

# Iowa Site Inventory Form

## State Historic Preservation Office

(January 2016)

State Inventory Number: 38-00349 ☒ 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.**

### • Property Name

A) Historic name: Marathon Service Station (Citgo Service Station)

B) Other names: Chuck's City Service; The Apple Tree

### • Location

A) Street address: 725 (727) G Avenue

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: O.P. Block(s): 25 Lot(s): Parts of 6

### • 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

—	Buildings	<u>1</u>
—	Sites	—
—	Structures	—
—	Objects	—
—	<b>Total</b>	<u>1</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: Grundy Center Commercial Historic District Historic district site inventory number: 38-00318

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

14D07 TRANSPORTATION/gas station

B) Current functions

02G01 COMMERCE/TRADE/café or diner

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

A) Architectural classification

01 NO STYLE

B) Materials

Foundation (visible exterior): \_\_\_\_\_

Walls (visible exterior): WOOD; 10B CONCRETE/block

Roof: 08A ASPHALT/shingle

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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

• **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*

\_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

**E) Significant dates**

*Construction date*

1951 ☐ *check if circa or estimated date*

*Other dates, including renovations*

1976

**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: Alexa McDowell/Architectural Historian Date: May 05, 2020

Organization/firm: AKAY Consulting E-mail: alexa@akayconsulting.com

Street address: 4252 Oakland Avenue Telephone: 515-491-5432

City or Town: Minneapolis State: IA Zip code: 55407

• **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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Related District Number: 38-00318

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Marathon Service Station (Citgo Service Station)

Grundy

Name of Property

County

725 (727) G Avenue

Grundy Center

Address

City

**Property Description**

The Marathon Station building is located on the southwest corner of block 25 on the northeast corner of G Ave and 8<sup>th</sup> Street, north of courthouse square. The building is sited on the west 59-ft. of Lot 6 of Block 25. The freestanding building is the westernmost building on this block of otherwise, contiguously located commercial buildings. The buildings are representative of a variety of construction dates and architectural styles, spanning the late 19<sup>th</sup> century through the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

Built in 1951 and extensively remodeled in 1976, the Marathon Station building is a single bay, one-story, 60- by 60-ft. building with a façade facing G Avenue on the south. The concrete block building is finished in diagonally laid, wood siding on the south, west, and east elevations with the rear (north) block exposed. The rear section of the building's roof is flat which, at about the mid-point and over the west 2/3s of the building, becomes a shed roof that extends at an angle to provide shelter over a front porch. The pitched roof is finished in asphalt shingles.

The porch, which extends the full width of the façade, is supported by four square columns with simple capitals. The middle two columns extend past the roof height to provide the mounting points for the business sign. The porch is approximately 8-feet deep, with long sections of bench seating abutting the building. A shallow version of the porch is attached to the east 1/3 of the building.

The south elevation of the building (located under the porch) has an entrance located on-center that is flanked by large, fixed windows. The entrance is reached by two wood steps with wood handrails on either side.

The west elevation has a single, large, fixed pane window near the south end of the elevation and a service door near the north end of the elevation.

The remainder of the property is characterized by an outdoor seating area nestled in the space created by the extended portion of the porch and the main body of the building on the east 1/3 of the building. The seating area has a perimeter fence and tables and chairs.

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### Statement of Significance

As established in the district site form, “the potential Grundy Center Commercial Historic District is locally significant and eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. 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” (Price, 2018).

As stated in the 2018 document, “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” (Price, 2018).

Following these established guidelines for evaluating eligibility, the Marathon Station was evaluated for its ability to contribute to the significance of the historic district under Criterion A, in association with what the 2018 evaluation identified as “Continued Downtown Investment: New Fronts and New Buildings, 1940-1963” and/or under Criterion C as a resource that demonstrates the “characteristics, building types, and architectural styles of a late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century commercial district.” With a construction date of 1951, the Marathon Station falls within the district’s period of significance. However, due to the 1976 renovation, which fully converted the building for a new use and erased the 1950s era character, the building has lost all sense of its historic character and is counted a non-contributing resource to the potential historic district.

### Historical Background

The city's street numbering system evolved as the town grew. The 1894 fire insurance map notes that the primary east-west roadway was Main Street (now G Avenue) with north-south streets numbered Fourth Street (now 7th Street), Third Street (now 6th Street), and Second Street (now 5th Street). The method of numbering buildings was also revised, with changes made between issuance of the 1902 and 1911 fire insurance maps and again between the 1916 and 1928 fire insurance maps. By 1928 the present system of street names and building numbers was in place.

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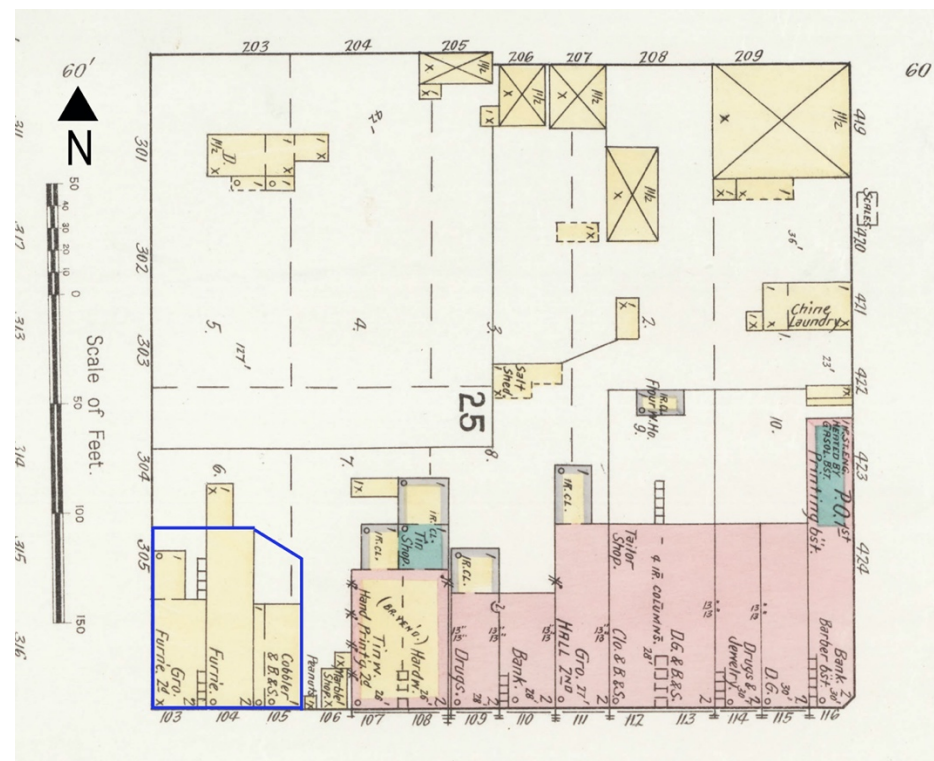
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The lot upon which the Marathon Station building is sited was developed by 1874. Between 1874 and the current building, which was constructed in 1951, there were five different buildings located on this parcel. At the time of the 1879 fire, which destroyed most of this block of G Avenue, the City Hall Block was located here. The City Hall Block was a two-story, 40- by 100-ft., brick building built in 1877 by R.T. Miller and the Elliot brothers; like the buildings to its east, the building was lost in the fire.

The first post-fire record of the parcel is the 1894 fire insurance map, which places a pair of 2-story, wood-frame buildings and one, 1-story, wood-frame building on the parcel. The buildings were occupied by a grocer and furniture store (west building), a furniture store (middle building), and a cobbler/boot & shoe store in the 1-story on the east (Figure 01). The buildings and occupants remained relatively unchanged until the 1916 fire insurance map (Figure 02).

**Figure 01. Fire Insurance Map – 1894**



(Source: <https://www.loc.gov/collections/sanborn-maps/?fa=location:iowa>. Retrieved 03/15/2019.)

In 1894, three wood-frame buildings were located on the parcel (approximation of the present parcel boundary is outlined in blue). The configuration and occupants remained largely the same on the fire maps of 1902 and 1911.

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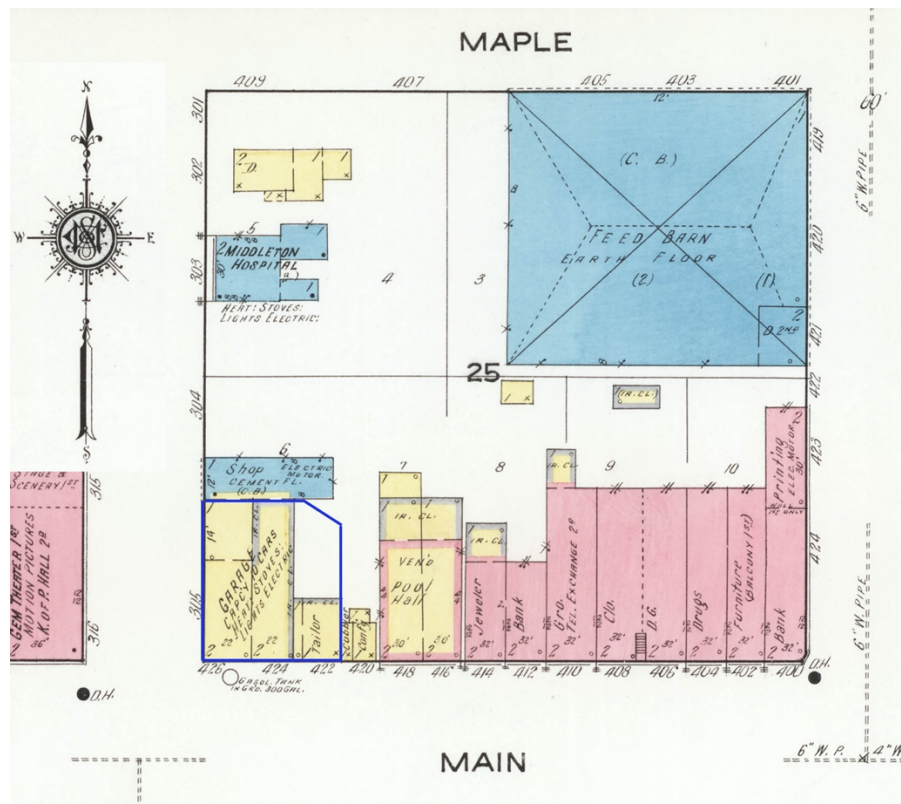
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**Figure 02.** Fire Insurance Map – 1916



(Source: <https://www.loc.gov/collections/sanborn-maps/?fa=location:iowa>. Retrieved 03/15/2019.)

By 1916 the west two commercial buildings on the parcel were occupied by an auto garage. As the map indicates, the garage had the capacity to handle 10 cars and the building was heated by stoves, with electric lights. The map also notes that a one-story, concrete block addition had been made to the rear of the garage (fronting 8<sup>th</sup> Street).

The addition is outside the current parcel boundary.

By 1916 the two west buildings located on the parcel were occupied by an automobile garage, with a one-story concrete block addition on the north (outside the present parcel boundary). That shift to an automobile-related commercial enterprise coincides with the rising popularity of the auto and the development of businesses that catered to the touring public. The one-story, wood-frame building on the east was occupied by a tailor.

By 1928 a new building was located on the corner lot; a one-story, square building with a deep canopy was sited at an angle, its façade facing southwest (Figure 03). Gas tanks were positioned north of the building. Although no historic images have been found to document the building's appearance, common to the property type, the building was sited so that auto traffic could enter from G Avenue to pass under the canopy, gas up, and pass out onto 8<sup>th</sup> Street on the west. The corner location and diagonal orientation

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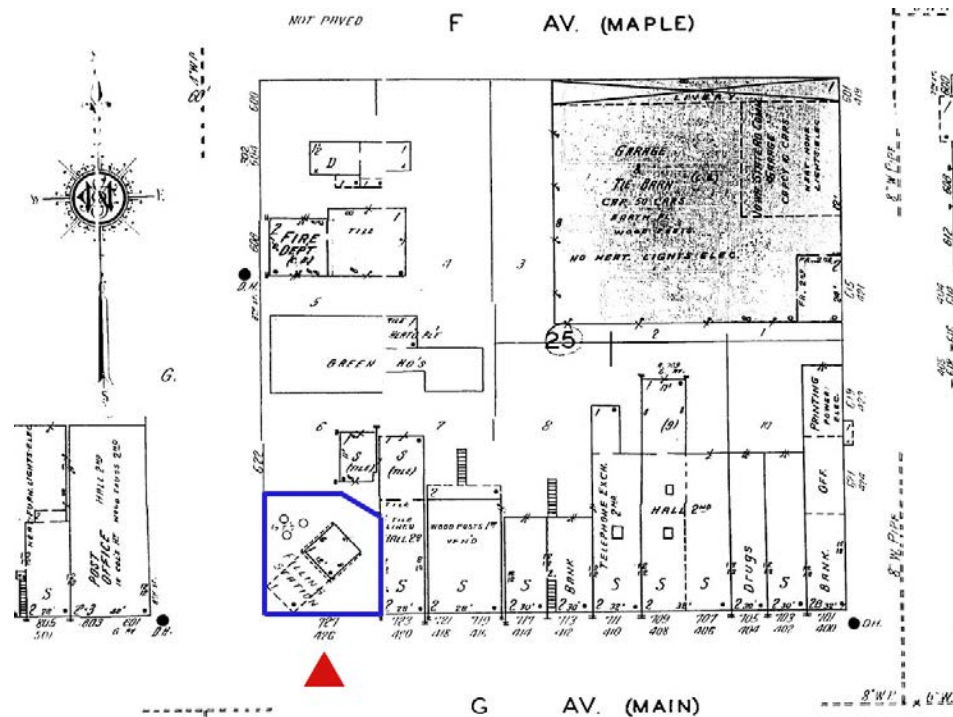
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of the building made that possible. The parcel and filling station remained unaltered on the 1939 revision of the 1928 fire insurance map.

**Figure 03.** Fire Insurance Map – 1928



(Source: <https://www.loc.gov/collections/sanborn-maps/?fa=location:iowa>. Retrieved 03/15/2019.)

By 1928, a gas station was located on the site (outlined in blue). The fire insurance map records its diagonal orientation on the lot.

The centennial history indicates that the current building was constructed in 1951 as a Marathon Filling Station and continued to provide automotive services to Grundy Center until the building was remodeled in 1976; the building was then occupied by The Apple Tree and B.K. Willoughby Tax Services. Although the original appearance of the Marathon Station cannot be discerned today, its orientation (squared to G Avenue on the south) sets the building apart from its ca.1916 predecessor. There are no recorded occupancies between the publishing of the centennial in 1977 and the district evaluation in 2018 when the occupant was recorded as the Landmark Bistro. The Landmark Bistro remains the building occupant as of 2020.



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**Table 01.** Table of Occupancy

Year	Business		Source	Notes
1874	West Room: G.N. Goodwin	East Room: Robert Talbott Miller Store Upper Story: City Hall	Centennial	
1877	"City Hall Block" Constructed		Centennial	Constructed by R.T. Miller and Elliot Brothers
1879	W.R. Laybourne, General Store		Centennial	
1879			Centennial	Original structure destroyed 2 weeks after Jan. 1879 fire
1880's	Snyder Brothers Hardware, Tinware and Wagon Wood Stock		Centennial	From 1880's-1918 the centennial notes that the businesses list could have either occupied 723 or 725 location
1880-1893	A.C. Aykens and Company Dry Goods and Groceries		Centennial	
1894	Furniture Grocery	Furniture	Sanborn	Address marked 103 and 104
1888	W.R. Laybourne Hardware		Centennial	
1892	Laybourne and Ricken General Hardware		Centennial	
1893-1905	H.W. Engelkes Furniture and Funeral Business		Centennial	
1896	George A. Laybourne and Company, Dry Goods and Shoes		Centennial	
1898	John Hut, Manufacturer of boots and shoes		Centennial	
1902	Gentleman's Store		Sanborn	
1902	Koobs and Fricken Tailor Shop		Centennial	
	"Old Gem Theater"		Centennial	
1911	Moving Pictures	Vacant	Sanborn	Address marked 424 and 426
1916	Garage		Sanborn	
?-1918	Gilmore Garage		Centennial	
1918			Centennial	Gilmore Garage burned down
1919	Grundy Oil Company		Centennial	
1926	Ralph J. Pabst Service Station		Centennial	
1928	"filling station"		Sanborn	
1939	Filling Station		Sanborn	Address marked 727
1940	Marathon Service		Centennial	
1950			2018 District Evaluation	Recorded new building
<b>1951</b>			Centennial	New Marathon Station Built
1955	Art Mills Cities Service		Centennial	
1957	Chuck's City Service		Centennial	
1959			Assessor	
1968-1973	Chuck and Ethel Rhoads Gulf Station		Centennial	
1974	B.K. Willoughby Tax Office		Centennial	



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1976		District Evaluation	Remodel
1976	The Apple Tree	Centennial	
1977	B.K. Willoughby Tax Office	The Apple Tree	Centennial
2018	The Landmark Bistro	2018 Photographs	
2019	The Landmark Bistro	2019 Photographs	

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

The following paragraphs are excerpted from Price's 2018 survey and evaluation of the potential historic district, which provide the historical context for evaluating resources constructed during the period from 1940-1963, particularly related to the impact of the automobile.

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. 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 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.

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**Bibliography**

“Go Walkabout Grundy: The Liberty Tour.” Booklet for the Felix Grundy Festival, 1991. Available at the Grundy County Historical Society Museum.

“Go Walkabout Grundy: The Orion Tour.” Booklet for the Felix Grundy Festival, 1992. Available at the Grundy County Historical Society Museum.

*Grundy Center: A Centennial Portrait, 1977.* Grundy Center, IA: Grundy Center Area Centennial, Inc., 1977.

Price, Jennifer A. “Grundy Center Commercial Historic District.” Iowa Site Inventory Form, 2018.

Grundy County Historical Society Museum. Grundy Center, Iowa.

Newspapers

*The Grundy Republican.* “A Live Town.” January 03, 1895.

*The Grundy Republican.* Advertisement for Jacobs Bros. January 03, 1895.

*The Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette,* “Grundy Center News: Grundy Center experiencing quite a boom in building.” June 09, 1900.

*The Grundy Republican.* Advertisement for Jacobs & Co. November 11, 1900.

*The Grundy Republican.* “Historical Sketch. Early Days of Grundy County and Grundy Center.” November 11, 1900.

*The Grundy Register, Diamond Jubilee Edition.* Misc. advertisements for local businesses. June 05, 1952.

Online Resources

Grundy County Assessor. <https://beacon.schneidercorp.com>. Retrieved 03/26/2019.

Library of Congress Sanborn Map Collection. <https://www.loc.gov/collections/sanborn-maps/?fa=location:iowa>. Retrieved 03/15/2019.

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**Geographic Data**

Latitude/Longitude: NW 42.361815/-92.773841  
NE 42.361815/-92.773686  
SE 42.361744/-92.773686  
SE-2 42.361744/-92.773745  
SE-3 42.361671/-92.773751  
SW 42.361671/-92.773841

**Additional Information**

**01. Assessor's Parcel Map – 2019**



(Source: <https://beacon.schneidercorp.com>. Retrieved 03/20/2019.)

The location of the resource is indicated in YELLOW. The building is located on Block 25, part of Lot 6.

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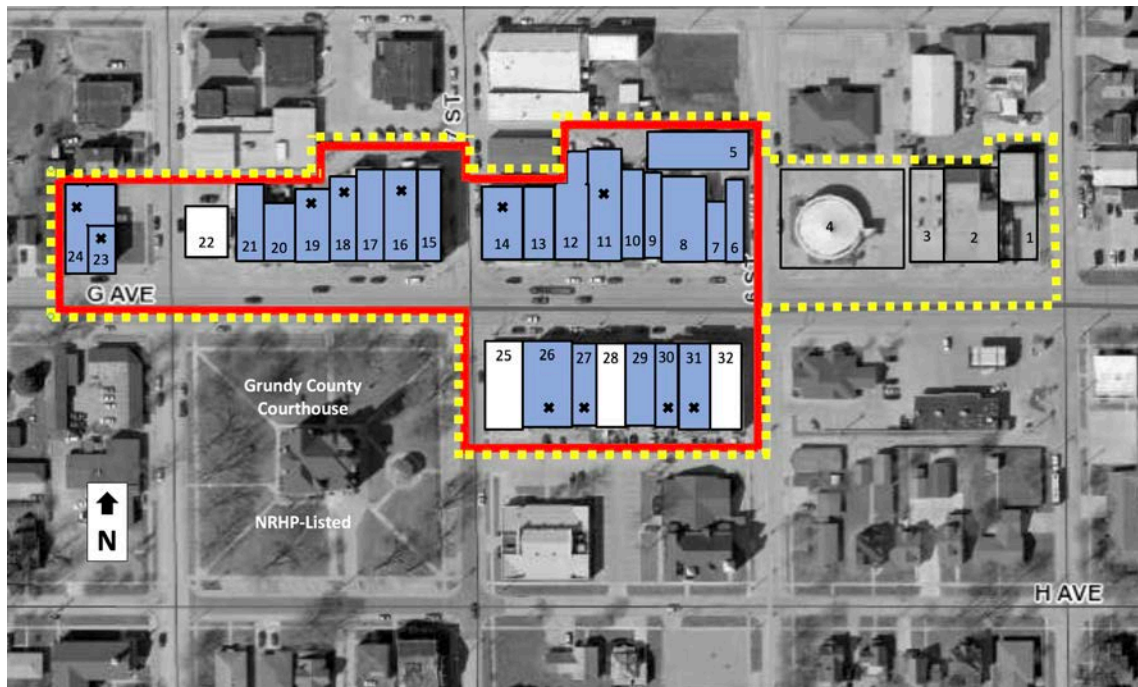
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**02. Potential District Boundary Map – 2018**



(Source: Jennifer Price, "Grundy Center Commercial Historic District," Iowa Site Form, 2018.)

The red outline indicates the proposed district boundaries.  
The Marathon Service Station Building is noted as building '22'.

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**Additional Information:** Photographs (06/08/2019)

**01. Streetscape View: Looking NE along G Avenue and 8<sup>th</sup> Street**



**02. Streetscape View: Looking NW along G Avenue and 7<sup>th</sup> Street**





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**03.** View of façade (south) and west elevation, looking NE across G Avenue and 8<sup>th</sup> Street



**04.** View of façade (south), looking north across G Avenue



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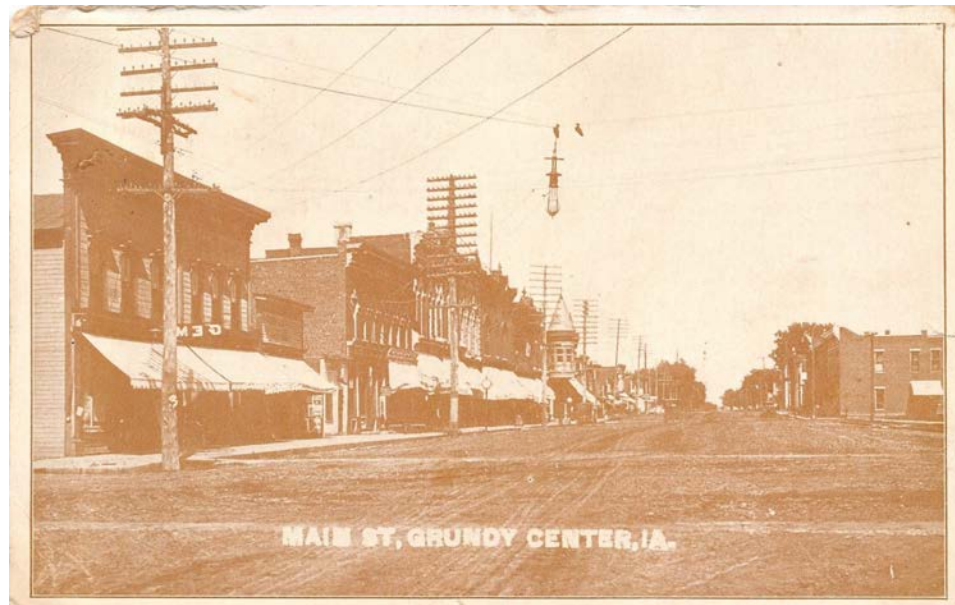
Grundy Center

Address

City

**Additional Information:** Historic Images

**01.** View of the north side of G Avenue, looking east from 8<sup>th</sup> Street – ca.1900



(Source: Grundy Center Historical Society.)

The site upon which the building is sited is at left; at this time, a 2-story wood-frame building occupied the parcel.



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**02. View of streetscape looking NW from G Ave and 7<sup>th</sup> Street toward 8<sup>th</sup> Street**



(Source: Grundy Center Historical Society.)