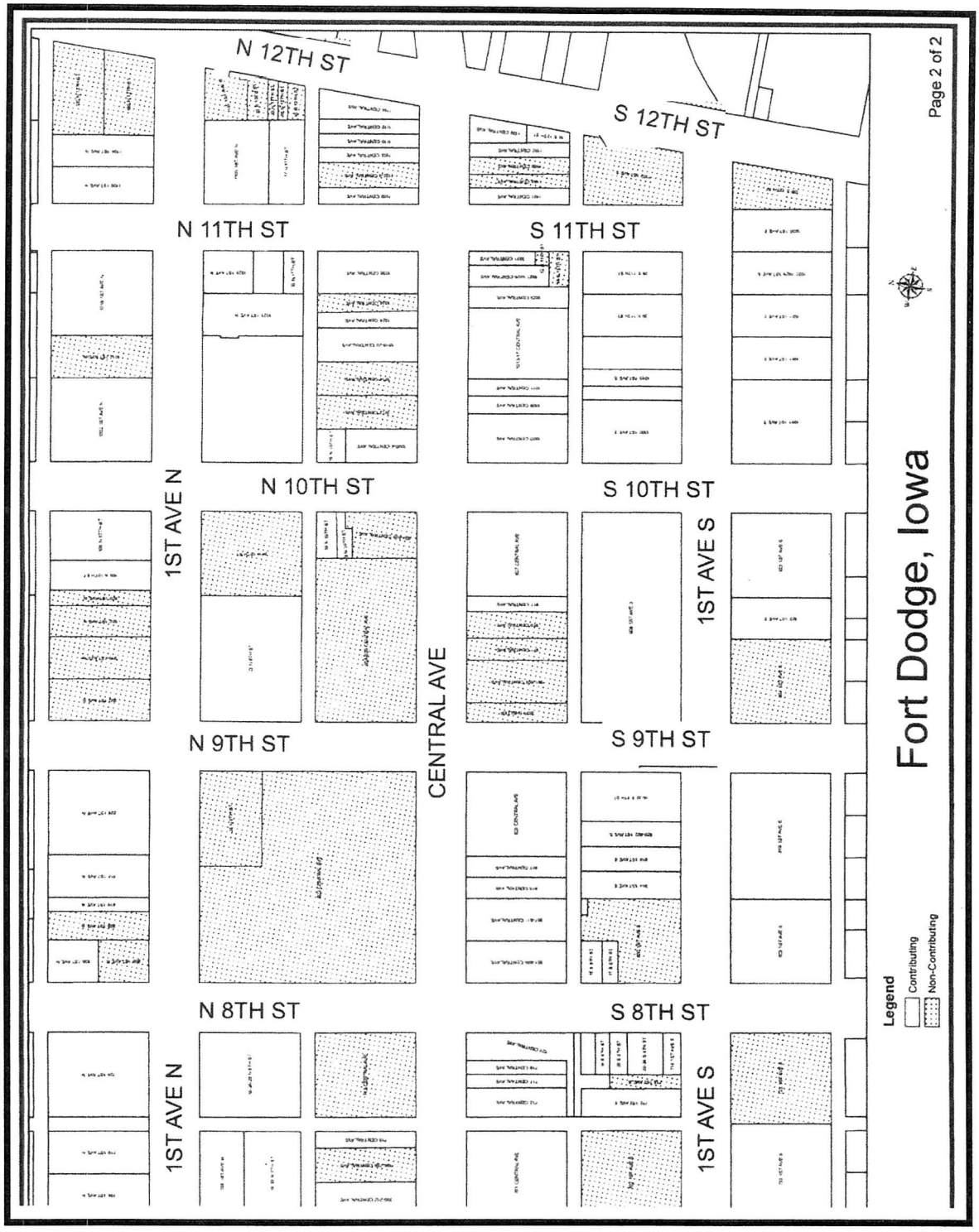
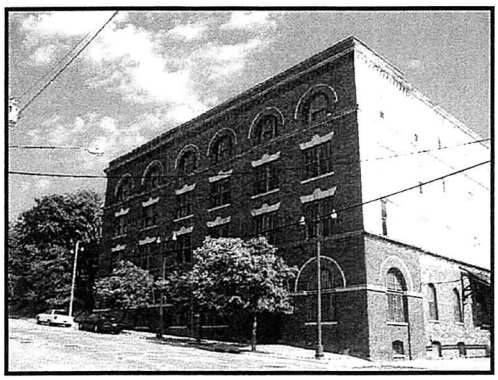
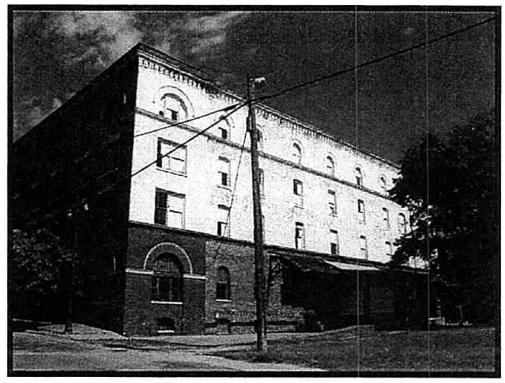


Figure 8. Downtown survey map, east section.

APPENDIX

PHOTOHISTORY





Fort Dodge Grocery Company Warehouse, 201 Central Avenue.



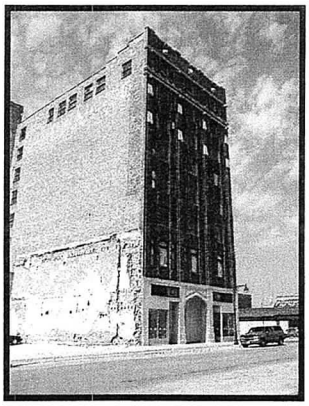


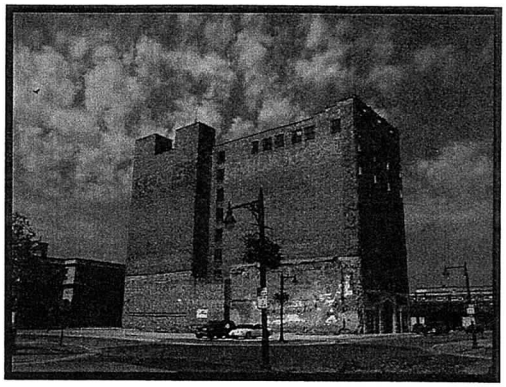
John Deere Company Building, 329 Central Avenue.



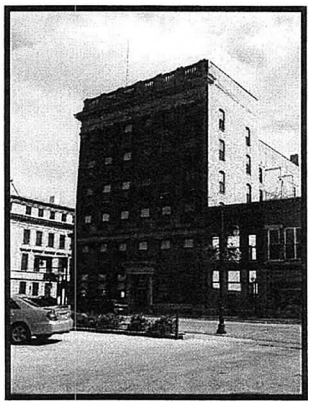


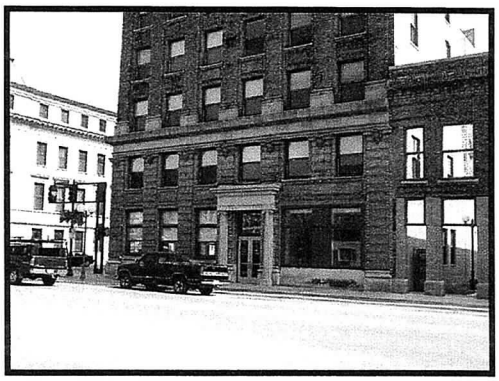
Garmoe Building, 514-518 Central Avenue.





Prusia Hardware-Sears Department Store Building, 610 Central Avenue.



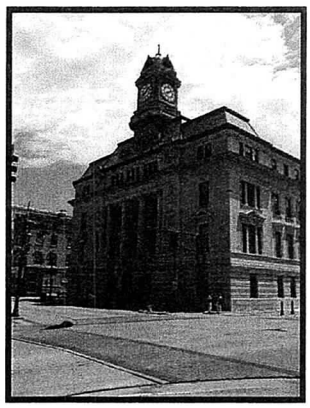


First National Bank-Beh Building, 627-629 Central Avenue.





Reynolds Block, 700-702 Central Avenue.



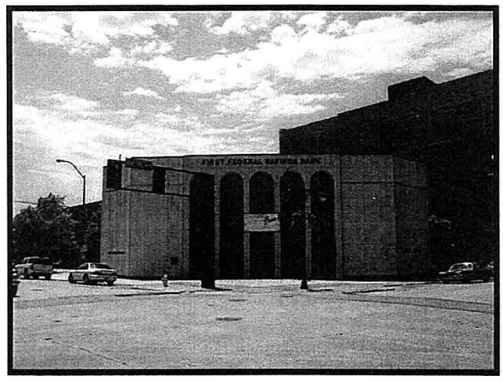


Webster County Courthouse, 701 Central Avenue.



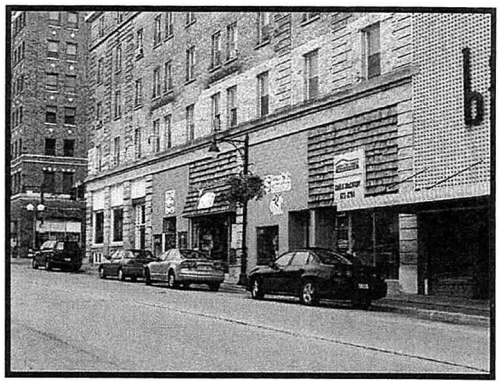


Snell Building, 805 Central Avenue.



First Federal Savings Bank Building, 825 Central Avenue.



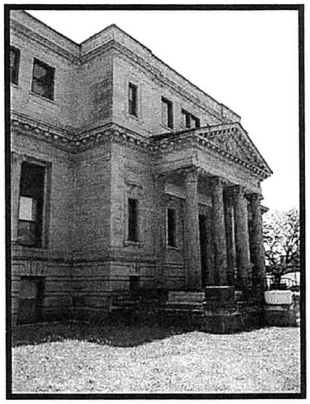


Wahkonsa Hotel and Annex, 927 Central Avenue.



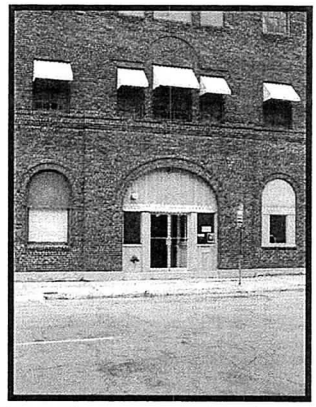


Carver Building, 1003 Central Avenue.





Carnegie Public Library, 605 First Avenue North.

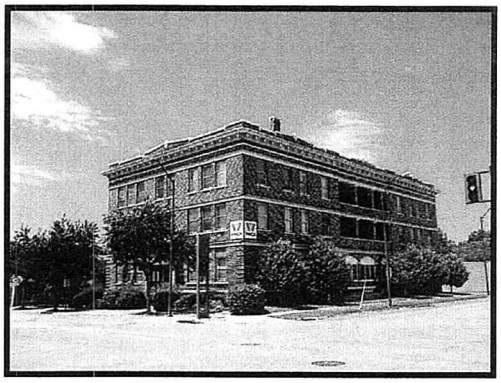
Marso-Rodenborn Manufacturing Company Building, 700 First Avenue North.




Johnston Hotel-Hotel Cornbelt Building, 705 First Avenue North.

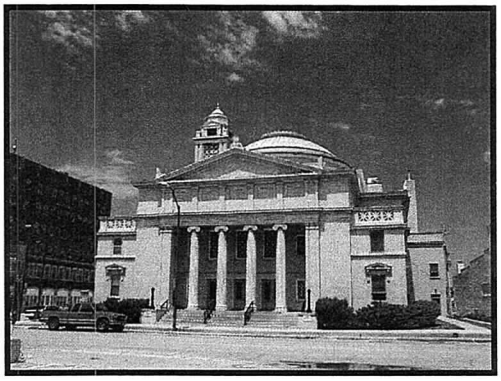



Rehder Cadillac Garage, 728 First Avenue North.





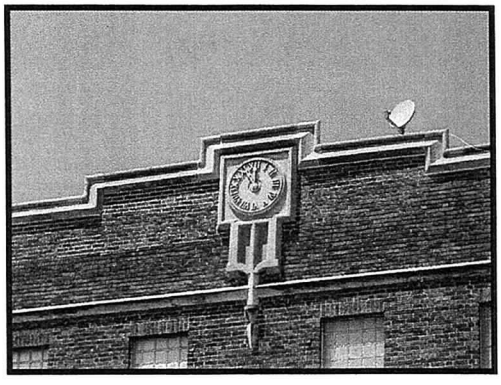
Y.W.C.A. Building, 826 First Avenue North.



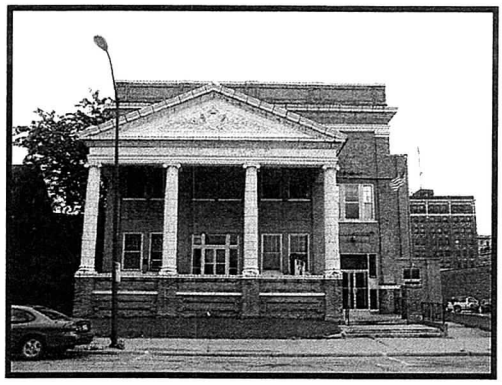


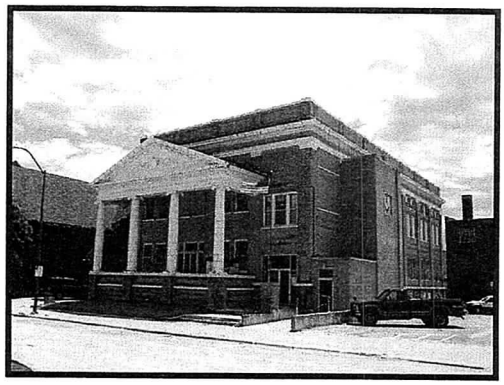
First United Methodist Church, 1002 First Avenue North.





Elks-Eagles Club Building, 1018 First Avenue North.





Masonic Temple, 1021 First Avenue North.



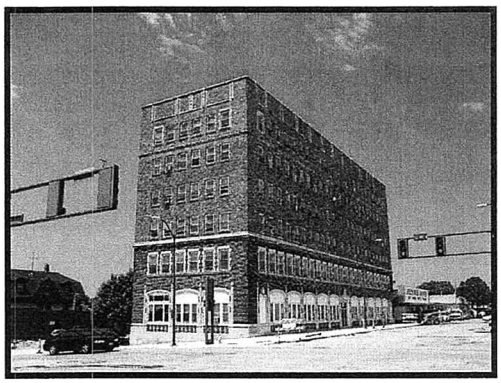


Fort Dodge Municipal Building, 819 First Avenue North.





Warden Hotel, 908 First Avenue North.





Physicians Building-Biltwell Apartments, 116 North Tenth Street





Sacred Heart Catholic Church, 211 South Thirteenth Street