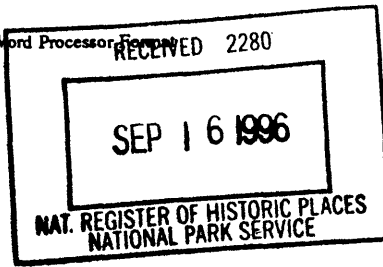


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" on the appropriate line 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 PERRY AND BRAINARD BLOCK  
other names/site number North Des Moines Town Hall

2. Location

street & number 1601 6th Avenue N/A not for publication  
city or town Des Moines N/A vicinity  
state Iowa code IA county Polk code 153 zip code 50314

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.)

Kathleen O'Connell DSHPO 9-12-96  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
State Historical Society of Iowa  
State of 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)

Edson R. Beall 10-25-96  
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

Perry and Brainard Block  
Name of Property

Polk County, Iowa  
County and State

**5. Classification**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Towards a Greater Des Moines

**Number of contributing resources  
previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

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

COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store  
GOVERNMENT/city hall  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

SOCIAL/meeting hall  
DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

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

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick  
walls Brick  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof Asphalt  
other Glass  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

Perry and Brainard Block  
Name of Property

Polk County, Iowa  
County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**  
(Mark "x" on one or more lines 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" on all the lines 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.

**Areas of Significance**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

**Period of Significance**

1889-1890

**Significant Dates**

1889  
1890

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

**Narrative Statement of Significance** - (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

**9. Major Bibliography 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):**

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

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository

Perry and Brainard Block  
Name of Property

Polk County, Iowa  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 | 15 | 447 900 | 4606 249 |

Zone Easting Northing

2 | \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ |

Zone Easting Northing

3 | \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ |

Zone Easting Northing

4 | \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ |

**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 William C. Page, Public Historian

organization River Bend Neighborhood Association date March 31, 1995

street & number 520 East Sheridan Avenue telephone 515-243-5740; FAX 515-243-7285

city or town Des Moines state Iowa zip code 50313

**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 SHPO or FPO.)

name Estate of Hazel Syphrit

street & number 608 East 10th Street telephone 515-262-5595

city or town Des Moines state Iowa zip code 50309

**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 Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7 Page 1

CFN-259-1116

Perry and Brainard Block, Polk County, Iowa.

### GENERAL DESCRIPTION

This is a 2-story commercial building clad with brick veneer. Built between 1888 and 1889, it is conceived within the traditions of vernacular commercial architecture, with a rectangular footprint, flat roof, and symmetrical configured facade. This was the largest commercial building in North Des Moines when it was first constructed.

The integrity of this building is fair, and its condition is also fair. The surrounding neighborhood is classified by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as "slum blight."

### BUILDING

The main portion of this block measures approximately 40' x 60' (width by depth), for a total of about 2,370 square feet on each of its two floors.

The building rests on a brick foundation. It contains a partial basement of about 1,700 square feet in area. Of balloon frame construction, the building is clad in veneer of red-colored brick. It features cast stone trimwork, including window hood molds. A brick cornice is no longer present. The roof is flat and covered with composition material.

On the interior, Floor 1 now serves as the meeting hall for Independent Lodge #4, a fraternal organization. This area features softwood floors with modern wood paneling on the walls. The public meeting rooms on Floor 2 have been converted into four apartment units.

Overall the building is in fair condition. The first floor storefront has been altered by installation of infill materials over the original window cavities. Although this infill is visually distracting, the original cavities appear to remain intact. In 1994, a fire damaged a portion of the building's second floor, but it appears that this area is in use again as an apartment. It should be noted that the overall integrity of this building remains good for a commercial building in Des Moines of comparable age. The tendency in this city has been the demolition of pre-1900 commercial buildings.

### SITE

This building is situated on a portion of Lot 12 in Block 3 of the Polk County Homestead & Trust Company's Addition to the City of Des Moines, Iowa. This city lot was platted of large size and measured 163' x 295'. At an early time, the lot was subdivided into smaller units. By 1909, for example, Lot 12 contained six separate parcels.

The three parcels fronting 6th Avenue were developed for commercial purposes, while the three parcels facing College Avenue were developed for residential purposes (see Continuation Sheet 7-7).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 2

CFN-259-1116

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Perry and Brainard Block, Polk County, Iowa.

The parcel on which the Perry and Brainard Block stands is situated at the southwest corner of Block 3, or, in another description, on the northeast corner of the intersection of 6th and College Avenues. This is a major intersection in North Des Moines.

A commercial node is located at this intersection. It includes a modern shop and parking lot on the southeast corner, a series of four commercial buildings on the northwest corner (one of which is a two-story Victorian commercial block similar to the Perry and Brainard Block), and a parking lot on the southwest corner. A parking lot stands immediately north of the Perry and Brainard Block, and another modern commercial building stands to its north.

The immediate site of this property is generally level in topography. To the east, College Avenue slopes downward to the Des Moines River valley, and to the west it runs upward slightly. Both to the north and south 6th Avenue is generally level before steeply sloping into the Des Moines River valley about three blocks to the north.

The Des Moines City Assessor's Office describes this site as in a "blighted area." The federal Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD) has designated this neighborhood as "slum blight."

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7

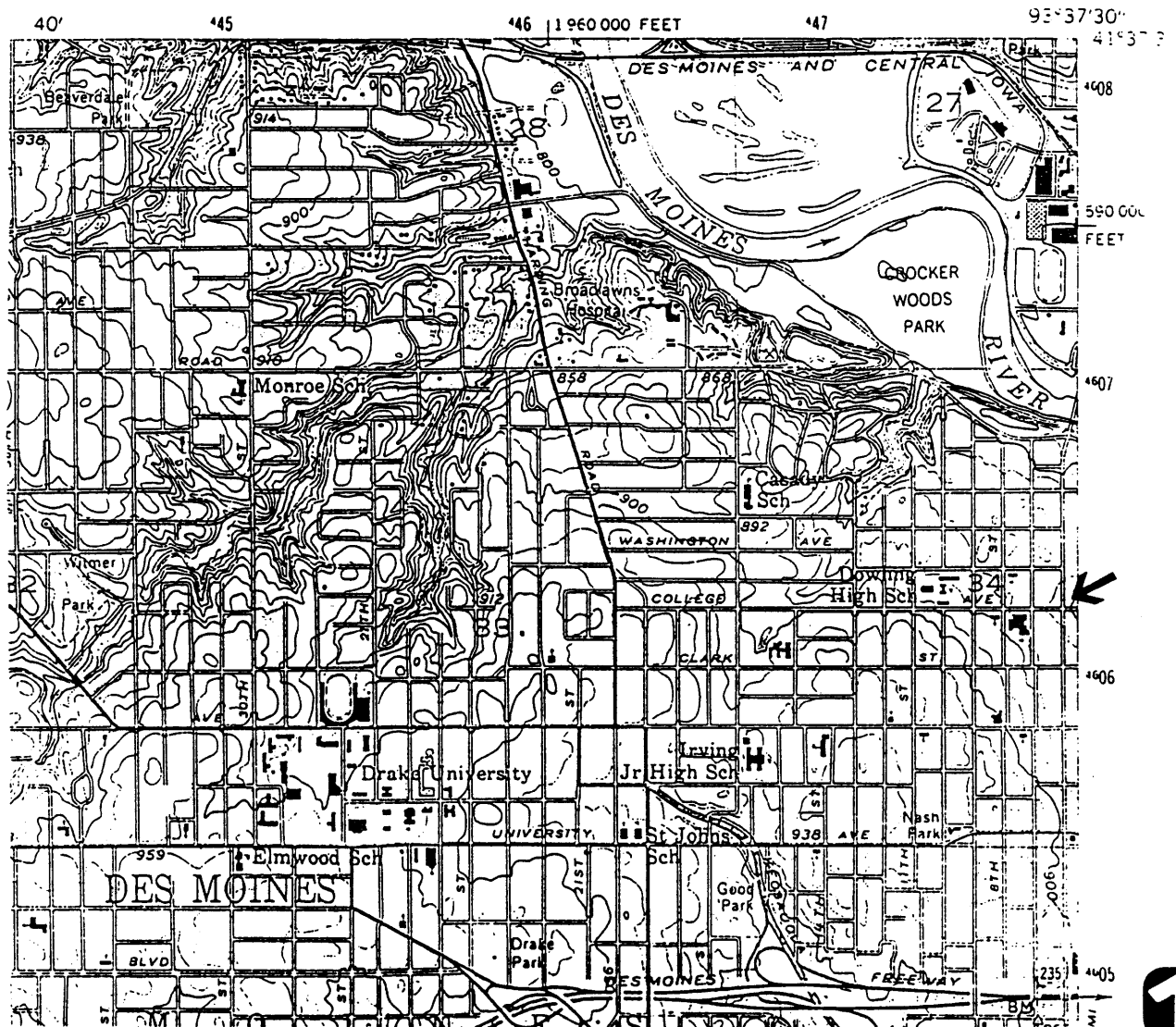
Page 3

CFN-259-1116

Perry and Brainard Block, Polk County, Iowa.

## SITE MAP

ARROW LOCATES PROPERTY



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

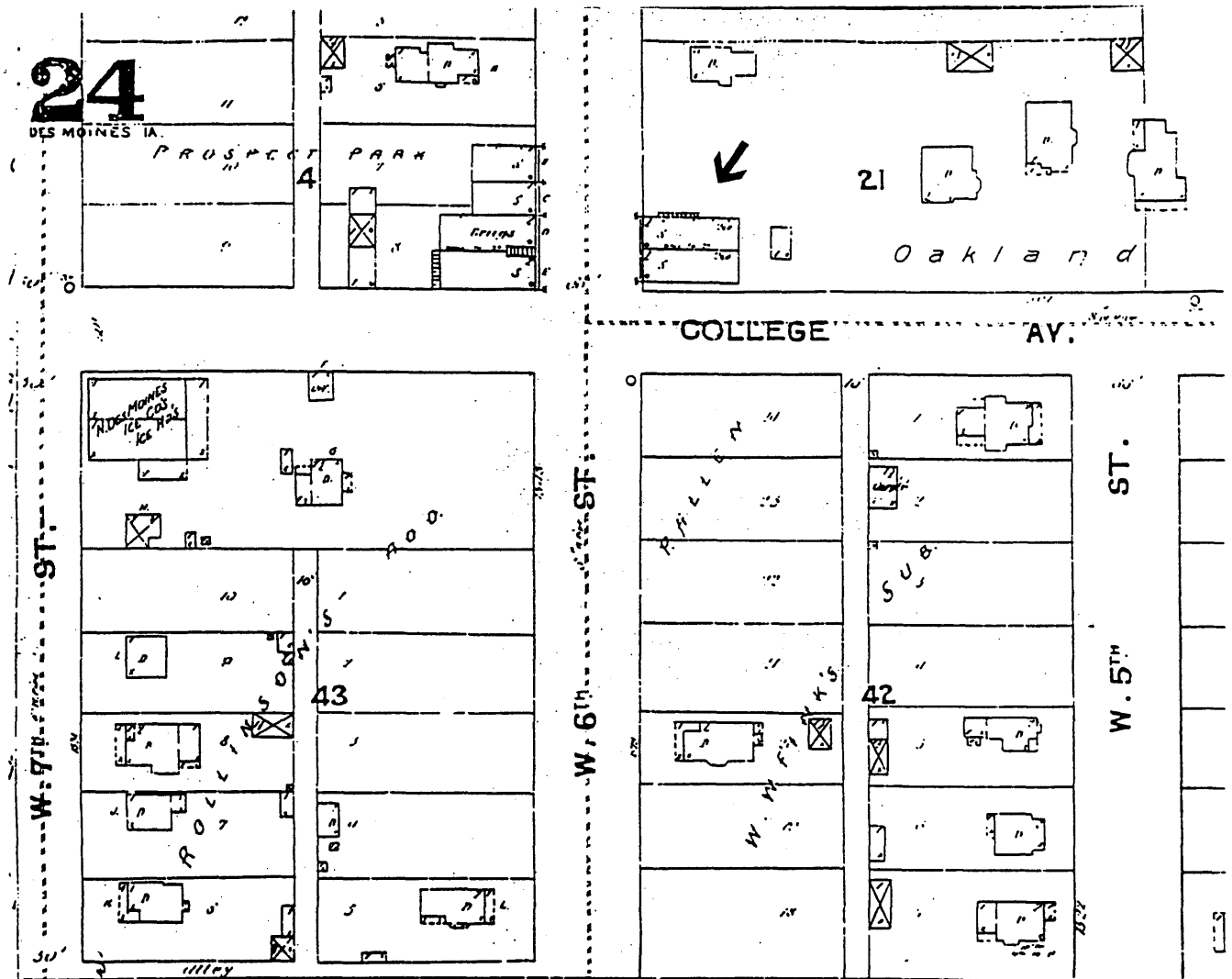
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Perry and Brainard Block, Polk County, Iowa.

## 1891 PLAT MAP

ARROW LOCATES PROPERTY





United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7

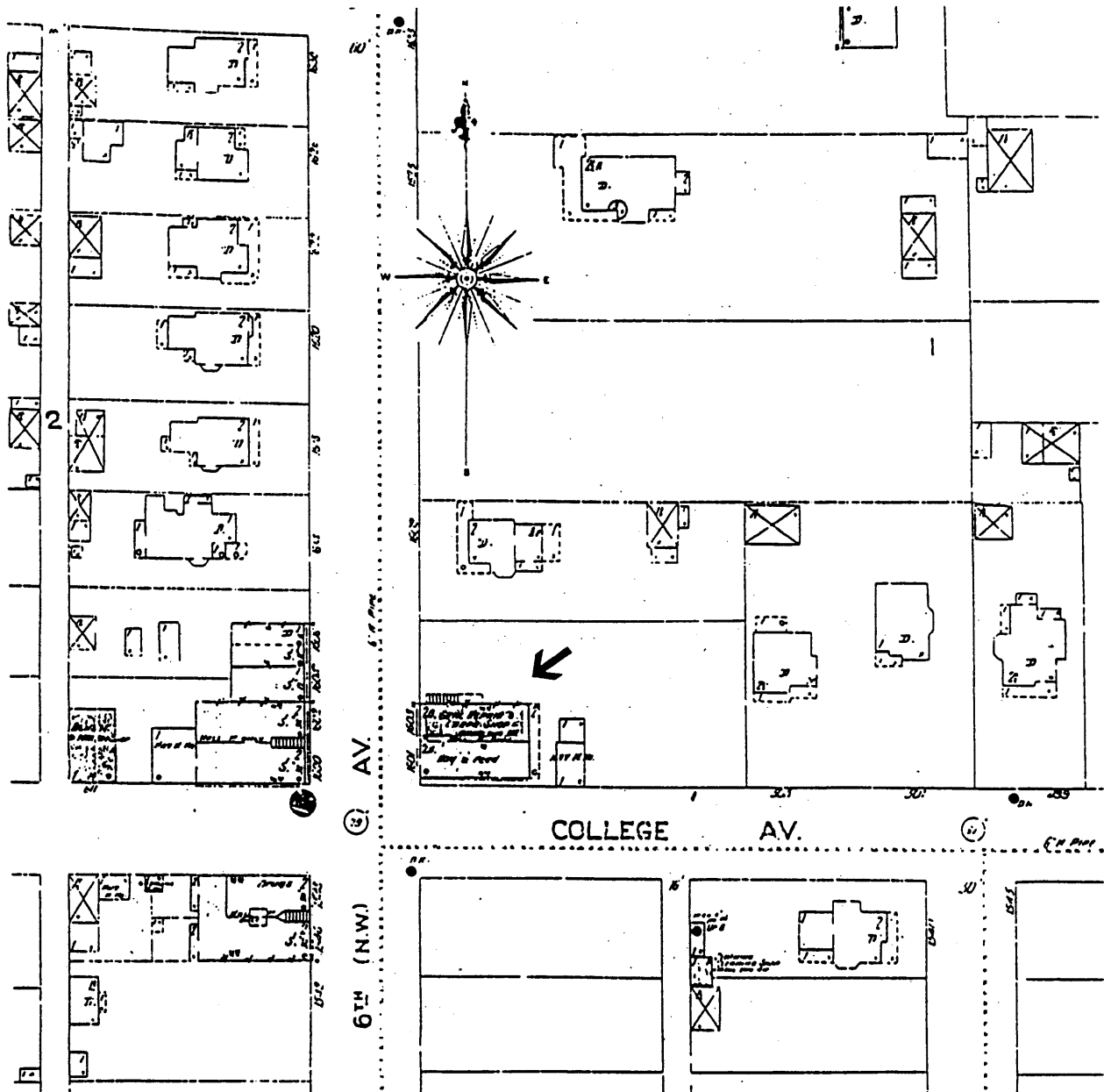
Page 5

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Perry and Brainard Block, Polk County, Iowa.

## 1901 PLAT MAP

ARROW LOCATES PROPERTY



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7

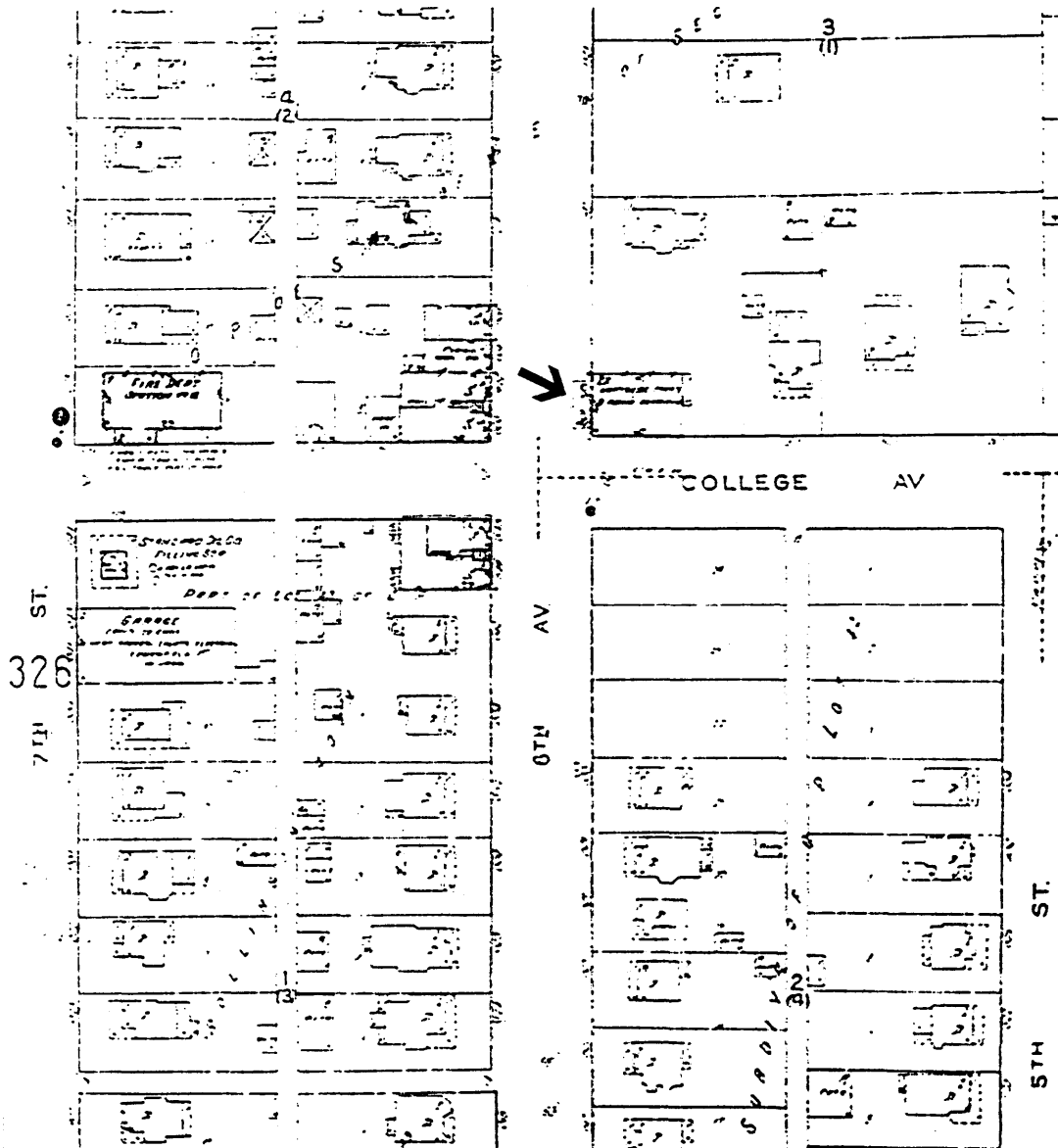
Page 6

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Perry and Brainard Block, Polk County, Iowa.

## 1920 PLAT MAP

ARROW LOCATES PROPERTY



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 7

CFN-259-1116

Perry and Brainard Block, Polk County, Iowa.

**SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Constructed between 1888 and 1889 as a commercial building and public hall, the Perry and Brainard Block calls direct attention to the Annexation Movement in Des Moines and its Victorian suburbs. This movement to expand Des Moines corporate limits was probably the most significant local government issue during the late Nineteenth Century in the metropolitan area. The Perry and Brainard Block is the only known public building surviving from this critical period. As the town hall for the independent community of North Des Moines, the second floor of the Perry and Brainard Block hosted numerous public meetings at which annexation and school consolidation (a closely related issue) were extensively debated during 1889 and 1890. This building also provided the local polling place for the vote. Upon the success of these referenda, residents of North Des Moines converged on the Perry and Brainard Block to celebrate victory. This event was spontaneous, colorful, and cut across class lines. "Hacks, fine carriages, farm wagons drawn by horses and wood carts drawn by mules" paraded before this building. The Perry and Brainard Block had become a common meeting place for public celebration. This parade of vehicles also symbolized the variety of socio-economic backgrounds emerging among North Des Moines residents.

The period of significance, under Criterion A, for the Perry and Brainard Block is 1889-1890, the years when the building served as town hall for North Des Moines. Significant dates include 1889, the year the building was completed, and 1889-1890, the period in which the building hosted public meetings and served as polling place for referenda on annexation and school consolidation.

The property contains one resource for this nomination--the building itself.

**ANNEXATION MOVEMENT**

The Annexation Movement in Des Moines and its surrounding suburbs was a critical issue facing the metropolitan area of Des Moines in the Nineteenth Century. The success of the 1890 referendum to annex the city's surrounding Victorian suburbs established Des Moines's boundaries virtually as they remain today.

The cover document to this nomination discusses the Annexation Movement in detail. Even before this matter could be locally voted upon, those agitating for annexation were compelled to obtain enabling legislation from the Iowa State General Assembly to allow it. The annexation process then required the participation of residents in the City of Des Moines, as well as residents in the surrounding incorporated communities, all of whom voiced their opinions concerning annexation. The study of this process provides an insight into each community.

North Des Moines played a pivotal role in the Annexation Movement. This suburb contained the largest population among the suburbs and was the most vocal among them in stipulating conditions before endorsing annexation. It was also the only suburb, which actually held a referendum on the issue. This fact reveals a well developed democracy in the suburb. A number of public meetings were held in the North Des Moines town hall to debate annexation and school consolidation. Contemporary newspapers

United States Department of the Interior  
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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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Perry and Brainard Block, Polk County, Iowa.

devoted many articles to these debates. (See Chapter III in the cover document.) This coverage shows the range of opinions on these matters and the sophisticated debate they stimulated. This tradition of open debate on controversial issues continues in North Des Moines today.

During this period, John MacVicar as mayor of North Des Moines presided over many of these public meetings. The fact that his house in North Des Moines is nonextant increases the historical significance of the Perry and Brainard Block because it also calls attention to this individual. (See Chapter II in the cover document.)

Finally, on February 5, 1890, North Des Moines voted on the two questions related to annexation: annexation and school consolidation. By a margin of more than two to one, the "big suburb" approved annexation and by the very large margin of five to one approved school consolidation. As one newspaper report said:

Des Moines and North Des Moines could both afford to be happy. The question of annexation was fairly submitted to a vote of the people in one of the principal suburbs and it won the day and won it gloriously..." (*Iowa State Register*, February 7, 1890, p. 7).

As the center of local government in North Des Moines, the Perry and Brainard Block became the site for public celebration following the announcement of the city's annexation into Des Moines. A local newspaper described this impromptu celebration:

At about 5 o'clock there was a motley gathering of vehicles in front of the town hall-- hacks, fine carriages, farm wagons drawn by horses and wood carts drawn by mules. From all over the "corporation of North Des Moines" they gathered in to express their convictions on the matter of annexation. (*Iowa State Register*, February 7, 1890., p. 7, col. 3.)

The variety of transportation described in this article indicates the broad range of socio-economic classes residing in North Des Moines during the period. It also suggests that annexation and school consolidation were issues of wide-ranging concern.

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

In addition to its function as a public meeting hall, the Perry and Brainard Block also calls attention to community development in suburban Des Moines. This significance is not claimed in this nomination because the Sixth and Forest Historic District calls more direct attention to the phenomenon. Nevertheless, the following comments are included in this nomination by way of additional information.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Page 9

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Perry and Brainard Block, Polk County, Iowa.

Several of the independent suburban communities surrounding Des Moines in the late Nineteenth Century developed commercial nodes to service local needs. In contrast to the ubiquitous small grocery stores, which stood throughout the metropolitan area as "stand-alone" businesses, suburban commercial nodes featured a cluster of buildings housing businesses, which provided a wider range of merchandise and services. The South Main Street commercial node in Sevastopol and the University Place node along University Avenue provide two other examples.

North Des Moines possessed two such commercial nodes--one at the intersection of 6th and Forest Avenues and one at the intersection of 6th and College Avenues. The fact that North Des Moines could sustain two of these suburban commercial nodes calls attention to the fact that this community was the largest of the independent incorporations surrounding Des Moines prior to annexation in 1890.

Built as an investment and an income-producing property, the Perry and Brainard Block is additionally significant historically because it helped establish the intersection of 6th and College Avenues as an important suburban commercial node in North Des Moines. As the metropolitan area's "big suburb," this community possessed two such nodes--one at this site and one at the intersection of 6th and Forest Avenues. These and other commercial centers evolved throughout the metropolitan area during the late Nineteenth Century as a result of its population boom, improved public transportation, and suburban growth.

In point of fact, the Perry and Brainard Block stimulated development of the commercial node at 6th and College. Another two-story brick commercial block was built soon afterward at 1600-1604 6th Avenue. Three additional one-story commercial buildings were later built north of it. The 6th and College commercial node, however, does not appear eligible for nomination to the National Register as an historic district because most of the resources date from the 1920s and later. This is beyond the period of significance of this commercial node as a suburban phenomenon.

The Perry and Brainard Block represents another trend within community development in Victorian Des Moines. The presence of the Ancient Order of United Workmen lodge, housed on the second floor of the Perry and Brainard Block, follows a common Nineteenth-Century practice, whereby members of fraternal organizations often used the upper floors of commercial buildings as meeting halls. (The lodged shared the second floor with the City of North Des Moines.)

#### ARCHITECTURE

This building exhibits the influences of Victorian commercial architectural styling, such as the building's two-story, rectangular configuration and hood molds over the windows. These characteristics lack, however, sufficient architectural significance for individual nomination. Although the present condition of the building is fair, the first floor storefront has been altered, and the cornice has been removed, this building should be judged within the context of pre-1900 commercial architecture in Des Moines. Within that context, the Perry and Brainard Block retains its integrity.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

## **NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

### **CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8

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Perry and Brainard Block, Polk County, Iowa.

#### **REPRESENTATION IN OTHER CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEYS**

This building was surveyed in 1994 as part of the "Towards a Greater Des Moines" reconnaissance survey of Des Moines' Victorian suburbs. As one resource within the intensive survey of the River Bend neighborhood, (another part of this project), the Perry and Brainard Block was evaluated as individually eligible, under Criterion A, for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The State Historical Society of Iowa concurred in this determination.

#### **POTENTIAL FOR HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY**

Although the site's potential for archaeological research is, as yet, unevaluated, there appears to be little in this regard. A one-story outbuilding stood to the east of the commercial block proper (see Continuation Sheet 7-4). This site might provide some potential to discover subsurface deposits.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 9

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Perry and Brainard Block, Polk County, Iowa.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Please refer to Section I of the Multiple Property Documentation Form for complete bibliography.

#### PRIMARY

Des Moines City Directory, 1896.

Huebinger, M.; *Map of the City of Des Moines, Iowa*; Des Moines; The Iowa Publishing Company; 1909.

*Iowa State Register*; December 20, 1889, p. 5; January 30, 1890, p. 6; and February 7, 1890, p. 7.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for 1891, 1901, and 1920.

#### SECONDARY

Brigham, Johnson; *Des Moines, the Pioneer of Municipal Progress and Reform of the Middle West together with the History of Polk County, Iowa, the Largest, Most Populous and Most Prosperous County in the State of Iowa*; Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company; 1911; 2 volumes.

Page, William C., and Joanne R. Walroth; *Towards a Greater Des Moines: Early Suburbanization and Development, circa 1880-circa 1920*; Intensive cultural resources report prepared for and on file at the Des Moines Historic District Commission and State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines; 1992.

Des Moines City Assessor's Office; Property Record Card.

*Des Moines Sunday Register*; "'A Bad Fire,' Blaze damages D. M. building; 2 are injured"; February 13, 1994, p. 5B.

*Des Moines Register*; "Building holds suburb's history; North Des Moines structure harkens back to annexation"; February 15, 1994; Metro and Iowa News, p. 5M.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

# **NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET**

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CFN-259-1116

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Perry and Brainard Block, Polk County, Iowa.

## **VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The north 45 feet, the south 75 feet, and the west 84 feet of Lot 12 in Block 3 of the Polk County Homestead & Trust Company's Addition to the City of Des Moines, Iowa.

## **BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The National Register boundary contains all land historically associated with this resource.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 10 Page 13

CFN-259-1116

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Perry and Brainard Block, Polk County, Iowa.

### LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Perry and Brainard Block  
1601 6th Avenue  
Des Moines, IA 50314  
Looking northeast  
William C. Page, Photographer  
November 30, 1995
  
2. Perry and Brainard Block  
1601 6th Avenue  
Des Moines, IA 50314  
Looking southeast  
William C. Page, Photographer  
November 30, 1995