

# Survey and Evaluation Update

## Iowa City Central Business District



Prepared for  
City of Iowa City  
Iowa City Historic Preservation Commission

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October 2018

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## **1.0 Introduction**

Iowa City has been proactive in the work of identifying, documenting, and evaluating the city's historic resources, with numerous expansive projects undertaken beginning in the 1990s. In 1993, an intensive level survey and evaluation of the city at large was undertaken. The resulting Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) "Historic Resources of Iowa City, Iowa" by historian Marlys Svendsen, created the evaluative framework for subsequent National Register nominations by outlining historic contexts, discussing the impact of those contexts on the built environment, and identifying resources (buildings, districts, objects, and landscape features) that reflect the historic contexts. The National Park Service approved the MPDF in 1994 and it has since been the foundation for evaluating the city's historic resources for National Register eligibility.

Since 1994 multiple amendments to the 1994 MPDF have been written to cover the previously developed historic contexts or based on intensive-level surveys of specific neighborhoods in Iowa City.

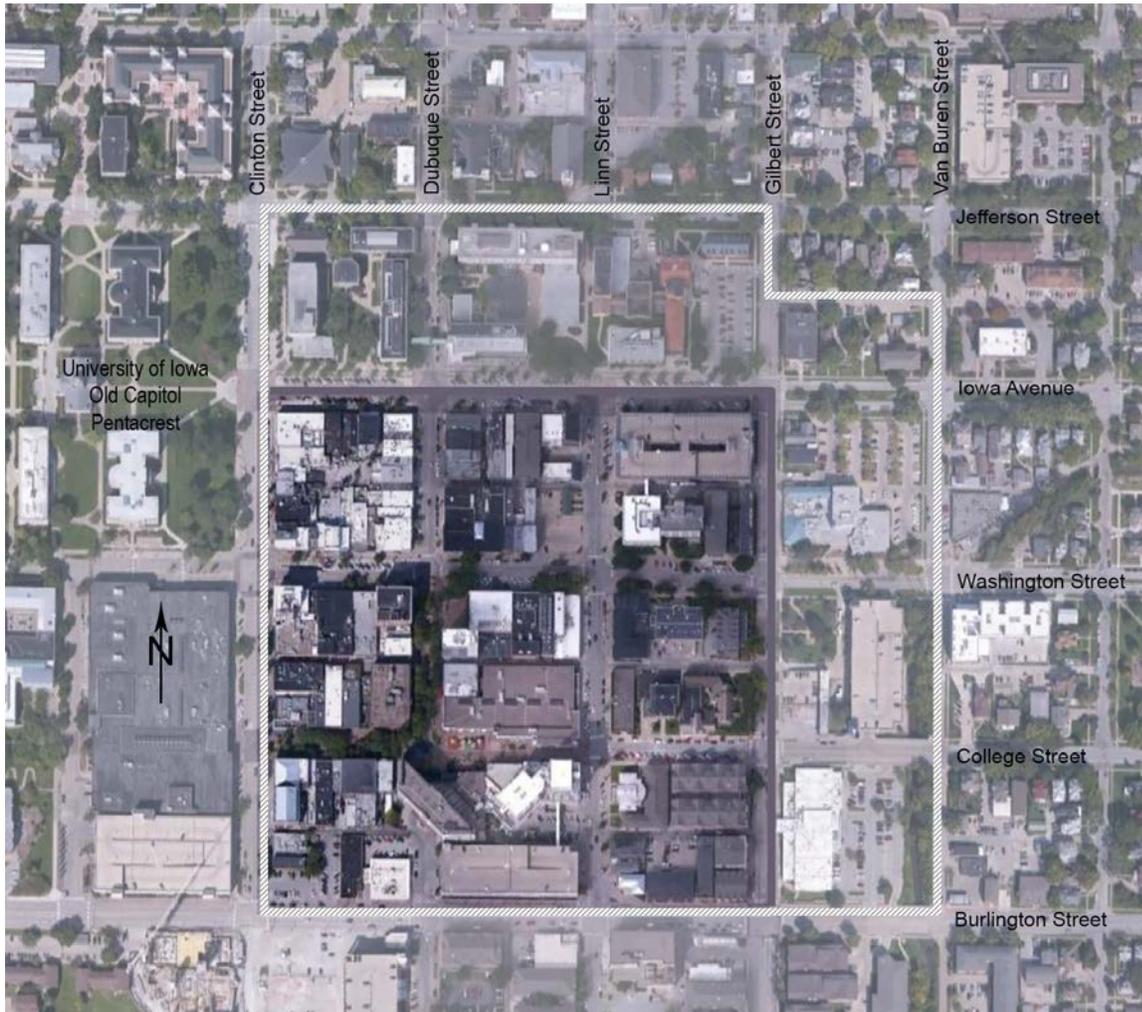
- "Brown Street Historic District" was listed in 1994 under the historic context "Iowa City Neighborhoods: Town and Country (1840 -1940)" which was developed in the MPDF.
- "Architectural and Historic Resources of the Dubuque/Linn Street Corridor, 1839-c.1940." 1996.
- "Historic and Architectural Resources in College Hill, Iowa City, Iowa, 1839-1944." 1997. This MPD included two historic districts, the "College Green Historic District" and the "East College Street Historic District." 1997.
- "Historic Folk Housing of Iowa City, Iowa, 1839-c.1910." 1997.
- "Architectural and Historic Resources of the Longfellow Neighborhood Area, Iowa City, Iowa, c.1860-c.1946." 1998.
- "Architectural and Historic Resources of Original Town Plat Neighborhood (Phase II). 1845-1945." 2000.
- "Architectural and Historic Resources of the Goosetown Neighborhood (Phase III), 1855-1945." 2000.

In 2000-2001 the work to identify and evaluate the city's historic resources continued; that project, also completed by Marlys Svendsen, focused on the Central Business District (CBD) blocks located opposite Capitol Square of the Original Town Plat of Iowa City recorded in 1839 (Figure 01) with approximately 135 principal buildings located on 15-1/2 blocks. The 2000-01 project resulted in an amendment to the 1994 MPDF, but that amendment, "Architectural and Historical Resources of the Iowa City Central Business District, 1855-1945," was not submitted to the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office. As a result, no action to register the amendment or resources identified in the amendment occurred.

The present 2018-2018 amendment updates the 2001 document. While much of the content remains intact with previously stated historic contexts retained as developed by Svendsen, the document has been altered to correspond to a reduced survey area – a necessity given loss of resources in the years subsequent to the 2001 project and the listing of the Jefferson Street

Historic District. The 2018 survey area covered nine square blocks with 115 buildings (Figure 01). The present MPD amendment also updates resource images and resource counts, updates maps as appropriate, provides additional historic images for visual context, and expands historic context specific to the “Urban Renewal and Redevelopment Era, 1960-1984.”

**Figure 01.** Map of Project Survey Area – 2018



(Map source: <http://google.maps.com>.)

This map illustrates the 2001 (dotted outline) and 2018 (darkened, 9-square blocks) project survey areas.

## 2.0 Methodology

The overall purpose of the present project was to update the report and Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) prepared for the City of Iowa City and Iowa City Historic Preservation Commission in 2001. The primary goal of the 2018 project was the identification of historic resources that individually or collectively meet the criteria for listing in the National

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Register of Historic Places. A secondary goal of the 2018 project was documentation of present conditions, including buildings lost subsequent to the 2001 project, changes (positive or negative) to historic integrity of resources in the survey area, and documentation of buildings constructed in the survey area subsequent to the 2001 project. A full description of the methodology employed is contained in Section H of the Multiple Property Document Form appended to this report.

Work on the update of the Central Business District Survey was completed over a 12-month period beginning in June of 2017 and concluding in the fall of 2018. Seven buildings in the CBD Survey Area were identified as having been previously listed in the National Register of Historic Places; one registered resource, the Van Patten House, was razed in 2011 as a result of a fire, but the 2001 registration of the Englert Theatre and the recent registration of the Iowa State Bank & Trust accounts for the eight National Register listed resources in the 2018 survey area (locations of the listed properties are noted in blue on the resource map, Figure 02).

**Table 01.** National Register Listed Resources in 2018 Survey Area

Historic Name	Image	Address	Built Date	Listed	Site Number
College Block Building		125 E. College St.	1878	1973	52-01089
Trinity Episcopal Church		320 E. College St.	1871	1974	52-01096
Franklin Printing House		115 S. Dubuque St.	1856	1986	52-01562
Old Post Office		28 S. Linn St.	1904/ 1931	1979	52-02227
Paul-Helen Building		207 E. Washington St.	1913	1986	52-02816
Englert Theatre		221 E. Washington St.	1912	2001	52-02821
Boerner-Fry Company/Davis Hotel		332 E. Washington St.	1899	1983	52-02826
Iowa State Bank & Trust (Johnson County Savings Bank)		102 S. Clinton St.	1912	2017	52-01063

In addition, five National Register properties and one historic district are located on the north and west edges of the CBD Survey Area. They are:

**Table 02.** National Register Listed Resources Adjacent to the 2018 Survey Area

<b>Historic Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Listed</b>
Old Capitol National Historic Landmark	Pentacrest	1972
Congregational Church	30 N. Clinton St.	1973
Pentacrest Historic District	Pentacrest	1978
Park House Hotel	130 E. Jefferson St.	1978
St. Mary’s Church & Refectory	220 E. Jefferson St.	1980
Jefferson Street Historic District		2004

The update of the 2001 amendment to the 1994 Multiple Property Documentation Form, “Architectural and Historical Resources of Iowa City Central Business District (1855-1984)” was the final outcome of the CBD Survey.

## **2.1** *Community Engagement*

A critical component of the 2018 project was engaging the community in a discussion about the project, its various components, and the possible outcomes. Identifying individuals and groups with a variety of perspectives and talking with them about their viewpoints, ideas, and recommendations was an early focus of the project. In September 2017, a public presentation was held at the Englert Theatre. While the content of the presentation focused on providing an overview of the project, the discussion that followed provided time to address the many questions and concerns related to preservation of historic downtown buildings; the impact of new buildings on the historic fabric; the importance and related challenges of maintaining a vibrant downtown; and concerns about loss of identity in the historic downtown due to the pressures of development.

In November 2017, a presentation focused on issues of concern specific to business and property owners was held. Content included a discussion about the potential effects of a finding for National Register eligibility and the related local overlay zoning. Questions about the design review process and the potential for that process to be beneficial to business owners were raised, as was the perceived importance of incentivizing historic rehabilitation of downtown buildings. Questions about the complexity of the historic tax credit programs and the need for local guidance in navigating the programs were discussed. Attendees also commented on the challenges of business owners to function efficiently in historic buildings and expressed concerns about the challenges of business owners located in buildings owned by absent landlords. Finally, examples of appropriate and inappropriate storefront alterations were shown with a discussion about how such alterations can play a significant role in the overall visual character of the historic downtown.

A final public presentation was held in October of 2018 to present the project findings and recommendations.

Along with this series of public presentations, one-on-one conversations between the consultant and interested parties were undertaken. Nancy Bird, Nate Kaeding, Thomas Agran, Marc Moen, Bobby Jett, Kevin Monson, Kent Jehle, Karen Kubby, Cecile Kuenzli, Jim Throgmorton, David Kieft, Alicia Trimble, Joshua Moe, Geoff Fruin, and John Yapp all took time to speak about their views related to the project focus. It cannot be understated how important those conversations were to developing an understanding of the perspectives of city officials, historic preservation advocates, University of Iowa interests, local financial institutions, local architects, developers, downtown business owners, and the Iowa City Downtown District (ICDD). The ideas and concerns of this group informed the process as it continued through conclusion. Several of the recommendations included in this report are the direct result of that input.

### **3.0 Development Overview**

The 2001 survey identified development trends experienced in Iowa City's Central Business District during the previous decades, and classified them as similar to evolutionary patterns in commercial development found in many American communities. As Svendsen notes, such evolutionary patterns are often described as "organic," in that a downtown is not the product of a single property owner, a single architectural design, or a single historical period. Rather, a downtown represents the collective financial investment and architectural preferences of hundreds of individual owners and business operators through many generations. The urban renewal period departed from that organic evolutionary pattern to the degree that the alteration of the downtown, through the mass demolition of buildings and the introduction of contemporary features such as the pedestrian mall, occurred under the control of a more centralized force versus the more typical individualized efforts that typify earlier evolution of the downtown character. The proximity of the University, with considerable property owned by it and the municipality, and the role played by institutional planners and property managers also contributed substantially to the generally organic pattern evolution in the Iowa City CBD.

Svendsen noted that, when established in the 1840s and 1850s, downtown Iowa City faced onto the six-acre Capitol Square. Old Capitol served the territory, then the state as the statehouse. A mix of small-scale frame and brick commercial buildings, churches and dwellings were built on the north, east and south sides of the square. These early buildings were utilitarian in design, serving basic needs of the new settlers and were soon replaced. Iowa Avenue was planned as a wide boulevard from Capitol Square on the west edge to Governor's Square on the east edge of the Original Town Plat. Although a governor's mansion was never built, the 120-foot width of the street made Iowa Avenue the widest and most important thoroughfare in the city despite the fact its symbolic role never materialized.

**Image 01.** Franklin Printing – 115 S. Dubuque Street - 1856



(Source: AKAY Consulting, November 2017.)

Built in 1856, the National Register listed Franklin Printing (left) is the oldest remaining commercial building in the 2018 survey area. Its companion on the right dates to 1860, making it the second oldest commercial building in the survey area. Franklin Printing, in particular, retains a high degree of historic integrity specific to its early construction date.

Other street widths in the CBD ranged from 80-feet for most of the north-south streets (Dubuque, Linn, Gilbert, and Van Buren) to 100-feet for the east-west streets (Jefferson, Washington, College, and Burlington). Because it fronted onto Capitol Square, Clinton Street was given the more generous width of 100-feet. One block east of Capitol Square, along the north side of Iowa Avenue, a city park was platted with nearby reserves for churches and a school. South Market, one of three public squares on the Original Town Plat, was established three blocks away between Gilbert, Van Buren, College, and Burlington streets (Svendsen, 2001).

The railroad arrived in Iowa City at the end of 1855 and the capital was moved to Des Moines two years later. In a decision that would eventually have profound significance, the state legislature established a university in 1847 and willed the abandoned capitol to it in 1857. Capitol Square (now, the Pentacrest) became its campus with the now established business district adjoining it on three sides. First-generation commercial buildings gradually were replaced with two- and three-story brick commercial blocks (Image 01). After the Civil War, more substantial church structures replaced earlier ones, an opera house appeared, and several additional University buildings were erected. The downtown continued to serve as the economic and social crossroads of the community (Svendsen, 2001).

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The decade of the 1870s produced the largest number of extant buildings in the downtown; in 2001, two-dozen or 17% of the buildings in the survey area dated to the 1870s. In the reduced, 2018 survey area, the percentage is comparable. Mostly two-story, narrow-front commercial buildings with residential flats for their owners on upper levels, by 1880 these buildings lined Clinton and Dubuque Streets and adjoining blocks. Clothiers, tailors, and milliners favored Clinton Street; most banks built along Washington Street; saloons and billiard halls selected Dubuque Street; and a collection of hardware stores, boot and shoe sellers, dry goods establishments, jewelers, bakeries, and hotels were scattered along the other blocks of the downtown (Image 02). Fire was the greatest hazard of this era and occurred regularly. A number of catastrophic fires created opportunities for new buildings in the place of early structures.

**Image 02.** View of the west side of S. Dubuque with 1870s era buildings



(Source: AKAY Consulting, November 2017.)

The four buildings in this view (bound by the Hotel Jefferson at left and Prairie Lights at right) were constructed in the 1870s. Changes to facades have left them with more or less visual character reflective of their early construction dates.

The 1880s and 1890s produced changes in the use of both of the public squares located in the downtown. South Market was changed from a brush-covered localized dump to a railroad depot site for both passengers and freight. In 1890 the city authorized transfer of the city park block to the university. A series of new buildings was constructed on the city park block, including Chemistry Hall and Homeopathic Hospital, as well as the first sections of the University Hospital during the following decade. Construction of more ornamented buildings continued during the 1880s and the 1890s (Svendsen, 2001). In 2001, 20 buildings survived from this period; the number located in the smaller, 2018 survey area is 13. Svendsen also noted that more than one-third of the buildings in the 2001 survey area were built prior to 1900. In 2018 that percentage stands at 47 of 115 buildings.

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It is important to keep in mind that, while construction dates reveal significant historical trends and patterns, they are not necessarily an accurate indicator of historic character retained today. Many of the downtown commercial buildings received facelifts as a result of fire or for the purpose of “modernizing.” As a result, a building constructed prior to 1900 may not retain the visual character of its construction era. One example is The Airliner (22 S. Clinton St.), which was built in ca.1888, but underwent a complete façade replacement in 1950 that removed all vestiges of its 19<sup>th</sup> century character (Image 03). While it is true that approximately 40% of the commercial buildings in the 2018 survey area were constructed prior to 1900, the percentage to retain their 19<sup>th</sup> century visual character is closer to 25%, and only a handful of those retain a high level of their original character.

**Image 03.** The Airliner - 22 S. Clinton Street – ca.1877/1950



(Source: AKAY Consulting, November 2017.)

Although constructed prior to 1900, the building’s visual character is representative of its mid-20<sup>th</sup> century façade replacement.

Svendsen also notes that, during the decades prior to World War I, the downtown experienced a building boom. University enrollment grew, new buildings were added to the Pentacrest Campus, and the hospital complex was expanded three times. Streets were paved using brick, electric street railways began operation, and retail trade thrived. In 2001, 20 buildings survived

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from this boom period, including several that define the downtown skyline. They included a multi-story bank and office building (Iowa State Bank & Trust, 1912), a major hotel (Hotel Jefferson, 1913), and a new theatre (Englert Theatre, 1913) to replace the declining opera house. The 2018 survey area retains 19 buildings constructed between 1900-1920, including those Svendsen notes as particularly noteworthy (Image 04). Interestingly, in comparison to buildings constructed prior to 1900, those of the period from 1900-1920 retain a higher degree of historic integrity specific to their period of construction. Likely due to their functions (not commercial retail), fewer have seen major alterations. Also during this period, a civic corridor replaced residences along and near Linn Street; a public library, post office, and several fraternal halls joined City Hall, then located on the northwest corner of Linn and Washington streets.

**Image 04.** Englert Theatre - 221 E. Washington Street - 1913



(Source: AKAY Consulting, April 2018.)

Like most of the survey area buildings constructed between 1900 and 1920, the Englert Theatre retains the historic character indicative of its construction date.

Downtown development held steady during the 1920s and 1930s with the most significant change being the appearance of national and regional franchise stores. Chain stores first appeared prior to World War I and continued to thrive, despite the economic struggles of the Great Depression (Image 05). A number of buildings went through receivership, accelerating the rapid rotation of businesses that typified downtown Iowa City.

Several trends in 20<sup>th</sup>-century technology and popular culture manifested themselves in the downtown prior to World War II. The arrival of the automobile spawned construction of service stations, car dealerships, and garages, including several along Burlington and south of College Street along Linn and Gilbert streets. Tobacco shops, confectioneries, soda fountains, billiard halls, and movie theatres sprang up in existing buildings scattered throughout the business

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district. The only major building constructed in the decade prior to World War II housed the Iowa City *Press-Citizen* newspaper. Less than a dozen buildings constructed during the 1920s and '30s survived in 2001. While only seven buildings constructed between 1920 and 1930 are retained in 2018, some 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings received new facades during that period (e.g. 28 S. Clinton, Ewers Men's Store).

**Image 05.** Kresge's - 119-123 E. Washington Street - 1930



(Source: AKAY Consulting, April 2018.)

The Kresge's Building represents both a 1930s architectural style and the appearance of national and regional franchise stores in Iowa City.

The 20 years that began with World War II saw the population of Iowa City nearly double. Enrollment at the University fluctuated dramatically before leveling off in the late 1950s. Shortages and workforce disruptions during the war stifled downtown development during the early 1940s. An ample supply of office and retail space discouraged additional development during the following decade despite a robust retail climate. As a result, the general size and scale of buildings in the business district remained unchanged. The same core blocks provided a mix of retail shops, banks, theatres, hotels, service stations, office buildings, restaurants, and civic buildings with a handful of residences scattered in. In 2018 only three buildings erected during these two decades survive, down from seven in 2001 (Image 06). Notably, seven buildings in the 2008 survey area received major alterations during the war years – either additions or new facades.

Downtown property owners and municipal leaders focused attention on solving traffic congestion and parking problems during this period. In the late 1940s parking meters were introduced and the first municipal parking lots were built on parcels along the eastern edge of the downtown. Congestion was addressed by street widening, removal of boulevard or median strips, and installation of traffic signals.

**Image 06.** Eldon Miller Building (Gabe's) - 330 E. Washington Street - 1955



(Source: AKAY Consulting, April 2018.)

This building, commonly referred to as Gabe's, was built in 1955 by the Eldon Miller trucking company. The building façade retains its mid-20<sup>th</sup> century character and stands as only one of three buildings in the 2018 survey area built in the 1950s.

The last four decades of the 20th century in downtown Iowa City have been dominated by the debate over urban renewal. Introduced in ca.1960 as a strategy to revitalize an aging city center, measures eventually were broadened to include the construction of new municipal buildings and parking ramps as well as proposals for street closures. The strategy of acquiring and demolishing aging buildings to provide larger parcels for redevelopment proved highly controversial. Bolstered by the receipt of federal funding, this policy eventually resulted in clearing 11-acres of land or nearly six city blocks. Simultaneously, the University built major new buildings in the three blocks extending along the north side of Iowa Avenue.

By the year 2000, the CBD Survey Area had evolved to contain a series of intensely developed commercial blocks generally consisting of two- and three-story buildings with scattered multi-story banks, office buildings, apartment buildings, parking ramps, and a hotel. A multi-block pedestrian mall extended along College Street from Clinton to Linn streets and along Dubuque Street from College to Washington streets. Three blocks of the University of Iowa's downtown campus stretched along the north edge of the survey area with the former Capitol Square, known

as the Pentacrest, lying to the west of the CBD. An assortment of moderate to large-scale public and private civic buildings was located along the east edge, with the south edge marked by the major arterial street of Burlington Street, and a series of public parking ramps. The Old Capitol Center, a two-story shopping mall, was located south of the Pentacrest along the west edge of the CBD.

In the years subsequent to the 2001 survey, the CBD has undergone a significant transformation. Some 14 buildings have been lost during that period; 11 of the 14 dated to more than 50 years of age, with 2 of the 14 non-extant buildings dating to the City's urban renewal program (114-116 S. Dubuque and the much-altered, 1981 Iowa City Public Library building at 123 S. Linn Street). Demolitions have occurred in the wake of loss to fire (e.g., Peoples Steam Laundry at 225 Iowa Avenue and Van Patten House at 9 S. Linn Street) and to facilitate construction of new buildings (e.g., Vogel House at 229 E. Iowa Avenue and J.C. Penney building at 130 S. Dubuque Street). Loss of buildings along the outer edges of the CBD, particularly along E. Burlington Street on the south, have tilted the historic to non-historic ratio; today, only one building dating to more than 50 years of age (Montgomery Ward & Co. Farm Store at 120 E. Burlington) remains on E. Burlington Street between S. Clinton and S. Gilbert streets. The parking ramp between S. Dubuque and S. Linn streets is associated with the urban renewal period, its scale and poured concrete construction accounting for much of the streetscape's visual character. The remaining blocks on the Burlington Street corridor are visually defined by contemporary, freestanding, relatively large-scale buildings, that combine retail space on the ground floor with apartment living on the floors above. This changed character is mirrored on the south side of Burlington Street where construction of new retail-apartment and commercial buildings (e.g., Hilton Gardens and MidWestOne Bank office building) has occurred.

Most recently, tower-type buildings (eight or more stories) have been constructed in the CBD. The 14-story Plaza Towers/Hotel Vetro was built in 2004. The building site was cleared as part of the City's 1970s and 1980s urban renewal program and remained a parking lot until construction of the 2004 building. The building's height and materials are reflective of a changing aesthetic in the CBD; as such it has been the source of ongoing controversy in the years since plans for its construction were made public. The 14-story Park@201 (201 E. Washington Street) was completed in 2014 on the former site of the 1970s Dain, Kalman & Quail Building. The location of that steel-frame, glass-sheathed tower on the pedestrian mall, in the heart of the CBD and adjacent to Black Hawk Park, has likewise drawn particular debate. The 2001 construction of the Vogel House at 229 Iowa Avenue, which required demolition of an 1898 building of the same name, also drew some controversy.

These examples illustrate the prevailing pressures to "build up" and the resulting conflict between, on the one side, the preservation of historic buildings and the character they create in a community, with, on the other side, the desire (and perceived demand) to build tall buildings with a contemporary appearance in response to the economics of land values, rental rates, and the changing face of retail business. Creating economic vitality while preserving the historic character of a community is a challenge confronting towns and cities across the country. This challenge must find resolution in Iowa City.

#### **4.0 Summary of Findings and Recommendations**

The 2018 Central Business District Survey Area includes a variety of building types and forms ranging from contiguous, narrow-front commercial buildings to freestanding commercial buildings, fraternal halls, and public buildings. Portions of the area were first settled when Iowa City served as Iowa's territorial and then state capital. All of these first-generation structures have since been replaced with more permanent buildings one or more times. Approximately 115 primary structures were evaluated during the present Central Business District Survey. Existing site forms were updated for all previously evaluated buildings located within the boundaries of the 2018 survey area. Updates included: revision of property descriptions and integrity discussions when warranted; insertion of current photographs; review and revision of building histories and associated contexts when needed; addition of historic images and fire insurance maps when useful to understanding a building's historic evolution; update of bibliographic resources and geographical information; and insertion of a parcel map.

A resource count by property type remains similar to that of the 2001 project. What a count of the properties in the present survey does not reflect is the shift from commercial to apartment buildings in the areas within the 2001 survey area, but now just outside the 2018 survey area; although not reflected in the count, their proximity impacts the physical and visual character of the survey area. Further, a count by property type would not reflect the impact of high-density development.

A range of American architectural styles spanning the latter half of the 19th century and the 20th century remain represented by the buildings in the CBD Survey Area. The work of important local and Midwestern architectural firms and designers is represented in modest as well as large-scale buildings. They include Chauncey Lovelace of Iowa City, Proudfoot and Bird and their successor firm - Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson - of Des Moines, Dieman & Fiske of Cedar Rapids, Liebbe, Nourse & Rasmussen of Des Moines, Vorse, Kraetsch & Kraetsch of Des Moines, H.L. Stevens Co. of Chicago, Kruse and Klein of Davenport, and J. Bradley Rust of Iowa City. Urban renewal era designers have also made their impact in the CBD, including the Iowa City firm of Hanson Lind Meyer and Des Moines architects, Brooks Borg Skiles. The work of these architectural firms, along with that of other designers and craftsmen whose names are not known, include examples of the Greek Revival, Italianate, Classical Revival, Beaux-Arts, Georgian, and Modern styles.

#### 4.1 *Standards of Evaluation*

The resources<sup>1</sup> of the present project area were evaluated using the standards and guidelines established by the Secretary of the Interior, National Park Service. Further clarification of integrity standards specific to Iowa’s downtown commercial buildings was provided in the 2002 Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) “Iowa’s Main Street Commercial Architecture,” written by Jan Olive Nash (Appendices).

Resources are evaluated for eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places under four criteria<sup>2</sup>:

- Criterion A: A property associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- Criterion B: A property associated with the lives of person significant in our past.
- Criterion C: A property that 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 represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- Criterion D: Property has yielded or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Once determined that a resource has a significant association under one or more of these criteria, it is evaluated for historic integrity. The standards for evaluating historic integrity have become increasingly more stringent over the decades since the 1966 passage of the Historic Preservation Act, which established the National Register of Historic Places. Specific to this project, in the 15 years since the previous evaluation of the Iowa City downtown was completed, standards have changed significantly; buildings that were then considered individually eligible sometimes don’t meet the current standard. As a result, some of the buildings designated as individually eligible in the 2001 Multiple Property Document are now designated as contributing resources even if their historic integrity is retained at a similar level.

Integrity standards for the evaluation of resources have some variability depending on how the case for eligibility is being made. When evaluating for significance under Criterion A (historical association), the standard for integrity is *somewhat lower* because the case for significance does not rely on the architecture itself. Buildings with significance under Criterion B (significant person association) typically have a similar integrity standard as those with a case made under Criterion A. In contrast, when evaluating for significance under Criterion C (architecture) the standard for integrity is high, which makes sense given that the loss of historic integrity diminishes the architecture itself.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of evaluating for National Register eligibility, the term “resource” refers to buildings, structures, objects, and landscape features. For the sake of clarity and because the resources of the Iowa City project area are predominantly buildings, the following definitions are specific to the evaluation of buildings.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix NEED for additional information regarding registration criteria including special consideration for properties less than 50 years of age.

**Image 07.** Carnegie Public Library (1903) – 218 S. Linn Street



(Source: AKAY Consulting, April 2018.)

The Carnegie Library is considered National Register eligible under Criterion A in its association with the history of the library movement in Iowa, specifically as an example of a Carnegie library. Some loss of integrity of the exterior and (likely) interior is evident, but because a case for eligibility can be made under Criterion A the integrity standard is somewhat lower than if the case relied solely on the building's architectural significance.

Mitigating factors such as rarity of a building type or architectural style within the community, (or historic district) or an elevated historical significance, are taken into consideration when balancing a building's significance against its level of historic integrity. Buildings of this sort often warrant specialized designation as "key contributing" (C/K) buildings (see further discussion below).

The resources within the project area were evaluated for their potential significance under Criteria A and C. The operating assumption, based on the results of the 2001 MPDF, was that all of the historic resources would have significance under Criterion A in association with the history of commerce in Iowa City and that all would bear the potential to contribute to the architectural fabric of the commercial downtown under Criterion C.

Proceeding under that understanding, the buildings were evaluated for historic integrity for the purpose of determining whether they should be considered individually eligible (C/I), a contributing resource to a potential historic district (C), a key contributing resource to a potential district (C/K), or a non-contributing resource to a potential historic district (NC). The resources are coded as such in the resource table (Table 03).

#### **4.1.a** Individually Eligible

The standard for determining individual eligibility is high – these buildings should be seen as the cream of the crop. Generally speaking, individually eligible buildings must retain high historic integrity on the exterior and on the interior, with character-defining features specific to the period of significance retained. As noted in the 2002 MPDF by Jan Olive Nash, resources may be individually eligible in the cases “where they display high integrity and their historical associative or architectural characteristics are strong.”<sup>3</sup>

A thorough evaluation of building interiors was not part of the present survey’s scope of work. As a result, some assumptions about the integrity of interiors were made based on observations from the exterior and known changes in function. Buildings considered to bear the potential for individual eligibility demonstrate a significant historic association, a high level of historic integrity on the exterior, and the likelihood of an appropriate level of historic integrity on the interior.

Given the high standards for individual eligibility, it is to be expected that few buildings be so designated. Of the 115 buildings located in the 2017 survey area, 8 are currently individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places (Table 01) with 11 additional buildings identified in the present survey project as bearing the potential for individual listing (Table 03 & 04). It is important to note that a thorough evaluation of interiors may support individual eligibility for additional buildings.

It should be noted that designations for individual eligibility are recommendations only. In the case a property owner chooses to pursue individual nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, additional research and evaluation would be necessary to support both a case for significance and to verify that sufficient historic integrity is retained on both the exterior and the interior.

**Example:** A building considered significant as an example of Italianate architecture (Criterion C) must retain the elements that define it as Italianate architecture, including an interior that remains representative of the period of construction. If those elements are gone or significantly altered, the building would likely not be considered an individually eligible resource.

In contrast, a building significant in its historical association (Criteria A or B), rather than as an example of an architectural style, could have a lower level of historic integrity and still be considered individually eligible.

In numerous cases in the present project, a building was determined significant under both Criterion A (historic association) and Criterion C (architecture). In that situation, the standard for historic integrity must meet the dominant case.

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<sup>3</sup> Jan Olive Nash, “Iowa’s Main Street Commercial Architecture,” National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form,” 2002.

#### **4.1.b** Contributing

Contributing resources represent those buildings, 50 years or more of age, with a demonstrated historical association or representing an architectural style, but which lack the degree of historic integrity necessary to be considered individually eligible.<sup>4</sup> Together, contributing resources within a district retain sufficient historic integrity to convey a sense of time and place.

The 2002 MPD “Iowa’s Main Street Commercial Architecture” by Jan Olive Nash provides the standard for evaluating contributing resources:

“Judgments about the integrity of the district will take into consideration the expected alterations and typical motivations of Main Street tenants and owners. Change is a constant on Main Street because merchants treated their storefronts as an important way of inviting shoppers—both pedestrian and rolling—to stop in and buy something. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century merchants have generally linked attracting customers with having an updated and remodeled storefront composed of the latest materials and styles. Storefronts at the street level show more alterations than on the upper floors. Alterations range from stylish updates that reference specific popular architectural influences to piecemeal projects conducted over a longer period of time, perhaps by several tenants or property owners. Large upper floor window sashes are replaced by smaller windows and the excess space bricked in or filled with plywood. Sometimes these windows are simply covered over. Stamped sheet metal cornices are often missing at the roofline.

Since change is a historical factor present from Main Street's inception, a greater degree of alterations can be accommodated in a commercial district before the integrity of the district is seriously compromised. Essential characteristics such as massing, survival of the historic pattern of fenestration and storefront composition, and contribution to the street's overall profile are key components. Where a building's facade is hidden behind new materials, much of the original, historic fabric may still be present underneath since merchants had little motivation to spend more on a remodeling project than was commercially practical or necessary. Still, the application of an overlay material like metal siding or Perma-stone may have necessitated removal of projecting architectural elements. Inspection behind the cladding should be performed where possible in order to gauge the extent and condition of original features intact underneath. If a building is completely hidden behind materials that were applied after the period of significance and no inspection underneath is possible, then that building will be non-contributing to the district. The building should be reevaluated, however, if and when the cladding is removed. If the cladding was applied within the period of significance, then the building might be considered contributing if the remodeling reflected the context of continued progress and success in the commercial district and the desire to update an older building to reflect that progress.”

As noted, in cases where mitigating factors such as rarity of a building type or architectural style within the community (or historic district) or an elevated local historical significance exists, resources bear a specialized designation as “key contributing” (or C/K) to indicate the increased impact their loss within the downtown streetscape would carry. Buildings with the designation of key contributing may have a diminished historic integrity (preventing individual eligibility), but

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<sup>4</sup> Resources significant in association with Urban Renewal date to less than 50 years of age. As a result, a special case for consideration must be made. See the appendices for additional information about Criterion Consideration G.

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their significance to the character of the streetscape, due to either their architectural style or their historical context, elevates their importance.

The buildings along S. Clinton Street between Iowa Avenue and Washington Street provide an example of the key contributing designation. The entire streetscape has a critical physical and historic association with the early establishment and subsequent development of the University of Iowa Pentacrest. Further, the streetscape remains intact and representative of the evolution of commercial facades over a period from the late 1880s through the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, with architectural styles ranging from Commercial Italianate to Modern. While the buildings that bookend the block (the Dey Building on the north and the Whetstone building on the south) are considered individually eligible, the remaining buildings lack sufficient integrity for individual registration. Lacking individual eligibility, designation as key contributing underscores the significance of the streetscape and the individual buildings.

**Image 08.** Coast & Sons (1895) – 10-14 S. Clinton Street



(Source: AKAY Consulting, April 2018.)

Although the storefront of this three-bay commercial building has been altered multiple times, the building's upper façade retains the various elements that create its architectural style. The infill of portions of the window openings negatively impacts the integrity, but retention of the historic form, mass, and character-defining features makes it a contributing resource. Its rare style in the Iowa City CBD and location within a contiguous streetscape of significant buildings mark it as key contributing.

**Image 09.** Things & Things & Things (1970) – 130 S. Clinton Street



(Source: AKAY Consulting, April 2018.)

Although not yet 50 years of age, this building meets the standard for exceptional significance in association with the City’s urban renewal era.

In cases where a resource is not yet 50 years old (the guideline established by the Secretary of the Interior for consideration of “historic” resources), consideration of contributing status must be filtered through Criterion Consideration G, which provides guidance for evaluating the potential significance of exceptional resources that don’t meet the age guideline (Appendices). In cases where the standard for “exceptional significance” can be met, a resource can be considered individually eligible and/or a contributing resource at less than 50 years old. The Things & Things & Things building was the first urban renewal era buildings completed in Iowa City (Image 09). As such, the building is historically associated with a period that was of monumental importance, not just in Iowa City, but across the country.

**4.1.c** Non-Contributing

Resources dating to less than 50 years of age (absent significance under Criterion Consideration G) or with historic integrity that does not meet the standards previously described are considered non-contributing.

**Image 10.** Commercial Building (ca.1915) - 112 E. College Street



Although this building was constructed in ca.1915, the storefront and the upper façade have been altered less than 50 years ago, resulting in a visual character that is contemporary. Comparison with its historic appearance (Image 11) illustrates the loss of historic integrity.

**Image 11.** Historic Image – E. College Street - ca.1915



(Source: State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City.)

A portion of the College Street commercial building (now occupied by Saloon) is seen in its early existence at far left. Today, only the building height and width remain reflective of the original building. As a result, the building is considered a non-contributing resource.

#### **4.2** *Statement of Findings*

Through the process of survey and evaluation, it has been determined that 11 buildings in the CBD are individually eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and that a potential historic district with a total of 75 contributing buildings, two contributing landscape features, and 19 non-contributing buildings exists.

The following resource table (Table 03) identifies each building in the survey area by Iowa Site Form number, street address, historic name and/or common name, and construction date. In addition, evaluation findings are noted: NRHP indicates buildings that are already listed on the National Register; C/I indicates resources considered individually eligible and as such contribute to the significance of a potential district; C/K indicates key contributing resources that lack sufficient integrity for individual eligibility, but which bear elevated local significance; C indicates contributing resources without elevated local significance; and NC indicates non-contributing resources.

Resource maps that follow are color coded to identify their status. See Figures 02-04.

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**Table 03.** Resource Evaluation Findings

**Key:** NRHP = National Register of Historic Places Listed  
 C/I = Individually Eligible/Contributing to a potential district  
 C/K = Key Contributing  
 C = Contributing  
 NC = Non-Contributing

Site Number	Image	Address	Historic Name (Common Name)	Built Date	Status
		<b>E. BURLINGTON ST.</b>			
52-04068		120 S. Burlington St.	Montgomery Ward & Co. Farm Store	ca.1930	NC
52-05437		180 S. Burlington St.	(Commercial/Mixed-Use Building)	2015	NC
54-05431		304 S. Burlington St.	(Commercial/Mixed-Use Building)	2006	NC
52-04064		310-318 S. Burlington St.	(Commercial Building)	1986	NC
52-00763		320-322 S. Burlington St.	(Commercial/Mixed-Use Building)	ca.1985	NC
52-04063		340 S. Burlington St.	(Commercial/Mixed-Use Building)	1986	NC
		<b>S. CLINTON ST.</b>			
52-01938		8 S. Clinton St. (105 E. Iowa Avenue)	Dey Building (Iowa Book & Supply)	1917	C/K
52-01051		10-14 S. Clinton St.	Coast & Sons Building	1892	C/K

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52-01052		16 S. Clinton St.	Namur Bakery Building (McDonald Optical)	ca.1874/ ca.1884	C/K
52-01053		18-20 S. Clinton St.	Commercial Building	ca.1874/ ca.1944	C/K
52-01055		22 S. Clinton St.	The Airliner	ca.1888/ 1950	C/K
52-01057		24-26 S. Clinton St.	Racine's Cigar Store No. 3	ca.1874	C/K
52-01058		28 S. Clinton St.	Ewers Men's Store	ca.1874/ ca.1923	C/K
52-01059		30 S. Clinton St.	Bloom-Ries Building (Moses Bloom Clothing Store)	ca.1870	C/K
52-01060		32 S. Clinton St.	Whetstone Building	ca.1868	C/K
52-01063		102 S. Clinton St.	Iowa State Bank & Trust (Johnson County Savings Bank)	1912	NRHP

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52-04075		114 S. Clinton St.	Strub Building (Roshek's Department Store)	1865/ ca.2005	NC
52-04074		124 S. Clinton St.	Hawkeye Barber Shop	1979	C
52-01069		130 S. Clinton St.	Things & Things & Things building	1970	C
52-04072		132 S. Clinton St.	Bill Hill Music Studio	1971	C
52-04040		210-212 S. Clinton St.	(Safeway 2000 Building/Joseph's)	2000	NC
52-04070		224 S. Clinton St.	Commercial Building (Bread Garden)	1955/ 1995	NC
52-01071		226 S. Clinton St.	Carson & Thatcher Motor Co.	ca.1905/ 1980s	NC
		<b>E. COLLEGE ST.</b>			
52-05432		E. College from Clinton to Linn St. and S. Dubuque from College to Iowa Ave.	City Plaza (Ped Mall)	1978-79	C
52-01070		103 E. College St.	Savings and Loan Building	1877/ 1940	C/K

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52-04093		109 E. College St.	Dooley Block (west bay)	ca.1874/ 1929	C/K
52-04085		110 E. College St.	Carson Building	ca.1916	C
52-04086		112 E. College St.	Commercial Building	ca.1915	NC
52-01087		114-116 E. College St.	Schneider Bros. Furniture Store	1883/ 1906	C
52-04091		111-113 E. College St.	Sears, Roebuck & Co. Building	1929	C/K
52-01088		115 E. College St.	Dooley Block (east bay)	ca.1895/ 1929	C/K
52-04090		117-123 E. College St.	Crescent Block	ca.1895	C/I
52-04087		118-120 E. College St.	Commercial Building	ca.1874	C

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52-01089		125 E. College St.	College Block Building	1878	NRHP
52-04088		128 E. College St.  (125 S. Dubuque St.)	Plaza Centre One	1977	C
54-05434		309 E. College St.	Old Library Condos/ Crepes De Luxe Cafe	2001	NC
52-01095		312 E. College St.	Iowa City Masonic Temple	1914	C/I
52-01096		320 E. College St.	Trinity Episcopal Church	1871	NRHP
52-04059		325-393 E. College St.	(Commercial Building)	1996	NC
<b>S. DUBUQUE ST.</b>					
52-01545		1 S. Dubuque St. (127 E. Iowa Avenue)	Park House	ca.1867	C
52-01546		2-4 S. Dubuque St.	Market Hall	1873/ ca.1947	C
52-01548		5 S. Dubuque St.	F.J. Epeneter Building (north half)	1883/ ca.1933	C

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52-01549		6-8 S. Dubuque St.	Ham's Hall (north two-thirds)	ca.1873/ ca.1930	C
52-01550		7 S. Dubuque St.	F.J. Epeneter Building (south half)	1873	C
52-01551		9 S. Dubuque St.	Patterson Block (north half of north half)	1879/ 1899/ 1982	C
52-01552		10 S. Dubuque St.	Ham's Hall (south one-third)	1870	C
52-01553		11 S. Dubuque St.	Patterson Block (south half of north half)	1879/ 1899/ 1982	C
52-01554		12 S. Dubuque St.	Commercial Building (Sports Column)	ca.1870	C
52-04094		13-15 S. Dubuque St.	Prairie Lights Book Store	1983/ 1993	NC

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52-01556		14 S. Dubuque St.	Mueller Block (Sports Column)	ca.1910	C
52-01557		17 S. Dubuque St.	J.J. Stach Saloon	ca.1876	C
52-01558		19-21 S. Dubuque St.	Scanlon Saloon/ Maresh & Holubar Tin Shop	ca.1874/ ca.1875	C
52-01559		23 S. Dubuque St.	Commercial Building	1879/ 1970	NC
52-05429		109 S. Dubuque St.	Jefferson Cafeteria	ca.1915	C
52-01561		111 S. Dubuque St.	Commercial Building	ca.1860	C
52-01562		115 S. Dubuque St.	Franklin Printing House	1856	NRHP
52-01564		118 S. Dubuque St.	Commercial Building	ca.1881	C/K

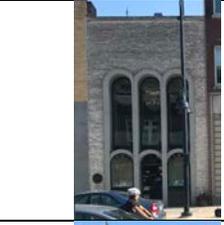
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52-01567		124 S. Dubuque St.	Iowa Theater	1936	C
52-04065		220 S. Dubuque St.	Holiday Inn (Sheraton Hotel)	1984	C
54-05430		229 S. Dubuque St.	Dubuque Condominiums	2015	NC
<b>E. IOWA AVE.</b>					
52-01940		113-115 E. Iowa Ave.	Bashnagel Building	ca.1875	C
52-01941		117 E. Iowa Ave.	Studio Tea Room	ca.1922	C
52-05436		119 E. Iowa Ave.	Commercial Building	2004	NC
52-01943		121-123 E. Iowa Ave.	Brunswick Hall	ca.1890	C
52-01944		211 E. Iowa Ave.	C.O.D. Steam Laundry Building	ca.1895	C

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52-01945		213 E. Iowa Ave.	Reardon Hotel	ca.1900	C
52-05423		219 E. Iowa Ave.	Capitol Square Condominiums	2002	NC
52-05428		225 E. Iowa Ave.	Brueggers Bagel Bakery	2011	NC
52-05425		229 E. Iowa Ave.	Vogel House	2001	NC
52-04039		325 E. Iowa Ave.	Tower Place & Parking Facility	2000	NC
		<b>S. LINN ST.</b>			
52-02225		13-15 S. Linn St.	Hohenschuh Mortuary	1917	C/K
52-02227		28 S. Linn St.	Old Post Office	1904/ 1931	NRHP
52-02228		104-116 S. Linn St.	J.A. O'Leary Velie Co. Garage/ Iowa Apartment Building	1919/ 1924	C
52-02229		122 S. Linn St.	Meardon Building	1977	C

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52-04056		123 S. Linn St.	Iowa City Public Library	2004	NC
52-05426		201 S. Linn St.	Plaza Towers/Hotel Vetro	2004	NC
52-02230		218 S. Linn St.	Iowa City Public Library (Carnegie)	1903	C/I
52-04054		222 S. Linn St.	Leff Law Firm	1966	NC
52-02231		224 S. Linn St.	Residence	ca.1888	NC
52-04055		225 S. Linn St.	Dubuque Street Parking Ramp	1980	NC
<b>E. WASHINGTON ST.</b>					
52-02800		109 E. Washington St.	Hands Jewelry Building	ca.1868/ 1968	C/K
52-02804		110 E. Washington St.	Western Union Building	1938	C

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52-02805		112 E. Washington St.	Sunier Music & Jewelry Store	1900/ 1929	C/K
52-02806		114 E. Washington St.	Commercial Building	ca.1874	NC
52-02807		111-117 E. Washington St.	Yunker's Department Store	1951	C
52-02808		118 E. Washington St.	Freeman Building	ca.1874/ ca.2002	NC
52-02809		120 E. Washington St.	Bremer's Building	1964	C
52-02810		121 E. Washington St.	S.S. Kresge Co. Building	1930	C
52-02811		124 E. Washington St.	Security Insurance Co. building	ca.1869/ ca.2010	NC

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52-02812		126 E. Washington St.	Commercial Building	ca.1869	C
52-02813		128 E. Washington St.	Arcade Building	1874/ 1927	C
52-01487		129-131 E. Washington St.	Hotel Jefferson	1913/ 1926	C/I
52-02814		132 E. Washington St.	Pryce & Schell Building	ca.1879	C
52-05427		201 E. Washington St.	Park@201	2012	NC
52-02815		202-214 E. Washington St.	First National Bank	1911	C/K
52-02816		207 E. Washington St.	Paul-Helen Building	1913	NRHP

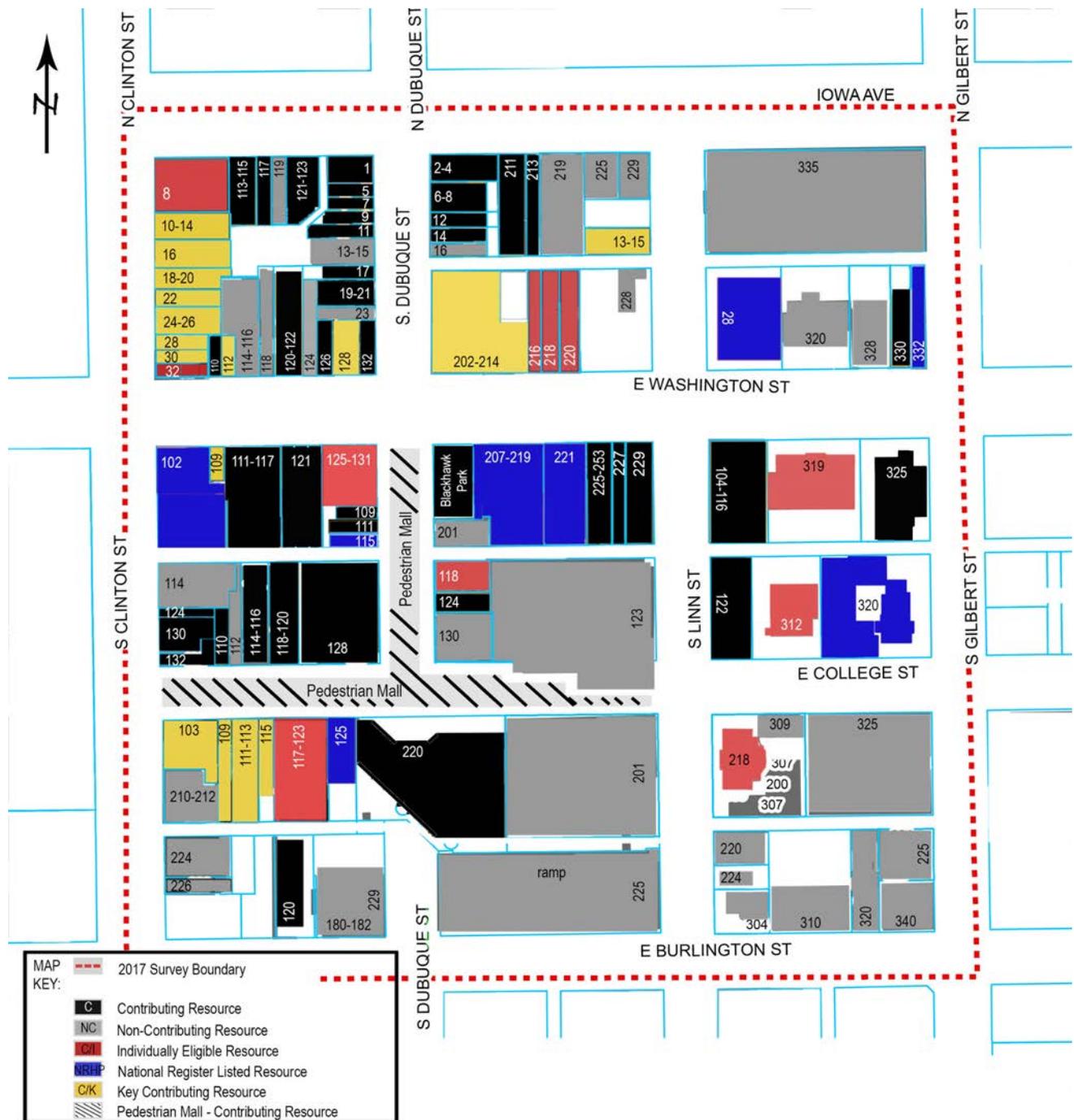
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52-02818		216 E. Washington St.	Stillwell Building	ca.1880	C/K
52-02819		218 E. Washington St.	IXL Block (west bay)	1883	C/K
52-02820		220 E. Washington St.	IXL Block (center bay)	1883	C/K
52-02821		221 E. Washington St.	Englert Theatre	1912	NRHP
52-04053		225 E. Washington St.	Schump Transfer & Storage	1910	C
52-04052		227 E. Washington St.	Stilwell Building	1910/ ca.1949	C
52-02823		228 E. Washington St.	First National Bank Drive-In Bank	1962	NC

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52-04051		229 E. Washington St.	Meacham Travel	1971	C
52-02824		319 E. Washington St.	Iowa City Press-Citizen Publishing	1937	C/I
52-02825		320 E. Washington St.	Ecumenical Housing	1980	NC
52-02827		325 E. Washington St.	B.P.O.E. Hall	1909	C
52-05433		328 E. Washington St.	The Abbey Apartments	2011	NC
52-02829		330 E. Washington St.	Eldon Miller building (Gabe's)	1955	C
52-02826		332 E. Washington St.	Boerner-Fry Company/ Davis Hotel	1899	NRHP

Figure 02. Resource Map – 2018



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**4.2.a** Individually Eligible

As noted, the standard for determining individual eligibility is high. Of the 115 buildings located in the 2018 survey area, 8 buildings are individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places (Table 01.) with the following 11 buildings identified in the present survey project as bearing the potential for individual listing.

**Table 04.** Individually Eligible Resources

<b>Historic Name (Common Name)</b>	<b>Image</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Built Date</b>	<b>Site Number</b>
Dey Building (Iowa Book & Supply)		8 S. Clinton St.	1917	52-01938
Whetstone Building		32 S. Clinton St.	ca.1868	52-01060
Crescent Block		117-123 E. College St.	ca.1895	52-04090
Iowa City Masonic Temple		312 E. College St.	1914	52-01095
Commercial Building		118 S. Dubuque St.	ca.1881	52-01564
Iowa City Public Library (Carnegie Library Building)		218 S. Linn St.	1903	52-02230
Hotel Jefferson		129-131 E. Washington St.	1913/ 1926	52-01487
Stillwell Building		216 E. Washington St.	ca.1880	52-02818

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IXL Block (west bay)		218 E. Washington St.	1883	52-02819
IXL Block (center bay)		220 E. Washington St.	1883	52-02820
Iowa City Press-Citizen		319 E. Washington St.	1937	52-02824

Designations for individual eligibility are recommendations only. Additional research and evaluation would be necessary to fully support both a case for significance and to verify that sufficient historic integrity is retained on both the exterior and the interior. The Iowa State Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service review nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to ensure the resource meets the standards for registration.

Because the local standards for eligibility specific to building exteriors align with National Register standards, properties designated C/I are eligible for local landmark designation under the Iowa City Historic Preservation Ordinance. The ordinance also provides designation of C/K or “key contributing” resources for landmark designation. It is important to note, however, that the local ordinance does not regulate building interiors for landmarked properties.

**4.2.b. Historic District Eligibility**

While evaluating individual buildings in a survey project such as the present one is important, it is necessary to keep in mind that, as stated in Nash’s 2002 Main Street MPD, “the overarching significance for the majority of commercial buildings stems from their location on Main Street, not their individual status.” Only by examining the role individual buildings played in the trade and commerce of a community as elements of the larger grouping that together comprise Iowa City’s commercial district, do we gain a full understanding of historic associations and their significance. As the heart of a community, the commercial district has long been central to the economic health of a town. Further, it has historically served as a community gathering space where the social networks were established and maintained. Commercial districts also functioned historically as a civic space where the political views and community memory could be expressed, either in the course of daily conversation or through symbolic actions like parades and flag displays (Nash, E-24). Historic images of the Iowa City CBD document such events: university engineering students parading down S. Clinton Street in 1911; local residents and students celebrating a 1922 football victory over Purdue; patriotic salutes on E. Washington Street in 1915; and the protests of the 1970s illustrate the role of the CBD as civic space.

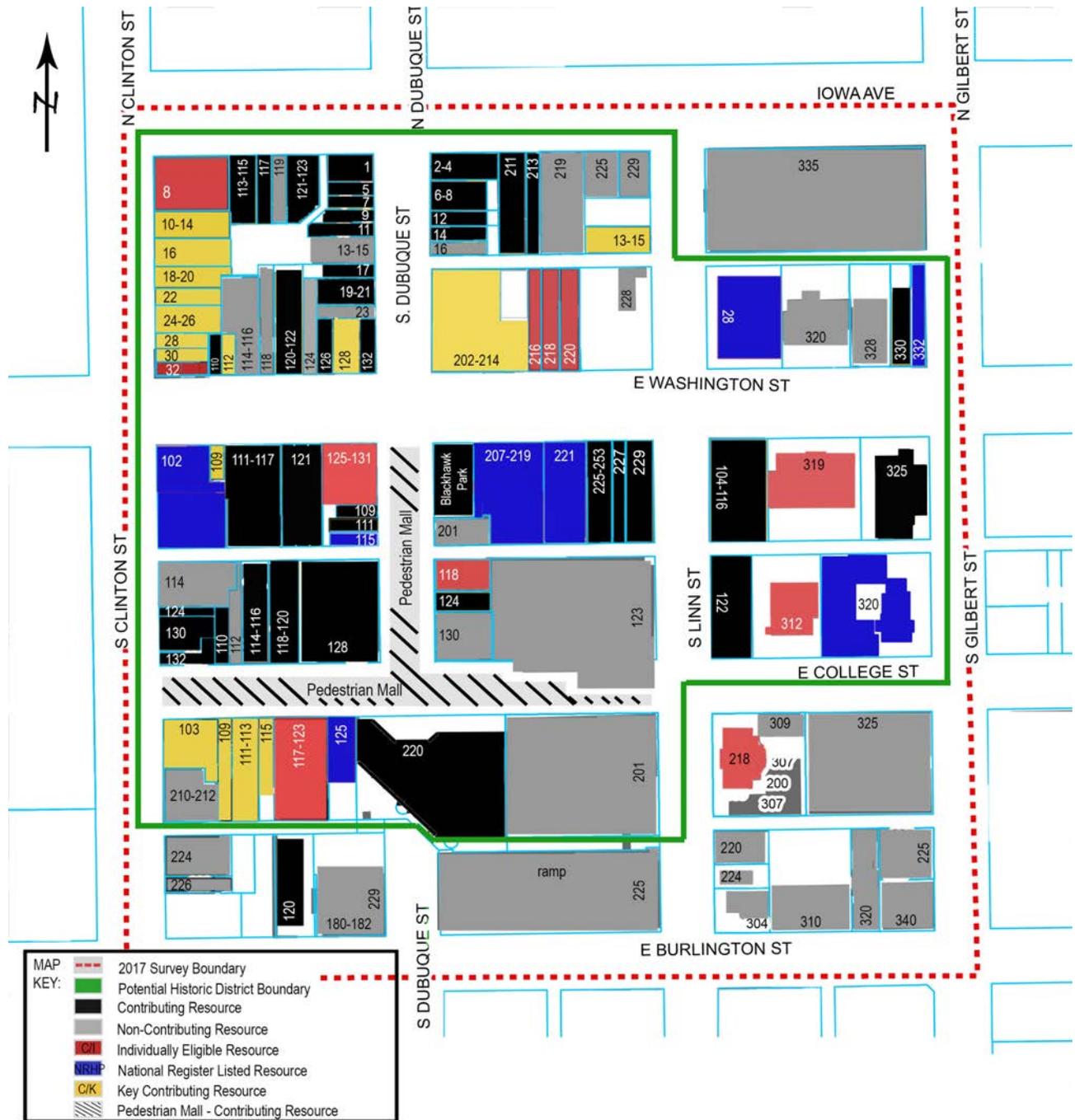
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A potential historic district exists in the CBD survey area (Figure 03). The proposed boundary encompasses 96 resources (75 contributing buildings, 2 contributing landscape features, and 19 non-contributing buildings) dating from the earliest remaining building (Franklin Printing, 1856) through the last urban renewal building constructed (Holiday Inn, 1984). The proposed boundary is bound by S. Clinton Street on the west, running two blocks east along Iowa Avenue, turning south for ½-block along S. Linn Street, turning east along the alley between Iowa Avenue and E. Washington to S. Gilbert Street, turning south to E. College Street, turning west to S. Linn Street to the alley between E. Burlington Street and E. College Street to S. Clinton Street.

The proposed district contains the best-preserved commercial buildings in the CBD including examples of Greek Revival, Late Victorian era Commercial Italianate, Renaissance, Romanesque, Classical Revival, Georgian, and Moderne style building designs. It also includes a collection of public buildings constructed prior to World War I in a "civic corridor" along the east edge of the CBD. Significantly, the proposed district embraces the significant alterations that resulted from the City's urban renewal program. While the buildings constructed during the period associated with the program (1970-1984) lack the architectural features many think of as "historic," the buildings do represent the architectural trends and technologies of the period. More importantly, they are directly associated with an historic period that contributes significantly to the character of the district today.

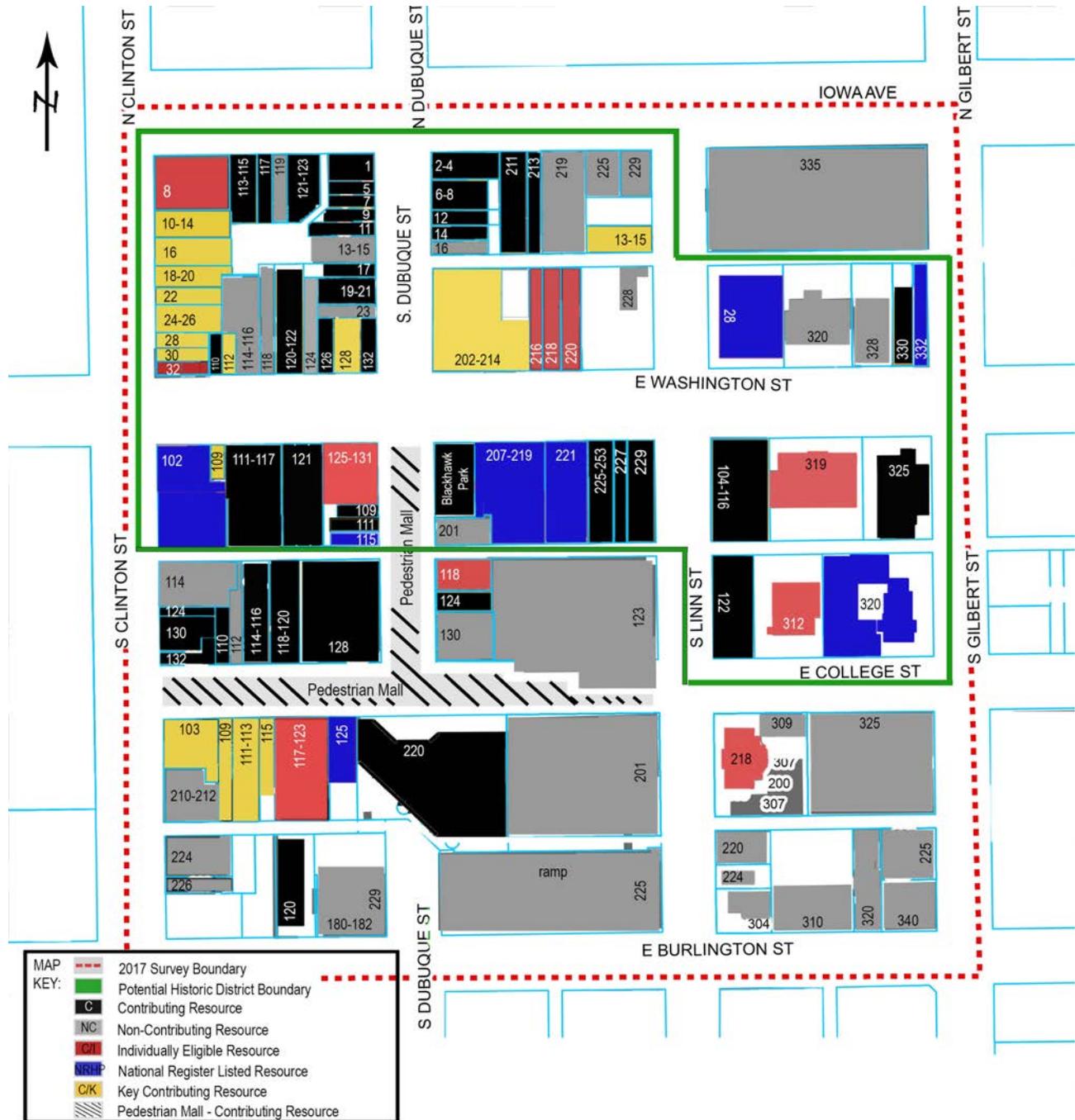
The proposed district boundaries also embrace the pedestrian mall. In contrast to similar landscape features that appeared in urban renewal projects across the country, the Iowa City pedestrian mall was a success. Where the majority of other such projects have been reversed in recent years, the pedestrian mall remains a beautiful gathering place that contributes to the civic, social, and economic vitality of the downtown. Its place within the physical and historical context of the CBD cannot be overvalued.

Figure 03. Map of Proposed Historic District Boundaries - 2018



It is important to note that without embracing the significance of the urban renewal resources the pedestrian mall would not be included within the district boundaries. Further, due to the significant alteration of the setting along College Street and one block of Dubuque Street, the buildings facing the pedestrian mall would be adversely impacted. The result would be a diminished district boundary that excludes those resources (Figure 04).

**Figure 04.** Map of Historic District Boundaries Without Urban Renewal Resources - 2018



#### **4.2.c. Historic Preservation Overlay Zones**

Iowa City's zoning ordinance provides special protection for properties that qualify either as a local historic district or a historic landmark under the designation "historic preservation overlay" zone (OHP). All areas identified as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places individually or as a historic district qualify for local designation and protection. It is recommended that, through time, the Historic Preservation Commission seek designation of all properties identified as National Register eligible in the amendment to the Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Architectural and Historical Resources of Iowa City Central Business District (1855 - 1984)." Highest priority should be given to designating individually eligible properties with particular attention to any identified as threatened. Further, resources designated as key contributing in the potential historic district should be designated as local landmarks

#### **4.3 *Recommendations***

The Iowa City CBD has seen many changes over the course of its 170-year history. The magnitude of those changes is evident by reviewing the extensive collection of historic images held by the State Historical Society of Iowa in Iowa City, the Iowa City Public Library, and the University of Iowa Special Collections. Evolution of a downtown is far from unusual - it's to be expected. It is in the examination of what has been lost that we can begin to value the importance of protecting what remains.

- Preparation of a nomination of the Iowa City Central Business District with the boundaries to include the resources of the urban renewal period is strongly recommended.
- Designation of a local overlay district that follows the boundaries of the National Register district and provides the protections available by local ordinance is recommended.
- Immediate designation of C/I (individually eligible) resources as local landmarks.
- Immediate consideration of C/K (key contributing) resources for landmark designation.
- Provision of a full-time City staff person with dedicated responsibility for overseeing the downtown historic resources is recommended. Said staff should possess knowledge of local design review as it relates to downtown resources and a thorough understanding of financial incentives for historic preservation, (i.e., historic tax credit programs).
- Establishment of a collection of topical digital resources accessible from the City website.

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- Continued partnership with the Iowa City Downtown District to actively engage business owners in the historic rehabilitation of buildings with an understanding that current business trends may sometimes require adaptation of buildings to meet those challenges.
- Immediate development of a clearly delineated policy aimed at addressing the pressure for increased density and contemporary design within the proposed historic district. Development of that policy should seek out successful models for responding to development pressures, particularly related to the impact of height, massing, and materials of new construction as well as the growing trend for adding stories (housing or terraces) to existing historic buildings. The process should consider existing policy and/or planning tools (e.g., form-based zoning, TIF, local landmark ordinance, etc.) to determine how to create a comprehensive approach to the protection of the downtown historic resources while promoting economic viability and downtown vitality.
- The City should pursue and promote other financial incentives for owners of historic properties that seek historic rehabilitation including, but not limited to, tax exemption from Johnson County.
- The City should actively promote non-financial incentives to property owners who wish to undertake the historic rehabilitation of buildings.

One means of promoting historic rehabilitation of downtown buildings relates to the International Existing Building Code (IEBC), which is “intended to provide requirements for repair and alternative approaches for alterations and additions to existing buildings.” As such, it is commonly used in historic rehabilitation projects where retention of historic features may be in conflict with standard building codes. While the City currently defers to the IEBC in some cases, it remains underused.

The City should proactively promote the use of the IEBC in historic rehabilitation, including information regarding the IEBC in communications with potential developers and individual property owners.

Further, the City should promote the flexibility that exists in the current zoning code that allows the Board of Adjustment to waive parking for buildings that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, either as part of a district or individually. The waiver is also available for buildings designated as local landmarks regardless of their National Register status.

Promotion of historic rehabilitation as an environmentally friendly approach to development is another important way of considering and supporting historic preservation. Promotion of the benefits of green construction should be incorporated into the larger effort to promote historic rehabilitation of downtown resources.

## **5.0 Historic Preservation Incentives Opportunities for the Iowa CBD**

The Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) and the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) offer multiple funding opportunities directed at the historic rehabilitation of downtown properties for the purpose of preserving historic resources and enhancing community economic vitality. Summaries of the applicable programs follow with links to additional detail.

It is important to note that State and Federal tax credit programs are subject to congressional action with increased and continued scrutiny in recent years. Preservation groups in Iowa and across the country have worked diligently to bring the profoundly significant impact of these programs on historic buildings and the communities in which they are located to the attention of congressional representatives with important success.

As noted by the National Park Service, the Federal Historic Tax program approves some 1,100 projects annually with nearly \$6 billion in private investment leveraged. In this way, the program supports private investment in the rehabilitation and re-use of historic buildings. Further, the program generates new jobs and is one of the country's most successful and cost-effective community revitalization program. Since 1976, the program has leveraged over \$84 billion in private investment resulting in the preservation of 42,293 historic properties.

### **5.1 *Historic Preservation Tax Credit Programs***

Historic tax credit (HTC) programs, both the state and the federal programs, have been successfully used across Iowa for the rehabilitation of historic buildings of many types: commercial buildings, schools, libraries, warehouses, residences have found re-use and renewal because of the availability of these programs and with rehabilitation of individual resources has come economic revitalization of communities across the state. Excellent examples of the positive impact of the historic tax credit programs are found in Des Moines, Davenport, Cedar Rapids, Waterloo, Fort Dodge, Mason City, Dubuque, Sioux City, and Council Bluffs as well as in smaller communities like Perry, Waverly, Belle Plaine, and Marshalltown (Image 12-13).

**Image 12. BEFORE:** Letts-Fletcher Company Warehouse – Marshalltown, Iowa - 2011



(Image by AKAY Consulting, March 02, 2011).

**Image 13. AFTER:** Letts-Fletcher Company Warehouse – Marshalltown, Iowa - 2015



(Image by AKAY Consulting, May 11, 2015).

The Letts-Fletcher Company Warehouse in Marshalltown is one example of a warehouse-to-residential conversion. Along with the rehabilitation of the Tall Corn Hotel just across the street, the project spurred significant reinvestment in the city's historic downtown commercial district. Historic rehabilitation of the building, which is a contributing resource to the Marshalltown Commercial Historic District, was made possible by a combined state and federal historic tax credit of approximately \$2 million. This type of large-scale adaptive re-use of an historic building has been used to stimulate re-development in Davenport, Sioux City, Fort Dodge, and Des Moines. While many of those projects involved the transition of a former warehouse building to housing, numerous other historic building types have also been successfully rehabilitated using the historic tax credit programs.

While most projects, particularly large commercial projects, use both the state and the federal program, smaller projects may be better suited to just the state program; this is related to how the tax credits are awarded. It's important to carefully consider the circumstances of a potential rehabilitation project and its developer/owner, including the specific requirements and potential benefits of each programs in order to decide the best approach.

In the case of the Barton-Ford Motor Company building in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, both state and federal tax credits were used in the historic rehabilitation of this small-scale building. The Barton-Ford Motor Company building is a contributing resource in the Cedar Rapids 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue SE Auto Row Historic District (listed, 2015). After a number of alterations and years of vacancy, a small business owner undertook its rehabilitation for re-use as a brewery/restaurant.

The project is included here as a successful example of a small-scale historic tax credit project, provided to illustrate the potential benefit to property owners of smaller-scaled buildings that exists in the historic tax credit programs (Images 14-17).

**Image 14. BEFORE:** Barton-Ford Motor Company Building (1912) - 2014



(Image by AKAY Consulting, March 02, 2014).

**Image 15. AFTER:** Barton-Ford Motor Company/Quarter Barrel Brewing - 2015



(Image by AKAY Consulting, May 11, 2015).

**Image 16. BEFORE:** Barton-Ford Motor Company Building – Interior - 2014



(Image by AKAY Consulting, March 02, 2014).

**Image 17. AFTER:** Barton-Ford Motor Company/Quarter Barrel Brewing – Interior - 2016



(Image by AKAY Consulting, May 11, 2016).

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Unfortunately, the historic tax credit programs are under utilized in Iowa City. Perhaps the recent historic rehabilitation of the Iowa State Bank & Trust will encourage other such projects in the downtown, specifically, but across the city generally. The completed project is an excellent example of a successfully completed historic rehabilitation utilizing both State and Federal historic tax credits

**Image 18. AFTER:** Iowa State Bank & Trust – 102 S. Clinton – 2018



(Image by AKAY Consulting, April, 2018).

It cannot be denied that the process of applying for historic tax credits can be daunting, with hoops to be jumped through and red tape to be cut. However, with thorough planning and a willingness to respond to the requirements of the programs, the financial benefit is significant and, in many cases, is what makes rehabilitation of historic buildings possible. Guidance from the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office is essential for evaluating the appropriateness of historic tax credits. A number of preservation consultants in the state have considerable experience navigating the process and can be invaluable in the work of completing a successful project.

### **5.1.a** Iowa Historic Tax Credit Program

The following is an overview of the Iowa HTC program. Please note that it is only a summary and additional issues, such as timing of the process, additional expenses incurred, and tax implications (to name a few), should be considered in the process of determining the viability of the program for a specific project. See appendices for additional information.

The Iowa Historic Tax Credit (HTC) program (<https://iowaculture.gov/history/preservation/tax-incentives/state-tax-credit>) provides a state income tax credit for “the sensitive, substantial rehabilitation of historic buildings.” Use of the program supports retention of character-defining features and spaces of historic buildings and contributes to the revitalization of the neighborhoods in which an historic resource is located. The Iowa HTC program provides an income tax credit of up to 25% of *qualified rehabilitation expenditures* (QREs).

The State HTC program is available to eligible taxpayers, defined as the fee simple owner of the property or someone having a long-term lease that meets the requirements of the federal rehabilitation programs. The applicant may be a nonprofit, but may not be a governmental body. Before applying, it is strongly recommended that an owner consult their accountant or tax advisor to assure that the state tax credit is beneficial and that the definition of an eligible taxpayer is met.

The State program has two tracks: the Small Projects track (for projects with QREs of \$750,000 or less) and the Large Projects track (for projects with QREs in excess of \$750,000). While the application process is generally the same regardless of the project size, those that fall in the large projects category are typically far more competitive and registration for those projects occurs twice a year; the small projects are registered on a rolling basis.

### **5.1.b** Federal Historic Tax Incentive Program

The Federal program offers a 20% tax credit for the rehabilitation of historic, income-producing buildings (<https://www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives/before-you-apply.htm>). Unlike the state program, owner-occupied residential properties do not qualify) that are determined to be “certified historic structures.” As with the state program, projects are evaluated to ensure that the proposed work complies with the Secretary’s Standards for Rehabilitation. See appendices for additional information.

Eligible tax credit projects must meet several qualifying standards including certification as a historic property (National Register listed or determined eligible as an individual or a contributing resource to an historic district) through completion of Part 1 of the application process. In addition, the project building must be defined by the IRS as “depreciable,” that is, used in a trade or business or held for the production of income. The amount of the rehabilitation must be “substantial,” meaning the rehabilitation involves the greater of \$5,000 or an amount equal to the owner’s adjusted basis in the building. Expenses incurred in a Federal historic tax

credit project may occur during a two-year period or be phased over a five-year period. For phased projects, plans must be approved prior to work commencing.

In the cases where application is made to both the state and federal programs, each element of the application process for both programs is submitted simultaneously to maximize efficiency of the review process. A review period for each element of the application will take a minimum of 90 days, so it is important to account for sufficient time to undertake the application process.

In summary, the State and Federal historic tax credit programs have been an essential tool supporting the historic rehabilitation of historic buildings across Iowa. Despite that fact, the programs have been under-utilized in Iowa City – the downtown commercial district has only two projects that used the programs. The Englert Theatre and, more recently, the Iowa State Bank & Trust are excellent examples of rehabilitations supported by the HTC programs. As noted, both the State and the Federal tax credit programs have and continue to undergo revamping. Fortunately, the longstanding and significant benefits that have resulted from the programs have supported their retention in a climate when other tax credit programs have been eliminated.

**5.1.c** Iowa's Historic Property Temporary Tax Exemption Program encourages the rehabilitation of historic buildings by allowing county governments to abate increases in local property taxes resulting from completion of a certified rehabilitation. The program provides a combination of full exemption for four years from any increased valuation resulting from the work, and decreasing exemption (up to the new valuation) during the subsequent four years. To be eligible a minimum of \$5,000 of rehabilitation investment must be made. Before completing the three-part application, it is advisable to estimate the adjusted basis and the total rehabilitation investment for the project to determine whether it will likely meet the "substantial rehabilitation" test. Criteria for approval are similar to those described above for the federal and state tax credits. <https://iowaculture.gov/history/preservation/tax-incentives/property-tax-exemption/before-you-apply>

## **5.2** *City of Iowa City Programs*

**5.2.a** Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a mechanism used to provide financial assistance for projects within a designated urban renewal area and TIF district. The difference between taxes derived from unimproved, underdeveloped, or underutilized property and those derived after its development, redevelopment, or expansion is the "increment" of taxes which may be pledged by the City to help finance project expenses incurred by the City or the developer in furtherance of the development.

The TIF ordinance makes available to the City incremental tax revenues for repayment of project-related expenses or the provision of a property tax rebate. The incremental tax revenues include those levied by and for other taxing jurisdictions, such as the county, school district, and community college.

TIF financing is available in the form of public infrastructure improvements or in the form of forgivable loans or property tax rebates for qualifying businesses. The amount of available TIF is dependent on the amount of new taxable property value added to the property.

It is important to note that the TIF policy approved in November 2017 includes language that encourages the preservation of historic resources: “New construction requiring the demolition of structures on the National Register of Historic Places, or those identified as individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places or those identified as key properties are not eligible for tax increment financing.”

### **5.3** *Iowa Downtown Resource Center Programs (Iowa Economic Development Authority)*

*Main Street Iowa.* Utilizing the Main Street Approach, communities capitalize on the unique identity, assets, and character of their historic commercial districts. Assistance from the Main Street Iowa team includes training workshops, architectural and design assistance, business assistance, and other technical assistance opportunities. Financial incentives made available to Main Street communities includes the Main Street Challenge Grant.

<https://www.iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/MainStreetIowa>

*Model Communities: Connecting leaders to share successful practices.* The program partners with Iowa communities to share community development best practices. Downtown Resource Center Downtown Forums held in four Iowa model communities in June 2018.

<https://www.iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/programDetails?pid=125&ppid=101>

*Workforce Housing Tax Credits.* The program provides tax benefits to developers to provide housing in Iowa communities, focusing especially on projects involving abandoned, empty or dilapidated properties. The tax incentives include a refund of sales, service or use taxes paid during construction. Developers may receive a state investment tax credit of up to 10% of the investment directly related to the construction or rehabilitation of housing.

<https://www.iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/WHTC>

## APPENDICES