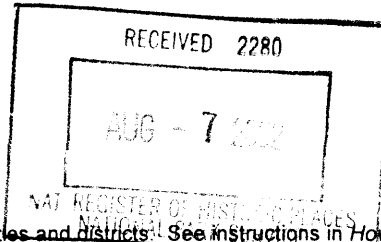


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



1034

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

1. Name of Property

historic name State Center Commercial Historic District

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Main Street Blocks 200-100 West and 100 East N/A not for publication

city or town State Center N/A vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Marshall code 127 zip code 50247

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).

Rowell G. Sotke August 2, 2002
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

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

for
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Edson H. Beall 9/20/02

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- ARCHITECTURE _____
- COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT _____
- COMMERCE _____

Period of Significance

1869-1952

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Prescott, J.H. and Company

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 9 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	[1]5	[4]8[6]2[2]2	[4]6[5]1[3]8[5]	2	[1]5	[4]8[6]2[4]7	[4]6[5]1[2]7[3]
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
3	[1]5	[4]8[6]6[2]8	[4]6[5]1[3]8[5]	4	[1]5	[4]8[6]6[0]8	[4]6[5]1[4]6[6]

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Leah D. Rogers and Joyce Barrett

organization Tallgrass Historians L.C. date March 27, 2002

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

city or town Iowa City state IA zip code 52246

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the complete form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

Photographs

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

Additional items

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

Property Owner

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

name see continuation sheet

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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

State Center Commercial Historic District

Section number 7 Page 1 Marshall County, Iowa

7. Description continued

Materials

foundation CONCRETE

walls CONCRETE

METAL/tin

METAL/cast iron

Narrative Description

The State Center Commercial Historic District is located in the town of State Center in Marshall County, Iowa, which is situated in central Iowa. The town is situated 12 miles west of Marshalltown, which is the county seat for Marshall County. This linear district encompasses both sides of Main Street, which is within an area platted on a northeast-southwesterly angle. Main Street, despite its name, is not the main drive-through route through town. It is, however, the street closest to the railroad and is parallel to those tracks. Main Street was once part of the second routing of the Lincoln Highway through this community, with the original route along 4th Street and then down to 5th Street. The routing of the Lincoln Highway along Main Street did not occur until c.1924, with an even later routing along the north edge of town. Main Street was originally platted as First Street and is divided into West Main Street versus East Main Street by the intersection of 1st Avenue. The district is bounded on the west side by 3rd Avenue West and on the east by 2nd Avenue East. Main Street in State Center parallels the railroad tracks, which form the north boundary of the district. The district contains 36 total properties, with 33 contributing (31 buildings and 2 structures) and 3 non-contributing buildings. One of the contributing structures is Main Street itself, which retains its original crowned profile and potentially its original c.1924 Lincoln Highway concrete pavement. Unlike many other Main Street communities along the Lincoln Highway route, State Center's section was paved with concrete instead of the more typical brick pavement. One building within the district boundary is already listed in the National Register: Watson's Grocery Store at 106 West Main Street listed in 1998.

While no systematic survey had been previously undertaken of the State Center commercial district, several buildings had been previously recorded as part of a statewide thematic survey concerning Opera Houses in Iowa. That survey was conducted in the mid 1980s and reported in Glenn and Poole (1993). There is also a developing interest in the history and historic preservation of this commercial district by the State Center Main Street program.

The 200 block on the north side of West Main Street is dominated by industrial rather than commercial use, with the grain elevator complex still extant but historically also including blacksmiths, implement dealers, and feed and meal mills. By 1919 a notable block building that housed an automobile garage/service station and a movie theater had been added on the southeast corner of this block (64-00523).

The 100 block north side of West Main Street is anchored by a vacant general store (64-00518), which was also identified in a previous survey as Manwaring Hall. The center of the block is dominated by a distinctive bank (64-00894) and its 1965 addition (64-00895) adjacent to the east. The bank addition removed six historic buildings up to the east end of the block, which now has a contemporary convenience store (64-00896) on the site of an old filling station. The older buildings on this block were lost to deterioration and demolition and not the result of fire.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****State Center Commercial Historic District****Section number 7 Page 2 **Marshall County, Iowa****

The 100 block on the north side of East Main Street begins with the historic wagon works building (64-00897) and warehouse (64-00898), which retain a strong historic appearance based on available historic photographs. The land to its east appears to have been traditionally vacant, with historic photos showing a fire alarm bell tower. Currently, a modern metal building houses the equipment for the town's volunteer fire department. The east end of the block is anchored by the opera house (64-00520). Though its exterior appearance has been significantly altered, it is one of the oldest buildings on Main Street and is still recognizable as an opera house-type hall. The upstairs later became the Masonic Lodge, a function it still serves to the present day. The building originally had four storefronts. Through the years, its first floor was converted to agricultural implement sales and is currently used for storage by the school district.

The 100 block on the south side of East Main Street historically began with two houses, but only one remains (64-00900). This was followed by a string of government and commercial buildings heading west. The streetscape was dramatically altered in 1917 when a fire destroyed nearly the entire block except for the two houses on the east end and the two-story Whitehall Bros. General Merchandise Building (a.k.a., the Liston Building; 64-00519) on the west end. By 1934 only three buildings had been built into this vacant space, including the 1921 Post Office (64-00903). City Hall (64-00902) was built in 1950, and the small commercial duplex (64-00902), which was built after 1934, now complete the block. Among the historic buildings lost in the 1917 fire were a large Masonic Hall and a smaller Oddfellows building. Both organizations moved into existing buildings following the fire and never rebuilt their own separate buildings.

The 100 block on the south side of West Main Street is perhaps the most significant of State Center's commercial blocks. This is a block of commercial buildings dating primarily to the turn-of-the-last-century because there was a major fire in 1895, which destroyed a major section of this block. The block begins on the east side with the architect-designed Bank of State Center (64-00908), which opened in 1902. Significant to the community is the National Register-listed Watson's Grocery Store (64-00918) also on this block. The most recent building is Dr. Wood's hospital (64-00909), which was constructed in the early twentieth century. One of the oldest main street buildings anchors the west end of this block—the wooden false-front Bishops Drug Store (64-00929), now covered in a stucco finish, this building dates to the 1880s.

The 200 block on the south side of West Main Street consists of the school block with the former High School (64-00930) and an older dwelling that was later converted into a funeral home (64-00889). The school is set back on the lot, with the funeral home occupying the far northwest corner of the block. Historically, this block was a mixture of commercial and residential properties, with the majority of these buildings removed when the High School was built in the 1920s.

COUNTING SYSTEM FOR BUILDINGS

The counting system for buildings within the district is based on the original configuration of the building and its separation from adjacent buildings by structural walls and not by its internal store unit divisions. Therefore, a block building constructed as a structurally identifiable building separate and distinct from adjacent buildings but having any number of internal store unit divisions, would count as only one building even though it might have two or more storefronts or internal store units.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

State Center Commercial Historic District

Section number 7 **Page** 3 **Marshall County, Iowa**

PROPERTY TYPES

The property types follow those devised for the *Iowa's Main Street Commercial Architecture* Multiple Property submission to the National Register. The following is a brief listing and summary of each type, with more detailed descriptions summarized in the cover document for the MPS. Type I is the commercial district itself. Type II consists of the first generation of buildings, structures, sites and objects constructed along Main Street. Type III represents the second generation of construction along Main Street often tied to a building boom associated with prosperity and growth. Type VI consists of specialized buildings constructed for a specific purpose such as a courthouse, Carnegie public library, post office, grain elevator, or gas station. Type V represents properties that have undergone substantial modification reflecting the updating of commercial properties in the form of façade remodeling as well as buildings, structures, sites and objects that are late additions to the district but within the period of significance. Type VI consists of modern infill properties added to the district after the period of significance.

The State Center Commercial Historic District as Property Type I meets the registration requirements set forth in the *Iowa's Main Street Commercial Architecture* MPS by retaining sufficient integrity and by reflecting the settlement and development of the town of State Center, particularly how the town's economy and commercial development responded to a series of devastating fires in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Of particular note is a row of small-scale commercial buildings constructed in the wake of an 1895 fire along the south side of Main Street.

INDIVIDUAL BUILDING DESCRIPTIONS

The following descriptions discuss each of the buildings in the State Center Commercial Historic District where known by Iowa Site Inventory number, address, date of construction, historic name, descriptive comments, evaluation as either contributing or non-contributing to the district, and the known history of the property.

Several buildings had been previously recorded as part of statewide thematic survey related to Iowa's opera houses (Glenn and Poole 1993). That survey was conducted in the mid-1980s; however, the inventory forms are not complete and posed some complications in the assignment of inventory numbers within the commercial district.

Additional historical information was gleaned during the current investigation from local historical accounts and the available historic fire insurance maps. Assisting in the information gathering stage were Cathy Noble (the State Center Main Street Director), Margaret Nelson, and Pat Fisher. Jan Olive Nash of Tallgrass Historians L.C. conducted the initial field investigation and took the district photographs. Additional historical research was conducted by Joyce Barrett of Tallgrass Historians L.C. Ms. Barrett also completed the Iowa Site Inventory form for the district and assisted in the compilation of the National Register nomination, which was completed by Leah D. Rogers of Tallgrass Historians L.C. Repositories visited for research information included the Marshalltown Public Library, the Gutekunst Public Library in State Center, and the State Historical Society of Iowa in Iowa City.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

State Center Commercial Historic District

Section number 7 Page 4 Marshall County, Iowa

#64-00893

Address: Main Street between 2nd Avenue East and 3rd Avenue West

Construction Date: first paved in 1930

Historic Name: Main Street (for a time part of the second route of the Lincoln Highway)

Property Type: III: paved street

Evaluation: Contributing structure

Comments: This property consists of the whole of Main Street between 2nd Avenue East and 3rd Avenue West including the street pavement from curb to curb. This street is currently covered with asphalt; however, the crown of the road profile and the way that the asphalt is wearing strongly suggests that the original 1930 concrete pavement is still extant underneath. Only one intersection at 2nd Avenue West and Main Street has been redone with modern concrete pavement; otherwise, the remainder of the street appears to have a high potential for intact pavement from the Lincoln Highway era association of this street.

History: This street was paved with concrete in 1930. It was part of the second route of the Lincoln Highway c.1924, and it is perhaps notable that unlike other Main Streets along the Lincoln Highway that were typically paved with brick pavers, this segment was paved originally with concrete.

Significance: This roadway appears to have a good potential to retain evidence of the early twentieth century construction and pavement. As such, it is considered a contributing structure to the district.

#64-00887

Address: 209 W. Main Street

Date of Construction: early 1900s (elevator); 1920s-30s (weigh station)

Historic Name: Quaker Oats Company

Property Type: IV: Elevator and Office/Weigh Station

Evaluation: One contributing structure and one contributing building

Comments: The structure consists of a monitor-roofed crib-construction elevator with metal roofing and siding, and a two-story tile-block addition to the elevator's west side. The elevator is adjacent to the railroad tracks, which are to the north (rear) of this complex. The building is a one-story tile block office building/weigh station added to the milling complex in the 1920s-early 1930s. The tile block building has been little changed since first built and still functions as the milling company office.

History: Quaker Oats Company operated this elevator until 1917, when it was purchased by George Mead and his son-in-law Elmer Goodman. Mead had been the previous manager for Quaker Oats. The new business became known as Goodman and Mead and later Goodman Milling Inc. Goodman sold the business to Gringer in 1993, with the current operation known as the Midwest Milling Company. Quaker Oats had lost their largest grain elevator to fire in June 1913, and either the extant elevator was a smaller one that survived the fire or a new one built c.1913 in place of the lost structure. The tile block building was added to this complex in the 1920s-early 1930s as part of the Goodman and Mead Milling operation.

Significance: This well-preserved grain elevator complex reflects the importance of the region's agriculture to the development of this Main Street community and to the continued viability of this industry in the town's current commercial enterprises. This complex also marks the west end of the commercial district.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

State Center Commercial Historic District

Section number 7 Page 5 Marshall County, Iowa

#64-00888

Address: 205 W. Main Street

Date of Construction: c.1934

Historic Name: Gross' Malt Shop

Property Type: III: Retail commercial

Evaluation: Contributing building

Comments: Two-story rectangular tile block building with the narrow side facing the street. This building is located along the east edge of the milling complex and has been little changed since first built.

History: Built around 1934, this tile block building housed the popular Gross' Malt Shop.

Significance: This building reflects the use of new materials then available and the less elaborate commercial building designs of the early twentieth century.

#64-00523

Address: 201 W. Main Street

Date of Construction: 1919

Historic Name: L Garage/State Theater

Property Type: III: Transportation (auto-related)/Recreation (theater)

Evaluation: Contributing building

Comments: Two-story brick block building is located at the northwest corner of the intersection of 2nd Avenue West and Main Street. The second floor has ten windows across, with the four of the windows remaining the original 1/1 double-hungs and the remainder having been covered over in more recent years (probably reversible). The cornice features a simple corbelled brick pattern. The storefront originally had an open corner entry that has since been infilled with wood siding and modern windows and doors. The original garage door opening on the front façade also has been infilled with a window. Likewise, the other former display windows have been covered over with modern door and window inserts but there may be some potential for reversibility. Historic photographs show what appear to be Luxfer glass ribbon windows above the garage and window openings and a gas pump at the edge of the sidewalk in front of the garage.

History: Built in 1919, with two store units on the ground floor and a hall on the second floor. The ground-floor units originally housed the L Garage, an automobile garage and service station, and the State Theater, which local residents recall as a movie theater; however, the statewide Opera House survey reported remnants of a stage and a proscenium with wings suggesting an original use of the upper floor as an opera house. The movie house, at least in its later years, was housed in the ground-floor corner unit. The current building owner, Jim Eckhardt, indicated that there is a raised platform ten feet deep, with remnants of the old movie screen and speakers. More recent office remodeling installed a dropped ceiling, with eight feet of space between the new ceiling and the old tin ceiling. The second floor was also once used as a bowling alley and dance hall. Currently, this building houses Eckhardt Enterprise Insurance and Tax Agency.

Significance: An important corner building, this property reflects the growing importance of the automobile in the early twentieth century and related automobile services as well as an interesting combination of a garage building with an opera house/movie theater and a public hall. This building also reflects the less elaborate commercial building designs popular in the early 20th century.

#64-00518

Address: 127 W. Main Street

Date of Construction: 1880s

Historic Name: Dussell and Liston General Merchandise

Property Type: III: Retail commercial

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

State Center Commercial Historic District

Section number 7 Page 6 Marshall County, Iowa

Evaluation: Contributing building

Comments: Two-story brown brick, single-unit store building occupies the northeast corner of 2nd Avenue West and Main Street. The second floor features three single 2/2 double-hungs, with plain stone lintels and sills, and a bracketed pressed metal cornice along the top of the front façade. The west side of the building has five single windows across that have been boarded over. A rear entry door is at the ground-floor level. The storefront has been remodeled with metal-framed display windows and a modern door; however, the ribbon window may be intact underneath the cover-up material and the recessed central entry is retained. A less elaborate pressed metal cornice is above the storefront. Painted on the west side of the building is "The Boys General Merchandise."

History: The 1899 fire insurance map shows this as the general merchandise of Dussell & Liston. By the early twentieth century, it was known as "The Boy's General Merchandise" store. However, the building's long-time twentieth-century use was as Brimhall Furniture and Undertaking. The furniture store closed in 1987. The building is currently vacant.

Significance: Well-preserved, Italianate-influenced corner store building serves as an important anchor building to this intersection and reflects the growing prosperity of the State Center commercial district in the late nineteenth century and its continued vitality into the twentieth century.

#64-00890

Address: 123-125 W. Main Street

Date of Construction: 1914

Historic Name: Malloy Pocket Billiards

Property Type: III: Retail commercial

Evaluation: Contributing building

Comments: 1.5-story, two-unit tile block building has a brown brick veneer on the façade. It was a modest addition to Main Street in the early twentieth century. The parapet features simple brick corbelled pilasters, with additional patterned detail added by using a lighter colored brick. Small square vents in parapet above each storefront. The two storefronts have been altered in more recent years, with the 125 W. Main unit altered more severely with brick infill and modern door and window inserts, with the 123 W. Main unit having modern metal-framed display windows and double-doors, but retaining some sense of a central store entry flanked by display windows. The ribbon windows above each storefront have been covered over but may have potential for reversibility.

History: This building was constructed as the J.E. Malloy Pocket Billiards in 1914. It was later used by furniture store next door and as a hardware store. Building was damaged by a fire. At one time also housed Irma's dress shop and Carmody's Pool Hall. Currently used as the Video Place.

Significance: Reflects the simpler commercial building designs of the early twentieth century.

#64-00891

Address: 121 W. Main Street

Date of Construction: 1920s-early 1930s

Historic Name: Retail commercial

Property Type: III: Retail commercial

Evaluation: Contributing building

Comments: This small, one-story commercial building has clay tile block walls, with yellow-glazed brick veneer. The parapet is shaped and features a simple decorative brick panel below. The storefront level has been altered with modern windows and doors and has a bubble-type awning over the entry.

History: The historic function of this building is unknown beyond a general retail commercial business. It is currently used as Bailey's Pizza Shop.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

State Center Commercial Historic District

Section number 7 Page 7 Marshall County, Iowa

Significance: While the storefront has been modernized, the decorative parapet and the use of a yellow-glazed brick on the façade reflects the use of new materials and the simpler commercial building designs of the early twentieth century.

#64-00892

Address: 119 W. Main Street

Date of Construction: 1920s-early 1930s

Historic Name: barber shop

Property Type: III: Retail commercial

Evaluation: Contributing building

Comments: One-story, small reddish brown brick commercial building has a distinctive stepped parapet, with an inset brick panel below. The storefront has been updated with modern doors and windows; however, the original window and door openings (with covered transom above) remain intact.

History: Was shown on a 1940s photograph with a barber shop pole by the door; thus, it was likely built for use as a barber shop and remains this type of business to the current day. The current name is Garry's Barber Shop.

Significance: Interesting early twentieth century barber shop building reflects the simpler commercial building designs of the early twentieth century.

#64-00894

Address: 115 W. Main Street

Date of Construction: 1916

Historic Name: First National Bank of State Center

Property Type: III: Bank

Evaluation: Contributing building

Comments: Classical Revival-styled bank building is comparatively small in size being one-story in height and occupying a narrow single-unit wide lot. There is almost an Egyptian Revival influence to the stylized cornice and entablature, with the remainder of the façade featuring two squat pilasters with concrete cornice caps and four concrete rosettes across the freizeband and the use of a yellowish-colored brick as the veneer material. The front windows have been reduced and replaced in more recent years but the original fenestration remains intact.

History: Founded as a private bank by J.W. Dobbin in 1869 (the first bank in State Center), this institution became the Dobbin and Whitson Bank in 1902 and the First National Bank in 1907. This bank building was constructed as the First National Bank of State Center in 1916. The bank later merged with Central State Bank under title "Central State Bank," which it remains today, with the bank then consolidated on the north side of Main Street and including this 1916 building but also a modern addition (64-00895).

Significance: This classical bank building reflects the trend to update banks' appearance in the community by either remodeling an older building with a new façade, or building a stylish new building, such as this example. While small in size, it was a "modern" stylish addition to State Center's Main Street in the early twentieth century.

#64-00895

Address: 109 W. Main Street

Date of Construction: 1965

Name: Central State Bank

Property Type: VI: Bank

Evaluation: Non-contributing building

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

State Center Commercial Historic District

Section number 7 **Page** 8 **Marshall County, Iowa**

Comments: Modern addition to older bank building (#64-00894). This modern building is one-story in height with a strong horizontal emphasis. It sits back on the lot and was less intrusive to the historic Main Street than if it had been fronted at the sidewalk.

History: On this site between the old bank (64-00894) and the older corner filling station, there were once six wood-frame stores that were demolished after 1934.

Significance: As a modern property, this infill building is considered non-contributing to the district.

#64-00896

Address: 101 W. Main Street

Date of Construction: 1986

Property Type: VI: Convenience Store

Evaluation: Non-contributing building

Comments: Citgo/Cissy's II Convenience Store; modern building canted to corner of intersection. Has large canopy over gas pumps closer to the street.

History: This lot has been the site of a gasoline station through much of the twentieth century. The older, non-extant gas station was a Sinclair filling station. The current building was constructed in 1986.

Significance: As a modern infill building, this property is considered non-contributing to the district.

#64-00897

Address: 101 E. Main Street

Date of Construction: 1893

Historic Name: McMahon & Son Carriage Works

Property Type: III: Manufactory/Retail commercial

Evaluation: Contributing building

Comments: Two-story corner building was embellished with pressed metal siding and cornice overhangs on the front and sides of the building. A name-plate pediment once on top of the cornice has since been removed. The east-side and rear walls of this building show a brick veneer, and it is suspected that this is a wood-frame building with brick veneer, with the pressed metal siding either added to the front and west sides at an early date or used instead of brick veneer on the more public views of the building. The metal siding is pressed to mimic rock-face blocks. The Liston Building directly across the street (south) of this building was constructed with actual rock-face concrete blocks in the early 1900s perhaps to "show up" the faux block look of the building across the street. The windows on the second floor consist of paired and single double-hung windows, with one original tall window on the west side at the rear and the rest paired and single replacement windows reduced in size from the original 1/1 double-hungs. The storefronts have been heavily altered by adding horizontal wood siding over this building and the adjacent storefront to the east. However, there appears to be potential for reversibility. Historic photographs show a recessed central entry, with double doors and Queen Anne-type colored glass transom windows above the door and display windows. The interior entry has a tile floor inlaid with "McMahon & Son," with the old wooden floor extant on the interior of the building.

History: Built in 1893, this building housed the McMahon and Son Carriage Works. It later housed a hardware store until the year 2000. The building is currently vacant.

Significance: This important corner building serves an anchor to this intersection within the district. It is also a notable example of the use of elaborate pressed metal siding to promote the impression of a much more substantial construction.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

State Center Commercial Historic District

Section number 7 Page 9 Marshall County, Iowa

#64-00898

Address: 103 E. Main Street

Date of Construction: c.1893

Historic Name: McMahan & Son Carriage Works Warehouse

Property Type: II: Manufactory/Retail Commercial

Evaluation: Contributing building

Comments: This one-story wood-frame building is adjacent to the main carriage works building at 101 E. Main Street. The one-story building was part of the carriage works business but was a separate construction with a dividing wall separating the two buildings. This building features the same pressed metal cornice overhang as the main building and may have had the same pressed metal siding that has since been removed or covered over on this smaller building. The original façade of this building had a single wagon door opening, but has since been altered with a horizontal wood siding cover-up and modern window inserts. There may be some potential for reversibility. However, the cornice across the top of the building helps to tie this building to its historically-associated building at 101 E. Main. There was also once a nameplate and finials on top of the cornice.

History: Built c.1893, this building housed the warehouse portion of the McMahan and Son Carriage Works. This building was later part of the adjacent hardware store and is now vacant.

Significance: This building retains enough integrity to tie it historically and physically to the more significant building at 101 E. Main. As a result, this building is considered contributing to the district.

#64-00899

Address: 111 E. Main Street

Date of Construction: 1978

Name: State Center Fire Department

Property Type: VI: Fire Station

Evaluation: Non-contributing building

Comments: This broad-gabled, modern metal building houses the State Center Fire Department.

History: This lot has always been associated with the city's fire department. Historic photographs show the old alarm bell tower close to the street. The current building was added to this lot in 1978.

Significance: As a modern infill building, the fire station is considered non-contributing to the district.

#64-00520

Address: 119-121 E. Main Street

Date of Construction: 1869

Historic Name: Opera House

Property Type: III: Opera House/Retail commercial

Evaluation: Contributing building

Comments: Two-story rectangular building sits at the southeast corner of this corner lot, with the building abutting the sidewalk on its long side. The most prominent feature of this building is the mansard roof, which appears to have been the historic roofline for this building. The exterior has been clad with metal siding, with the windows and doors primarily modern replacements and inserts. Some interior features of the later Masonic Hall on the second floor remain intact. Etta Whitehill's historical account and others refer to a brick opera house. The historic photographs of this building, while not clear, appear to show a building if not a brick structure, then a wood-frame building with a brick veneer. Historic photographs also show a series of 2/2 double-hung windows across the second floor on at least three sides and on the ends of the first floor. The long side of the building fronting Main Street had four storefronts, including at least two with large

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

State Center Commercial Historic District
Marshall County, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 10

wagon door openings. An early remnant of State Center's herringbone-pattern brick sidewalk remains parallel to Main Street in front of this building.

History: Built by Conway Rhodes in 1869, this building housed an opera house on the second floor and businesses on the first floor. By 1899, the first-floor stores included a billiards hall and an implements business. By the early twentieth century, Wells Implement Company was housed in this building. In 1921, Masonic Terrestrial Lodge No. 276 purchased this building from B.H. Grey at a cost of \$6,000. The Lodge still meets in this building and extensively remodeled the building in 1959. On the interior of the second floor there is a large open meeting space. Along the west wall are a series of six to seven rooms that local residents assume had once been dressing rooms. When the Masons remodeled, they dropped the ceiling, but noted that in the attic space above there are remnants of scenery, wallpaper, and rolls of stage backdrops, probable remnants of the opera house use of this building. The Masons purchased this building after their lodge hall building burned to the ground in 1917 across the street from the opera house. Their older lodge building had been a substantial two-story brick block, typical of Masonic Hall constructions of the late nineteenth century. Their decision not to rebuild in 1917 but rather purchase the old opera house may have been driven by the economy of the time.

Significance: While this building has been greatly altered, the most prominent features of this building, its massing and its distinctive mansard roof, still make this building recognizable as a public hall, in particular as an opera house. It is assumed that the metal siding is simply covering over the older wall finish, with integrity likely to improve with its removal. As a result, this building is considered contributing to the district because it reflects an important resource of Iowa's Main Streets: the opera house.

#64-00900

Address: 126 E. Main St.

Date of Construction: c.1890

Historic Name: Dr. Engle's House and Office

Property Type: II: Residential dwelling/Medical office

Evaluation: Contributing building

Comments: 1.5-story wood-frame front-gabled cottage has wide replacement siding and a hip-roofed enclosed portico front porch. The porch was enclosed in the 1920s-1930s based on the use of multi-pane over single pane windows. Other windows on the house include at least one cottage window. A small one-story addition to the rear has a shed to flat roof.

History: This dwelling survived the disastrous fire of 1917 on this block. Historically, it also served as a doctor's office for Drs. Engle, Wood, and Coe. It is currently vacant.

Significance: This dwelling reflects the context of living on Main Street but also reflects the use of an otherwise dwelling for a professional office as well. As such, it is considered contributing to the district.

#64-00902

Address: 118 E. Main Street

Date of Construction: 1950

Historic Name: State Center City Hall

Property Type: VI: Civic city hall

Evaluation: Contributing building

Comments: This two-story yellow raked-brick building has had the second floor windows infilled in some cases and altered and replaced with modern windows in others. The first floor retains the fire department garage door opening, although the door is a modern replacement. The front entryway is recessed and features a built-in planter.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

State Center Commercial Historic District
Marshall County, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 11

History: When this building was first constructed in 1950, it housed the city hall, the American Legion Rooms, all of the city's fire equipment, the public library, the city clerk's office, the council room, the general assembly room, and a well-furnished kitchen. The fire department is now housed in a separate building, with this building still functioning as the main city hall and office building.

Significance: While this building has been altered through the years, it is still recognizable as a civic building dating from the 1950s. Furthermore, while it was built near the end of the period of significance for this district, it is within that period and is considered contributing as a representative example of specialized buildings constructed on Main Street in the twentieth century.

#64-00903

Address: 114 E. Main Street

Date of Construction: 1921

Historic Name: U.S. Post Office

Property Type: VI: Post Office

Evaluation: Contributing building

Comments: One-story brownish-red brick building features simple brick panel patterns across the parapet along with an inset panel that reads "State Center, IA Post Office." The storefront has a central door flanked by square plate-glass windows. A shingled awning was added in more recent years across the storefront.

History: Built as post office building in 1921. This building still functions as the State Center U.S. Post Office.

Significance: This small brick building reflects the trend of building specialized separate buildings for civic and public property types on Main Street, such as libraries, city halls, and post offices, as in this case. This building also reflects the use of materials new to this period and the simpler commercial building designs of the early twentieth century.

#64-00904

Address: 110-112 E. Main Street

Date of Construction: 1930s-1940s

Historic Name: retail commercial

Property Type: V: Retail commercial

Evaluation: Contributing building

Comments: Small, one-story, two-unit store building has an interesting stepped parapet over mirror-image storefronts, one of which has a door-double window arrangement and the other a double window-door configuration. This yellowish brick building has raked white mortar joints. A simple cornice band dresses up the façade.

History: This building was added to the district after 1934 but before 1952. It currently houses Denny's Shoe Repair and the Shepler Barber Shop.

Significance: Interesting early to mid-twentieth century commercial building reflects the simpler commercial building designs and the use of material new to this period. It is a late addition to the district.

#64-00905

Address: 108 E. Main Street

Date of Construction: Built between 1917-1934

Historic Name: Kielly's Farm Implement Store

Property Type: III: Retail commercial

Evaluation: Contributing building

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

State Center Commercial Historic District
Marshall County, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 12

Comments: This one-story red brick building has a greater height than the adjacent building at 110-121 E. Main Street but is also a one-story building. Distinctive features include the six brick pilasters that vertically subdivide the façade, and the rectangular plate-glass windows that flank the central front door.

History: Built by Bud Kielly as a Farm Implement Store, which sold Farmhall tractors. This building later housed Hilliman's Hardware. Currently houses the Rose Capitol Mini-Mall.

Significance: Interesting early twentieth century commercial building reflects the simpler building designs popular in this period.

#64-00906

Address: 104 E. Main Street

Date of Construction: post 1917

Historic Name: retail commercial

Property Type: III: Retail commercial

Evaluation: Contributing building

Comments: One-story, red-painted cast concrete block building has rock-face concrete block and simple textural pattern across parapet. The storefront has been infilled with glass block and 1950s yellow brick. It has a central door with modern window inserts to either side.

History: This building was constructed after the 1917 fire had destroyed most of this block. It is not known what businesses were housed in this building. It currently houses the Road Hog Bar.

Significance: Early twentieth century commercial building reflects the use of newer materials (cast concrete blocks) to impart a stone block appearance. It also reflects the simpler commercial designs popular in the early twentieth century. Complements building adjacent to the west, which is an earlier two-story concrete block building.

#64-00519

Address: 102 E. Main Street

Date of Construction: c.1900-1910

Historic Name: Whitehall Bros. General Merchandise

Property Type: II: Retail commercial

Evaluation: Contributing building

Comments: Two-story, single-unit concrete block commercial building is located on the southeast corner of Main Street and 1st Avenue. This building is constructed with rock-face concrete blocks and features a denticulated, corbelled cornice that wraps around the front and west sides of the building. It originally had two sets of paired windows across the second floor front façade, with similar sets along the west side. The windows have been reduced with modern inserts but may be reversible. The storefront has also been altered in more recent years with tan brick and glass block infill but still has recessed entryway. A metal beam with buttons is exposed above the storefront.

History: This building was the sole commercial building survivor on this block from the fire of 1917. Originally, this was the Whitehall Bros. General Merchandise store, followed by the Liston grocery business. Liston's closed in 1972. The Oddfellows had their lodge hall on the second floor of this building after their original lodge building burned in the 1917 fire. The building currently houses Iowa Realty.

Significance: Important corner building reflects use of locally-manufactured concrete blocks and serves as a notable anchor building on the corner of this intersection along Main Street.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

State Center Commercial Historic District
Marshall County, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 13

#64-00907

Address: 102 W. Main Street

Date of Construction: c.1901-02

Historic Name: Bank of State Center

Property Type: III: Bank

Evaluation: Contributing building

Comments: Designed by the architectural firm of J.H. Prescott & Company. One-story Richardsonian Romanesque-inspired corner bank building features distinctive arcaded and round-arched openings on the front and east sides, with an open corner entry and a corbelled brick cornice once wrapped around the side of the building. The building materials include St. Louis granite brick, Minnesota red sandstone trimmings, and tinted mortar. The corner pillar was replaced after the 1930s. The windows have been replaced and partially infilled or covered over but may be reversible.

History: Built c.1901-02 as the Bank of State Center. It was later known as the Central State Bank, which even later merged with the First National Bank across the street under the single name of the Central State Bank, which then consolidated in the bank building across the street. The building currently houses the dental offices of Dr. Alfred Havick.

Significance: This important corner bank building is an architect-designed addition to Main Street in the early 1900s.

#64-00908

Address: 104 W Main Street

Date of Construction: c.1900

Historic Name: Loy Down's Barber Shop

Property Type: III: Retail commercial

Evaluation: Contributing building

Comments: One-story single-unit building with tall parapet has a unique rough-cut limestone block veneer on the parapet and as pilasters flanking the storefront. The stones form a checkerboard pattern across the cornice. A small pediment above the parapet has since been removed. The storefront has been completely covered over by vertical board siding, with the modern door and window inserts. A metal I-beam with rosettes is exposed above the storefront. The door is now boarded over because the building is in poor condition and vacant. Plans to rehabilitate include the removal of the back wall and construction of a new building behind the historic façade.

History: Built c.1900, this building housed Loy Down's Barber Shop, with several cafés between 1956-1965. The building is currently vacant.

Significance: Interesting block building construction reflects the unusual use of actual rough-cut limestone blocks in the early 1900s. While the storefront has been altered, there appears to be some potential for reversibility.

#64-00918

Address: 106-108 W. Main Street

Date of Construction: 1895

Historic Name: Watson's Grocery/Benson's Dry Goods

Property Type: III: Retail commercial

Evaluation: Contributing building

Comments: One-story, two-unit brick block building has red-tinted mortar and dark red brick. Distinctive inset panels and corbelled details on parapet, with two date plates that read "1895" since removed from the parapet. The 106 W. Main storefront unit has been restored to a historic look with tall display windows and exposed cast iron elements. A metal I-beam with rosettes is exposed across both storefronts. The storefront at 108 W. Main has been altered with a panel of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

State Center Commercial Historic District
Marshall County, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 14

wood covering over the ribbon window panel but retains a recessed central entry. Significant original interior details remain intact.

History: Built in 1895 following a disastrous fire that destroyed much of this block, this building was the long-time site of Watson's Grocery until 1980 in the east store unit and Benson's Dry Goods in the west store unit; which operated until the 1940s. Billy Watson came to State Center in 1869 and worked for Morgan Grocery. He later became a partner and then eventually took over the business. The original building was lost in 1895, with the current building constructed in its place. The building is now used as the community historical museum.

Significance: The Watson's Grocery unit of this important building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, with the entire building considered a key contributing building to the district.

#64-00909

Address: 110-112 W. Main Street

Date of Construction: Built between 1900-1934

Historic Name: Dr. Wood's hospital

Property Type: III: Retail commercial

Evaluation: Contributing building

Comments: One-story two-unit dark red brick building has matching tinted mortar. The façade features Classical Revival-inspired pilasters with classical caps and a classical entablature complete with wide friezeband and rectangular panels. Recessed central entry to both store units flanked by older storefront windows that may be original. Concrete coping has deteriorated.

History: Built in the early twentieth century as Dr. Wood's hospital, it then became a nursing home run by Marion Malloy and known as "Malloy's Nursing Home." Dr. Wood's son also used a portion of this building as an attorney's office. The building currently houses Char's Café.

Significance: Notable early twentieth century commercial building reflects the simpler, more classical commercial designs then becoming popular. Also reflects the use of newer materials then available.

#64-00910

Address: 114 W. Main Street

Date of Construction: c.1895

Historic Name: grocery store

Property Type: III: Retail commercial

Evaluation: Contributing building

Comments: One-story, well-preserved red brick building has decorative corbelled brick arches with stone keystones and other corbelled brickwork along the parapet. The storefront has a recessed central entry, with modern door and transom covered over. The central entry is flanked by older display windows, with an uncovered ribbon window and metal I-beam, with rosettes.

History: Housed Foot's Grocery c.1899, was later the A.E. Dobbin Dry Goods, which was a store operated by women. The building is currently vacant.

Significance: This well-preserved late nineteenth century store building is modest in size but certainly contributes to the integrity and historic appearance of this block. It may also have some significance for its association with an early woman-operated business in this community.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**State Center Commercial Historic District
Marshall County, Iowa**

Section number 7 Page 15

#64-00911

Address: 116-118 W. Main Street

Date of Construction: c.1895

Historic Name: Hat shop/Jewelry store

Property Type: III: Retail commercial

Evaluation: Contributing building

Comments: One-story, two-unit brick block is of a notably modest size for a two-unit store. It retains very good integrity and features an interesting corbelled brick cornice and rather unique rectangular panels with a corbelled gridwork pattern. The storefront features an intact cast iron storefront, with central recessed double entryway and flanking tall storefront display windows. The metal stoop at the entryway was manufactured by Vierling McDowell & Co. of Chicago.

History: Housed Minnie Frohwein's Hat Shop in the east store unit c.1899, a business which was originally associated with a clothing-related business operated by Misses Milne & Dobbin. Mr. R.W. Holsworth had his jewelry store in the west unit c.1899. The building currently houses Computers Etc. and the Hair Garden.

Significance: This well-preserved late nineteenth century store building contributes to the integrity and historic appearance of this block and may also be significant for its association with early women-operated businesses in this community.

#64-00912

Address: 120 W. Main Street

Date of Construction: c.1895

Historic Name: restaurant/hotel

Property Type: III: Retail commercial

Evaluation: Contributing building

Comments: This building began life as a full two-story, single-unit brick building; however, the upper floor was reduced and the three original upper floor windows were infilled with brick, although their former location is still discernible on the upper portion of the building. The storefront has also been altered having been infilled with yellow brick and glass block in more recent years.

History: This building housed a restaurant and hotel business in 1899 and was the Evans Café and City Bakery c.1914. The Telephone Company occupied this building in the 1950s. Currently used as an owner-occupied apartment.

Significance: While this building has been greatly altered, the red-brick upper floor of the façade helps maintain the continuity and rhythm of this block and it is considered contributing as a result.

#64-00913

Address: 122 W. Main Street

Date of Construction: Between 1895-1899

Historic Name: Brimhall Drug Store

Property Type: III: Drug Store

Evaluation: Contributing building

Comments: Two-story, single-unit red brick building has similar parapet treatment to adjacent building at 124-128 W. Main and three 1/1 double-hung windows across the second floor, with horizontal bands of stone trim above and below the windows. Storefront retains recessed central entry, older display windows, and exposed ribbon window, with metal I-beam above. Retains good integrity.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

State Center Commercial Historic District
Marshall County, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 16

History: The Brimhall Bros. Drug Store was a long-time business in State Center until 1954. It was then operated by Van Pelts until 1975. Historically, it housed the town's first switchboard and a popular soda fountain. This building currently houses the State Center Main Street offices.

Significance: This is the only two-story building on this block but is tied to the other buildings by having similar design details across the parapet. This well-preserved building certainly contributes to the historic integrity of this district.

#64-00927

Address: 124-128 W. Main Street

Date of Construction: c.1895

Historic Name: Rhode and Buck Building

Property Type: III: Retail commercial

Evaluation: Contributing building

Comments: One-story two-unit red brick block building has decorative parapet treatment very similar to that seen on the Watson's Grocery store building at 106-108 W. Main Street on this same block except that this parapet appears to be more intact than that on 106-108 W. Main. The two storefronts retain recessed central entries and intact cast iron storefronts. The ribbon windows are covered over, which may be reversible. The mortar is tinted red. Parapet panels may have terra cotta trim. The sign blocks on the parapet read: "E. Rohde" and "R.A. Buck."

History: Originally, the east unit housed E. Rohde & Son Clothiers, with the west unit the R.A. Buck Barber Shop. Later housed Ron German's Clothing Store 1939-1975 and the City Meat Market in 1914. R.A. Buck's shop began business in 1890 and was rebuilt after the 1895 fire. He also manufactured *Buck's Hair Tonic*. Currently, this building houses the professional offices for Janson-Pfantz Insurance and Hinshaw Attorney-at-Law.

Significance: Well-preserved modest-sized brick block contributes to the overall integrity and historic appearance of this block and the district as a whole.

#64-00928

Address: 130 W. Main Street

Date of Construction: Between 1899-1934

Historic Name: Variety store

Property Type: III: Retail commercial

Evaluation: Contributing building

Comments: One-story, single-unit brick building has corbelled brick cornice and exposed metal I-beam with rosettes above an otherwise altered storefront. The storefront has been covered over with vinyl siding and modern door and window inserts and a triangular pediment added over the central doorway.

History: This building housed a variety store followed by the newspaper. Currently the Mid-Iowa Enterprise offices are located here (a news-advertising-printing business).

Significance: While the storefront has been altered, there may be some potential for reversibility. The parapet retains good integrity in its corbelled brick cornice and helps maintain the rhythm of this block and its overall historic appearance.

#64-00929

Address: 132 W. Main Street

Date of Construction: c.1880

Historic Name: Connelly Grocery Store

Property Type: II: Retail commercial

Evaluation: Contributing building

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

State Center Commercial Historic District
Marshall County, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 17

Comments: This one story, wood-frame false-front single-unit building is coated in pebble-dash stucco. It retains a cornice overhang and a storefront that has a recessed central entry, display windows, with a ribbon window above. The original storefront had a recessed entry with double doors and fixed-pane (nine panes) display windows to either side. The false front parapet was clad with clapboard siding.

History: The Connelly Grocery Store is reportedly the oldest standing wood building in the commercial district. By 1914 it was Bishop Drug and Groceries. The building is currently vacant, though the last tenant was Brodes Heating.

Significance: This rare survival of a wood-frame false-front type of building in the State Center district is notable and serves as an anchor to a block of otherwise brick commercial buildings. Interestingly, the majority of this block maintained modest sizes and one-story heights in keeping with this older wood building following the 1895 fire.

#64-00930

Address: 214 W. Main Street

Date of Construction: 1924

Historic Name: High School

Property Type: IV: School

Evaluation: Contributing building

Comments: Three-story rectangular brick building is set back on block from the south side of Main Street. Monumental central entryway, with series of paired windows across the three floors. Simple stone insets and panels decorate the slightly stepped parapet. Front doors and windows are modern replacements, but fenestration remains unchanged.

History: This block was significantly altered between 1899 and 1934. The commercial and residential block between 2nd and 1st streets was taken over by the construction of a high school and gymnasium in the 1920s. Second Street was blocked off between Oneida and Seneca so that the school properties could infill the entire two blocks between Main and 3rd Street. Removed were eight dwellings, a hotel, a restaurant, a photo shop, and a machine shop. One dwelling remained, which is now used as the Wensel Perrin Funeral Home (228 W. Main). School consolidation occurred in 1920, with the high school built in 1924. The Middle School now uses this building.

Significance: This building reflects the addition of specialized buildings to Main Street in the early twentieth century, in this case the consolidated high school building. While there has been some alteration through the years, it is still very recognizable as a 1920s school buildings and certainly contributes to the historic look and feel of the district. It also serves as a recognizable corner boundary to the district.

#64-00889

Address: 228 W. Main Street

Date of Construction: c.1890

Historic Name: Residential Dwelling

Property Type: II: Residential Dwelling

Evaluation: Contributing building

Comments: Gable-front-and-wing frame dwelling has a two-story front-gabled portion fronting Main Street, with a one-story side-gabled ell on the east side. The front porch on the side-gabled ell has been enclosed and the siding and some of the windows replaced on the building as a whole.

History: Built around 1890 as a single-family dwelling. It was later converted to the Wensel-Perrin Funeral Home.

Significance: This property reflects the context of living on Main Street, with this house originally built on what was otherwise a commercial block. The other buildings were removed prior to the construction of the extant high school, with this dwelling the only older property left on this block fronting Main Street. While the building has been altered through the years, it is still recognizable as a late nineteenth century dwelling and is considered contributing to the district.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

State Center Commercial Historic District
Marshall County, Iowa

Section number 8 Page 18

Statement of Significance

The State Center Commercial Historic District is locally significant under Criterion C for its architectural significance and under Criterion A for its historical significance. This district is being nominated under the *Iowa's Main Street Commercial Architecture* Multiple Property Documentation Form. The historical significance of the State Center Commercial District lies in its representation of the central business district from the late 1860s to the present and its reflection of the many varied commercial, industrial, public, social, cultural, and recreational enterprises that evolved in the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries within this community. The architectural significance of the district lies in the retention and integrity of many of the historic buildings constructed between the 1860s and 1952, particularly for its retention of so many early twentieth century commercial buildings. The State Center Commercial Historic District is notable for the small scale and modest size of its extant commercial buildings reflecting the impact of disastrous fires in 1895 and 1917 but also the comparative failure to thrive of State Center's commercial economy. The period of significance for the district is from 1869 when the opera house was built at the east end of the district until 1952, the 50-year cut-off date for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. The majority of the buildings date from the 1890s-1920s and reflect the modest rebuilding efforts that followed in the wake of the two disastrous fires.

Historical Significance of the State Center Historic District

The site of State Center was part of the expansive Midwest prairie, noteworthy as the highest point in Marshall County. State Center is located twelve miles west of Marshalltown, the county seat for Marshall County, and twelve miles east of Nevada, the county seat for Story County. Though there was early pioneer settlement in the vicinity in the 1850s, State Center had its origins with the 80 acres of land acquired in 1863 by the Cedar Rapids & Missouri Railroad (later the Chicago Northwestern) in order to establish the town of "Centre Station." William Barnes, the first railroad agent changed the name to "State Centre." When the railroad reached its elevation summit on its path to the west, John Blair platted the town of State Centre in April 1864, with the town then incorporated in August of 1867 (John Blair is noted as an investor whose factory back east was supplying the rails to this railroad project, he bought 80 acres and platted Centre Station). Stages brought settlers to State Centre from Des Moines and Fort Dodge. The town's development stagnated during the Civil War, but following the war's end, the town grew quickly to a population of 600 in 1866-67 and by 1878 the population stood at 992.

The railroad runs east-west through town immediately to the north of what was then First Street (today's "Main Street"). County Road S-52, which travels to the small communities of Clemons to the north and Rhodes to the south, splits Main Street east and west, thus the division between "East Main Street" and "West Main Street." A second railroad, the State Center branch of the Iowa Central Railroad came into town from the southeast, joining the Northwestern line just west of the commercial district in 1881. That line was closed in 1925. While State Center certainly benefited as a result of the two rail lines, the commercial district did not thrive to the same extent as other railroad towns of this size in Iowa. Two disastrous fires, one in 1895 and one in 1917, may have set back the commercial development sufficiently to slow the local economy at times when national economic woes and world events further stunted growth and prosperity. As a result, even though business buildings were rebuilt after the fires, rebuilding was gradual and the new buildings were very modest and small in size, rather than the trend seen in other commercial districts where replacement buildings were often of more substantial construction and grander scale than their predecessors. Interestingly, a 1900 article in the local newspaper stated:

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**State Center Commercial Historic District
Marshall County, Iowa**

Section number 8 **Page** 19

While State Centre may never experience a “boom” or become a large city, situated as it is in the midst of a fertile country which is rapidly increasing in population and wealth, it will always be a prosperous and thriving town (*The Enterprise* 1900).

Therefore, even in 1900, when most other Iowa railroad towns had boomed commercially, it was recognized that while State Center would continue to have a viable commercial community, it was notably not booming at that time. The 1917 fire likely cemented that tendency, with the Great Depression that followed, ensuring it.

The business development was local and supported regional agriculture. Livestock raising and dairying predominated the agriculture of the region. The major twentieth-century industry in State Center was the Farmers Cooperative Creamery, which closed in 1982. In 1949 it was producing two million pounds of butter annually. However, there had been an earlier successful creamery operated by C.W. Sibley, who established the State Centre Creamery in 1879. Another major business was the grain elevator complex at the west end of Main Street that was part of the Quaker Oats Company until 1917. The former Quaker Oats manager, George Mead, then purchased the elevator from Quaker Oats and established his own operation in partnership with his son-in-law, Elmer Goodman. The new business became known as Goodman and Mead and later Goodman Milling Inc. Goodman sold the business in 1993, with the current operation known as the Midwest Milling Company. Quaker Oats had lost their largest grain elevator to fire in June 1913, and either the extant elevator was a smaller one that survived the fire or a new one built c.1913 in place of the lost structure.

Regional school consolidation in 1920 has helped maintain State Center’s regional importance and resulted in a new high school building in 1924.

The Main Street was paved in 1930 partly due to its association with the second route of the Lincoln Highway through this community. The first route in 1914 extended along 4th and 5th streets, with the second route c.1924 entering on 4th Street SE, then turning north on 5th Avenue and then west along Main Street before crossing the railroad tracks and exiting town along 2nd Street and 9th Avenue NW. An even later route extended along the north edge of town (Iowa Lincoln Highway Association n.d.). Even later, the current Highway 30 was located to the south of town.

The population has been stable for the last 100 years, rising only from 1,008 in 1900 to 1,249 in 2001. There were some dips in the population totals in 1905 (967) and 1910 (898), but from the 1930s to the present the population has stood above 1000. In reality, the current historic nature of this district should be credited to the slowing commercial success within the community, which would have brought modernization and building replacement.

Ethnic settlement in State Center was predominated by German immigrants, although a few French settlers were noted in the community. The German presence was strong enough that Etta Whitehill noted that she was first exposed to the German language while frequenting Alice Dobbin’s store, where “nearly all of the customers who came in” spoke German (Whitehill n.d.). She further noted that “most of the early settlers came direct from Germany” (ibid.). German immigrants and their descendants were also notable among the businessmen of State Center. The German Lutheran Church established in 1898 further attests to the presence of this immigrant group in State Center.

State Center also boasted of several women-operated businesses including the dry goods, shoes, and millinery business of Suzanne Milne and Alice E. Dobbin, who started their business in 1891, with Milne selling her share to Dobbin in 1899. After that time, A.E. Dobbin operated her own business under her name. In 1895, Dobbin sold the millinery department of the business to Minnie Frohwein, who retained her business in Miss Dobbin’s store building. Angie Pfantz, was also a well-known milliner in town, while Madame DeMange, a French immigrant, “taught and did much fine embroidery and bead work” (Whitehill n.d.). “Madame DeMange had the whole town going to her for lessons in embroidery and bead work” but she also “finished pieces and sold them” (ibid.). Other businesswomen in State Center included Brayton and Jones, milliners and dressmakers and dealers in dress goods and notions and Miss Minnie Wells, also a milliner and dressmaker, both businesses operating in the early 1870s.

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

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

**State Center Commercial Historic District
Marshall County, Iowa**

Section number 8 Page 20

Architectural Significance of the State Center Commercial Historic District

The architectural significance of the State Center Commercial Historic District lies in its representation of a modest-sized community that survived economically through the years but did not thrive to the same extent as other communities of similar size and position. What is remarkable is the comparatively modest growth and development of this commercial district despite its situation along a major rail line that continues to operate to the present day and despite the presence of what appears to have been a strong elevator/milling business at the west end of Main Street, also a business that continues to operate to the present day.

The failure to truly thrive is perhaps best demonstrated in the overall small-scale of the commercial buildings that were constructed along Main Street through the years. Historically, the only block to ever have what would be considered large-scale masonry block buildings burned to the ground in 1917. This block was the south side of Main Street between 1st Avenue and 2nd Avenue East. The buildings that were constructed in the wake of this fire were built on a much smaller scale than the ones that were lost, perhaps reflecting a reluctance to invest in larger buildings, or a reflection that the town's economy going into the twentieth century would not support larger business houses. It may also reflect, in this particular instance, some backlash from the state of the world in 1917, which was then embroiled in the first World War.

The second block to have been devastated by fire was also on the south side of Main Street but between 1st Avenue and 2nd Avenue West. Many of the buildings on this block burned to the ground in 1895, with all of the buildings rebuilt in the wake of the fire being small in scale (all except one are one-story buildings). Even the two-unit block buildings rebuilt along this street after 1895 were small in scale and limited to single-story buildings. Interestingly, the stylish new bank buildings that were added to the north and south sides of Main Street in the early 1900s, were both unusually small in scale (limited to one story and basically one-store unit wide) compared to bank buildings then being constructed in other Main Streets across Iowa. Whatever the reason, the large block buildings, that so define many other Iowa railroad communities of this size, were never a major feature of State Center's Main Street.

Masonry building materials were a common feature of the second generation commercial buildings in State Center, with brick, limestone, cement block, and tile block represented by multiple examples. Very few frame buildings remain standing, the result of devastating fires and deterioration and demolition. The cement blocks were manufactured locally, with at least two cement block and post manufactories operating in the early 1900s in State Center. These two businesses were operated by Louis Echhart and L. Wohlert (Battin and Moscrip 1912:186).

At least one architect-designed building is present in the district; the Bank of State Center at the southeast corner of 2nd Avenue and Main Street. This c.1901-02 Romanesque-inspired building was designed by the architectural firm of J.H. Prescott and Company. Building materials for the façade were brought in from St. Louis and Minnesota. The other bank building, the First National Bank of State Center built in 1916, may also have been architect designed. However, the majority of the extant buildings in the district would have been designed and constructed by local carpenters, masons, lumberyards, and contractors. These included the Bolton and Shere Lumberyard established in 1898, J.L. Patton and Sons Lumberyard operating in the early twentieth century, and J.W. Tuthill lumber dealer and F.S. Munson & Co., both lumber dealers in the early 1870s, in addition to the two above-noted cement block manufactories in the early 1900s. In the 1870s, local masons included G. Mitten and D.C. Snyder, with carpenters including J.A. Brewer, D.H. Fitch, P.P. Nichols, Charles Price, C.R. Richards, William Richards, and Charles Winslow (Western Historical 1878).

The State Center Commercial Historic District contains one of the better preserved groupings of 1890s-1920s commercial buildings of modest size and design in the state. This is a unique factor recognized and promoted by the Main Street group and other preservation advocates in this community. It is in the hope of furthering the preservation of this rather unique Main Street that the current nomination is being set forth.

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

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

**State Center Commercial Historic District
Marshall County, Iowa**

Section number 8 Page 21

Table 1. List of Buildings in District

Property Address	Inventory #	Property Type	Year Built	Status in District
Main Street	64-00893	Road	c. 1930	Contributing structure
209 W. Main Street	64-00887	Elevator	c. 1900	Contributing building
209 W. Main Street	64-00888	Office	c. 1910	Contributing building
201 W. Main Street	64-00523	Garage	1919	Contributing building
127 W. Main Street	64-00518	General Store	c. 1880	Contributing building
123-125 W. Main Street	64-00890	Pool Hall	c. 1910	Contributing building
121 W. Main Street	64-00891	Retail Commercial	c. 1900-1934	Contributing building
119 W. Main Street	64-00892	Barber Shop	c. 1900-1934	Contributing building
105 W. Main Street	64-00894	Bank	1916	Contributing building
109 W. Main Street	64-00895	Bank	1965	Non-contributing building
101 W. Main Street	64-00896	Convenience Store	1986	Non-contributing building
101 E. Main Street	64-00897	Hardware/Implements	c. 1890	Contributing building
103 E. Main Street	64-00898	Hardware/Implements	c. 1890	Contributing building
111 E. Main Street	64-00899	Fire Department	1978	Non-contributing building
119-121 E. Main Street	64-00900	Retail Commercial	1869	Contributing building
126 E. Main Street	64-00901	Dwelling	c. 1890	Contributing building
118 E. Main Street	64-00902	City Hall	1950	Contributing building
114 E. Main Street	64-00903	Post Office	1921	Contributing building
110-112 E. Main Street	64-00904	Retail Commercial	c. 1940	Contributing building
108 E. Main Street	64-00905	Implement Store	1917-1934	Contributing building
104 E. Main Street	64-00906	Retail Commercial	1917+	Contributing building
102 E. Main Street	64-00519	General Store	c. 1890	Contributing building
102 W. Main Street	64-00907	Bank	1902	Contributing building
104 W. Main Street	64-00908	Retail Commercial	c. 1900	Contributing building
106-108 W. Main Street	64-00918	Grocery/Dry Goods	1895	Contributing building
110-112 W. Main Street	64-00909	Retail Commercial	1900-1934	Contributing building
114 W. Main Street	64-00910	Retail Commercial	c. 1895	Contributing building
116-118 W. Main Street	64-00911	Retail Commercial	c. 1895	Contributing building
120 W. Main Street	64-00912	Retail Commercial	c. 1895	Contributing building
122 W. Main Street	64-00913	Drug Store	c. 1895	Contributing building
124-128 W. Main Street	64-00927	Clothing/Barber	c. 1895	Contributing building
130 W. Main Street	64-00928	Retail Commercial	c. 1899-1934	Contributing building
132 W. Main Street	64-00929	General Store	c. 1880	Contributing building
214 W. Main Street	64-00930	School	1924	Contributing building
228 W. Main Street	64-00889	Dwelling	c. 1890s	Contributing building

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

State Center Commercial Historic District
Marshall County, Iowa

Section number 9 Page 22

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- Interview with Mr. Jim Eckhardt of State Center, Iowa, by Joyce Barrett 2/13/02

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 23

**State Center Commercial Historic District
Marshall County, Iowa**

Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the State Center Commercial Historic District is shown as the dashed line on the map entitled "Map of State Center Commercial Historic District" (Page 25).

Boundary Justification

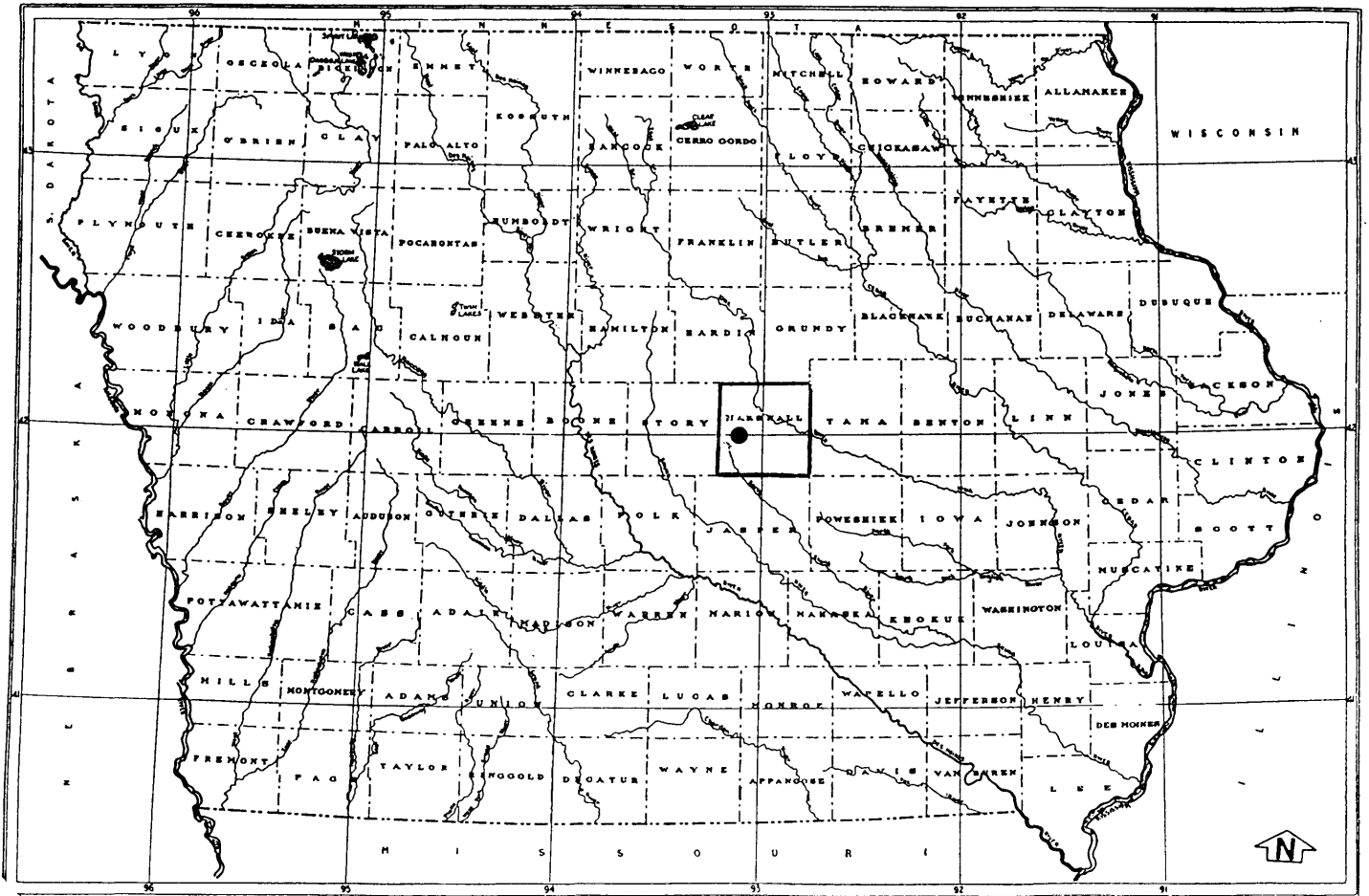
This boundary encompasses all the area historically associated with the commercial development of State Center along Main Street between 3rd Avenue West and 2nd Avenue East that maintain historic integrity.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Additional Documentation Page 24 State Center Commercial Historic District
Marshall County, Iowa

General Location of State Center, Iowa





MAP OF IOWA
Scale 1:100,000

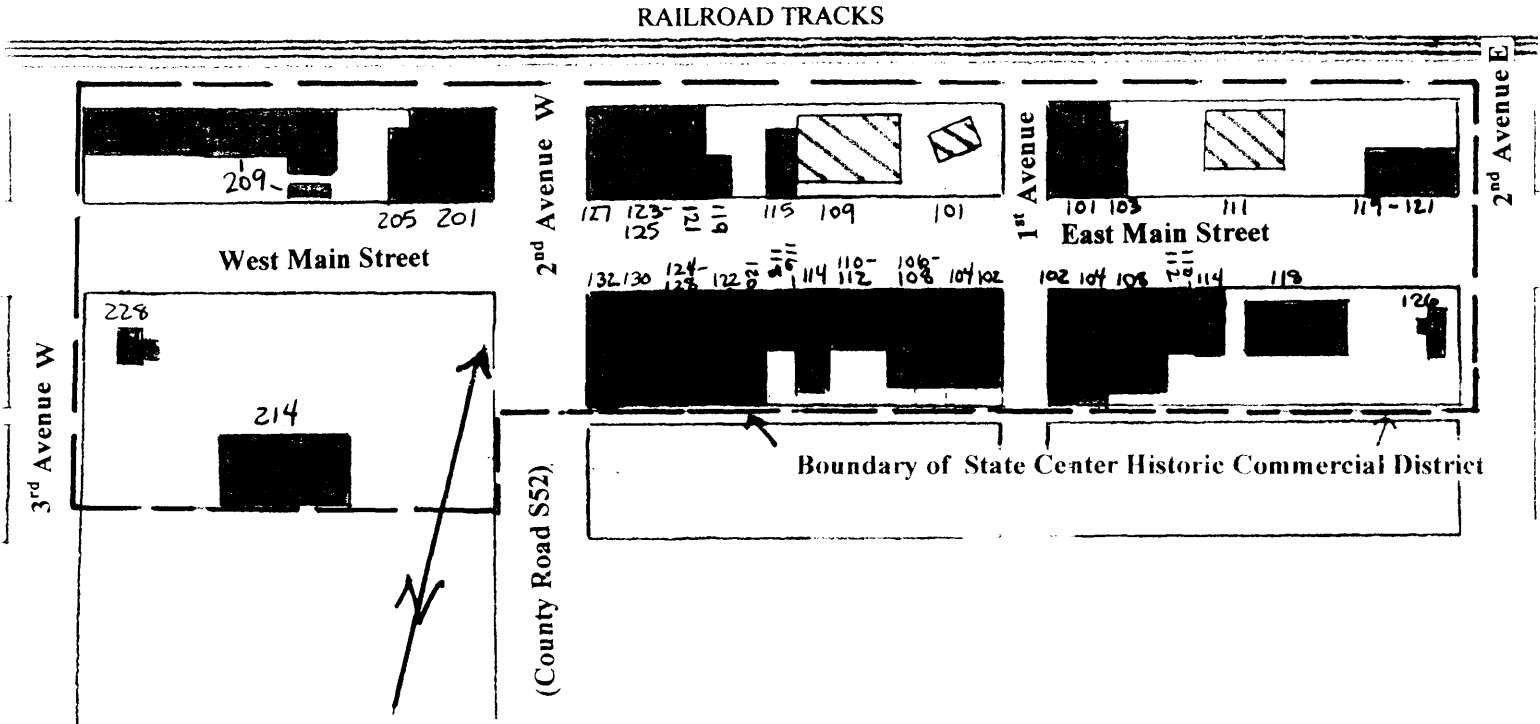
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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Additional Documentation Page 25 State Center Commercial Historic District
Marshall County, Iowa

Map of the State Center Commercial Historic District

-  = Contributing
-  = Non-contributing



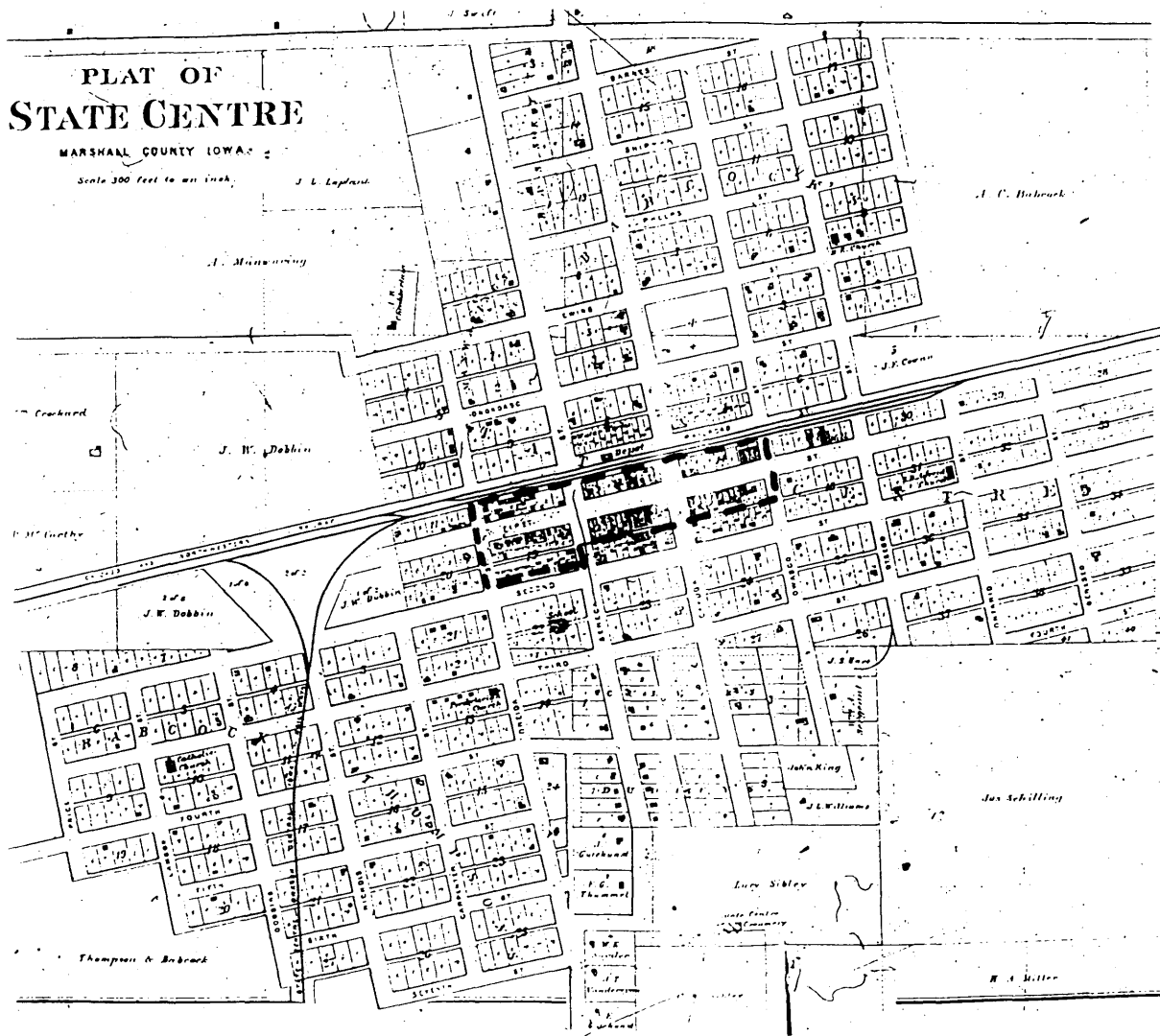
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Additional State Center Commercial Historic District
Section number Documentation Page 26 Marshall County, Iowa

1885 Plat of State Centre
(Warner and Foote 1885)

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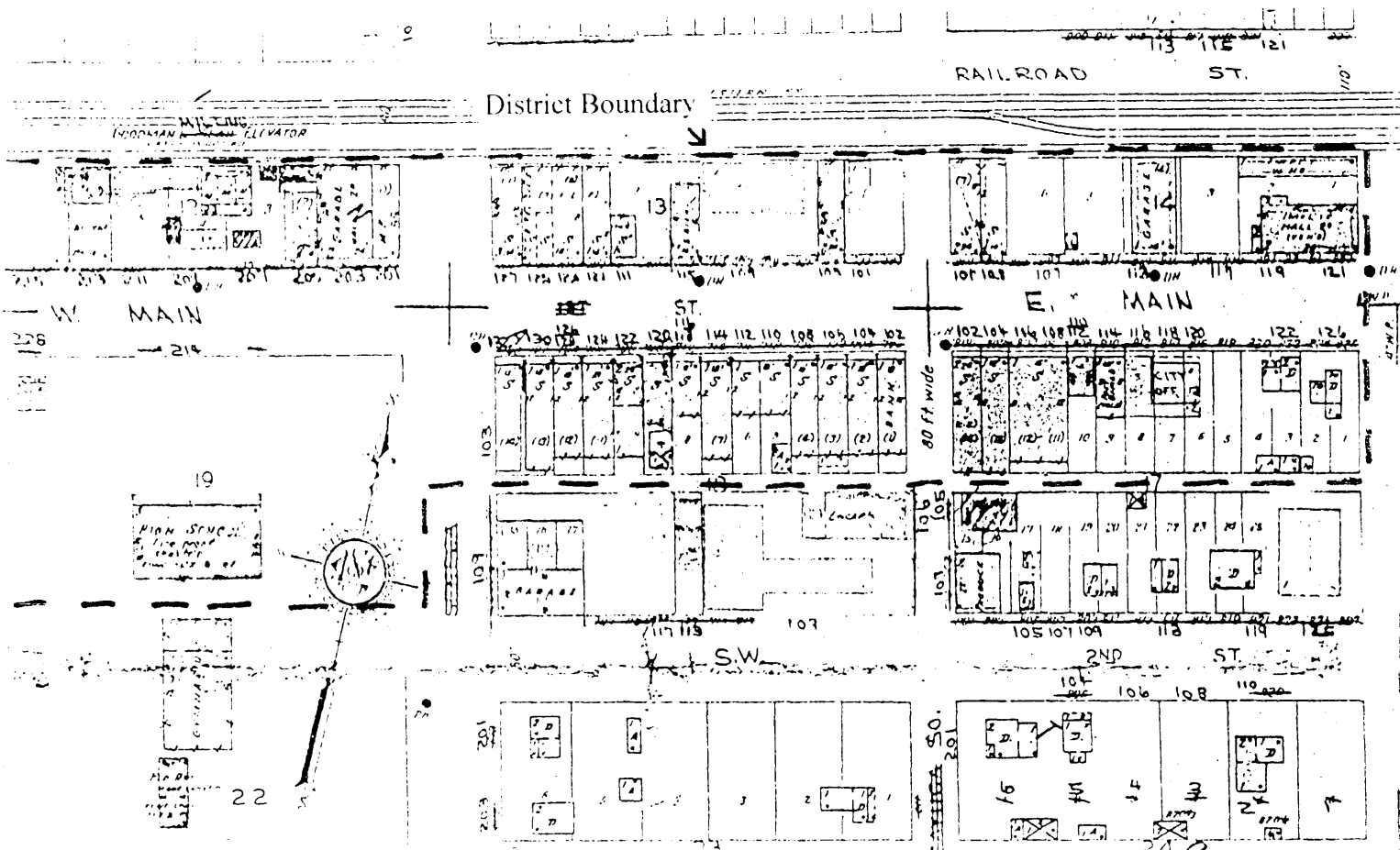


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Additional State Center Commercial Historic District
Section number Documentation Page 27 Marshall County, Iowa

1934+ Fire Insurance Map of State Center Showing the District



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Additional State Center Commercial Historic District
Section number Documentation Page 28 Marshall County, Iowa

c.1930s Photograph of State Center Commercial Historic District
View to the East from the West end of the District



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Additional State Center Commercial Historic District
Section number Documentation Page 29 Marshall County, Iowa

c.1920 Photograph of the State Center Commercial Historic District
View to the East near the Intersection of Main Street and 2nd Avenue West



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Additional State Center Commercial Historic District
Section number Documentation Page 30 Marshall County, Iowa

1940s Photograph of State Center Commercial Historic District
View to the West from the Intersection of Main Street and 1st Avenue



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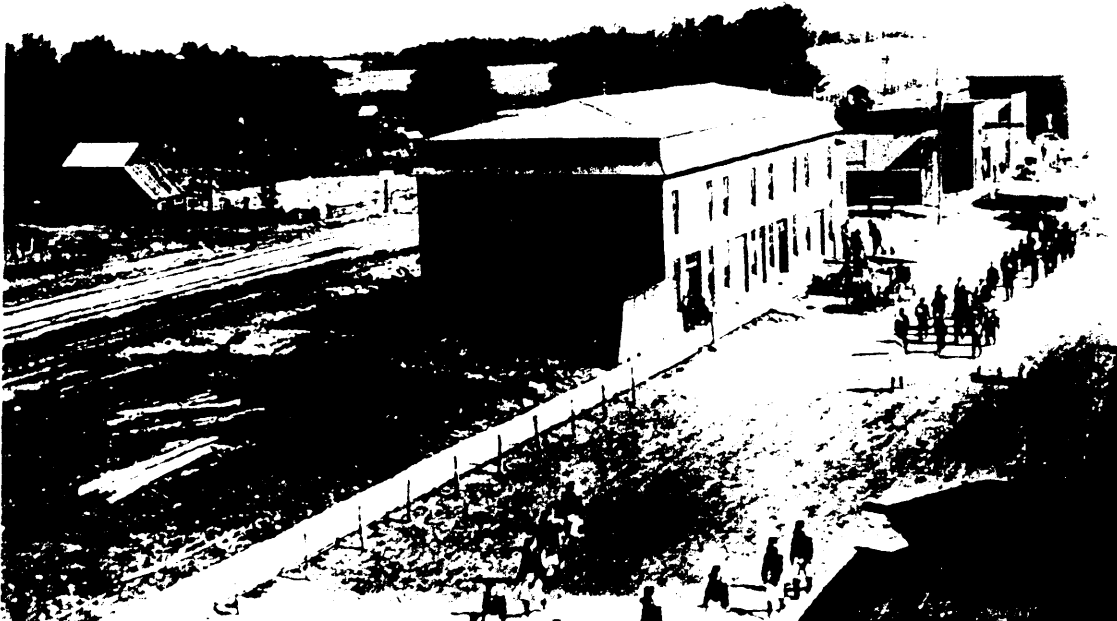
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Additional Page 31 **State Center Commercial Historic District**
Marshall County, Iowa

c.1900 Photograph of the Northeast Block of the State Center Commercial Historic District
View to the NE from the Intersection of Main Street and 1st Avenue Looking Towards Opera House



Detail Photograph of Opera House c.1900, View to the ENE



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Additional Documentation Page 32 State Center Commercial Historic District
Marshall County, Iowa

April 1900 Photograph of South Side of Main Street, View to the SE from First Avenue
(all buildings except Whitehall Bros. Store at right were destroyed in 1917 fire)



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

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Additional Documentation Page 33 State Center Commercial Historic District
Marshall County, Iowa

Early 1900s Photograph of South Side of Main Street, View to the SW from 1st Avenue
(Row of buildings constructed after 1895 starting with Bank of State Center on left)



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

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Additional **State Center Commercial Historic District**
Section number Documentation **Page** 34 **Marshall County, Iowa**

List of Photographs

Name of Photographer: Jan Olive Nash
Date of Photographs: October 2001
Location of Original Negatives: State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines

- #1 North Side of 200 Block of West Main Street, View to the NE
- #2 North Side of 100 Block of West Main Street, View to the North
- #3 North Side of 100 Block of West Main Street, View to the NE
- #4 North Side of 100 Block of West Main Street, View to the NW
- #5 North Side of 100 Block of West Main Street, View to the NW
- #6 North Side of 100 Block of West Main Street, View to the NE
- #7 Northeast Corner of Intersection of Main Street and 1st Avenue, View to the North
- #8 Detail of Opera House at East End of District, View to the NW
- #9 Rear of North Side of Main Street, View to the West Along Railroad Tracks
- #10 Southwest Corner of District, View to the SW
- #11 South Side of 100 Block of East Main Street, View to the SE
- #12 South Side of 100 Block of East Main Street, View to the SE from 1st Avenue Intersection
- #13 Detail of Northwest Corner of Intersection of Main Street and 1st Avenue, View to the South
- #14 South Side of 100 Block of West Main Street, View to the SW
- #15 South Side of 100 Block of West Main Street, View to the SE
- #16 South Side of 100 Block of West Main Street, View to the SE
- #17 Detail of High School on South Side of Main Street, View to the SE
- #18 South Side of Main Street at West end, View to the SW

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Additional State Center Commercial Historic District
Section number Documentation Page 36 Marshall County, Iowa

List of Property Owners

Property Address	Property Owner	Owner Address	City/State
205-209 W. Main	Gringer Feed & Grain	3536 Hwy 1	Iowa City, IA 52240
201 W. Main	Acejimeck, Inc	201 W. Main St	State Center, IA 50247
127 W. Main	Sharon Sontag	2300 W. Victory Blvd #C211	Burbank, CA 91506
123 W. Main	Christy Duncan	123 W. Main St.	State Center, IA 50056
121 W. Main	Sherry D. Bailey	P.O. Box 621	State Center, IA 50247
119 W. Main	Garry and Barbara Pfantz	1161 230 th St	State Center, IA 50247
109-115 W. Main	Central State Bank	109 W. Main	State Center, IA 50247
101 W. Main	Norma & Lester Campbell	2018 Edison Ave	Ames, IA 50010
101-103 E. Main	Douglas Gerke, et. al.	101-103 E. Main St	State Center, IA 50247
111, 118, 122 E. Main	Town of State Center	Box 668	State Center, IA 50247
119-121 E. Main	Terrestrial Lodge c/o Ervin McClure	119-121 E. Main	State Center, IA 50247
126 E. Main	Tom Crane	305 2 nd Ave, Box 792	State Center, IA 50247
114 E. Main	William and Karen Jubeck	10499 Chickadee Dr	Peosta, IA 52068
110-112 E. Main	Carroll Sheppler	307 2 nd St. SW	State Center, IA 50247
108 E. Main	Carolyn Walkup	1449 230 th St	State Center, IA 50247
104 E. Main	Joseph Schmidt	1748 250 th St	State Center, IA 50247
102 E. Main	Iowa Realty Central	102 E. Main	State Center, IA 50247
102 W. Main	Karl Borman	Box 594	State Center, IA 50214
104 W. Main	State Center Development Assn	P.O. Box 186	State Center, IA 50247
106 & 108 W. Main	Rosalinda Drella	1255 237 th St	State Center, IA 50247
110-112 W Main	Charlene Hrnicek	104 2 nd St SE	State Center, IA 50247
114 W. Main	Douglas Willard	Box 5483	Glendale, CA 91202
118, 122, 132 W. Main	Jeffery Merrill	105 Pinckney St #4F	Boston, MA 02114
120 W. Main	Fred Zeller	120 W. Main St.	State Center, IA 50247
124 W. Main	Jason Kirke	Box 67	State Center, IA 50247
128 W. Main	Leanne Pfantz	Box 636	State Center, IA 50247
130 W Main	John Strawn	PO Box 634	State Center, IA 50247
214 W. Main	West Marshall Community School District	3 rd Street N.W.	State Center, IA 50247
228 W. Main	Iowa Funeral Management Inc. Houston, TX 77019	Property Tax Department	1929 Allen Parkway

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Additional State Center Commercial Historic District
Section number Documentation Page 35 Marshall County, Iowa

Map Showing Direction of Photographs

