OMB No.

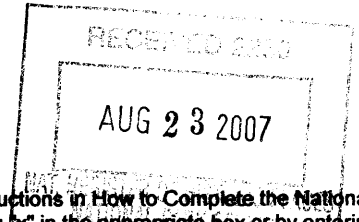|03\

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

RECEIVED 2280

AUG 2 3 2007

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

1. Name of Property

historic name _____ City Hotel _____

other names/site number ____ Seifert's Tavern, Wheatland Feed Mill _____

2. Location

street & number _____ 214 S. Main St. _____ not for publication _ N/A __
city or town _____ Wheatland _____ vicinity _N/A_
state ___Iowa_____ code __IA__ county ___Clinton_____ code _045___ zip code ___52777_

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

_Lowell J. Soike, Deputy SHPO, August 17, 2007_____

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 commenting or other official   Date

_____
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

_✓_ entered in the National Register
___ See continuation sheet.
____ determined eligible for the
National Register
___ See continuation sheet.
____ determined not eligible for the
National Register
____ removed from the National Register

____ other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper _Edson H. Beall_____   Date of Action _10·3·07_

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)
  X private
____ public-local
____ public-State
____ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)
  X building(s)
____ district
____ site
____ structure
____ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_1_	_2_	buildings
____	____	sites
____	____	structures
____	____	objects
_1_	_2_	Total

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

_____ N/A _____

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

_0_

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
  DOMESTIC/hotel
  COMMERCIAL/TRADE/restaurant
  AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/storage

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
  VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)
  LATE VICTORIAN

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions
foundation   STONE/Limestone
roof   ASPHALT

walls   BRICK

other   WOOD

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

8. Statement of Significance

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

____A   Property is associated with events that have made
a significant contribution to the broad patterns of
our history.

____B   Property is associated with the lives of persons
significant in our past.

_X_ C   Property embodies the distinctive characteristics
of a type, period, or method of construction or
represents the work of a master, or possesses
high artistic values, or represents a significant and
distinguishable entity whose components lack
individual distinction.

____D   Property has yielded, or is likely to yield
information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)
Property is:

_____A   owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

_____B   removed from its original location.

_____C   a birthplace or a grave.

_____D   a cemetery.

_____E   a reconstructed building, object, or structure

_____F   a commemorative property.

_____G   less than 50 years of age or achieved
significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

__ARCHITECTURE_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Period of Significance
__1893_____

_____

_____

Significant Dates
__1893_____

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

__N/A_____

Cultural Affiliation
__N/A_____

Architect/Builder
__Araah, Antheona_____

_____

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 # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data
_X_ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
___ Other
Name of repository:

_____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property ___less than one acre___

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing   Zone Easting Northing
1 _15_ _679470_ _4633027_   3 __ _____ _____
2 __ _____ _____   4 __ _____ _____

___ 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___ Jan Olive Nash (with research by Eric Lana and Amy Smothers)___

organization_Tallgrass Historians L.C.___   date___January 2007___

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 completed form:

Continuation Sheets

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

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

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

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)
name ___SAKS Investments, L.L.C.___

street & number___201 W. Lincoln Way___   telephone___563.374.1824___

city or town_____Wheatland_____   state_IA_   zip code _52777___

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(8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

City Hotel
name of property

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Clinton Iowa
county and state

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7. Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The City Hotel sits in the southern part of the town of Wheatland (Fig. 1), one of a series of small, nineteenth-century villages strung together across Clinton County, Iowa, by the main line of the Chicago & North Western (CNW) railroad.[1] Wheatland was founded by John L. Bennett, a New York native who came to Iowa in 1856, just as construction of the CNW's precursor pushed west from the Mississippi River and the port town of Clinton. Bennett purchased 200 acres of rolling prairie in the western part of the county and waited for the railroad to arrive. Two years later, in 1858, Bennett gave 20 of his acres to the railroad company, at the same time platting the town of Wheatland alongside the new line.[2] Located near the CNW depot, City Hotel is the second hotel on this site and well positioned to take full advantage of the passenger traffic generated by the rail line. Built of patterned brick veneered over a wooden frame, with a limestone foundation, the two-story building's gabled front looks east over Main Street (formerly Railroad Street). Its long northern side faces the rest of the Main Street district. The long southern side, the brick veneering of which has suffered partial collapse, faced the island depot and the rail yard that once served trackside industries and gave slow trains a way off the main line to await passage of faster trains. One of these side tracks passed within just a dozen feet or so of the hotel windows of sleeping guests. The hotel's gabled rear, west wall served as the utility or service area for the building. Surrounded by a grassy lawn, the rear and north sides of the hotel are crowded by nearby neighboring buildings and small sheds. Decoration of the City Hotel was accomplished primarily through the use of dichromatic patterned brickwork, wooden window headers with jigsawed ornamental shapes, and a curved and stepped façade pediment that is capped by a large metal finial. Fenestration is largely asymmetrical, except on the façade, and appears to reflect historic interior spaces and features rather than an exterior eye towards style. Several of the windows and doors have been modified or covered up over the years. Inside much of the original wall surface has been removed but a colorful art glass transom and some original woodwork survive.

Exterior

The foundation of the 40- by 60-foot hotel building is of large, yellow, rock-face limestone blocks laid in a coursed pattern. A balloon-frame structural system sits atop this stone, with a light-weight timber frame supporting the interior floors. The exterior stud walls are sheathed on the outside with wide fir or pine planks and clad, finally, with courses of red and yellow brick veneer. Color changes in the brickwork provide one of the strongest decorative elements of the building and visually link the walls with the yellow limestone foundation (Figs. 2 & 3). While the bulk of the brick veneer is common red brick, laid in

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[1] Wheatland's population remains less than 1000. In 1920, it was 549; in 1980 it was 840; in 2000 it was 772 (federal censuses).
[2] *Wheatland: The Story of a Century, 1858-1958* (1958), 3. Collection of Steven K. Rohling.

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City Hotel
name of property

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Clinton Iowa
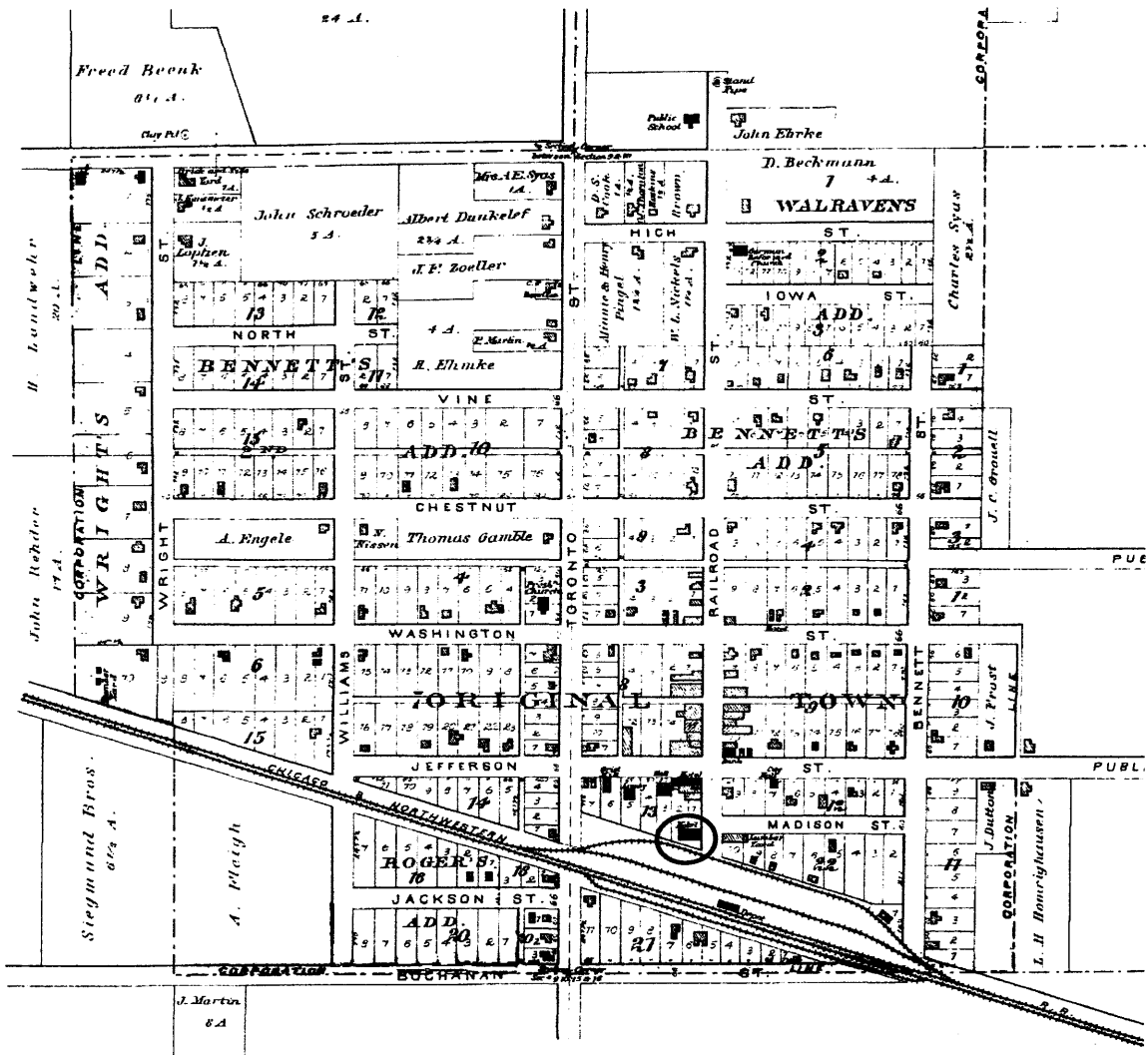county and state

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Figure 1 Map of Wheatland, Clinton County, Iowa, 1894. The City Hotel is circled.
(Plat Book of Clinton County, Iowa by Banker's Life)

all-stretcher courses, yellow brick is used in both gables, where geometric shapes suggest "wings" radiating from a central oculus window that itself is encircled in yellow brick. The lighter colored masonry is also used for corbels and a string course at the roof. At each corner, a large yellow-brick corbel is used at the roofline

Mr. Raymond A. Mosley, Director
Office of the Federal Register
Washington, DC 20401

Subject: Notification of pending National Register nominations.

Dear Mr. Mosley:

We hereby certify that the enclosed disk in WordPerfect format is

a true copy of the original subject document which is also

enclosed.

J. Paul Loether, Chief
National Register of Historic Places/National
Historic Landmarks Program

Windows XP
Printer Test Page

Congratulations!

If you can read this information, you have correctly installed your HP LaserJet 1022 on INP2280AABERNAT.

The information below describes your printer driver and port settings.

Submitted Time: 2:45:30 PM 9/24/2007
Computer name: INP2280AABERNAT
Printer name: HP LaserJet 1022
Printer model: HP LaserJet 1022
Color support: No
Port name(s):   USB001
Data format: IMF
Share name:
Driver name: IMFNT5.DLL
Data file: SDhp1020.SDD
Config file: SDNT5UI.DLL
Help file: SDhp1020.HLP
Driver version: 5.06
Environment: Windows NT x86
Monitor: HPLJ1020LM
Default datatype: RAW

Additional files used by this driver:
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 C:\WINDOWS\System32\spool\DRIVERS\W32X86\3\SUhp1020.dll   (5, 60, 2208, 0)
 C:\WINDOWS\System32\spool\DRIVERS\W32X86\3\SUhp1020.ent
 C:\WINDOWS\System32\spool\DRIVERS\W32X86\3\ZJBIG.dll   (5, 4, 334, 3)
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City Hotel   _____
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Figure 2 Current view of the City Hotel's east façade on Main Street (formerly Railroad
Street) and north side elevation, facing southwest. A bit of the railroad yard is
visible as open space at the left edge of the image. (Tallgrass Historians L.C., 2006)

to achieve a dropped pendant effect, followed below down the corner by yellow-brick quoining to the
foundation. Yellow brick is also found on each elevation, slightly above the midway point between foundation
and roof, suggesting both a decorative string course and the interior placement of the second floor joists.
Another row of these bricks, arranged in a slightly different pattern, is located at the approximate location of the
interior ground floor level. The pale brick is also used to create the appearance of dropped hoods over
each door and window, as well as the impression of base brackets at the bottom of each opening. Hoods are
made of double rows of header bricks, set as segmental arch, with yellow, instead of red, stretchers alongside
the windows under the arch. A quoining pattern is used down the sides of doorways under the segmental arch.
The use of nonstructural patterned yellow brickwork in this building cleverly approximates finer masonry and
structural stone that might have been used in a load-bearing masonry building.

Unlike the artistic use of patterned brick, the hotel's fenestration arrangement appears largely dictated by the
interior arrangement of rooms and architectural features. The east façade is symmetrical and balanced (Figs. 4
& 5). Paired windows flanked a single opening in the center on both stories. A strong vertical axis is
established on this front wall by stacking a number of features, described from ground up as: the central
entrance, a guestroom window, the oculus window, the tallest part of the curved

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Figure 3 Current view of the west rear and the south side wall, looking northeast.
(Tallgrass Historians L.C., 2006)

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Figure 4 Current view of the east façade, facing west. (Tallgrass Historians L.C., 2006)

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Figure 5 "East Elevation" drawing by Douglas J. Steinmetz, AIA (2004)

pediment, and the pointed metal finial. These features diminish in width with each rising element, maximizing the illusion of verticality in this relatively low two-story building. Alterations on this façade include the reduction of the front entrance opening by using wood paneling and a replacement door, and the substitution of a wooden delivery door to the south for one of the paired ground-level windows. There is no obvious evidence of a front porch and the building may sit too close to the street to have ever had one.

The opposite, rear gabled wall's fenestration lacks both balance and symmetry (Fig. 6). The central windows are offset to the south (right) of the oculus window in the gable. Three original windows and an additional fourth opening (an alteration) appear in the upper level, while five original openings are located on the lower level (a rear entrance and four flanking windows). A wooden, shed-roof storage porch was added in 1951 to shelter the rear entrance, which included a widened doorway. Other alterations include the removal of window sashes on the upper floor, each being either infilled with wood or a smaller window.

The long, north side of the City Hotel is balanced but not symmetrical (Fig. 7). Five single windows punctuate the wall, both on the upper floor and the ground level. These windows are unequally spaced, with the windows at the front (eastern) part of the building set farther from the front wall, creating a wider interstitial wall than that found between the rest of the windows. Alterations to this side include the application of two long wooden boards that anchored a shed addition, now removed.

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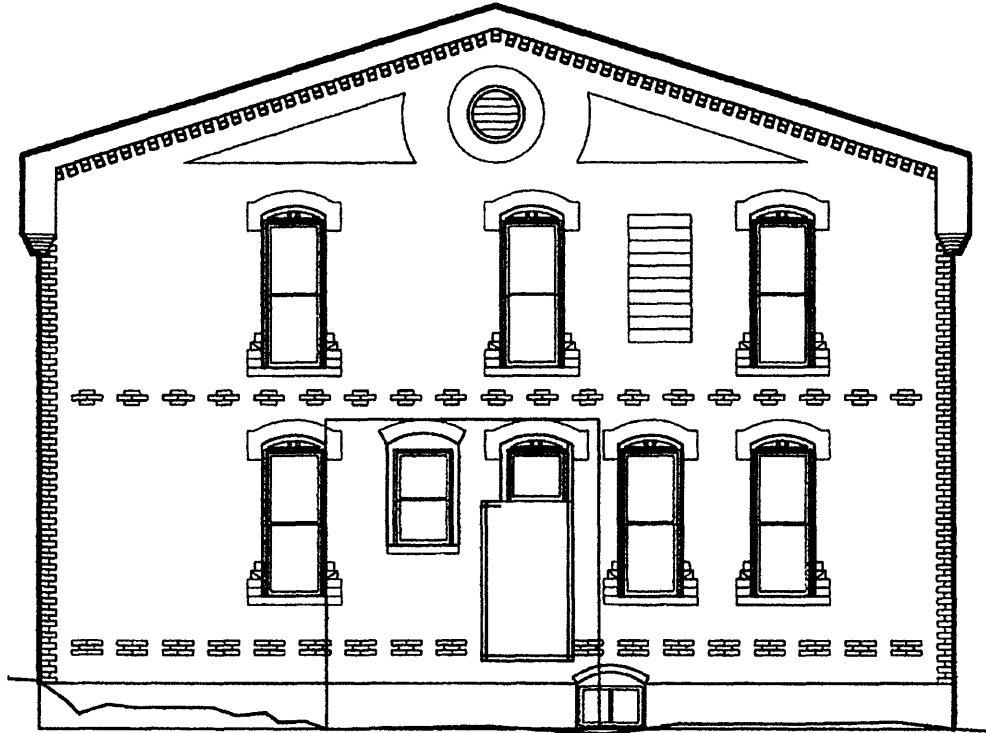county and state

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Figure 6 "West Elevation" drawing by Douglas J. Steinmetz, AIA (2004)

Several windows have had one or both sashes replaced and filled with wood or metal cladding. And one centrally located, ground floor window has been widened and converted to an entrance.

The final, long south side of the hotel presents yet another unique fenestration arrangement (Fig. 7). Vertically balanced, it too lacks symmetry around a central axis. Three groups of windows interrupt the long wall, with wide spaces in between them: two sets of paired widows and two single windows positioned close to each other. This arrangement makes little sense with respect to the second floor sleeping rooms and so may have been more driven by first floor function, a lobby, commercial traveler's showroom, or dining room, for example. Alterations to this side wall include the replacement of many window sashes with solid material and the significant deterioration and collapse of the brick veneer. Bricks have fallen away from more than half of the wall, leaving the plank sheathing exposed. The bricks have been salvaged, however, and are stored at the base of the building awaiting reinstallation.

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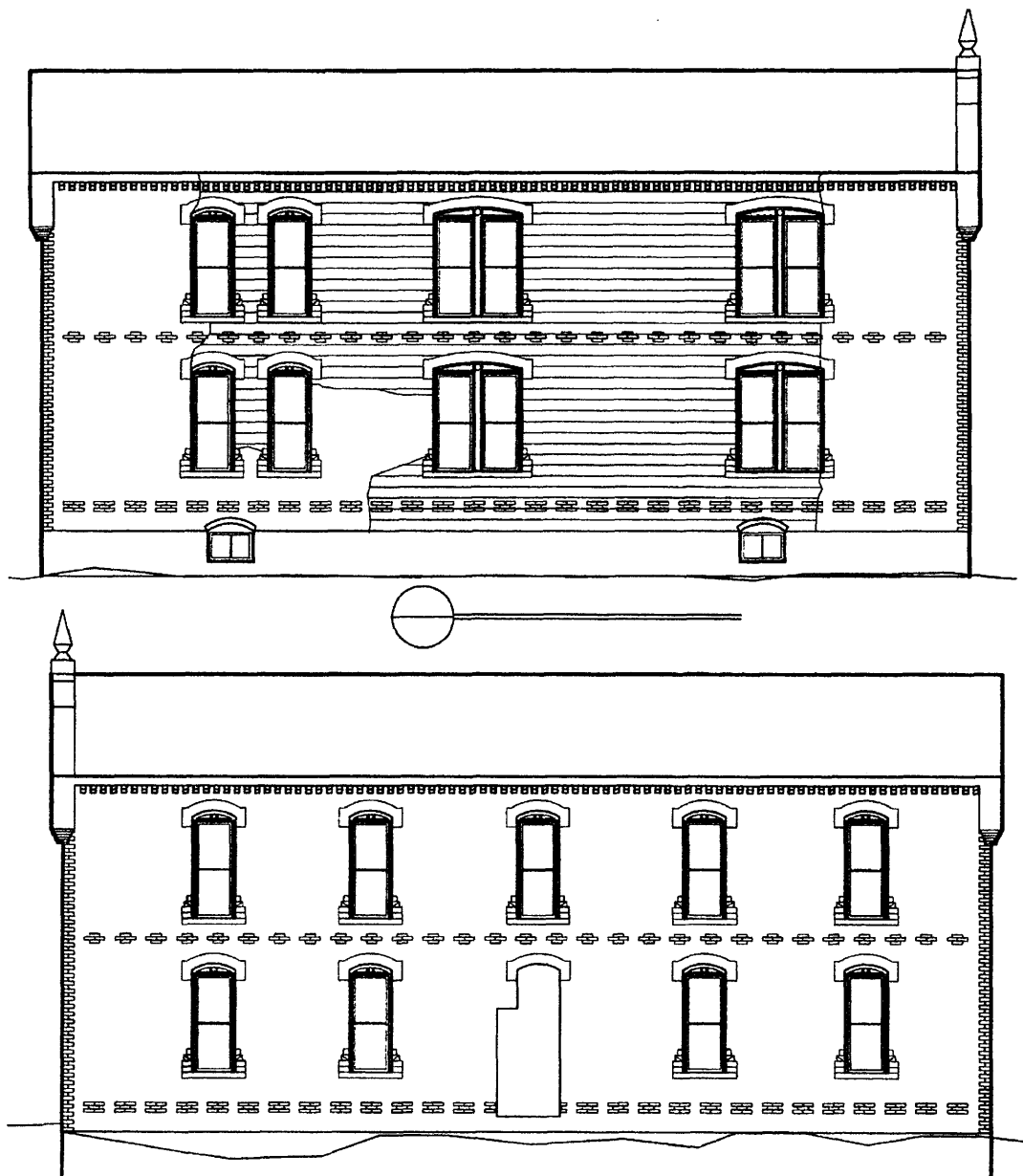Section ___7___ Page _8_

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Figure 7 TOP: "South Elevation" drawing. BOTTOM: "North Elevation" drawing. Both by
Douglas J. Steinmetz, AIA (2004)

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Interior

Little of the original interior floor plan or finishes remain intact. Much of the ground floor interior has been opened to create a wider space by the removal of partition walls and is now filled with stored lumber and other materials. Walls were lath and plaster and this does largely remain in place on the inside of the exterior walls. Ceilings have been stripped bare of their covering (patterned tin sheeting, perhaps) to reveal the floor joists of the upper level. Some original trim work remains as well, around the windows, doors, and the floor. Window trim looks like yellow pine and is composed of butt-jointed boards and head blocks with Eastlake incising, typical of what was available from mail order catalogs of the time. Window trim is larger and more elaborate downstairs than the simpler lines of the window trim in the upstairs guest rooms. Over some interior doorways was a decorative transom, parts of which survive in at least one location downstairs. The artistic transom glass was composed of small red squares, set at an angle, and joined to larger mustard-yellow glass squares with clipped corners (Fig. 8). A narrow stairwell and wooden staircase lead to the second floor, where front room partition walls remain, while other evidence of the hotel's former sleeping rooms is gone except for the gaps in the plaster (Fig. 9).

Sheds

Two small wooden storage sheds sit off the northwest corner of the City Hotel. The smaller shed appears to be of turn-of-the-twentieth century construction. Its wood frame is clad with vertical board and batten siding and rests on a masonry foundation. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles and window openings have been covered with solid material. The second wooden shed is slightly larger and appears to be from the mid-twentieth century. Its wood frame is clad in vertical tongue-and-groove siding; its roof is covered with asphalt shingles. A modern overhead garage door is located on the south gable-end wall.

Integrity

Other than the alterations and deteriorated areas already mentioned, the building displays good integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. On the exterior, alterations to the building's fenestration have affected the integrity of design, but not enough to diminish overall historic integrity. While interior modifications are more extensive, there are still remnants of original materials that display integrity of feeling.

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Figure 8 Current view of upper floor from stairway landing, looking southeast through doorway into the southeast corner room. (Tallgrass Historians L.C., 2006)

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Figure 9 Current representative view of ground floor. The camera is positioned just
inside the rear entrance (off camera at right) and facing south. The southwest corner of
the building is behind the lumber at right. (Tallgrass Historians L.C., 2006)

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OMB No. 1024-0018

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8. Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary Paragraph

The 1893 City Hotel is locally significant under Criterion C for its Late Victorian commercial style. It serves as an example of the work of the Italian, Antheona Araah, a relatively obscure photographer turned architect, who, though operating under the constraints of small-town economics, created a clever homage to the higher styled architecture popular in larger cities, managing to create a pleasingly decorated hotel building, largely using just a change of brick colors. As a commercial lodging property type, the City Hotel represents the efforts of a small-town property owner to build a hotel that could attract the traveling public as they disembarked from the nearby busy mainline railroad. Combining the talents of a local "artist" with an excellent commercial location, the City Hotel served as a functional landmark in town and now stands as a reminder of a long-gone era of small-town prosperity and travel habits associated with the railroad as the principal mode of inter-town travel before the age of the automobile.

The Architect

Italian born Antheona Araah (1850-1934?) fashioned himself an artist and engaged in creative professions ranging from photography to carpentry and masonry to designing buildings.[1] Born in 1850, Araah immigrated to the United States in 1859 as a nine-year-old child.[2] Other than his European nativity, little is known about Araah's early life or education. In 1881 he married a young Iowa native and lived in Onslow, a tiny village in eastern Jones County, about 25 miles from Wheatland. By then, he had already learned the new medium of photography and described himself as a "photoartist."[3] He also called himself "Professor Araah" in his newspaper ads, but whether this reflected advanced schooling or just promotional hyperbole is unknown. Araah's business methods as a photographer led him to work in several eastern Iowa towns, using a mobile photo gallery "car" that traveled from town to town.[4] From 1876 until at least 1904, Araah remained principally based in Oxford Junction, midway between Onslow and Wheatland, but he sold artistic photographs, (including stereo photographs), took new photographs, and dealt in picture frames in Onslow, Maquoketa, Oxford Junction (formerly called Garfield), and Monticello, all in eastern Iowa.[5] He also brought

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[1] This individual's name is reflected in the historical record with a number of spelling variations. His first name is referred to as Antheona, Anthony, Antheonia, just A., or A.A., and occasionally the initials, M.A. His last name is also spelled Araat in some records. There is a discrepancy in birthdates in the records also, one listing it at 1842 (obituary) and another listing it as 1850 (federal census). Read together, it is possible there were two brothers or an uncle and nephew—one named A. or A.A. Araah, born in 1850, and one M.A. Araah, born in 1842. More genealogical sleuthing would be required to really sort out these discrepancies, but, based on contemporary newspaper accounts, Antheona Araah is clearly the photographer who also designed the City Hotel in 1893.
[2] U.S. Census, manuscript data, 1900. Collection of the State Historical Society of Iowa.
[3] U.S. Census, manuscript data, 1880. Collection of the State Historical Society of Iowa.
[4] The reference to "car" does not to mean railroad car, though that might seem logical. The local Wheatland newspaper, in various 1890 and 1891 issues, refers to the "corner" in town where Araah's car was located and the fact that Araah was waiting to move his car until the roads become more passable. Furthermore, most of the towns in which Araah worked were not on the railroad line. Therefore, it would appear the mobile studio or gallery was actually a type of covered wagon, probably pulled by horses.
[5] Mary Bennett and Paul C. Juhl, *Iowa Stereographs: Three-Dimensional Visions of the Past* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1997), 337.

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his gallery car to Wheatland as early as 1890. Wheatland in the early 1890s was a hustling market stop on the CNW's main line. It was one of a long chain of small rail stops along the line between Clinton on the Mississippi River and, at the opposite end of the state, Council Bluffs on the Missouri River. The pattern of railroad towns seems especially remarkable across Clinton and adjacent Cedar counties for the regularity of their spacing, averaging 6½ miles between each community.

Antheona Araah's work as a photographer placed him for extended stays in small towns along a circuit, all of which, except for Wheatland, were located north of the CNW railroad line and away from direct connections to the greater world. To reach his circle of towns, Araah hauled his gallery car along muddy county roads that crossed the Wapsipinicon River in several locations. A picturesque countryside, to be sure, much of it covered with native oak, hickory, and walnut, but these roads occasionally meant extended stays for the photographer in one town while he awaited improved traveling conditions. Wheatland was an important stop because of its connections with the greater markets and the outside influences that would arrive on the CNW. He probably received his shipments of the picture frames he sold, as well as his photographic supplies there in Wheatland and easily could have taken the train out of Wheatland for buying trips to Chicago.

His familiarity among Wheatland residents was evident when, late in 1890, Araah moved his gallery car to the town and put a notice in the November 19th *Wheatland Gazette*. "I have on exhibition a complete line of all the latest styles of Finished Photographs," the notice read, "produced in no other gallery west of Chicago. All of which I will be pleased to show to the public, and whether desiring work or not, you will be convinced that the place to get pictures is at *my* gallery. You will find a good natured artist who will be pleased to see you. A. Araah, Artist" [emphasis original]. A couple of weeks later, Araah presented the editor of the *Gazette* with a "fine view of Railroad St., north from his gallery." The editor also commented, in good, small-town booster fashion, that "It is an exceptionally clear picture and is also a good advertisement for Wheatland as well as for the artist, showing, as it does, the street crowded with farm teams."[6]

Whether Araah was still in Wheatland the next February or had simply returned from stops in other towns is unknown, but the February 11th edition of the *Gazette* suggests work was slow when it commented that "Professor Araah has been putting in his time during the past few days improving the internal arrangement of his photograph car...Stop in and look at it. The genial artist will be pleased to show you the car whether you want work done or not." By May, Araah was back in Oxford Junction, but was set to return to Wheatland shortly. Later that same year, on October 28, 1891, the first suggestion that Araah was expanding his economic activities appeared in the *Gazette* with the editor's note that "Professor Araah is a first-class mason as well as artist. He put up two chimneys for J.W. Tooker [a local builder] on Monday." Six weeks later, the editor announced that "Last Friday professor Araah sold his photograph car and outfit...leav[ing Wheatland] without a gallery of any kind. The professor has made hundreds of photos for the people in this vicinity...and we all dislike to have him or his car go away. The corner where it stood looks bare enough now."[7] Apparently, the case was made, for Araah did put together another studio car in June of 1892, but he also

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[6] *Wheatland Gazette*, December 12, 1890.
[7] *Wheatland Gazette*, December 8, 1891.

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expanded his masonry activities at the same time. In the fall of 1892, when one of Wheatland's merchants started construction of a new general store on Railroad Street, Araah was in charge of the masonry, from building the brick housing for the store's new furnace in late November to the work on the building's exterior. The *Gazette* reported in its January 4, 1893, edition that "the brick work on Lohmann's store has been finished in spite of the cold weather. A. Araah, of Oxford Junction, had charge of the work and kept it going, weather or no weather. It is now the handsomest building in our town." Just a month later, Wheatland's main street commercial district would suffer a major fire, leading to another, more important building project for A. Araah, the landmark City Hotel.

The City Hotel

The February 7, 1893, conflagration that burned a half a block of Railroad St. businesses was spotted just before midnight by a CNW engineer who had just "pulled his long freight train out the way of the west-bound 'limited'" by diverting it to the side track south of the depot. At the sight of smoke, the quick thinking engineer pulled on the whistle cord of his locomotive, setting off "a series of startling and appalling whistles which quickly and effectively conveyed to the entire community a message of danger." The fire, whipped by a stiff northwest wind, consumed six "close-set wooden buildings" along the west side of Railroad Street, including the original City Hotel near the depot. Between the City Hotel on the south, and the brick Grohmann Hotel and Saloon at the north end of the block, sat four saloons and a dwelling. The ignition point of the fire was between two of these saloons.[8]

The disaster was the third major fire in 11 months and it prompted civic changes as well as much rebuilding. A new waterworks system was installed that included a large tank to draw from in the event of another fire and, within a month, the town also passed a new ordinance that established the boundaries of a fire zone or "fire limits." Within this district, it was unlawful to "erect, or cause to be erected, any building, any part of which is constructed of wood material on the outside." Storing combustible materials such as hay in the open against, between, or around buildings also was prohibited within the fire district.[9] The stage was thus set for the reconstruction of a new City Hotel on the valued site near the depot, but of fire resistant materials this time.

John Grell had opened the original City Hotel in 1889, after "repairing, painting and furnishing his property on Railroad Street near the depot," suggesting that the first hotel was an existing building adapted to commercial lodging.[10] The *Gazette* noted with pleasure the opening of the first City Hotel on October 23, 1889, saying "A new hotel has been opened in Wheatland and is known as the 'City Hotel.' It is conveniently near the Northwestern depot on our principal business street and is admirably arranged for the comfort and convenience of its patrons...We now have four hotels, and the man, woman, or child that cannot be pleased by one of them should never remain away from home overnight." All four hotels—the City Hotel, the Siegmund House, Schmuetz Hotel, and Gerard House—placed ads in the *Gazette* and solicited the trade of the traveling

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[8] *Wheatland Gazette*, February 8, 1893.
[9] *Wheatland Gazette*, March 8, 1893.
[10] *Wheatland Gazette*, n.d., but ca. October, 1889. Collection of Steven K. Rohling.

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public. In addition to long-distance travelers, professionals commonly traveled to expand their trade much as photographer Araah did. A dentist from a nearby town, for example, regularly set up temporary quarters in the City Hotel, placing notices to that effect in the *Gazette*. Hotel business should have been brisk, considering the 12 trains that came through Wheatland on the CNW each day, including five passenger trains. Augmenting the need for commercial lodging was the nearby crossing of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul (the Milwaukee) railroad and depot a half mile east of town. Four daily trains passed by Wheatland on the Milwaukee line and hack services operated to shuttle travelers back and forth from the depot to town.[11]

In April, 1890, the first City Hotel was leased to Newton Neff, a former "traveling man," to operate but Mrs. Grell continued to own the building, suggesting that Mr. Grell had either died or left town.[12] When the 1893 fire and the destruction of the original City Hotel left Neff and his wife homeless, they temporarily moved to the residence of one of the nearby saloon owners who decided to permanently move to Chicago, having been burned out twice in less than a year.[13] Work on the new City Hotel, the extant brick-veneered building, began by April, just a couple of months after the fire.

The contract work for the new hotel's foundation was given to a "Mr. Wagner" and was nearly done by mid April, 1893. "A. Araah," the *Gazette* reported on April 12th, "is ready to begin the carpenter and brick work as soon as the foundation is complete." On May 10th, the *Gazette* reported that "Carpenters, under the direction and management of A. Araah, commenced work on the new City Hotel last Friday, and will continue to hustle the work until it is ready for occupancy." At the end of that month, the *Gazette* editor wrote a long, laudatory column summarizing the improvements in Wheatland's business prospects over the last year, in spite of, or perhaps motivated by, the three big fires that had burned down so many businesses. "But fire proves only a stimulus to the enterprise of Wheatland," the editor crowed, "and the buildings destroyed are already replaced, or are being replaced, by structures greatly superior to those destroyed." A new brick and tile manufacturing plant had opened with a daily production capacity of 25,000 bricks. The new fire zone ordinance and a need to rebuild so many business meant the plant would likely see profitable operations for some time. By May, the town's new waterworks were complete, as was the organization and equipping of a new fire company. A new brick Opera House had been finished and expectations for the new City Hotel then under construction were high, with the editor predicting that the hotel would "vastly eclipse the old in appearance as well as commodiousness."[14]

A little over a month later, at the end of May, the newspaper reported that "the new City Hotel is patiently awaiting the arrival of brick."[15] The brick work was finished two months later, and the *Gazette* praised the job, stating on July 19,[th] that "the brick work on the new City Hotel…is a credit to the architect, A. Araah, and his workmen. No part of the work has been slighted and the result is a beautiful and durable piece of work. Work on the metal roof is being pushed rapidly."[16] Toward the end of summer the *Gazette* reported on the progress,

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[11] *Wheatland Gazette,* October 23, 1889.
[12] *Wheatland Gazette,* April 16, 1890.
[13] *Wheatland Gazette* clipping, n.d. but ca. February. 1893. Collection of Steven K. Rohling.
[14] *Wheatland Gazette,* May 31, 1893.
[15] *Wheatland Gazette,* June 15, 1893.
[16] *Wheatland Gazette,* July 19, 1893.

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predicting that "when finished, the interior of the new City Hotel will be the finest in the town."[17] With work moving into the fall of 1893, it was announced in the September 13th *Gazette* that the new City Hotel would open within the week. On September 27th, the paper commented, "The City Hotel is now running although not complete in every detail. The work of settling goes steadily on and before long everything will be complete. The structure itself, both inside and outside, is a lasting proof of the skill of A. Araah, as architect and builder."

Architectural Influences

Araah's creative use of colored brick, curving forms, and skilled masonry techniques resulted in a commercial building for Wheatland that was functional yet aesthetically pleasing. Decoration was streamlined, comparatively inexpensive, and probably obtained locally, reflecting the building's setting in a small Midwestern town and its underlying economic function. Yet the building was attractively finished with a nod to the greater fashions of the day. Material choices were clearly dictated by the local fire ordinance, as well as economic constraints and artistic preferences. Rather eclectic in its stylistic references, the City Hotel reflects the Late Victorian penchant for decoration and architectural variety. In some ways, it fits within the Queen Anne architectural style, popular in England from the 1860s and in the United States from slightly later. Its Victorian jigsawed window headers, however, could have been used in several picturesque styles, especially the Italianate. The oculus window is another detail that was used in the late nineteenth century on a variety of architectural styles, including the Queen Anne, Second Empire, and Romanesque Revival. And the low roof profile of the rear elevation, combined with the triangular yellow patterned brick and corbels, hint at the pediment and dentils of ancient Greek temples, perhaps a subtle tribute to the architect's Mediterranean background (refer back to Figs. 3 & 6).

The City Hotel's strongest Queen Anne references are achieved through the use of colored bricks to establish patterns, highlight features, and create the illusion of stone trim. Also rooted in the Queen Anne, is the skillful masonry that created corbels, corner pendants, quoining, and that most stylish and prominently placed element of the City Hotel—the curving stepped pediment of the façade. This gable pediment represents a detail seen infrequently in American Queen Anne architecture, but falling within the "patterned masonry" and "townhouse" subtypes generally found in larger eastern U.S. cities.[18] This gable shape was more frequently seen in the urban English versions of Queen Anne houses and town homes (as was the use of contrasting colors of brick as decoration). See, for example, the work of Ernest George (1839-1922), a British architect well known for incorporating Flemish and Jacobean details (Fig. 10).[19]

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[17] *Wheatland Gazette*, August 30, 1893.
[18] The reader is encouraged to skim through the pages of Virginia and Lee McAlester's *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986). Examples of the gable applied to Queen Anne architecture of the "patterned masonry" subtype are seen at pages 285 and 287.
[19] Mark Girouard, *Sweetness and Light: The Queen Anne Movement, 1860-1900* (1977, reprinted New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 213-214. One of the best examples of the use of contrasting colored brick is London's All Saints', Margaret Street, church by William Butterfield, 1850-1859. Roger Dixon and Stefan Muthesius, *Victorian Architecture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 205.

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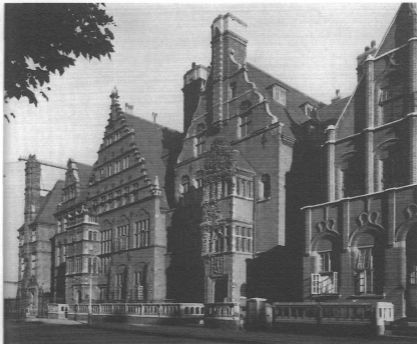Clinton Iowa
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Figure 1   These Queen Anne houses at Harrington Gardens, London, England, by Ernest
George and Harold Peto, 1880s, reference early 17th century Flemish architecture. From
Dixon and Muthesius, *Victorian Architecture* (1978), 67.

City Hotel's very subtle Queen Anne architecture pales in comparison to the high-style commissions of Ernest
George in England, or the American example of architect Wilson Eyre's "Taylor House" in New Jersey (Fig.
11). Still, within its own community, City Hotel has long served as a landmark literally risen from the ashes of
a major disaster. It remains as a material memory of a prosperous past era, a period in the life of Wheatland's
residents that was strongly associated with the rhythms of the railroad and the every day patterns of the
traveling public.

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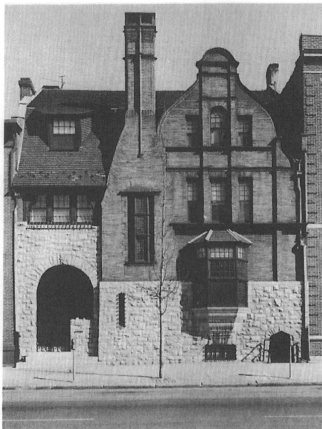
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Figure 2 Taylor House, designed by architect Wilson Eyre, in 1886, is a Queen Anne house of patterned brick, with a prominent curved façade gable, and rock-faced coursed limestone. From Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 287.

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After the Railroad

The 1910s saw the beginning of the demise of the City Hotel, largely because of the popularity of automobile travel and the establishment of the Lincoln Highway, which followed the CNW for much of its course across Iowa. Early highways often closely followed the routes of railroads, because of the gentle grades needed for the trains and the previous establishment of towns with accommodations for travelers, such as the City Hotel. In 1915, the Lincoln Highway was routed through the north part of town. Although the paved highway brought more automobile travelers through Wheatland, the City Hotel was not directly on the route. It had lost its prime location as the first sight in town for weary travelers needing overnight lodging. Also, more people traveling in automobiles meant fewer people taking the train and stopping in town. Both factors led to a reduction in customers for the City Hotel and it closed in the late 1920s or early 30s. In 1937, after remaining empty for several years, the Seifert family opened a tavern in the two rooms in the southeast corner of the downstairs and lived in a few room upstairs. This continued until 1939 when Emil Koch, owner of a tavern across the street, purchased the City Hotel building. From 1939 until 1951 the building stood empty. In 1951, a portion of the interior was remodeled and converted into a feed mill. It continued as a feed mill operation until September 1980. From then until the summer of 1995 it was used solely as a warehouse and storage facility, most recently for a lawn care operation.[20]

Future Plans

As of 2007, the property owner intended to rehabilitate the building as a tax credit project.

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[20] Steven K. Rohling, draft National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1996. Collection of Steven K. Rohling.

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10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

Part of lots 1 and 2, in block 13, in the Original Town of Wheatland, Iowa, described as follows, to-wit: Commencing at a point in the West line of Railroad Street (Main Street) in the Town of Wheatland, Iowa, 130 feet and 2 inches south of the Northeast corner of lot 1, in block 13, in the Town of Wheatland, thence South along the West line of Railroad Street (Main Street) to the North line of the railroad right-of-way, thence Northwesterly along the North line of said railroad right-of-way to the West line of lot 2, in block 13 in the Town of Wheatland, thence North along the West line of said lot 2, to a point 130 feet and 2 inches South of the Northwest corner of said lot 2, thence East to the point of beginning.

Also, a part of lot 3 in block 13, in the Original Town of Wheatland, Iowa, more particularly described as follows: Commencing 112 feet South of the northeast corner of said lot 3 in block 13, thence West 15 feet, thence South parallel to the East line of said lot 3 in block 13 to the South line of said lot 3 in block 13, thence Southeasterly on the South line of said lot to the East line therof, thence North on the East line of said lot 3 in block 13 to the place of beginning.

Boundary Justification

The boundary is the legal description of the entire parcel historically associated with the property.

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Floor plans
(by Douglas J. Steinmetz, AIA, 2004)

Upper Level   Ground Level

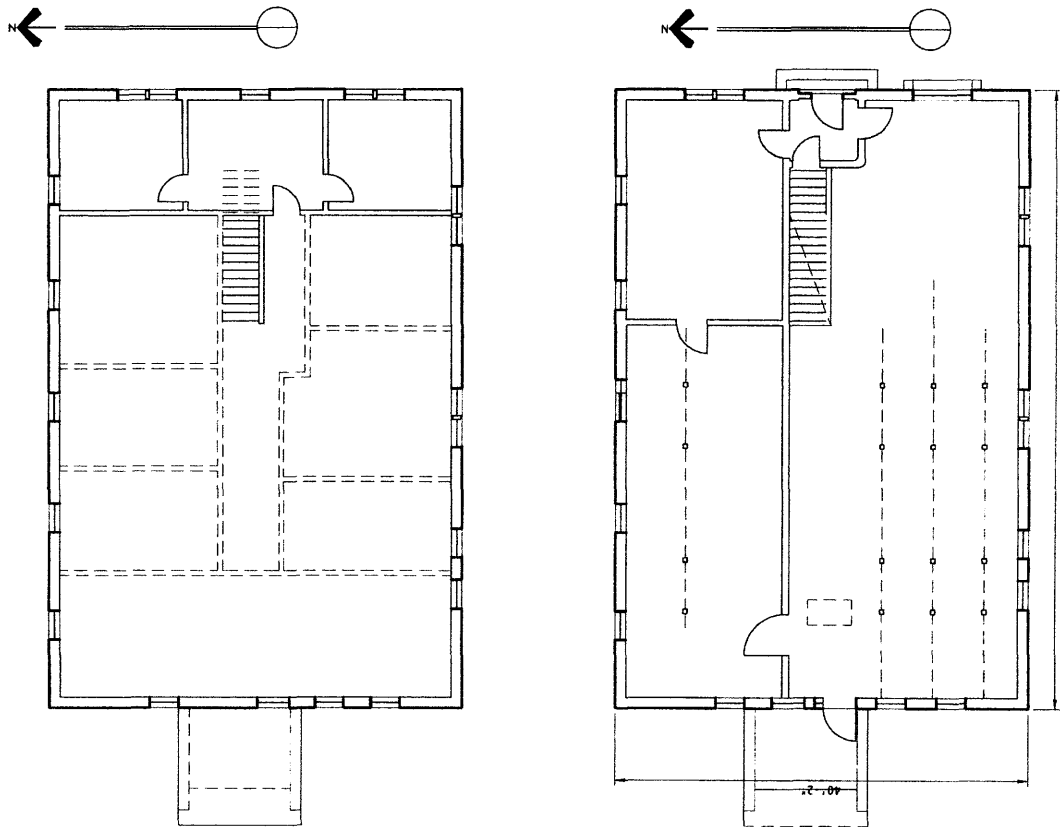United States Department of the Interior
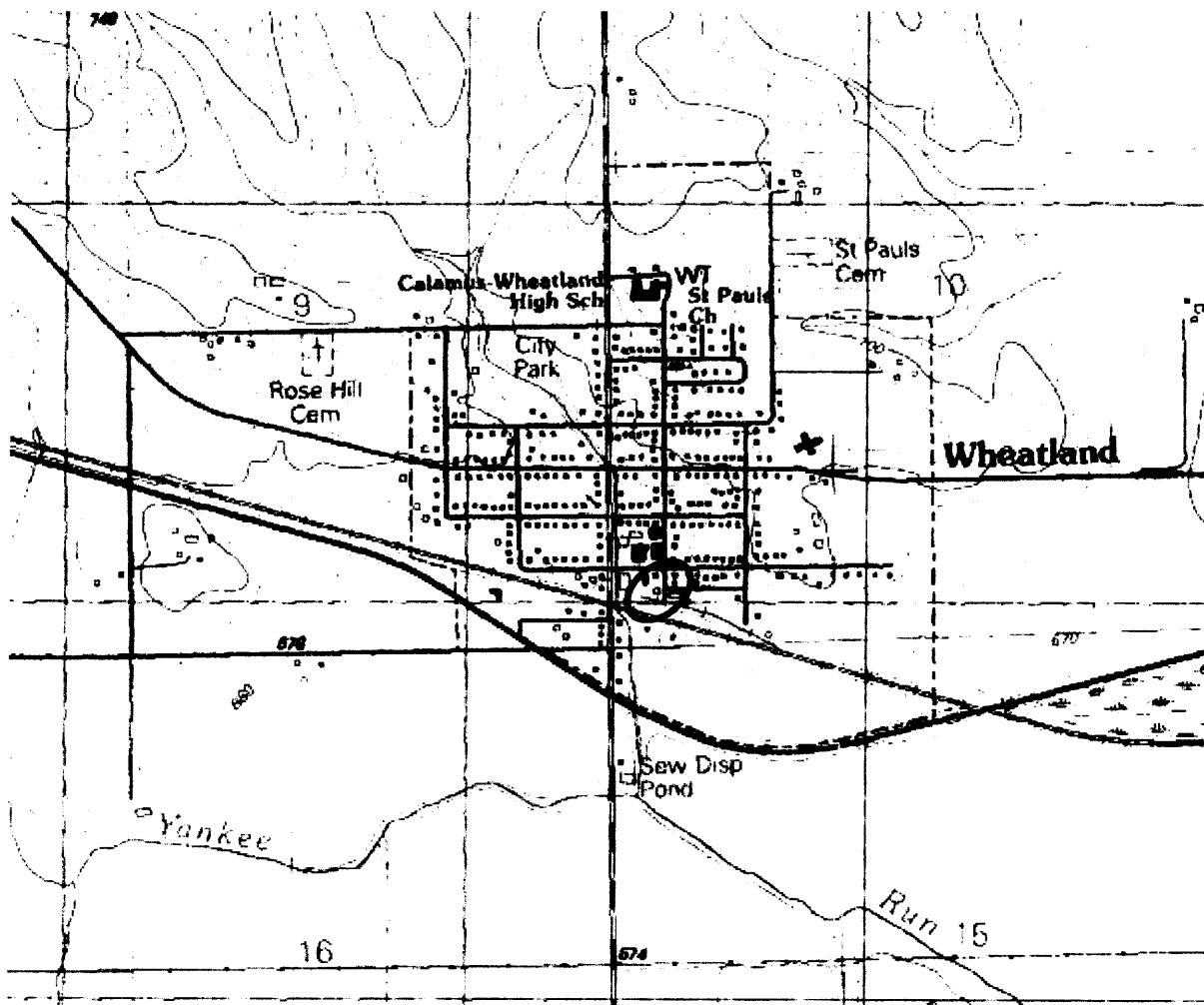National Park Service

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City of Wheatland, Clinton County, Iowa with the general location of the property circled.
(Source: Map obtained from http://cairo.gis.iastate.edu on 16 January 2007)

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Site Plan (2007) (not scaled; dashed line=nominated property)   N ⇧

COMMU-
NITY
HALL

HOUSE

SIDEWALK

SIDEWALK

S MAIN STREET

SHED

SHED

CITY HOTEL

CHICAGO & NORTH WESTERN
RAILROAD SPUR LINE

UNNAMED STREET