

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

480

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.



1. Name of Property

Historic name: Central Avenue Historic District

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing: _____

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

2. Location

Street & number: Central Avenue

City or town: Middletown State: Ohio County: Butler

Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

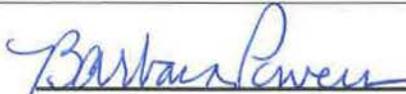
I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A ___ B X C ___ D

	DSHPO for Inventory & Registration	<u>June 20, 2014</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:		Date
State Historic Preservation Office, Ohio History Connection _____		
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government		

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
_____	_____
Signature of commenting official:	Date
_____	_____
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Butler Co., OH
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

John Edison H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

8-8-14
Date of Action

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

Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Butler Co., OH
County and State

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>	
<u>36</u>	<u>7</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u>2</u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>36</u>	<u>9</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- COMMERCE/TRADE/department store
- COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store
- COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant
- RECREATION AND CULTURE/theater
- INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION/manufacturing facility
- DOMESTIC/hotel
- HEALTH CARE/clinic

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store
- COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant
- COMMERCE/TRADE/organizational
- HEALTH CARE/clinic
- LANDSCAPING/plaza
- VACANT

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- LATE VICTORIAN/Italianate
- LATE VICTORIAN/Renaissance Revival
- LATE VICTORIAN/Queen Anne
- LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Neo-Classical Revival

Central Avenue Historic District

Butler Co., OH

Name of Property

County and State

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Spanish Colonial Revival
MODERN MOVEMENT/International

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick, Concrete, and Stone

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Central Avenue Historic District is located in downtown Middletown, Ohio (Figure 1). The historic district extends along Central Avenue from the west side of Broad Street to the west side of Curtis Street to the south and by the west side of Clark Street to the north (Figures 2-4). The Central Avenue Historic District consists of 45 resources: 36 contributing buildings, seven (7) non-contributing buildings, and two (2) non-contributing sites (Figures 5-8). The contributing buildings within the district were constructed from 1886 to 1964 with four late twentieth century non-contributing infill buildings. Two non-contributing plazas within the district were constructed after 2001. The buildings within the historic district represent mainly the Italianate, Renaissance Revival, Queen Anne, Neo-Classical Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival, and modernism architectural styles, but many buildings are vernacular commercial buildings with no architectural style. Some of the buildings are sited on narrow lots while others occupy larger lots. The buildings range from one to five stories and are of varying scale and massing. The majority of the buildings have two-part commercial block configurations, but there are a few one-part commercial block configurations and one building with a three-part commercial block configuration (Longstreth 1987). Most buildings occupy rectangular footprints except for 1150 Central Avenue, which occupies a trapezoidal footprint (to maximize building space) bounded by Verity Parkway and Canal Street. Most of the buildings are constructed of brick. Many buildings within the western portion of the district lost some historic materials along the first stories when that portion of Central Avenue was enclosed to form the Middletown Mall, later known as City Centre Mart. However, that enclosure was removed in 2001, and many of the buildings still retain their original cornices, parapet rooflines, upper-story window openings, commercial building configurations, architectural styles, and ornamentations. In addition, several of the storefronts retain their original configurations, although some historic materials have been replaced by modern materials. The Central Avenue Historic District maintains historic integrity specifically in its location, design, setting, and feeling.

Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Butler Co., OH
County and State

Narrative Description

The Central Avenue Historic District, located in Middletown, Ohio (Figure 1). The city of Middletown is located in northeastern Butler County with a small portion of the city extending into northwestern Warren County. The city occupies approximately 26 square miles and is located approximately half way between Cincinnati and Dayton. As of 2010, the population of the city was 48,694 (US Census Bureau 2013). The city is located along the eastern bank of the Great Miami River. The two primary streets in the city are Central Avenue (east-west) and Main Street (north-south) which intersect approximately a half mile east of the Great Miami River, and one block west of the eastern edge of the historic district. A bridge carries Central Avenue across the Great Miami River, where the road becomes Middletown Eaton Road.

Central Avenue is the main east-west route and the core commercial thoroughfare through downtown Middletown. Because of its importance, Central Avenue serves as a divider between the north and south versions of its cross streets. For example, Broad Street north of Central Avenue is called North Broad Street, and labeled South Broad Street to the south. Originally named Third Street, the street was renamed “Central Avenue” in 1923 because it had become the primary commercial corridor for the downtown area. This change in street names resulted in the renumbering of buildings. See section 8 for the historic context of Middletown’s development.

1. 1050 Central Avenue – (Photos 1 and 2) – Contributing

This three-story Neo-Classical-style building was constructed in 1915. According to Middletown historian, George C. Crout, the building was designed by architect C. E. Oeden (Crout 2000). Oeden was a local Middletown architect who worked on designing several utilitarian buildings around Middletown (*American Contractor* 1917). This building appears to be one of the most noteworthy of his career. The upper stories of the building were originally utilized as the Knights of Pythias Castle Hall, while the first story of the building was occupied by the G. C. Murphy Company Five & Dime Store.¹

The two-part commercial block building has a modified storefront on the first story of the north (front) elevation. The storefront has marble panel bulkheads and tile surrounds. The modifications to the storefront likely date to the mid-1970s, as a result of the enclosure of Central Avenue to create the Middletown Mall. The main entrance is a modern metal-frame and glass business door with sidelights and a larger fixed transom. The six modern display windows, three on each side of the main entrance, are protected by modern cloth awnings. The upper stories are red brick with concrete quoins on the second story. The windows on the second and third story are one-over-one modern replacement units with ornate concrete surrounds. Under each window on the second story is a decorative panel adorned with a circle embellishment. The

¹ George Clinton Murphy started his first variety store in McKeesport, Pennsylvania in 1906. Following Murphy’s death in 1909, two executives, John S. Mack and Walter C. Shaw, who had worked with Murphy prior to him starting his own store, purchased the fledgling franchise (G. C. Murphy Company Foundation Inc. 2004). It was under their leadership when sometime in the mid-1920s, the G. C. Murphy Store opened at this location in Middletown (Crout 2000). The G. C. Murphy Store in Middletown was one of approximately 375 variety stores opened by the G. C. Murphy Company, primarily east of the Mississippi River, during the twentieth century. Like other G. C. Murphy variety stores, the store in Middletown provided low-cost, quality merchandise situated on shelving accessible to the public to allow shoppers the opportunity to inspect the merchandise prior to purchasing (G. C. Murphy Company Foundation Inc. 2004).

Central Avenue Historic District

Butler Co., OH

Name of Property

County and State

cornice has dentil ornamentation and a brick parapet with stone coping and a low central pediment (Photo 1). It appears an elevator was added to the northwest corner of building sometime in the mid-twentieth century. The south (rear) elevation of the building features multiple brick additions with six-over-six and one-over-one metal-frame windows and a square brick chimney (Photo 2). Most of these brick additions appear to have been constructed between 1924 and 1950 (Sanborn Map Company).

Historic photographs show that the storefront on the first story of the north elevation has been altered at least three times. In ca. 1917, the building featured two inset storefronts with a center entrance to the main portion of the building (Figure 9). An advertisement in the 1917 *Williams' Middletown Directory* boasted that this was one of the buildings in Middletown that utilized American Rolling Mill Company (ARMCO) sheet metal work. By ca. 1940, the G. C. Murphy Company Five & Dime Store operated out of the storefront that featured two inset store entrances, but no center entrance to the main portion of the building (Figure 10). The storefront has been altered multiple times and the windows have been replaced, but no other significant alterations have been made to the building. The building retains a good level of integrity including its original upper story design and window openings, concrete ornamentation, parapet roofline, and two-part commercial block configuration. A one-story, modern, concrete-block building, sited behind 1050 Central Avenue, is not included within the boundaries of the historic district (Photo 2).

2. 1054 Central Avenue – (Photos 3 and 4) – Contributing

The large three-story building with two-part commercial block configuration has a Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style. According to the Butler County Auditor's Office, the building was constructed in 1906, but it was likely remodeled in ca. 1916 when the John Ross Department Store opened in the building (Crout 2000). This building utilized ARMCO sheet metal work as mentioned in an advertisement in the 1917 *Williams' Middletown Directory*. The first story of the north (front) and west (side) elevations are modified storefronts that were likely installed in the mid-1970s during the Middletown Mall period. The modified storefronts have modern display windows, but the storefronts are separated by red brick pillars which appear to be original because they can be seen in historic photographs of the building (Figures 9 and 11). The main entrance on the north elevation is a modern metal-frame and glass business door. A similar door is located on the side entrance on the east elevation fronting onto South Broad Street. A projecting belt course separates the first and second story. The upper stories are clad in stucco. The second story windows are modern nine-over-one replacement units, while the windows on the third story are modern one-over-one replacement units with eight pane transoms. The flat roof features skirts along the north and east elevations sheathed in red clay tiles supported by wood brackets. The northwest, northeast, and southeast corners of the roof are adorned with parapets embellished by six bands of exposed bricks with diamond ornamentation in the upper most of the courses.

A ca. 1916 photograph shows that the building has experienced the loss of original materials from the storefront and the replacement of upper-story windows, but it retains its ca. 1916 design including storefront and display window configurations, upper-story window openings, flat roof with skirts and corner parapets, and two-part commercial block configuration (Figure 11). The

Central Avenue Historic District

Butler Co., OH

Name of Property

County and State

building retains the integrity to embody the characteristics of its historic character. The building is now utilized by the Central Avenue Walden Gallery and Stained Glass Studio.

3. 1100 Central Avenue – (Photos 5 and 6) – Contributing

The two-story building was constructed in 1940 and has a stripped down Neo-Classical Revival architectural style. The enframed window wall storefronts on the first story of the north (front) and west (side) elevations are modified with elongated aluminum frame show windows with blue tile bulkheads. Although the door and window configurations appear similar to their ca. 1950 configuration (Figure 12), the modified storefronts likely date to ca. 1970, shortly before the building was incorporated into Middletown Mall experiment. The off-centered main entrance on the north elevation is through paired aluminum frame business doors which also likely date to the mid-1970s. A side entrance on the west elevation, through a single aluminum frame business door, fronts onto South Broad Street. The north and west elevations are faced by concrete panels on the upper floor, while the storefronts on the first story are separated by fluted pilasters. The fluted pilasters are visible in the ca. 1950 photograph (Figure 12). The second story windows appear to be original metal-frame industrial sash units with four central panes surrounded by small side lights. The flat roof is adorned by small concrete dentils around the roofline. The south (rear) elevation is brick with a small square interior brick chimney (Photo 6).

During the period of significance, Gallaher Drug Store, including a soda fountain, occupied the building, but the building is now vacant (Crout 2000). A ca. 1950 photograph shows that the display windows have been lengthened with lower bulkheads, and an inset store entrance on the northeast corner to “Artwil,” a dress shop (Figure 12). This inset entrance has been replaced with a display window flush with the façade of the north elevation. A 1972 photograph of the building shows that the alterations to the storefront and the second store entrance had been done by that time (Figure 13). The building retains a good level of integrity and embodies the characteristics of a mid-twentieth century commercial building. The building now appears vacant, but Decker & Associate Architects may operate out of a portion of the building.

4. 1108 Central Avenue – (Photos 7 and 8) – Contributing

According to the Butler County Auditor’s Office, the small one-story vernacular commercial building was constructed in 1895, but this construction date is unlikely. A ca. 1903 photograph shows a two-story building where this building is currently located (Figure 14). The 1912 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map appears to be the first to depict a building with a similar footprint occupying this lot. The modest building has a one-part commercial block configuration and a parapet roof. The enframed window wall on the north (front) elevation has been altered with four modern metal-frame display windows with tile bulkheads. The main entrance, a modern metal-frame glass door, is located on the northwest corner on the north elevation (Photo 8). The alterations to the storefront likely occurred during the mid-1970s during the Middletown Mall period. A belt course separates the storefront from the upper portion of the façade. The façade with a parapet are red brick with a small centered brick diamond and a basic decorative bracket at the top of the parapet. The top of the parapet was adorned by a sign, visible in a ca. 1950 photograph, which has since been removed, revealing a discolored shadow along the brickwork (Figure 12; Photo 8). The rear of the building has two older wood-frame two-over-two windows

Central Avenue Historic District

Butler Co., OH

Name of Property

County and State

protected by metal bars, and a rear entrance with a man metal door with a small square light (Photo 7).

A photograph taken ca. 1950 shows this one-story building was associated with its larger neighboring building to the east (1118 Central Avenue), as part of the S. S. Kresge Company Department Store (Figure 12). The historic photographs focused on the previous and current buildings at 1100 Central Avenue, but 1108 Central Avenue is visible on the left side of both photographs. Because this building was not the primary subject of these historic photographs, it is impossible to see the original configuration of the storefront. Although the building has an altered storefront, the building retains a sufficient level of integrity including its brick façade, one-part commercial block configuration, and the parapet dating to at least ca. 1940, to continue to express its historic character.

5. 1118 Central Avenue – (Photos 9 and 10) – Contributing

The four story building was constructed in 1895 in the Renaissance Revival style. This building is an excellent example of a three-part vertical block commercial building with storefronts on the first story, round-arched windows extending from the second to third stories, and paired rectangular windows on the fourth story. The first story has been divided into two modified storefronts. The two storefronts are similar with large modern show windows with decorative wood surrounds and paneled bulkheads. The business entrances on the north (front) elevation are modern wood paneled doors with a single large rectangular light. These storefronts appear to have been altered recently, possibly after the Middletown Mall was removed in 2001. Pressed metal pilasters and dentils adorn the first story around the storefronts. The pressed metal ornamentation appears to be older than the modified storefronts, but it does not look like this ornamentation is in a 1972 photograph of the building (Figure 13). The upper stories of the building retain more historic materials and features than the first story storefronts. The second and third story windows are set in four round-arched bays constructed of red brick with rectangular windows on the second story and arched windows in the third story. The second story windows are one-over-one wood-frame units that are possibly original. Each window is flanked by two pane sidelights and a fixed transom. The third story windows are one-over-one wood-frame units with arched upper panes. Each of these windows is flanked by single pane side lights, and each has a stained glass arched header. These windows also appear to possibly be original. Above each arched bay, separated by a belt course, are paired one-over-one windows. The originality of these windows could not be confirmed from public access. The windows on the west (side) and south (rear) elevations have been boarded up with plywood. A one-story shed-roof addition, likely dating to the mid-twentieth century, has been added to the south elevation. An exterior brick chimney is sited on the southwest corner of the building.

Unfortunately, historic photographs do not capture a good image of the north (front) elevation. A ca. 1903 photograph shows that this building was the largest building on the block during this time (Figure 14). A ca. 1938 postcard image shows that this block experienced great change in those intervening 35 years, but the building at 1118 Central Avenue remains similar in form as it remains today (Figure 15). As mentioned in the description of 1108 Central Avenue, this building was part of the S. S. Kresge Company Department Store. A faded sign painted directly on the bricks at the upper level of the west (side) elevation of the building advertised the S. S.

Central Avenue Historic District

Butler Co., OH

Name of Property

County and State

Kresge Co. (Photo 9). Currently, two businesses operate in the building: a clothing store, Design 2 Wear 2; and the Gift Gallery shop. The storefronts on the first story have been altered, but the building retains a good level of integrity, including its original three-part vertical block configuration, upper-story window openings and materials, and Renaissance Revival architectural style.

6. 1124 Central Avenue – (Photos 11 and 12) – Contributing

The Castell Building, or Sebald Building, is a large four-story, two-part commercial block, Neo-Classical Revival-style building constructed in 1914 by the Sebald Brewing Company. The Sebald family named this building the “Castell Building” in honor of the German city, Castell, because that is the birthplace of William Sebald, the family patriarch (Crout 2000). See Section 8 of this nomination for further information on the Sebald family, and their impact on Middletown. Middletown City Directories reveal that numerous Middletown professionals had offices in the building over the years. Some of these professionals include doctors, dentists, chiropractors, architects, lawyers, a watch repairman, beauticians, and seamstresses. The building has a common bond brick façade. The first story of the north (front) and east (side) elevations have been altered. Two altered storefronts flank the main entrance on the north elevation. The main entrance to the building has a concrete Neo-Classical Revival surround. Modern display windows with tile bulkheads extend along the storefronts on the north elevation and northeast corner of the east elevation. These storefronts were likely altered in the mid-1970s as a result of the Middletown Mall experiment. The rest of the first story of the east elevation is blind with two side entrances. A small projecting belt course separates the first and second stories. The upper stories have uniform window openings with modern one-over-one replacement units. The window openings have vertical brick headers each with a concrete keystone. The parapet roofline and cornice are adorned with dentils and ornate brackets. A concrete panel set into the brickwork centered under the cornice on the north (front) elevation is embossed with “Sebald” in block letters (hence the alternate name for the building). The windows on the south (rear) elevation are likely original two-over-two wood-frame units. The window openings on the first story of this elevation have been enclosed. A metal fire escape accessed by metal doors in each of the upper three stories is also attached to the south elevation.

A postcard image of the building from ca. 1915 shows that the building retains its original style and form, but the Neo-Classical Revival surround around the main door appears more elaborate than the current concrete surround (Figure 16). A ca. 1970 photograph confirms that the Neo-Classical Revival surround was replaced with a simpler concrete one (Figure 17). The older surround was further outset from the building and was adorned with decorative brackets. The older outset surrounds and decorative brackets can be seen in a ca. 1938 postcard image (Figure 15). The ca. 1970 photograph also reveals that the storefronts had been altered prior to 1970, and the existing storefront modifications happened post-1970. During the Middletown Mall period, this building was the eastern end of the mall, and an entrance to the mall was installed on Central Avenue, in front of the building (Figure 18). The building appears vacant, but the interior is being renovated. The view of the renovation work is blocked by screening. The building has experienced altered storefronts and loss of historic materials, but the building retains good integrity, including its original two-part commercial block configuration; upper story window

Central Avenue Historic District

Butler Co., OH

Name of Property

County and State

openings; parapet roofline adorned with brackets, dentils, and projecting cornice; and Neo-Classical Revival architectural style.

7. 1150 Central Avenue – (Photos 13 and 14) – Contributing

The large two-story brick building constructed in 1927 occupies a trapezoidal footprint. The two-part commercial block building lacks an architectural style. The building has a common-bond cream-brick façade with the front portion of the building painted green. The altered storefront extends along the first story of the north (front) elevation and continues onto the northwest and northeast corners of the west and east (side) elevations. The enframed window walls on the first story of the north (front) elevation and northern portions of the east and west elevations feature aluminum-frame display windows with low tile bulkheads. The main entrance on the north elevation is inset and flanked by display windows. The second story of the north, west, and east elevation is blind. Roll-down metal security gates have been added above the store windows to provide security for the pawn shop currently operating in the building. An inset side entrance is located on the west elevation. Two side entrances on the east elevation have been in-filled with concrete block. A mid-twentieth century full-façade addition has been added to the south (rear) elevation. Four industrial sash windows are located on the east elevation of the addition portion, while the south elevation is blind with two belt courses.

Historic photographs show that this building was heavily altered between ca. 1950 and ca. 1970 (Figures 19 and 20). The storefront featured a pair of inset entrances in ca. 1950, but by ca. 1970, the storefront had been altered to have one centered entrance. In addition, the upper story featured one-over-one windows with concrete sills and circle ornamentation above each window opening (Figure 19). By ca. 1970, these window openings were enclosed or covered over, but the ornamentation remains visible on the east elevation. Bands of metal striping were added to the southern portion of west elevation (Figure 20). A historic photograph of the east elevation could not be located, but based upon the historic views of the other elevations; the windows on this side appear to reflect the historic configuration. Since ca. 1970, the metal striping has been removed, single-pane display windows have been replaced with multiple aluminum-frame panes, and two sets of display windows on the west elevation have been enclosed. The configuration of the entrance shown in the ca. 1970 photograph remains. Historically, the Central Store operated out of the building. During the mid-twentieth century, the Central Store was one of the busiest department stores in downtown Middletown, but by 1976, business had slowed so much that the store was forced to close (Crout 2000). Richie's Pawn Central, the building's current occupant, opened in the building after the Central Store closed (Crout 2000). The building remains one of the busiest stores in downtown Middletown. The historic photographs show that the building has lost much of its 1927 architectural integrity; however, many of the alterations appear to date to ca. 1960, within the period of significance. Because the alteration to the building occurred within the period of significance, the building retains sufficient integrity including its scale and massing, irregular trapezoidal footprint, and its ca. 1960 appearance to contribute to the historic character of the district.

8. 1200 Central Avenue – (Photos 15 and 16) – Contributing

The five-story building on the southeast corner of Central Avenue and South Canal Street has a vernacular architectural style. The building was constructed in 1919 by the Sebald Realty

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., OH

County and State

Company who then leased it to the Reed-Klopp Company (Crout 2000). S. H. Reed and W. T. Klopp had opened their first store on Main Street, but moved to this building following its completion. The Reed-Klopp Furniture Store operated under a variety of owners in the building from ca. 1920 through 1981 (Crout 2000). The building has a two-part commercial block configuration. The first story of the north (front) and west (side) elevations are modified enframed window walls. The main entrance is a recessed entrance located at the northwest corner of the building. This corner is supported by a square column sheathed in decorative pressed metalwork. The modern storefronts have metal-frame show windows with low tile bulkheads and were altered sometime after 1975. The storefront configuration appears to be similar to its historic configuration with intact upper brick friezes and brick columns, although the brick columns are now covered. The building is vacant and several of the show windows have been covered by plywood. The upper stories of the building have a common bond red brick façade with paired modern one-over-one replacement windows. Stone or concrete belt courses separate the first and second stories and the fourth and fifth stories. The basic parapet roof has a rusting iron cornice with dentil ornamentation. The south (rear) elevation is rough brick with an elevator shaft on the southeast corner of the building. An interior square brick chimney is sited on the south elevation.

Historic photographs show that the building featured a large “REED-KLOPP” sign mounted to the roof (Figures 21 and 22). The windows were paired one-over-one windows, but the recessed corner entrance had round-arch portals (Figure 21). Between ca. 1945 and ca. 1975, the first story storefronts were altered by the addition of a metal band around the top of the storefronts, the removal of the round arches in the recessed entrance, and the replacement of display windows (Figures 21 and 22). The metal band has since been removed, the display windows were replaced again, and the original one-over-one windows were replaced with modern replacement windows. The storefronts have been altered multiple times and the upper story windows have been replaced, but the building retains its parapet roof with iron cornice, original window openings, and two-part commercial block configuration. The building has sufficient integrity to contribute to the historic character of the district.

9. 1210 and 1212 Central Avenue – (Photos 17 and 18) – Contributing

The two-story Valen Building has a two-part commercial block configuration and a vernacular architectural style. According to the Butler County Auditor’s Office, this building was constructed in 1886, but the current façade appears to be a mid-twentieth century brick façade. Review of the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps shows that a building with a similar footprint was situated on the parcel by 1895 (Sanborn Map Company). The first story of the north (front) elevation has been altered and is currently occupied by the Liberty Restaurant. This restaurant has operated in Middletown since 1925. The first story has modern metal-frame show windows and is clad in white tiles. A modern cloth awning protects the main entrance of the Liberty Restaurant. The second story has a common bond cream brick façade with six basic belt courses. The second story windows are modern one-over-one replacement units with transoms in-filled by vertical board siding. Several additions, likely dating from the early to mid-twentieth century, have been added to the south (rear) elevation including the rear entrance to the Liberty Restaurant. None of the additions are visible from Central Avenue.

Central Avenue Historic District

Butler Co., OH

Name of Property

County and State

Unfortunately, no historic photographs showing this building directly could be located. A photograph taken in 1913 showing the south side of what is now Central Avenue includes this building on the right side of the photograph (Figure 23). It is clear that the façade on this building has been substantially altered. A ca. 1945 photograph of the former Reed-Klopp Furniture Store building (1200 Central Avenue) shows the Valen Building on the left corner of the photograph (Figure 21). It appears that the building during that time retains a similar façade as shown in the 1913 photograph, but it is difficult to tell from this photograph (Figure 23). It is clear that after ca. 1945 the façade was altered, including the removal of a square brick chimney. A poor quality photograph of the south side of the 1200 block of Central Avenue dating from ca. 1960 appears to show that the building's façade had been altered by that time (Figure 24). A 1998 photograph shows that the storefront had definitely been altered by that time (Figure 25). The building remains similar in appearance today, with the exception of the addition of the cloth awning. According to the Middletown City Directories and the 1913 photograph, the Middletown Hotel operated in this building during the early twentieth century until ca. 1915 (Figure 23). After ca. 1915, a jewelry store, a clothing store, and a merchant operated out of the building until 1925, when Gus Valen, an immigrant from Crete, opened a restaurant in the building. The restaurant became the Liberty Restaurant, and it became famous for its "Liberty Hot Dogs" (Middletown Journal 1976:2). The restaurant fell on hard times in 2000 and has closed and reopened three different times since then. The most recent reopening took place in December 2012 as part of a redevelopment effort for downtown Middletown (Pitman 2012). Although the building has experienced substantial alterations including the replacement of the façade, the façade renovations were likely completed within the period of significance, prior to 1960 (Figure 24). The building also retains its two-part commercial block configuration and has sufficient integrity to contribute to the historic character of the district.

10. 1214, 1216, and 1218 Central Avenue – (Photos 19 and 20) – Contributing

The two-story Valen II Building has some Neo-Classical Revival architectural detailing and a two-part commercial block configuration. According to the Butler County Auditor's Office, the building was constructed in 1896, but the façade of the building appears to date from the early twentieth century. A photograph from 1913 shows that façade has experienced some alterations (Figure 23). At that time, the building had a standing-seam metal roof that has since been replaced by what appears to be a tar-paper covered roof. The main entrance, a metal-frame door likely dating to the late twentieth century, is centered on the north (front) elevation and is flanked by a storefront on either side. The main entrance and storefronts on the first story are enframed by a Neo-Classical Revival-style surround created by glazed tiles likely dating to the early twentieth century. "Valen" is inscribed over the main entrance. The storefronts have late twentieth century metal-frame business doors and aluminum-frame display windows with tiled bulkheads. The storefront west of the main entrance, now a vacant tailor shop, retains its central inset entrance even though it has lost its historic materials. The storefront east of the main entrance, now a Cricket Wireless store, has been altered with a slanting display window, a low brick wall with a handrail in front of the display window, and an inset entrance on the northeast corner of the north elevation. The second story is cream brick with some ornamental brick work under the parapet along the roofline. The window openings on the second story have been partially in-filled by cream brick and smaller paired modern four-over-four and one-over-four replacement windows have been installed. The date of these window modifications is unknown.

Central Avenue Historic District

Butler Co., OH

Name of Property

County and State

At least four internal brick chimneys are sited along the east (side) elevation. The south (rear) elevation is plain with two six-over-one windows and two rear business doors.

Unfortunately, no historic photographs of this building showing its current façade could be located. The ca. 1960 photograph of the south side of the 1200 block of Central Avenue has a light streak across this building which prevents the building from being seen (Figure 24). It is likely that the façade was replaced prior to 1960, especially judging from the Neo-Classical Revival surround. A 1998 photograph of the building shows that the building, with the exception of the Cricket Wireless store, has experienced little alteration during the past 15 years (Figure 25). Middletown City Directories show that this building housed Fred Ciener Men's Clothing Store (visible in Figure 23) through the early twentieth century until the mid-1930s; after that, the Roy A White Co. Paints store occupied the building. By 1949, the Spiegel's Inc. mail order house had moved into the building. Several Middletown professionals had offices within the main portion of the building, including accountants, beauticians, an insurance agent, a sign company, and a detective and collection agency. Although the building has experienced substantial alterations including the replacement of the façade, the façade renovations were likely completed within the period of significance, prior to 1960 (Figure 24). The replacement façade has had its second story window openings in-filled, and the configuration of the eastern storefront has been altered. The building retains sufficient integrity including its Neo-Classical Revival surround on the first story, parapet roofline, internal brick chimneys, and its two-part commercial block configuration to convey its historic character.

11. 1224 Central Avenue – (Photos 21 and 22) – Contributing

The three-story Renaissance Revival style building, constructed in 1909, was the former Eagles Temple for the Middletown branch of the Fraternal Order of Eagles (Photos 21 and 22). The building has a two-part commercial block configuration. The first story has a centered main entrance flanked by a storefront on either side on the north (front) elevation. The building is vacant and both storefronts and the main entrance are boarded up. Two eagles highlight the top corners of the main entrance. The first and second stories are separated by a belt course with dentil ornamentation. The windows on the second story are ten-beside-ten wood-frame casement windows with ten-pane fixed transoms. The windows in the third story appear to be casement windows with paired ten-pane units each with a four-pane square transom. Above these paired windows is a decorative round-arch with a circle window. These windows appear original. The brick work on the third story is more ornamental than the brick work on the second story. Heavy ornate brackets support a wood balcony between the second and third stories. The overhanging cornice is supported by scrollwork brackets along the roofline. Many of the window openings on the west (side) elevation have been in-filled. A full three story brick addition, likely dating to the mid-twentieth century, has been added to the south (rear) elevation.

Historic photographs of the building show that the north elevation has experienced little alteration, with the exception of the enclosing of the storefronts and main entrance and the removal of a wrought iron handrail from the wood balcony (Figures 23, 24, and 26). The building retains many historic materials, including its upper story windows, wood balcony, and overhanging cornice (Figure 26). In addition to serving as a meeting hall for members of the Fraternal Order of Eagles, Middletown Aerie No. 258, the Eagle Theater, a 200-seat theater, was

Central Avenue Historic District

Butler Co., OH

Name of Property

County and State

opened in the building in 1912. In 1917, the theater's name was changed to the Majestic Theater, and then in 1940, its name was changed to the State Theater. The theater closed in 1948 (Crout 2000). Overall, the former Eagle's Temple retains excellent architectural and historical integrity.

12. 1234 Central Avenue – (Photos 23 and 24) – Contributing

According to the Butler County Auditor's Office, the building was constructed in 1906, but photographs from 1913 and a ca. 1915 show a smaller one-story commercial building on this lot. It is likely that this building was constructed sometime between 1915 and 1924 because the 1924 edition of the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps is the first to depict a two-story building on this parcel. The narrow two-story building has a two-part commercial block configuration. At some point after ca. 1960, the first story was renovated as a storefront with a modern metal-frame show window resting on a brick bulkhead. The main entrance, on the north (front) elevation is a modern metal-frame business door. The top of the storefront is clad in angled siding. The belt course separating the first and second stories is sheathed in aluminum cut to look like an awning. The windows in the second story are possibly original one-over-one wood-frame units with brick headers and concrete keystone lintels. A six panel Neo-Classical Revival decorative pressed-metal cornice adorns the façade under the parapet roofline. An exterior brick chimney is sited on the southeast corner of east (side) elevation. The south (rear) elevation is plain with boarded up windows and a rear business entrance.

A ca. 1950 photograph (Figure 27) and a poor quality ca. 1960 photograph (Figure 24) appear to show that the building originally had a larger show window. The ca. 1950 photograph also shows that the current decorative pressed metal cornice, parapet roofline, belt course sheathed to look like an awning, and the second-story façade remain the same as in the photograph (Figure 27). According to Middletown Business Directories published during the 1910s and 1920s, the building was a billiard hall. Following that, a series of shops operated out of the building including a ladies' accessories shop, a men's clothing shop, and a news and tobacco stand. By ca. 1950, the Silver Dollar Café was operating out of the building (Figure 27). The building is now used by the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 36. The storefront has been altered and the second story windows have been replaced, but the building retains its two-part commercial block configuration, second story windows, pressed-metal Neo-Classical Revival cornice, and parapet roofline. The building has sufficient integrity to convey its historic character.

13. 1236, 1238, and 1240 Central Avenue – (Photos 25 and 26) – Contributing

The two-story Neo-Classical Revival building was constructed in 1922. The building originally had open storefronts accented by concrete and brick pilasters. The storefronts have been in-filled with stucco sheathed material, but the accenting concrete and brick pilasters remain. Modern eight-over-eight windows have been installed along the former storefronts on the north (front) and east (side) first story elevations. The main entrance on the north elevation is a late twentieth century metal-frame business door with sidelights and a fixed transom. The main entrance has a concrete Neo-Classical Revival surround dating to after ca. 1960 (Figure 24). The windows on the second story are late twentieth century eight-over-eight replacement units with four pane fixed transoms. These windows extend around the north, east, and south (rear) elevations. An interior brick chimney is sited on the plain south elevation.

Central Avenue Historic District

Butler Co., OH

Name of Property

County and State

While a number of small businesses, including a hardware store, an ice cream shop, and a confectioner, operated out of the building during the period of significance, the primary business was the William T. Knott Company department store. This department store was advertised as “Middletown’s Most Modern Department Store” and served as an important department store for Middletown shoppers (Crout 2000). The building is currently utilized by Better Built Construction Services, Inc. A ca. 1950 photograph (Figure 27) and a ca. 1960 photograph (Figure 24) of the building show that the storefronts were not enclosed, and the windows on the second story were originally six-over-one windows. The historic photographs show that the building still retains its two-part commercial block configuration, concrete and brick pilasters, and deck roofline adorned decorative pressed metal cornice (Figures 24 and 27). The building maintains sufficient integrity to convey its historic character.

14. 1300 and 1306 Central Avenue – (Photos 27 and 28) – Contributing

The two-story brick Schomer Building has a two-part commercial block configuration and was constructed in 1910 (Photos 27 and 28). The building has a modest Arts and Crafts influence. The building has experienced some alterations, mainly altered storefronts and the loss of historic materials. The storefronts along the first story of the north (front) and northwest corner of the west (side) elevation have been altered during the late twentieth century. The storefronts on the west elevation have been enclosed by brick but the multi-paned fixed transoms originally above the storefronts remain (Figure 28). The altered storefronts have modern metal-frame show windows on either brick or tile bulkheads. The main entrance to the interior of the building is sited between the storefronts on the north elevation with a late twentieth century metal-frame door and an original decorative concrete surround with “Schomer” inscribed above the main entrance. The storefront east of the main entrance has late-twentieth century materials, but it retains its historic configuration (Figure 28). The windows on the second story of the north and west elevations are late twentieth century six-over-one replacement units. A rusticated cornice, supported by heavy scrollwork brackets, separates the second story from the crenellated parapet roofline. At least three internal brick chimneys are sited on the south (rear) elevation.

Historically, the western portion of the building housed a variety of restaurants including the Crystal Restaurant and the Anchor Restaurant. The Capital Loan and Savings Company operated out of the storefront directly west of the main entrance (Figure 28). Several Middletown professionals operated offices within the main portion of the building, including dentists, an optometrist, an architect, and a taxi company. One of the original uses of the building was by Louis Schomer as a real estate office. According to the U.S. Census records, Louis Schomer was the son of Russian immigrants who was born in Wisconsin before moving to Middletown and working as a real estate agent. His success is apparent with his name attached to the building. The eastern storefront was used by a tailor and a barber prior to it becoming Leo’s Auto Accessory Store, which operated in the building beginning in the 1930s through the 1960s (Figure 28). The western portion of the building is currently occupied by Buck’s Sports Bar and Grill, while the eastern portion is vacant. A ca. 1939 photograph of the building shows that the building retains its original two-part commercial block configuration, the rusticated cornice with bracket supports under the parapet roofline, the configuration of the eastern storefront, and the fixed multi-pane transoms on the west elevation (Figure 28). A clock formerly sited in front of the building blocks the building’s main entrance in this photograph, but it appears the concrete

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., OH

County and State

surround of the main entrance is original too (Figure 28). The storefronts have been altered and the second story windows have been replaced, but the building retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic character.

15. 1310 and 1312 Central Avenue – (Photos 29 and 30) – Contributing

According to the Butler County Auditor's Office, this building was constructed in 1910, but the 1921 Sanborn map shows that this lot was vacant at that time (Sanborn Map Company). The building was likely constructed in ca. 1922 as it first appears on the 1924 Sanborn map (Sanborn Map Company). The three-story brick building has a two-part commercial block configuration. The north (front) elevation of the first story features a storefront with an inset business entrance and the main entrance to the main portion of the building (Photo 29). The storefront has a wood-frame business door and modern show windows resting on paneled bulkheads. While the storefront may remain in its original configuration, the materials appear to date to the late twentieth century. The main entrance to the building is an inset doorway on the northeast corner of the north elevation. A concrete belt course separates the first and second stories. The window openings on the second story appear to have in-filled round-arch transoms, but the six-over-one wood-frame windows protected by metal-frame storm windows may be original. The window openings on the third story are rectangular with similar wood-frame six-over-one windows, except the center opening is a French door opening onto a small wrought iron balcony. A concrete cornice adorns the parapet roofline. Several one-story brick additions dating to the mid-twentieth century have been added to the south (rear) elevation, but are not visible from Central Avenue (Photo 30).

The main business to operate in this building during the period of significance was the Sherwin-Williams Paint Store. In 1866, the Sherwin-Williams Company was founded by Henry Sherwin and Edward Williams in Cleveland, Ohio. One segment of the Sherwin-Williams Company focused on opening public stores for the purpose of selling the company's paint products. Sometime in the early twentieth century, the Sherwin-Williams Company opened their paint store in Middletown, Ohio (Crout 2000). The building is now used by the United Steel Workers Local 1-112 Union. The storefront materials are modern and the round-arch transoms on the second story have been in-filled, but the building retains good integrity, including the configuration of the storefront, upper story window materials, the third story French doors, wrought iron balcony, and parapet roofline adorned by a concrete cornice.

16. 1314 and 1316 Central Avenue – (Photos 31 and 32) – Contributing

The two-story brick building was constructed in 1913 with a Neo-Classical Revival façade on the north (front) elevations. The building has a two-part commercial block configuration with two business entrances in the first story and a projecting bay from the second story. The two business entrances on the north elevation are subdued and flank a small central multi-pane display window on a wood paneled bulkhead. Doric pilasters, extending the full height of the façade, adorn the corners of the north elevation. The inset entrances are blocked off by iron gates. The display window and the two entrances have Neo-Classical Revival surrounds. Although the two entrances appear to have late twentieth century metal-frame business doors, the door surrounds and display window appear to have experienced little alteration. The second story has a projecting bay clad in stucco with three late twentieth century one-over-one replacement

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., OH

County and State

windows. A projecting cornice adorns the area below the parapet roofline. The east (side) elevation is plain with late twentieth century one-over-one replacement windows. An internal brick chimney is sited near the southeast corner of the east elevation. The south (rear) elevation has three original two-over-two wood-frame windows protected by metal-frame storm windows and no rear entrance to the building.

According to Middletown business directories, the primary business that operated out of 1314 Central Avenue was as a photography studio owned by Grace F. Parker. It appears that Grace F. Parker was a portrait photographer, and took some class photographs for the local schools during her career (Crout 2000). The 1930 and 1940 U.S. Census records her as the owner and operator of her own photo studio and shop. At 1316 Central Avenue, a variety of businesses were located during the twentieth century, including a men's clothing store, a barber, and briefly the Citizens Building Loan and Saving Association bank. The building currently appears to be vacant. Unfortunately, no historic photographs of this building could be located, but it appears that the building has experienced little alteration. The building retains its two-part commercial block configuration and Neo-Classical Revival façade. The storefronts may have experienced some minor alterations, but they appear to remain fairly intact. Overall, the building maintains a good level of integrity and continues to convey its historic character.

17. 1318, 1320, 1324, and 1326 Central Avenue – (Photos 33 and 34) – Contributing

According to the Butler County Auditor's Office, the two-story brick building with a two-part commercial block configuration was constructed in 1910. However, the 1921 Sanborn map shows a dwelling on this parcel (Sanborn Map Company). The dwelling may have been incorporated into the current structure configuration, suggested by a gable-roof portion of the building visible from the rear of the building (Photo 34). The current configuration of the building is first depicted on the 1924 Sanborn map (Sanborn Map Company); therefore the likely construction date is actually ca. 1922–1923. The first story of the north (front) elevation has three storefronts. The storefronts appear to retain their original configuration with recessed entrances and projecting display windows, but the materials appear to be late twentieth century replacements. Unfortunately, no historic photographs of this building could be located, so the exact original configuration or historic materials of the storefronts cannot be determined. The business entrances are late twentieth century metal-frame business doors, and the modern show windows rest on bulkheads sided by vertical board siding. A projecting concrete cornice separates the first and second stories. The windows on the second story are paired modern one-over-one replacement units. The flat roof is accented by a projecting skirt under the roofline, supported by scrollwork brackets. Several mid- to late-twentieth century additions, including a one-story concrete-block two-car garage, have been added to the south (rear) elevation.

Middletown city directories show that a variety of business operated out of the building, including a confectionery, a florist, a second-hand store, a cigar shop, a clothing store, an appliance store, and a jewelry shop. The center business is now occupied by the Beauty Nook salon, but it appears that this business has closed. The other two storefronts are vacant. The building has lost much of its historic materials including storefront materials and the replacement of the second story windows, but it retains its two-part commercial block

Central Avenue Historic District

Butler Co., OH

Name of Property

County and State

configuration, the configuration of the storefronts, and its flat roof with the skirt accent. The building retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic character.

18. 1328 Central Avenue – (Photos 35) – Non-contributing

The one-story brick building was constructed in 1979. This building is less than fifty years of age and is not a contributing resource to the Central Avenue Historic District.

19. 1338, 1340, 1342 and 1344 Central Avenue – (Photos 36 and 37) – Contributing

The two-story brick building with a two-part commercial block configuration was constructed in ca. 1920. The first story of the north (front) elevation is divided into three storefronts with an inset entrance to the second story of the building near the center of the façade. One storefront is sited west of the main entrance while two storefronts are east of the main entrance. The storefront on the west side of the north elevation appears to be the least altered of the storefronts. This storefront features an enframed window wall with large display windows resting on patterned tile bulkheads. The patterned tile work appears to date to at least the mid-twentieth century, if not earlier. The large show windows in this storefront appear to be mid-twentieth century replacements, but the recessed business entrance and the projecting display windows is likely represent the original configuration for this storefront. The inset main entrance beside this storefront has a wood-frame door that looks to date from the mid-twentieth century with late-twentieth century hardware including a deadbolt lock. The two storefronts east of the main entrance are more altered. The central storefront retains its inset business entrance and projecting display windows, but the materials, including the metal-frame display windows and tiled bulkheads, appear to date from the late twentieth century. The eastern storefront is the most altered. While this storefront historically was likely recessed similar to the other two storefronts, the current storefront is a modern enframed window wall featuring a business entrance and display windows flush with the façade. The first and second stories are separated by a concrete cornice. The windows on the second floor are modern one-over-one replacement units. The roofline is unadorned. Several mid- to late-twentieth century additions, including a rear gable addition, have been added to the south (rear) elevation. The rear of the building features a brick gable-roof portion with an interior brick chimney on the ridgeline. This rear portion may be the remnant of an earlier residential dwelling. The 1912 edition of the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps shows that this parcel was occupied by a two-story dwelling with the rear portion of the dwelling in approximately the same place as the current brick gable-roof rear portion of this building (Sanborn Map Company).

Unfortunately, no historic photographs of this building could be located. According to Middletown business directories, a variety of businesses operated out of this building over the years, including a milliner, a tailor, a beauty salon, and a drug store. The F&S Outlet store is currently occupying the eastern storefront, while the other two storefronts are vacant. The storefronts have lost historic materials and the eastern storefront has been altered, but the building retains its two-part commercial block configuration and the central and western storefronts likely reflect their original configurations. The building retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic character.

Central Avenue Historic District

Butler Co., OH

Name of Property

County and State

20. 1346, 1348 and 1350 Central Avenue – (Photos 38 and 39) – Contributing

According to the Butler County Auditor's Office, the two-story Neo-Classical Revival style building was constructed in ca. 1920. The building has a two-part commercial block configuration and a Neo-Classical Revival false-front façade on the north (front) elevation of the side-gable building. The main entrance on the north elevation has an older wood-frame door flanked by two storefronts. The two storefronts have lost their historic materials, but they appear to retain their original configuration, each with a recessed business entrance and projecting display windows. The late twentieth century display windows on the western storefront rest on tile bulkheads, while the eastern storefront display windows rest on bulkheads sheathed in stucco. Neo-Classical Revival pilasters flank both sides of the center entrance and define the corners of the first floor of the north elevation. The primary features on the second story on the north elevation are two projecting bays on the northwest and northeast corners, each with three windows. The windows on the second story are modern one-over-one replacement units. The false-front roofline is adorned by an ornate cornice supported by decorative scrollwork brackets and dentil ornamentation. The east elevation is blind and sided in aluminum siding. A mid-twentieth century one-story red-brick addition with an interior brick chimney is sited on the southeast corner of the south (rear) elevation.

The false-front façade on the north elevation of a side-gable building suggests that a former domestic structure or older commercial building may have been converted into its present configuration, which is supported by the depiction of a very similar structure in this location on the 1912 Sanborn map, labeled as a duplex dwelling (Sanborn Map Company). Unfortunately, no historic photographs of this building could be located, so the building's original use and exact degree of alteration to the façade cannot be determined. According to Middletown business directories, the main business that operated out of this building was a grocery store owned by Louis J. Hess and later by George D. Bugitzedes. In addition to the grocery store, The Fair Store, a woman's clothing shop, also operated out of the building. The building is now vacant. The storefronts have lost some historic materials, but they appear to retain their historic configurations. The building also retains its two-part commercial block configuration, projecting second story bays and window openings, and ornamental cornice along the roofline. Overall, the building retains good integrity to convey its historic character.

21. 1364, 1366, and 1368 Central Avenue – (Photos 40 and 41) – Contributing

According to the Butler County Auditor's Office, the two-story building was constructed in ca. 1920, but it is likely that the building was actually constructed before 1890, as it first appears on the 1890 Sanborn map (Sanborn Map Company). The building has a modest late nineteenth century Italianate influence and a two-part commercial block configuration (Photo 40). The main entrance on the north (front) elevation is flanked by storefronts. The storefronts appear to retain their original configuration with recessed entrances and projecting display windows, but the materials appear to be late twentieth century replacements. The modern display windows rest on low bulkheads sided in aluminum. A projecting concrete cornice separates the first and second stories. The windows on the second story are late twentieth century one-over-one replacement units. The roofline of the north elevation is adorned by an entablature with a plain frieze and an Italianate-style cornice supported by carved brackets. The west (side) elevation has one late twentieth century one-over-one replacement window and is sheathed in aluminum siding. The

Central Avenue Historic District

Butler Co., OH

Name of Property

County and State

south (rear) elevation is also sheathed in aluminum siding, but has three late twentieth century one-over-one replacement windows and two metal rear business doors (Photo 41).

According to Middletown business directories and Sanborn maps, the building was primarily the home of a confectionary, from as early as 1901 through 1958, with a millinery occupying the building in 1890 before the confectionary was established. Businesses that occupied the other half of the building included a men's clothing store, a barber, a wallpaper shop, a second-hand store, the Finley Davidson piano store, a florist, a radio and hobby shop, and a gift shop. Unfortunately, no historic photographs of this building could be located. Although the storefronts have lost their historic materials, it appears that they retain their original configurations. In addition, the building retains its two-part commercial block configuration and Italianate-style cornice. The building retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic character.

22. 1372, 1374, 1378, and 1380 Central Avenue – (Photos 42 and 43) – Contributing

According to the Butler County Auditor's Office, the two-story building with a two-part commercial block configuration was constructed in ca. 1920. However, according to Middletown historian, George C. Crout, this building would have had to been constructed prior to 1909 because the first Kroger store in Middletown opened in this building that year (Crout 2000). In addition, the building first appears on the 1890 Sanborn map (Sanborn Map Company), so the building must have been erected before 1890. The building has a modest Neo-Classical Revival influence. The north (front) elevation has two main entrances flanked by storefronts. The two main entrances have mid-twentieth century wood doors with late twentieth century hardware including deadbolt locks. These entrances have Neo-Classical Revival pilasters while larger Neo-Classical Revival pilasters define the corners of the first floor of the north elevation. The two storefronts have late twentieth century metal-frame display windows resting on panel bulkheads, but the storefronts appear to retain their original configuration with a recessed business entrance and projecting display windows. The first and second stories are separated by a projecting concrete cornice. The windows on the second story are late twentieth century one-over-one replacement units with concrete lintels. Some of the windows have been boarded up with plywood. The second story is separated from the parapet roofline by a brick cornice. The west (side) elevation has modern one-over-one replacement windows, each with a concrete lintel, and a side entrance on the southwest corner. The south (rear) elevation has three metal business doors and many of the window openings are in-filled by plywood. Small interior brick chimneys are sited on the northeast and southwest corners of the building.

A ca. 1910 photograph of the northwest corner of the north elevation shows that the building still retains its original storefront configuration, pilaster ornamentation, and parapet roofline (Figure 29). Middletown's original Kroger store can also be seen in this photo. Information from Sanborn maps and business directories indicate that a grocery operated in the west half of the building from as early as 1890 through 1945. In addition to the Kroger Store, other businesses that operated in the building include a men's furnishing goods store, a florist, a wallpaper store, a savings and loan association, an insurance agent, an auto parts store, and a drug store. In 1890, one half of the building housed the United Brethren Church. Currently, the western storefront is vacant while the Treasures of the Chest pawn shop operates out of the eastern storefront. The two storefronts have lost some of their historic materials, including window sashes and signage,

Central Avenue Historic District

Butler Co., OH

Name of Property

County and State

but they appear to retain some original materials, including pilasters in their original configuration. In addition, the building retains its two-part commercial block configuration, Neo-Classical Revival pilaster surrounds around the first story storefronts, and its parapet roofline. The building retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic character.

23. 1391 Central Avenue – (Photos 44 and 45) – Non-contributing

According to the Butler County Auditor's Office, the two-story rusticated concrete-block building was constructed in ca.1920. However, the building first appears on the 1907 Sanborn map, meaning that the building was likely constructed between 1901 and 1906 (Sanborn Map Company). In addition, the building was noted as a dwelling on the 1907 Sanborn map; it retains this designation (at least in part) through the 1931 Sanborn map edition (Sanborn Map Company). The main entrance on the south (front) elevation is recessed on the southeast corner. A storefront with three modern projecting display windows resting on stucco bulkheads was added to the building ca. 1922–1923, and likely altered in the late twentieth century. The first and second stories are separated by a shed-roof wood awning above the storefront. The second story of the south elevation has late twentieth century one-beside-one windows and is sheathed in vertical board siding (Photo 45). A metal chimney pipe extends from the roof on the north elevation. The southern portion of the east (side) elevation is sheathed in stucco while the remaining portion of the elevation is rusticated concrete block. The windows are one-over-one aluminum-frame replacement windows with concrete sills and lintels. A small rusticated concrete block chimney is sited on the north (rear) elevation (Photo 44). According to Middletown city directories, the building was the residence of the Logan Family in 1912 and 1918; the first commercial venture identified for the building is a dry goods store in 1923. The building housed a restaurant from ca. 1926 through ca. 1931, and then was home to a tailor, a photography studio, and a shoe repair shop.

Unfortunately, no historic photographs of this building could be located. The exact degree of alteration to the building is unclear, but it is clear that the building's façade has been completely changed. It is likely that the building historically had a two-part commercial block configuration. Judging from the other buildings in the historic district constructed around the same time, the storefront would have likely been a centered recessed business entrance with projecting display windows. The windows in the second story would have likely been vertical windows instead of horizontal ones. This building has lost its integrity and does not contribute to the Central Avenue Historic District.

24. 1387 Central Avenue – (Photos 46 and 47) – Contributing

According to the Butler County Auditor's Office, this two-story brick building was constructed in ca. 1920, but the front-gable roof suggests a possible earlier construction date. The 1912 Sanborn map shows a narrow two-story building on the lot, which had in turn replaced a dwelling, but the 1921 Sanborn map shows, the building with its current footprint, much larger than the 1912 building (Sanborn Map Company). It is possible that the narrower building depicted on the 1912 Sanborn map was incorporated into the larger existing building (Sanborn Map Company), a portion of which can be seen in the photograph of the rear of the building (Photo 47). The building has a modest Neo-Classical Revival style, and a two-part commercial block configuration. The south (front) elevation of the first story features a main entrance and a

Central Avenue Historic District

Butler Co., OH

Name of Property

County and State

storefront altered in the late twentieth century (Photo 46). The main entrance on the southeast corner of the south elevation has a modern metal panel door. The storefront, west of the main entrance, has slanting display windows resting on bulkheads sheathed in vertical board siding leading to a recessed business entrance. The business door is a modern metal-frame door. The storefront and main entrance are protected by a shed-roof overhang which also separates the first and second stories. The windows on the second story are mid-twentieth century one-over-one aluminum-frame replacement units, each protected by metal awnings supported by metal rods. The front gable roof has gable end pediment supported by a projecting cornice and in-filled by painted wood paneling. The windows on the east (side) and north (rear) elevations are also one-over-one aluminum-frame units (Photo 47). There are no side or rear entrances on these elevations. Historically, the building was primarily occupied by the Carl Rossi Shoe Repair Shop, from ca. 1926 through 1948 (the shoe repair shop relocated next door to 1391 Central Ave. between 1948 and 1958). In 1923, the building was a dry goods store, and in 1958, it housed the Hagias Candy Shop. The building is now vacant, but it retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic character.

25. 1385 Central Avenue – (Photos 48 and 49) – Contributing

The three-story building was constructed in 1909. The building has a two-part commercial block configuration. The first story of the south (front) elevation features a storefront and the entrance to the upper stories of the building (Photo 49). The main entrance to the upper stories of the building is on the southwest corner and the storefront is sited east of this entrance. The inset main entrance has a late twentieth century metal-frame door. The storefront appears to retain its original configuration with a recessed entrance and projecting display windows. The storefront has lost its historic material, and now has late twentieth century metal-frame display windows resting on bulkheads sheathed in modern vertical siding. The first and second stories are separated by a concrete cornice. The primary feature on the second and third stories of the south elevation is a projecting bay with three windows on each story of the bay. A cornice supported by modest brackets adorns the top of the bay. All the windows on the south elevation of the second and third stories are modern one-over-one replacement units. The windows outside of the projecting bay have stone sills and lintels. The roofline over the projecting bay is supported by small brackets. The date “1909” is emblazoned at the top of the parapet roofline. The north (rear) elevation is plain with a one-story shed-roof addition and a metal staircase attached to an in-filled rear entrance on the third story (Photo 48).

A poor quality photograph from ca. 1950 shows that the building has lost some of its historic materials, but the building retains its two-part commercial block configuration, projecting second and third story bay, original window openings with stone sills and lintels, and its parapet roofline (Figure 30). A large neon sign advertising Burger Bohemian Beer, brewed in Cincinnati, is visible in this photograph as well (Crout 2000). The Kroger Grocery was an early occupant of the building for a brief period ca. 1912, but was replaced by a ladies’ clothing store that operated out of the building from ca. 1918 through 1931. The building was vacant in 1935, and then housed a flower shop, a paint store, and a mail-order catalogue store. The building is currently vacant. Although the storefront has lost its historic materials, the building retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic character, including its storefront configuration, original window openings, projecting bay with cornice supported by modest brackets, and its parapet roofline.

Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Butler Co., OH
County and State

26. 1379 Central Avenue – (Photos 50 and 51) – Contributing

The two-story concrete-block building was constructed in 1960. The building has a two-part commercial block configuration. The first story of the building features an entrance to the second story and a storefront. The storefront appears to have been altered in late twentieth century with the replacement of the business door with a modern metal-frame business door. The metal-frame display windows resting on low tile bulkheads may be original (Photo 50). The first and second stories are separated by vertical metal bands. The windows on the second story appear to be original eight-pane industrial sash windows. The second story is sheathed in metal panels. A mid-twentieth century one-story concrete-block addition has been added to the north (rear) elevation (Photo 51). This building replaced another modest commercial building when it was constructed in 1960 (Figure 30). According to the 1960 business directory for Middletown, the Radio Lab hobby shop operated out of the building. The building was a homeless shelter during the late twentieth century. The Lil Bucks Pool Hall and Arcade was the most recent business to operate in the building, but the building is now vacant. Unfortunately, no historic photographs of this building could be located. The building has lost some historic materials, primarily signage and its original business door, but it retains its two-part commercial block configuration, industrial sash windows, and metal panel siding of the second story. The building retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic character.

27. 1373 Central Avenue – (Photos 52 and 53) – Contributing

According to the Butler County Auditor's Office, this one-story brick building was constructed in 1925; however, Sanborn maps through the 1950s depict a two-story building on the parcel (Sanborn Map Company). A date stone on the southeast corner of the building is inscribed "The Middletown Better Homes Co. 1964." It appears likely that the current building was constructed in 1964 by the Middletown Better Homes Company to replace an older two-story building seen in a ca. 1950 photograph (Figure 31). The building has a one-part commercial block configuration with a single storefront. The metal-frame business door and aluminum-frame display windows resting on brick bulkheads may be original to the 1964 construction date (Photo 52). A projecting cornice sheathed in metal overhangs the storefront. The unadorned roofline has been covered by plywood. At least two late twentieth century concrete-block additions, including a two-car garage, have been added to the north (rear) elevation (Photo 53). While the Middletown Better Homes Co. is still recorded as the owner of the property by the Butler County Auditor's Office, the building is currently vacant. The building retains a good level of integrity including its one-part commercial block configuration, likely its original storefront and materials, and its projecting metal-sheathed cornice.

28. 1371 Central Avenue – (Photos 54 and 55) – Contributing

According to the Butler County Auditor's Office, the one-story brick building was constructed in 1932, but the building is first depicted on the 1924 Sanborn map making the construction date more likely to be between 1921 and 1924 instead (Sanborn Map Company). The building has a one-part commercial block configuration with a parapet roof. The south (front) elevation features an original configuration storefront with a recessed entrance and projecting display windows (Photo 55). The storefront has lost its historic materials, and now features a modern metal business door and metal-frame store windows resting on bulkheads covered in vertical board

Central Avenue Historic District

Butler Co., OH

Name of Property

County and State

siding, dating to the late twentieth century. An overhang sheathed in wood shingles protects the storefront. The parapet roof is unadorned. A partially exterior brick chimney is sited on the west (side) elevation. The north (rear) elevation is blind with a rear metal business door (Photo 54). A ca. 1950 photograph shows the eastern portion of the building (Figure 31). The storefront appears to retain its configuration, but the parapet roof has been altered and the wood shingled overhang looks to be covering a multi-pane fixed transom originally above the storefront (Figure 31). The building was occupied by several different businesses, including a tailor, a carpet cleaner, a grocer, a hat cleaner, and a newsstand. The building is currently vacant. The building retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic character, including its one-part commercial block configuration, storefront configuration, and parapet roofline.

29. 1367 Central Avenue – (Photos 56 and 57) – Non-contributing

The one-story concrete-block building was constructed in 1979. This building is less than fifty years of age and is not a contributing resource to the Central Avenue Historic District.

30. 1357, 1359, and 1361 Central Avenue – (Photos 58 and 59) – Non-contributing

The one-story brick building was constructed in 1974. This building is less than fifty years of age and is not a contributing resource to the Central Avenue Historic District.

31. 1345-1357 Central Avenue – (Photos 60, 61, and 62) – Contributing

The two-story brick theater building was constructed ca. 1931, replacing a smaller theatre that stood on the same lot on the 1924 Sanborn map (Sanborn Map Company). The theatre is not listed in the 1930–1931 city directory, but it appears on the 1931 Sanborn map suggesting a construction date of ca. 1931 (Sanborn Map Company). Formerly the Strand Theater, and then the Studio Theater, the building is now vacant and suffering from neglect. The building has a two-part commercial block configuration with a modest Art Deco architectural style. It is one of the largest buildings within the Central Avenue Historic District. The two-store façade that fronts onto Central Avenue is small compared to the rear portion of the theater building (Photo 60).

The main entrance to the former theater is recessed under a ca. 1955 marquee. The inset area is tiled and leads to paired metal-frame business doors now chained shut. Flanking the main entrance are storefronts. On each corner of the south elevation are round-arched recessed side entrances to the building. The storefront east of the main entrance has modern metal frame show windows resting on damaged concrete bulkheads, while the storefront west of the main entrance has metal frame show windows resting on painted concrete bulkheads. The storefront west of the main entry likely retains its original configuration, while the eastern storefront has been altered slightly, shifting the business entrance slightly off-center. The western storefront is protected by a flat overhang supported by metal rods. Both storefronts are vacant. The round-arched side entrances on the southeast and southwest corners of the south elevation have been blocked off by metal gates. A belt course separates the first and second stories. The windows on the second story of the south elevation have been enclosed by painted panels. The central four windows have round-arched headers while the four windows on the east and west sides of the south elevation are simply rectangular. The projecting cornice has dentil ornamentation. The west (side) elevation shows that a building formerly shared this wall, as depicted on the 1950 Sanborn map (Sanborn Map Company). It also shows that the rear theater area of the building is larger

Central Avenue Historic District

Butler Co., OH

Name of Property

County and State

than the front façade. The north (rear) elevation is blind and a large metal hopper is sited on the roof of this elevation.

A ca. 1950 painting and a ca. 1960 photograph show that the original Art Deco marquee was been replaced by the existing marquee within the period of significance for the Central Avenue Historic District (Figures 32 and 33). Although the building is vacant and suffering from neglect, the building is one of the largest within the district, and it retains its two-part configuration, scale and massing, ca. 1955 marquee, projecting cornice, and its feeling of a theater; therefore, the building retains the integrity to convey its historic character.

32. 1316 Vail Avenue – (Photos 60 and 61) – Contributing

The one-story concrete-block building was constructed in ca. 1955. The building has a one-part commercial block configuration and a brick façade which fronts onto Vail Avenue. The north (front) elevation features an enframed window wall with large display windows, but these windows have been boarded up with painted plywood sheets (Photo 61). The west (side) and south (rear) elevations are concrete block with what appear to be original eight-pane industrial sash windows and metal doors (Photo 60). Unfortunately, no historic photographs of this building could be located.

Shortly after the building was constructed, the Sperry & Hutchinson Company opened a variety store in the building. The Sperry & Hutchinson Company was best known for their Green Stamp program in which customers of gas stations, grocery stores, and other retail stores would receive a number of stamps as a result of their purchases. The stamps were collected and then redeemed for merchandise from a Sperry & Hutchinson catalog. While the Sperry & Hutchinson store in Middletown likely distributed Green Stamps to their customers, little additional information regarding its Middletown store could be located. Following the decline of the Sperry & Hutchinson Company, the building was occupied by the Midd-Town Cabinet Company which continues to operate in Middletown. Despite having its enframed window wall boarded up, the building retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic character including its one-part commercial block configuration, some historic materials including the industrial sash windows and metal doors, and its enframed window wall may remain intact under the plywood covering.

33. 15 North Clinton Street – (Photos 63 and 64) – Contributing

The one-story concrete-block building was constructed in 1949 as Albert's Super Market. The building fronts onto North Clinton Street, just north of Central Avenue. The building has a one-part commercial block configuration. The west (front) elevation features an inset business entrance and an enframed window wall with eight large display windows. The enframed window wall rests on brick bulkheads extending most of the façade (Photo 64). The configuration of the window wall is likely original, but the materials appear to be late twentieth century replacements. A band of multi-pane fixed transoms extends along the façade above the main entrance and display windows. The north (side) and south (side) elevations are plain with the window openings in-filled by some kind of flexible material. The east (rear) elevation features a large garage door (Photo 63). Unfortunately, no historic photographs of this building could be located. Although the building has lost some historical materials, the building retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic character including its one-part commercial block configuration and

Central Avenue Historic District

Butler Co., OH

Name of Property

County and State

enframed window wall. The building now houses Digital Visuals, a multi-media services business.

34. 1311-1321 Central Avenue – (Photos 65 and 66) – Contributing

The two-story brick building was erected between 1907 and 1912. The building has a two-part commercial block configuration and appears to be two almost identical sister building sharing a central wall; however, the eastern half of the building was built ca. 1922–1923, as it does not appear on the 1921 Sanborn map but is present on the 1924 Sanborn map (Sanborn Map Company). A one-story addition was connected to the western half between 1931 and 1950. The eastern portion of the building has two storefronts flanking the main entrance to the building. Both of these storefronts retain their original configurations with recessed entrances and projecting display windows (Photo 66). The storefronts have metal-frame display windows resting on tile bulkheads that appear to date to the mid-twentieth century within the district's period of significance. Above each of these two storefronts are projecting bays on the second story. The projecting bays each have three, possibly original, wood-frame one-over-one windows protected by aluminum-frame storm windows. Each center window unit has a stained glass transom. The projecting bays are support by heavy brackets. The western portion of the building has a single storefront with similar show windows and bulkheads. A single bay projects from over the business entrance. This projecting bay is supported by the same heavy brackets and has similar wood-frame windows protected by storm windows. In addition to the windows in the projecting bay, there are three additional wood-frame windows protected by metal-frame storm windows in this portion of the second story. A stone belt course supported by ornate brackets extends the entire façade of the building and separates the first and second stories. The parapet roofline along the front façade is adorned by some basic ornamentation.

The original western half of the building housed woman-owned businesses from ca. 1915 up to ca. 1940. Helen Boli operated out of the westernmost storefront, and was listed in city directories as having a dry goods store, a notions shop, and finally a children's clothing store (operated by Mary Blust in 1935); the eastern storefront was home to a millinery owned by Elizabeth Stillwaugh until 1935, when it was owned by Louise Betz. The western addition was occupied by Harry Brakeman, who was first listed as a jeweler and then an optometrist; he was succeeded by Ralph Parmenter in the optometry business. The Middletown Paint & Glass Company operated out of the other storefront in the eastern half in 1926, but took over the western half of the building ca. 1940, and remained there through 1958. The Melampy Appliance Company and a paper hanger took over the original location of the Middletown Paint & Glass Company in the eastern addition. The eastern storefront is vacant, while Helton & Associates utilizes the center storefront, and Middletown Antiques operates out of the western storefront. Unfortunately, no historic photographs of this building could be located. It appears that the building retains excellent integrity including historic materials, its two-part commercial block configuration, the historic storefront configuration, its projecting second story bays, and the parapet roof.

35. 1237 and 1239 Central Avenue – (Photo 67) – Non-contributing

The modern one-story brick building was constructed in 1987. This building is less than fifty years of age and is not a contributing resource to the Central Avenue Historic District.

Central Avenue Historic District

Butler Co., OH

Name of Property

County and State

36. 1227 Central Avenue – (Photo 67) – Non-contributing

The modern one-story brick building was constructed in 1980. This building is less than fifty years of age and is not a contributing resource to the Central Avenue Historic District.

37. 1207, 1209, and 1215 Central Avenue – (Photos 68 and 69) – Contributing

According to the Butler County Auditor's Office, this one-story brick building was constructed in 1951 and occupies three parcels. The building features a one-part commercial block configuration with two storefronts on the southwest corner and one storefront on the southeast corner. The storefronts were likely altered in the late twentieth century by the replacement of materials, but the storefronts may retain historic configurations dating to the period of significance. The two storefronts on the southwest corner have metal-frame display windows resting on the ground with no bulkheads. Concrete panels separate these two storefronts from the eastern on the south (north) elevation. The storefront on the southeast corner of the building has three large metal-frame display windows and dual metal-frame business doors with a fixed transom. The southeast corner of the building has the same concrete panel ornamentation as the center of the building (Photo 68). Although the building is now used for specialty shops, at least the eastern portion of the building was formerly utilized as a bank building, and the night deposit box remains on the southeast corner of the south elevation. The 1958 Middletown Business Directory recorded a children's clothing store, a real estate agent, and a camera shop operating in the building. At some point in the early 1960s, a branch of the Citizens Savings and Loan Association bank opened in this building. A partially in-filled drive through window is a remaining vestige of the bank seen on the north (rear) elevation. The east (side) elevation is blind while the north (rear) elevation has a one-story addition with a rear business door. Unfortunately, no historic photographs of the building could be located, so the exact degree of the alterations is not known. While the transom has been covered and larger display windows have been installed, the building retains a good level of integrity including its one-part commercial block configuration, much of its historic appearance, and its façade configuration.

38. 1201 Central Avenue – (Photos 70 and 71) – Contributing

The three-story brick building with a two-part commercial block configuration was constructed ca. 1922–1923. The first story of the south (front) elevation features an altered storefront, and the southwest corner of the west (side) elevation has an altered display window. The storefront was likely altered in the late twentieth century with metal-frame display windows resting on low stucco bulkheads. The recessed business entrance is located toward the southwest corner of the south elevation. A ca. 1925 photograph shows that the building originally featured a centered recessed entrance with projecting display windows resting on higher bulkheads (Figure 34). In addition, transoms above the storefront and corner display window have been in-filled with painted plywood sheets (Figure 34). The first and second stories are separated by a projecting cornice sheathed in metal. The bands of windows on the second and third stories are three-over-one wood-frame units that may be original windows protected by metal-frame storm windows. The roofline is adorned by an entablature with cornice supported by dentils and plain frieze, and a brick and concrete balustrade extending along the south elevation onto the southeast and southwest corners of the east and west elevations. A metal fire escape that dates to at least ca. 1925 is attached to the west elevation (Figure 34). The windows on this elevation are similar to the windows in the second and third stories of the south elevation. The ca. 1925 photograph

Central Avenue Historic District

Butler Co., OH

Name of Property

County and State

shows that all of these windows were protected by cloth awnings at that time (Figure 34). The north (rear) elevation is blind and an elevator shaft is sited on the northwest corner of the building.

The first identified commercial tenant of the building was the Middletown Bicycle & Auto Company in 1923, followed by the People's Packing Company with the Malta Hall and the ARMCO Concert Band in the upper floors. For a period of at least ten years in the 1930s-1940s, a restaurant operated out of the building, alternately known as the Terrace Grill or Terrace Garden. The building was home to Robertson and Sons Sporting Goods in the post-WWII years. Currently, the building is vacant. Although the storefront has been altered, the building retains a good level of integrity including much of its historic appearance, its two-part commercial block configuration, its original windows on the second and third stories of the south elevation and the windows on the west elevation, and its balustrade along the roofline.

39. Port Middletown Park – (Photo 81) – Non-contributing

On the northwest corner of Central Avenue and Canal Street/Verity Parkway is the Port Middletown Park. The park is dedicated to preserving the memory of the Miami-Erie Canal that was so important to Middletown's growth and development during the early nineteenth century. This park features a concrete fountain designed to mimic the Miami-Erie Canal, and a large mural commemorating Port Middletown painted by muralist Eric Henn on the building west of the park (1131 Central Avenue). The park was established after 2001 when the Centre City Mart's roofing was removed, and the mural was painted after 2003 when the Middletown Mural Committee was established. A monument placed near the northeast entrance of the Centre City Mart in 1977 is included in the park (Crout 2000). This site is less than fifty years of age and is not a contributing resource to the Central Avenue Historic District.

40. 1131 Central Avenue – (Photos 72 and 73) – Contributing

The four-story International style brick building was constructed in 1955 as the former TV Middletown Building. The building features a two-part commercial block configuration with a storefront on the first story of the south (front) elevation. The storefront likely retains its original configuration, but some of the original materials on the bulkheads may have been lost in the early 1970s, during the construction of the Middletown Mall. A photograph from 1973 shows a long, flat awning protecting the storefront, but no earlier photographs of the storefront could be located (Figure 35). The current storefront has two entrances and modern metal-frame display windows resting on panel bulkheads. The ribbon windows on the second, third, and fourth elevations are metal-frame industrial sash windows that appear to be original. The 1973 photograph shows that the upper stories of the south elevation retain the historic configuration and materials (Figure 35). The prominent feature of the east (side) elevation is the large Port Middletown mural painted by muralist Eric Henn after 2003. An elevator shaft is sited on the northwest corner of the north (rear) elevation. The building retains a good level of integrity including its two-part commercial block configuration, storefront configuration, and some of its historic materials, primarily the ribbon window openings with industrial sash windows.

Central Avenue Historic District

Butler Co., OH

Name of Property

County and State

41. 1123 Central Avenue – (Photos 74 and 75) – Contributing

According to the Butler County Auditor's Office, the three-story, three-bay, Italianate style building was constructed in ca. 1900. However, according to Middletown historian, George C. Crout and based on the architectural style of the building, it was constructed in the late nineteenth century. The building was likely constructed ca. 1888 because a fire destroyed the building formerly located on this lot on July 31, 1887 and the current building appears to be depicted on the 1890 Sanborn map (Figure 36; Crout 1965:196; Sanborn Map Company). The building has a two-part commercial block configuration with a storefront on the first story of the south (front) elevation. The current storefront configuration likely dates to the early 1970s when this building was included in the Middletown Mall experiment. The storefront has a center recessed entrance with a late twentieth century metal-frame business door and projecting metal-frame display windows resting on low tile bulkheads. Cast iron pilasters highlight the corners of storefront. A narrow side entrance on the southwest corner of the building, west of the storefront, provides entry to the rear portion and upper stories of the building. The windows on the second and third stories appear to be original wood-frame one-over-one units with a ten-pane transom over each window. The window openings have their original hoodmolds. The cornice is supported by decorative scrollwork brackets. Multiple early to mid-twentieth century one-story brick and concrete-block additions have been added to the north (rear) elevation. A ca. 1909 photograph of the building shows that while the storefront has been altered; the building retains its two-part commercial block configuration, many original materials including upper story windows and cornice supported by decorative brackets, and its cast iron pilaster ornamentation (Figure 37).

The building has a long history as a clothing store, dating back to at least 1895. City directories identify the various clothing merchants as Morris Schmaman in 1912, 1917, and 1923; The People's Clothing Company in 1926 through 1935; vacant in 1941; the Spritz Middletown Clothing Company in 1945 and 1949; and the Joy Shop (women's wear) in 1958. The City Hotel used the upper stories as part of their establishment as early as 1901. The building appears to be currently occupied by a church group. The building retains a good level of integrity to convey its historic character including its two-part commercial block configuration, cast iron pilaster ornamentation around the storefront, its original windows and openings with hoodmolds, and cornice supported by decorative brackets.

42. 1119 Central Avenue – (Photos 74 and 76) – Contributing

The three-story Italianate style building is similar in scale and massing to 1123 Central Avenue. According to the Butler County Auditor's Office, the three-story, four-bay, Italianate style building was constructed in ca. 1900. However, the building was likely constructed in ca. 1885, and the third floor of the building was basically gutted during a fire on July 31, 1887 (Figure 36). The fire destroyed several buildings, but this building was saved and the third floor rebuilt (Crout 1965:196). The building appears on the 1890 Sanborn map (Sanborn Map Company). The building has a two-part commercial block configuration with a storefront on the first story of the south (front) elevation. The storefront was likely altered in the early 1970s as a result of this building being included in the Middletown Mall experiment. The storefront has a centered recessed entry with a late twentieth century metal-frame business door with projected display windows resting on low tile bulkheads. Metal pilasters adorn the corners of the storefront. The

Central Avenue Historic District

Butler Co., OH

Name of Property

County and State

windows on the second and third stories are large two-over-two wood-frame units. The windows on the second story have curved decorative hoodmolds while the windows on the third story windows have pointed decorative hoodmolds. The cornice is supported by decorative scrollwork brackets. Multiple early to mid-twentieth century one-story brick and concrete-block additions have been added to the north (rear) elevation.

Historic maps, city directories, and photographs show that the main historic function of the building was the City Hotel (Figures 36, 37, and 38). The rooms of the hotel occupied the upper floors of 1119 Central Avenue and annexed the upper floors of neighboring 1123 Central Avenue as well; the first story housed a bar and dining room from ca. 1890 to ca. 1901, after which the bar was listed as an office on the Sanborn maps. The City Hotel operated in the building until ca. 1920 when it was converted to other business uses including a bakery, a bank, a butcher shop, and a men's wear shop. The storefront is currently vacant. The historic photographs show that the storefront originally featured four bays with the main entrance on the southeast corner of the building and wood-frame display windows separated by pilaster ornamentation (Figures 37 and 38). The building retains a good level of integrity including its two-part commercial block configuration, upper story window openings with decorative hoodmolds, and cornice supported by scrollwork brackets.

43. Plaza on the northwest corner of Central Avenue and Broad Street – (Photo 82) – Non-contributing

A small plaza with a gazebo, decorative clock, and monumental boulder was located on the northwest corner of Central Avenue and Broad Street after 2001 when the City Centre Mart was demolished. This site is less than fifty years of age and is not a contributing resource to the Central Avenue Historic District.

44. 1105 Central Avenue – (Photos 77 and 78) – Non-contributing

The oldest portion of the two-story brick building appears to be the northwest corner of the existing building and was likely constructed in ca. 1910, as the earliest Sanborn map that shows the building dates to 1912 (Sanborn Map Company). The building encompasses at least three different buildings incorporated into a single façade. In ca. 1970, shortly before the construction of the Middletown Mall, the south (front) and west (side) elevations were heavily altered with a completely new unified facade. The north (rear) elevation shows that despite looking like one building, the building is comprised of at least two buildings. The main entrance is on the recessed southwest corner. The south elevation has four bays of show windows extending to the ground level. The main entrance and these show windows are protected by modern awnings. Additional smaller show windows and another storefront are located on the west elevation. A large internal rectangular brick chimney is sited on the west elevation. The second story of the south and west elevations are blind. In addition to showing the two different buildings, the north elevation has window openings in-filled by concrete block and three rear metal business doors.

A ca. 1940 photograph of the northeast corner of Central Avenue and Broad Street show the cream-color brick building which became the northwest portion of the current building at 1105 Central Avenue (Figure 39). Decorative brick work details visible in this photograph match brick details that can be seen in the cream-brick portion of the north elevation (Photo 78). A 1972

Central Avenue Historic District

Butler Co., OH

Name of Property

County and State

photograph shows the altered building before the construction of the Middletown Mall began (Figure 40). A variety of small businesses and organizations occupied the existing historical portion of 1105 Central Avenue originally had Broad Street addresses, and include a laundry, a storefront church, sporting goods stores, a tailor, an auto dealer, a jeweler, a paint store, an exterminator, and a dry cleaner. 1105 Central Avenue is currently the home of the Pendleton Art Center. The substantial alterations of the multiple buildings in the early 1970s into one unified building façade resulted in the building no longer retaining the integrity necessary to contribute to the Central Avenue Historic District.

45. 20 North Broad Street – (Photos 79 and 80) – Contributing

The large three-story style brick building with a two-part commercial block configuration was constructed between 1901 and 1907, the year that it first appears on a Sanborn map. The first story of the east (font) elevation features three separate storefronts. The configuration of the storefronts was altered in ca. 1960 (Crout 2000). While the storefronts likely retain the ca. 1960 configuration, it appears the materials of the storefronts were replaced in the late twentieth century. The storefronts now have metal-frame display windows resting on concrete bulkheads. The entrances are modern metal-frame business doors. A curving roof over the altered storefronts is sheathed in standing-seam metal. The windows on the second and third stories are boarded up by plywood panels. Additional window openings have been in-filled by brick. Portions of the brick façade on the east elevation have deteriorated. The roofline of this elevation is sheathed by metal panels. The south (side) elevation is now blind with brick in-filled window openings. An internal brick chimney is sited on the southeast corner of the south elevation. The north (side) and west (rear) elevations have also had the window and door openings in-filled.

The building originally housed A. B. Shetter's farm implement and automobile dealership from ca. 1907 to ca. 1925, and again from 1935 to ca. 1944. In between, Ollie Sebald had a bicycle shop and a sporting goods store in the building. In the post-WWII years, the building was occupied by the Dohn Hardware & Paint Company. The building is currently vacant. A ca. 1958 photograph shows the building shortly before the configurations of the storefronts were altered (Figure 41). The building retains its two-part commercial block configuration and its ca. 1960 storefront configurations. The window openings appear to not have been altered, just in-filled with plywood panels. The building has sufficient integrity to convey its historic character.

Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Butler Co., OH
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Butler Co., OH
County and State

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

1890-1964

Significant Dates

1913

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Oeden, C. E.

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., OH

County and State

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Central Avenue Historic District is significant because of its connection with the commercial development of the downtown Middletown business community, and for its relationship to the development of downtown Middletown as a result of changing transportation technologies (Criterion A). In addition, the district is significant because several of the contributing resources represent a variety of architectural styles which embody the characteristics of late nineteenth and early to mid-twentieth century commercial buildings (Criterion C). The Period of Significance for the Central Avenue Historic District begins in 1890, coinciding with the oldest remaining buildings in the district and reflecting a building boom that followed closely when Middletown rose from a town to city status (Crout 1960:98). In 1886, the citizens of Middletown voted 810 to 465 to ask for city status from state and county officials. The period between 1890 and 1930 witnessed the construction of the majority of buildings within the historic district, thirty-six; more than 80% of the historic district's building stock. The period of significance extends to 1964, encompassing the post-World War II commercial buildings of Middletown that have reached fifty years of age. Most of the late nineteenth century buildings were generally altered during the early to middle twentieth century. These alterations occurred within the period of significance. The Central Avenue Historic District represents development of Middletown's late nineteenth to middle twentieth century commercial and shopping district, reflecting the ongoing results of a booming economy, industrial growth, and civic pride in this important Ohio industrial city. In fact, *The Ohio Guide*, first published in 1940, describes Middletown as, "on State 73 is Middletown... which stretches along the flood plain on the east bank of the Great Miami River, encircled by a chain of low, rolling hills. The smoggy industrial atmosphere makes Middletown seem a raw, twentieth century boom-town. Actually it has had a vital commercial life for more than a century. The main street lies along an old mail-stage route, and the modern department stores, specialty shops, and other business houses look brightly down on what was once the old canal."

Many of the buildings on the western side of district experienced some renovations in the 1970s as part of a failed revitalization project that enclosed this portion of Central Avenue. Additional renovations to the district's buildings, primarily along the first-story storefront sections, were completed in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. These alterations, in general, are minor and do not prevent the majority of buildings from contributing to the historic character of the district. Many of the buildings retain their historic appearances including original façades, upper-story window openings, commercial block and storefront configurations, roofline details, and architectural ornamentation. Because of this, the Central Avenue Historic District retains a good level of integrity necessary to convey the historical significance of an industrial boom town commercial district.

Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Butler Co., OH
County and State

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Middletown owes its growth and development to increasing industrialization and evolving transportation networks. The earliest settlers in the Middletown region traveled into the area by utilizing the Miami River during the late eighteenth century. The natural waterway provided a path through the wilderness as well as resources such as fish and power for early industrial pursuits. The city of Middletown was laid out in 1802 by Stephen Vail, a pioneer who had traveled to what would become the Middletown area from New Jersey. The original plat of the town contained 52 lots located east of the river (Simms 1906:6). The Central Avenue Historic District is not included on Vail's original plat. By the early nineteenth century, the community of Middletown was comprised of a collection of small log homes, and had a saw mill, a grist mill, and woolen mill, all powered by water power supplied by a dam along the Miami River (Middletown Historic Preservation Council 1980:1).

Improving transportation technologies proved to be a significant asset to the growth and development of the community of Middletown. During the early 1820s, the trading center of the region was located north of Middletown, in Jacksonburg. It had a population approximately twice as large as Middletown, but that would change with the construction of the Miami-Erie Canal. In 1825, the ground breaking ceremony was held for the canal in Middletown, and by 1827, the canal was opened as far north as Middletown (Crout 1965:70). Canal traffic continued to increase and in the mid-1830s, approximately 1,000 travelers a week passed through Middletown via the canal. In addition to passenger service, the canal provided inexpensive transportation for freight including agricultural and natural resources. Middletown became the trading center of the region because of the efficient transportation provided by the canal (Crout 1965:70-71; Clendenin and Miller 2011:104).

The development of Middletown during this period shifted eastward from the Great Miami River and was centered along the Miami-Erie Canal because it offered the best transportation option (Crout 1960:61-63). It is likely about this time period that development began along Third Avenue (renamed Central Avenue in 1923) in what is now the Central Avenue Historic District. In 1833, Middletown was incorporated and canal traffic continued to increase. During the winter of 1835–1836, Gardner Phipps and Sumner Hudson, originally from Boston, established a pork packing business in Middletown. Because of the Miami-Erie Canal, the pork packing industry in Middletown benefitted from affordable and efficient transportation. By 1840, three pork houses were operating in Middletown. During the winters of the mid-nineteenth century, between 10,000 and 20,000 hogs were butchered and packed, becoming Middletown's chief export. Distilleries and gristmills also operated in Middletown. The majority of these industries operated along the canal to make transportation as efficient as possible (Crout 1960:61-63). The efficiency of canal transportation would be surpassed by the efficiency of transportation via railroads starting in the mid-nineteenth century.

The growing population and the developing industrial base of Middletown, primarily as a result of being a port along the Miami-Erie Canal, made it an attractive location to be connected to the

Central Avenue Historic District

Butler Co., OH

Name of Property

County and State

developing railroad network. The Miami-Erie Canal originally bisected Third Street (modern Central Avenue). In the 1830s and 1840s, much new commercial and industrial development in Middletown located near the canal to take advantage of what was the most cost-effective and efficient commercial transportation system at the time. The first Federal census that recorded the population of Middletown (n=1,087) was the 1850 census, and by 1860, the population of Middletown had almost doubled to 2,070 and jumped to 3,046 by 1870 (Crout 1960:90, 98). The growing population, the established industrial base, and Middletown's geographic location approximately halfway between Cincinnati and Dayton made it an economically attractive location for railroad construction companies in the region (Crout 1960:81-82).

By the 1850s, construction of the railroad network began to make the canal obsolete as a cost-effective option for shipping and receiving goods. In 1851, the Cincinnati, Hamilton, & Dayton (CH&D) Railroad was constructed west of Middletown, across the Miami River. Then in 1871, the Cincinnati & Springfield Railroad was constructed along the eastern side of downtown Middletown (Clendenin and Miller 2011:105-107). The improved transportation technology of the railroad resulted in the closure and abandonment of the canal following the Great Flood of 1913. Around ca.1930, the former canal bed through Middletown was filled in, and Canal Street, (also known as Verity Parkway) now follows the route of the former canal (Crout 2000). The history of the Miami-Erie Canal is commemorated today by the Port Middletown Park, located at the northwest corner of Central Avenue and Canal Street, and a substantial mural painted on the east elevation of 1131 Central Avenue. Both the park and mural were created following the removal of Centre City Mart from Central Avenue in 2001.

While many Middletown residents were upset by the CH&D decision to locate along the western bank of the Great Miami River, citizens of Middletown in the 1850s hoped that a railroad would be constructed along the eastern edge of the city itself. Surveyors laid out a route for this railroad, which would be twelve miles shorter than the CH&D, and would be known as the Shortline Railroad. After two decades of difficulties ranging from contracting disputes to hesitant farmers denying right-of-ways, the Shortline Railroad was finally completed on the eastern edge of Middletown by the Cincinnati and Springfield Railroad (C&S) Company in 1871. In ca. 1872, a small wood-frame depot was constructed by the C&S Company on the northwestern corner of the railroad's intersection with Third Street (modern Central Avenue), approximately 1,000 feet east of the Central Avenue Historic District (Crout 1960:84). The C&S Railroad was incorporated into the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago, and Saint Louis Railroad, also known as the Big Four Railroad. The Big Four Railroad had routes extending throughout western Ohio, southern Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois (Clendenin and Miller 2011:105-107).

After the railroad made the canal obsolete, commercial development in Middletown became focused along modern-day Central Avenue. This street served as the connecting corridor between Middletown's two railroad depots (sited on the outskirts of the city at that time) and thus attracted a high level of traffic, from residents and visitors to Middletown alike. Because the railroad depots were so important to Middletown, the Middletown and Madison Passenger Street Railway Company was established in 1879, and granted permission to operate horse-drawn street cars along Third Street (modern Central Avenue) between the Big Four Depot on the east side of Middletown and the CH&D Depot on the west side of the Miami River. People wanted an

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., OH

County and State

efficient way to get to and from downtown and the depots, and the horse-drawn street cars proved so popular in Middletown that they operated until 1914, long after every other horse-drawn line, except for one in New York City, had shut down (Crout 1960:99).

Throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, Middletown continued to experience population growth. In 1880, the population of community had risen to 4,538 (Crout 1960:98). The growing population of Middletown resulted in it becoming a city in 1886, with 810 out of 1,275 voters approving the town's upgrade to a city. Middletown was granted the status of a Grade 4B city with the approval of the state and county board (Crout 1960:98). At this time, the western portion of the Central Avenue Historic District was the main commercial corridor in the newly formed city, while the eastern portion remained primarily residential. The importance of the commercial entities within the Central Avenue Historic District was highlighted in the mid-1880s, when the city's leaders authorized the construction of a 210-foot tall tower for the purpose of providing electric lighting within the downtown commercial district, the base of which is visible in the foreground of Figure 36. The tower, known as the Arc Light Tower, supported eight arc lights which were so bright that it was claimed that residents approximately a half mile away from the tower could read newspapers at night. This tower was located at the intersection of Third Street (modern Central Avenue) and the Miami-Erie Canal (modern Canal Street), within the Central Avenue Historic District, but the tower was demolished in the early twentieth century (Crout 2000). The population of the city continued to rise during the last couple decades of the nineteenth century, growing to 7,681 in 1890 and then to 9,215 by 1900 (Crout 1960:98, 109).

On July 31, 1887, a large fire burned a quarter of the block on the north side of Third Street (modern Central Avenue) west from the Miami-Erie Canal (Crout 1965:196). The fire was first noticed in an old frame stable located on the west side of the Miami-Erie Canal. The fire spread into Ben Smith's livery, a three-story brick building just constructed in 1886. The livery was a complete loss and the fire then spread to a frame dwelling, a two-story brick building utilized by a carpet weaver at the time, a two-story frame building owned by Ben Smith and occupied by a popular saloon, and then it destroyed the old Union Hotel which had been converted into a second-hand store by that time. These three two-story buildings were along Third Street (Central Avenue) and can be seen in Figure 36. The final building impacted by the fire was the City Hotel (1119 Central Avenue). The third floor of this building was basically gutted, but the fire was extinguished before the entire building could be destroyed (Crout 1965:196-197). The fire, while destructive, allowed for the construction of 1123 Central Avenue to replace the older buildings damaged in the fire. It appears that 1123 Central Avenue was constructed to complement the City Hotel next door (1119 Central Avenue), and shows the vision of the local business community to improve and grow the business district along Central Avenue as Middletown entered its "boom" period.

The booming economy of Middletown can be seen in the 1895 Sanborn Fire Insurance maps for the city which show numerous commercial entities operating within Central Avenue Historic District, primarily in the western portion of the district (Sanborns 1-4). The character of the Central Avenue Historic District at the turn of the twentieth century can be described as largely commercial, although the eastern portion of the district contained several dwellings, interspersed

Central Avenue Historic District

Butler Co., OH

Name of Property

County and State

with small commercial buildings. The intersection of Broad Street and Third Street (Central Avenue) was solidly commercial, with stores, saloons, the City Hotel, a livery stable, and the Sebald Brewing Company lining the streets with no vacant lots. By the time of the 1912 Sanborn edition, the residential character of the eastern portion of the Central Avenue Historic District was giving way to increased commercialization, with new businesses replacing houses. Architecturally, the Italianate buildings at 1119 and 1123 Central Avenue and the Renaissance Revival style building at 1118 Central Avenue provide the best examples of late nineteenth century commercial buildings in the Central Avenue Historic District.

Middletown's late nineteenth century industrial and commercial growth was the result of an active business community; one of the most prominent and influential members of which was Paul J. Sorg. Sorg was born in Wheeling, West Virginia, in 1840 to German immigrant parents, Henry and Elizabeth Sorg. In 1851, the family moved from Wheeling to Cincinnati. Sorg was highly ambitious and was able to attend night school to gain a business education. He became an apprentice to a foundry moulder and quickly was promoted to foreman. In 1864, Sorg met a Cincinnati tobacco roller, John Auer. Auer was a skilled tobacco processor but was unable to keep books. Although Sorg knew nothing of tobacco processing, his night school classes had taught him bookkeeping. Sorg and Auer organized a tobacco firm which would consolidate with the firm of Wilson and Jacoby, who owned a factory in Cincinnati but lived in Middletown (Crout 1960:105–106).

In 1878, the newly consolidated firm constructed the large tobacco processing factory in Middletown, north of the Central Avenue Historic District. Shortly after the factory was constructed, Sorg and Auer sold their interests in that company. Sorg and Auer formed a new business of their own and chose to construct their new Paul J. Sorg Tobacco Plant on the eastern edge of Middletown, across the street from the Big Four depot, approximately 1,000 feet east of the Central Avenue Historic District. In 1898, the Continental Tobacco Company purchased the plant from Sorg. Eventually the tobacco factory came under the management of the P. Lorillard Company which operated it until the mid-twentieth century. In addition to tobacco, Sorg revolutionized Middletown's paper industry with the creation of the Sorg Paper Company (Crout 1960:105–107). Thanks to the efforts of Sorg, companies such as the McSherry Manufacturing Company, maker of grain drills, and the Miami Cycle Manufacturing Company, maker of bicycles, moved their plants to Middletown. Sorg also used his wealth to support the construction of a church and a hotel (Crout 1960:106-107). While none of these resources are located within the Central Avenue Historic District, Sorg's involvement is a major reason why Middletown was able to obtain the status of a city in 1886. Thanks to the efforts of Sorg, the business community within Middletown was able to benefit from the increasing customer base as well as receiving locally produced products to sell to Middletown's growing population.

While Sorg had a significant impact on Middletown's growing industrial base, brothers William and Louis Sebald would play a major role in the development of Central Avenue. The brothers established the Sebald Brewing Company along the Miami-Erie Canal, south of present-day Central Avenue in ca. 1866. The building at 1150 Central Avenue stands north of the former brewery location. The brewing industry made the Sebald family wealthy, and they constructed a substantial factory and warehouse buildings along the canal, south of Central Avenue. As their

Central Avenue Historic District

Butler Co., OH

Name of Property

County and State

brewery's success continued to grow, the Sebald family utilized their wealth and began diversifying into other areas of the Middletown economy. In addition to the Sebald Brewing Company, the Sebald family ran the Miami Ice & Storage Company, the Premier Beverage Company, and the Sebald Realty Company (Sebald Brewing Company 1943). William's son, George H. Sebald, took over the brewery as well as the William Sebald Realty Company, further impacting the development of the commercial buildings along Central Avenue (Figure 42). The Sebald family made a significant contribution to the development of the Central Avenue Historic District because of their involvement with the development of Middletown's commercial and economic base. Members of the Sebald family were involved with the construction of several buildings in the southwestern portion of the district including 1054, 1100, 1124, and 1200 Central Avenue (Crout 2000).

At the turn of the twentieth century, the mayor of Middletown formed a committee of interested businessmen for the purpose of attracting new industries to the city to continue the work of Paul J. Sorg. Middletown would provide prospective industries with inexpensive land, a well developed transportation network anchored by railroads, a good supply of water, and a growing population for a solid workforce. The work of this committee was celebrated on the morning of July 12, 1900, when the people of Middletown witnessed the ground breaking of a new steel mill. The mill would employ at least 350 people. To celebrate, stores within the city, including those along Central Avenue, were closed, and the streets were decorated for the festivities. A ceremony honoring the ground breaking was held at City Hall, and after the ceremony, the crowd became a parade that moved along the horse-car line on Third Street (modern Central Avenue) and, then turned down Curtis Street as it moved toward Doty's Grove, approximate 0.75 miles south of the Central Avenue Historic District. Across the road from the grove was the 12-acre site of the mill. At the site of the mill, there were speeches, a flag raising, and cornerstone laying ceremonies. The Middletown city solicitor welcomed "the gentlemen of the American Rolling Mill Company" and saluted "this great enterprise of such mammoth proportions" (Crout and Vorhis 1976:i-ii).

After the death of Paul J. Sorg in 1902, industrialist George M. Verity, founder of the American Rolling Mill Company (ARMCO), became Middletown's leading industrialist and promoter. Verity was born in 1865, attended a variety of schools, and finally graduated from high school in Georgetown, Ohio. He then attended college at Nelson's Business College in Cincinnati. Verity served as a store keeper for the camp grounds of the Cincinnati Conference of the Methodist Church because his father was a member of the organization. It was there that he met his future wife, Jean Standish, and began his business career. After Standish's father passed away, Verity assumed the management of the family's wholesale grocery store and oyster depot. He successfully managed the store until Kroger chain grocery stores began to dominate the Cincinnati grocery market and the Standish family sold their store (Crout 1960:108-109).

In 1889, the American Steel Roofing Company in Cincinnati was having so much success that the company's owners were ready to open a new plant in Philadelphia and they needed to find an able manager to take over their Cincinnati factory while they worked to get the Philadelphia factory running. The owners had heard of Verity's business abilities, and despite Verity only being 24 years old, he was offered the manager position for the Cincinnati factory. He accepted

Central Avenue Historic District

Butler Co., OH

Name of Property

County and State

the offer and managed the company for ten years. While running this factory, Verity came to believe that if he were able to combine steel production and sheet rolling into one factory, then he would be able to cut costs as well as ensure a steady supply of sheet steel to process into a variety of finished products (Crout 1960:109–110).

Verity began searching around Ohio for a suitable location to establish this new factory. He narrowed it down between Middletown and Zanesville, Ohio. The site offered by Middletown proved more acceptable, in large part because of the convenient railroad access. On December 2, 1899, ARMCO was organized and the contract to locate the new factory in Middletown was signed. By 1903, the quality of ARMCO steel was well known, and a representative from the Westinghouse Electric Company traveled to Middletown with specifications for a new type of steel required by the growing electricity industry. ARMCO was able to create this specialty steel and sent its first shipment in June 1903. This specialty steel production enhanced ARMCO's respect within the steel industry and increased demand for its product (Crout 1960:110–112). ARMCO steel was utilized in the construction of many of the buildings in Middletown, including (Building 1), 1050 Central Avenue built in 1915 and (Building 2) 1054 Central Avenue built in 1916 within the Central Avenue Historic District. It is unclear which other buildings within the district used ARMCO steel, but it is likely that most buildings utilizing steel components constructed after ca. 1910 in Middletown incorporated ARMCO products.

At the start of the twentieth century, the Middletown Business Man's Club was organized out of the Quixotic Club, originally established in 1870 by V.C. Hatfield. The Business Man's Club was the "leading organization of the city, taking the initiative in all matters of pertaining to the industrial and business advancement of the community" (Simms 1906:86). The newly reorganized club held its first meeting on March 3, 1903, and by 1906, had a membership of over two hundred people. Every male citizen of Middletown over the age of 21 and of good repute was eligible for membership. The purpose of the club was to discuss and develop plans for business priorities and matters of general public interest. Most of the prominent men of Middletown, including both Paul J. Sorg and George M. Verity, were members of the group, and through their efforts, many new commercial and industrial ventures were encouraged as well as substantial publicity and advertising campaigns for the city (Simms 1906:86–88).

The development of Middletown benefitted greatly from the Business Man's Club and its influence. Members of the club provided guidance for the industrial, commercial, and civic development of the city. At a 1909 meeting of the city's most prominent citizens, George Verity was cheered as he rose to speak on the topic of the meeting, "Greater Middletown: Its Possibilities" (Crout 1960:113-114). It was decided at this meeting that the city should build a library, establish a YMCA, a public hospital, starting park and recreation programs, and expanding school services (Crout 1960:114). In addition, the Middletown Realty Company was created to establish to begin laying out building lots and constructing new homes. While none of the civic improvements were located within the Central Avenue Historic District, the Middletown Realty Company would assist in the construction of (Building 13), 1236-1240 Central Avenue built in 1922 serving as "Middletown's Most Modern Department Store" (Crout 2000). The William T. Knott Company department store served as an important local department store for Middletown shoppers.

Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Butler Co., OH
County and State

With the growing industrial base, the early years of the twentieth century were prosperous ones for businesses in Middletown. Third Street (modern Central Avenue) had become the focus of commercial redevelopment at the turn of the twentieth century. Several commercial buildings within the Central Avenue Historic District were built between 1900 and 1913, replacing outdated nineteenth century buildings, many of which were used for industrial purposes near the Miami-Erie Canal or as residences on the eastern side of the Central Avenue Historic District. Local citizens would come to the downtown stores like the S. S. Krege Store at 1108 and 1118 Central Avenue, the Kroger grocery stores at 1385 Central Avenue, and Helen Boli's dry goods store and Elizabeth Stillwaugh's millinery at 1311-1321 Central Avenue. Travelers and business people coming to Middletown could stay at hotels like the Middletown Hotel at 1210 Central Avenue and the City Hotel at 1123 Central Avenue. By early 1913, Middletown was experiencing steady economic and commercial growth spurred by the growing industrial base led by ARMCO, but that growth would be impacted by a devastating act of nature.

The Great Flood of 1913 was a major event in the history of Middletown. Beginning on March 23, 1913, a steady rain began falling across Ohio. Over the next couple days, a total of six to eleven inches of rain had fallen on the state. The ground was quickly saturated and the rivers began to rise. The Miami River, along the west side of Middletown, quickly topped its banks and spilled into Middletown. Historic photographs, taken in March 1913, show the Central Avenue Historic District with water reaching near the top of the first story of the commercial buildings (Figures 43-45). The Middletown business community was devastated by the flood, but clean-up began almost immediately. A railroad man, George Lafayette, devised a way of getting a railroad crane, locomotive, and cargo cars onto the street car line along Main Street to assist in the immense clean-up effort. ARMCO provided the railroad equipment for Middletown to use (Crout 2000). The Great Flood of 1913 would unexpectedly prove to be a benefit for the commercial development along Central Avenue because many of the remaining domestic structures were demolished following the damage from the flood, and that allowed for the construction of new commercial buildings on those lots.

Middletown experienced significant population growth during the early twentieth century. The population of the city had risen to 13,152 in 1910, then jumped to 23,584 in 1920, and reached 29,992 by 1930 (US Census Bureau 2013). This population growth during the early decades of the twentieth century mirrors the growth of ARMCO, which began at the start of the twentieth century with only a few employees. By 1925, ARMCO was employing 3,688 workers at the Middletown Works (ARMCO 1925:3). Between 1930 and 1940, less than 1,300 citizens were added and the population only grew to 31,220. A little over 2,000 citizens were added during the next decade, with the population increasing to 33,695 in 1950 (US Census Bureau 2013). Although the population growth of Middletown had slowed during this time, by 1955, employment at ARMCO had risen to 7,845 workers. Population growth in Middletown slowed during the 1930s, likely as a result of the Great Depression. At the peak of ARMCO's production, approximately half of Middletown's work force were employed by the company (Miller and Crout 2000:7; 50).

Central Avenue Historic District

Butler Co., OH

Name of Property

County and State

The Central Avenue Historic District also benefited from the improving road network during the twentieth century. As the automobile took on the prominent role for American transportation, Main Street through Middletown, west of the Central Avenue Historic District, was incorporated into the Dixie Highway system. The Dixie Highway consisted of numerous improved roadways linked together to allow motorists to travel from northern Michigan all the way to southern Florida. The increased traffic would greatly benefit the commercial concerns operating in downtown Middletown (Crout 2000).

The booming population after the Great Flood of 1913, served as a major catalyst for the further development of the Central Avenue Historic District. Most of the buildings that survive from the post-1913 flood years date to ca. 1920, implying that rebuilding efforts after the flood may have been an impetus in the replacement of older commercial, industrial, and residential buildings with modern commercial buildings. Architecturally, the buildings that best represent the first four decades of twentieth century commercial buildings include: the former Knights of Pythias building at 1050 Central Avenue; the Spanish Colonial Revival style building at 1054 Central Avenue; the Renaissance Revival style former Eagles Temple at 1224 Central Avenue; the Neo-Classical Revival style buildings at 1124 Central Avenue and 1314 and 1316 Central Avenue; and the former Strand Theater, with a modest Art Deco style, at 1345-1357 Central Avenue. By the 1930s, the transformation of the eastern portion of the Central Avenue Historic District from a mix of residential and commercial buildings to solely commercial buildings was complete, with all the dwellings replaced by rows of stores, a bank, and the Strand Theatre (Sanborns 7-8).

The various department stores, specialty stores, theaters, restaurants, and service businesses, as described in the Narrative Description section, made the Central Avenue Historic District the center of Middletown's commercial development. The importance of the Central Avenue Historic District to Middletown's growth and development was demonstrated in 1923, when Third Street was renamed Central Avenue. The name "Central" was chosen because Third Street was the primary east-west corridor through town, and it had developed into Middletown's primary commercial district. Central Avenue also served as the divider between the north and south versions of the side streets. For example, Broad Street north of Central Avenue was North Broad Street, while south it was South Broad Street. The growing automobile traffic along Central Avenue at this time resulted in the need for traffic control. The first traffic light in Middletown was installed at the intersection of Central Avenue and Broad Street in 1925. Because Central Avenue carried more traffic, it was given a longer period of green to allow the traffic to flow more efficiently. The second traffic light in Middletown was installed a short time later at the intersection of Main Street and Central Avenue, west of the Central Avenue Historic District (Crout 1965:228).

The residents and industries of Middletown, like the rest of the United States, became fully invested in the war effort during World War II. Middletown industries converted from civilian production to war production while commercial entities suffered from rationing of materials critical to the war effort. Following the industrial boom resulting from the demands of the war effort, the decline of manufacturing industries and the evolution of transportation technology would negatively impact the development of downtown Middletown, but helping to preserve the overall integrity of the Central Avenue Historic District. The production of steel in Middletown

Central Avenue Historic District

Butler Co., OH

Name of Property

County and State

declined and the unemployment rose. The lack of good paying jobs resulted in the decline in consumer spending in Middletown. With the construction of Interstate 75 (I-75) east of Middletown, vehicle traffic was pulled away from the downtown business district, eroding the customer base. Increasing suburbanization further drew residents from downtown Middletown. New commercial ventures, including strip malls, were constructed along the outskirts of town where commuting consumers could more easily access the stores (Crout 2000). During attempts to revitalize the Central Avenue business district, many of the buildings experienced alterations and renovations, primarily along the first story storefronts.

In the period from the end of World War II in 1945 to 1964, few new commercial buildings were built in the Central Avenue Historic District. There are six buildings that date from this period and contribute to the Central Avenue Historic District: Albert's Super Market, 15 North Clinton Street, a one-story concrete block building put up in 1949; 1207, 1209, and 1215 Central Avenue, a one-story brick commercial building built in 1951, originally housing commercial specialty shops and a real estate office then by 1960 a bank branch; 1131 Central Avenue, a four-story International style building constructed in 1955 as the TV Middletown Building; 1379 Central Avenue, a two-story concrete block commercial building that was constructed in 1960 originally housing a hobby shop; and 1373 Central Avenue, a one-story brick building likely constructed in 1964 by the Middletown Better Homes Company to replace an older commercial building. The Middletown Better Homes Company was a property development company, and they were an important residential home building company for the city of Middletown. Even though post-war commercial construction diminished from the turn-of-the-20th-century building activity, this final phase of the period of significance shows the ongoing commercial and shopping activity concentrated within the Central Avenue business district, and the efforts initiated to sustain the downtown commercial businesses.

The population of Middletown fluctuated from 42,115 in 1960 to 48,694 in 2010, with some decades experiencing population growth while other decades suffered population loss (US Census Bureau 2013). Beginning in the 1950s, construction of a major north-south highway, I-75, to connect northern Michigan to southern Florida began. I-75 passed approximately four miles east of the Central Avenue Historic District. Because I-75 represented a major new transportation corridor, new commercial development in Middletown shifted east away from downtown to take advantage of travelers along I-75. As suburbanization around Middletown increased, the downtown commercial district began to experience a decline in consumers. In 1959, the Middletown Chamber of Commerce developed a list of 24 specific areas in which Middletown needed improvement. One of these areas was the development of downtown, with an emphasis on retail activities (Crout 1960:123). In August 1959, local business owners decide to try an experiment in which Central Avenue from Main Street to Verity Parkway would be closed to vehicular traffic, to allow shoppers easier and safer access to businesses along this section of Central Avenue. A fountain was even constructed in the intersection of Central Avenue and Verity Parkway. In October 1959, the experiment was abandoned mainly because of the parking problem that plagued the downtown area (*The Daily News* 1959:14; *The Steubenville Herald-Star* 1959:40).

Central Avenue Historic District

Butler Co., OH

Name of Property

County and State

The biggest impact to the integrity of the district occurred in the 1970s as a result of a failed revitalization project in which a large portion of Central Avenue was enclosed. In 1973, a plan was established for a downtown shopping area to compete with the growing commercial development along the outskirts of Middletown. The new plan was a more ambitious plan and included the scheme to permanently enclose the western portion of Central Avenue. To improve the parking problems experienced in 1959, several buildings were demolished to make way for a multi-story parking garage. Architect Daniel T. Meehan of Cincinnati was chosen for the project. The majority of the funding, more than nine million dollars worth, was provided by the federal government's urban renewal program (*Journal-News* 1973:13). The historic character of Central Avenue within the project area was described as being "entombed in more than \$2.6 million worth of glass and steel" (Blount 1974:A-5).

During construction, life on Central Avenue was severely disrupted by the inconvenience resulting from the substantial alterations required to enclose Central Avenue. The sidewalks were torn up and vehicular traffic had to be rerouted. Many shoppers simply avoided the area. Several businesses were forced to close even before the project was completed. In 1975, the Middletown Mall was dedicated, but not two years later, the Towne Mall, located along I-75 east of downtown opened. The Towne Mall was substantially more successful, and to help prevent confusion and boost business, the Middletown Mall was renamed City Centre Mart. Despite attempts to lure businesses to the City Centre Mart, retailers such as Elder-Beerman chose suburban sites instead of downtown Middletown (*Journal News* 1974:35). By 1998, it was clear that this revitalization effort had failed and plans were made to remove the enclosure at a cost of over \$18 million (*Norwalk Reflector* 1998:11). The removal of the enclosure was completed in 2001, but development along Central Avenue has remained stunted. Only six buildings have been constructed after 1964 in the Central Avenue Historic District, and many storefronts remain empty.

Despite the effects of the Great Flood of 1913 and the renovations during the Middletown Mall/City Centre Mart revitalization project, the Central Avenue Historic District retains architectural and historical integrity and significance, primarily the location, design, setting, feeling, and association of the contributing resources. Starting in 1895, the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps show the evolution of the development of Central Avenue from a mixture of domestic, commercial, and industrial buildings to the wholly commercial downtown aspect of today. Some of the effects of damage caused by the Great Flood of 1913 can be seen in the number of buildings present on the 1912 edition that had been replaced by the 1924 and 1931 editions. Comparing the final 1950 edition with current maps show that many buildings have been lost, several demolished for the City Centre Mart revitalization experiment in the 1970s. After 2001, two of the vacant lots created by these building demolitions were converted into small parks, one commemorating the Miami-Erie Canal and the other as a decorative plaza. The downturn of Middletown's economic fortunes in the Central Avenue Historic District over the past several decades has actually helped preserve the historic character of the contributing buildings. The district retains 36 contributing resources with only a few minor modern infill buildings. The contributing buildings were used for a variety of commercial enterprises including a variety of department and specialty stores, restaurants, theaters, hotels, and offices for a wide

Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Butler Co., OH
County and State

variety of professionals. Together, the contributing resources convey the historic character of a late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century commercial district in an industrial boom town.

The contributing resources to the Central Avenue Historic District embody the architectural characteristics of late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century commercial buildings. The best representatives for the district's architectural character include: the Italianate buildings at 1119 and 1123 Central Avenue; the Renaissance Revival style buildings at 1118 and 1224 Central Avenue; the Spanish Colonial Revival style building at 1054 Central Avenue; the Neo-Classical Revival style buildings at 1050 Central Avenue, 1124 Central Avenue, and 1314 and 1316 Central Avenue; the modest Art Deco style Strand Theater at 1345-1357 Central Avenue; and the International style TV Middletown Building at 1131 Central Avenue. In addition, the vernacular commercial buildings at 1124 Central Avenue, 1150 Central Avenue, 1200 Central Avenue, 1379 Central Avenue, and 1201 Central Avenue are particularly good examples of contributing commercial resources. The alterations experienced by the Central Avenue Historic District, in general, are minor and do not prevent the majority of buildings from contributing to the historic character of the district. Many of the buildings retain their historic appearances including original façades, upper-story window openings, commercial block and storefront configurations, roofline details, and architectural ornamentation. Because of this, the Central Avenue Historic District retains a good level of integrity and significance necessary to convey the feeling of a cohesive booming industrial town's commercial district from the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century.

Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Butler Co., OH
County and State

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Butler Co., OH

Name of Property

County and State

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Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Butler Co., OH
County and State

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Ohio

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 # _____

recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: MidPoint Library System: Middletown

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 11.445

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Butler Co., OH
County and State

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|--------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 16N | Easting: 723215 | Northing: 4377154 |
| 2. Zone: 16N | Easting: 723330 | Northing: 4377084 |
| 3. Zone: 16N | Easting: 723634 | Northing: 4377004 |
| 4. Zone: 16N | Easting: 723597 | Northing: 4376864 |
| 5. Zone: 16N | Easting: 723258 | Northing: 4376959 |
| 6. Zone: 16N | Easting: 723143 | Northing: 4377044 |

(see included quad map)

Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Butler Co., OH
County and State

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary for the Central Avenue Historic District begins at the southwestern corner of 1050 Central Avenue and extends east along the southern parcel boundaries to South Broad Street. From there it moves north, then east across South Broad Street staying along the southern boundaries of the parcels until it reaches 1150 Central Avenue. Here it follows the west, south, and east parcel boundaries for 1150 Central Avenue before continuing east across Canal Street, following the southern boundaries of those parcels until reaching 1224 Central Avenue. The boundary turns slightly south before once again turning east and following the southern boundary of those parcels, crossing South Clinton Street and finally reaching Curtis Avenue. The boundary then turns north along the west curb line of Curtis Street and crosses Central Avenue before turning back east and following the north curb line of Central Avenue. At Clark Street, the boundary turns north and runs along the west curb line of Clark Street until it turns west and follows along the northern boundary of the parcel at 1391 Central Avenue until reaching the parcel at 1379 Central Avenue. There the boundary turns north before turning back to the west at the rear of that parcel. The boundary then continues north, then west along the northern edge of the parcels before reaching North Clinton Street. The boundary then turns south until it reaches the northern boundary of 1239 Central Avenue and then turns back west, crossing North Clinton Street until reaching 1215 Central Avenue. The boundary then turns north until reaching the northern boundary of that parcel, and then turns back west and crosses Canal Street. On the western side of Canal Street, the boundary turns back north, then west towards the northern boundary of 20 North Broad Street, crossing Broad Street in the process. The boundary extends west until reaching the northwestern corner of 20 North Broad Street where the boundary turns south. The boundary turn east at the southwest corner of 20 North Broad Street for a short distance, then heads south, making a slight turn to the west before reaching Central Avenue due to an offset parcel. The boundary then crosses Central Avenue before reaching the southwest corner of 1050 Central Avenue once again (See attached map).

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This boundary was chosen to encompass the buildings that embody the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century commercial buildings associated with the development of the Middletown business district. East of the district are modern commercial buildings while west of the district are domestic resources now utilized for commercial purposes. Two buildings not located on Central Avenue, 15 North Clinton Street and 20 North Broad Street, are included within the boundaries of the Central Avenue Historic District because they fit within the character and significant time period of the district.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Benjamin M. Riggle/Senior Historian
organization: Hardlines Design Company
street & number: 4608 Indianola Avenue
city or town: Columbus state: OH zip code: 43214
e-mail bmriggle@hardlinesdesign.com
telephone: (614)-784-8733 date: April 26, 2013

Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Butler Co., OH
County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Butler Co., OH
County and State

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Central Avenue Historic District

City or Vicinity: Middletown

County: Butler

State: OH

Photographer: Terry Glaze

Date Photographed: March 29, 2013

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 82 ___ North elevation of 1050 Central Avenue, view looking south.
- 2 of 82 ___ Southwest corner of 1050 Central Avenue, view looking northeast.
- 3 of 82 ___ East elevation of 1054 Central Avenue, view looking northwest.
- 4 of 82 ___ Northeast corner of 1054 Central Avenue, view looking southwest.
- 5 of 82 ___ Northwest corner of 1100 Central Avenue, view looking southeast.
- 6 of 82 ___ Southwest corner of 1100 Central Avenue, view looking northeast.
- 7 of 82 ___ South elevation of 1108 Central Avenue, view looking north.
- 8 of 82 ___ North elevation of 1108 Central Avenue, view looking south.
- 9 of 82 ___ Northwest corner of 1118 Central Avenue, view looking southeast.
- 10 of 82 ___ Southwest corner of 1118 Central Avenue, view looking northeast.

Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Butler Co., OH
County and State

- 11 of 82 ___ Southeast corner of 1124 Central Avenue, view looking northwest.
- 12 of 82 ___ Northeast corner of 1124 Central Avenue, view looking southwest.
- 13 of 82 ___ Northwest corner of 1150 Central Avenue, view looking southeast.
- 14 of 82 ___ Southeast corner of 1150 Central Avenue, view looking northwest.
- 15 of 82 ___ Southwest corner of 1200 Central Avenue, view looking northeast.
- 16 of 82 ___ Northwest corner of 1200 Central Avenue, view looking southeast.
- 17 of 82 ___ North elevation of 1210 and 1212 Central Avenue, view looking south.
- 18 of 82 ___ South elevation of 1210 and 1212 Central Avenue, view looking north.
- 19 of 82 ___ Southeast corner of 1214, 1216, and 1218 Central Avenue, view looking northwest.
- 20 of 82 ___ Northeast corner of 1214, 1216, and 1218 Central Avenue, view looking southwest.
- 21 of 82 ___ Northwest corner of 1224 Central Avenue, view looking southeast.
- 22 of 82 ___ Southwest corner of 1224 Central Avenue, view looking northeast.
- 23 of 82 ___ Southeast corner of 1234 Central Avenue, view looking northwest.
- 24 of 82 ___ North elevation of 1234 Central Avenue, view looking south.
- 25 of 82 ___ Northeast corner of 1236 and 1240 Central Avenue, view looking southwest.
- 26 of 82 ___ Southeast corner of 1236 and 1240 Central Avenue, view looking northwest.
- 27 of 82 ___ Southwest corner of 1306 Central Avenue, view looking northeast.
- 28 of 82 ___ Northwest corner of 1306 Central Avenue, view looking southeast.
- 29 of 82 ___ Northwest corner of 1310 and 1312 Central Avenue, view looking southeast.
- 30 of 82 ___ South elevation of 1310 and 1312 Central Avenue, view looking north.
- 31 of 82 ___ Southeast corner of 1314 and 1316 Central Avenue, view looking northwest.
- 32 of 82 ___ Northeast corner of 1314 and 1316 Central Avenue, view looking southwest.

Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Butler Co., OH
County and State

- 33 of 82 ___ Northwest corner of 1318, 1320, and 1324 Central Avenue, view looking southeast.
- 34 of 82 ___ Southwest corner of 1318, 1320, and 1324 Central Avenue, view looking northeast.
- 35 of 82 ___ North elevation of 1328 Central Avenue, view looking south.
- 36 of 82 ___ Northwest corner of 1338, 1340, 1342, and 1344 Central Avenue, view looking southeast.
- 37 of 82 ___ Southeast corner 1338, 1340, 1342, and 1344 Central Avenue, view looking northwest.
- 38 of 82 ___ Southeast corner of 1346, 1348, and 1350 Central Avenue, view looking northwest.
- 39 of 82 ___ Northeast corner of 1346, 1348, and 1350 Central Avenue, view looking southwest.
- 40 of 82 ___ Northwest corner of 1364, 1366, and 1368 Central Avenue, view looking southeast.
- 41 of 82 ___ Southwest corner of 1364, 1366, and 1368 Central Avenue, view looking northeast.
- 42 of 82 ___ Northeast corner of 1372, 1374, 1378, and 1380 Central Avenue, view looking southwest.
- 43 of 82 ___ Southeast corner of 1372, 1374, 1378, and 1380 Central Avenue, view looking northwest.
- 44 of 82 ___ Northeast corner of 1391 Central Avenue, view looking southwest.
- 45 of 82 ___ Southeast corner of 1391 Central Avenue, view looking northwest.
- 46 of 82 ___ Southwest corner of 1387 and 1389 Central Avenue, view looking northeast.
- 47 of 82 ___ Northeast corner of 1387 and 1389 Central Avenue, view looking southwest.
- 48 of 82 ___ North elevation of 1385 Central Avenue, view looking south.
- 49 of 82 ___ South elevation of 1385 Central Avenue, view looking northwest.

Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Butler Co., OH
County and State

- 50 of 82 ___ South elevation of 1379 Central Avenue, view looking north.
- 51 of 82 ___ Northeast corner of 1379 Central Avenue, view looking southwest.
- 52 of 82 ___ South elevation of 1373 Central Avenue, view looking north.
- 53 of 82 ___ Northwest corner of 1373 Central Avenue, view looking southeast.
- 54 of 82 ___ North elevation of 1371 Central Avenue, view looking south.
- 55 of 82 ___ South elevation of 1371 Central Avenue, view looking northeast.
- 56 of 82 ___ Southwest corner of 1367 Central Avenue, view looking northeast.
- 57 of 82 ___ Northwest corner of 1367 Central Avenue, view looking southeast.
- 58 of 82 ___ North elevation of 1357, 1359, and 1361 Central Avenue, view looking south.
- 59 of 82 ___ Southeast corner of 1357, 1359, and 1361 Central Avenue, view looking
northwest.
- 60 of 82 ___ Southwest corner of 1345 Central Avenue, view looking northeast.
- 61 of 82 ___ Northwest corner of 1345 Central Avenue, view looking southeast.
- 62 of 82 ___ Northeast corner of 1345 Central Avenue, view looking southwest.
- 63 of 82 ___ Northeast corner of 15 North Clinton Street, view looking southwest.
- 64 of 82 ___ Southwest corner of 15 North Clinton Street, view looking northeast.
- 65 of 82 ___ Southwest corner of 1311, 1315, 1317, and 1319 Central Avenue, view looking
northeast.
- 66 of 82 ___ Southeast corner of 1311, 1315, 1317, and 1319 Central Avenue, view looking
northwest.
- 67 of 82 ___ Southeast corner of 1227, 1237, and 1239 Central Avenue, view looking
northwest.
- 68 of 82 ___ Southeast corner of 1207, 1209, and 1215 Central Avenue, view looking
northwest.
- 69 of 82 ___ Northeast corner of 1207, 1209, and 1215 Central Avenue, view looking
northeast.

Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Butler Co., OH
County and State

- 70 of 82 ___ Northwest corner of 1201 Central Avenue, view looking southeast.
- 71 of 82 ___ Southwest corner of 1201 Central Avenue, view looking northeast.
- 72 of 82 ___ Southeast corner of 1131 Central Avenue, view looking northwest.
- 73 of 82 ___ Northeast corner of 1131 Central Avenue, view looking southwest.
- 74 of 82 ___ Northeast corner of 1119 and 1123 Central Avenue, view looking southwest.
- 75 of 82 ___ South elevation of 1123 Central Avenue, view looking north.
- 76 of 82 ___ South elevation of 1119 Central Avenue, view looking north.
- 77 of 82 ___ Southwest corner of 1105 Central Avenue, view looking northeast.
- 78 of 82 ___ Northwest corner of 1105 Central Avenue, view looking southeast.
- 79 of 82 ___ Southeast corner of 20 North Broad Street, view looking northwest.
- 80 of 82 ___ Northwest corner of 20 North Broad Street, view looking southeast.
- 81 of 82 ___ Port Middletown Park, view looking northwest.
- 82 of 82 ___ Plaza at the northwest corner of Central Avenue and Broad Street, view looking northwest.

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.460 et seq.).

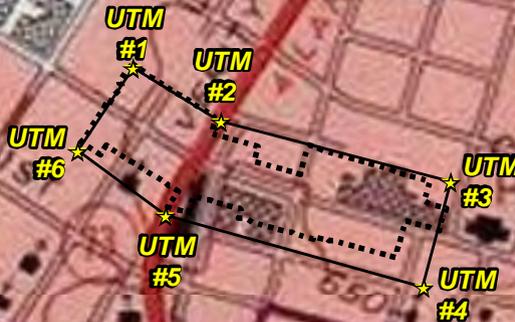
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Central Avenue Historic District, Middletown, Butler County, Ohio

UTM Coordinates:

- 1) 16N/723215/4377154
- 2) 16N/723330/4377084
- 3) 16N/723634/4377004
- 4) 16N/723597/4376864
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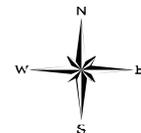
Location of NRHP District in Butler County, Ohio



Legend

-  Central Avenue NRHP District boundary

HDC 2013
Source: ESRI

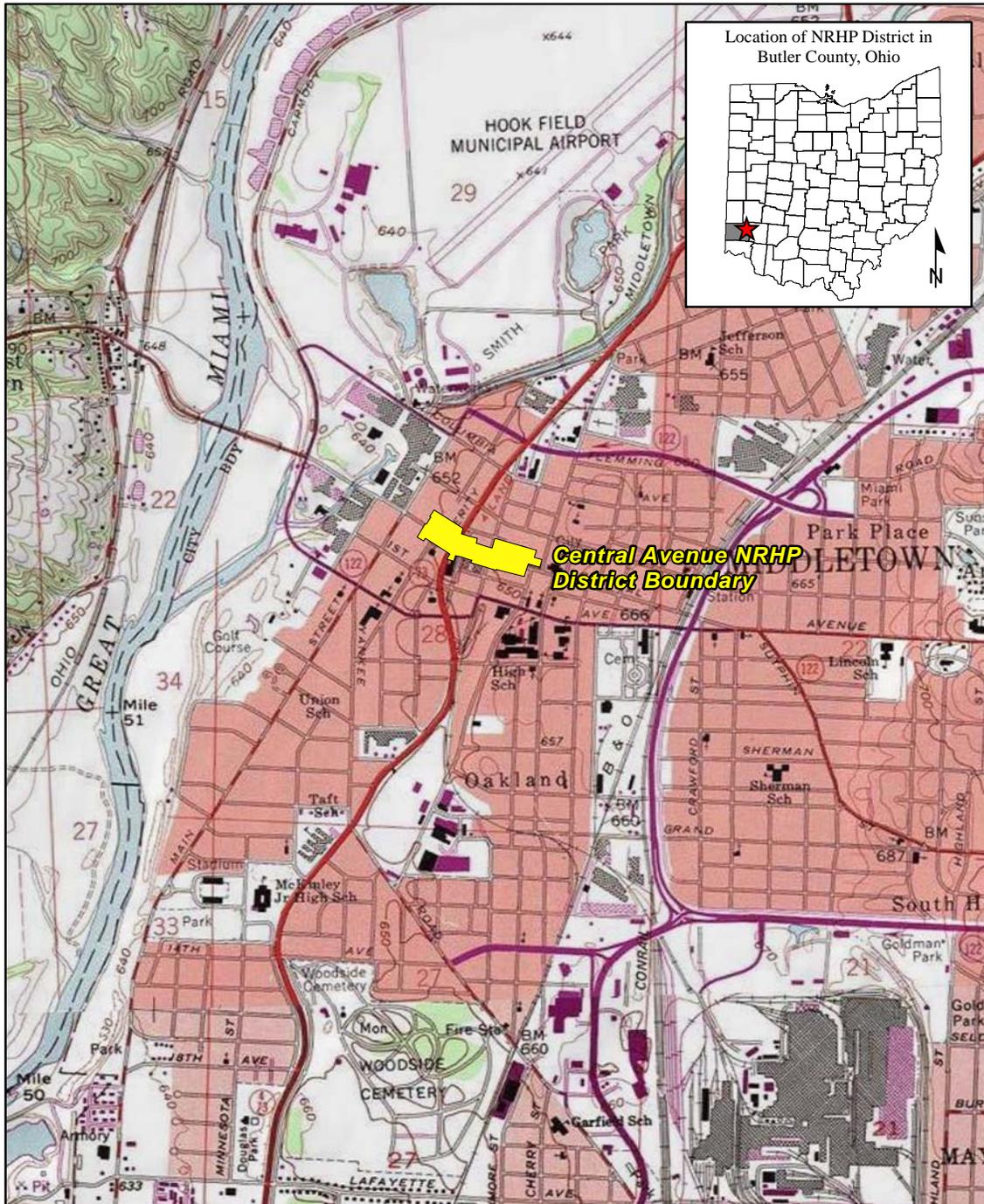


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property
Butler Co., Ohio
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 1



HDC 2013
Source: USGS, ESRI
Scale 1:24,000

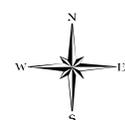
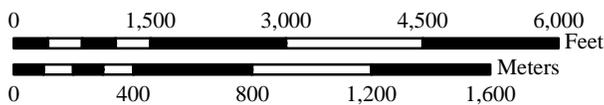


Figure 1. Location of the Big Four Depot in Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property
Butler Co., Ohio
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 2

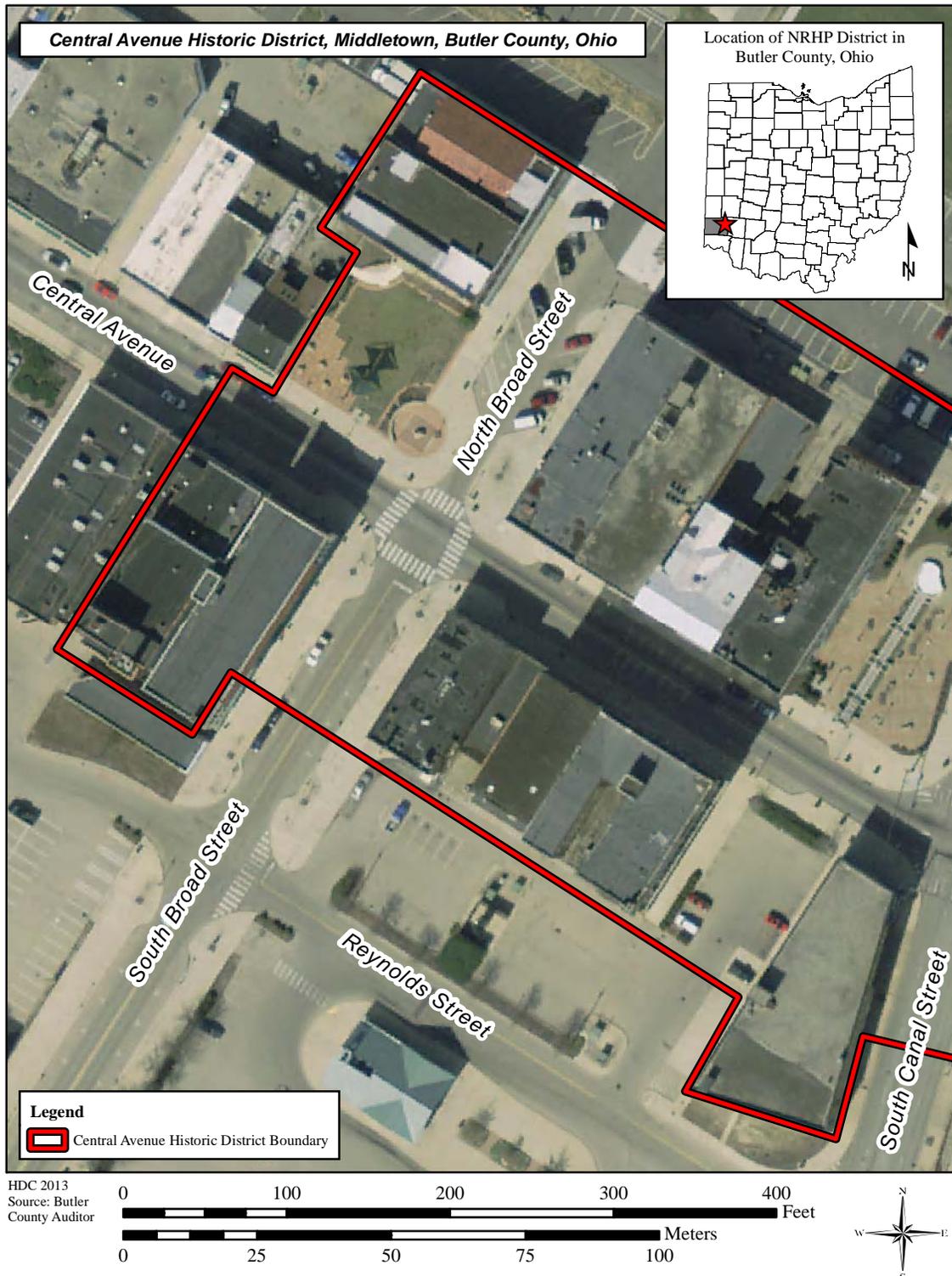


Figure 2. Aerial photograph showing the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property
Butler Co., Ohio
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 3

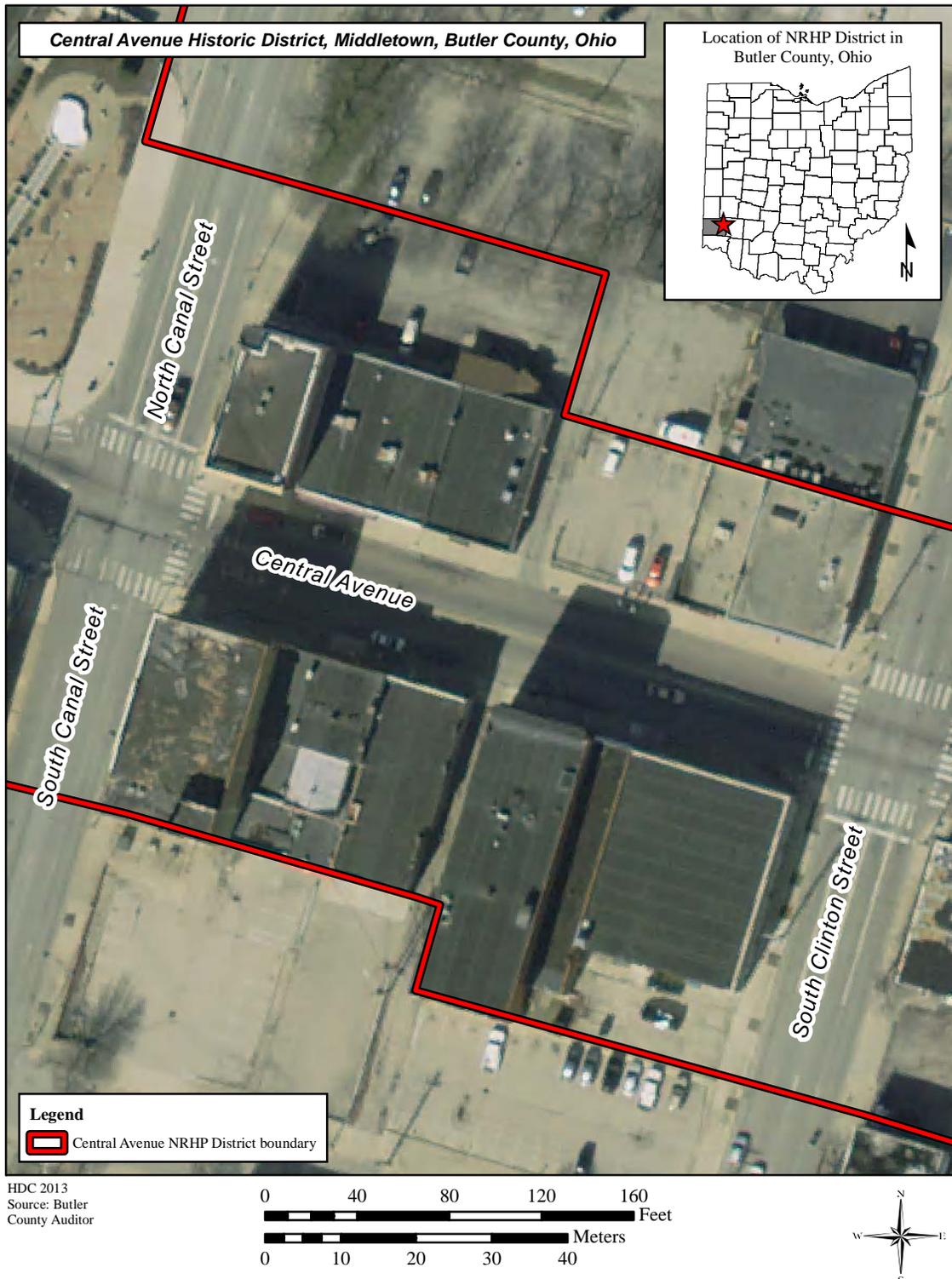


Figure 3. Aerial photograph showing the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 4

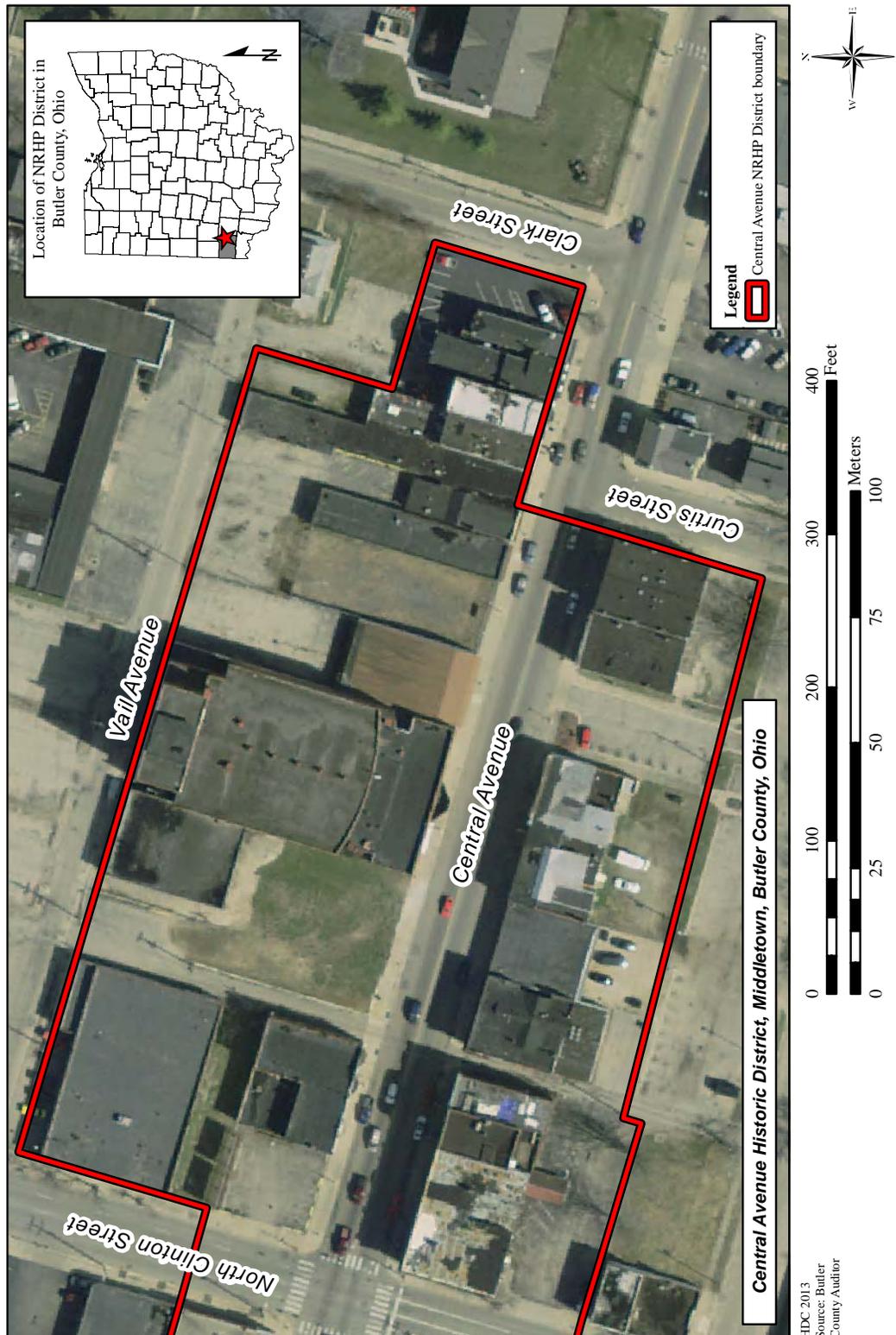


Figure 4. Aerial photograph showing the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 5



Figure 5. NRHP property boundary map of the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property
Butler Co., Ohio
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 6

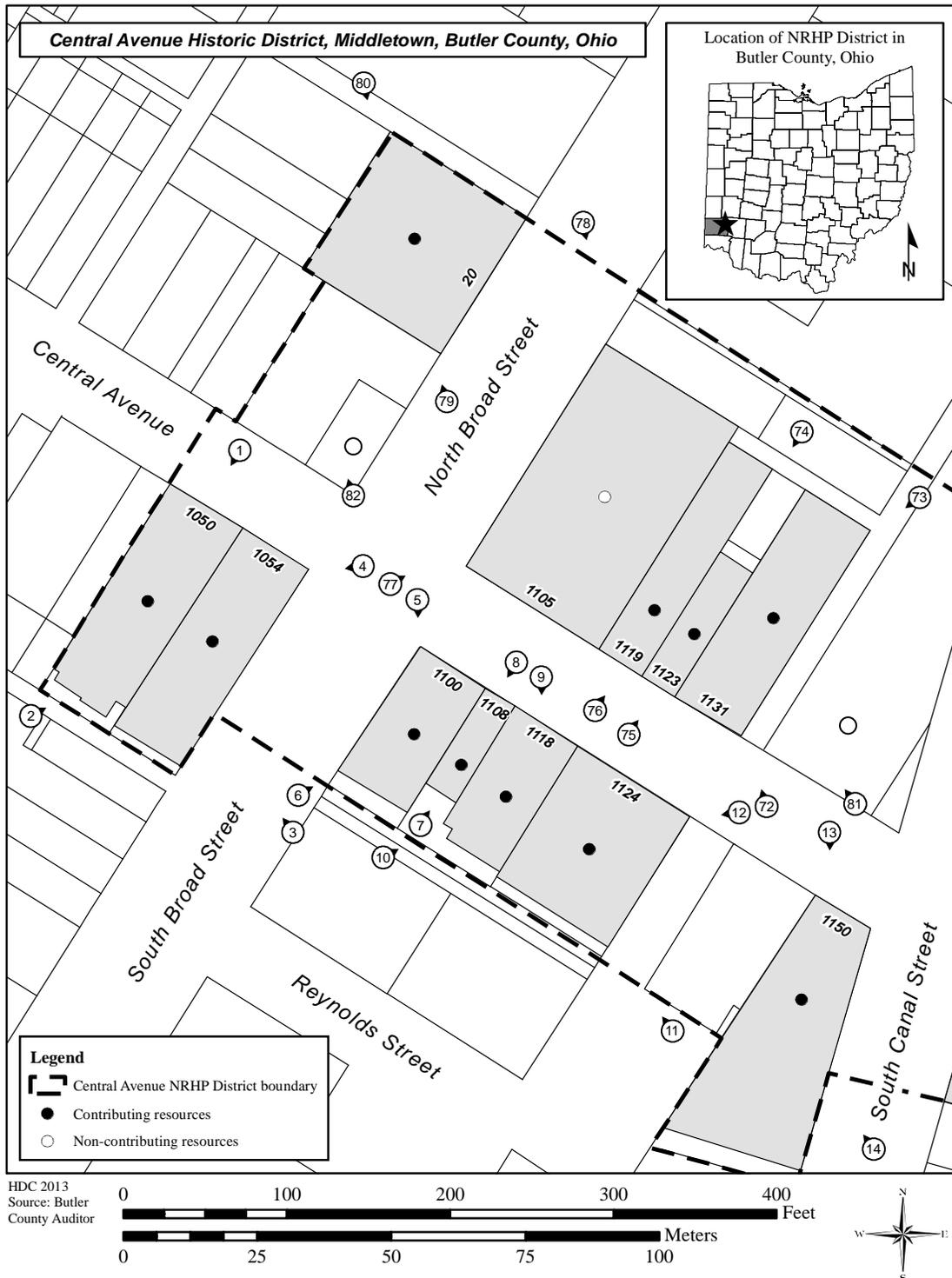


Figure 6. NRHP property boundary map of the western portion of the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio with photo locations

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property
Butler Co., Ohio
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 7

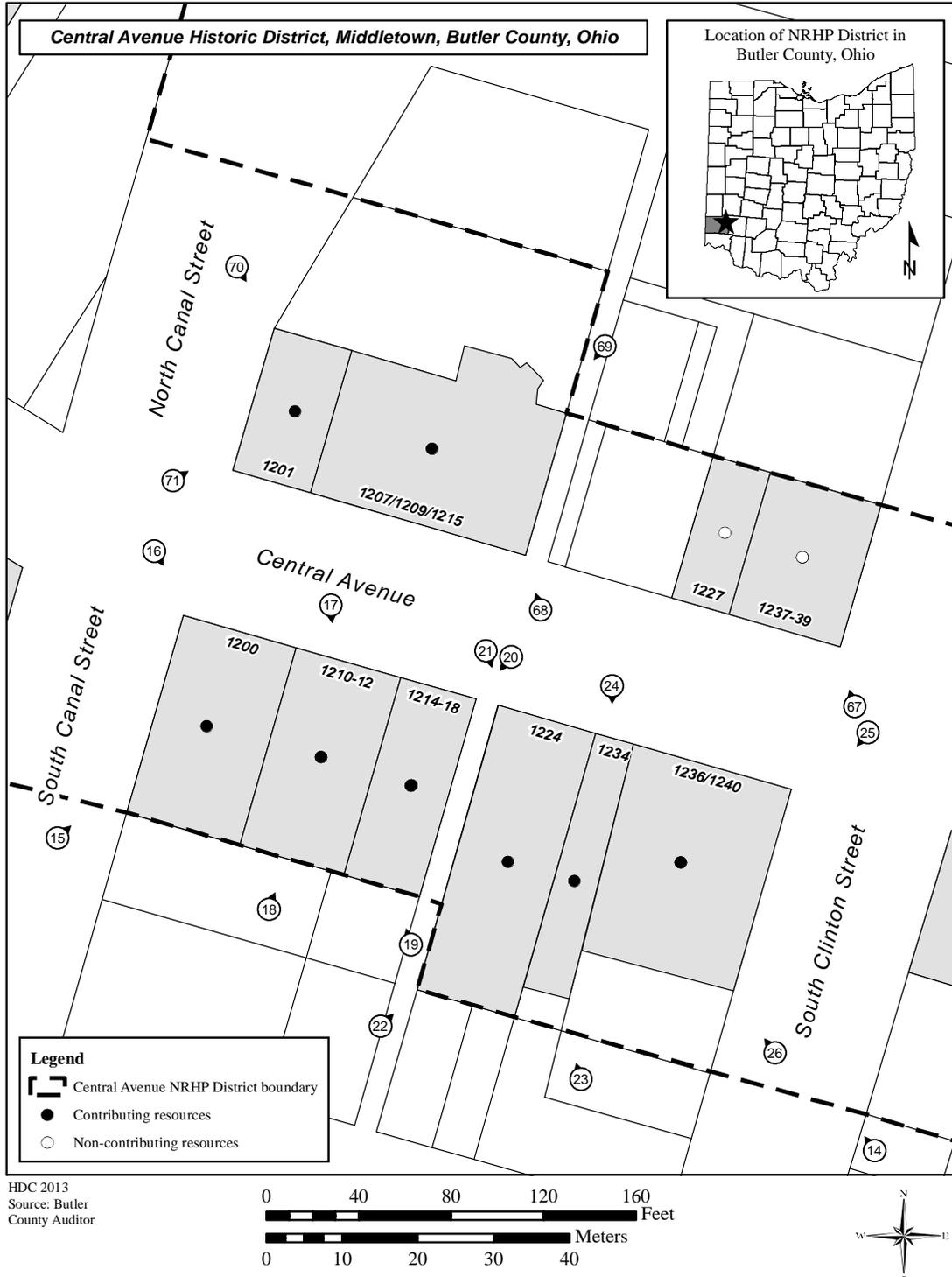


Figure 7. NRHP property boundary map of the central portion of the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio with photo locations

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 8



HDC 2013
Source: Butler
County Auditor

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 9

Figure 8. NRHP property boundary map of the eastern portion of the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio with photo locations



Figure 9. Ca. 1917 photograph of 1050 and 1054 Central Avenue in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking southeast

Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 10

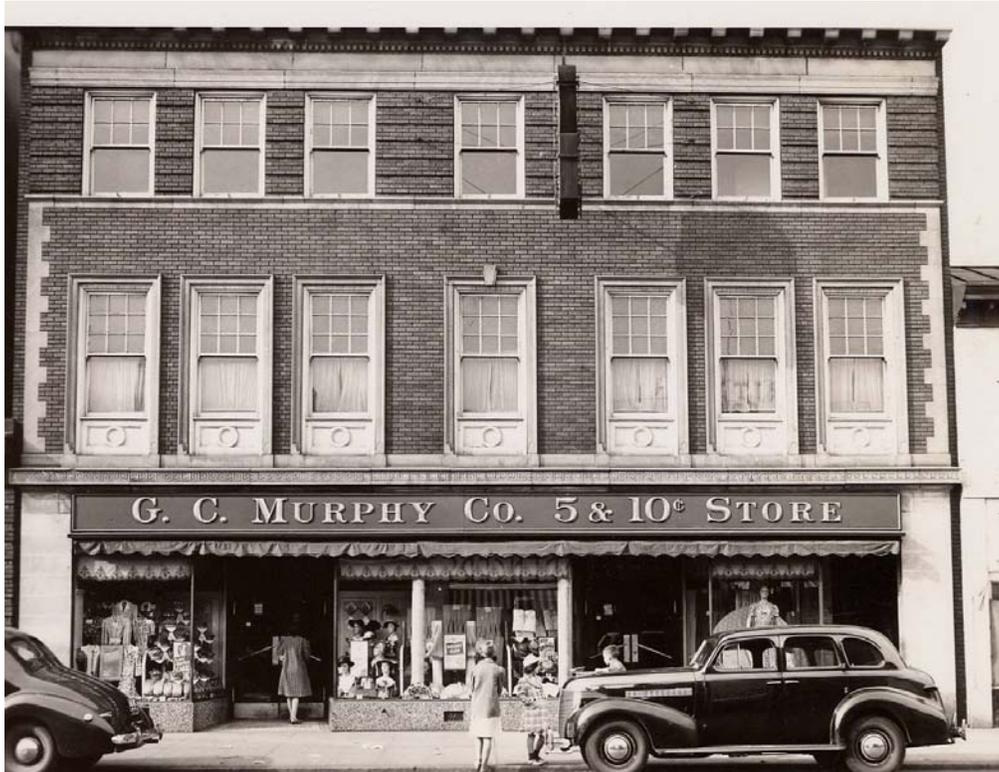


Figure 10. Ca. 1940 photograph of 1050 Central Avenue in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking south

Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 11



Figure 11. A pre-1915 photograph of 1054 Central Avenue in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking southwest

Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 12



Figure 12. Ca. 1950 photograph of 1100 and 1108 Central Avenue in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking southeast

Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 13



Figure 13. A 1972 photograph showing 1100, 1108, 1118 and 1124 Central Avenue in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking southwest

Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 14



Figure 14. Ca. 1903 photograph of the southeast corner of Third Street (Central Avenue) and Broad Street showing 1118 Central Avenue and buildings on the southeast corner of the intersection later replaced by 1100 and 1108 Central Avenue in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking southeast

Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 15



Figure 15. Ca. 1938 postcard image showing 1118 and 1120 Central Avenue in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking southwest

Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 16



Figure 16. Ca. 1915 postcard image of 1124 Central Avenue in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking southwest

Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

(Note: the building to the right is a much simpler artist's depiction and not the actual building at 1118 Central Avenue)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 17



Figure 17. Ca. 1970 photograph of 1124 Central Avenue in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking southwest

Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 18



Figure 18. Ca. 1974 photograph of the eastern entrance to the Middletown Mall and of 1124 Central Avenue in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking southwest

Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 19



Figure 19. Ca. 1950 photograph of 1150 Central Avenue in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking southeast

Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 20



Figure 20. Ca. 1970 photograph of 1150 Central Avenue in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking southeast

Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 21



Figure 21. Ca. 1945 photograph of 1200 Central Avenue in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking southeast

Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 22



Figure 22. Ca. 1975 photograph of 1200 Central Avenue in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking southeast

Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property
Butler Co., Ohio
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 23

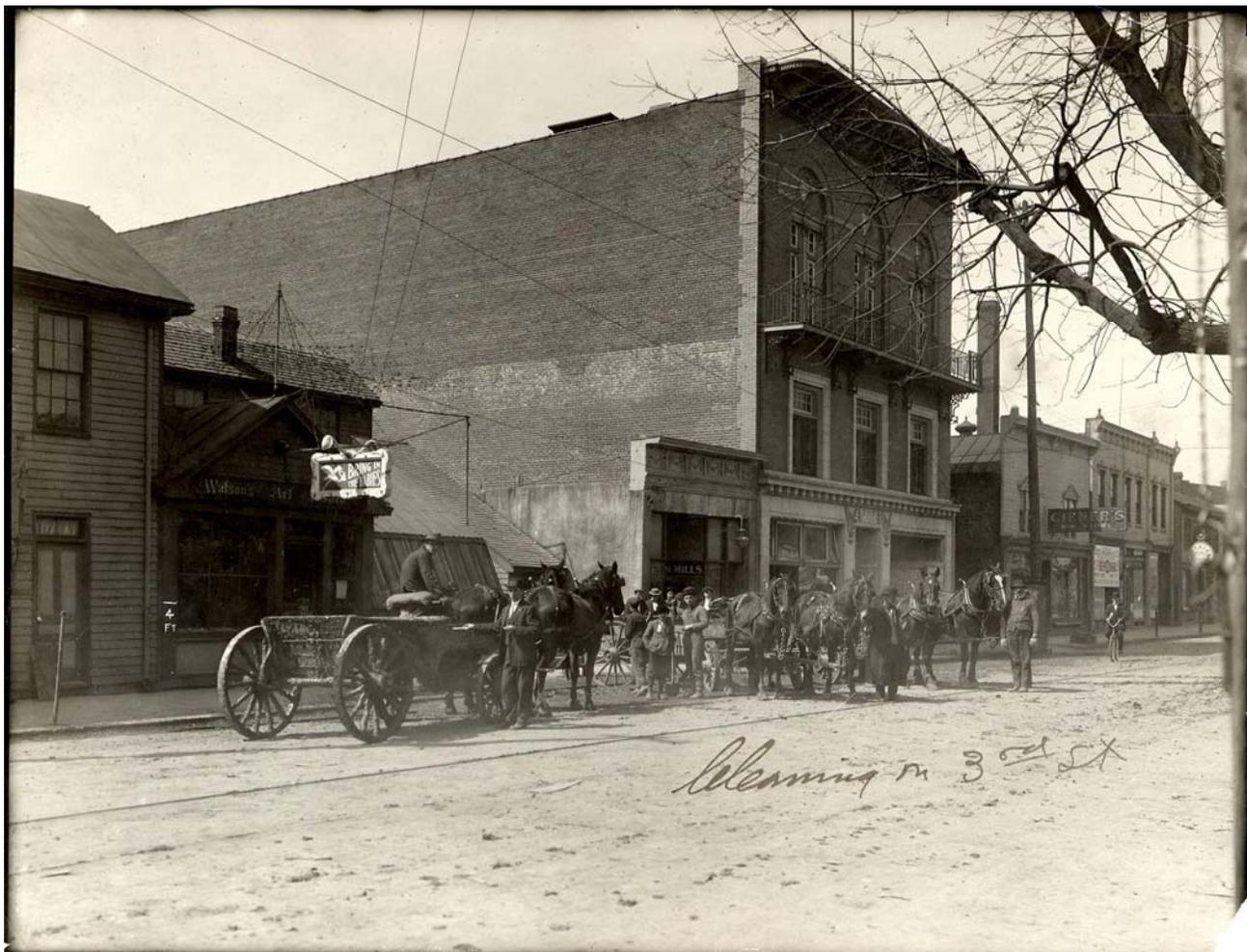


Figure 23. A 1913 photograph of south side of the 1200 block of Central Avenue in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking southwest

Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 24



Figure 24. Ca. 1960 photograph of south side of the 1200 block of Central Avenue in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking southwest

Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property
Butler Co., Ohio
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 25



Figure 25. A 1998 photograph of 1210-1212 and 1214-1218 Central Avenue in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking southwest

Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 26

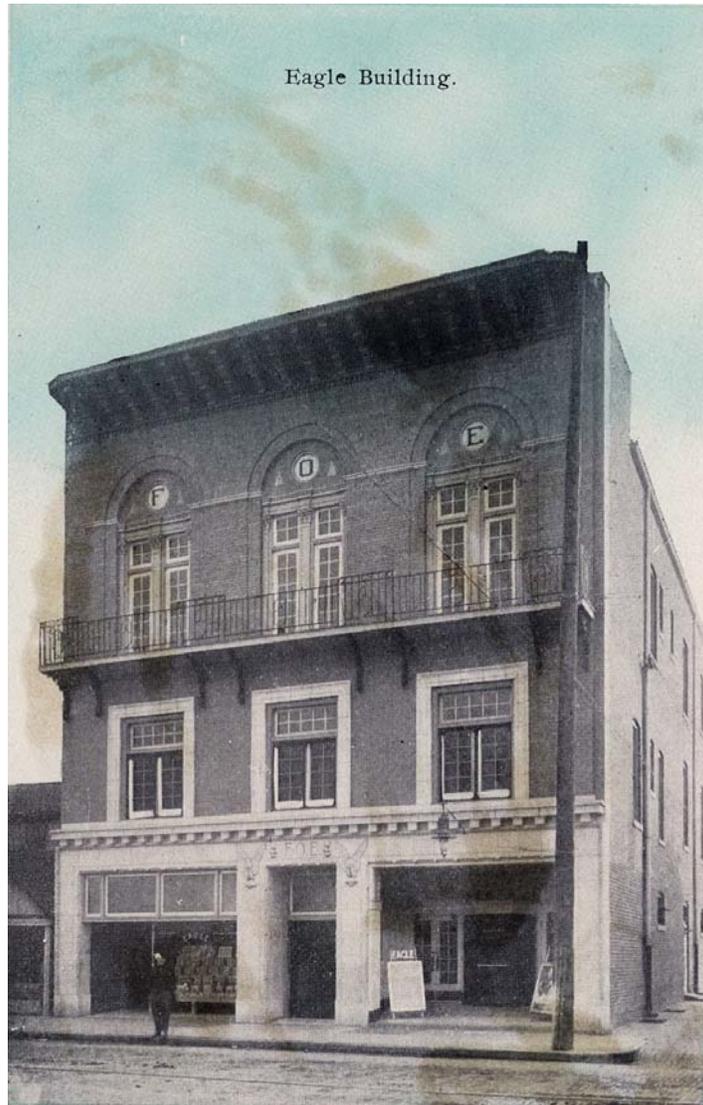


Figure 26. Ca. 1915 photograph of 1224 Central Avenue in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking south

Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 27



Figure 27. Ca. 1950 photograph of 1234 and 1236-1240 Central Avenue in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking southwest

Source: J. Thomas Sebald Real Estate Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property
Butler Co., Ohio
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 28



Figure 28. Ca. 1939 photograph of 1300 and 1306 Central Avenue in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking southwest

Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 29



Figure 29. Ca. 1910 photograph of 1372 Central Avenue in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking south

Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 30



Figure 30. Ca. 1950 photograph of the former building at 1379 and 1385 Central Avenue in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking northeast

Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property
Butler Co., Ohio
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 31



Figure 31. Ca. 1950 photograph of the eastern portion of 1371 Central Avenue, the former building at 1379 Central Avenue, and 1385 Central Avenue in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking north

Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property
Butler Co., Ohio
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 32

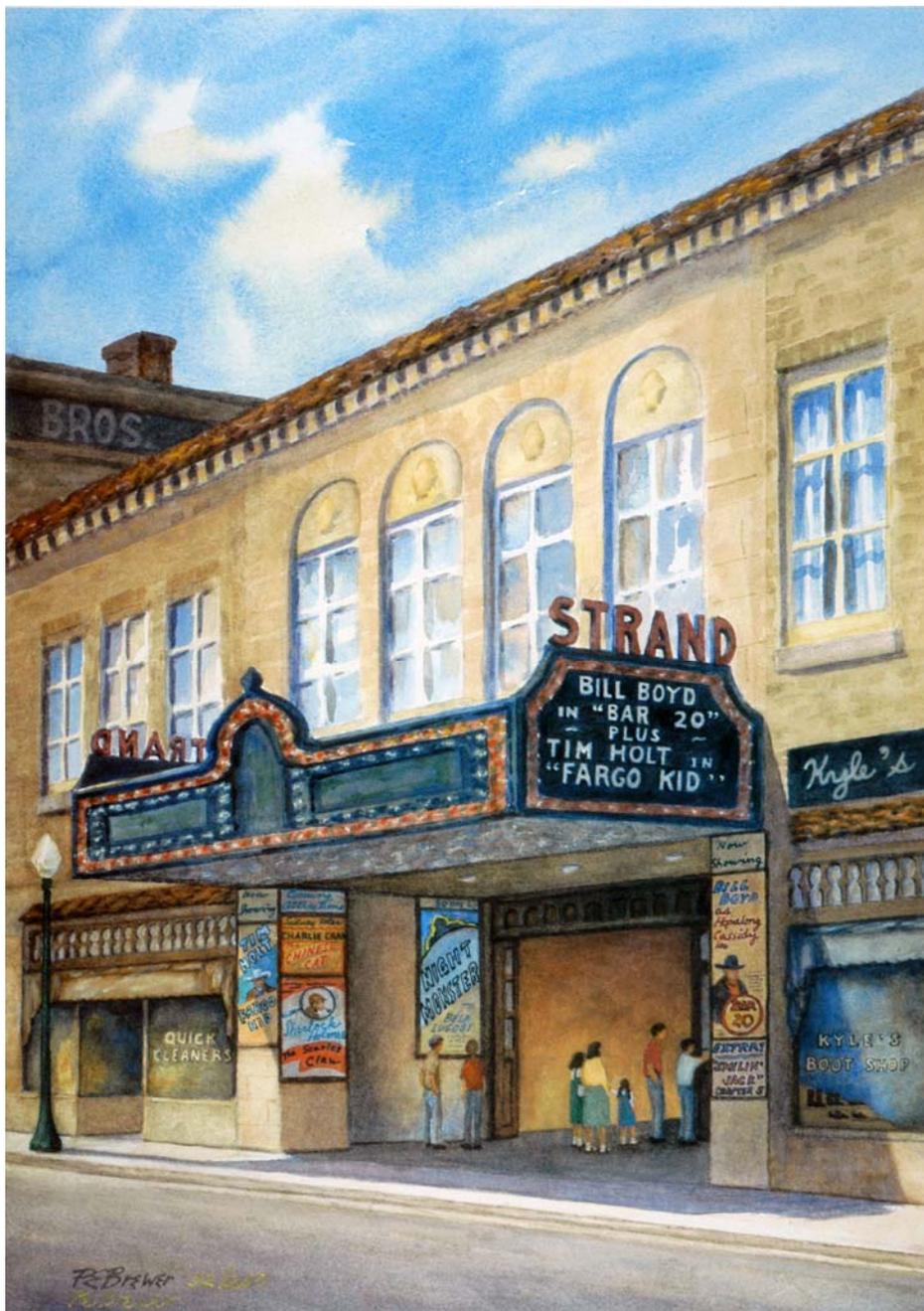


Figure 32. Ca. 1950 painting by artist P. E. Brewer of the Strand Theater at 1345-1357 Central Avenue in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking east
Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 33



Figure 33. Ca. 1960 photograph of the Strand Theater at 1345-1357 Central Avenue in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking east

Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 34



Figure 34. Ca. 1925 photograph of 1201 Central Avenue in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking northeast

Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 35



Figure 35. A 1973 photograph of 1119, 1123, and 1131 Central Avenue during construction of the Middletown Mall in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking northeast
Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property
Butler Co., Ohio
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 36

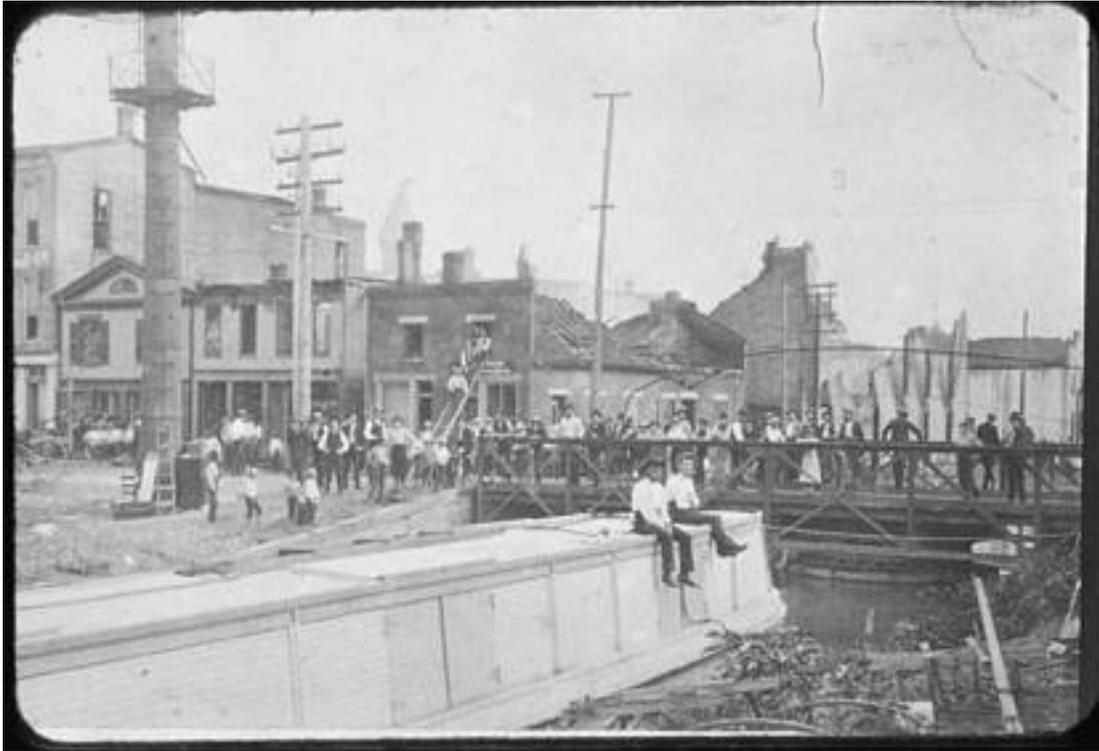


Figure 36. Photograph taken on August 1, 1887 showing the results of a large fire on the north side of Third Street (Central Avenue) west of the Miami-Erie Canal, 1119 Central Avenue is on the left side of the photograph in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking north (note the base of the Arc Light Tower on south side of the street)

Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 37



Figure 37. Ca. 1909 photograph of 1119 and 1123 Central Avenue during construction of the Middletown Mall in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking northeast

Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 38



Figure 38. A pre-1887 photograph of 1119 Central Avenue in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking northeast

Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 39



Figure 39. Ca. 1940 photograph of the construction on the northeast corner of what would become 1107 Central Avenue in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking northeast
Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 40



Figure 40. A 1972 photograph of 1107 Central Avenue in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking northeast

Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 41



Figure 41. Ca. 1958 photograph of 20 North Broad Street in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking southwest

Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property
Butler Co., Ohio
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 42



Figure 42. Ca. 1940 photograph of the Old Sebald Building, replaced by the current building at 1100 Central Avenue, in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking southeast
Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio



Figure 43. A 1913 photograph of the Great Flood from Third Street (Central Avenue) in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking west
Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 43

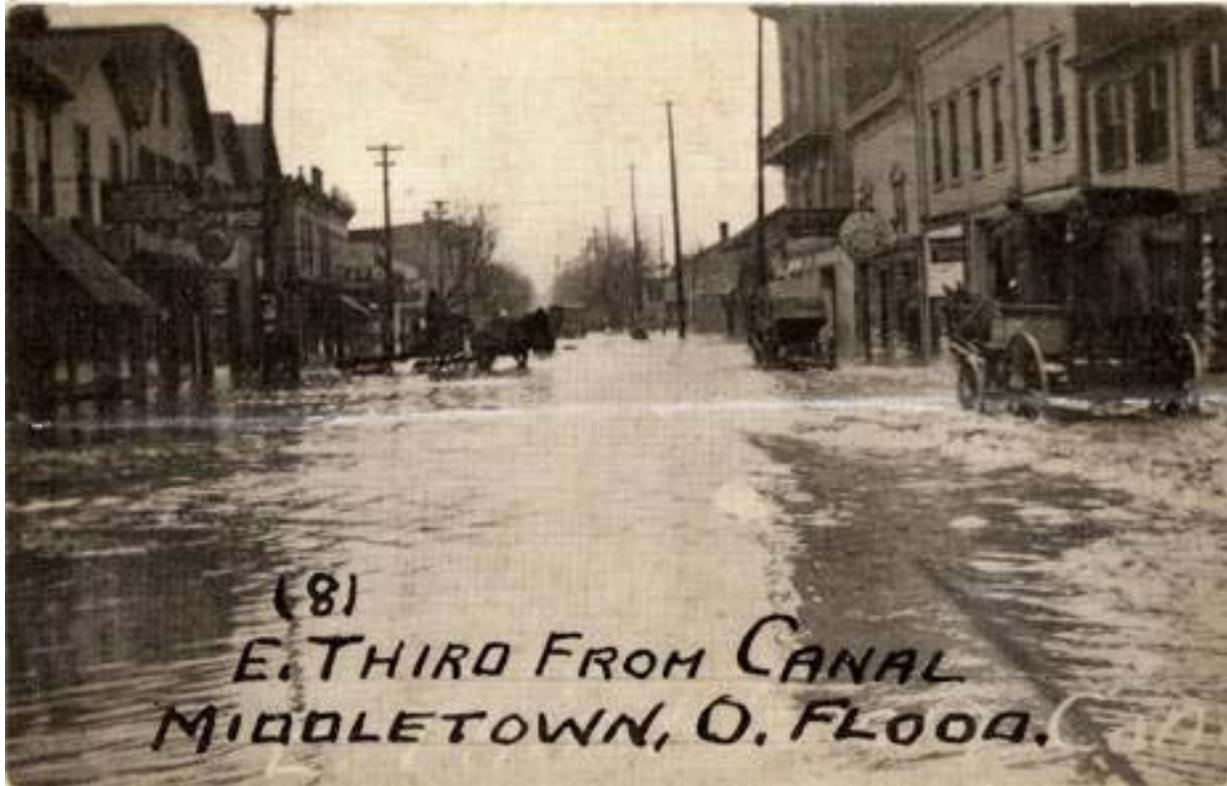


Figure 44. A 1913 photograph of the Great Flood from Third Street (Central Avenue) and the canal in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking east

Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 44



Figure 45. A 1913 photograph of the Great Flood from the intersection of Third Street (Central Avenue) and Clark Street in the Central Avenue Historic District in Middletown, Ohio, looking northwest

Source: George C. Crout Collection, MidPointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

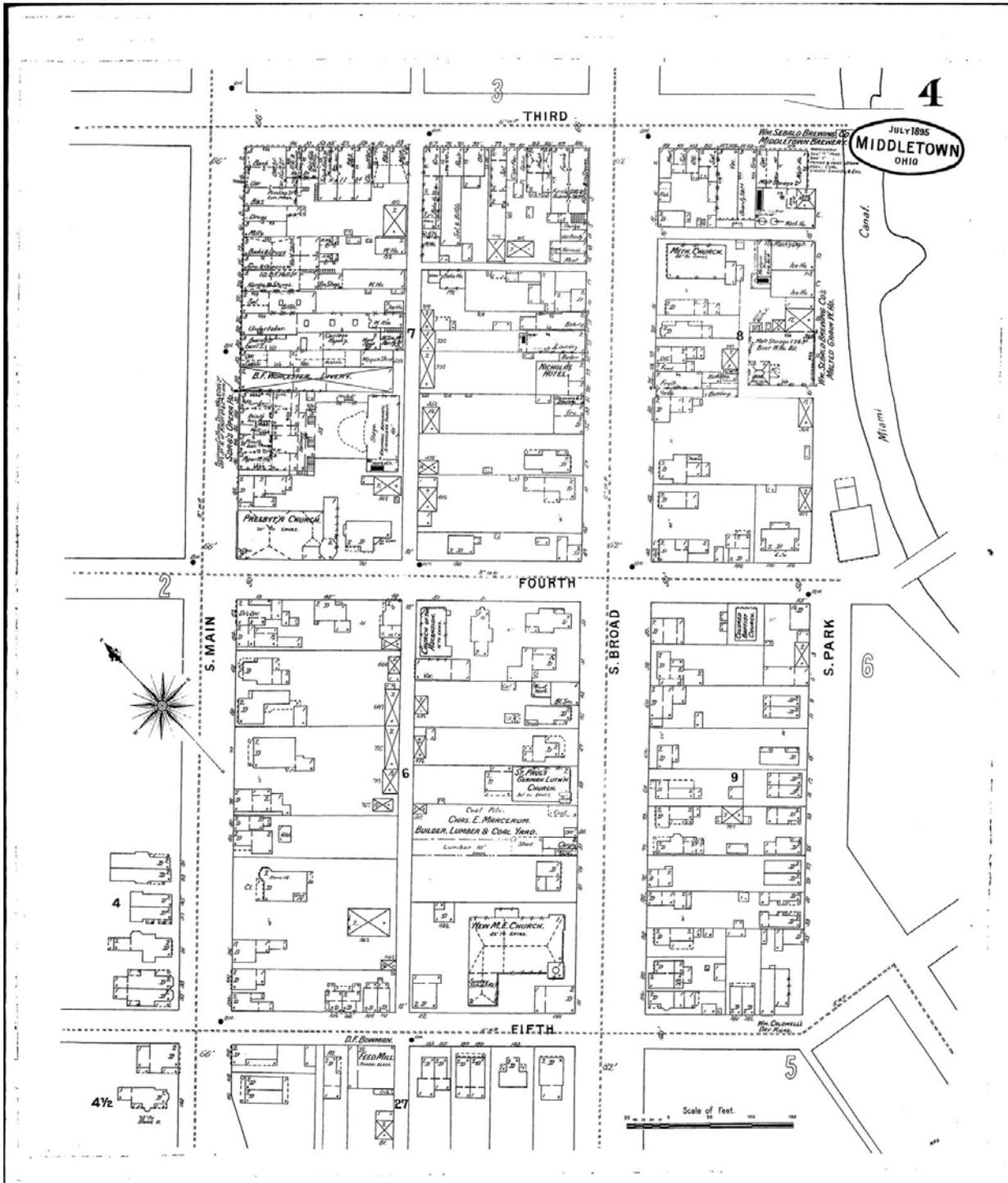
Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 45



Sanborn 1. 1895 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing south side of Central Avenue (Third Street) from Main Street to the Miami Canal

Source: Ohio Public Library Information Network

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

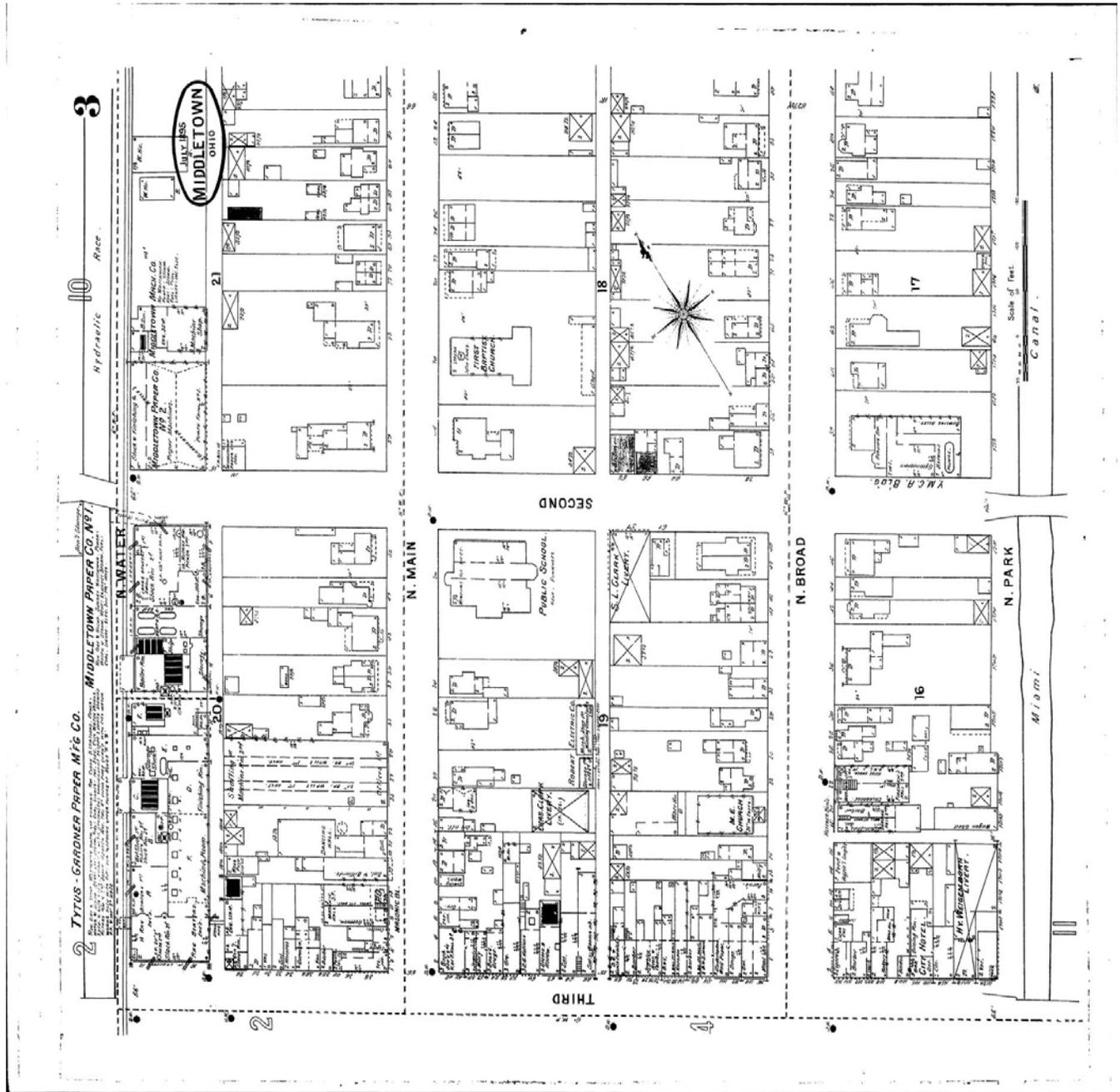
Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 46



Sanborn 2. 1895 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing north side of Central Avenue (Third Street) from Main Street to Miami Canal

Source: Ohio Public Library Information Network

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

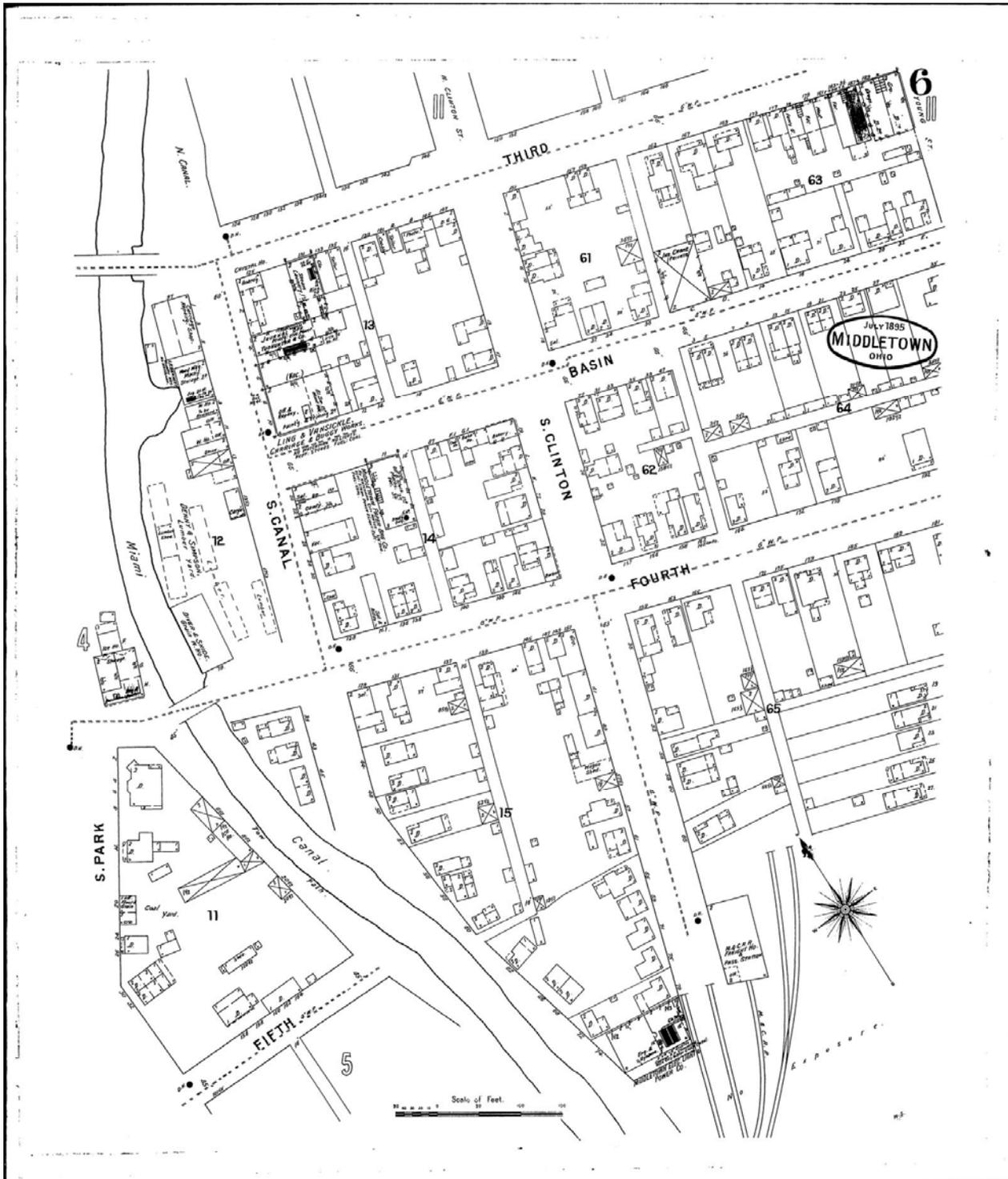
Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 47



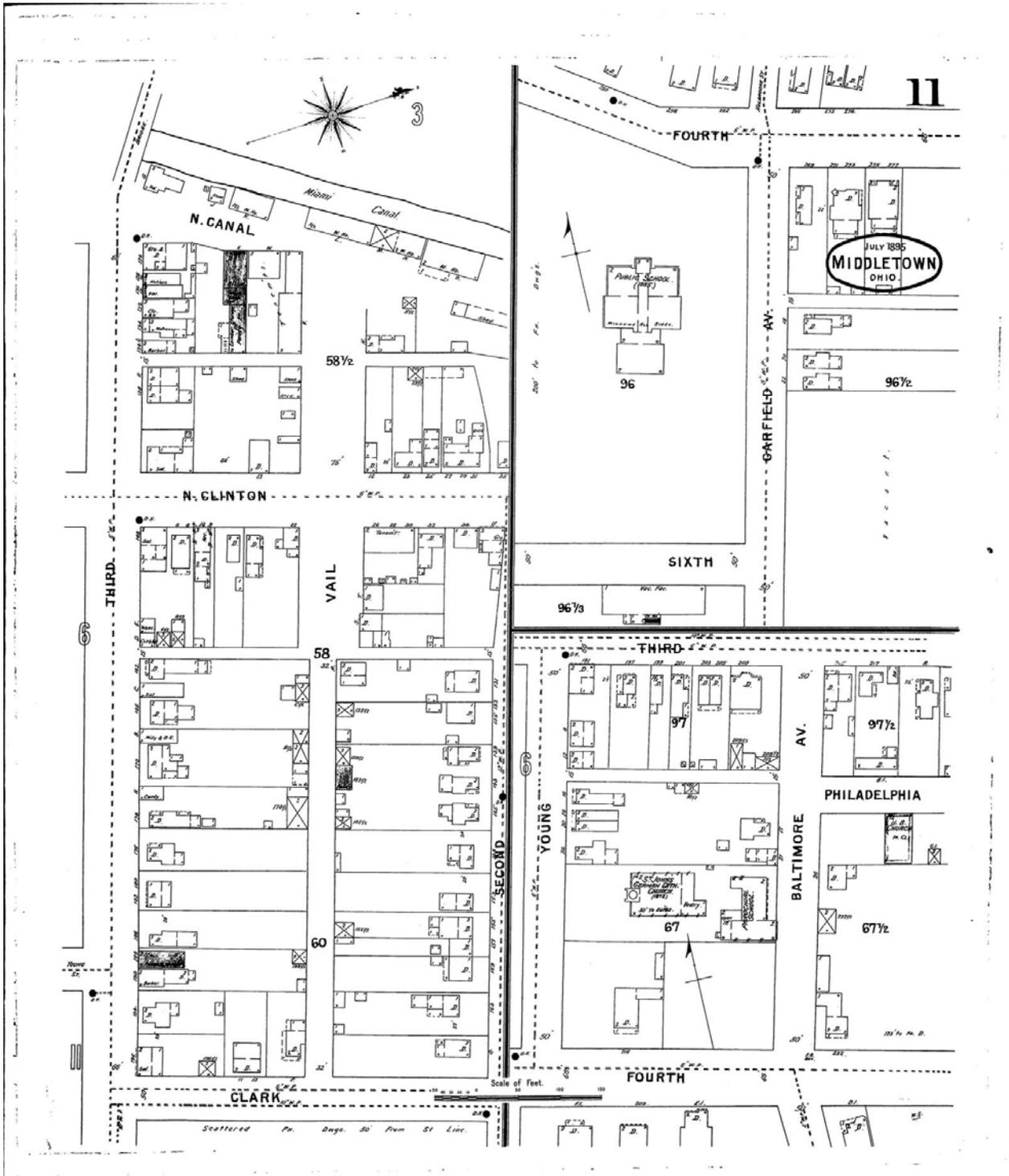
Sanborn 3. 1895 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing south side of Central Avenue (Third Street) from the Miami Canal to east of Clinton Street
Source: Ohio Public Library Information Network

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property
Butler Co., Ohio
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 48



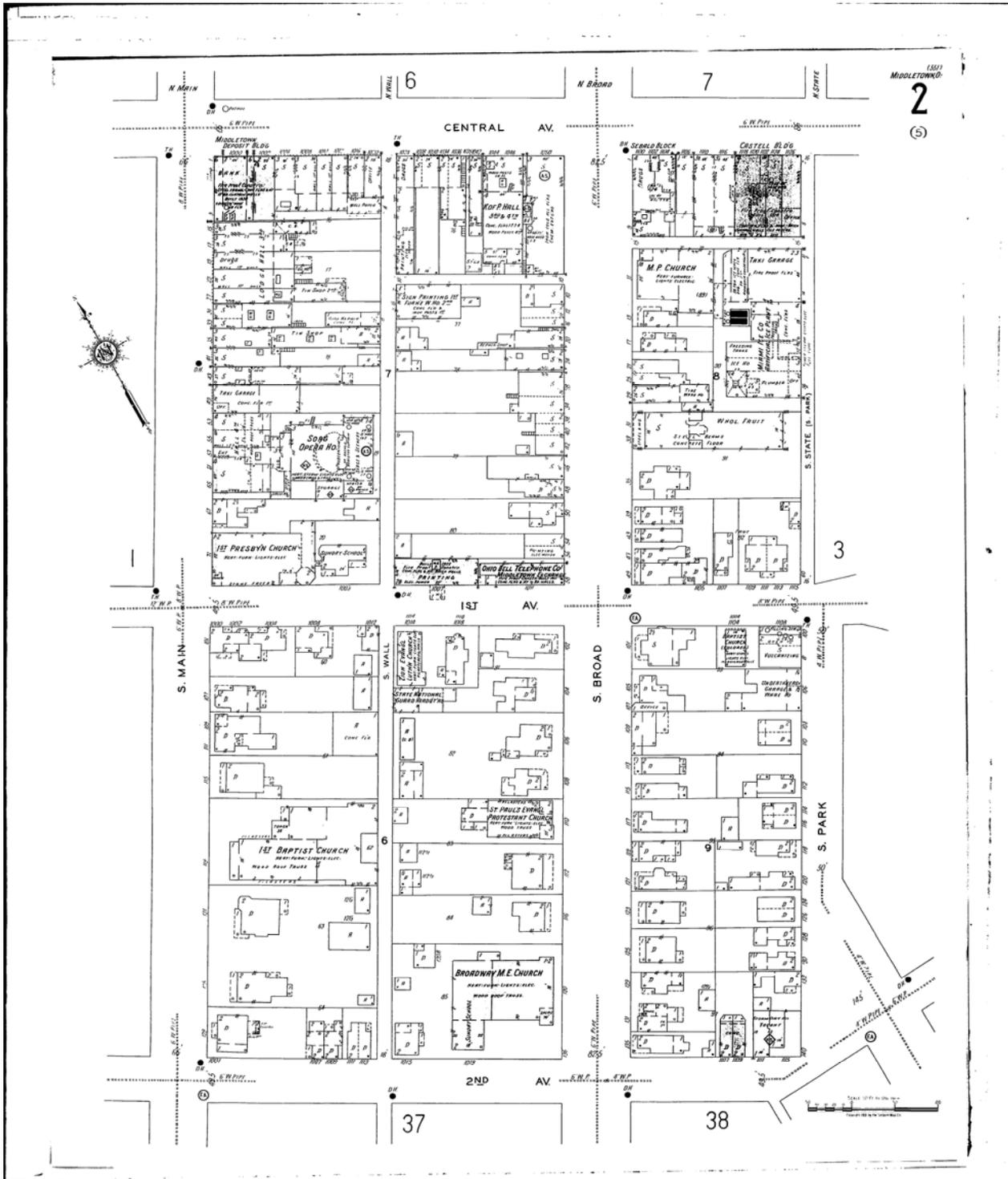
Sanborn 4. 1895 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing north side of Central Avenue (Third Street) from the Miami Canal to Clark Street and from Curtis Street (Young Street) to east of Baltimore Avenue
Source: Ohio Public Library Information Network

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property
Butler Co., Ohio
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 49



Sanborn 5. 1931 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing south side of Central Avenue from Main Street to Verity Avenue (State Street)
Source: Ohio Public Library Information Network

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

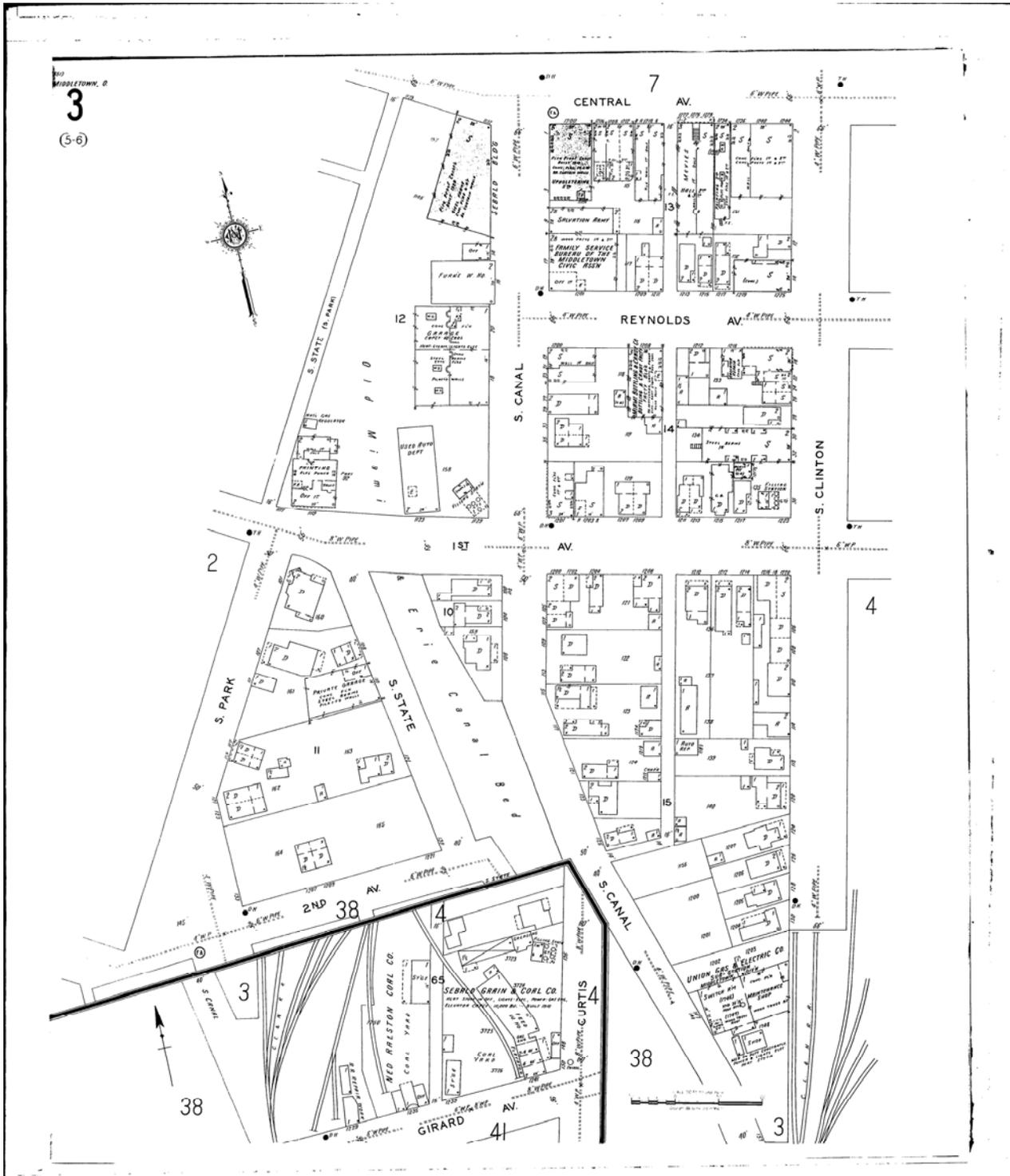
Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property
Butler Co., Ohio

County and State
N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 50



Sanborn 6. 1931 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing south side of Central Avenue from Verity Avenue (State Street) to Clinton Street

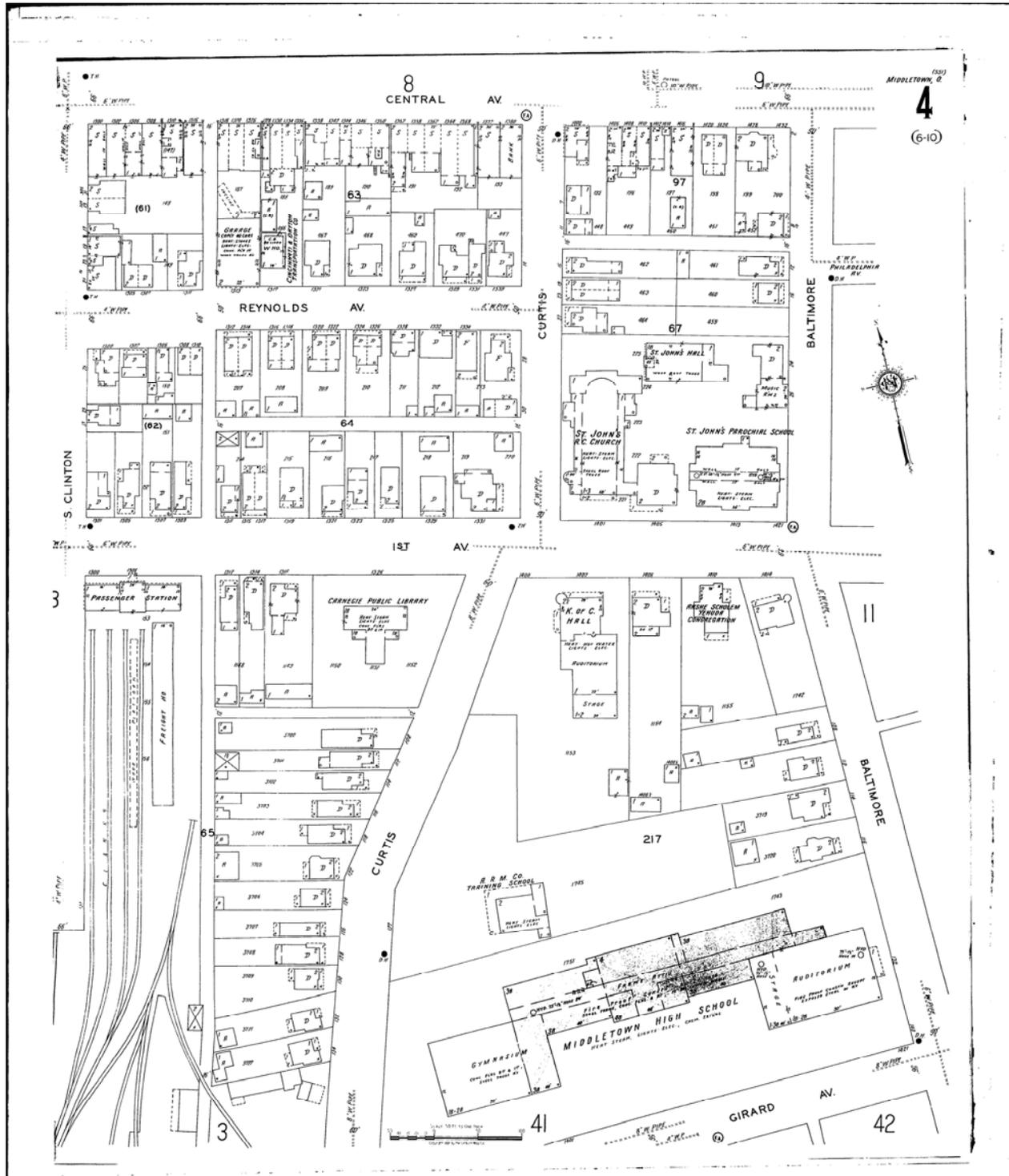
Source: Ohio Public Library Information Network

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property
Butler Co., Ohio
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 51



Sanborn 7. 1931 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing south side of Central Avenue from Clinton Street to Baltimore Street
Source: Ohio Public Library Information Network

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

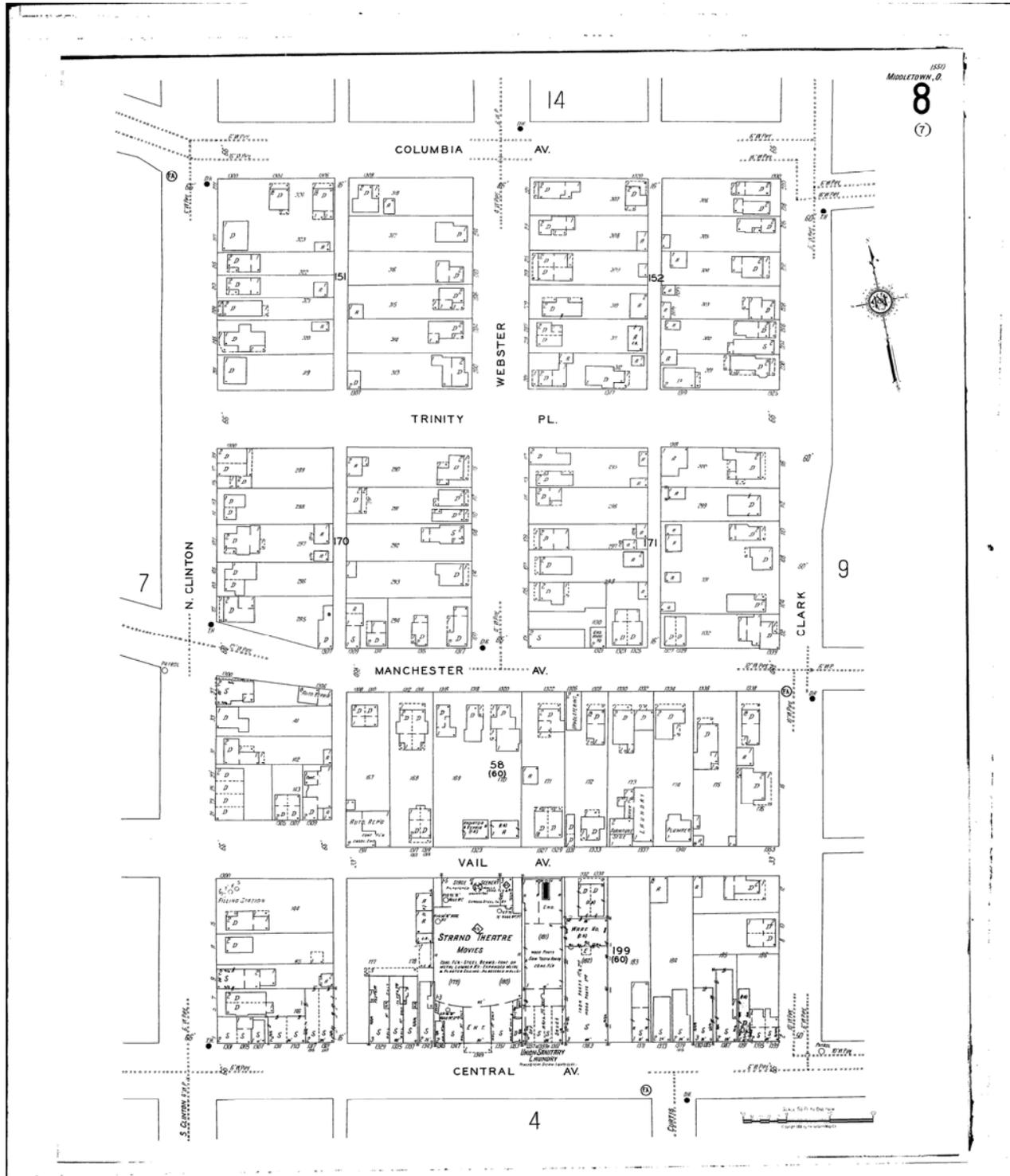
Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 52



Sanborn 8. 1931 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing north side of Central Avenue from Clinton Street to Clark Street

Source: Ohio Public Library Information Network

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Butler Co., Ohio

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 53



Sanborn 9. 1931 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing north side of Central Avenue from Broad Street to Clinton Street

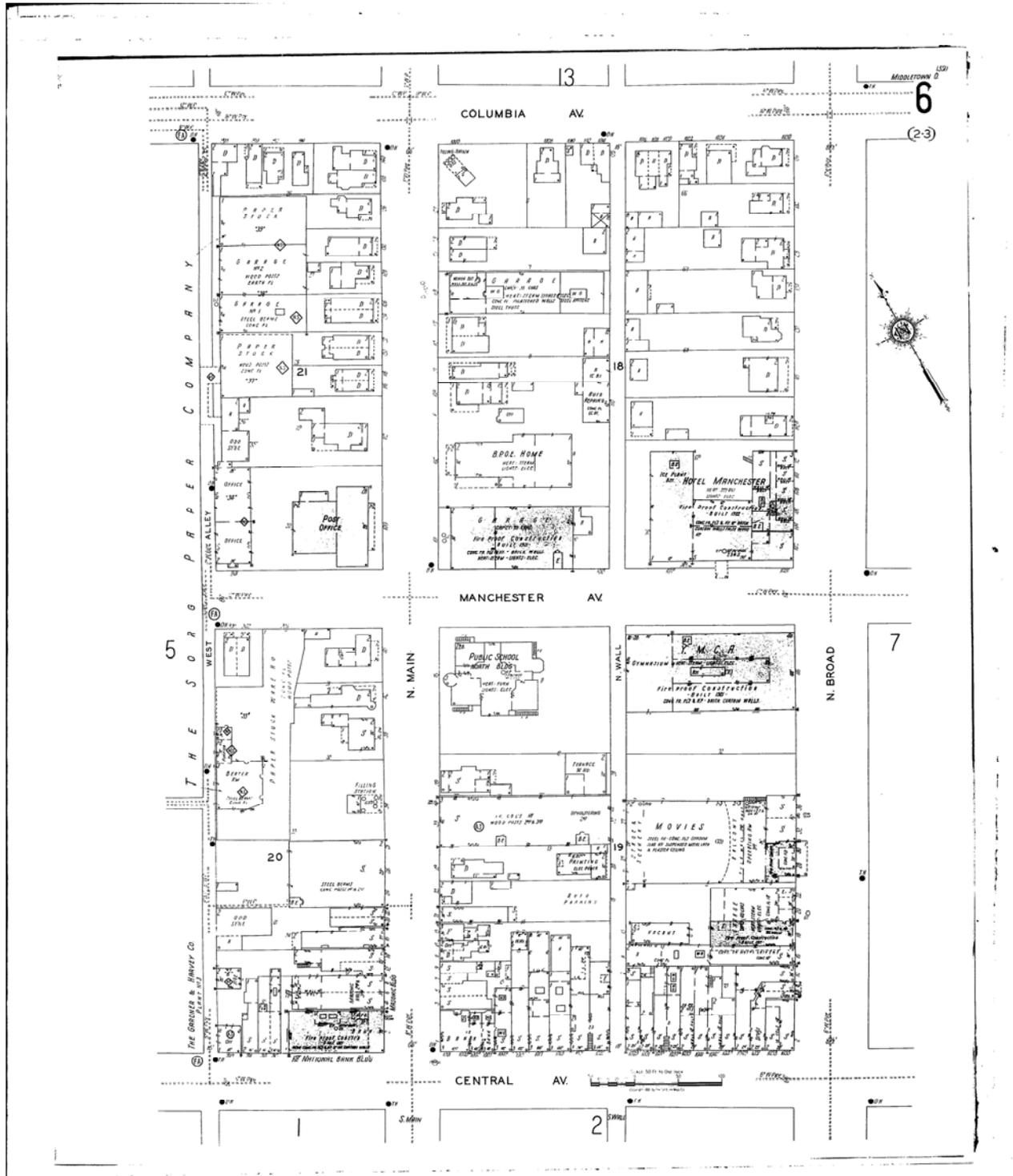
Source: Ohio Public Library Information Network

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Central Avenue Historic District
Name of Property
Butler Co., Ohio
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Information Page 54



Sanborn 10. 1931 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing north side of Central Avenue from West Avenue to Broad Street

Source: Ohio Public Library Information Network



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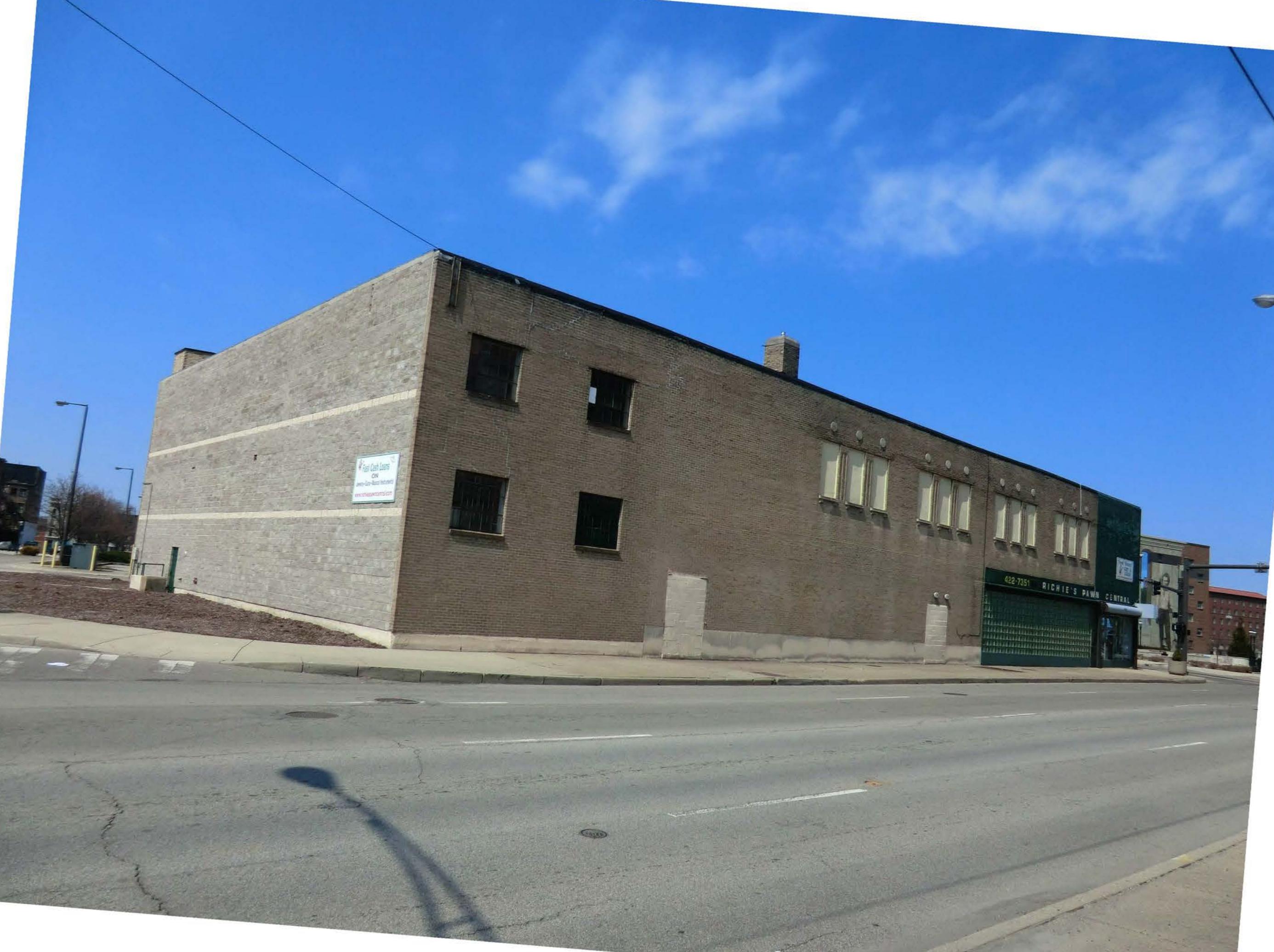
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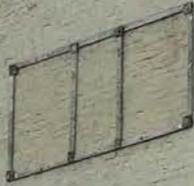


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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Central Avenue Historic District
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: OHIO, Butler

DATE RECEIVED: 6/27/14 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 7/22/14
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 8/06/14 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 8/13/14
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 14000480

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 8.8.14 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



June 20, 2014

Ms. Carol D. Shull, Keeper of the
National Register
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1201 Eye Street, NW (2280)
Washington DC 20005

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find one (1) new National Register nomination for Ohio. All appropriate notification procedures have been followed for the new nomination submission.

NEW NOMINATION

Central Avenue Historic District

COUNTY

Butler

The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for Central Avenue Historic District nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

If you have questions or comments about these documents, please contact the National Register staff in the Ohio Historic Preservation Office at (614) 298-2000.

Sincerely,

for A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lox A. Logan, Jr." with a flourish at the end.

Lox A. Logan, Jr.
Executive Director and CEO
State Historic Preservation Officer
Ohio History Connection

Enclosures

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NPS TRANSMITTAL CHECK LIST

OHIO HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

800 E. 17th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43211
(614)-298-2000

The following materials are submitted on June 23, 2014
For nomination of the Central Ave. Historic District, Butler Co., OH to the National Register of
Historic Places:

- Original National Register of Historic Places nomination form
___ Paper PDF
- ___ Multiple Property Nomination Cover Document
___ Paper ___ PDF
- ___ Multiple Property Nomination form
___ Paper ___ PDF
- Photographs
___ Prints TIFFs
- CD with electronic images
- Original USGS map(s)
___ Paper Digital
- Sketch map(s)/Photograph view map(s)/Floor plan(s)
___ Paper PDF
- ___ Piece(s) of correspondence
___ Paper ___ PDF
- ___ Other _____

COMMENTS:

- ___ Please provide a substantive review of this nomination
- ___ This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
- ___ The enclosed owner objection(s) do _____ do not _____
Constitute a majority of property owners
- ___ Other: _____