

56-1739



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 Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number 100-318 Fifth Street (even side 300 only) and cross streets [N/A] not for publication

city or town West Des Moines [N/A] vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Polk code 153 _____ zip code 50265

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] 21 Aug 2017

 Signature of certifying official/Title Date
 State Historical Society of Iowa

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

 State or Federal agency and bureau

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. [Signature] 10/11/2017
 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): _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply) **Category of Property** (Check only one box)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal
- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>52</u>	<u>17</u>	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	<u>1</u>	structures
_____	<u>1</u>	objects
<u>52</u>	<u>19</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

1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Commerce/Trade/Specialty Store
- Commerce/Trade/Financial Institution
- Commerce/Trade/Restaurant
- Domestic/Multiple dwelling
- Domestic/Single dwelling
- Industry/Processing/Extraction/manufacturing facility
- Health Care/Clinic
- Government/city hall

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Commerce/Trade/Specialty Store
- Commerce/Trade/Restaurant
- Domestic/Multiple dwelling
- Social/Civic
- Social/Meeting Hall
- Recreation and Culture/monument/marker
- Transportation/rail-related/train depot
- Street Furniture/object/gazebo

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Late Victorian, Italianate
- Late Victorian, Queen Anne
- Late 19th & 20th Century Revivals, Classical Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation Brick
- walls Brick
- roof Asphalt
- other _____

Narrative Description

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

See continuation sheets, Section 7 Page 5.

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)

Commerce
Community Planning & Development

Architecture

Period of Significance

1893-1967

Significant Dates

1893
1938

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Cross, Charles C.
Crow, Barney

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: # Main Street Valley Junction

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 11.94

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	[115]	[441061010]	[411343210]	2	[115]	[441061010]	[411343410]
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
3	[115]	[441121010]	[41610217310]	4	[115]	[441111210]	[4610216810]
							[] See continuation sheet

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 James E. Jacobsen

organization History Pays! Historic Preservation Consulting Firm date August 21, 2017

street & number 4411 Ingersoll Avenue telephone 515-274-3625

city or town Des Moines state IA zip code 50312-2415

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 Refer to attached list

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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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6. Function or Use Continued:

Historic Functions:

**Social: Meeting Hall
Recreation and Culture/Theater**

7. Narrative Description:

Architectural Classification, Continued:

Late 19th & 20th Century Revivals/Italian Renaissance
Late 19th & 20th Century Revivals/Tudor Revival
Modern Movements/Moderne
Modern Movements/Art Deco

Materials, Continued:

Foundation: Concrete
Walls: Wood/Weatherboard
Metal/Aluminum
Metal/Steel
Stucco
Concrete
Ceramic Tile
Terra Cotta
Stone
Roof: Synthetic
Rubber

Description:

The Valley Junction Commercial Historic District is the original downtown and administrative core of the burgeoning suburb of the City of West Des Moines. Located adjacent to the City of Des Moines, Iowa's capitol city, West Des Moines is one of a number of Iowa suburbs that are now that state's most populous cities. Valley Junction is bordered on the south by the Raccoon River and the floodplain between that river and Valley Junction contained the railroad and yards that were the reason for the town's founding. The commercial district is linear in form, consisting of three-block long Fifth Street and its adjacent cross-streets. Its nearly exclusive brick commercial buildings are mostly two stories high but there are shorter and taller exceptions. Several governmental buildings are included as are three frame residential buildings. While the majority of the commercial buildings are of a basic commercial design, the earliest buildings which predominate illustrate the Italianate, Classical Revival and Queen Anne styles. Intermediate buildings add examples of the Italian Renaissance, Art Deco and the Modernistic styles. The buildings are nearly all perimeter load-bearing brick designs with interior partition wall or post supports, with brick foundations. Most of the more substantial buildings have full basements, none of which have been determined to be of limestone construction, brick being the material of choice. The single-storefront buildings are clear span structures as are the corresponding sections of the larger blocks. The earlier buildings are visually unified by a finite palate of pressed brick colors, brick in lieu of metal cornices and the use of multiple rectangular recessed panels in their upper brickwork. Several larger and architecturally distinctive designs supplement the basic commercial cadence of the district. The district buildings today retain their overall design, their massing and their materials, while most upper-level windows and all original storefronts have been replaced. Most historic storefronts post-date World

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War II and consist of glassed aluminum frames. District historical integrity is defined by the largely unbroken massing of the original buildings and the visually readable commercial building mix that strongly represents the earliest years of district development as well as its selective infill and expansion through its period of significance.

District Description:

The commercial district was shaped by a number of geographical and man-made factors. Central to its history of frequent flooding was its placement to the east of Walnut Creek and north of the Raccoon River. The local topography rises to the north so the area was a natural catchment basin for drainage. The town fathers placed their new town virtually on top of the west boundary of Des Moines. Topographical realities and the presence of competing suburbs to the north meant that, with any expansion, the new town would grow west and its original downtown would be increasingly distant from that growth. Finally, West Des Moines, the successor to the original town, would redefine its point of center, but well past the district period of significance this original downtown would continue to serve as the West Des Moines downtown. Finally, Valley Junction was founded as a railroad town and the same geography that brought floods defined a narrow railroad right of way between the river and the townsite. A broader river terrace to the southwest provided grounds for a vast array of yards and shops. The new town site might well have been placed further west in proximity to those yards but instead the platters simply overlaid the new plat on the pre-existing village and railroad station location.

The district topography is flat, with southward drainage. Railroad tracks and Railroad Street border the district along its south end. The former railroad land to the south of the district is currently being redeveloped for residential, recreational and commercial/industrial uses.

The Valley Junction downtown is a compact linear commercial district, being three blocks in length with short extensions along two cross-streets, Maple and Elm streets. As a historic district, this one is very much self-defining, being completely composed of brick business buildings within its southern two-block core. The commercial building massing is contiguous save for four added pedestrian alleyways that are roughly centered in each of the half blocks to the south of Elm Street. These link back block parking areas and provide supplemental artistic and special events spaces. Building setbacks are uniform, being set a dozen feet back from street curbs. There are scattered frontage trees but these are small in scale. Ornamental planters are also small in scale and visually unobtrusive. A south end commemorative arch is the gateway to the district, a function that is underscored by the northward one-way traffic flow on Fifth Street. Most store buildings have lower level rear additions but by and large most buildings do not extend the full length of their lots and the city has acquired these open spaces for parking. Separate secondary buildings are also few in number.

The district includes only the southern two-thirds of the west side of the 300s block of Fifth Street, north of Elm Street. This boundary extension allowed for the inclusion of the former city hall and fire station at 318 Fifth Street. This inclusion required the inclusion of what were three frame residential buildings, two of which are non-contributing to the district. Save for this exception, all district buildings are either commercial or governmental. Also included, despite the presence of several non-contributing buildings, was the south portion of the east side of 100s block of Fifth Street. This inclusion allowed for the inclusion of the south gateway approach to the district, including its distinctive (but non-contributing) metal gateway arch.

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Figures 1,
2: District
location

(black rectangle, left) and district boundary (right)
(Iowa Geographic Map Server, 2016, annotated)

The blocks within the district are of unequal length and consequently of their resulting lot and building counts. The district buildings very uniformly conform to block or half-block cadences. Visually, as a result of these platting differences, the 100s block fronts read as being slightly longer. Another platting point of interest is the reservation of the east side of that same block, of the southernmost lots for depot grounds and a northward diversion of Railroad Avenue.

The district's buildings document the history of the Valley Junction downtown. Given that the town thrived and never suffered a devastating fire, the range of buildings trace the downtown process of building replacement and downtown expansion to the north, east and west along the two cross streets. Built up too late for pressed tin cornices, the dominant commercial architectural language of the district is defined by corbelled brick cornices, parapet-level ornamental blank recessed panels, panel and pilaster facade combinations and the use of a limited though varied range of brick colors. The earlier buildings were possibly designed and built by the same talents based on the rhyme of the building fronts.

The other visually dominant exceptional presence is that of very substantial two and three-story blocks, some notable fraternal and patriotic edifices, three substantial bank buildings, and one combination hotel/theater building and a 1953 city hall/fire station. A good number of the larger business blocks contain two or more storefronts. As is

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the case with most downtowns, corner lots are the locations for the largest and or most elaborate commercial designs. Valley Junction's downtown delivers on this tradition and as one ventures northward, corner locations were opportunities to express later-date modern styles, if only in a single-story massing.

Entering the district at its south end, single-story store buildings are dominant, particularly to the east side of the street. Most narrow two-story buildings have rear stair access but the larger blocks share a front stair entrance. A limited range of facade brick colors is a key distinguishing visual factor and denotes increment blocks that are of uniform design apart from brick color (104-106, 112-114, 201-203, 208-210, 209-211 Fifth Street). This factor would likely be even more noticeable if some buildings had not been painted. The main brick color palate includes reddish, blonde, golden, gray, red-purple and a dark brown-black hue. Fifth Street veneer colors tend to vary from secondary facades on side streets. The best examples are 143-145 Fifth Street (blonde-gold contrast) and 136 Fifth Street (gray-red contrast).

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housed the original city hall/fire station building (137 Fifth Street). And the Wegener Block to the south, the architectural pride of the downtown, was also just north of the city hall and south of Maple Street.

The north side of Maple Street, to the east is the one cross-street example where two-story store buildings cluster. North of Maple Street on Fifth Street the overall architectural visual effect is more modern, which is to say 1925-40 in feeling. The best district Modernistic/Art Deco examples book-end the west side of the 200 block (200, 234) and single-story storefronts are dominant on the north side of Maple Street to the west and its south side to the east. They pepper the east and west sides of the 200 block, to the south to the west and to the north to the east. Two east side two-story buildings have post-World II facades (205, 207 Fifth Street), two bank buildings have Classical Revival style facades (228, 219 Fifth Street) and the American Legion Building has a triple-bay stone Modernistic style design (217 Fifth Street). Elm Street store buildings are all single-story that date from 1939 through the middle 1950's. Other buildings of interest are the downtown's only surviving historic service station (200 Fourth Street) and its largest and best preserved automotive garage (300 Fourth Street).

The district buildings trace each period of district growth with numerous good examples of each period of growth. Still modernization efforts made on older buildings within the district period of significance also visually interpret those same periods of growth. A notable absence is almost any ornamental storefront cast ironwork. While some of this material is simply not visible little of this structural material is seen in historic images. Clear span storefront bays are readily covered by a beam and several beam and rosette examples are to be found (100-02, 106, 136 and 209 Fifth Street). Round steel columns flanking entrances are more commonplace. Steel plates support many transom or storefront caps. Storefronts largely represent 1950s+ installations of aluminum framed systems with covering of transom levels for use as signage space. More recent Main Street related storefronts, employing a larger scale framing in wood or steel and commonly painted black, also account for numerous frontages. Newer buildings post-dating the district period of significance number just three; 110 (1970), 232 (1988) and 308 (210) Fifth Street.

Building Ages and Styles:

The oldest buildings number 19 (100-02, 114, 116, 118, 120, 122, 130, 137, 201, 203, 205 (altered), 206, 207, 209, 214, 216-18, 221, 304 (residence) Fifth Street; 409 Maple Street-this count includes an engulfed residence at 304 Fifth, built in 1900) and date to 1893-1901. Six of these are double storefronts, four of which occur in two-story plans. Ten are two-story buildings. Unpainted brick exteriors are of a reddish, dark brown, purplish and a blonde color range. There are three clusters of heightened construction activity, these being 1893-94 (5 buildings), 1896-98 (6 buildings) and 1900-01 (8 buildings). What typifies the majority of these buildings is the use of a recessed upper wall panel or panels that are framed by pilasters and corbelled brick lines below and above. The most ornate example is 114 Fifth Street, built in a purplish brick in 1900. Also common is the use of multiple rectangular recessed plain brick panels across the parapet base. Highly ornamented brick parapet fronts substitute for the absence of any pressed metal cornices. A typical two-story single storefront example is 219 Fifth Street which is significant for its being the first of two bank buildings to jump northward, going up between frame residences close to Elm Street. A second bank building (230 Fifth Street, completely remodeled in 1920) did the same on the opposite side of Fifth Street in 1901. Four examples might loosely be classed as Italianate style designs (120, 201, 216-18 Fifth Street and 409 Maple Street). Queen Anne examples are 100-02 and 206 Fifth Street, both of which have lost their upper bay windows. Classical Revival style examples are 137 and 203 Fifth Street. The latter two examples employ a quoin effect and the 137 Fifth Street façade has a distinctive Greek key patterned belt course as a parapet base. The 203

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Fifth Street example is the earliest example of a near-corner design that wraps around a pre-existing building to present facades onto two streets. Pediments are rare occurrences in the district but 137 Fifth, the city hall, has a square-cut date stone as does 203 Fifth Street. The Odd Fellows block has a name stone centered in its parapet front. The wonder of these earliest buildings was that their construction coincided with a national depression.

Because railroad shop expansion continued through the years 1902-09 the district might have more than the 7 surviving buildings (104, 112, 124, 128, 132-34, 136, 224-26 Fifth Street) that date to those years. All but one of these buildings were built mostly on the north end the west side of the 100s block. All of these buildings were built 1904-07, nicely correlating with the final major railroad relocations and investments. All but one of these buildings was two-story and all but one (132-34 Fifth which was a triple storefront) were single storefronts. All had purplish or dark brown colored brickwork. All employed a combination of upper wall recessed panels with flanking pilasters and elaborate brick parapets and cornices. Two examples are late Queen Anne in style and have one or two bays set into single-plane upper brick fronts (132-34, 136 Fifth Street). The exception within this group was the two-story double storefront block that was built in 1905 at 224-26 Fifth. Its broad upper facade was a plane wall plane, a modern hint, with a broad parapet that was ornamented with teardrop-like shallow elongated brackets.

National agricultural prosperity between 1897 and the end of World War I, now retrospectively termed the "Golden age of agriculture," coincided with most of the period of initial district expansion. With the district this economic boom period induced new commercial building construction beginning with the year 1911. Six buildings (106, 138, 143-45, 204, 211, 312 Fifth Street, the last listed being a former residence) date to 1911-15 and all but one date to 1913-15. Three buildings represented the continuing trend of building up the west side of the 100 block, with two of the three being on the north end of that block. Brick colors were blonde, light and dark brown or purple. Two buildings were simply duplicates and doublings of earlier ones. 106 Fifth was a single-story garage front. 211 Fifth was two stories high with inset wall/window panels and an ornate parapet, a distinction being a shallow square cut pediment. 204 Fifth was the only single-story double storefront built to date, a precursor of the modern store type. Finally, the district's first modern commercial design, a two-story Classical Revival influenced style corner building, was built at 143-45 Fifth. It was so modern that the local newspaper actually castigated its appearance. Then immediately across the street east arose the district's most substantial edifice, the three-story Wegener block. It combined a hotel and movie house and its upper ornament generally reprised the district template of recessed wall/window panels but with more elaborate brick tracery and belt courses. It too is perhaps best classed as Classical Revival influenced in its style.

Commercial district construction between the world wars was bi-nodal with 9 buildings (202, 219, 220-22, 228, 230 (altered) Fifth Street, 501-07, 509-13 Elm Street, 201, 300 Fourth Street) going up on the heels of the war, 1919-27. Two of these were the warring north-end banks, built or re-built facing each other at 219 and 228 Fifth Street. Both two-story buildings employed Classical Revival influenced designs, the former in blazing white terra cotta, the latter in white ceramic brick. The third example, another single-story storefront (230 Fifth Street) was later eclipsed by a 1964 bank extension. The final example, an auto garage (300 Fourth Street) was built to the east of the downtown in 1923. The other five examples date from 1924-27. Each is notable in its own right. The service station at 201 Fourth Street was built in 1927 and is a rare surviving example of a simple and early type. 202 Fifth was the first single-story modern store design with an unelaborated upper front laid up using polychrome brick. 220-222 Fifth Street was the district's second three-story edifice in the form of the Ashworth Masonic Hall. Its raised attic or hall level wasn't a true third floor and at any rate it was lost in the rebuilding after a 1946 fire. It was designed in the

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Renaissance Revival style. Its construction locked in the evolving architectural dominance of the 200 block of Fifth and its west side in particular. The other two examples (501-05-07 and 509-11-13 Elm Street) were purely modern, being in the form of single-story multi-storefront. Even the corner or east end building ignored Fifth Street and the six storefronts all fronted onto Elm Street, forming what was at the time the northern terminus of the downtown. The west section was built almost immediately after the east one, ca.1924-25.

The second inter-war era for construction was 1932-42 and 7 buildings (111-13, 123-25, 225, 234 Fifth Street; 403-05 (altered), 408, 411-13 Maple Street) date to this period. Starting in 1937 infill buildings were built on the east side of the 100 block of Fifth Street. 123 Fifth is a single story double storefront that date to ca.1937 (its facade is covered over). 111-13 Fifth was an industrial amalgam located at the south end of the district. 408 Maple was a concrete block meat locker building (1938). Most prominent and modern Vandenburg's Art Deco style drug store (234 Fifth, 1939) with its prominent corner location on Elm Street. The building at 225 Fifth was an Art Deco style medical clinic, the first building type in the district. It had structural glass window infill and curved entry walls, all set into a low-profile design with no parapet cap at all. A single-story double storefront at 411-13 Maple (1937) represented a conversion of a frame warehouse to commercial use on a developing cross-street. 111 Fifth was the last to be built of this group, a fire forcing the need to rebuild.

The final period of district up-building followed World War II, 1946-57 with the construction of 14 new buildings (202 Fourth (altered), 115-17, 127, 131-35, 200, 208, 210, 213-15, 217, 227, 233-35, 318 Fifth Street; 400-02, 513-21 Maple Street). Like the wartime buildings these tended to be of concrete block construction due to building materials restrictions. Given that the west side of Fifth Street was by this time substantially built up, all but 2 of these new buildings were built on the east side of Fifth Street. Those on the 100s block replaced frame buildings while those in the 200 replaced frame store buildings or houses. Two new buildings represented the continuing commercialization of Maple Street, those one was a replacement for a burned building. The pace of construction was low level yet constant with just about a new building going up each year. All but three of these buildings were low-profile multiple storefront modern designs mostly without parapets. The two exceptions to the latter point were a chain store at 213-15 and 131-35 Fifth Street. Brick colors were red or blonde. Several examples were incremental expansions, being built in iterations and the two most notable ones combined angled individual storefronts with triple-storefronts (111 built in 1942 and doubled with 113 in 1946, 131-35 and 233-35 Fifth Street). Two industrial buildings were of concrete block construction and were built on the lower east side of Fifth or on Maple Street west of the downtown (127 Fifth and 513-21 Maple streets). Two other newer buildings were notable. The new city hall/library/fire station (318 Fifth Street) kept the growing's suburb's administrative heart downtown but had to be built in the 300 block. It embodied a striking Modern design with an angled front wall. Seward's Pharmacy (200 Fifth Street, 1946) was a Modernistic design with a curved corner wall and an entry with aluminum canopy and storefront. This was the final key corner location to be built up, replacing a landmark frame building. It nicely book-ended Vandenburg's Art Deco pharmacy located on the south end of the same block. It replaced a frame store building that fronted east on to Fifth and it retained that street address in contrast to its counterpart at 501 Elm Street. Modernistic style examples are 200, 225 and 234 Fifth Street. Modern designs are 230 and 318 Fifth Street.

There are 14 non-contributing buildings. Those post-dating the district period of significance number three (110, 232 and 308 Fifth Street). One building has a wood cladding covering with a known concrete block exterior that is reversible (509-13 Maple Street). One frame residence was not in commercial usage and adapted to that

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purpose during the district period of significance (304 Fifth Street). Two buildings with altered storefronts (106, 214 Fifth Street) are likely reversible while that at 112-13 Fifth Street requires further investigation. Five buildings or storefronts have been altered in a non-reversible manner (123, 128, 130, 227 Fifth Street and 208 4th Street and 403-05 Maple Street).

Just two early buildings (205, 207 Fifth Street) had their upper facades modernized completely during the 1950s but both are deemed to be contributing given that these transformations interpret changing commercial architectural and marketing tastes and were done within the period of significance. The building at 230 Fifth Street was re-fronted as a modern style bank addition in 1964 and similarly interprets successful bank growth and is contributing. Four buildings have the equivalent of slipcovers on portions of their buildings. Two of these involve simple metal or wood claddings on their oversized parapet fronts (131-35 and 213 Fifth Street). The bank building at 219 Fifth Street has an awning over its parapet front but the original survives beneath it. The building at 523-29 Maple Street is a concrete block multi-storefront building that has wood cladding over its storefront.

District Historical Integrity Evaluation:

The district retains a good level of historical integrity. Substantive alterations entail upper level window replacements, covered transoms and storefront alterations.

Integrity of location is vested in its relationship to the vacated railroad grounds to the south, its market proximity to Des Moines and its now protected proximity to its floodplain. The commercial core remains concentrated within the district. The commercial function of the district strongly contrasts today with the more traditional retail and service offerings of nearby strip-malls and arterial commercial locations. Just one building, the railroad depot is not in its original location (save for some relocated frame buildings that are now rear extensions of newer buildings).

Integrity of design is measured by its retention of its relatively full range of historic commercial architecture and its compelling presence of substantial brick store buildings. It is further attested to by the dominance of localized facade ornamentation, brick colors and post-war storefronts. Facades necessarily bear the burden of this integrity test and these are compromised by upper level window size reduction, window infill, reflective glass, or storefront replacements. A few slip screens cover storefronts but mostly occur on the transom level of storefronts. Parapets are almost uniformly intact given that they were of corbelled brick originally. The vast majority of district buildings are deemed to be contributing on the basis of their intact ornamental brick work, fenestration pattern, and sympathetic storefront lines that date to within the period of significance.

Integrity of setting is conveyed by the concentration of brick commercial buildings that are centrally positioned relative to the surrounding (on three sides) residential neighborhood that is also associated with the origin of Valley Junction. Apart from added parking and alleyways to those parking areas to the east and west, the downtown remains distinctly different from its residential surroundings. Streetscapes are open and visible with just a handful of small-scale trees in the sidewalks. Substantial and/or more ornate corner buildings survive and frame each block front and the key intersections. Continued commercial use with no empty storefronts maintains the historical function of the district.

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Integrity of workmanship is best expressed by the exterior brickwork of the upper building facades and in the postwar storefronts. The distinctive district brickwork specialty is the use of rows of rectangular recessed brick panels, set beneath the parapet level, or upper storefront panels that frame the windows, often in combination with end wall pilasters. Brick color also plays a key role in building design and workmanship with virtually every major building deviating from the normative red brick color to show off. Art Deco and modernistic styles employ curved walls, structural glass some curved walls and these key attributes survive. Known interior features include vaults and pressed tin ceilings.

Integrity of feeling is reflected in the architectural evolution that continues to express how the downtown expanded and how its earliest buildings were modified or replaced post-construction. The dominance of pre-World War I buildings with the overlay of architecturally more prominent corner store buildings calls to mind the intensity of historical era downtowns with their combination of ground level retail and upper level residences and public halls.

Integrity of association is vested in the certainty that historical figures, if resurrected, could readily locate the downtown and the specific buildings with which they were associated back in time. With one exception, all of the bars remain in the 100s block of Fifth Street. Two hotels, both public buildings and all of the bank buildings remain extant and recognizable. The movie house, while long out of operation, still retains its landmark marquee. The railroad still passes to the south of the downtown. The only other major natural event, that of flooding, is thankfully now quelled by protective levees. The district buildings collectively represent the associated architectural and historical contexts that make the whole significant.

Future Plans For The District:

Downtown Valley Junction has long promoted itself as being "historic" and achieving listed district National Register of Historic Places status will further bolster this claim. The original downtown has maintained its cachet as the distinctive point of origin for Des Moines' most successful suburban neighbor. As the city redefined herself in terms of name, scale and westward expansion, Valley Junction has struggled to retain both its historical persona as well as to retain her rightful share of community resources and attention. It is hoped that gaining National Register recognition, and in conjunction with the development of a new master plan for the city, that this ongoing effort to maintain broader community respect will be enhanced. On a more pragmatic level, it is anticipated that National Register status will make available a range of historic preservation and related incentive programs to district property owners.

Building Descriptions, Evaluations and Histories:

201 Fourth Street, Spear's Service Station, 1925:
Evaluation: This is a contributing building

History: The E. L. Royer Construction Company gained built this service station in association with the

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Alterations: The original building gained an east end 15 feet by 27 feet concrete block addition prior to 1937. The service area has been enclosed but not so as to obscure the original design. The brickwork has been painted since at least 1954

Description: This utilitarian brick hip roof filling station consists of a brick office/canopy (14 feet by 22 feet) that fronts west onto 4th Street, and tile grease house wing that has parapet walls on three sides, and an overhead door on the south end.

Standard Oil Company. J. Floyd Spear was the proprietor by 1927 through 1954 (*Express*, April 20, 1954). Sammon's Standard Service (1960) and Bob's Standard Service (1965) followed and it was vacant as of 1968.



Figure 4: Building looking northeast (Jacobsen, 2017)

202 Fourth Street, Itlis Lumberyard Lumber Shed, 1953:

Evaluation: Non-contributing due to the enclosure of sidewalls and residing. See 403-05 Maple Street

Alterations: Converted into apartments recently.

Description: This was a two-story gable roof open-sided lumber shed.

History: See 403-05 Maple Street.



Figure 5: Building looking northwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

300 Fourth Street, Valley Auto Company/Service, 1923:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building. The south windows retain their transoms and some windows, while shortened, have recessed brick panels that show the original window void.

Alterations: Then north addition is metal clad on its north wall and west windows have been infilled. The footprint was doubled to the north in 1939. The building brickwork was painted after 1947.

Description: This is a double-vaulted roof brick and concrete block garage building that measures 100 feet by 100 feet. It has pedimented east/west end walls.

History: Elmer D. Brunn (1876-1957) and William Stewart (1869-?) were railroad engineers who founded the Valley Auto Company in 1916 and expanded to this site in 1923, building this building and remained here until 1968 (*The American Contractor*, March 18, 1916; *Express*, August 18, 1918). Contractor Glenn McAvoy built a 50 feet by 65 feet addition on Lot 8 to the north that displaced a bungalow in 1939 (*Express*, December 7, 1939). Ray D. Spencer (1889-1955) purchased the company in 1937.

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The north addition is concrete block. The core building was likely veneered with a wire-cut polychrome brick, now painted



Figure 6: Building looking northwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

100-101 Fifth Street, steel gateway, new:

Evaluation: This is a non-contributing object but celebrates the “railroad or south gateway” into the district.

Alterations: Not applicable

Description: Commemorative steel gateway arch on brick piers.

History: Not applicable



Figure 7: Structure looking northwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

100-02 Fifth Street-Seyfert Block/St. Joe Hotel, 1900:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: Four bay windows have been removed. A 1984 fire caused a rebuilding of the apartments. The present storefront and removal of the bay windows is associated with the post office occupancy. A new south wood stairway is now being built.

History: Harry L. Seyfert built the building in 1900 (*Express*, February 23, April 27, 1900). The hotel function became a rooming house in 1942. The *Leader Magazine* was a tenant 1955-60 and a novel (Tom Duncan's Gus The Great) they published featured the building and resulted in a local renaming of the block. The post office

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Description: This is a late Queen Anne style two-story painted brick hotel with double front stores. Ornament includes bracketed parapet base on two fronts, projecting south chimney, sealed oriel windows both floors south wall, steel beam and brick columns in the storefront. The core measures 48 feet by 105 feet.

relocated here in 1952 and the present building exterior is the remodeled building altered for that purpose. The Tamarack Apartments (8 units) replaced the hotel by 1968. Other businesses included billiard halls, restaurants, beverage companies and most notably the post office, 1955-63. Two key clubs, the El Rio and Warriors were here 1940-49.



Figure : 1904 view 100-102 Fifth Street, looking northwest, interurban station at lower right (Valley Junction *Express*, September 16, 1904)



Figure 8: Building looking northwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

104 Fifth Street, Harry L. Seyfert Building, 1904:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: Permits indicate remodelings in 1970 and 1976. A frame rear garage addition extends to the alley and covers both 104-06 Fifth.

Description:

This is a single-story red brick storefront (the core measures 19 feet by 96 feet). The lower range of the boomtown front is ornamented with three recessed rectangular panels set horizontally. The parapet base is corbelled outward. The right-hand angled entry and storefront predate World War II. The interior retains a plaster ceiling above a drop ceiling.

History: Harry L. Seyfert built this building to house his pool hall. In later years it housed a barber shop and a contractor's office and yard. With the completion of 106 Fifth Street to the immediate north it housed auto garages, a tire company and the Western Silo Mfg. (1937-65), manufacturer of ready-built garages and farm buildings. Next came one of the first antique stores, Americana Gift Bazaar (1968).

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Figure 9: 104-06 Fifth Street, 1957 (*West Des Moines Express*, June 13, 1957)



Figure 10: Building looking southwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

106 Fifth Street, Freel Auto Service Garage, 1915:

Evaluation: This building is counted separately and not as an addition to 104 Fifth Street due to its garage front conversion. It is a non-contributing building because of the modern garage door alteration.

Alterations: Permits show remodelings of systems in 1972-76.

Description: This is a single-story red brick storefront (the core measures 19 feet by 96 feet). The upper facade treatment largely matches that of 104 Fifth Street save to the slightly taller recessed panels and the absence of a parapet base treatment. This storefront retains its steel beam with rosettes but the storefront with its modern garage door replacement is post-1968. The rear addition is of tile construction.

History: Harry L. Seyfert built an addition to 104 Fifth in April 1915 (*Express* April 22, 1915). Carey Freel acquired the property in late March 1919 and to house his new auto that sold Chevrolet automobiles. After this building was finished it shared tenants with 104 Fifth (*Des Moines Western World*, November 27, 1919; *Express*, March 29 1919).



Figure 11: Building looking west (Jacobsen, 2017)

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110 Fifth Street, Antiques Mall, 1957, 1970:

Evaluation: This is a non-contributing building.

Alterations: This open shed was simply walled in with a stud wall and metal panel cover. The unified rear addition, covered with board & batten and painted purple, covers the backs of 104-110 Fifth.

Description: This single story shed roof double front frame building is a metal wall cladding of what was an open storage shed built by the Western Silo Co.

History: Western Silo Co built an open sided storage shed.



Figure 12: Building looking northwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

111-13 Fifth Street, Tuttle Coal Company, 1945, 1959, 1984:

Evaluation: Non-contributing due to alterations.

Alterations: The building was enlarged to the south in 1959. The façade was remodeled substantially since 1974. The rear portions of the buildings have been clad with vertical boards further obscuring historic features.

Description: The core plan measures 40 feet by 98 feet.

History: Clyde Tuttle built the original building to house his coal company (*Express*, September 13, 1945). Later tenants were a concrete block firm and a plumbing company.



Figure 14: South part of the building looking northeast (Jacobsen, 2017)



Figure 13: North part of the building looking northeast (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

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112 Fifth Street, Ashworth Building, 1907:

Evaluation: The window change is apparent and the storefront is faux historic, but the scale and brickwork make this a marginally contributing building.

Alterations: Monolithic glass has replaced the 2/2 windows. The last historic storefront had a centered angled recessed entry, two-tone tile covering and higher tavern side windows. A recent garage, deck and stair system are at the back of the building.

Description: This is a two-story dark brown brick single storefront with a core that measures 25 feet by 42 feet. A rear addition (pre-1920), also two stories, adds 40 feet to its depth. The upper facade features unusual vertical recessed brick panels on either side of the two second story windows. Two horizontal rectangular panels define the parapet base and are in line with the two lower window-panel combinations. There is south wall fenestration.

History: The Ashworth brothers built this building in the fall of 1907 (*Express*, September 26, 1907). Subsequent tenants were a barber shop, several cafes and it was a tavern from ca. 1937 past the district period of significance.



Figure 15: Building looking northwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

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114 Fifth Street, Callibreath Building, 1899:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: The ground floor was remodeled for industrial use in 1948.

Description: This two-story purple-red brick single storefront closely resembles the façade brick ornamentation of 112 Fifth Street and matches the brick color on 104-106 Fifth Street. As with 112, pilasters formed by the use of recessed panels divide the three upper windows into half-bays and very narrow vertical recessed panels flank each window opening. Above, three recessed panels align with the half-bays and form the parapet base. The two-story core measures 25 feet by 67 feet while a one-story concrete block addition (pre-1920) adds 78 feet to the plan depth. The storefront pre-dates 1968 and has a left-hand upstairs entry. The transom is covered but intact structural elements include round a steel column and probable transom beams and glass.

History: The Ashworth Brothers acquired this half lot in late 1899 and put an entire new facade on the existing Callibreath Building (*Express*, January 5, 1899). Early tenants were a series of restaurants and cafes. The Des Moines Box Mfg. Co was upstairs, 1922-19. The Bodenstein Mfg. Co, a metal fabricator, was established in early May 1946 and occupied the ground floor (*Express*, January 9, 1947; July 15, 1948).



Figure 16: Building looking northwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

115-17 Fifth Street, Iowa State Liquor Store, 1957:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: The existing storefront plan dates to October 1959 (permit).

Description: This is a later single-story double storefront veneered in a blonde-gold colored brick. The core measures 50 feet by 109 feet. The storefronts are mirror imaged and reversed with book end corner entrances, intervening elevated rectangular windows and a substantial blank wall segment. Both storefronts now have fixed canvas awnings.

History: Clyde Tuttle built this concrete block building to house the Iowa State Liquor Store #44 which occupied it as of 1957-68.



Figure 17: Building looking northeast (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

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116 Fifth Street, Boyd's Building, 1894:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: The 1968 storefront has gained a fixed black canvas awning and wooden door with wooden screen door. Contractor Greg Arganbright built a \$55,000 800 square feet brick addition in 2000 (permit dated May 23, 2000).

Description: This is a very plain light brown brick single-story building. A wood cornice, certainly of recent vintage, copies one present as of 1968 and this caps a fixed awning that covers the transom front. The parapet front is low-cut and lacks ornamentation apart from a tile coping. The storefront has a right-hand side entry with transom and the storefront was present as it as of 1968. The transom area structural elements likely survive. The core building 17 feet by 53 feet. The rear addition, of varied length, adds 66 feet to the depth.

History: Thomas Boyd started construction of this building in early June 1894. The narrow storefront was split in early (*Express*, April 12, May 24, 25, 1894). Tenants included barber shops, restaurants, a produce station, art studio and plumbing shop.



Figure 18: Building looking southwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

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118 Fifth Street, Boyd building, 1894:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: The current brick storefront is present behind the transom level clapboard covering. An aluminum double door opening as of 1968 has been downsized to a single door. Permits include a walk-in cooler (fall 1959), the repair of unspecified fire damage in mid-1965, the repair of the building front in April 1977, plumbing work in 1983, electrical and heating work in 1985 and a storefront alteration in April 1985.

Description: This one-story painted brick single story building largely matches its south counterpart. While unelaborated, its upper front brickwork is framed by slightly projecting stack bond rowlocks along the inner sidewalls. A deeper angled wooden cornice forms the parapet base and a brick signage area is similarly framed at each end by an identical bricked feature. A second wooden cornice caps the storefront and there is no transom, that area now being covered by the signage area above. The storefront entry is centered with flanking brick columns and this storefront was present as of 1968. A frame gable roof rear addition extends the plan to 89 feet, the width being 16 feet.

History: Tenant firms included a barber shop, saloon, tailor shop, confectionery, cigar factory and the then a series of restaurants.



Figure 19: Building looking west (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

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120 Fifth Street, Boyd's Block, pre-1894 (north half), 1894 (south half):

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: The building gained a new front in 1919 (*Express*, November 20, 1919). Awnings have been added and doors replaced. Permits indicate systems upgrades (1976-77), a remodel by Superior Sales (1977) and the interior was heavily fire damaged in 1983. A one story shed roof rear wing, 24 feet in depth, is of recent date. The entire roof was removed by high winds ca.1996.

Description: This is a double storefront two-story light brown colored brick building. The storefronts are of unequal width, the south front having three, the north four upper windows. Pilasters divide the two fronts. The narrow window scale indicates Italianate style influences. These feature soldier brick semi-circular arches and stone sills. The parapet is ornate with a band of recessed squares that surmount a complex corbelled base. The upstairs front entry is centered on the plan and accounts for the uneven split in the facade layout. The core plan measures 35 feet by 44 feet. Early 1/1 windows survive and the storefront with twin angled centered entries matches the dimensions as they were in 1968. Round steel columns (1919) survive and it is more than likely that transom components also remain.

History: Owner Thomas Boyd acquired this lot in mid-1894 and doubled his "block" to the south adding the south portion (*Express*, October 26, 1894). The Glas family owned the building 1925-54 and operated a cigar factory, confectionery and a beverage shop over those years. Other tenants were a laundry, men's clothing store, barber shops, cafes, taverns and an auto repair



Figures 20-21: North part of the building looking northwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

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122 Fifth Street, Mary E. Moore Building, 1893:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building despite window changes that are reversible.

Alterations: The building was completely remodeled by contractor Barney Crow in 1954, with two modern upstairs apartments and a new storefront (*Express*, April 1, 1954). The upper windows have been replaced by monolithic glass infills and reduced panel surrounds. The present storefront has removed a stucco transom covering present as of 1968 and a faux historic storefront replaces an aluminum and glass one of that date. A brick kick plate (present 1968) survives. The rear addition is recent in date.

Description: This two-story double storefront block is built of darker brown brick, now painted a dark green. The upper facade is locally unusual in the district in that it is not sub-divided by pilasters nor is it ornamented apart from the use of rowlock caps on its semi-circular upper windows and a corbelled parapet base. The parapet front echoes that of 120 Fifth Street to the south with the use of a band of recessed squares as adornment. It also remains a single storefront with an angled centered and recessed entry. The upstairs entry is at the left. The core measures 31 feet by 60 feet. An open roofed patio and single-story rear addition extend the plan depth by 36 feet.

History: Mary E. Moore built this building. Sereno S. Farrington's Cash Fair Store was here in 1897. The building tenants included variety stores and the post office was in the south half (1894-99) (*Express*, September 28, 1894, February 19, 1897). Moses Jacobson owned the building until 1953) and his long-surviving clothing store occupied this building 1895-96 and 1917-35, being used as the firm's warehouse until 1954.



Figure 22: Building looking northwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

125 (123) Fifth Street, garage, pre-1937:

Evaluation: This is a non-contributing.

Alterations: Permits note a remodel in 1981, an exterior remodel in 1982-83 and added a canvas awning (1983). A wood-covered facade covers what was originally a single double storefront, now divided.

Description: This is a single-story concrete block garage building. The core measures 32 feet by 60 feet and there is a south end rear concrete block wing (16 feet by 14 feet) that is original to the building.

History: The construction date is not documented but it likely dates to 1928 when the Ashworth brothers purchased the south half of the parcel in late 1928. An unidentified auto repair company occupied this concrete block garage as of 1937.



Figure 23: Building looking northeast (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

124 Fifth Street, Ashworth Building, 1907:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: An aluminum frame storefront is now faced with wood and a stucco covered transom area has been reopened. Permits note alterations (1963, 1965) and an exterior remodel (1980). The windows (1/1) are replacements in kind.

Description: This is a two-story marginally late Queen Anne style design, executed with a purple-brown brick. A single storefront plan (25 feet by 52 feet), it is unusual in the district for its single close-cut offset upper bay window. Also unusual to the district is the use of wrap-around raised brick to flank the sides and cap of the bay and to extend the semi-circular arch on the left-hand upper window. The parapet treatment is also noteworthy, being shallow in height and having a pointed bracket base, with a band of single brick recessions across its front. This pattern is found on other brick buildings to the south. The north wall is fenestrated on the upper level and the district's sole cast iron fire escape remains on that frontage. The building has no rear extensions. The storefront has a centered angled recessed entry.

History: The Ashworth brothers built this building in 1907 (*Express*, September 19, 1907). Tenants included many taverns, and a barbershop.



Figure 24: Building looking northwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

126 Fifth Street:

Evaluation: vacant lot-alleyway, not counted

Alterations: Not applicable.

Description: This was the earliest of what became four public alleyways linking the downtown with parking in the back.

[see 128 Fifth Street for image]

History: Not applicable.

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127 Fifth Street, Ozimek Machine Shop, ca.1951:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: A permit for a \$1,375 addition was issued to Frank Ozimek in 1955 (*Express*, June 9, 1955).

Description: This is a utilitarian concrete block single story double storefront. The building might be frame construction and as such has a very substantial massing at least vertically and the stepped symmetrical facade provides a boomtown visual obscuring of the simple gable massing. The facade is not ornamented and the twin mirror-image storefronts are subordinated by the high blank front wall. The core measures 42 feet by 60 feet.

History: Frank Ozimek built this building in 1951 and enlarged it four years later. The Ozimek machine shop was here 1960-68+.



Figure 25: Building looking northeast plus the alleyway of 126 Fifth Street (Jacobsen, 2017)

128 Fifth Street, L. Mott's Building, ca. 1898:

Evaluation: This is a non-contributing building due to the loss of its upper story and its replacement facade.

Alterations: The building was substantially rebuilt after the district period of significance.

Description: This is a single-story frame gable roof single storefront. Historically this was a two-story building as late as 1968.

History: This building housed a cigar factory, groceries, barbershops, a billiards hall, café and plumbing shop.



Figure 26: Building looking northwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

129 Fifth Street, alley east side

Evaluation: Not counted as it is vacant land.

Alterations: Not applicable.

Description: No building since 1974.

[see 127 Fifth Street for image]

History: Not applicable.

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

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130 Fifth Street, George Pringle Billiards, 1897:

Evaluation: This is a non-contributing building.

Alterations: The building has gained a story and faux Italianate style windows have been added on the upper level. The storefront has gained an awning. Permits indicate a substantial interior remodeling in 1984. A rear chain link fence dates to this year.

Description: This was historically a single-story frame boomtown front building and remained so as late as 1968. The core plan measures 22 feet by 60 feet.

History: This building housed a billiards hall and an early second hand/antique store, the West Des Moines Trading Post, 1920-68+.



Figure 27: Building looking northwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

131-33-35 Fifth Street, McIntyre Furniture, 1953:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building. The wood slip screen simply obscures the original parapet.

Alterations: The new building had no canopy the still-extant brick parapet—simply a brick front with three separate structural glass transoms centered above each storefront.

Description: This is a single-story brick triple storefront building. The special feature of this facade is the angled pattern of each storefront segment, each of which ends with a single door opening. This typical '50s treatment is repeated in one other district building (233-35 Fifth Street). The core measures 75 feet by 120 feet and a north end garage wing extends an additional 22 feet. There is an original wood garage door in that wing. A broad flat aluminum canopy covers the entire frontage and a "boomtown" low level parapet extends above the actual parapet cap along the entire front.

History: McIntyre Furniture built the north storefront in 1946. Barney Crow was the contractor and Paul Williams did the masonry work when the building was tripled in size in 1953. The firm sold home furnishings, Mautz paints and Kelvinator appliances (*Express*, May 2, 1946; October 1, 1953; August 4, 1955). The business remained here through 1968.



Figure 28: Building looking northeast (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

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132-34 Fifth Street, Thurtle Block, 1905:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: The bricked-in central storefront, present by 1968 has been opened with twin openings that lead to recessed upstairs entrances. The south storefront reduced windows have been enlarged downward to match the north storefront. Replacement windows include transoms. A brick rear addition, now separate, likely dates to Pollard-Walton expansion of 1914 (*Express*, June 18, 1914). The storefront was substantially bricked in by 1964 (*Express*, November 5, 1964). The original windows were 6/1 or 4/1 lights.

Description: This is the most substantial two-story block in the 100s block, west side. Originally a triple-storefront plan, the upper facade employs broad pilasters to define bookend half bays and an oversized central bay. These do not align with the present double storefront and its centered entrances. The brickwork steps out each parapet base to form still recessed spandrels that remain subordinate to the pilaster side frames. The parapet itself is then brought flush with the latter, and has a base of broad square-cut corbelled brackets. A now separate gable roof brick single-story addition (pre-1920) is offset south and measures 15 feet by 31 feet).

History: Albert M. Thurtle built this block in 1905, his contractor being R. E. Rigler (*Express*, August 10, October 5, 26, 1905; February 8, 1906). It housed restaurants, plumbing and tin shops, hardware and furniture stores, billiards halls, cafes and first housed the local Iowa State Liquor Store (1935).



Figures 29-30: Building looking southwest and northwest (Jacobsen, 2017)



Figure 31: Substantial brick outbuilding, view northeast (Jacobsen, 2016)

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136 Fifth Street, Seyfert Block, 1905:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: The 1968 aluminum storefront with a left-and upstairs entry has been replaced (1978) with a wooden one, with broader transom area. An antique entry door is not original. A two-story concrete block addition represents a pre-1920 41 feet long addition and a more recent partial-width block addition is brick-faced on its west side and extends the core plan (20 feet by 40 feet) by 48 feet. A frame garden shed without foundation is not counted.

Description: This two-story purple-brown brick single storefront building is distinctive for its twin three-sided bays and its steel storefront beam with decorative rosettes. The only other brick ornament is a saw tooth parapet brick base that is singular to the district. The bays are boldly profiled in contrast to shallower examples found to the south of this example. The storefront retains a round steel column.

History: Harry L. Seyfert moved the ironclad two-story frame O'Connell & Cahill's restaurant building (shown on the 1897 Sanborn) to the rear of 138 Fifth Street where it stands today. Contractor E. B. Rigler did the moving and built this block (*Express*, October 5, 1905). The new building and contained the first freight elevator in district. It next housed the town's first movie house, called the Nabob Theater, 1909-14 (*Express*, November 18, 1909; February 24, 1910; August 20, 1914). Other tenants were billiards halls, shoe stores, restaurants, barber shops and a grocery.



Figure 32: Building looking northwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Evaluation: This is a contributing building, not counted as it is individually listed on the National Register.

Alterations: Larger fire engines forced the widening of the entrance to the south, removing a pilaster, now replaced. The building was completely remodeled to house the Valley Junction Foundation in 2010 at the cost of \$750,000. RDG were the architects, and Weitz Construction the contractor. This work restored the original front engine house door.

Description: This two-story brick Classical Revival style public building is laid up with a distinctively light brown toned brick. The contrasting darker ground level brick tracery is unusual to the district. The simple functional design reflects its original purposes. The storefront has the double-door fire doors with flanking smaller 1/1 lights and a left-and entry. The lower brick trim work that frames the openings projects beyond the wall plane as do side wall pilasters. The facade is otherwise a recessed panel. A brick-bracketed stone belt course set at the upper sill level divides the facade. A stylized Greek key patterned parapet base, executed in projecting brickwork, is unique to the district. The semi-circular window jack arches are made up of soldier bricks. The high parapet has the aforementioned brick band, a corbelled base, and a centered elongated name stone and a curved pediment with the date "1905" which curiously post-dates the building completion by four years is a recent addition. The comparable upper facade to this one with its distinctive mirror image serpentine brick band is 216-18 Fifth, the IOOF Block, the two being of comparable dates. The core measures 25 feet by 51 feet, and a single-story rear garage section adds 23 feet to the depth.

History: The town built the ground floor in late with the intention to add the upper story. J. F. Martin designed the whole building and the ground floor was first built, by contractor H. J. Roush (*Express*, September 21, 1900; *Des Moines Gazette*, September 27, 1900)The upper story was in place by February 1901 (*Express*, February 1, 1901). The city offices remained here until 1953 and McIntyre Furniture used the building as a furniture warehouse (1960-75+) after a few years of vacancy.



Figure 33: Building looking northeast (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

138 Fifth Street, Ashworth Block, 1911:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: Windows (1/1) have been replaced with reflective glass and the storefront is a wood replacement (1996-97). Permits note a comprehensive \$101,000 renovation in 1996-97 by contractor Gene Gretman.

Description: This corner two-story building is distinctive for its style (Classical Revival) and design. Double-fronted, its north Maple Street frontage is faced with a red brick while the facade is a gray-brown colored pressed brick. The *Express* castigated the building's appearance, finding it both "squatty" and tall enough to have three stories and lacking harmony with near-by buildings (*Express*, June 22, 1911). The design is classical with a base, column and capital vertical separation. The storefront covers the east facade ending with an angled corner entry. The second floor has paired double window sets that broaden the facade visually. An attic is separated by corbelled brickwork and stone belt courses above and below from the pedimented parapet and has matching smaller window sets. Stone belt courses run just under the upper window sill level. The north wall is fully fenestrated and two of three upstairs windows are paired sets. The core plan measures 20 feet by 45 feet. A two-story frame metal-clad addition (17 feet by 41 feet) is certainly a relocated former frame store building from 136 Fifth Street.

History: In mid-1911 this building was built by the Ashworth brothers (*Express*, June 2, 29, 1911, December 30, 1965). The H. S. Chase chain store had occupied the previous building and remained here until 1916. It was followed by a hardware store, the Spencer Grocery (1918-50).



Figure 36: 138 Fifth Street looking southwest, ca. 1911 (Jordan House Library and archives)



Figure 35: Building looking southwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

143-45 Fifth Street, Wegener Block, 1913:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: The present theater marquee dates to 1940 (*Express*, August 22, 1940) but lost its vertical element in 1968. A most substantial loss, ca.1968 was the removal of the substantial pediment that bore the building name.

Description: This is the only three-story block on the east side of Fifth and the reduced profile of the Legion building, 220-22 Fifth, leaves it the largest and tallest district building. It is a Classical Revival style design. It mirrors its corner counterpart to the west (138 Fifth, 1911) by using contrasting brick colors for its primary and secondary facades. The former is a modern gold-blonde color while the latter is a mottled brown color. The design doesn't use the recessed panels or pilaster framing common to the district. The facade brickwork is plainly laid up and the parapet too is unadorned. A most elaborate brick belt course divides the floors at the actual floor level (not the usual sill level) and it features staple-like two-sided corbelled brackets that extend above and above it. Second story windows have stone sills and jack arches but the third-floor windows are distinctively framed completely by projecting brick brackets (in lieu of stone sills) and a continuous cornice above. All but four north windows are paired sets. These elaborations continue the full length of the north side wall. Windows are vertically aligned. The west core measures 50 feet by 47 feet, a two-story addition (pre-1920) was full-width for just 28 feet and added 73 feet in depth to the plan. A 24 foot-square single-story addition with distinctive darker rowlock courses was also present by 1920.

History: Edward L. Wegener started a \$20,000 three-story block in early 1913. Rainy weather delayed progress after the foundations were done (*Express*, April 10, 1913; *Des Moines Tribune*, May 13, 1913). The Lyric Hotel functioned until 1935, and became the 15-unit Lyric Apartments that remain in operation. The Lyric Theater or movie house operated until 1960. A most notable tenant was the post office that was here for 30 years, 1931-52 (*Express*, February 14, 1952).



Figures 37-38: [top] Photo looking southeast, ca.1940 (Valley Junction Main Street); [left] Complete theater marquee, looking northeast (West Des Moines *Express*, February 18, 1971)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa



Figure 39: Building looking southeast (Jacobsen, 2017)

200 Fifth Street/505 Maple, Seward Pharmacy, 1946, 1949:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: Seward Pharmacy added a 32 feet by 29 feet concrete block west warehouse addition in August 1949, costing \$5,000. It later became separate leased storefronts (*Express*, October 6, 1949-see 512-21 Maple). The present storefront was present as of 1968.

Description: This is a Modernistic style single-story building with a separately leased rear Maple Street storefront. The style is imparted by a rounded corner and angled entry, the brickwork being laid up with soldier brick, a rounded aluminum canopy and block glass vertical panels that flank the entry. The west end of the plan has a lower parapet. A soldier block band underscores the concrete coping. The core plan measures 25 feet by 98 feet.

History: Druggist W. J. Seward built this building and his pharmacy followed was here until after 1968. At times this building was also addressed as 500 Elm.



Figure 40: Building looking northwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

201 Fifth Street, Herman Raaz First Valley Junction Bank, 1893:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building. What might be termed a later addition (203) is treated as a separate building.

Alterations: The west facade was re-veneered with a polychrome brick in 1921 when white ceramic brick was used to highlight the pilasters as faux columns. The display window substitution likely dates to 1920. Structural glass infills (present as of 1968) on four south storefront windows have been replaced with glassed sash. The south facade is painted white below the parapet base line. An exterior basement entry has been closed off as has south entrance.

Description: This two-story brick block with its angled corner and entry is distinctive for being the district's first and oldest surviving brick building. It was also the first brick building on the east side of Fifth Street. It is unusual given its elevated ground floor level (likely due to basement tenants rather than flooding concerns). The plan measures 22 feet by 94 feet. The south facade is that of the brick veneered original while the west primary facade is a replacement likely borne of the architectural bank race that took place on upper Fifth in 1919-20. Not to be outdone white enameled brick and corner pilasters were added here along with the south window arches and some triangular inserts below the parapet. It lost its name and date plate and gained a Classic Revival style entry hood. The altered front including the angled wall were made to emulate other district parapet treatments with bands of recessed square panels and a row of diamonds formed from raised brick along the parapet front. This was originally an Italianate style design with a darker brown brick color. The west facade originally had twin single windows up and down with a left-hand entryway. The south facade is nearly fully fenestrated but a mix of larger and shorter openings on the ground floor is not vertically aligned. The 1900 vault survives.

History: This building was started in late September 1893 (*Express*, September 29, October 27, December 15, 1893; April 13, July 27, August 10, 1894). The building transformed from mixed use (newspaper in the basement, drugstore on the ground floor, hall upstairs) to an enlarged bank and office building in 1897 (*Express*, August 13, 1897). A new vault followed in 1899 (*Express*, November 11, 1898; February 17, 24, 1899). This tenant mix would dominate the block for all of its history and included the Valley Junction Commercial Club (1915-17) and Corner Bank Insurance (1943), Hawkeye Telephone (1908-14) and the Booster newspaper (1925). By 1950 417 Maple was set off as a separate leased storefront. The bank became the West Des Moines State Bank in 1938 and occupied the building until 1960 when a new bank opened on Grand Avenue (*Express*, January 14, 1960). Eight apartments were added upstairs by 1968.



Figure 42: Building looking northeast (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa



Figure 41: 201-203 Fifth Street, looking northeast (Jordan House Library and archives)

202 Fifth Street, Peter Pan Grocery, ca.1927:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: A major storefront remodeling dates to 1939 (*Express*, April 27, May 25, 1939). No permits found but at some point the storefront was divided.

Description: This single-story red/brown brick double storefront has stone or concrete sidewall foundations, a centered double recessed entry for its narrow storefronts, the latter substantially being those present as of 1968 save for a Carrara glass kick plate. The core plan measures 25 feet by 135 feet, the south half of the plan extending 12 feet further than the north half. The upper facade is plain, being separated from the storefront by a stone/concrete belt course and a course of soldier brick. The parapet base is slightly projected beyond the wall plane and there is a stone/concrete coping. This store has retained its aluminum/glass display windows and wooden doors present as of 1968.

History: A. H. Minnis owned the property 1923-57 and that family is the builder. The Peter Pan Grocery (1927-50), Way's Food Market and Saville's AG Food Store (1955-68) successively tenanted this building.



Figure 43: Building looking west (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

203 Fifth Street, 415-17 Maple, Herman Raaz Block, 1900:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building. Its twin west and south facades are counted as one building.

Alterations: Both storefronts have been substantially bricked in with a too-red brick but this work predates 1968 at least on the south facade. The west transoms were then covered with paneling but the canopy was present with the current storefront.

Description: This two-story brick Classical Revival style building wraps around its corner (201) precursor. Its core measures 22 feet by 134 feet and it has an L-shaped footprint with two Maple Street storefronts as well as an upstairs hall, then offices and now apartments. Its brickwork is a redder color. Three broad upstairs windows have semi-circular soldier brick arches. A distinctive feature is the use of darker brick to highlight an arch cap, to form a saw-toothed band with borders at the parapet base and as brackets for the stone coping. The date stone is centered within a square-cut pediment. The Maple Street facade originally had the same window arches as that on Fifth Street (these have been shortened from the top). The darker brick forms a faux quoin treatment and also a band of strongly projecting bracketed arches form the parapet front. There is also a similar pediment without a circular insert with four stone inserts. Windows on this frontage are paired with two broadly separated sets.

History: This block was banker Herman Raaz's response to the construction of a second local bank (*Express*, August 18, 1899). The architects were Proudfoot and Bird of Des Moines (*Express*, August 25, 1899). The 1893 and 1900 buildings were remodeled to conform to each other. This building contained a large upstairs hall. Raaz converted the hall into 16 suites and professional offices, adding six skylights, and linked the upper levels of 201 and 203 with an east end door (*Express*, August 12, 19, September 9, 1904). George Youngerman was the contractor. Fifth Street tenants were several large dry goods firms and a wallpaper company. Maple Street tenants included jewelry, millinery and beauty shops. Swan's Apartments (six units) was upstairs, 1937 to 1955.



Figures 44-45: Fifth and Maple street frontages, left looking east, right looking northwest (Polk County Assessor, left; Jacobsen, 2017, right)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

204 Fifth Street, 1915:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: There are no documented alterations.

The storefronts, are identical in layout and materials to those of 1968.

Description: This is a single-story red brick double storefront with a core that measures 28 feet by 45 feet. The parapet/transom line is covered but the parapet proper is set above a line of square cut corbelled brackets and there is a tile coping. The back of the plan consists of short extensions that were present as early as 1937.

History: G. H. Chase acquired the property in August 1915 and the 1920 Sanborn depicts the front part of this building. Tenants tobacco, confectionery, barbershops, electrical, candy hamburger, shoe and coffee shops.



Figure 46: Building looking northwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

205 Fifth Street, 1897, 1940 re-fronting, M. O'Carroll Building:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building and is separately counted. It is contributing because its permastone front interprets post-war modernization efforts within the district. A concrete block gable roofed outbuilding is non-contributing.

Alterations: A rear addition (24 feet by 60 feet) dates to 1900 (*Express*, February 9, 1900). The facade was replaced in 1940 (*Express*, April 25, 1940). Permits note window replacement and a storefront remodeling that likely included the new permastone front, all in 1961. B. Crow was the contractor. The aluminum/glass storefront was present as of 1968 but was later extended north to eliminate a removed left-hand upstairs entry. The Tavern store space was extended north into 207 in 1992 at a cost of \$110,000. Fox Construction the contractor, and finally in 2007 the same contractor did a \$25,000 remodel.

Description: This two-story brick building is old but its permastone covering redefines it as a 1940 store building. The core measures 25 feet by 60 feet with a narrower single-story rear addition that adds 39 feet to the plan. The facade retains three 1/1 windows and these have gained faux arches and key stones while stone sills have been buried flush. The storefront transom area remains intact but covered with a shingled canopy. Facade "ghosts" are twin angled parapet level pilasters that remain visible.

History:

M. O'Carroll was the owner when this building, certainly raised up simultaneously with 207 to the north, which was being rushed to completion in late 1897 (*Express*, November 10, 20, December 17, 1897). It just missed being included in the 1897 fire insurance map. Tenants were dry goods and second hand goods stores; a photo studio, café and there after, (1937), The Tavern (1937 to present and 1940 re-fronting). This is the only bar to be located outside of the 100s block to the south.



Figure 47: Building looking northeast (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

206 Fifth Street, Irwin Block, 1896:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: A concrete block garage addition extends the plan to the alley. An external cast iron spiral staircase leads to the rear roof. The upper façade lost a centered bay window prior to 1920. An iron-clad rear addition was present by 1920.

Description: This two-story painted brick building is an excellent example of squeezing a design into a narrow plan. A lost centered bay window originally made the building style late Queen Anne. The sidewalls project in pilaster fashion. Successive belt courses cap the transom area and there are twin single 1/1 side windows and the central set. These have cast stone wrap-around lintels and the north window is the point of interest in that the window is set cheek and jowl against the side wall and the lintel is cut off to fit. The upper facade is plain with only a stone/concrete coping. The storefront has a centered angled entry and a left-hand upstairs entry, the aluminum/glass materials being present as of 1968.

History:

Druggist W. T. Irwin acquired the parcel in early 1896 and built the building that same year to house his drug store that contained the town's first soda fountain (*Express*, April 21, May 8, June 10, 1896; May 24, 1897). Later tenants were barber, tobacco, flower and jewelry shops through 1935. Krull Clothing and most notably, Jacobsen Clothing were then here through the mid-1960s followed by Denny's Cafe (1964-68).



Figure 48: Building looking west (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

207 Fifth Street, 1897, Sorensen Electric & Heating Company, 1951:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: There was a minor rear addition in 1954 and a general remodeling in 1968.

Description: This two-story brick building of early vintage is redefined as a post-war remodeled building due to its new 1951 brick veneer. The core measures 25 feet by 60 feet. Three upstairs windows have been reduced in size, have steel plate lintels and stone sills. There is no parapet or facade elaboration. The new front is carried down to cover the lost transom area.

History:

The original building was built simultaneously with 205 Fifth Street to the south, the contract being let for a 25 feet by 40 feet two story block (*Express*, November 12, 1897). It just missed being included in the 1897 fire insurance map. Ed Sorensen put on a new brick front in 1951 to house his electric and heating company (*Express*, May 2, 1951; February 7, 1952). The 1920-37 Sanborn Maps identify an upstairs hall.



Figure 49: Building looking northeast (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

208 Fifth Street, Jacobson's Clothing Store, 1953:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: A single-story rear addition extends to the alley across 208-210. Permits note remodelings in 1976 and 1983.

Description: This is a light brown brick single story and single storefront building. It measures 25 feet by 138 feet. The brickwork is unadorned. There is a metal coping. The 1968 storefront survives intact, having gained only a square wooden cornice in lieu of a lost awning.

History:

Harry Jacobsen built 210 Fifth Street to the north in 1952 and then built this building ca. 1953 to house his clothing store that was here 1955-69+.



Figure 50: Building looking northwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

209 Fifth Street, Burt Building, 1900:

Evaluation: This a contributing building. A minor metal gable roofed storage shed is not counted.

Alterations: The parapet has lost a very shallow centered pediment present in 1968.

Description: This two-story brick facade resembles others with its twin recessed wall/window set panels. These panels begin just below the stone sill level and the caps of the panels are corbelled out forming minor cornices. The parapet base has a projecting brick base, a delicate band of triangular brackets that continues in front of the pilasters, and finally twin elongated recessed brick

History: L. J. Burt built this building. The second floor contained offices. Tenants included Harry Young's Wallpaper (1932-45), Olsen Paint and Wallpaper (1960-68) and Berard Materials (1965-75).



Figure 51: Building looking southeast (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

210 Fifth Street, Banner 5¢-\$1.00 Store, 1952:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: The only changes apart from the rear addition (see 208 Fifth Street) is the loss of a double door (1968) and the addition of a boxed wooden cornice in lieu of an awning.

Description: This building is identical in every respect to 208 Fifth Street.

History: Harry Jacobsen built this \$15,000 building in 1952 (*Express*, July 10, August 14, 1952). Tenants were the Banner 5¢-\$1.00 Store which became the (Banner) Ben Franklin Store (1952-68+).



Figure 52: Building looking southwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

211 Fifth Street, Burt Building, ca.1913-14:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: A single permit notes plumbing work in 1976. The 1968 storefront appears to survive. At that time, the transom was covered and now is behind a fixed canopy.

Description: This two-story brick building is a copy of 209 to the south save for the use of a slightly browner brick. The core measures 24 feet by 60 feet with a single-story rear concrete block garage addition (pre-1950) that adds 63 feet to its depth. It retains its shallow pediment.

History: The Burt family built this building, matching the facade of 209 to the south. Tenants sold groceries, jewelry, liquor and the district's Iowa State Liquor Store was here 1943-57. Later occupants were a clothing store, an appliance store, a meat store and then an antiques store.



Figure 53: Building looking northeast (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

212 Fifth Street:

Evaluation: This is a vacant lot-alleyway so it is not counted

Alterations: Not applicable.

Description: No building since 1974.

[refer to 214 Fifth Street for image]

History: Not applicable.

213-15 Fifth Street, Western Auto Company, Des Moines Hardware, 1942, 1946:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: Permits note a general remodeling in 1963 with a new storefront and a marquee at that time, B. Crow being the contractor. A present canopy was installed in 1978. The raised parapet is sheathed in corrugated steel.

Description: The north half (215) is an early wartime single-story concrete block building, the south half being added in 1946.

History: William den Hartog rebuilt built his 1939 building after a 1942 fire, in two phases, 1942 and 1946. The use of concrete block as a building material was a wartime necessity (*Express, Express*, July 13, August 20, 1939; May 7, 1942; April 11, 1946). As of 1947 there was no canopy and the transom was infilled with glass block. It was re-fronted in 1963. Hardware and auto supply stores were the tenant firms.



Figure 54: Building looking southeast (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

214 Fifth Street, Seyfert Building, 1897:

Evaluation: This is a non-contributing building.

Alterations: A 1940 green carrara storefront was lost to a 1968 remodeling which was more recently replaced. The 1968 storefront had a metal or asphalt front covering, a structural glass infilled transom and an off-centered recessed entry that largely matches the present one. A 24 feet by 37 feet rear concrete block addition was built by contractor M. A. Knutsen in 1976.

Description: This is a single-story brick building with a wood-clad storefront. The core measures 24 feet by 71 feet.

History: H. L. Seyfert, had an unidentified Des Moines contractor build this building (*Express*, July 30, August 6, 20, 1897). Pollard Hardware was here 1917. Carmody Drugs was here 1919-65.



Figure 55: Building looking northwest with vacant alleyway at 212 Fifth Street to the left (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

216-18 Fifth Street, C. S. Yeaton Block, Fraternal Hall, Odd Fellows Block, 1897-98:

Evaluation: This building is not counted as it is pending individual National Register listing on the same time schedule as this district.

Alterations: New storefronts date to 1954 (*Express*, April 8, July 20, 1954). Upper windows were replaced prior to 1968. The existing storefronts were present by 1968. A one-story rear addition (21 feet by 35 feet) behind 218 predates 1920.

Description: This is a distinctive Italianate style fraternal building design executed in a light brown brick. The facade has a tri-partite division with side wall and centered pilasters defining two mirror halves including twin storefronts. These terminate vertically with a stone sill level belt course. The upper facade consists of two recessed panels. Three elongated windows are evenly spaced and are capped with jack arch brickwork. A serpentine brick band caps each panel and a narrow stone belt course and centered name plate define the cornice/parapet level. There is a very slight flat pediment. The original windows were likely triple 1/1 window sets. The storefronts have raised floor levels and front steps which is unusual in the district.

History: C. S. Yeaton announced plans in early June 1897 to build a 50 feet by 80 feet two story block with upstairs hall, the plan contingent on contracting the town's "secret societies" to use it for at least three years. The architect was C. C. Cross of Des Moines (*Express*, June 4, July 2, 9, August 20, December 17, 31, 1897; January 14, 1898). It was then described as being the "finest brick building in the town" (*Express*, March 16, 1898). Groceries and hardware stores were the principal tenants.



Figure 56: Building looking northwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

217 Fifth Street, American Legion West Des Moines Post 620, 1949-50:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: The major façade change is the window and door replacements. The back of the building has been completely remodeled with a porte cochere. The building interior was completely remodeled in 1985, when it was converted for use as the community center at a cost of \$570,000. Covenant Construction Services was the contractor. Flood damage repair (1984) cost \$129,000 with Koester Construction as the contractor. A new elevator was installed by Brocon Services, in 1993. Originally This building, contained two small storefronts.

Description: This stone veneered two-story is Modernistic in style. The footprint measures 50 feet by 136 feet. The facade has a central entry that is flanked by engaged fluted quarter-round columns. Twin storefronts with corner entries flank this opening. Three rectangular window sets are on the upper front. The facade is veneered with rectangular limestone slabs. The cornice is not elaborated and the coping is of brick. The original upper windows were Chicago style windows. Notably the upper facade retains the original carved inscription.

History: The West Des Moines American Legion Drum and Bugle Corps removed two frame residences from the site in 1940 but started long after the war ended (*Express*, May 9, 1940). Designer Robert N. Nelson, employed by Brooks Borg Architects, prepared the final plans, dated June 4, 1949, under his own name. Garmer and Stiles were the general contractor with a \$69,000 building cost (*Express*, July 14, 28, August 4, November 3, 1949; January 19, February 9, 1950). Sub-contractors and suppliers included the J. C. White Concrete Co., Drake Roofing, O'Dea Hardware, Groves Sheet Metal, Pittsburgh Des Moines Steel, Carr and Moehl millwork. The small storefronts were occupied by realtors a lounge, tax preparers and a jewelry store. The Legion gifted the building to the city as a community center in 1974 (*Des Moines Register*, July 11, 1972). This was the only commercial building that was suitably fire-resistant to qualify for air raid shelter purposes (*Express*, May 22, 1952).



Figure 57: Building looking northeast (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

**219 Fifth Street, Security Savings Bank,
Ashworth Bank Building, 1919:**

Evaluation: This is a contributing building because the form largely remains visible and the cornice and upper entryway survive under their coverings.

Alterations: The brickwork has been painted and a faux mansard covering obscures the cornice. A second canopy hides the top of the Classical entry.

Description: This two-story white enamel trimmed brick bank copied then popular side columns, a side-columned entryway and a prominent parapet front. All this was accomplished using brick, with white enameled brick forming the columns. The core measures 22 feet by 59 feet with a 16 feet long one-story rear addition (1921-36). There are paired 1/1 windows set into twin recessed wall panels and separated by a pilaster. Windows flank the centered entrance. This is a Classical Revival style design.

History: This new bank replaced its predecessor next door north (see 221-25 Fifth Street) at the same time that the competing First National Bank re-fronted its building across the street west. A construction race ensued. Security won by a goodly margin despite strikes and other setbacks. The white enameled front, laid up in July was copied in part by the Valley Junction Savings Bank to the south (201 Fifth Street). The new building was occupied in late November 1919 (*Express*, April 10, July 10, August 7, October 16, November 20, 1919). This was the only town bank to fail, going into receivership in October 1934 (*Pella Chronicle*, October 9, 11, 1934). Post-bank tenants included realtors, a monuments firm, the West Des Moines Public Library (1947-50), various construction firms, and the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce (1968).



Figure 58: Building looking northeast (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

220-22 Fifth Street, Ashworth Memorial Masonic Temple Block, 1925, 1946:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: A recessed third story or attic was lost to a 1946 fire. The façade and parapet are otherwise intact. The storefronts date from the mid-1950s

Description: This is the district's second three-story edifice, being reduced to its present form due to 1946 fire. The style is a simplified Italian Renaissance Revival based the recurring arch pattern and the insertion of carved stone ornament. The triple storefront plan is tri-partite. A broad stone belt course caps the lower floor and is set just beneath the upper sill level. There are five upper windows, two narrow flanking ones and three broader centered ones and these are each framed by a row of infilled arched decorative panels set flush. These have distinctive angled brick infilling within the arches. Keystone inserts cap each arch. A carved stone cornice and a bolder and more elaborate stone cornice define a parapet base that includes a substantial nameplate that is flanked by square stone inserts. A partial south end bay contains a shared upstairs entrance with 216-18 Fifth to the south. There is a Colonial Revival fan arch transom, a segmental arch cap with key stone an elaborately carved secondary "lintel" and a continuation of the main upper facade fenestration and wall treatments above that. The building retains its glass fraternal sign. There are no rear additions although there is a substantial concrete block second floor exit base and a very substantial "T"-shaped chimney.

History: The Gweneth Masonic Lodge built this building. The architects were Dougher, Rich and Woodburn of Des Moines. A February 1946 fire gutted the upper interior resulting in \$75,000 in damage. Store tenants were left relatively unscathed the north half of the ground level. Ted Lovejoy was announced as the contractor for an all-new two-story building in late April but insurance payments delayed reconstruction (*Express*, April 25, 1946). Tenants were department stores, fabric shops, tailors, realtors, barbershops and beauty saloons.



Figure 59: Building looking northwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

224-26 Fifth Street, 1905:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: The twin storefronts date to the mid-1950s. Apart from upper window replacement, the building is well preserved. A south brick rear addition measures 24 feet by 30 feet and pre-dates 1920. A lesser north addition pre-dates 1937 (11 feet by 30 feet).

Description: This is a two-story purple-brown brick colored double storefront building. The upper facade is simply executed with a plain running bond pressed brick main wall that is fenestrated with four openings, the outer two being broad but single sash, the inner two being paired sets. The parapet is stepped out from the main wall plane across its base and sets of long and short pendant brick brackets ornament the upper parapet. The core measures 51 feet by 71 feet.

History: Charles Ashworth built this building. The construction date is known because of some lost glasses dropped near "the new Ashworth building under construction just south of the First National Bank." The contractor was E. B. Rigler (*Express*, August 3, 10, October 5, 1905). The six-unit Kinlane Apartments occupied the upstairs of 224 as early as 1932. Other tenants were grocers and department stores.



Figure 60: Building looking northwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

221 Fifth Street, Security Savings Bank, 1900:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: The power company did a comprehensive remodeling in 1953 that included an aluminum/glass storefront, the new display windows being lowered to floor level. Barney Crow was the contractor and the cost was \$2,000. This storefront survives intact with covered transom (*Express*, October 22, 1953; January 7, 1954). The 1968 storefront survives with twin round steel support columns. The transom was then paneled shut.

Description: This is a two-story brown brick building, and one that follows the district pattern of ornamenting an upper facade with recessed brick panels. This is an early use of upper level paired window sets. Two of these are separated at the ends and middle by the panels. Five (vertical rectangles) panels cover the parapet front. Two elongated ones have centered teardrop brick pendants that intrude downward. The parapet cap is corbelled out to a bold profile. A limestone belt course runs full width along the upper sill line. The plan matches 217 Fifth Street in its dimensions and a narrow single-story rear addition across the rear of both plans. This building was fully fenestrated on both upper side walls due to upstairs offices and the windows survive on the north wall.

History: This building is significant to the district because it was the first commercial and more to point, the first bank, to "leap frog" northward into the residential part of the upper along 200s block of Fifth Street. Work on what was the town's second bank was begun in June, the architects being Charles C. Cross and Frank A. Gutterson of Des Moines (*Express*, April 28, 1899; June 1, 8, 29, July 6, 1900). Bank offices were upstairs. The Des Moines Electric Light Co., later Iowa Power and Light, replaced the departed bank and was here 1920-75+.



Figure 62: Newly completed 221 Fifth, looking southeast, 1900 (Jordan House Library and archives)



Figure 61: Building looking southeast (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

225 Fifth Street, Dr. Sternagle Medical Clinic, 1940:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: The window frames, canopy and curved walls have been painted black and a black metal cornice has replaced or covered the stone coping. A 30 feet deep full-width rear addition pre-dates 1950.

Description: This is a large pre-war single-story medical clinic. It's curved entry angles put it into the Modernistic architectural style. The full fenestration uses arrow brick piers to define matching window sets, with a centered long window flanked by square end ones. A narrow aluminum transom capped four tiers of structural glass. The original storefront including an aluminum rounded canopy, survives save for the lost structural glass block. The building footprint measures 50 feet by 96 feet and has substantial light wells on either side of the center of the plan.

History: Dr. Fred Sternagle built this Art Deco styled clinic (*Express*, November 7, 9, 1939). It was formally titled the West Des Moines Internal Medicine Clinic by 1975.



Figure 63: Building looking southeast (Jacobsen, 2017)

227 Fifth Street, 1947, 1985:

Evaluation: This is a non-contributing building due to its completely new facade.

Alterations: Not applicable.

Description: This one-story building has been re-fronted. The original storefront had a left-hand entry, aluminum cornice, and structural glass bordering its doors and windows and forming a kick plate. The cornice was plain with a stone coping. The plan measures 25 feet by 60 feet.

History: The building first a Reed's Ice Cream store and then the West Des Moines Waterworks.



Figure 64: Building looking southeast with vacant alleyway of 229 Fifth Street at left (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

228 Fifth Street, First National Bank, 1901, 1920:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: The current bank façade (1920) was placed on an older brick bank building (1901). The facade matches its 1968 appearance save for the replacement of a half-sized side window with night deposit box below, with a full-size replacement and the loss of a projecting bank sign. A 25 feet by 54 feet concrete block two-story rear addition dates to 1949 and was built by contractor H. H. Kilburg.

Description: This is an excellent and well-preserved example of a Classical Revival bank building design, veneered with cream colored terracotta. The facade has a centered pedimented entry that is positioned within a recessed central wall plane section. The "mezzanine" above the entry is fully fenestrated, originally with multi paned lights set into three sets. Sidelights flank the entrance. The whole facade is recessed between projecting side wall pilasters. These are paneled vertically. Column-like square cut columns with capitals are then set inside each side wall. The parapet consists of a broad frieze band with circular modillions a cornice, a belt course, the name plate with flanking large circular modillions, and a cap of alternating shells and scrolls.

History: Leland Windsor and Simon Casady built the original bank in 1900-01 (*Express*, April 27, July 19, 1900). The building was rebuilt save for its sidewalls and ground floor in 1919-20 as part of the bank architectural race with the Security State Bank across the street. This rebuilt building was designed and built by the Lytle Construction Company, Sioux City (*Express*, September 4, 11, 1919). The bank occupied the building until 1991 (*Des Moines Register*, July 11, 2001).



Figure 65 (left): Building looking southwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

Figure 66 (right): Bank façade and signage looking south, 1980 (*Des Moines Register*, February 23, 1980)

229 Fifth Street, vacant alleyway:

Evaluation: Not counted.

Alterations: Not applicable

Description: No building since prior to 1950.

[see 227 Fifth Street for image]

History: Not applicable

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

**230 Fifth Street, Charles Martin Building, 1920,
First National Bank Annex, 1964:**

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: The only change is the addition of a display window and a fixed canvas awning.

Description: This single-story Modernistic style building was re-faced with a brick and tile facade, the design of which emulated a series of columns. The side and rear walls appear to indicate concrete block construction and all new work however.

History: J. F. Martin was the original contractor (*Express*, October 2, 16, 1919; January 15, August 5, 1920). The building housed a confectionery and news stand, a grocery, restaurant and finally a residence prior to its conversion for bank use. The First National Bank altered the storefront ca. 1965.



Figure 67: Building looking southwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

232 Fifth Street, 1988:

Evaluation: This is a non-contributing building.

Alterations: Not applicable.

Description: This is a new single-story brick storefront is new construction within the district. This 1988 building wraps around 234 in front and rear and includes an Elm Street rear storefront. The whole building is counted as one non-contributing building.

History:

This was a residential lot as late as 1920 and this building finally altered its land use.



Figure 68: Building looking west (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

234 Fifth Street, Vandenburg's Drugs, 1939:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: The 1968 storefront is still intact apart from the loss of a presumed aluminum cornice and flat square cut hood that wrapped around the main facade, also an angled raised wing (its shadow in the tile has left a white cover over the gap) that was used for signage. The north elevated windows, originally infilled with structural glass, have been replaced and the Maple Street parapet covered as noted.

Description: This is a corner single-story Art Deco style glazed enamel tile veneered drugstore design with an angled corner entry. Square cream-colored tile covers the east bay (main facade) and a rear north-facing Maple Street storefront. Rectangular tile covers the parapet fronts (presumably on the Maple Street front as well which is obscured by a metal slip screen), save for over the angled entry where square tile and a light green rectangular tile form alternating horizontal bands. The same green tile is run vertically between stacks of rectangular tile. A rear Elm Street store area measured 12 feet by 25 feet. The foundation is of concrete block (*Express*, March 28, 1949).

History: The architects were Wetherell and Harrison of Des Moines. Garmer and Stiles were the general contractors. The glazed enamel tile and structural glass came from Carr Glass and Paint. Chelious Vandenburg built this building. His Vandenburg Drug was here 1940-68. A rear 508 Elm Street storefront first housed Marion Tuttle's beauty shop.



Figure 69: Building looking southwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

233-35 Fifth Street/420 Elm, Cornwell Building, 1955:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: This building retains its original storefront infill and materials.

Description: This triple angled storefront plan mirrors and reverses that located at 131-35 Fifth Street. The core measures 50 feet by 70 feet. The facade brickwork is a thin Roman brick that is laid in running bond with a consistent one brick width overlap relative to adjacent courses. There is a thicker boxed cornice. Pilasters separate the storefronts and each entry is on the right-hand side. There is a rear Elm Street storefront with door and double-display window and this served the bakery.

History:

Clarence W. Cornwell built this building to house his real estate and insurance business. Clayton Ridgway was the contractor (*Express*, November 24, 1954; May 26, 1955). Other tenants were a bakery, barbershop, law offices, an optometrist and several barbershops.



Figure 70: Building looking northeast (Jacobsen, 2017)

304 Fifth Street, ca. 1900:

Evaluation: This is a non-contributing building. It is a residential building that was not commercially used and adapted for that use prior to 1968.

Alterations: Post-1968 commercial changes opened up the porches and added a front ramp, as well as adding a substantial rear addition in 1978.

Description: This is a two-story frame cubic house with cropped hip roof and a wrap-around porch on the south and east sides.

History:

This was a private residence past the period of significance and was minimally altered for commercial use subsequent to that.



Figure 71: Building looking southwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

308 Fifth Street, 2010:

Evaluation: Non-contributing due to its recent construction.

Alterations: Not applicable.

Description: This is a single-story frame side gable office building built after the district's period of significance.

History: Not applicable



Figure 72: Building looking southwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

312 Fifth Street, McLaren Funeral Home, conversion 1906, 1946:

Evaluation: The main and secondary frame buildings count as two contributing buildings.

Alterations: The permastone Tudor Revival style porch replaced a full-width front porch 1946 (*Express*, August 1, 1946).

Description: This is a two-story frame Classical Revival style residence with a deeply pedimented front gable, a cross-gable roof, each side gable having returned eaves. There is a Palladian-like front attic window set. The house exterior is clad with broad siding. A two-story carriage house has a first story concrete wall with a frame second story. It uses an interesting end wall roofing design with lower and steeper end gables to form twin shed roof effects, the whole being bracketed in Craftsman style. The carriage house postdates 1920 and pre-dates 1937. Its former east side garage openings are now infilled and covered with wood shakes. A stucco/tile carriage house dates to ca.1942 and is contributing. It represents the funeral home conversion

History: This two-story frame house was likely built ca.1906 by F. G. and Ella Young who then acquired the property. The McLaren Funeral Home Tudorized the house by adding a front addition, ca.1946. By 1978 it was termed the company's "Annex."



Figure 73: Building looking southwest (Jacobsen, 2017)



Figure 74: Carriage House, view northeast (Jacobsen, 2016)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

318 Fifth Street, West Des Moines City Hall and Fire Station, 1953-54:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: The building exterior is barely changed since its 1968 appearance. The roof soffits are broader and noteworthy lettering for the city offices and fire department have been removed.

Description: This is an excellent and very well preserved Modernistic style example of a combination city hall and fire station. The design focuses on the mix of angles and setbacks and the uneven parallel roof lines with a broad soffit edge and contrasting vertical elements (chimney and north end hose tower, the latter centered on the firehouse plan). The varied facade elements south to north consist of a blank brick wall, the aluminum entryway, a series of columns and long windows, and finally the twin doors of the fire station.

History: The Fire Department acquired this site and gave it to the city. The architects were Keffer & Associates. The general contractor was Kenworthy & Fehm of Ankeny. Goff Plumbing and Furlong & Baker Electrical were the other primary contractors. The new building was occupied by the city, library, water department and fire department in early February 1954 (*Express*, February 28, May 29, October 9, November 6, 1952; April 30, May 7, 1953; February 4, 1954). The building was vacated by city government in 1996.



Figure 75: Building looking southwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

420 Elm Street, 1921-36:

Evaluation: This is a vacant lot and is not counted.

Alterations: Not applicable

Description: This paved area is located east/behind 233-35 Fifth Street.

History: Former residential lot.

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

501/503, 505, 507 Elm Street, 1924-36:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: No major changes are noted apart from the fixed awning. Storefronts were present as of the mid-1950s.

Description: This is an early single-story multiple storefront brick building that long formed the downtown's north end, the building fronting south on Elm Street. The core measures 42 feet by 75 feet. The facade brickwork lacks any ornamentation apart from a corbelled brick coping. There were four storefronts for much of its history, the 503-05 entry having paired entries. Entrances are centered, recessed and angled and the kick plate angles are a rare district example of open gap brickwork. A particular point of interest is the back or north wall with four elevated coal chutes. A narrow alley provides access to those features.

History: A. H. Minnis built this building. Tenants included clothing and shoes stores, a plumbing and heating firm, an ice cream company, medical offices, a restaurant, beauty shop, barbershops, photo shop, a florist and insurance firms.



Figure 76: Building looking northwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

509, 511, 513 Elm Street, Thompson and Green Building, 1946:

Evaluation: This is a non-contributing building given that 513 Elm Street had a garage front and while the façade is of concrete block construction, its obstructed fenestration is in doubt, the three storefronts are otherwise completely covered with a wood cladding.

Alterations: At present the entire building exterior is covered with metal, wood or stucco.

Description: This building matches its eastern counterpart in terms of massing and contains three storefronts but it is of concrete block construction. The plan measures 42 feet by 70 feet.



Figure 77: Building looking northeast (Jacobsen, 2017)

400-02 Maple Street, West Des Moines Express Building, 1954:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: The building was enlarged to the south with a concrete block addition in 1960 (permit dated July 20, 1960).

Description: This single-story brick/concrete block double storefront measures 50 feet by 98 feet. Each storefront has a centered entry and shorter flanking display windows. The front is unadorned apart from a wooden cornice set at the lintel level. Sidewalls are fenestrated on the core and the rear (1960) addition has garage doors on both sidewalls along with other openings. The brick is rose-light brown in color.

History: Truman L. Thompson built this building in 1946 (*Express*, April 11, 1946). Tenants included barbershops, a photo studio, electronics and appliance stores, an upholstery shop, and an auto repair shop



Figure 78: 513 Elm Street looking north, 1967 (*West Des Moines Express*, November 2, 1967)

History: The *West Des Moines Express* newspaper replaced its fire-destroyed building in 1954 (*Des Moines Tribune*, April 8, 1953). The newspaper remained here as late as 1975.



Figure 79: Building looking southwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

401-03-05 Maple Street, Iltis Lumber Company:

Evaluation: This is a non-contributing building.

Alterations: This is an early lumber company office but a re-cladding with vertical siding fenestration changes render it non-contributing.

Description: This is a two-story frame parapet roofed corner commercial building having former single-story lumber sheds attached on the west side. These are counted as one building.

History: H. A. Bechtel started a lumber yard here in early 1909. The Iltis Des Moines lumber chain, took over in 1910 and remained here well beyond the district period of significance (*Express*, March 11, 18, April 1, May 13, June 10, 17, 1909, September 8, 1955).



Figure 80: Building looking northwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

408 Maple Street, West Des Moines Frozen Food & Locker Services, 1938:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: The building exterior was painted as early as 1939 (*Express*, October 26, 1939). A major rear addition (post-1941) has a 48 feet width and both sections a 98 feet depth. A final addition with a 19 feet width dates 1950.

Description: This brick/concrete block single-story utilitarian locker building consists of several sections of varying height. The core building with its storefront offset to the west has a 29 feet width. The core original facade has a stepped pediment, left-hand raised entry, and a paired 1/1 window set and square display window to the west of it. This building has sidewall fenestration, still open on the alley (west) side. The rear additions have mostly eaves level small windows and an alley garage door.

History: Ray Brinton is credited as founding the firm and building this building in 1938, operating it for eight years until C. J. Carlson acquired it in 1950 (*Express*, July 15, 1954). The firm sold the parcel in 1975 as the West Des Moines Locker Service.



Figure 81: Building looking southwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

409 Maple Street, Raaz Building/Joice Apartments, ca.1900:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: The only major building change was a shortening of the upper front and west side windows likely in 1985. The brickwork has also been painted. A new building storefront dates to 1960 (permit dated December 9, 1959. The storefront (extant as of 1968) has twin right-hand entries, the easternmost for upstairs egress. The transom area, covered in 1968, is obscured by a fixed awning.

Description: This two-story brick Italianate style building has a prominent cornice that is set above a band of corbelled stack bond brick brackets. There are four upper front windows. The brickwork is painted with highlights. This is a free-standing alleyway building having west and north fenestration and a rear frame stairway.

History: Banker Hermann Raaz acquired this lot in late 1899 and built this building on its west end, close to his bank building. Tenants were Des Moines Photo Co (1905), Valley Vulcanizing (1919), Ralph and Robert Joice Photography (1914-25, upstairs), upstairs residential use resumed in late 1910. Peggy's Beauty Shop (1927) and Joice Beauty Salon (1929-68+).



Figure 82: Building looking northwest (Jacobsen, 2017)



Figure 83: 409 Maple Street, ca. 1920 photo looking northeast (Jordan House Library and Archives)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

411-13 Maple Street, J. H. Swan Building, pre-1937, re-fronted 1945:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building.

Alterations: This building retains its 1945 storefronts. Only the doors have been replaced.

Description: This single-story brick fronted double storefront is present by 1937 (Sanborn) and was remodeled into its present form in 1945. Its frame east wall and metal covered north/rear wall betray its humbler and earlier origins. The plan measures 40 feet by 43 feet. The facade is plainly wrought and one minor point of interest is the slightly raised concrete foundation that underscores its front. There is a third left hand entry into 201-03 Fifth. The two storefronts, likely extant as of 1968, have centered entrances.

History: This building had its origins as a single-story frame warehouse that was re-fronted at a later date. Tenants included electrical contractors, refrigeration services, appliance shops, a coffee shop and record store.



Figure 84: Building looking northwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

513, 515, 517, 519, 521 Maple Street, Thompson Building, 1947:

Evaluation: This is a contributing building. Given that the actual facade is of concrete block construction, the lower wood storefront coverings are deemed to be reversible elements. The whole is treated as one building due to presumed simultaneous construction and unity of design and materials.

Alterations: The most impactful change was the addition of full-length wooden canopies across the storefront level and the upper front of the taller portion. In addition, vertical boards cover the storefronts.

Description: This is a one/two-story concrete block cluster of buildings, the central section being taller with lower bookend wings. The building has the same five narrow storefronts it started out with. The two-story core measures 34 feet by 49 feet, the west section 13 feet by 35 feet and the east one 22 feet by 28 feet. The front is devoid of ornamentation. Windows on the upper levels and other non-facade fronts are industrial metal sash.

History: Truman L. Thompson built this concrete block business building (*Express*, January 30, 1947). It consisted of five narrow storefronts. Tenants included a flower shop, café, barbershops, a roofing contractor, cleaners, union office, law office and paint contractor.



Figure 85: Building looking northwest (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

**415 Railroad Avenue, Rock Island Railroad
Passenger Depot, ca.1910-20:**

Evaluation: This is a contributing building. While this building was never in or near the district, it retains its architectural merit despite its move and does serve to preserve the district's railroad association, although visitors are potentially confused as to where the station and related tracks actually were.

Alterations: The building was moved to site 1983 and gained a rear wing. The low foundation is concrete block and a reconstructed south wooden deck emulates the depot function.

Description: This single-story frame depot consists of its longer now west wing, an off-center office bay, and shorter east wing. The interior plan is open but the building retains 4/4 lights and interior trim. The exterior has replacement siding across its base and stuccoed upper walls. Station signage is on the east gable end.

History: This depot was located two blocks east and was relocated to this site in 1983, losing its east end bathroom addition.



Figure 86: Building looking northeast (Jacobsen, 2017)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

District Property List and Tabulation:

Address	Year Built	Main Building contributing	Main Building Non-contributing	Secondary Building Contributing	Secondary Building Non-Contributing	Historic name, style if applicable, notes
4th Street						
201	1927	1				Spear's
202	1955		1			Iltis
300	1923	2				
5th Street						
Gateway arch					1(O)	Non-contributing object
100-02	1900	3				St. Joe Hotel
104	1904	4				Seyfert
106	1915		2			Freel Garage
110	1970		3			
111-13	1940s		4			
112	07-15	5				Ashworth
114	1900	6				Callibreath
115-17	42-49	7			1	Boyd's
116	1894	8			2	Boyd's
118	1894	9				Boyd's Block
120	1894	10				
122	1893	11				
123-25	-1937		5		3	
124	07-09	12				
Alley-126	N/A					Not counted
Alley-129	N/A					Not counted
127	1951	13				Ozimek Machine Shop
128	1910		6			Mott's
130	1897		7			Pringle
132-34	1905	14		1		Former brick wing now free standing, see Figure 5
131-33-35	1953	15				
136	05-06	16				Seyfert, tiny shed not counted

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

Address	Year Built	Main Building contributing	Main Building Non-contributing	Secondary Building Contributing	Secondary Building Non-Contributing	Historic name, style if applicable, notes
137	1900-01	Not counted				City Hall, Fire Station NRHP
138	1911	17				Ashworth
143-45	1913	18				Wegener
200	1946, 49	19				Seward Pharmacy, including 505 Maple
201	1893	20				Raaz, Includes 417 Maple
202	1927	21				Peter Pan
203	1900	22				Raaz, Includes 411-15 Maple
204	1915	23				
205	1897	24		1		
206	1896	25				Irwin
207	1898, 1952	26				Sorenson
208	1953	27				Jacobson
209	1900	28				Burt
210	1952	29				Banner
211	13-14	30				Burt
Alley- 212	N/A					Not counted
213-15	1942, 1946	31				WDM Hardware
214	1897		8			Slocum
216-18	1897					Not counted, NRHP listing pending
217	1949- 50	32				American Legion
219	1919	33				Security State Bank
220-22	1925, 1946	34				Masonic Block
221	1900	35				Security State Bank
224-26	1905	36				
225	1940	37				Sternagle
227	1947		9			
228	1901, 1920	38				First National Bank

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

Address	Year Built	Main Building contributing	Main Building Non-contributing	Secondary Building Contributing	Secondary Building Non-Contributing	Historic name, style if applicable, notes
Alley-229	N/A					
230	1920, 1964	39				C. Martin, bank addition but now separate
232	1988		10			Includes 508 Elm
234	1932	40				Vandenburg Drugs
233-35	1955	41				
304	1900		11			
308	2010		12			
312	1913, 1946	42		2		McLaren Funeral Home, garage with apartment, see Figure 14
318	1953-54	43				City Hall
Elm Street						
420-lot	N/A					Not counted, vacant lot
501-05-07	1924-36	44				
509-11-13	1946		13			
Maple Street						
400-02	1954	45				WDM Express
403-05	1920s		14			Iltis
408	1938	46				WDM Locker
409	1900	47				Raaz
411-13	1937	48				
513-19-21	1947	49				
Gazebo	1986				1(S)	Moveable structure at 521 Maple
Railroad Place						
415		50				Moved in
Totals		50	14	2	3 buildings, 1 structure, 1 object	

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

The district includes 50 primary contributing and 2 secondary contributing buildings (total 52, not counting 2 NRHP listed building); 14 primary non-contributing buildings and 3 secondary non-contributing buildings (total of 17) 1 non-contributing structure and 1 non-contributing object, for a total resource count of 71 buildings, and structures and objects.

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

Architects, Continued:

Douglas [Albert James], Rich [Herbert E.], Woodburn [Chester C.]
Gutterson, Frank A.
Keffer and Associates
Nelson, Robert N.
Proudfoot and Bird
Wetherell and Harrison

Builders, Continued:

Garmer and Stiles
Kenworthy and Fehn
Martin, J. Frank
Ridgway, Clayton
Rigler, E. B.
Rousch, H. J.
Youngerman, George

Statement of Significance:

The Valley Junction Commercial Historic District is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, on the local level, for its historical significance under Criteria C, architecture, and Criteria A, history, commerce and community planning and development. It derives its significance for the role it played serving as the commercial core of a railroad suburb that would transform itself into one of Iowa's largest suburban cities. The district period of significance is 1893-1967. This period ends with the National Register 50-year cutoff point for unexceptional significance because the district retained its commercial and community vibrancy past that point in time. Architecturally this ending date coincides with the expansion of the First National Bank within the district as well as the closing of the movie theater. Significant dates, 1893 and 1938, mark the formal incorporation of the town and the survival of its oldest building and the transition point where Valley Junction became West Des Moines.

Significance Narrative:

Four significant arguments apply to this district. The most compelling in terms of community historical identity is that suburban growth and development under the context of community planning and development. Suburban communities commonly develop in response to (or are engulfed by) proximity to an urban center. Valley Junction, an upstart new railroad town, obstinately located itself in the very westward face of Des Moines, the capital city and challenged it on many fronts even as it co-depended upon it. On the statewide level, no other comparable new town of its period would survive and then grow to become one of the state's major cities in its own right, and still retain an architecturally intact historic downtown along the way.

Valley Junction was one of a great many new towns that were established in the late 19th Century and pre-World War I years in Iowa in direct response to the finalization of the state's developing railroad grid. When the same railroad that made the town deserted the town, as was commonly the case, Valley Junction didn't dry up and

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blow away, but re-invented itself with a new name and a diversified its economy to both survive and grow. While the massive rail yards that made the town are long-gone, the contextual shadow of the railroads was fixed in the scale of the downtown, the vast majority of which was built while the railroad was a vital economic partner. Various public halls and fraternal rooms housed railroad union activities, multiple banks were established to handle railroad payrolls, and substantial portions of railroad paychecks were expended in local bars, only the nearby railroad track and the re-located passenger station directly evoke the railroad's centrality to the town.

Finally, a basic contextual association with commerce itself explains the continued vitality and expansion of the downtown even in the face of abandonment by the railroad and national economic downturns. The Valley Junction downtown was largely a self-contained and sufficient provider of commercial services throughout its history, despite the proximity of substantial capital city commercial and financial services. There was some degree of co-dependency of course, but the district always contained a full array of the largest classes of stores, a good number of banks. The mix of storefront dimensions suited both the small and the largest businesses. Arterial competition was slow to develop, focusing mostly on auto-related services and it wasn't until the mid-1960s that the core businesses, drug stores, groceries and department stores, began to shutter or relocate. The downtown economic vitality between 1893 and 1967 is evidenced by the impressive number of businesses that it housed as well as the survival of most of its banks during the Great Depression.

A Downtown Historical Overview:

Railroads can make or break a community, particularly when they make locational decisions for their coveted division points. The economics of abandoning established shops and yards for completely new locations defy ready understanding but this was the story of Valley Junction, located in the west central part of Polk County in Walnut Township. An entire new town would spring up when the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad relocated its facilities from Stuart and Brooklyn and plunked them onto a flat but flood-prone floodplain. While new towns were platted or even relocated to be on a rail line, Valley Junction's inception was unusual. It sprang from whole cloth once the railroad announced its intentions. In 1938 the railroad moved its facilities to Des Moines, leaving the town in the lurch.

Prior to 1893, Valley Junction was simply a rural station, located as the name states at the intersection of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad, which turned southwest from the junction, and the West Des Moines and Fort Dodge Railroad which ran westward, both continuing from Des Moines proper. The developers with fiscal and entrepreneurial muscle would come from Des Moines in the incorporated form of the Hawkeye Investment Company in early 1891. The town plat was filed for record on April 10, 1891 and the town of Valley Junction would incorporate two and a half years later, on October 9, 1893 (*Des Moines Register*, December 29, 1999; [https://apps.polkcountyiowa.gov/ADM/TI/442%20Cnty%20Sec_Twn_Rng%201890-1919%2078-81%2025-B%20\(1-153\)/STITCHED_0018.jpg](https://apps.polkcountyiowa.gov/ADM/TI/442%20Cnty%20Sec_Twn_Rng%201890-1919%2078-81%2025-B%20(1-153)/STITCHED_0018.jpg)).

Figure 90 depicts the well-established town of Valley Junction as it was in 1914. The downtown district is highlighted. The railroad shops and yards were located substantially west of the downtown, where space was available to the north of the Raccoon River. The west boundary of Des Moines, set nearly on top of the downtown, is noted on the right-hand side of the plat map. Placing the downtown so close to the Des Moines boundary, literally in what would soon become a corner of the expanding plat, meant that as Valley Junction would increasingly be far

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removed from the population center point as growth headed north and in particular, west. Still the functional centrality of the original downtown as the administrative center of West Des Moines continued into the late 1990s, well after it had lost its commercial dominance.

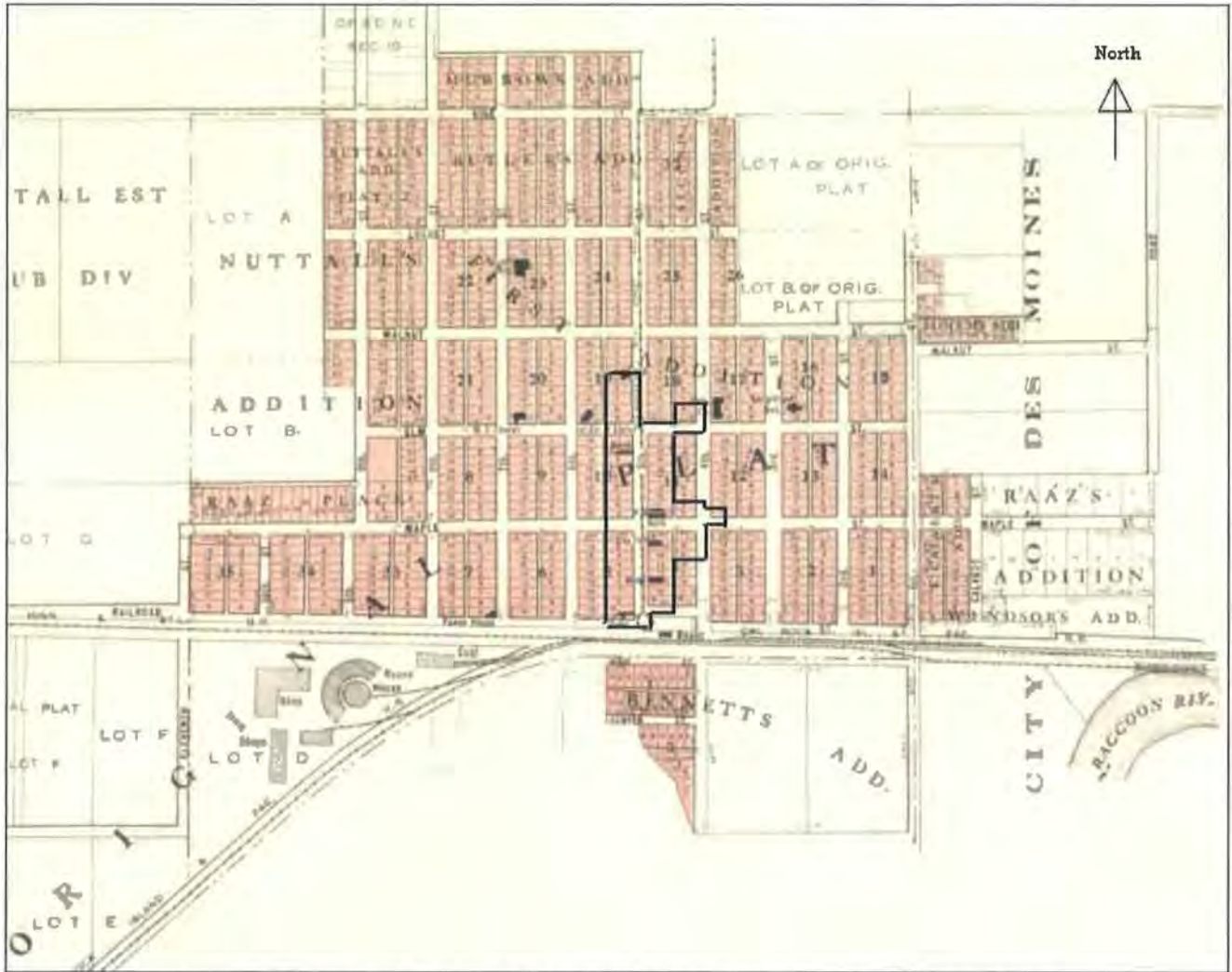


Figure 90: Valley Junction plats as of 1914 (district boundary annotated)
(Atlas and Plat Book of Polk County, Iowa 1914, p. 39)

The downtown simply overlaid atop the pre-existing village site centered at the future Fifth and Maple street intersection. The initial town population was typical of a railroad town, having an entrepreneurial mix of Northern European stock, while the railroad class of workers were largely Irish and Southern European. This class was substantial in size given the division point status of the town.

The downtown layout is that of a linear plan, being a little over two blocks in length. The dominant development rule was the most substantial blocks were built along the west side of Fifth Street, the principal street.

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The visually dominant larger building blocks are 100-02, 138, 216-18, 222 and 228 Fifth Street. The exception to this general trend was that four of the most important or architecturally significant buildings, 137 and 143-45 Fifth Street (city hall and the Wegener Block), 201 Fifth Street (Raaz block, the earliest surviving building and first bank), and 221 First Street (Security Bank, the second bank and first bank to push the downtown northward), are on the east side of the main street. A second rule, more functional, was that the south block of the developing downtown would contain all bars, industrial services and hotels. That relegation impacted the southern part of both sides of the 100s block, but the east side in particular, where lingering frame buildings were only replaced after the Great Depression.

New building construction is one measure of district growth over time. It excludes substantial improvements and lost buildings as well. The district as it now stands erected in three major growth phases as Table 1 shows. Nearly a third of surviving buildings were erected during the initial establishment, in a cadence that mirrored railroad facilities improvements. A relatively quiet pre-war period of 14 years 13 buildings or just a little less than one new building annually. What is of interest is the absence of new buildings 1916-18 (there was construction with 3 buildings dating to these years but none survive). There was also no overt construction 1926-31, the era of railroad strikes and cutbacks. Post-World War I growth resulted in 9 buildings in 6 years. Finally, post-World War II buildings averaged just about a new building each year. The downtown growth was complete by 1957 as far as new buildings were concerned. By that time space to build was exhausted and arterial commercial growth was the dominant factor.

Table 1, Dates of Extant District Buildings, 1893-Present

Phases	Buildings
1893-1901	19
1902-1909 ¹	7
1911-1915	6
1919-1925	9
1932-1942	7
1946-1957	14
Post-1968	3
Total	65

¹ While 7 buildings survive for this 8-year period the newspaper credited that number of new business buildings to 1905 alone (*Express*, December 28, 1905).

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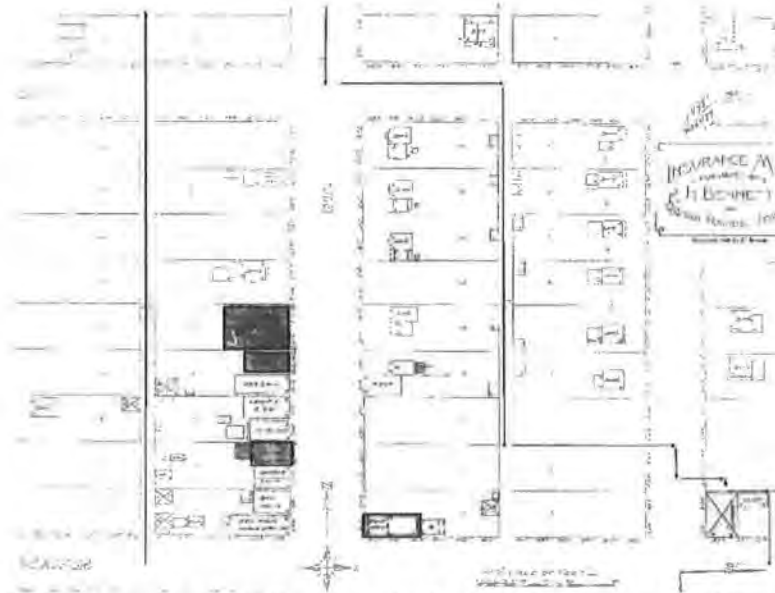


Figure 91a: District as of 1897 with extant buildings marked with black squares (the north part of the district above Maple Street) (Bennett Fire Insurance Company, 1897, district boundary added)

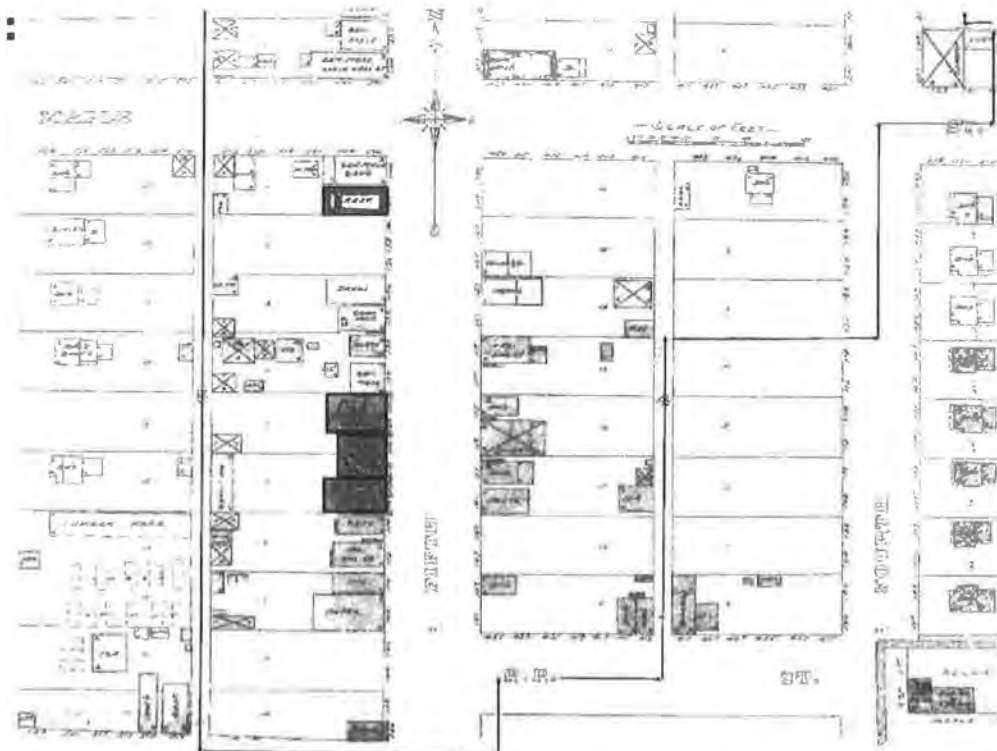


Figure 91b: District as of 1897 with extant buildings marked with black squares (the south part of the district) (Bennett Fire Insurance Company, 1897, district boundary added)

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Note in Figure 91a that only the west side of Fifth north of Maple Street (the south half of the block) is commercially built up and mostly in frame construction. Henry Raaz's bank and a small frame restaurant are on the opposite side of Fifth Street. No commercial buildings front onto Maple Street. Figure 91b depicts the early west side of Fifth Street dominance in brick building construction. Railroad Avenue deviates north and around the railroad depot grounds at the lower right corner.

It took until the late 1890s for all of the relocated railroad assets and the workers to finally reach Valley Junction and these incremental injections fostered sustained downtown growth. Valley Junction was officially one of four Rock Island Railroad division points in Iowa, the others being at Council Bluffs, Brooklyn and Davenport. Given that Valley Junction was mostly a new community of relocated residents from other towns, there were no community celebrations of traditional national holidays. Everybody simply went home to their hometowns. The final major rail shop and yard improvements came in 1906-07. As late as 1902 there were no local formal Memorial Day or Fourth of July programs (Valley Junction *Express*, July 6, 1900; June 13, 1902; *Daily Iowa Capital*, December 22, 1896; September 1, 1897; *Des Moines Gazette*, December 28, 1899).



Figure 92: Early frame storefronts on the east side of the 100s block of Fifth Street, ca.1900, (Jordan House Library and Archives)

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Figure 93: Lower Fifth Street looking northeast, ca.1907-12 with the City Hall at the right and an unpaved main street (Jordan House Library and Archives)

The claim of 2,000 residents was verified in early 1905 and this qualified the town to be a city of the second class (a population over 15,000 were of the first class, lesser communities were simply incorporated towns) which required wards, separate voting precincts and ward-based aldermen. The *Des Moines News* for perhaps the first time now suggested that it would be timely to reduce the corporate name to “Valley” dropping “Junction” which “exactly fit when the town was first laid out, but it savors of a cross roads place, and conveys that impression abroad” today. The *Express* concurred urging “It is time to put aside village ways.” Annual construction end-of-year reports tracked local downtown improvements but the last of these appeared in 1906 (*Des Moines News*, May 5, 1905; February 9, 1906; *Valley Junction Express*, August 10, 1905; December 27, 1906).



Figure 94: Lower Fifth Street looking northwest from Railroad Avenue, ca.1910 (Jordan House Library and Archives)

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The matter of organized labor is an important one relative to the subject town and little is known about its presence and influence. In 1909 the *Iowa Unionist* enumerated the town's "friends of labor" in mid-1907 and promoted the businesses that favored unions. The roster included Ed Wegener (St. Joe Hotel), Fred Henshaw (boots, shoes), Victor Arbuckle (grocer), Charles Waldron (jeweler), W. L. Stroup (grocer), C. E. Diehl (mayor), W. J. Rankin (city marshal), Carl Miller (drugs), Mrs. M. C. Swan (milliner), M. L. Jacobson (clothier), F. D. Gray (meats) and William Carmody (drugs). A rare fraternal hall directory from 1909 enumerated 19 organizations that used that dominant hall. Railroad unions were the Switchman's Union and their auxiliary, and the Car Men's Brotherhood. The Miner's Union was another labor group (*Iowa Unionist*, July 19, 1907; *Valley Junction Express*, May 20, 1909).



Figure 95: Upper Fifth Street looking northwest from Railroad Avenue, ca. 1908
(Jordan House Library and Archives)

In Figure 95 the west side of Fifth Street north of Maple Street was well built up in brick buildings. The Odd Fellows (216-18 Fifth Street) and the original First National Bank (216-18 Fifth Street) buildings are just to the left of the interurban car, the gap between them being the future site of the Masonic Block (228 Fifth Street).

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Figure 96: Upper Fifth Street looking north from mid-block, 1910
(Jordan House Library and Archives)

Figure 96 largely duplicates the view of figure 95 but also shows the solid two-story brick buildings by then in place on the east side of Fifth Street. Figure 97 was taken from a midway point in the 100s block and shows the City Hall and the still vacant lot destined to house the three-story Wegener Block.



Figure 97: Lower Fifth Street looking north from mid-block, 1910
(Jordan House Library and Archives)

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Figure 98: Lower Fifth Street looking northwest from Railroad Avenue, ca. 1914
(Jordan House Library and Archives)

Figure 98 nicely contrasts the near-solid brick frontage on the west side of Fifth Street in sharp contrast to the frame buildings south of City Hall on the east side.

The Great War fully absorbed the town's attention but no surviving building has any direct association apart from public halls where any number of public gatherings were held.



Figure 99: "A Live town for live people" upper Fifth Street looking south from Elm Street, 1924 showing the two new banks left and right (Jordan House Library and Archives)

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Figure 99 depicts what was the north end of the downtown. The two successive Security Bank buildings are to the left, just between the trees, and residences still flank those buildings. The First National Bank is at the right, with the precursor building of the bank annex (230 Fifth Street) to the north of. The ribbed poles that supported the interurban wires are visible along the curb lines.

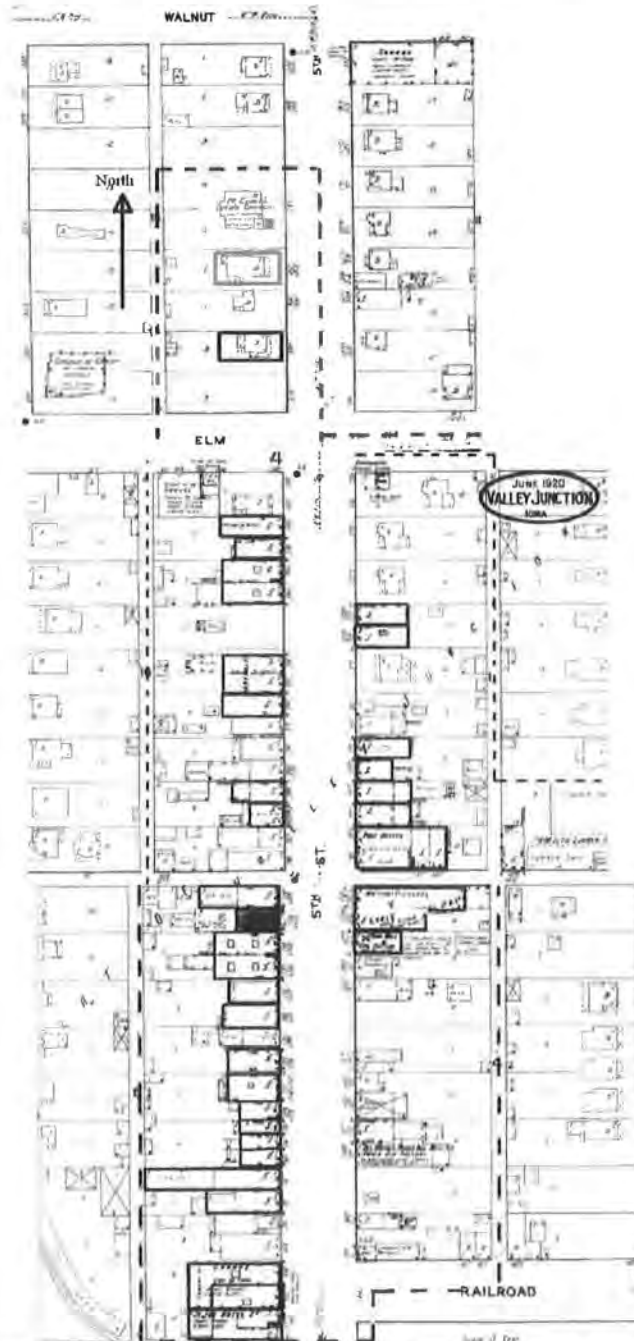


Figure 100: 1920 Sanborn annotated with extant buildings

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Figure 100 depicts a 1920 downtown that ends below Elm Street and remains dominated by the level of west side (of Fifth Street) up-building.



Figure 101: Lower Fifth Street looking southwest across Maple Street, ca. 1922
(Jordan House Library and Archives)

Figure 101 shows the original Lyric Theater marquee (far left) and the mostly brick buildings along the west side of Fifth Street. Figure 102 nicely contrasts the frame mostly single-story storefronts that lines the east side of Fifth Street south of the City Hall. Note the broad concrete sidewalks.



Figure 102: The east side of the 100s block, looking northeast
(Des Moines Register, March 2, 1933)

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Building improvements resumed in 1939 (with the Art Deco style Vandenburg Drugstore (234 Fifth Street) being the sole Depression era new commercial building) with the use of glass block, ceramic tile and modernistic metal storefront components. The Lyric Theater received its present marquee. With the onset of World War II the only available construction material was concrete block so for some years, any new downtown building used that core material. This mode of construction resumed in 1945-46 and in the spring of 1946 the *Express* reported "Many Concrete Structures Are Almost Finished, West Des Moines is now undergoing the greatest business building boom in its long history. These new improvements are right in the heart of the business district and embrace a number of new concrete business buildings, along with several new brick and glass fronts (West Des Moines *Express*, July 11, August 22, November 7, 14, 1940; May 7, July 17, 1942; April 11, 1946).

The Second World War would increasingly dominate all aspects of life in West Des Moines. The newer Security Bank building (219 Fifth Street) housed the War Price and Rationing Board #2 which operated there from mid-1942 until September. The local Red Cross chapter was located next door in 221 Fifth Street. A major downtown feature was removed in October-November 1942 when some 70 tons of interurban steel rails were pulled up using Works Progress Administration workers (Figure 103) (West Des Moines *Express*, June 25, August 13, 20, October 22, November 12, 1942; September 27, 1945).



Figure 103: Interurban track removal, further south in 200s block looking north (Jordan House Library and Archives)

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Figure 104: Lower Fifth Street looking southwest across Elm Street, ca. 1945 showing the undamaged Ashworth Masonic Building (center) before it burned (Jordan House Library and Archives)

The 1947 zoning map overlaid a heavy industrial district atop the southeast quadrant of the downtown, effectively grandfathering a mixed land use along the lower east side of Fifth Street. The zoning simply acknowledged the existing land use mix in that area. Commercial buildings could still be built in the industrial area. (West Des Moines *Express*, January 8, 1947; March 4, 1948; Des Moines *Tribune*, January 16, 1948).



Figure 105: The new city hall-fire station, looking southwest 1953 (Jordan House Library and Archives)

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Figure 106: Downtown with extant buildings outlined (1952 Sanborn Map)

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Figure 106 depicts the 1952 downtown that by this time included almost all of the extant historic district. Only the east side of the 100s block of Fifth Street had yet to be built up. This happened rapidly during the mid-1950s and the Iowa State Liquor Store found new quarters there. Figure 107 depicts the southern portion of the downtown. The former depot park along Railroad Avenue, long the domain of filling stations and oil storage tanks, was now cleared away for parking. All of the long-delayed infilling of buildings along the lower east side of Fifth Street is complete by this time.



Figure 107: Aerial view looking northwest from Railroad and Third streets
(West Des Moines *Express*, October 25, 1962)

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Figure 108: looking north from Maple Street, 200s block Fifth Street, October 1, 1964
(Courtesy City of West Des Moines)



Figure 109: Upper Fifth Street looking southeast across Elm Street, ca.1968, The downtown main street became one-way running north in 1970 (Jordan House Library and Archives; *Des Moines Register*, June 2, 1970).

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Figures 110-111: [left] Upper Fifth looking southwest from Elm, ca.1970, and [right] the parking-alleyway system, 1980 (Jordan House Library and Archives; Des Moines Register, February 23, 1980)

Downtown Infrastructural Improvements:

- 1899-volunteer fire company equipped
- 1900-01-Ten 2,000 candlepower street lights for the downtown and 17 fire hydrants, City Hall/firehouse built
- 1905-06-Capital City Gas Company service extended to the downtown
- 1913-local or municipal ownership of the electric power plant is finally repudiated and the Des Moines Electric Company buys and operates it, providing regular service after a long and fitful service history
- 1917-18-new electric arc downtown street lights, globe gas street lights and asphalt paving in the downtown, storm and sanitary sewer system
- 1918-first fire truck
- 1947-20 new street lights
- 1953-new city hall and fire station, 300s block of Fifth Street and Elm Street widened per fire fighting needs

Commercial Architectural Significance:

Its significant architecture embraces a contiguous and cohesive range of primarily brick (with a few surviving frame) commercial buildings that fully represent the spatial and architectural evolution of the downtown over time. This range includes an impressive array of well-preserved substantial and elaborate commercial examples that are not usually found in a non-county seat Iowa downtown context. The majority of the buildings are two stories in height, although there is one three-story example and a few early single-story buildings. The majority of and the largest examples of the latter are post-World War II concrete block designs with brick facings. The topography is flat and the district layout is linear with commercialized cross streets. The developing buildings adhered strictly to the established plat so that almost without exception, the width cadence is that of a half-lot (25 feet) or full lot double-storefront (50

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feet). The Masonic Block (220-222 Fifth) is the only obvious exception with its upstairs south end stairway hyphen that it shared. The district substitutes corbelled brick parapets and cornices for pressed metal ones exclusively. Its upper facade ornamentation adheres to a localized trend that patterns recessed brick panels in rows across the upper facade and/or the parapet frontage. The majority of commercial buildings lack any formal stylistic lines. Blocks, corner buildings, banks and public buildings are the exceptions. Architectural merit rests on ornamental brickwork, brick coloration, and scale and massing. It is also supported by the unusual survival of multiple examples of each phase in the district's development, including several original frame examples. Pure stylistic examples are rare. These buildings reflect at least some association with formal architectural styles:

Italianate Style: 201, 216-18 Fifth Street, 409 Maple Street

Queen Anne Style: 100-02, 124, 126, 132-34, 136 Fifth Street

Classical Revival Style: 137, 138, 143-45, 201 (as remodeled), 203, 228, 312 (residence) Fifth Street

Renaissance Revival Style: 220-22 Fifth Street

Art Deco Style: 225, 234 Fifth Street

Moderne/Modernistic Style: 200, 217 225 230, 234 Fifth Street

This downtown was fortunate, the fire threat never impacting more than a single building and few of those at that. As such the district's commercial architecture consists of substantial surviving buildings from each of its successive building phases. At the same time, the long-term financial prosperity of the downtown meant that the storefronts of even the earliest buildings were replaced wholesale, particularly post-World War II and there are no original historic storefronts and no structural cast iron structural materials, apart from beams that cap the storefronts. Six buildings retain visible steel beams with rosettes above their transom lines (100-02, 106, 136, 206 209, 216-18 Fifth Street).

The district's architecture directly interprets its historic function and development in a more direct manner than most districts do. Several developmental rules applied to this downtown. First, the "lower district" being the 100's on Fifth Street between Railroad and Maple streets, was the saloon zone, the realm of railroad workers who were off on a tear. It was also the light industrial or services part of the town and community. Normally stables and blacksmith shops are off of the main street, relegated to the periphery of the downtown. Here they had front-row seats. The second rule of this downtown was that the west side of the main street was always the more substantial, the street side where brick buildings first arose. This trend, overlaid on the first one, translated to the east side of the 100's block always being of predominantly frame construction. This of course results in no original surviving frame buildings. A third trend is that this downtown always had its share of frame store buildings and retains a few today. Many still survive near the downtown, having been moved and rebuilt as residences or additions to residences. The fourth trend is that this downtown had to expand north being landlocked to the south so its architectural story expands in that direction and in general the newer the building the more likely it is located towards the district's northern reaches. This northward gravitation was slow and fitful and as late as World War II it remained confined to the two blocks between Railroad and Elm streets.

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Significant Historical Contexts, An Expanded Application:

Suburban Growth and Community Planning and Development:

This significance argument focuses on the interplay between suburb and capital city as well as the relationship between Valley Junction and comparable communities across the state.

Urban conflict necessarily arises when established cities confront intransigent suburbs. The residents of Valley Junction knew that their community formally mattered in 1894 when their town name was first added to the title of the Polk County directory, along with a separate directory section. None of the numerous other emerging suburbs that clustered around the capital city would be so honored. Most of these would simply disappear as they were annexed to the city, the other exceptions being Clive, and Urbandale (*Valley Junction Express*, June 29, July 13, November 23, December 27, 1894).

Des Moines had expanded west and east, assuming by 1893 an elongated rectangle that measured four miles by two miles. Impertinent Valley Junction now represented what was assumed to be a brief obstacle to westward growth. The initial struggles were over very substantial matters. The first one was about drinking water. Des Moines used the Raccoon River as its water source and Valley Junction was now positioned upstream from where that water was secured. Beginning in the fall of 1897 the new town was blamed for using the Raccoon River as its sewer. The City of Des Moines passed a contamination ordinance but the Valley Junction folks ignored it as state law allowed the aggrieved city to control these problems but only within a five-mile radius. The Junction folks argued that the contamination source was more than five miles distant "by river." Thus initiated, this row would continue until 1919 when a sewer treatment plant was finally established. The water issue never went away and in its final phase in 1957 the city went to legal war with Des Moines over a projected series of water wells that were to be driven close to the Raccoon River and the ensuing legal struggle continued into mid-1958 when the two cities agreed to jointly construct a shared water reservoir. Des Moines claimed priority water rights (*Daily Iowa Capital*, September 4, October 20, 1897; *Des Moines Daily News*, October 23, 1896; *West Des Moines Express*, January 10, June 20, 1957; April 10, 1958).

Finding a building site for what would become Fort Des Moines #3 was a rich federal prize that Des Moines very much wanted. A serious effort was made to have one of two sites in close proximity to Valley Junction selected as the location for massive military post in 1900. It was a near-successful coup but the fort finally went to the capital city (*Valley Junction Express*, April 8, 1898; April 13, 27, November 9, 1900).

Annexation was a long-term concern to the new town. The matter first emerged in early 1902 when the town council voted to annex land to the north of the city boundaries. The gained ground totaled 240 acres and 300 residents. The *Des Moines Daily News* printed a tongue-in-cheek column that warned that the town would "finally determine to annex Des Moines" itself. There was also concern that Valley Junction residents were increasingly in a position to seek county and township political offices (*Des Moines Daily News*, February 20, December 11, 1902).

Valley Junction's history revolves around its early disavowal of temperance. Because state liquor laws commonly defaulted to county level oversight when liquor matters were under consideration, the little suburb commonly found itself at legal odds with Polk County, which the citizens equated with Des Moines. Historically the

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town restricted its bars to three in number but as November 1913 the Valley Junction hostelries were the only ones in operation in the county. Predictably, Valley Junction was immediately a destination point for what appeared to be the wholesale liquor trade. One local saloon was employing 22 bartenders. The Des Moines chief of police established a liquor embargo and famously seized a wagon train of beer headed to the suburb. Statewide prohibition would come in 1916, well before the nation did (1921). County raids would continue and the Valley Junction downtown was never free of empty liquor and beer bottles (Valley Junction *Express*, November 27, December 4, 1913; July 27, 1916; October 18, 25, 1917; February 21, 1918 Des Moines *National Democrat*, November 27, 1913; Des Moines *Tribune*, November 30, 1913, December 1, 1913; Valley Junction *Express*, 1913).

Municipal paranoia was riled when the Des Moines post office sought bids to convert the Valley Junction post office into a branch of the capital city's postal organization under the guise of offering free delivery to homes with the promise that the sub-station would retain the local name. The *Express* enumerated past grievances against the dominant capital city, the most recent being a legislative effort to force Valley Junction to pay \$80,000 against shared sewer services. With regard to stopping the postal coup the same source advised "Let Valley people at once get busy and send remonstrance's to the department against this effort to obliterate our city as a self-governing identity..." The final annexation threat came in 1937-38 when the railroad abandoned Valley Junction and relocated to East Des Moines. Annexation was an attractive alternative to self-governance as the economic future of the town seemed to be in doubt. Annexation would have helped finance the town's increasing infrastructural costs (Valley Junction *Express*, October 30, 1919).

In mid-1905 the *Daily News* predicted that "Wise men predict that Valley Junction will double its population every five years until it is absorbed by Des Moines." By early 1907 the *Express* was celebrating the town's position as "the second city in size and importance in Polk County". In 1911 the *Daily News* noted "Valley Junction Forging Ahead--Des Moines' little sister, Valley Junction, is snugly in the list of the rapidly developing towns in Iowa that have cast off their village swaddling clothes. Really it is growing so fast that the cosmopolitan citizenship does not relish the appellation, 'Junction,' and it may be no surprise that in the near years they will insist on being geographical known as Valley City." The same source added "The merchant houses easily vie with those of Des Moines in all wares and the First National Bank ranks among the best in smaller towns of the state" (Valley Junction *Express*, January 23, August 8, 1907; Des Moines *Daily News*, June 1, 1905; June 18, 1911).

Valley Junction's successful story was duly noted in the 1912 Des Moines municipal history. Author Johnson Brigham repeated its status as being the county's second largest city, and credited it with having 3,000 inhabitants. Johnson noted the railroad and coal field assets along with "electric lights, waterworks, gas, telephones, street cars, and practically all the conveniences of a modern city" (Johnson, Vol. 1, p. 696).

Town residents were chaffed by what they thought was a big city disdain for their little burb. Newly-elected mayor Jesse Compton took public issue with his suburb being no "Jay village but [a] regular city." His particular complaint was that Valley Junction was the habitual fall guy on vaudeville stages. A resolution was to be prepared for distribution to Des Moines theater owners theaters to instruct their actors to refrain from the little bursts of wit which originated several thousand years ago..." (Des Moines *Daily News*, August 19, 1913).

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In 1946 the West Des Moines Commercial Club considered renumbering the city's streets so as to be a continuation of Des Moines' numbered streets. This notion was rejected by the new planning commission and they remain distinctly uncoordinated to this day (West Des Moines *Express*, June 6, December 3, 5, 1946).

Inter-community animosity was rekindled post-World War II in early February 1960 the Des Moines *Tribune* accused the West Des Moines mayor for under-reporting municipal traffic convictions to the state. The city received a State Audit as a result of the allegation. The *Express* termed the incident "another lively chapter in a 10-year old feud" and lauded its mayor "whose administration has thwarted our Big Brother of Locust Street in a number of its pet projects, such as sewers, annexations and news releases [Mayor Giles] has learned this week that you can't win 'em all." The *Express* closed with "Meanwhile suspicion is mounting up that the Tribune's article is simply one of its long series to prove that nothing good can ever happen in the suburbs. Especially this one" (West Des Moines *Express*, February 4, 1960).

Over time, West Des Moines and other western suburbs solidly halted the westward advance of Des Moines and when highways and later, interstate highways were being planned and built, the neighboring communities had to cooperate in their overall planning. In late 1964 the magazine *Business and Industry* observed "To many Des Moines residents West Des Moines is a barnacle. True, West Des Moines does not have a hospital, nor an airport, nor a technical high school, nor a paid fire department, nor a college. It uses Des Moines hospitals, recreational buildings educational institutions, cultural centers and transportation." Continuing, the same source added "But West Des Moines fights back and says it contributes to Des Moines cultural activities, patronizes its stores and service establishments, pays for its hospital services and for its transportation needs." Of course, the reality was that of every suburb, that taxes there were comparatively low and per the *Business and Industry* article "What is appealing about life in West Des Moines is that everything--most everything--is new...It is life in a small town near a big city. So they buy their houses in West Des Moines and work in the city..." (*Business and Industry*, November 1964).

In reality, there was a well-established pattern of cooperation between Valley Junction and Des Moines that was a mutual community benefit. Des Moines contracted sewer services, the provision of manufactured gas service, provided its parks and entertainments, and even shared school resources. Hired school services even resulted in a potential consolidation of the several municipal school districts in 1913 (*Iowa Unionist*, November 18, 1913; Valley Junction *Express*, September 11, 1913).

A much-valued interurban service obviated the suburb from paying for streetcar or even bus service for many years and absent the interurban it is doubtful that streetcar service would have been established. This was the first interurban extension from Des Moines, and while further westward extensions from Valley Junction never materialized, the success of this line led to other more substantial line extensions from the capital city. Car service arrived in the fall of 1900, and its tracks followed the downtown's main street to a south-end turnaround. A long-enduring bone of contention was the fare that was charged, being double what other suburbs paid (Des Moines *Daily News*, April 28, 1899; June 16, 1900).

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Figures 87-88: A typical interurban car, 1900, Maple Street intersection looking west from Fifth Street, left (Jordan House Library and Archives): An Electric "curbliner" (instituted in 1941) on Maple Street, 1960 looking northeast, right (Courtesy of Earl Short)

Despite the long-running battles over water source and sewage treatment, in 1926 the two cities quietly entered into a perpetual contract with Des Moines to handle its sewage treatment. A substantial up-front payment by Valley Junction made the necessary connections possible and annual payments were made in successive ten-year periods. The third decade of the agreement was to have charged West Des Moines 50 cents a head of its population. Des Moines leaders and their legal department were surprised to learn about the arrangement claiming that perpetual agreements were illegal (*West Des Moines Express*, May 30, 1946).

The West Des Moines the War Price and Rationing Board #2 (219 Fifth Street) had authority over the west part of Des Moines as well as its own community, during the Second World War, effecting the daily lives of 50,000 residents in the two cities. At its height it had 11 employees and only closed down in late September 1945 just after Victory Over Japan Day (*West Des Moines Express*, June 25, August 13, 20, October 22, 1942; September 27, 1945).

Valley Junction and its current embodiment, West Des Moines is a singular Iowa urban phenomenon if one parses the criteria. If one seeks out examples of Iowa towns that were never a county seat, experienced a relatively late date of establishment (late 1880s to World War I), were established in very close proximity to a major city, enjoyed sustained population growth throughout its history, as a result have a present-day population that is comparable to the state's larger cities, and have a substantial historic commercial downtown, there are no other examples in the state. Two cities, Bettendorf in Scott County and Urbandale, in Polk County, match most of these descriptors. Neither city has a historic commercial core.

Late 19th and early 20th Century Town Growth and Community Planning and Development:

This significance argument focuses on the particular nature and pace of Valley Junction's downtown growth with a consideration of the role played by community planning. Key sub-themes under this section are overall growth, taxes and infrastructure and localized economic downturns and gains., and Subordinate contexts that defined or reflected its developing self identity were flooding, fire protection, and its overall evolving community identity.

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Sources of wealth: Railroads, Agriculture, Coal and Industry:

The survival let alone the growth of Valley Junction was dependent on several major local employers and the loss or accession of these impacted the community. These successive interests were the railroads, coal mines, agriculture and finally industry. Railroads could simply pick up their shops and division points as this town's origin shows and they could relocate on a whim, as they had done in 1892, devastating several other now former railroad centers.

The new town had the double advantage of being the exchange point (junction) between two railroads as well as a key agricultural shipping point as a result of this railroad access. The town's foundation first coincided with a national economic downturn known as the "Panic of 1893" that lasted until 1897. The "golden age of agriculture" which represented a nation-wide agricultural prosperity, followed and ended only with the post-World War I peacetime transition that began in 1918. This era was caused by overall farm modernization and rapidly rising commodity prices that outstripped even increasingly mechanized operating costs. Valley Junction was well positioned to thrive from its inception, being initially financed by railroad relocation and then by the wealth that was generated by area farmers and stock raisers (<http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h792.html>; https://iowahist.uni.edu/Social_Economic/Teacher's_Guide_pdfs/Theme%20Introduction%20Unit%20II%20).

Valley Junction was well positioned to dominate a large and very productive agricultural area, serving as a key shipping point and taking advantage of its railroad advantages. By 1911 Valley Junction was known throughout the country as one of the largest hog shipping points in the middle west. The local stock yards belonging to J. S. Stockton & Co. claimed that "their lowest average in several years has been 200,000 hogs" *Des Moines Daily News*, June 18, 1911).

Valley Junction suffered through a number of rumored railroad removals or force reductions. The first of these came in mid-1904 with a threatened relocation to Moline, Illinois, and obituaries were being written for the young town. There was a one-third force reduction that summer but by mid-October the shops were busier than ever before and by early 1905 the workforce was the largest in the past five years with a monthly payroll of \$60,000. The next scare came in April-May 1908 with the shops being in operation just 18 days out of two months, with another closing in mid-June. All was back to normal by July 2 (*Des Moines Capital*, August 18, October 14, December 9, 1904; January 12, 1905; *Cedar Rapids Republican*, August 9, 1904; *Valley Junction Express*, May 21, 28, July 2, 1908).

The May 1913 rumor that the Rock Island would remove its shops to Des Moines symbolically coincided with the construction of the Wegener Block (143-45 Fifth Street), the town's largest commercial block. Real estate investors were panicked and the *Tribune* reported that it wasn't until mid-August that real estate values recovered "from their last depression caused by the rumors of a removal of the Rock Island shops from the town." The same source noted that some townspeople discounted the severity of losing the shops, but advised a majority held "that the shops, if not dominating the destiny of the town, at least are a very necessary adjunct." The upshot of the false removal rumor was the reverse, the consolidation of the origination point of all division Rock Island trains including the Short Line routes. This translated to 25 passenger trains in addition to the four M & St. L. trains daily. This translated in turn to even greater pay day receipts, the shops alone increasing by \$10,000 a month (*Des Moines Tribune*, May 13, September 18, 1913).

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Railroad matters stabilized until 1919 when another rail strike occurred. The first serious strike involved 1,400 workers and began on July 1. The first organizational effort following the walkout was to register the strikers in a mass meeting in the Odd Fellows hall (216-218 Fifth Street). Area coal miners also went on strike that same month. By early September after five months on strike businesses in Des Moines were burdened with accumulated credit allowed the striking families and a dozen groceries had closed. The Valley Junction retailers were no doubt also suffering. The strike would continue for 22 months and it is thought that the strike experience would finally convince the Rock Island to abandon its Valley Junction hub. On the railroad side of the strike, 200 African American strike breakers were at work in the Junction yards and shops and they drew the attention of the area Ku Klux Klan. A threatening letter was distributed and the county sheriff pledged the safety of the imported workers. A tally of all downtown businesses shows that 15 disappeared from the record in 1919, as do 10 more in 1920 and 36 in 1922. Disappearances thereafter are reduced to just a few annually (Des Moines *Tribune*, June 22, July 1, 25, September 6, 7, 1922; Jacobsen, "Master List").

The railroad yards and shops were gone in 1937 and the loss of local newspapers hinders the determining of the immediate and long-term impact. The well-known impact was the renaming of the town as West Des Moines. The early 1920s strike brought measurable African-American and Hispanic communities to the town.

The first area coal mine was discovered in 1899 and by 1911 half a dozen substantial coal mines were providing employment and business to the town. A new and massive Portland Cement plant (secured in June 1907), promising 500-600 new jobs. The plant remained in operation until recent times. With the loss of the railroad yards and shops in 1937 the struggling town turned to industrial recruitment. These manufacturing and chemical firms played a key role in westward expansion and finally, in drawing commercial services away from the downtown (Des Moines *Daily News*, June 18, 1911; Valley Junction *Express*, June 6, 9, 1906).

The final sub-theme under the town growth heading is one of community identity. This topic has already been addressed when the relationship between the town and nearby Des Moines was discussed. Being a "railroad town" was a mixed blessing. Wealth and financial stability was leavened with the instability that strikes or shutdowns brought to a single-industry community. The town struggled with the symbolic implications of its railroad brand, "junction" being deemed as being hardly a proper name for a growing town, and "valley" was an unhelpful generic term. As early as 1915 substitute town names included "Vallevue," "Des Moines Valley" and "Ashworth Valley." State Curator Edgar Harlan warned that a name change would cause legal and historical confusion but then went on to recommend "Leafland" given the town's use of tree types for its cross street names (Des Moines *Capital*, May 7, 14, 1915).

The long-enduring campaign to rename the town enjoyed renewed support in early 1931. The Commercial Club pushed petitions favoring the new name of "West Des Moines" and realized half of its 800 signature goal within the first week. The supporters predicted that under the new title the town would gain "significant state and national prestige" and that industries would be attracted to a suburban location having metropolitan advantages. The town had apparently already lost some if not all of the railroad shop function by this time as the petitioners also argued that the old name was no longer applicable as its railroad origin was already "past history." The issue went to a special election twice and lost. The matter would remain dormant for six more years (Des Moines *Tribune*, May 27, 1931; Oelwein *Daily Register*, September 3, 1931).

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The West Des Moines Club was formed in 1935 to continue to push the name change idea and it was the club that paid for a special election. Pro-name change petitions garnered 1,123 signatures which were more than half of the qualified voter headcount. The opposition however was organized and warned that the change would increase enable the county to make property assessments the same as in Des Moines, leading to higher taxes, and that the new name would pave the way for annexation by the capital city. The Postal Department threatened that even if the town changed its name, the local post office name would not change due to potential confusion between the similar city names. Mayor P. L. Riley exclaimed "I know this will help us. It is just what 'Valley' needed. We are ready to go to town." The city council acted later in the month to legally make the change and effective New Year's Day, 1938 the citizenry awoke in their newly re-titled city (Des Moines *Tribune*, December 8, 21, 1937; Des Moines *Register*, December 1, 8, 1937).

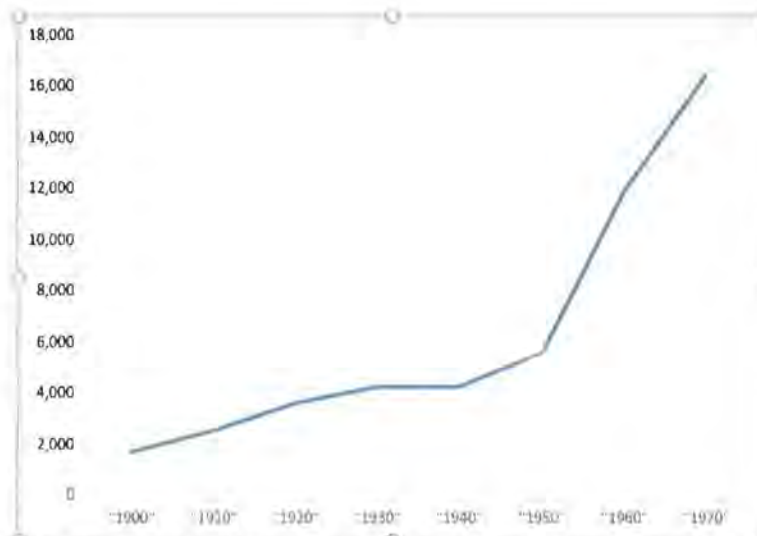


Chart 1: Valley Junction/West Des Moines Population Growth, 1900-1970

<http://www.iowadatacenter.org/archive/2011/02/citypop.pdf>

Chart 1 traces the substantial early population growth of the town with an expected hiatus in growth during the Great Depression years. Exponential growth followed, fueled by postwar prosperity and the interstate highway system in particular. The latter would play a key role in expediting westward expansion and annexation. The current city now covers just under 40 square miles.

West Des Moines continued to function as a small town and it wasn't until 1946-48 that zoning, an initial and unsuccessful bond issue for a new city hall, and the first large-scale annexation efforts began. The first successful annexation produced a Des Moines *Register* headline that read "West D. M. No Railroad Village Now." The same source note that since its name change in 1938 "the city rapidly has been outgrowing the valley that led to its original name." By 1954 the city had a modern city hall, and along with the new American Legion building and two schools, the city finally had three buildings that met air raid shelter standards. The first annual progress edition was produced in 1955 by the *Express*. These would continue to appear for decades but this was the first year that so much growth

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was experienced that the town and its newspaper claimed bragging rights (Des Moines *Register*, April 2, 1950; West Des Moines *Express*, February 4, 1954; October 1955).

In early 1968 the *Register* could proclaim of the growing city "Its Valley Junction Days Are Gone." As of 1947 the city encompassed two square miles. By 1968 it exceeded 17 square miles. The same source also ran another similar article that same year titled "New Image Presented by W. D. M." in which the typical resident 'wears a well-pressed business suit, owns a modern home and reasonably new car and has most of the other appendages associated with suburban living.' This image contrasted with the long-gone man "who worked for the railroad, wore the typical railroader's working clothes and lived in a modest house." The article otherwise stressed the remarkable growth of the city now with a population of 15,500, its push for industry and the increasing infrastructural demands that growth necessitated (Des Moines *Register*, March 10, July 25, 1968).

The Significance of Downtown Commerce:

The physical manifestation of a 74-year significance in commercial history is the historic commercial district itself. This context will be treated in four categories; the scale, diversity and longevity of commercial services, the modernization of commercial practices, the role of banking and the location of banks and public service downtown, and commercial organization and promotion.

The all district businesses database covering the founding of the downtown through 1967 enumerates nearly 1,100 individual businesses that comprised the economic heart blood of the district. Some of these lasted a few months, others many decades.

Table 2: Representative Headcounts by Business Type, 1893-1968

Business Type	Number
Barbers	38
Confectioners	21
Drugs	20
Dry goods/General	23
Furniture	13
Groceries	58
Hardware	14
Jewelers	5
Meats	22
Restaurants/Cafes	85
Recreation:	
Saloons/beverages	32
Billiard Halls	24
Transportation Related:	
Auto-related	24
Auto garages	5

While these tallies in Table 2 include miniscule and short-term firms along with substantial double-store fronted long-term ones as well as reiterations of partner mixes and changing ownership, the point to be made is that a non-county seat town fostered a 75-year commercial vitality that was the envy of many a larger community. There

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wasn't a retail or service classification that wasn't well represented within Valley Junction's downtown mix at any point of its commercial history.

The database traces a substantial usage of the community name in business titles. While it is likely that most of these examples technically used the full "Valley Junction" brand in their titles, 28 firms used just "Valley" while 25 more used the entire brand name. A dozen used "West Des Moines" in their names after the 1938 corporate name change. Many of the firms using the old town name simply updated their titles in 1938. Obviously, Valley or Valley Junction were both more popular in the original downtown. Two cases involved new firms that brought back the original name beginning in the 1950s and a third, Valley Auto Company, simply kept its name after 1938.

The database documents the impact of national financial depressions on the town's business. While the data is based upon a city directory sampling, dates for the last listing of a business are indicative of waves of business closings. Fifteen local businesses vanish after 1919, as did 31 more did so in 1920, and 36 after 1922, during the very difficult post-war peacetime transition years. Some 58 businesses disappear in 1929 alone as do 37 more in 1932. Twenty more disappear in 1937. The truly telling statistic however is that Valley Junction lost but one of its three banks in 1934 and the two survivors remain in business today. Yet another measure of hard times was the use of two storefronts by two minor churches during the years 1932-37. While this peripheral trend reflected the establishment of new church congregations unable to invest in their own buildings, it also indicates that storefronts formerly in commercial use, were now available for other non-commercial purposes. The big impact in the downtown pre-dated the onset of the hard times with 58 businesses disappearing as of the end of 1929. Another 27 were gone by 1933. Losses surprisingly diminished with just 6 disappearances during 1935, but 21 more by 1938. Another measure of the local economic impact of the Great Depression was diminished post office receipts. These dropped so sharply that towards the end of 1933 the threat of being downgraded to a third class postal service was barely averted by a December get out your stamp drive (*Mason City Globe Gazette*, May 19, 1933; *Pella Chronicle*, October 9, 11, 1934; Jacobsen, "Master List").

The 1900 federal census provides a measure of the importance of downtown residents. That headcount found 154 business related residents with their families and 54 boarders or servants as well, for a total of 208 downtown dwellers (1900 Federal Census).

One commercial sector that was prosperous publicly apart from the prohibition years was the consumption of alcohol. The town would finally relent on its three bar limit after World War II but its state-owned liquor store, which supplemented the historic saloon trade was, as of early 1950, doing "a volume of business out of proportion with the city's size, a result of shoppers from greater Des Moines..." The claimed number of taverns runs as high as 11 but the 1943 directory lists six taverns, all but one being south of Maple Street. As late as 1975 there were just five named taverns in operation (*Des Moines Register*, April 2, 1950; City Directories).

The post office just missed obtaining a second class rating in 1951. But a first class status was achieved just two years later in early 1953, setting the stage for obtaining a new federal building. This expansion reflected post-war prosperity and population growth (*Des Moines Register*, July 19, 1951; *West Des Moines Express*, January 15, April 9, 20, October 1, 1953).

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The commercial dominance of the downtown survived into the latter 1950s and new or replacement stores employed modern single story designs to keep current with changing retailing tastes. Improved roads, new highways and close-by arterial competition. By the mid-1950s the new chain drugstores were locating along Grand Avenue where the Gateway Shopping Center developed, just half a mile northeast of the district. Another retailing blow was struck in 1959 when Des Moines' first mall (Merle Hay Plaza) opened many miles to the distant northeast. Still, the 13th consecutive *Express* progress edition termed the downtown "Polk County's Largest Shopping Center" (West Des Moines *Express*, August 6, 1950; January 3, 1957; August 6, 1959; January 14, 1960; October 24, 1963; Fredrickson, p. 60).

Downtown the first businesses to disappear to outside competition were the small grocery stores. These were gone by 1960. Drug stores were next, gone by the early 1970s. Antique stores, to be the wave of the retail future were present as early as 1950 with the West Des Moines Trading Post (130 Fifth Street). By 1968 five antique or gift stores were downtown. A symbolic loss was the closing of the Lyric Theater in January 1967 (*Des Moines Register*, January 14, 15, 22, February 7, March 14, 1967; City Directories).

The continued currency of the name "Valley Junction" as a brand name for a technically eclipsed city name attests to the reality that the downtown area both survived as it evolved commercially and retained some degree of its "chip on the shoulder" sense of uniqueness and pride. The provision of access ways to rear street parking and an array of mall-like improvements helped to keep it vibrant. The provision of a long-sought community center in the former American Legion building (217 Fifth Street) reinforced the communal ties with the broader residential neighborhood. The Kiwanis Club transformed the remnant south end depot parcel as a railroad themed park in 1974 and a model railroad museum thrived during the early 1990s and built on the railroad theme. The nearby depot was relocated into a lot north of the little park in 1983.

The commercial evolution from regular service-retail to specialty shops continued to thrive as did a growing role played by female entrepreneurs and property owners. Increasingly the downtown developed a statewide and even regional market area that transcended its traditional local support base. By 1974 this non-local market accounted for half of retail trade. By this time there were ten antique stores and an antique mini-mall at 104-06 Fifth that housed 11 other dealers (*West Des Moines Express*, October 3, 1974).

The early 1980s were hard ones as an agricultural depression gripped the state. Efforts were made to mandate a faux Victorian facade treatment and the district joined the Main Street Iowa economic development program. In early 1990 the *Register* noted "Valley Junction Sells Nostalgia and Service." In 1983 Valley Junction was the first suburban retail community to be accepted in an experimental manner by the highly successful Iowa Main Street economic development program and it has won enumerable national and other awards. The year 1991 marked the removal of the last district bank and the preparatory steps to relocate the official town center of West Des Moines to a more suburban locale (*West Des Moines Express*, June 20, 1989; June 21, 1991; *Des Moines Register*, October 24, 1986; July 12, 1989; February 1, 1990).

The Modernization of Commercial Practices Historical Context:

This section considers how Valley Junction's merchants responded to changing business practice over time. One measure of market strength is the appearance of chain stores. The district being so close to Des Moines, and its

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people being so integrated between those two communities in terms of place or residency, it was natural that Des Moines firms would open branches in the developing suburb. This was happening as early as 1897. Chain stores brought two changes, their scale of operation and cash-only transactions. A most notable enduring presence was the H. S. Chase grocery chain that was nicely ensconced on the corner of Fifth and Maple and remained there as late as 1916. Iltis Lumber similarly became the local lumber source in 1912 and remained as beyond 1967 at 401 Maple Street. The town's second bank was a Des Moines consortium, so much so that the bank fixtures were reused from a closed city bank. The *Express* described one successful cash-only business in 1898, noting "Mr. [C. L.] Thompson has strictly adhered to the cash system and it has been a decided winner. It has enabled him to sell at close margins and at lower figures than competitors. When you pay cash you are not paying some bad account. This store has brought many new purchasers to Valley Junction from the surrounding community." There is no evidence that the local merchants opposed branch stores (*Daily Iowa Capital*, November 20, 1897; *Valley Junction Express*, November 12, 26, December 10, 1897; August 19, 1898; January 20, 1899; February 9, 1900; *Des Moines Daily News*, June 16, 1900).

By early 1899 nine leading merchants pledged to adhere to reduced "summer hours" but wisely exempted railroad paydays and Saturdays. There was enough perceived wealth in downtown safes to attract thieves and dynamite assaults date from this same time (*Daily Iowa Capital*, January 13, May 1, 1899; *Valley Junction Express*, January 20, February 9, May 5, 1899).

A very early example of the first self-service grocery was the Peter Pan cash grocery which opened business with that new model of operation in 1919. The *Express* noted "The store makes a point of selling cheap, and there is no magic about it. It is done by eliminating extra help and making no deliveries. The system has been popular where tried" (*Valley Junction Express*, April 3, 1919).

The downtown developed one new trend all by itself and this involved having an exceptional number of female business owners. Their earliest documented presence dates to 1959 when the *Express* featured 16 local female business leaders in recognition of Business Women's Week. Beginning this same year Betty Hill Swander made her first real estate purchase (the Wegener Building) and by 1988 her downtown holdings numbered 20 properties with an assessed value of \$3.2 million. Two other female investors had comparable holdings downtown. Female entrepreneurship and their property ownership would become more substantial after 1968 (*West Des Moines Express*, June 4, 18, October 3, 1959; *Des Moines Register*, July 25, 1968; April 9, 1988).

The Role of Banking and the Location of District Banks and Key Public Service Downtown, Historical Context:

Herman Raaz opened the first town bank (First Valley Junction Bank) and his brick building is the district's oldest one, being located at Fifth and Maple streets. His was a private bank and Raaz saw no need for any competition. It developed quickly when Raaz declined to cash railroad pay checks and required the railroad to pay its workers in specie. The Security State Bank represented Des Moines interests built its new bank on the north end of the downtown (221 Fifth Street) in 1900 and the downtown had two banks. The First National Bank was organized in 1901 and built across the street from the Security State Bank. Banker Raaz responded in 1906 by doubling his corner edifice, employing the noted notable Des Moines architects Proudfoot and Bird to design the expansion (*Daily Iowa*

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Capital, December 22, 1896; September 1, 1897; *Des Moines Gazette*, December 28, 1899; *Valley Junction Express*, April 28, August 11, 1899; April 13, May 18, June 1, September 11, 14, November 5, 1900).

The new competing bank, the First National, would prove its own need by rapidly outpacing Raaz's bank. Established as a private bank in 1900, it nationalized a year later with capitalization of \$25,000 and had balances amounting to \$200,000 by 1907. It quickly became one of the state's stronger banks. Herman Raaz typically responded in 1908 by making his private bank a state one, titled the Valley Junction Savings Bank with a capitalization of \$50,000 (*Valley Junction Express*, January 23, 1907; December 24, 1908; February 4, 1909),

The year 1919 was that of the great new bank building race. The Securities Savings determined to build a new building immediately south of their first one and the First National countered with a Classical Revival style white terra cotta front. The Valley Junction Savings Bank, not to be outdone, retuned its facades using the same white brick. In mid-October the *Express* observed "Both bank buildings are running a close race for completion and are already showing a big improvement in looks for the city." The Security bank won, moving into its new quarters in late November 1919. The First National building was ready by late February 1920 (*Valley Junction Express*, April 10, 17, July 10, August 7, September 4, 11, 1919; October 16, November 20, February 26, 1920).

With three strong banks Valley Junction was in a healthy economic position. Its banks weathered the post-World War I peacetime transition of 1919-21 and just one of the three would finally fail in late 1934. The Security Savings Bank failure involved the town's largest state bank at least in terms of outstanding loans. As of the end of June 1930 the failed bank loans were \$407,000 while those of the Valley Junction Savings Bank were valued at \$295,000. The latter bank was one of the first in the state to be reopened in May 1933 under the State Stabilization Act. The First National Bank of Valley Junction had assets that exceeded either bank and it passed through the hard times with minimal difficulty. It is significant that this small town lost but one of three banks while other towns lost all of their banks.

Post office downtown locations are commonly as critical as are the location of banks. The local post office was relocated to Raaz's bank block (201-03 Fifth) in late 1906 as a result of his bank expansion effort. The *Express* noted "the new location will afford the best quarters the Valley Junction post office has ever had." A post office location is as good a measure of determining the heart of a downtown as are banks. It is curious that prior to the completion of a new building in the 400s block of Fifth in 1963, the location never moved north of 201-03 Fifth. It was at 122 Fifth Street as of 1894-97, in the Wegener Block (143-45 Fifth Street) at from 1931-52, and finally removed to the St. Joe at the extreme south end of the downtown (100 Fifth Street) in 1955 remaining until 1963 when the current replacement facility was built. the opening of its new post office at 430 Fifth Street, still downtown but a block further north of the City Hall, would begin to pull commercial expansion northward, mostly in the form of the commercialization of former residences (*Valley Junction Express*, October 4, 1906; *Des Moines Register*, April 25, 29, 1963).

Commercial Organization and Promotion Context:

The first "full fledged commercial club" dates to mid-1909 with 100 members. Also then termed a booster committee, the first project was providing worker transportation to the distant cement plant so as to encourage their residing in town. Valley Junction was being boosted as of mid-1922 with the slogan "A live town for live people."

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Continuation Sheet

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

Promotions that summer included a tourist camp, a reorganized town band and a local minstrel show. In July the town finally had its first Chautauqua, a hired company. In early 1923 the local commercial club once again celebrated obtaining a membership of over one hundred members for the first time and in 1924 the city gained its first Chamber of Commerce. A Women's Club organized in 1921, Rotary followed in 1926, Lion's Club in 1930 (*Des Moines Daily News*, June 10, 11, 1909; *Des Moines Tribune*, February 6, 1923).

What would become a nationally famous booster organization, an American Legion Drum and Bugle Corps had its humble beginning in 1930. It would evolve as one of the town's notable institutions. Beginning in 1932 it entered state legion competitions and by 1935 it was placing first every year. The proceeds of this corps made possible the Legion building at 217 Fifth Street (*West Des Moines Express*, September 7, November 2, 1939).

In early 1939 the Commercial Club created needed public parking by removing two frame stores in the 100s block of Fifth Street, noting that "at times the parking problem along Fifth street becomes rather acute. A Downtown Business and Professional Association supplemented the Chamber, having been organized in mid-1955 (*West Des Moines Express*, March 16, April 6, October 12, 1939; *West Des Moines Express*, May 19, 1955;

The year 1947 brought the first mention of a Chamber of Commerce queen. Krazy Days (or later, Krazy Daze) was an annual two-day downtown sales promotion held at least from 1958 through 1961. It was promoted by radio spots over three days and 51 businesses participated. Cash and merchandise prizes worth \$1,400 were awarded. This event continued yearly and by 1960 it had gained a distinct military presence with tanks, ducks, heavy artillery or navy displays as a part of the show. Auctions were added in 1960 and the 1961 event took on an atomic flavor. These events were conducted by the Retail Promotions Committee of the Chamber (*West Des Moines Express*, June 5, 19, 23, 1947; September 11, 17, 24, October Progress Edition, November 1, 1958; September 17, 1959; September 22, 1960; September 21, 22, 28, 1961).

The first municipal history dates to the city's 75th anniversary celebration in 1968. Titled the "Junction Jubilee" the event and the historical booklet celebrated and acknowledged the Valley Junction origin and legacy. Downtown provided the central stage with a carnival filling the 100-200 block of Fifth and City Hall serving as the event headquarters (*Des Moines Register*, August 3, 1968; *Picture Magazine*, August 9, 1968, p. 20).

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa



Figure 112: Upper Fifth Street looking southeast across Elm Street, ca.1975, note southward one-way traffic and angled parking (Jordan House Library and Archives)

9. Major Bibliographic References:

1893-1968: A Detailed History of the Birth and Growth of West Des Moines. n.p. [West Des Moines Jubilee Days], 1968

Atlas and Plat Book of Polk County, Iowa. Des Moines: Canyon Company, 1914

A Pattern Book for West Des Moines Neighborhoods. West Des Moines: City of West Des Moines, 2009

Brigham, Johnson. Des Moines: The Pioneer of Municipal Progress... Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1911

City of West Des Moines:
Building Permits

Des Moines Public Library
Clippings File
Newspaper Index

English, Emory H. "Persons, Events And Places In the Life of Emory H. English," typed MS, West Des Moines Public Library Clippings File

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National Park Service

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

Frederickson, T. L. and A. D. Post. West Des Moines: From Railroads to Crossroads, 1893-1993. West Des Moines: West Des Moines Centennial, Inc., 1993

"Growing West Des Moines Sets Its Sights on New Industry." *Business & Industry*, September 1966

Hovey, Arthur M. Atlas of Polk County, Iowa. N.p.: unidentified publisher, 1902

Jacobsen, James E. Master List of Downtown Valley Junction Businesses, 1893-1968. Des Moines: History Pays, 2016

Jordan House Library and Archives, 2001 Fuller Road

Untitled Typed Manuscript, ca. 1970

West Des Moines Scrapbook [the surviving index covers September 1956-December 17, 1963-likely lost in the 1993 floods, final volume survives at the Jordan House]

Junction Diamond Jubilee. A Detailed History of The Birth and Growth of West Des Moines, 1893-1968. West Des Moines: Junction Diamond Jubilee, 1968

Long, Barbara Beving. "The Architectural Legacy of Proudfoot and Bird in Iowa, 1882-1940." Des Moines, 1988

Main Street Valley Junction

"Early History of West Des Moines." Typed MS, n.p., n.d.

Newspapers: (as cited in the text)

Sanborn Map Company, Valley Junction Sanborn fire insurance maps, 1896, 1924, 1941, 1950, 1968

West Des Moines Building Permits

West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce. Early History of West Des Moines, Iowa. N.p.; n.d.

West Des Moines Public Library

Clippings File

"West Des Moines, Iowa: Crossroads of the Interstates." *Business and Industry*, December 1971

Westholm, Woodrow. "Post Offices and Postmasters of Polk County, Iowa." Typed MS, n.p., 1964 [Iowa State Historical Society Library]

Shank, Wesley I. Iowa's Historic Architects: A Biographical Dictionary. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999

Tate, J. C. and F. C. Tate's Atlas of Des Moines and Plat Directory to Additions, Subdivisions and Official Plats in Des Moines, Iowa... Des Moines: J. C. and F. C. Tate, 1899

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Polk County, Iowa

Online Resources:

<http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h792.html> (accessed July 19, 2017)

[https://iowahist.uni.edu/Social Economic/Teacher's Guide_pdfs/Theme%20Introduction%20Unit%20II%20](https://iowahist.uni.edu/Social_Economic/Teacher's_Guide_pdfs/Theme%20Introduction%20Unit%20II%20)
(accessed July 19, 2017)

<http://www.iowadatacenter.org/archive/2011/02/citypop.pdf> (accessed July 20, 2017)

Interviews:

Steve Phillips, business and property owner, November 11, 2016

Jim Miller, Valley Junction Main Street Director

Nan Hagen, Local Historian and Main Street Volunteer

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

10. Geographical Data:

Verbal Boundary Description:

The included legal parcels are:

- Railroad Park Parcel 320/0412-000-000-enough of west end to include arch base
- Block 4: Lots 1-3, 9-16
- Block 5: Lots 1-10 (east half)
- Block 10: Lots 1-9 (east half)
- Block 11: Lots 8-9, 10-18 (west half)
- Block 12: West 60 feet of Lot 10 and south 10 feet of west 20 feet of Lot 11
- Block 19: Lots 4-9, 10 (east 73 feet)
- Block 20: Lots 8-9

The district boundary begins at the midpoint of alley, south end of Block 5, runs east to the midpoint of Fifth Street, runs north to the east of the east pier support for the commemorative arch and continues to the center line of Railroad Place, runs east to the midpoint of the alley east of Fifth, follows the alley north to the south boundary line of 408 and 400 Maple Street, turning north at the intersection with the midpoint of Fourth Avenue, runs east so as to include the parcel that contains 210 Fourth, follows same parcel north and west to the same Fourth Street midpoint, follows same north to a point even with the north boundary of Lot 8, Block 10, follows that north boundary west to the midpoint of the alley east of Fifth, runs north along same alley to the midpoint of Elm Street, runs west along same to the midpoint of Fifth, runs north along same to the north boundary line of Lot 4, Block 19, runs west along same north lot line to the midpoint of the alley west of Fifth Street, runs south along same alley crossing Elm and Maple streets to the place of beginning.

Boundary Justification:

This district boundary includes all contiguous pre-1966 commercial buildings that are historically associated with the district significance and that retain their historical integrity. Just three buildings that fail to meet these two standards are included so as to define as inclusive and exhaustive a district as is reasonable without including substantial open areas. Just one vacant lot (408 Maple Street) is included to simplify the district boundary by including a whole half block. While a separate parcel this inclusion reads as the back part of the lot for a contributing building. Any commercial building or converted residence now used commercially that otherwise post-date 1966 are not included. The only purposeful gerrymander is the inclusion of 300 Fourth Street, a well preserved auto garage example, that is diagonally contingent with the contiguous district.

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

Maps:



Figure 91: District boundary with labeled streets
(City of West Des Moines, 1916)

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Section number 10 Page 109

Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

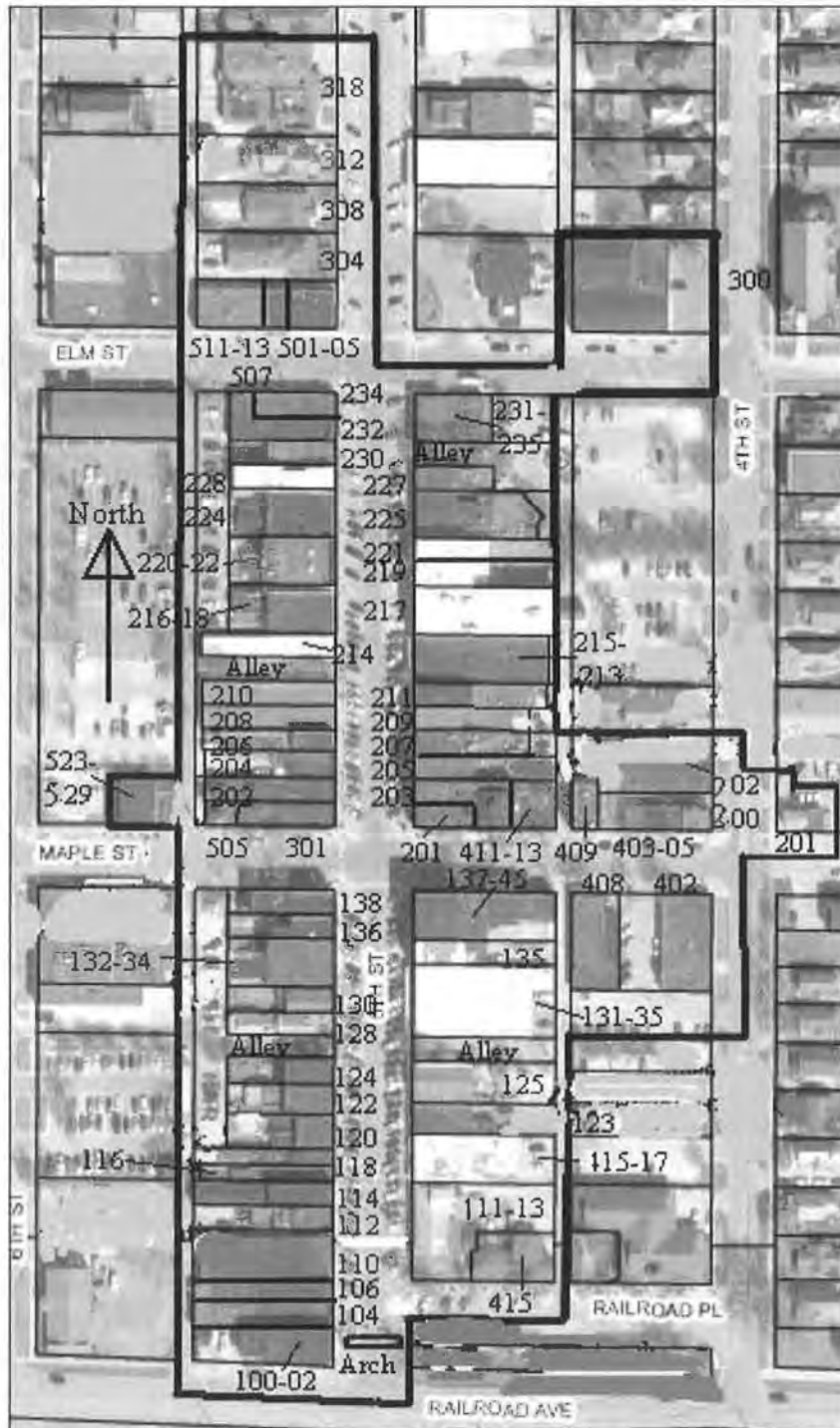


Figure 92: District boundary with building parcels and addresses (City of West Des Moines, 1916, annotated)

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa



Figure 93: District boundary with secondary buildings and structures, with annotations as to contributing and non-contributing evaluations

(City of West Des Moines, 1916, annotated) **Photographs:**

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National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 111

Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

Name of Photographer: James E. Jacobsen

Film Type: Ilford 100ASA

Date of Photographs: November 5, 2016

Location of Original Negatives: Valley Junction Foundation

Description of views:

<u>Frame:</u>	<u>Direction:</u>	<u>Descriptions:</u>
1	Northwest	West side of Fifth Street, arch, 100-124 Fifth
2	Northwest	West side of Fifth Street, 104-124 Fifth
3	Northwest	West side of Fifth Street, 120-130 Fifth
4	Southwest	West side of Fifth Street, 100-124 Fifth
5	Northwest	West side of Fifth Street, 132-210 Fifth
6	Southwest	West side of Fifth Street, 100-138 Fifth
7	Northwest	North side of Maple Street, 301-529 Maple
8	Northwest	West side of Fifth Street, 301 Maple-228 Fifth
9	Southwest	West side of Fifth Street, 301 Maple-218 Fifth
10	Northwest	West side of Fifth Street, 218-232 Fifth
11	Southwest	West side of Fifth Street, 210-234 Fifth
12	Northwest	North side of Elm Street, 501-13 Elm
13	Northwest	North side of Elm Street, 300 Fourth Street, 501-13 Elm
14	Northwest	West side of Fifth Street, 301 Elm-318 Fifth
15	Northwest	West side of Fifth Street, 301 Elm-318 Fifth
16	Northeast	North side of Railroad Place, 111 Fifth Street, 415 Railroad Place
17	Northeast	East side of Fifth Street, 111-135 Fifth Street
18	Northeast	East side of Fifth Street, 123 -145 Fifth Street
19	Northwest	North side of Maple Street, 200, 200-202 Fourth, 403-411 Maple
20	Southwest	South side of Maple Street, 402-408 Maple, 137-45 Fifth
21	Northwest	North side of Maple Street, 409-505 Maple, 301 Fifth
22	Northeast	East side of Fifth Street, 201-211 Fifth
23	Northeast	East side of Fifth Street, 211-235 Fifth
24	Northeast	East side of Fifth Street, 219-235 Fifth

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Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Polk County, Iowa

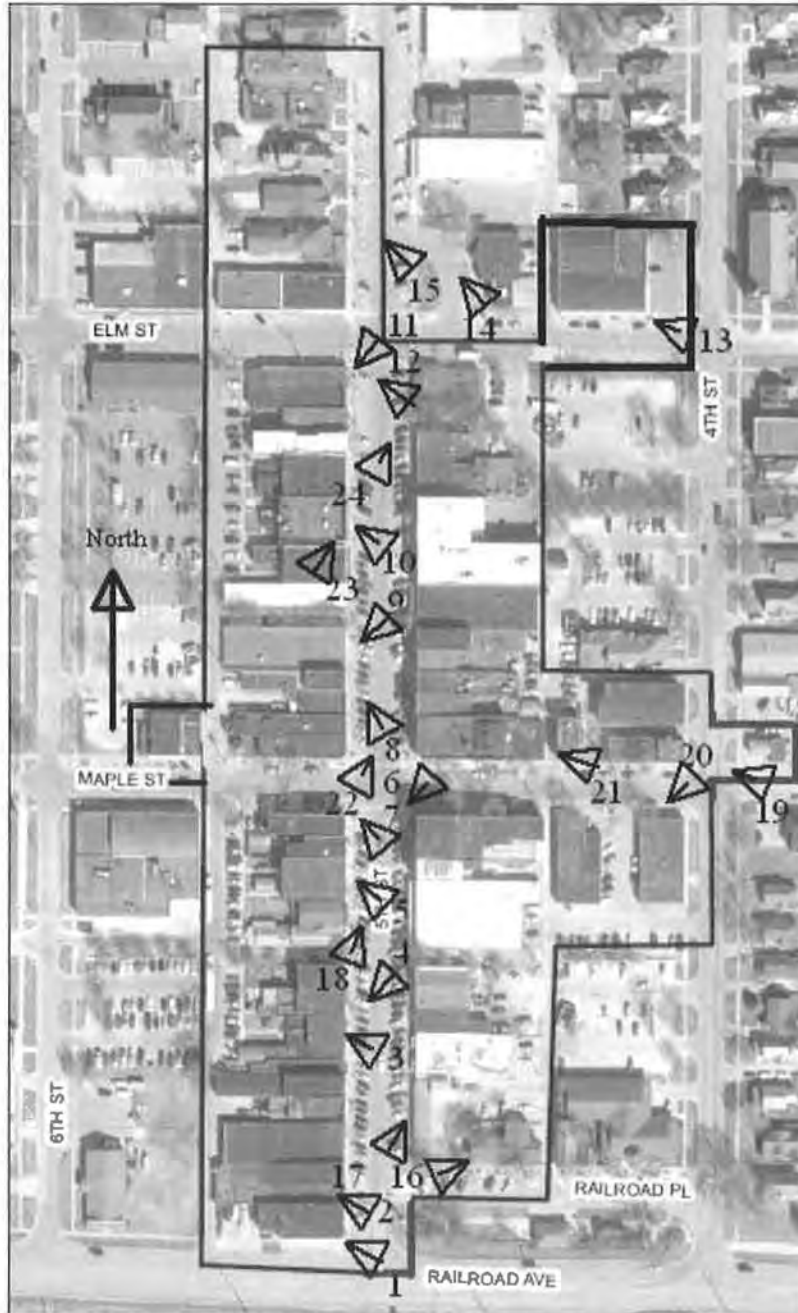


Figure 94: District photo map
(City of West Des Moines, 2016, annotated)



HISTORIC VALLEY JUNCTION

HISTORIC VALLEY JUNCTION

ONE WAY

BEGIN ONE WAY

SPEED LIMIT 20



FISH LIPS
BEADS and BLUES
JEWELRY • BEADS • FINDINGS • KITS • SEWING • KIMONOS • CLASSES

Antique Mall
Antiques & collectibles
Buy Sell

ANTIQUE MALL
BUY SELL

SPEED
LIMIT
20

ANTIQUE
MALL

Antique Mall

P.C.



GEN

Galaxy

FOR LEASE
811-7323

LIGHT

LIGHT

ANTIQUE

6W6 ZC1





FOR LEASE
871-7323

FOR LEASE
871-7323

FOR LEASE
871-7323

The Gourmet
Kitchen &
Specialty Foods

P
4

Sponsored by
Veridian
Jingle in the Junction
December
December
December

PARKING

515-255-0481
**MAINTENANCE
& CONSTRUCTION
SERVICES**

of IOWA

463 SFG

EDN 759

SILVERADO

Veridian *Jingle Junction* December 01
December 08
December 14

DO NOT
ENTER

ONE WAY
NO LEFT TURN









ASHWOOD

ARTISAN GALLERY 218

Fun on 5th

WOODS



ARTISAN GALLERY 218 1

P
4 HOURS
TUESDAY THROUGH FRIDAY
10:00 AM - 6:00 PM

216

W. 1ST ST







WAGNER AND THE BUNCH

OPEN DAILY

WAGNER AND THE BUNCH



STOP

Monte Alvarado

20

P

114691





COLLECTIBLES

CABIN DEPOT





SPEED
LIMIT
20

PHOTO STUDIO

PHOTO
Cameras • Studio

CAMERA STORE

We Fix It Repair
Cell Phones • Tablets

We Fix It Repair
1111 1st St
111 1st St
111 1st St
815.805.7348



Light The Earth

Light the Earth

HISTORIC
VALLEY
JUNCTION

WV 16384







24 HOUR
PARKING

P
NO PARKING
TUESDAY - THURSDAY

EGE 541

Apartment for Rent
207-207



HEART OF WISCONSIN

HEART OF WISCONSIN

P

201

ONE WAY

No Right Turn

Stacy's
Vintage
on Maple
Boulevard



MERRILL LEGION
EST. 1905 POST 620

BOCO

Hearst

OPEN

CBF 498



Artistic Beads

219

Artistic Beads
ACCESSIBLE
PARKING

219

Artistic Beads

567 ZPL

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

Multiple Name:

State & County: IOWA, Polk

Date Received: 9/1/2017 Date of Pending List: 9/22/2017 Date of 16th Day: 10/10/2017 Date of 45th Day: 10/16/2017 Date of Weekly List:

Reference number: SG100001739

Nominator: State

Reason For Review:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver | <input type="checkbox"/> National | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG | |

Accept Return Reject 10/11/2017 Date

Abstract/Summary
Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria Accept, National Register Criteria A and C.

Reviewer Patrick Andrus Patrick Andrus Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2218 Date 10/11/2017

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.

CHRIS KRAMER, ACTING DIRECTOR



August 21, 2017

IOWA ARTS
COUNCIL

PRODUCE
IOWA

STATE HISTORICAL
SOCIETY OF IOWA

STATE HISTORICAL
MUSEUM OF IOWA

STATE HISTORICAL
LIBRARY & ARCHIVES

STATE HISTORIC SITES

STATE HISTORIC
PRESERVATION
OFFICE OF IOWA

IOWA HISTORICAL
FOUNDATION

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Mr. Loether:

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

Valley Junction Commercial Historic District

The Valley Junction Commercial Historic District is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, on the local level, for its historical significance under Criteria C, architecture, and Criteria A, history, commerce and community planning and development. It derives its significance from the role it played serving as the commercial core of a railroad suburb that would transform itself into one of Iowa's largest suburban cities. The district period of significance is 1893-1967. This period ends with the National Register 50-year cutoff point for unexceptional significance because the district retained its commercial and community vibrancy past that point in time. Architecturally this ending date coincides with the expansion of the First National Bank within the district as well as the closing of the movie theater. Significant dates, 1893 and 1938, mark the formal incorporation of the town and the survival of its oldest building and the transition point where Valley Junction became West Des Moines.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura Sadowsky". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Laura Sadowsky
State Historian
State Historical Society of Iowa

Enclosures.