

HISTORIC TOUR

1 CITY SQUARE – 1850s

The “Square” has been a space used for gathering since settlement began. In 1851 the square extended to what is today 3rd Street and was used as a parade ground for the garrison of soldiers stationed at the fort, situated just north of the Square. In the 1880s it became a market where farmers could sell their grain and hay. Improvements were made in the 1890s, making it a park and location for additional buildings. Check out the historic plaques on and near the Square to learn more about the history of this area.

2 GARMOE BUILDING – 1896

This building is named for Isaac Garmoe who was a prominent real estate dealer, Webster County Treasurer, and member of the Methodist Church. The building has housed a number of hardware and drugstores over the years. This Victorian influence Queen Ann style building was designed by Architect Samuel C. Wherry. The turret’s cone was removed in the 1970s, but the building’s unique details still today represent the style and architecture of the time.

3 PRUSIA HARDWARE – 1917

Named for Emanuel E. Prusia; a businessman owning Prusia Hardware. This was his second store built after the first had burnt. Prusia was a wholesale store that carried “the largest and finest stock of builders’ hardware, cutlery, tools, cooking ranges, furnaces, and general stock”. The building later housed by Sears and Robuck until 1961, so it’s often called the Sears Building. The Architect was E.O. Damon, Jr., who was a resident of Fort Dodge in the Snell Addition. Although the design is simple, the stone trim and decorations of lions heads and rosettes are some unique details to study. Damon also designed the Warden Plaza, Blanden Museum, and other buildings during the period of the Downtown Historic District’s greatest growth.

FUN FACT: MANY OF E.O. DAMON’S BUILDINGS ARE CONSIDERED “LOW RISE SKYSCRAPERS”. IN 1925 FORT DODGE WAS KNOWN TO HAVE THE MOST SKYSCRAPERS PER CAPITA WEST OF THE MISSISSIPPI. AT THAT TIME A SKYSCRAPER WAS 6 STORIES OR MORE.

4 FIRST NATIONAL BANK BUILDING – 1908

This building was designed by Architect Leiebbe, Nourse, and Rasmussen an Iowa Architectural firm that also designed the Snell Building and Wahkonsa Hotel on Central. As the most extravagant office building in town, the First National Bank Building became home to many of the city’s lawyers, doctors, realtors, accountants, and gypsum companies. The Bank closed its doors in the 1930s due to its deposited asset plummeting, but the offices remained and in July 1934 the State Bank opened. The building was acquired by Carleton Beh in 1966 and is sometimes known as the Beh Building.

5 WEBSTER COUNTY COURTHOUSE – 1902

Fort Dodge became the county seat for Webster County in 1856. The Courthouse replaced the original and was designed by H.C. Koch Co. in Milwaukee, who also designed the Carnegie Library. The temple front, with columns topped by Ionic capitals and the windows with a triangular crown reflect the ancient Greek and Roman influence. The Latin words ‘Pax’ and ‘Lex’ mean ‘peace’ and ‘law’. Well above the entry are decorations of lions heads — symbols of strength.

6 REYNOLDS BLOCK – 1882

The 700 Reynolds block is the oldest building in the Downtown Historic District and marks the transition from wood frame structures to masonry construction for commercial buildings. Originally constructed as a 3-story building, the third story was removed in 1961 due to advanced deterioration. Originally constructed for Reynolds Grocery by owner A. S. R. Reynolds. In addition to Reynolds Grocery it housed the Commercial National Bank for many years. The cast iron storefront components reflect an important innovation in commercial building design credited to James Bogardus and was used wide spread between the 1850s and 1880s.

7 SNELL BUILDING – 1915

The Snell Building was designed by Architect Leiebbe, Nourse, and Rasmussen an Iowa Architectural firm and was Fort Dodge’s first “skyscraper”. Richard Snell was the owner of both the Snell Building and the Boston Centre — he received the land from his father, Thomas Snell. The ground level of the Snell Building was occupied by First National Bank and the Charles A. Brown clothing store; the remaining floors had over 150 rooms for various offices. The brick has a unique glazed finish and came from St. Louis. It is said that, at the time, this brick was the most expensive manufactured at \$65.00 per 1,000.

8 BOSTON CENTRE – 1914

This six-story building was originally constructed for the Boston Store, which occupied four floors and the basement. The upper two floors were for offices. In September 1922, the store suffered a devastating fire that also damaged the buildings on either side. Once remodeled, it expanded to include the top two floors for merchandise. It was a popular place to shop downtown until it closed in 1979.

9 MCQUILKIN BUILDING – 1914

This seven-story building was built for the A. D. McQuilkin Furniture Co., which was known as “The Big Store with Little Prices”. The large show windows on the upper floors were typical of commercial stores of the period and took advantage of natural lighting. The upper story windows with their three parts are a well preserved example of the “Chicago window”.

DID YOU KNOW? DOWNTOWN FORT DODGE IS A DESIGNATED HISTORIC DISTRICT ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES DUE TO ITS COLLECTION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS. THESE BUILDINGS TELL A UNIQUE STORY INSIDE AND OUT.

10 FIRST FEDERAL SAVINGS BANK - 1973

This bank was built on the site of the former Fantle’s and Kresge’s stores, which were destroyed by fire on January 12, 1971. While the building was constructed outside of the Downtown’s prominent development period (1854-1964), it is historically significant for its unique, architecturally distinguished contemporary-style that illustrates twentieth-century change in the built environment. Designed by Smith-Voorhies-Jenson, the building consists of travertine marble walls with arched windows, polished marble interior finishes, and a vaulted atrium.

11 WAHKONSA HOTEL - 1910

This building was built for George W. Reynolds and designed by Iowa Architect Leiebbe, Nourse, and Rasmussen. With over two hundred guest rooms, this was Fort Dodge’s largest hotel. In 1915 Ohio hotelier F.G. Warden acquired the hotel. The hotel underwent a number of remodels and apartment conversions, and in 2008 became individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Historic Tax Credits were then used to rehabilitate the building for apartments.

12 CARVER BUILDING – 1916 & 1922

In March of 1916, it was announced that Dr. W. F. Carver would be constructing a two story building for office and store rooms on the site of the old Colonel Blanden homestead, which he purchased weeks before. Jensen Construction Company was given the contract to build the two story, 70’ x 140’ building. The foundation was constructed to support seven stories, as Carver had the intention to add five more stories as soon as he saw a sufficient demand for more office rooms. In 1921 work began to construct six additional stories, housing over 150 first-class and highly modernized office rooms and suites.

13 1000 BLOCK OF CENTRAL – 1903-1964

This block consists of a lot of historically significant structures for downtown Fort Dodge. The north side of the block includes 1000 Central (1914), and the Arcade at 1012 Central (1922), which is seen as a precursor to the shopping mall, since it originally housed a number of shops that were provided natural light from a skylight that spans the center of the building. Next door at 1014 Central (1951), the exterior walls of the adjacent building are exposed, revealing parking stall markings painted on the brick. The adjacent building (1018-1020 Central), was originally constructed in 1913 as the Majestic Theatre, later the Polkadot, and finally the Dodge Theatre, so may have had adjacent parking for its attendees or upstairs tenants. 1022 Central Avenue was constructed in 1964, and the building situated on the northeast corner was built by the Leighton brothers in 1923 and designed by local architect Frank Griffith. On the south side of this block sits the Carver Building and on the opposite corner two buildings that were constructed in 1903 - one originally used for a grocery, the corner as a Bank. Both consist of a unique upper-story glazed brick.

14 1100 BLOCK OF CENTRAL – 1898-1963

There are seven contributing historic structures on the 1100 Block of Central Avenue. The south side includes the Cadwell building (1898), the Hower building (1916), and on the corner at 1109 Central Avenue, the Hower building (1896), which shows some German influences, which is where the Hower family originated. The north side of Central includes the Fisher Block at 1100 Central (1902), the Corey Block at 1108 Central (1909), Boehm’s Grocery at 1110 Central (1902) — only the west half of this building remains — the east half was demolished in 2000 to construct an addition to Daniel Pharmacy. Daniel Pharmacy (1963) is situated on the east corner and was constructed after the original building was demolished — the building and its “DRUGS” signage serve as a bookend to the downtown’s period of historic significance (1854-1964).

SELF-GUIDED HISTORIC WALKING TOUR



1/2 MILE

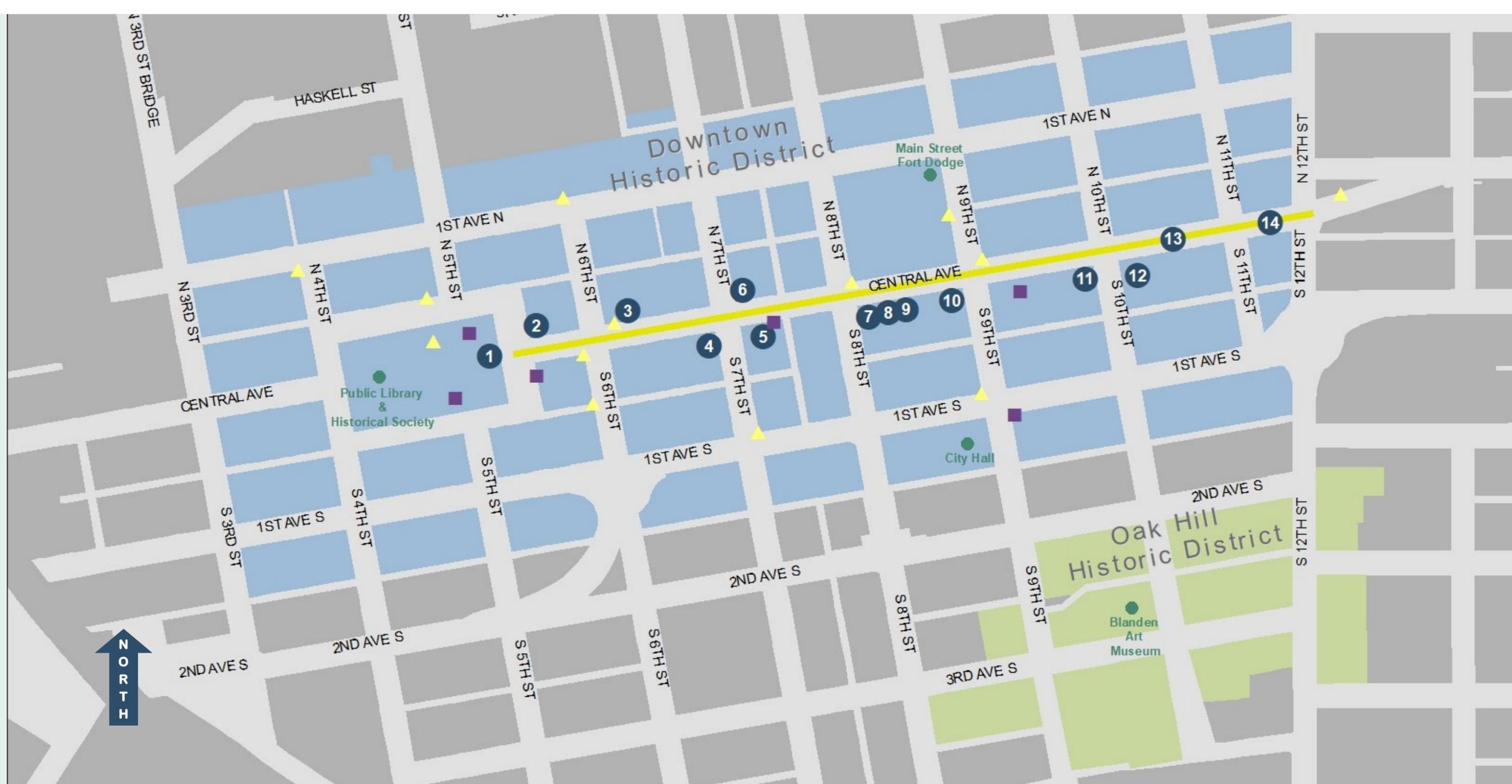
FORT DODGE
DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT
Central Avenue

HISTORIC TOUR

- 1 CITY SQUARE [424 Central Avenue]
- 2 GARMOE BUILDING [514 Central Avenue]
- 3 PRUSIA HARDWARE [610 Central Avenue]
- 4 FIRST NATIONAL BANK BUILDING [629 Central Avenue]
- 5 WEBSTER COUNTY COURTHOUSE [701 Central Avenue]
- 6 REYNOLDS BLOCK [700 Central Avenue]
- 7 SNELL BUILDING [801-805 Central Avenue]
- 8 BOSTON CENTRE [809 Central Avenue]
- 9 MCQUILKIN BUILDING [815 Central Avenue]
- 10 FIRST FEDERAL SAVINGS BANK [825 Central Avenue]
- 11 WAHKONSA HOTEL [927 Central Avenue]
- 12 CARVER BUILDING [1003-1007 Central Avenue]
- 13 1000 BLOCK OF CENTRAL
- 14 1100 BLOCK OF CENTRAL

▲ HISTORIC PLAQUES

■ PUBLIC ART



DOWNTOWN WALKING TOURS

The Fort Dodge Downtown Historic District was established in 2010 in an effort to preserve and celebrate the places that make our downtown unique. This brochure takes users on a self-guided tour of Central Avenue, the spine of the District. Along the route, keep an eye out for other important features of the downtown, including historic plaques that tell users about the history of buildings and spaces, and public art that speaks to the history and future of our great community.

This is the first of a series of downtown self-guided walking tours and is a result of a partnership between Main Street Fort Dodge, the City of Fort Dodge Historic Preservation Commission, Allers Associates Architects and the Webster County Historical Society. This project was made possible in part by a grant from the Iowa Arts Council, a division of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, and Visit Fort Dodge.



IOWA ARTS COUNCIL
IOWA DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS



Scan the QR Code below to visit the Main Street Fort Dodge webpage to learn more and view additional self-guided tours.



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