

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

APR 29 2016

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Nomination Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building
other names/site number Garage Building for Rawson Brothers

2. Location

street & number 1420 Locust Street not for publication N/A
city or town Des Moines vicinity N/A
state Iowa code IA county Polk code 153 zip code 50309

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide s X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Steve King 22 APRIL 2016
Signature of certifying official Date

State Historical Society of Iowa
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper	Date of Action
<u>Patrick Andrews</u>	<u>6/13/2016</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building
Polk County, Iowa
Name of Property County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

(do not include previously listed resources in count)

Contributing	Noncontributing
1	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
1	_____
_____	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

The Architectural Legacy of Proudfoot & Bird in Iowa, 1882-1940

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: restaurant
VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th CENTURY AND EARLY 20th CENTURY
AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Commercial Style
LATE 19th CENTURY AND 20th CENTURY
REVIVALS: Classical Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
walls BRICK
STONE: limestone
roof SYNTHETIC
other WOOD

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

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

- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1921-circa 1951

Significant Dates

1921

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson

Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building
Polk County, Iowa
Name of Property County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	15	<u>447030.59</u>	<u>4603814</u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jennifer James, MAHP, historian jenjames123@gmail.com
organization Jennifer James Communications for Locust Street Investments date March 7, 2016
street & number 4209 Kingman Blvd. telephone 515/250-7196
city or town Des Moines state Iowa zip code 50311

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps: A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

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

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

Property Owner

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

name Kyle J. Krause, Locust Street Investments, LC (c/o Kum & Go)
street & number 6400 Westown Parkway telephone 515/226-0128
city or town West Des Moines state Iowa zip code 50266

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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County and State Polk County, Iowa

7. Narrative Description

Summary

The Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building at 1420 Locust Street, Des Moines, Polk County, Iowa, occupies a midblock lot in the heart of the former automobile sales, service, and manufacturing district on the western edge of the downtown commercial core. The two-story rectangular building constructed 1920-1921 from plans designed by Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson is a two-part commercial block with a decorated facade that wraps the northeast and northwest corners. The interior is divided into two zones differentiating the formal first-floor front showroom with mezzanine offices from the utilitarian rear and second-floor workspaces used for assembling and servicing automobiles. This rare surviving Auto Row building retains significant architectural integrity and clearly communicates its historic associations with the early automobile industry.

While in the process of listing the building to the National Register, the new owners have been rehabilitating the building (and the neighboring G.W. Jones Building, 1430 Locust Street, located across a paved parking lot at 1424 Locust); the rehabilitation has followed the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation, with state and federal historic tax credit applications Parts 1 and 2 approved. Before commencing work, the Apperson-Iowa Building had painted brick exterior, glass panels over its stone signband, some boarded up windows, modern office interior cladding, and a modern mezzanine level inserted into the tall-ceilinged first-floor rear work room. The photographs shown at the State Nomination Review Committee meeting in 2014 demonstrated how much of the historic finishes remained beneath these modern cover-up materials. The 2014 pre-rehab photos have been supplemented by new photographs that show the building in its rehabilitated state with the original unpainted brick; stone signband, restored windows; original showroom tile floor; and rear workroom once again with tall ceiling and exposed concrete floor, masonry walls, and wood ceiling plus parts storage balcony; and second-floor work room with restored skylights and windows.

Setting

The Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building is located on the built-up western edge of the downtown Des Moines commercial business district in what has been known as "Auto Row" or "Motor Row," a commercial and light industrial district associated with cars, trucks, and associated businesses. Starting in the 1910s, the burgeoning auto industry pushed west from the existing retail core into the neighboring "West End" residential district, replacing late-nineteenth frame houses with mostly one- and two-story masonry showrooms, garages, accessories shops, and related buildings. By 1920, when construction began on the Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building, the district extended from Grand Avenue (one block north) to Mulberry Street (two blocks south), and from Eighteenth Street (west) to Ninth Street (east). Locust Street, in the center of "Auto Row," attracted the premier auto showrooms and commanded the highest prices for land and building sites.

The city designated Locust Street an east-flowing one-way four-lane arterial in 1953. Locust today remains a high-profile arterial thoroughfare that begins at (west) Eighteenth Street, runs through the main

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commercial core, and terminates at East Seventh Street at the base of the Iowa State Capitol as a planned vista. The surroundings have changed to the north, with redevelopment of several blocks and removal of Auto Row buildings. This makes the rare surviving buildings all the more important.

Site

The building occupies Lot 6, Block 2, of J.C. Savery's Park Addition, in the middle of the south side of the 1400 block of Locust Street. This gently sloping parcel is rectangular, measuring 51 feet by 169 feet (east-west frontage width by north-south depth). The lot is highest at the center and slopes downward to Locust Street and to the rear alley. As with many other Auto Row commercial buildings, the Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building's rectangular footprint occupies the entire lot, with no setbacks.

The north side is the main and primary facade, and abuts the public concrete sidewalk next to Locust Street. The facade wraps the building on the east and west elevations, with the same building materials employed on the northeast and northwest corners extending back 15 feet 9 inches; this facade extension reflects the historic residential setback in use on the neighboring buildings that existed in 1920, when the Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building construction began. Behind the historic residential setback line—and essentially out of public view as of 1920 setbacks—the garage building adopts an industrial appearance.

The east elevation shares a sidewall with a tall one-story commercial building, 1416 Locust Street. The west elevation abuts a concrete sidewalk. It is important to note that adjoining the 1420 Locust Street building is a separate parcel, 1424 Locust Street, which contains a paved parking lot, an object (metal fencing), and a structure (entrance structure); these items are not included in the object/structure count due to their being located outside the historic property boundary. (Parking on 1424 Locust Street was first created circa 1978 after demolition of the detached medical college-turned-apartment building following a fire.)

The south elevation abuts the paved public alley, which runs north-south between Locust and Walnut streets. Historically, automobiles entered 1420 Locust through the alley via a centered garage door opening to the service center and via a garage door opening to the freight elevator in the southeast corner.

The building is located in the middle of the south side of the 1300-1400 double block of Locust Street, which retains rare and scattered remaining Auto Row buildings.

Building

Structure

The building footprint measures 133 feet (east-west) by 132 feet (north-south), covering the entire building lot. (Polk County Assessor's Office) The structure consists of brick-veneered structural clay tile walls over a concrete foundation, interior wood columns over concrete piers/footings, I beams (20 inches, 65 per square foot) on the second-story over the showroom and by the elevator penthouse, girders elsewhere, and concrete/tile floors on the first story and wood flooring on the mezzanine and second story. In the rear

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abutting the alley is a partial basement. The original centrally located interior staircases have been removed and replaced with code-compliant staircases at the north and south ends of the building. The original freight elevator masonry stack occupies the southeast corner.

Exterior

As designed by the prominent Des Moines architectural firm of Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson, the building is of the predominant commercial architectural style of the period, the Commercial Style. Here, the style is embodied by the symmetrical design, large square window openings (display windows), restrained Classical Revival architectural details including applied turned columns on the second story, and parapet walls instead of a cornice.

The main exterior building materials are finished red brick on the primary and wraparound facades, with larger common red brick employed on the remainder of the walls. The facade employs Indiana Oolitic limestone for sill and lintel courses, the stone-trimmed signband in the spandrel area between floors, and coping. Wood was used on the primary facade on the first floor for window frames and entry doors, but was replaced at an unknown date by circa-1970s storefront glazing; a new storefront system has been installed in the rehabilitation. Secondary facade windows are a mixture of original rehabilitated steel-sash windows and replacement metal industrial-look windows.

On the roof, the three original skylights have been reopened. Mechanical equipment and access to the elevator penthouse are also located rooftop, and new roofing has been installed.

North elevation: This main and primary facade features symmetrical red brick wall piers and decorative stone trim outlining the window and door openings, first and second story. At the street level, the facade features tall storefront windows topped by transoms that extend nearly to the sidewalk (as originally designed), with pedestrian doors at either end; the original stone framing remains in place. Two brick piers set on stone bases flank these display windows and bear the upper facade wall. The brick wall is red finish brick with off-white mortar, laid in Flemish bond.

Above the display windows resides the stone-trimmed signband. On the second story is a ribbon of seven window bays; each bay contains large six-light wood-framed windows, topped with original four-light transoms. (Bloom informant interview) Original wood pilasters frame each window opening, providing classical detailing and vertical emphasis to the windows.

Hand-carved original limestone accents the north front façade. An original continuous projecting stone drip lintel and original vertical stone trim that continues on each side from the first floor completes the window enframing. Three original diamond patterns made of brick and limestone decorate the brick frieze above the windows. At the roofline, original stone coping crowns the low parapet wall.

West elevation: The facade wraps around from the north elevation to the northwest corner, continuing nearly 16 feet south the same red finish brick (painted) laid in a Flemish bond with stone coping at the

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roofline. Variegated red common brick continues to the alley, with the parapet wall stepping down at regular intervals.

This elevation contains the facade wraparound, with a tall storefront window topped by a transom. Beyond, in the common brick industrial portion are a mixture of mostly tall first-floor windows with corresponding shorter second-floor windows stacked above, all regularly spaced, plus a new side entrance door.

South elevation: The common red brick wall is unpainted. At the alley street level, the building features three bays, one of which has infill paneling and two others that contain new code-compliant egress doors.

On the second story, there are two window openings, which stack above the western and middle bays at the alley level. Above the windows, the brick continues to a hanging gutter. The eastern portion of the second story is dedicated to the original freight elevator shaft and the original brick chimney, which rises up above the elevator penthouse. The penthouse roofline has a metal hanging gutter with metal downspout channeling water to the alley.

East elevation: The brick wall is unpainted. About two-thirds of the sidewall is a party wall shared with the one-story commercial building, 1416 Locust Street.

The facade wraps around from the north elevation to the northeast corner, continuing for nearly 16 feet south with the same red finish brick and stone coping topped with metal at the roofline. Then common brick continues to the alley, with the parapet wall stepping down at regular intervals until the freight elevator penthouse rises up in the southeast corner at the alley. Here, the penthouse wall extends an additional story, terminating at a parapet. A portion of the wall near the alley is infilled flush with clay tile.

Interior

The interior configuration and original building materials/finishes of the Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building clearly reflect its historic commercial use. The original floor plan is largely intact. The formal front showroom and upper mezzanine office area contains original plaster walls and ceilings and original ceramic tile flooring (first floor only). Original exposed building materials, structural members, and finishes remain intact in the industrial-finish rear auto service workroom, mezzanine balcony stockroom, and second-floor workshop. The two original narrow internal staircases have been removed, but the massive freight elevator remains in place in the rear southeast corner.

Structurally, the interior in both formal and utilitarian areas is divided into three north-south bays created by the location of the columns and girders/beams supporting the building. Overall, the space is divided into the original formal front showroom with office area tucked below the original mezzanine office level. To the rear are the first-floor auto service workroom and the original mezzanine-level parts storage balcony, with the original large open workshop on the second floor.

Vertical circulation in the building occurs via the original rear freight elevator stack (into which a new code-

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compliant rear fire egress stair has been installed), new code-compliant elevator stack and a new front staircase, both near the northwest corner. As constructed, the massive freight elevator stack with inserted staircase occupies the southeast corner of the building; the stack/staircase can be accessed from the alley and interiorly from the first floor, mezzanine, and second floor. The original narrow internal central staircases were removed in the 1990s by city mandate due to life-safety hazards.

Showroom and mezzanine offices: Inside the north entrance, the soaring story-and-a-half showroom features a much higher level of finish than the rear industrial areas. The space measures approximately 49 feet wide (east-west) by 36 feet deep (north-south). White hexagonal ceramic tile with an outer border of black small square tiles covers the floor as per the original architectural plans. The tile covers the entire showroom, including the central entrance from the rear workroom, where autos would have been driven into the showroom toward the rear workroom; the black border highlights this original auto passageway. Original marble base remains on the west wall. Finished walls rise to the ceiling, which soars above some 16 feet, outlined with original deep moldings and massive original ceiling beams (designed by the original architects to hide girders and piping for steam radiator heat). Two painted metal columns extend from floor to ceiling next to the display windows and appear to be structural columns indicated on the original architectural plans. (Although the original architectural drawings show decorative trim applied to the plaster walls and decorative interior windows on the south wall, it is not known if these details were built—the deep recession of 1920-1921 that crippled the auto industry appears to have led to scaling back the number of fenestrations on this building per comparison of a published architectural rendering and the completed drawings; the economic impacts of the recession may have affected other aspects of the building's completed design.)

The mezzanine level offices are above, with the north-south ceiling beams creating three bays at the intersection of the mezzanine; the original north wall was removed at an unknown date.

First-floor rooms/offices (under the mezzanine): Two sets of rooms are located on either side of a central hall; the original north wall was removed at an unknown date. Original concrete floors (“cement” per architectural plans) exist..

First-floor rear service workroom and balcony stockroom: This large open area, punctuated by two rows of squared wood support columns largely retains all original finishes. The concrete floor slopes slightly toward the alley. The original clay-tile walls remain intact, as do some original 10-foot-tall steel-sash windows on the west wall. Along the east wall is the original low ceiling under the original balcony stockroom; the stockroom is supported by one of the column rows. The stockroom occupies the eastern interior rear bay, extending to the elevator shaft, which was designed to stop at this level for delivery of goods. An original wood knee wall (2 feet 6 inches high) made of boards with a flat wooden cap defines the stockroom.

Second-floor “finishing room” and workshop: This lofty open space retains nearly all original materials, including some tongue-and-groove wood flooring, exposed clay-tile walls, thick wood columns, and structural steel and wood roof supports. The “finishing room” at the light-filled north front features a plastered ceiling. Original steel I beams and girders are exposed, running outside of the plastered ceiling;

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these structural steel members helped carry the load of the automobiles for which the building was built to house. The north wall has seven sets of original wood-framed windows with divided-light transoms; the original wood window frames and sills are intact, with replacement glazing tacked on from the interior. (Bloom informant interview)

Behind the finishing room area, in the open workshop, two rows of wood columns run north-south. These columns align over those on the mezzanine and first floor. The tall open ceiling here features exposed joists and girders. Three skylights exist in the ceiling.

Partial basement: The small rear partial basement contains a boiler room, coal room, and elevator pit.

Integrity

The Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building retains integrity for National Register listing as a rare surviving Auto Row building and as a Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson-designed automobile-related commercial building built during the interwar years and used primarily for auto uses from 1921 through circa 1951.

A note regarding the north elevation: The main façade's first floor has at least twice been altered. As stated in "The Architectural Legacy of Proudfoot & Bird in Iowa, 1882-1940" Multiple Property Document registration requirements, "some ground floor alterations may be acceptable." (Long 1988: F.3) Given that this building is of special importance as being personally designed by and owned by key Proudfoot & Bird et al. architect Harry D. Rawson (of Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson, 1910-1934)—and that the window openings remain and the rest of the building retains significant integrity—the loss of the storefront windows is acceptable per the MPD registration requirements.

Seven Aspects of Integrity:

The Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building retains excellent integrity in one aspect, very good historic integrity in five aspects, and good historic integrity in one aspect.

Location: With regard to location, its integrity is excellent. The Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building remains at its original site, with the original orientation of public sidewalk in front of the north facade and public alley at the rear south elevation.

Design: The design continues to reflect the building's historic dual function of high-end auto sales/distribution and auto assembly/service. The design also reflects early-20th-century emerging specialized building technology and architecture tailored to auto sales and service showrooms. As is common for commercial buildings, the storefront window system has been replaced on the first floor; however, the tall window openings remain and portions of window framing and the transoms remain. The main elevation still retains the original brickwork dominated by a two-story enframed window wall (a design technique explored further in the Statement of Significance section) with original façade detailing including

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stone signboard, stone trim, wood pilasters, and Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson's trademark diamond decorative elements. The interior showroom retains its original soaring volume, deep ceiling beams and cornice, plaster ceiling, overlooking mezzanine offices, plaster walls, some marble base, and tile floor—and the overall effect remains one of grandeur. The rear and second-floor spaces retain their exposed-construction industrial materials and finishes, including structural steel and wood beams and columns for the early 1920s hybrid engineering designed to carry to live and dead loads of automobiles being serviced and displayed. The rear first-floor workroom retains nearly all original utilitarian finishes and features, including the extra-tall exposed ceiling, clay-tile walls, columns, original steel-frame windows, and concrete floor, plus original freight elevator stack. The mezzanine offices retain original plaster ceilings with decorative beams and columns that also serve structural purposes and plaster walls. The rear (mezzanine) balcony stockroom retains its original exposed ceiling, clay-tile east wall, shiplap west knee wall, and freight elevator stack with tin doors. The second floor in particular remains little changed since it was constructed in 1921, with extra-tall ceiling, structural steel, massive wood columns, exposed clay-tile walls, and some wood strip flooring plus freight elevator stack with tin doors. The building is well preserved, with no additions or demolitions. In these regards, its integrity is very good.

Setting: The overall integrity of setting is good. The Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building is located on the south side of the 1300-1400 Locust Street double block, which retains seven original early-20th-century Auto Row showroom/dealerships. The loss of auto-related buildings across the street and elsewhere within the former Auto Row district elevates the importance of these rare surviving buildings that remain. In addition, the location on Locust Street retains its relationship as the main thoroughfare into the downtown commercial core, and still terminates at the Iowa State Capitol.

Materials: The integrity of materials is very good to good. The Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building exterior remains relatively unchanged from when it was originally constructed and the condition of materials remains excellent to good. The brick that predominates is in good condition. The limestone that accents the main facade is in very good condition. Original wood pilasters/ applied columns on the second story are in place. A number of original steel-sash windows have been retained. And the historic connection to the alley remains. The publicly viewable area of the building, the front showroom with impressive tall beamed ceiling retains key original building materials. In the rear and second-story industrial zones, the exposed structure openly displays the raw building components including the use of structural steel. The second floor in particular remains little changed since it was constructed in 1921.

Workmanship: The integrity of workmanship is very good. The quality of craftsmanship expected by Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson as detailed in the building specifications (such as with the stonework) and carried out in the execution of the building is clearly expressed throughout the exterior in the high-quality brickwork, facade brick detailing, carved stone trim, and turned wood pilasters. Inside, the showroom expresses workmanship with the neatly laid ceramic tile floor including decorative border, plaster walls, ornate cornice treatment and boxed ceiling beams, which remain in excellent condition. In the rear and second-story industrial areas, the original well-constructed structural supports and structural steel exposed on the ceilings, neatly laid clay-tile walls, solid columns, and tightly laid wood flooring clearly express the

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engineering technologies of the time and particularly those employed by the Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson firm.

Feeling: The integrity of feeling is very good. The front facade and the first-floor interior readily convey the Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building's historic character as a stylish early-1920s automobile showroom with overlooking mezzanine offices. The formal front of house contrasts with the other industrial-finished exterior elevations, reflecting the rear service station and second-story assembly/work areas.

Association: The integrity of association is very good. The building retains its association as an early-20th-century auto-related commercial building through its large storefront window openings, voluminous formal showroom, overlooking mezzanine offices, and industrial-finished rear and second-floor work areas. It retains its association as part of the Locust Street Auto Row through its location on the south side of the Locust Street double block, which contains many original auto-related showrooms and service centers.

Summary of Essential Character-Defining Physical Features

In summary, the essential character-defining physical features of this building, which define the building's significance as an automobile showroom/service center and as a Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson auto-related commercial building from the 1921 to circa 1951 era, include:

- Front façade (north elevation): The symmetrical two-story enframed window wall features brick wall piers on limestone bases and hand-carved limestone trim that outline the grouping of expansive storefront window openings with transoms above; the signband area; and second-floor wood pilasters and stone sill/lintel that frame upper windows topped with divided-light transoms. Three trademark Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson diamond patterns made of brick and limestone decorate the brick frieze above the windows; stone coping caps the wall.
- Front façade (east elevation, first 16 feet): The same finish brick wraps from the north façade; here brick piers on stone bases flank the original expansive storefront window opening. Stone coping caps the wall.
- Secondary elevations: Utilitarian common brick walls and some original steel-sash windows demonstrate the light-industrial nature of the rear portion of the building, as does the rear freight elevator opening off the alley and the elevator penthouse.
- Showroom: The soaring volume and decorative features include original ceramic tile floor (square-tile border surrounding one-inch hexagonal tile), marble base, plaster walls, plaster ceiling, decorative ceiling beams that serve a key engineering purpose (allowing the showroom to be free of columns), and original floor plan intact.
- First-floor rooms/offices: Original concrete floors are in this area, which is divided by a wide center hallway built to drive through cars into the showroom.
- First-floor rear service workroom: Form follows function in this area used to service autos: Original sloping concrete floor, clay-tile walls, columns, exposed 16- to 18-foot ceiling, 10-foot-tall steel-sash windows on west wall, and masonry elevator shaft with tin fire doors. The original floor plan is intact.
- Mezzanine offices: As originally built, these offices overlook the showroom and feature original plaster

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walls, plaster ceilings, and plastered angled ceiling beams (structural supports)..

- Balcony stockroom: Built to stock auto parts, this balcony space remains largely as built with clay-tile east wall, shiplap west knee wall, exposed ceiling, and elevator shaft with tin fire doors..
- Second-floor "finishing room" and workshop: These spaces remain largely as built in 1921, with original wood flooring, exposed masonry walls, exposed structural steel, plastered ceiling (finishing room), steel-sash windows, and elevator shaft with tin fire doors.

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8. Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary Statement of Significance and Period of Significance

The Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building meets the registration requirements for an automobile-related building designed by Proudfoot & Bird et al., as set forth in the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation (MPD) Form "The Architectural Legacy of Proudfoot & Bird in Iowa, 1882-1940." The MPD was approved June 28, 1989, by the Keeper of the National Register as a basis for evaluating properties designed by the various iterations of the "Proudfoot & Bird et al." architectural firm. The Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building meets the registration requirements for significance, important subtype (auto-related building), and integrity, as set forth by historian Barbara Beving Long. (Long 1988: F3-4)

The Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building is locally significant under Criterion A – Commerce, being associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history: the rise of the automobile industry in Des Moines.

The Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building is also locally significant under Criterion C – Architecture, embodying the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, and method of construction and representing the work of the master architectural firm: an early automobile industry building in Des Moines and the work of architect Harry D. Rawson and the Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson architectural firm.

The building has been determined to be eligible for federal historic tax credits through Part 1—Evaluation of Significance approval by National Park Service, issued in a November 15, 2013, letter from National Register of Historic Places historian Roger G. Reed. The property has been assigned NPS project number 29045.

The Period of Significance for the Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building is 1921-circa 1951, representing the years that auto dealerships/distributorships leased the building and including the years (1921-1938) that architect Harry D. Rawson and his brothers owned the building. The significant date is 1921, marking the year that the building was completed and leased to its first early auto dealership/distributorship, the Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company. The significant date also falls within Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson's most prolific period (1910-1925), when as the state's most prominent architectural firm it developed its automobile-related commercial architecture subspecialty. (Long 1988: E.5-E.6)

Criterion A: The Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building derives local significance for its association with Commerce due to its construction as an early-20th-century two-story urban auto dealership/distributorship "garage," a specialized variation of commercial architecture tailored to attract customers (retail and wholesale) and complete assembly and then service automobiles. It is an example of a once-common property type associated with downtown Des Moines automobile-related commerce prior to World

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War II. As a rare surviving local example of the property type, it calls attention locally to the importance of the automobile and auto-related commerce in the development of Des Moines, and the city's role in distributing automobiles to outlying communities. The building, constructed on the premier retail street in Des Moines and central Iowa—and the premier street within Des Moines' Auto Row—combined a formal front-of-house showroom and offices for retail and wholesale sales, with a rear industrial-finish service center and second-floor final assembly workshop.

Criterion C: The Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building is significant locally as a well-designed and rare surviving example of an interwar-era urban automobile dealership/distributorship that calls attention to the work of Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson, the esteemed Des Moines-based firm whose commercial and public buildings dominated downtown Des Moines by 1921. During architect Harry D. Rawson's tenure (1910-1934), the firm developed an important subspecialty: automobile-related commercial and industrial buildings. A well-designed facade and showroom helped sell the public on the new concept of automobiles for everyday living as well as sell a particular brand, allowing dealers to capture the public's attention and differentiate their product in a crowded emerging marketplace. Investors and auto dealers sought Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson in part to bring the gravitas and solidity of the banks, government buildings, and insurance skyscrapers the firm was noted for to the new commercial form required for modern automobile-related merchandising. The two-story Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building dealership/distributorship facade incorporates an enframed window wall, a popular urban design technique employed in the early twentieth century through the 1940s, as identified by architectural historian Richard Longstreth in his book *Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture*. (Longstreth: 464) In total, the building embodies the distinctive building form, architectural elements, and materials associated with Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson's urban automobile-related commissions. Many of the firm's early-20th-century Auto Row buildings in Des Moines have been demolished; this rare surviving well-preserved example is located within the largely intact portion of the premier street within the district, Locust Street.

The building, owned by architect Harry D. Rawson and two of his brothers, was an investment property built on leased land, but it also served to promote the work of the architect's firm, Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson.

Given the direct tie with Harry D. Rawson, the building represents an important addition to the identified extant work of the Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson firm as laid out in the MPD "The Architectural Legacy of Proudfoot & Bird in Iowa, 1882-1940." Due to the address listed on the plans not matching the street address assigned to the building, the Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building history and tie with Harry D. Rawson and the Proudfoot firm had been lost to time until now.

A note about the property's address: Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building generally has been assigned the street address 1420 Locust Street, with the variant 1420-1422 Locust Street used during a time of multiple tenants. Historically, the property may have been known as 1418 Locust Street prior to construction, given the use of this address on the architectural plans, spec books, and newspaper stories about the proposed project.

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Auto-Related Commerce Significance: Exponential Growth in the 1910s and 1920s

Completed and first placed into service in 1921, the Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building is historically significant under National Register Criterion A – Commerce for its use as an automobile dealership showroom and distributorship built during a period of exponential growth in the nascent auto industry, in which Des Moines entrepreneurs played a key role in making Iowa a national sales leader. As a rare surviving interwar example, it calls attention to the special architecture engineered and built for distributor dealerships, which served the multi-functions of preparing vehicles for sale (final assembly/painting), meeting with retail and wholesale customers, showcasing model vehicles, servicing the machines, and stocking parts.

Scholarly study has documented the rise of the automobile in the United States: Michael L. Berger's *The Automobile in American History and Culture: A Reference Guide* encapsulates how what started as a luxury curiosity for entertaining the wealthy in the 1890s quickly grew in the first decades of the 20th century to become a desired and relatively affordable necessity for work and leisure transportation on the farm as well as in the city. And automotive writer Robert Genat's *The American Car Dealership* looks in-depth at trends impacting showrooms. The advent of assembly line manufacturing and financing of car sales helped make auto purchases accessible to middle-class consumers, fueling sales demand in the 1910s and 1920s. Between 1900 and 1920, some 600 different manufacturers produced autos, but following World War I, there were fewer than 120 remaining given the demands of scale forcing major changes in manufacturing and distribution. (Genat: 9-17) "Independent" car manufacturers further winnowed out and the industry evolved toward an oligarchy in the 1920s and 1930s as the farm crisis and then the Great Depression hollowed out middle-class auto sales. (Berger xvii-xxiv)

The role of Des Moines as a regional retail center for automobiles and related accessories during the early development of the U.S. auto industry has been documented in two large-scale scholarly studies. Historian James E. Jacobsen in his architectural and historical report "Des Moines' First 'West End' and Its Transition from Residential Neighborhood to Auto Row, from a Commercial District to the Western Gateway" found that "Des Moines played a leading role in promoting auto ownership in Iowa. Iowa proved to be a national leader in car ownership. As would be expected, the capital city dominated the state's lesser cities and held market sway in the center of the state." (Jacobsen 2000: 31)

Historian Barbara Beving Long—in "Des Moines, Center of Iowa: Survey of Historic Sites," a 1983 architectural and historical report plus related Iowa Site Inventories—found that the city's Auto Row developed as a district during the period of the greatest growth in registered vehicles in the state:

Automobile dealers whose franchised territory often extended statewide built showrooms to display their gleaming automobiles. Automobile-related businesses naturally sprang up near the dealers' buildings to serve the growing populace of automobile owners.... The number of [vehicle] registrations in Iowa grew from just 40 in 1900 to 30,000 in 1911, 198,584 in 1916, and 707,231 in 1927. Ambitious entrepreneurs hurried to cash in on this popularity. However, many were poorly

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financed and soon went out of business, only to be replaced by other eager businessmen. (Long 1983b: #21)

Auto manufacturers relied upon independent or franchised auto dealers to sell their cars in defined territories, often through regional distribution networks via manufacturer-owned branch houses or distributor-dealers who sold vehicles and parts retail and wholesale. (Genat: 17-20) Des Moines, with its central location, capital city designation, and easy rail line access, became a regional hub for distribution via both branch houses and distributor-dealers. Until the late 1940s, it was an accepted business practice for dealers and distributors to represent several brands as well as trucks and/or tractors, thereby increasing their sales options and lessening their risk should one go out of business. (Genat: 22) (Some dealers maintained multiple manufacturer representations by setting up separate dealerships, sometimes each with its own showroom/vehicle lot. (Peverill informant interview)

Despite the turnover in dealers, early Des Moines entrepreneurs were very successful at introducing and selling automobiles, with demand often outstripping supply. Whereas auto sales in the early days occupied a side business, the fast-paced sales in the 1910s converted many part-time dealers into full-time. In a newspaper article about the coming 1920 Des Moines Auto Show, organizer Harter B. Hull commented about the growth of the business and the impact on dealers:

Automobile selling is an all-the-year-round proposition now. No longer are we confined to a six-month sales season. People have learned that they are not putting a certain amount of money into a mechanical device, into an 'auto.' But that they are buying service, transportation. (*Des Moines Sunday Register*, January 25, 1920)

The result of all those sales: Period local newspaper and chamber of commerce accounts lauded Iowa's and Des Moines' leading status in auto ownership. "Iowa Still First in Cars Per Capita," with one car to every 6 people versus the 1:15 ratio nationwide, reported the October 5, 1919, *Des Moines Register* Sunday motorist news page. (The auto industry had become so integral and represented such an important advertising segment that local newspapers added weekly "motor" pages.) In 1920, Iowa again led in autos per person, and so did the capital city: A news item highlighted "Des Moines in Top Place" for having more autos per capita than any other U.S. city; Omaha came in second and Detroit third. (*The Des Moines Register*, January 19, 1920; *The Des Moines Register*, May 6, 1920)

Looking at the impact of the Des Moines auto industry, the Chamber of Commerce's new Motor Trades Bureau upon its establishment in 1916 reported that it represented a local industry of \$12 million with \$1.9 million in capitalization, employing 1,000 workers with \$1 million in wages paid; less than four years later, and the bureau estimated the local industry at \$75 million annually with \$5 million in capitalization, employing 7,000 workers with \$3 million in payroll in 1920. (*Des Moines*, May 1916; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, January 25, 1920) The bureau counted 150 motor-related "houses" (businesses) in 1919; six months later, the bureau touted 200 motor-trade establishments. (*Des Moines*, August 1919; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, January 25, 1920)

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As Auto Row grew, so did the desire for professionalism and group lobbying efforts. Des Moines dealers were on the leading edge with the 1910 formation of the Des Moines Automobile Dealers Association, which hosted the city's annual auto show; the 1916 addition of the Motor Trades Bureau to the Des Moines Chamber of Commerce; the 1919 founding of the Iowa Motor Trades Bureau headquartered in Des Moines; and a number of Des Moines dealers being invited into the inaugural National Auto Dealers Association, founded in 1917 and still active. (*Des Moines*, May 1916: 6; Schoffner: 8-9; Genat: 17)

While the auto industry seemed to be limitless in sales growth in the 1910s, the demand for autos crashed against forces out of control of dealers or manufacturers. Several problems occurred in 1919 and into 1920: a shortage of raw materials to make auto parts, strikes by auto plant workers and railroad workers, and shortage of rail freight cars that combined to slow production, assembly, and distribution. (*The Des Moines Register*, "Some Troubles of the Auto Dealer," October 19, 1919: 4-S) Used cars also competed with new cars. "With sales down, the manufacturers had a difficult time holding prices. Raw material costs remained high and reduced production cut into profits. Sales continued to decline and many manufacturers temporarily closed their doors. Even the mighty Ford Motor Company halted production for a short period." (Genat: 26) The economic slowdown hit extra hard in Des Moines and Iowa due to a parallel farm crisis caused by slumps in grain prices that led to a reduced cash flow, especially among potential rural buyers. (*Motor World*, January 26, 1921; Long 1988: E7)

Auto-Related Commerce Significance: Early-20th-Century Automobile "Sales Palaces" and the Development of Auto Rows

To further understand the commercial significance of the Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building as an example of specialized commercial architecture required of interwar urban automobile dealerships, it is helpful to further examine the development of the auto showroom as a building type.

In *Main Street to Miracle Mile*, scholar Chester H. Liebs examines how the "car met commerce" in the United States, changing spatial relationships, reimagining architecture through the lens of a speeding windshield, and producing new types of buildings and cultural landscapes to meet the needs of an auto-driven culture. (Liebs: 7-3) In the beginning, autos were sold as a sideline by mainline merchants: "[L]ivery owners began repairing cars in addition to boarding horses; bicycle and carriage shops became makeshift auto showrooms." (Liebs: 9) But the volume of sales—and sometimes the weight and size of the merchandise—began to overwhelm existing retail infrastructure. (Liebs: 75) Some renovated, but many more turned to new construction, adapting traditional storefronts by adding larger windows to showcase oversized merchandise and maybe a garage door if side or rear access was not available. Inside, "[m]any early showrooms were laid out like any large retail shop. [T]he back room was reincarnated as a repair shop with workbenches, lubrication pit, wash rack, and turntable (if the site did not permit sufficient turnaround space). If a building was more than one story high, upper floors, rather than containing offices or apartments, were instead portioned out into inventory and storage areas made accessible by a heavy-duty freight elevator." (Liebs: 76-77)

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As public interest and acceptance of autos rose, auto companies jockeyed to increase market share in the crowded marketplace—and turned to showroom architecture as a means of differentiating their product and increasing sales. Some built “object lesson” showrooms in large cities. Liebs examines the importance of dealership architecture in this era and the influence that model showrooms had:

Automobile-dealership buildings were no longer considered merely places where a fad was merchandised; now they were the point of contact between the public and a rapidly expanding industry, consisting of scores of manufacturers. Nagging questions plagued the early-20th-century car buyer. “Should it be a Gray, Dodge, Autocar, Studebaker, Oakland, Regal, Chandler, Gordon, Packard, or Ford?” “Will the company be around in ten years?” “Will parts continue to be available?” Producing good cars and convincing advertisements was one way to inspire public confidence. *Building impressive and attractive showrooms was another.* [emphasis added]

.... Instead of being patterned after ordinary Main Street commercial blocks, these model showrooms were crafted to resemble the most impressive office buildings, banks, and railroad depots so they would instantly be perceived as civic assets. Exteriors often sported bas-reliefs, grand ornamental cornices, and entrance porticoes, while inside cars were sold in elegant surroundings in large, opulent salons.

Many early auto showrooms were not designed to stand up under the ever-increasing load of cars, engines, repair equipment, batteries, tires, and myriad parts, nor were they constructed to take the constant pounding and shaking cause by moving automobiles. They were also susceptible to fire. With gasoline and electricity in close proximity, one misplaced spark could quickly turn early motor marts, with their wooden floors and ceilings, into blistering infernos.

.... It was not long before these model facilities were having the desired effect. By the second decade of the new century, dealers began pouring their own money into lavish new facilities. Within ten years, fashionable showrooms were going up by the hundreds, and auto-showroom construction had become a game of visual one-upmanship. Now architectural imagery was used not just to give credibility to fledgling companies, but also to symbolize the power of established corporations and the prosperity of successful dealers. (Liebs: 78-81)

Liebs further explains how dealers and speculators in smaller cities built “scaled-down sales palaces.” “Through the creation of an environment that offered leisure and luxury, companies, dealers, and their architects had developed an effective backdrop, a stage set for selling automobiles.” (Liebs: 83) What is important to note is that the early backroom functions of assembly, repair, and parts storage still took place out of view of the fancy newer showrooms. Liebs calls this the “dichotomous architectural program of stimulating sales while providing for service, all under the same roof.” (Liebs: 85) With the evolution of new houses of commerce for cars (and trucks) came the development of a new type of commercial district: the automobile row. Liebs describes the creation of an auto row as starting with dealers building their own often larger sales palaces outside of cramped central-city quarters, with speculators infilling between with one-story, less ornate showrooms rented by agents of smaller, lesser-known automakers. (Liebs: 83)

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In Des Moines in the 1910s and early 1920s, auto dealers adopted the “dichotomous architectural program” of fancy primary facade and front showroom with utilitarian secondary facades and industrial-finish service and work areas behind and above the showrooms. Study of period newspapers, the Des Moines Chamber of Commerce magazine, as well as national auto trade publications show Des Moines dealers competing for potential customers (and press coverage to attract customers) via the appearance of their facilities. Advertisements from the era often showed photographs of new dealership buildings and showroom interiors, as well as the cars sold there.

In his 2000 study of Des Moines’ Auto Row, Jacobsen examined the architectural trends and anomalies. He found that most auto dealerships built or leased showrooms of one or two stories—some with mezzanines. Dealerships of more than two stories were constructed rarely in Des Moines—main examples being the “automotive department stores” Clemens Automobile Company, 210 Tenth Street, constructed 1916 (NRHP 2009); and Herring Motor Company, 912-922 Mulberry Street, constructed 1917-18 (NRHP); as well as the more utilitarian Studebaker Corporation Branch Office Building, 1440-48 Locust Street, constructed 1917-18 (NRHP 2015). (Jacobsen: 96-97; 152) While their size and mass conveyed the industry’s prosperity, the construction cost and lengthier construction time proved impractical. Instead, dealers and speculative investors devoted resources to adding design details to facades and the sales floor.

In her 1983 study of Auto Row, Long described the typical Des Moines building appearance:

“The new structures along Locust were of the auto age, often having larger doorways and elevators for the vehicles and ample showroom windows to display the gleaming merchandise.... Most of these new buildings were brick but exhibited a variety of decorative detail, including geometric brick patterns, organic terra cotta designs and classically inspired detail. In some cases, open space for parking was part of the original layout, making for a less congested arrangement.” (Long 1983a: 42)

For auto dealers who chose to locate their businesses on the Locust Street double block in the 1910s and 1920s, this location and this particular time made sense because it was located on the main street connecting downtown commercial core where wealthy individuals worked with the west-side upper-class neighborhoods where they lived. By redeveloping what was mostly a residential neighborhood adjoining an industrial zone, auto dealers had more room to expand (especially since the lots in the Locust Street double block were larger than some in the concentrated commercial core), maximizing their exposure while retaining access to potential buyers.

As to the location of the new auto showrooms, the national trend of infilling around the larger buildings also took place in Des Moines. “The location of the three big concerns... Herring Motor Company, Clemens Automobile Company and Studebaker Corporation—mark fairly well the new motor district,” reported the Chamber of Commerce in its May 1916 magazine. (*Des Moines*, May 1916: 6) Locust already being the prominent retail street in the commercial core, terminating across the river at the Capitol, retained that status on Auto Row, with Grand an up-and-coming street, and Walnut and Mulberry more industrial -- attracted truck and specialty auto businesses. Ninth Street, or Tenth Street where the Clemens and Herring

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buildings were located, formed the eastern boundary and 18th Street with the Ford Motor Co. factory (extant but altered with 1950s addition and conversion to school use; 1801 Grand Avenue) formed the western boundary. The Studebaker Corporation Branch Office Building (extant, NRHP 2015; 1440 Locust Street) occupied the southeastern corner at 15th Street of the 1300-1400 Locust Street double block; as happened within the nascent auto industry where turnover was swift, Studebaker vacated its new building a few years after construction and Apperson dealer Al Miller then filled the multi-story building with a mix of several different auto and truck lines, including Apperson.

The Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building embodies the post-World War I “sales palace” showroom as discussed by Liebs, with its polished facade and showroom overlooked by mezzanine offices, contrasted with a utilitarian rear service area, balcony parts storage, and upper workshop areas. The facade is composed nearly all of glass plate resting on a thin stone sill (no bulkhead)—with the oversize window openings designed to provide a tires-to-hood view of the Appersons displayed inside. The expansive masonry openings remain, with modern replacement glazing extending to the sidewalk. Although changes to storefront systems in high-demand, high-rent retail areas such as Locust Street are to be expected, at least one original transom window and some of the original wood window framing have been discovered under cover-up material inside and out; further discoveries may be forthcoming after asbestos removal is complete. In fall 1920, when the architectural rendering was released to the press, the building-to-be was described as one that would be among the best-lit showrooms in the city, with plans calling for transoms above the display windows to be backlit so that the showroom would sparkle at night and draw in additional light to the mezzanine offices. (*Des Moines Capital*, “Apperson Motor Co. to Have Fine New Building,” November 14, 1920: 5A)

To provide the showroom a clear span uninterrupted by columns—and carry the dead and live loads of heavy automobiles on two floors—Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson employed a hybrid structural system that enhanced the structural load-bearing masonry walls and wood beams with steel I beams at the front (north) and rear (south) ends of the building. The I-beams added extra support over the front showroom and support at the rear near the freight elevator. In the showroom, the I-beams are trimmed out as decorative box beams; in the second-floor finishing room area above, the I-beams are exposed beneath the stuccoed/plastered ceiling (the ceiling finished probably for fireproofing). Further support is provided by two rows of columns that march through the building. In the showroom, two structural columns were placed next to the north display windows with decorative bases; another set were hidden behind the showroom’s south wall. In the rear service area and on the second floor, the columns divide the interior into three bays mirrored by the placement of the I-beams; the columns are arranged so as to accommodate maneuvering automobiles.

Apperson vehicles reached the showroom from the rear workroom, pulling through a central double-doorway in the north workroom wall, passing through a central hallway that adjoined the first floor offices and toilet rooms, and entering via another set of double-doors, these in the south showroom wall. Vehicles entered the building via a centered garage door on the alley. Cars requiring services on the second floor (for example, painting may have been done in the Finishing Room) entered via the freight elevator entrance off

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the alley.

This building evokes its time and place, constructed during the early 1920s farm crisis that hit Midwestern states particularly hard but also caused a general economic slowdown. The growing financial depression weeded out weak, overextended auto manufacturers as well as dealers—including Des Moines dealer Al Miller, who commissioned the 1420 Locust Street showroom. Further 1920s construction within Des Moines' Auto Row slowed due to these economic conditions. (Long: E7) Contraction in the number of dealers and manufacturers would continue during the 1930s Great Depression, when few had the means to buy, and into the 1940s wartime, when no new civilian vehicles were manufactured. (Genat: 10-11) It would not be until post-World War II that large-scale auto-related building would again resume in Des Moines' Auto Row.

Auto Row remained a desirable location for dealerships in the midcentury because of its location and number of available showrooms and car lots. Dealers continued to use older showrooms without making many updates—the detailing of the architecture was no longer important to dealers or manufacturers: “The showrooms were the eggshells and the cars were the yolks—the cars were what mattered,” explained long-time dealer Bill Jensen, retired owner of Crescent Chevrolet, who began working in the Des Moines auto industry in 1949 and subleased auto storage space in 1420 Locust Street during the 1950s. One challenge that faced dealers using older showrooms was maneuvering wider, heavier vehicles through narrow garage doors and columned interiors. Later, auto manufacturers required dealerships to use specific architectural plans and finish materials, resulting in contemporary “cookie cutter” dealerships. (Jensen informant interview)

Background: Early Land Development in J.C. Savery's Park Addition, Block 2 prior to Auto Row

Several phases of planning and development have taken place in the plat where the Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building was built, in J.C. Savery's Park Addition. This section will briefly review their impact on the creation of Auto Row west of the downtown commercial core.

Locust Street Railroad Depot Double block: Mid-19th-century transportation aspirations led to the creation of a “triple block” on Locust Street between 12th and 15th streets reserved for a railroad depot for the Mississippi & Missouri Rail Road (sic) Company. Railroads were the major urban economic engine at the time that Des Moines was incorporated in 1851 as the Town of Fort Des Moines, a military fort built at the confluence of the Des Moines and Raccoon rivers. A group of investors purchased adjoining tracts of land west of the Fort Des Moines plats and each contributed land to the depot in the late 1840s and early 1850s. Investor Jonathan Lyon Jr. eventually lost his depot land to various creditors in the 1860s. (Abstract of title for 1420 Locust Street) Decades later, 13th Street would be cut through, leaving the double block.

West End Garden District: Scholarly study about “West End” residential development documents the western movement of well-to-do community leaders, who in the 1870s and 1880s built homes surrounded by gardens occupying multiple city lots. (Jacobsen 2000) But in the 1880s, as industrial development encroached to the south along the river and rail lines, high-end housing began shifting still farther west.

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(Long 1982: 2.2-2.3) That shift freed up the former gardens and other undeveloped land for infill housing. J. C. Savery's Park Addition illustrates these trends: In the late 1860s, businessman James C. Savery reassembled some of the depot land and in 1870 recorded a plat of 24 lots in two blocks on either side of Locust Street—largely today's 1400 block of Locust Street. (Abstract of Title for 1420 Locust St.) Within Block 2, in 1880 newspaper editor J.S. Clarkson moved to a large house, 1428 Locust Street, with grounds occupying four lots; by 1889 Clarkson had sold the house and three lots for a \$10,000 loan. On the same block, adjutant general and quartermaster general William L. Alexander, listed in 1880s city directories at 1402 Locust Street, also owned more than one lot. In 1894 he sold the lot at 1420 Locust Street to billiards hall operator Daniel Lehane, who erected a \$4,000 two-and-a-half-story frame house. (Abstract of Title for 1420 Locust St.; *Register & Leader*, April 7, 1894; Sanborn maps; Still College Archives, held at successor institution Des Moines University)

College Campus Development: In 1898, a group of osteopathic doctors and backers leased, then purchased the former Clarkson lots on which to build one of the first osteopathic medical colleges in the country. The Dr. S.S. Still College of Osteopathy opened in fall 1898, holding classes in the large house and a rented brick double-house until a wing of a new classically designed masonry institutional building designed by architects George Hallett and Harry D. Rawson was completed in 1899. (Further additions were to be built when enrollment and funding permitted; unfortunately the college never expanded on the site.) This institutional use accelerated change in the Locust Street double block. (*The Des Moines Daily News*, August 30, 1898; City directory, 1899: 682A; Still: various undated newspaper clippings) The college underwent institutional division and financial struggles during the early 20th century. The reformed Still College of Osteopathy took on financial backers starting in 1905 that included the Hubbell family, major property owners in the city. Eventually the college building was split off from the remaining lots, which the Hubbell family controlled and redeveloped into Auto Row commercial buildings. (Abstracts for 1424 and 1430 Locust Street)

Rental District: The institutional presence of Still College and the related demand for student and faculty housing affected the built environment in J.C. Savery's Park Addition. Families took in student roomers and boarders. Later, some houses were converted to boarding or rooming houses. Eventually the houses were torn down for Auto Row commercial buildings and/or apartment buildings. The Lehane residence, 1420 Locust (future site of the Apperson building), located in the shadow of the Still College building, illustrates the opportunities that the changing land use presented to property owners. Lehane and his family occupied the house until his death in 1910, and also rented rooms. (*Des Moines Daily News*, October 2, 1902) After Lehane's death, his daughters moved away and rented 1420 Locust as "housekeeping and sleeping rooms." (City directories; classified ads such as *The Des Moines News*, June 27, 1914, and October 18, 1918) By December 1918, the Lehane sisters had conveyed the property via a 99-year lease to real estate agent F.F. Frost and two Rawson brothers—members of the family who would go on to develop the Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building at that site. Fittingly, after the Still College moved to new quarters in 1927, the old medical school building, 1424 Locust Street, was converted to an apartment complex. (*Des Moines Sunday Register*, October 2, 1927)

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Architectural Significance: Proudfoot & Bird et al. Multiple Property Document

The Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building is architecturally significant under National Register Criterion C — Architecture under the MPD “The Architectural Legacy of Proudfoot & Bird in Iowa, 1882-1940,” by historian Barbara Beving Long. (Long 1988) As Long sets forth, “For well over forty years, the Des Moines architectural firm of Proudfoot & Bird et al. played a significant role in designing Iowa’s architectural heritage.... The firm’s statewide legacy is broad and deep. Of their approximately 658 Iowa commissions between 1885 and 1940, about half (an estimated 338) were in Des Moines.” (Long 1988: E1) Regarding the significance of Proudfoot & Bird et al. buildings, Long states:

“The property type directly calls attention to the meaningful role the Des Moines architectural firm of Proudfoot & Bird, et al. played in designing Iowa’s architectural heritage.... Proudfoot & Bird, et al. was considered the foremost architectural firm in the state, especially between 1910 and 1925. However, the firm’s Iowa years date from 1896 (and possibly as early as 1882) and illustrate an unusual continuum. Few firms can trace a similar record of uninterrupted practice, one that places it in the forefront of architectural practice in the state. The experience of the firm offers opportunity to learn about architectural practice in Iowa from the late nineteenth century through the 1930s.” (Long 1988: F2)

Long set forth registration requirements (Long 1988: F3-4). Below, these requirements will be quoted verbatim (set italics), with fulfillment discussion of how the Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building meets those requirements:

Area of Significance.

- a. Criterion C: properties that represent the work of a master architectural firm.*
- b. Date from presence in Iowa, 1882-1940*

Fulfillment: This building represents the work of a master architectural firm, being designed by Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson and may represent the work specifically of architect Harry D. Rawson, one of the owners of the building. It falls into the date range, being constructed 1920-1921.

Characteristics and Qualities.

- a. Association with Proudfoot & Bird, et al. is attributable.*
- b. Of sufficient design quality to embody distinctive and successful characteristics of the firm’s design work.*
- c. Illustrate architectural heritage of Iowa, 1882-1940.*

Important Subtypes.

- d. Commercial, including ... automobile-related buildings.*

Fulfillment: The association with the firm is attributable via architectural plans for the building currently housed at the Proudfoot successor firm of Brooks Borg Skiles AE, via historical newspaper reporting about the construction of the building, and via the abstract of title for the property which shows Harry D. Rawson

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and his brothers leasing the land and constructing the Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building as an investment property.

The design quality is more than sufficient to embody the distinctive and successful characteristics of the firm's design work. Long specifically cites automobile-related buildings and industrial buildings as two "important subtypes" of Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson. She states: "The firm's one- and two-story commercial buildings, especially automobile-related ones, are typically brick, have fairly simple geometric detail (including the diamond shape), and contrasting stone or concrete trim." (Long 1988: E11) Long also identifies decorative diamonds as a distinctive characteristic:

"Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson often added decorative diamonds to their commercial facades. The motif is more common on smaller commercial buildings, especially automobile-related ventures. The diamonds are executed in contrasting trim (stone or concrete) and are often used in conjunction with brick patterns, another inexpensive early 20th-century technique for enlivening the surface of a design. Most examples [diamond motifs] have been altered..." (Long 1988: E12)

In the case of the two-story Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building, it fits the pattern of use of brick with limestone and wood detailing on the facade, although the interplay of materials and window treatments is complex. The facade features what Richard Longstreth calls a two-story enframed window wall, a design strategy that simplifies fenestrations and other architectural features by unifying them within a continuous border in order to create a single compositional unit. (Longstreth: 464) In this case, symmetrical brick wall piers and decorative stone trim outlines the grouping of first-floor storefront windows and doors, transoms, signband, and second-story windows. Above the window enframing, inset diamonds created with brickwork and stone define the top of the building. The exterior's design as originally designed and as exists today is perfectly symmetrical. Inside the formal showroom, symmetry continues. The tall beamed ceiling and airy interior free of intrusive columns was made possible due to hybrid engineering discussed above; the ceiling's deep cornices and boxed beams would have looked at home in luxurious bank and hotel lobbies—and indeed the original inked plans include a pencil sketch of a tiered chandelier. The overall effect taken from examining the architectural plans and the extant showroom is one of elegance. (Proudfoot 1920a)

The Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building is further important for its illustration of Iowa and Des Moines' architectural history through its direct connection with architect Harry D. Rawson—a fact that had been lost to time along with the building's pedigree as a Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson design, due to the labeling of the architectural plans with the address 1418 Locust Street. (The address 1418 Locust Street pertains to an adjoining lot (Lot 5), whereas the Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building occupies Lot 6, otherwise known as 1420 Locust Street.) This new discovery of the architect (or his firm) designing his own automobile showroom/service center investment property demonstrates the commitment Harry D. Rawson had to the Des Moines automobile industry and his interest in emerging technologies—both the automobiles housed within the buildings and the engineering required to design buildings to successfully carry the live and dead loads of autos on display and in the process of repair.

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Finally, the automobile-related use is an important subtype, as identified by Long. She states: "The firm also received commissions for a significant number (at least seventeen) of automobile-related buildings in Des Moines and across the state...." Long left open the possibility of additional buildings yet to be discovered as commissions from the firm. (Long 1988: E12)

Integrity. Alterations should not impair appreciation of quality of design.

b. Commercial buildings: some ground floor alterations may be acceptable, especially for prominent buildings.

Fulfillment: Overall, the alterations to the exterior and interior of the Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building have largely involved covering up original historic fabric, rather than removing it. As the new owners remove the non-historic material, it is clear that the changes made to the building are largely reversible—and therefore do not impair appreciation of the quality of design. As is typical for buildings in high-rent, high-demand retail settings, the ground-floor storefront system has been modernized. Through the 1960s, Locust Street was *the* premier street for retail in Des Moines and all of central Iowa. The remainder of the main façade remains intact. The front elevation's second-floor window openings and frames remain intact. The stone trim and decorative diamond motifs remain in excellent condition. The brickwork is also in good condition; although some of the exterior has been painted, rehabilitation plans call for gentle removal of paint following Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines and Standards and Preservation Brief No. 1. The remainder of the exterior includes original steel-sash windows inset into brickwork. Inside, the floor plan remains largely intact behind removable late-20th-century gypsum-board walls. Most original materials, finishes, and features remain intact, behind removable late-20th-century office finishes (carpet, gypsum board, and dropped ceilings). Stepping into the front showroom, it is evident from the 16-foot soaring ceiling with mezzanine offices tucked behind massive decorative beams and deep cornice detailing that this room was built to showcase high-end merchandise. Full rehabilitation of the long-hidden original ceramic tile floor, plaster walls, and full height window openings and transoms will return the showroom to its glory. Behind late-20th-century gypsum board and plywood, the rear and second-floor workspaces retain original flooring (concrete on first floor, wood on second), exposed masonry walls, exposed ceilings, structural steel, support columns, and original steel-sash windows—all as specified in the Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson plans. In these work rooms, the light-industrial finishes demonstrate that behind the glamorous showroom, dirty work needed to be done to prepare and maintain the autos.

Architectural Significance: Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson and Auto Row Architecture

As Long details, under architect Harry D. Rawson's tenure with Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson, the firm became the leading architectural firm in Iowa and expanded into new building types including automobile showrooms/service centers. Through its many early-20th-century commissions for auto-related business places, the firm helped shape the appearance of Des Moines Auto Row, bringing to this emerging district the dignity and design finesse employed in its numerous civic and financial institution landmarks. That Harry Rawson personally invested in building a modern auto showroom for a high-profile auto dealer and distributor—his second auto showroom on the Locust Street double block in which he is known to have

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owned—further shows his regard for the auto-related building subtype and the particular design of 1420 Locust Street.

Long examined how architect Harry D. Rawson arrived at the firm at the time of unprecedented prosperity in Iowa, thanks to high crop prices and high demand for them. Growth in urban population, business starts, and school children increased total architectural commissions, especially those of the Proudfoot firm, which she attributes to Rawson: “Strengthened by political and social connections of Rawson, the newly formed Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson emerged as the foremost architectural firm in the state.” (Long 1988: E6)

Rawson was born in 1872, the youngest son of a prominent Des Moines pioneer family. He received his bachelor of arts degree in architecture from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1896, toured Europe, and then worked for a Chicago architectural firm. Rawson then returned to Des Moines and by 1898 was in partnership with architect George E. Hallett as Hallett & Rawson. This partnership continued until Hallett withdrew from the firm in 1910 and Rawson joined with Proudfoot & Bird to form Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson. (Long 1988: E3-4; Harlan: “Harry D. Rawson”) Rawson leveraged his family’s political ties and connections to win commissions for his firm. (Long 1988: E4) Oldest brother Charles was chairman of the Republican State Central Committee (1912-1922), appointed U.S. Senator in 1922, and then served as a member of the Republican National Committee (1924-1932). Brother Hollis “Hallie” was married to the daughter of Iowa Governor and U.S. Senator Albert Cummins, who twice ran for president.

Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson’s varied work during this boom time (1910-1925) included high-profile government projects (including at least 63 schools, several college buildings, and four city halls), 118 houses, landmark skyscraper office buildings, about 20 banks, a dozen apartment buildings, and at least 17 auto-related buildings. The firm’s commissions also reflected carefully cultivated and maintained long-term relationships with organizations such as the State Board of Education and Des Moines school district, as well as individuals such as the wealthy Hubbell family, which owned (and still owns) considerable property in the Des Moines commercial core. (Long 1988: E6-11)

Thus, the use of Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson for building auto dealerships and other auto-related commercial architecture fits Liebs’ findings of model auto showrooms borrowing from highly regarded civic architecture. With the Des Moines firm’s high quality designs located throughout the downtown commercial core and well-represented in upper-class neighborhoods via beautiful homes and schools wrought by its architects, hiring Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson would have imbued an auto dealership with dignity and grace attractive to customers.

In Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson’s commercial work, Long found one- and two-story brick buildings predominate, particularly with auto-related commissions. Facade detailing was relatively simple and geometric, with decorative diamonds being a common motif especially used on auto-related ventures. Long noted the diamond motif to be a distinctive characteristic of the firm: “The diamonds are executed in contrasting trim (stone or concrete) and are often used in conjunction with brick patterns, another inexpensive early 20th century technique for enlivening the surface of a design.” (Long 1988: E11-12)

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Background: Developing the Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building—a Family Affair

Developing the Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building as a side investment involved all four prominent Rawson brothers: politician and manufacturer Charles A., financier J. Scott (Joseph S.), manufacturer Hollis A., and architect Harry D. The brothers engaged in complementary careers with multiple intersections. As of 1919, Charles and Hollis continued their father's claymaking business: Charles was president and manager of Iowa Pipe & Tile Co. and vice president Des Moines Brick & Tile Co.; Hollis was president Des Moines Brick & Tile Co. and secretary-treasurer of Iowa Pipe & Tile Co. J. Scott was president Central Trust Co., of which Charles was a director. (1919 city directory) Future research may determine further levels of intersection, such as use of clay products produced by Charles and Hollis' firms on buildings produced by Hallett & Rawson and Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson; and architectural work produced by Harry for his brothers' workplaces.

The brothers also engaged in at least two other side business ventures:

- *Rawson & Co.*: Harry and Hollis had a partnership together, Rawson & Co. (Abstract of Title for 1420 Locust Street). The partnership, under the direction of Harry, built a four-story investment property on Auto Row—the Rawson & Co. Apartment Building, 1301 Locust Street (NRHP). (*The Des Moines Capital*, June 4, 1915) Designed in 1915 by Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson (and attributed to Harry D. Rawson), the estimated \$75,000 building contained 39 apartments and a first-floor automobile showroom and service garage for “electric cars only.” The first auto tenant was Spry & MacArthur Co., dealers of the Milburn electric auto. The building occupies a corner lot at the intersection of 13th Street within the Locust Street double block. As documented in William C. Page's “Hallett Flats—Rawson & Co. Apartment Building” National Register of Historic Places Form, the 1301 Locust Street apartment building shared utilities with the adjoining apartment building at 1305-07 Locust Street (NRHP), a 1904 George E. Hallett-designed investment apartment building; Harry Rawson acquired title to this property following Hallett's 1910 withdrawal from the Hallett & Rawson architectural firm. (Page: 7.2-3; 8.17-21)
- *Teetor Adding Machine Co.*: As of 1919, Charles Rawson was president of the Teetor firm, J. Scott was secretary, and Harry presumably contributed architectural work given a Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson architectural sketch of the building (720 W. Sixth Avenue, nonextant) that accompanied a Chamber of Commerce magazine story about the firm. (*Des Moines*, November 1917: 10)
- *Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building*: The Rawson family's involvement with constructing the Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building (noted on the architectural drawings as “Garage Building for the Rawson Brothers”) began in late 1918 with Charles and J. Scott engaging in a 99-year-lease of the land in conjunction with real estate agent F.F. Frost. In June 1919, Frost and J. Scott conveyed their interests to Hollis. That same month, Frost ran a classified advertisement for Lots 5 and 6 (1416-18 Locust and 1420 Locust): “99 Year Lease without reappraisal - \$4200 per annum. 1416-1420 Locust Street—102 x 167 feet. 80-foot alley in rear. Lease for sale at \$16,000.” (*The Des Moines News*, June 22, 1919: 10.) Hollis conveyed half of his double interest in 1420 Locust Street to Harry in October 1920, so that the three

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brothers each owned one-third shares.

High-profile auto and truck dealer Al Miller announced in November 1920 that he would be leasing from the Rawson brothers trio a new custom showroom for his Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company. The newspaper story lists 1418 Locust Street as the building site and the architectural plans are labeled with this address—perhaps indicating that Miller had considered Lot 5. (*Des Moines Capital*, November 14, 1920; Proudfoot 1920a) But in December 1920, a building permit was taken out by the “Rawson Brothers” for Lot 6–1420 Locust Street, and an elevation of the Apperson showroom signed by Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson was published showing it sited next to the Still College of Osteopathy medical school building. (City of Des Moines Building Permit Log; *The Des Moines Register*, December 12, 1920) The newspaper description of the project detailed the layout and uses: “On the first floor will be a handsome, well-lighted showroom, with offices on a mezzanine floor. At the rear end will be a large service station with a balcony running its entire length for the storage of parts. On the second floor Mr. Miller plans to install a paint and top shop and a well-equipped machine room.” (*The Des Moines Register*, December 12, 1920)

The Apperson line of cars hailed from Kokomo, Indiana, and was named for machinists Elmer and Edgar Apperson, the pioneering co-builders with Elwood Haynes of one of the earliest gasoline motor cars constructed in the United States. The brothers launched Apperson Brothers Auto Co. auto line in 1901 and production continued through circa 1925. The cars were noted as heavy-duty expensive luxury cars. (*The Des Moines Register*, April 4, 1920; Huffman: 200; *The Automobile Journal*, February 1918: 63)

Auto Dealers Occupying the Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building, 1921-circa 1951

The period of significance for the Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building is 1921 through circa 1951, reflecting the years that auto dealerships/distributorships leased the building and including the early decades that the Rawson brothers owned the building. Below are the auto dealers who occupied the building during this period of significance, listed in chronological order.

- *Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company (1921-summer 1922)*: Al Miller, manager and president of Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company, took out a five-year lease with the Rawson brothers in fall 1920 for a new showroom, “one of the most handsome automobile salesrooms in Des Moines,” dedicated solely to Apperson dealership. (*Des Moines Capital*, November 14, 1920) This was a change in Miller’s course of business; the 20-year veteran of the auto industry had operated several companies from the former Studebaker Corporation branch house, 1440 Locust Street, which he began leasing in 1919. (*Des Moines Daily News*, February 28, 1919). His companies included Iowa Truck & Tractor Co., distributor of several truck and tractor lines as well as Anderson, Elgin, and Studebaker autos; Des Moines Simoniz Co., distributor of auto cleaner/wax; and Motor Equipment Co. Miller used the three-story dealership to store large shipments of vehicles as well as house a large painting shop. He prided himself on offering Appersons in a wide variety of colors, a new phenomenon in auto retailing. (*The Des Moines News*, February 6, 1919 and February 20, 1920; *The Des Moines Register*, January 4, 1920 and May 30, 1920)

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Miller's Apperson dealership took occupancy of the Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building by March 1921, based on the street number change to 1420 Locust Street in Miller's prodigious pre-1921 Des Moines Auto Show advertising—all including the tagline "Al Miller, The Apperson Man." (*Des Moines Tribune*, March 2, 1921) Newspaper coverage at the time of the new building announcement credited Miller as the distributor for the Apperson in six states, plus heir to the Chicago distributorship for all of Illinois come January 1921. (*The Des Moines Capital*, November 14, 1920) But less than two years later, Miller made the front page of the newspaper for fleeing Des Moines from creditors, then returning to hire attorneys to contest action brought against his company. (*The Des Moines Capital*, July 2, 1922) Later he again fled, wanted on charges of embezzlement—with additional warrants for arrest pending for passing worthless checks in Anita, Iowa, and Omaha, and a charge of jumping bail in New York City after being arrested for Omaha authorities. (*The Des Moines Capital*, November 6, 1922) As a postscript, the Apperson manufacturing company folded operations in 1925, following the 1920 death of one of the founders. (Huffman: 200)

- *Chase Nash Franklin Company (1922-circa 1923)*: By August 1922, another car dealer was occupying the building: Chase Nash Franklin Company, a dealership that moved west from smaller quarters at 1118-1122 Locust Street. The firm distributed Nash passenger cars and trucks (which debuted in 1916), Franklin luxury cars, and Autocar trucks and parts. Representing the fluid, fast-paced change in the auto industry, dealership owner J. Given Chase added the Franklin distribution covering central Iowa in winter 1922 and the Autocar business in summer 1922. (*Motor Age*, "In the Retail Field," February 9, 1922: 39; *The Des Moines Capital*, "Adamson with Chase-Nash Co.," August 20, 1922: 2A) Chase also maintained his pre-auto business, secretary and treasurer of Chase Brothers grocery store, 812-814 Walnut Street. (City directories)

A short story about Chase Nash in *Motor Age* trade journal speaks to the tough economic conditions that it and other Des Moines auto dealers and distributors faced in the early 1920s due to overall poor business conditions and low prices for farm crops: "An inquiry conducted by a dealer of the Chase-Nash Co., Des Moines, among 689 farmers in his territory elicited the information that of that number 87 made a definitive statement that they would buy a new car this spring. Last year a similar inquiry was conducted by this dealer and of 712 farmers interviewed only 13 made such a definitive statement." (*Motor Age*, March 9, 1922) Also indicative of hard times in the Des Moines auto industry: The 1923 Des Moines Auto Show, in which Chase Nash Franklin Co. participated, featured fewer than 30 auto dealers, down from the 40 that participated in 1921.

- *Nash-Vriesema Auto Co. (circa 1924-circa 1933)*: Based in Omaha, this distributorship took over the Chase Nash territory by 1924. Previously, owner Dan T. Vriesema's territory had covered all of Iowa but the eastern one-third, all of Nebraska, and part of South Dakota. (*Motor Age*, May 18, 1922) In 1928, Nash-Vriesema took out a permit for a \$250 project on adjoining Lot 5, probably to raze the double-house (1416-1418 Locust Street) and develop an outdoor car lot with small rear building sharing the eastern sidewall of 1420 Locust Street. This firm remained at 1420 Locust until about 1933. (City directories)

- Vacant (circa 1934-circa 1935): City directories for 1934 and 1935 list the address as vacant.

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• *Crescent Chevrolet and Capital Auto Market (circa 1936)*: The 1936 city directory lists two businesses, each under a different address, indicating that the storefront may have been split in two. Crescent Chevrolet's used car department occupied 1420 Locust Street, and perhaps used the outdoor car lot to the east. Capital Auto Market, a used-car business, occupied 1422 Locust Street. Crescent Chevrolet became a dominant dealer in the city and remained in the greater Auto Row area through the end of the 20th century. (Jensen informant interview)

• *Hudson-Jones Auto Co. (circa 1937-circa 1938?)*: This well-established auto dealer (founded in 1909 and owned by G.W. Jones beginning circa 1911) occupied 1406-1410 Locust Street as its primary building and appears to have leased adjoining auto-related buildings and lots as needed. In 1937 and 1938, per city directory listings and advertisements, Hudson-Jones occupied more than half of the south side of the 1400 block of Locust Street, including the 1420-22 Locust Street showroom. Later city directories did not list Hudson-Jones beyond its 1406-10 Locust Street main showroom, but a historic photo circa 1943 shows the 1416-18 Locust car lot accessed from the street via a large arched "Hudson-Jones Used Car Lot" sign. And Hudson-Jones took out a permit in March 1947 for a \$20,000 project at 1416-1418 Locust Street, which presumably resulted in the larger one-story building as seen on the 1950 Sanborn map.

[[Banker's Trust ownership (1939-1948)]] Harry, Charles, and Hollis Rawson rented the garage building, but they did not own the land. The Rawson brothers as lessees and the Lehane sisters as property owners signed a mortgage to Banker's Trust for \$37,500 in March 1921, following construction. Harry D. Rawson died February 1934; the following year, the surviving lessees and property owners conveyed their interest in the property to Banker's Trust, but the bank filed for foreclosure. Charles A. Rawson died September 1936 while the foreclosure case was ongoing. Banker's Trust won the case in March 1938 and the court ordered the property sold. The bank was the highest bidder at the April 1939 sheriff's sale. After Banker's Trust took possession of the building in 1939, the building's auto-related use was briefly interrupted due to the economic depression followed by World War II-era restrictions on auto manufacturing. Two vending machine distributors occupied the building, each for about one year, followed by a hatchery distributor, K.I. Miller, who purchased the building in 1948 and owned it until 1961.

• *Orville Lowe Inc. (circa 1949-circa 1951)*: Leasing space in the Rawson brothers building helped propel auto dealer Orville Lowe to become one of the largest dealers in the state. The second-generation Ford and Mercury dealer was known as "Your East Des Moines Ford Dealer," headquartered at East Sixth and Des Moines streets, until he expanded and elevated his operations by opening "new display rooms for English-made automobiles"—two models of Ford Motor Co. cars and two weights of trucks—in the 1420-22 Locust showroom. (*Des Moines Register*, January 1, 1949; January 2, 1949) The West End Auto Row venture proved successful, and circa 1952 Lowe subleased the larger Hudson-Jones main showroom, 1406-10 Locust, after the owners of that company closed their business in 1952 due to the Hudson corporation eliminating distributorships. (Peverill informant interview) Lowe resigned his Ford contract in 1957 and purchased Mid-Town Motors Inc. in 1958, operating it as a Lincoln, Continental, and Mercury dealership. Lowe followed Hudson-Jones in stringing together a series of nearby lots and showrooms along Locust Street, as well as opening dealerships in other Iowa cities. (*Des Moines Register*, April 2, 1964; February

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27, 1986) In later advertising he called Locust Street “Orville Lowe Row,” a twist on the Auto Row name. He sold his dealership in 1980 and it continues operations as Stivers Ford Lincoln in a western suburb of Des Moines. (*Des Moines Register*, February 27, 1986; Stivers Ford)

After Orville Lowe Inc.’s departure from 1420 Locust in circa 1951, the building at 1420 Locust Street converted to light industrial use. The larger size of cars may have made entry into and through the building difficult, a fate that befell many early-20th-century Auto Row dealership buildings, according to long-time Auto Row dealer Bill Jensen. (Jensen informant interview) The arrival of Forman Ford & Co. glass company in circa 1952 likely resulted in the initial first-floor storefront system change and installation of color-glass panels over the signband (removed during the rehabilitation)—advertisements for the various glass products sold by the company. The building permit pulled in 1952 by building owner K.I. Miller may have covered this work. (City of Des Moines)

Postscript of the Des Moines West End Auto Row

Automobiles allowed urban residential development to extend beyond streetcar and interurban lines, decentralizing settlement. (Liebs: 7-37) In Des Moines, smaller auto rows grew outside of the West End, including the East Side. In the 1950s and 1960s, downtown Auto Row expanded north to Ingersoll Avenue, Linden Street, and High Street, with some adopting open lots and others applying Modern Movement architectural styles to classic auto showroom plans such as Crescent Chevrolet commissioning a modernistic two-story showroom with large display windows on both first and second floors for showcasing scores of vehicles under one roof. (Jensen informant interview)

In the late 1960s and 1970s, in response to white-collar jobs and suburban homes moved farther west and northwest, Des Moines dealerships began to follow suit. In 1967, dealers on the Merle Hay Auto Mile advertised 24-hour shopping (viewing) of parking lots filled with cars; Auto Row dealers countered by advertising brightly lit lots and touting the benefits of indoor showrooms for protecting vehicles and customers from hail storms and other inclement weather. (“Hail? No!” stated one Orville Lowe ad following a hail storm that damaged autos that were displayed outdoors.) By the 1990s, most downtown dealerships had left or been decommissioned due to retirement, with old showrooms used by smaller auto-related service or specialty firms (radiator repair, vehicle radio installation, vehicle alignment, etc.), for other light industrial uses, or for low-rent uses.

Large-scale demolition of Auto Row Buildings has occurred since the 1990s due to two massive corporate campus construction projects and the creation of a large sculpture park and public library on the West End. The last decade has seen a renewed interest in the rare remaining old showrooms and other auto-related buildings, with several being restored or rehabilitated for new commercial and/or residential uses.

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9. Major Bibliographical Sources

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"Lowe dead at 71," February 27, 1986: 7.
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"How New Apartments at 1424 Locust Street Will Look," October 2, 1927: Commercial.
"Iowa Has Most Autos on Population Basis," January 19, 1920: 10.
"Iowa Still First in Cars Per Capita," October 5, 1919: 4S.
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Miller signs 5-year lease for Apperson showroom, November 21, 1920: Commercial.
"Motor Industries Annual Balances Reach \$75,000,000," January 25, 1920: Commercial.
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County and State Polk County, Iowa

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Motor Age

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"In the Retail Field," May 18, 1922: 37.

"Iowa Farmers in Market," March 9, 1922: 28.

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Peveerill, William. Informant interview with the nephew of Julian A. Peveerill and son of Harry Peveerill, co-owners of Hudson-Jones Motor Co. and Peveerill Motor Sales, 1924-1952. March 7, 2013. (Peveerill informant interview)

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Register & Leader

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College of Osteopathy) on Locust Street, as well as college catalogs and related ephemera. Courtesy of Des Moines University Library, Kendall Reed Rare Book Room.

Stivers Ford Lincoln. Corporate website for the successor company to Orville Lowe's Midtown Mercury-Lincoln dealership. <Accessed online at www.stiversfordia.com.>

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Section 10 Page 34 Property name Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building
County and State Polk County, Iowa

10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

J.C. Savery's Park Addition, Block 2, Lot 6

Boundary Justification

The boundaries for this nomination are the historic boundaries of the property.

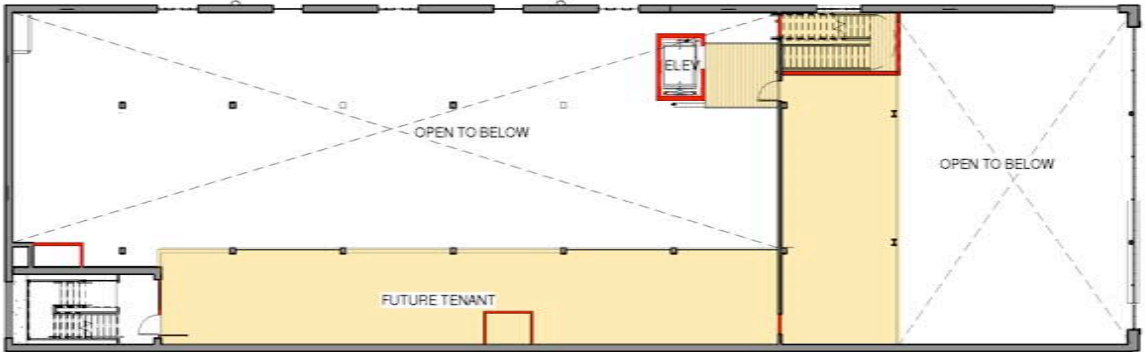
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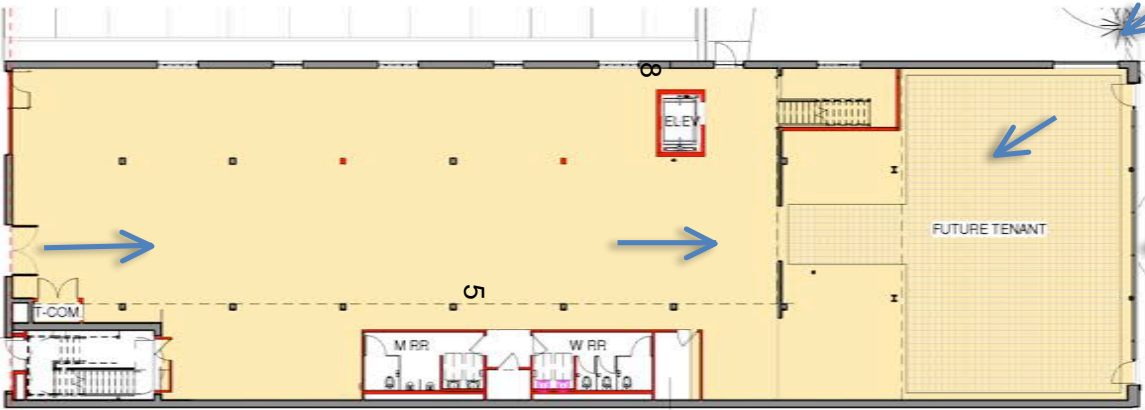
Section Photos Page 35 Property name Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building
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Floor Plan Sketch Map – Floor Plans First Floor and Mezzanine, 2015



PROPOSED 1420 - MEZZANINE PLAN

SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"



PROPOSED 1420 - 1ST FLOOR PLAN

SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"



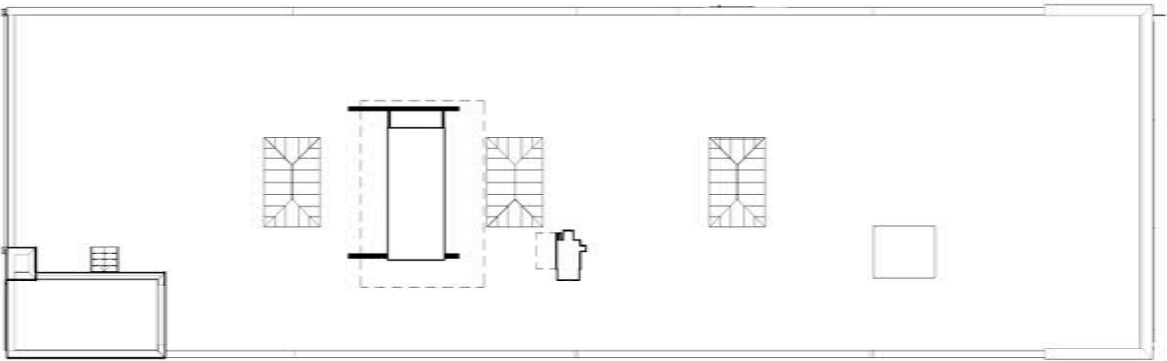
(SOURCE: Slingshot Architecture, 2015.)

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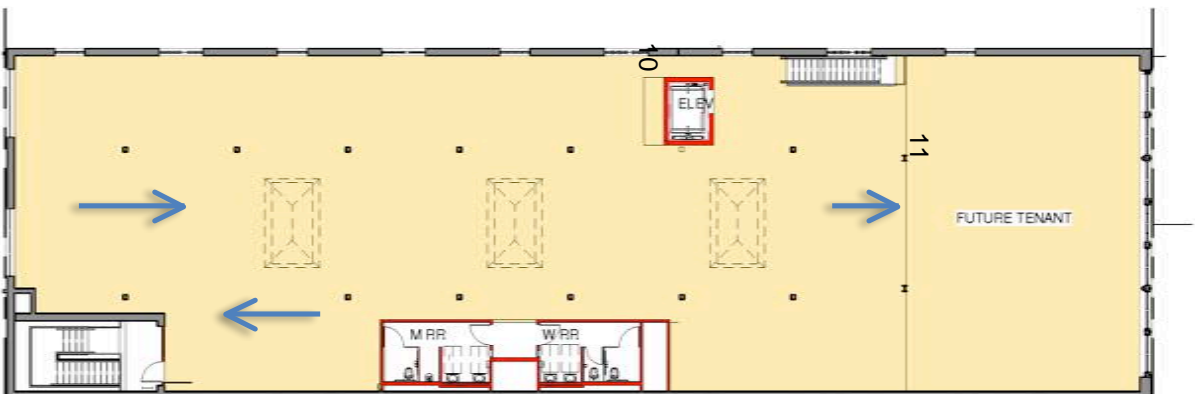
Section Photos Page 36 Property name Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building
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Floor Plan Sketch Map – Floor Plans Second Floor and Roof Plan, 2015



PROPOSED 1420 - ROOF PLAN

SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"



PROPOSED 1420 - 2ND FLOOR PLAN

SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

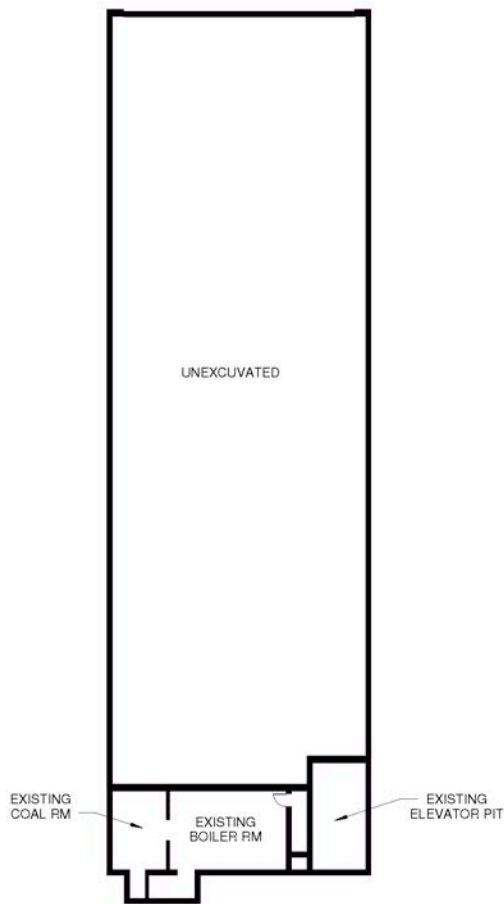
(SOURCE: Slingshot Architecture, 2015.)

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Section Photos Page 37 Property name Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building
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Floor Plan Sketch Map – Pre-Rehab Conditions Basement, 2013



1420 - EXISTING BASEMENT PLAN

SCALE: 1" = 20'-0"



SLINGSHOT
ARCHITECTURE
300 SOUTH GARDNER STREET, IOWA CITY, IA 52242

1420 | 24 | 30 Locust Street

08/29/13

(SOURCE: Slingshot Architecture, 2013.)

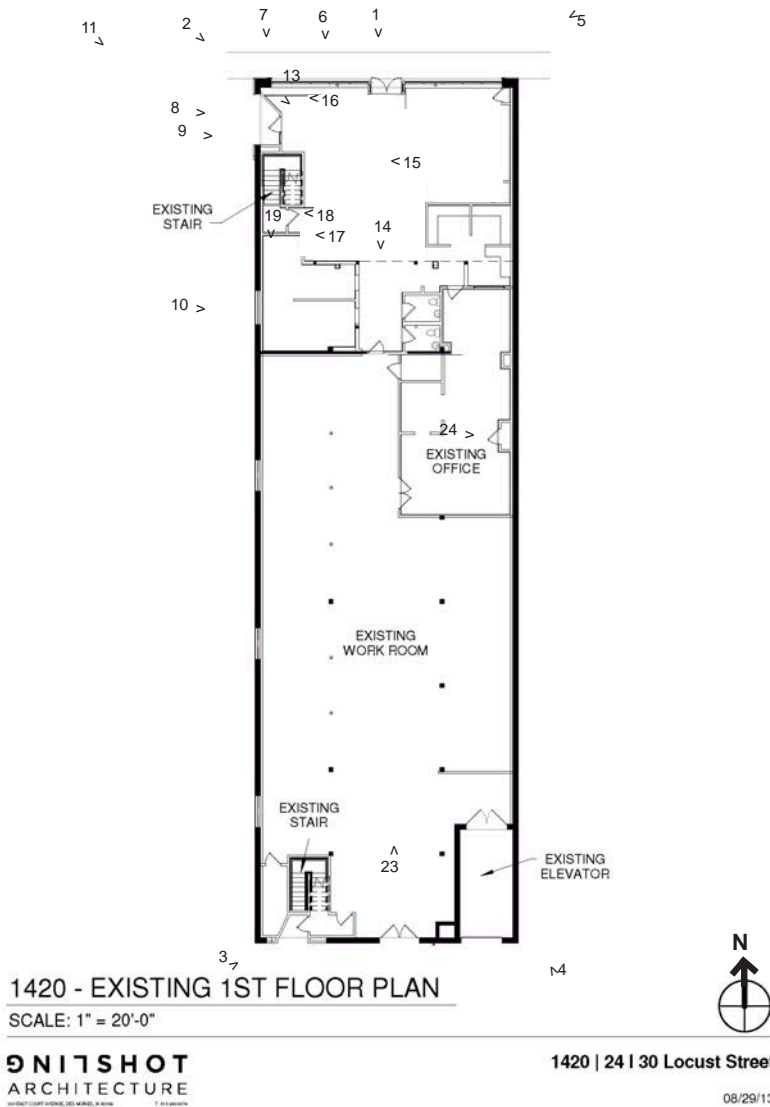
For reference, this plan shows pre-rehab conditions.

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Section Photos **Page** 38 **Property name** Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building
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Floor Plan Sketch Map and Photo Key – Pre-Rehab Conditions First Floor, 2013



(SOURCE: Slingshot Architecture, 2013.)

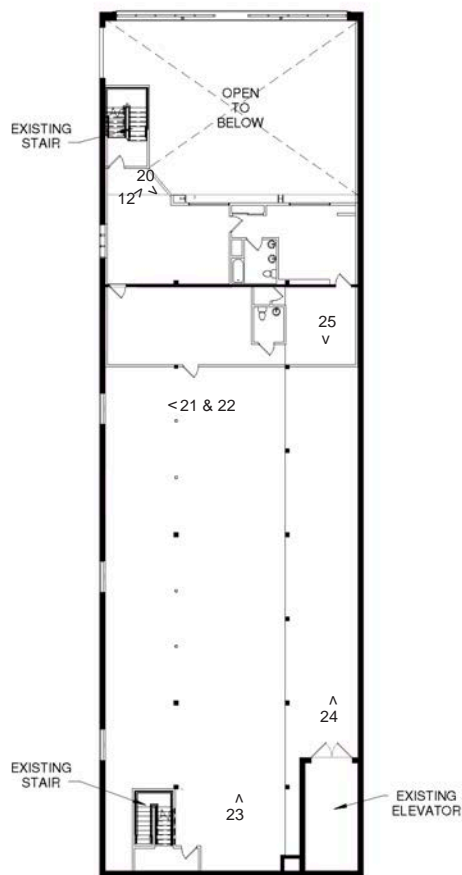
For reference, this plan shows pre-rehab conditions.

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Floor Plan Sketch Map and Photo Key – Pre-Rehab Existing Conditions Mezzanine, 2013



1420 - EXISTING MEZZANINE FLOOR PLAN

SCALE: 1" = 20'-0"



SLINGSHOT
ARCHITECTURE
101 EAST LOCUST STREET, SUITE 200, POLK COUNTY, IOWA 52241

1420 | 24 | 30 Locust Street

08/29/13

(SOURCE: Slingshot Architecture, 2013.)

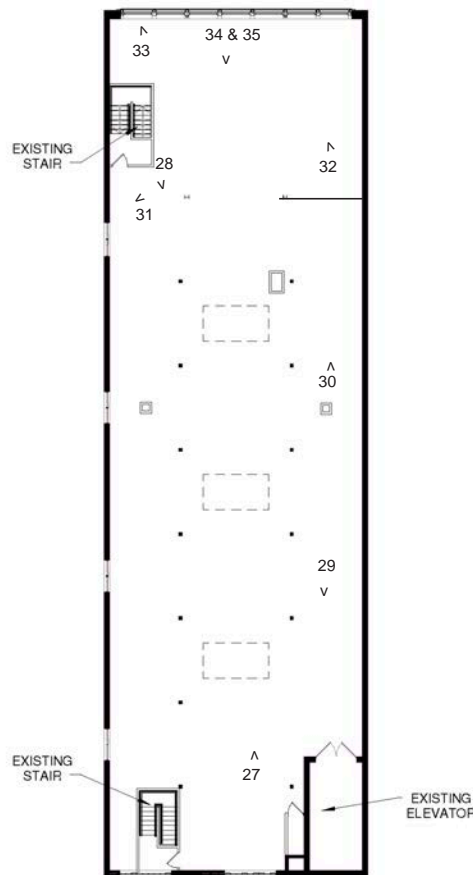
For reference, this plan shows pre-rehab conditions.

United States Department of the Interior
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Section Photos Page 40 Property name Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building
County and State Polk County, Iowa

Floor Plan Sketch Map and Photo Key – Pre-Rehab Existing Conditions Second Floor, 2013



1420- EXISTING 2ND FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: 1" = 20'-0"



SLINGSHOT
ARCHITECTURE
ARCHITECTURE & INTERIOR DESIGN

1420 | 24 | 30 Locust Street

08/29/13

(SOURCE: Slingshot Architecture, 2013.)

For reference, this plan shows pre-rehab conditions.

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County and State Polk County, Iowa

Photo Log

Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building, Des Moines, Polk County, Iowa.

All photographs taken by Jennifer James, Jennifer James Communications, Des Moines, Iowa, and will be on file digitally with the SHPO and owner. Photographs total 11.

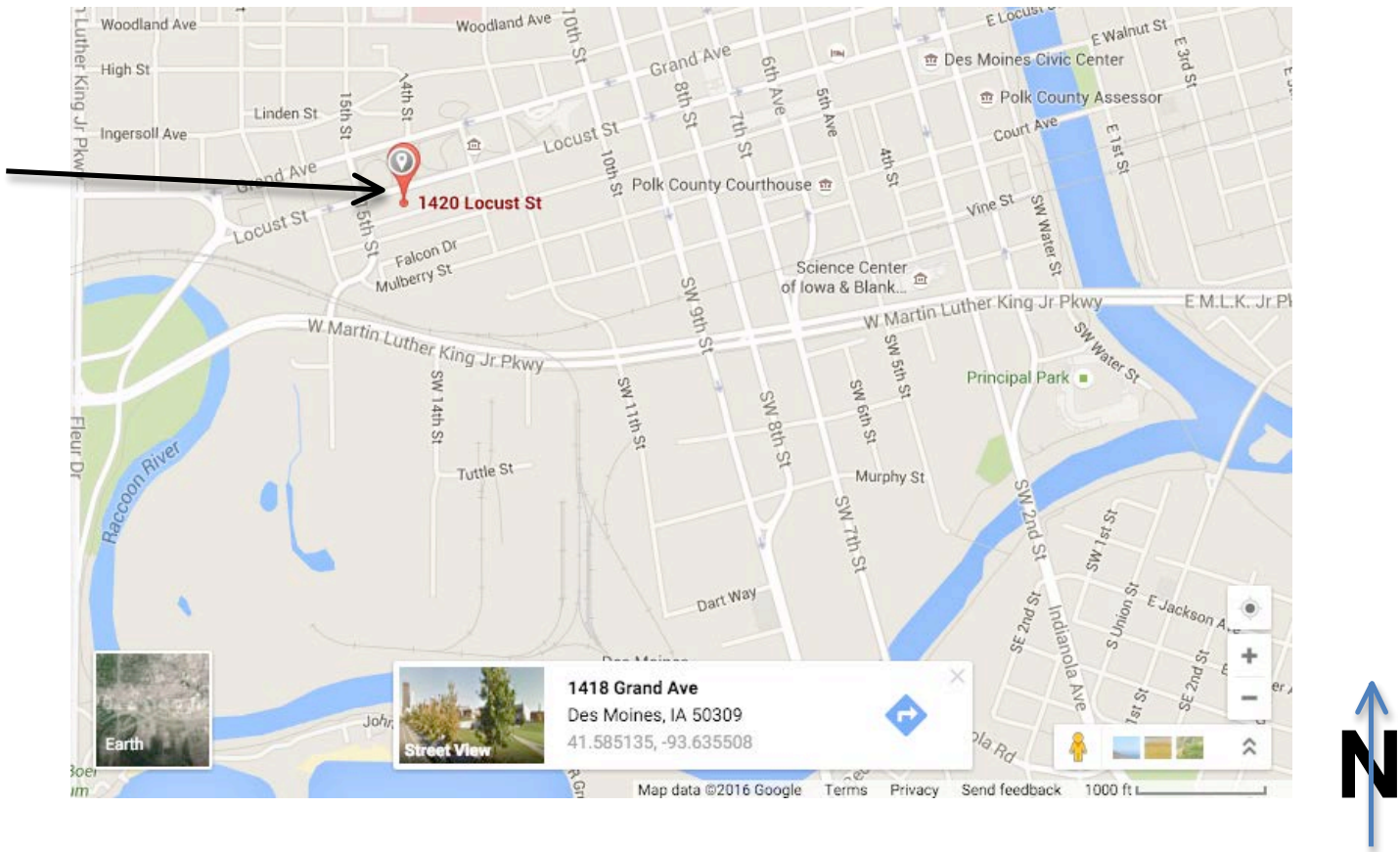
1. IA_PolkCounty_AppersonIowaMotorCar0001.jpg View of north and east elevations of Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building, looking southwest across Locust Street. February.2016.
2. IA_PolkCounty_AppersonIowaMotorCar0002.jpg View of north (primary) of Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building, looking south across Locust Street. February 2016.
3. IA_PolkCounty_AppersonIowaMotorCar0003.jpg View of north and west elevations looking southeast from Locust Street. 2016.
4. IA_PolkCounty_AppersonIowaMotorCar0004.jpg View of west elevation of Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building, looking northeast alley. February 2016.
5. IA_PolkCounty_AppersonIowaMotorCar0005.jpg View of south and east elevations of Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building, looking northwest from alley. February 2016.
6. IA_PolkCounty_AppersonIowaMotorCar0006.jpg View of first-floor showroom with upper mezzanine looking southeast. February 2016.
7. IA_PolkCounty_AppersonIowaMotorCar0007.jpg. View of first-floor rear workroom doorway leading into front showroom, looking north. February 2016.
8. IA_PolkCounty_AppersonIowaMotorCar0008.jpg View of first-floor rear service area with balcony parts storage looking north. February 2016.
9. IA_PolkCounty_AppersonIowaMotorCar0009.jpg View of second-floor workroom looking north. Fall 2015.
10. IA_PolkCounty_AppersonIowaMotorCar0010.jpg View of second-floor front finishing room looking north. Fall 2015.
11. IA_PolkCounty_AppersonIowaMotorCar0011.jpg View of second-floor freight elevator looking south. Fall 2015.

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County and State Polk County, Iowa

Figure 1: MAP – Google map showing latitude and longitude, 2016



(SOURCE: Google Maps)

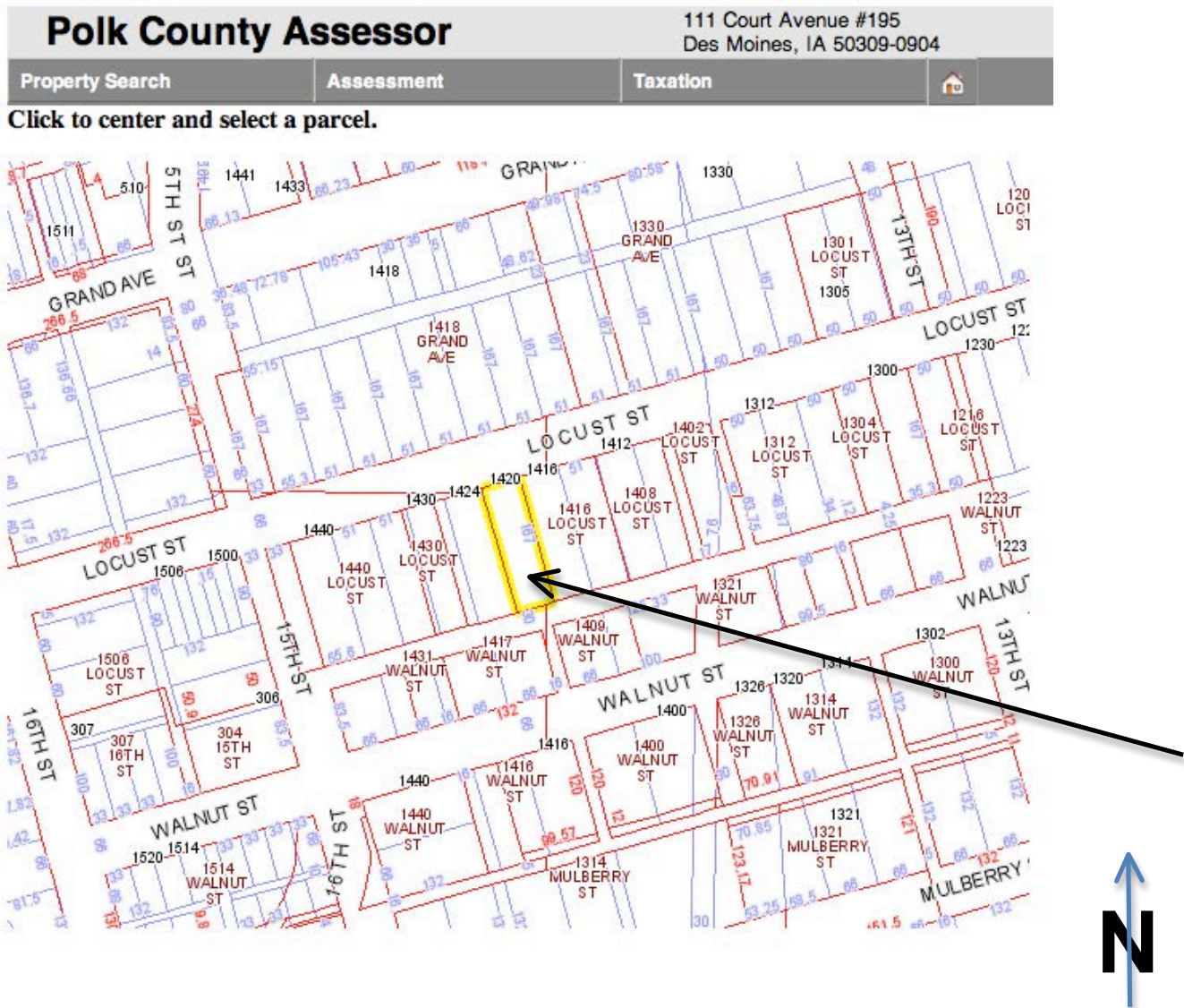
The left arrow indicates the location of the Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building, 1420 Locust Street, Des Moines.

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Figure 2. Site Map – Assessor’s Parcel Map, 2013



(SOURCE: Polk County Assessor's Office website, viewed May 5, 2013.)

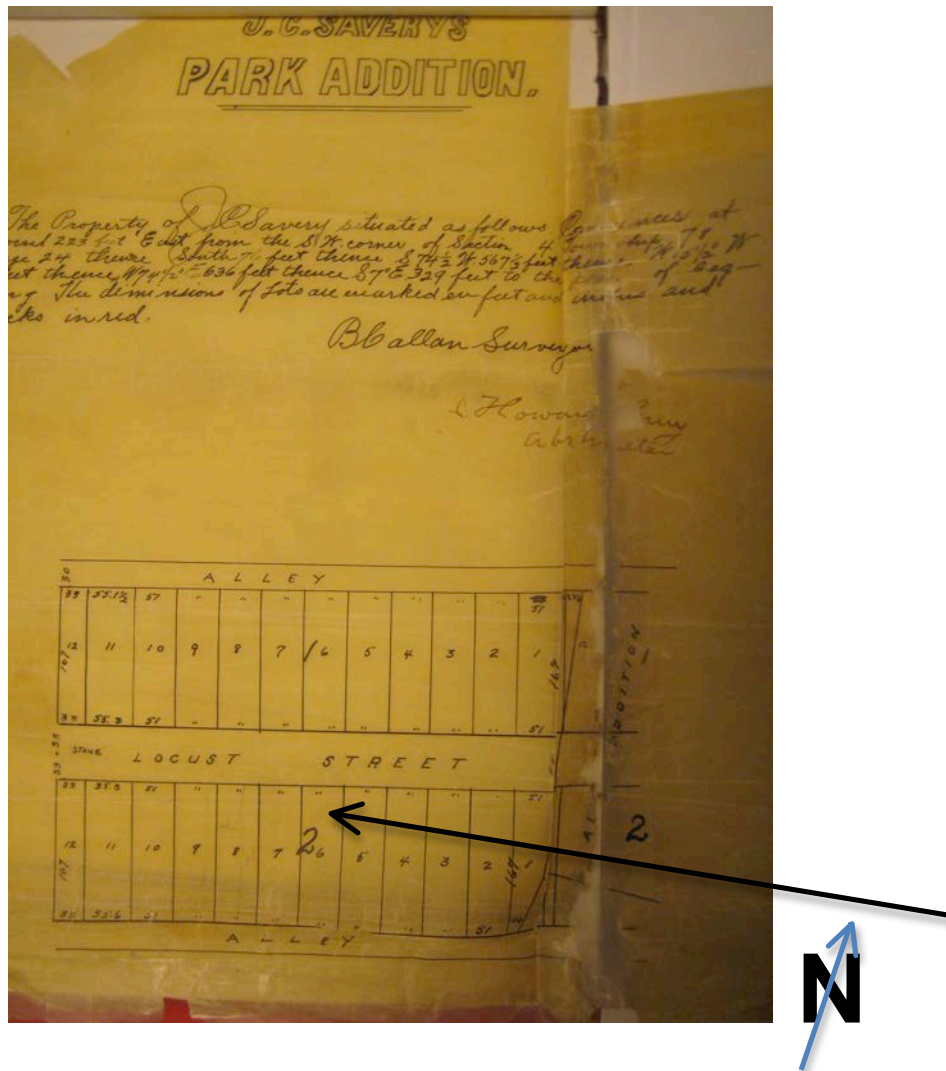
The long arrow indicates the location of the Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building, 1420 Locust Street, Des Moines.

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Figure 3: HISTORIC MAP – J.C. Savery's Park Addition Plat, circa 1879



(SOURCE: Abstract of Title for 1430 Locust Street)

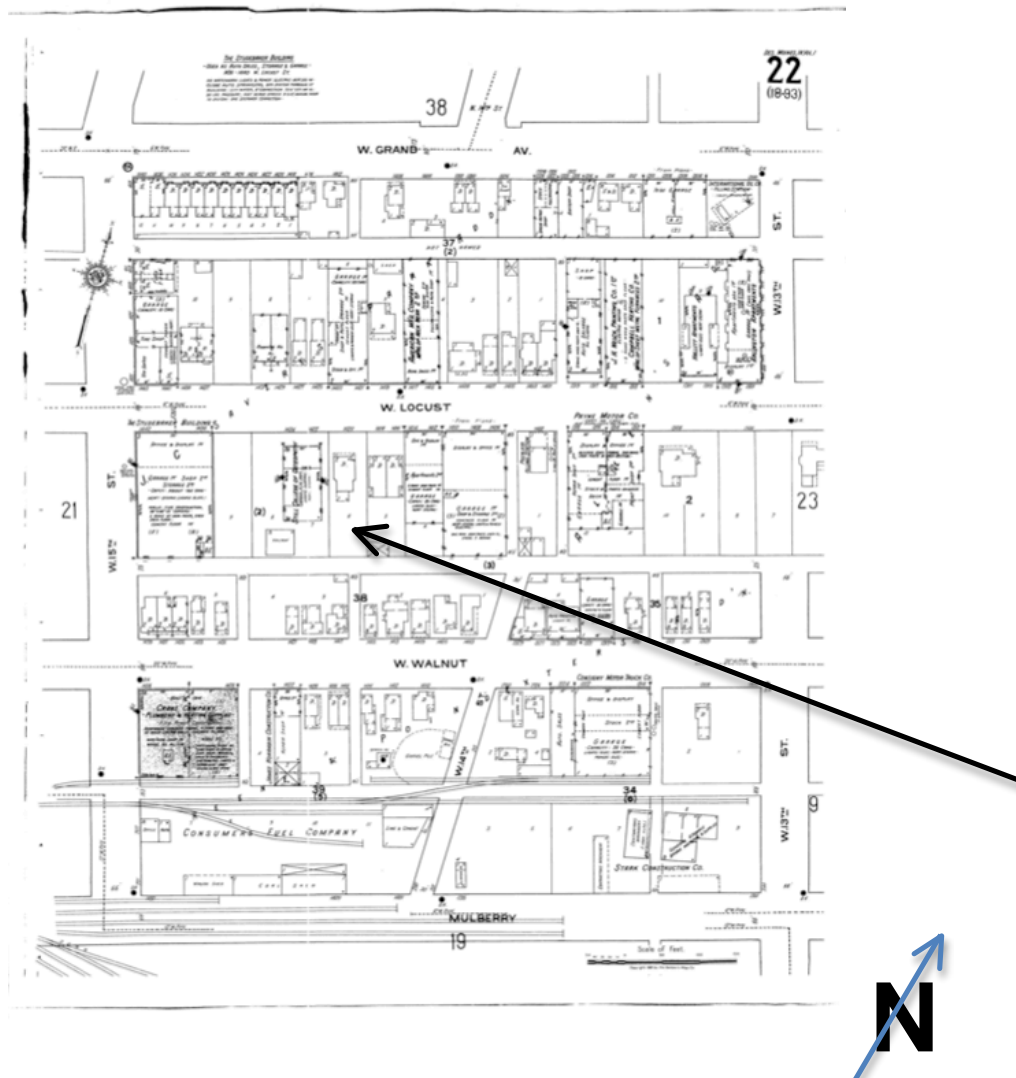
Businessman J.C. Savery platted land that had been set aside for the railroad depot double block. The long arrow indicates the future location of the Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building, 1420 Locust Street, in Lot 6 in Block 2.

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Figure 4. HISTORIC MAP – Fire Insurance Map, 1920



(SOURCE: Sanborn Map Company, "Des Moines," 1920.)

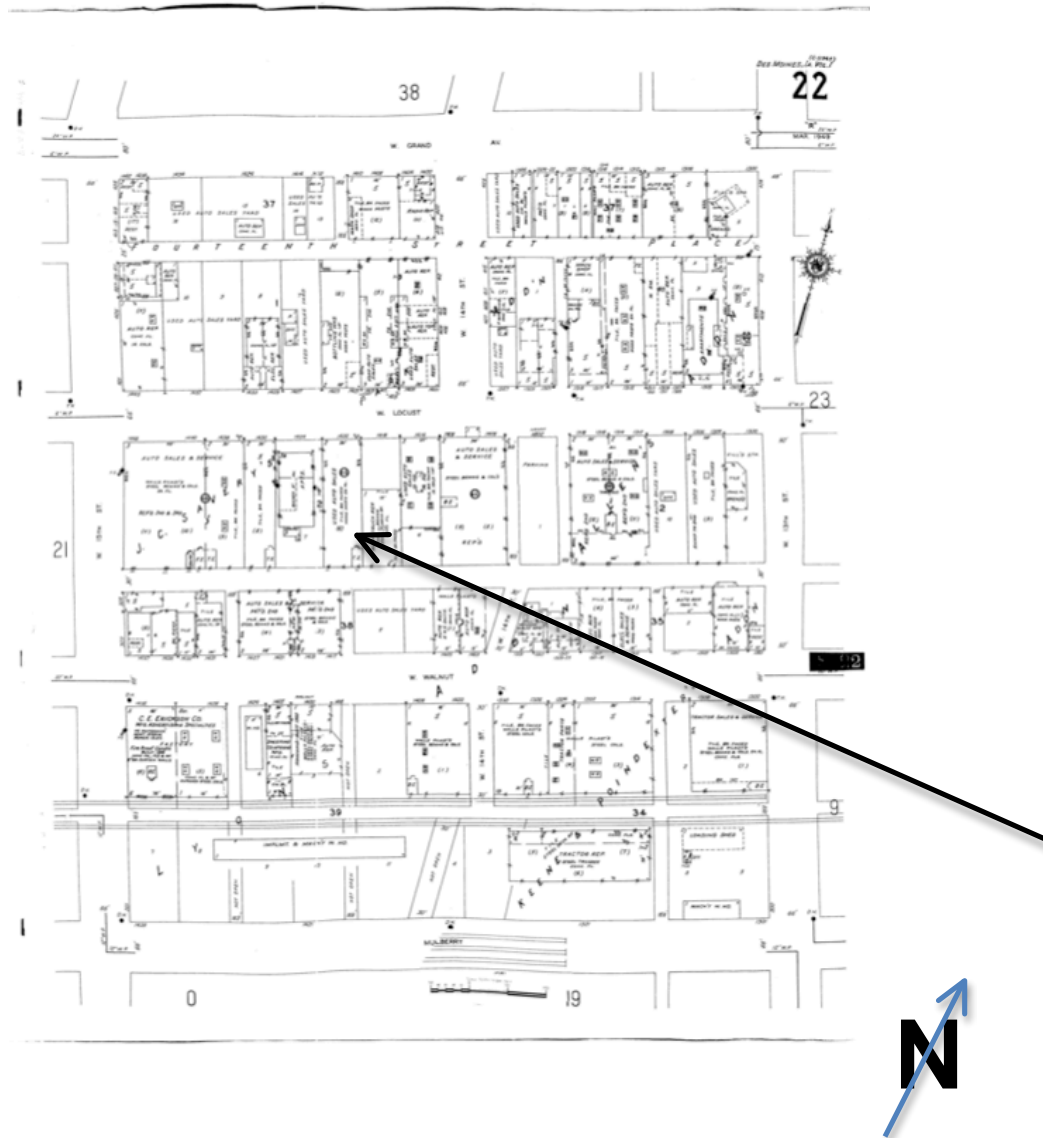
The right arrow indicates the location of the site, occupied by a frame house prior to construction of the Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building; newspapers reported that the groundbreaking occurred in November 1920.

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Figure 5. HISTORIC MAP – Fire Insurance Map, 1920-1950



(SOURCE: Sanborn Map Company, "Des Moines," 1920 updated to 1950.)

The right arrow locates the property, 1420 Locust Street; the building is labeled "Used Auto Sales." The freight elevator is indicated in the lower right (southeast) corner.

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Figure 6: HISTORIC IMAGE – 1300-1400 Locust Street, January 1916



(SOURCE: Hank Zaetel, historic photo album relating to 1301 Locust Street; photo labeled January 13, 1916.)

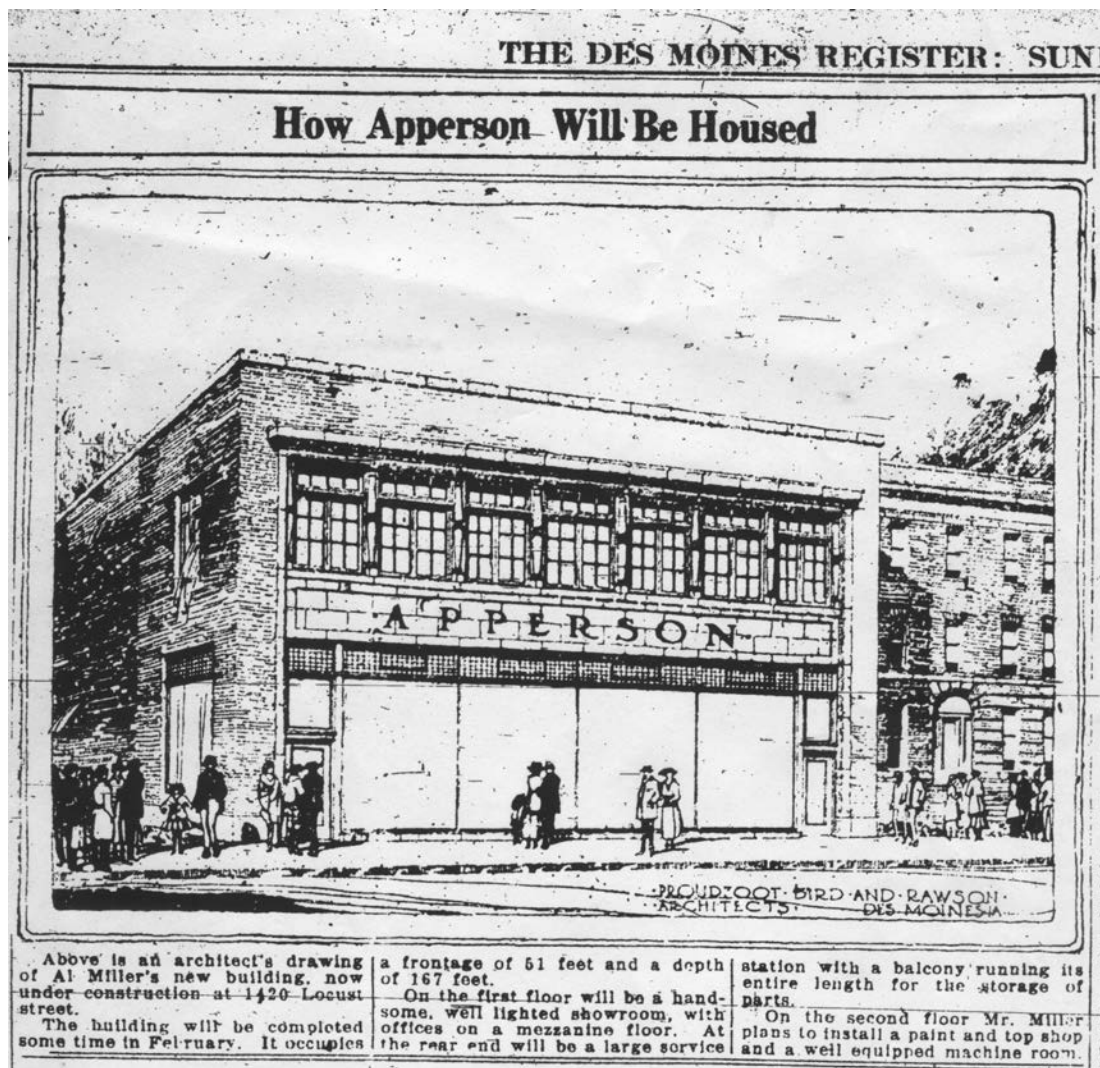
This photograph captures the transition of the 1300 – 1700 blocks of Locust Street from primarily residential to primarily commercial/light industrial. Taken from the sidewalk in front of 1301 Locust Street on January 13, 1916, newly constructed Auto Row brick buildings are visible on both sides of the street as are remaining frame houses. On the left side, the four-story brick osteopathic college building, 1424 Locust Street, is visible (short arrow). And in the far background the tower of E.T. Meredith's *Successful Farming* magazine printing plant, 1716 Locust Street, is visible (long arrow).

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Figure 7. HISTORIC IMAGE – Architectural Rendering, December 1920



(SOURCE: *The Des Moines Register*, December 12, 1920.)

The architectural rendering for the Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building was unveiled in a December 1920 newspaper story. The text provides details about how the commissioning tenant, Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company owned by Al Miller, will use the interior. It is important to note that the second-floor window on the east elevation (left side) was eliminated from the architectural drawings. This may be evidence of cost savings due to the harsh economic climate of the 1920-1921 recession.

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Figure 8. HISTORIC IMAGE – Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Co., 1420 Locust Street, March 1921



(SOURCE: *Des Moines Tribune*, March 2, 1921: 15.)

Al Miller, owner of Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Co., touted his new showroom location in this advertisement, one of a number that he ran in March in conjunction with the Des Moines spring auto show.

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Figure 9. HISTORIC IMAGE – Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building, circa 1943



(SOURCE: Digital file from Eaton family/The Printing Station. Original photograph is attributed to *The Des Moines Register*.)

The completed Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building, 1420 Locust Street, and neighboring car lot, 1416 Locust Street, as photographed from Locust Street looking southwest. The tenant at 1420 Locust Street was Mayflower Distributing, which is listed in the city directories at this address for only one year—1943. The car lot was occupied by Hudson-Jones Auto Co., which was based out of a large showroom a few doors to the east; Hudson-Jones leased 1420 Locust Street in the late 1930s.

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Figure 10. HISTORIC IMAGE – 1430 Locust Street, 1975



(SOURCE: John Maves, Iowa Site Inventory Form for 1424 Locust Street, from citywide survey.)

A corner of the north elevation and part of the western wall of the Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building is visible in a 1975 architectural survey photograph of the former Still College of Osteopathy, 1424 Locust Street, and then called The Downtowner apartments. Fire gutted the college/apartment building in the late 1970s and it was torn down after that.

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Figure 11. HISTORIC IMAGE – Duncan Sanitary Products, 1430 Locust Street, 1983



(SOURCE: Barbara Beving Long, Iowa Site Inventory Form for 1420 Locust Street, from Auto Row survey.)

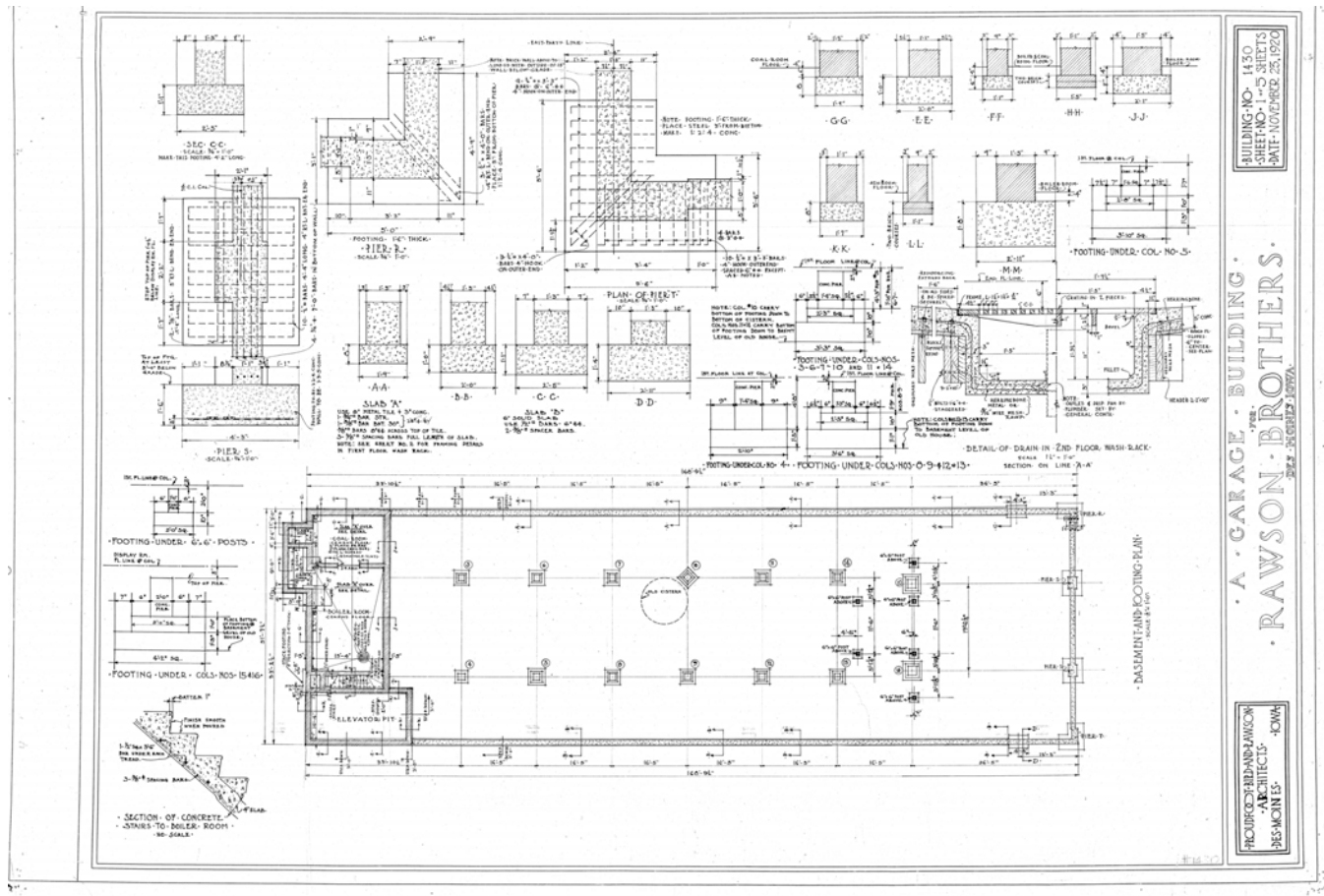
This photograph shows what is likely the second-generation storefront configuration with upper glass panels, changes attributed to auto-glass/storefront-glass company Forman Ford during its 1950s residence in the building.

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Figure 12: HISTORIC IMAGE – Basement and Footing Plan, November 1920



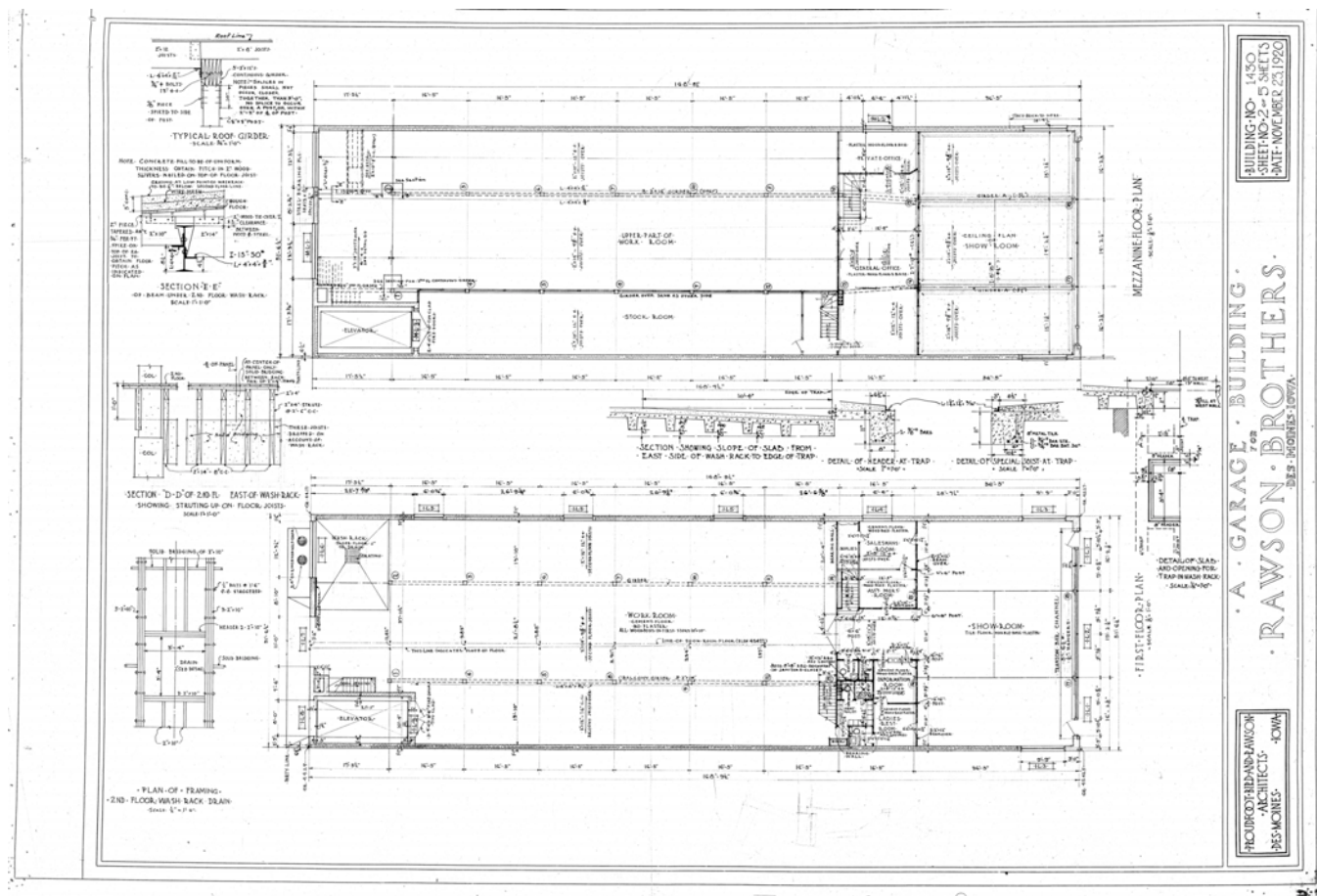
(SOURCE: Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson, original architects' drawings, November 25, 1920.)

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Figure 13: HISTORIC IMAGE – First-Floor Plan and Mezzanine-Floor Plan, November 1920



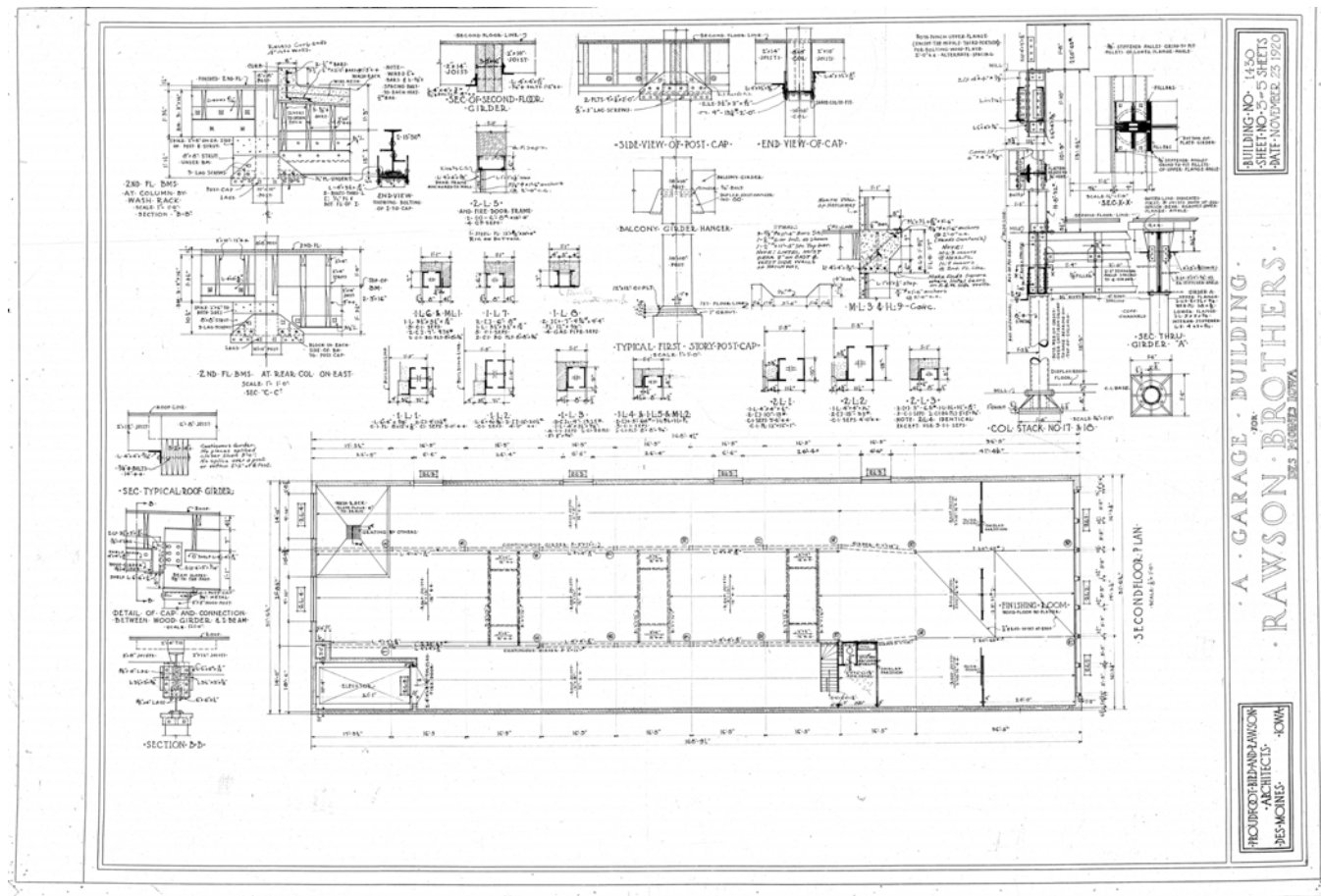
(SOURCE: Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson, original architects' drawings, November 25, 1920.)

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Figure 14: HISTORIC IMAGE – Second-Floor Plan, November 1920



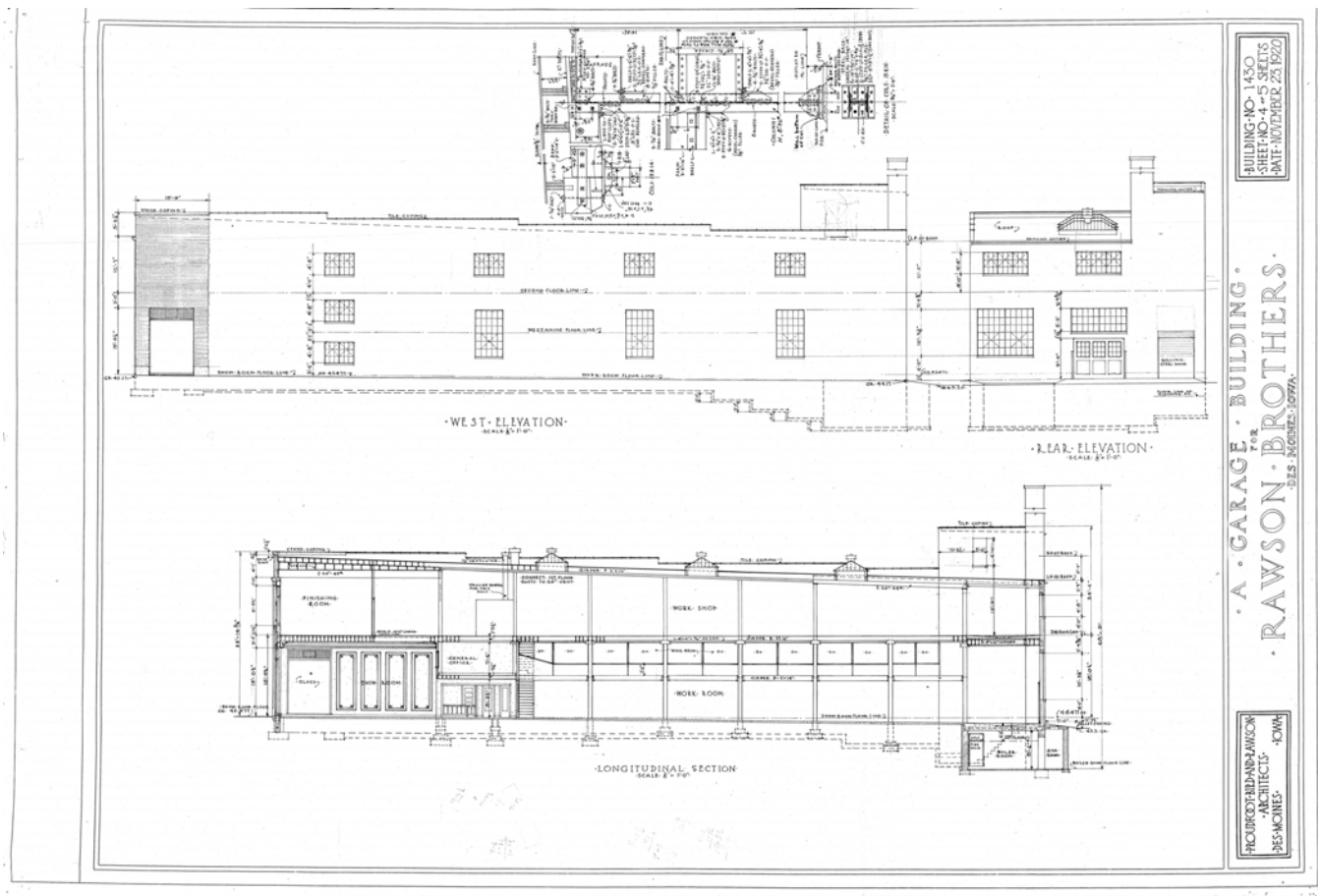
(SOURCE: Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson, original architects' drawings, November 25, 1920.)

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Figure 15: HISTORIC IMAGE – West and Rear Elevations, and Longitudinal Section, November 1920



(SOURCE: Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson, original architects' drawings, November 25, 1920.)

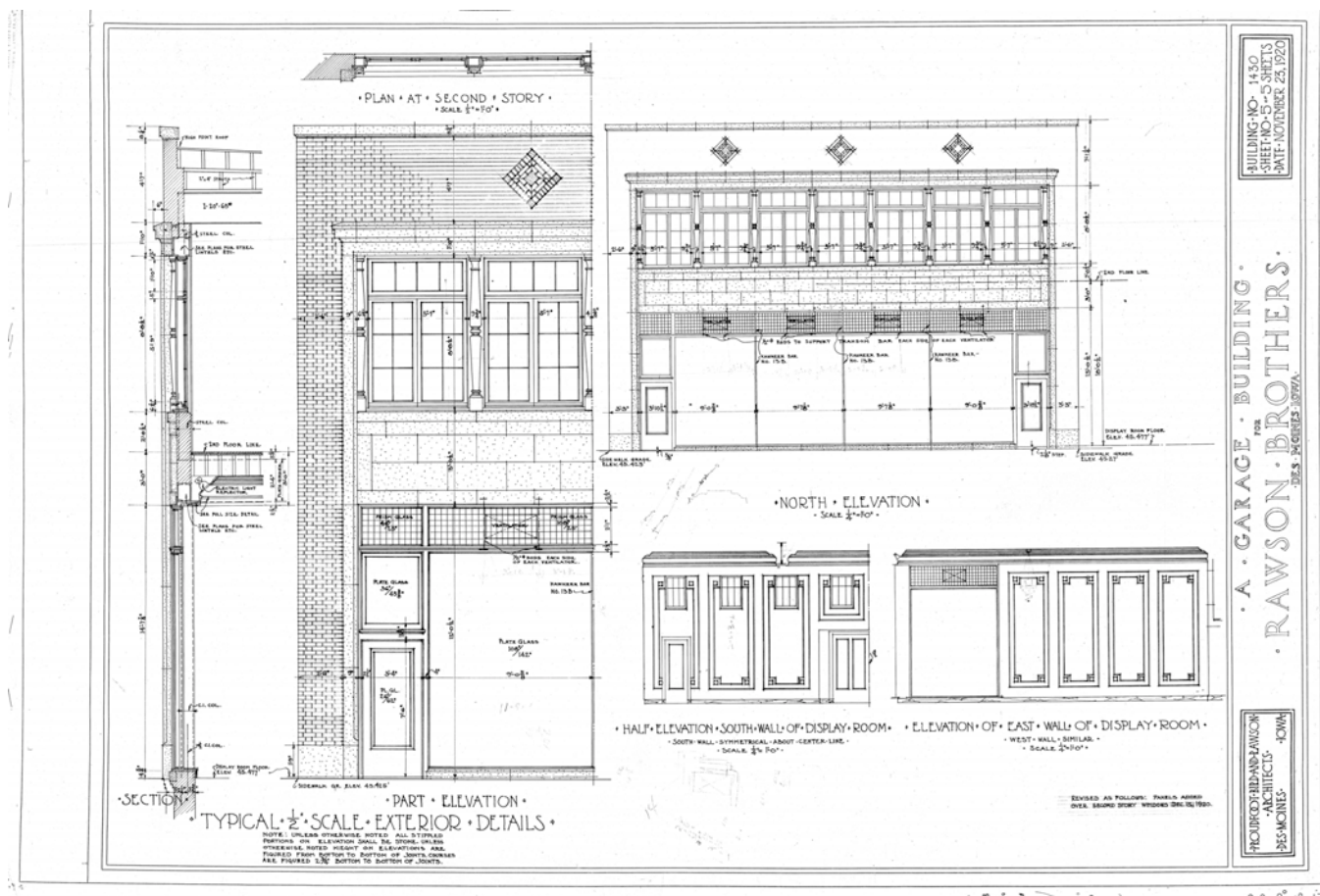
View is of the west and south (rear) elevations.

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Figure 16: HISTORIC IMAGE – North Elevation and Display Room Elevations, November 1920



(SOURCE: Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson, original architects' drawings, November 25, 1920.)

View is of north elevation and “display room” also referred to in the plans as “showroom.” Although the plans call for decorative panels adhered to the plaster walls and ornate windows in the mezzanine level, it is not known if these details were actually built. The crushing recession of 1920-1921 led to scaling back of the auto industry, including auto-related buildings. Given the financial failure the first tenant, Apperson-Iowa, had in summer 1922, it is possible that luxury details were not built as drawn.





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EXIT











EXIT



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Apperson--Iowa Motor Car Company Building
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: IOWA, Polk

DATE RECEIVED: 4/29/16 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/25/16
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/09/16 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/14/16
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 16000363

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 6/13/2016 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept A & C

REVIEWER Portia Andrus

DISCIPLINE Historian

TELEPHONE _____

DATE 6/13/2016

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.

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF
CULTURAL AFFAIRS

TERRY E. BRANSTAD, GOVERNOR
KIM REYNOLDS, LT. GOVERNOR

MARY COWNIE, DIRECTOR
CHRIS KRAMER, DEPUTY DIRECTOR

RECEIVED 2280

APR 29 2016

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

April 25, 2016

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief
National Register and National Historic Landmarks
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Fl.
Washington D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

The following National Register nomination(s) from Iowa are enclosed for your review and listing if acceptable.

- Cedar Valley Seminary, 200 North 7th Street, Osage, Mitchell County
- G.W. Jones Building, 1430 Locust Street, Des Moines, Polk
- Greater Second Street Historic District, 201-315 East Second, 116 North Green, 109 South Green, and 106-112 North Market, Ottumwa, Wapello County
- Apperson-Iowa Motor Car Company Building, 1420 Locust Street, Des Moines, Polk County

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Foster
National Register Coordinator
State Historical Society of Iowa

IOWA
ARTS
COUNCIL

PRODUCE
IOWA

STATE HISTORICAL
SOCIETY OF IOWA

STATE HISTORICAL
MUSEUM OF IOWA

STATE HISTORICAL
LIBRARY & ARCHIVES

STATE
HISTORIC
SITES

STATE HISTORIC
PRESERVATION
OFFICE OF IOWA

IOWA
HISTORICAL
FOUNDATION