

56-718



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Gordon-Van Tine Company Historic District

other names/site number U.N. Roberts & Company Buildings

2. Location

street & number 736 Federal Street and 737 Charlotte Street [N/A] not for publication

city or town Davenport [N/A] vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Scott code 163 zip code 52803

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. [see continuation sheet for additional comments].

[Signature] 17 Jan 2017
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State Historical Society of Iowa

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. ([See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

[Signature] 3-7-17
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Gordon-Van Tine Company Historic District
Name of Property

Scott County, IA
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>4</u>		buildings
		_____ sites
		_____ structures
		_____ objects
<u>4</u>		Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION/
Manufacturing Facility
COMMERCE/TRADE/Business
COMMERCE/TRADE/Warehouse

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling
COMMERCE/TRADE/Business

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/
Classical Revival
OTHER

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
walls BRICK
roof SYNTHETIC
other STONE

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Gordon-Van Tine Company Historic District
Name of Property

Scott County, IA
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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1907 - 1947

Significant Dates

1910

1916

1946

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

UNKNOWN

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

Gordon-Van Tine Company Historic District
Name of Property

Scott County, IA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.9 ACRES

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 [1]5 [7]0[3]2[8]5 [4]5[9]9[9]4[2] 2 [1]5 [0]0[0]0[0]0 [0]0[0]0[0]0
Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

Lat 41.524988 Lon 90.563305

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Molly Myers Naumann, Consultant mollynaumann@outlook.com

organization _____ date December 2016

street & number 167 West Alta Vista telephone 641-777-3318

city or town Ottumwa state IA zip code 52501-1437

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the complete form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Y & J Properties LLC Unity Corporation

DBA Harbor View Properties, DBA Republic Companies

street & number PO Box 4469 PO Box 3807

city or town Davenport, IA 52808 Davenport, IA 52808

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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GORDON-VAN TINE COMPANY HISTORIC DISTRICT
SCOTT COUNTY, IA

Section number 7 Page 1

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION:

Summary Paragraph

The **Gordon-Van Tine Historic District** consists of four early twentieth century brick commercial/industrial buildings located at 736 Federal and 737 Charlotte streets, approximately one block north of the Mississippi River in Davenport (Scott County), Iowa. The Gordon-Van Tine Company was one of the major producers of mail order, or "kit", houses in the first half of the twentieth century. The four buildings in this historic district speak to the importance of this trend. They range in size from a small single story garage to a large five story warehouse/factory building. **Building #1** is a four story brick office building. It is a simple five bay by ten bay rectangle in the Classical Revival design. The main entrance is centered on the the narrow side of the rectangle (west elevation) and has a Classical Revival stone surround with a simple limestone cornice. The building features a dressed limestone foundation, a stone water table defining the top of the first floor windows and a narrower stone string course between the second and third floors. The building is capped by a very simple classical brick entablature with a brick and stone cornice. **Building #2** is the large five story building that served as both a warehouse and a factory. It is of fire-proof reinforced concrete construction with brick curtain walls. It is a rectangular building measuring seven bays by twelve bays, with brick pilasters defining the bays on floors three through five, and a very simple brick classical cornice across the top of the building. Today the office and warehouse buildings are linked by two skywalks. A major two story addition was made on the east side of the warehouse/factory in 1965. It differs in both style and brick color from the original section, but is sympathetic in scale and proportion. **Building #3** is a small single story garage located at the east end of the office building. Although it is linked to the office building today by a four story hyphen containing a stairway, originally it was free-standing with two additional sections at the east end. These two sections were removed around 1960. **Building #4** is a long narrow building along the north side of the block, parallel to Charlotte Street. It was originally built as a lumber shed with loading docks opening onto a railroad spur between it and the warehouse/factory, and large doors along the street side to facilitate the loading of lumber onto trucks. Buildings #2, #3 and #4 are simple vernacular brick structures without defining stylistic elements.

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GORDON-VAN TINE COMPANY HISTORIC DISTRICT
SCOTT COUNTY, IA

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Figure 1

Gordon- Van Tine Company Historic District
2014 aerial photo shows district boundaries and location of resources

- 1 Office Building
- 2 Warehouse/Factory
- 3 Garage
- 4 Lumber Storage

(ISU Geographic Information System)

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GORDON-VAN TINE COMPANY HISTORIC DISTRICT
SCOTT COUNTY, IA

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Narrative Description

Davenport is the county seat of Scott County which is located in eastern Iowa along the banks of the Mississippi River. This part of Iowa was home to the earliest settlement in the state in the 1830s. Davenport was founded by Antoine Leclaire in 1836 and named for his good friend George Davenport. The Mississippi River was the major mode of transportation for much of the nineteenth century, although the railroad arrived in 1856, linking Davenport to Rock Island, Illinois. Like most river towns, the industrial area developed along the river, and the railroad laid track not only west into the heart of Iowa, but also along the river. When the Gordon-Van Tine (GVT) complex was initially established, there was a large railroad yard immediately to the west across Federal Street, and a rail spur was built into the GVT grounds to provide easy access. Although the area around GVT along the river is mixed use commercial and industrial, a residential neighborhood lies directly across Charlotte Street to the north.



Figure 2
USGS map of Davenport
Arrow indicates location of
Gordon-Van Tine
Note Mississippi River at lower right

Figure 3
Detail of USGS map
Arrow indicates location of
Gordon-Van Tine



The Gordon-Van Tine Company was one of the major producers of mail order, or "kit", houses in the first half of the twentieth century. The four buildings in this historic district speak to the importance

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GORDON-VAN TINE COMPANY HISTORIC DISTRICT
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of this trend. The Gordon-Van Tine Historic District consists of four brick buildings tightly clustered on an irregularly shaped city block bound by Federal on the west, Charlotte (originally Case) on the north, Swits on the south, and Tremont on the east. There was originally another street, Union (aka Beech), between Federal and Tremont but it was closed at some point to allow expansion of the Gordon-Van Tine facilities. The terrain here has a gentle downward slope from Charlotte to Swits. All four buildings appear to have been constructed shortly after the company was formed, c.1907 to c. 1915-20.

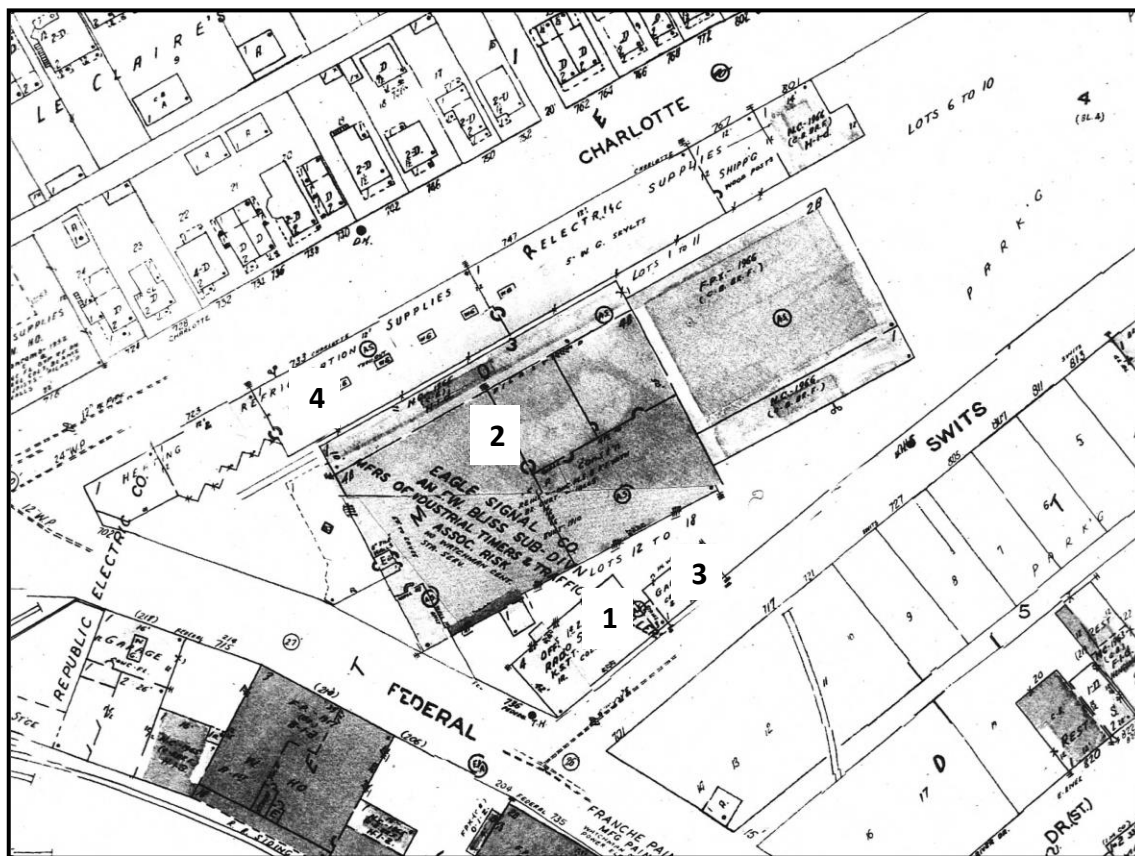


Figure 4
Gordon-Van Tine Company buildings as they appear in 1967
(1967 Sanborn Insurance Map)

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EXTERIOR

Building #1, the office building, was constructed in 1908-09. It is located at the southwest corner of the block, the corner of Federal and Swits, and features two primary elevations. It is a four story rectangular brick building with a flat roof. The exterior walls are of red orange face brick laid in running bond. It measures fifty-one by ninety-one feet, with the main entrance on the narrow west elevation. The entrance is centered on the five bay façade and features a simple Classical Revival limestone surround. The surround consists of dressed stone pilasters flanking the door with a simple Classical Revival cornice across the top. The pilasters flanking the door are capped by a monogrammed cartouche. The one on the left carries the initials UNR for U.N. Roberts, and the one on the right has GVT for Gordon-Van Tine. (U.N. Roberts was the parent company of Gordon-Van Tine.) The building rests on a limestone foundation: dressed stone on the two primary elevations (west and south), and rusticated stone block on the secondary (east and north) elevations. Window sills on the primary elevations are limestone, while those on the other two elevations are of header bricks. A limestone water table defines the top of the first floor windows, while a narrower stone string course is located between the second and third floors. Both the water table and string course turn the corners to the secondary elevations, ending in cornice returns. The windows on the first, second, and fourth floors are simple rectangles, while those on the third floor feature segmental arches. On the secondary elevations all fenestration is segmental arched. The top of the building continues the Classical Revival style with a brick patterned entablature of biglyphs and metopes. Each biglyph appears to rest on a small square stone block. A narrow stone string course below a narrow corbelled brick cornice completes the design. The brick stepped parapet is capped by glazed tile.

Building #1 was originally a five bay by ten bay three story building. It has not yet been determined when the fourth floor was added or when the four story nine by twenty-five foot extension was added to the east end of the building. A photograph from c.1915-20 shows it as three stories and shows a small single story building immediately east (Building #3) but the two are not connected. Gordon-Van Tine letterhead in the 1918 catalog includes an engraving of the entire GVT plant, and the office building is shown as four stories. This could have been accurate or could have been in anticipation of the additional story. That particular engraving was used for years in the GVT catalogs. A photograph from the 1923 catalog shows the office building as four stories.

At the time that the fourth story was constructed, the string course between the second and third floors was added, and it is very possible that a sheathing of face brick laid in running bond was applied. A close look at the façade shows that the walls of the first and second floors appear to be one brick thicker than those above. Sheathing would also explain why there is no sign of the added floor. The addition on the east may have been added at the same time, as the brickwork on the first and second floors is flawless, but a line is clearly visible on the third and fourth floors where the brick has been "toothed in." The "new" entrance in this nine foot addition reflects the Classical Revival style of the

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original portion of the building, with brick pilasters flanking the doorway and sidelights, and a simple stone cornice above. At the top of the addition, the brick entablature and cornice with narrow stone string course match that found on the original building. The first thought upon seeing this addition is that it was added to connect buildings 1 and 3. However, the connecting doorway seems almost an after-thought. It appears that the addition was made to house a second set of stairs connecting all four floors.

In addition to the changes noted above, exterior alterations to Building #1 after the period of significance include new windows throughout, a doorway at the west end of the south elevation that has been replaced by a triple window, an elevator shaft added to the north elevation near the west end in 1963, and two skywalks connecting to Building #2. The canopy above the main entrance and sloping sidewalk to provide handicapped accessibility are recent changes by a previous owner.

Building #2 is the large five story brick building located immediately north of the office building. It is shown on the 1910 Sanborn Insurance Map as "being built" and described as "Lumber Warehouse, fire proof construction, reinforced concrete." The rectangular building measures one hundred thirty-five by two hundred twenty-five feet, with an east/west axis. Surrounding it on three sides (west, north and east) was a concrete platform. No major exterior changes or additions were made to this building under Gordon Van-Tine ownership. Since that time, a single story addition housing loading ramp and doors was made to the west end, and a large (104 x 150 feet) three story addition with a single story side wing (twenty-two by one hundred fifty feet) was built at the east end in 1965. The east addition was built outside of the period of significance and ownership of Gordon-Van Tine and thus is not functionally related to Gordon-Van Tine. It is considered to be part of Building #2, not a separate entity.

This five story building features an exterior of brown and charcoal brick laid in common bond. The first floor is basically the basement as it is only visible on the south elevation due to the slope of the block. That level is currently covered with vertical board siding, but it is believed to be brick, matching the rest of the building. This building, like Buildings 3 and 4, was purely functional in design, with sparse decorative elements. The west elevation of the building, facing Federal, was considered to be the façade. At the southwest corner of the building, on the west elevation, was the "front" door, unadorned, and easily over-looked. This opened into the small office area of the building. Windows throughout Building #2 are rectangular, with several on the second floor being set in pairs. The first and second floors are perfectly plain, but the third, fourth and fifth floors are treated to a pattern of pilasters defining recessed window bays. The ends of the building contain seven bays. Each bay contains a single window per floor, except on the west elevation where the center bay contains two windows. This bay is also the location of the original freight elevator and shaft. Decorative details are limited to a narrow limestone water table at the level of the third floor windows, and, connecting the tops of the pilasters, is a double row of brick corbelling with a plain brick cornice above capped by glazed tile. It must be noted that the stone water table is only found on the part of the building visible

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from Federal, becoming brick on the other elevations. The twelve bay side elevations are devoid of detailing other than the pilasters and brick patterning noted above. A single story five bay loading ramp (seventy-four by fourteen to twenty feet) has been added to the west elevation. The railroad spur that originally ran between Buildings #2 and 4 has been enclosed (twenty by two hundred and twenty-five feet). Much of the east elevation is obscured by the 1965 addition, but there is a "new" elevator tower located in the center bay at that end as well. This elevator provides access to the roof where a wood deck is presently located on the southeast corner. This deck not only provides a view of the river and Arsenal Island, but to the north, the red brick Italianate residence of Antoine Leclaire (NRHP) can be seen on the hilltop. From this deck six skylights are visible, all in the east half of the roof. Three of these have been covered with shingles, but the other three still allow light into the fifth floor. The south elevation of the original portion of the building is now connected to the office building by two skywalks, one at the second floor and one at the fourth floor level. At ground level, near the east end, a new entrance with glass door and sidelights, has been added, providing access to both the original building and the addition to the east.

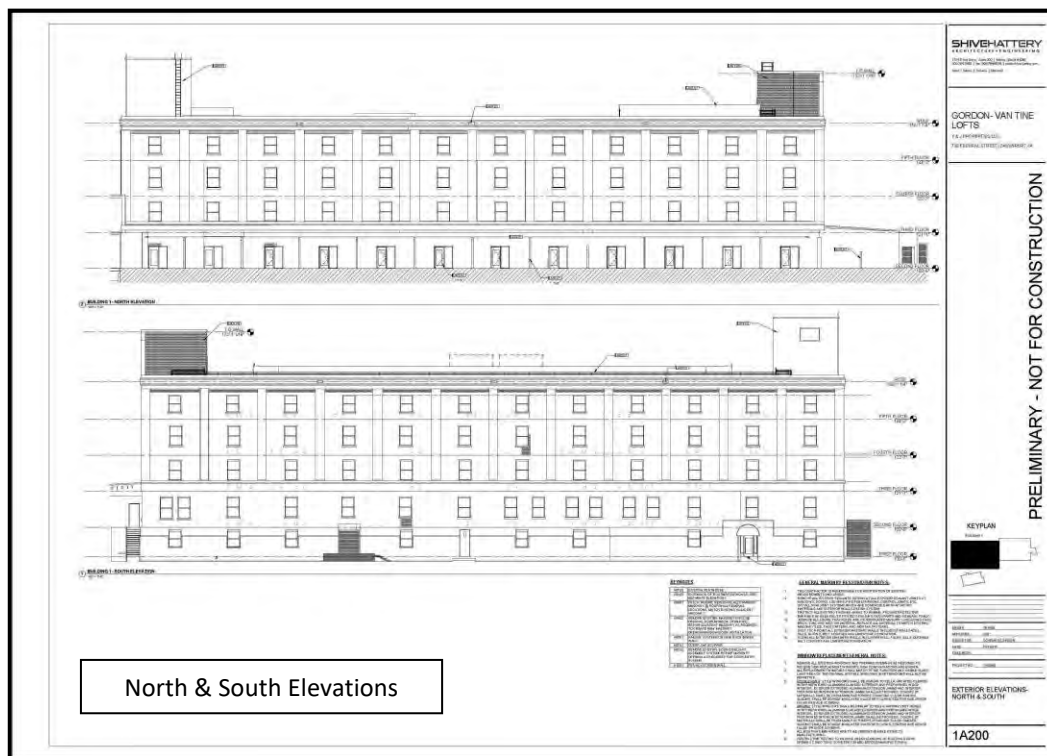


Figure 5
Building 2 – Elevations of the original 1910 section
(Shive-Hattery drawings)

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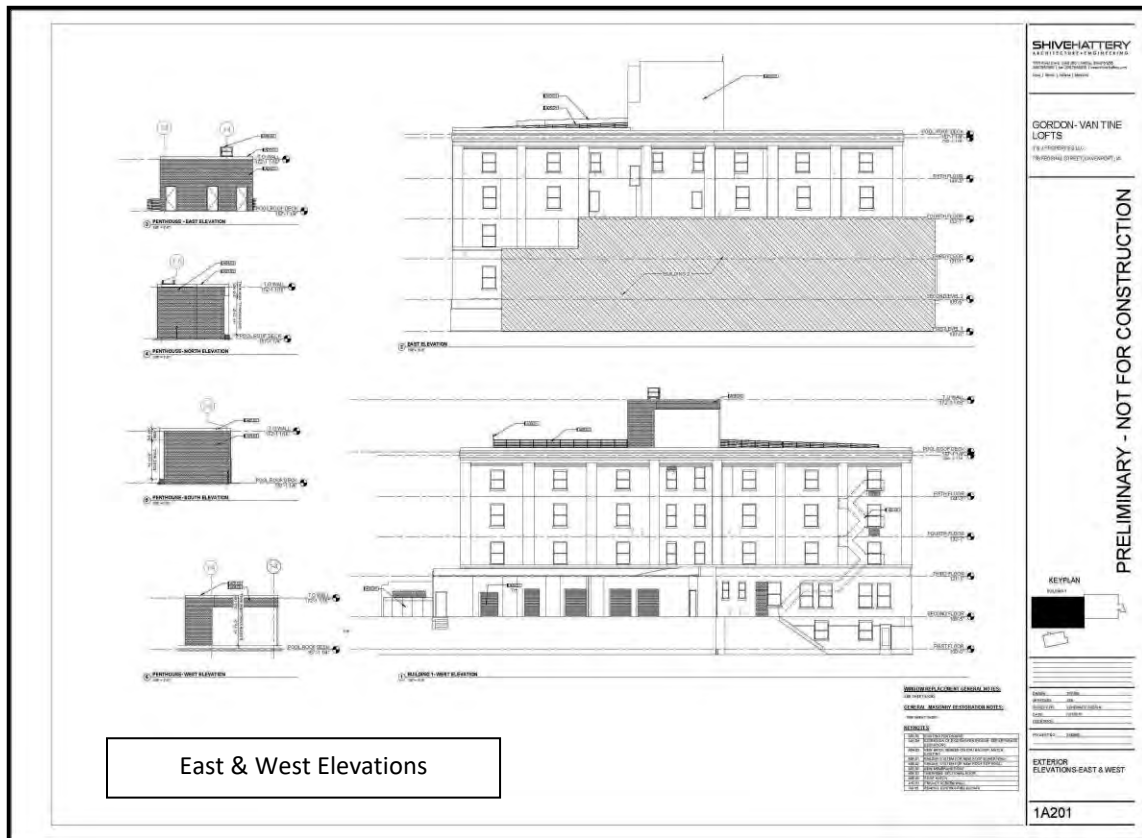


Figure 6
Building2 – Elevations of the original 1910 section
(Shive-Hattery drawings)

The 1965 addition on the east elevation of Building #2 differs from the 1910 portion in terms of both brick color, and design. It is constructed of buff-colored brick that is laid in running bond, and is of simple modern design, with large sections of glass on the east elevation. The building was designed to house offices as well as production/factory areas, so large sections of the walls are windowless. On the façade (east elevation) is a rectilinear three story section, set at an angle, that houses the main entrance to the individual buildings with access via a dramatic open staircase. The single story portion of the building along the south elevation provides space for delivery and storage. This 1965 addition does not “match” the original section, but is not considered to be visually intrusive as it is sympathetic in terms of building material, scale, and proportion.

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Building #3 is the smallest of the buildings in the district, being only a single story and measuring thirty-one by forty-five feet. It was originally built as a four car garage, but no specific date has been established for the construction. The lack of Sanborn Maps between 1910 and 1950 makes dating difficult. However, the 1915-20 photograph that shows the office building as only three stories also shows this building, proving that it was an early part of the complex. Building #3 is a simple rectangle with flat roof. The brick here is the same color as that found in Building #2, and it is laid in common bond. The design follows that of Building 2 with panels containing a single window each (the east panel has a pair of windows in the space), separated by brick pilasters. Each panel is highlighted by brick corbelling across the top, and the roof parapet is capped with glazed tile. The south elevation (along Swits) is three bays, while the east elevation is a single bay. The east end has become the primary elevation with a single entry door and a small window to the left side. "Quoins" have been added to the corners and a decorative cornice added across the top. The brick on this end has been painted gray. The north elevation now faces a patio or courtyard. The four large garage door openings are separated by steel posts and have been filled in with brick laid in common bond. Three of these sections have a door and/or window, while the 4th is blank. All windows and doors in this building are post-period of significance. Despite the new doors and windows, Building #3 retains a high degree of integrity.

Building #4 is a long slender single story building that runs parallel to Charlotte along the north side of the block. It measures sixty-two by five hundred sixty-eight feet with an east/west axis. This was originally built as a lumber shed. It was separated from the warehouse/factory (Building #2) by the rail spur that ran between the two buildings. This facilitated loading and unloading to both buildings. The color and size of the brick appear to be the same used for Buildings #2 and 3, and the pattern of a series of bays divided by pilasters separating recessed panels with corbelled brick patterning above is also the same. The middle portion of this building is composed of two long sections (101' and 150') containing multiple bays. Though the roof is gabled, these sections are defined by stepped parapets at the end of each section. Two sections (fifty-one and fifty feet) were added to the west end by the 1950 Sanborn map. The builders were very careful to try and match the older sections in the middle, with the brick being slightly more red than brown, but the common bond brickwork matched almost perfectly. The 1967 Sanborn shows two additions to the east end, one being a loading dock, and the other a windowless warehouse. The color of the brick in these sections is a soft red, and it is laid in running bond, making no pretense of matching the original. The scale and proportion of the additions at each end are sympathetic to the original. A date of construction has been difficult to establish. Although a lumber shed in this location is shown on the 1910 Sanborn, parts of that building appear to be of frame construction, and the shed was narrower. There were two wood platforms between the shed and the railroad tracks to the south. An engraving from the 1918 Gordon-Van Tine Company catalog shows a long narrow gable roofed building with a series of bays on the Charlotte Street side, but the wood platforms appear to still be in place on the south side. It is believed that the two middle sections date prior to 1920, and the additions to the west end were built not long after. City Assessor's

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records show that this was built in sections between 1915 and 1932. This building retains a strong sense of its original use.

INTERIOR

Building #1 The office building appears to have served two purposes at the time it was constructed: office space on the second and third floors, and a studio producing art glass on the lower level. This was a practical arrangement since the production of glass requires an open flame, and that would create a fire hazard in a warehouse stacked with piles of lumber. The office building is of masonry construction with load-bearing walls, requiring two rows of iron columns through the building from east to west. Entering from the main door facing Federal, there would originally have been a short set of steps leading down to the glass studio, and another leading up a half story to the office level. This arrangement has been altered through the years, and a ramp now provides handicapped accessibility to the lower level lobby and hallway which lead to the "new" elevator on the north elevation. Throughout this building dropped ceilings have been installed and new walls of sheet rock added, often covered with modern paneling. All of this is reversible, but it greatly alters the appearance today. The original pressed metal ceiling remains above the dropped ceiling in the lobby, and it may exist in other parts of the building as well. Since there are no original plans for any of the buildings, it is difficult to determine the exact configuration of each floor. The original Craftsman staircase would have risen from the front entry hall, but has been reconfigured, and the entire open staircase now rises from an interior hall that connects the elevator with the main hallway on the first floor. However, it retains the original Craftsman style railing and newel posts, and golden oak finish. There is a central hallway on the first floor that leads to the back of the building (east), with rooms opening off to each side. The upper floors can be accessed by the original staircase, the "new" stairs on the east end, or the 1963 elevator on the north elevation. The second floor appears to have been the location of the offices for the company's officers. The two rooms on the west end of the building (northwest and southwest corners) were considered prime space, and oak paneled wainscoting has been discovered behind the sheet rock walls. In addition, the wood flooring in these two rooms is of narrow quarter-sawn oak, while flooring in the rest of space is of wider oak boards. A closet that now opens into the office at the southwest corner contains a wooden column with a simple base and capital. It is currently painted, but it appears to have been a decorative element in one of the executive offices, and was probably golden oak, matching the staircase. The hallway on this level runs along the north wall rather than the middle of the building. While this creates larger office suites, the design puts some of the iron columns in strange places such as the middle of the room, or in a closet. In the northeast corner of both floors one and two is a large brick vault. The vault does not extend above the second floor. On the third floor the hallway is just off center, creating a situation where some of the iron columns are free-standing in the hall. The fourth floor reverts back to the hallway along the north side of the building, providing natural light. The offices on this floor are laid out around a large open space with six free-standing iron columns. Additional

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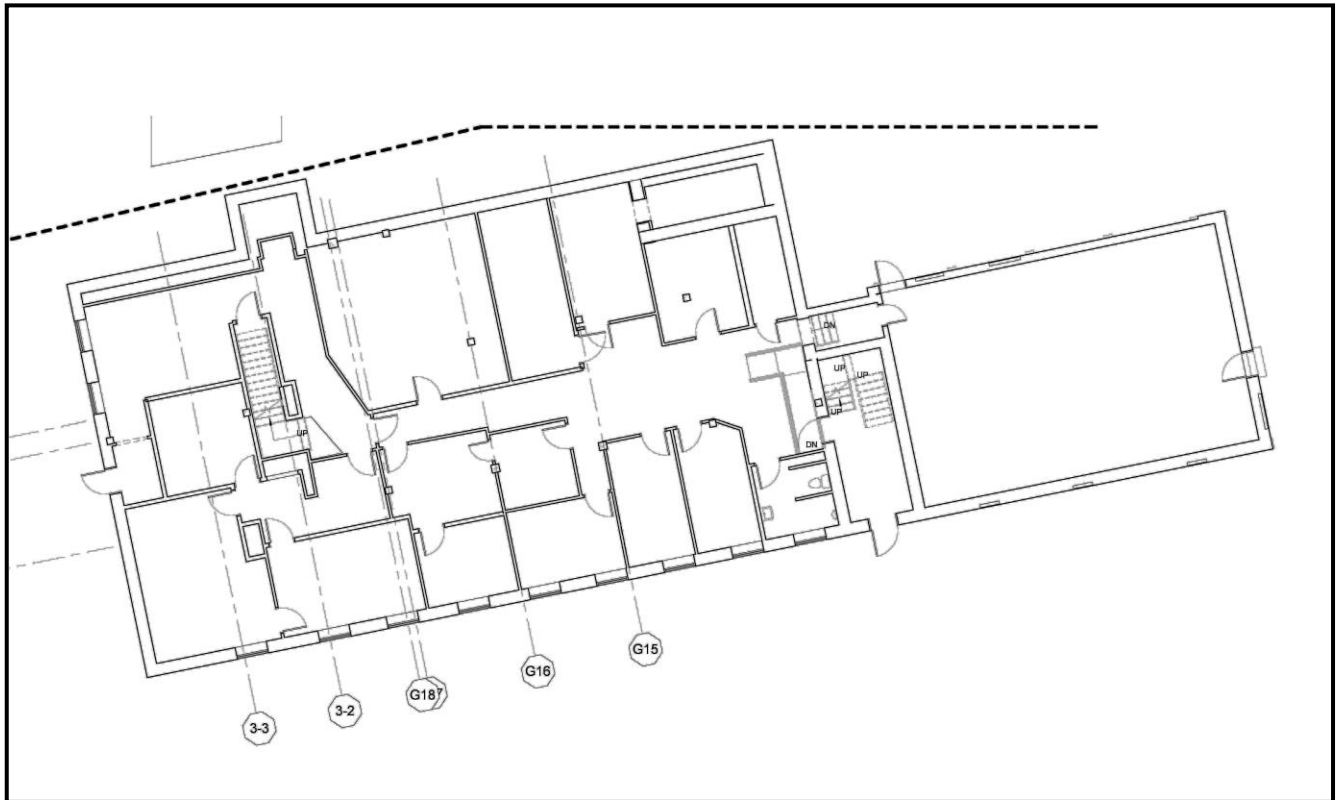


Figure 7
Building 1 on left, Building 3 on right
Plan of 1st floor
(Shive-Hattery drawing)

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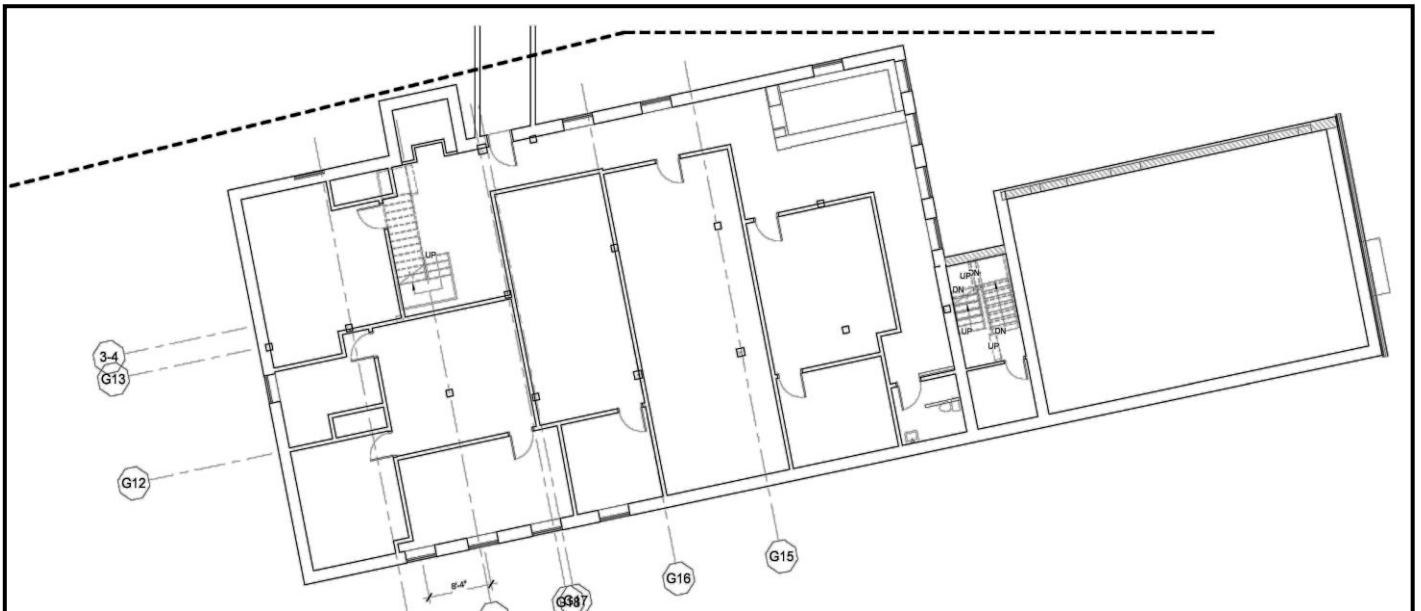


Figure 8
Building 1 on left, roof of Building 3 on right
Plan of 2nd floor
(Shive-Hattery drawing)

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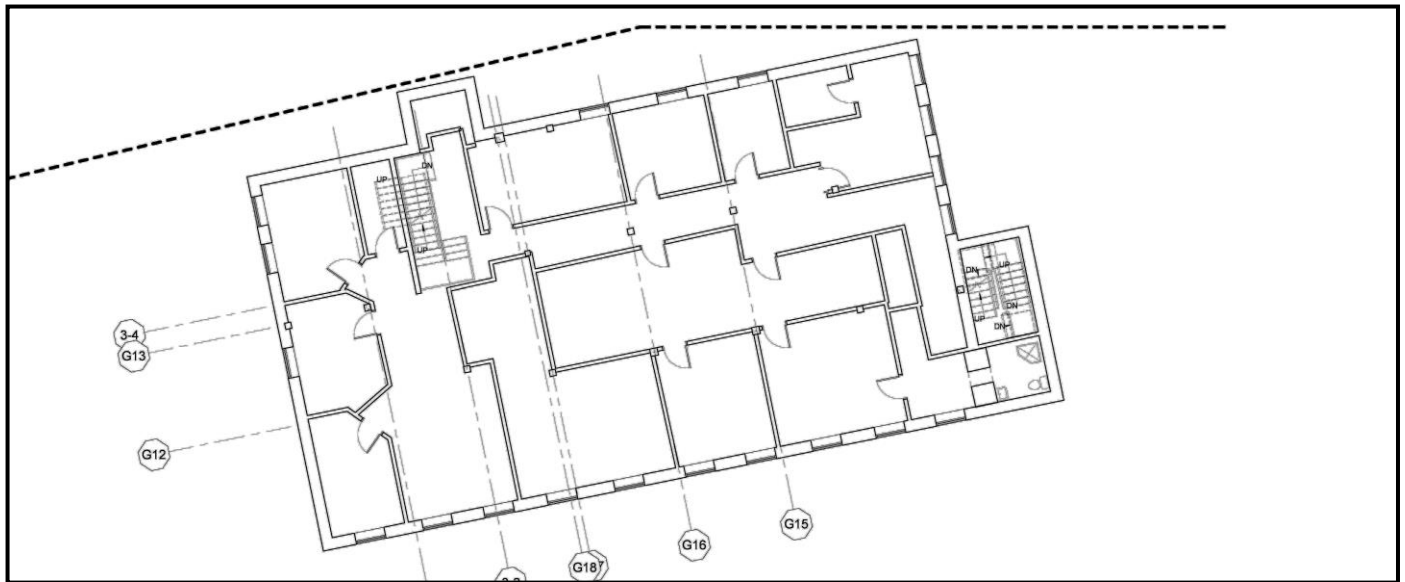


Figure 9
Building 1
Plan of 3rd floor
(Shive-Hattery drawing)

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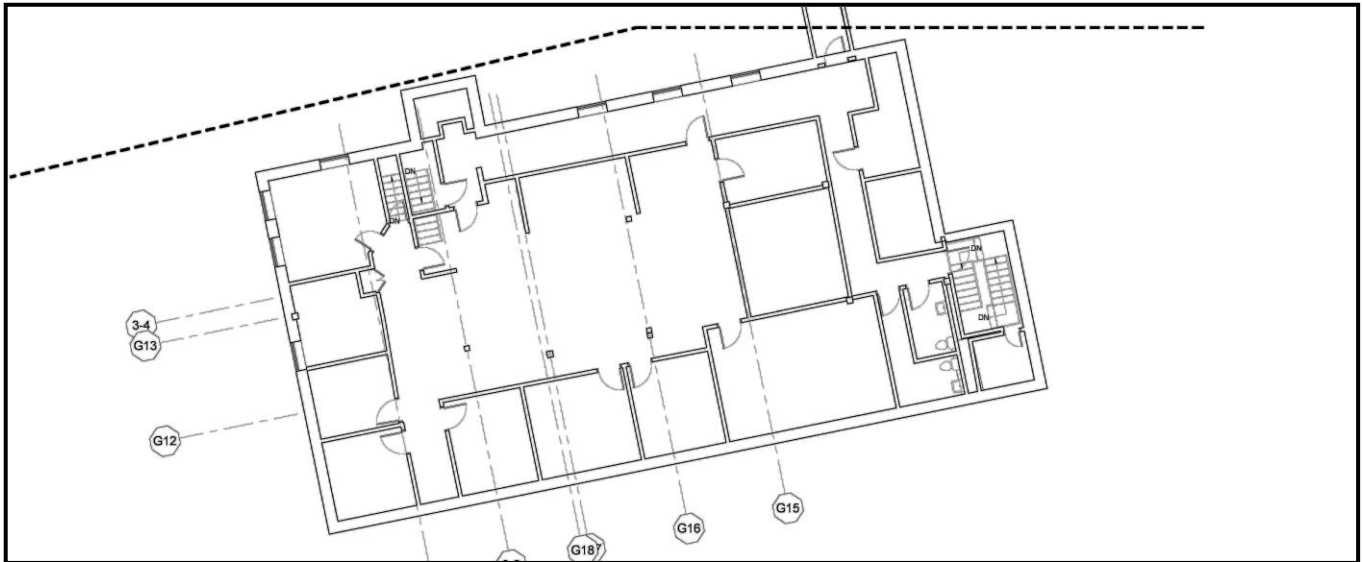


Figure 10
Building 1
Plan of 4th floor
(Shive-Hattery drawing)

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information about the original configuration of the interior, and additional architectural detailing may be identified at some future date. Original windows were replaced by a previous owner after the period of significance.

Building #2 The five story warehouse/factory is of reinforced concrete construction with brick curtain walls. This was a relatively new building technique in 1910 that was fast becoming common for warehouse and industrial buildings. Floors and ceiling throughout the building are of concrete, while the side walls are of brick. Each floor has a grid of six cast concrete piers running north and south, and eleven piers running east and west. These piers are approximately eighteen feet apart on center. Due to the open plan the arched sections of the ceiling are clearly visible. These were reinforced and cast in place, with the arched design spreading the weight to the concrete piers on each side. A brick wall runs north/south through the building on each floor, connecting the concrete piers in the center (piers #6) providing additional strength. The ceiling height does not appear to vary from floor to floor, being almost twelve feet. This grid pattern created the large open space that was needed for a warehouse, and provided a fire-proof storage for stacks of lumber as well as the doors, windows, sash, and millwork that was created by Gordon-Van Tine. A freight elevator located on the west end provided means for moving this material easily, either up for storage, or down for shipping via the rail spur. The first floor originally contained a small office area in the southwest corner, plus a shipping area. Due to the slope of the ground, there are no windows on the north side as it is underground. The floors above remained primarily open space for lumber storage, etc. The fourth floor was broken into several specific production areas: art glass, glazing and glue, and carpentry shop. The interior space was well lit by the windows on all four elevations, and the fifth floor had additional lighting from six extant skylights (three of which are currently covered). Company advertising boasted that they had erected an entire house for display inside this building using one of the GVT "kits." Unfortunately, no photographs have been located documenting this.

The integrity of the interior of this warehouse/factory has been maintained because it is structural. Since the sale of GVT in 1946, this space has been used for a variety of purposes and by a number of different businesses: offices, exercise, music, manufacturing, etc. For this reason, much of the open space has been divided by partition walls, dropped ceilings have been added, and carpeting covers some of the floors. While this creates a very different type of interior space, it is all reversible. Large open areas are still visible on the second and fifth floors. There is a new main entrance to the building on the south elevation, opening off the courtyard. The interior space has been finished with new walls, ceilings, flooring and lighting, creating a welcoming space to both the original 1910 building, and the 1965 addition on the east. Most, if not all, of the original windows were replaced by a previous owner after the period of significance.

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Figure 11
Building 2
Plan of 1st floor
(Shive-Hattery drawing)

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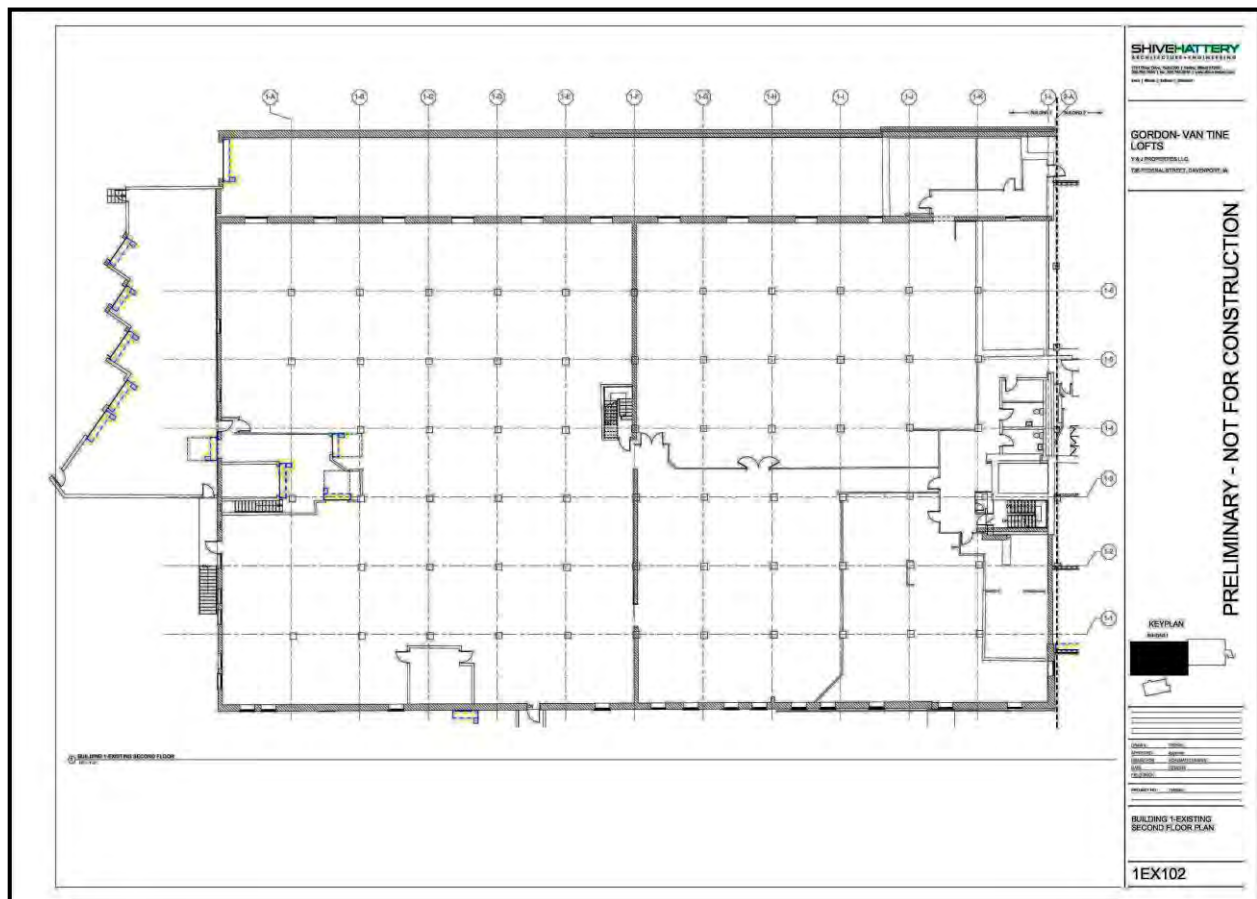


Figure 12
Building 2
Plan of 2nd floor
(Shive-Hattery drawing)

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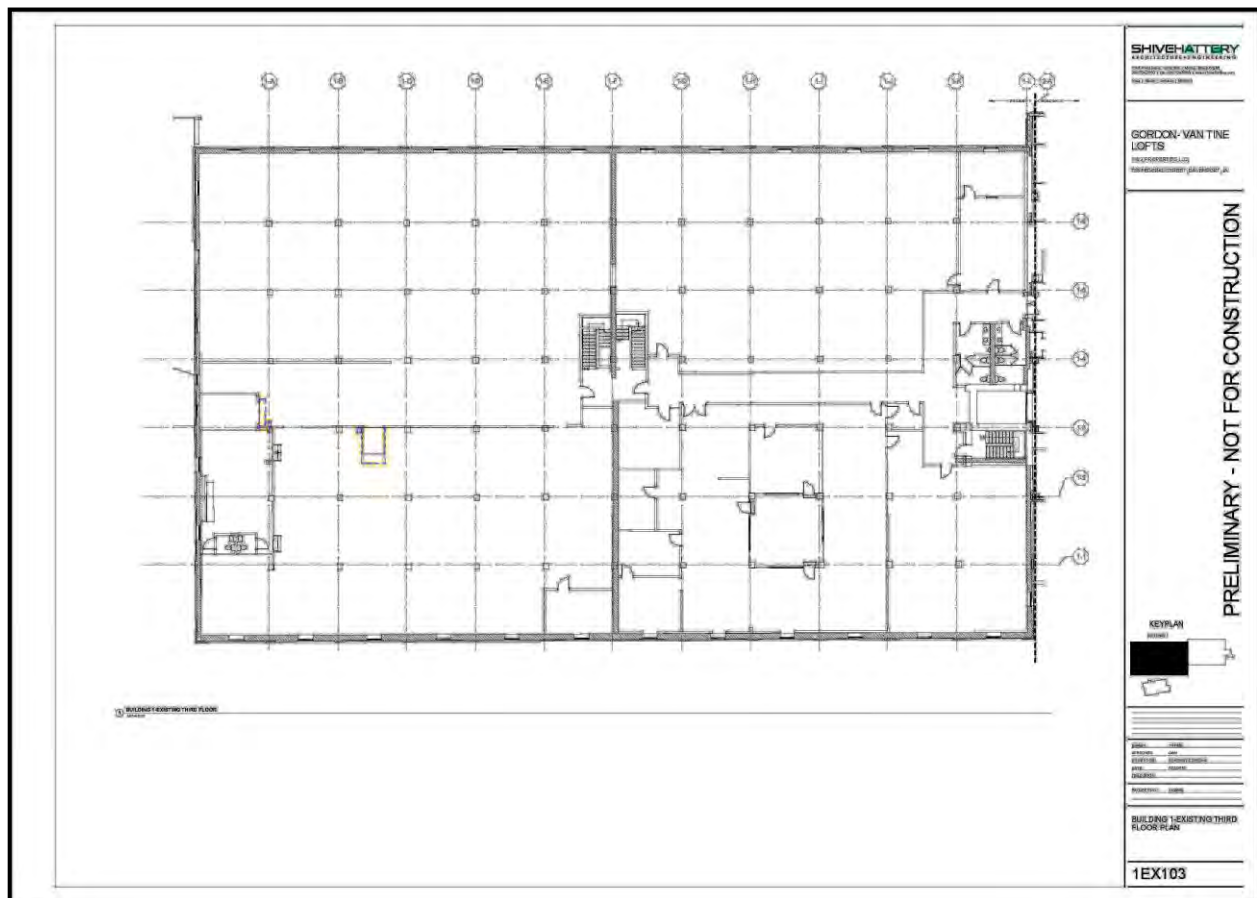


Figure 13
Building 2
Plan of 3rd floor
(Shive-Hattery drawing)

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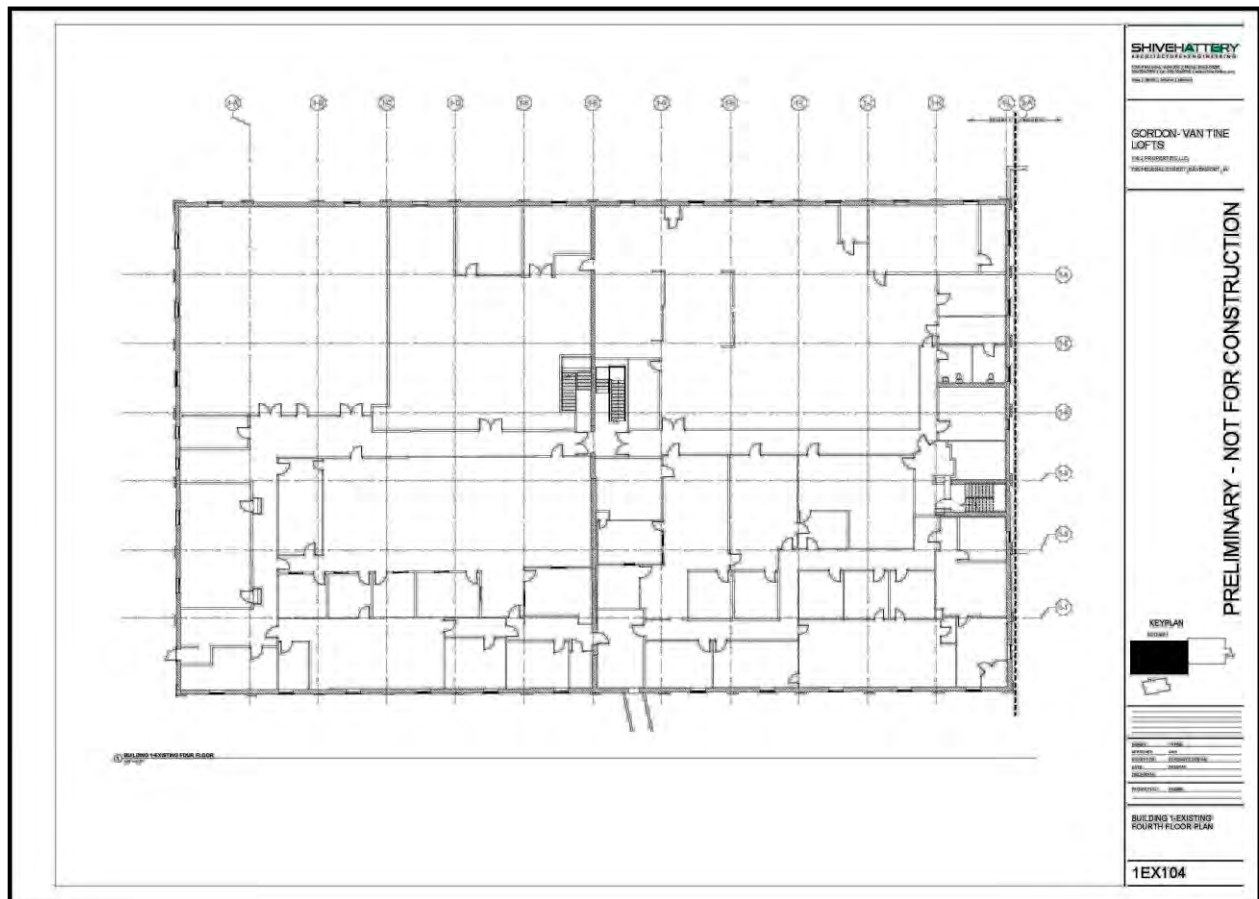


Figure 14
Building 2
Plan of 4th floor
(Shive-Hattery drawing)

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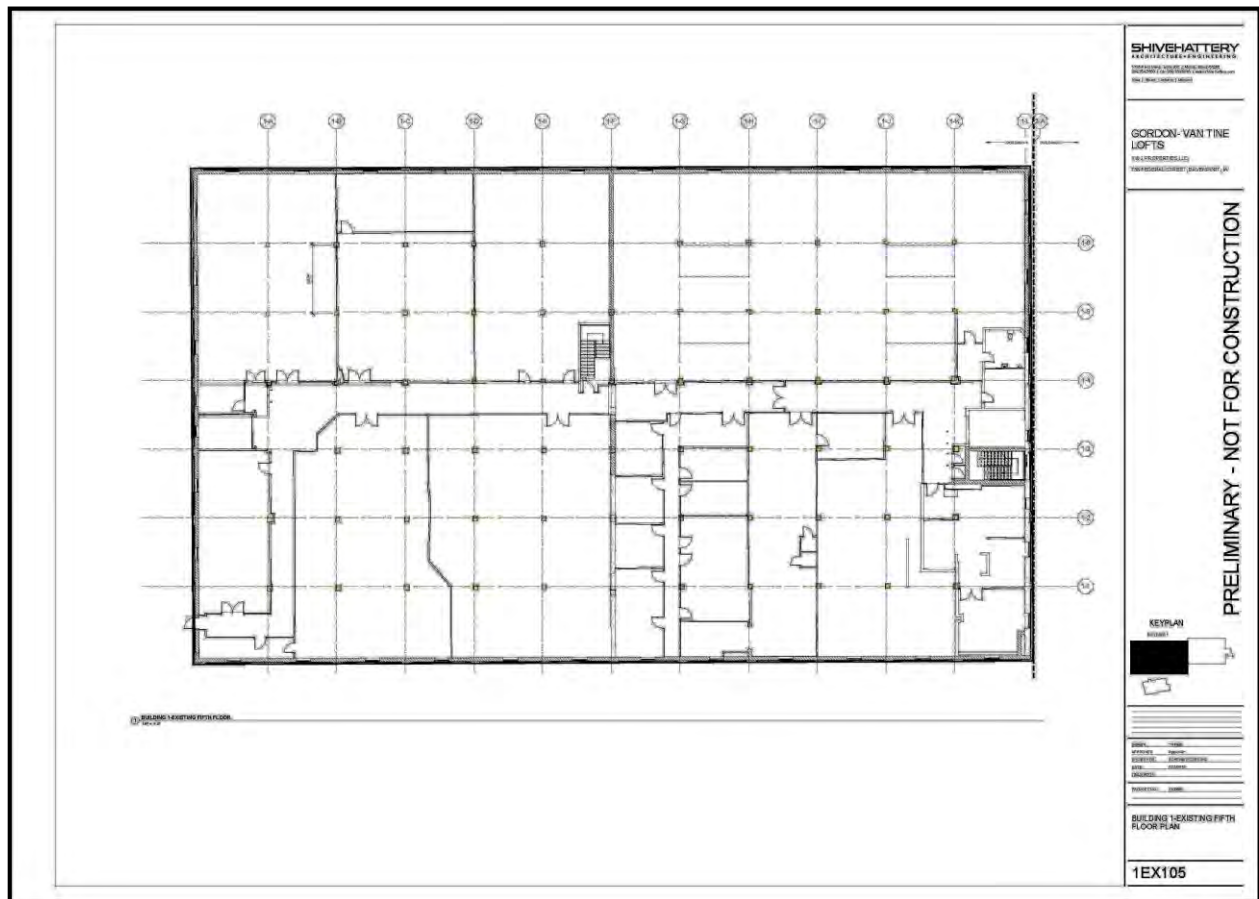


Figure 15
Building 2
Plan of 5th floor
(Shive-Hattery drawing)

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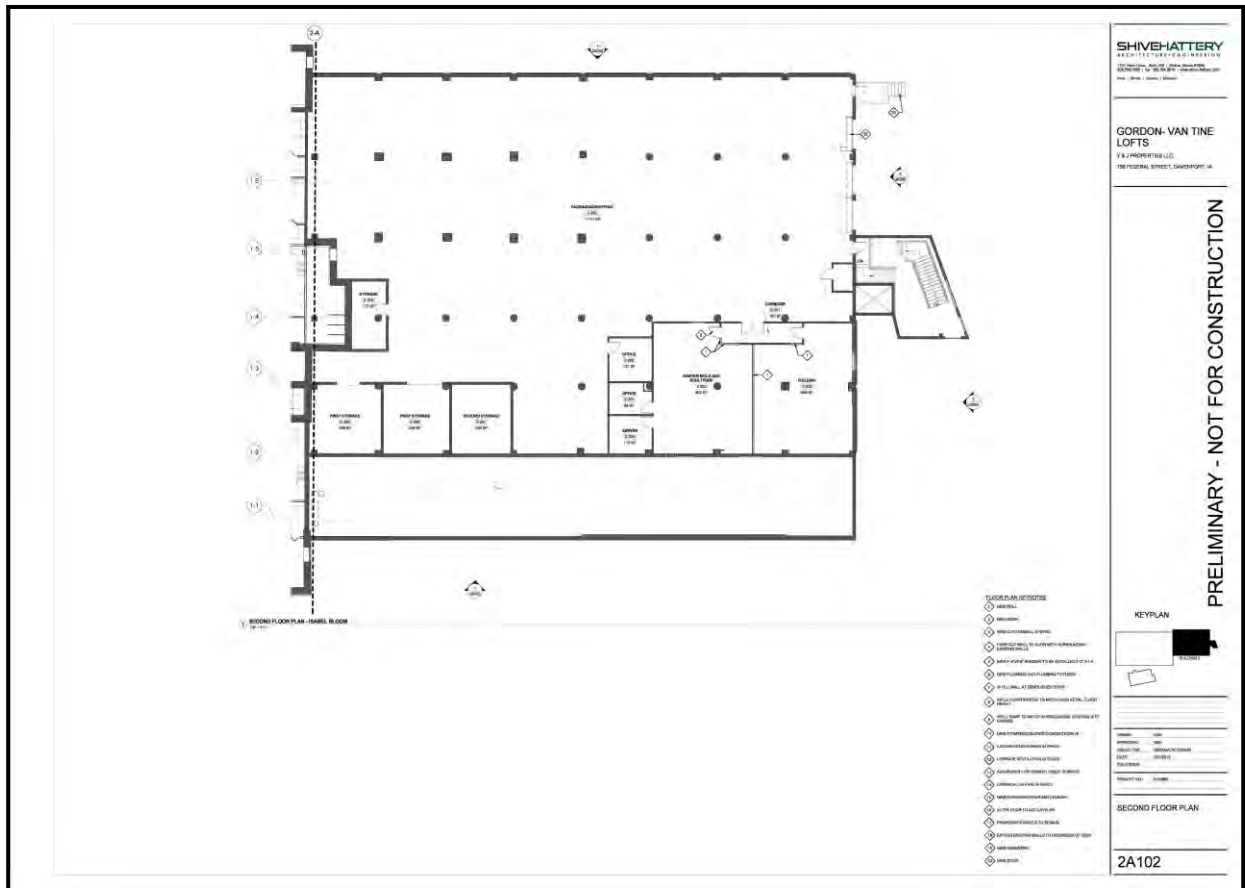


Figure 17
 Building 2, 1965 addition
 Plan of 2nd floor
 (Shive-Hattery drawing)

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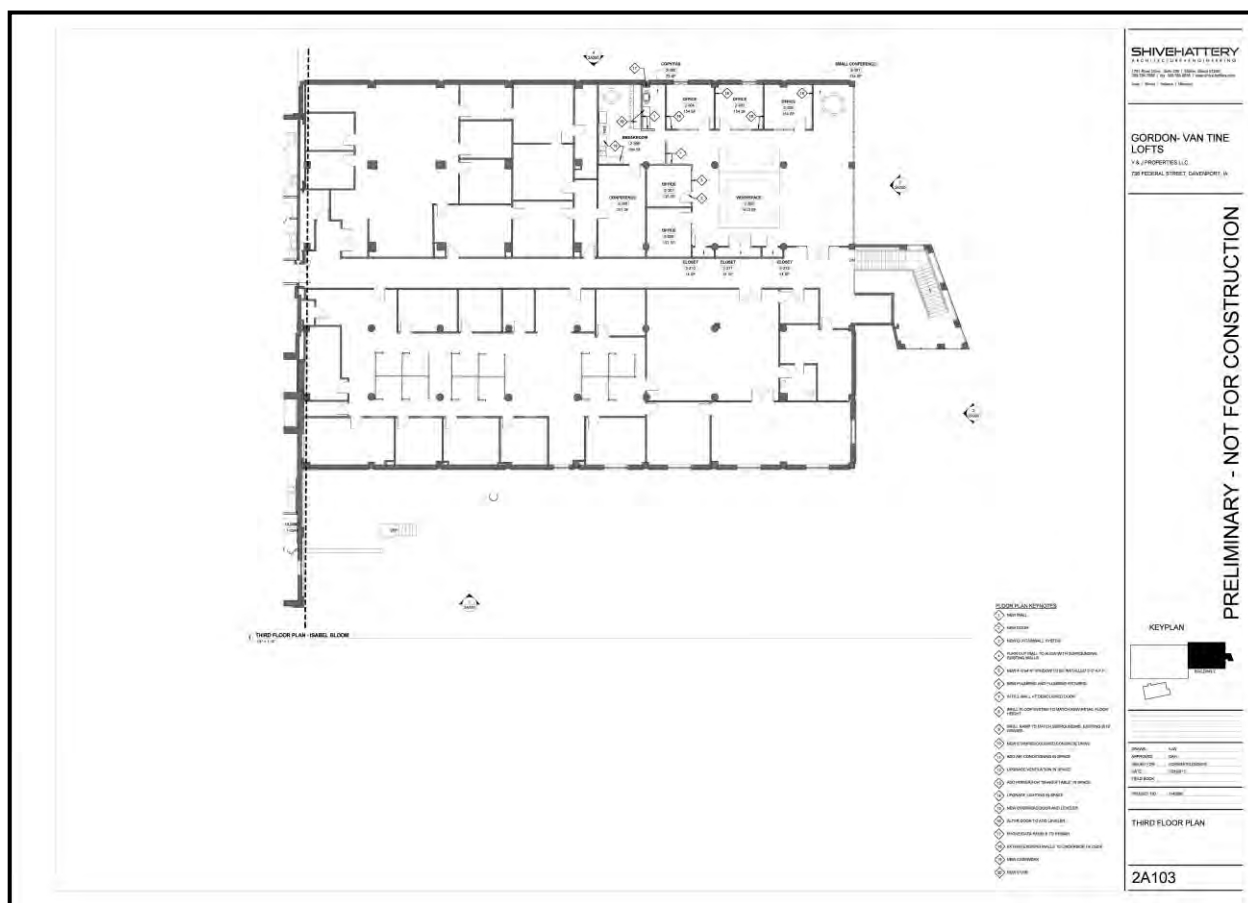


Figure 18
Building 2, 1965 addition
Plan of 3rd floor
(Shive-Hattery drawing)

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Building #3 This small single story building is serving an entirely different purpose than its original use as a garage. While the exterior has been altered to a certain degree, the interior is now totally different. The walls have been finished, a dropped ceiling with new lighting has been installed, and the floor has been carpeted. The only original elements of the garage interior that are visible are the three cast concrete columns that divided the vehicle stalls. It now serves as a display center and retail space. (See floor plan on page 11)



Figure 19
Building 4 – Floor Plan
(Davenport Assessor's Records)

Building #4 The function of this building has changed very little. Originally it was constructed for use as a lumber shed, providing storage for the stacks of lumber needed for the GVT housing section, as well as lumber sold strictly as a lumber yard. It has not been determined when it was extended to the south, occupying the area originally designated for lumber stacks outside. Today it serves as office and warehouse space for Republic Electric. Because it is under different ownership than Buildings #1-3, there has not been the same availability in terms of access. It is directly related to the other three buildings through original ownership and function, and for that reason it is considered a contributing resource in the district.

INTEGRITY:

The Gordon Van-Tine Historic District exhibits a good degree of each of the seven aspects of integrity.

Location: Each of the four buildings in this district stands on its original construction site. They are clustered on an irregularly shaped city block. The rail spur has been removed, and that area enclosed. Several lumber storage buildings and the Steam Dry Kiln are non-extant, but the complex has existed in its present state since 1967. Parking lots now extend to the east and south.

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Design: The original design of each of the four buildings is readily visible. Building #1, the office building, retains its original Classical Revival detailing, which was carefully matched on the four story addition to the east. The other three buildings are straight forward industrial designs with little ornamentation. Additions to these buildings are easily identified and are not visually intrusive. The reinforced concrete construction of Building #2 can be clearly seen in several areas of the building. Building interiors have been altered by the construction of new walls, dropped ceilings, and new flooring. These elements are reversible. New (post-period of construction) windows are found in all of the buildings, but again, this is reversible. Unfortunately, no architect has been identified for any buildings in the complex.

Setting: This area of Davenport has always been mixed use, with a combination of retail, wholesale, industrial, and residential to the north. This has not changed to any great extent. The biggest change would be the loss of the rail yard in the block to the west, and the lumber yards to the east.

Materials: The original brick exterior of these four buildings is clearly visible. The exterior of Building #1 is of face brick laid in a running bond, with dressed limestone detailing on the primary elevations, while common bonding is found on the secondary elevations. The other three buildings are of regular brick laid in common bond with corbelled brick patterning and a limestone stringcourse occasionally used on primary elevations. The application of vertical wood siding on the first floor of Building #2 is the most noticeable alteration and it is believed that the original brickwork remains in place beneath, and it can be uncovered. The use of reinforced concrete for the construction of Building #2 was a relatively new technique at the time. The original materials have not seriously deteriorated over the century of use.

Workmanship: The craftsmanship of the original builders can be seen in quality of the brickwork, the brick patterning that was used on the industrial buildings, and the condition of both the brick and stonework exteriors. The reinforced concrete of Building #2 is in very good condition for its age.

Feeling: The overall feeling of the buildings in this district remains industrial, with a straight forward approach to the work to be done. There is nothing about these buildings that resembles retail, commercial or residential use.

Association: The four buildings in this historic district speak directly to the importance of the Gordon-Van Tine Company and the role it played in the "kit housing" industry in the first half of the twentieth century. It is believed that this maybe the only building complex in the United States left to tell the story of this part of American residential design and construction.

Future plans for this complex include the rehabilitation Buildings #1-3 for residential use. Building #4 is not part of the proposed development and will remain in use by Republic Electric.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary Paragraph

The **Gordon-Van Tine Historic District** is composed of four brick office and industrial buildings tightly clustered on an irregularly shaped city block about a block and a half north of the Mississippi River in Davenport, Iowa. It is significant under Criterion A as it illustrates the early twentieth century desire, and ability, of the American middle class to become home owners. The pre-cut or “kit” house technique provided a less expensive way for this to happen. The district has Criterion C significance for the company’s role in the development of the Ready-Cut building process/technique. Company catalogs described their “notch” that made their system superior to those of their competitors. Gordon-Van Tine was one of a half dozen major “kit” house companies in the country, with mills in St. Louis, Missouri, Hattiesburg, Mississippi, and Chehalis, Washington as well as Davenport. The period of significance is from 1907-1947: from the formation of the Gordon-Van Tine Company, to the closing of the company by new owners after World War II. Dates of significance include 1910 (the completion of Building 2), 1916, (publication of the first Ready-Cut House catalog), and, 1946 (sale of the company to the Cleveland Wrecking Company). The Gordon-Van Tine Company was a business that “helped put Iowa on the Map.”

Statement of Significance

Established in 1907, Gordon Van-Tine’s success grew from the late nineteenth century lumber industry in Iowa. The parent company of Gordon-Van Tine was U.N. Roberts, a successful lumber and millwork company that had been established in Davenport in 1866.

In the 1850’s a number of saw mills were located along the Mississippi River in eastern Iowa, producing lumber primarily for local consumption. It was a happy combination of factors that led to the development of the lumber industry in Iowa. After the Civil War the lumber industry started to grow. Bridges were built across the Mississippi at Dubuque, Clinton, Davenport, and Burlington, providing rail access to the western half of the country. White pine was readily available in the forests of northern Wisconsin and Minnesota, and western expansion required building materials since the Great Plains were sparsely forested. The Mississippi River served as a broad avenue down which logs could be floated to towns with railroads, where they were cut into lumber and shipped not only to the west for development, but was widely used in the neighboring counties as well. Dubuque, Lyons, Clinton, and Davenport became the major lumber towns in Iowa. The lumber industry had a tremendous impact on the economy of these communities. Lumber milling was a seasonal activity due to the closing of the Mississippi in the winter due to ice. So, many of the mills began producing millwork: doors, sash, all kinds of cabinetry, during the winter months. Several of the larger companies, such as Curtis Millwork in Clinton began publishing catalogs showcasing their products and offering to sell not only to local lumber yards and contractors, but direct to the future property owners, thereby cutting out the middle man. In early 1907 U.N. Roberts incorporated a new company, Gordon-Van Tine, to market their

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lumber and millwork directly as well. This direct marketing created ill-will between the large lumber companies and the “catalog” companies that would simmer and boil over within a few years.



Figure 20
Early (c.1907-10) Gordon-Van Tine Catalog
(Sacco, Iowa Architectural Foundation)

AN ATTRACTIVE EXHIBIT
Gordon-Van Tine's Display Draws Large Crowds at the Fair

“One of the most unusual evolutions of business is demonstrated in the Gordon-Van Tine exhibit at the state fair grounds this year. Their book is a show of something like 5,000 items in building materials from the heaviest timbers to the richest interior finishing woods. But the remarkable part of the business is that all of their output is sold to their customers by correspondence.”

“You would not have thought three years ago that an Iowa concern could build up a every state of the union on windows, doors, stair materials, porch work, roofing, shingles and absolutely everything that enters into the construction of a house except its foundation stones and carry on that remarkable business by mail, making the sales from a great catalogue. This is what the Gordon-Van Tine company do [sic] and they have their exhibit at the state fair grounds so that their customers and prospective

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customers may see exactly what is the quality of every item they offer for sale. The Gordon-Van Tine company is doing a business of nearly a million dollars a year all of which is conducted by correspondence, every sale being made from a catalogue. This catalogue is an intensely interesting document to any one interested in building or repairing and they invite every reader of the Daily News to leave their name at the booth on the fair grounds for a catalogue or to write to the headquarters at Davenport, Iowa." (*Des Moines Daily News*, Aug 27, 1908, np)

For many years the Gordon-Van Tine Company was located in several buildings in the 300 block of Harrison. In the mid-1890s the business moved to the Federal Street site currently being nominated. It provided more room for lumber sheds and openly stored stacks of lumber. About 1907-08 a three story brick office building was constructed at 736 Federal, the corner of Federal and Smits streets, facing Federal. It was designed and built as the company's main headquarters, and the front entrance featured limestone monograms on each side of the door: UNR on the left, and, GVT on the right, linking to the two companies as an entity. The office building also housed the firm's art glass studio in the basement. The open flames associated with the production of art glass could have been disastrous anywhere else in the lumber yard. This building was virtually "tucked into a corner" of empty space, surrounded by all of the wood frame warehouses and sheds already on the block. In the 1908 Davenport city directory, the U.N. Roberts's address was listed as "Federal NW Swits.," and their business was "sash, doors, blinds, int. finish, plates, and window glass." The following year, 1909, it was Gordon-Van Tine that was listed at that address, so it appears that the office building had been completed.

On November 27, 1909 tragedy struck. "Quarter of a Million Dollar Fire Which Destroys the U.N. Roberts Co. Warehouse Leaves Fourteen Families Without Homes." (*Davenport Daily Times*, Nov 27, 1909, np, nc) The following day, Sunday, November 28, 1909, the rival *Davenport Leader* carried a banner headline on the front page, and the two column story continued to page 16.

"Heart-Rending Scenes in One of City's Most Disastrous Fires"
"U.N. Roberts Company Plant Totally Destroyed"
"Entailing a Loss of \$250,000"
"Many Families Rendered Homeless & Destitute"
"150 Men Out of Work"
"Occupants of Homes Nearby Barely Escape With Their Lives"
(*Davenport Leader*, Nov 28, 1909, p 1)

The article noted that the fire was discovered about 4:00 AM by the night watchman. The 160 x 406 foot metal covered warehouse building containing finished doors, sash, glass, etc. was completely destroyed, but the office building, some moulding sheds, and stacks of lumber south of the warehouse were saved. The fire chief said the fire appeared to be "incendiary in nature."

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“The U.N. Roberts Company is the largest concern of its kind in the middle west and their business extends all over the United State and even into Mexico and Canada.

Horace G. Roberts said they would rebuild at once, a fire-proof structure.”

(*Davenport Leader*, Nov 28, 1909, p 16)

The following day, Harry V. Scott, GVT vice president, said that although they would definitely be re-building, the site had not yet been determined. Building on the west edge of Davenport was a strong possibility due to the “congestion and limited space on the old site.” (*Davenport Daily Times*, Nov 29, 1909, np) Repercussions from this blaze continued for years, as the Roberts and Scott families believed that it had been intentionally set by an illegal combine of lumber dealers in reaction to GVT’s direct sales catalogs. Despite these problems, GVT continued on its path of direct marketing, printing their first book including house plans in 1909.



Figure 21

Gordon-Van Tine Grand Book of Plans, 1909

(<https://archive.org/details/gordon-van-tine>)

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GVT brought charges against the lumber combine before a grand jury, including testimony by Scott that both he and his wife had received letters threatening their lives. GVT charged that the lumber trust had sent spies into their plant, bribed their employees, and warned dealers not to do business with GVT. (*Rock Island Argus*, Jun 14, 1911 and Jan 8, 1913) In response, the lumber combine (refusing to admit they were a combine) accused Gordon-Van Tine of misleading customers by telling them that they would save money buying direct, and, in later years, that buying a ready cut house would save them money over a tradition house. (*American Lumberman*, Dec 7, 1918, p 51, and Estherville, Iowa *Vindicator and Republican*, Dec 18, 1918, p 11, c 1-3) Unfortunately, research has not yet provided an answer to how these two cases were resolved.

The 1909 fire provided the impetus for the brick complex we have today. The first building constructed following the fire was the five story warehouse/factory, Building 2. It has not been determined whether the rail spur from the rail yard to the west was extended into the GVT block at this time or earlier. The new building took advantage of this spur and was built close to it, with loading platforms on three sides. This building housed most of the major departments involved with the GVT lumber and building business, providing storage for the materials, as well as carpentry, glass, and woodworking shops. The large freight elevator provided the means of transporting the pieces from floor to floor. In the following years, as frame buildings were replaced, or new buildings constructed, brick was the material of choice.

Figure22
Early photograph of the
Gordon-Van Tine Buildings
Facing Federal Street,
c.1910-15
(Courtesy of Ralph Christian)



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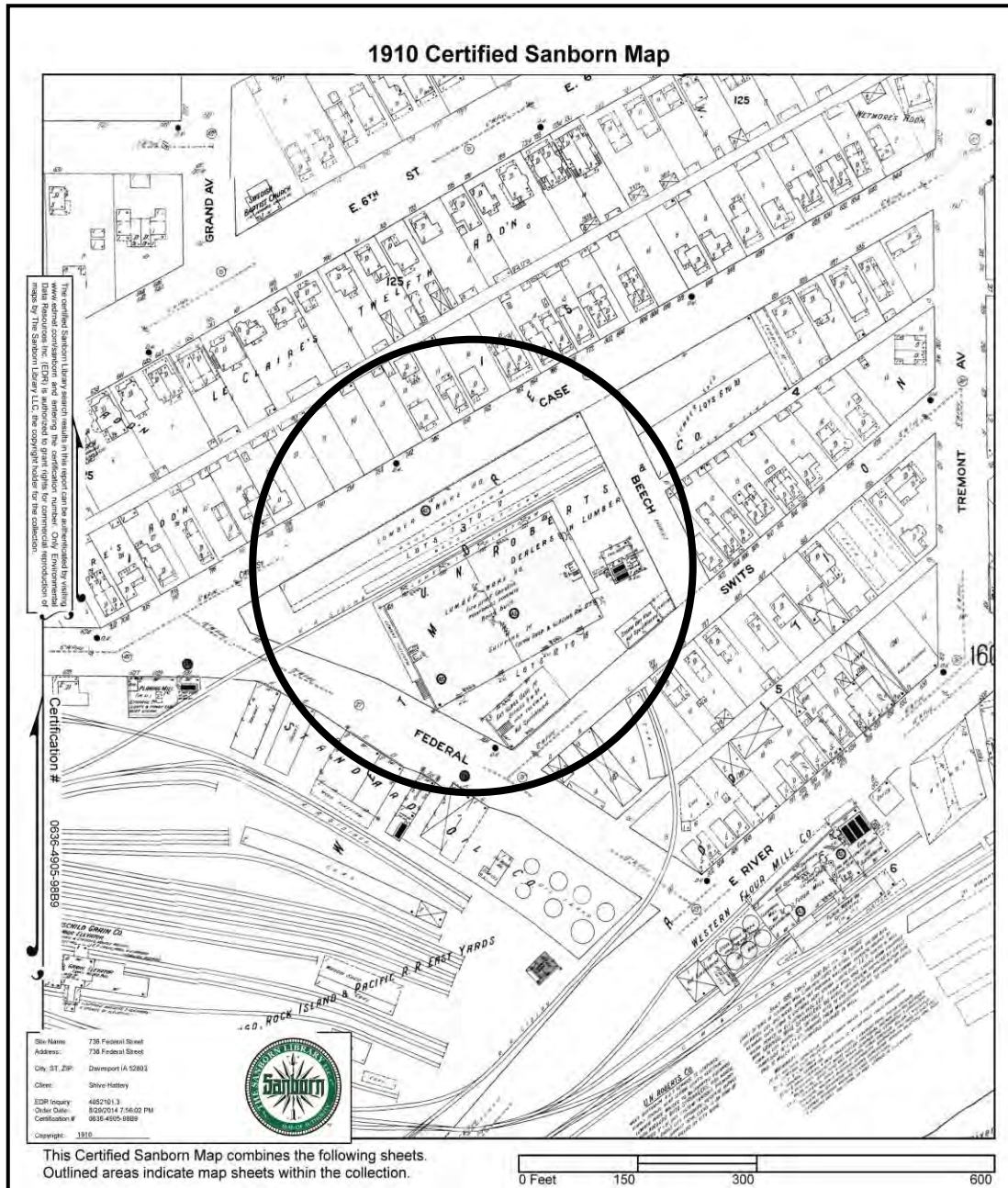


Figure 23
1910 Sanborn Insurance Map
The Gordon-Van Tine complex is shown for the first time.
Note that Building 2 is "being built"

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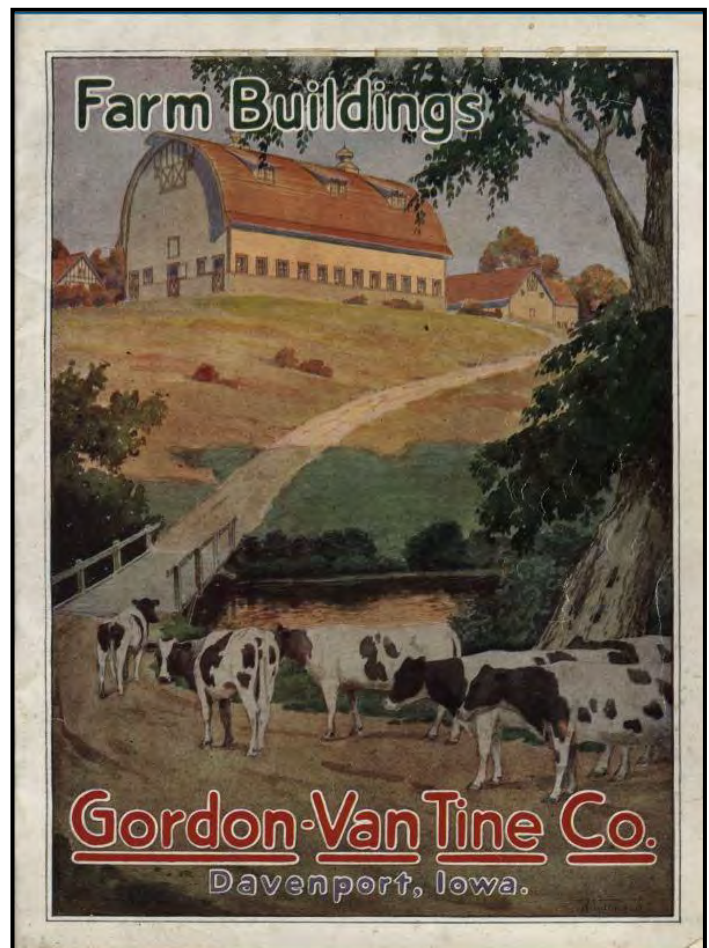
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Situated in Davenport, Gordon-Van Tine was surrounded by potential customers. Midwest farmers were often isolated from a full service lumber yard, and many were also “do-it-yourselfers.” Catalogs which arrived in their mail box were a way they could browse, compare, and decide on their next project. Full page ads in major magazines such as *American Carpenter and Builder*, and *Popular Mechanics* touted the low prices on a full range of lumber and interior components. The early twentieth century was a point in time when many changes were coming to farming. The original houses from the mid-late nineteenth century were ready for replacement. The house plans included in the GVT catalog were simple, straight-forward designs that appealed to the no-nonsense farmer and his wife: Late Victorian cottages, Four Squares, and Bungalows. The plan book also contained ideas for barns, sheds, chicken houses, and pretty much anything that a farmstead might need. GVT published a catalog of Farm Buildings only. They were not the only Iowa company involved with agricultural design. The Loudon Machinery Company of Fairfield primarily manufactured agricultural equipment, but in 1906 it opened an Architecture Department. This department produced plans for barns and other outbuildings, always including Loudon equipment in the designs. (Wm. C. Page, MPD, 1998)

Figure 24
Cover of 1917 GVT Farm Buildings
Catalog
(<https://archive.org/details/gordon-van-tine>)



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AMERICAN CARPENTER AND BUILDER 95



**HIGHEST GRADE LUMBER
AT LOWEST PRICES!**

Lumber is the backbone of all building. YOUR BUILDING COSTS ARE IN PROPORTION TO THE LUMBER PRICES YOU PAY. Save from \$10 to \$30 a car! Buy direct of Gordon-Van Tine. Pocket the savings you make through our "wholesale-to-builder" prices. Get your shipment from Gordon-Van Tine mills at the edge of the great timber forests. Let our "24-HOUR-SERVICE" add to your profits as it is already adding to the profits of over 10,000 other shrewd builders. Cut out all middlemen's rakes-off! It is a physical impossibility for others to equal our prices without lowering standards. We ship anywhere that railroads go.

Our shipping service is ideal. Our stocks are so complete, always, that no building job is ever held up because of delay on a few tons. We carry in stock hundreds of bargains that cannot be bought elsewhere except on special order at high prices. Quality, Quantity, Safe, Prompt Delivery and Satisfaction Guaranteed or Money Back.

Three strong Banks and over 100,000 satisfied customers among home-owners vouch for our honesty and square-dealing.

Send the Coupon for This FREE Book of 5000 Building and Remodeling Bargains

We want you on our Free Mailing List, so we can send you our Special Bargain Price Bulletins from time to time. Thousands of the most successful contractors and carpenters, expert judges of values, keep our great catalog, valuable books and special bulletins on hand as a check and guide on buying orders and estimates. We also want to send you at once (if you have not a copy already) our big, illustrated, 156-page Bargain Catalog. Over 5000 separate items. Everything for building. All sold by mail at "direct-to-builder" wholesale prices. Get this price-maker! It can save money for you. Send the coupon. NOW!



WE SHIP ANYWHERE

Get all your shipments direct from the biggest standard lumber stock in America. All your needs supplied at a moment's notice. Dimension, Heavy Joists and Timber, Drop Siding, Bevel Siding, Ceiling, Flooring, Partition, Veneering, Lumber, Lath, Shingles, Boards, Lows, Posts and Patters. All graded in accordance with Rules of the Lumbermen's Association. All standard, bright, clean, new. Kept protected from the weather.

Safe, Prompt Delivery and Full Satisfaction Guaranteed or Money Back!

Rush orders are a specialty with Gordon-Van Tine! No other concern in America can give you the quick action, quality and low prices that Gordon-Van Tine Co. offers. Our immense plant has for years been built up with the main idea of getting materials to our customers quickly and right in every particular. We actually carry everything our carpenter and contractor customers want—with simple facilities for also making special stuff quickly. "Guaranteed Right Estimates" furnished free. Visit us, you need!

GORDON-VAN TINE CO.
773 Federal St. Davenport, Iowa
ESTABLISHED HALF A CENTURY!

FREE CATALOG REMINDER

Put my name on your carpenter and contractor free mailing list for special price, bargain bulletins. Also send me your 156-page, fully illustrated four color Catalog and Lumber List FREE!

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____

WHEN WRITING ADVERTISERS PLEASE MENTION THE AMERICAN CARPENTER AND BUILDER

Figures 25 & 26
Advertisements in
American Carpenter and Builder. 1910
(<https://archive.org/detail/gordon-van-tine>)

AMERICAN CARPENTER AND BUILDER 87

**A Complete House Or
Any Part of A House
At WHOLESALE Prices**

YOU are paying higher prices for your materials than you have to, Mr. Builder! Get our "mill-direct-to-consumer" prices on your needs. Save money! You can buy a whole house—or any part of a house—**at wholesale**—from us. Everything for building! We ship to you **anywhere**—no matter where you live! Over 100,000 customers—some in every State. Over 10,000 contractors, carpenters and builders deal regularly with us. All brought by mail. **Three strong banks also vouch for us.** Everything sold under legal-binding guarantee of **safe, prompt delivery, highest quality and satisfaction or money back.** Study these sample prices. Order what you want from this advertisement. Be sure you send for our 5000 Bargain Catalog.

"Quality" House Paints

"Quality" Brand House Paint contains just the right proportion of each ingredient necessary to make the right kind of house paint. The paint offered you can excel the paint you buy of outside-the-line companies. "Quality" is our trademark every minute in the day.

The low price you pay on our Paints is due to the difference in selling plans. Other Paints come to you through the local dealer and, besides his profits, he adds the profits of the middleman, jobber and manufacturer.

FRONT DOORS
Hundreds of special designs. See Catalog. Illustration shows our "Craftsmen" Front Door. Beauty—cost by 2 feet 8 in. x 20 feet 6 in. inside finish—\$9.95

MASTERPIECE COLONNADE
A perfect, durable Front Sash in every way, and made to last as long as you desire, with real marble and steel. Made in our factory. Price per set, \$2.07

FRONT DOOR LOCK SET
A complete set of 3 master lock cylinders, 1 1/2 inches diameter, 1 1/2 inches long. Includes master key, double mortise lock, 1 1/2 inch key, 1 1/2 inch key, 1 1/2 inch key, 1 1/2 inch key. Price per set, \$2.50

BUILT-UP PORCH COLUMNS
A perfect, durable Front Sash in every way, and made to last as long as you desire, with real marble and steel. Made in our factory. Price per set, \$2.07

THIN OAK FLOORING
A perfect, durable Front Sash in every way, and made to last as long as you desire, with real marble and steel. Made in our factory. Price per set, \$2.07

FINE INTERIOR VARNISH
A perfect, durable Front Sash in every way, and made to last as long as you desire, with real marble and steel. Made in our factory. Price per set, \$2.07

FLOOR VARNISH
A perfect, durable Front Sash in every way, and made to last as long as you desire, with real marble and steel. Made in our factory. Price per set, \$2.07

5000 BARGAINS
In this 156-page, fully illustrated four color Catalog, you will find 5000 bargains for building. A perfect, durable Front Sash in every way, and made to last as long as you desire, with real marble and steel. Made in our factory. Price per set, \$2.07

GORDON-VAN TINE COMPANY
773 Federal St., Davenport, Iowa
Established Half a Century!

Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____
Occupation: _____

GORDON-VAN TINE CO.
769 Federal Street Davenport, Iowa

WHEN WRITING ADVERTISERS PLEASE MENTION THE AMERICAN CARPENTER AND BUILDER

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POPULAR MECHANICS ADVERTISING SECTION 101

He Saved \$800⁰⁰ On This Bungalow!

Dr. Whitehurst, of Texas, Tells of Big Saving in Building Cost by Use of Gordon-Van Tine Millwork and Lumber

Here's His Letter

Peniel, Texas, May 7, 1910.
Gordon-Van Tine Co., Davenport, Iowa.

Gents: Enclosed are photos of our new house, in which we used your millwork, including White Pine Siding, Maple Flooring and Bishopric Mastic Wall Board. It is almost a Gordon-Van Tine house.

I have the sweetest bungalow I think I ever saw now and saved about \$800.00 in the building of it.

I received your check for \$25.70 some time back, covering an overcharge in freight.

Please accept my thanks for your honest treatment.

These hardwood veneered doors, thick maple floors and Queen Anne windows are the talk of the town.

Respectfully,
S. Whitehurst M.D.



Front View of Dr. Whitehurst's Bungalow



Interior View of Dining Room

Isn't This Good Evidence of Dr. Whitehurst's Satisfaction?



Side View of Bungalow

Further Evidence of Intense Satisfaction

Over Half a Million Customers and Every One SATISFIED!

Over half a million home builders are buying their materials at bargain prices, direct from our great Millwork and Lumber Plant.

We carry a tremendous stock of building material—everything needed to build complete and beautiful homes of the most modern types, even to mantels and hardware. We guarantee quick shipment, no matter how large the order.

Quality, safe delivery and satisfaction guaranteed or money refunded.

Have You Written for Our Latest HOME-BUILDERS' CATALOG?

♦ Solely through this wonderful Catalog of 5,000 Bargains in highest grade Millwork and Lumber we have built up a patronage extending from ocean to ocean. Everything offered at dealers' prices. Every item we sell is guaranteed up to the official grades of the Sash & Door Manufacturers' Associations.



At Last—A Plan Book That Keeps Cost Within Estimates!

The Gordon-Van Tine Plan Book shows over 50 designs of Houses, Cottages, Bungalows, etc., costing from \$600 to \$6,000, that have actually been built at the exact cost specified.

Booklets you have sent for many of the Plan Books advertised for sale. Have you ever tried to put up a house at the prices stated in these books? The Gordon-Van Tine Plan Book wins out because it safeguards the builder! For a limited time we will send this splendid volume free on receipt of 10c to cover handling and postage.

Get Our FREE BOOKS and Save Big Money!

Our Grand Free Millwork and Lumber Catalog will save an average of 20% on material and our Plan Book will enable you to build with the positive assurance that the cost will not exceed the original estimate.

We offer to the home-builder a service that no other concern in America can duplicate. In justice to yourself, investigate the big advantages which we place at your disposal.

ESTIMATES FREE! Send on your list of materials. We will be glad to furnish complete estimates. You incur no obligation by availing yourself of this service.

All correspondence receives prompt, courteous and careful attention. Write us. 779 GORDON-VAN TINE CO., 2146 Federal Street, DAVENPORT, IOWA

Please Mention Popular Mechanics

Figure 27
Advertisement in *Popular Mechanics*, 1910
(<https://archive.org/details/Gordon-van-tine>)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

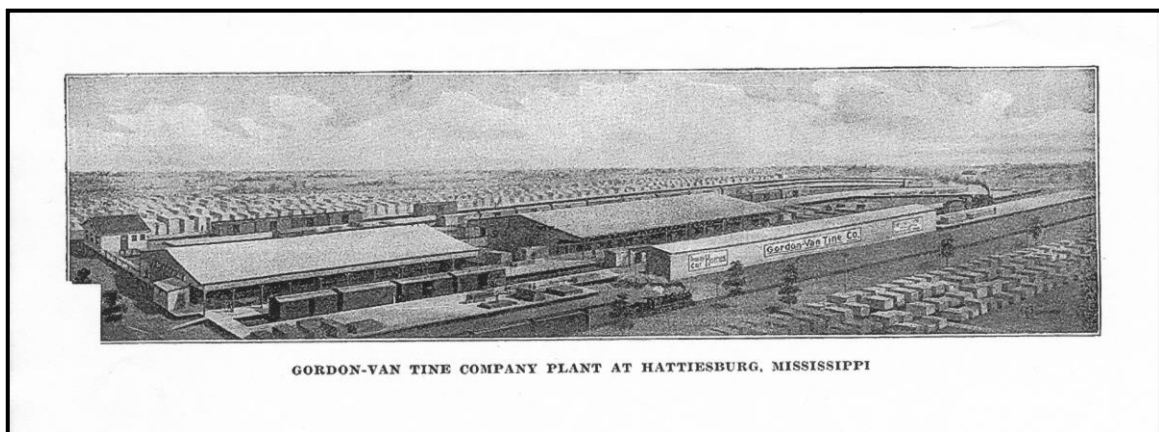
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GORDON-VAN TINE COMPANY HISTORIC DISTRICT
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Dale Wolicki found evidence that Gordon-Van Tine supplied Sears Roebuck customers with buildings materials as well. (Wolicki, GVT web site) The Sears catalog noted that their materials were shipped from west of Chicago at no extra cost. The only large millwork operations west of Chicago at that time that would not have required extra cost were located in Iowa along the Mississippi River. It appears that GVT and Sears worked together for about five years before Sears purchased their own millwork company in 1912.

The U.N. Roberts/Gordon-Van Tine companies had expanded their business due to the direct sales of lumber across a wide part of the United States. U.N. Roberts purchased a Davenport lumber yard, the McClelland Company and operated it as a separate business. At some point in the early twentieth century, U.N. Roberts also acquired a lumber yard in St. Louis. This business operated as the Funck Lumber Company at 5700 Natural Bridge Road. In the March 16, 1916 issue of *The Iron Age*, p 706, it noted that the Funck company had expanded the lumber yard and mill to add planing facilities and other equipment to begin providing the lumber for “the manufacture of ready-cut houses.” Although GVT is not specifically mentioned, since both GVT and Funck were owned by U.N. Roberts, it is assumed that the expansion was in conjunction with GVT. Gordon-Van Tine often included pictures of this business in their advertising, calling it “The Largest Lumber Yard in the South.” The name was changed to Goodfellow Lumber in 1919. (Information about the Funck Lumber Company provided by Judith Chabot, Sears House Seeker) Gordon-Van Tine was also advertising a west coast facility, and included pictures of “Our Lumber Yard in Chehalis, Washington.” A location for this lumber yard has not yet been identified, but research has identified two businesses, either of which might have been that facility: the Chehalis Fir Door Company; and, the Chehalis Lumber Company. By 1919 the company needed to expand again, and built a lumber yard and mill in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. In future advertising GVT could brag that it had four distribution centers.



GORDON-VAN TINE COMPANY PLANT AT HATTIESBURG, MISSISSIPPI

Figure 28
Engraving of the Gordon-Van Tine facility in Hattiesburg, Mississippi
(Malvaney, “Mississippi Craftsman: Gordon-Van Tine’s Pre-Cut Bungalows”)

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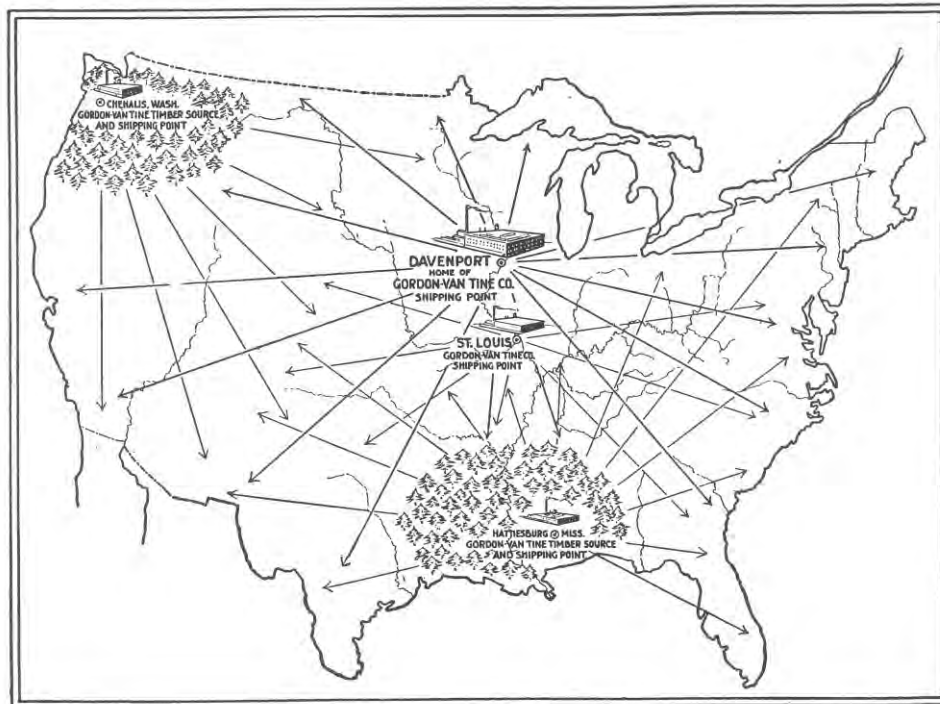


Figure 29

“Strategic Factory Locations Get Lowest Freight Rates – Wherever You Live”
((Gordon-Van Tine Homes, 1923, p 1)

While the lumber business was doing well, Gordon-Van Tine had become aware that some of its business was being drawn away by companies offering not just house plans, but also all of the lumber needed to build the houses, pre-cut and ready to use. The earliest of these appears to have been the Aladdin Homes manufactured by the North American Construction Company of Bay City, Michigan.

Pre-cut houses were obviously going to be easier to assemble, and, they cut out the waste that happened when each piece of lumber had to be cut to a specific size. Like the direct mailings to rural areas that “brought the lumber yard to the farmer,” these pre-cut houses could be ordered, delivered, and built by an average craftsman. A number of companies across the country jumped on the chance to attract new customers, and began manufacturing pre-cut houses. These companies included Bennett Homes of Buffalo, NY, Pacific System Homes in Los Angeles, Harris Brothers of Chicago, and Sears Roebuck. Two new companies in Bay City, MI were established, both by former Aladdin employees, Lewis Manufacturing, and International Mill and Timber. It was into this crowded field that Gordon-Van Tine jumped in 1916 with the publication of its first catalog of pre-cut houses. GVT marketed their houses as Ready-Cut Homes.

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The driving force behind this surge in home building and home ownership can best be attributed to the American belief that if we work hard, we can have many of the things enjoyed by the upper class. The middle class was just starting to move out of the crowded town centers to the "suburbs." Many rural residents were leaving the farm and moving into town. Americans wanted to, and could afford, own their own homes. Where did they turn to find these houses? The pre-cut housing companies were ready to show them how easy it could be.



Figure 30
Cover of the first Ready-Cut Homes catalog in 1916
(<https://archive.org/details/gordon-van-tine>)

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In their first catalog, Gordon-Van Tine introduced its new line in the following manner.

‘For many years we have been selling our Standard Homes direct to the homebuilders of the United States. These homes have given the utmost satisfaction, and will continue to do so. But there is a call in this day and age for a building which can be erected more quickly and more easily than the usual form of construction. Our Ready-Cut Homes meet this demand.’ (Gordon-Van Tine 1916 Catalog)

From the beginning, the catalogs for Ready-Cut Houses carried pages of drawings and photographs illustrating exactly how the system worked, and how the homes were constructed.

Gordon-Van Tine Homes Page 6

THE GORDON-VAN TINE

Saves You Up to 17% on Lumber Waste—And 30% Carpenter's Time—17% Lumber—Saved

NINETY-SEVEN per cent of the lumber that goes into a house must be cut at one or both ends—an average of more than two cuts on each piece. In the days of cheap labor this work was all done by the carpenters on the building lot. Stock lengths and sizes of lumber were sawed and ripped up to fit by hand-saw and elbow grease.

You remember passing a building lot where a new house was to be built and seeing the carpenters sawing up the lumber?

If you were interested enough to observe closely, you no doubt were impressed by the fact that although the carpenters always seemed to be working steadily, the actual construction seemed to progress by fits and starts—about two days working on the ground and at the benches, and one day's nailing, on an average. These carpenters were working all the time, but they were making such slow progress because they had to spend so much time preparing the material for use.

And when those carpenters were through, remember how the yard around that house looked? Littered about knee deep with short sawed-off pieces of lumber—from 5 and 6 feet long on down to trimmed ends, wasn't it? A whole cellar full of kindling wood when it was piled away—terribly expensive kindling wood.

30 to 50% Carpenter's Time—17% Lumber—Saved

Experts estimate that this old-fashioned way of making whatever the local dealer has in stock do, and sawing it up to fit on the job by hand, *wasted from 30 to 50 per cent of the carpenter's time, and on average of 17 per cent of the lumber—and the time and the lumber that are wasted, cost just as much as the time and lumber that are used.*

In the good old days when we thought our forests would last forever, and lumber was dirt cheap—those days when a carpenter got thirty cents an hour and was glad to get it, this toll of waste may not have mattered so much. But now-a-days, \$75.00 to \$100.00 in hard cash, going into the cellar to start fire with, and \$150.00 to \$200.00 excess carpenter's bill for pushing the hand-saw is a big enough total to be pretty seriously considered.

The GORDON-VAN TINE Ready-Cut method of construction has eliminated all but a little less than 2 per cent of the lumber

Skyscraper Construction

As you know, the modern skyscraper is all ready built in the great steel mills which turn out its framework. The big girders are all prepared there, and even the rivet holes bored to fit. Everything is marked in accordance with the plans, and the erectors simply put the giant structures together. Now all this results in tremendous economies, because the steel mills substitute machinery for slow hand work, and also in accuracy,

Guaranteed Prices—No Extras Page 7

READY CUT SYSTEM

Material by Eliminating on Construction Cost

waste (the necessary waste in mitering, beveling and squaring up—and the sawdust), and has made possible savings in construction cost which our customers say average up to 43.2 per cent.

It Sounds Impossible—But We Do It

To those skilled in the old method of construction this no doubt sounds impossible. But if you could step for a minute into one of our three great Ready-Cut Factories at St. Louis, Missouri, Chicago, Washington, or Hattiesburg, Mississippi; if you could see the great machines at their work—their flashing saw eating into the lumber in fact as the conveyors can bring it to them, setting the largest and smallest pieces accurately to a sixty-fourth of an inch, so fast that the eye can scarcely follow their work—you would begin to realize how this wonderful saving is made.

To see a truck load of lumber, which would require half a day's time to cut by hand-saw, whisked through the great pneumatic control gang trimmer in five minutes, for instance; or to watch the rafter machine as it trims both ends of a rafter at once and at the same time cuts the notch to fit it over the plate; to see these things is to be everlastingly convinced that the Ready-Cut System is the only way to prepare lumber.

Care in Marking, Bundling, Loading, Make Building Easy

And then if you could inspect this cut material as it is assembled and loaded into the cars, noting how every piece is marked just as the plans are marked and see the care taken to load the cars so that each bundle will come out in the order in which it is to be used; if you could follow the shipment through and see how our complete and thorough instructions show the workmen just how to unload and pile the lumber so it will all come to hand as needed; and then if you could stay there for three or four days, to a week and see them frame that house up; see the carpenters without spending a minute to saw, take that perfectly cut and fitted material and make the frame of a house of it just as fast as they can drive nails, see everything fit to perfection; making a right, tight, ship-shape job that is a joy to a good mechanic—in short, if you could follow through a Ready-Cut House from start to finish you would be just as thoroughly convinced and as enthusiastic as other GORDON-VAN TINE customers are—for seeing is believing.

The Notch that Compels Accuracy

Our experience and the volume of our business has made possible certain refinements in construction which are peculiar to GORDON-VAN TINE Ready-Cut

Methods Applied to Homes!

Is Like the Skyscraper—Accurate

because exact science takes the place of human guesswork and human mistakes. Well, what the steel mills do for the skyscraper, our mills do for the modern home. Our machines do in a few hours what it would require hand labor days to accomplish. This saves for you, and the accuracy with which the work is done gives you a house of no middle.

Plates ready-cut and fitted, are laid on top of the foundation and fit exactly.

The joints cut to a precise length laid on top of foundation and girders. Sub flooring laid on top of joints.

Gordon-Van Tine notches plates, all ready-cut and fitted, laid on top of sub flooring.

Ready-cut adding shown fitting into notches in plates.

The studs in place—top plates being laid on studs. Notice headers and trimmers for window opening all cut and fitted. Notice also double adding at corners and double top plates.

Ceiling joints cut and beveled laid on top of double plates. Everything fits to perfection.

Rafter and a d lookouts cut, notched and beveled fitting into place perfectly.

Ready-Cut System makes this merely a matter of nailing up. Cut on the job it is a work of days.

Ready-Cut building, both wall and roof sheathing, being nailed in place. Not a saw on the job and the house ready for siding and shingling. These pictures show why the Ready-Cut System saves you big money.

Figure 31

Diagrams of the Gordon-Van Tine Ready-Cut System
(Gordon-Van Tine Homes, 1923, pp 6 & 7)

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According to the catalogs, the Gordon-Van Tine Ready Cut System saved the buyers on both materials and construction costs.

“Ninety-seven per cent of the lumber that goes into a house must be cut at one or both ends – *an average of more than two cuts on each piece.* ... Experts estimate that this old-fashioned way of making whatever the local dealer has in stock do, and sawing it up to fit on the job by hand, *wasted from 30-50 per cent of the carpenter’s time, and an average of 17 percent of the lumber – and the time and the lumber that are wasted, cost just as much as the time and lumber that are used.* ...”

“The GORDON-VAN TINE Ready-Cut method of construction has eliminated all but a little less than 2 per cent of the lumber waster (the necessary waste in mitering, beveling and squaring up – and the sawdust), and has made possible savings in construction cost, which our customers say average up to 43.2 percent. ... If you could see the great machines at their work - their flashing saws eating into the lumber as fast as the conveyors can bring it to them, cutting the largest and smallest pieces accurately to a sixty-fourth of an inch, so fast that the eye can scarcely follow their work – you would begin to realize how this wonderful saving is made.”

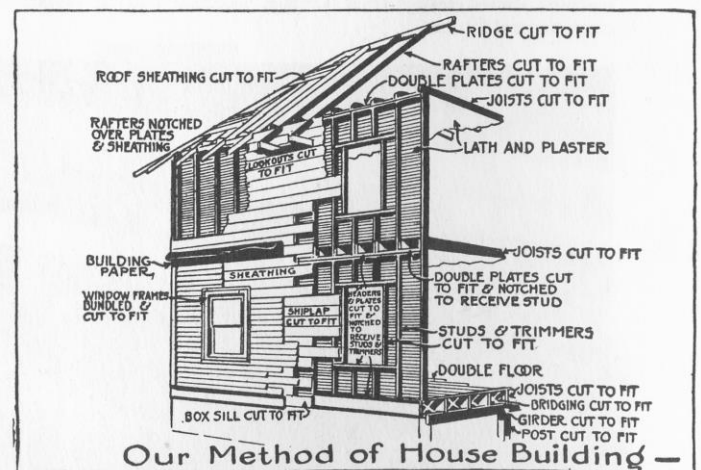


Figure 32
(Gordon-Van Tine Homes, 1923, p 6)

“Our experience and the volume of our business has made possible certain refinements in construction which are peculiar to GORDON-VAN TINE Ready-Cut Homes. First and foremost among them is the now famous GORDON-VAN TINE notched plate.”

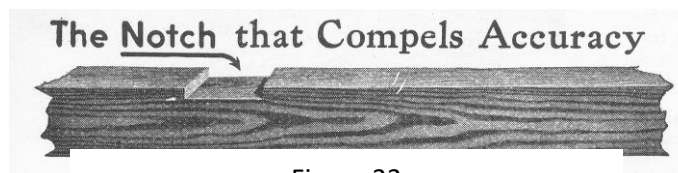


Figure 33
(Gordon-Van Tine Homes, 1923, p 7)

“Each upright stud rests on a plate and is capped by a plate. *We notch those plates.* Each stud fits into its own notch. There can be no deviation – the walls must be set accurately. No measuring is necessary – accuracy becomes automatic. The notch compels accuracy. This is simply one of the means which we have taken to insure satisfaction and time saving in GORDON-VAN TINE Ready-Cut Homes.” (Gordon-Van Tine Homes, 1923, pp 6-8)

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Gordon-Van Tine Homes

Guaranteed Prices—No Extras



What We Furnish—Such Complete Specifications Furnished Only by Gordon-Van Tine

Highest Quality of Material Proven
Here is What Our Customers Say About the Goods They Got

Doors—All interior doors are of two panel design, having white pine stiles and rails and beautiful slash grained Douglas fir panels. Front doors are of handsome design suitable to the house. Six-panel Colonial front doors for all Colonial houses. Glazed doors provided for rear and grade doors. All doors are strictly "A" quality and mortised for locks.

Inside Finish, clear slash grain Douglas fir, Craftsman pattern in casing, base and moldings. Ends squared, banded and marked. Picture moulding furnished for all rooms except bath, kitchen and upper halls. Chair rail furnished for bath room. All interior finish is selected for beauty of grain and is properly machined and sanded ready for varnish or stain.

Bands, Window Boxes, Lattice and Trellis are furnished where shown in illustration.

Mantel Shelf, Dome Damper and Ash Trap are furnished when fireplace is shown on floor plan.

Main Stair in all 1½ and 2-story houses, clear slash grain Douglas fir, Cut-To-Fit, banded and marked. 1½-inch treads, ¾-inch risers, tongued and grooved together, stair stringers housed out for treads and risers. Newels, rail and balusters, furnished (except where shown between walls) in handsome Craftsman design. All complete and machined ready to set up.

Kitchen, Pantry and Linen Cases clear slash grain Douglas fir, Cut-to-Fit, banded and marked. Front of these cases are put together and shipped set up. Kitchen or pantry cases have four bin, towel drawers, and small doors below counter-tops, with doors and shelves above. All counter shelves are clear hard maple, the sanitary wood. Linen cases have large linen drawers, doors and shelves. Towel cabinet furnished for bath room in all houses not having a linen closet. See color pages for illustrations.

The following miscellaneous material is furnished: Scaffolds and braces, tar paper for covering lumber, grounds for guides to plastering around doors and baseboards, backing strips and hardwood thresholds for all outside doors.

HARDWARE

Mortise Lock Sets are furnished in our bevel edge Regal Design, antique copper finish. Front door locks are solid bronzes with night latch. Rear and grade door locks are solid bronze. Inside locks are plated on steel. All locks have heavy bevel, giving them a handsome massive appearance. They are strictly first-class in mechanism and finish.

The foregoing color pages convey an excellent impression of the unsurpassed quality of Gordon-Van Tine homes after they are completed. But the strongest assurance of quality of the material which goes into them is, we believe, the voluntary testimony of those who have built them and are now living in them.

Below are excerpts from a few letters taken from thousands in our files which tell you better than we can of the superior quality of the materials used in our Gordon-Van Tine Homes.

There is no skimping in grade, dimension or workmanship. Nothing is omitted that will make for sound, lasting construction of longer life. Quality goes all through. Read these letters and then read pages 9 and 10 and you will realize why Gordon-Van Tine Homes are so far superior to the ordinary house.

Important Additional Information—Read Carefully

FIR LUMBER FOR THE NORTHWEST—Shipments for North Dakota, South Dakota or states west of these are made from OUR MILL, AT CHEHALE, WASHINGTON. In these shipments Douglas fir is furnished throughout in place of yellow pine for all framing lumber, flooring, sheathing and outside finish. Siding is clear red cedar, free from knots or defects. Inside finish and doors clear slash grain fir. Fir products from our Western Mill are the highest grades manufactured. Only No. 1 fir is used—even where No. 2 yellow pine is found in general specifications.

CHANGES IN CONSTRUCTION—Different climatic conditions prevailing in different parts of the country sometimes make alterations advisable in stock specifications. Where desired, these changes can be made and we will be glad to submit you revised prices.

If you live in the extreme Northern part of the country you may want to back plaster and put building paper under the roof shingles for warmth. If you want to make such changes, we will be most glad to tell you just how much they add to or subtract from the price of any home in this book.

MASONRY—Don't ship plaster, lime, cement, brick, etc., with lumber. Freight charges on such a car are much higher than on a straight car of lumber and millwork. We do not furnish such items for that reason, so would advise that you buy them locally. All plans covering masonry, etc., are furnished with each house, free of charge.

PLUMBING, HEATING AND LIGHTING—Our plans show the location of all plumbing fixtures. On the last pages of this book, we show prices on all plumbing and fixtures for each home.

PLANS—We furnish one complete set of blue prints for each house sold. Should you desire an extra set, let us know, and we will gladly furnish it.

REVERSED PLANS—Any plan can be furnished with plans reversed (opposite location of all rooms) without extra charge.

CEILING HEIGHTS—All houses have first stories nine feet high, second stories eight feet, except where otherwise noted in the description of the house. These measurements are in the clear between floor and ceiling. Basements where shown are six feet eight inches high.

A few houses in this book are of unusual architectural type, the harmony of which requires different heights of ceilings. In these few cases a note of story height is given in the description of the house.

Screens and porch sash are not included, but are priced for every home at the back of the book.

SHIPMENTS—All lumber shipments are made from our Lumber Mills at St. Louis, Mo., Chehale, Wash., or Hattingsburg, Miss. Prompt shipments and lowest freight rates are thus assured no matter where you live.

Build-Ins—Lumber
My carpenter said he had been building houses for 25 years, and he never put on as good siding as I got—*W. F. Coan, Grand Junction, Iowa.*

The lumber measured up beyond my expectations. I could not find a single knot in the siding—*Geo. A. Cummings, Edina, Mo.*

Every piece of material that came in sight when the building was ready for the painters was absolutely clear—*H. H. Baker.*

Siding
My carpenter said he had been building houses for 25 years, and he never put on as good siding as I got—*W. F. Coan, Grand Junction, Iowa.*

The lumber measured up beyond my expectations. I could not find a single knot in the siding—*Geo. A. Cummings, Edina, Mo.*

Every piece of material that came in sight when the building was ready for the painters was absolutely clear—*H. H. Baker.*

Windows and Frames
I never saw such nicely finished window frames. The workmanship can't be beat—*H. N. Hester, Extra, Iowa.*

Sash were in perfect condition and an well pleased with them—*Jos. Swinden, Jr., Caseyville, Ill.*

Was very much surprised that you put such good stock in your sash—*W. F. J. Warner, Michlen, N. J.*

Shingles
My carpenter said he never laid better shingles than the ones I got—*W. F. Coan, Grand Junction, Iowa.*

They are good A-No. 1 shingles, just as represented, if not somewhat better—*H. L. Borlin, Swanton, Ill.*

Lath
Your lath cannot be duplicated anywhere—*Fred A. Egan, Mason City, Iowa.*

I have never seen any better lath than those you sent me—*J. Bachmann, Fox Lake, Wis.*

Hardware
The material was everything you claimed for it, from hardware to nails—*John Gleason, Illinois, Ill.*

As well pleased with the quality. As to quantity I find the material ample to complete the job—*Geo. H. Woodman, Republican City, Neb.*

Paint
We are more than pleased with the way your paint is wearing—*Albert Brown, Mechanicsburg, Ohio.*

Used your paint two years ago, I have been wanting it, and like the lumber, millwork, hardware and tar paper, it is handling the test and giving good satisfaction—*L. F. Godfrey, Reynolds, Ill.*

The painters said that yours was the best varnish they had ever used—*L. R. Parish, Decatur, Ill.*

Mouldings
The interior woodwork is beautiful—*W. E. Schorer, Camden, Mo.*

Your windows, doors and moldings are of excellent quality—*A. J. Carroll, Elliott, Ia.*

Floors
I cannot say enough about your flooring, the quality as well as the milling was the best I ever saw. I have laid thousands of feet and have never seen any other flooring in my life—*E. E. Sauer, Clay, Ark.*

The flooring is the nicest I ever laid—*M. S. Brown, Painesville, Ohio.*

You do certainly handle good stuff—*William Fox, Zimbark, Easton, Pa.*

Everything was first class and plenty of it—*D. E. Roth, Painesville, Ill.*

It is as good as anyone could get from any source—*Geo. Creadick, Rochester, N. Y.*

Furnaces
I would not have that heater taken out for \$1000 if I could not get another—*O. C. Gray, Riverside, Iowa.*

The Fire King Pipeless Furnace arrived in good condition. I easily set it up myself and the sash and doors were all A-No. 1 quality—*D. F. Davis, Watertown, Pa.*

The fir trim and doors are beautiful—such pretty grain—*John Fernandez, Springfield, Ill.*

My five-cross panel doors are the admiration of all who have seen them—*H. S. Browne, Winchester, Ky.*

I am particularly pleased with the clearness and high polish of the glass, and the beautiful grain running through the wood of your doors—*Wm. L. Fisher, Philadelphia, Pa.*

Doors
Such doors could not be bought here for double the money—*J. S. Payne, Parker, Kansas.*

The doors are the nicest I have seen—*S. E. McFarland, Hermann, South Dakota.*

Electric Fixtures
I don't believe such nice fixtures could be bought for the money—*F. L. Bell, Davenport, Iowa.*

I bought my plumbing, electric fixtures and shades from Gordon-Van Tine at a great saving—*W. H. Hays, Grandville, Mo.*

Figure 34
Diagrams of the Gordon-Van Tine Ready-Cut System
(Gordon-Van Tine Homes, 1923, pp 10 & 11)

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GORDON-VAN TINE COMPANY HISTORIC DISTRICT
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Gordon-Van Tine wanted to ensure that readers knew that these were “quality” homes, not some cheap, thrown-together structures. One way they stressed the fact was through a full page advertisement in a variety of publications, beginning in 1916, that features a photograph of the company president’s own Gordon-Van Tine home. This house still stands at 824 East Locust Street in Davenport.

This is Our President's Own Home!
Built From Gordon-Van Tine
Ready-Cut Plan No. 560

Ready-Cut Home No. 560—\$1266

**FREE! 300 Plans and Photos
Of Beautiful Homes!**

Mr. H. C. Roberts, President of Gordon-Van Tine Co., owns and lives in this Gordon-Van Tine Home. Built entirely from stock. Total cost of material only \$1266. This is only one of 300 Gordon-Van Tine perfected plans. All come free for the asking. Two big books showing plans, floor plans, elevations, show pictures of homes, detailing the many, many styles, exact prices. Cost home—\$300 up. All wholesale—save \$200 to \$300 on your home. Plans free.

**Material Supplied Either in Usual Way
Or Ready-cut to Fit—As You Prefer**

All highest standard grades. Newest architectural styles. Prices lowest—save enough to pay for lot. Ready-cut Homes shipped in 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100. Construction costs cut. Kitchens, bath, and porches—built hundreds of times. Full of home construction ideas and plans. Kitchens, built or paper over, built, ready, 2 panel for doors, hanging trim for Milwaukee, built or ready—All material delivered at one time—no delays.

Wholesale Prices—Shipped Anywhere

Makes no difference where you live. Get the low home prices for free. Customers everywhere enjoy material—orders are shipped. You are sole judge of quality. Money back on goods paid, both areas if you are not satisfied. Three strong banks vouch for us. Prompt delivery guaranteed. We serve the thousands of houses for you. Send Coupon today!

Gordon-Van Tine Co.
Satisfaction Guaranteed or Money Back
6064 Case Street Davenport, Iowa
In Business Since 1865

GORDON-VAN TINE CO., 6064 Case St., Davenport, Iowa

Please send me Free the books checked:

<input type="checkbox"/> Standard Home Plans	<input type="checkbox"/> Ready-cut Plans, Book	<input type="checkbox"/> Home Building Material
<input type="checkbox"/> Complete Blueprints	<input type="checkbox"/> Samples of Hardware and Glass	<input type="checkbox"/> Hardware and Glass
<input type="checkbox"/> 24 Pictures	<input type="checkbox"/> Catalogue	<input type="checkbox"/> For the Home Owner

Please send me specific information on all the above mentioned items. I am most interested in _____

Name _____ Street No. _____
City _____ State _____ Davenport _____

October Good Housekeeping 139

Figure 35

1916 Advertisement in Good Housekeeping magazine

(<https://archive.org/details/gordon-van-tine>)

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GORDON-VAN TINE COMPANY HISTORIC DISTRICT
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Each catalog featured houses of varying sizes and styles, from handsome residences like the president's, to popular Four Squares, Bungalows, and cottages.

Gordon-Van Tine Homes
Page 12



Gordon-Van Tine Home No. 535

Fine Sleeping and Sun Porches in This Home

This House Furnished with Siding or Shingles on Outside Walls Instead of Stucco. Write for Prices.

THIS beautiful home is certain to continue a favorite with the discriminating home-builder. It will prove, wherever built, one of the community's most substantial units. Should your need suggest, and your desire permit the construction of this exceptional home, then select this plan with all the comfortable assurance that goes with it.

There is small need, if any, to impress upon you the beauty, the convenience, and excellence of this home. The exterior could not be more imposing or pleasing—it is indeed a beautiful home, inside and out.

The impressive features of the exterior are the fine proportions obtained—the broad eaves, the big stucco pillars, the heavy brackets supporting the quaint hood over the entrance; the attractive front door and side lights, the two quadruple casement sash on either side, with the two flower boxes set below them, are welcome additions that serve to intensify the fine harmony that prevails throughout.

Notice particularly the fine balance contained in proportioning the windows of the second floor. Hold in mind, as you study this plan, the living comfort afforded by the sun porch and sleeping porch.

The living room and dining room are spacious and perfect in light and ventilation—opening from the sun porch are our beautiful French doors. You will always appreciate the fireplace with its cheer and warmth. The kitchen is a model, equipped with our kitchen case, style "17" and so handily arranged it will always be appreciated as a perfect room in a perfect home.

Through the service hall the basement is easily reached. Here there is space for the ice box and a convenient closet. Notice how easily we have arranged the approach to the second floor stairway—either from the front or rear halls.

Four bedrooms, a bath, a sewing room, with the sleeping porch provide an ideal arrangement upstairs. Besides a closet for each bedroom, we have furnished our finest closet as shown on the colored insert. Entrance to the sleeping porch is made from either chamber.

Prices for sectional sash for sun porch will be quoted on request.

PAINT—Unless otherwise instructed, we will furnish white paint for trim. The walls are stucco, for which we furnish Berkitt patent sheathing.

For Plumbing, Heating, Lighting for This Home, See Last Pages of Book

For Prices on This Home, See First Page.
Read Pages 9 and 10 for Full Description of Materials.




Figures 36-37
(Gordon-Van Tine Homes, 1923,
pp 12 & 15)

Guaranteed Prices—No Extras
Page 15



Gordon-Van Tine Home No. 596

Fine Sized Rooms in This 4-Bedroom Home

For Prices on This Home, See First Page.
Read Pages 9 to 10 for Full Description of Materials.

THIS design of this house has proved itself admirable in all parts of the country—it is substantial, handsome and well arranged.

The broad effect is emphasized still further by the design of the porch. The brick pedestals and newels, the good lines of the porch columns and the square balusters are all pleasing.

A glance at the floor plan shows this to be unusual. The living room and dining room extend across the entire front of the house, commanding a splendid view in almost every direction. These rooms are made practically one by the wide opening between them.

No room is taken up by a stairway at the front of the house. But instead it opens off the passage way, making it equally convenient to the living room, kitchen or den. Notice the room that may be used as a den or downstairs sleeping room. It is of good size with windows well placed.

The kitchen has surely been designed as a labor saver. Our kitchen case, range, sink and space for the sink occupy the outer wall, and assure the worker of excellent details. We want also to call your attention to the fact that the 84-inch space that has been left for the range, is ample for even the largest of ranges.

From the kitchen one passes to the rear porch through a good sized entry which could easily be used for a refrigerator room or wash room. Or one may leave the kitchen by means of the glass door just under the stairway leading to the second floor.

Upstairs there are three fine chambers each with a big closet. Can you imagine three better planned bedrooms than those shown here?

Two or three windows for each sleeping room in a home are surely unusual, but here they are to be found and plenty of well space for the proper placing of furniture besides.

The stairway leading to the house-wood attic, the bath and the linen closet—like the one shown in the colored insert—will open from the second-floor hall also. The attic is floored and well lighted and ventilated by the windows in the dormer.

As you consider this home, picture your own comfortable furniture on the inside, and certainly you will find it much to attract and satisfy you at an exceedingly low cost.

PAINT—Unless otherwise instructed, we will furnish white paint for the body and white for the trim of this home.

For Plumbing, Heating, Lighting for This Home, See Last Pages of Book




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GORDON-VAN TINE COMPANY HISTORIC DISTRICT
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Gordon-Van Tine Homes

Page 14



Gordon-Van Tine Home No. 521

A Very Popular 4-Bedroom Bungalow

PICTURE to yourself the pleasure of owning and living in a home as charming as this. A more attractive exterior would be hard to imagine. It is artistic and homelike in every line. Everything about this house bespeaks well balanced architecture that emphasizes the home feeling.

The appearance of this house is emphasized by the finish. The timbered front dormer and the projecting bay window in the dining room wall are added features.

This home is delightful throughout its interior also. From the big comfortable arched porch with its view unobstructed by many pillars, one enters the friendly well planned living room. A wide opening beyond assists one to the comfortable dining room, lighted by the group of triple windows in the bay, which forms one entire side of the room—an especially attractive window arrangement.

The kitchen is an unusual model of convenience. The sink and work table are each under a window, and arranged in the most convenient manner, with the sink to the left of the table and the large built-in case, design "D", to the right. This is shown on the color pages. The rear door, which is on the same level as the walk, serves as a rear entrance to the house and to the roomy basement below.

The central hall gives direct access to a large coat closet, dining room and living room, bed rooms and bath. From here the stairs lead to the second floor, where there are two more bed rooms and an attic, well lighted by the windows in the dormer. These three rooms all open into the upper hall.

All the first and second floor bed rooms are well provided with closets of good size, and with plenty of furniture space. It is quite unusual that a home occupying no more ground space than this bungalow should offer four splendid sleeping rooms, with even a well lighted attic space besides.

You must be agreed that the entire plan of this home is most charming. Imagine owning this beautiful little home and then plan to get it. A family intending to invest in a home would be well repaid for sacrificing a bit in order to own such a home as this.

PAINTS—Unless otherwise instructed, we will furnish seal brown paint for body and white for trim. We do not furnish stain for roof shingles.

For Plumbing, Heating, Lighting for This Home, See Back of Book

For Prices on This Home, See First Page. See Pages 9 and 10 for Full Description of Materials.



First Floor Plan

Second Floor Plan

Loof




Loof

Figures 38-39
(Gordon-Van Tine Homes, 1923,
pp 14 & 111)

Guaranteed Prices—No Extras

Page 111

Ready Cut Cottages for All Purposes




Gordon-Van Tine Cottage No. 210

Comfortable Three-Room Cottage

For the man who has little money to invest, who wants to get up his home in haste, this cottage is ideal. In its very simplicity of construction is the economy realized, and it can be made more attractive and cozy. We furnish everything complete at our prices. Ask that in connection with this, together with every price in catalogue. An architect's sketch is correct. It should prove interesting to quantity buyers.

See First Page for Prices




Floor Plan

Gordon-Van Tine Cottage No. 204

This five room cottage has the same floor plan which we have used in many of our finest bungalows. We have found it one of the most convenient and appealing possible to construct. The two chambers both have big closets and all the rooms are large.

And remember that you can do all the work yourself if you wish, or if you hire a carpenter he will only be a few days on the job when ordinarily it would take him weeks. The outside dimensions of this house are 28 feet wide by 30 feet deep. Ceilings are 8 feet high.



Gordon-Van Tine Cottage No. 205

A big, roomy cottage—six rooms. Comfortable, practical and the most economical home one can build. If you must build to a price then, here is your solution. Big living and dining rooms well-lighted. Kitchen of good size—ample. Three good-sized, airy bed rooms. Closets for each bed room. Outside dimensions 34 feet. Ceilings 8 feet high. Plans in the simplicity, yet attractive five rooms of its substantial proportions and high grade construction. A value absolutely unsurpassed.

Specifications on Above Buildings on Page 110. Write for Special Price on Lots of 5 or More.

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Gordon-Van Tine Homes

Page 114

A Large Porch—Fine Interior

Prices on page 1
Specifications on page 112

Floor Plan No. 388

Gordon-Van Tine Summer Cottage No. 388

The rear porch which may be used for either dining or sleeping is a real feature of this compact, yet comfortable, summer home. If you use the rear porch for sleeping the side porch affords an ideal outdoor dining space. The living room, with its six windows and one outside door, will be cool and comfortable on hot days while the fireplace at one end will take the chill off on cool mornings and evenings.

The kitchen is amply large for storage of the quantity of supplies that must be carried away from town. An unusually roomy summer house with just the necessary living quarters enclosed by walls—the balance porch—for which we furnish 14 mesh screen wire.

Gordon-Van Tine Summer Cottage No. 304

A Cosy Home for the Summer

For Prices, See First Page

The quaint recessed porch, the shingled walls, the big living room with the fireplace, the excellent arrangement of beds make this a most desirable summer home. The sleeping rooms, located as far as possible from the main roof, extend over the big screened porch, making it substantially a part of the cottage and assuring all the comfort of an open living room. Just drop up a line and we'll send it all cut and ready to set up direct to your favorite lake. We do not furnish fireplace material.

Floor Plan No. 304

Floor Plan

Gordon-Van Tine Summer Cottage No. 377 For Prices, See First Page

A Dandy Cottage

Not too big—not too small—just the right size for a small party. A cosy, comfy, summer home. There's the big airy porch, for the hot days and nights and the big cheery fireplace for the cold rainy days and chilly nights in early or late season. Material for the fireplace is not furnished as it cannot be shipped at a saving.

Specifications for Summer Cottages on Page 112

Just as Gordon-Van Tine had offered plans for barns and other agricultural buildings earlier, by the 1920s they were including plans for summer cottages and garages in their catalogs. Houses built during this period were among the first needing a building to house their automobile. Being located farther from the city center, automobiles were becoming a part of daily life.

Guaranteed Prices—No Extras

Page 117

Ready-Cut Garage No. 102—Double Garage This Design, No. 104

Specifications of Garages on This Page

SILLS—2x6, No. 1 Yellow Pine.

STUDS AND BATTENS—2x4, No. 1 Yellow Pine spaced 2 ft. on centers.

ROOF—1x6, No. 2 Yellow Pine dressed and matched shingling, covered with Japan-Top shingle roll, slate surfaced roofing in a beautiful grey-green color.

SIDING—1x6, Clear Yellow Pine Drop Siding.

DOORS—Clear White Pine Doors, each 4 ft. by 8 ft., 1 1/2 inch thick, with steel rollers and rails, and hand-cast brass hinges with glass panels above—very strongly built. Are ready to hang.

WINDOWS—Single garages have one window in each side and one end; double garages have two windows in each side and one in the end.

SASH—Size 2 ft. 7 in. by 2 ft. 5 in., divided six square lights. Hinges to swing in. Complete with all necessary hardware.

HARDWARE—Double Japanese hardware for doors, including brass foot and head bolts, handle, and cylinder lock with small fat key. Hinges and fasteners for sash. Nails for entire building.

PAINT—Two coats of Quality paint for outside walls and doors. Unless otherwise instructed will furnish white paint.

PLANS and blue prints are furnished free.

All material cut-to-fit.

Line Your Garage with Wallboard

For real winter comfort. A small heater will keep things from freezing and your car will start easily on coldest mornings.

Our Blackhawk Wallboard is made of three layers of highly compressed pine fibre, treated with a moisture proof slane and two layers of asphalt cement, welded together to form a tough electric board, quietest thing. You can put it on yourself. Prices on page 1.

All Lumber Cut-to-Fit Put Them Up Yourself

Every bit of lumber which goes into these garages is ready-cut. Window frames are factory made and shipped ready to set into the wall. Doors are made complete in our own factories of clear white pine lumber and are shipped ready to hang. As finally made as the best home front door and cost much less than the usual nailed together door. They are 1 1/2 inches thick, mortise and tenon joints, and will always hang true and straight. Because all material is sent in such shape, it is but the work of a few hours to build your garage instead of several days. Hundreds of our customers build these garages themselves at big savings and enjoy doing it too.

Now the specifications and see what excellent material we furnish. You get the finest hardware, heavy hinges and a cylinder lock set, two coats of quality paint and all plans and blue prints furnished free.

Now the specifications and see what excellent material we furnish. You get the finest hardware, heavy hinges and a cylinder lock set, two coats of quality paint and all plans and blue prints furnished free.

DOUBLE GARAGES are amply large for two cars, 104 being similar in design to 102, and 104 similar in design to 102. These double garages have two sets of double doors, two windows in each side and one in the end.

Ready-Cut Garage No. 106—Double Garage This Design, No. 105

Garages Nos. 106 and 107

Extra fine material furnished for garages of this design, including triple sliding doors with complete hardware, 3 to 3 Extra Clear Red Cedar shingles over 1x4 roof sheathing and clear level house siding (Cypress or Redwood). Material for lattice and gate brackets also furnished.

Other specifications similar to those given above on this page.

IMPORTANT NOTE—These garages are equipped with our Gordon Weathercraft's Triple Sliding Doors. These doors open by rolling inside and require three feet of clear space to operate. Order your garage at least five feet longer than your car. These doors are pre-drilled, slide easily and are spring fitted. They are finished in the price of Garage Nos. 106, 107, 108 and 109, quoted on page 1.

These triple doors are also furnished for any other garage on this page. See option on page 1.

STUCCO FINISH—We also offer this style garage with Byrd's Patent Stucco Finish. Stucco has special outside walls which may be finished in any color. Single garage with surface to which stucco firmly adheres. Single garage with surface to which stucco firmly adheres. 109, double garage, 106.

This Handy Side Door for Any Garage

(Except Nos. 101 and 110)

Especially convenient if your garage opens on to street. This panel is 1 1/2 inch thick, size 3-2x6-6 with brass handle, latch, lock set and night latches. Costs but little extra.

Price on page 1.

Figures 40-41
(Gordon-Van Tine Homes, 1923,
pp 114 & 116)

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All of the attention in the Gordon-Van Tine catalogs was not on the exteriors of the houses. GVT also included examples of plans for various rooms, including kitchens and baths.



Figures 42-43
(Gordon-Van Tine Homes, 1923, np)

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The early catalogs, and those that followed in future decades, always included an engraving of the Gordon-Van Tine Company plant in Davenport.



Figure 44

Engraved image of the Gordon-Van Tine complex from the NW
This image was used in catalogs beginning in 1918
And was used as the company letterhead for decades.

Figure 45

Engraved image of the Gordon-Van Tine complex from the SW
A different view that was also used in company advertising



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The most popular view of the Gordon-Van Tine Davenport facility was that seen in figure 42. Chabot discovered this view was used as a logo for the U.N. Roberts Company as well.



Figure 46
U.N. Roberts letterhead from a Sept 21, 1931 letter
(Courtesy of Susan Chabot)

A variation on this view was used as an undated Gordon-Van Tine advertising flyer.



Figure 47
Undated GVT Flyer
(<https://archive.org/details/gordon-van-tine>)

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The complete lack of original plans or drawings for any of the four Gordon-Van Tine buildings in this historic district, as well as the lack of Sanborn Insurance maps between 1910 and 1950, has been frustrating for many reasons. One of the questions has been that Building 1, the Office Building, was constructed as a three story brick building, and is shown that way on the letterheads and the Sanborn maps, but is obviously four stories today. The undated flyer shows it as a four story building, and, a photo in the 1923 company catalog shows it as four stories. This photograph provides an approximate date for the fourth floor addition, between 1916 and 1923.



Figure 48
Main Office Building shown as four stories in 1923
(*Gordon Van Tine Homes*, 1923, p 1)

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Following the lead of the other companies, Montgomery Ward decided to enter the housing market and published its first catalog in 1910. It offered house plans and materials, but none of it was pre-cut, and, the plans were woefully out of style, featuring late nineteenth century designs by William Radford. Wolicki found that Gordon-Van Tine approached Montgomery Ward in 1921 with an offer to design, produce, and market "kit houses" for them. (GVT web site) The first "new" catalog for "Wardway Houses" was published in 1922. A careful review of the designs and floor plans shows that these were actually the same as a number of houses in the most current GVT catalog, the only changes being names and model numbers, and different plantings around the houses.

The 1920s were the "heyday" of "kit houses," but Hunter says that even then, only 2-5% of the homes constructed were pre-cut. (Hunter, "Historical Architectural Research", www.kithouse.org) In a 1926 article the *Davenport Democrat & Leader*, noted that Gordon-Van Tine had total sales of \$7,000,000 during the past year, the best year in its history. It mentioned the mills in St. Louis, Chehalis, and Hattiesburg, and sales offices in Chicago, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Newark, Syracuse, and Washington, D.C. The article ended with:

"... The Gordon-Van Tine company will probably be the largest-advertiser in the state of Iowa in 1926. Twenty-four magazines of national circulation will be used with a total circulation of over 26,000,000 copies to carry the message of Gordon-Van Tine homes and Davenport, Ia., to practically every family in the country."

"The company also makes large use of newspaper advertising and its notable success has been due to the degree in which it has made Davenport known as the center of supply for ready-cut building material for American homes."
(*Davenport Democrat & Leader*, Jan 28, 1926, p 16)

One of the reasons why the homes became so popular, in addition to being delivered to your lot and easily assembled, was that a number of the pre-cut housing companies started offering mortgages. The availability of these mortgages often meant the difference between buying from one company rather than another. Aladdin and Gordon-Van Tine were two of the hold-outs. It was not until 1927 that the GVT board approved a home mortgage program.

In January 1929 the Gordon-Van Tine board announced that it would be opening 15-20 retail stores in the state of Illinois in the coming year. These would be scattered to provide complete coverage of the state. No plans were made to open any stores in Iowa. (*Davenport Democrat & Leader*, Jan 24, 1929. np) It has been said that the 1929 GVT catalog was "the most ambitious to date." (Wolicki, GVT web site) Although it is believed that the 1929 Stock Market Crash heralded the decline in the pre-cut housing industry, it actually had little effect. However, 1932 brought a drop in housing sales, and Montgomery Ward did not put out a 1933 catalog. Home owners continued paying off their mortgages, but one by one the companies stopped offering them.

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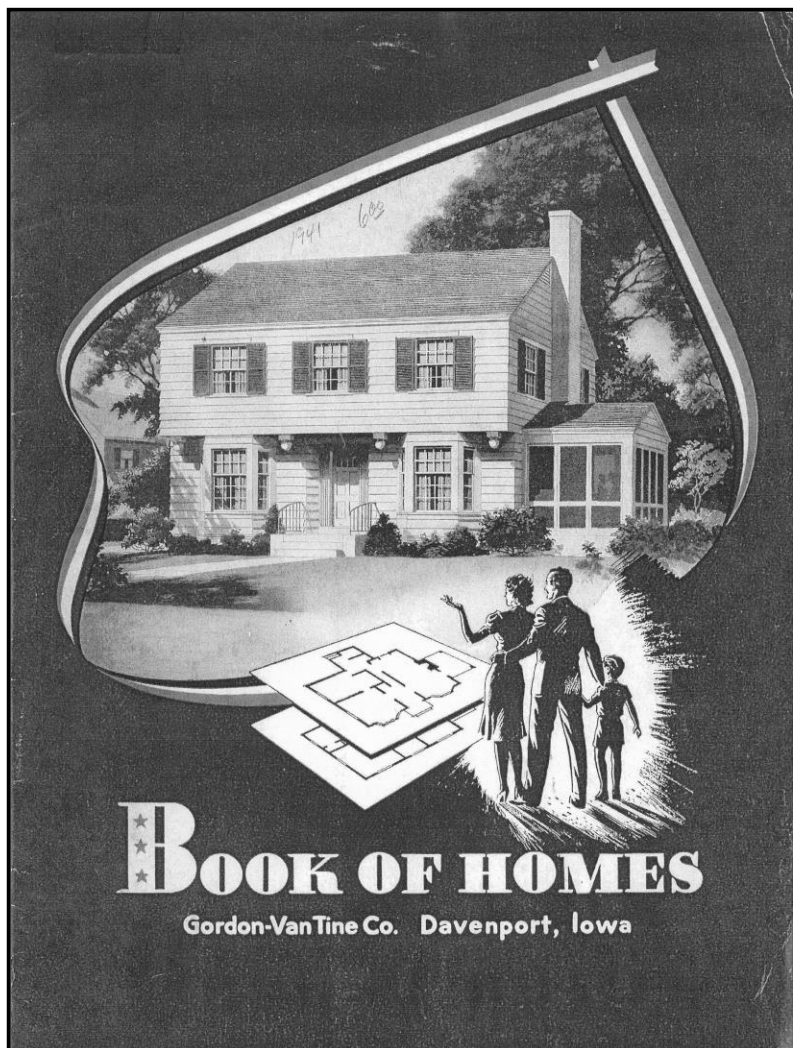
GORDON-VAN TINE COMPANY HISTORIC DISTRICT
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Probably the biggest blow to the “kit housing” market was the Federal Housing Administration. There had always been ill-feeling between architects and mail-order firms, going back to the mid-nineteenth century catalogs of Downing, Davis, Holly, and later, Palliser, and Barber. Following the advice of staff architects, the F.H.A. initially refused to approve mortgages for “kit houses” deeming them of poor quality.

Gordon-Van Tine managed to stay in business throughout the Great Depression, and published a catalog in 1941. The catalog followed the traditional format of touting their nation-wide service through its four lumberyard/mills, and included pages explaining and illustrating how and why a Gordon-Van Tine home was superior. They also introduced some new and/or up-dated styles. While there were a number of two story traditional houses, many were small, reflecting the buying preferences of the period. The house plans in this book illustrate the housing stock that was built across the country in the suburbs following World War II. Some plans include attached garages.

Figure 49
Cover of
1941 Gordon-Van Tine catalog



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The BELMAR " " " " " "

Six Rooms, Bath and Lavatory

The Living Room: This splendid large room has a pleasant outlook on three sides, a cheerful recessed fireplace and a glazed door leading to the side porch. You enter the living room from the center hall where you find the main stairs and the necessary coat closet. A door at the back of the living room connects with the rear hall which places the kitchen, the lavatory, the rear door and the cellar stairs only a few steps away.

The Dining Room: A spacious corner room, well lighted by the front and side windows.

The Kitchen: Has two windows, a broom closet and room for kitchen cabinets below the side window; at the right of this window at left of sink and above sink and refrigerator. The cabinet below the side window will be a lower case only and will be especially convenient because it is near the dining room; thus, it can be used for a serving table. A door opens to the rear hall bringing the rear door, the lavatory, the living room and the cellar stairs within a few steps. The rear door is covered by a small porch.

The Bedrooms: Upstairs you find three fine bedrooms each with two windows and large closets. The right front bedroom has two closets. Closet space in the Belmar is unusually generous when you consider the two linen closets in the second floor hall and the towel closets in the bath and lavatory.

The Bathrooms: Has stone tub space and towel closet.

The Belmar is 33 feet wide by 34 feet deep. The side porch is 20 feet wide and the rear veranda is 4 feet 6 inches. For specifications, see pages 4 and 5. Outside walls covered with wide shingle siding.

Gordon-Van Tine Co., Davenport, Iowa.

[PAGE 10]

The STRATFORD " " " " " "

Four Rooms, Dinette and Bath

The Living Room: We have made this room large because it is the center of family life. The big window window bay floods it with light and cheer—even makes it look bigger. You can see that furniture well space is good. If desired, a gate-leg table can be used in the dining space so that this space can be used as part of the living room except when meals are served. A closed opening leads to the hall serving the bedrooms and bath and a swinging door opens to the kitchen.

The Kitchen: While work can never be called play, this kitchen certainly promises that there will be no monotone drudgery in the Stratford. It is compact with everything placed so no steps or time can be wasted. Good cabinet space along rear wall, to left of sink, under sink and over refrigerator space. The range has its own recess. The two windows mean plenty of light and hot-weather ventilation. You reach the cellar stairs and rear door landing in a few steps and you will note that this landing provides a direct passage from the cellar to the garage without entering the kitchen.

The Stratford is 30 feet wide by 24 feet deep, 8-inch level siding on outside walls. For specifications, see pages 4 and 5.

The Bedrooms: Are kept separate from the living quarters by the hall. Closet space is generous (note coat closet in vestibule) and each bedroom has windows in both outside walls for best light and ventilation.

The Bathroom: Has large towel closet.

Gordon-Van Tine Co., Davenport, Iowa.

[PAGE 14]

Figure 50
(Gordon-Van Tine Book of Homes, 1941)

The TARRYTOWN " " " " " "

Fine Rooms and Bath

The Living Room: This splendid large room has four windows and a Colonial fireplace. It is reached from the center hall which serves the main entry and provides the necessary coat closet. A door opens from the living room to the rear hall where you find the lavatory and an additional closet.

The Dining Room: A good sized corner room with two windows.

The Kitchen: Has two windows, excellent space for cabinets to the left and right of the sink; also along the inside wall. A closed opening leads to the rear hall which places the cellar stairs, lavatory and living room within a few steps of the kitchen. The kitchen has a glazed rear door.

The Bedrooms: Located on the second floor. The left bedroom has two closets and the right bedroom one closet. Each bedroom has three windows which assures fine cross ventilation.

The Bathroom: Has towel closet and recessed space for the tub.

NOTE: If desired, the first floor lavatory can be omitted and this space devoted to a rear entry. This would permit a direct passage from the outside to the cellar stairs, also provide a larger closet and an extra closet for the living room.

The Tarrytown is 30 feet wide and 22 feet deep. For specifications, see pages 4 and 5.

Gordon-Van Tine Co., Davenport, Iowa.

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The CLAYMONT " " " " " "

Five Rooms, Lavatory, Bath and Garage

The Living Room: The two bay windows add a decorative touch to the front of this already beautiful Cape Cod house and increase the size and pleasantness of the living room and dining room.

The interior has been carefully planned. Look at the first floor plan. It's the popular central-hall type. The living room boasts of its fine size, many windows and cheerful open fireplace. The lavatory is centrally located and the modern, well lighted kitchen has fine cabinet space on the left wall and around and above the sink, recessed space for both refrigerator and stove, and a glazed outside door leading to the covered passageway between the house and garage. This passage also provides a protected entrance to and from the garage to the house. The garage is 10 feet wide by 20 feet deep and has modern roll-up type overhead garage doors.

Closet space in this home is indeed liberal. In addition to the three big closets, linen closet and attic space on the second floor, there is a handy coat closet in the entry hall.

The bedrooms are large rooms and each has two windows. The bathroom has a recessed space for the tub.

The Claymont is 44 feet wide by 23 feet 5 inches deep. Outside walls (except for brick veneer front wall) covered with 8-inch level siding. For specifications, see pages 4 and 5.

Gordon-Van Tine Co., Davenport, Iowa.

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During World War II Gordon-Van Tine provided barracks and other housing for the U.S. government. Following the war, GVT was braced for a wave of new construction when it realized that government rationing of materials increased the cost to the point where manufacturing was not profitable. In 1946, Horace Roberts, the lone family member remaining in the business, agreed to sell U.N. Roberts, Gordon-Van Tine, and McClelland to a businessman from Cincinnati by the name of Sidney Rose. Rose was the chairman of the Cleveland Wrecking Company, a national demolition and salvage company. Although Rose assured the U.N. Roberts/Gordon-Van Tine/McClelland workers that their jobs would not be affected by the change in ownership, in July 1947 Rose closed U.N. Roberts/Gordon-Van Tine, and sold the McClelland Company to another out of town owner. (Wolicki, *Ibid.*)



Figure 51
Aerial photograph of Gordon-Van Tine Company, 1948
(Courtesy of Putnam Museum)

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Ironically, if Horace Roberts had been able to hold on a little longer, the Gordon-Van Tine Company would probably have experience its biggest sales ever during the post-World War II building boom.

Rebecca L. Hunter created a table showing pre-cut housing sales by the major companies.

Major U.S. Mail-Order Home Companies		
Company	Years	Estimated* Number of Mail-Order Homes
Aladdin	1906–83	100,000
Sears, Roebuck	1908–40	60,000–70,000
Harris Brothers	1908–31	NA
Gordon-Van Tine	1909–47	75,000
Montgomery Ward	1909–31	30,000
Lewis	1913–75	75,000
Sterling	1915–74	45,000
Pacific Homes	1918–40	37,000

* Data extrapolated from catalog figures and reports listing total annual sales

Figure 52
(Hunter, p 51)

This table shows that when the estimated 30,000 Montgomery Ward houses manufactured by Gordon-Van Tine are added to the estimated 75,000 GVT houses, the total is more than that of any of the other companies. Gordon-Van Tine houses have been identified in Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Mississippi, Wisconsin, Ohio, and Oregon, and there are undoubtedly unidentified Gordon-Van Tine houses across the country. Several individuals or groups have attempted to identify how many GVT houses there may be in the state of Iowa. A list provided by Judith Chabot that was created by the “Sears Modern Homes” research group found only thirteen, but they were really looking for Sears houses, so this is sort of a bonus of their study. Dale Wolicki has conducted the most intensive search in Iowa and his focus so far has been primarily the eastern part of the state. He puts the number at 300, but knows that there are many more. It is believed that there are neighborhoods of GVT houses in Davenport, but these have not been verified. A survey of GVT houses there would add greatly to the library of information about Gordon-Van Tine and its role in early twentieth century residential development.

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SCOTT COUNTY, IA

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CONCLUSION

The Gordon-Van Tine Historic District has Criterion A and C significance as a producer of building materials and pre-cut housing packages that allowed middle class Americans to build and own their own homes during the first half of the twentieth century. In its early years, the company depended heavily on rural customers interested in a new farm house, barn, or other agricultural buildings. Gordon-Van Tine was one of the top manufacturers of pre-cut houses, providing materials, and, in some cases, complete housing packages (design, marketing, materials, instructions, and price) to other companies, including Sears Roebuck and Montgomery-Ward. In addition to their Davenport facilities, they had facilities in St. Louis, Hattiesburg, Mississippi and Chehalis, Washington, and shipped throughout the United States and Canada. Their advertising in 1926 was estimated to be in 26,000,000 copies of twenty-four national publications. The *ready-cut* system that GVT developed was advertised as saving both time and money. Their catalogs contained not only small, simple house and cottage designs, but also larger homes in the most popular styles of the day, ranging from Bungalows, Four Square, Arts and Craft, to Colonial and Tudor Revival, and garages designed to meet the growing need for auto "housing."

The period of significance is 1907 (when GVT was established) to 1947 (when the new owner closed the operation). Dates of significance include 1910 (construction of the warehouse/factory), 1916 (publication of first catalog featuring *ready-cut* homes), and, 1946 (company sold to new owners). With additional survey and research the Gordon-Van Tine Company Historic District might achieve state-wide significance. Gordon-Van Tine was a name known throughout the country and it put Davenport, Iowa "on the map."

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA:

Lat 41.524988 Lon 90.563305

Verbal Boundary Description

WETMORE'S ADD PART OF BLK 3 BEG AT NW COR OF LOT 11 BLK 3-N 61D13' E ALG SLY/L OF CHARLOTTE ST 515.3'-S 28D47' E 62.4' -S 61D13' W 478.9' TO ELY/L OF FEDERAL ST-N 72D27' W ALG SD ELY/L 53'-N 28D47' W ALG SD ELY/L FEDERAL ST 24.2' TO POB

WETMORE'S ADD PRTS BLKS 3 & 4 ALSO E & W ALLEY BET BLKS 3 & 4 FROM TREMONT AVE TO FEDERAL ST & ALSO BEACH ST (VACATED) FROM CHARLOTTE AVE TO SWITS ST (EXC N 62.4' OF BLK 3 & N 62.4' OF W 48.8' OF BEACH ST LYING E OF BLK 3)

Boundary Justification

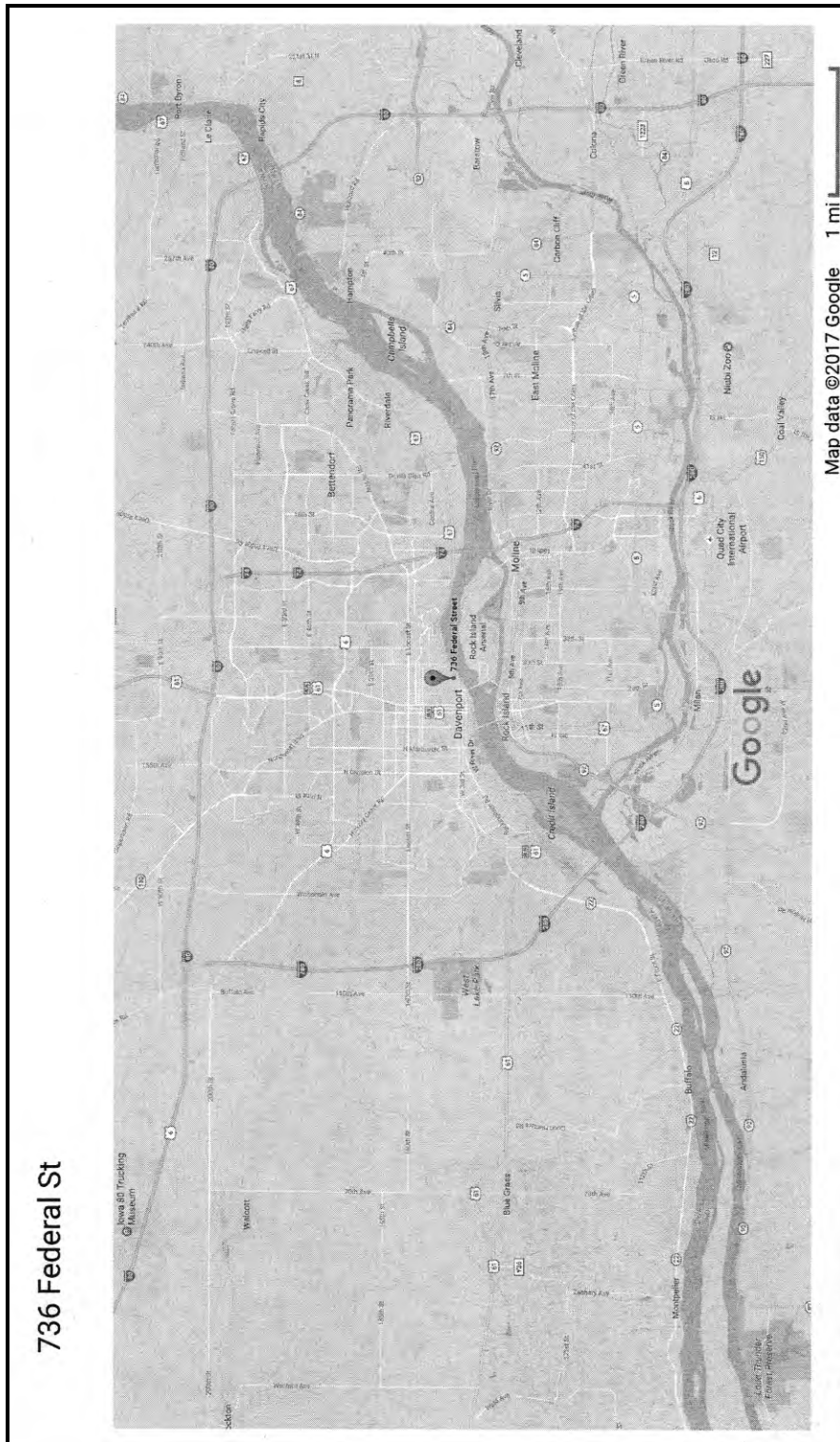
This is the area historically associated with the Gordon-Van Tine Company.

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SCOTT COUNTY, IA

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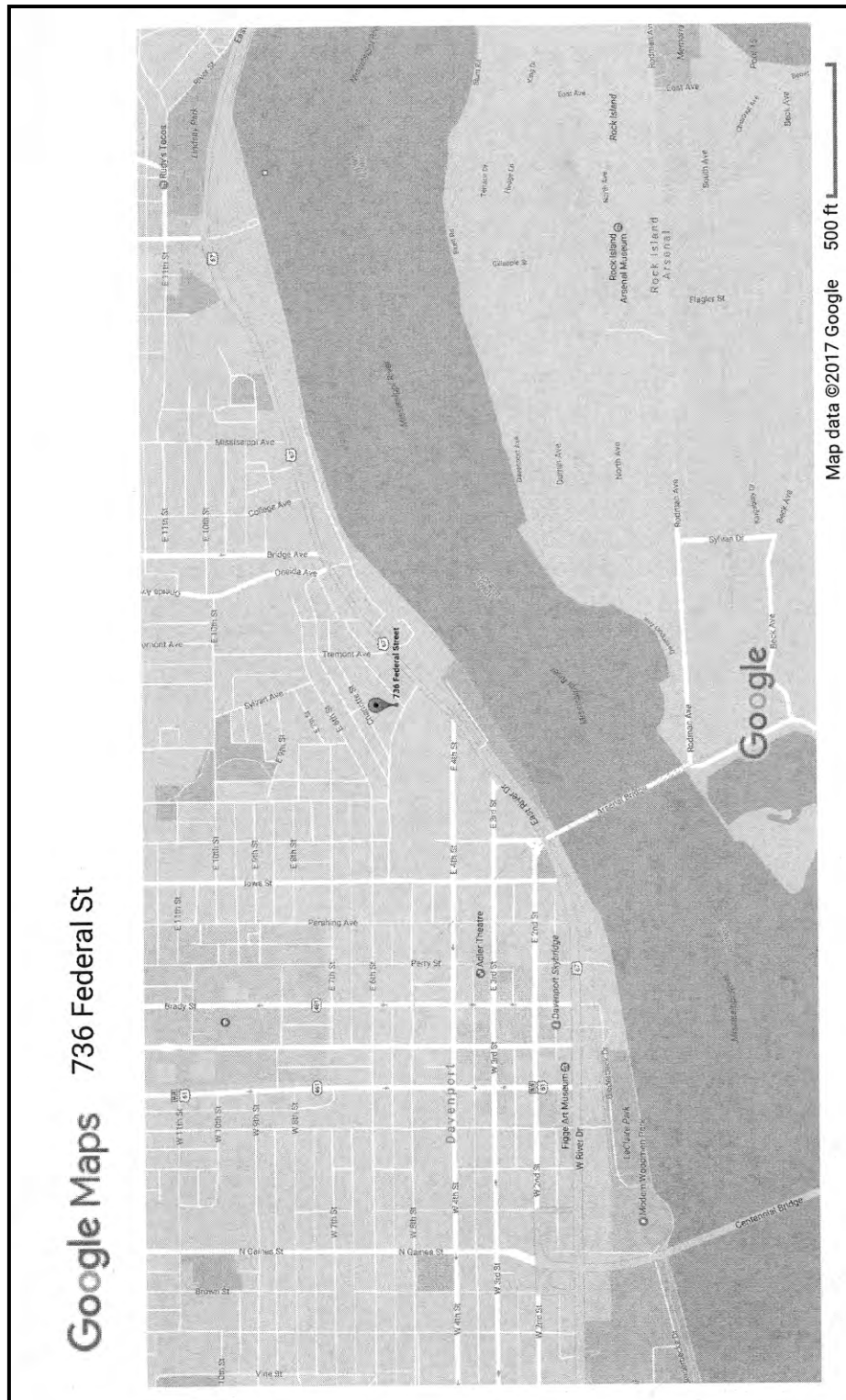


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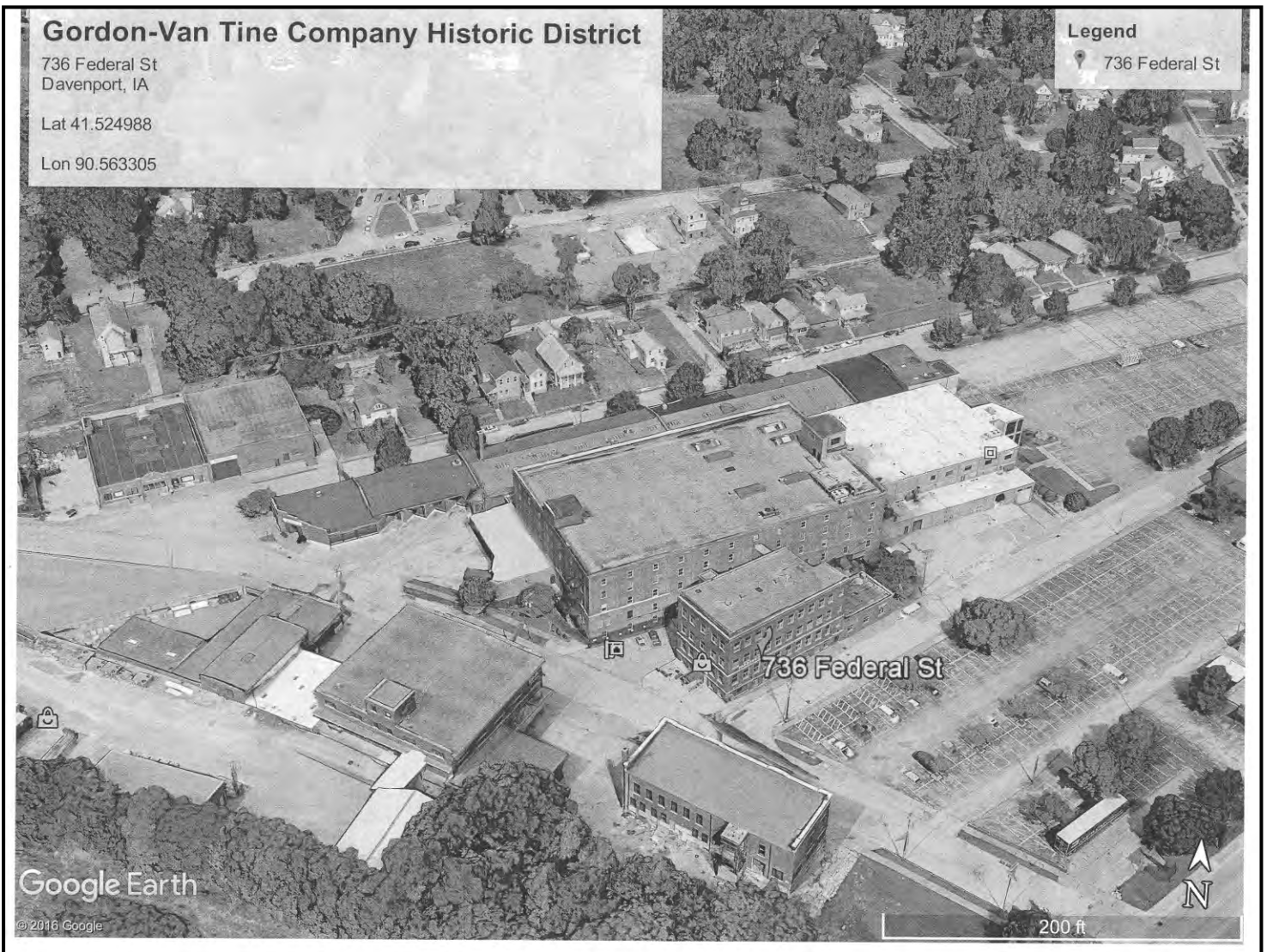


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**GORDON-VAN TINE COMPANY HISTORIC DISTRICT
SCOTT COUNTY, IA**

Section number Photos Page 64

Photographers: Rachel Finley, Marion Meginnis, Molly Myers Naumann

Date Photographed: Between August 2014 and April 2016 (each photo is dated)

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

	EXTERIOR	
0001	General view of Gordon-Van Tine Historic District to N from Federal near River Drive	8-18-14
0002	Bldg 1, W elevation (façade) and S elevation to N	8-27-15
0003	Bldg 1, detail of monogram atop right pilaster to NE	8-27-15
0004	Bldgs 1 & 3, S elevations along Swits Street, to W	8-27-15
0005	Bldg 2, W and S elevations, note vertical wood panels on first floor, to N	9-29-14
0006	Bldg 2, W elevation with five bay loading dock, to E	8-27-15
0007	Bldg 4, loading docks on S elevation, to N	8-10-15
0008	Bldg 4, N elevation along Charlotte, to E	5-12-15
0009	Bldg 4, E end N elevation, to SW	8-10-15
0010	E elevation of Historic District, L to R: Bldg 1, Bldg 2 (old & new), Bldg 4, to SW	8-10-15
0011	Bldg 2, original part on L, addition on R, to NW	7-9-15
0012	Bldg 1 on L, Bldg 3 hidden behind tree, Bldg 2 on R, to SW	8-27-15
0013	Bldg 3 in foreground, Bldg 1 behind, patio in foreground, to SW	7-7-15
0014	Bldg 2, S elevation of original section, new entrance at SE corner, to NW	8-10-15
	INTERIOR	
0015	Bldg 1, entrance into lobby from main door on W elevation, to NE	5-12-15
0016	Bldg 1, 1 st floor hall with elevator & oak staircase, to NW	5-12-15
0017	Bldg 1, 2 nd floor, hallway along north wall, to NE	5-12-15
0018	Bldg 1, 2 nd floor, office in SW corner to E	5-12-15
0019	Bldg 1, 2 nd floor, office in NW corner, oak wainscot found behind new wall	9-28-15
0020	Bldg 1, 3 rd floor hall to NE, note columns in hallway	5-12-15
0021	Bldg 1, 4 th floor skywalk connecting to Bldg 2, to NW	5-12-15
0022	Bldg 2, 1 st floor, entry at SW corner of bldg., to NW	2-13-15
0023	Bldg 2, 2 nd floor, freight door originally opening onto rail spur, to NW	5-12-15
0024	Bldg 2, 2 nd floor, originally the area with the rail spur, now enclosed to SW	5-12-15
0025	Bldg 2, 2 nd floor, hallway in front of freight elevator, to SW	8-18-14
0026	Bldg 2, 2 nd floor, fire door	5-12-15
0027	Bldg 2, 2 nd floor, open warehouse space, to NW	8-27-15
0028	Bldg 2, 5 th floor, open warehouse space to NW, note skylight	8-27-15
0029	Bldg 2, ramp connecting to Bldg 2 Addition	7-9-15
0030	Bldg 2 Addition, 1 st floor factory space	7-9-15
0031	Bldg 3, retail space and display area to NE	8-17-15
0032	Bldg 4, warehouse area to NE	4-15-16

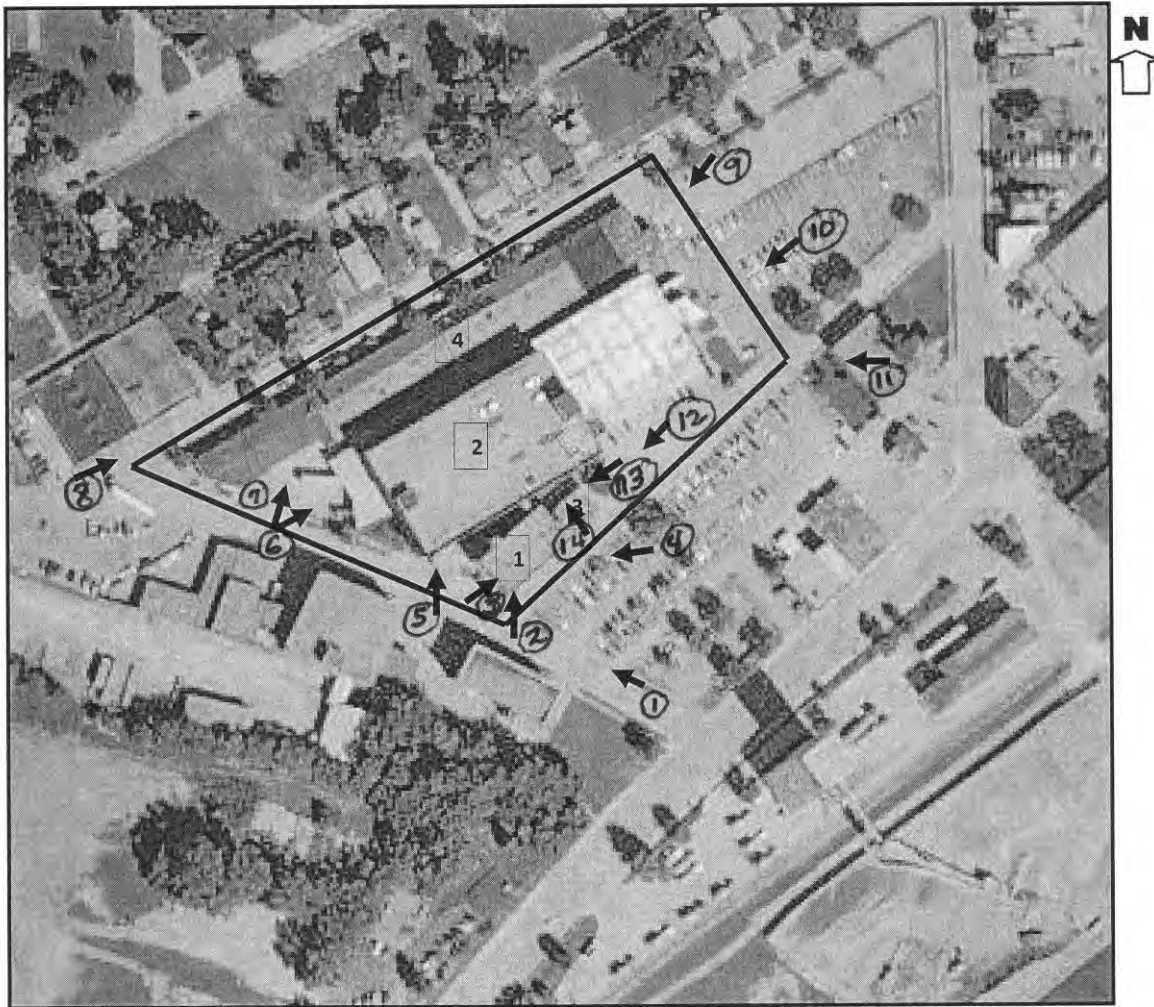
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Photo Key – Exterior



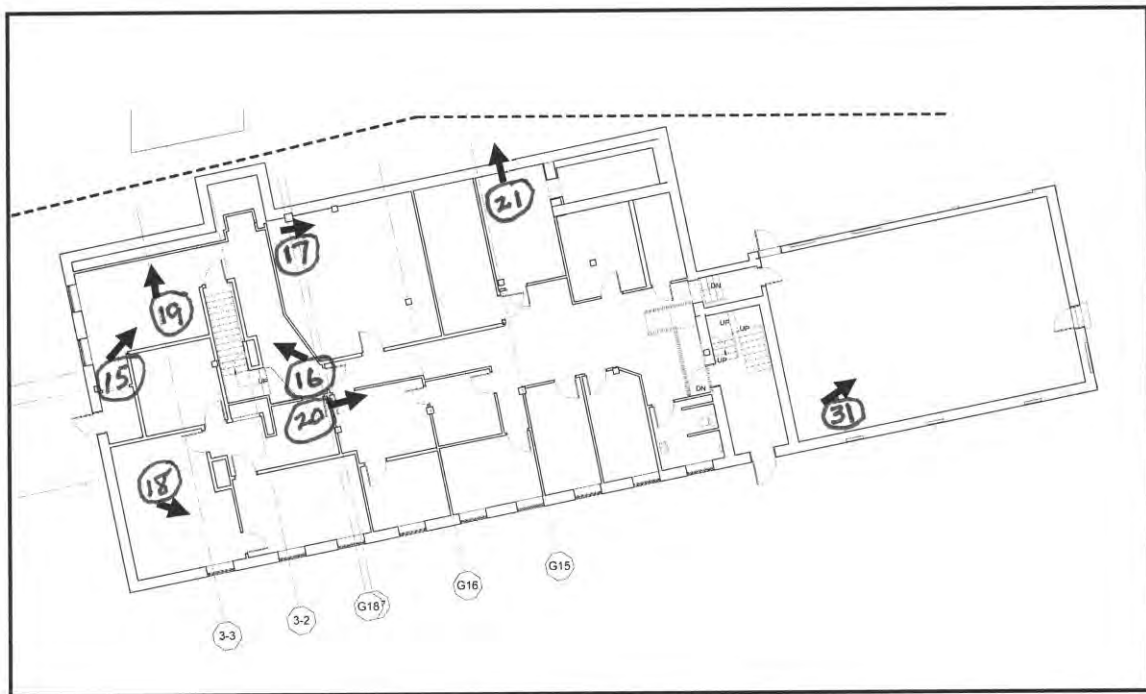
United States Department of the Interior
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Photo Key – Interior – Buildings 1 & 3



Interior – Building 4



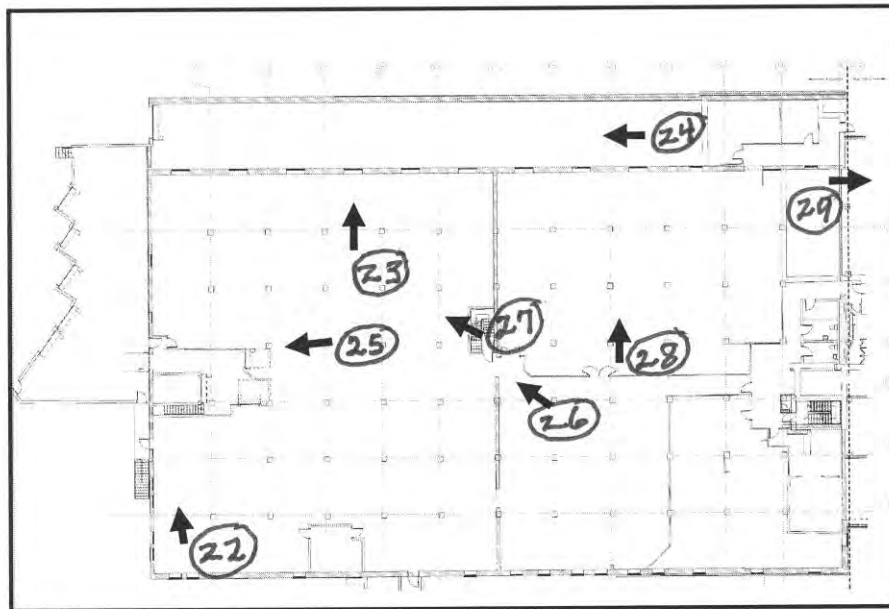
United States Department of the Interior
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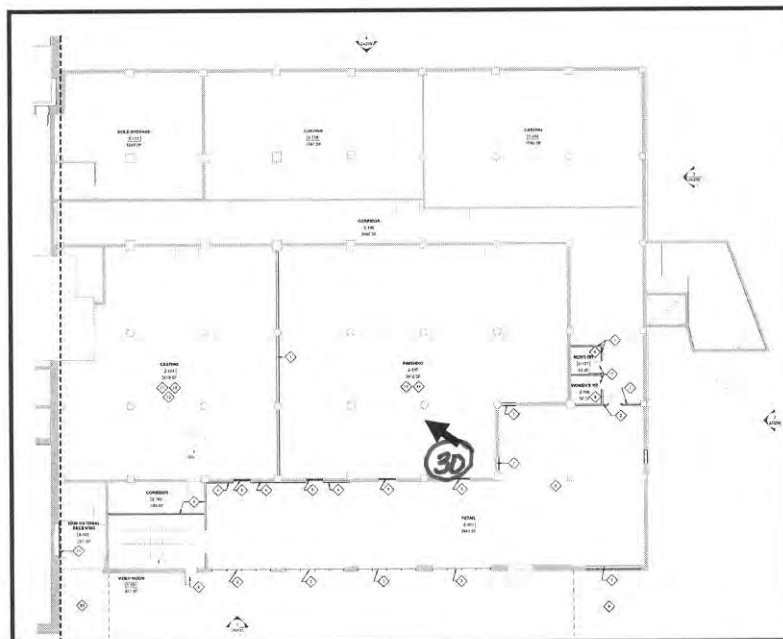
GORDON-VAN TINE COMPANY HISTORIC DISTRICT
SCOTT COUNTY, IA

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Photo Key – Interior – Building 2 – Original Section



Building 2 – 1965 Addition





HARBORVIEW

126 - 128 FEDERAL ST

HARBORVIEW

FEDERAL ST. 736
SWITS

176







HARBORVIEW

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Ryder

Republic
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NO SMOKING
NO ALCOHOL
NO DRUGS

NO SMOKING
NO ALCOHOL
NO DRUGS

736

SWITS ST ENTRANCE

HARBORV

NO
SMOK















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1234

EXIT



















GOLDEN A

Wash Hand Process

Please do not touch the equipment in this room.







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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: Date of Pending List: Date of 16th Day: Date of 45th Day: Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria

Reviewer Edson Beall Discipline Historian

Telephone _____ Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

MARY COWNIE, DIRECTOR
CHRIS KRAMER, DEPUTY DIRECTOR

TERRY E. BRANSTAD, GOVERNOR
KIM REYNOLDS, LT. GOVERNOR



IOWA
ARTS
BOUNCE

January 17, 2017

PRODUCE
IOWA

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief
National Register and National Historic Landmarks
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Fl.
Washington D.C. 20005

STATE HISTORICAL
SOCIETY OF IOWA

Dear Mr. Loether:

The following National Register nomination(s) from Iowa are enclosed for your review and listing if acceptable.

STATE HISTORICAL
MUSEUM OF IOWA

- **Gordon-Van Tine Company Historic District, 736 Federal Street and 737 Charlotte Street, Davenport, Scott County, Iowa**

STATE HISTORICAL
LIBRARY & ARCHIVES

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Elizabeth Foster".

STATE
HISTORIC
SITES

Elizabeth Foster
National Register Coordinator
State Historical Society of Iowa

STATE HISTORIC
PRESERVATION
OFFICE OF IOWA

IOWA
HISTORICAL
FOUNDATION