

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name _____
other names/site number Bowers and McDonald Office Building

2. Location

street & number 816 Commercial [] not for publication
city, town Grinnell [] vicinity
state Iowa code IA county Poweshiek code 157 zip code 50112

3. Classification

| | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| Ownership of Property | Category of Property | Number of Resources within Property | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | Contributing | Noncontributing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-local | <input type="checkbox"/> district | <u>1</u> | _____ buildings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-State | <input type="checkbox"/> site | _____ | _____ sites |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal | <input type="checkbox"/> structure | _____ | _____ structures |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> object | <u>1</u> | _____ objects |
| | | | <u>0</u> Total |

Name of related multiple property listing: Architectural and Historical Resources of Grinnell, Iowa
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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 sets forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. [] See continuation sheets.

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official _____ Date 10/23/90
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.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register. Entered in the National Register
[] See continuation sheet. [Signature] 12/20/90
[] determined eligible for the National Register. [] See continuation sheet. _____
[] determined not eligible for the National Register. [] See continuation sheet. _____
[] Removed from National Register. _____
[] Other, (explain): _____

[Signature] Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Commercial

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Commercial

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)
Other

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls stone veneer

roof composition

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Bowers and McDonald Office Building is located on Commercial Street mid-block between Main and Broad Streets and adjacent to a north-south alley on the west. The building faces north. It is situated in Grinnell's central business district one-half block north of the Rock Island railroad tracks. The other commercial buildings which surround it are 1 and 2-stories.

This is a 2-story, brick building with rusticated stone veneer on the facade. Its eastern side is a common wall with its 1-story neighbor. On the facade, stone piers rise from the first floor through the second and terminate with bulbous terminals in the cornice. The rest of the facade recedes slightly from these piers. The first floor is sheathed in plate glass windows defined by cast metal and wooden framing. The right half of the first floor has a large display window with its glass in the plane of the facade. The left half is devoted to two entrances recessed under the protection of the second floor. The left entrance permits entry to stairs for the second floor without access to the first floor space. The right entrance affords entry to the first floor commercial space. Each door is lighted by a transom, and this division of higher levels of glass into smaller divisions is continued in the display window. A wide iron beam decorated with three rosettes provides structural support for the second floor facade and divides the upper and lower stories. The upper facade level has three round-headed arched, double-hung windows united by a smooth band of stone which outlines the voussoirs of the arches. The rusticated stone on this level is laid in alternating narrow and wide courses. The cornice approximates a dental pattern with vertically laid stonework. A small rectangular projection emphasizes the center of the cornice.

The above description applies to the building's original as well as its current appearance. The integrity of this building is high. The fenestration and bulkheads, for example, appear original to the building. It is the exception for commercial buildings in Grinnell to have preserved original first floor fenestration. The entry doors also appear to be original along with their hardware. There is some mortar decay on the stone facade and the building should be repointed. Window and doors are in need of repair. The building also needs other maintenance work like painting.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1896

Significant Dates

1896

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Architect/Builder

N/A

R. G. Coutts (by attribution)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Bowers and McDonald Office Building, constructed in 1896, is a fine example of a small scale, Victorian commercial building influenced by Richardsonian Romanesque styling. The building is a vernacular interpretation notable for its design, employment of stone veneer on the facade, and its integrity. It is situated on Commercial Street, in an area of Grinnell's central business district which was leveled by a disastrous fire in 1889. The building derives significance under Criterion C and is important for its materials of construction.

Stone became a popular building material in Grinnell after the Great Fire of 1889. Along with brick, these durable materials became all but ubiquitous in the central business district replacing frame commercial buildings which predated the fire. Two other factors encouraged the employment of stone in Grinnell. First it complimented architectural styles popular during the late Victorian period. Secondly, R. G. Coutts, a Grinnell stone cutter, mason, building contractor, and real-estate developer, was a man of business acumen who promoted stone as a building material.

Robert G. Coutts was a Scot by birth. Trained as a mason in Scotland (noted for its stone buildings), Coutts arrived in Grinnell in 1873. His greatest achievement in Grinnell is the imposing commercial row at 917-27 Broad Street. These store fronts feature stone veneer and stone detailing. Included in this row is the Coutts Building at 917 Broad Street (Site #12 in the Grinnell Historic Commercial District).

Design and construction of the Bowers and McDonald Office Building is, while not documented, attributed to Coutts because of its close similarity to the Coutts Building which is contemporaneous in construction. Comparison of the two buildings reveals many common characteristics like the arched second story windows, cornice and pediment, and side columns. The Coutts Building is 4-bays wide while the Bowers and McDonald Building is 3-bays wide.

The Bowers and McDonald Office Building and the lot on which it stands are examples of speculative real-estates ventures in Grinnell. While Criterion A is not claimed for this site, this additional historical information is included as a supplement. R. W. Clark, a Grinnell lumberman in partnership with B. Jenkins, acquired the land in 1891 for \$1,000, and sold it in 1896 for \$1,500 to J. B. Bowers and M. W. McDonald. Bowers and McDonald erected the "office building, brick with stone front"

[x] See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps.

Grinnell. A Century of Progress 1854-1954.

Historic photograph circa 1895 looking north from top of standpipe. Photograph property Ramsey-Weeks Incorporated, Grinnell, Iowa.

Oral Informant; John Kleinschmidt w/W. C. Page; Winter 1989, February 1990.

"Grinnell Herald;" 9 April 1895. "Yesterday L. W. Satchell sold his hack line outfit to J. B. Bowers and M. W. McDonald. Mr. McDonald also purchased of Mr. Bowers a half interest in dray business, so that the new firm, Bowers and McDonald, will conduct a Dray and Hack line, and no one doubts they will do it well working always to accommodate the public."

See continuation sheet

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 Report # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one acre

UTM References

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------|--------------|-----------------|---------|-----|----------|-----|-----|-----|------|
| A | [1]5 | [5]2[2]8[9]0 | [4]6[2]1[0]0[0] | B | [] | [] | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| | [] | [] | Zone | Easting | | Northing | | | | Zone |
| | Easting | Northing | | | | | | | | |
| C | [] | [] | [] | D | [] | [] | [] | [] | [] | [] |

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The west 21 feet of the north 64 feet of Lot P in Block 8 of Grinnell, Iowa.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

Boundary includes all land associated with the building and excludes all other buildings.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title W C PAGE, PUBLIC HISTORIAN

organization THE DUNBAR/JONES PARTNERSHIP

date DECEMBER 1989

street & number 110 SOUTHWEST FIFTH STREET

telephone 515/280-3026

city or town DES MOINES

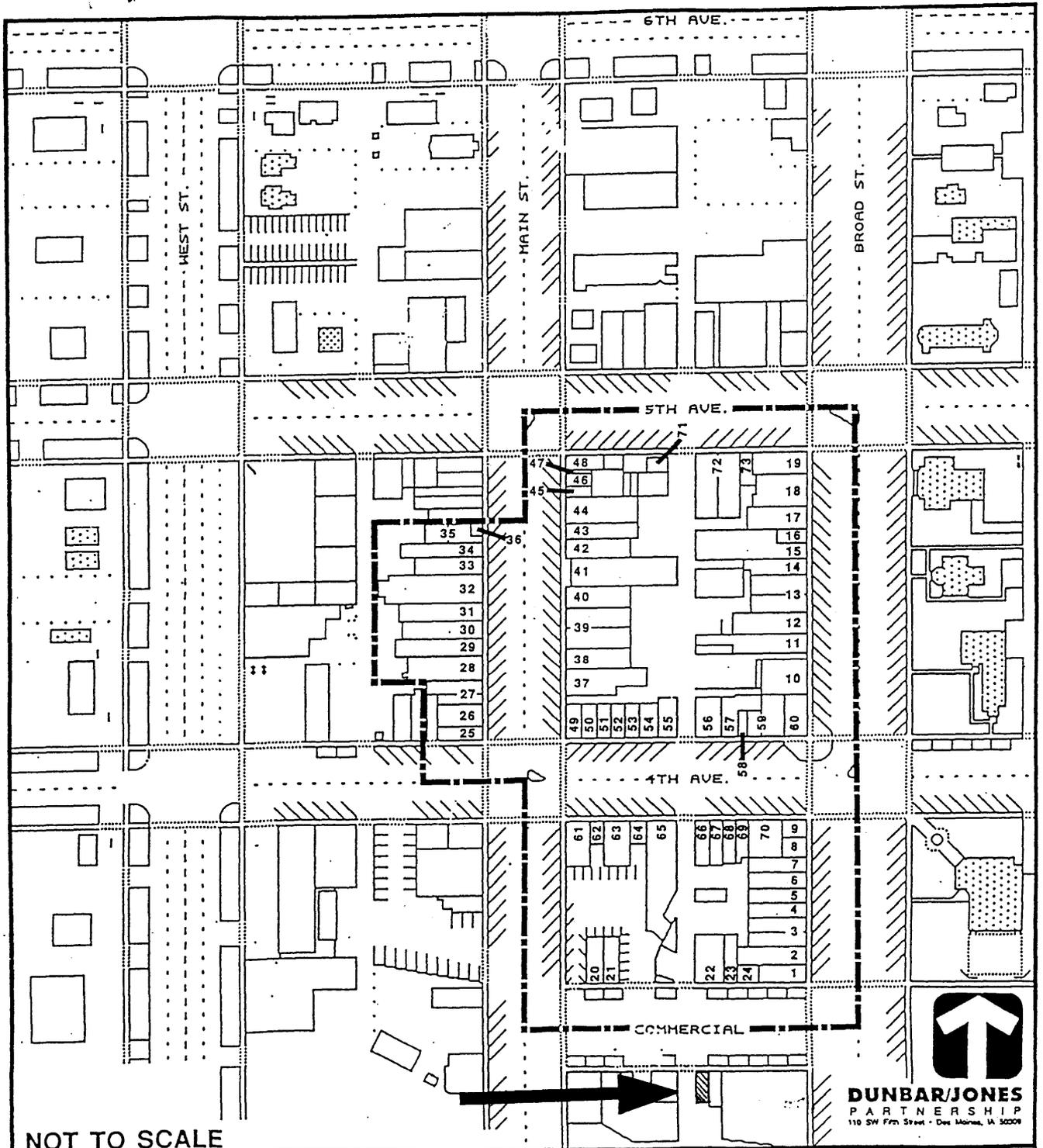
state IA zip code 50309

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7 Page 2

CFN-259-1116



NOT TO SCALE

Bowers and McDonald Office Building
816 Commercial

DUNBAR/JONES
PARTNERSHIP
110 SW 7th Street • Des Moines, IA 50319

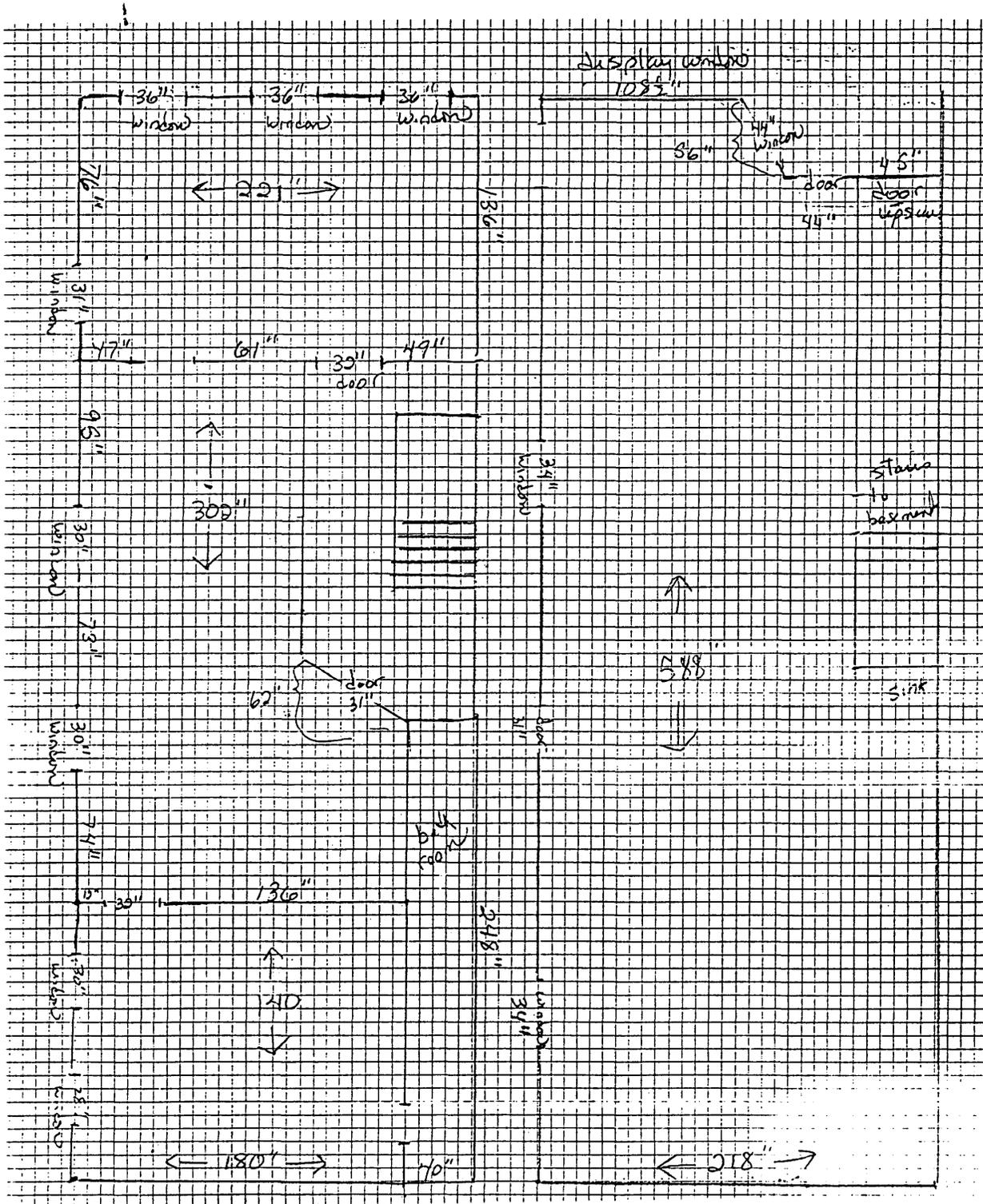
GRINNELL, IOWA
PHASE TWO
NATIONAL REGISTER PROJECT

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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BOWERS AND McDONALD OFFICE BUILDING

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Arrow indicates vacant lot
of Bowers and McDonald
Office Building



Photograph- 1895 looking northwest from waterworks standpipe

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during the building season of 1896. McDonald soon bought out Bowers' interest in the building for \$2,350 in July 1897. McDonald, in turn, sold to Jarvis S. Wilson for \$3,000 in 1901.

This building relates, in conclusion, in design and materials to other stone buildings in Grinnell like the Broad Street commercial row, a notable example of this locally popular building material. The office building derives architectural significance according to Criterion C for this reason. It derives additional significance under Criterion C because it also exhibits, on a small scale, stone design and use of materials and in a section of the central business district away from the major examples of stone construction. This reinforces the fact that stone was a popular building material and widely used in Grinnell.

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LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Bowers and McDonald Office Building
816 Commercial Street
Grinnell, IA 50112
Looking south
Dan Ogata, Photographer
March 1990

2. Bowers and McDonald Office Building
816 Commercial Street
Grinnell, IA 50112
Looking southeast
Dan Ogata, Photographer
March 1990