

# Iowa Site Inventory Form

State Historic Preservation Office

(July 2014)

State Inventory Number: 38-00318 ☒ New ☐ Supplemental

9-Digit SHPO Review & Compliance (R&C) Number: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Non-extant Year: \_\_\_\_\_

**Read the Iowa Site Inventory Form Instructions carefully, to ensure accuracy and completeness before completing this form. The instructions are available on our website: <http://www.iowahistory.org/historic-preservation/statewide-inventory-and-collections/iowa-site-inventory-form.html>**

## • Property Name

A) Historic name: Potential Grundy Center Commercial Historic District

B) Other names: \_\_\_\_\_

## • Location

A) Street address: G Avenue, 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> Streets

B) City or town: Grundy Center (☐ Vicinity) County: Grundy

C) Legal description:

Rural: Township Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Township No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Range No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Section: \_\_\_\_\_ Qtr: \_\_\_\_\_ of Qtr: \_\_\_\_\_

Urban: Subdivision: Original Plat Block(s): 17,24,25,26,27 Lot(s): \_\_\_\_\_

## • Classification

**A) Property category:** *Check only one*

- ☐ Building(s)  
☒ District  
☐ Site  
☐ Structure  
☐ Object

**B) Number of resources (within property):**

*If eligible property, enter number of:*

Contributing Noncontributing

<u>24</u>	Buildings	<u>4</u>
—	Sites	—
—	Structures	—
—	Objects	—
<u>24</u>	<b>Total</b>	<u>4</u>

*If non-eligible property, enter number of:*

—	Buildings
—	Sites
—	Structures
—	Objects
—	<b>Total</b>

**C) For properties listed in the National Register:**

National Register status: ☐ Listed ☐ De-listed ☐ NHL ☐ NPS DOE

**D) For properties within a historic district:**

- ☐ Property contributes to a National Register or local certified historic district.  
☐ Property contributes to a potential historic district, based on professional historic/architectural survey and evaluation.  
☐ Property *does not* contribute to the historic district in which it is located.

Historic district name: \_\_\_\_\_ Historic district site inventory number: \_\_\_\_\_

**E) Name of related project report or multiple property study, if applicable:**

MPD title

Historical Architectural Data Base #

## • Function or Use *Enter categories (codes and terms) from the Iowa Site Inventory Form Instructions*

**A) Historic functions**

02 COMMERCE

03A SOCIAL/meeting hall

04F GOVERNMENT/post office

**B) Current functions**

02A COMMERCE/business

02B COMMERCE/professional

02E COMMERCE/specialty store

## • Description *Enter categories (codes and terms) from the Iowa Site Inventory Form Instructions*

**A) Architectural classification**

09F Commercial

05B Italianate

05D Queen Anne

07A Commercial Style

**B) Materials**

Foundation (visible exterior): 04C STONE/Limestone

Walls (visible exterior): 03 BRICK; 04 STONE

Roof: 08 ASPHALT

Other: 06 STUCCO; 10A CONCRETE/Block

**C) Narrative description** ☒ **SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED**

Site Number: 38-00318 Address: G Avenue, 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> Streets City: Grundy Center County: Grundy

• **Statement of Significance**

**A) Applicable National Register Criteria:** *Mark your opinion of eligibility after applying relevant National Register criteria*

Criterion A: Property is associated with significant events.

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ More research recommended

Criterion B: Property is associated with the lives of significant persons.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ More research recommended

Criterion C: Property has distinctive architectural characteristics.

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ More research recommended

Criterion D: Property yields significant information in archaeology/history.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ More research recommended

**B) Special criteria considerations:** *Mark any special considerations; leave blank if none*

☐ A: Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ E: A reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ B: Removed from its original location.

☐ F: A commemorative property.

☐ C: A birthplace or grave.

☐ G: Property less than 50 years of age or  
achieved significance within the past 50 years.

☐ D: A cemetery

**C) Areas of significance**

*Enter categories from instructions*

02 ARCHITECTURE

**D) Period(s) of significance**

1879-1963

05 COMMERCE

**E) Significant dates**

*Construction date*

1879 ☐ *check if circa or estimated date*

*Other dates, including renovations*

1880; 1893; 1963

**F) Significant person**

*Complete if Criterion B is marked above*

**G) Cultural affiliation**

*Complete if Criterion D is marked above*

**H) Architect/Builder**

*Architect*

*Builder/contractor*

**I) Narrative statement of significance** ☒ *SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED*

• **Bibliography** ☒ *See continuation sheets for the list research sources used in preparing this form*

• **Geographic Data** *Optional UTM references* ☐ *See continuation sheet for additional UTM or comments*

Zone	Easting	Northing	NAD	Zone	Easting	Northing	NAD
1				2			
3				4			

• **Form Preparation**

Name and Title: Jennifer A. Price/Consultant Date: June 2018

Organization/firm: EarthView Environmental, Inc./Impact7G E-mail: jprice@impact7G.com

Street address: 310 2nd Street Telephone: 319.594.9513

City or Town: Coralville State: IA Zip code: 52241

• **ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION** *Submit the following items with the completed form*

**A) For all properties, attach the following, as specified in the Iowa Site Inventory Form Instructions:**

1. **Map** of property's location within the community.

2. **Glossy color 4x6 photos labeled** on back with property/building name, address, date taken, view shown, and unique photo number.

3. **Photo key showing each photo number on a map and/or floor plan, using arrows next to each photo number to indicate the location and directional view of each photograph.**

4. **Site plan** of buildings/structures on site, identifying boundaries, public roads, and building/structure footprints.

**B) For State Historic Tax Credit Part 1 Applications, historic districts and farmsteads, and barns:**

*See lists of special requirements and attachments in the Iowa Site Inventory Form Instructions.*

**State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Use Only Below This Line**

*The SHPO has reviewed the Site Inventory and concurs with above survey opinion on National Register eligibility:*

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ More research recommended

☐ *This is a locally designated property or part of a locally designated district.*

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

SHPO authorized signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Potential Grundy Center Commercial Historic District	Grundy
Name of Property	County
G Avenue, 6 <sup>th</sup> to 9 <sup>th</sup> Streets	Grundy Center
Address	City

This Iowa Site Inventory Form is being prepared for the City of Grundy Center as part of an Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) Downtown Revitalization Grant. This site form provides an architectural/historical evaluation of the buildings in the Area of Potential Effect (APE), which includes the 11 buildings in Grundy Center's downtown commercial district that are participating in the Downtown Revitalization Grant, as well as a National Register-eligibility evaluation of a potential Grundy Center Commercial Historic District.

**7. Narrative Description**

Grundy Center, the county seat of Grundy County, is located in the center of Grundy County. The county itself is located in northeast central Iowa. The Area of Potential Effect (APE) contains approximately three and one-half blocks (500 to 800 block) along G Avenue – also the route of State Highway 14 through town – from 5<sup>th</sup> Street on the east side to just west of 8<sup>th</sup> Street on the west side. Most of the buildings in the APE line the north side of G Avenue, with the exception of one block located on the south side just east of the Grundy County Courthouse and public square, and one building located on the west side of 6<sup>th</sup> street, just north of G Avenue. A total of 32 commercial buildings are included within the APE. Of those, 28 buildings are located within the preliminary boundaries of a potential Grundy Center Commercial Historic District, which includes the 600 block (north and south sides), 700 block (north side), two buildings in the 800 block (north side), and one building located on 6<sup>th</sup> Street (west side).

The potential historic district contains 27 one and two-story commercial buildings dating from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, and one modern infill building. The historic resources within the potential historic district are architecturally distinct in appearance from the surrounding areas, which include the National Register-listed Grundy County Courthouse, several churches, residential streets, and a number of modern buildings surrounding it.

Within the preliminary boundaries of the historic district are 28 resources, of which 24 are contributing and four are non-contributing. Non-contributing resources include one modern infill (Bldg #25), and three heavily altered historic resources (Bldgs #22, #28, and #32). There is one vacant lot within the preliminary district boundaries on the northwest corner of 8<sup>th</sup> Street and G Avenue, where the two-story Gem Theater/Knights of Pythias Hall was located. It was razed in the mid-1970s. (See Table 1 below and Map of the Potential Historic District in Additional Documentation.)

**Table 1. Number and Status of Resources in District**

Contributing	Non-Contributing
24	4

Of the nine contributing resources, seven are one-story brick commercial buildings and 21 are two-story brick commercial buildings. The contributing buildings display varying degrees of historic integrity, with the best preserved buildings located in the 700 block. These include the First National Bank Block (Bldg #15), Masonic Block (Bldg #17), Geer Block (Bldg #18), Central Block (Bldg #19), and the Wilson Building (Bldg #21). Other historic buildings notable for well preserved historic details include the Hummel Block (Bldg #15), Carpenter Block (Bldg #11), Schafer Garage (Bldg #24), and the Kerr Block (Bldg #27). The Hummel Block retains its second-story corner oriel, although its conical roof is nonextant. All contributing buildings have had many updates over the years, including replacement windows and storefronts enclosed or reconfigured with wood and/or vinyl-clad panels and newer windows and doors. One contributing building and one non-contributing building have been clad in stucco covering original brick facades (Bldg #20 and #32), and one non-contributing building had a new brick front built in 2003 after the original collapsed (Bldg #28). Many contributing buildings, however, retain original details, such as Italianate cornices, upper floor fenestration patterns, cast iron posts and lintels, store

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transom windows, original brick and decorative brickwork, and name and date blocks. Because of the piecemeal updating of storefronts by successive building owners, it is possible that more original historic features are extant beneath wood and vinyl panels and other cover-ups. Upper floor fenestration has in most of the two-story buildings been reduced in size and smaller replacement windows installed or have had replacement windows installed.

Table 2 below contains information for each resource in the Area of Potential Effect (APE) and the potential historic district, including the number of each building, which corresponds to the APE and District maps in Additional Documentation; the historic name or function of each building; construction date and remodeling dates; an evaluation of eligibility within the potential district; and identification of buildings participating in the Downtown Revitalization Grant.

**Table 2. Historic Resources within the APE and Potential Grundy Center Commercial Historic District**

Bldg #	Current Building Name/Occupant	Address	Historic Name/Function	Build Date	Remodel Date(s)	Evaluation	IEDA Façade Grant
1	Spartan Barber Shop	505 G Ave	Herman Iblings Building	1967		Outside potential district boundaries	
2	Myers Home Improvements	507 G Ave	People's Motor Co	1948	Remodel 1971	Outside potential district boundaries	
3	Lifetime Vision Center	509 G Ave	Skandia Inn	1971		Outside potential district boundaries	
4	Grundy National Bank	529 G Ave	Farmers Savings Bank	1971		Outside potential district boundaries; (Evaluate again at 50 years of age)	
5	Laundromat	609 6th St	Petersen Building; Jim's Super Market	1947	Remodel 1955	Contributing in potential historic district	
6	The Grundy Register	601 G Ave	Franz Building; The Grundy Register	1950		Contributing in potential historic district	
7	Headliner Hair Salon	603 G Ave	Franz Building; Quality Bakery	1947		Contributing in potential historic district	
8	True Value Hardware	605-609 G Ave	Canfield Building & Baughman Building; Coast-to-Coast Store; Stable Gifts	1939 and 1947	Unified 1963; Remodels 1952, 1968, 1971	Contributing in potential historic district	
9	Tasty House Chinese Restaurant	611 G Ave	People's Natural Gas Co Building	1958		Contributing in potential historic district	
10	Jansen Optical & Basic Bodyworks Massage	613 G Ave	Meester Building; Meester Shoe Repair; Jans Optometrist	1949		Contributing in potential historic district	
11	Movement Dance & Fitness; Shabby Shack Men's Clothing	617-619 G Ave	Carpenter Block; Gambles Store	1913		Contributing in potential historic district	Yes

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Grundy

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Grundy Center

Address

City

Bldg #	Current Building Name/Occupant	Address	Historic Name/Function	Build Date	Remodel Date(s)	Evaluation	IEDA Façade Grant
12	Manly Drug Store/Steifl Drug	621 G Ave	Manly Rexall Drug Store	1961		Contributing in potential historic district	
13	As You Like It Hallmark Shop	625-627 G Ave	People's Savings Bank; The Racket Store	1911		Contributing in potential historic district	
14	Flex Fitness	629 G Ave	Hummel Block; Hummel's Drug Store; Ladage Drug Store	1893		Contributing in potential historic district	Yes
15	Schuck Realty Co	701 G Ave	First National Bank Block; Post Office	1885		Contributing in potential historic district	
16	Vacant	703 G Ave	Commercial Block; Sargent Bros; Frederick Furniture Store	1879	Front remodels 1939 and 1962	Contributing in potential historic district	Yes
17	Vacant	707-709 G Ave	Hawkeye Block; Stark Building; Masonic Block; J.C. Penneys	1884	Remodels 1926; 1950	Contributing in potential historic district	
18	319 Décor & Design	711 G Ave	H. G. Geer Block; H. G. Geer Grocery; Cech Grocery; United Telephone Co	1880		Contributing in potential historic district	Yes
19	Grundy Mutual Insurance Association	713-715 G Ave	Central Block; Grundy County National Bank; Fraternal Hall;	1879		Contributing in potential historic district	Yes
20	Bob Eisenman, State Farm Insurance Agent/Gem's Antiques	717-719 G Ave	Campbell Block; Kelso & Son Grocery; Laybourn & Rickers Hardware	c.1880		Contributing in potential historic district	
21	Olive Branch Inspirational Book Store	721 G Ave	Wilson Building	1919		Contributing in potential historic district	
22	The Landmark Bistro	723 G Ave	Citgo Service Station; The AppleTree	c.1950	Remodel 1976	Non-Contributing in potential historic district	
23	Brown Heating & Cooling	803 G Ave	Schafer Building; Schafer Music House	1909		Contributing in potential historic district	Yes
24	American Family Insurance	805 G Ave	Schafer's Garage	1912		Contributing in potential historic district	Yes
25	Law Firm	630 G Ave	United Federal Savings Bank	1976		Non-Contributing in potential historic district	
26	Latta Harris Hanon Penningroth CPA; Crazy Daisies	624-626 G Ave	DeSeelhorst & Morse and J.H. Blewitt Block; Furniture and Undertaking; Feller's Variety Store	1899		Contributing in potential historic district	Yes
27	Hair Mechanic	622 G Ave	Kerr Building; City Bakery; Grundy Café	1900		Contributing in potential historic district	Yes
28	Stylish Living	620 G Ave	I.O.O.F. Block; Gambles Dept Store; Horbach Furniture	1900	Front rebuilt 2003	Non-Contributing in potential historic district	

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Bldg #	Current Building Name/Occupant	Address	Historic Name/Function	Build Date	Remodel Date(s)	Evaluation	IEDA Façade Grant
29	Vacant	618 G Ave	Dudden's Clothing & Shoe Store	1955		Contributing in potential historic district	
30	The Fleurist; Lon's Plumbing & Heating	612 G Ave	Mamminga Building; Home Bakery	1952		Contributing in potential historic district	Yes
31	Grundy Veterinary Clinic/Edward D. Jones Investments	606 G Ave	Bailey & Raymond Garage; L.L. Daniels Building; M.G. Mamminga Building; Home Bakery	1910	Remodel 1941	Contributing in potential historic district	Yes
32	Pizza Hut	602 G Ave	Jacob Bros Dept Store/Dry Goods; John High Hardware; True Value Hardware	1887	Remodel 1956	Non-Contributing in potential historic district	

***Integrity of Potential District:*** Today, the potential Grundy Center Commercial Historic District retains enough integrity based on location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association to convey its significance as the historical (and current) heart of the Grundy Center community. Together, the contributing resources of the district retain essential characteristics of massing and their historic relationships, including the contribution of each building to the district's historic profile. Most of these buildings display historic patterns of second-floor fenestration, cornices, decorative brick panels and corbelling, and in a few cases storefront details and configuration, all of which enhance the feeling and association of the potential Grundy Center Commercial Historic District with its historical significance. Even with some loss of historic buildings around and within the preliminary boundaries of the historic district, the heart of the potential Grundy Center Commercial Historic District along G Avenue retains its historic profile and cohesiveness and thus its historic identity.

**8. Statement of Significance**

The potential Grundy Center Commercial Historic District is locally significant and eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. Under Criterion A, the potential historic district is associated with the following historic contexts: 1) Early Development and the Impact of the Railroad on Town Development, 1855-1910s; 2) Major Fires and Rebuilding in the Commercial District; 3) Effects of the Automobile on the Commercial District, 1920s-1963; and 4) Continued Downtown Investment: New Fronts and New Buildings, 1940-1963. The potential historic district represents two phases of development. The first phase is associated with Grundy Center's development as the Grundy County seat of government, an important agricultural market town, and a station and shipping point on the Cedar Rapids & Sioux Falls Branch of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad from the 1879 to c.1920. The second phase of development represents Grundy Center's adaptation to the automobile, particularly after the route of State Highway 14 routed along G Avenue in 1920 and was paved in 1931, and with the post-World War II modernization and building boom, which gained steam in the late 1940s and culminated in 1963 with the Frederick Furniture front remodel.

Under Criterion C, the potential district exhibits the characteristics, building types, and architectural styles of a late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century commercial district, mixed with mid-twentieth-century commercial buildings and historic front remodels. The two phases of Grundy Center's development are almost equally balanced in number of buildings, with 13 representing the earlier period and 11 representing the later period. Thus, the potential district reflects layers of historical and architectural development in Grundy Center spanning 85 years. Most of the buildings exhibit the distinctive characteristics of their time or type of construction, namely one and two-story brick commercial buildings, the earlier of these featuring elaborate Italianate, Queen Anne, and

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Classical Revival details and the later buildings and historic remodels featuring simpler Commercial styles of architecture.

The preliminary period of significance for the potential Grundy Center Commercial Historic District is 1879 to 1963, from the year the Central Block was built right after the 1879 fire, to 1963, the year that Frederick Furniture remodeled their façade, the culmination of the post-World War II commercial district building boom.

***Early Development and the Impact of the Railroad on Town Development, 1855-1900s***

The town of Grundy Center was platted more than two decades before the railroad arrived. In 1855, Thomas G. Copp became the town's first resident. According to William G. Kerr's historical account of the town's founding and early development in the *Grundy Register Centennial Edition*, after a long trek across the central Iowa prairie in search of a new home,

Copp eventually arrived at a promontory overlooking the Black Hawk and Minnehaha creeks, and because the site offered timber as well as water, he decided to stay. He constructed a log cabin, with hay for a roof, on what is now the site of the Bethany Presbyterian Church [southwest of the courthouse] (Kerr 1977).

The second resident was John Overdear. Together, Copp and Overdear made the first town plat of Grundy Center in 1856. The original plat of Grundy Center contained 35 blocks, with Block 18 at the center dedicated to a public square and the site for the proposed county courthouse. The east-west avenues were Pine, Maple, Main, Chestnut, Elm, and Locust. The north-south streets were First, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh and Eighth. (All avenue names were changed to letters of the alphabet in the mid-twentieth century – Main Street became G Avenue – and the numbered streets were renumbered beginning further east in newer additions). The commercial district developed east and north of the public square, in Blocks 17, 24, 25, 26, and 27. In 1857, the first courthouse was constructed. It was a wooden octagon-shaped building known locally as “the cheesebox.” The current courthouse was begun in 1891 and completed in 1893. In 1857, Copp built the town's first hotel on the northwest corner of the block just east of the courthouse (south side of G Avenue). The town's first store, built in 1860, was located in that block as well (Kerr 1977).

Prior to the railroad, the town grew slowly. By 1875, only about a dozen buildings had been erected in Grundy Center on the town lots north and east of the courthouse square. Nearly all of them were one or two-story wood false-front store buildings mixed with a few residences. When Grundy Center incorporated in April 1877, the town had 437 inhabitants. The first town election was held a month later (Kerr 1977).

Just after Grundy Center's incorporation, in the fall of 1877, the Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern Railroad reached the town and citizens planned a celebration:

A few hundred posters in German English, and a few thousand program bills were distributed over the county and in surrounding towns in order to advertise the celebration. They made preparation for a free public dinner consisting of two roasted oxen, 15 roasted pigs, and 40 boiled hams with bread and butter. A number of bands were invited, and there were speeches and toasts. On Wednesday, September 5, 1877, when the first train pulled into town, it is estimated that from 5,000 to 8,000 people were assembled to celebrate the event (Kerr 1977).

The railroad was built through Grundy Center approximately 6 blocks north of the commercial district, which paralleled Depot Street (today A Avenue) in its southeast-northwest trajectory. A building boom had begun that year in anticipation of the railroad. In the spring, C.W. Reynolds erected a frame building, and Daniel Kerr and Charles Campbell began construction on the two-story, double brick veneered Campbell Block. Holt and Beckman put up a two-story frame building for a bank, and Dr. E.A. Crouse, W.C. Williams, and G.C. Shuler built a frame building called the Grundy County Bank. The Sargent Brothers built a two-story building, and R.T. Miller and the Elliott Bros. erected a building known as City Hall Block on the west end of the business district. With so

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many wood frame commercial buildings built in two years, the Grundy Center business district resembled a railroad boom town (Kerr 1977).

***Major Fires and Rebuilding in the Commercial District***

Fires have played a prominent role in shaping downtown Grundy Center. The development of the current Grundy Center commercial district began in January 1879 with a fire that destroyed all the wood store buildings and the brick-veneered Kerr & Campbell Block in the 700 block just north of the courthouse. Two weeks later, a fire destroyed the City Hall Block. With Grundy Center's new railroad access to building materials not previously available, however, "plans for rebuilding the burned district were soon perfected. Within six years, six Italianate-style brick commercial blocks were built facing the courthouse. These buildings were the Central Block (Bldg #19), built 1879; Commercial Block (Bldg #16), built 1879; H.G. Geer Block (Bldg #18), built 1880; Campbell Block (Bldg #20), built c.1880; Hawkeye Block (Bldg #17), built 1884; and First National Bank Block and Post Office (Bldg #15), built 1885. A few years later, other brick buildings were built in other blocks along G Avenue, notably the Jacobs Bros. Block (Bldg #32), built 1887, and the Queen Anne style Hummel Block (Bldg #14), housing Hummel's Drug Store, built in 1893 (Kerr 1977).

In 1899, a fire that started in the Post Hotel at the southeast corner of 7<sup>th</sup> and G Avenue, the block just east of the courthouse, destroyed nearly all the commercial buildings on the south side of G Avenue, with the exception of the brick Jacob Bros. Block. The Odd Fellows Block (Bldg #28) and the DeSeelhorst & Blewett Block (Bldg #26), both built in 1900, were direct results of that fire (*Grundy Register*, July 7, 1977).

In March 1911, a fire started in the Petersen Meat Market in the 600 block on the north side of G Avenue. The fire soon spread to the Kruger building on the east and threatened the Hummel Block on the corner. The brick and mostly fireproof Hummel Block broke the wind from the west and kept the fire from spreading further. The Peoples Savings Bank Block (Bldg #13) and the Carpenter Block (Bldg #11) built in 1911 and 1913, respectively, were direct results of this fire (*Grundy County Democrat*, March 16, 1911).

The two-story brick building that replaced the Post Hotel in 1900 was destroyed in a fire in 1975. The one-story law office building on the corner (Bldg #25) was built in 1976 (*Grundy Register*, January 23, 1975).

***Effects of the Automobile on the Commercial District, 1920s-1963***

Not long after the peak of the railroad boom in Grundy Center came the arrival of the automobile in the early 1900s. As more people in Grundy Center became automobile owners, new businesses that sold autos and serviced the needs of these vehicles sprouted on and around G Avenue and the commercial district. Usually, and somewhat ironically, local blacksmiths and livery operators were often the first businesses to sell and service the new horseless carriages. Grundy Center automobile-oriented businesses were mainly grouped in the 500 block of G Avenue, but also within the commercial district, including Schafer's Garage (Bldg #24) and a garage/auto storage business in the L.L. Daniels Building (Bldg #31), an older commercial building on the south side of the 600 block. At the northeast corner of 8<sup>th</sup> Street and G Avenue, a purpose-built Cities Service Station opened in the 1920s, which was rebuilt and modernized in the 1950s (Bldg #22). Helping to increase automobile traffic through Grundy Center was the designation in 1920 of State Highway 14, which was routed through the town along G Avenue. In 1931, the highway was paved from the junction with State Hwy 57 north of Grundy Center to the junction with State Highway 58 (now 175) west of Grundy Center (Hancock 2018). The improvement undoubtedly brought more traffic along G Avenue and through the commercial district. Such auto-oriented businesses (service stations, garages, and dealerships) continued their presence in downtown Grundy Center throughout the period of significance.

In addition to the new auto businesses, the automobile aided the building of better roads and highways across Iowa, and "created tremendous opportunities for small town shoppers," since "getting into town to shop became



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vastly easier for rural residents all over the state. . . . As roads improved in the 1920s and 30s, shoppers from both small towns and the countryside were not limited to their local Main Street. Often they kept right on driving down the road to the next largest town" (Nash 2002:9). And for many rural and small-town residents of Grundy County, that next largest town down the road was Grundy Center, where shoppers could find not just the goods and services offered by locally owned businesses, but also branches of the big national chain stores, like J.C. Penney Co., I.G.A. Grocery, Gambles, and Coast-to-Coast Stores. By locating branch stores in small towns like Grundy Center, J.C. Penney Co. and the other chain stores were adapting to modern business conditions, shaped largely by widespread automobile ownership.

***Continued Downtown Investment: New Fronts and New Buildings, 1940-1963***

During the World War II era and beyond, many vacant lots and wood false-front stores remained part of Grundy Center's commercial district. For a town that had seen more than its share of fires, efforts to replace these wood buildings with more fireproof brick buildings partially drove the postwar commercial building boom. As the *Grundy Register* observed in 1947:

The construction of new buildings in the main part of the Grundy Center business section has begun to boom. Six new projects are now in various stages of construction, and most of them should be completed by the first of the year. These buildings when completed will mean a cash investment of more than \$100,000. In addition several other new buildings have been completed in recent weeks, and at least two other men are planning to construct new buildings in Grundy Center in the near future (*Grundy Register*, September 18, 1947).

Two of the six buildings noted by the *Grundy Register* were the Petersen Implement Co building on the west side of 6<sup>th</sup> Street (Bldg #5) and the Franz Building (Bldg #6) on the northwest corner of G Ave and 6<sup>th</sup> Street – a lot that had long stood vacant. The latter building would become the newspaper's new home and continues to be today.

The number of Type V buildings (historic remodels and later buildings), along with a minimal number of vacant lots, reflects Grundy Center's economic stability and continued investment in its historic core during the second phase of development within its period of significance. Beginning in the 1930s, Grundy Center property owners began to update, or modernize, the fronts of their brick store buildings, many of which had been built in the previous century or the early years of the twentieth century. A "new front" was part of a store's advertising: the newer the appearance, shoppers would assume, the more modern and desirable the store and products must be inside. Others changed the look of a building to facilitate and/or advertise a totally new use. Branches of the national chain stores, which located in the historic buildings in downtown Grundy Center, often remodeled at least the storefronts of their buildings, if not entire façades, like Frederick Furniture did in 1963, when it unified two adjoining buildings with a completely new brick front. Other later buildings in the district replaced those lost to fire or filled historically vacant lots. Others simply replaced older historic buildings that were no longer useful. The first of these later buildings was the Canfield Building in 1939 (part of Bldg #8). By 1962, just prior to Frederick Furniture's total front remodel, the *Grundy Register* remarked how much the commercial district had changed in just a decade:

Buildings on Main Street have been improved from one end to the other in the past 10 years. If the courthouse were not in its usual spot, visitors might pass thru the town wondering what place it is (*Grundy Register*, August 9, 1962).

Buildings constructed during the second phase of development in the period of significance include: the Petersen Implement Co (Bldg #5); the two Franz buildings (Bldg #6 and #7); Canfield & Baughman Building (Bldg #8), built 1939 and 1947, respectively; the Meester Building (Bldg #10), built 1949; Peoples Natural Gas Co (Bldg #9), built 1958; Manly Drug Store (Bldg #12), built 1961; Dudden's Clothing Store (Bldg #29), built 1955; and the Mamminga Building (Bldg #30), built 1952. Together, these newer historic buildings, along with the historic

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remodeled buildings, changed the overall look of the Grundy Center commercial district that remains evident today.

One notable building outside the period of significance is the round Farmers Savings Bank (Bldg #4), built in 1971. This building should be re-evaluated when it is 50 years old, the age of eligibility required for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. It should be evaluated for individual eligibility and/or as a contributing building in an expanded potential historic district.

***Architecture of the Potential Grundy Center Downtown Commercial District***

The potential Grundy Center Commercial Historic District displays the building types and architectural details of a cohesive historic district that developed in two phases, from 1879, just after the fire in the 700 block on the north side of G Avenue to c.1920 and from the 1940s to the mid-1960s. The potential district, therefore, exhibits the characteristics, building types, and architectural styles of a late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century commercial district, mixed with mid-twentieth-century commercial buildings and historic front remodels. The two phases of development are almost equally balanced in number of buildings, with 13 representing the earlier period and 11 representing the later period. Thus, the potential district reflects layers of historical and architectural development in Grundy Center spanning 85 years. Most of the buildings exhibit the distinctive characteristics of their time or type of construction, namely one and two-story brick commercial buildings, the earlier of these exhibiting Italianate, Queen Anne, and Classical Revival details and the later buildings featuring Commercial styles of architecture.

Research and evaluation of the buildings and the potential district followed the historic contexts, typologies, and eligibility criteria set forth in the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Document, *Iowa's Main Street Commercial Architecture* (Nash 2002). Table 3 presents the number of each property type within the district. Both Contributing and Non-Contributing buildings are included in the table.

**Table 3. Main Street Commercial Architecture in Potential Grundy Center Commercial Historic District**

Property Type III	Property Type V	Property Type VI
13	11	4

The following Table 4 gives a brief description of each property type and lists those buildings in the potential historic district that fit each typology. Again, both Contributing and Non-Contributing buildings are included in the table.

**Table 4. Building Typologies in the Potential Grundy Center Commercial Historic District**

Property Type	Brief Description of Typology	Buildings in Potential Historic District
<b>PROPERTY TYPE III: Second Generation and Reconstructing Main Street Buildings</b>	These buildings date from the succeeding years of a town's commercial growth, with Iowa's commercial districts typically reaching a peak in the very late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. The impact of the railroad was reflected in the continued building up of the platted commercial district. Type III buildings are typically multi-story in height and can contain anywhere from one to a number of actual store units. Large block buildings were constructed during this period, with store units often unified along the second floor by a shared façade, cornice, and other details. Type III buildings are most often of masonry construction, usually brick either locally manufactured or shipped in by rail. Many display stylish architectural features.	617-619 G Ave - Bldg #11 625-627 G Ave - Bldg #13 629 G Ave - Bldg #14 701 G Ave - Bldg #15 707-709 G Ave - Bldg #17 711 G Ave - Bldg #18 713-715 G Ave - Bldg #19 721 G Ave - Bldg #21 805 G Ave - Bldg #23 803 G Ave - Bldg #24 624-626 G Ave - Bldg #26 622 G Ave - Bldg #27 606 G Ave - Bldg #31

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Property Type	Brief Description of Typology	Buildings in Potential Historic District
<b>PROPERTY TYPE V: Remodeling Main Street: Face-Lifts and Later Additions</b>	These are older buildings that were updated and remodeled through the years in the attempt to continue to put a progressive face forward in the community. Usually the remodeling is more substantial than just a storefront update, and generally involves the entire façade for a new look, such as Streamlining in the 1930s and 1940s. Type V buildings are also later buildings added to the commercial district that reflect a continued economic vitality in the community. These buildings often replaced older buildings lost to demolition or fire but could also include new construction on previously vacant lots. All Type V buildings would have been remodeled or built within the period of significance.	609 6 <sup>th</sup> St - Bldg #5 601 G Ave - Bldg #6 603 G Ave - Bldg #7 605-609 G Ave - Bldg #8 611 G Ave - Bldg #9 613 G Ave - Bldg #10 621 G Ave - Bldg #12 703 G Ave - Bldg #16 717-719 G Ave - Bldg #20 618 G Ave - Bldg #29 612 G Ave - Bldg #30
<b>PROPERTY TYPE VI: Modern Infill</b>	These buildings were built or completely altered within district boundaries after the period of significance. All are non-contributing.	725 G Ave - Bldg #22 620 G Ave - Bldg #28 630 G Ave - Bldg #25 602 G Ave - Bldg #32

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

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Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Grundy Center, Grundy County, Iowa, 1894, 1902, 1911, 1916, 1928, and 1928, updated to 1939.

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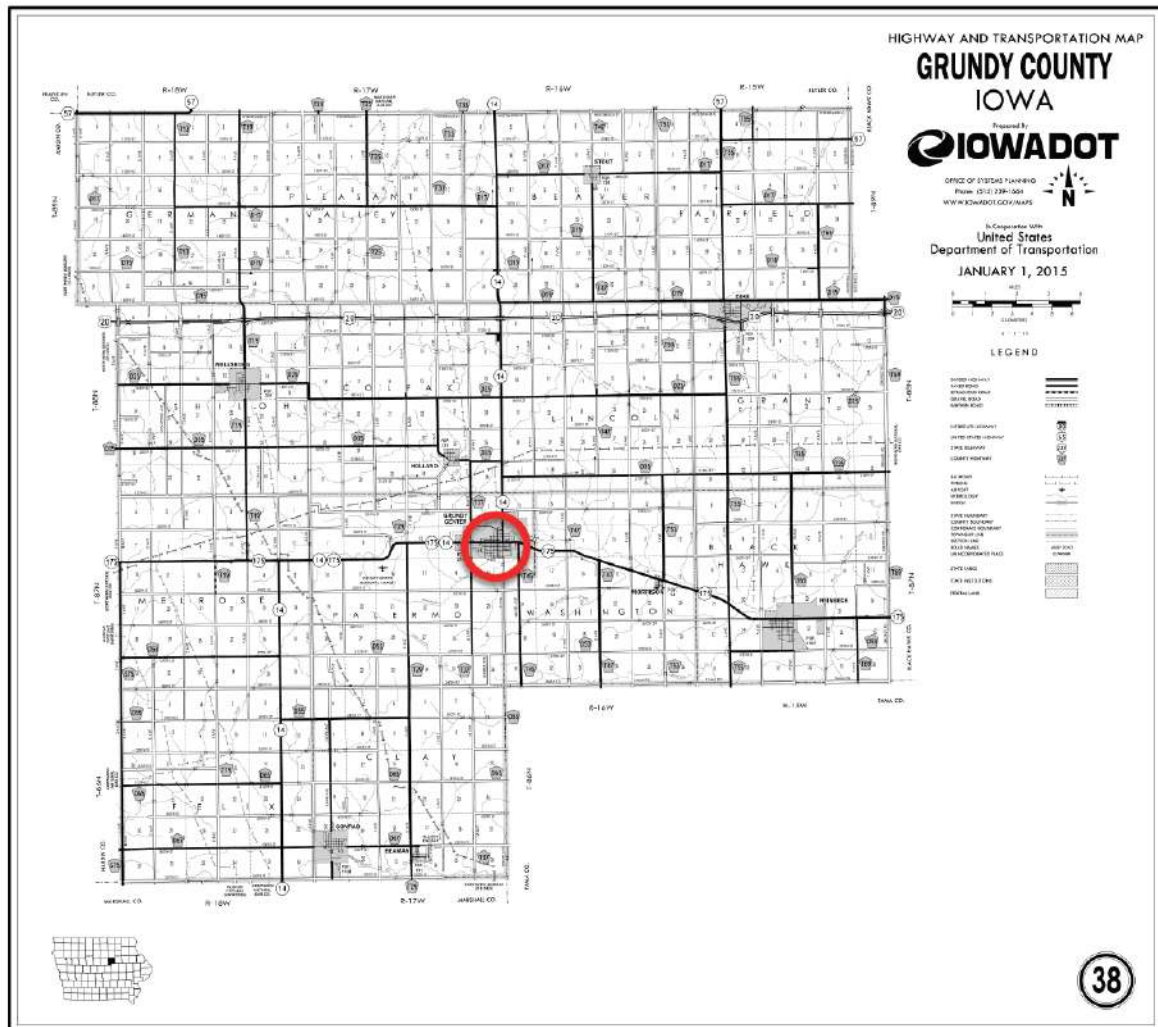
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## 10. Additional Documentation

### General Location Map



Latitude	Longitude
42.361671	-92.770127
42.361703	-92.774408
42.361330	-92.771425
42.361370	-92.772573

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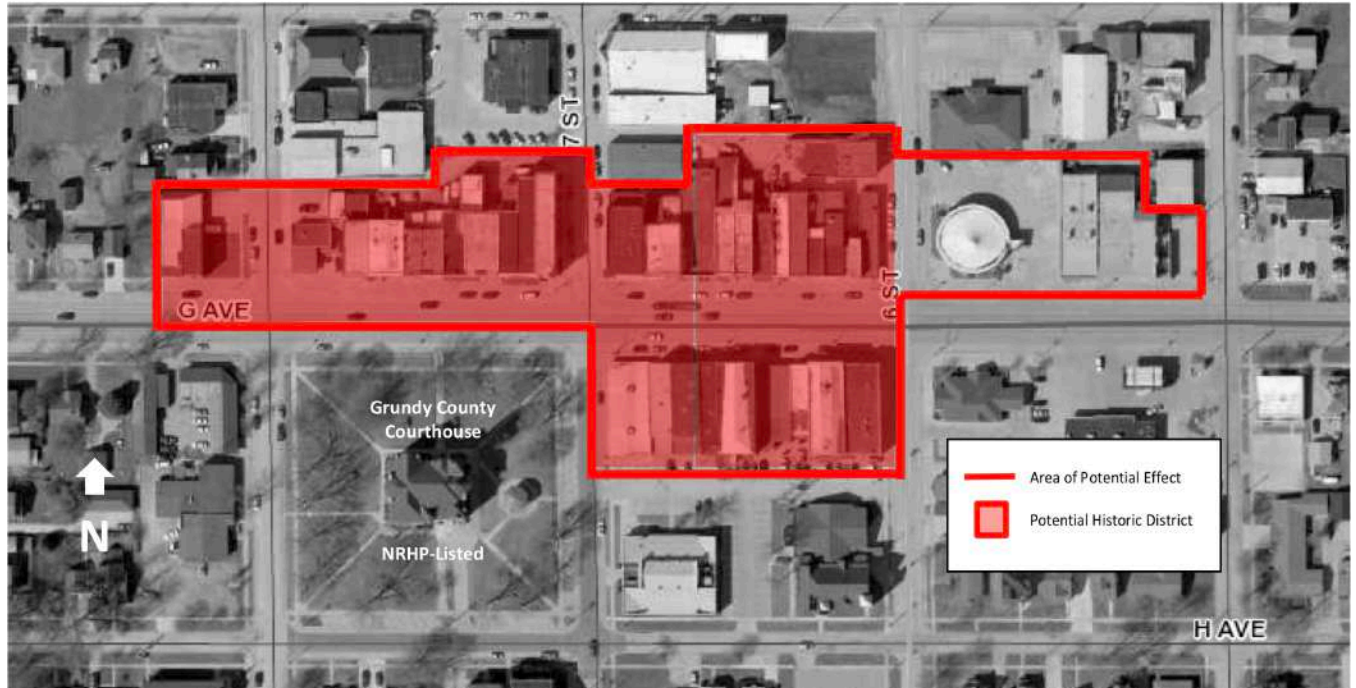
G Avenue, 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> Streets

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**Grundy Center Downtown Façade Revitalization Project Area of Potential Effects (*red boundary*) and  
Potential Grundy Center Commercial Historic District (*red shaded area*)**



Base Map: Grundy County Assessor GIS Map - 2018 Imagery

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## Potential Grundy Center Commercial Historic District

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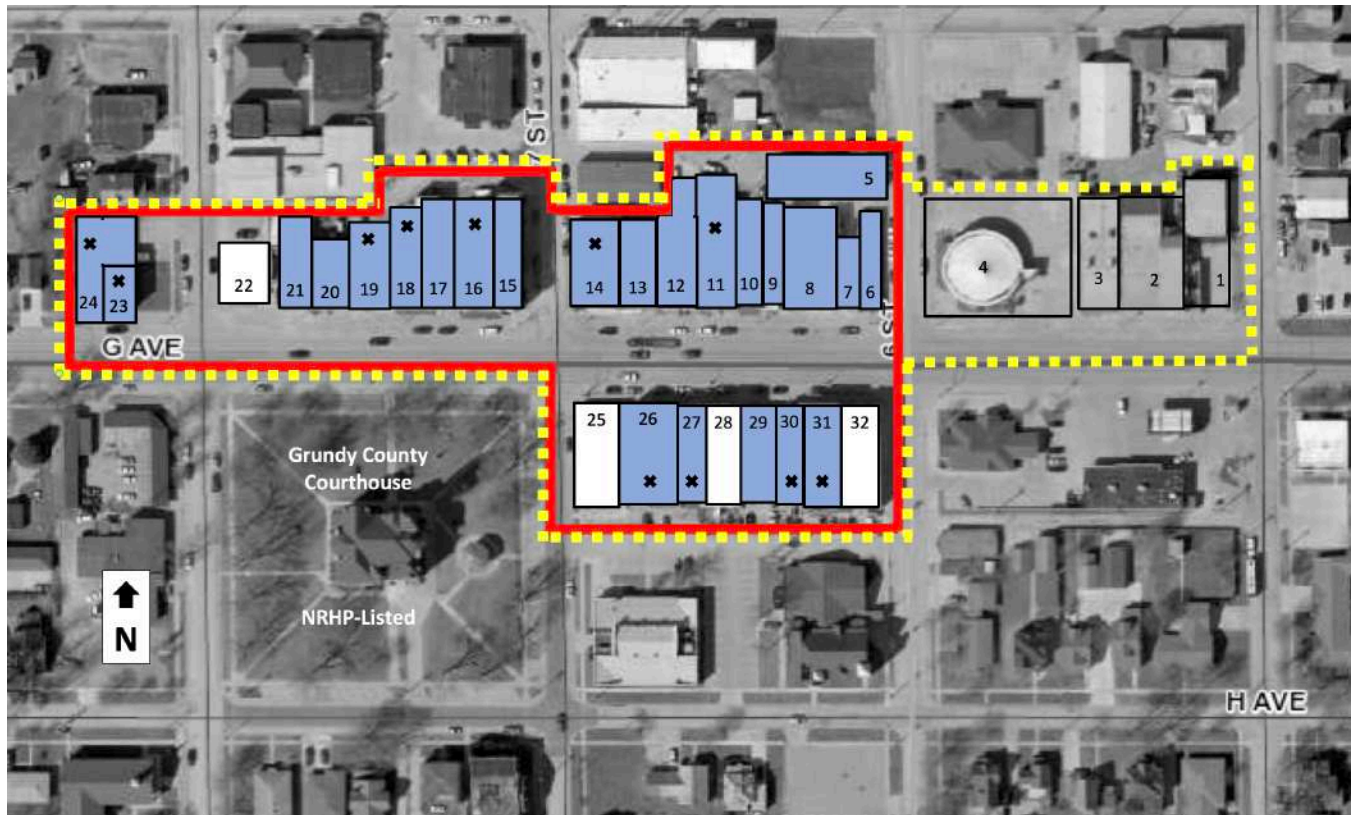
G Avenue, 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> Streets

Grundy Center






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## Potential Grundy Center Commercial Historic District Findings Map



Base Map: Grundy County Assessor GIS Map - 2018 Imagery

-  = Area of Potential Effects (APE)
-  = Preliminary Boundary of Potential Historic District
-  = Contributing Building in Potential Historic District
-  = Non-Contributing Building in Potential Historic District
-  = Participating Building in Downtown Façade Revitalization Project



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**Current Photographs (Area of Potential Effect and Potential Historic District)**

*Photos by Jennifer Price, June 20, 2018*



General view west-northwest on G Avenue from 6<sup>th</sup> Street of potential historic district



General view west-southwest on G Avenue from 6<sup>th</sup> Street of potential historic district

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General view northwest of north side of G Avenue from just west of 8<sup>th</sup> Street



View northwest of 800 block, north side of G Avenue (Bldg #s 24 & 25)



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View northeast of 700 Block, north side of G Avenue from 8<sup>th</sup> Street (Bldg #s 15-22)



View northwest of 700 block, north side of G Avenue (Bldg #s 15 through 22)

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View northeast of 600 block, north side of G Avenue from 7<sup>th</sup> Street (Bldg #s 6-14)



View southwest of 600 block, south side of G Avenue (Bldg #s 25-32).  
Note tower of Grundy County Courthouse visible above the buildings

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View of north side of G Avenue from 6<sup>th</sup> Street



View southeast of 600 block, south side of G Avenue (Bldg #s 25 through 32)



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View northwest of west side of 6<sup>th</sup> Street from near corner of 6<sup>th</sup> Street and G Avenue (Bldg #5)



View northeast of 500 block, north side of G Avenue (Bldg #s 1 through 4 – Outside potential district)

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**Current Building Photographs**

*Photos by Jennifer Price, June 20, 2018*

*O = Outside Potential District; C = Contributing in Potential District; NC = Non-Contributing in Potential District*



Bldg #1 – 505 G Avenue - O



Bldg #2 – 507 G Avenue - O



Bldg #3 – 509 G Avenue - O



Bldg #4 – 529 G Avenue - O



Bldg #5 – 609 6<sup>th</sup> Street - C



Bldg #6 – 601 G Avenue - C



Bldg #7 – 603 G Avenue - C



Bldg #8 – 605-609 G Avenue - C



Bldg #9 – 611 G Avenue - C



Bldg #10 – 613 G Avenue - C



Bldg #11 – 617-619 G Avenue - C



Bldg #12 – 621 G Avenue - C



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Bldg #13 – 625-627 G Avenue - C



Bldg #14 – 629 G Avenue - C



Bldg #15 – 701 G Avenue - C



Bldg #16 – 703 G Avenue - C



Bldg #17 – 707-709 G Avenue - C



Bldg #18 – 711 G Avenue - C



Bldg #19 – 713-715 G Avenue - C



Bldg #20 – 717-719 G Avenue - C



Bldg #21 – 721 G Avenue - C

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Bldg #22 – 725 G Avenue - NC



Bldg #23 – 805 G Avenue - C



Bldg #24 – 803 G Avenue - C



Bldg #25 – 630 G Avenue - NC



Bldg #26 – 626-628 G Avenue - C



Bldg #27 – 622 G Avenue - C



Bldg #28 – 620 G Avenue - NC



Bldg #29 – 618 G Avenue - C



Bldg #30 – 612 G Avenue - C



Bldg #31 – 606 G Avenue - C



Bldg #32 – 602 G Avenue - NC



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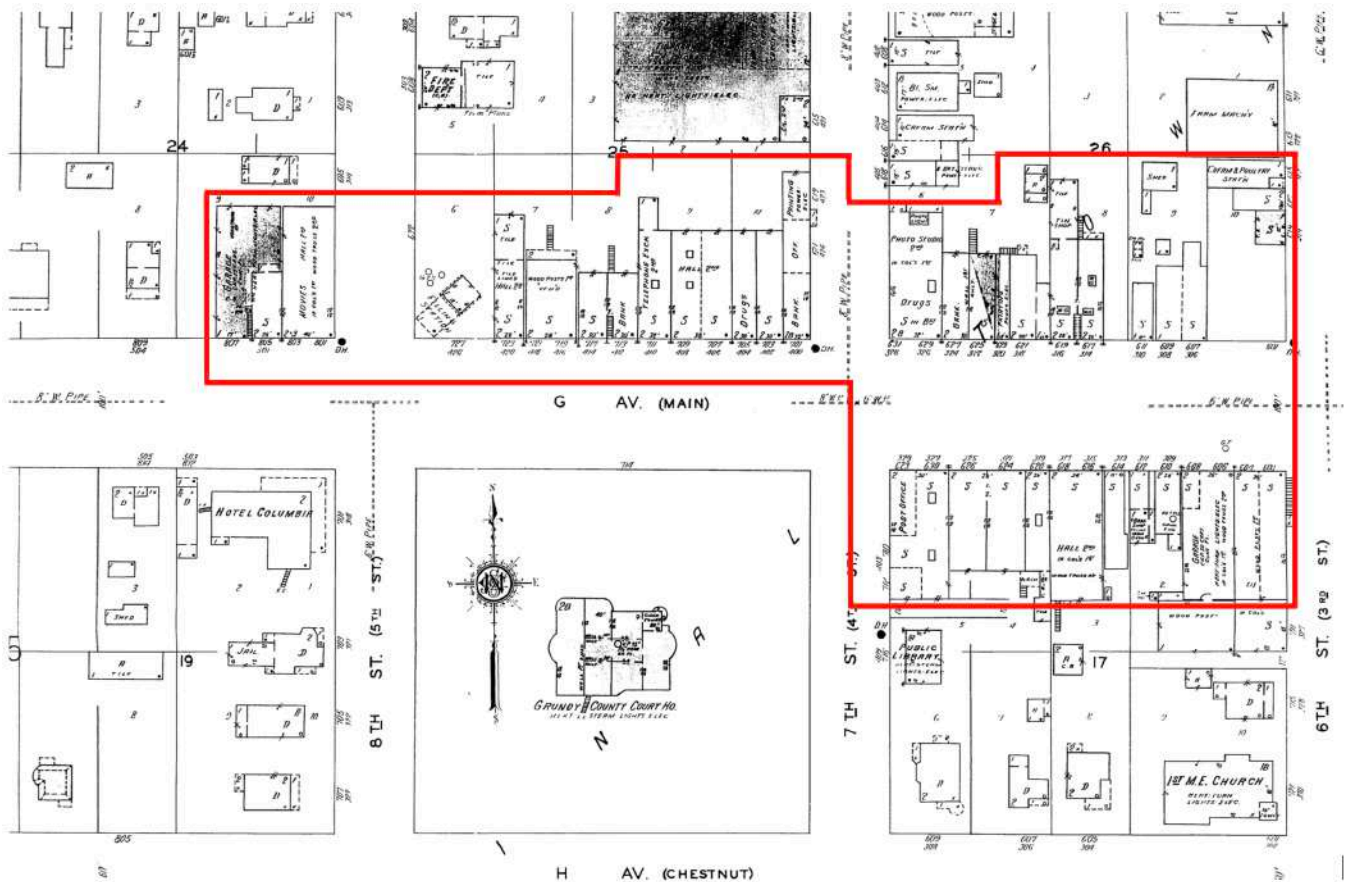
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**Historical Documentation**



Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Grundy Center, 1928, with preliminary boundary of potential historic district



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View northeast of 700 block of G Ave, 1890s



View southwest of south side of G Ave, 1890s

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View northeast of 700 block of G Ave, 1890s



View west on G Ave from 5<sup>th</sup> Street, 1909



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View east on G Ave from 7<sup>th</sup> Street, c.1915



View east of Hummel Block (#14) and Peoples Savings Bank/The Racket Store (#13) and north side of G Avenue, c.1920

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View west on G Ave from 7<sup>th</sup> Street, 1940s



View northwest of northeast corner of 8<sup>th</sup> and G Avenue, 1920s. Gem Theatre/Knights of Pythias Hall on corner is nonextant



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View northeast from Grundy County Courthouse of north side of G Ave, 1940s



View northwest of 700 block of G Ave, 1940s

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View of first front remodel (1939) of Frederick Furniture, c.1940

**Fredericks Grand Opening Friday-Saturday**



Front Remodel of Frederick Furniture, 1963

Source: *Grundy Register*, March 28, 1963