

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER, HISTORY
& EDUCATION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Ausadie Building

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 845 First Avenue S.E. N/A not for publication

city or town Cedar Rapids N/A vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Linn code 113 zip code 52402

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Ronell G. Sorka October 26, 2004
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

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

Calvin W. Brant 12/6/04
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Ausadie Building
Name of Property

Linn County, Iowa
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	1	buildings
1	0	sites
0	1	structures
		objects
3	2	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

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

- DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling/apartment building
- DOMESTIC/secondary structure/garage
- DOMESTIC/secondary structure/carriage house
- LANDSCAPE/garden
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

- DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling/apartment building
- DOMESTIC/secondary structure/garage
- DOMESTIC/secondary structure/carriage house
- LANDSCAPE/garden
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

- LATE 19th AND 20th C. REVIVALS/Colonial Revival
- LATE 19th AND 20th C. AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/
- Bungalow/Craftsman

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation CONCRETE
- walls BRICK
- roof ASPHALT
- other _____

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE _____

COMMERCE _____

EDUCATION _____

Period of Significance

1923-1945 _____

Significant Dates

1923 _____

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Palmer, Austin N. _____

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Brown, William J. _____

Loomis Bros. Construction _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than 1 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	[1]5	[6]1[0]9[9]5	[4]6[4]8[5]6[5]	2	[1]5	[0]0[0]0[0]0	[0]0[0]0[0]0
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
3	[1]5	[0]0[0]0[0]0	[0]0[0]0[0]0	4	[1]5	[0]0[0]0[0]0	[0]0[0]0[0]0

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 Leah D. Rogers/Member and Clare L. Kernek, Research Assistant

organization Tallgrass Historians L.C. date October 20, 2004

street & number 2460 S. Riverside Drive telephone 319-354-6722

city or town Iowa City state IA zip code 52246

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the complete form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

Photographs

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

Additional items

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

Property Owner

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

name Richard Cooley and Tim Oberbroeckling

street & number 845 First Avenue S.E. telephone 319-365-3860

city or town Cedar Rapids state IA zip code 52402

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

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

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetAusadie Building
Linn County, IASection number 7 Page 1

Narrative Description

The Ausadie Building is located at 845 1st Avenue S.E. in the City of Cedar Rapids, Linn County, Iowa. This apartment building was built in 1923 for Austin and Sadie Palmer is situated on the southeast side of First Avenue, which was the main thoroughfare that historically connected the cities of Cedar Rapids and Marion. This avenue angles from the northeast to the southwest and is aligned with the original city plat of Cedar Rapids. The location of the Ausadie is uphill from the main part of downtown Cedar Rapids and was historically within the Victorian “walking city” residential area, where the well-known and successful businessmen lived within walking distance of their businesses. The Ausadie is currently situated in an area that has become more commercial in orientation in the modern era, with a commercial business to the northeast, a large expanse of parking lot to the rear, the Turner Funeral Home to the southwest, and the Masonic Library to the west. Small commercial properties line First Avenue directly across the street from the Ausadie. The nominated property includes the three-story apartment building, a former carriage house that was later converted into a garage, a modern garage, and a courtyard lot that now features gardens and a swimming pool. Of these properties, the apartment building and the former carriage house are considered contributing buildings, while the modern garage is considered a non-contributing building. The garden/swimming pool area is situated on the lot to the northeast of the apartment building and was a parcel that was designated in 1923 for a courtyard but was originally slated for a second, twin building to the Ausadie. The twin building was never constructed, and this lot has remained a courtyard ever since. As such, it is considered a contributing site to the property. The swimming pool is considered a non-contributing structure because it was added to the property in 1998.

The Ausadie was built in 1923 and was designed by well-known Cedar Rapids’ architect, William J. Brown. The design was influenced by the Colonial Revival style of architecture then popular in the United States, with some of the interior features reflecting the influence of the Craftsman style and the Arts and Crafts movement of the early twentieth century. The building was constructed by Loomis Brothers, a long-time Cedar Rapids’ construction business. Work began on the building on April 15, 1923, and was completed in late October 1923.¹ The Cedar Rapids *Gazette* noted that the Ausadie, “with its main façade in colonial design, is an excellent example of domestic architecture as applied to a building of this character.”² The exterior dimensions are 44 feet wide by 127 feet deep, with the building rising three stories above a full basement level. The exterior walls are of face brick with Indiana Limestone trim. The façade has a shaped parapet with two stone urns capping the corner pilasters. When completed, it was estimated that the construction cost around \$100,000.³

The front façade has a central recessed entryway that is graced above by a stair landing window that has a decorative fanlight. A wrought-iron railing above the doorway and in front of the fanlight window is original to the building’s construction. The lintel over the entry door is inscribed with “Ausadie.”⁴ The third-story hallway window above the fanlight window is a simpler window type that is repeated in the flanking windows on all three floors. The front windows are all a variation of the Chicago-type window, which has a large centered window flanked on each side by narrow, moveable sash windows. In this case, the windows are all moveable double-hungs, with four to eight panes over single panes in pattern. Both the sides and the

¹ “Loomis Bros., Contractors for Ausadie Apartments, Will Finish Work in the Next Week,” Cedar Rapids *Evening Gazette*, October 21, 1923. In clipping files of the Genealogical Society of Linn County, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

² “Ausadie Apartments are Monument to Future of City; Have Latest Ideas,” Cedar Rapids *Evening Gazette*, October 21, 1923. In clipping files of the Genealogical Society of Linn County, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

³ “First Avenue to Have New Apartment Building,” Cedar Rapids *Evening Gazette*, April 8, 1923. In clipping files of the Genealogical Society of Linn County, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

⁴ The original architect’s plans for the property included a sketch of a shield with a “P” that was never placed on the building. In addition, there was one reference in the plans to the “Palmer Building,” and it is likely that when the final name of Ausadie was selected for this building that the shield motif with the “P” was dropped in favor of the inscribed “Ausadie” above the front door.

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**Ausadie Building
Linn County, IA**

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rear of the building show rows of varying-sized double-hung windows across all three floors providing an abundance of light into each apartment. Many of these windows are the originals.

As originally built, the Ausadie housed 24 apartments made up of either two rooms and a bath or three rooms and a bath. Currently, the building has 20 apartments. The Palmers' apartment was originally on the third floor "on the left corner."⁵ The size of their apartment was reportedly equivalent to two of the "typical" apartments. Murphy beds behind French doors in each living room provided additional bed space, with the kitchens furnished with a cabinet, refrigerator, gas range, and a sink/wash tub. Closets were provided in each room, with a store room in the basement for each apartment. In addition to tenant storage rooms, the basement originally housed a restaurant, with this amenity advertised in 1923 as "a Tea Room" in the "English Basement" and was to be the "finest in Cedar Rapids."⁶ The restaurant was entered from the exterior through the basement level door to the right of the front door. Mrs. Addie Scott reportedly was to be in charge of the restaurant in 1923.⁷ The restaurant has not survived, and the basement now houses a laundry room, one apartment (originally the janitor's quarters), and the tenant store rooms, which are essentially wire-mesh, wood-framed bins that can be locked. The original steam heating plant system for the Ausadie is still in place in the northeast room of the basement but is no longer in use. All of the apartments were originally equipped with city telephone as well as a house telephone system.

The interior of the Ausadie features a long, six-foot wide central hallway on each of the three floors, with only the third floor plan later altered from the original. The third floor now features a penthouse apartment that occupies half of the third-floor space. Otherwise, the second and first floors still basically exhibit their original apartment configurations. The main entrance leads into a small enclosed vestibule where the tenants' mail boxes were originally housed. The floors of the vestibule, hallway entryway, and front stairs are laid with square buff-colored tiles, with the hallways now carpeted. The original hallway floors were described as "composition floors."⁸ The basement has concrete floors.

Flanking each side of the central hallway were four apartments, with four additional apartments at each corner. The flanking apartments featured a living room, combination dining room/kitchenette, bathroom, a large dressing room with Murphy bed, and a linen closet. The floor of each kitchen was originally covered with linoleum, with the other floors of oak.⁹ A few apartments still retain their original hardwood floors; however, most of the kitchens have been updated for modern use.

The corner apartments featured a living room, bedroom, bathroom, and combination dining room and kitchenette. The living rooms also had a Murphy bed hidden behind French doors. Only one Murphy bed remains in place in the current owner's corner apartment on the first floor. There were closets on the east side of the Murphy bed closet, with a large closet in the regular bedroom. The bathrooms featured tile floors and built-in tubs, with all of the apartments retaining their original tile floors and bath tubs to the present day. The kitchens had a combination sink and laundry tub, a large cupboard, a refrigerator, and a gas range.¹⁰ A few of the original kitchen cupboards and two of the iceboxes have been salvaged and are stored in the Ausadie.

Other interior features of note include the special service doors that were opened from the hallway and allowed for access into the icebox in each kitchen (each door opened into two apartments) and for package delivery into part of the cupboard directly

⁵ "First Avenue to Have New Apartment Building," April 8, 1923.

⁶ "The New Ausadie Apartments 845 First Avenue Ready for Occupancy About October 1st." Advertisement dated July 20, 1923. In clipping files of the Genealogical Society of Linn County, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

⁷ "Ausadie Apartments are Monument to Future of City," October 21, 1923.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

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**Ausadie Building
Linn County, IA**

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on top of each refrigerator. These doors are all still in place even though their original functions have ceased to be of use. Also of note was the original sound-proofing for the building, which included metal lath in the wall partitions that were lined with a solid sheet of insulated quilt to deaden sound. The floors were also insulated with the same quilting laid on rough flooring, which was then finished with finer flooring on top.¹¹

The foundation of the building is poured concrete, with the exterior walls faced with brick and “tile damp-proofed on the inside.”¹² The stairwells are continuous from the basement to the rooftop at both ends of the building. The rear stairs are concrete with metal pipe railings. Large doors with panes of wire-meshed safety glass separate the stairwells from the hallways on all floors to help fire-proof the building.

The large lot to the east side of the building was originally planned as a simple grassy courtyard with sidewalks, two benches, and a central fountain or statue according to the ground plans (see attached maps). However, the original intent was to build a second “twin structure” to the Ausadie on this lot.¹³ The second building was never built, likely because Austin Palmer died within four years of the completion of the Ausadie. This lot continues to serve as a green, garden space for the benefit of the tenants and has been beautifully landscaped with flower beds, a water fall/fish pond, a gazebo, and an in-ground swimming pool. Current owner, Richard Cooley, noted that when the hole for the swimming pool was excavated in 1998, evidence of the former house on this lot was encountered.¹⁴

When the Ausadie was completed and ready for occupancy, the job of renting the apartments was carried out by the Hedges Company of Cedar Rapids. They advertised the Ausadie as the following:

*The largest and finest apartment building in Cedar Rapids is ideally located; walking distance to loop and to depots, close to Coe College, less than a block to Waterloo interurban, handy to neighborhood stores, and adjoins some of the city’s fine old residences.*¹⁵

While the neighborhood has changed from residential to commercial in the modern era, much of what was originally touted about the Ausadie apartments is still true. It is within walking distance of downtown Cedar Rapids even though one can no longer catch the train at the depot or connect with the interurban. Coe College is just down the block, and there are still a few stores handy to the building’s occupants.

The building itself has changed very little through the years and retains a high degree of integrity on both the exterior and interior. The main changes have been to the third floor interior where the penthouse apartment has altered the original floor plan and is a modern update to this space. Two of the bedrooms on the first floor also have a different configuration from the original floor plan. Likewise, by necessity, most of the kitchens have required updating as well as the heating system. When acquired in 1989 by the current owners, Richard Cooley and Tim Oberbroeckling, the building was in a rundown state and was half empty in occupancy. The roof was in poor shape, the rear wall of the building was crumbling, and the plaster was cracked on much of the interior. Many of the kitchen sinks were still the original cast iron but the lighting had been replaced with florescent lights. The owners undertook a long and painstaking restoration of the building, first repairing and stabilizing,

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ “First Avenue to Have New Apartment Building,” April 8, 1923.

¹⁴ Richard Cooley, personal communication with Leah Rogers, 2004.

¹⁵ “The New Ausadie Apartments,” July 20, 1923.

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**Ausadie Building
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and then refurbishing the interior. Many of the original light fixtures had disappeared and had to be replaced with reproductions. In the process of this refurbishment, the owners restored the building to nearly its original look and have certainly restored a strong sense of time and place of a 1920s apartment building, all-the-while providing a living space habitable to modern standards. There is now a waiting list for the apartments.

There are two outbuildings, one structure, and one site on the nominated property. One building is the original carriage house to a dwelling that came to be owned by Mrs. Palmer and was located next door to the Ausadie at 839 First Avenue. This house is no longer extant; with the house lot now a paved parking lot and additional green space for Ausadie tenants. The carriage house is a late Victorian design that has been converted into a three-stall garage. It was in very poor condition in 1989 and was restored and refurbished to its current look by the current owners. The carriage house features a hipped roof, shingle and clapboard siding, and the original limestone foundation. A gabled wall dormer is off-center on the hipped roof, with two small gabled wall dormers on the rear roof. Originally, the rear dormers would likely have functioned as hay mow access. An oval decorative window is featured on the front dormer. The carriage house is considered contributing to the property because of its association with the Palmers and its later conversion to a garage likely during the period of significance for the Ausadie Building. The second building is a more modern garage built c.1955 and banked into the slope of the grassy courtyard off the southeast corner of the building.¹⁶ This garage is considered non-contributing because of its modern construction but it is only visible from the rear of the building and did not impact the historic building. The single structure is the in-ground swimming pool that was added to the courtyard space in 1998. It is also considered non-contributing because of its modern construction; however, it is not visible from any public views of the property and did not impact the historic building. The site consists of the courtyard on the northeast side of the Ausadie building. This courtyard was originally intended to be the site of a twinned building to the Ausadie; however, that twin building was never built. The courtyard has remained a green space for the building's tenants, with garden beds, a small gazebo, a pond/waterfall feature, and the above-noted swimming pool added in the last ten years. However, because this space is still used for its original function, as a courtyard and green space for the apartment building's tenants, it is considered a contributing site to the property.

¹⁶ Estimated date of construction for garage obtained from Linn County Assessor's Records, www.cedar-rapids-assessor.org, accessed July 21, 2004.

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National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 5 **Ausadie Building
Linn County, IA****Statement of Significance**

The Ausadie Building is locally significant under Criterion C for its representation of a well-preserved early twentieth century apartment building design in the City of Cedar Rapids and for its design by well-known Cedar Rapids' architect, William J. Brown. The building is also locally significant under Criterion B for its association with Austin Palmer, a significant person in Cedar Rapids' late nineteenth and early twentieth century history. It was noted at the time of its completion that the building "stands as a monument to Mr. Palmer and an everlasting evidence of his faith in the future of Cedar Rapids, as a prosperous and growing city."¹⁷ Austin Palmer was nationally known for his "Palmer" writing method, which revolutionized handwriting methods in the early twentieth century and well into the late twentieth century. His business college in Cedar Rapids was a successful enterprise from 1878 until 1974, surviving long after his death in 1927. Palmer and his wife, Sadie, built the Ausadie Building in 1923 as a business venture and to serve as their residence while in Cedar Rapids since by that time their many business ventures had required living in New York most of the year. They resided in Cedar Rapids about three months out of each year. Originally, the Palmers planned for a second twin building to be built on the adjacent lot; however, this building was never constructed probably because Austin Palmer died before it could be built. After his death in 1927, Sadie Palmer moved permanently back to Cedar Rapids and lived at the Ausadie until her death in 1945. She succeeded her husband as president of the Cedar Rapids Business College upon his death. Notes on the original architectural plans suggest that the Palmers played an active role in the design of the building. Originally to be called the "Palmer Building," it was instead named the "Ausadie" as the design progressed. The name "Ausadie" is combination of Austin's and Sadie's names and reflects their devotion to one another and their personal connection to this building. The period of significance for the Ausadie Building is from 1923 until 1945 representing the span of time this building was directly associated with, and inhabited by, the Palmers.

Architectural Context of the Ausadie Building

While there is at least one other property still standing in Cedar Rapids that had a direct association with Austin Palmer and his significance in the Cedar Rapids community, the Ausadie Building appears to retain a higher degree of integrity and reflects not only Austin's prominence but also that of his wife, Sadie, in Cedar Rapids' business and social activities. The other known Palmer-associated building is the business college building constructed for Austin Palmer in 1905. This property is located at what is now 117 5th Street SE, but has been altered in more recent years to the point that its integrity as an individual property has been impacted.¹⁸ At present, it does not appear that any of the previous residential properties once associated with the Palmers are still standing. Therefore, the Ausadie Building is concluded to be one of the better preserved properties in Cedar Rapids having a direct and highly visible association with Austin Palmer and his wife Sadie Whiting Palmer.

The Ausadie Building, constructed in 1923, is one of 11 known apartment buildings built in the first three decades of the twentieth century in Cedar Rapids that remain standing to the present day.¹⁹ These buildings all contain six or more units.²⁰ The ten apartment buildings in addition to the Ausadie include the following:

¹⁷ "Ausadie Apartments are Monuments to Future of City," October 21, 1923.

¹⁸ Originally, this building would probably have had a 2nd Avenue address; however, the front entrance of the building has been changed in more recent years from 2nd Avenue to 5th Street.

¹⁹ Data gathered through windshield survey conducted by Tim Oberbroeckling and from the Linn County Assessor's records accessed through www.cedar-rapids-assessor.org, July 21, 2004.

²⁰ There are several four-unit apartment buildings from this period also still standing in Cedar Rapids; however, these were excluded from the comparative data because they are closer to early duplex and double-house configurations than the multi-unit apartment building design of the Ausadie.

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1261 1st Avenue SE (1st bldg.)	Mission style	built 1914	good exterior integrity
1261 1st Avenue SE (2nd bldg.)	Prairie/Craftsman style	built 1914	fair to good exterior integrity
1115 2nd Avenue SE	Colonial Revival	built c.1930	good exterior integrity
1339 2nd Avenue SE	Tudor Revival style	built c.1940	good exterior integrity
1040 3rd Avenue SE	Prairie School/Craftsman style	built c.1910	good exterior integrity
1407 3rd Avenue SE	Mission style?	built c.1920	fair to poor exterior integrity
1234 4th Avenue SE	Classical Revival style?	built 1914	fair exterior integrity
205 14th Street SE	Tudor Revival style	built 1936	fair to good exterior integrity
340 16th Street SE	Classical Revival style	built c.1900	fair to good exterior integrity
106 2nd Avenue SW	Prairie/Craftsman style?	built c.1915	fair to good exterior integrity

Of these buildings, the property at 1115 2nd Avenue SE, which is known as the Roman Apartments, is most similar in design to the Ausadie but is smaller in size (it only contains 11 units), is more squat and box-like in its proportions, and is less aesthetically pleasing in its architectural design than the more graceful design of the Ausadie.

Of the 11 known apartment buildings, only six, including the Ausadie, retain good exterior architectural integrity, with the remaining five showing varying degrees of exterior alteration since they were first built. The interior integrity of these buildings, other than the Ausadie, is not known, although it is suspected from exterior modifications that at least of few have been updated on the interior as well. In comparison, the Ausadie retains a high degree of architectural integrity on both the interior and exterior and is a good example of Colonial Revival stylistic influence applied to a multi-unit, urban apartment building in the expanding urban core of Cedar Rapids in the early twentieth century. Its still presents a very stylish and upscale appearance and strongly imparts the sense of time and place of an early twentieth century apartment building.

The Ausadie Building was designed by William J. Brown, who was the founding principal of the Cedar Rapids architectural, planning, and interior design firm of Brown Healey Stone & Sauer. He was born in Urbana, Illinois, and graduated from the University of Illinois with a B.S. in architecture in 1900. He first worked as a draftsman in Chicago for Holabird & Roche in 1901, followed by jobs in New York from 1902 to 1903 for Kenneth M. Murchison and from 1904 to 1906 for John Russell Pope. After a stint in the military from 1914-1915, he moved to Cedar Rapids where he was in partnership with his brother, Frederick. The two formed their architectural firm, known as Brown Brothers, in 1910.²¹ During the first half of the twentieth century, the firm designed many well-known buildings in the Cedar Rapids area. These included both private homes as well as such public buildings as the Memorial building (Cedar Rapids City Hall), the World Theater, Cedar Rapids Country Club, and St. James Methodist Church on Ellis Boulevard. The firm was particularly known for its school designs, including ten Cedar Rapids elementary schools built in the mid-1950s. During the 1930s, Brown coordinated the conversion of Roosevelt, McKinley, Franklin and Wilson senior high schools into junior-senior high schools. He also worked with schools in many other towns in the area, including Marion and Blairstown.²²

Brown had been on his own for several years when he was joined by an up-and-coming young architect, Edward "Ted" Healey, in 1953. The firm of Brown and Healey acquired a third partner in 1960, the professional engineer Carl Bock. The firm continued to operate under this name many years after the death of Brown in 1970. In 1972, two new architects, Herb Stone and Ed Sauer joined as principals. In 1981, the firm incorporated, with Healey as president, Stone as vice-president,

²¹ Wesley I. Shank, *Iowa's Historic Architects* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999), 33; "Architects incorporate," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, December 13, 1981.

²² The majority of this history is based on the article by George Ford, "A part of C.R. history. Brown Healey Stone & Sauer designed many area buildings," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, November 11, 1990.

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Sauer as secretary, and Bock as treasurer of the new corporation.²³ By 1990, Bock was mostly retired, and the new name of Brown Healey Stone & Sauer was adopted. The change had been resisted for some time by President Ted Healey. Brown's name was retained both for continuity and "historical purposes." Buildings designed by the firm in the last 20 or so years include the Cedar Rapids Public Library, Cedar Rapids Municipal Airport terminal building, the Greenwood Terrace addition at Meth-Wick Manor, and most of the campus of Kirkwood Community College. The firm has designed buildings for the Coe and Cornell college campuses as well.²⁴

Historical Context of the Ausadie Building

The parcel of land including the current location of the Ausadie apartment building was first sold by the United States to Nicholas Brown, in 1843. The land purchased by Brown consisted of 269.41 acres, and included "Lots 1, 4, and 5 and the SE Sec. 21-83-7-269." The patent for this land was granted in 1845 to Addison Daniels and Nicholas Brown as "tenants on common and not joint tenants." These two men, along with Hosea Gray, George Greene and Julius Sanford, owned and laid out the town of Cedar Rapids in 1843.²⁵

The apartment building and adjacent property, including the courtyard, are located on a large block originally platted as Out Lot 3. By 1895, this block had been subdivided into house-sized lots, and most had been built on by this time with residential properties.²⁶

In 1915, Austin Palmer began purchasing property in this block on which to build his apartment building. On March 2, he bought portions of Lots 7 and 8 from Frank S. Carroll (unmarried) and Mary C. Carroll (widow), described as follows: "The NE-ly 28 feet of Lot 7, and the SW-ly 40 feet of Lot 8, in out lot 3, in the Original Town (now city) of Cedar Rapids, as shown by the recorded plat thereof, being a rectangular piece of ground 68 feet fronting on First Avenue, by 150 feet in depth to alley in rear..."²⁷ This description fits a house then at 845 First Avenue, which straddled Lots 7 and 8.²⁸

A month after purchasing this land, Palmer acquired the rest of Lot 8 and part of Lot 9 from the heirs of Clarence Miller (d. May 19, 1912). The parcel of land is described as follows: "SW-ly ½ of Lot 9, and NE-ly 20 feet of Lot 8, of out lot 3..." This was the location of the house then located at 851 First Avenue. The house was later removed and this lot became the enclosed courtyard northeast of the apartment building. The other parcel of land became the site of the apartment building built by Palmer in 1923. The building was constructed at the west end of the lot, to maximize space for the courtyard. Architect William Brown designed the building.²⁹

²³ "Architects incorporate." Ibid.

²⁴ Ford; Suzanne Barnes, "Ted knows a town by the buildings it keeps," Cedar Rapids *Gazette*, April 8, 1992.

²⁵ Abstract of Title to Ausadie Apartments.

²⁶ 1895 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for the City of Cedar Rapids.

²⁷ The property abstract then gives the following description: "...being more particularly described: Beginning on First Avenue on the S-ly side thereof, 200 feet, in a SW-ly direction from Tenth Street; thence SE-ly and parallel with said Tenth Street 150 feet; thence SW-ly parallel with First Avenue, 68 feet; thence at right angles NW-ly 150 feet to First Avenue; thence along First Avenue to place of beginning."

²⁸ Abstract of Title; 1895 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

²⁹ Abstract of Title; "First Avenue to Have New Apartment Building," April 8, 1923.

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When Palmer died, on November 16, 1927, his widow, Sadie, inherited his real estate, including his holdings in Out Lot 3, described as follows: "The NE-ly 28 feet of Lot 7, all of Lot 8, and Sw-ly ½ Lot 9, all in Outlot 3...." This property included the apartment building and the adjacent lot.³⁰

The abstract states that Sadie Palmer deeded the Ausadie Apartments to S.E. Coquette in 1943. St. Elmo Coquette was the Vice-President of the Merchants National Bank of Cedar Rapids, of which Austin Palmer had been a director. He had named both Merchants National Bank and Sadie Palmer as executors of his estate in his will; Coquette had thus acted as one of the executors of Austin Palmer's estate. It is unclear why Sadie deeded the Ausadie Apartments, "together with all furniture, furnishings, equipment, and appliances therein belonging to the grantor" to Coquette for consideration of \$1.00. Her will originally stated her intention to bequeath the apartment building and grounds to the Home for Aged Women, located at 202 Twelfth Street, "to be used by them as a home."³¹ This would have been in keeping with her many other acts of philanthropy, including donating the house next door at 839 First Avenue SE, which she had purchased on December 14, 1927 (one month after Austin's death) to the Cedar Rapids Art Association for three years for use as a gallery. She was especially active in women's organizations.³²

However, the paragraph bequeathing the Ausadie to the Women's Home was cancelled after the transfer of title to Coquette in 1943 "for the reason that she has conveyed the said property." Sadie Palmer continued to live at the Ausadie until her death in her apartment on January 20, 1945. She had been ill for two years, and her obituary notes that "only a few close friends had seen Mrs. Palmer in the last year." She and Austin had no children to survive them.³³

In 1972, the Ausadie was deeded to Bernice Coquette, S.E.'s widow, by Merchants National Bank, the executor of Coquette's estate. He had died on January 10, 1971. Bernice was 82 years old at the time of her husband's death, and was living at the family's apartment on the top floor of the Ausadie. The property was valued at \$185,000 at the time.³⁴

In 1977, following Bernice's death the previous year, the Ausadie was deeded by the bank, acting as Executor, to Clifford and Joan Doe, husband and wife. The Does paid a consideration of \$1.00 for the property. In March of 1988, the Does entered into a contract for sale with John Brewer, for consideration of \$351,000. In August of the same year, John Brewer transferred title by special warranty deed to "Ausadie, Ltd." On May 30, 1990, Brewer, as President of Ausadie, Ltd., sold the property to its current owners, Richard A. Cooley and Timothy R. Oberbroeckling.³⁵

Austin N. and Sadie (Whiting) Palmer

Austin Norman Palmer was an innovator, educator, and founder of an empire based on the writing method he developed and taught at his business college in Cedar Rapids. By the time of his death, in 1927, the "Palmer method" was being taught in an estimated 80 percent of the nation's schools. Palmer himself had accumulated a sizable fortune, primarily from the sales of

³⁰ Abstract of Title.

³¹ Abstract of Title.

³² "Mrs. Palmer Dies at Home," Cedar Rapids *Gazette*, January 20, 1945. In A.N. Palmer clippings file at The History Center in Cedar Rapids.

³³ Abstract of Title; "A.N. Palmer Dies Today," Cedar Rapids *Evening Gazette*, November 16, 1927. In A.N. Palmer clippings file at The History Center in Cedar Rapids.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Abstract of Title.

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books, magazines, and mail-order supplies related to his famous invention. He also owned and operated three business colleges whose success grew with that of his method.³⁶

Palmer arrived in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in 1879. At 20 years old, he was already an accomplished “penman.” As the writer and son of Palmer’s colleague, William Henning, explains, “Good handwriting was prized in earlier eras, and so were its practitioners.”³⁷ Before the advent of typewriters, those individuals who were skilled at producing polished-looking documents in longhand were highly sought-after and well-compensated. Jacob Shallus, who was handsomely paid for penning the Constitution, is one such example. Professional penmen continued to provide a vital service in both government and business well into the twentieth century, and penmanship was an important subject in American schools, to which pupils devoted many hours of practice.³⁸

Palmer was apparently poor at penmanship when he was a schoolboy living in the east. He had been born on a farm near Fort Jackson, New York, on December 22, 1859, where he lived until the age of 13, the year his father died. At that time his family moved to Manchester, New Hampshire, and it was not until then that he received formal instruction in penmanship in the public schools there. Although his lack of proficiency in the subject made him an unenthusiastic pupil, he nonetheless ended up attending a business school run by the well-known penman George Gaskell. Supposedly, he was undecided as to what profession he wanted to enter, and his mother believed, rightly so as it turned out, that Gaskell’s business course could be the start of a successful career for her son.³⁹

The handwriting style taught at Gaskell’s school was a highly ornate and decorative form. Palmer worked hard to become skilled at producing its elaborate flourishes such as birds and bounding stags, believing, “Nothing else in the world was quite so beautiful or important as ornate penmanship.”⁴⁰ So important was it to Palmer to earn his “writing master” certification that he was willing to do any job at the school to pay for his tuition, including sweeping floors and working in the mail room of Gaskell’s lucrative learn-to-write-by-mail business.⁴¹

Following his graduation, Palmer became an itinerant writing teacher, teaching brief courses in various locations. His real ambition, however, was to work in a business college such as the one operated by his mentor, George Gaskell. In 1878 Palmer ran the following ad in the *Penman’s Art Journal*: “A teacher of penmanship wants a situation in some business college, willing to work cheap the first year.... Can do any kind of penwork.”⁴² After teaching for brief periods in both Indiana and Missouri, Palmer decided to move with his mother to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where his sister, Mrs. Ida Ballheim, had been living for three years. There he accepted a position as a penman for the Iowa Railroad Land Co.⁴³

³⁶ “A.N. Palmer Dies Today,” November 16, 1927; Robert E. Belding, “The Penman Builds an Empire,” *The Palimpsest* 61:5 (September/October 1980), 138-145; Kurt Roghan, “Handwriting expert left mark on C.R. history,” *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, May 8, 1983.

³⁷ William Henning, “Halcyon Days of Fine Penmanship,” *Iowa Heritage Illustrated* (Fall 1998), 133.

³⁸ *Ibid.* Sources differ on Palmer’s date of birth. According to Henning’s article, Palmer was born in 1857, and thus was 22 years old when he arrived in Cedar Rapids; however, other articles, including his 1927 obituary, give his year of birth as 1859, and state that he was 20 years old when he moved to Iowa.

³⁹ *Ibid.*; Eudora Seyfer, “The Palmer Method,” *Country Living* (November 1997), 60, 62.

⁴⁰ Quoted in Henning, 133.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Quoted in Seyfer, 62.

⁴³ *Ibid.*; Henning, 133.

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In his vocation as a commercial writer for the land company and as policy writer for an insurance company, Palmer found the decorative writing style whose beauty he admired to be impractical. Not only was writing lengthy contracts and policies in such a stylized manner inefficient, it was physically taxing. The commonly-used script at that time required intricate, precise finger movements that were fatiguing even when performed at a deliberate pace. When increased speed was attempted, the result was nearly illegible.

Palmer realized that a more practical form of penmanship was needed for the business world than the Spencerian script prevalent at the time. This prevailing style, taught in most public schools at the time, had been developed by Platt Rogers Spencer, who first published his system in 1859. Schoolchildren, including Palmer himself, spent hours painstakingly recreating the delicate script in copybooks, a practice Palmer had disliked as a boy. Now a qualified writing master himself, Palmer looked for a better system. It was while observing the commercial penmen where he worked that he first conceived of the method that would bear his name. He watched as the writers worked at their large ledgers, using sweeping movements powered by the arm muscles, instead of minutely-controlled finger movements. Palmer decided that this was the key to a faster, more streamlined penman style especially suited to the business world.⁴⁴

Eager to share his new approach to writing with others, he began teaching at the Cedar Rapids Business College. The school first opened in 1878, according to an announcement in the *Weekly Republican* that year, and was purchased by Samuel H. Goodyear on March 1, 1879. After a period of working at the school in his off hours, in 1881 Palmer quit his job at the insurance firm to devote himself full-time to his life's true passion. The usefulness of his new writing technique, which he called the "Palmer Muscular Method," was instantly appreciated by his pupils, and as word spread, demand for his classes grew quickly. Around 1885, Palmer purchased a half-interest in the college, which was then located on the second floor of original Dows building at Second Avenue and Second Street S.E. Within a few years, he bought out Goodyear's interest in the college. While Goodyear retained his copyrights related to the Goodyear textbooks the college had been publishing, Palmer was left with sole control of the school.⁴⁵

By this time, Palmer had launched his own publishing business. In 1884, he and B.M. Worthington had launched *The Western Penman*, one of several penmanship journals being published at the time. The magazine grew out of Palmer's idea to publish written instructions to his writing method based on his classes. He had hired Hattie L. Cook, who would later head the college's shorthand department, to take notes as he delivered his lessons. From these he developed the written course that he began publishing in serial form in 1884. Originally intended as a bimonthly, the magazine's second issue announced that it would be published on a monthly basis, and that its offices were being moved from Cedar Rapids to Chicago. A second business school, Lakeside Business College, was founded in Chicago by the magazine's publishers. In 1886, the firm of Worthington & Palmer dissolved, and Palmer, along with the *Penman* offices, returned to Cedar Rapids. (This apparently ended his two-year involvement with the business college in Chicago as well.)⁴⁶ At this time, S. H. Goodyear bought into Palmer's publishing business, a partnership that lasted until 1890. (This may have been the same year that Goodyear sold out his interest in the Cedar Rapids Business College.)⁴⁷

⁴⁴ "A.N. Palmer Dies Today," November 16, 1927; Henning, 133; Seyfer, 62.

⁴⁵ "A.N. Palmer Dies Today," November 16, 1927; Henning, 133; John Reynolds, "3,000 Grads Have Gone Out from C.R. Business College" Cedar Rapids *Gazette*, May 24, 1959.

⁴⁶ This may have actually been the same year 1886, rather than 1885 when Palmer bought into the C.R. Business College with Goodyear; various sources seem to present incongruous timelines for these early events.

⁴⁷ "A.N. Palmer Dies Today," November 16, 1927; "Highlights in the Penman's History." Newspaper article from unknown source. In A.N. Palmer clippings file at The History Center in Cedar Rapids.

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By the late 1890s, interest in Palmer's method was spreading, due largely to the tireless efforts of Palmer himself in spreading the word. As one historian described this period, "His income was scanty, but his enthusiasm was inexhaustible." He traveled all over the Midwest teaching courses in his method, including spending a week instructing 200 nuns at St. Mary's Academy in Monroe, Michigan. His instruction was so well-received that the school's Mother Superior asked him to publish them in book form, so that the Sisters could use them in their classrooms. She placed an advance order for enough books for the entire school. Palmer immediately returned to his Cedar Rapids offices, where he published the first edition of *The Palmer Method of Business Writing*, destined to become a seminal business text.⁴⁸

In 1898 Palmer formed the Cedar Rapids Business College Company, which also ran two other business colleges purchased in the 1890s. The first, purchased in 1892, was located in St. Joseph, Missouri, and the second was the Creston (Iowa) Business College. The articles of incorporation adopted in 1898 named Palmer as president; G.E. King, vice-president; and H.G. Healey, secretary. Palmer would retain his position as president of Cedar Rapids Business College until his death in 1927, by which time he was living primarily in New York.⁴⁹

The burgeoning empire taking shape by the early 1900s soon outgrew the limited space on the second floor of the Dows building, with the school facing the prospect of turning away the students who were, in Palmer's words, "clamoring for admission." After trying unsuccessfully to persuade that building's owner to add a story that would relieve the cramped conditions, he began looking for a suitable location elsewhere. He had originally considered the B.C.R.&N. building, until the railroad refused to lease any portion of the property. At that time, Palmer told the local newspaper, he decided to purchase the "Spangler Corner" and build himself. In 1903 he purchased the lot at the corner of First Avenue and Fifth Street, which had been the site of a recent fire. He explained his choice to the newspaper: "I have also thought of the Bever corner opposite, but I prefer the Spangler lots, as it gives the right side of the avenue, as far as the sun is concerned." The newspaper agreed that the location, which had been talked about as the possible building site of the Carnegie library, "is a good one and the proposition amounted to a real estate snap." It went on to comment:

The Cedar Rapids Commercial college is an institution that has hardly been appreciated in our city, or at least its importance has not been recognized. It brings, in fact, more students to the city than even Coe college for which the people last year made an endowment of \$150,000. Yet the Business college has never asked for any assistance from the people. The college has simply been pouring money into this city, the money spent here by a dozen teachers and by hundreds of pupils. Mr. Palmer is the author of publications, text books in writing and so on that are being used over the entire country, not only in business schools, but in other cities. He is a recognized authority in commercial education. Within a year he had most flattering offers to remove his institution to other cities...But he has preferred to keep it here in the city he has learned to love and for whose upbuilding he has always been so zealous. His purchase of the property at the corner of First and Fifth means....that Mr. Palmer is just entering upon the real beginning of a school that will draw its students from a wide area of the country. He will have one of the few Commercial schools housed in its own home, built for his purposes and adapted to the most complete educational methods. No improvement under consideration in this city has so much of meaning as this one.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Seyfer, 62.

⁴⁹ Reynolds; Belding, 140-142. Palmer was succeeded as the college's president by William Henning, who had been on the faculty since 1892 and was the college's public relations manager.

⁵⁰ "A.N. Palmer Buys the Spangler Corner." From newspaper article dated March 7, 1903. Title of publication unknown; probably the Cedar Rapids *Evening Gazette*. In Cedar Rapids Business College clippings file at The History Center in Cedar Rapids.

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The new four-story building was completed in 1905. The basement housed the offices of *The Western Penman* and the Goodyear Publishing House, while the front of the first floor became the headquarters of Palmer's company, operating under the name "Inter State Schools." The top two floors and the rear of the first floor housed the business college itself.⁵¹ (This building is located only a few blocks to the southwest of the Ausadie Building.)

By 1900, the Palmer Method was gaining acceptance in many schools, especially parochial schools, which were among the first to adopt the system. Public schools were also beginning to show an interest in the new method, which used "push-pull" drills to exercise the arm muscles rather than the copybooks of the previous century, which Palmer disdained. "No one ever learned to write from a copybook," he declared. Under the old method, children painstakingly practiced recreating the perfectly-formed examples of letters that lined every page. Only after many hours had been spent perfecting each letter was the student allowed to progress to complete words.⁵²

Instead of emphasizing finger movements, the Palmer Muscular Method relied instead on fast, flowing arm movements learned through practicing drills. Palmer described them as involving the "movement of the muscles of the arm from the shoulder to the wrist, with the larger part of the arm below the elbow on the desk, the fingers not being held rigid, but remaining passive.... The driving power is located above the elbow in the upper muscles of the arm."⁵³ Students used these movements to make a series of up-and-down lines and fat ovals that were the basis of Palmer's more fluid writing style.⁵⁴

Although there was much interest in the new method, particularly in the Midwest where Palmer concentrated his promotional efforts, its acceptance was not yet widespread. A demonstration of his system, including "before" and "after" handwriting samples at the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis, Missouri, proved to be one of the year's most popular exhibits, and earned Palmer much publicity. School administrators in New York, however, openly expressed their skepticism of the much-touted results Palmer had displayed. Their attitude was that, while the method may be effective in the Midwest, where orderly classrooms provided an environment conducive to practicing the Palmer Method drills, "it would never work in New York City."⁵⁵

Palmer was eager to take up the challenge. He offered to come with a team of instructors to work with students and teachers in any school the New York authorities chose. The school authorities agreed and said Palmer's instructors could work in the Bowery, the toughest part of the city. There, Palmer and his associates worked overtime demonstrating in classrooms how to master the new technique. "Pushin' Palmer," as the students called it, soon "became the past time of that part of the city." The method created such a sensation that outside visitors had to be banned from the classroom.⁵⁶

As a result of Palmer's success in the Bowery, his program was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in schools throughout the city. This event was the turning point in Palmer's crusade to revolutionize penmanship instruction in American schools.

⁵¹ "Plans for New Palmer School." From newspaper article dated March 28, 1903. Title of publication unknown; probably the Cedar Rapids *Evening Gazette and Republican*; Steve Martens, "C.R. building ready for 2nd Century of use," Cedar Rapids *Gazette*, August 16, 1995. Both articles in Cedar Rapids Business College clippings file at The History Center in Cedar Rapids.

⁵² Reynolds; Belding, 139; Bill Duffy, "Push and Pull, Push and Pull, Hit the Line Every Time," Cedar Rapids *Gazette*, March 17, 1965. In Cedar Rapids Business College clippings file at The History Center in Cedar Rapids.

⁵³ Quoted in Seyfer, 62.

⁵⁴ Duffy.

⁵⁵ "A.N. Palmer Dies Today," November 16, 1927.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

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Other cities soon followed New York's example. Throughout the country, the copybooks Palmer deplored were being discarded in favor of the new system and replaced with Palmer Method manuals.⁵⁷

In order to meet the spreading demand for instruction in the Palmer Method, the Cedar Rapids Business College began offering summer courses to penmanship teachers, who came from 34 states and Canada. In addition to the hundreds of teachers attending the college's summer school, an additional 50,000 took courses through correspondence and the school's staff of itinerant instructors. Orders poured into Palmer's publishing company for its writing manuals, while the publishing houses that had previously profited from the copybooks prevalent in the nineteenth century grew nervous. Sensing that the tide had shifted, one reportedly offered Palmer \$125,000 for his magazine and publishing operation "at a time when it was not worth nearly that much."⁵⁸ It would have been a sound investment, however. The A.N. Palmer Company quickly grew to become such a sizable enterprise that it required more and more of Palmer's attention. In 1907, he and wife Sadie moved to New York, the new location for his company's headquarters.⁵⁹

Although he retained the title of president of the Cedar Rapids Business College until his death in 1927, after he left Cedar Rapids, vice-president G.E. King took over the day-to-day management of the institution. Palmer concentrated his energies on the growing A.N. Palmer Company, which over the next 20 years added offices in Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, Atlanta, and Portland, Oregon. By the 1920s, the company was offering an array of supplies in addition to the magazine (now called *The American Penman* to broaden its appeal) and handwriting manuals it published. Customers could also order through the catalogue specialized Palmer Method writing supplies such as nibs, ink, ink powder, pen holders, and practice papers; as well as the official Palmer badges awarded to schoolchildren learning the method.⁶⁰

Although his home and primary business were in New York after 1907, Palmer retained his interest in the Cedar Rapids Business College Company. He and his wife, Sadie, continued to spend a considerable amount of their time in Cedar Rapids. In 1923, the Palmers built an apartment building on First Avenue SE, a few blocks from the Palmer Building. The couple spent three months of each year until Austin's death in the apartment kept for them there.⁶¹ After Palmer's death on November 16, 1927, in New York, his body was returned to Cedar Rapids, where he was buried. His widow, Sadie, also returned to Cedar Rapids, where the couple's apartment in the Ausadie Building became her permanent home.⁶²

Sadie Palmer had been born Sadie Whiting and was originally from Cedar Rapids. Little is known at this time about her early life or marriage to Austin Palmer. His obituary simply notes, "When a young man Mr. Palmer Married Miss Sadie M. Whiting of this city. No children were born of this union."⁶³ Sadie was her husband's primary heir and inherited all of his real estate. He also left her controlling interest in his company, of which she became President. She held this position until her own death, in 1945, at her apartment.⁶⁴

⁵⁷ Ibid.; Kurt Roghan, "Handwriting expert left his mark on C.R. history," Cedar Rapids *Gazette*, May 8, 1983; Seyfer, 62.

⁵⁸ Duffy.

⁵⁹ Reynolds; Seyfer, 62; "A.N. Palmer Dies Today," November 16, 1927.

⁶⁰ Belding, 139; Reynolds; Seyfer, 62; "A.N. Palmer Dies Today," November 16, 1927.

⁶¹ "Ausadie Apartments are monument to future of city," October 21, 1923; Reynolds; Roghan; Becky Stover, "C.R. man's message clear about handwriting," Cedar Rapids *Gazette*, May 23, 1999; "A.N. Palmer Dies Today," November 16, 1927.

⁶² Seyfer, 62; Reynolds.

⁶³ "A.N. Palmer Dies Today," November 16, 1927.

⁶⁴ Abstract of Title; "Mrs. Palmer dies at home," January 20, 1945.

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Sadie Palmer's obituary does not even include her date of birth, but does describe her volunteer and philanthropic activities. In addition to donating large sums to local charities, she apparently also quietly gave assistance to many needy individuals in her community. She held leadership positions in several organizations in both New York and Cedar Rapids, including serving as the director of both the Public Health Nursing Association and of the Y.W.C.A. in Cedar Rapids. Mrs. Palmer was particularly interested in women's issues. She had been active in the New York Women's Club, and at the state level, in the New York State Federation of Women's Clubs. In Cedar Rapids she continued to be involved with the Women's Club, and had also previously (before her move to New York, presumably) held an office in that state's Federation. Another cause important to her was the growing number of traffic fatalities witnessed in New York in the early twentieth century. While living there she used her position as president of the Society for Political Study to launch "the first movement in the line of a general public protest against the recklessness of automobile drivers. More than 80,000 women were enlisted in this campaign to fight the city's 'speed mania.'" She was also interested in the arts, and in 1931 she donated the large house next door to the Ausadie Building to the Cedar Rapids Art Association to use as its gallery and art center.⁶⁵ She made the donation in memory of her husband.⁶⁶

Palmer's empire lived on long after his own death and that of his widow. The Cedar Rapids Business College moved to its third home in 1946, when the Palmer Building was sold (and then housed the Embassy Club). From 1945 through 1959, the college was located at 318½ Third Street SE. In 1959, the school moved into a new building at 128 Second Avenue S.W. The college closed in 1974, having graduated approximately 30,000 students in its nearly 100-year history.⁶⁷

The Palmer Method actually experienced a comeback in Cedar Rapids schools, where it was reinstated in 1970. It also continued for many years to be the method favored by parochial schools. The A.N. Palmer Company continued to publish textbooks for the Palmer Method well into the 1980s. The company filed articles of dissolution in 1988.⁶⁸

A piece of Palmer's legacy that endures in Cedar Rapids is his founding of the organization that became the Cedar Rapids Chamber of Commerce. Palmer had returned from a trip to Kansas City, Missouri, in 1897, where he attended a meeting of commercial clubs, feeling that the business community where he lived should have a similar organization. On June 5 of that year he sent a letter to 400 of the town's business leaders inviting them to a meeting at his business college to discuss the issue. At a subsequent meeting, the Cedar Rapids Commercial Club was formed, with Palmer named its first president. The group changed its name in 1918 to the Cedar Rapids Chamber of Commerce.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Sadie Palmer acquired the adjacent residential property at 839 1st Avenue SE in 1927. The house is no longer standing, but the lot and the former carriage house for this property are included within the nominated boundary for the Ausadie Building.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Reynolds; Stover; Clipping of unknown author and title from the Winter 1988 issue of *Iowa Heritage Illustrated*, page 185. In Cedar Rapids Business College clippings file at The History Center in Cedar Rapids.

⁶⁸ Belding, 139; Douglas Neumann, "Cursive: A dying art form," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, September 27, 1992; Seyfer, 62.

⁶⁹ Duffy; "A.N. Palmer Dies Today," November 16, 1927.

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**Ausadie Building
Linn County, IA**

Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property consists of the NE-ly 38½ feet of Lot 6, all of Lots 7 and 8, and the SW-ly half of Lot 9, Plat of the Subdivision of Out Lot Three of Original Town of Cedar Rapids, Linn County, Iowa.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes the lot on which the Ausadie Building is standing as well as the adjacent courtyard lot to the northeast and the adjacent lot to the southwest that contains the parking lot and carriage house. This entire property was associated with the Palmers' ownership of the nominated property during the period of significance.

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Ausadie Building
Linn County, IA

Topographic Location of the Ausadie Building
(USGS Cedar Rapids South, 1994)



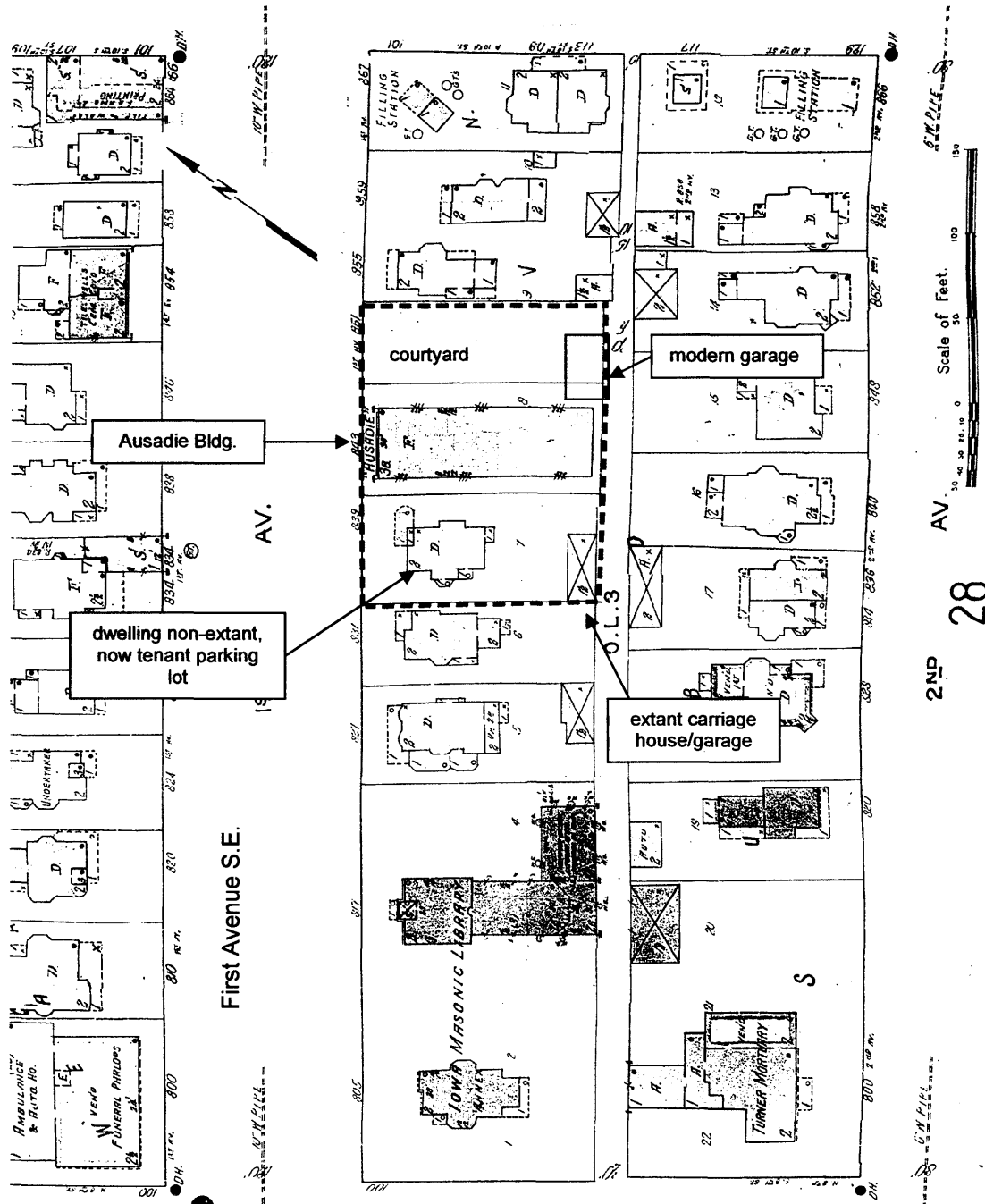
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Ausadie Building
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Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Showing Boundary of Nominated Property (Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 1913-31)



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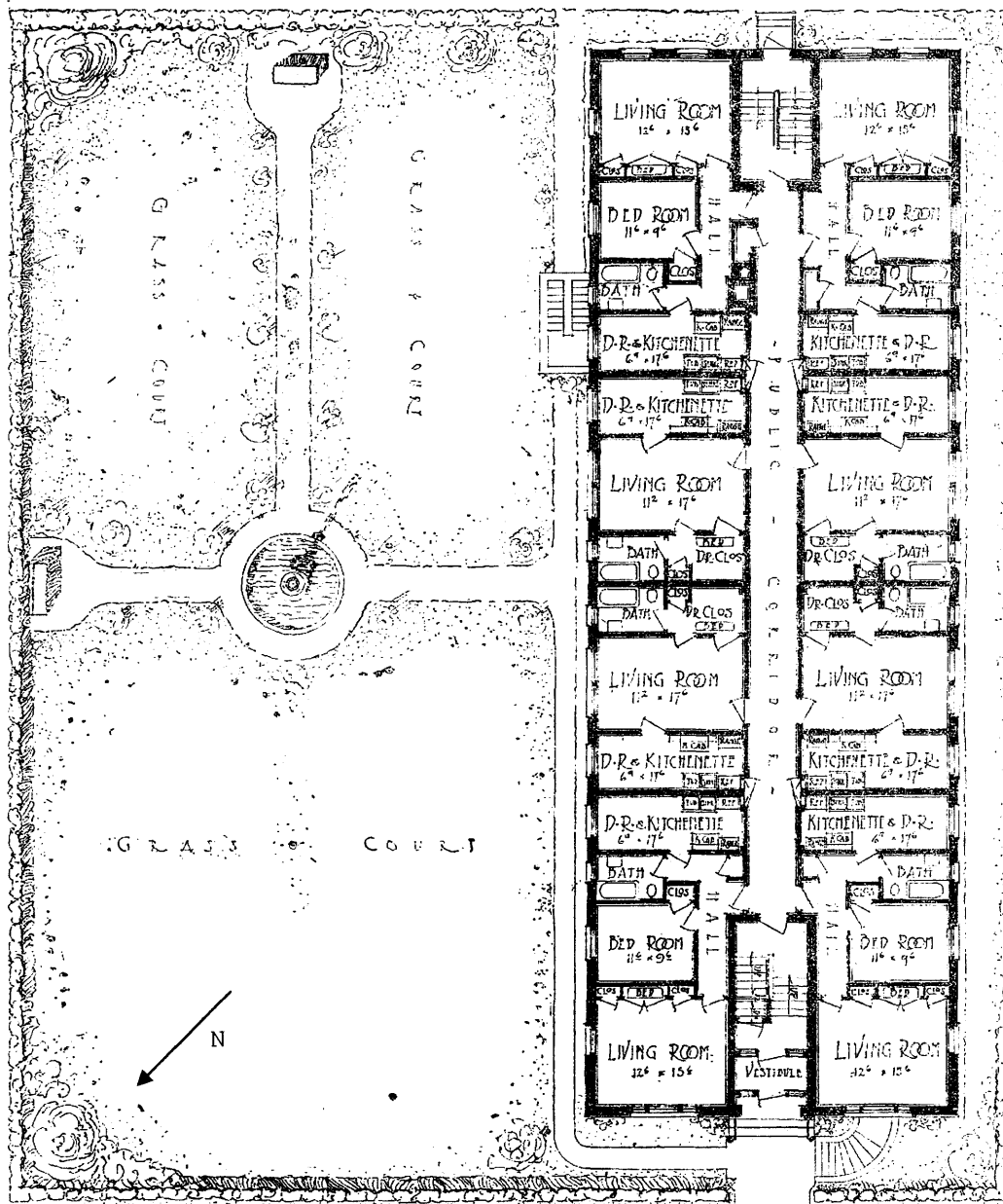
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Ausadie Building
Linn County, IA

Upper Floor Plans and Original Landscaping Plan for the Ausadie ("First Avenue to Have New Apartment Building," Cedar Rapids Gazette, April 8, 1923)

Interior Floor Plans and Landscaping



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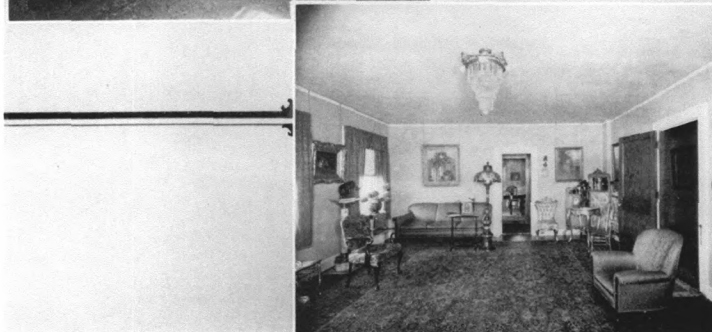
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**Ausadie Building
Linn County, IA**

**Historic Photographs of the Ausadie Building c.1923
(Marshall-Wallace Advertising c.1928)**



*THE AUSADIE
APARTMENTS
Fireproof and
Modern in Every
Respect.
Erected and
Owned by
A. N. Palmer.*



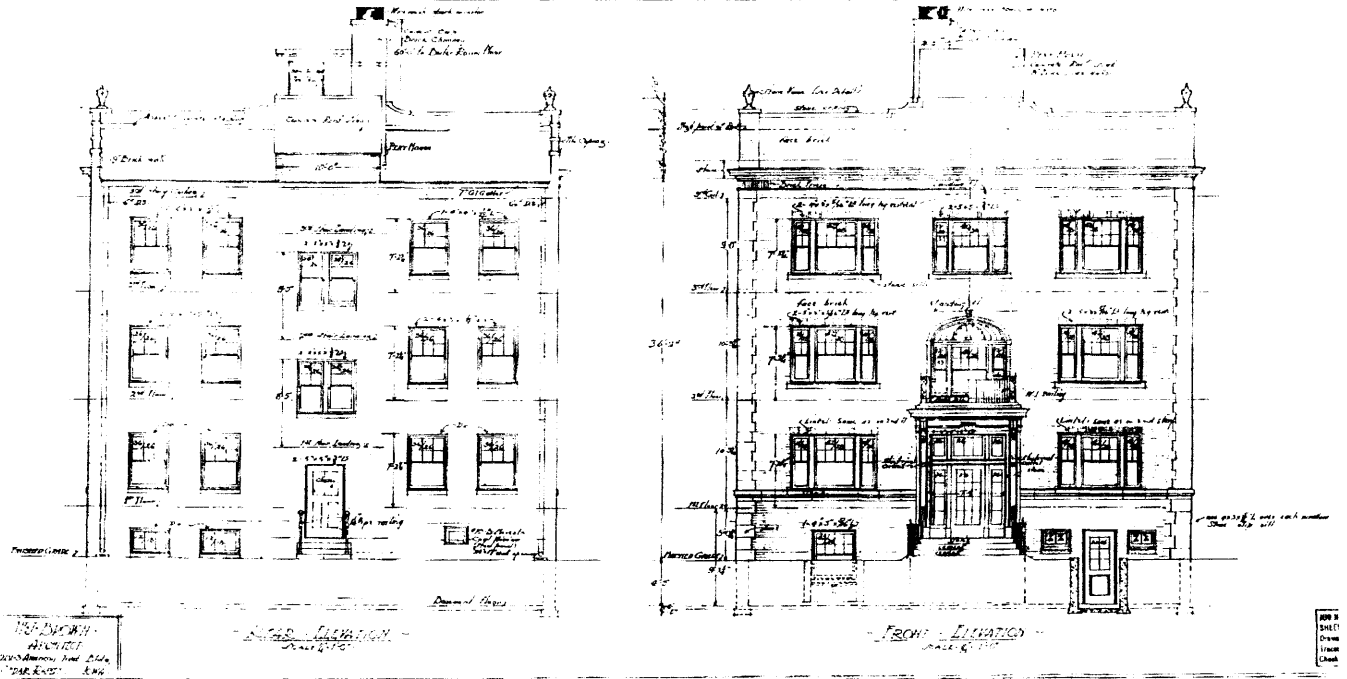
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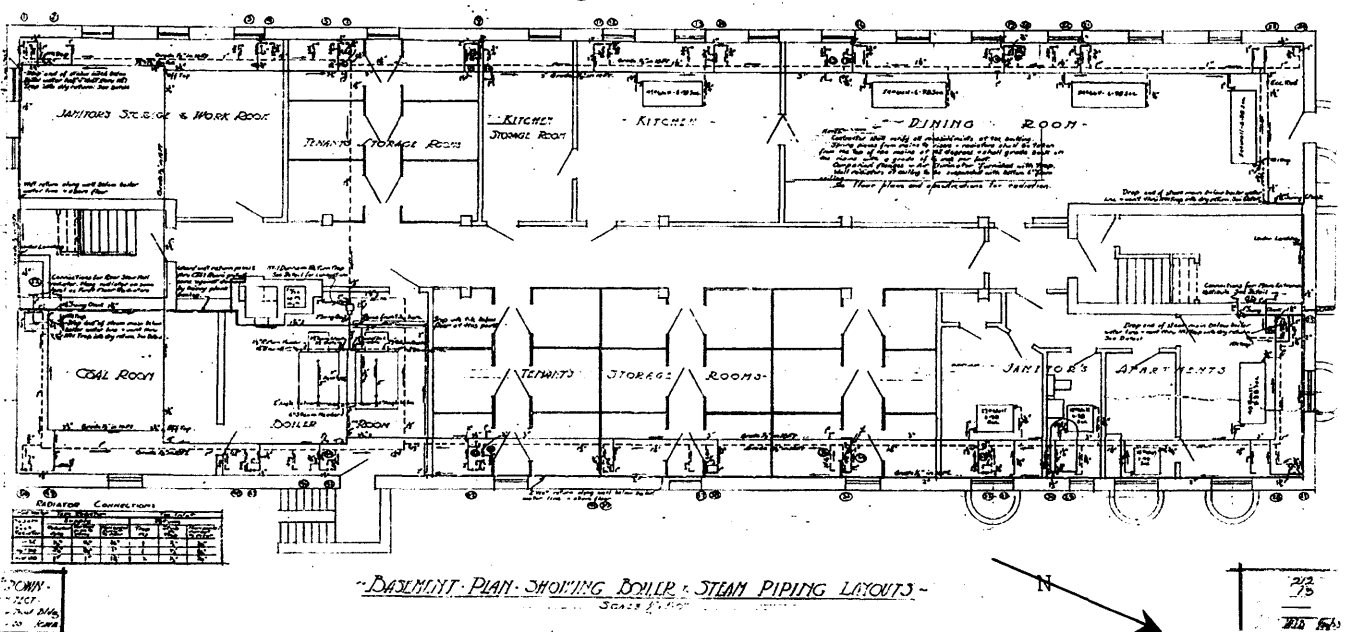
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Ausadie Building
Linn County, IA

Elevation Drawings from Original Architect's Plans for the Ausadie Building dated 1923



Floor Plan of the Basement from Original Architect's Plans Showing Restaurant Plan



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Ausadie Building
Linn County, IA

Photographs of Austin and Sadie Palmer
(Clipping Files, Genealogical Society of Linn County, Cedar Rapids, Iowa)



A B C D E E Z G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p
q r s t u v w x y z 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0.

The Palmer-method alphabet (SHSI)

Sample of Palmer Writing Method (Belding, 140).

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**Ausadie Building
Linn County, IA**

**Photographs Showing the Palmer Building at Second Avenue and Fifth Street S.E.
(Top photograph dates from 1905, while the bottom photograph is a modern view showing alterations to the building). In Cedar Rapids Business College clippings file at The History Center, Cedar Rapids.**



The Palmer Building at Second Avenue and Fifth Street SE was built in 1905 for A.N. Palmer's Cedar Rapids Business College. Palmer developed and taught the Palmer Method of Penmanship that was used for many years in more than 80 percent of U.S. schools.

The Palmer name is still visible at the top of the building. In later years the upstairs rooms of the structure were used by the El Kahir Shrine Temple. The first floor of the building was extensively remodeled in 1988 for the Teleconnect Company and later for MCI WorldCom telecommunications corporation. (Top photo courtesy of The History Center, bottom photo courtesy of George T. Henry.)

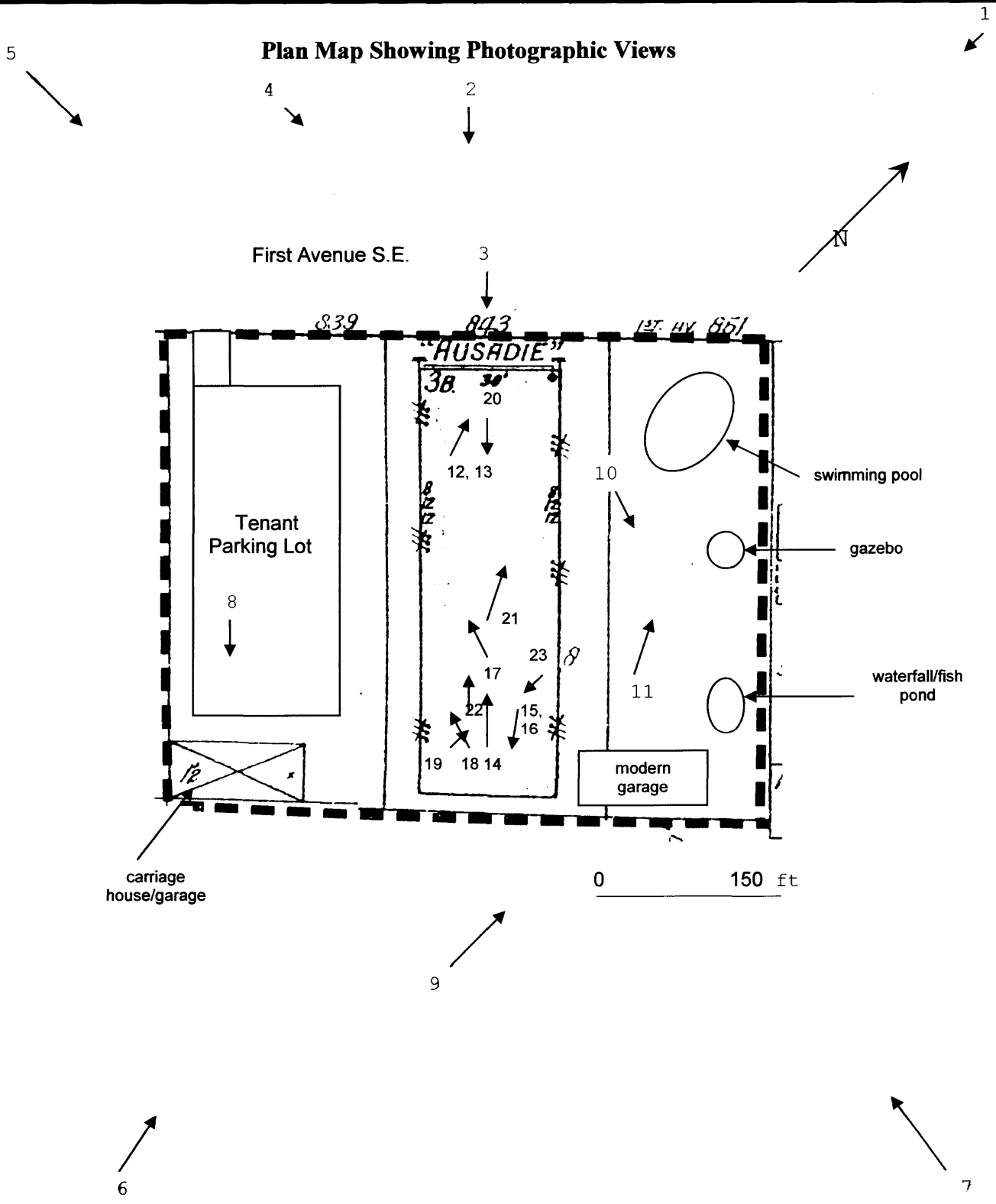


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**Ausadie Building
Linn County, IA**

Photographs:

Name of Property: Ausadie Building, Linn County, IA

Name of Photographer: Leah D. Rogers, Tallgrass Historians L.C.

Dates of Photographs: April 10 and May 7, 2004

Location of Original Negatives: State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines

- # 1 General view of Ausadie Building, View to the SW
- #2 Front façade of Ausadie Building, View to the SE
- #3 Detail of front entry of Ausadie Building, View to the SE
- #4 Front and side of Ausadie Building, View to the East
- #5 General view of Ausadie Building, View to the NE
- #6 Rear of Ausadie Building and Palmer Carriage House, View to the North
- #7 General view of Ausadie Building, View to the NW
- #8 Palmer Carriage House/Garage, View to the SE
- #9 Modern garage, View to the North
- #10 Side courtyard and rear of modern garage, View to the East
- #11 Swimming pool and gazebo in side courtyard, View to the North
- #12 Interior of front vestibule, View to the NW
- #13 Interior of second-floor stair landing fanlight window, View to the NW
- #14 Interior of central hallway, View to the NW
- #15 Interior of third-floor stair landing window, View to the NW
- #16 Interior of rear stairwell, View to the SE
- #17 Interior detail of typical service door, View to the West
- #18 French doors in owner's apartment, View to the NW
- #19 Interior closet door detail, View to North
- #20 Interior of central hallway in basement, View to the SE
- #21 Interior of basement showing tenant storage lockers, View to the North
- #22 Original kitchen cabinets now stored in basement, View to the NW
- #23 One of the original furnaces in basement, View to the South