

Site Inventory Form

State Historical Society of Iowa

(December 1, 1999)

State Inventory No. 22-01385

New Supplemental

Part of a district with known boundaries (enter inventory no.) 22-01381

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 Number _____

Non-Extant (enter year) _____

1. Name of Property

historic name Wardell Chevrolet Company Building

other names/site number Hochhaus Motor Company; Staw Center for Commerce and Culture

2. Location

street & number 109 West Bridge Street

city or town Elkader

vicinity, county Clayton

Legal Description:(If Rural) Township Name _____

Township No. _____ Range No. _____ Section _____ Quarter of Quarter _____

(If Urban) Subdivision Original Town Block(s) 5 Lot(s) See Full Legal Description

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)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

If Non-Eligible Property

Enter number of:

— buildings
 — sites
 — structures
 — objects
 — Total

If Eligible Property, enter number of:

Contributing Noncontributing

1 — buildings
 — — sites
 — — structures
 — — objects
1 — 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

Arch. & Hist. Resources of the Elkader Downtown Historic District MPD

Historical Architectural Data Base Number

22-030

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

02E01 Auto Showroom

10A02 Factory

14907 Gas Station

14D09 Automotive Service and Repair

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

09F02 Broad Front

foundation 16 Clay Tile

walls 03 Brick

roof 08B Asphalt

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)

Yes No More Research Recommended

A Property is associated with significant events.

Yes No More Research Recommended

B Property is associated with the lives of significant persons.

Yes No More Research Recommended

C Property has distinctive architectural characteristics.

Yes No More Research Recommended

D Property yields significant information in archaeology or history.

County Clayton
City Elkader

Address 109 West Bridge Street

Site Number 22-01385
District Number 22-01381

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)

05 COMMERCE

Significant Dates

Construction date
1930 check if circa or estimated date
Other dates

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 Marlys Svendsen, Svendsen Tyler, Inc.

organization City of Elkader

date 7/2011

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telephone 715/469-3300

city or town Sarona

state WI zip code 54870

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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Wardell Chevrolet Company Building

Clayton

Name of Property

County

109 West Bridge Street

Elkader

Address

City

7. Description:

According to the Clayton County Assessor, this building is estimated to have been built in 1940. Sanborn maps from 1930 and 1951 show a building with the same footprint erected sometime between these dates. On March 30, 1930 account in the local paper described plans to wreck the old building on the property to make room for construction of the new Wardell Chevrolet Company's building.

The Wardell Chevrolet Company Building is an example of a Broad Front commercial building form. The 1-story building has tile walls covered in mottled reddish brown and gray brick veneer. Brick work includes running bond walls with rectangular designs above the storefronts and below the parapet formed with soldier brick and stacked brick courses with stone squares at each corner. The building has an unusual footprint with an integrated filling station original located in a drive-through section at the northwest corner of the building. The pumps and canopy have been removed. The storefront design includes replacement plate glass windows arranged with transom lights within the original openings along the north and northwest facades. The west façade has had most of its original window openings modified with the installation of smaller sash. One overhead door opening remains midway along the wall. The north half of the building now is configured with the shop spaces and the south portion contains manufacturing space.

8. Significance:

The Wardell Chevrolet Company Building at 109 West Bridge Street is an good example of a Broad Front commercial building form used for automobile dealerships and garages in the years before and after World War I. This building also had an integrated filling station – one of five stations at the intersection between World War I and II. The building is a contributing resource in the Elkader Downtown Historic District under Criteria A and C. Under Criterion A, it was one of a series of automobile related businesses to locate along the West Bridge Street auto group. The historic district's commercial buildings are associated with the historic contexts developed for the downtown in the "Architectural and Historical Resources of the Elkader Downtown Historic District" Multiple Property Documentation form covering the years 1846 to 1960. The building is also eligible under Criterion C, as a contributing resource because of the Broad Front commercial form it represents.

Elkader Downtown Historic District Background:

The town of Elkader was laid out in 1846 along the banks of the Turkey River approximately 16 miles upstream from the Turkey River's confluence with the Mississippi River. The town was surveyed and laid out in 1846 with the Original Town Plat filed in June 22, 1846 by Timothy Davis, Chester Sage and John Thompson, friends and business partners, who began operating a sawmill on North Front (Main) Street in 1845 before the town was even platted. By 1849 they had a successful flour mill in operation. The new town was named for Abd el-Kader, an Algerian freedom fighter and world figure who was admired by Davis. The principal building stimulating development in the 1840s and 1850s was the Elkader Mill. After 1860 when the Clayton County voters selected Elkader as the permanent county seat, the downtown saw a variety of merchants set up shops, several hotels open, a number of newspapers begin publication, and small manufacturing concerns get underway in the city center. Elkader numbered 440 residents in 1860.

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The new county court house saw its first section completed in 1869 opposite the downtown. New limestone buildings were erected along both North and South Main Street with public halls frequently located on upper floors. During the 1870s and 1880s 2-story brick buildings began replacing frame business houses. A permanent railroad connection was completed by the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul RR in 1886 but service remained poor as Elkader was located at the end of a spur rather than along a main line route. A more important transportation improvement during the 1880s was the completion of the Keystone Bridge across the Turkey River in 1880. Its completion prompted a period of economic vitality and community investment. The community was officially incorporated two years later in 1891 and a new waterworks system and city well were completed in 1896. Electricity was rejected by locals until the end of the decade in 1900, however. In the meantime, new churches were built in 1897 for the Congregationalists on the east side of the river and in 1897-1899 for the Catholics on the west side of the river. Coupled with a series of major fires during the 1890s, the downtown saw a period of rebuilding with a new hotel and bank at the entrance to the business district at the turn of the century. The new opera house was completed on North Main Street while other 2 and 3-story brick blocks appeared both north and south of Bridge Street.

By 1900, Elkader's population stood at its peak of 1,321 – an increase of 77 percent during the decade of the 1890s. Development continued in the downtown before and after World War I but at a much slower pace. Floods and fires damaged the Elkader Mill in 1902, 1906 and 1908, but it was nevertheless rebuilt by Schmidt Brothers & Co., retaining a key employer and anchor for Elkader's downtown. The business district began to extend to the west before and after the war with the principal changes seen along West Bridge Street. Here livery stables and wagon shops were replaced by automobile dealerships, implement companies and filling stations. Five stations eventually located along West Bridge with a sixth one block to the south along First Street SW. The national economic depression of the 1930s was coupled by the closing of the Elkader Mill in 1939 following a major fire. Natural disasters after World War I included major floods in 1922, 1947, and 1958 with a tornado destroying section of South Main Street in 1958 as well.

Despite these natural and human made disasters, Elkader saw steady but modest population growth from 1,223 in 1920 to 1,526 in 1960. The impact of the automobile was seen in traffic patterns, parking patterns, and traffic signs and the introduction of electricity saw several generations of street lighting come and go. The popularity of the opera house waned and the first floor became the municipal fire station while two movie houses came and one stayed in the downtown drawing evening crowds for entertainment and shopping. As many as 130 people resided in downtown flats during this period. A good system of inter and intra-state highways connected Elkader and its downtown to other parts of the state and country in a way that railroads had never served the community. By 1960, downtown Elkader was well-established as one of several geographically dispersed retail centers serving Clayton County. Virtually every storefront was filled with start-up businesses or multi-generational family stores as Elkader's downtown achieved a stable and healthy status for local and countywide residents.

Historic Background for the Wardell Chevrolet Company Building at 109 West Bridge Street:

The Wardell Chevrolet Company Building was built in 1930 following the demolition of the old New Home Lumber Company in March and April. By early summer the building was completed and the

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formal opening was held on June 21st. Wardell sold the building and Chevrolet dealership to Hochhaus Brothers in 1943 with George Hochhaus serving as principal partner. Following George's death in 1947 the property was sold to Elmer and Marie Miehe. Elmer operated an implement sales and service business from this location continuing to maintain the filling station at the intersection. In 1960 the property passed to Elmer and Marie's sons – John, James, Daniel and Patrick.

In 1960, the Wardell Building was leased by the Miehe family as manufacturing space for EPCO, Inc. a plastic and component parts manufacturing concern owned by local investors. Three years later in 1963, the Elkader Wire and Display Manufacturing Company, a division of Commercial Wire Products Company of Rockford, Illinois took over the business and four years later purchased the building from the Miehe family. The firm fabricated display racks for a variety of businesses and specialized product lines. By 1971, the firm had 32 employees and the manufacturing operations also included the adjacent Allen Brothers Building at 107 West Bridge Street. The firm remained a going concern until 2004. The following year Adam Polloch purchased both buildings to house manufacturing for his architectural and artistic lighting business, Fire Farm. In 2007, the front retail shop spaces were restored and the building renamed "Staw Center for Culture and Commerce."

9. Major Sources:

1984 History of Clayton County. Clayton County Genealogical Society, Elkader, Iowa: Griffith Press, 1984.

Anderson, David C. *Reconnaissance Survey of Elkader Clayton County, Iowa.* Clayton County Historic Preservation Commission and Main Street Elkader, March 1, 1994.

Andreas, A.T. *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa.* Chicago: Andreas Atlas Co., 1875.

Appraisal Records for Elkader Downtown Properties, Clayton County Assessor's Office, 1949 – 1965.

"Bird's Eye View Map, Elkader, Iowa, 1871." Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Doniat and Zastrow.

Elkader Historical Society/Carter House Museum research file for 109 West Bridge Street; files focusing on downtown Elkader buildings, businesses, civic leaders and related information. Compiled by Marge Costigan and other museum volunteers. Research files contain hundreds of historic photos, newspaper articles, publication transcriptions, property ownership records, and information from interviews. Digital copies of some research files were loaned to Marlys Svendsen, October 2010 and others were made available in March 2011 for duplication.

Census of State of Iowa for the years 1856, 1867, 1875, 1885, 1895, 1905, 1915, and 1925 as printed by various State Printers.

Clayton County, Iowa, Memories & Heritage from the Photo Albums of Clayton County. Elkader, Iowa: The Clayton County Register, 1997.

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Downtown Building Survey (73 surveyed buildings) records including survey questionnaires, draft Iowa Site Inventory Forms and digital photographs. Main Street Elkader, 2009.

Downtown Elkader Business Questionnaires completed by property/business owners, 2010.

Downtown Elkader Individual Property Site Maps compiled by Eli Garms, Clayton County GIS, Engineer's Office, Elkader, November 2010.

Elkader Building Survey (62 surveyed buildings). Main Street Elkader, 1994-1996.

Elkader Historic Photograph Collection (digital). Elkader Public Library, Elkader. Digital files loaned to Marlys Svendsen, December 2008.

"Elkader, Iowa 1846-1971, the Past, the Present the Future." 125th Anniversary Edition, *The Clayton County Register*, Elkader, Iowa, July 21, 1971.

Elkader Telephone Directories, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1932, 1933, 1960 and 1966.

Gottfried, Herbert and Jan Jennings. *American Vernacular Design, 1870-1940*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1985.

Griffith, Katherine. "Elkader Opera House." Elkader, Iowa: Elkader Main Street, ca. 1992.

Insurance Maps for Elkader. New York: The Sanborn Company, 1895, 1902, 1913, 1930, and 1951.

"Keystone Bridge Centennial Edition." *The Clayton County Register*, Elkader, Iowa, July 26, 1989.

Olson, Edward W. *Look What you Started Mr. Davis...Elkader, Iowa: History, Facts and Folklore about Elkader, Iowa U.S.A., ca. 2010*.

Plat Book of Clayton County, Iowa, Minneapolis: Warner & Foote, 1886.

"Plat of Elkader, June 22, 1846." Recorder's Office, Clayton County, Court House, Elkader, Iowa,.

Powell, Harry. "The Elkader Story." unpublished first draft, December 1980; copy available at Elkader Public Library.

Price, Realto E., editor. *History of Clayton County, Iowa from the Earliest historical Times Down to the Present, Volumes I and II*. Chicago: Robert O. Law Company, 1916.

Property Transfer Records for Blocks 3 – 10 and Fractional Blocks 3-6 in Town of Elkader, Clayton County Auditor's Office and Recorder's Office, Clayton County Court House, Elkader, Iowa.

Shank, Wesley I. *Iowa's Historic Architects: A Biographical Dictionary*. Iowa City, Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 1999.

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Standard Atlas of Clayton County, Iowa. Chicago: George A. Ogle & Co., 1902.

United States Census, 1850-2010. (population figures provided by State Library of Iowa, January 2011 and City of Elkader, March 2011).

Additional Information Legal Description: Original Town, PT LOTS 5 & 6 N 1/2 LOTS 7 AND 8 W 1/2 LOTS 7 AND 8 BLK 5.

Address: 109 West Bridge St



Map Created By:
Eli Garms
Clayton County GIS
2010

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Photographs: 109 West Bridge Street, looking southeast, and street view, looking east (Elkader Downtown Survey Photograph, 10/29/2010, Marlys Svendsen, photographer).



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Photographs: 109 West Bridge Street, looking south and along 1st Street SW side, looking east and southeast (Elkader Downtown Survey Photograph, 10/29/2010, Marlys Svendsen, photographer).

