

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED MAY 12 1976  
DATE ENTERED AUG 10 1976

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

\*\*

Central Park - North Main Street Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

same

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER west side of North Main Street for 101-123 North Main and 201-223 North Main; in addition, 300 block of North Jackson for 301-307 North Jackson & the Central Park.

CITY, TOWN

Charles City

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

3

STATE

Iowa

VICINITY OF

CODE

19

COUNTY

Floyd

CODE

067

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: library

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Multiple ownership - see continuation sheet, item number 4, page one

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

VICINITY OF

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Floyd County Court House, Recorder's Office

STREET & NUMBER

101 South Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Charles City

STATE

Iowa

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic Buildings Survey

DATE

July & August, 1975

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR

SURVEY RECORDS Charles City Department of Community Development, City Hall

CITY, TOWN

Charles City

STATE

Iowa

# DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Central Park - North Main Street Historic District comprises the historical downtown business center of Charles City and reflects the city's prominence as an important 19th century commercial center for northern Iowa. It consists of sixteen architecturally or historically significant buildings and a city park. Seven of the buildings, all of expert masonry work utilizing native limestone (one has been covered over), were built prior to 1872. The remaining buildings were built from 1877 up to 1914 and are of brick except for one frame house. All buildings, with three exceptions, were built as commercial structures. The exceptions are a Carnegie library and two houses which are now commercial with residential uses. All buildings are two stories high except for the one-and-a-half story library and two large limestone buildings of three stories built in 1863 and 1866.

The historic district, generally an "L" in shape, follows the west side of North Main Street from Riverside Drive, at the banks of the Red Cedar River, northerly along the 100 and 200 blocks of North Main Street to and including Central Park as well as frontage facing the park on North Jackson Street. This configuration includes the important remaining downtown buildings that are still relatively intact historically and architecturally and which survived the devastating tornado of 1968. The east side of North Main Street suffered heavy tornado damage which resulted in the surviving buildings having been severely altered and modernized; in addition, gaps of vacant land and new construction intrude on the east side of North Main Street justifying its omission from the district. However, except for two vacant parcels, the west side of North Main is intact and is unique by its continuity of historic commercial facades.

Although, generally, the ground floor store fronts have been altered, the historic styles, scale and character of the buildings are relatively unmarred. Although there are several exceptions, signage is generally better and less offensive than commonly found on most commercial buildings. This factor helps contribute to the surviving historic integrity of the district.

Brief descriptions of each of the buildings, starting on the south and proceeding north along North Main Street to the Central Park and the Jackson Street frontage are as follows:

1. Farmers Trust and Savings Bank (101-103 N. Main Street): Circa 1900, Queen Anne style influence, 2 stories, brick with upper story limestone window heads and corner bay of decorative tin cladding. Original bank vault and teller station intact. Ground floor storefronts altered. Now houses realtor office and community college center. Maintenance and condition of the building are good.

2. Legel Building (105 N. Main Street): Built 1893, Queen Anne style influence, 2 stories, brick with limestone trim, and ornate tin cornice. Ground floor storefront altered. Originally was the grocery and drug store of John Legel. Now used by Northern Iowa Area Community College as their Charles City Center. Building is in good structural condition and is excellently maintained.

3. Legel Drug Store (107 N. Main Street): Built in 1913, 2 stories, brick with a parapet of decorative brickwork. Storefront has leaded glass clerestory although a portion was destroyed by the 1968 tornado. Built originally for a theatre, the building was remodeled in the early 1920's for a drug store. The remodeled interior is intact. The Floyd County Historical Society owns the fair condition building and uses it as a museum. The Society has preserved Legel's "antique drug store" with its unique contents as well as having museum exhibits and activities on the upper floor and basement.

4. Herrington Building (109 N. Main Street): Circa 1902, 2 stories, brick with second floor windows with flat-arches of projecting brick. Brick parapet rebuilt to replace original tin cornice ripped off by tornado. Cowell's Bar now occupies the poorly maintained building.

Continued on Continuation Sheet, Item Number 7, Page One.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1914	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) library museum
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1855 to 1914

BUILDER/ARCHITECT as noted below

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE** The Central Park - North Main Street Historic District includes two virtually intact frontages of mostly 19th century, with some early 20th century, commercial buildings that, as a whole, create a unique example of continuity of form and scale characteristic of "downtowns" of early "industrialized America." In addition, the commercial frontages are contiguous with the original "village square" of Charles City, now Central Park, and an adjacent street frontage of three buildings which are also significant in their own right. The combination of all elements constitutes a unified "place" that has historical, social and architectural significance while successfully utilizing and, generally, respecting its early styled architecture and materials in a contemporary environment.

Charles City was first settled in 1850 and established in 1855 when the original plat of the city was dedicated by Joseph and Malinda Kelly on January 18, 1855. The city plan that Kelly laid out was a simple "grid-iron" with streets oriented in relation to the (Red) Cedar River. The major street, Mill Street (now North Main Street), was generally aligned with the river ford. The third block (Block 9) from the river along Mill Street was envisioned by Kelly to be the center of the city so he set it aside as the public square, and it has ever since remained open as public land and park. It is now named Central Park (17).

The Jackson Street frontage, on the west side of Central Park, has three buildings of significance and interest. The Milo Gilbert House (16), circa 1863, was built of local limestone for Milo Gilbert. Gilbert was an influential early citizen of Charles City, a banker and owner of a saw mill on Kelly Street. He became the first mayor of Charles City in 1869 upon incorporation as a city.

The only wood frame structure in the district is the H. J. Fitzgerald mansion (15) of Classical Revival style built in 1903. Fitzgerald was a prominent and wealthy family in Charles City. The large house is opulent with ornate woodwork--inside and out.

The Public Library (14) was dedicated on November 25, 1904. It was built with Carnegie funds of \$12,500 after a public subscription raised \$4,000 for the land purchase. The architects for the building were Patton and Miller of Chicago, Illinois, while the H. E. Potter Company was the contractor. In 1941, the library was given the personal art library and art objects of Arthur Mooney, a former Charles City resident. Many of the books and prints are rare and unusual. The collection is housed in a special room in the building. Carrie Chapman Catt, a native of Charles City and an early national leader of the women's suffrage movement, donated a bronze statue housed within the building. A large meteorite, found locally, rests in the south yard. The building itself is a rare "romantic" eclecticism utilizing, for the most part, Georgian and Jacobean stylistic features.

South of Central Park, along the west frontage of North Main Street to the river, are located two consecutive street frontages of architecturally and historically significant commercial buildings. The first of these, adjacent to the park at Kelly and North Main Streets, is the old First National Bank (13) erected in 1871-72 for J. W. Lehmkuhl, a partner in the firm of Lehmkuhl and Hausberg which occupied the stone building next to it until 1876.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Brown, H. Clark. This Place I Have Known. Ever-Redi Printing Service, 1955.  
 "Floyd County Centennial Centurama." Charles City: Waller Printing Co., 1954.  
History of Floyd County, Iowa. Inter-State Publishing Company, 1882.  
History of Floyd County, Iowa. Indianapolis, Indiana: B. F. Bowen and Co., Inc., 1917.  
 Jones, C. R. Charles City, Iowa--Its Architectural Heritage. Private Printing, 1963.  
 Webster, Clement L. History of Floyd County, Iowa. 1897.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 4.9

UTM REFERENCES

140

A	1,5	5,2,6,1,6,0	4,7,6,8,3,8,0	B	1,5	5,2,6,2,8,0	4,7,6,8,3,0,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1,5	5,2,6,1,6,0	4,7,6,8,0,5,0	D	1,5	5,2,6,0,7,0	4,7,6,8,0,7,5
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION Starting at the center-line intersection of Riverside Drive and N. Main St. and proceeding north-northeasterly along the center-line of N. Main St. to the center-line intersection with Blunt Street, then west-northwesterly along the center-line of Blunt Street to the rear property line extended, or at the mid-point of the block, between N. Jackson and N. Johnson Streets, then south-southwesterly along said line to the center-line of Kelly St., then east-southeasterly along the center-line to the rear property line extended, or at the mid-point of the block, between N. Main and N. Jackson Streets,

Continued on Continuation Sheet, Item Number 10, Page One  
 LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE

Ronald E. Schmitt, Architect (Environmental Planning and Research, Inc.)

ORGANIZATION

Charles City Department of Community Development

DATE

December 22, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

City Hall, 105 Milwaukee Mall

TELEPHONE

515-228-2681

CITY OR TOWN

Charles City

STATE

Iowa 50616

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Adrian H. Anderson*

TITLE

*Dirctor, Div. of Historic Preservation*

DATE

*4-22-76*

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

*Wm. [Signature]*

DATE

*8/14/76*

DIRECTOR OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

*Charles [Signature]*

DATE

*8-5-76*

STILLKEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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The following order indicates ownership for each building: Building Number, Historic Name/Common Name, Building Address in parentheses, Owner's Name and Owner's Address.

1. Farmer's Trust & Savings Bank/Harrold Real Estate (101 N. Main): William H. & Dianne C. Harrold, 101 N. Main, Charles City, Iowa.
  2. Legel Building/N.I.A.C.C. (105 N. Main): Alton H. Sanders, 400 N. Main, Charles City, Iowa.
  3. Legel Building/Antique Legel Drug Store--Floyd County Museum (107 N. Main): Floyd County Historical Society, 107 N. Main, Charles City, Iowa.
  4. Herrington Building/Cowell's (109 N. Main): Harold Miller, R.R.3, Charles City, Iowa.
  5. Gilbert's Stone Block (Union House)/Ray's Pastime--Gilbert Hotel (119-123 N. Main): Raymond H. Isaacson, 613 First Avenue, Charles City, Iowa.
  6. J. W. Smith Block/Cinderella Shop--Winterink Building (201-203 N. Main): Jack B. Winterink, 201-203 N. Main, Charles City, Iowa.
  7. Lindon-Commercial Bank-Dyke Building/HE + KCHA + Trading Store (205-209 N. Main): 205:Carl Peterson, 800 Clinton, Charles City, Iowa, and Virgil Kane, 506 Eighth Avenue, Charles City, Iowa; 207:First Church of Christ Scientist, c/o 207 N. Main, Charles City, Iowa; 209:Edwin and Alberta Benedict, 503 N. Jackson, Charles City, Iowa.
  8. Waller Building/Van's Hardware (211 N. Main): Gladys S. Ferguson, 400 Ferguson, Charles City, Iowa.
  9. May Building/Meusel Hardware (213 N. Main): Charles R. and Alice K. Meusel, 201 N. Iowa, Charles City, Iowa.
  10. John Kuck Harness Shop/B.G.'s Shoppe (217 N. Main): Dean Schlick, 5 Glenn Oak Circle, Charles City, Iowa.
  11. Carl Merckel Hardware/Dean's Jewelers (219 N. Main): Dean and Geneva Schlick, 5 Glenn Oak Circle, Charles City, Iowa.
  12. J. W. Lehmkuhl Building/McDermott T.V. (221 N. Main): Leon McDermott, 221 N. Main Street, Charles City, Iowa.
  13. First National Bank/Uptown Cafe (223 N. Main): Dale and Doris Adams, R.D.2, Ionia, Iowa.
  14. Public Library (301 N. Jackson): City of Charles City, Library Board, 301 N. Jackson, Charles City, Iowa.
  15. H. J. Fitzgerald Home/Welton's Realtors (305 N. Jackson): Glenn R. and Elizabeth C. Welton, 305 N. Jackson, Charles City, Iowa.
  16. Milo Gilbert House/Stone House Books (307 N. Jackson): Maurice J. Schrup, 307 N. Jackson, Charles City, Iowa.
  17. Central Park (bounded by Blunt, N. Main, Kelly and N. Jackson Streets): City of Charles City, City Hall, 105 Milwaukee Mall, Charles City, Iowa.
- Vacant lots (111-117 N. Main and 215 N. Main): City of Charles City, Department of Community Development, 105 Milwaukee Mall, Charles City, Iowa.

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5. Gilbert's Stone Block/Union House (119-123 N. Main Street): Built in 1863 with an 1877 addition on the west, native limestone exterior, 3 stories high while the west addition is 2 stories high. Main building is of "Early Style" with simple, utilitarian design. The addition is of Italianate style. The building still houses a hotel and is in fair condition.

6. J. W. Smith Block (201-203 N. Main Street): Built 1866, Italianate style, 3 stories, native limestone, corner and window quoins, arched windows, and decorative tin cornice (added before 1900). The original windows have been replaced. The building is in good condition with shops on the ground floor and residential units above. A recent, one story brick wing houses public restrooms.

7. Lindon-Commercial Bank-Dyke Building (205-209 N. Main Street): Built 1877, modified Italianate style, 2 story cream-color brick with flat and round arched windows, iron window caps and tin cornice. An original, center-bay, iron balcony has been removed. The building, in fair condition, contains stores on the ground floor while the second floor is vacant.

8. Waller Building (211 N. Main Street): Circa 1897, a simple brick commercial building with limestone window lintels. Sheet plywood replaced the original tin cornice destroyed in the 1968 tornado. In poor condition--only the building's ground floor store space is occupied.

9. May Building (213 N. Main Street): Built 1914, an eclectic building stylized with Renaissance and Jacobean features, 2 story brick with stone trim and decorative work. A hardware store, with basically original finishes, occupies the ground floor of the fairly maintained building.

10. John Kuck Harness Shop (217 N. Main Street): Built 1865, a simple, 2 story commercial building with native limestone, dressed and squared and laid in coursed range ashlar. Originally with gable roof, the roof was rebuilt "flat" and a tin cornice added before the turn-of-the-century. Now houses a gift shop and is well-maintained.

11. Carl Merckel Hardware (219 N. Main Street): Built 1865, a handsome, 2 story, Italianate styled building of local limestone laid in broken range ashlar with dressed stone quoins and trim. The well-maintained building had extensive, but sensitive, alterations for a jewelry store undertaken in 1972. The changes included removal of the second floor to create a "2-story" high store space, a new ground-level storefront, and replacement of the original second floor windows and "tracery" in the three arched, upper-story, masonry openings with "solar" plate glass.

12. J. W. Lehmkuhl (221 N. Main Street): Built 1864, a 2-story building remodeled in 1957 with a "billboard" type wood siding applied over the front facade. The original dressed limestone walls and windows are reputed to be intact under the cladding. Of fair condition, the building houses a TV sales and service operation.

13. First National Bank (223 N. Main Street): Built 1871-72, a 2-story native limestone building with arched windows and a bracketed cornice. Remodeled extensively in 1962 and again in 1970, the original, irreplaceable, Italianate styled features including the ornate iron railing of the balcony, front windows with iron caps, iron-bracketed canopy and storefront have been removed and replaced by a "modernized" wood storefront and upper story metal siding on the front. The balcony has new metal railings, and the visible stone building walls have been painted white. Much of the original work, however,

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still remains and the styling comes through despite the alterations. The building, in fair condition, is now occupied by the Uptown Cafe.

14. Public Library (301 N. Jackson): Built in 1904, a "romantic-styled" eclectic building utilizing Georgian and Jacobean features, it has a rusticated granite boulder base and flanking entry piers. The walls are of brick with dressed stone window lintels, trim and tuscan columns about the entry door. The main gable roof is tiled while the rear "wing" is flat roofed. The building is in good condition.

15. H. J. Fitzgerald Home (305 N. Jackson): Built in 1903, the large, two and a-half story frame house, with gambrel roof, has a full width front porch. It also has an upper story porch centrally located. Built of Classical Revival design, the house has full 2-story high stylized ionic columns dominating the front facade. The corner pilasters, bay windows, overhanging cornice and roof dormers extensively utilize Classical motif. The interior is rich, with wood paneling. In good condition, the building is now used as a realtor office on the ground floor with residential quarters above.

16. Milo Gilbert House (307 N. Jackson): Circa 1863, a simple, early style building of local limestone, dressed and squared laid in coursed range ashlar, it is 2-stories high with a half-rose window in the end gable. The building extension to the south has ornate lattice-work inset in its gable overhang. The full width porch, which replaced a small one on the south wing, was added around 1910 and, subsequently, the classical porch roof railing has been removed. In good condition, the house is also partially occupied by Stone House Books.

17. Central Park (bounded by Blunt, N. Main, Kelly and N. Jackson Streets): Established 1855, block square park, generally "open" with scattered small flower beds and random placement of various sizes and species of trees. Diagonal concrete walks connect the four corners and intersect at the park center. Wood-slat benches are located occasionally along the walks. A bandstand and fountain which stood in the park have been removed. Once densely wooded with stately elms, the tornado of 1968 took a heavy toll of mature trees so only a few remain.

The "intrusions" are the two vacant parcels, the result of tornado & fire damage which are owned by the City of Charles City. The northern parcel (215 N. Main) is proposed to be a pedestrian walkway connecting North Main Street with the "rear" city parking lots along the east side of N. Jackson Street. The southern parcel, in the 100 block of N. Main, is proposed for commercial development. With proper design, as city policy requires, these two parcels may be positive factors in the district and may not necessarily be "intrusions."

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Lehmkuhl's building, the J. W. Lehmkuhl Commercial Building (12), circa 1864, was occupied by Hausberg alone after 1876 until 1879 when he formed another partnership with H. E. Holbrook--until Holbrook sold out. Then it became Hausberg and Clemens, and then, by 1897, Clemens and Harding Dry Goods. Later, Gibbons occupied the store until 1957 whereupon it remained vacant until 1964 when the present owner, McDermott's, occupied it and sided-over the original limestone.

The third building, in a progression of four native limestone buildings built from 1864 to 1872, is the Carl Merckel Hardware (11) built in 1865. Of Italianate style, the commercial building had a variety of occupants over the years.

The John Kuck Harness Shop (10) of 1865 completes the original limestone facades on this portion of the street segment.

The other limestone building of the frontage between Kelly and Clark Streets is the important J. W. Smith Block (6), built in 1866. The large, three-story building is an outstanding example of Italianate style applied to a commercial structure. The masonry work is superb.

Across Clark Street from the Smith Block is probably the district's most important single building, the Union House or the Gilbert's Stone Block (5) as it was commonly known. It was built in 1863 for Milo Gilbert, first mayor of Charles City and whose stone house (16) is also in the district. The builder was Ira Brackett. Brackett also built the first Floyd County Court House in Charles City in 1857. (The courthouse was destroyed by fire in 1881.) The architect for Gilbert's Stone Block is unknown although it may have been Theodore Mix, who designed the courthouse and resided in Charles City at the time, or it may have been designed by the builder, Ira Brackett. In 1877, an addition and alterations were undertaken by Charles Shaw which completed a facility that was called (at that time) the finest in northern Iowa. The addition is an outstanding example of Italianate style. Originally called the Union House, the hotel was later renamed the Gilbert Hotel. Although the hotel was damaged by the great tornado of 1968, which devastated much of the central city, the building survived, and the exterior appears quite similar to its original appearance.

The Charles City buildings of local stone were generally of two distinct, but complimentary, styles. The early buildings were simple and direct expressions of utilitarian commercial architecture that do not easily "fit" any style classification but, perhaps, are best described as "Early Style" with humane characteristics of "folk architecture." The other buildings were more ornate and done in Italianate style. All have excellent masonry work, rich in texture, and, through common materials, technique and scale, create an interwoven architectural fabric. The warm-hued white limestone came from a quarry west of town owned by W. Winterink. The handsome limestone was called "St. Charles Marble" because of its superior qualities.

The brick buildings along Main Street, due to scale and style similarities, are in harmony with the earlier stone buildings.

Banks, which later failed, occupied the buildings near the river at the corner of Riverside and North Main (1), of circa 1900, and the Lindon-Commercial Bank-Dyke Building (7) of 1877.

The Herrington (4), Waller (8) and May (9) buildings are 22-foot wide brick commercial buildings of circa 1902, 1897 and 1914 respectively.

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The Legel Building (2), built 1893, housed John G. Legel's drug and grocery business (founded in 1884 with the acquisition of Edward Berg's 1873 business) until the early 1920's when Legel moved next door to a remodeled building (3) built originally in 1913 for the "Casino Theater." The Legel Drug Store continued its "old-time" operation in the building until 1961 when John G. Legel, Jr. presented the building and its contents to the Floyd County Historical Society which preserved the "antique" drug store and its contents as a museum. The interior is intact and the original shelves and prescription counter are filled with a collection of quaint medicines and remedies dating back to 1873, rare balances, pill machines and other unique and rare mechanical devices and artifacts. In addition, other museum exhibits and displays of early history occupy the upper and basement floors. However, the antique drug store is the outstanding feature of the museum and is truly one of the outstanding collections of its kind in the country.

In summary, the district is rich in local history and visually preserves the early commercial character common, at one time, to the downtown of American cities. The brick and unique native limestone buildings create unified street facades of historic and architectural merit rarely found today.

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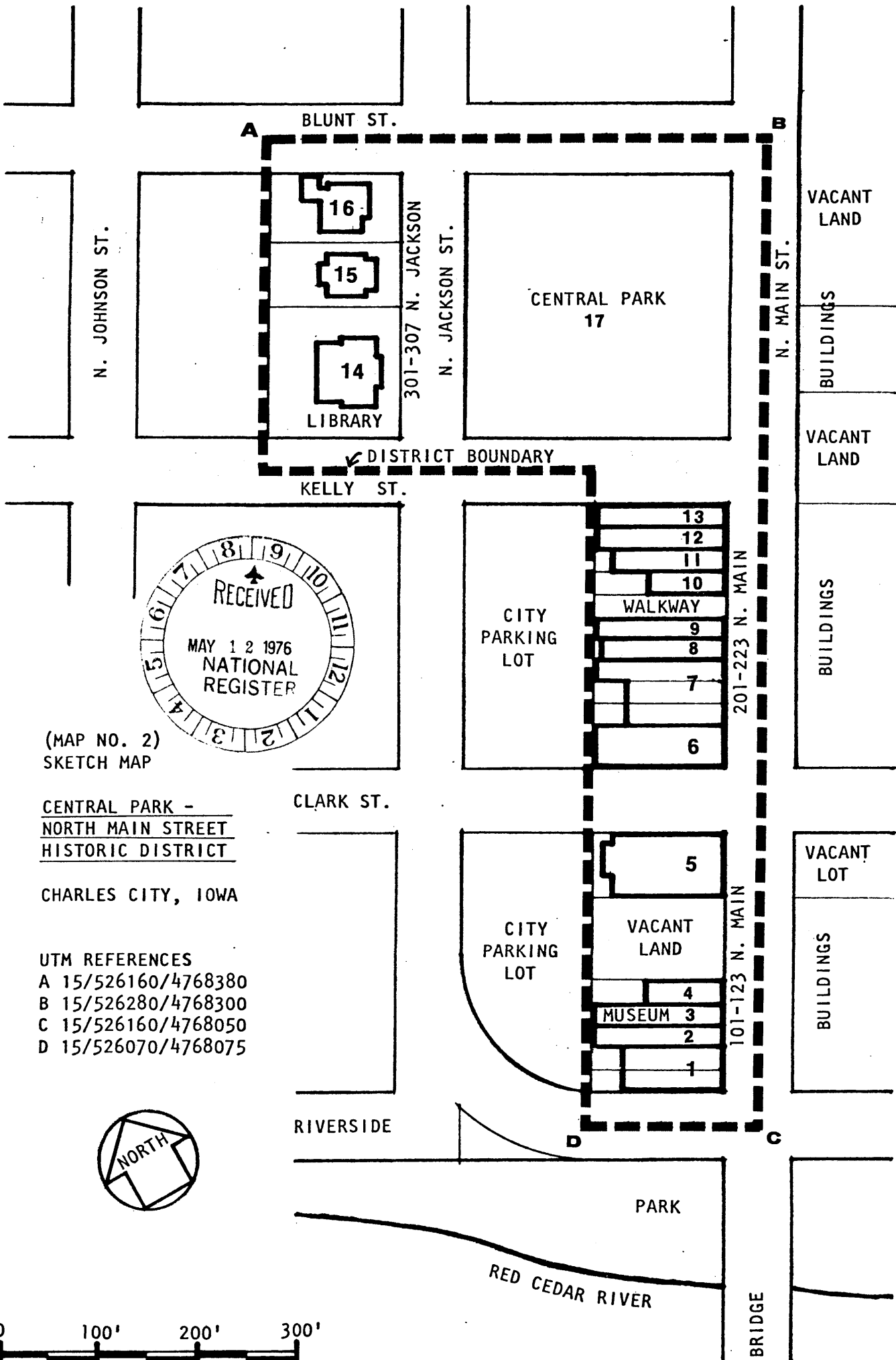
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then south-southwesterly along said line to the center-line of Riverside Drive, and then east-southeasterly along the center-line to the point of beginning.



(MAP NO. 2)  
SKETCH MAP

CENTRAL PARK -  
NORTH MAIN STREET  
HISTORIC DISTRICT

CHARLES CITY, IOWA

- UTM REFERENCES
- A 15/526160/4768380
  - B 15/526280/4768300
  - C 15/526160/4768050
  - D 15/526070/4768075

