

**Site Inventory Form**  
**State Historical Society of Iowa**  
 (December 1, 1999)

State Inventory No. 70-00254  New  Supplemental  
 Part of a district with known boundaries (enter inventory no.) 70-01005  
 Relationship:  Contributing  Noncontributing  
 Contributes to a potential district with yet unknown boundaries  
 National Register Status: (any that apply)  Listed  De-listed  NHL  DOE  
 Review & Compliance No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Non-Extant (enter year) \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Name of Property**

historic name John A. Wilson House  
 other names/site number Field Site #: WH-144

**2. Location**

street & number 316 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
 city or town Muscatine  vicinity, county Muscatine  
 Legal Description: (If Rural) Township Name \_\_\_\_\_ Township No. \_\_\_\_\_ Range No. \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_ Quarter of Quarter \_\_\_\_\_  
 (If Urban) Subdivision Original Town Block(s) 53 Lot(s) N 90' of W 56' of Lot 10

**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>	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____ sites	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____ structures	_____	_____ structures
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____ objects	_____	_____ objects
<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____ Total	<u>1</u>	_____ Total

Name of related project report or multiple property study (Enter "N/A" if the property is not part of a multiple property examination).  
 Title \_\_\_\_\_ Historical Architectural Data Base Number \_\_\_\_\_

A Historical and Architectural Survey of the "West Hill" neighborhood, Muscatine, Iowa 70-016

**6. Function or Use**

<b>Historic Functions</b> (Enter categories from instructions)	<b>Current Functions</b> (Enter categories from instructions)
<u>01A01: Domestic / Single residence</u>	<u>01A01: Domestic/Single residence</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____

**7. Description**

<b>Architectural Classification</b> (Enter categories from instructions)	<b>Materials</b> (Enter categories from instructions)
<u>05B: Italianate</u>	foundation <u>04: Stone</u>
_____	walls <u>03: Brick</u>
_____	roof <u>08A: Asphalt shingles</u>
_____	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 type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" 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 Muscatine Address 316 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Street Site Number 70-00254  
City Muscatine District Number 70-01005

**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)

31: Other/Neighborhood Development

**Significant Dates**

Construction date 1884  check if circa or estimated date  
Other dates 1850s – original construction?

**Significant Person**

(Complete if National Register Criterion B is marked above)

**Architect/Builder**

Architect \_\_\_\_\_

Builder \_\_\_\_\_

**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 Diane Mayer Day, Commission member (R.L. McCarley, consultant)  
organization Muscatine Historic Preservation Commission date 12/22/05  
street & number 215 Sycamore telephone 563-264-1550  
city or town Muscatine state IA zip code 52761

**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 non-contributing 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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## 7. Narrative Description

This is a two-story, three-bay, Italianate house. The house sits on a stone foundation. The walls are brick. The gable-front roof is clad in asphalt shingles. The heavy Italianate styling consists of segmental arch lintels with keystones, pilasters, large brackets, and wide frieze and eaves.

The front (north) elevation consists of three bays, with the main entry on the far left side of the residence. The entry has an elaborate arch design. The wood door is surrounded by sidelights and arched lights over the door. An arched roof projects above the entry, over the simple stoop. Large decorative brackets support the arched roof line. The first story has two four-over-four-light, double-hung windows with brick segmental arch lintels with stone keystones and stone sills. The windows also have wood shutters in the shape of the windows. The second story contains three four-over-four-light, double-hung windows with brick segmental arch lintels with stone keystones and stone sills. The sides of the façade are defined by wide brick pilasters that are divided from the top of the first story windows to the cornice. Two large decorative brackets crown the top of each pilaster and support the front gable returns. Additional smaller brackets are found within the front gable. The gable has a wide decorative frieze with large brick "dentils" under the gable line. Curved brick detailing leads from the pilasters to this gable line.

No historic photograph of this house has been located.

The east elevation consists of the four-bay section of the main house and the side of the rear one-and-one-half-story section. The four bay east elevation of this residence is defined by four pilasters in a similar style as the front pilasters, which are located on either end, between the first and second bays, and between the third and fourth bays. Arches above the second story windows that are part of the frieze define each of the four bays, including the middle division that lacks a pilaster. Large paired decorative brackets are found at the end of each arch. One four-over-four-light double-hung windows are found on the first story of the fourth bay, and two on the second story in the third and fourth bays. Each window has the same design as the windows on the front (north) elevation of the house. The east side of the rear addition has a four-over-four-light double-hung window on the first story and a one-over-one-light double hung. There are two arch topped two-over-two-light double-hung second story window partially inset into the brick work along the frieze. This brickwork includes large projected dentils similar to the front gable with an arch around the window. The heavy decorative brackets seen on the façade continue along the east eave of the house's main front section.

The west elevation of this house is similar to the east elevation. It is also four bays, but has four four-over-four-light double-hung windows on the first and second stories one in each bay. The windows have the same detailing as the front elevation. The west elevation is defined by four pilasters in a similar style as the front pilasters, and they are located on either end, between the first and second bays, and between the third and fourth bays. Arches above the second story windows that are part of the frieze define each of the four bays, including the middle division that lacks a pilaster. Large paired decorative brackets are found at the end of each arch. The west side of the rear addition has two two-over-two-light

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double-hung arch windows on the second story. The first story has an enclosed side porch with an almost flat roof and asphalt shingles. The porch has been enclosed since the 1946 Sanborn map. The west side has five one-over-one-light double-hung windows and an entry. None of these windows or doors match the detail of the rest of the house. The rear (south) elevation of this addition has two one-over-one-light double-hung windows.

The rear (south) gable-end elevation of this residence consists of the one-and-one-half-story gable-roof section that extends further to the rear. The rear (south) elevation of this section contains a single one-over-one-light, double-hung window on the second story. There is also one one-over-one-light double hung window on the first story as well. A basement entry is also located on this elevation. This window does not follow the same pattern as the other windows in the residence. It is not arched topped with lintel or sill detailing. The eaves contain decorative brackets but they do not follow the same pattern as the main house. The brackets are not as ornamental and are not paired as they are on the main house.

There is not a garage for this property.

## 8. Narrative Statement of Significance

The John A. Wilson House appears to be individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C. It also appears to be a contributing building in a potential "West Hill" neighborhood historic district.

According to local tradition, John A. Wilson, grocer, built a house on this lot around 1843 and then rebuilt the house in 1884, apparently to reflect his added stature and large family (*Historic Architecture of Muscatine* 1977: 46). However, a series of mortgages in the mid-1850s suggest construction around this period. No similar information could be found to support an 1843 date of construction, and his obituary notes that it was not until 1847 that he moved to Muscatine. The house in the 1840s or 1850s would definitely not been this substantial of a house. The 1874 bird-eye view does show a two-story gable-front house on this lot, but details are unclear. Wilson did take out substantial mortgages in 1884 and 1885, supporting a c.1884 date of reconstruction or significant remodeling. The current house and appearance likely dates to this period, rather than an earlier date. Wilson was born in Hallowell, Maine on November 4, 1820 and arrived in Muscatine in 1847 with his wife, Sophia (Stutson) Wilson (Muscatine Journal: January 19, 1891). Mr. Wilson was a farmer in 1866 and then entered the grocery business in 1874. He retired in 1879, but did work in the insurance business while he was retired (Muscatine Journal: January 19, 1891). He does not appear to have significantly contributed to the community's history. No significant event is known to have occurred on the property. The house however is remarkably intact, with several unique characteristics that set it apart from other houses in the neighborhood or community. Italianate influence is dominant, especially with its horizontal eaves and bracket details. Most earlier Italianate buildings had generally timid features, but as the style progressed into the later half of the century, the brackets became more massive and elaborate. The bracketing on 316 W. Fourth reflects this evolving style as few other buildings in Muscatine do. The brackets' sheer mass and elaborate carving required

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brick supporting piers to be installed under them. However, the builder then scaled the corresponding horizontal eaves and gently sloping gable roof to maintain the airy atmosphere of the Italianate style. The combination of such features, coupled with its overall good integrity, creates a unique neighborhood building. Thus, the John A. Wilson House appears to be individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C.

The John A. Wilson House also appears to be a contributing building in a potential "West Hill" neighborhood historic district. It is a contributing property to an historic district because it holds the character and charm of a past era. The decorative scroll work on the eaves and the detail to the windows and front entry door show how much detail was given to this particular house. Its overall integrity is good and helps reflect Wilson's stature and importance in the community. Such a building would have attracted much attention and likely helped convince others to consider West Hill as a potential residential site. This house contributes significantly to the history and architecture of this potential historic district.

According to local tradition, John A. Wilson, grocer, built a house on this lot around 1843 and then rebuilt the house in 1884, apparently to reflect his added stature and large family (*Historic Architecture of Muscatine* 1977: 46). As noted previously no deeds or mortgages supporting an 1843 date of construction could be found, and his later obituary notes that the family did not move to Muscatine until 1847. John A. Wilson is listed as the owner in the 1866-1874 Transfer Book, but no date of actual purchase was listed nor could this deed be identified. The first transactions recorded for John A. Wilson in the county records are mortgages in 1852, 1853, and 1854. Sophia A. Wilson had a mortgage deed recorded to E.H. Allbee for the property at W 56' of Lot 10 on Block 53 on October 20, 1852 for \$520 (L:46). The mortgage was to be paid in full by October 20, 1853 with ten percent interest. Sophia A. and John A. Wilson took out a mortgage deed for the property at W 56' Lot 10 Block 53 from Suel Foster on May 11, 1853 for \$460 (L:454). This mortgage was to be paid in full in twelve to eighteen months with six percent interest. Finally, John A. Wilson and his wife took out a mortgage deed from Jarvis B. Brown for the W 56' of Lot 10 on Block 53 on October 14, 1854 for \$666.66 (N:578). This mortgage was to be paid in full by April 1, 1856. All of these mortgages were noted that they had been paid in full. This suggests that the first house on the lot was actually constructed in the mid-1850s. His residence in the 1856 directory is identified as "south side Fourth, east of Linn," while the 1859 directory address is "southeast corner 4<sup>th</sup> and Linn." This listing indicates a house at this corner by 1856. However, it was likely not the substantial home currently on the lot. The 1874 birds-eye view of Muscatine shows a gable-front house with a rear ell. It appears to be a plainer house, but that detail cannot be positively determined. Sanborn maps do not cover this section of this block until 1899.

John A. Wilson was born in Hallowell, Maine on November 4, 1820. He moved to Zanesville, Ohio in 1841. On April 20, 1846 Sophia Stutson married John A. Wilson in Zanesville, Ohio (Old Settler's Register, no page). She was born on October 29, 1829 in Montgomery County, Maryland. In 1847 they moved to Muscatine. Mr. Wilson conducted a grocery business for many years. He does appear as a resident in the 1856 and 1859 Muscatine City Directories. He is listed as being a grocer in both the 1856 directory and 1859 city directory. His residence in the 1856 directory is identified as "ss Fourth e? Linn," while the 1859 directory address is "sec 4<sup>th</sup> and Linn." Both correspond to this location. The 1860

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census confirms his occupation as a grocer and lists other family members. These include his wife Sophia, 35, born in Maryland, and several children, including: Albert, 12, born in Ohio; Adalaide, 4, born in Iowa; Sophia, 3, born in Iowa and Frank, three months, born in Iowa. In addition, Clara E. Perry, 30, a New York native, is also listed in the household. It is unknown what relationship she had with the Wilson family. Wilson had changed occupations when the 1870 census was taken and had become a farmer. However, he appears to kept Muscatine as his residence. His son Albert is also listed as a farmer living in the Atalissa area. Other family members still at home were Sophia, 46; Ada, 14; Sophia, 13; Frank, 10; George 7?, and Stella, 1. John A. Wilson is listed as a farmer with a residence at Fourth se corner of Linn in the 1866 Muscatine City Directory. The 1869 city directory identifies Mr. Wilson as living at se corner of Linn and Fourth, no occupation is listed for him in this directory. The 1874 Muscatine City Directory states that Mr. Wilson is a grocer and residing at the same address as the 1869 directory. The 1879 city directory identifies Mr. (J.A.) Wilson as being retired at the same address. The 1883 Muscatine City Directory lists Mr. Wilson living at 316 W. Fourth Street and no occupation was listed.

During the 1880s, the family was listed at 316 W. Fourth. Local tradition states that Wilson rebuilt the house on this lot around 1884 (*Historic Architecture of Muscatine, Iowa* 1977: 46). This information is more strongly collaborated than the original construction date. Sophia and John A. Wilson took out a mortgage from J.J. Hoopes on January 18, 1884 for \$1200 (13:473). They also took out another mortgage from Thomas Brown on August 1, 1885 for \$1386.05 (17:237). Both indicate a substantial investment, which would correspond to the elaborate house on this lot. Additionally, the architecture is more typically of a c.1884 construction than the earlier period. By this point, Wilson has run a successful grocery for several years, and he was 63 in 1884. Thus the house would have reflected his growing stature in the community. In the 1886-87 city directory, John A. Wilson is listed there, along with George and Frank. No occupation is listed for John, while George is identified as a teamster and Frank is a marble cutter. The 1889 Muscatine City Directory finds John A. Wilson, Ada, Frank, Sophia, and Stella living at this address. John is listed as being retired, Frank is a marble cutter, and Ada, Sophia, and Stella have no occupations listed. The 1891 city directory identifies Sophia Wilson is a widow, Frank is a marble cutter, and Ada, Sophia, and Stella do not have occupations listed. Mr. Wilson died on January 18, 1891 in Muscatine. His obituary noted that during his retirement he acted as an insurance agent doing a little business in that line. He had six surviving children, Albert, Adelaide, Sophia, Frank, George R., and Stella Maude (*Muscatine Journal*, January 19, 1891, page 4). His obituary mentions that the funeral took place from the family residence on West Fourth Street. Mrs. Sophia Wilson (John's wife) died on June 16, 1893.

Family members continued to be listed at the address through the 1943 city directory and various census reports. Both the 1902 and 1909 Transfer Books state that Stella M. Wilson was the "owner" of this portion of Lot 10. Ada is listed here from the 1889 Muscatine Directory through the 1908 directory. The 1891 Muscatine City Directory states that Ada (no occupation listed), Frank (marble cutter), Stella (no occupation listed), Sophia (widow), and Sophia (no occupation listed) all lived here. The 1893 city directory identifies Ada (no occupation), Frank (foreman at Gruber Marble), Stella (no occupation listed), Sophia (widow), and Sophia (insurance agent) resided at this address. The 1895 Muscatine City Directory states that Frank (marble cutter for Gruber Marble), Stella (no occupation), and Sophia

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(insurance agent) are still living at this address. The 1897 city directory identifies that Ada (no occupation), Frank (foreman at Gruber Marble), Sophia (insurance agent), and Stella (no occupation) reside in this residence. The 1899 city directory states that Frank (Becke and Wilson Marble Works), Sophia (insurance agent), and Stella (no occupation listed) remain at this address. Ada (Adelaide), 43 or 44, single, also appears on the 1900 census report as the property owner. No occupation is listed for her. Other family members listed in the 1900 census were Sophia, 42, single, an insurance agent; Frank, 35, marble cutter; and Stella, 31, no occupation listed. The 1900 Muscatine City Directory lists Frank (Becke and Wilson Marble Works), Sophia (insurance), and Stella (no occupation) were living at this address. The 1902 city directory identifies Frank (Becke and Wilson Marble Works), Sophia (insurance agent), and Stella (no occupation) all lived at 316 W. Fourth Street. The 1904 Muscatine City Directory lists Frank (Becke and Wilson Marble Works), Sophia (insurance), and Stella (no occupation listed) resided in this home.

Frank Wilson was listed in the 1907 directory as the resident. He is also listed as working at Becke and Wilson Marble Works in the 1907 directory. Only Sophia (insurance) and Stella (no occupation) lived in this home with Frank Wilson. The 1910 census confirmed him as the head of the household and the owner. The directory identified him as a partner with Becke & Wilson, while the census listing showed his occupation as an ironworker. Sophia, 52; and Stella, 41, were also living at 316 W. Fourth. No occupation was listed for either of the sisters. In addition to the Wilsons however, the 1910 census indicates the house might have been split into apartments. Robert H. Clark and his wife Edna were also listed as tenants. Clark worked as an assistant manager for a button company. The census does not show any relationship between the Wilson or the Clark families. The 1911 Muscatine City Directory states that Frank, Sophia, and Stella Wilson were all living here. Frank is listed as being employed by Becke and Wilson, while the sisters do not have an occupation listed. The 1913 through 1921 city directories list the same occupants in this residence. Frank Wilson is working for Becke and Wilson, Sophia does not have an occupation listed, and Stella is listed as a collector. The 1920 census showed no change with the Wilson family residents, but tenant Ella Davidson, 54, single, was listed as the renter.

Adelaide, Sophia, and Frank Wilson received  $\frac{3}{4}$  interest in the property in 1925, and Stella received  $\frac{1}{4}$  interest in the property in 1925 (June 6, 1925). Frank Wilson continued to be listed in city directories as the resident through the 1934 directory. Sophia and Stella Wilson are also as living in this home, Neither sister is identified as having an occupation. Frank Wilson passed away on July 14, 1936. His obituary states that he died at home at 316 W. Fourth Street, where he had lived all of his life. Mr. Wilson was identified with the marble tombstone business for 62 years, first with Theodore Beckey and then with Mr. Nolte. Mr. Wilson was born on March 12, 1859. He was a member of Trinity Episcopal Church and the A.O.U.W. Lodge. Surviving at home are two sisters, Sophia and Stella, and Ada Epperly of Portland, Oregon died two years ago (Muscatine Journal: July 14, 1936, pg. 1).

Stella and Sophia Wilson apparently continued to own the house after Frank's death. From the 1936-37 through the 1943 directory, Sophia Wilson and Stella Wilson were listed as the residents. There was not an occupation listed for either sister. Stella died on February 7, 1949. No obituary could be found for Stella Wilson. Sophia Wilson passed away on September 27, 1950. Miss Wilson's obituary states that

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she died at Hershey Hospital. Miss Wilson's home had been 605 W. Seventh Street in Muscatine. Miss Wilson was born on November 12, 1857. She was a member of Trinity Episcopal Church and of St. Mary's Trinity Church. Miss Wilson was preceded in death by her parents, and several brothers and sisters. Only survivors of Miss Wilson are nieces and nephews (Muscatine Journal: September 28, 1950, pg. 6). No occupation was listed.

Stella and Sophia Wilson apparently sold the property in the mid-1940s, but a transfer could not be located. Velma and Howard Lange purchased the property on June 28, 1946 from A.M. Grossklaus (117:334). Howard and Velma Lange are listed as the occupant of this residence in the 1946 Muscatine City Directory. The 1949 Muscatine City Directory lists Howard and Velma at this address. Mr. Lange is listed as being a machine operator at Roach and Musser. The 1952 city directory does not have Howard listed but Velma is still living at this address and is employed in her own beauty salon, Velma's Beauty Shop. Helen Lange (widow of Henry) is also listed here at this time. She is employed at the Muscatine Pearl Works as a button worker. The 1954 through 1961 Muscatine City Directories finds Howard, Velma, and Helen living in this residence. Helen is not listed as having an occupation, Velma is still working in her beauty salon, and Howard is listed as being a wood worker at Roach and Musser. Mr. Lange was working at Roach and Musser from the 1949 Muscatine City Directory through the 1961. Velma Lange has her beauty shop from the 1952 through the 1961 city directory. He is identified as working for the USAC in the 1946 Muscatine City Directory. They continued to be listed through the 1958 city directory. In the 1958 city directory, Velma is listed as running a beauty shop.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Census Records, United States Census Bureau, 1860, 1870, 1900, 1910, 1920.

City Directories, Muscatine. Various publishers, 1856-1959. Available as the Musser Public Library.

Deed/Abstract Records, Recorder's Office, Muscatine County Courthouse, Muscatine, Iowa.

Sanborn Map Company. "Muscatine, Iowa," Sanborn fire insurance maps. Pelham, NY:  
Sanborn Map Company, 1883, 1888, 1892, 1899, 1907, 1912, 1919, 1928. Accessed online at:  
Sanborn.umi.com.

Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs  
 State Historical Society of Iowa  
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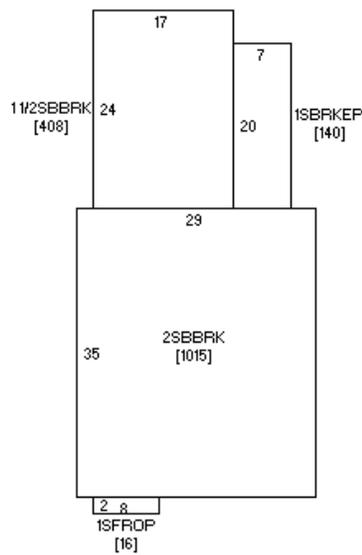
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**Location Map**



**Plans of buildings on site (from assessor's office)**



(front – 4<sup>th</sup> Street)

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**Photograph of building (digital image)**

