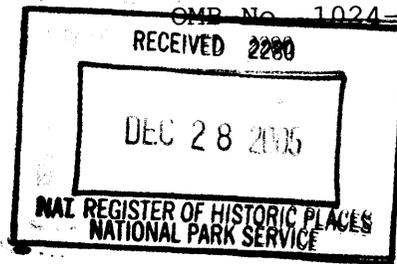


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



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 any 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 Dubuque Casket Company

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 1798 Washington Street not for publication N/A  
city or town Dubuque vicinity N/A  
state Iowa code IA county Dubuque code 61 zip code 52004

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_\_\_ nationally \_\_\_\_\_ statewide X locally. ( \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 12-20-05  
Signature of certifying official Date

**STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA**

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 commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau





**USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form**  
**Dubuque Casket Company**  
**Dubuque, Dubuque County, Iowa**

=====  
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.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a 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.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Industry \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance 1895- 1955

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form**  
**Dubuque Casket Company**  
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Significant Dates 1895  
1905  
1919

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)  
N/A

Cultural Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder Unknown  
Unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

**USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form**  
**Dubuque Casket Company**  
**Dubuque, Dubuque County, Iowa**

=====

9. Major Bibliographical References

=====

(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 # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data

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

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

=====

10. Geographical Data

=====

Acreage of Property Less than one

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	15	691709	4769144	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____
	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.)

**USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form**  
**Dubuque Casket Company**  
**Dubuque, Dubuque County, Iowa**

=====  
11. Form Prepared By  
=====

name/title Sam Erickson, Vice President e-mail address sam@chihousing.com  
organization Community Housing Initiatives, Inc. date May 28, 2005  
street & number 1505 Springs Drive telephone 515-262-4932  
city or town Pleasant Hill state Iowa zip code 50327

=====  
Additional Documentation  
=====

Submit the following items with the completed 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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Community Housing Initiatives, Inc.  
street & number 14 West 21<sup>st</sup> Street, Suite 3 telephone 712-262-5965  
city or town Spencer state IA zip code 51301

=====  
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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Section 7 Page 1

Dubuque Casket Company  
name of property  
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## Narrative Description

The Dubuque Casket Company is a four story red brick edifice located on the corner of Washington Street and 18<sup>th</sup> Street East in the center of Dubuque's potential Old Town historic district. The front of the four story building faces West on Washington Street. The north façade lines 18<sup>th</sup> Street East. Designed in the Classic Revival style, this commercial building has served as an industrial building since its construction in 1895. Exterior features of the Classic Revival building are simple in nature to reflect its industrial use and include arched windows, pilasters and a minimal ornamental cornice detail on the front and sides of the building.

The original Dubuque Casket Company building was constructed on the northwest corner of the lot. Historic records indicate the original 1895 building has undergone two major additions. The first addition was made in 1904 and the second in 1919. Both additions were constructed on the south end of the building. The exterior of the building continues to possess a high degree of architectural and historical integrity with little alteration to the brick facades. The only visible change that has been made to most of the exterior is the replacement of a significant portion of the windows with either boards or brick. A metal loading dock has been added to the south side of the building.

## Exterior

The Dubuque Casket Company occupies a prominent corner located in the heart of Dubuque's potential Old Town historic district. The Dubuque Casket Company is positioned on the corner of Washington Street and 18<sup>th</sup> Street and is surrounded by residential dwellings on three sides and bordered by a car lot to the East.

The rectangular Dubuque Casket Company measures 163 feet in length on the East and West facades and 100 feet in length on the North and South facades. The building does feature a metal garage addition that is not historic on the South façade of the building. The roof is flat in design and constructed of asphalt.

The building's design was fashioned in the Classical Revival style which enjoyed popularity in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. The architect for this building and its additions is unknown.

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### West Facade- Front of Building

The Dubuque Casket Company was designed in the Classical Revival style with simple detail and little ornamentation, consistent with its planned use as an industrial building. The uncomplicated design is constructed of red brick and divided into eight symmetrical bays that house three windows on each of the building's four stories. The front of the building is the most ornate façade. Windows are gently arched in Classical Revival style and are divided by wide pilasters of brick. The exception to the symmetry of the three windows in each bay is four entry doors that are designed in keeping with the building's symmetrical design. The original entry doors no longer exist, but historic photos demonstrate the doors were very simple and utilitarian. Each of the doors has four cement steps at the base. A small ornamental cornice of red brick accents the building's roofline.

The exterior of the building's front façade has sustained few alterations over the years. Most notably, 90% of the windows have been replaced with boards, metal or brick. The remaining 10% of the windows are modern replacement windows. Three of the building's four original entrance doors have been removed and closed in with wood. The fourth and southernmost entrance door has been replaced with a metal replacement door. The original brick of the building is in good condition, but has suffered deterioration in some places and is in need of restoration.

### South Facade (side of building)

The south facade of the building is constructed in red brick and features very little architectural design detail. The roof line is stepped in three descending levels with no ornamentation. Original arched window bays may be found on the first, second and third stories. As with the front façade of the building, windows are grouped in sets of three and vertically symmetrical. The notable difference of window placement on the south facade is the lack of windows on the entire fourth story and the southwest corner of the second story. On the fourth story, the name "Dubuque Casket Company" is painted in white on a black background. A large metal three stall garage measuring 55 ft by 41 ft. has been added to the south façade of the building. This addition is less than twenty years old.

### East Facade (rear of building)

The rear of the building faces east and is constructed of red brick. This facade provides a clear demonstration of the three phases in which the building was constructed. The northern portion of the building is the first phase of development. Two additional phases of development were later added on to the south of the building. On the street level, the building has three large freight bays and several narrow arched windows. The second, third and fourth levels feature eight symmetrical window bays that each contain three gently arched narrow windows separated by brick pilasters. The notable exception to this pattern is one bay that contains two symmetrical windows, located on the southernmost portion of the first phase of construction, abutting the first addition to the original building.

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Dubuque Casket Company  
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**North Facade (side of building)**

The North face of the building faces Eighteenth Street and is the façade that most closely resembles the front of the building. The red brick construction is divided into six symmetrical bays, flanked by simple brick pilaster columns. Each bay houses two gently arched windows. A simple cornice adorns the roofline of the building. The most notable change to the north façade of the building is the replacement of windows with metal, brick and wood.

**Interior**

The interior of the Dubuque Casket Company building reflects the building's industrial use. On all four levels, floors are clean and open, allowing for ease of movement with manufacturing materials and finished goods. The building houses three interior wood staircases that are simple in construction. The building's interior is divided into five bays by four interior brick walls. Two of these separation walls are the result of additions to the building.

**First Story**

The exception to the open floor plan occurs on the first floor at the building's main entrance to the south. This interior space housed offices and a show room for the Casket Company. The office area is outlined by plaster and wood detail in a simple Tudor design. This space is not original to the building and was used as offices for the Casket Company business. The area was also used as a show room for caskets in the later years of the business. The vault is also located in the office area at the southwest corner of the building.

The remainder of the first floor interior is an open plan. Exposed wood beams that remain in good condition are present throughout the first floor level. In addition, wood floor joists are visible and in good condition. Window bays on the first story have been filled in with wood or brick and glass block. There are few remaining wood window casings, and those are remaining are in very poor and deteriorated condition. The building has concrete floors on the first level.

**Second, Third and Fourth Stories**

The second, third and fourth stories of the building were historically utilized for the manufacturing and warehousing of funeral caskets and have sustained few alterations over the past one hundred years. The floor plans of the upper stories are simple and open in design. Red Brick walls divided each of the upper stories into five bays. In many cases, the brick walls have been painted white.

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Exposed wood beams that remain in good condition are present throughout the upper three stories. In addition, wood floor joists are visible and in good condition. In some cases, the joists have been covered with wood tongue and groove ceilings that are also in good condition. Three wood stair cases of simple construction are visible in the building's upper three stories.

Window bays have been filled in with wood or brick and glass block. There are few remaining wood window casings, and those remaining are in very poor and deteriorated condition. The building does have wood floors on the upper three stories. However, the wood floors are in serious disrepair and in many cases, the wood has been permanently damaged by oil stains.

### Historic Significance

The Dubuque Casket Company building achieves historic significance according to Criterion A of the National Register Criteria because of its contribution to the series of events, activities and social patterns of development in Dubuque, specifically its critical role in Dubuque's casket making industry. The building site served as a casket company site from 1877, when the Dubuque Casket Company's predecessor firm, the Dubuque Furniture and Burial Case Company, built its first facility. The Dubuque Casket Company was the most successful of three casket manufacturers in Dubuque, operating from 1877 to 1987. The building is one of the key buildings in Dubuque's potential Old Town district, and is the only remaining casket manufacturing building in the city of Dubuque. Furthermore, the limited alterations to the exterior of the building over the years and the building's overall good condition render the building a prime example of Dubuque's industrial architecture and Classical Revival design. In summary, the Dubuque Casket Company building does contribute significantly to the history and industrial growth of the City of Dubuque and the State of Iowa.

Dubuque, Iowa established itself as a national leader in the coffin making industry in the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Three significant manufacturers contributed to the city's strength in the industry. All three of the coffin makers chose to operate in what is now Dubuque's potential Old Town historic district, locating on sites from Elm and 15<sup>th</sup> Street to 18<sup>th</sup> and Washington Street. The Dubuque Furniture and Burial Case Company (later to become Dubuque Casket Company) was the first coffin maker in Dubuque, established in 1877. The Iowa Coffin Company was established in 1880 and incorporated in 1882. The facility for the Iowa Coffin Company was two blocks southeast of the Casket Company site on the corner of Elm and 15<sup>th</sup>. The third casket manufacturer, Hawkeye Casket Company, was organized in 1905 and moved into the former Key City Furniture Company building located at 11<sup>th</sup> and Elm. Both the Iowa Coffin Company and the Hawkeye Casket Company had gone out of business by 1924; both buildings have since been demolished.

The Dubuque Furniture and Burial Case Company was the first coffin maker established in Dubuque in 1877. The firm was governed by three board members, John Hartman, Henry Huber and A. Koester who contributed an initial investment of \$16,000. Within three years, the company grew from a small manufacturer into one of the largest coffin making establishments in the West. By 1880, the company employed 50 workers making large furniture items and caskets.

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Dubuque Furniture and Burial Case Company factory was located at the corner of 18<sup>th</sup> and Washington Street and also set up a retail storefront for the furniture line at 584 Main Street. In 1883, a large fire swept through the Dubuque Furniture and Burial Case Company, destroying most of the building. Eventually, the owners were forced out of business.

The Dubuque Casket Company filed articles of incorporation on January 21<sup>st</sup> of 1893, listing initial officers as Frank A. Beiler, president; J.K. Deming (local bank president), vice president, and A.C. Gasser, secretary-treasurer. Stockholders were listed as M.M Hoffman (casketmaker), J.H. Whatmore (CGW Railroad), J.C. Longueville (attorney), J.C. Althausser (retailer) and Arnold Nicks (contractor). The purpose of the company was listed as "manufacture, buying and selling of caskets, coffins, and undertakers supplies, goods and wares. The initial amount of capital stock was \$50,000, divided into 500 shares of \$100 each.

Two days after filing articles of incorporation, on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Dubuque Casket Company purchased the three story 40x80 warehouse at 1798 Washington Street from the Dubuque Furniture and Burial Case Company. The Casket Company also leased a number of lots adjoining the building with an option to purchase those lots. The founders of the Dubuque Casket Company soon made plans for expansion of the facility and construction of the current building started in the summer of 1893.

The first Dubuque Casket Company building cost \$7,000 to construct. The first floor of the new company was to be the machine and equipment room. The second floor was for the manufacturing of fine cloth covered caskets. The third floor was to be used to manufacture undertaker's dry goods, which was a new industry for Dubuque. The Fourth Floor was to be used for storage.

In 1895, the new Dubuque Casket Company facility was complete and the Dubuque Enterprise noted "its plant at Washington and Eighteenth streets is one of the very largest manufacturing establishments in the city. It is devoted to the manufacture of caskets, robes, linings and other accessories to a general jobbing business in funeral directors' supplies, such as chemicals, instruments and everything used by undertakers."

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Dubuque Casket Company (Enterprise, c.1902). This illustration depicts the first phase of construction.

Construction on the second and what is now center section of the building began in 1903. Construction was not complete on the \$12,000 addition, designed to accommodate significant growth and expansion of the business, until 1905. Early photographs indicate the construction resulted in differing floor levels and window elevations.



Dubuque Casket Company (Enterprise, September 26, 1903)

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By 1911 the Dubuque Casket Company was ready to expand the building for a third time, and planned a \$60,000 addition. Photographic evidence from 1911 indicates that the third phase of construction updated the first two phases of construction in order to visually unify the front façade. In that same year, the company was capitalized at \$100,000 and employed over 70 employees. The Dubuque Casket Company listed a sales force of 8 gentlemen and reported annual sales at over \$300,000 per year. The company stood out among typical casket manufacturers because it maintained its own lumber yard, and was the first business west of the Mississippi to make burial robes and coffin liners as well as manufacture caskets. The market area for the Dubuque Casket Company was North and South Dakota, Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin, Missouri, Nebraska and Wyoming.



**Dubuque Casket Company c. 1911 (Towards A Greater Dubuque)**

A 1958 Dubuque Daily Telegraph Herald article listed the Dubuque Casket Company as the nation's 21<sup>st</sup> largest coffin manufacturers of 472 such companies across the nation. By that time, the company employed 43 specialized workers. The Dubuque Casket Company remained a unique entity in the 1950's by continuing to custom make every order. For that reason, the building was never fully automated. Products produced by the Casket Company fell in to three product categories: caskets manufactured of metal, of highly polished hardwoods and of cloth covered wood. Custom tailoring was also offered for casket interiors and included over 400 interior designs in several fabric choices of taffeta, twill, crepe, velvet or satin. A display room featured over 100 casket models.

The economic downturn of the 1980's proved fatal for Dubuque's casket making industry. The present building was owned by the Dubuque Casket Company from 1893 until 1988. In 1988 the building was sold to Boyes Auto and Truck Parts Co. In 2005 the Boyes' family sold the building to Community Housing Initiatives, Inc.

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**Future Plans**

The limited alterations to the exterior of the Dubuque Casket Company have preserved the building as a wonderful example of the Classical Revival style. New owners of the Dubuque Casket Company intend to restore the exterior of the building as closely as possible to its 1911 appearance. Future plans for the building are to preserve the building according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Exterior brick will be cleaned and tuck pointed. Window openings will be re-opened and outfitted with historically appropriate wood and metal replacement windows. The four entry doors on the west façade will be restored with wood and glass historically accurate replacement doors. The metal additions to the building will be removed. Any and all signage on the exterior of the building will be cautiously cleaned to preserve writing.

The interior of the Dubuque Casket Company will retain some of its historic integrity through the restoration process. The first floor will be renovated and offered for rent to local non-profit organizations. The upper stories of the building will be converted to 36 one and two bedroom apartment units. Twenty four one bedroom units will average 1027 square feet. twelve two bedroom units will average 1270 square feet. Wherever possible, interior brick walls will be left exposed, interior wood columns and exposed floor joists will also be restored and left exposed. Total estimated project cost for restoration of the Dubuque Casket Company is 5.6 million dollars.

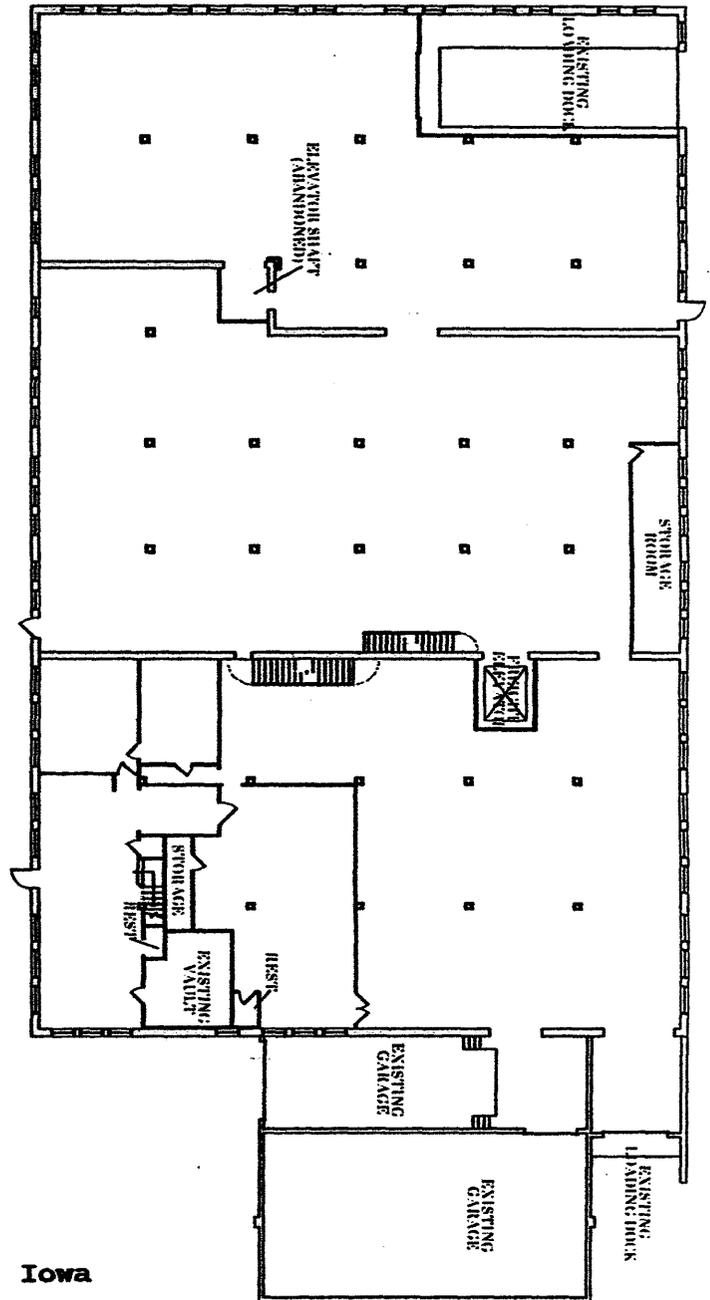
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Dubuque Casket Company  
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First Floor Sketch



↑  
North

Source: In/Vision Architecture, Sioux City, Iowa  
Date: May, 2005

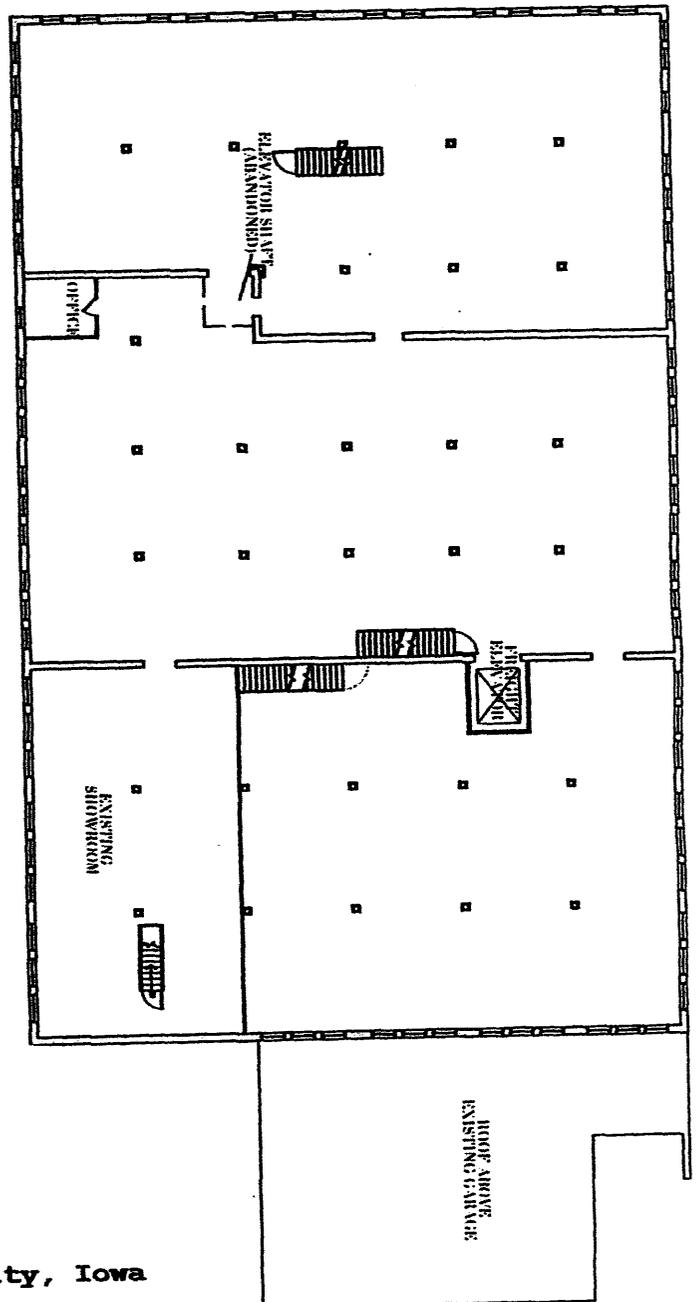
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Dubuque Casket Company  
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Second Floor Sketch



↑  
North

Source: In/Vision Architecture, Sioux City, Iowa  
Date: May, 2005

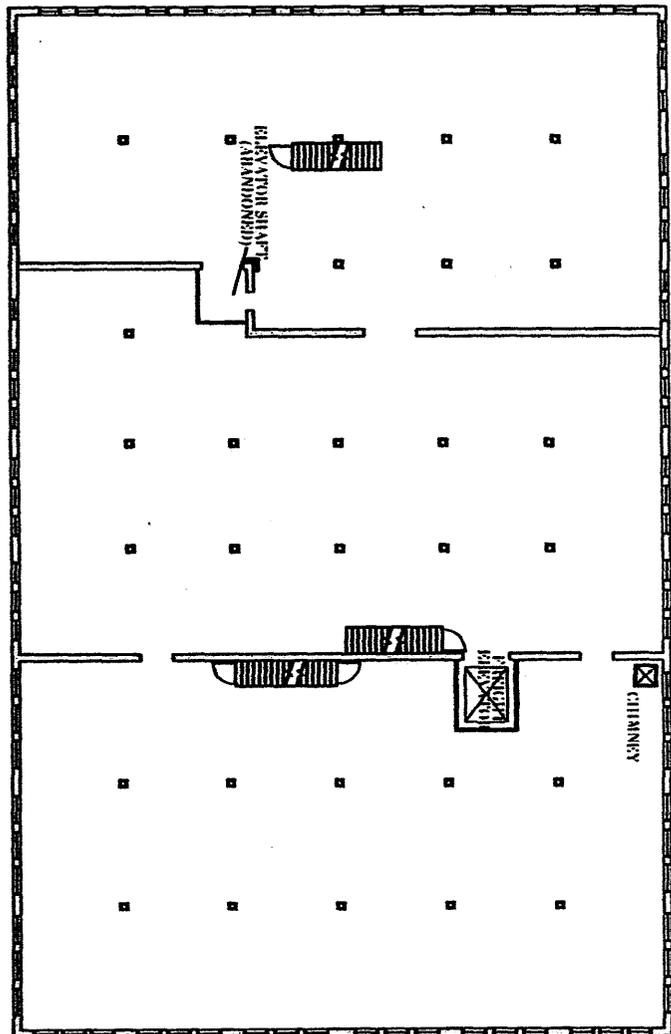
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Dubuque Casket Company  
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Third Floor Sketch



↑  
North

Source: In/Vision Architecture, Sioux City, Iowa  
Date: May, 2005

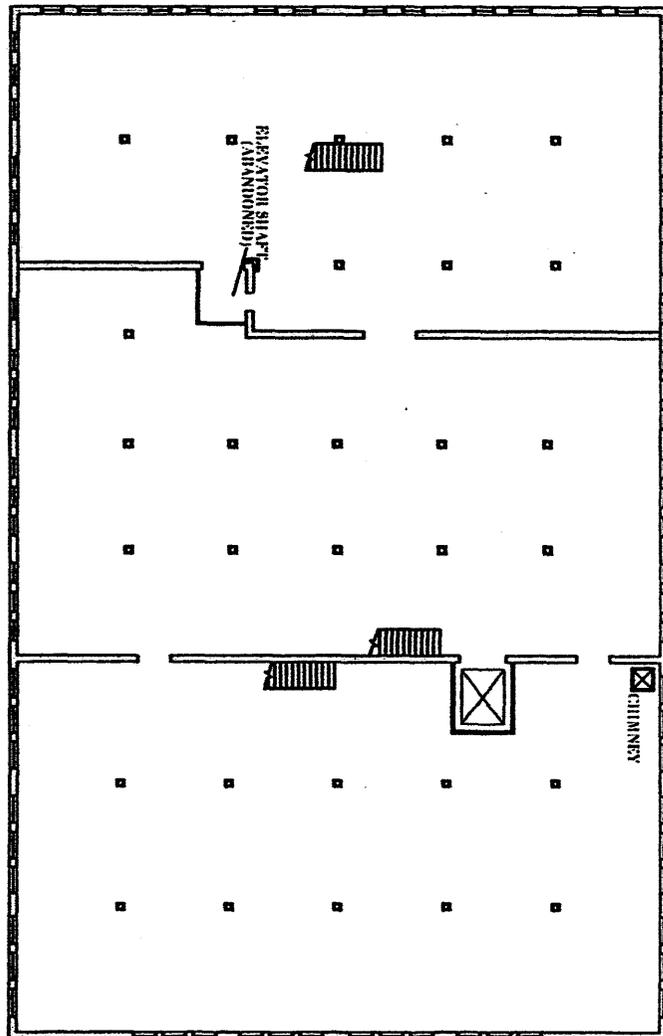
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Dubuque Casket Company  
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Fourth Floor Sketch



↑  
North

Source: In/Vision Architecture, Sioux City, Iowa  
Date: May, 2005

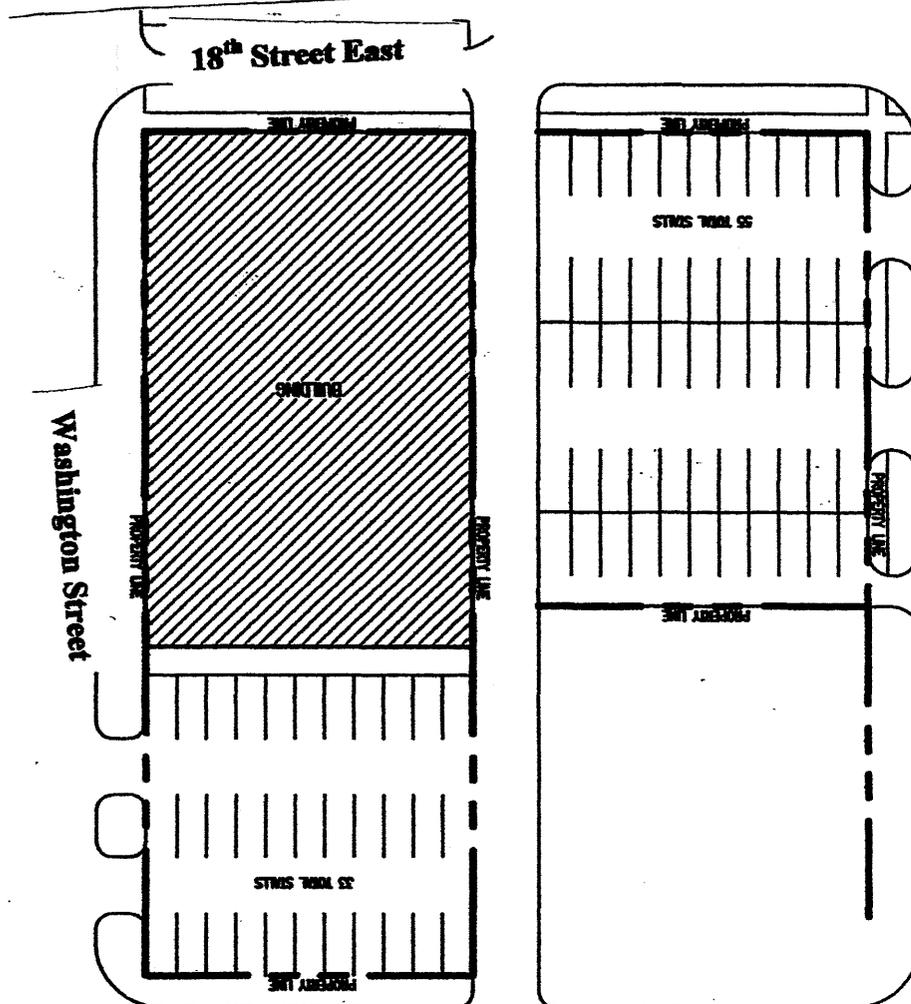
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Site Plan



↑  
North

Source: In/Vision Architecture, Sioux City, Iowa  
Date: May, 2005

Legal Description:

Dubuque Casket Company Building  
1798 Washington Street, Dubuque Iowa.

Lot 102, 103, 104, 105 and 106. East Dubuque Addition  
City of Dubuque, Dubuque County, Iowa.

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Plat Map



↑  
North  
Dubuque, Iowa  
Source: City of Dubuque  
Date: November, 2004

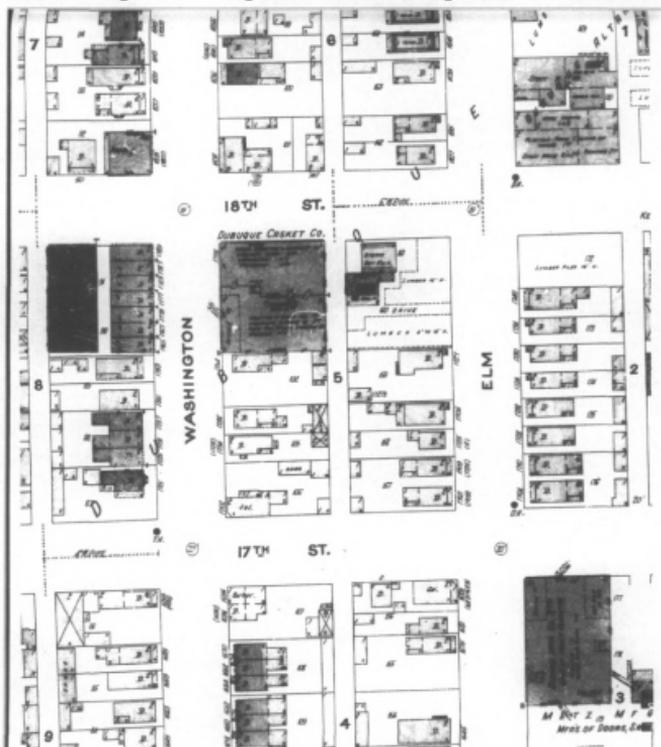
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Dubuque Casket Company  
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Sanborn Map- 1909 Depicts first two phases of construction



↑  
North

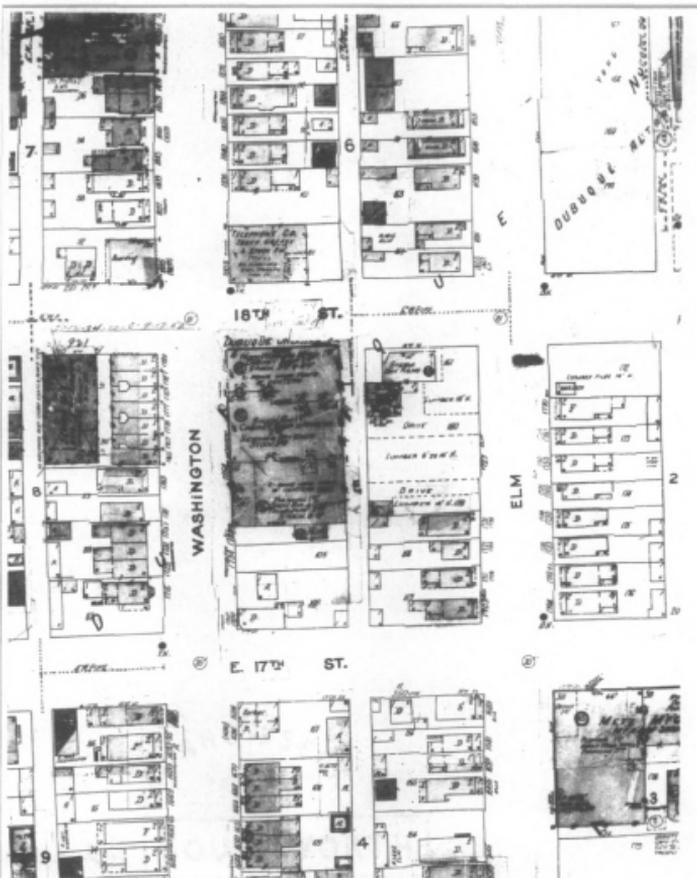
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Sanborn Map- 1909 Depicts third and final phase of construction



(8-86)

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Dubuque Casket Company  
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Bibliography

- Advertisement (quarter page ad). *Dubuque Casket Co. Manufacturers of Fine Burial Caskets*, Dubuque Daily Telegraph Herald, March, 23, 1913.
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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Dubuque Casket Company

name of property

Dubuque, Dubuque County, Iowa  
county and State

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Dubuque Casket Company- Legal Description

The building described as sitting on Lots 102 to 106 East Dubuque addition to the city of Dubuque, Dubuque County, Iowa.

VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Dubuque Casket Company

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Dubuque Casket Company  
name of property  
Dubuque, Dubuque County, Iowa  
county and State

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Photographs:

All Photographs #1-6

Dubuque Casket Company  
Dubuque, Dubuque County, Iowa

Photographer- Dale McKinney, In/Vision Architecture, Sioux City, Iowa  
Photo Date- May 2005

Negative Location- Community Housing Initiatives, Inc. Spencer, Iowa

Photo #1- Dubuque Casket Company camera facing East, Washington Street facade

Photo #2- Dubuque Casket Company camera facing South, 18<sup>th</sup> Street facade

Photo #3- Dubuque Casket Company camera facing West, rear facade

Photo #4- Dubuque Casket Company camera facing North, side facade

Photo #5- Main entrance

Photo #6- Third floor