

Site Inventory Form
State Historical Society of Iowa
 (November 2005)

State Inventory No. 29-01251 New Supplemental
 Part of a district with known boundaries (enter inventory no.) _____
 Relationship: Contributing Noncontributing
 Contributes to a potential district with yet unknown boundaries
 National Register Status:(any that apply) Listed De-listed NHL DOE
 9-Digit SHPO Review & Compliance (R&C) Number _____
 Non-Extant (enter year) _____

1. Name of Property

historic name Des Moines County Courthouse
 other names/site number Downtown Survey Map # DT-27

2. Location

street & number 513 N. Main Street
 city or town Burlington vicinity, county Des Moines
 Legal Description: (If Rural) Township Name _____ Township No. _____ Range No. _____ Section _____ Quarter of Quarter _____
 (If Urban) Subdivision Original City Block(s) _____ Lot(s) Lot 197 - except south 6" - except w 1/2 of n 1/3

3. State/Federal Agency Certification [Skip this Section]

4. National Park Service Certification [Skip this Section]

5. Classification

Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property			
	If Non-Eligible Property		If Eligible Property, enter number of:	
	Enter number of:		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	—	buildings	<u>1</u>	—
<input type="checkbox"/> district	—	sites	—	—
<input type="checkbox"/> site	—	structures	—	—
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	—	objects	—	—
<input type="checkbox"/> object	—	Total	<u>1</u>	—

Name of related project report or multiple property study (Enter "N/A" if the property is not part of a multiple property examination).
 Title Intensive Level Historical and Architectural Survey of "East" Downtown Burlington, IA Historical Architectural Data Base Number 29-034

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
<u>04J01: Courthouse / County</u>	<u>04J01: Courthouse / County</u>
<u>04C02: Correctional facility / Jail</u>	

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)	Materials (Enter categories from instructions)
<u>08: Modern</u>	foundation <u>10B: Poured concrete</u>
	walls (visible material) <u>03: Brick</u>
	roof _____
	other _____

Narrative Description (SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" representing your opinion of eligibility after applying relevant National Register criteria)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended	A	Property is associated with significant events.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended	B	Property is associated with the lives of significant persons.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended	C	Property has distinctive architectural characteristics.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended	D	Property yields significant information in archaeology or history.

County Des Moines Address 513 N. Main Street Site Number 29-01251
City Burlington District Number _____

Criteria Considerations

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

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

26: Politics/government
02: Architecture

Significant Dates

Construction date 1939-40 check if circa or estimated date
Other dates, including renovation _____

Significant Person

(Complete if National Register Criterion B is marked above)

Architect/Builder

Architect Keffer & Jones, Des Moines, IA
Builder Paul Stenberg Construction, St. Paul, MN

Narrative Statement of Significance (SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography See continuation sheet for citations of the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form

10. Geographic Data

UTM References (OPTIONAL)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	_____	_____	2	_____	_____
3	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

See continuation sheet for additional UTM references or comments

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kristin Lampe and Barb Mackey, volunteers Rebecca L. McCarley, consultant, Davenport
organization Burlington Historic Preservation Commission date December 17, 2012
street & number City Hall, 400 Washington Street telephone 319-753-8158
city or town Burlington state Iowa zip code 52601

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION (Submit the following items with the completed form)

FOR ALL PROPERTIES

- Map:** showing the property's location in a town/city or township.
- Site plan:** showing position of buildings and structures on the site in relation to public road(s).
- Photographs:** representative black and white photos. If the photos are taken as part of a survey for which the Society is to be curator of the negatives or color slides, a photo/catalog sheet needs to be included with the negatives/slides and the following needs to be provided below on this particular inventory site:

Roll/slide sheet #	_____	Frame/slot #	_____	Date Taken	_____
Roll/slide sheet #	_____	Frame/slot #	_____	Date Taken	_____
Roll/slide sheet #	_____	Frame/slot #	_____	Date Taken	_____

See continuation sheet or attached *photo & slide catalog sheet* for list of photo roll or slide entries.

Photos/illustrations without negatives are also in this site inventory file.

FOR CERTAIN KINDS OF PROPERTIES, INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING AS WELL

- Farmstead & District:** (List of structures and buildings, known or estimated year built, and contributing or noncontributing status)
- Barn:**
 - A sketch of the frame/truss configuration in the form of drawing a typical middle bent of the barn.
 - A photograph of the loft showing the frame configuration along one side.
 - A sketch floor plan of the interior space arrangements along with the barn's exterior dimensions in feet.

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

Concur 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: _____

Evaluated by (name/title): _____ Date: _____

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Des Moines County Courthouse

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7. Narrative Description

***This information is from National Register of Historic Places Registration form for Des Moines County Courthouse, prepared by Marlys A. Svendsen, January 2003.*

This building is constructed of poured concrete with a two-tone brick and stone facing. The foundation is clad in Bedford limestone while the walls are faced in mottled tan and light brown-colored brick set in a light gray mortar. Decorative cut stone is also Bedford limestone. The front of the building is 11 bays wide and 4 stories high. A one-story addition built in the 1970s is located on the north end of the building. The raised foundation is clad in brick with a limestone watertable separating the ground level and first floor. The central seven bays set forward approximately 4 feet and the parapet height is approximately 2 feet higher than the two-bay north and south sections. The center five bays are set off by vertical cut stone trim and the darker toned brick for the recessed brick panels separating the windows. Octagonal stone pieces are set between the ground floor windows and the first floor windows. Cut limestone is used elsewhere on the facade for the entrance surround, the solid blocks that form the balustrade for the entrance steps, all window sills, the beltcourse between the ground level and first floor, a lintel band over the third floor windows, and coping. Cast bronze lettering mounted on the brick wall above the five center bays reads, "Des Moines County Court House." The building's original flat roof was augmented with the installation of a low-pitched hipped roof in the mid-1990s. The roof is not visible from Main Street. The concrete entrance steps are centered on the front elevation between the stone block balustrades. The front entrance surround consists of large cut-stone pieces laid on both sides of the door and over the transom. The vertical edges of the stone pieces facing the entrance doors are curved. The beltcourse between the ground and first floor ties into the stone surround. The transom above the door originally had an elaborate metal grillwork design. This was removed and replaced with a clear glass transom around 1976 when all of the windows were replaced and again in 1997. The new windows in the balance of the building are fabricated of metal with a combination of operable casement sash and fixed metal infill panels.

On the north and south elevations, the courthouse has eight narrow bays with a height of four stories on the south and three stories on the north due to changes in elevation. An at-grade entrance is located along the south facade with approaches from both the south parking lot and Main Street, the latter created by removal of steps and construction of a concrete ramp. Mechanical equipment for the buildings ventilating and air conditioning system is located on a metal deck at the southwest corner of the building. When the building had a new roof installed in the mid-1990s a new sheet metal gutter was installed along the parapet. It has a dentiled design and is painted dark brown. The low pitch of the building's current hipped roof is not visible from the south parking lot.

In addition to the elevation differences between the north and south facades, the north facade has a one-story addition which was added in the late 1970s. A three-story addition at the northwest corner of the building originally contained a garage in the ground level and storage areas on the first and second floors. Construction of the addition eliminated the garage approach from Main Street, placing two levels of offices in its place. The walls are tan-colored brick with stone trim that may have been relocated from the original building's beltcourse when the new space was created. New windows are stair-stepped along the steeply sloping wall of the addition. Window arrangements in the upper levels

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match the south elevation. A similar dentiled gutter is installed for roof drainage. Additional air-handling equipment is located of the roof of the addition.

The rear (west) side of the building faces Blackstone Alley. Brick walls and stone trim match that of the balance of the building. The location of a three-story garage/office addition at the northwest corner of the building reduces the facade's symmetry. The building's original rear entrance is centered on the west facade. A stone surround frames the opening with the original painted metal double doors, each with four horizontal lights, set beneath the multi-light transom. A dentiled gutter installed when the low-pitched hipped roof was constructed in the 1990s extends along the rear parapet. The roof is not visible from the alley, but can be seen from certain vantage points a half-block to the west along N. Third Street. New windows installed in the rear elevation are of a similar design to others replaced in 1997.

8. Narrative Statement of Significance

Per the 2003 National Register of Historic Places form, the Des Moines County Court House derives its significance as one of ten county courthouses built in Iowa during the New Deal Era with funding assistance from the federal Public Works Administration. Its construction represented a significant public investment of federal and local tax dollars made at a time when this rural county was hard pressed by the Great Depression. Designed by Des Moines architects Karl Keffer and Earl Jones, it is a well-preserved example of the PWA Moderne Style of public building architecture that dominated the 1930s and early 1940s. The building was listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places in 2003.

At this time, the Des Moines County Court House has not been included within the recommended boundary for the potential Downtown Commercial Historic District. It is located at the far north end of the potential district boundary, somewhat removed from the core of downtown. Its governmental use is similar to City Hall, which is located within the Heritage Hills Historic District and is excluded from the Downtown Commercial Historic District, which is focused more on the commercial/retail sector of the downtown. Further information on the Downtown Commercial Historic District can be found on Iowa Site Inventory Form #29-03685.

History from Marlys Svendsen, National Register of Historic Places form, 2003:

The Des Moines County Court House was designed by the architectural firm of Keffer and Jones with offices in Des Moines, approximately 155 miles northwest of Burlington. The firm developed a solid reputation in the state, eventually receiving commissions for dozens of schools and collegiate buildings. The firm designed twelve major buildings at the Iowa State Fairgrounds between 1920 and 1936 and a number of commissions for the Des Moines School District between 1921 and 1939. Architectural historian Wesley Shank credits their work on schools to their ability to work well with school boards (Shank 1999: 94). The firm developed a similar reputation for their work on county courthouses in the state. Commissions included the O'Brien County Court House (1915-1917) in Primghar, the Ringgold

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County Court House (1926-27) in Mount Ayr, the Louisa County Court House (1926-1927) in Wapello just 25 miles north of Burlington, the Warren County Court House (1938-1939) in Indianola, the Audubon County Court House (1939) in Audubon, and the Des Moines County Court House (1939-1940) in Burlington. According to Shank, the firm's O'Brien County Court House was the first example of a flat-roofed rectangular block form in the state - a basic form that would be repeated in subsequent design efforts.

Des Moines County was the most populous of the counties to apply for a PWA courthouse grant in this period, and Burlington was the largest of the cities to see a courthouse erected. The Des Moines County Court House is the largest of Keffer & Jones' New Deal Era courthouses. The building has four full floors (ground, first, second, and third) for offices, jail, and courtroom areas, and a basement level for storage space and service areas. Its \$280,000 price tag for site, construction, and equipment made it the most costly. The building maintains many of its original furnishings, and despite completion of several major remodeling projects, maintains its most significant features. Successful completion of the courthouse project would lead the way for Keffer and Jones to design buildings for another important county facility, the Des Moines County Home, in 1941.

The Des Moines County Court House formally got underway in August 1938 during meetings of the board of supervisors (Des Moines County Board of Supervisors Minute Book, Volume 11, pp. 183 and 186). The board set September 16, 1938 for a vote on a referendum to authorize the issuance of \$154,000 of bonds. Later that month the board was formally informed by the Omaha Office of the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, successor of the PWA, that Des Moines County's grant covering 45 percent of the project had been approved. The following month, voters approved the referendum authorizing the sale of 20-year bonds and the levying of a tax of up to four tenths of one mill. The approval vote came one day after a similar measure was approved in Audubon County, another county where Keffer and Jones were providing design services.

The next several months saw the architects complete plans for the courthouse, the largest and most costly of the PWA-Era courthouses to be erected in Iowa. The county proceeded to assemble the remaining pieces of ground necessary for the site. A portion of the site was already owned by the county and used as the "County Yard" for storage of lumber and county vehicles. The balance of the new site contained a private dwelling. Bidding was intense for the courthouse construction contracts. Contractors from central and eastern Iowa, Minnesota, and Ohio submitted bids. On February 25, 1939 the general construction contract was awarded to low-bidder Paul Stennberg Construction Co. of St. Paul, Minnesota for \$175,819. Mechanical contracts were awarded to Healey Plumbing & Heating Co., also of St. Paul, and Carstens Brothers (electrical work) of Ackley, Iowa. The jail equipment contract was awarded to Stewart Iron Works Co. of Cincinnati, Ohio. Local newspapers reported that the bid of a local general contractor was rejected because he was \$654 higher than the low bidder from St. Paul. The resident PWA engineer for the job was scheduled to be Earl Krell and Cyril M. Lamb served as the architect's superintendent. The PWA grant provided for 14 months to complete construction for the project, which would set the completion date at January 21, 1940.

Throughout the course of construction, the PWA required that workers be paid minimum wages based on the prevailing wages for various trades. At the national level this measure had been established to

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stabilize wage rates and make sure that public works contracts did not see workers suffer in a competitive environment. The highest paid workers were structural iron workers followed by bricklayers, plumbers, steam fitters, sheetmetal workers, asbestos workers, plasters, and terrazzo workers. The next group of tradesmen included carpenters, electricians, glaziers, painters, roofers, cement finishers, and hoist operators. Truck drivers, teamsters, and helpers for various trades received the lowest hourly rate.

Work proceeded at a slow pace from the start on the courthouse project. Architects Keffer and Jones were delayed 60 days in getting the plans and specifications finished. Work commenced in late April but by August the building had only reached the 20 percent completion stage with a crew of 60 men in various trades at work. By early September 1939, a newspaper account stated that work on the courthouse was 30 percent complete. It was one of two major PWA projects underway at the time, the other being the nearly completed West Burlington elementary and junior high school ("Architect's Drawing of New Court House Here," *Daily Hawk-Eye Gazette*, August 24, 1939; "Court House 30% Complete," *Daily Hawk-Eye Gazette*, September 9, 1939).

When the county requested an extension for the completion of the project from January 21, 1940 to April 13, 1940 the architects' delay was one of several unavoidable delays cited. Subsoil conditions and the resulting changes in plans had necessitated a 46-day delay. The unavailability of terrazzo workers added 28 days to the project and unspecified "trade conditions" made it impossible for equipment suppliers to complete their contracts on time adding another 35 days. The PWA accepted these arguments, and the completion date was extended. Another factor only indirectly suggested for the slow pace of the project was the fact that architects Keffer and Jones had another courthouse project underway at the same time. The approval for the Audubon County Court House was granted only one day earlier. The western Iowa project was smaller, had no contentious labor issues, and was located just 80 miles from Des Moines. The competing Des Moines County Court House was located twice the distance from the capital city and plagued by site problems, labor issues, and a worker shortage. All of these factors likely complicated completion of the Burlington project for the architects. Judging by the straightforward, on schedule completion of the Audubon County Court House, complications with the Des Moines County Court House did not affect the Audubon County project.

In early April 1940 with work nearly finished on the courthouse, workers in various county offices began to move into their new quarters. The *Burlington Hawk-Eye* announced the pending dedication of the new courtroom in the Des Moines County Court House. When Iowa Supreme Court Justice Oscar Hale gave his dedication remarks on April 6, 1940 he related the event to the trying times in Europe. He noted that "it is nice to think that there is an institution which wishes to continue" ("Dedication Remarks," *Daily Hawk-Eye Gazette*, April 6, 1940). There was little opportunity for a major community celebration for the conclusion of the courthouse in subsequent months with daily headlines in the *Hawk-Eye* focused on war news: "Air Battle Rages Over London," "War Flames in Mediterranean," "Conscription Plans Ready." News of the completed courthouse was removed from the front pages as Des Moines County residents followed news wire stories from abroad.

Minutes of the board of supervisors indicate that completion of the courthouse was largely completed by June 1940. In a resolution approved on June 3, 1940, it was agreed that all equipment contractors

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should not be held responsible for missing completion dates on their contracts due to other delays in the project. It should be noted that among the contract holders listed were two regionally important manufacturers from Burlington, the Leopold Company, manufacturers of office equipment, and the Chittenden & Eastman Company, a manufacturer of a wide range of furniture items. Conclusion of the Des Moines County Court House project came on September 16, 1940 when the board of supervisors sold the old county courthouse including the real estate it occupied to Roy Yetter. As a sign of the times, Yetter planned to raze the building and erect a filing station on the site (Old Court House Site Sold - to be New Phillips Station," *Daily Hawk-Eye Gazette*, September 7, 1940).

The building's appearance has undergone some changes over the years, which have been described above. It is still in use as Des Moines County's courthouse in 2012.

9. Major Bibliographical References

City Directories, Burlington, Iowa, various dates. On microfiche at the Burlington Public Library.

Deed records, per transfer books at Des Moines County Auditor's Office.

Downtown Partners, Inc., a Division of the Greater Burlington Partnership, Burlington, Iowa. Collection of collected historic photographs of downtown Burlington.

Newspapers, various titles and editions. Particular special editions utilized:

Burlington Evening Gazette, March 24, 1906

Daily Hawk-Eye Gazette, September 2, 1938

Burlington Hawk-Eye Gazette, August 4, 1942

Burlington Hawk-Eye, July 10, 1962

Burlington Hawk-Eye, July 4, 1976

Sanborn Map Company. "Burlington, Iowa," Fire Insurance Maps. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1886, 1892, 1900, 1931, 1952.

Svendsen, Marlys A. "Des Moines County Court House," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 2003.

Vertical files. Files on business/industry as well as individual businesses. Burlington Public Library, Burlington, Iowa.

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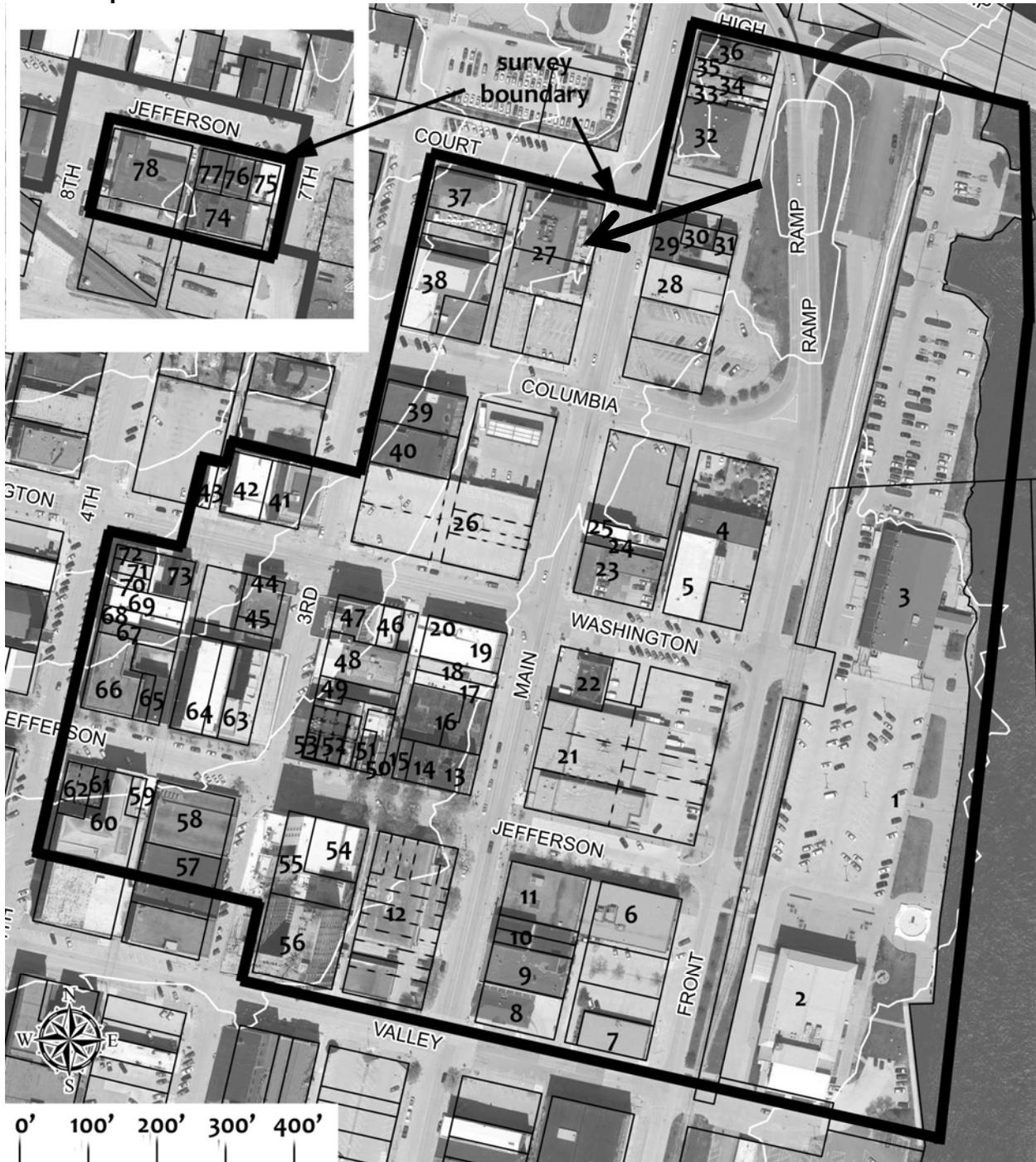
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Location map



Base aerial photography by Aerial Services Inc for Des Moines County GIS Commission, March 2010.

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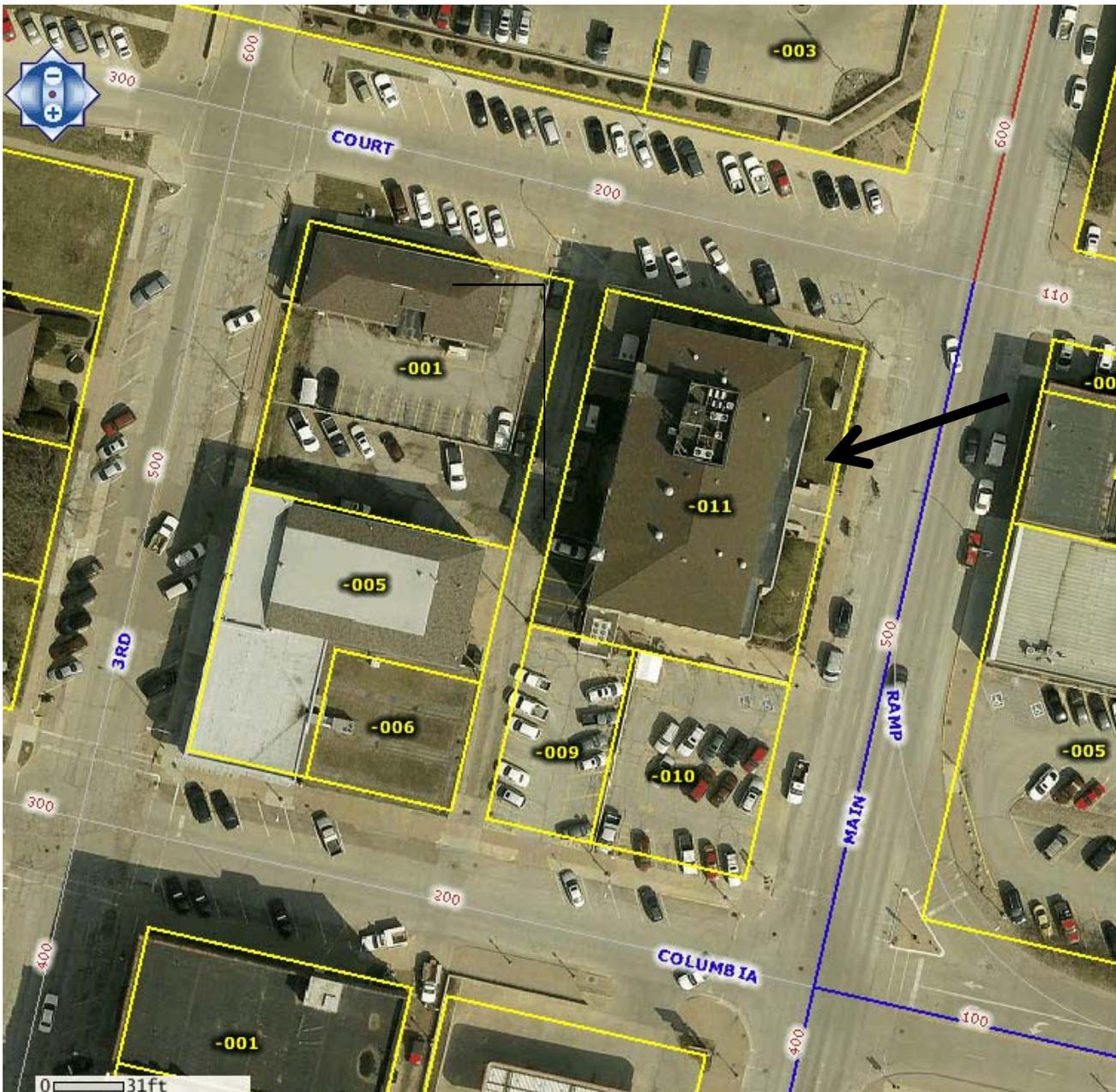
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Building plan (from assessor's website)



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Historic images



Postcard of Court House from c.1950s (Downtown Partners collection)

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Digital photographs



Photograph 29-01251-001 – East (front) and north elevations, looking southwest (McCarley, June 20, 2012).

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Photograph 29-01251-002 – East (front) elevation, looking west (McCarley, June 20, 2012).

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Photograph 29-01251-003 – South and east (front) elevations, looking northwest (McCarley, June 20, 2012).

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Photograph 29-01251-004 – West elevation, looking east (McCarley, June 20, 2012).