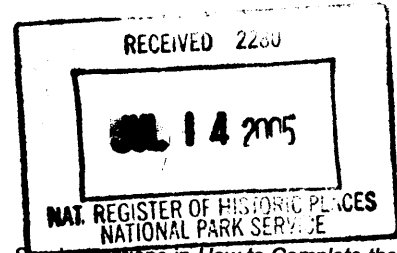


907

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 Ottumwa Young Women's Christian Association

other names/site number Your Family Center

2. Location

street & number 133 West Second St. [N/A] not for publication

city or town Ottumwa [N/A] vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Wapello code 179 zip code 52501

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).

Rowell J. Saitke July 13, 2005  
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:)

Edron M. Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

8.24.05  
Date of Action

**Ottumwa Young Women's Christian Association**  
Name of Property

**Wapello County, IA**  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>		buildings
<u>0</u>		sites
<u>0</u>		structures
<u>0</u>		objects
<u>1</u>		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**

**Architectural & Historical Resources of Ottumwa, IA**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL/Civic

RECREATION & CULTURE/Auditorium

RECREATION & CULTURE/Sports Facility

DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL/Civic

RECREATION & CULTURE/Auditorium

RECREATION & CULTURE/Sports Facility

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> & EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS:

Italian Renaissance

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

STONE/Limestone

roof ASPHALT

other METAL/Iron

\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

**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)

**SOCIAL HISTORY**

**ARCHITECTURE**

**Period of Significance**  
**1925-1955**

**Significant Dates**  
**1925**

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

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**  
**Croft & Boerner**  
**Ennis, C.W.**

**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 acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>[1]5</u>	<u>[5]4</u> <u>[9]3</u> <u>[8]2</u>	<u>[4]5</u> <u>[4]1</u> <u>[0]7</u> <u>[6]</u>	2	<u>[1]5</u>	<u>[0]0</u> <u>[0]0</u> <u>[0]0</u>	<u>[0]0</u> <u>[0]0</u> <u>[0]0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
3	<u>[1]5</u>	<u>[0]0</u> <u>[0]0</u> <u>[0]0</u>	<u>[0]0</u> <u>[0]0</u> <u>[0]0</u>	4	<u>[1]5</u>	<u>[0]0</u> <u>[0]0</u> <u>[0]0</u>	<u>[0]0</u> <u>[0]0</u> <u>[0]0</u>

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 Molly Myers Naumann, Consultant

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date June 2005

street & number 167 West Alta Vista telephone 641-682-2743

city or town Ottumwa state IA zip code 52501-1437

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the complete form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

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

**Additional items**

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

**Property Owner**

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

name Your Family Center, Board of Trustees

street & number 133 West Second St. telephone 641-682-5473

city or town Ottumwa state IA zip code 52501

**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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**Ottumwa Young Women's Christian Association  
Wapello County, Iowa**

Section number 7 Page 1

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**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION:**

The Ottumwa Young Women's Christian Association (1925) is located at 133 W. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, at the intersection of 2<sup>nd</sup> and Washington Streets in Ottumwa's central business district. It faces toward the railroad tracks and the river to the south. However, since the original plat of the city of Ottumwa was laid out parallel to the river, and not to the cardinal points, the building faces southwest.

The YWCA building consists of three sections built at three different times. The main block is a three story building measuring 88' x 67' located directly on the corner, facing 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. It was constructed in 1924-5 from plans drawn by Croft and Boerner of Minneapolis. To the east (also facing 2<sup>nd</sup> Street) is a two story gymnasium block (44' x 88') that was built in 1902 as part of the original YMCA building on this site. At the rear of the building, along 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, is a single story brick swimming pool wing measuring 62' x 112' that was designed by Steffen & Stoltz of Ottumwa and constructed in 1966.

**Exterior:**

The 1925 building is a fine example of Renaissance Revival design. A new, matching, façade was added to the gymnasium section when the corner building was constructed. The exterior is of "rough [striated] yellow brick and the trimming is of Bedford stone. The appearance of the building is also enhanced by the use of bricks to make fancy designs in the walls." (*Ottumwa Courier*, 20 September 1924) In the Renaissance tradition, each of the three floors is treated in a different manner.

Located on a corner with no other building behind it, all three major elevations of the YWCA are treated uniformly. The main block has a five bay symmetrical façade at street level, with a symmetrical eight bay secondary elevation along Washington, and the rear elevation contains six bays. The main floor features large round arched windows, with an arched central entrance. It rests on a stone water table and stone belt course surrounds the building at the first floor window sill level. The entrance is highlighted by a recessed stone arch with a rope motif. Surrounding the entry doors are sidelights with a multi-paned transom and lunette window above. This transom contains stained glass and enameled panes with the letters "YWCA." Intricate iron detailing covers the sidelights and surrounds the transom and lunette. Flanking the entrance are decorative rectangular iron panels. Above the entry, at the second floor level, is a balcony with brick railing and stone base, supported by decorative stone brackets. A stone cartouche containing the YWCA emblem is centered on the railing. The arcaded treatment of the primary façade on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street is continued on the secondary façade along Washington. The second floor of the primary façade contains a series of six rectangular windows, four centered directly above the arches on the first floor while the two center windows are centered above the balcony. On the Washington Street elevation rectangular second floor windows are centered directly above the first floor arches. The third floor also consists of a series of rectangular windows, but these are slightly smaller than those directly below. A single exterior brick chimney is located on the rear elevation.

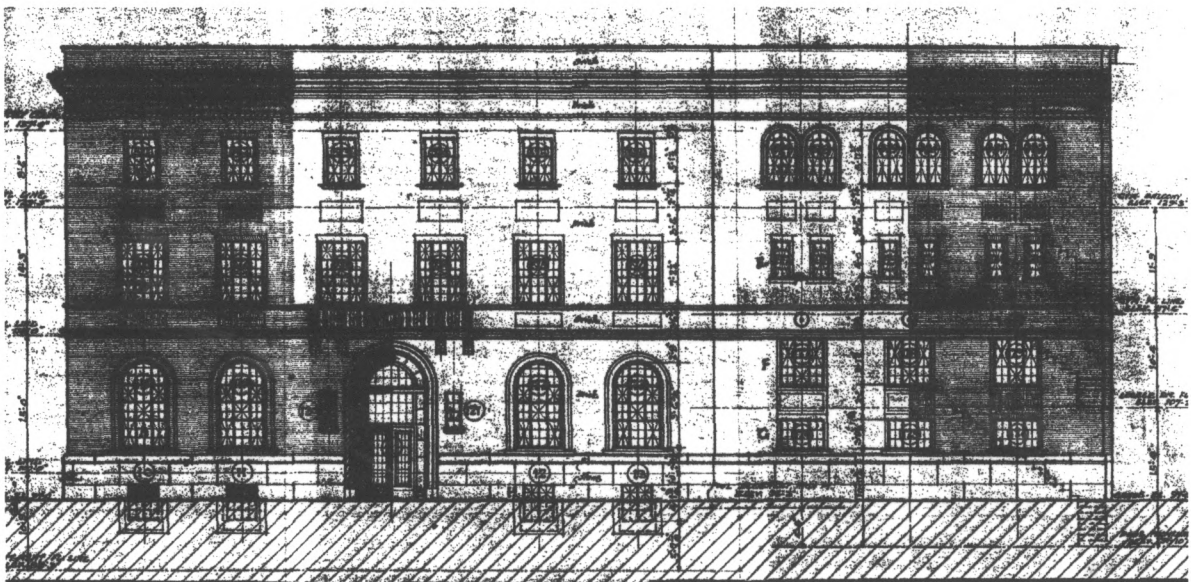
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Ottumwa Young Women's Christian Association  
Wapello County, Iowa

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The treatment of the gymnasium façade differs from that of the main block in both size and placement of windows. Although it appears to have two full stories, it is actually a tall single story building with a walking track around it at the second floor level. Horizontal elements link this section directly to the main block, but the windows here are all rectangular and vary by size and shape. The lowest level contains three horizontal openings to provide ventilation. Directly above these are three rectangular multi-pane vertical openings to provide light into the gymnasium, but high enough in the wall that the outside viewer cannot see inside. The top of the gymnasium has three pairs of tall slender multi-pane windows, again not to see out of, but to provide natural light to the track area. Note that the drawing below predates changes made to the design for economic reasons, and includes a third floor on the gymnasium section that was never built.



Drawing of Façade Elevation  
Croft & Boerner, 21 December 1923  
(Drawing courtesy of Your Family Center)

The exterior of both sections is covered with a variety of different brickwork patterns, adding a visual richness not often seen on buildings in a central business district. These patterns suggest that this was a special building, designed to serve a special purpose.

All windows on the three exposed elevations are flanked by stacked headers, with a soldier row across the top of the window. The lowest level of the walls, between the stone foundation and stone belt course, is laid in a pattern of soldier bricks along the bottom, headers

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**Ottumwa Young Women's Christian Association  
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across the top, and a brick patterned square in the middle area. The area between the stone belt course and a denticulated brick cornice at the top of the first floor is laid in English cross bond (alternating rows of headers and stretchers). The denticulated belt course has a double row of stretchers above, capped by a row of diagonal headers.

The next horizontal pattern is a row of headers around the building creating the sills for second floor windows. Between this row of headers, and the diagonal row below are decorative brick panels. On the gymnasium these are brick roundels centered above the first floor windows, while on the main block these are rectangular basket weave panels directly below, and the same width as, the second floor windows.

Above the second floor belt course, the English common bond continues until just above the second floor windows. Directly above each of these windows is a panel with a checkerboard pattern. On the gymnasium this is the highest level of decorative brick work below the very simple brick patterned cornice. On the main block however, the English bond continues to above the third floor windows where there is a stretcher row of dentils, and then a broad herring-bone frieze. This is capped by denticulated brick and a triple row of saw-tooth patterning. Above all of this is single row of roof tiles with a brick parapet and limestone cap.

The 1966 swimming pool wing is of light tan brick laid in running bond above a limestone base. It is divided into sections by tall narrow windows covered with patterned iron panels. These windows provide natural light into the pool area, while the iron panels reflect the ironwork found on the 1925 main block.

**Interior:**

The gymnasium wing is totally utilitarian with wood playing floor, plastered walls and ceiling, and the balcony (track) is supported by steel beams. On the 1924 floor plan the gymnasium is shown as "Swimming Pool" at the first floor level, with "Gymnasium" shown on the second and third floors. Due to monetary constraints, the swimming pool was not built and the gymnasium from the YMCA building was only slightly altered.

It is the interior of the main block that is of interest and is virtually unaltered. Entering through the main door (originally two doors that are now in storage), the vestibule is four steps below the lobby area. A terrazzo floor is found throughout the first floor, and the decorative ironwork seen on the exterior is carried inside and used as radiator covers on each side of the vestibule. These radiators have marble tops which can be used as benches. The lobby is 20' x 21', with offices opening off to the left; a lounge/living room (21' x 33') to the right; and, on the far wall, on the left, French doors open into a hall leading to the cafeteria, on the right a broad marble staircase leads up to the second floor, and in the center is an 11' wide passage that leads back to the kitchen, gymnasium (labeled swimming pool), and rest rooms. Each of these described areas is reached through a tall round arched opening. Monumental pilasters flank each of these openings. The arches opening into the offices and the lounge/living room spring from free-standing Doric columns. The main office (11'6" x 12') features a desk separating it from the lobby and is surrounded by a series of smaller offices along the west (Washington Street)

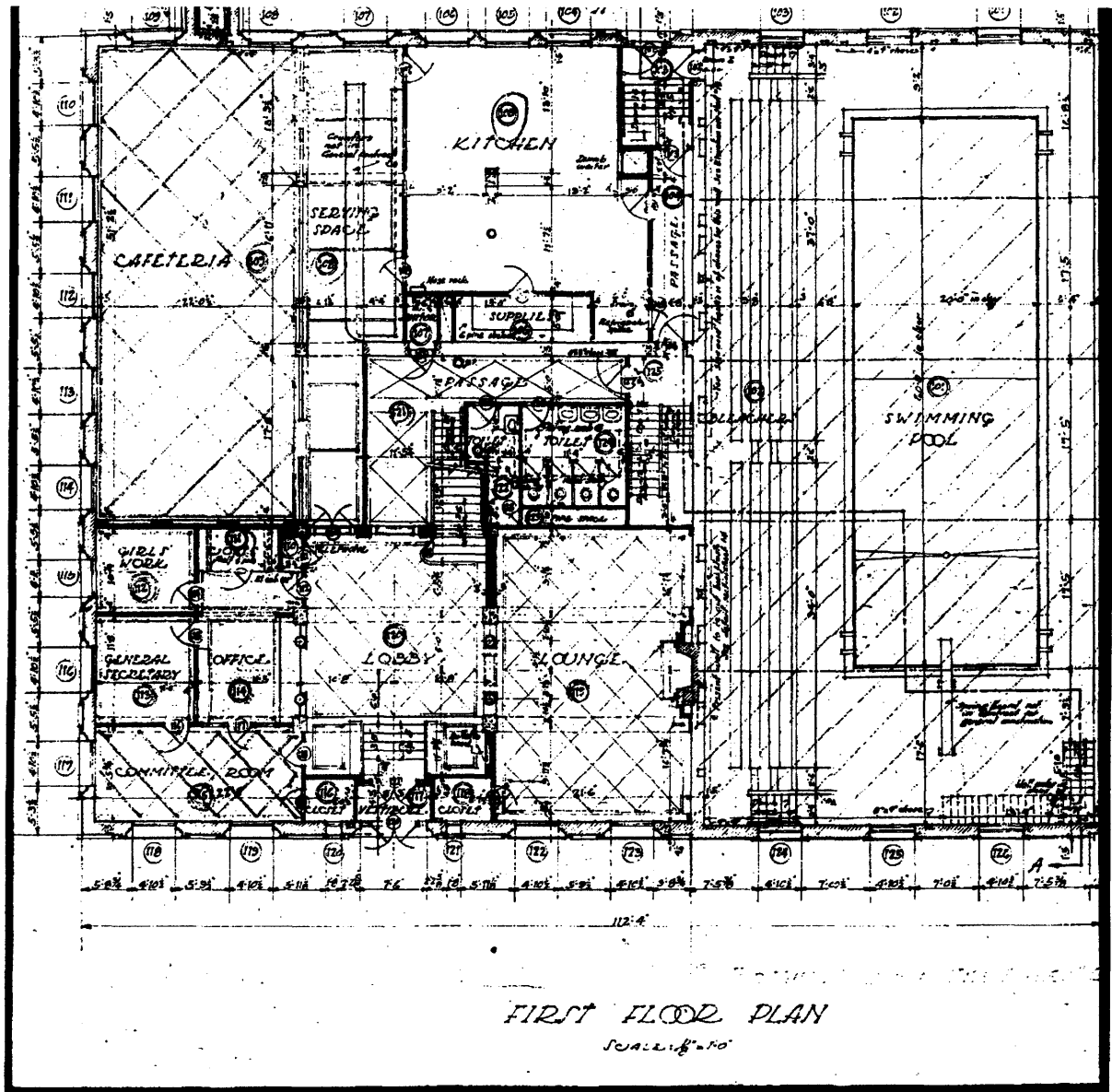
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Ottumwa Young Women's Christian Association  
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Plan for First Floor  
Croft & Boerner, 10 March 1924  
Note that the Swimming Pool at right was never built  
(Courtesy of Your Family Center)



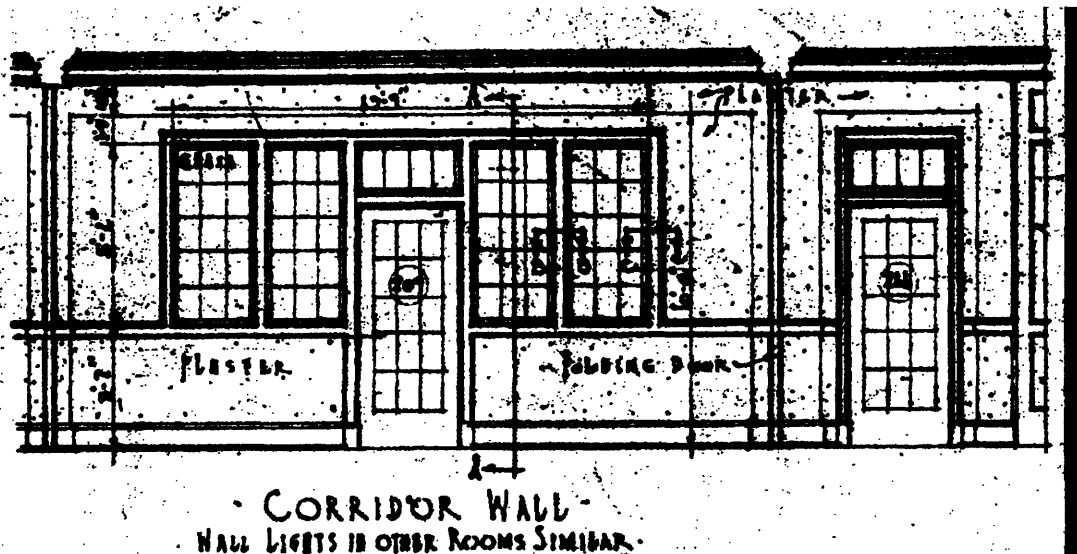
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Ottumwa Young Women's Christian Association  
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wall. The lounge/living room is high-lighted by a large fireplace with oak mantle that features the YWCA triangle. Both the lounge/living room and the lobby have beamed ceilings. Through the French doors leading to the cafeteria (22' x 51'), you are separated from the dining room proper by a wall of oak framed windows. The cafeteria fills the entire west side of the building behind the offices. The kitchen (22' x 25') is located in the center of the rear of the building. The stairs leading to the second floor are open, with a handsome wrought iron railing. A landing 2/3 of the way upstairs allows the stairs to make a right angle turn before reaching the second floor. continuation of the wrought iron railing. The Little Theater, or auditorium, measures 65' x 33' and extends across the entire front of the building and has a beamed ceiling. The stage (21' x 33') is located at the east end of the room. The auditorium was designed to seat 200 people. A large L-shaped series of rooms is located along the west and north sides of the second floor. These were originally designed to serve as parlors and/or club rooms for the girls, and could be opened to create one large room, or the doors can be closed and create five smaller individual rooms. The largest of these (13' x 22') is in the northwest corner of the building and features a fireplace. A corridor provides access to these rooms, and, like the passage by the cafeteria, the rooms are separated from the hall by a series of oak framed windows. The second floor also contains rest rooms, a check room and an office. A light court in the center of the building provides illumination to the interior rooms.



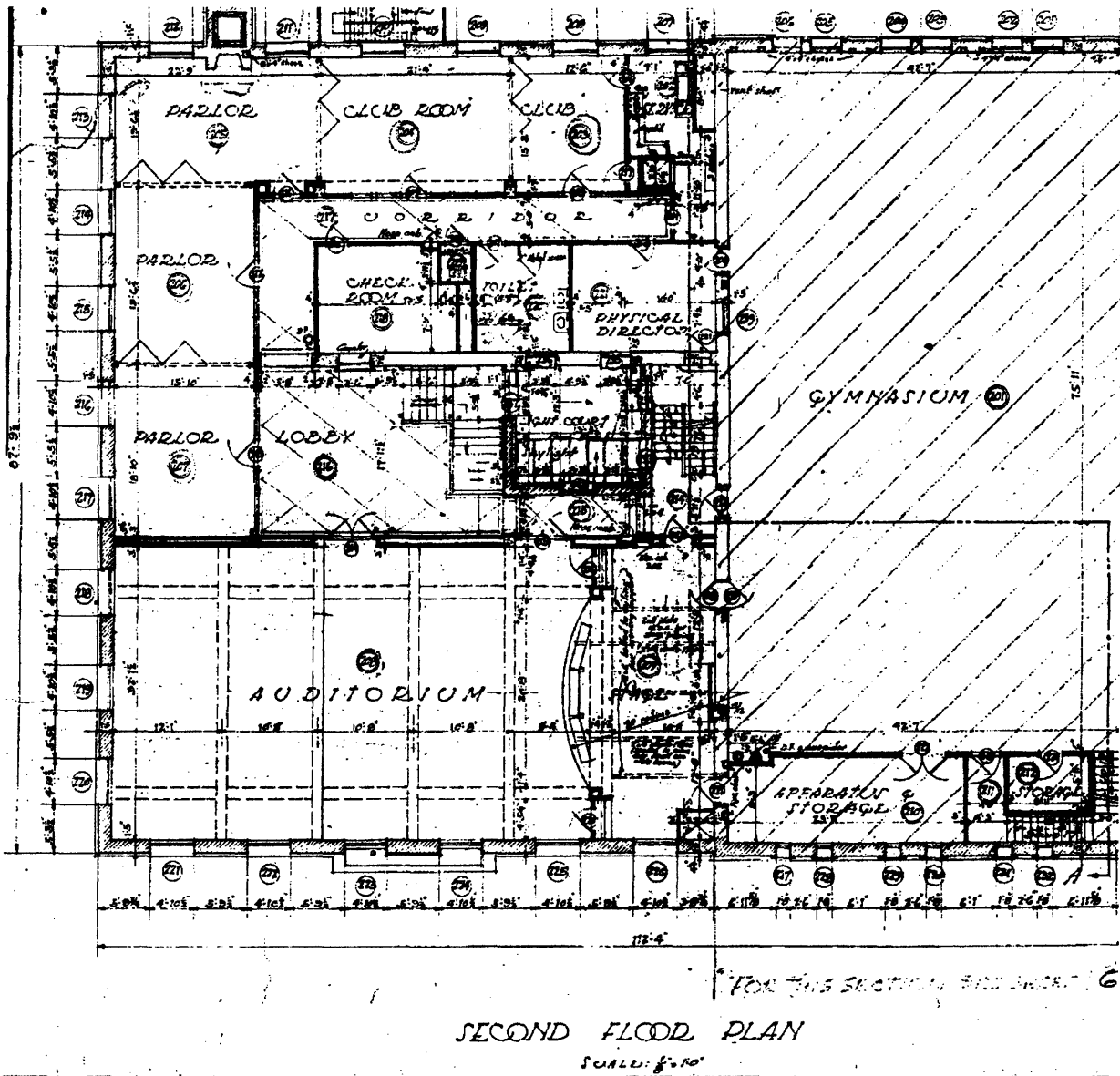
Drawing of Doors and Windows on 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Croft & Boerner, 21 December 1923  
(Courtesy of Your Family Center)

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Ottumwa Young Women's Christian Association  
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Plan of 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Croft & Boerner, 10 March 1924  
The gymnasium was not built as shown, the 1902 YMCA gymnasium was used  
(Courtesy of Your Family Center)

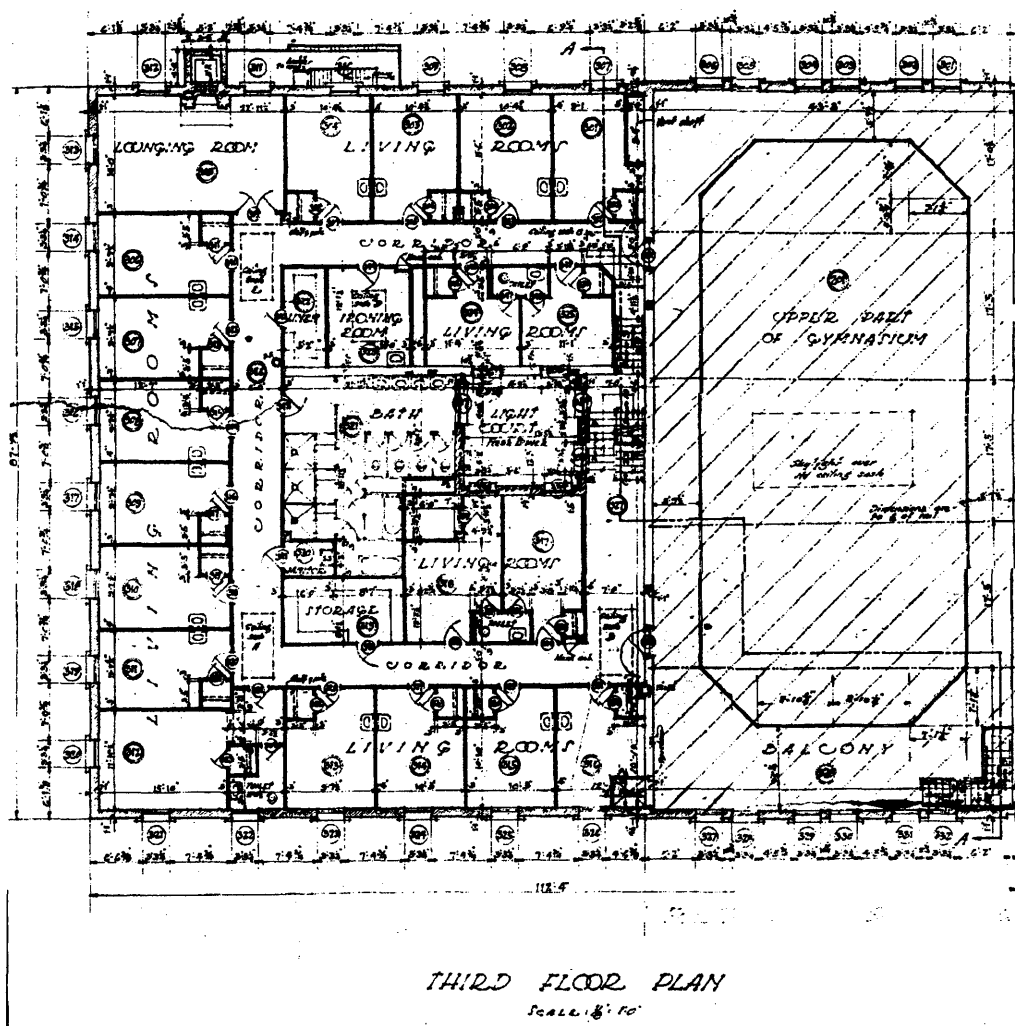
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The third floor houses the individual "living" or dorm rooms for young women, with a large (14' x 23') "lounging" room at the northwest corner that has a fireplace just like the room directly beneath it. There are nineteen individual rooms, six that originally had sinks, a communal bath, ironing room, and storage areas. The individual rooms vary in size from 10' x 10' to 12' x 16.' The floor on this level is concrete rather than terrazzo. Again, the light court provides illumination for the interior rooms.



Plan for 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Croff & Boerner, 10 March 1924  
The gymnasium was not built at this level, 1902 YMCA gymnasium was used  
(Courtesy of Your Family Center)

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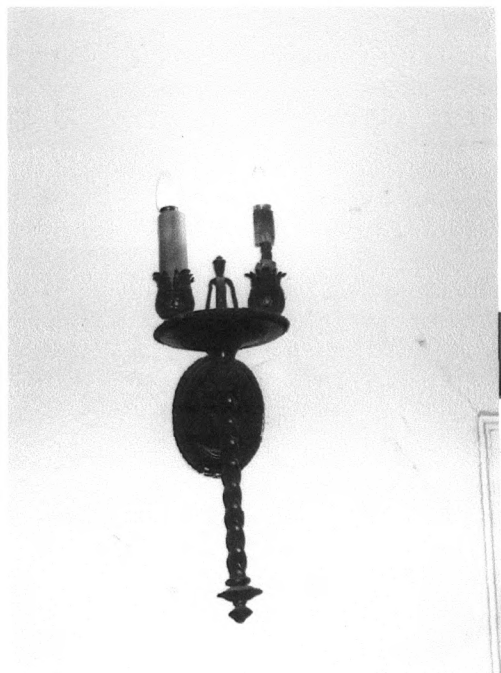
**Ottumwa Young Women's Christian Association  
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Like the gymnasium, the basement is totally utilitarian and contains an exercise room, locker rooms, and the mechanical systems.

The formal marble staircase connects only the first and second floors. Narrow, more utilitarian concrete steps connect all three floors along the east wall of the main block. Throughout the building many of the original light fixtures remain in place. Some are elaborate wrought iron hanging lights, while others are wrought iron wall sconces with "candle" lights.

The integrity of this building is extraordinary. Not only have the floors and oak woodwork been maintained, there are original pieces of furniture from the main floor lounge/living room and many original lighting fixtures. The alterations that have been made appear to date to the last ten to fifteen years. New windows were installed in the mid-1990s, and the original double front doors were removed at about the same time. The original doors are said to be in storage and could be reinstalled. The addition of the swimming pool in 1966 necessitated doors opening from the main block into the pool area at both the main floor and from the basement locker room. The swimming pool design is such that it is distinctly different from the main building and is not considered to be intrusive.



Original (1925) Lighting Fixtures

Left: Vestibule Light

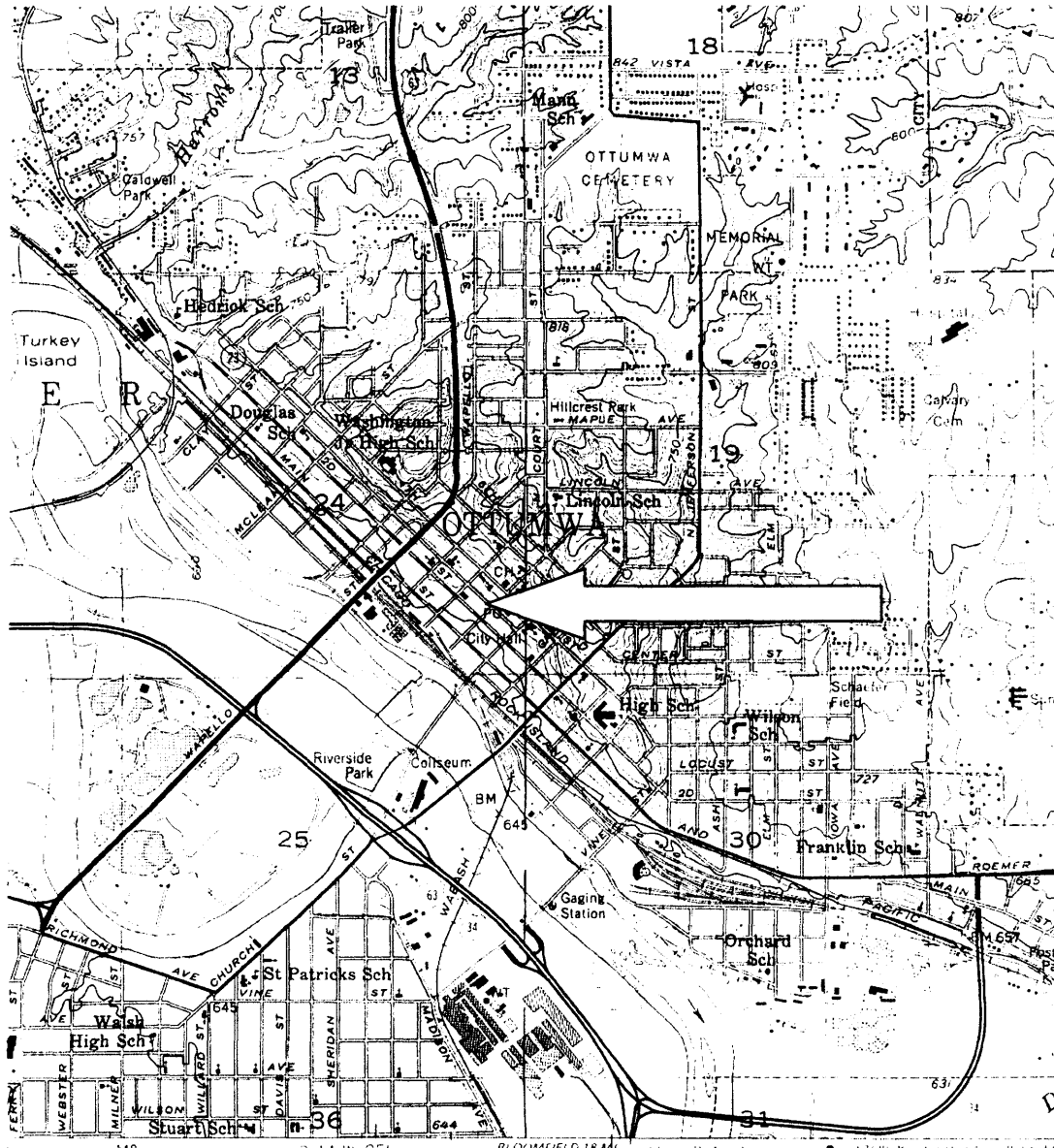
Right: Wall Sconce of the type used throughout the building

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National Park Service

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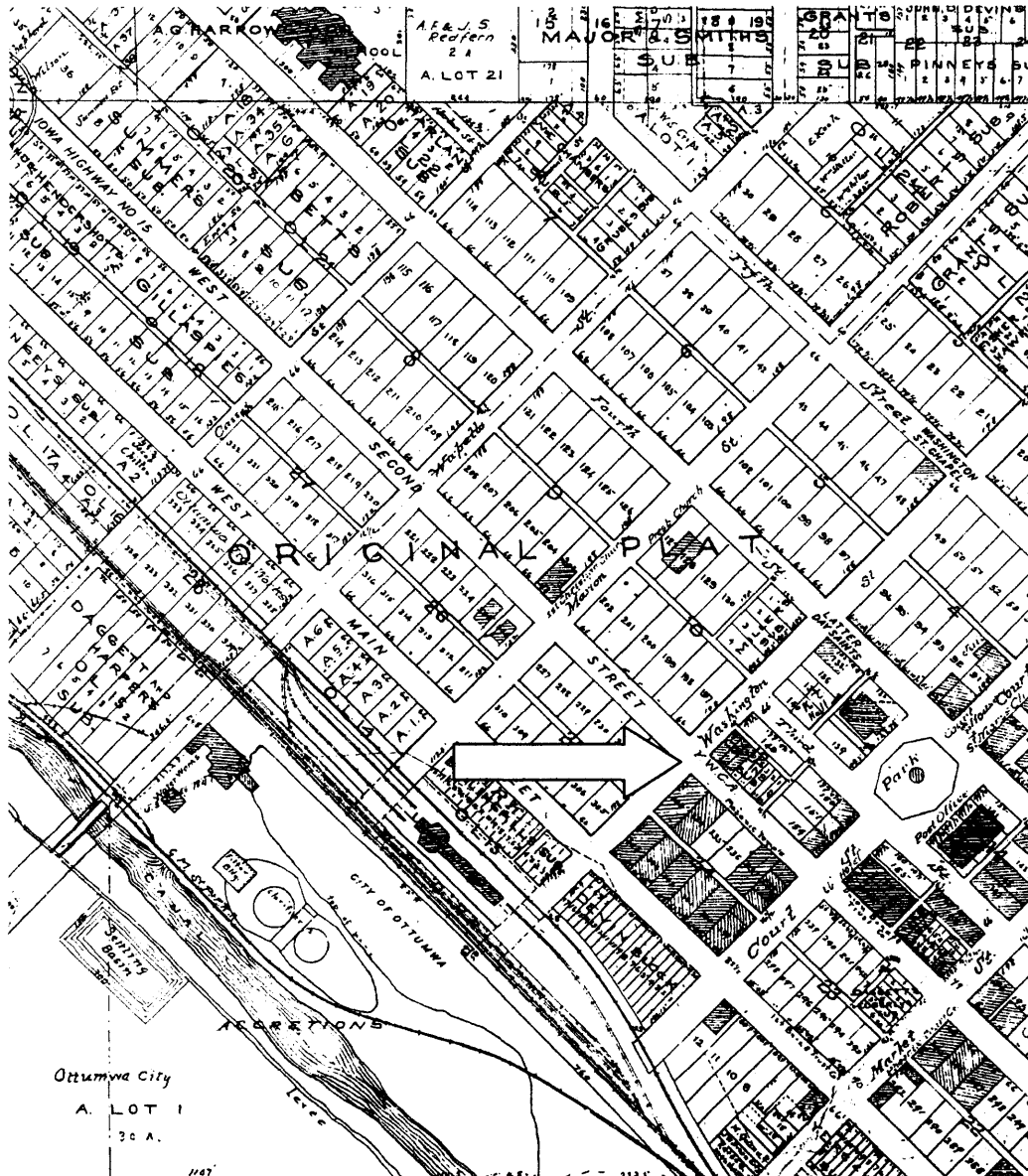
U.S.G.S. Map of Ottumwa (North) Quad (Rev 1976)  
Location of YWCA Indicated by Arrow

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Ottumwa Young Women's Christian Association  
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1939 Plat Map of Ottumwa  
Indicating Location of YWCA

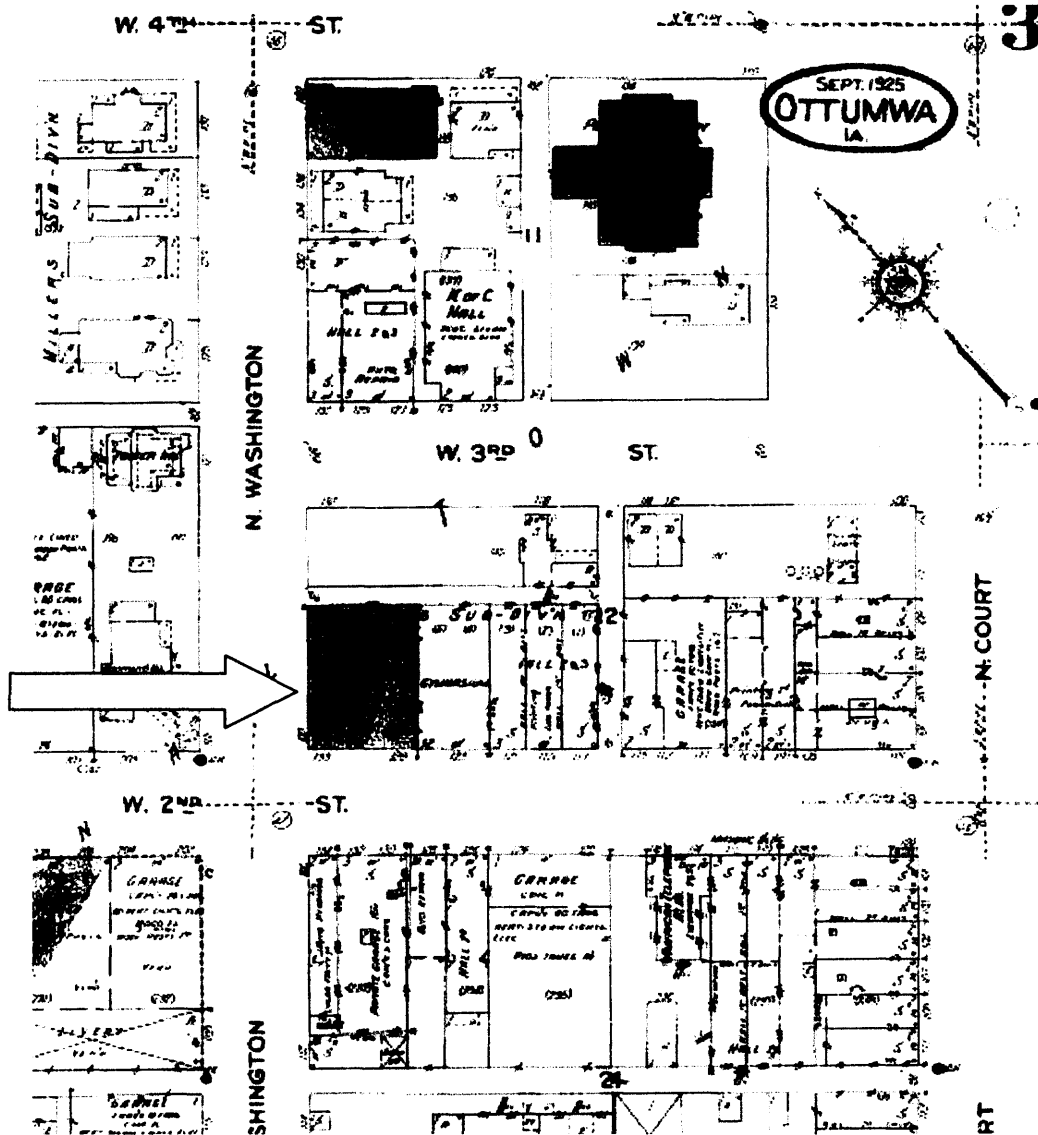
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1925 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Ottumwa  
Arrow Indicates Location of YWCA

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**Ottumwa Young Women's Christian Association  
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**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

The Ottumwa Young Women's Christian Association (1925) is locally significant under Criterion A as it represents the social movement to encourage the business and professional development of young women by providing safe lodging, and educational programs. It is locally significant under Criterion C as a fine, virtually unaltered example of the Italian Renaissance Revival style designed by the Minneapolis architectural firm of Croft and Boerner. It links to the 1995 "Architectural & Historical Resources of Ottumwa, Iowa" Multiple Property Document and meets the registration requirements under the "Architecture" context. The period of significance is the 30 year period between the date of construction, 1925 and 1955, recognizing the 50 year requirement. The 1902 gymnasium falls within this period of significance as it was incorporated into the 1925 design.

**Criterion A:**

The Young Women's Christian Association is an international nonsectarian Christian organization that aims "to advance the physical, social, intellectual, moral, and spiritual interests of young women." (Women in American History) The origins can be traced back to England in the 1850s as a response to the industrial revolution which drew many young women to the cities in search of work. A number of women's groups established homes for these women, including Lady Kinnard who created a boardinghouse in London to provide lodging for young working women. In 1858 a group of women in New York City established the first Ladies' Christian Association to provide for the "temporal, moral, and religious welfare of young women who are dependent on their own exertions for support." (Ibid.) That is considered by many to be the first YWCA in this country. In 1866 a group in Boston was formed and took as its official name, the Young Women's Christian Association. Associations were formed on college campuses as well as in urban areas. The movement spread rapidly, and hundreds of associations were in existence by 1900. In 1906 the national organization was established in New York City.

In addition to providing safe lodging and meals, the YWCA offered rooms for social gatherings, classes to introduce new subjects, new job training opportunities, recreation including team sports and summer camps, and opened its facilities to the community as a whole. The recreational, educational, and spiritual aspects of its program are symbolized in its insignia, a blue triangle the three sides of which stand for body, mind, and spirit.

"Throughout our history the YWCA has been in the forefront of most major movements in the United States as a pioneer in race relations, labor union representation, and the empowerment of women." (YWCA History) In 1870 the YWCA held the first classes in typewriting, previously considered to be a male occupation. They opened the first employment bureau for women in the same year. During the 1890s the first black YWCA branch opened in Ohio, and the first YWCA for Native Americans opened in Oklahoma. In 1919 the YWCA held the first International Conference for Women Physicians, when participants from 32 countries spent six weeks focusing on women's health issues. During the Depression and World War II the YWCA trained women as bus drivers, lathe operators, and "Rosie the Riveters." In 1942 the YWCA extended its services to Japanese-American women and girls incarcerated in World War II



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**Ottumwa Young Women's Christian Association  
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relocation centers. In 1946, eight years before the U.S. Supreme Court's decision against segregation, the YWCA adopted its Interracial Charter. And in 1960 the Atlanta YWCA cafeteria opened to blacks, becoming the city's first desegregated public dining facility. (This is a partial list of accomplishments taken from the timeline included in the [YWCA History](#))

The growing city of Ottumwa experienced many of the same problems as the larger urban centers. In the 1890s Ottumwa business and industry were more diversified than today, and many of the employees were young women. Those lucky enough to have family in town lived at home, but those who came to Ottumwa from smaller towns and farms to find work had few choices in terms of living arrangements. These young women were employed in retail stores, offices, and some industries. From the 1880's through 1953 one of Ottumwa's industries was cigar making. The heyday of cigar making in Ottumwa was from 1890 until the mid-1920s. Nearly one-half of the 400 people employed in sixteen cigar factories were young, unmarried women. (Naumann, MPD, E-27) The heart of the cigar manufacturing industry was centered in downtown Ottumwa, in the 200 block of East Main and the 100 and 200 blocks of South Market. A safe place to live near the downtown business area would be of help to dozens of young women.

The Young Women's Christian Association in Ottumwa was organized in January 1894 with sixty-five charter members. These women were the leaders of Ottumwa's society and were the wives or daughters of the men who had established the Ottumwa Young Men's Christian Association in 1887. In the first year of organization the women opened reading rooms and rest rooms, and in the fall added a boarding house for young women. The YWCA had fiscal ups and downs, but around 1903 they purchased the former First Baptist Church on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street (non-extant) and remodeled it to fit their needs. The YMCA was located across the street in a three story brick building and, unlike the YWCA, had a gymnasium and swimming pool. The two organizations cooperated on many recreational and camping activities. In the early 1920s the YWCA provided camping opportunities for 350 girls at Camp Harper-Brown (located on the Des Moines River a few miles upstream from Ottumwa) and Kamp Koho (a smaller recreation area located near the corner of Elm and Vanness in the northern part of the city).

With a growing membership, the YMCA decided to build a new, larger building three blocks east at the corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> and Green. The association moved into this new building in May 1921. The Board of Directors of the YWCA became interested in the old YM building and made plans to purchase and remodel it. The 1923 Annual Report from the YWCA Executive Secretary illustrates the need for the YW to also expand:

YWCA membership reached 700

More than 70,000 persons were served by the Association that year

"Girls are coming to Ottumwa every day of the year seeking employment and requesting direction and assistance from the YWCA."

Cafeteria served more than 40,000 lunches, and some evening meals.

"Hundreds of country people, while in Ottumwa to shop, make the Association their headquarters, finding there a place to rest, to meet friends, to warm milk for the baby and to get a good lunch."

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"In the present quarters at 123 W. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, ....there is little or no opportunity for all classes and clubs to have their gatherings. Lack of space has obliged the Association to refuse the use of rooms to outside organizations."

The YW selected the Minneapolis architectural firm of Croft and Boerner to design the changes to be made. The YM building had a swimming pool across the rear of the building, and a gymnasium along the east side. The YW Board wanted to have the swimming pool located beneath the gymnasium proper, and plans were drawn to show this. A New Building Campaign was conducted in 1923, raising a total of \$165,000. In January 1924 the YWCA Board of Directors advertised for bids to completely remodel the building inside and out. All bids were rejected because they were higher than had been anticipated. C.E. Croft made a visit to Ottumwa in February, and was instructed to draw new plans on a smaller scale. (*Ottumwa Courier*, 9 March 1924) In March bids were again taken, this time for a totally new building on the site. The bids fell within the association's budget of \$170,000.

### **New YWCA Building to Start Monday**

C.W. Ennis of Grinnell, awarded the general contract today for the erection of the new YWCA at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Washington Streets, expects to begin work Monday and his agreement calls for completion of the structure December 1.

The present building on the site, formerly the YMCA, will be torn down. The gymnasium, joining the main building on the east, will not be changed, but the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street facing wall will be rebuilt to conform with the other building.

Carstens Bros. of Ackley were given the contract for the heating, ventilating and plumbing, and the Central Electric Co. of Ottumwa gets the contract for the electrical work. Mr. Ennis agreed to the recommendations of the directors and building committee that local labor and material be used.

Association leaders said this afternoon that the total of the three major bids, plus architect fees and allowance for shrinkage would come within \$150,000, at the same time emphasizing the fact that it is necessary that all pledges made during the building campaign a year ago and due at six month intervals since, be paid at once if the committee is able to meet its obligations. The exact figures on the individual contracts were not forthcoming, but it was understood in local construction circles that the Ennis bid was \$93,000; Carstens, \$24,325; and the electrical firm, \$7,531. It was also general information that the highest bid, offered on the major contract, was \$119,787.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the new building will be given over to dormitory rooms. The 2<sup>nd</sup> will have an auditorium seating 200 persons, with club rooms along

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the Washington Street and rear sides. On the first floor will be placed the secretaries' offices, lobby, lounge with fireplace, cafeteria and kitchen, the latter across the rear alley side. (*Ottumwa Courier*, 26 March 1924)

The old building was demolished in April and the cornerstone for the new building was laid (with appropriate ceremony) on Sunday, 22 June 1924. The chairman of the Building Committee was George Foster, son of Mr. and Mrs. T.D. Foster, both of whom had been instrumental in establishing the YMCA and YWCA. (T.D. Foster was responsible for bringing John Morrell & Company Meatpacking to Ottumwa in 1877. The T.D. Foster residence at 205 E. 5<sup>th</sup> Street was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1985.)

Construction continued through the summer and fall, with the ladies of the YWCA continuing to raise money for the building. A bazaar was held in November to raise money for supplies and furnishings. (*Ottumwa Courier*, 14 November 1924) It was originally hoped that lavatories could be placed in each of the dormitory rooms, but funding only allowed for nine rooms to have this special feature. The swimming pool was also deleted from the plans due to lack of money, but the General Secretary, Miss Parks, explained that "The girls will arrange to swim in the YMCA plunge." (*Ottumwa Courier*, 3 December 1924.)

When the building was completed in late March, and everything was moved in, there were still nine dormitory rooms to be furnished. It cost \$125 to furnish a dormitory room. It appears that local merchants were selling furniture, etc. at cost to help with the project. Most of the rooms were furnished by organizations or as memorials, and brass name plates were placed on the doors identifying the donors. By the time the \$130,000 building was dedicated in April it was noted that it was debt free.

**GREAT CROWDS VIEW Y.W.C.A.**

**Many Are Turned Away as Dedication Ceremonies Are Opened**

More than 500 people were waiting in the new Y.W.C.A. building yesterday at 4 o'clock for the opening dedication service, and it is estimated that at least 300 were unable to get in. Many of those who could not attend the services passed through the building. Praise of the structure was unanimous.

**DEDICATION PRAYER**

The services opened with the dedication prayer by Mrs. Chris Haw, president of the association. Greetings were given by Mrs. D.D. Jacobs of Marshalltown, Rev. N.C. Lambly and M.T. McClelland, the latter the president of the Y.M.C.A. The dedication address was made by Maria L'Hommedieu, national Y.W.C.A. secretary, of Chicago.

Miss L'Hommedieu in speaking of the building paid a beautiful tribute to the architecture and also the things with which it is made up. She spoke of

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it embodying loyalty, faith and love. She opened her address by telling how the building was dedicated to the glory of God in the service of young women, and of the same purpose of the Y.W.C.A. all over the world. She spoke of the building as a great character building, a constructive agency and how much a building is needed in this age when women are so economically bound up with the world structure.

LIVING WATER

"In spite of the beautiful simplicity of this building's architecture," Miss L'Hommedieu said, "It would mean nothing if there was no living water to be had there." She spoke of it as being not only a house of joy to the women and girls of Ottumwa, but also, as a place of rest and refreshment for travelers. (*Ottumwa Courier*, 20 April 1925)

With this new building, the YWCA was able to expand their programming in a number of ways. The new gymnasium was in use even before the building was dedicated, when a basketball game, Ottumwa YWCA vs. Burlington YWCA, was played on 4 April. The gym floor was marked for basketball, tennis and baseball, and exercise equipment was available. The "large, well lighted, well ventilated locker room" in the basement contained "100 steel compartments, sixteen shower baths, plenty of dressing rooms, excellent mirrors and drinking fountains." (*Ottumwa Courier*, 20 April 1925)

The 1927 Annual Report by the General Secretary shows the growth of the programming and activities at the YWCA:

- Gave a home to 45 girls
- Gave lodging to 172 more girls and women
- Found employment for some
- Served 79,340 clean, well-cooked, reasonable priced, meals
- Provided space for 138 organizations not affiliated with the YW to hold 186 meetings, plus the 100+ YW clubs meetings
- Provided telephone service, rest rooms, reading room with reading Materials to thousands of people
- Building used by about 125,000 people in 1927
- 3565 girls and women enjoyed physical education
- 1200 boys also used the gymnasium
- 2300 women and girls swam at the YMCA under the direction of the YWCA physical director
- 232 grade school girls and 171 high school girls participated in Girl Reserves
- These girls gave 15 Thanksgiving baskets & Christmas gifts to 50 Navajo children and gave a Christmas part for 196 local needy children
- There was a club for business and professional women and a new club for "girls in industry" was started.
- Classes were offered in the Bible, Spanish, hand-crafts, and English

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The late 1920s and early '30s were busy years at the YWCA. Physical education and the emphasis on living a healthy life style were demonstrated in a list of 21 classes that took place each week in the gymnasium during the spring of 1929. Included were gymnastics, dancing, basketball, volley ball, as well as activities at other sites such as swimming, tennis (on the courts behind the building), and hiking. What was referred to as "the old English game of badminton, popular on the east coast" was introduced in Ottumwa by the YW. Summer camps continued to be offered, but in 1931, in order to cut down on the cost of maintaining camp grounds and providing meals and lodges for the campers, the YW offered a "stay at home" camp. Camp was scheduled on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM at a different location with different activities each day.

The dormitory rooms were filled with young working women, and some who had come to Ottumwa to take business classes at Iowa Success, a local business school. These girls found the YWCA to be their home and family away from home. One young woman expressed her appreciation of the YWCA when she said, "The YW has provided many hours pleasure for me after a busy day at the factory. Parties, week-end camping trips, picnics and the regular weekly club meetings have all brought me pleasure. New friends have brought new interests into my life and some have brought me a new understanding of girls of other races and nations." (*Ottumwa Courier*, 31 December 1929)

The YWCA's meeting rooms and cafeteria also attracted people to the building in growing numbers. The Ottumwa Community Theater presented plays in the YWCA auditorium. In 1930 it was said that 96,180 people passed in and out of the building. Some came to attend a class, or a meeting, to have lunch, to wait for a friend, to use the telephone, or to ask for information.

In 1932 the local YW organization conducted a community survey to see what programs were the most effective, and if there were any duplications with other groups, etc. The report showed that the YWCA worked with "diverse groups representing practically all ages and occupation groups as well as all sections of the city." (*Ottumwa Courier*, 13 April 1932) One of the groups that the YWCA was helping was the unemployed. More than 300 Ottumwa women used the YWCA's free employment bureau. Most of the job placements were temporary, but all were needed. Approximately six new women signed up each week, many with unemployed husbands. Eighty per cent of the women listed with the YW's employment service had other family members depending totally on them. The women ranged in age from 16-72. For over a year during this time period the YW operated without a General Secretary due to lack of funds. Volunteers took up the work load to maintain the programs which were more important than ever.

At the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Ottumwa Young Women's Christian Association held in January 1934, Miss Stella Orr, the volunteer General Secretary "spoke of the manner in which the YWCA had adapted its program to changing needs during its more than 50 years of operation. From a group of older women of Protestant evangelical churches, working for younger women, it has been put on a personal basis for all women and girls, irrespective of creed, race or age, with the younger girls sharing responsibility." (*Ottumwa Courier*, 31 January 1934)

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In September 1936 the YWCA announced their projects for the coming year. These included: conferences and lectures on world affairs to cover international relations, race problems, the menace of fascism, and problems of youth; and, classes in French, German, and in consumer buying. (*Ottumwa Courier*, 25 September 1936)

During World War II the YWCA provided not only food and housing for the women coming to Ottumwa to fill jobs vacated by men, but also provided guidance and support. When dozens of WAVES were assigned to the Ottumwa Naval Air Station, the YW expanded its services again, and provided a home-like atmosphere for them.

Following the war, girls and women continued to enter the work force in larger numbers, and the YW continued to be there for them. Iowa Success Business College, and the Ottumwa Beauty Academy both drew young women to the community, and the YWCA "looked after them" while they lived in the dormitory rooms on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. The programs for girls received new names, "Pigtails" for the elementary group, and "Y-teens" for the high school girls. The YMCA opened a youth center with Friday night dances for the high school age group, and the YWCA opened one for junior high students. The auditorium was used by a dance studio to offer lessons in tap, ballet and toe. Craft classes were offered for all ages in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor club rooms. In the mid-1950s the YWCA was a busy building offering services for all parts of the community, fulfilling the needs of body, mind, and spirit.

**Criterion C:**

When the YWCA Board of Directors selected the architectural firm of Croft and Boerner to design their new building, they were not choosing an unknown entity. Croft and Boerner were the architects of the newly opened Ottumwa High School (1923) and may have also designed the 1921 YMCA building at the corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> and Green. (Research continues to identify the architect of the YMCA.) It appears that Croft and Boerner did few, if any, other projects in Iowa as Wesley Shank did not include them in his book *Iowa's Historic Architects*. Information provided by the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office and the Northwest Architectural Archives at the University of Minnesota indicates that Ernest Bernard Croft and Francis Clarence Boerner both graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1911 with degrees in Civil Engineering, and worked for architects in New York for several years. They returned to Minnesota, settling in Minneapolis where they formed a partnership which lasted from 1916 - 1930. Buildings attributed to them include Northwest Terminal Warehouse in Minneapolis (1920), the Lafayette Building in Minneapolis (1922, non-extant), The Milles Lacs County Court House in Milaca, MN (1922, NRHP), the Minneapolis Work House (n.d.), the Minneapolis Auditorium (1925, non-extant), Children's Gospel Mission, Minneapolis (1932 by Croft alone).

The selection of the Italian Renaissance Revival style for the YWCA building was a deliberate act to set the building apart from its neighbors by making it more impressive. This style was used primarily for public and institutional buildings. In Ottumwa there are three other examples of this style. The Federal Building/Post Office (NRHP) from 1912 was designed by the Treasury Department architect. The exterior is of Bedford stone, with an arcaded first floor,

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pedimented windows on the second floor, and small rectangular windows on the third (attic) floor. It is a free standing building on a half block site, with two primary elevations and a very important secondary elevation. The six story Hotel Ottumwa (1916) was designed by Proudfoot and Bird and is located one block east of the YWCA. It is of dark brown brick (from Morey Clay Products) with cream terra cotta detailing and an elaborate metal cornice. The YMCA (1921) is of dark brown brick, and is free standing on a corner lot, with the primary elevation facing 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. Like many buildings in Ottumwa, it is built into a hillside, so that the upper level opens at ground level in the rear and the second level opens at ground level on the side elevation. It has a symmetrical façade and rests on a high foundation with double stairs leading up to the front entrance. Each floor is treated in a different manner.

The YWCA is a good example of the Italian Renaissance Revival design as it contains many of the elements that are characteristic of the style. Despite the fact that there has always been a building connecting to the gymnasium wing, the YW is treated as a free standing building, much like many of the Renaissance palaces on which the style is based. The main block rests on a stone foundation with horizontal emphasis created by the stone water table and the brick patterning between the water table and stone stringcourse at sill level. The arcaded first floor with stone surround at the entrance is a common feature of this style. The horizontal emphasis is continued by the denticulated brick frieze above first floor windows, the decorative brick patterned panels, and the brick stringcourse that connects all second floor windows at sill level. The herring bone frieze, brick dentils, and sawtooth brick pattern create the broad rich cornice appropriate for this building, while the single row of clay roof tile hints at the Mediterranean origins of the style.

On the interior the building continues the "public" building aspect with terrazzo floors on both the main and second floors, with concrete in the more utilitarian third floor. The lavish use of oak gives the interior a warm feeling. The Renaissance Revival style is carried through with the use of large arched openings off the first floor lobby, free standing Doric columns and Doric pilasters, the rusticated treatment of the walls giving the illusion of stone. Wrought iron was used for lighting fixtures and railings. Fireplaces play an important role in many of the common spaces, again, reminiscent of the Renaissance, but also typical of the use of fireplaces denoting places of warmth, the heart of a home or building.

None of these details were missed when the building was opened to the public for the first time. The *Ottumwa Courier* (18 April 1925) painted a picture with words for its readers:

A tour through the building first impresses and reveals the feminine atmosphere, both in the architecture and furnishings. There are cozy woman-like nooks and also more formal rooms and openings, all blending together in a large home and all expressing a feeling of welcome.

The general scheme of interior architecture exemplified in the lobby is of an Italian period, with a slight touch of the Spanish. Arched doorways, windows and recesses carry out this thought. Columns and pilasters support the openings. Graceful iron railings and supports carry it out still further and

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the lamp brackets and chandeliers go that much further with this classical theme. The lights are in candle style and rest in wrought iron and burnished gold settings. The floor is of Italian terrazzo or chipped marble, a very attractive material and regarded as one of the more durable known. All through the building is the restful, quiet, peaceful air of a large home. No more beautiful interior can be found for a structure of its size and cost.

The Young Women's Christian Association building was one of a group of substantial (many architect designed) buildings constructed in Ottumwa during the 1920s that were identified in the 1995 Multiple Property Document as being National Register eligible. The *Courier* kept its readers apprised of construction progress in the community. In addition to the previously mentioned Ottumwa High School and the Young Men's Christian Association building, other buildings from the 1920s include the *Ottumwa Courier's* Egyptian Revival building on E. Second that had been designed by the Davenport firm of Clausen and Kruse, St. Joseph Hospital at the east end of Vogel Avenue (key structure in the Vogel Place Historic District, NRHP), a new auto garage across 2<sup>nd</sup> Street from the YWCA, a theater building with a terra cotta façade on N. Market Street (Benson Block, NRHP), and Ottumwa architect Archie Eaton designed a modern mortuary facility on N. Court for the Jay Funeral Home (NRHP). John Morrell & Company was constructing a new executive office building designed by Henshein & McLaren of Chicago (non-extant) at their meatpacking plant on the east side of town. The *Ottumwa Courier* often carried ads for Morey Clay Products, a local brick plant. These ads included photographs of local buildings under construction using their products. Both the Morrell Office Building and Ottumwa High School appeared in these ads. Since the same architects designed the High School and the YWCA, and since the YWCA had requested the use of local labor and materials, it seems logical that Morey bricks were also used for the YWCA.

**Conclusion:**

The Ottumwa Young Women's Christian Association building (1925) illustrates the important social movement to provide for the body, mind, and spirit of early 20<sup>th</sup> century working girls and women. It provided a home with safe lodging and healthy meals, it provided fellowship and educational activities, and, it provided physical activities to strengthen their bodies. While doing all of this the association also opened its doors to the girls and women of Ottumwa and the Ottumwa area, allowing them to take part in the educational and physical programs. It adapted to changing times by setting up an employment bureau during the Depression, opening its doors to the WAVES during World War II, and by adding new programs for the young people such as the junior high youth center in the 1950s.

Architecturally it is a fine example of Italian Renaissance Revival design by mid-west architects, Croft and Boerner. It is one of a group of substantial buildings constructed in Ottumwa during the decade of the 1920s, illustrating the prosperity that was being felt in the community at that time. Minimal alterations to both the exterior and interior give it a remarkably high degree of integrity. This nomination was prepared following the recommendations of the



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1995 Multiple Property Document for the listing of the significant Ottumwa buildings on the National Register.

In the late 1990's there was a major reorganization of the YWCA of the USA. The association was restructured from a "top down" to a "grassroots" organization. At that time the Ottumwa YWCA, along with many others nationwide, broke away from the National Young Women's Christian Association due to changes in fee structure, policies, etc. The Ottumwa women formed a new organization called "Your Family Center." Your Family Center continues much of the same work as the YWCA and is housed in the same building. The Board of Directors recognizes that their building is a significant one, not only for their use, but for the community as a whole. They plan to maintain the building, retaining its historic significance.

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Newspapers

<i>Ottumwa Daily Courier:</i>	16 November 1923	"Drive to get YWCA Pledges Paid"
	3 January 1924	"YWCA Asking for Bids"
	24 January 1924	"YWCA Board Studies Bids of Wide Range"
	29 January 1924	"Plan to Help YWCA Build in New Place"
	9 February 1924	"Will Revise YWCA Plans"
	25 March 1924	"New YWCA Bids Opened"
	26 March 1924	"New YWCA Building to Start Monday"
	3 April 1924	"Old YWCA Building is Sold to Knights of Columbus"
	28 April 1924	"YWCA Bricks are Selected"
	16 May 1924	"Copper Box Found in 'Y' Cornerstone"
	20 May 1924	"Silk Paper Found in Box"
	19 June 1924	"YWCA Cornerstone To Be Laid Sunday"
	23 June 1924	"Stone Laid for New YWCA"
		"Impressive Ceremony Marks Cornerstone Laying for New Building"
	28 June 1924	"Part of Old 'Y' Wall Falls"
	7 August 1924	"Plan is OK for Theater"
	3 September 1924	3 column ad for Morey Face Brick used for new Ottumwa High School
	12 September 1924	3 columns ad for Morey Face Brick used for new John Morrell General Office Building
	20 September 1924	"Construction Work is Rapid"
		"Three Attractive Downtown Buildings Are Nearing Completion"
	10 November 1924	"New YWCA Should Be Done by February 1"
	14 November 1924	"YWCA Shopping Lists All Ready"
	3 December 1924	"Finish YWCA By March 1"
	24 December 1924	"\$64 Needed By YWCA to Reach \$170,000"
		"When Goal Met, Another \$18,000 Will Be Given"
	8 January 1925	"New YWCA Ready Soon"
	10 March 1925	"Dedication of YWCA April 19"
	13 April 1925	"New YWCA Rooms Now Ready"
	18 April 1925	"Beautiful New YWCA Ready to Use"
		"\$130,000 Edifice is Free of Debt"
	20 April 1925	"Great Crowds View YWCA"
	31 December 1929	"Past Year Good One for YWCA"
	13 April 1932	"YWCA Community Survey"
	31 January 1934	"YWCA Annual Meeting"

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**GEOGRAPHIC DATA:**

**Verbal Boundary Description:**

Coffin's Sub-division Block 12, lots 4-8 and the NW 111.37' of Lot 149, Original Plat of Ottumwa.

**Boundary Justification:**

This is the parcel of land historically associated with this resource.

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The photographs submitted with this nomination were taken by Molly Myers Naumann in July 2004. The negatives are on file at Your Family Center, 129 W. Second, Ottumwa, IA

- 1      Façade on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, looking N
- 2      Façade and west elevation, looking E
- 3      Rear addition and original building, looking S
- 4      Detail: Cornerstone with date
- 5      Detail: Main entrance, looking NE
- 6      Interior: Main entrance with arched door, stairs, and decorative ironwork
- 7      Interior: Front lobby looking from front door towards doors to dining room, steps to 2<sup>nd</sup> floor
- 8      Interior: Front lobby looking toward main office
- 9      Interior: Front lobby looking into front parlor (lounge)
- 10     Interior: 2<sup>nd</sup> floor lobby area at top of stairs, outside Little Theater
- 11     Interior: Little Theater on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor
- 12     Interior: 2<sup>nd</sup> floor corridor showing doors and windows into offices
- 13     Interior: 1902 gymnasium
- 14     Interior: "Back" stairs connecting all three floors and basement