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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" on the appropriate line 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 Des Moines Western Railway Freight House

other names/site number Des Moines, Iowa Falls & Northern Railroad Freight House (see Continuation Sheet 16)

2. Location

street & number 625 East Court Avenue N/A not for publication

city or town Des Moines N/A vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Polk code 153 zip code 50309

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.)

Barbara A. Muehle DEHPO April 24 2008
Signature of certifying official/Title 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 certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 - See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 - See continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register.
- Other, (Explain)

Signature of Keeper Linda H. Edlund Date of Action 7-10-08

Des Moines Western Railway Freight House
Name of Property

Polk County, Iowa
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property **Category of Property**
(Check as many lines as apply) (Check only one line)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-local | <input type="checkbox"/> district |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-State | <input type="checkbox"/> site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal | <input type="checkbox"/> structure |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> object |

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

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

**Number of contributing resources
previously listed in the National Register**

"The Advent and Development of Railroads in Iowa: 1855-1940"

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/rail-related

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE
WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone/Brick
walls Brick
roof Synthetics/Rubber
other Wood

Narrative Description

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

Des Moines Western Railway Freight House
Name of Property

Polk County, Iowa
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" on one or more lines 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" on all the lines 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION

Period of Significance

1903-1955

Significant Dates

1903

1935

1955

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Brererton, William H., Building Contractor

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

9. Major Bibliography 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):

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository

Des Moines Western Railway Freight House
Name of Property

Polk County, Iowa
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 | 15 | 449250 | 4604000 |

Zone Easting Northing

2 | | | |

Zone Easting Northing

3 | | | |

Zone Easting Northing

4 | | | |

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 William C. Page, Public Historian

organization Iowa State Bar Association date October 30, 2007

street & number 520 East Sheridan Avenue (Page) telephone 515-243-5740 (Page)

city or town Des Moines state Iowa zip code 50313-5017

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name Iowa State Bar Association

street & number 521 East Locust Street telephone 515-243-3179

city or town Des Moines state Iowa zip code 50309

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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CFN-259-1116

Des Moines Western Railway Freight House, Polk County, Iowa.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Des Moines Western Railway Freight House is a 2-story, unpainted brick building constructed between 1902 and 1903 for F. M. Hubbell by general contractor William H. Brereton of Des Moines. The building's footprint measures approximately 44 by 122 feet. The building rests on stone footings and a brick foundation. A very low-pitched, side gable roof of wood frame clad with synthetic membrane covers the building. This freight house has undergone two remodeling projects, the first in 1933 to convert a portion of it into an interurban passenger depot, and the second in the 1980s to convert it into a restaurant. The property is presently being rehabilitated as an office building under a design approved by the National Park Service for federal historic preservation tax credits.

SITE

Originally, railroad sidings and buildings dotted the area. In the 1950s, an engine house was erected a little to the south of the building. (See Continuation Sheet 11.) All these railroad-related features were removed many years ago; today the site consists solely of a concrete parking lot.

Relatively few commercial buildings within Des Moines' East Side business district are presently listed on the National Register. Listed properties include the Northwestern Hotel at 321 East Walnut Street; Studio Building at 524 East Grand Avenue; Teachout Building at 500-502 East Locust Street; Hohberger Building at 506 East Locust Street; and Syndicate Block at 501 East Locust Street. The Des Moines Western Railway Freight House is situated in this area, which is designated as the East Village Cultural and Entertainment District.

BUILDING

Exterior

The Des Moines Western Railway Freight House is a solid masonry building supported internally by a system of wood posts and beams. The brick varies in shades of red, purple, brown, and orange and is laid in common bond.

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Des Moines Western Railway Freight House, Polk County, Iowa.

Originally, a series of dock doors provided access to and from the building for the transfer of freight. Five dock doors stood on the south elevation, and five dock doors stood on the north elevation. These doors were arranged in such a way that, when opened, freight could be moved in a straight line from the doors on the opposite side of the building. Two additional dock doors were originally situated on the west elevation. None of these dock doors remains extant, although their cavities remain generally intact. The dock door on the east end of the north elevation was infilled with brick and a window, likely in 1933. The door on the west end of the north elevation was infilled with a replacement pedestrian door, circa 1986. On the west elevation, the south dock door was entirely infilled with brick, likely within a few years of the building's construction, and the north dock door was removed and infilled with a replacement door in the 1980s. An historic photograph pictures these doors. (See Continuation Sheet 9.)

A pedestrian door is situated on the north end of the west elevation of the building and is original to it. In 1933, a portion of the building was remodeled for use as a passenger depot. This project affected the east end of the first floor, the basement, and most of the second floor. A door was added on the east end of the north elevation, surmounted by a transom, and two small window openings on the north end of the east elevation were enlarged to provide greater natural light to the interior.

The building's fenestration varies. Some windows feature 1/1 double-hung sash. These are mostly located on the second floor. A series of small windows on the first and second floors also provided light and ventilation to the interior. These windows originally were of awning type with six panes. Some of these windows have been removed and their cavities infilled with cover-up materials.

The synthetic membrane which now covers the roof of this building likely dates to the 1980s, when the building was converted into a restaurant. The membrane is reaching the end of its life span. Brick parapets edge the east and west gable ends of the roof, and its low pitch obscures a view of the roof from the street.

Interior

The building features a simple floor plan with one large room on each of its floors. (See Continuation Sheet 7.) Wood posts and beams provide structural support for the interior of the building. A row of eight posts runs east and west down the middle of the building on 16-foot centers on each floor. The basement features two additional sets of posts and beams flanking the

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middle row. They date from the 1980s and were installed to remedy some separation of joists from their joist pockets in the basement. The floor joists above the basement and first floor run north and south, as do the rafters above the second floor of the building. All are exposed.

As befits a building dedicated to the efficient transfer and storage of freight, this structure features plain and simple wall, ceiling, and floor surfaces, constructed of heavy and durable materials.

The 1933 remodeling project, in addition to the changes noted above, also made some alterations to the interior of the building. Those included the construction of staircases to the second floor and to the basement from the new door on the northeast corner of the building. This door provided entrance and egress for interurban passengers to purchase their tickets. On the second floor, a part of the east end was partitioned off for office use. A counter for the sale of passenger tickets was also located there. The brick walls of the second floor were covered with plaster to make them more amenable for office use. The brick, which edged the window cavities, was chipped off to form a bullnose, which was then troweled with plaster to transition the new plaster walls to the old window frames.

The 1933 remodeling might also have included responsible for the construction of three vaults in the building. Located in the southeast corners of the first and second floors and the basement, these vaults are of brick construction with entrance doors on their west sides. The basement vault is without a door. The vault on the first floor has a modern metal door. The second floor vault possesses a heavy, metal, nonworking combination lock door. Three facts indicate that these vaults are later additions to the building. The brick courses of their walls do not match the brick courses of the building's main walls. Several small windows on the southeast corner of the building had to be infilled with brick to construct the vaults. The 1920 fire insurance map of the property does not show the vaults in place.

Another remodeling of the building occurred when it was converted into a restaurant. These changes included the construction of a brick fireplace on the south wall in the basement and a brick fireplace on the south wall of the first floor. A massive staircase was installed on the north wall to run from the basement to the second floor. This staircase features heavy plank treads and a banister constructed of railroad tracks bent to shape. A smaller staircase was built in the southwest corner of the building, also running to all levels of the building. Most of the plaster was removed from the second floor walls. These walls were then sandblasted to remove plaster residue. The project also sandblasted the interior's wood posts, wood beams, and wood ceiling. This process stripped those elements of dirt and grime but left the wood with a slightly raw finish.

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This work also included the construction of additional posts and beams to strengthen the original structural support system of the building. This remodeling project also included a few changes on the site. A short run of track was installed on the west side of the building; a boxcar was relocated to a siding on the south of the building and an entrance from it to the first floor of the freight house built, and brick pavers were laid on the north side of the building to form a wide pedestrian walk to East Court Avenue. All of these changes were removed before the present adaptive reuse project began.

The floors in the building vary. The basement features a concrete floor. The floors on the first and second floors are of wood and other mixed materials, which have been added to the original surface.

An elevator originally served the building. Located on the north wall about midway down it, this elevator ran from the basement to the second floor. A fire insurance map from 1920 pictures this elevator, and an historic photograph from the 1950s shows an elevator house projecting above the roof. This elevator house has been removed, but a patch in the second floor ceiling reveals where the elevator shaft was located. Today, the staircase on the north wall is situated adjacent to this shaft, and the shaft's open space from the first floor to the second floor forms a stairwell. The elevator shaft from the basement to the first floor is now covered by an extension of the first floor.

FUNCTION

The Des Moines Western Railway Freight House nicely illustrates how the building functioned to transfer shipments of cargo. Boxcars were shunted onto one of three sidings on the south side of the building, where a series of five large dock doors provided access to the main floor of the building. Five similar dock doors, situated directly north of these doors on the Court Avenue side of the building, provided the means to transfer freight to or from horse-drawn wagons (later trucks) and the railroad cars. The placement of these doors facilitated the direct movement of freight from one side of the building to the other.

A nonextant elevator on the north wall facilitated the movement of freight from the main floor to the basement and second floor. Two large dock doors on the west elevation provided additional means to transfer freight to and from wagons or trucks. Two nonextant weigh scales on the north side of the first floor provided a means to determine cargo shipment fees.

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The siting of this building further facilitated its function. The building is located directly south of the well-traveled East Court Avenue right-of-way. This siting provided an off-street loading area for wagons and trucks to back up and depart, having deposited or picked up their shipments.

Speed was an essential ingredient in shipping by rail. Freight houses were designed for the rapid transfer of goods rather than their storage. Senders wished their goods to move out as soon as possible. Receivers wished the same. Other facilities in Des Moines provided storage capabilities for customers. Indeed, the U.S. Interstate Commerce Commission established a fee structure, which railroads used to assess charges for freight left without pick-up after a stipulated period of time.

INTEGRITY AND PRESENT CONDITION

This building possesses excellent integrity. It is located on its original site and its setting has been preserved without reduction in size or construction of intrusive buildings. The building's materials and workmanship remain substantially original, with the exterior brickwork and the interior post and beam support structure the most important. Sometime in the 1980s or 1990s, the elevator housing at the top of the building was removed, but this was not a substantial loss. The open feeling of the large, interior spaces remains intact on each floor of the building. The property's feeling and association with its historic events remain unimpaired. Those individuals involved in these events would immediately recognize the building as it appears today.

The condition of the building is excellent. It has been occupied for most of its life and well maintained, although during a recent period of vacancy, vandals broke a few windows. The recent project to rehabilitate the building has undertaken some needed improvements. In 2006, a structural engineer noted that the footings and foundation on the east and west sides of the building had settled slightly, causing cracks in those walls. To solve this problem, trenches were dug around the perimeter of the building and grout solidifier was injected beneath the footings to provide additional support to them. This repair stabilized the problem, and the wall cracks were subsequently pointed.

The Des Moines Western Railway Freight House fulfills the integrity considerations outlined in the MPD. That document emphasizes the vulnerability of railroad-related service buildings.

... the mere fact that railroads no longer require all these buildings housing specialized functions, and consequently most lines have removed them, gives extant service buildings

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importance as the physical record associated with the era of steam railroading. (Conard and Cuning: F34)

The Des Moines Western Railway Freight House stands as an outstanding example of such preservation.

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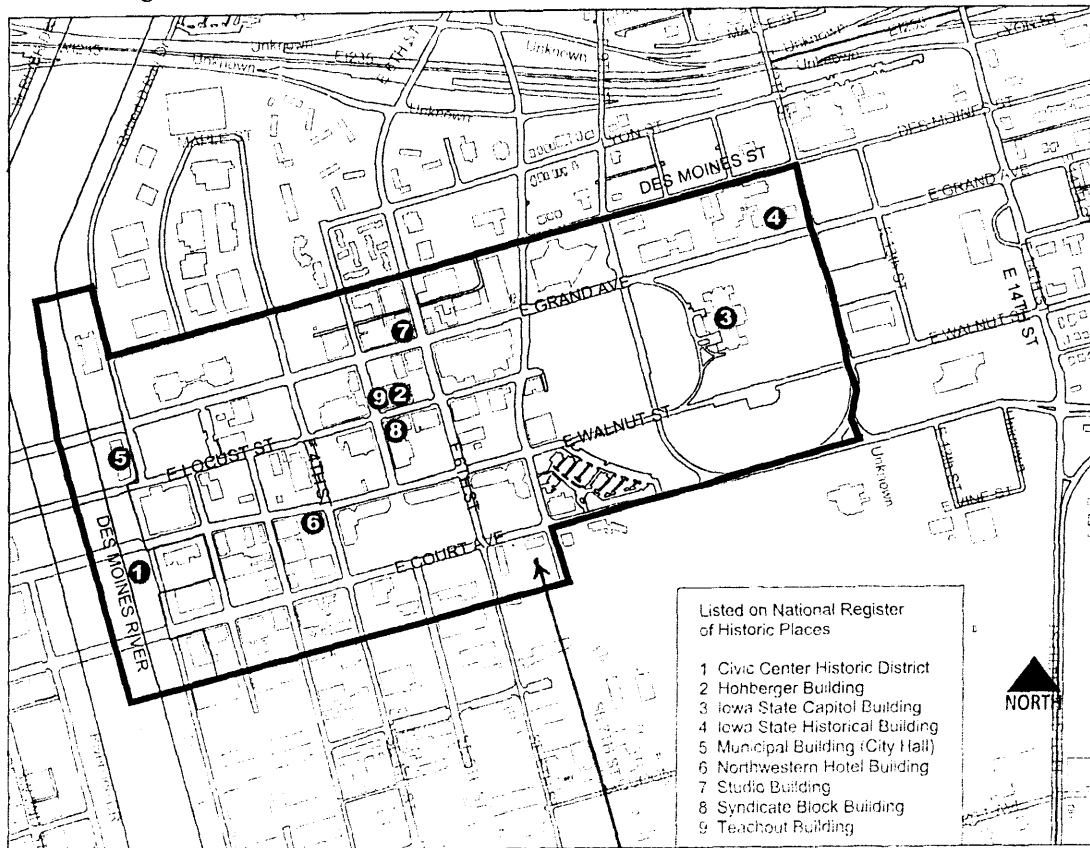
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Des Moines Western Railway Freight House, Polk County, Iowa.

SITE MAP

ARROW LOCATES PROPERTY BEING NOMINATED

East Village Cultural and Entertainment District



Map prepared by City of Des Moines Community Development Department

October, 2005



The bold line indicates the boundary of the East Village Cultural and Entertainment District.

Source: City of Des Moines, Iowa, 2005.

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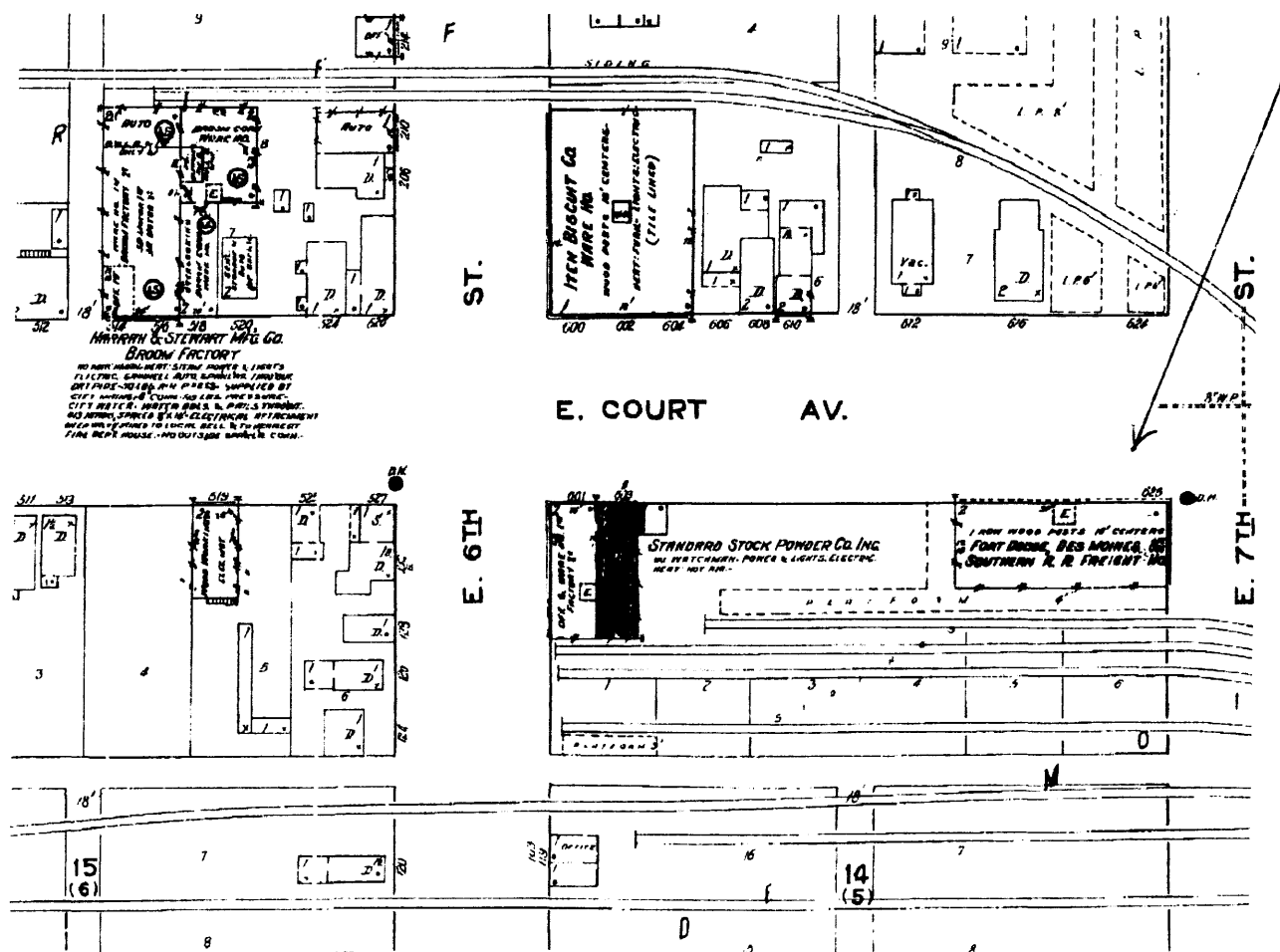
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1920 FIRE INSURANCE MAP

ARROW LOCATES PROPERTY



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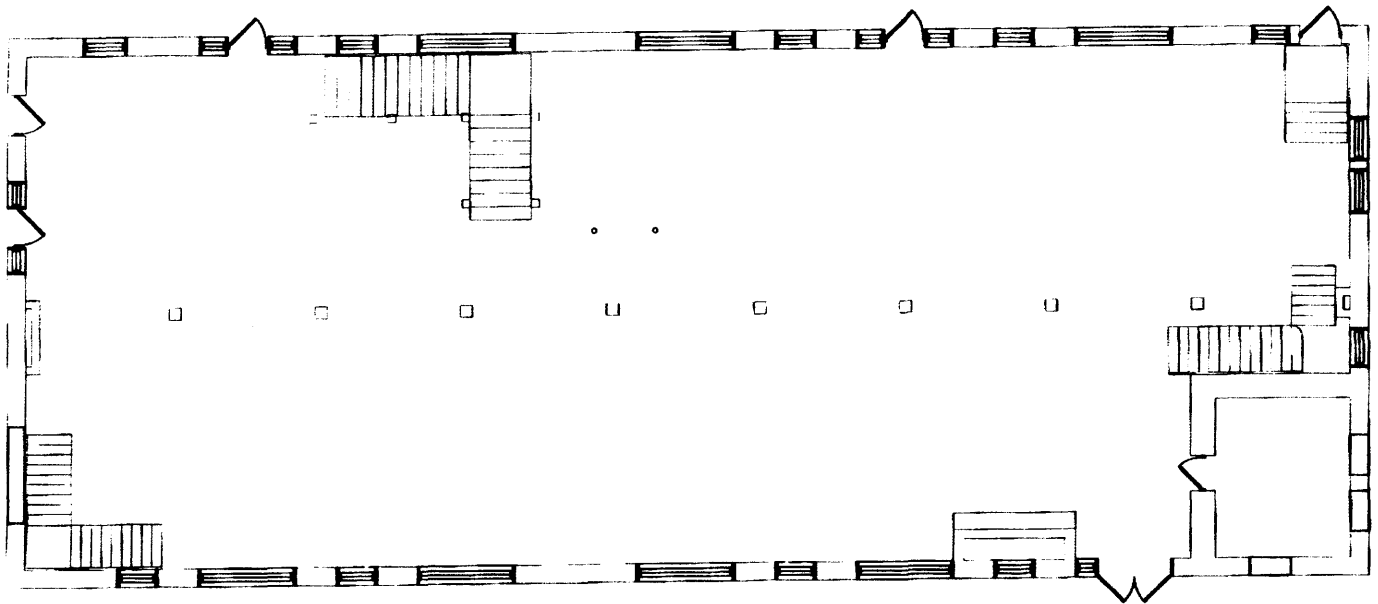
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Des Moines Western Railway Freight House, Polk County, Iowa.

EXISTING FIRST FLOOR PLAN



Source: G. E. Wattier Architecture, Inc., 2006.

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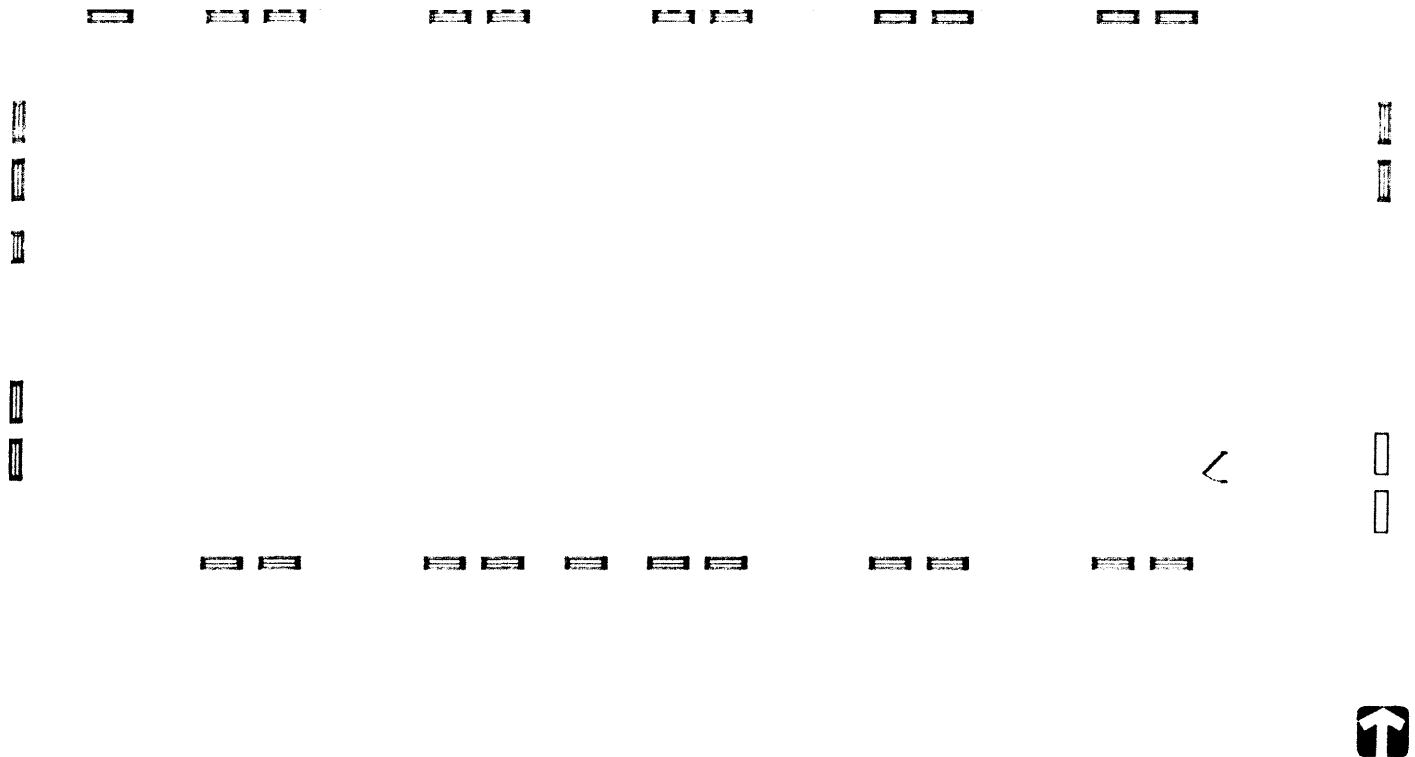
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Des Moines Western Railway Freight House, Polk County, Iowa.

EXISTING SECOND FLOOR PLAN



Source: G. E. Wattier Architecture, Inc., 2006.

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FREIGHT HOUSE

LATE 1930S



Looking to the southwest from the north side of East Court Avenue, this view pictures the Freight House and its open surroundings. An interurban car, lying-over until its next trip, stands east of the building, now partially converted to a depot to accommodate passengers.

Source: Collection Ronald D. Sims, Des Moines, Iowa.

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HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPH

1956



This historic photograph looks to the southeast and pictures the building near the end of its service as a railroad facility. The dock doors on the north and west elevations of the first floor and the elevator housing on the roof are clearly visible.

Source: Ronald D. Sims, Photographer, 1956.

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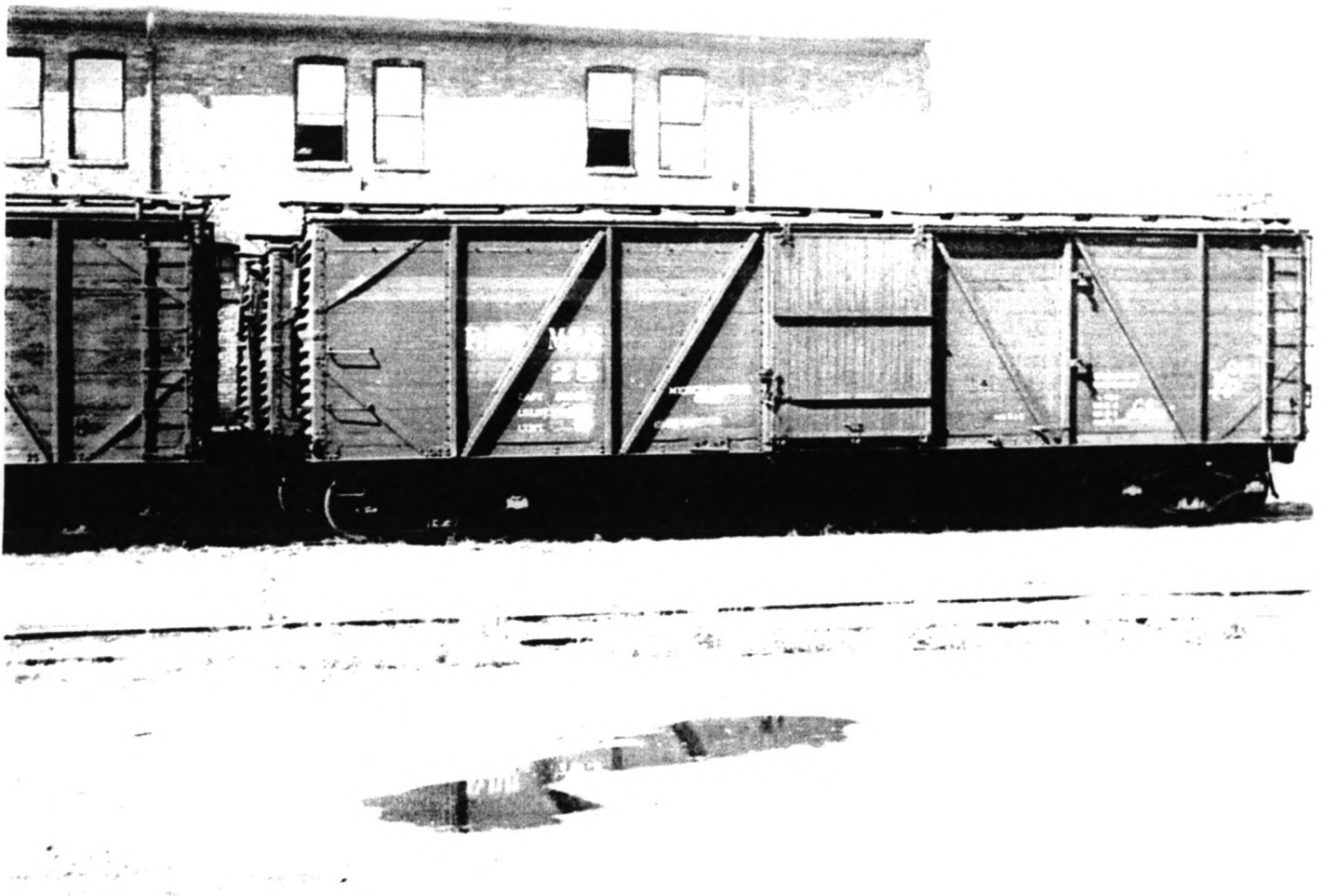
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Des Moines Western Railway Freight House, Polk County, Iowa.

FREIGHT HOUSE

1956



Looking north, this photo pictures the south elevation of the freight house and the railroad sidings in front of it. The boxcar features the "FtDDM&S" monogram of the Fort Dodge, Des Moines & Southern Railroad.

Source: Ronald D. Sims, Photographer, 1956.

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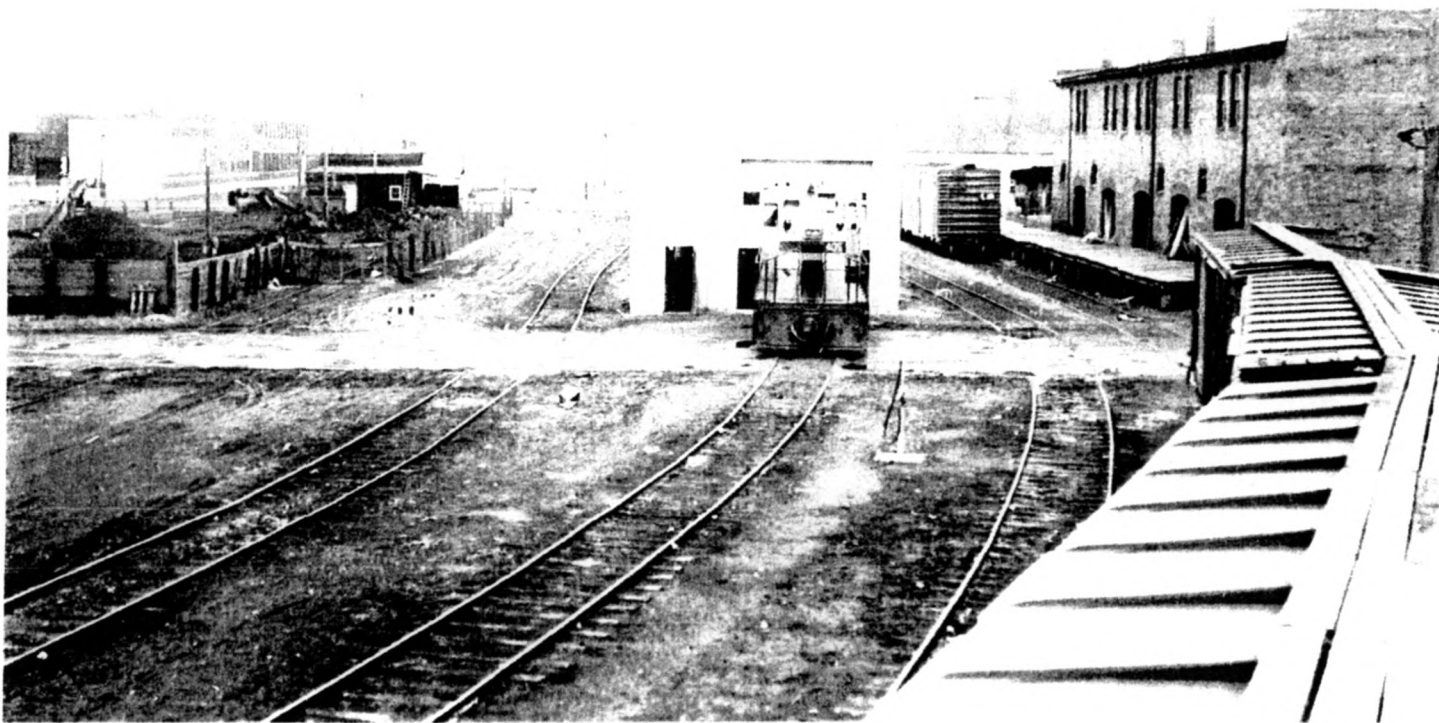
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Des Moines Western Railway Freight House, Polk County, Iowa.

FREIGHT HOUSE

1956



Looking west, this photo pictures the dock along the south elevation of the Freight House and the railroad yard to its south. The engine house (center) was a recently constructed building on the site. It was razed only a few years later. A coal yard is visible at the far left.

Source: Ronald D. Sims, Photographer, 1956.

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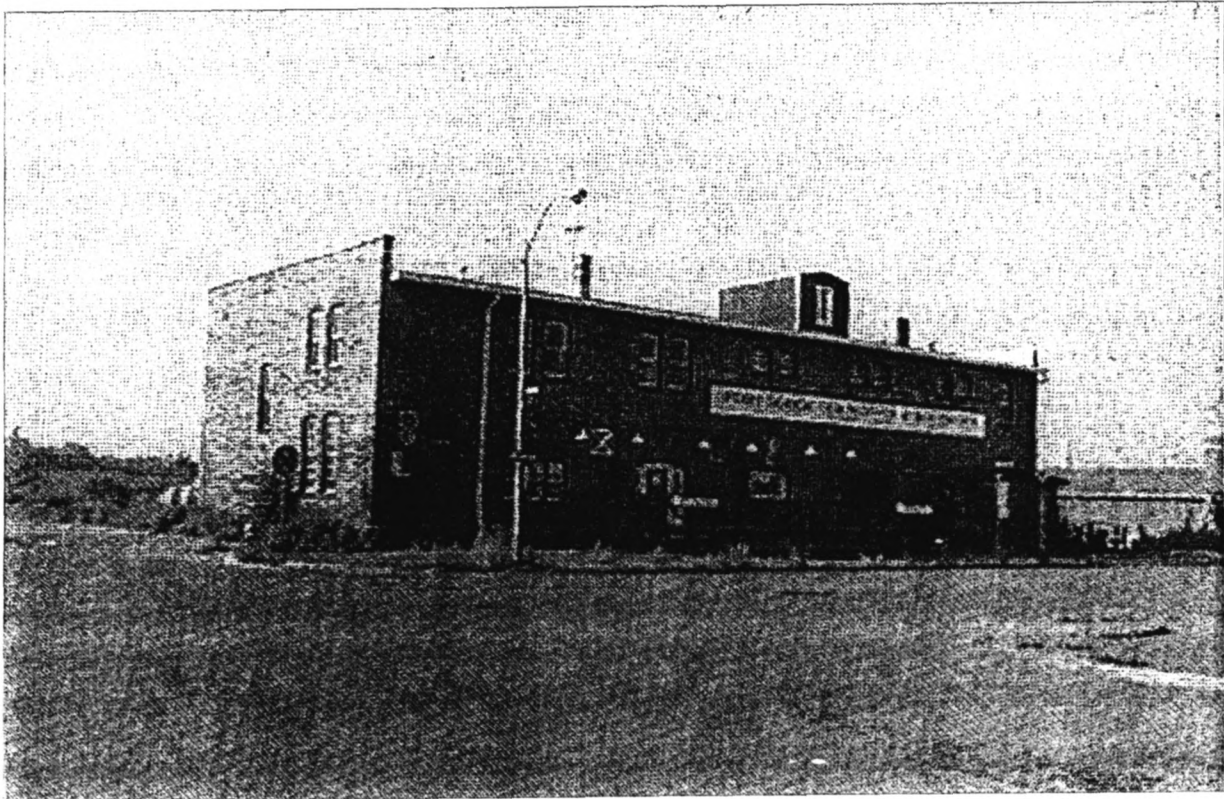
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FREIGHT HOUSE

CIRCA 1986



Looking to the southwest, this photograph pictures the building soon after it was converted to a restaurant. Those changes included the painted sign above the first floor and changes to the dock doors.

Source: State Historic Preservation Office Inventory Files, State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines.

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Des Moines Western Railway Freight House, Polk County, Iowa.

Name of Property/other names (continued from Page 1)

St. Paul & Des Moines Railroad Freight House; Fort Dodge, Des Moines & Southern Railway Co.
Freight House and Passenger Depot

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

Begun in 1902 and completed in early 1903, the Des Moines Western Railway Freight House is locally significant, under National Register Criterion A, because of its association with railroad transportation. This 2-story building calls attention to railroads and interurban lines in Des Moines during the first half of the 20th century and their significance for the growth of the city. F. M. Hubbell originally built this facility for the Des Moines, Iowa Falls, and Northern Railroad, an aborted attempt to link the capital city and points west. The Fort Dodge, Des Moines & Southern Railroad (FtDDM&S), an interurban line, subsequently acquired Hubbell's road and continued to use this freight house for its original purpose. In addition to passengers, the FtDDM&S carried a substantial volume of freight. In the 1930s, the road converted part of this freight house into a passenger depot, a function which continued into the 1950s. Today, the Des Moines Western Railway Freight House remains one of the few extant properties associated with interurban transportation in Des Moines and a rare surviving example of a freight house, a once common property type in the city. William H. Brereton of Des Moines served as the general contractor for the erection of the building.

The period of significance, under Criterion A, for this property is 1903 to 1955. These years witnessed the building's historic service as a freight house and passenger depot. The building was placed in service in 1903 and ceased serving railroad functions in 1955.

The property contains one resource for this nomination—the edifice itself, which is counted as a contributing building.

The Des Moines Western Railway Freight House meets the registration requirements for local significance, under Criterion A, as outlined in the 1990 Multiple Property Documentation Form "The Advent and Development of Railroads in Iowa: 1855-1940." According to that document, eligible properties include those

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Des Moines Western Railway Freight House, Polk County, Iowa.

Structures associated with key locales in the evolution of major railroad transportation routes (e.g. terminal stations, division stations, important line crossings); structures associated with railroad stations that were the focus of a community's transportation system. (Conard and Cuning: F-33)

As Iowa's largest city, Des Moines received and distributed vast quantities of goods via the railroads. The Des Moines Western Railway Freight House expedited this process. At a time before the automobile dominated transportation, this building in its adaptive reuse as a depot served the legion of local travelers dependant on public transportation. This reuse calls attention to the railroads' constant emphasis on economy, as explicated below.

BACKGROUND

F. M Hubbell

Frederick Marion Hubbell (1839-1930) took a leading part in building the financial and industrial institutions of Des Moines. Hubbell's ambition, business acumen, and drive were largely responsible for the establishment of the Equitable Life Insurance Company of Iowa; for contributing to the city's emergence as a national insurance center; for founding several railroad lines; for the establishment of the Des Moines Waterworks; for the amassing of great real estate holdings; and for siring a dynasty of children, who followed in his footsteps and excelled in all of these and other fields of business endeavors. Hubbell accomplished much of this during an era when government lacked regulatory powers and provided only basic services for the common weal and in a business climate where capitalists operated under *laissez faire*, with only the restraint provided by fierce competition, a *modus operandi* in which Hubbell excelled and which earned him both repugnance and grudging respect among his competitors.

F. M. Hubbell was born in Connecticut and relocated to Des Moines in 1855, shortly after the incorporation of the community as a town. He joined a land office and then joined a law and real estate firm with J. S. Polk and P. M. Casaday, first as a clerk and then as a partner in 1862. Hubbell was admitted to the bar in 1858. For a time, he relocated to Sioux City, Iowa, where he was involved in the organization of government in the newly established Woodbury County, Iowa.

Upon his return to Des Moines, Hubbell rejoined the partnership with Polk and Casaday. When Casaday retired, the firm was reorganized as Polk & Hubbell. The partners realized the importance

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of transportation for the nation's growing economy. Together they organized a railroad line from Des Moines to Ames, which later became part of the Northwestern system. In 1882, they assisted in financing the construction of a railroad line from Albia, Iowa, to Des Moines and later a branch line from Clive, Iowa, to Boone. Hubbell was also active in the establishment of streetcar service in Des Moines. Hubbell mistakenly believed that narrow gauge railroads held a key for transportation's future, one of the few mistakes (albeit a big one) of his financial career. The freight house he had constructed for the Des Moines Western Railway calls attention to the rectification of this mistake. That line was built as a standard gauge railroad.

Hubbell's greatest achievement was in insurance. He built the Equitable of Iowa Insurance Company as its president into one of the nation's major insurance firms (Mills: 118) and boosted Des Moines as a leading insurance center.

William H. Brereton

The 1899 Des Moines city directory lists two William Breretons: William H., a contractor with an office at 622 East Grand Avenue, who resided at 1341 Lyon; and William, a bricklayer, who resided at 1404 East Walnut Avenue. (City Directory: 175) The two men were likely father and son, the contractor the father, whose advertisement as a brick contractor appeared on page 828 of that directory.

William Henry Brereton was a Des Moines building contractor, who served as one of the men "in charge of building Camp Dodge," the U.S. Cantonment near Des Moines, constructed during World War I. Brereton was born in Staffordshire, England, and died in Des Moines in 1921. (Baldwin: 39)

The city directory still listed William H. Brereton in the general section as a contractor in 1920 but not in the classified business directory, so it is likely that he had retired by this time. A newspaper advertisement for Brereton, published in 1913, says that he had been in the construction business for 25 years. It lists the following 15 of his projects:

Des Moines Municipal Market
Polk County Jail and Tunnel
Drake University Library
Drake University Bible College
Drake University Gymnasium
Drake University Apartment House

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Des Moines Casket Factory
Yunker Building, Sixth and Mulberry
Merchants' Transfer Ware House
Garrison's Livery Barn
Des Moines Electric Company Addition and Stack
Des Moines City Railway Car Shops, W. 2nd & 24th Sts.
East Des Moines Union Station

Source: *Des Moines Capital*, June 18, 1913.

Except for the properties associated with Drake University, most of these jobs are related to transportation or industry. This suggests that much (if not most) of Brereton's work focused on utilitarian architecture. Although it is not presently known if Brereton trained in Britain before emigrating, this focus would be consistent with that nation's emphasis on industrial arts at the time. Curiously, the above advertisement does not mention the subject of this nomination.

In 1920, Brereton resided at 546 40th Street. This fashionable address is indicative of Brereton's successful career. Fortieth Street is located, then and now, in a prestigious and affluent residential neighborhood in Des Moines. Brereton's house shows the influence of Craftsman styling on its design and, although not big, features a wealth of architectural detailing. Brereton's firm no doubt built it. Gertrude Brereton, William's daughter and an artist, continued to live in the family home following her father's death in 1921.

FREIGHT HOUSE

The Des Moines Western Railway Freight House is historically significant because of its service as a freight house for a succession of railroad companies in Des Moines, Iowa, and because it remains today a rare surviving example of a once common property type in the city. The companies it served included the Des Moines, Iowa Falls & Northern Railroad (DMIF&N), St. Paul & Des Moines Railroad (StP&DM), and the Fort Dodge, Des Moines & Southern Railway Co. (FtDDM&S). The latter was an electric interurban line, which also carried freight. The FtDDM&S used the facility from 1911 to 1968 as a freight house and from 1933 to 1955 as a combination passenger depot and freight house.

Rebecca Conard and Tracy Ann Cuning in their seminal study "The Advent and Development of Railroads in Iowa: 1855-1940" provide an historic context for the emergence of railroad

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transportation in the state. This work outlines the general characteristics of freight houses, among other ancillary railroad buildings and structures. The report notes that

Freight houses can be divided into terminal freight buildings and local freight houses, although since Iowa had few terminal stations, the distinction is generally unimportant here. Larger facilities sometimes had separate inbound and outbound freight houses. When the freight house was intended to handle primarily local freight, it was usually located near a prominent thoroughfare, as close to the business portion of town as feasible. At stations which handled considerable car-load freight, it was customary to locate the freight house alongside the tracks. Freight houses in larger cities were often two-story or combination one-and two-story brick buildings. Stations that handled a smaller volume of freight received single-story frame structures with high platforms on one or more sides. It was not uncommon for old combination wood depots to be recycled as freight houses when a new depot was constructed. (Conard and Cuning: F-20)

Although this report did not fully develop the freight house as a property type or identify any freight house in Des Moines, it is evident that the Des Moines Western Railway Freight House conforms to the description given above of a local freight house. The building is brick and two-story in height, commensurate with the importance of Des Moines as an industrial and wholesale center in Iowa. As a prominent thoroughfare, East Court Avenue provided a convenient route to the city's wholesale districts (one located directly east of the Des Moines River and one directly west of the river), as well as to factories on the city's farther east side.

The Des Moines Western Railway was incorporated February 11, 1902, by F. M. and F. C. Hubbell along with H. D. Thompson and capitalized at \$300,000. The charter originally indicated that plans called for the construction of a railroad line from Des Moines to some point on the Missouri River between Council Bluffs and Sioux City. The trackage through western Iowa never materialized. Indeed, the road ran just within the Des Moines city limits, running south, along the west side of the Chicago Great Western Railway from the city limits to Brooks Avenue (now Dean Avenue), then west around Capitol Hill to East 6th Street. The DWR leased this trackage to the Des Moines, Iowa Falls & Northern Railroad, another of F. M. Hubbell's business ventures. This lease included the Des Moines Western Railway Freight House at 625 East Court Avenue.

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An announcement in a local newspaper heralded the construction of this building:

Deeds were filed for record yesterday conveying property valued at \$24,950 to the new terminal company through which F. M. Hubbell is building a new terminal railway on the East Side for the use of the Des Moines & Iowa Falls road. The property conveyed includes all of the land between the Des Moines Union tracks and Court avenue from East Sixth to East Eighth street and several small tracts in Sunnyside addition. The Montgomery property at East Sixth and Court avenue sold for \$9,500. (*Des Moines Register & Leader*, October 10, 1902, p. 6, c. 4)

By early December 1902, Hubbell had hired a building contractor for the freight house and decided upon a design, as reported in the following newspaper account:

BUILDING A FREIGHT HOUSE
D.M.I.F. & N.R.R. Erecting a
Building at East Seventh.

Contractor William Brereton has begun the erection of a freight house at East Seventh and Court avenue for the Des Moines, Iowa Falls & Northern Railroad company. The structure will be 112x44 feet, constructed of stone and vitrified brick, stone being used for the foundation and basement walls. The estimated cost is \$25,000. It is expected the road will have been completed to this city about December 20, when traffic will be opened between Des Moines and Iowa Falls. There is no longer any question that the Des Moines, Iowa Falls & Northern is an independent line, but that it is closely allied with the Illinois Central and will be operated in connection with the Central is equally certain. Its passenger trains will be run into the Union station. (*Des Moines Daily News*, December 5, 1902, p. 7)

The subsequent history of this freight house is complicated. It served the Des Moines, Iowa Falls, and Northern line for only a few years. In June 1905, that line set up a new railroad company, the St. Paul & Des Moines Railroad, in order to build an extension from Iowa Falls to Mason City, Iowa. The DMIF&N was subsequently absorbed into the new StP&DM, effective on August 1, 1908, shortly before the latter company completed its trackage into Mason City.

After August 1, 1908, the Des Moines Western Freight House was operated under the auspices of the StP&DM until it was sold to the Chicago Rock Island & Pacific Railroad on February 23, 1911.

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On August 8, 1911 the StP&DM company disappeared, when the Rock Island road absorbed it into the St. Paul & Kansas City Short Line Railroad, a new road formed to make connection with Kansas City, Missouri. After the StP&DM came under Rock Island ownership, the lease with the Des Moines Western Railway for its freight house was terminated, and all business moved to Rock Island facilities near downtown Des Moines.

The Fort Dodge, Des Moines & Southern Railway now came into the picture. In 1912, this road leased the Des Moines Western trackage in Des Moines and the Freight House. The FtDDM&S operated extensive interurban lines in Central Iowa, including both freight and passenger service.

The history of the FtDDM&S is still under investigation concerning the property at 625 East Court Avenue. Briefly put, the line used this building until 1933 exclusively for freight. During this time, the line leased facilities at the Union interurban station at 2nd and Grand Avenues in Des Moines for its passenger service. During the Great Depression, the line felt the pinch of economic stress and to save money, terminated its operations at Union. In 1933, the FtDDM&S converted the Freight House into a combination freight house and passenger station, making the alterations to the building, as noted above, to accommodate its new use.

Following World War II, the rise of the automobile precipitated the decline of interurban passenger service. In 1955, the FtDDM&S terminated its passenger service. The line continued to operate its freight service until 1968, when the Chicago & Northwestern purchased the line. Because the C&NW operated its own freight house in Des Moines, the property at 625 East Court became redundant and sat vacant. Then, in 1975, after the title to the property had cleared, Hamms Des Moines Co., Inc., a beverage distributing company, purchased the Freight House, effectively ending its use as a railroad facility.

Historic Name

The historic name for this freight house as a property of the Des Moines Western Railway reflects the legal name of this parcel of land, which remained in force until the estate of F. M. Hubbell sold it in 1975. It is true that this freight house quickly became known as the Des Moines, Iowa Falls, and Northern Freight House (as indicated in the 1902 newspaper story cited above), as well as other names reflecting the current leaseholder of the building. The author of this report struggled to find an appropriate way to combine these names in hyphenated style. Finally, he decided to use its original name and to include the others as common names.

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REPRESENTATION IN OTHER CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEYS

Previous surveys of this building have been thin. An early Iowa Site Inventory form identified it as "Court Avenue Station" without any evaluation. A second form, submitted in 1980, identified it as the "Fort Dodge, Des Moines, and Southern Station" and evaluated it as "non-contributing," although no written evaluation was included.

POTENTIAL FOR HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Although the site's potential for archaeological research is, as yet, unevaluated, there appears to be little in this regard. There has been substantial disturbance on the surface of this site.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND REGISTRATION

W. H. Brereton was an important contractor in Des Moines during the late 19th and early 20th centuries but little research has focused on his life and work. The list of his works, outlined in this nomination, provides a starting point to evaluate these contributions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Ronald D. Sims, local historian of Des Moines, wrote some sections of text blended into this nomination. His interest and research in railroad history spans 50 years, evidenced by a series of historic photographs of the freight house, which he shot in 1956 and which are reproduced in this report. Sims notes that many historic images exist of passenger stations and railroad rolling stock, because of popular interest in those subjects. The freight house, in contrast, was viewed as a utilitarian building. This, according to Sims, accounts for the fact that few historic images of freight houses exist and that early 20th century images of the Des Moines Western Railway Freight House remain unknown at present. Posterity owes a debt of gratitude to Sims for recognizing the importance of such utilitarian buildings in the 1950s and photographing them.

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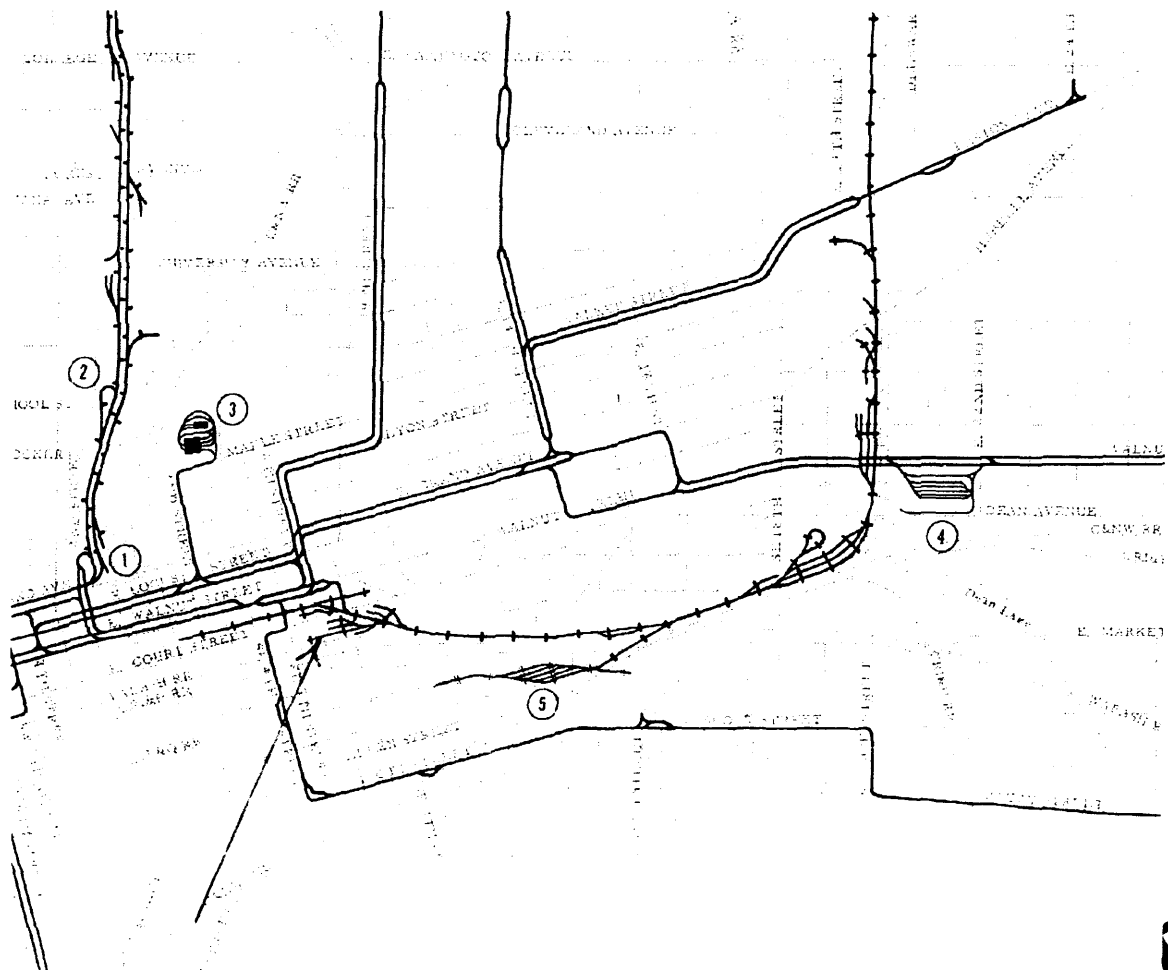
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INTERURBANS IN DES MOINES



The arrow identifies the location of the Freight House. The map pictures the interurban system at an unspecified date, described instead by the source as "at its greatest extent."

Source: *Iowa Trolleys*, Map Insert for Des Moines, n. p.

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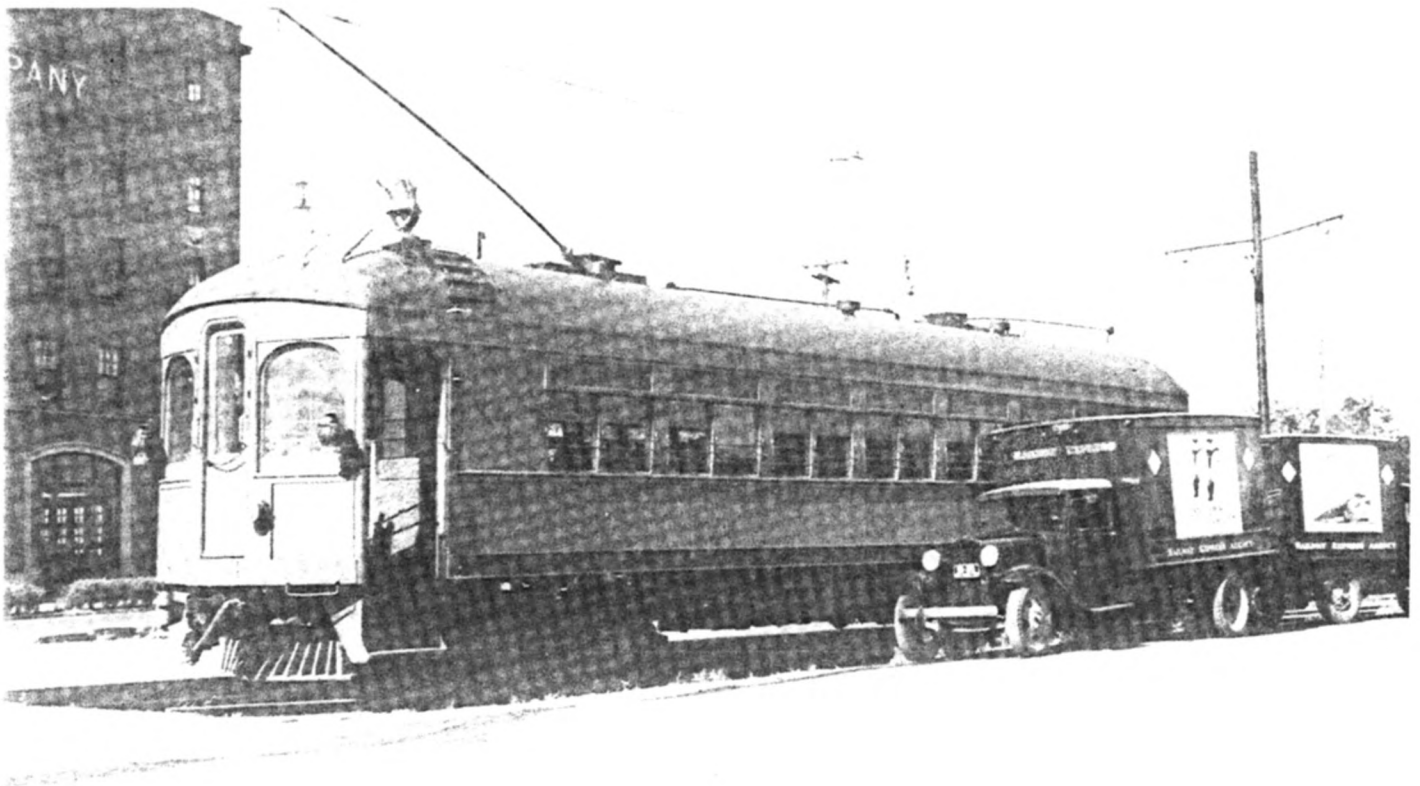
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CAR 66



Two Railway Express trucks load freight on a FDDM&S interurban car circa 1938. Scenes like this directly north of the Freight House on East Court Avenue frequently enlivened the scene. The International Harvester Company warehouse stands at far left.

Source: *Iowa Trolleys*, p. 118.

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Maps

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ORAL HISTORY

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

East one-half of Lots 3 and 4 in Block 2 of the West Fort Des Moines plat of the City of Des Moines.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The National Register boundary contains all land historically associated with this resource.

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LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Des Moines Western Railway Freight House
625 East Court Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50309
Looking southeast
William C. Page, Photographer
May 14, 2008
2. Des Moines Western Railway Freight House
625 East Court Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50309
Looking northeast
William C. Page, Photographer
May 14, 2008
3. Des Moines Western Railway Freight House
625 East Court Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50309
(Detail of east facade)
Looking northwest
William C. Page, Photographer
April 12, 2008
4. Des Moines Western Railway Freight House
625 East Court Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50309
Looking southwest
William C. Page, Photographer
April 12, 2008
5. Des Moines Western Railway Freight House
625 East Court Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50309
First Floor Interior looking east
William C. Page, Photographer
April 12, 2008

These photographs were printed on Hewlett-Packard Premium Plus Photo Paper with Vivera HP ink.