

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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by SHPO



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This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instruction in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classifications, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number North Grand Avenue from 9th Street to 18th Street & 1st Ave W to 1st Ave E N/A not for publication

city or town Spencer N/A vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Clay code 041 zip code 51301

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally.

Shirley King
Signature of certifying official/Title - Deputy SHPO

26 MARCH 2014
Date

Iowa State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
Action

- entered in the National Register
See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): _____

Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper
Date of 5-19-14

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
 Name of Property

Clay County, Iowa
 County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
 (check as many as apply)

- private
- public - local
- public - state
- public - Federal

Category of Property
 (check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property
 (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
96	19	buildings
		sites
1	2	structures
		objects
97	21	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
 (enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 (enter categories from instructions)

- DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling
- DOMESTIC/Secondary Structure
- LANDSCAPE/Park
- LANDSCAPE/Plaza
- RELIGION/Religious Facility
- TRANSPORTATION/Road-Related

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions)

- DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling
- DOMESTIC/Secondary Structure
- DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling
- HEALTHCARE/Medical Business/Office
- LANDSCAPE/Park
- LANDSCAPE/Plaza
- LANDSCAPE/Street Furniture/Object

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (Enter categories from instructions)

- LATE VICTORIAN/Queen Anne
- LATE 19th AND 20th CENTURY REVIVALS/Colonial Revival
- LATE 19th AND 20th CENTURY REVIVALS/Classical Revival
- LATE 19th AND 20th CENTURY REVIVALS/Tudor Revival
- LATE 19th AND EARLY 20th CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS
- MODERN MOVEMENT/Moderne

Materials
 (Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation: Stone
- walls: Wood
- Brick
- roof: Asphalt
- Other: Stucco

Narrative Description
 (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing).

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE
 COMMUNITY PLANNING &
 DEVELOPMENT

Period of Significance

1880-1964

Significant Dates

1880
c.1915

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Arnold, Ralph
Beuttler, William
Bjornstad, Bjorn
Clemens, Earl

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- 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

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite books, articles, and other sources used in preparing the form on one or more continuation sheets) See continuation sheets

- Previous documentation on file (NPS):
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36CFR67) has been requested
 - previously listed in the National Register
 - previously determined eligible by the National Register
 - designated a National Historic Landmark
 - recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
 - recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: City of Spencer, Parker Historical Museum

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Name of Property

Clay County, Iowa
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 17.6

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	15	325413.47	4780174.69
Zone		Easting	Northing
2	15	325539.3	4779073.9

3	15	325520.85	4779600.1
Zone		Easting	Northing
4	15	322554.62	4779453.66

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sheriffa M. Jones, Architectural Historian

organization Rural Preservation Partners date March 1, 2014

street & number 1623 2nd Avenue E telephone (712) 490-3399

city or town Spencer state Iowa zip code 51301

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation sheets

Maps: A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs: Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

name See Continuation Sheets

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number 6.7 Page 1

Functions or Uses Current Functions (continued):

RELIGION/Religious Facility
RELIGION/Church-Related Residence
TRANSPORTATION/Road-Related
TRANSPORTATION/Pedestrian-Related

Architectural Classification (continued):

LATE 19th AND EARLY 20th CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/Prairie School
LATE 19th AND EARLY 20th CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/Bungalow/Craftsman
MODERN MOVEMENT

Wall Materials (continued):

Vinyl
Aluminum
Concrete

Architect/Builder (continued):

Cory, John Webster
Madson, William
Miller, A. W.
Penning, Eugene
Oestenstad, Riedar
Ralston, John Glen
Roskens, Eite
Sorenson, Jacob C.
Thomas, Oren

NARRATIVE

The North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District is the area that is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. The district is approximately an eleven block area north of downtown Spencer, Iowa (See Figure 1). The North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District is bounded by commercial businesses to the south and commercial businesses to the north/northwest starting at 18th Street. The proposed district boundaries are a total of eleven blocks bounded by 9th Street to the south, 18th Street to the north, 1st Avenue West to the west, and 1st Avenue East to the east.

Within the community, Grand Avenue is also United States Highways 71/18. It is highly maintained as a tree-lined street with additional landscaping. The trees are predominately large varieties of mature deciduous and coniferous trees. A landscaped boulevard dissects the north and south bound traffic. There are non-contributing Art Deco light fixtures with flower baskets that are spaced equidistant in each section of the boulevard. Additionally, the center of the boulevard is landscaped with small trees, native grass, and flowers. Mowed grass fills in the area from the curb of the boulevard to the center where the additional landscape

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 2

elements are visible. The front lawns of the houses are manicured and generally landscaped. There are sidewalks on both the west and east sides of Grand Avenue that are parallel to Grand Avenue/Highways 71/18.

The district is distinct due to the 75 foot setback that is visible on all lots north of 11th Street. There is one block that is included in the district (9th to 10th) which is part of the Railway Addition and therefore does not have the same setback as the rest of the district. The district is primarily residential. However, within the North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District are four churches representing various religious affiliations. Three of the four churches are contributing to the district. Both 1st Avenue East and West, which are adjacent streets to Grand Avenue are partially included in the district as they have a high concentration of similar architectural features as the houses on Grand Avenue.

The original local street name was Main Street, which is now Grand Avenue; however, unofficially Main Street was referred to as North Main Street and Grand Avenue is referred to North Grand Avenue. The local citizens generally refer to the area south of the Little Sioux River as "South Grand Avenue" and north of the railroad tracks (8th street) as "North Grand Avenue" herein referred to as Grand Avenue or North Grand Avenue. This name change is discussed further in Section 8 of this nomination.

The City of Spencer is located near the center of Clay County in northwest Iowa. The city is often described as the hub of business and shopping for communities within a 50-60 mile radius. Spencer has one other district, the Grand Avenue Historic Commercial District, which encompasses three blocks between 3rd and 7th streets. It was listed on the National Register in 2004.

The architectural styles that are represented within the North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District are some of the best examples that exist in Spencer, Iowa. These styles include: Queen Anne, Victorian, Classical Revival, Colonial Revival, Greek Revival, Four Square, Tudor Revival, Bungalow, and Craftsman.

The district's contributing and non-contributing buildings were evaluated primarily based on form and not materials. If a building had some alterations, but the original form could still be determined the building was determined to be contributing. However, if the building had multiple additions, changes to the form; and therefore the form was more difficult to decipher, the building was determined to be non-contributing. The character defining features that were evaluated to determine if each building was contributing or non-contributing included: (vinyl) windows, doors, exterior material, chimneys, porches, additions, and infill.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 3

Property Descriptions

Table 1: Building Description for North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District

Address	Primary Building Style/Integrity Evaluation/Details	Outbuildings	Contributing	Non-Contributing
902 Grand Ave	Colonial Revival – 1938 – Contributing – Brick foundation with aluminum siding; asphalt-shingled, side-gambrel roof.	Detached garage – Non-contributing – 1965	1	1
906 Grand Ave	Moderne – 1940 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with vinyl siding; asphalt-shingled, side-gabled roof.	Detached garage – Contributing – 1940	2	0
910 Grand Ave	Moderne – 1939 – Contributing – Brick foundation with aluminum siding; asphalt-shingled, cross-gabled roof.	Detached garage – Contributing – 1939	2	0
914 Grand Ave	Bungalow – 1917 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with wood siding; asphalt-shingled and an outstanding example of the Bungalow Style within the district.	Detached garage – Contributing – 1917	2	0
919 Grand Ave	Hope Reformed Church – Moderne – 1970 – Non-contributing – Reinforced concrete foundation. Classroom/educational wing additions – 1985 and 2000.		0	1
920 Grand Ave	Moderne – 1965 – Non-contributing – Office Building.		0	1
1003 Grand Ave	Victorian – 1880 – Contributing – Brick foundation with stucco exterior; asphalt-shingled and an outstanding example of the Victorian style within the district. Built by A. W. Miller. See figures 7 & 8.	Detached garage – Contributing 1940	2	0
1013-1015 Grand Ave	Modern – 1964 – Non-contributing apartment complex composed of brick veneer and wood with an asphalt shingled roof.	Detached garage-Non-contributing – 1964	0	2
1021	Bungalow/Craftsman – 1919 – Contributing –	Detached	2	0

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 4

Grand Ave	Concrete block foundation with steel siding; asphalt-shingled, front-gabled roof.	garage – Contributing – 1950		
17 W 10 th St	Craftsman – 1915 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with vinyl siding; asphalt-shingled, cross-gabled roof.	Detached garage – Contributing – 1950	2	0
21 W 10 th St	Moderne – 1950 – Contributing – Poured concrete foundation with steel siding; asphalt-shingled, hipped roof. Attached garage – 2004.		1	0
16 W 11 th St	Craftsman – 1920 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with wood lap siding; asphalt-shingled, front-gabled roof.	Detached garage – Contributing – 1940	2	0
22 W 11 th St	Bungalow – 1915 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with steel siding; asphalt-shingled, front gabled roof.	Detached garage – Contributing – 1940	2	0
15 W 11 th St	Colonial Revival – 1931– Contributing – Concrete block foundation with wood lap siding; asphalt-shingled, side-gabled roof. Designed by Eugene Penning.	Detached garage – Contributing – 1931	2	0
21 W 11 th St	Bungalow/Craftsman – 1920 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with vinyl siding; asphalt-shingled, front-gabled roof.	Detached garage – Non-contributing – 1969	1	1
1105 Grand Ave	Victorian – 1892 – Contributing – Poured Mortar/River Rock foundation with wood lap siding; asphalt-shingled, hipped roof. Attached garage –1960. One of the best examples in Spencer of a Victorian house. Designed by Bjorn Bjornstad. See figure 12.		1	0
1109 Grand Ave	Moderne – 1920 – Non-contributing – Concrete block foundation with vinyl siding; asphalt-shingled, side-gabled roof.	Detached garage – Non-contributing – 1975	0	2

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 5

1119 Grand Ave	Victorian – 1896 – Contributing – Known as the Cory House. Brick foundation with wood lap siding; cedar shingles and is one of the best examples in Spencer of a Victorian house. Built by John W. Cory. See figure 12.	Detached garage – Contributing – 1920	2	0
1102 1 st Ave W	Moderne – 1954 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with wood lap siding; asphalt-shingled, side-gabled roof. Attached garage – 1954.		1	0
1104 1 st Ave W	Moderne – 1945 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with hardboard siding; asphalt-shingled, side-gabled roof. Attached garage – 1945.		1	0
20 W 12 th St	Moderne – 1950 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with wood lap siding; asphalt-shingled, hipped roof. Attached garage – 1950.		1	0
12 W 12 th St	Moderne – 1941 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with steel siding; asphalt-shingled, side-gabled roof with two front facing, overlapped gables.	Detached garage – Contributing – 1957	2	0
1212 1 st Avenue W	First Congregational Church – Moderne – 1950 – Contributing – Reinforced concrete foundation; asphalt-shingled. Addition – 1960.		1	0
1200 Grand Avenue	First Baptist Church – Moderne – 1955 – Contributing – Reinforced concrete block foundation with brick exterior; asphalt shingled, front-gabled roof.		1	0
1214 Grand Ave	Moderne – 1956 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with hardboard siding; asphalt-shingled, hipped roof. Built by Eugene Penning.	Detached garage – Contributing – 1956	2	0
1215 Grand Ave	Late Victorian/Late 19 th and 20 th Century – 1884 – Known as the Higgins Mansion. Entire property including the garage, playhouse, and fence is listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places. Unknown who	Detached garage and detached playhouse	0	0

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 6

	designed/built the original 1884 Victorian House; 1911 remodel designed by John Glen Galston. See figure 10.			
1220 Grand Ave	Moderne- 1948 - Contributing - Concrete block foundation with vinyl siding; asphalt-shingled, side-gabled roof.	Detached garage - Contributing - 1948	2	0
1217 1 st Ave E	Moderne - 1952 - Contributing - Concrete block foundation with vinyl siding; asphalt-shingled, front-gabled roof. Attached garage - 1952.		1	0
1221 1 st Ave E	Moderne - 1953 - Contributing - Concrete block foundation with steel siding; asphalt-shingled, and hipped roof. Attached garage - 1953		1	0
1301 Grand Ave	Moderne - 1954 - Contributing - Concrete block foundation with steel siding; asphalt-shingled, hipped roof. Attached Garage -1954		1	0
1305 Grand Ave	Craftsman/Bungalow - 1928 - Contributing - Concrete block foundation with vinyl siding; asphalt-shingled roof.	Detached garage- Non-contributing- 1989	1	1
1315 Grand Ave	Four Square - 1920 - Contributing - Concrete block foundation with steel siding; asphalt-shingled, hipped roof. Wall dormer facing front. Attached Garage -1920		1	0
1319 Grand Ave	Four Square - 1913 - Contributing - Concrete block foundation with aluminum siding; asphalt-shingled roof. Chimney. Front porch.	Detached garage - Contributing - 1945	2	0
15 West 14 th Street	Bethany Lutheran Church - Moderne - 1951 - Contributing - Reinforced concrete block foundation, rough stone exterior; asphalt-shingled roof. Classroom addition-1967		1	0
1304 Grand Ave	Four Square - 1910 -Contributing - Concrete block foundation with vinyl siding; asphalt-		1	0

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 7

	shingled, hipped roof. Attached garage– 1910			
1314 Grand Ave	Bungalow – 1914 – Non-contributing – Concrete block foundation with vinyl siding; asphalt-shingled, cross-gabled roof. Front porch.	Detached garage – Non-contributing – 1960	0	2
1320 Grand Ave	Bungalow – 1928 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with cement board siding; asphalt-shingled, side-gabled roof. Chimney.	Detached garage – Non-contributing – 1960	1	1
1402 Grand Ave	Craftsman/Bungalow – 1925 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with stucco siding; asphalt-shingled, front-gabled roof. Front porch. Chimney.	Detached garage – Contributing – 1925	2	0
1410 Grand Ave	Moderne– 1940 – Contributing – Tile block foundation with vinyl siding; asphalt-shingled, hipped roof. Attached garage. Designed/built by Earl Clemens.	Detached garage – Contributing – 1940	2	0
1414 Grand Ave	Colonial Revival/Moderne – 1940 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with brick veneer siding; asphalt-shingled, side-gabled roof. Designed by Architects Beuttler & Arnold from Sioux City and local contractors, Riedar Oestenstad and Eite Roskens.	Detached garage – Contributing – 1940	2	0
1420 Grand Ave	Moderne – 1935 – Contributing – Brick foundation with brick exterior and a flat roof. This house is one of the most impressive examples of the Moderne houses on Grand and in Spencer. It is known as, the <i>House of Tomorrow</i> . Designed by Oren Thomas, Architect from Des Moines. ¹ Built by A.P. Nelson. Attached garage – 1930. See figure 13.		1	0
1416 1 st Ave W	Moderne – 1945 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with vinyl siding exterior; asphalt-shingled, side-gabled roof with a front gabled entrance.	Detached garage – Contributing – 1947	2	0

¹ *The News-Herald*. Friday, June 14, 1935. Pg. 6.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 8

1418 1 st Ave W	Moderne – 1940 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with wood exterior; asphalt-shingled, side-gabled roof.	Detached garage – Contributing – 1947	2	0
1420 1 st Ave W	Moderne – 1947 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with vinyl siding exterior; asphalt-shingled, side-gabled roof with a front gabled entrance.	Detached garage – Non-contributing – 1947	1	1
1502 Grand Ave	Colonial Revival – 1920 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with shingle and steel siding; asphalt-shingled, side-gabled roof.	Detached garage – Non-contributing – 1964	1	1
1505 Grand Ave	Tudor Revival – 1900 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with wood siding; asphalt-shingled roof. Stucco wall cladding.	Detached garage – Non-contributing – 1984	1	1
1510 Grand Ave	Moderne – 1937 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with vinyl siding; asphalt-shingled, side-gabled roof, and one front facing gable. Two front facing dormers. Chimney. Attached garage –1937		1	0
1511 Grand Ave	Colonial Revival/Moderne – 1939 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with vinyl siding; asphalt-shingled, side-gabled roof.	Detached garage – Non-contributing – 1985	1	1
1516 Grand Ave	Colonial Revival/Moderne – 1940 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with vinyl siding; asphalt-shingled, side-gabled roof. Chimney. Attached Garage –1940.		1	0
1517 Grand Ave	Tudor Revival – 1935 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with vinyl siding; asphalt-shingled, side-gabled roof with front facing gable in which door sits. Chimney. Attached garage – 1935		1	0
1520 Grand Ave	Colonial Revival/Moderne – 1940 – Contributing – Brick foundation with vinyl siding; wood-shingled, side-gabled roof.	Detached garage – Non-contributing –	1	1

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 9

		1987		
1521 Grand Ave	Bungalow – 1920 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with wood & brick siding; asphalt-shingled, side-gabled roof with gabled dormer facing front.	Detached garage – Contributing – 1920	2	0
1602 Grand Ave	Bungalow – 1924 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with vinyl siding; asphalt-shingled, side-gabled roof with front-facing chimney. Attached garage – 1924	Detached garage – Contributing – 1924	1	1
1603 Grand Ave	Moderne – 1940 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with vinyl siding; asphalt-shingled, front-gabled roof. Attached garage – 1940		1	0
1606 Grand Ave	Colonial Revival/Moderne – 1942 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with aluminum siding; asphalt-shingled, side-gabled roof. Chimney.	Detached garage – Contributing – 1942	2	0
1607 Grand Ave	Bungalow/Craftsman – 1924 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with wood siding; asphalt-shingled, front-gabled roof. Fully enclosed porch. Chimney.	Detached garage – Contributing – 1925	2	0
1610 Grand Ave	Moderne – 1949 – Contributing – Poured concrete foundation with steel siding; asphalt-shingled, gabled roof. Attached garage – 1949 and addition 1992.		1	0
1611 Grand Ave	Bungalow/Craftsman – 1925 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with vinyl siding; asphalt-shingled, front-gabled roof.	Detached garage – Contributing – 1924	2	0
1617 Grand Ave	Bungalow – 1920 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with steel siding; asphalt-shingled, front-gabled roof. Designed/Built by William Madson.	Detached garage – Contributing – 1920	2	0
1620	Tudor Revival – 1937 – Contributing –	Detached	2	0

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 10

Grand Ave	Concrete block foundation with brick and wood siding, wood shingles. This house is one of the finest examples in Spencer and within the district of the English Tudor Revival. Designed by Jacob C. Sorenson. See Figure 9.	garage – Contributing – 1937		
1621 Grand Ave	Bungalow/Craftsman – 1920 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with vinyl siding; asphalt-shingled, front-gabled roof. The home features a gabled porch set off to one side, which acts as the front entrance. Designed/Built by William Madson.	Detached garage – Contributing – 1920	2	0
1603 1 st Ave E	Moderne – 1940 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with vinyl siding; asphalt-shingled, gabled roof. Attached garage – 1988		1	0
1611 1 st Ave E	Bungalow/Craftsman – 1937 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with wood siding; asphalt-shingled, front-gabled roof. Fully enclosed porch. Attached garage – 2002.		1	0
1615 1 st Ave E	Colonial Revival/Moderne– 1940 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with wood siding; asphalt-shingled, side-gabled roof. Chimney.	Detached garage – Contributing – 1940	2	0
1623 1 st Ave E	Tudor Revival – 1940 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with brick; asphalt-shingled, side-gabled roof with a front facing gable. Shed dormer facing front of house. Chimney.	Detached garages – Contributing – 1940 and c.1955	2	0
7 E 17 th St	Moderne – 1940 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with vinyl siding and brick; wood-shingled, gabled roof. Chimney.	Detached garage – Non-contributing – 1990	1	1
13 E 17 th St	Bungalow – 1920 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with wood siding; asphalt-shingled, hipped roof. Attached carport – 1920		1	0
1705 1 st Ave E	Classical Revival/Moderne – 1945 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with combination wood and brick veneer siding;		1	0

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 11

	wood-shingled, side-gabled roof with a front facing gable. Attached garage – 1945			
1725 1 st Ave E	Colonial Revival/Moderne – 1941 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with vinyl siding; wood-shingled, side-gabled roof with a front facing gable. Attached garage – 1941		1	0
1710 Grand Ave	Moderne – 1947 – Contributing – Poured concrete foundation with hardboard siding; asphalt-shingled, gabled roof. Attached garage – 1947		1	0
1714 Grand Ave	Bungalow – 1920 – Contributing – Concrete block foundation with vinyl siding; asphalt-shingled, gabled roof.	Detached garage – Contributing – 1920	2	0
1722 Grand Ave	Moderne– 1947 – Contributing – Tile block foundation with vinyl siding; asphalt-shingled, side-gabled roof with a front facing gable. Chimney.	Detached garage – Contributing – 1947	2	0
	Boulevard– c.1890		1	
	Lights – 2010			1
	Concrete/Brick Entrance Pillars– 2010			1
			Contributing	Non – Contributing
	TOTALS		97	21

In addition to the houses, garages, and churches there are other non-contributing and contributing structures to the district. The additional non-contributing structures include the three concrete and brick entrance pillars; two are located at the south end of the district (9th and Grand Avenue) on both the east and west corners and one is located at the north end of the district (17th and Grand Avenue) on the east corner. There is not an entrance pillar on the west corner of 17th and Grand Avenue due to right-of-way access. The final non-contributing structure is the collection of new light fixtures that traverse the boulevard. The entrance pillars and the light fixtures were installed in 2010. The landscaped boulevard, which is a contributing structure to the district, runs north and south from 8th to 18th. The boulevard has been an integral part of the residential area since the late 1890s–early 1900s.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 12

The period of significance (1880-1964) was chosen based on the construction date of the first house, 1003 North Grand Avenue built by A.W. Miller, and shortly thereafter the formation of the Griffin & Adams Addition, which the majority of the district lays within. The end date of 1964 was chosen using the cut-off point for historic resources as 50 years or older.

Integrity

The North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District possesses a high degree of integrity. The landscape of the District remains intact and no major changes have been made. The stability and integrity of the District are a testament to the quality of the original landscape and the design intentions of North Grand Avenue. The District maintains high integrity of location, design, setting, materials and workmanship, feeling, and association. The items in the integrity statement are evident within the district. Specifically in the following ways:

Historic Integrity of Location: The District and its site retain a high degree of integrity of location. Specifically, the 75 foot setback has been maintained in the Griffin & Adams Addition and the setback in the Railroad Addition has also been maintained. The width of the highway and the boulevard has also been maintained. The residential district is split by North Grand Avenue/Highway 71/18 and a landscaped boulevard dissects the east and west sides. The houses still convey a sense of architectural history of the City of Spencer within one distinct area. The houses that give the district its' character have maintained their original location

Historic Integrity of Design: The District retains its integrity of design relative to the designated period of significance. Most of the original design elements exist to some extent, particularly the 75 foot setback, the boulevard system; and many of the original houses still line the street. The district has also maintained a high degree of landscape design in that it continues to be a tree-lined street. The trees vary and include large varieties of mature deciduous and coniferous trees. The design of the houses remains and tells a story of the changes of architectural styles as the district developed. This is evident as one traverses the district, particularly from south to north. Additionally, the designed 75 foot setback from the street is retained along North Grand Avenue. The majority of design and form of the houses has been maintained throughout the district.

Historic Integrity of Setting: The District retains a relatively high degree of integrity of setting. As during the period of significance, the district maintains its distance to downtown and the railroad as well as continuing to remain a residential district. The key spatial relationship of the district to the railroad tracks and other major streets has been unaffected by other changes that have occurred within the community and the adjacent area. The District retains a great percentage of single-family residential houses. The district is walkable with sidewalks on both the east and west sides. There are large deciduous and coniferous trees. The landscaped boulevard is also tended to with landscaping and non-historic light poles. The rhythms of the houses follow the 75 foot setback and the massing of the houses changes gradually from south to north. The south end of the district has larger houses, while the north end has smaller bungalow houses. The majority of the lawns are flat and nicely manicured. The houses maintain their integrity within the setting of district their relationship to other houses within the district and/or the respective blocks is impeccable.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number 7, 8 Page 13

Historic Integrity of Materials and Workmanship: The District retains a high degree of integrity of materials and workmanship. Many of the character defining features of the district, landscape, and houses are intact. Additionally, many of the houses have retained their original materials and workmanship. The styles of the houses are evident and many are fine examples of a representative style collected in one geographic location within Spencer. Some of the houses have a fair level of integrity of materials; however, many of the houses have experienced some type of alteration in regards to materials and therefore workmanship. Those houses who have maintained a high level of integrity are clearly identifiable and serve as excellent examples of their architectural style within Spencer.

Historic Integrity of Feeling: The District retains a high degree of integrity of feeling. Viewed from the north or south, the district appears much as it did when it was platted by the railroad and Griffin & Adams. Despite some changes to the surroundings (such as: commercial development encroachment, razed homes, etc.), the district still conveys the historic and aesthetic feeling of the period of significance. The District still has the feeling of a prominent area with excellent architectural specimens. The boulevard, as well as the 75 foot setback of houses, plays a huge role in the feeling of the district. To date, the 75 foot setback has been respected and all the lots north of 11th Street maintain the 75 foot setback.

Historic Integrity of Association: The District retains its integrity of association due to its impact on the Community Planning & Development of Spencer. It also serves as a collection of architecture that represents the entire community from the 1880 and the Victorian Era to the 1960s and the moderne architectural styles. Those individuals involved in the planning of Main Street (North Grand Avenue) in the 1880s would recognize the district today. The District is within walking distance of the downtown and the railroad; additionally, the association with Highways 71/18 remains.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District is locally significant under Criteria A as it illustrates the development of residential properties of a very visible and prominent residential neighborhood in Spencer, Iowa. The district is also an example of the importance of residential planning and development along a transportation corridor. The district is also locally significant under Criteria C as it encompasses a strong collection of architectural styles in a concentrated area of Spencer, Iowa.

The North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District demonstrates the influence of styles and trends which is evident as one would traverse the district from the southern boundary to the northern boundary. Finally, the district is a local example of boulevard and residential design influenced by the City Beautiful movement as well as shaped by the prosperous agriculture of the area.

The City Beautiful Movement (1885-1915)

The impact of the City Beautiful movement, at the beginning of the 20th century, greatly influenced the progressivism of cities. In Spencer, Grand Avenue served as a visual symbol of civic pride and the desire to improve the northern gateway into Spencer.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number 8 Page 14

The first large-scale demonstration of the City Beautiful philosophy was at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. The St. Louis World's Fair of 1904 continued the popularity of the genre. The design ideas of City Beautiful were adopted in some form in Chicago, St Louis, Kansas City and Des Moines, among other cities, in the early part of the twentieth century. The prominent citizens of Spencer traveled widely by train at the time and would have likely traveled to these cities to visit the World Fairs or for other business. While the City Beautiful movement impacted civic and cultural centers, it also served as an example and was the driving force for the North Grand Avenue residents to beautify the boulevards and maintain the front yards of the residences, in projects in the 1910s and again in the early 1930s.²

According to Roth, "In some cities the goal was to integrate the interrelated transportation, industrial and commercial networks for the greatest efficiency, while at the same time making the city physically, artistically and culturally, a better place to live."³ In Spencer, the latter was true, specifically attempting to make Spencer a better place to live by ensuring that the gateway is a visual presentation of how citizens thought and felt about their community.

History of Spencer and the North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District

The development of Spencer started in 1865 when five pioneer families from Wisconsin chose a 50-acre grove in the center of Clay County for their new home.⁴ From this meager beginning, the city of Spencer emerged to be the center of agriculture, business, and industry in Clay County.⁵

Spencer is the county seat of Clay County. Although it was established by the Iowa Legislature in 1851, Clay County was not organized as a separate entity until 1858. The town of Spencer as we know it today was surveyed by John Edmonds and platted in 1871 on the north side of the Little Sioux River. The county seat was moved from Peterson to Spencer in 1871. While the relocation of the Clay County seat was not the largest political battle of the area, it is widely known that Peterson was the first county seat. One of the main reasons for relocating the county seat was that Spencer had become a more developed town and was more centrally located within the county.

The original 1871 plat of Spencer was twelve square blocks. Main Street, running north and south, was platted as 100 feet wide, while others were 66 feet wide. Early residences were modest structures. This original plat was essentially the entire town until the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad arrived in 1878.⁶ See figure 3.

Additionally, the arrival of the railroad marked "an important epoch in the history of Clay County when slowly but gradually Spencer and the county put on a new appearance...Houses sprang up; new arrivals came on every

² Roth, Leland. *American Architecture: A History*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2001. Pg. 321.

³ Ibid. Pg. 323.

⁴ *The Daily Reporter*. Thursday, January 29, 1987. Pg. 1B.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ *Centennial: Spencer, Iowa 1871-1971*. Spencer, IA: Standard Printing, 1971 and Naumann, Molly Myers. *Grand Avenue Historic Commercial District Nomination*, 2004. Pg. 20.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number 8 Page 15

train; trade was given a fresh impetus; farmers were receiving better prices for their stock and produce... The change was marked and great.”⁷ The prospects for Spencer grew brighter than ever before in its history. The extension of Main Street (later named North Grand Avenue) to the north continued the linear plan of the original plat with the Griffin & Adams Addition.

By 1908, when Gillespie and Steele wrote their history of the county, Spencer could boast of a municipal waterworks with many wells and a large steel water tower:

A splendid sewer system of 22,131 feet, well-kept streets and 230 blocks of cement sidewalks, a municipal electric light plant located just north of the business district and the railroad tracks, five school buildings... a modern courthouse, the Grand Opera House, and a new public library financed by a \$10,000 grant from Andrew Carnegie.⁸

Additionally, the prosperous agriculture of the area was making its mark in Spencer. Farmers were finally seeing a significant increase in crop sales. Within the first two decades of the 20th Century, farmers experienced double and even triple the land values as they had previously seen.⁹ This is reinforced locally as well:

Farmers had the money to expand operations, buy new equipment and automobiles. They could afford to replace the old (often original) farm house with a new residence of “modern” design, often a Bungalow or Four Square. And, perhaps most importantly, they could afford to buy not only the necessities, but some of the luxuries that made life in the early decades of the 20th century much more comfortable.¹⁰

As Molly Myers Naumann wrote, in the Grand Avenue Historic Commercial District nomination:

between 1910 and 1920 Spencer's population increased by 50%, from 3,005 to 4,599. New houses, almost all in the Bungalow style, were being constructed all over town. These were not large, expensive houses, but ones affordable to almost all... It was noted that some of the new houses were built for farmers who had retired and moved to town, while others were built for farmers in anticipation of their retirement in the next few years.¹¹

At that time North Grand Avenue was considered a desirable place to live due to its close proximity to downtown. Many area farmers had prospered from the development of the railroad and agricultural systems. This made it possible for some of these farmers to have their houses built in the prestigious North Grand Avenue neighborhood when they made their move to Spencer.

Changes In Town: Esthetic Changes and the “Main Street” Name Change

In 1915, the residents living on Main (Grand Avenue) were making plans to add beauty and attraction to the

⁷ Gillespie, Samuel, and James E. Steele. *Clay County, Iowa: From Its Earliest Settlement to 1909*. Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1909. Pg. 159.

⁸ Gillespie, Samuel and James E. Steele. *History of Clay County Iowa*. Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1909. Pg. 92.

⁹ Hurt, R. Douglas, Editor. *American Agriculture: A Brief History*. Purdue University Press. 2002. Pg. 221.

¹⁰ Naumann, Molly Myers. *Grand Avenue Historic Commercial District Nomination*, 2004. Pg. 23.

¹¹ Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number 8 Page 16

city. The residents proposed that a cement "path" twenty-feet wide be constructed and "planted with hardy shrubs and foliage plants as well as having a few nice forest trees, benches for the accommodation of those who may wish to sit down."¹² The intention and hopes of the residents was that those who stay in Spencer will be willing to make the town a beautiful place and that they will be glad to make Spencer their permanent home, "rather than when they shall be able to get away from here."¹³

In addition to the local efforts to esthetically improve the city as well as North Main there were discussions pertaining to changing the names of all city streets, including Main Street.

In 1924, the Spencer Commercial Club offered a \$26.00 prize to whoever could come up with the best name for Main Street.¹⁴ However, many citizens thought that the whole concept of changing a city's street names seemed "foolish" and "ridiculous".¹⁵

The articles began to appear in 1924 in the Spencer News Herald and pointed out that perhaps the name change came about due to the book, "Main Street", by Sinclair Lewis, which was published in 1920. The book focused primarily on the small town of Gopher Prairie (modeled after Sauk Centre, MN). The book ridiculed the small cities and made them appear "uninteresting" and "pitiful". Many of the citizens of Spencer were affected by this and therefore had a great desire to change the name of Main/North Main Street. The name Main Street had a negative connotation as a "hick" town. And therefore, a competition began to see who could come up with the best name and everyone was invited to vote on the new name for Main/North Main Street.¹⁶

Some of the names (Okoboji Boulevard/Drive) were suggested as they thought they would give statewide notoriety for the area, another name "Bee Street/Boulevard" was nominated as traffic was always "Busy as a Bee" on Main Street. There was over 50 names that were submitted as part of the competition, they included: Main Boulevard, Central Avenue, Grant Street/Way/Road, Grand Avenue, Iowa Avenue, Broadway, Sioux Avenue, Sioux Boulevard, and Liberty Avenue.¹⁷ One opinion letter that appeared in the Spencer Reporter in 1924 had these recommendations:

There is one more change which looks good to a large number of others I have talked to and that is to have the streets of Spencer numbered and laid out so that it is a welcome place for strangers to locate places...it is very inconvenient for strange workmen to find streets in Spencer. The suggestion I would like to make is to start at the river and number the streets 1st Street, 2nd St, 3rd St, etc. to the north side of the city. Then start on Main Street and number the streets west of Main and parallel to it 1st Avenue West, 2nd Avenue West, etc. and then on the east side of Main Street would be 1st Avenue East, 2nd Avenue East... Yours Truly A Resident of Spencer.¹⁸

¹² *Spencer Reporter*. "A Projected Improvement." February 24, 1915. Front page.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ *Spencer Reporter*. "Main St. Name Contest Closes." June 25, 1924. Pg. 7, col 1.

¹⁵ *The Spencer News-Herald*. "Shall Name of Main Street be Changed: Some Think the Old Name is Good Enough." June 12, 1924.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ *Spencer Reporter*. "Main St. Name Left to People." July 2, 1924. Pg. 2, col. 2.

¹⁸ *Spencer Reporter*. June 25, 1924. Pg. 8, col. 3.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number 8 Page 17

After hundreds of names were offered, and “fussing, using several gallons of newspaper space and getting all heated up and excited, Old Main Street won out in the newspaper poll, and unless the city council votes to have it changed, it will be Main Street until time shall end...”¹⁹; however, in 1939, many if not all, the streets in Spencer were renamed; (North) Main Street became (North) Grand Avenue.

Planning, Development, & Transportation

The development of North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District (State Highway 71/18), was integral to the development of Spencer, northwest Iowa, and the agricultural needs of the region. In 1893, Main (later known as Grand) was included on the first Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of the area; however, no houses were included north of 7th Street on the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.²⁰ Main was primarily a transportation corridor.

History of the 75 Foot Setback & (North) Grand Avenue Development

The original plat for Spencer was laid out in 1871. The First Railway Addition was laid out in 1880 and included the 900 and 1000 blocks of the North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District. These two blocks were not subject to any special conditions or restrictions.

The Griffin & Adams Addition was laid out in 1884. This addition covers the 1100-1800 blocks of North Grand Avenue. Houses built in the Griffin & Adams Addition on North Grand Avenue were subject to several conditions and restrictions. They are as follows:

That the front one-third of the said block... fronting Main Street shall contain no buildings except the residences of said...owner and his grantees, and such residences shall be built and erected not nearer than 75 feet from the front line of said block and if said conditions and restrictions shall be in any wise violated by said...owner or his grantees, then this deed shall be null and void, and the title hereby conveyed shall at once revert in Griffin and Adams, together with all improvements thereon, without pay or compensation from said Griffin and Adams.”²¹

The transition between the First Railway Addition and the Griffin & Adams Addition is quite clear. The blocks from 9th Street to 11th Street do not have the 75 foot setback restrictions. The 75 foot setback of the Griffin & Adams Addition begins at 11th Street and continues north to 18th Street. The setback is 75 feet from the property line of each parcel. The First Railway Addition designated 100 foot parcels and the Griffin & Adams Addition designated 100-foot parcels as well. The original conditions and restrictions have been followed to date; however, there is not a binding contract that would keep someone from building within the 75 foot setback.

There were later subdivisions to both additions, which include Carlson’s subdivision (1915) and Squier’s Resurvey (1919) and later became the Livingston Replat subdivision. The subdivision to Griffin & Adams Addition contained a clause describing the restriction that no buildings may be constructed within 75 feet of

¹⁹ *Spencer Reporter*. “No Change In Main Street Name Verdict of Newspaper Readers.” July 16, 1924. Pg. 1, col 3.

²⁰ There are Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Spencer for the additional years: 1924, 1941, and 1946. These maps did not include further information on the district area.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number 8 Page 18

Main Street (now known as Grand Avenue). The clause also states that no home may be constructed for "less than \$2,000 total cost of building materials." The Grand Avenue Residential District has the greatest collection of architectural styles that are found throughout the city within two additions and later subdivisions.

There were several key players in the development of North Grand Avenue as we know it today. These business men and women chose to build houses that were quite modern for their time. These homes had and continue to have a significant presence as travelers pass through Spencer. Two of these key players were John Q. Adams and Marion E. Griffin. Similar to other areas in Spencer, the North Grand Residential District experienced additional subdivisions as the years passed. See Figure 3.

John Quincy Adams

John Q. Adams was born in South Troy, Vermont in 1848 and when he was eight years old his parents moved to Ohio. In 1863, he came to Osage, Iowa and attended school there. For a time and afterwards, Adams taught school in Mitchell County, teaching his first school when he was about 17 years of age. In 1870, he accepted a position as a traveling salesman for a large wholesale firm and continued on the road for eleven years representing some of the largest wholesale grocery stores. At that time, Spencer was on his route, and Mr. Adams formed a partnership with M. E. Griffin in January 1881, in which they embarked on the banking business. The partnership of Griffin & Adams remained for a number of years. They bought and handled a considerable amount of land. The land in the north part of Spencer was bought by Griffin & Adams and laid out as an addition to Spencer; it is still known as the Griffin & Adams Addition.²²

John Adams married in 1874 to Miss Frances C. Smith and they had one son, Bennie. In March 1888, Mr. Adams was elected mayor of Spencer and he also served on the school board for several years. John also held the position of director of the "Old Clay County Fair" and was a very public-spirited citizen. John had great faith in the future of northwest Iowa and invested in land in the area. At one time, he owned several thousand acres.²³

John left Spencer about 20 years prior to his death, but always maintained personal interest in the area. His family continued to have a house on Lake Okoboji where they vacationed and spent the majority of their time during his last few years of life.²⁴

John died suddenly in Chicago on December 12, 1919. His body was brought back to Spencer where he was buried.²⁵

Marion E. Griffin

John Q. Adams' business partner, Marion E. Griffin, was born on October 10, 1844, in the town of Brookfield, New York, son of Mr. and Mrs. James Griffin. He was the youngest of seven sons. At the age of fifteen he was

²² *Spencer Reporter*. "John Q. Adams Died Suddenly." December 17, 1919. Pg. 1, col. 6.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number 8 Page 19

sent to public school at Utica, New York, but in April 1860, the family moved to Delhi, Iowa, where he entered the Epworth Seminary at Epworth, Iowa. In August 1862, he enlisted in the United States Army at Dubuque, Iowa, joining Company F, 21st Iowa Infantry. He was mustered out of service in July 1865, and then took a business course at Bryant and Stratton School in Chicago.²⁶

John moved around Iowa. He worked for a while at a wholesale grocery store in Dubuque, Iowa, as a bookkeeper, and then moved to Algona, Iowa, where he opened an abstract office. In October of 1869 he moved to Peterson, Clay County, Iowa and then resided in the city of Spencer from December, 1871, until his death.²⁷

Marion E. Griffin was a well-known business man in Northwest Iowa. From the beginning he was frugal. He never spent as much as he earned. He lived carefully and economically. It was said by the man himself that when he came to the area all he had was a "silk tile hat, a good suit of clothes and less than a dollar in money." He was a liberal giver to the Masonic Temple and he made a large donation to the county fair.²⁸

Mr. Griffin was in the banking business beginning in 1869 and continued in the business in Spencer for years. His banking methods were never questioned and he had the full confidence of the community. Mr. Griffin, to his friends, was a genial man and he enjoyed visiting. He was the type of man who, if he liked you, wanted you to know it, and if he did not like you, he was equally frank.²⁹

He was one of the largest real estate holders in the county at the time, perhaps the largest, for his holdings were known to total several thousands of acres. For a number of years he owned the famous Griffin Ranch, southwest of Spencer, one of the largest farms at the time in this part of Iowa.³⁰

Politics attracted him early on. He was elected county treasurer in 1870, a year after moving to the county. He took office in January 1871 and he held the office for a period of six years. During the early years of Clay county's political history, he was a leader of one faction of the Republican party.³¹

A devoted exponent of the principle of personal control of business, he kept in very close touch with the affairs of his bank, even during the years of his growing ill health. Known as a plain, simple, and straightforward man for more than fifty years he was a leader in the affairs of his community. By all accounts, he was respected by all who knew him and who had intimate relations with him. He was one of the founders of Masonic work in Spencer; he was a Mason, a Knight Templar, and a Shriner, and a member of Abu Bekr Shrine at Sioux City. He was the third master of the Evening Shade Lodge 312, A.F. & A.M., holding that office during the years

²⁶ *Clay County Iowa, GenWeb*. "Marion E. Griffin, 1844-1925". Accessed April 4, 2013. <http://iagenweb.org/boards/clay/obituaries> and *Spencer News Herald*. "October 15, 1925.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number 8 Page 20

1876 and 1877, and was also a member of the Elks.³²

The professional work of Griffin & Adams had a profound effect on the development of Spencer and specifically the North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District.

Development of the Highway System & Highways 18 & 71

The development of the North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District, from the time the addition was platted in 1884 to its improvements in the 1910s and 1920s, has been influenced by the concurrent development of Iowa's highway system, specifically Highways 18 and 71.

In the early years of statehood, township trustees graded ditches and did some dragging of the roadway bed to form a primitive grade, usually by oxen pulling a plow. Plans were seldom prepared in advance of work, cost estimates were unheard of and distances were arbitrary. The workers for these primitive or "military roads" were mostly farmers working out their road tax in the easiest way possible: manual labor. In 1858, male residents of townships were required to do two day's work annually upon the roads. As was the case for most towns in Iowa, the first streets of Spencer and Clay County were primitive dirt roads. Grand Avenue was a dirt road in the early 1880s.

By 1900, Iowa had 104,000 miles of road open to travel (all rural mileage was dirt). There were no motor vehicles on the roadways yet and 20 miles of travel was a long journey for a farm team and wagon.³³ In July of 1904, the first concrete paved street in Iowa, and the second in the nation, was in LeMars, Iowa (70 miles west of Spencer). Two investors paid for the project.

Then, on April 13, 1904, the 30th General Assembly and Governor A.B. Cummins created the Iowa State Highway Commission (IHC). The commission, originally established as part of the Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts (today Iowa State University of Science and Technology) in Ames, Iowa, provided information and acted as an administrative advisory agent to the local jurisdictions regarding road development and improvement.³⁴ While productive, the commission remained hindered by the lack of funds it needed to conduct working tests of material and methods of construction suited to Iowa's unique needs.

On April 9, 1913, the IHC separated from the Iowa State College, becoming an independent state-administered organization, managed by a three-member commission. That same year, the first section of highway to be

³² *Clay County Iowa, GenWeb*. "Marion E. Griffin, 1844-1925". Accessed April 4, 2013. <http://iagenweb.org/boards/clay/obituaries> and *Spencer News Herald*. "October 15, 1925.

³³ Approaching the Turn of the Century: Discovering Historic Iowa Transportation Milestones. Iowa Department of Transportation. Accessed March 2013. <http://www.iowadot.gov/histbook.pdf>. Pg. 12.

³⁴ <http://www.iowadot.gov/about/organizationalhistory.htm>. Accessed November 22, 2010.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number 8 Page 21

paved in Iowa with the use of federal funds was a section of Highway 18 between Mason City and Clear Lake (90 miles east of Spencer).³⁵

In rural counties like Clay County, consolidated schools, rural mail delivery and increasing marketing and supply needs accentuated the problems of the highway system. Advancements in agriculture put more wear and tear on what were already poor roadways.³⁶ Additionally, the funds available for local counties and cities did not enable them to properly serve the needs of their citizens. Under the IHC, paving of State Highways 71 & 18 in northwest Iowa finally began in the late 1920s. It would take over a decade for the paving to be completed and encompass the arteries beyond Spencer and Clay County.

From its early days to the present, Highways 71 & 18 continues to offer a unique corridor to Iowa and Northwest Iowa. This corridor connects the northwest corner of the state and aids Spencer's position as a hub for business and shopping. Additionally, it connects the adjacent areas of South Dakota and Minnesota to four lane state highways as well as the interstate system.

Prominent Business People

In addition to John Q. Adams and M.E. Griffin, Spencer was home to many prominent business people. Some were downtown business owners, which included clothiers, furniture supplier, bankers, lawyer, and newspaper editor. Many of them chose to build esthetically pleasing houses on North Grand Avenue. A few of these business people included Bjorn Bjornstad, John and Mary Cory, and A.W. Miller.

Bjorn Bjornstad – 1105 North Grand Avenue

The residence at 1105 N Grand Ave was designed and built by Norwegian immigrant Bjorn Bjornstad in 1892 for his family.³⁷ Bjorn Bjornstad played a pivotal role in building early residences and buildings for the Spencer community that he adopted as his home. Born in 1851 in Trondhjem, Norway, Bjorn and his young wife, Anna, came to Iowa via Minneapolis, Minnesota in the late 1870s. In 1881, they moved to Spencer. According to his obituary, Bjorn built many of the city's early residences, as well as witnessed the growth of this vibrant new community at the turn of the century and beyond.³⁸ For 46 years Mr. Bjornstad contributed to the architecture of the city's homes, and his cabinetry-making skills were represented in many homes' interiors. He also built the First Congregational Church in Spencer and completed its interior, which has since been replaced. According to one local legend, the staircase in the 1105 North Grand Avenue house was crafted after the stairs of the ship that brought him to America.³⁹

Bjorn Bjornstad's legacy of his craft as well as his public spirit and commitment to the community continues to this day, not only in his carpentry but through his sons and their families. The Bjornstads have been at the

³⁵ Approaching the Turn of the Century: Discovering Historic Iowa Transportation Milestones. Iowa Department of Transportation. Accessed March 2013. <http://www.iowadot.gov/histbook.pdf>. Pg. 20.

³⁶ *Iowa Journal of History*, vol. 47. State Historical Society of Iowa. 1949. Pg. 133.

³⁷ *The Spencer News Herald*. "Grim Reaper Claims Many During Week, Bjorn Bjornstad," February 4, 1926.

³⁸ Biographies of Clay County, Iowa, -Iowa Gen Web, Otto Andreas Bjornstad. Accessed January 22, 2011.

³⁹ Gebhard, David and Gerald Mansheim, Buildings of Iowa, Oxford University Press. New York, Oxford. 1993, Pg. 433.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number 8 Page 22

center of Spencer's economic development for many years, and their entrepreneurial spirit can still be felt. A plumbing and heating business, pharmacy, hardware store, law office, and car dealership were all established on Main Street by the Bjornstads, most of which are still in operation today and still in the Bjornstad family. The infamous Spencer fire of 1931, a case which spurred on the decision to ban fireworks in Iowa, began in the Bjornstad Drugstore. The Bjornstad families have served and continue to serve on municipal boards, bank boards of directors, and numerous civic organizations. Many Spencer residents today are proud of their Bjornstad ancestry and the leadership heritage that began with a talented Norwegian carpenter.⁴⁰

John W. & Mary C. (Burley) Cory – 1119 North Grand Avenue

John William Cory was described as a pioneer, northwest Iowa attorney and land owner. John was born on a farm in Linn County on February 12, 1850. He was one of five children. He lived with his parents John Francis and Margaret Smyth Cory, until his graduation from Cornell College in Mount Vernon, Iowa, in June 1871. Following graduation, John set out for Estherville, Iowa with Captain E.B. Soper (who later became John's brother-in-law). John taught school and was principal. While in Estherville he studied law with Captain Soper and was admitted to the Iowa bar in May 1873. John practiced law in Estherville for six months with Captain Soper. In 1874, John moved to Spirit Lake to enter a practice and later was the last district attorney of the 14th judicial district of Iowa (the office was later abolished by the state legislature).⁴¹

On August 3, 1881, he was married to Miss Mary C. Burley and to their marriage two sons were born; John Rowland who passed away in infancy and John William Cory Jr. In 1896, the family moved to Spencer from Spirit Lake. John took up practice with W.S. Bemis and later with his son until the formation of the firm Cory and Sackett. Sackett Law Firm still exists today in Spencer.⁴²

John was very involved as a Mason, including the Evening Shade Lodge. He received various degrees including royal, select master, and served as high priest for 18 years. In 1890, he became a Knights Templar. He also served as first commander for several years. He received the Scottish Rite degree in January 1900, and became a Shriner in 1896. During 1914-1915 he held the office of grand high priest of the Grand Chapter of Iowa.⁴³

While residing in Spirit Lake and Spencer he was quite active in the municipal affairs. He was also very active in church affairs until he became ill. John William Cory died on Wednesday, June 22, 1938. He was survived by one son and two grandsons, John Webster Cory and Ace Rowland Cory.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Bjornstad, Bjorn, *original carpenter ledger*, provided by Chris Bjornstad, circa 1890-1900.

⁴¹ *The Spencer Reporter*. "J.W. Cory Dies At Home Here on Wednesday," June 24, 1938.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number 8 Page 23

Mary Catherine (Burley) Cory – 1119 North Grand Avenue

Mary Cory was born in Thornton, England on April 18, 1857. She was the youngest daughter of Samuel and Dorothea Burley in a family of ten children. The Burley family traced its ancestry to Sir Simon Burley, a courtier and favorite of King Richard II. The family was very well educated by a governess. At age 16, Mary passed the senior exams at Cambridge University.⁴⁵

Mary's older brothers had left England and had come to Iowa. In 1875, Mary joined her brother Fred in Iowa. They traveled extensively and particularly to northwest Iowa. She met John Cory where they lived for a few years in Spirit Lake until building a home on (North) Main in 1896, which remained the family home until after John's death.⁴⁶

Special interest in the War Mothers and the Women's Auxiliary were very intense due to her family's service in the Great War and the fact that her son John enlisted in the service. She served as first president of the War Mothers; first president of the Service Star; and was sent as a delegate to the first state convention of the Auxiliary of the American Legion. She was a member of the P.E.O and the Evening Shade Chapter, Order of Eastern Star. She held the office of Worthy Matron for three terms. It is her activity in women's club work that she was known for and loved through the state of Iowa. In 1927, she received one of the highest honors that would come to an Iowa woman, she was elected Honorary Vice President of the Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs. Mary was involved in many state committees such as House Economics, Health, Library Extension, and Advisory, to name a few. Mary had profound influence on improving life in Spencer as well as the entire state of Iowa. She was involved in cultural, social and civic leadership.⁴⁷ Mary died at her residence on May 31, 1934 at age 77.⁴⁸

A.W. Miller – 1003 North Grand Avenue

This house was built by the locally influential man, A.W. Miller. Miller was born in Maryland where he enlisted and served in the Maryland Volunteer Infantry. He first moved to Iowa in 1869 and quickly became influential within Clay County. He was part owner of the Spencer Mill for a time, and in 1875 he founded the Clay County Bank, the first private bank of its kind in the county. He went on to start the First National Bank as well and remained president of the institution until his death.

Discussion of Architects and Contractors

There were several architects and contractors that made their mark on the buildings that are included in the North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District.

Ralph Arnold was born in Carbondale, Illinois. He earned a B.S. at the University of Illinois in 1911. It is

⁴⁵ *The Spencer News-Herald*. "Death Takes Mrs. J.W. Cory at age of 77:Funeral Rites Held Sunday: Community Mourns Loss," June 8, 1934, Pgs. 1, 7.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number 8 Page 24

unknown if there are other buildings in Spencer, Iowa designed by Ralph Arnold. However, there are several known buildings designed by Beuttler & Arnold throughout northwestern Iowa, eastern South Dakota, and Nebraska.⁴⁹ Locally, Ralph Arnold designed 1414 North Grand Avenue as well as Reynolds Elementary School in 1926.

William Beuttler was born in Hannibal, Missouri. From 1909-1911 William took the special architecture course at Washington University in St. Louis. He started practicing in 1911 in Sioux City, Iowa under Wilfred W. Beach and later formed the partnership of Beuttler & Arnold.⁵⁰ Locally, he designed 1414 North Grand Avenue as well as Reynolds Elementary School in 1926.

Earl Clemens locally designed 1410 North Grand Avenue. Mr. Clemens was known as an active contractor/builder in Spencer since 1914. It appears that he was primarily in the residential construction business. This includes houses on 1st Ave East and 16th Street, West 1st, West 5th, and West 10th.⁵¹

William Madson designed/built 1617 & 1621 North Grand Avenue. At the time the area in which the houses were built was called "Madson Square" and there are other houses that he built a few blocks to the south. There is very little known about his training and education surrounding construction.

Eugene Penning was born in Jefferson County, Illinois and went to Quincy Business College in Illinois. He worked as the City Clerk for Spencer; Secretary and Treasurer for the Spencer Building and Loan; and Secretary for Spencer Construction. He also held jobs with each entity during the depression, which is how he gained his experience. He designed 15 W 11th Street & 1214 North Grand Avenue.

John Glen Ralston was born in Vinton, Iowa. He attended Tilford Academy for a one-year course in 1890. He completed the International Correspondence Schools' course in Architecture likely between the years of 1892-1897. There are other buildings that Ralston designed, they are primarily civic and educational buildings.⁵² Locally designed the 1911 remodel of the Higgins Mansion, 1215 North Grand Avenue.

Eite Roskens contractor on 1414 North Grand Avenue. Mr. Roskens worked with Mr. Oestenstad on a few project in particular on the *House of Tomorrow*, which is how the house is known locally. However, there is very little known about his training and education surrounding construction. The *House of Tomorrow* in Spencer, Iowa has characteristics from the *House of Tomorrow* that was unveiled at the 1933 World's Fair in Chicago.

⁴⁹ Shank, Wesley I. *Iowa's Historic Architects: A Biographical Dictionary*. University of Iowa Press: Iowa City, Iowa. 1999, Pgs. 12-13.

⁵⁰ Ibid. Pgs. 24-25.

⁵¹ *Spencer Daily Reporter*. "Clemens Has Active Building Year Here". September 4, 1941. Section 7, Pg. 3, col.3.

⁵² Shank, Wesley I. *Iowa's Historic Architects: A Biographical Dictionary*. University of Iowa Press: Iowa City, Iowa. 1999, Pgs. 133-134.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number 8 Page 25

Jacob C. Sorenson designed 1620 North Grand Avenue. It does not appear that Mr. Sorenson had any formal training in architecture and the house is said to have been designed by Sorenson himself. Sorenson moved to Spencer with his wife Christine from Latimer, Iowa. He had been a banker in Latimer. His decision to move to Spencer was influenced by the time he had spent driving up and down North Grand Avenue on his way to Okoboji. He liked the street so much he decided to build on it.

Oren Thomas was born in Camden, New Jersey. He practiced as part of the firm, Keffer, Jones & Thomas and then later a member of the firm of Proudfoot, Rawson, Souers & Thomas. There are two other houses in Iowa that are referenced as his design. It is unclear if there are perhaps others in Spencer that he designed.⁵³ Mr. Thomas was known for taking the lead in Iowa with his designs of modern houses and he specialized in the use of all concrete construction.⁵⁴ He was the architect that designed 1420 North Grand Avenue, locally known as the *House of Tomorrow*.

The *House of Tomorrow* in Spencer, Iowa has characteristics from the *House of Tomorrow* that was unveiled at the 1933 World's Fair in Chicago. With the theme of a "Century of Progress," the houses that were built for the 1933 Chicago World's Fair demonstrated modern architectural design, experimental materials, and new technologies such as central air conditioning and dishwashers.⁵⁵ The *House of Tomorrow* in Spencer, Iowa used "new" and interesting features of precast concrete joists and slabs for flooring. It was also advertised that the House of Tomorrow in Spencer was "fully air-conditioned."⁵⁶

Riedar Oestenstad contractor on 1414 North Grand Avenue. The house was built for an agreed price between Oestenstad and lot owner Harry Noel. He was a well-known contractor who built other houses throughout the community and large barns.⁵⁷ There is very little known about Riedar Oestenstad training and education.

Future Plans

The future plans of the Grand Avenue Improvement Corporation (GAIC) consist of further marketing the district as a special place. Additionally, they have discussed implementing design guidelines for homeowners and working with the City of Spencer Historic Preservation Commission to add local regulations to ensure that future commercial development does not further encroach upon the historic district.

Acknowledgements

This nomination is being put forward to recognize the historical and architectural significance of this notable residential neighborhood in Spencer, Iowa. This project was spearheaded by the GAIC. Over the course of three years the GAIC board members and Grand Avenue residents who have been involved in the completion of this nomination include: Mike Carlson, Kitty and Neal Conover, Majorie Eeten, Tim and Mary Frank, Vance

⁵³ Shank, Wesley I. *Iowa's Historic Architects: A Biographical Dictionary*. University of Iowa Press: Iowa City, Iowa. 1999, Pgs. 162-163.

⁵⁴ *The News-Herald*. "House of Tomorrow Attracts Much Interest." June 14, 1935, Pg. 6.

⁵⁵ House of Tomorrow. National Park Service. Accessed November 20, 2013.
www.nps.gov/indu/historyculture/centuryofprogress.htm

⁵⁶ *The News-Herald*. "House of Tomorrow is Fully Air-Conditioned." September 5, 1935, Section 5, Pg. 3.

⁵⁷ *Spencer Daily Reporter*. "Oestenstad Completes Numerous Building Jobs". September 4, 1941. Section 7, Pg. 3, col.3.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number 8 Page 26

Frommie, Brad Hawn, Duaine Holck, Mike and Betty Kaschmitter, Mary Jean and Dick Montgomery, Christine Segreto, and many others. Intern, Sara Sickelka, aided in research through an internship made possible through assistance from the Iowa Lakes Corridor of Opportunity and the Iowa Lakes Resource Conservation and Development offices. Many of the residents of North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District also aided in the completion of this nomination. Their willingness to provide photographs and oral histories to the research of this nomination was invaluable.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number 9 Page 27

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number 9 Page 28

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number 9 Page 29

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number 10 Page 30

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

UTM References (continued)

Zone	Easting	Northing
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6. 15	325621.17	4779604.38
7. 15	325671.89	4779895.13
8. 15	325571.71	4780012.56
9. 15	325592.04	4780130.16
10. 15	325619.09	4780339.19

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District is shown as the black outline on the accompanying Figure 2. Further detailed maps are included that identify the contributing and noncontributing buildings to the district. See figures 4-6.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes all the historic residential neighborhood along North Grand Avenue and portions along 1st Avenue West and 1st Avenue East; from East/West 9th Street at the south end to East/West 18th Street to the north end of Grand Avenue. These boundaries were determined based on the impact of transportation and architecture of Grand Avenue and the impact that the side streets have upon Grand Avenue as a transportation corridor. The district includes the adjacent streets of 1st Avenue East and 1st Avenue West as they have a high concentration of similar architectural features to the houses on North Grand Avenue. See figure 2.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number Embedded Images Page 31

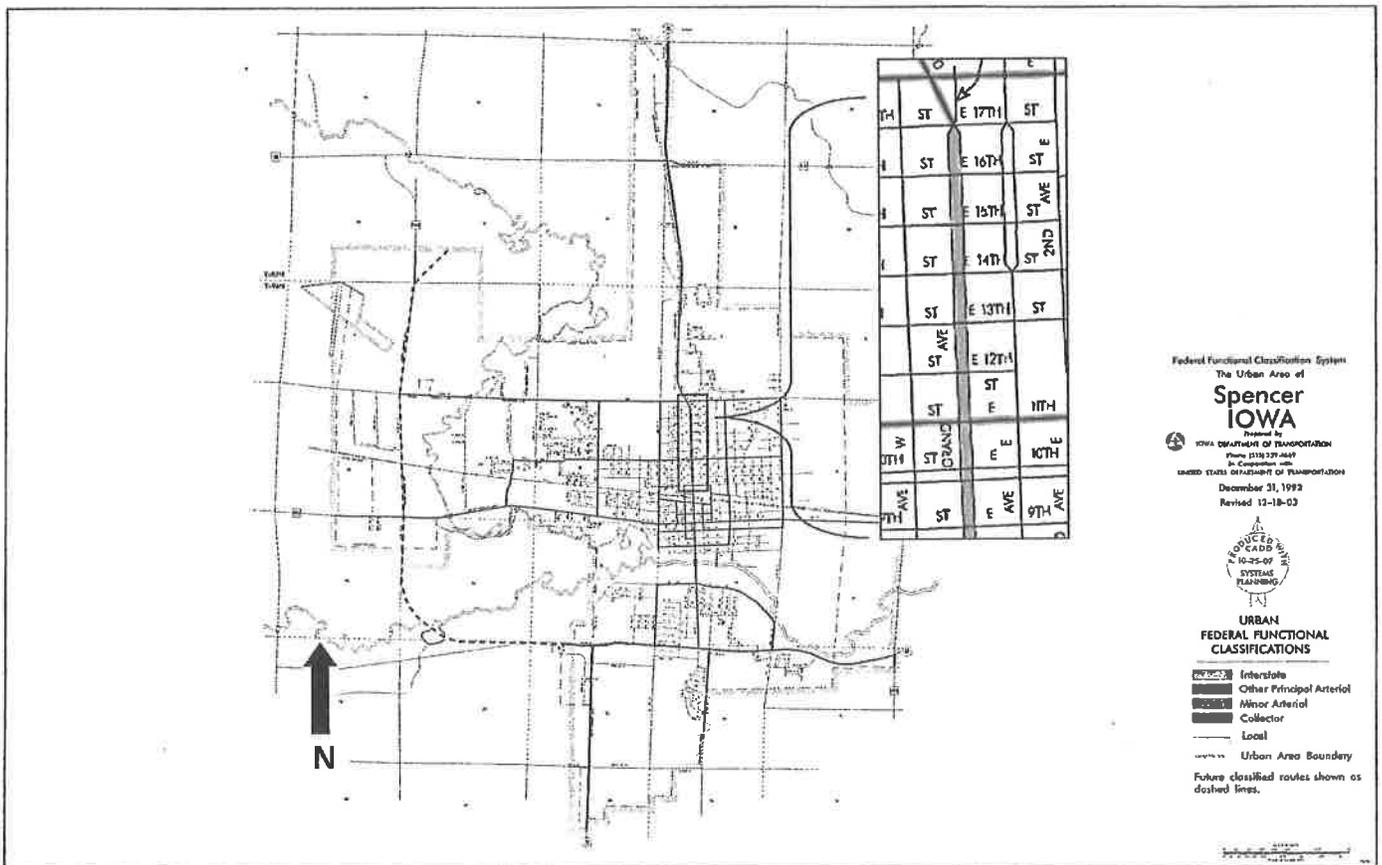


Figure 1: General location of the North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District within the City of Spencer. Map courtesy of the Iowa Department of Transportation, http://www.iowadot.gov/systems_planning/fedfuncclass.html. Accessed May 15, 2013.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number Embedded Images Page 32

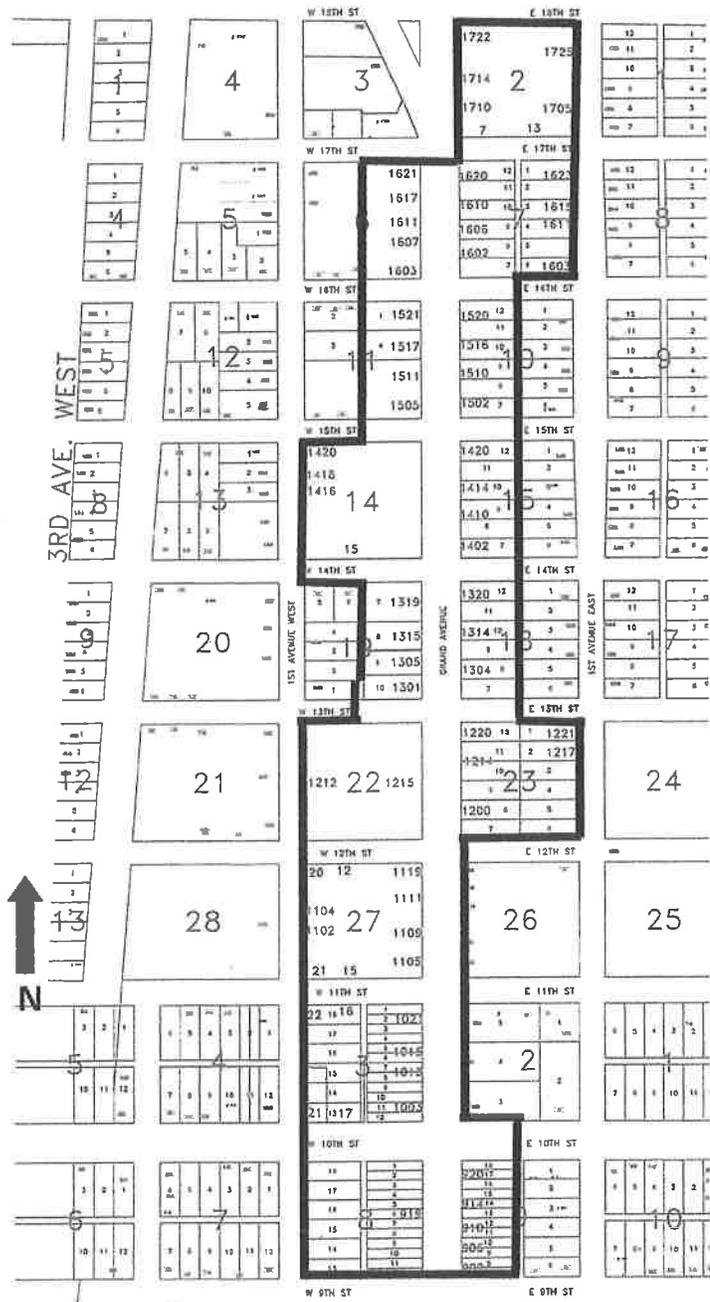


Figure 2: The entire area of the North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District. Map courtesy of the City of Spencer, May 2013. The boulevard which is a contributing structure to the district runs north and south from 8th to 18th.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number Embedded Images Page 33



Figure 3: The subdivisions and additions of North Grand Avenue. Map courtesy of the City of Spencer, October 2013.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number Embedded Images Page 34

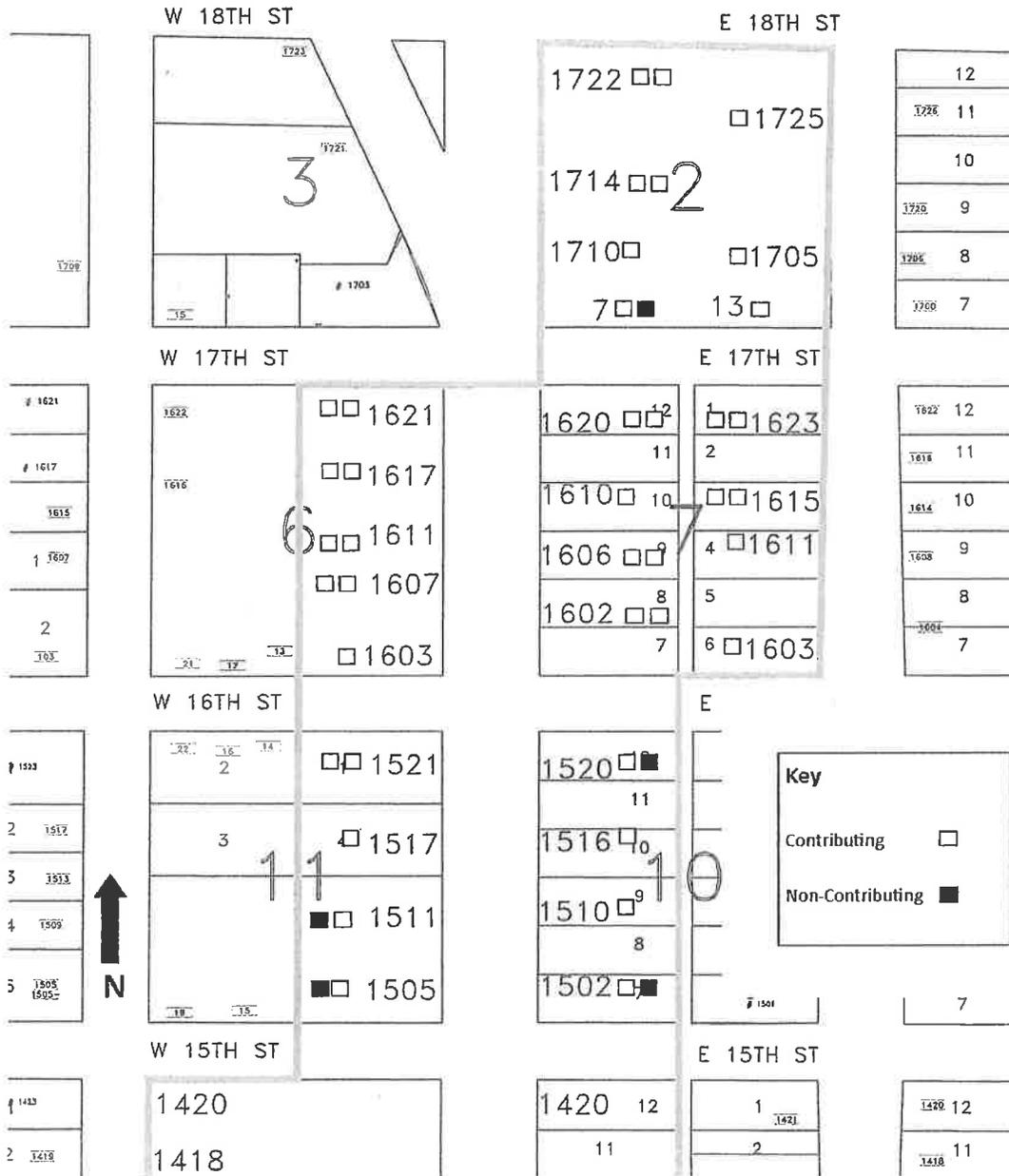


Figure 4: Blocks 1500-1700 of North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District. Map courtesy of the City of Spencer, May 2013. The size of the rectangle used to symbolize buildings is not representative of the actual size of the building or the orientation of one building to another.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number Embedded Images Page 35

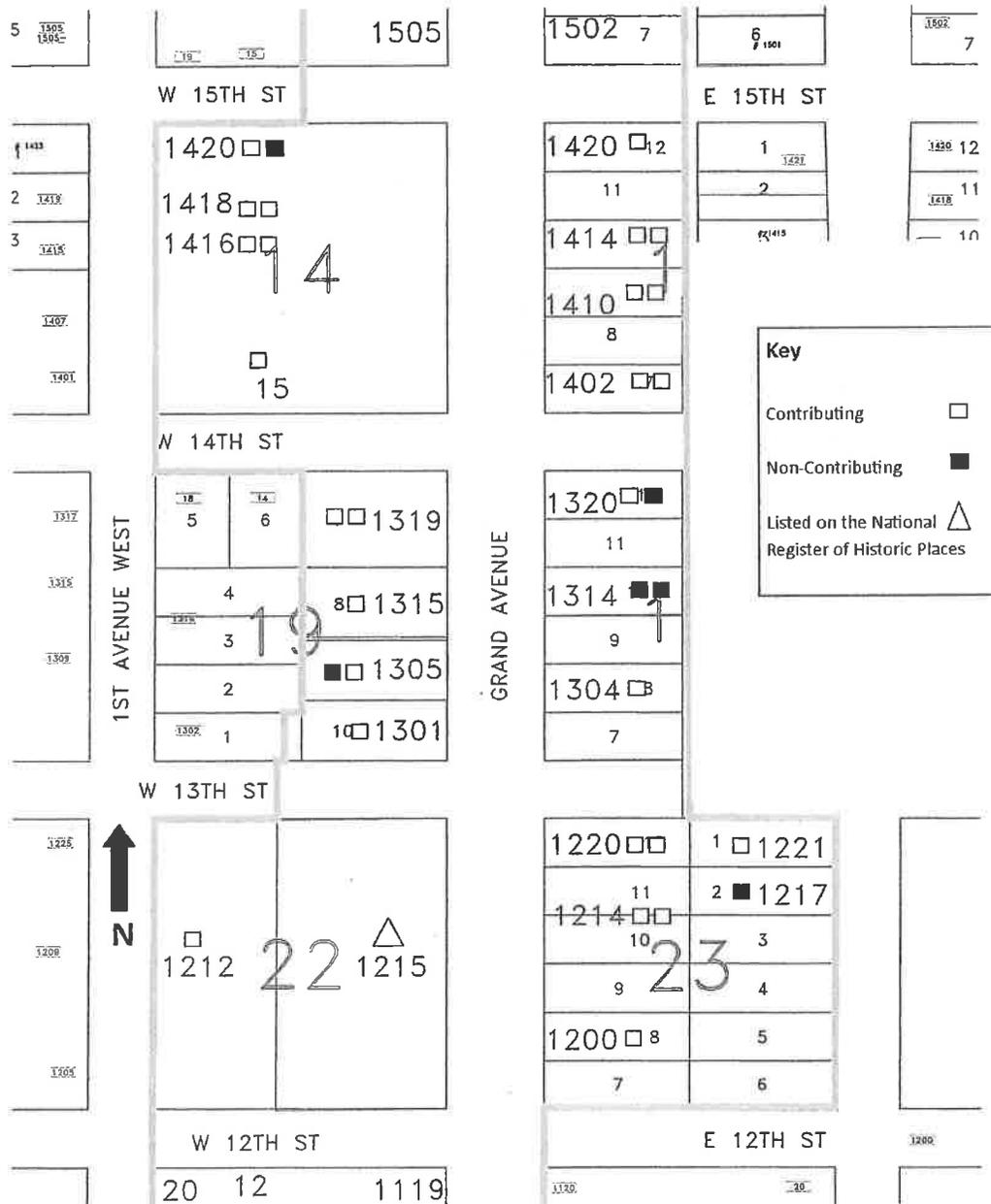


Figure 5: Blocks 1200-1400 of North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District. Map courtesy of the City of Spencer, May 2013. The size of the rectangle used to symbolize buildings is not representative of the actual size of the building or the orientation of one building to another.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number Embedded Images Page 36

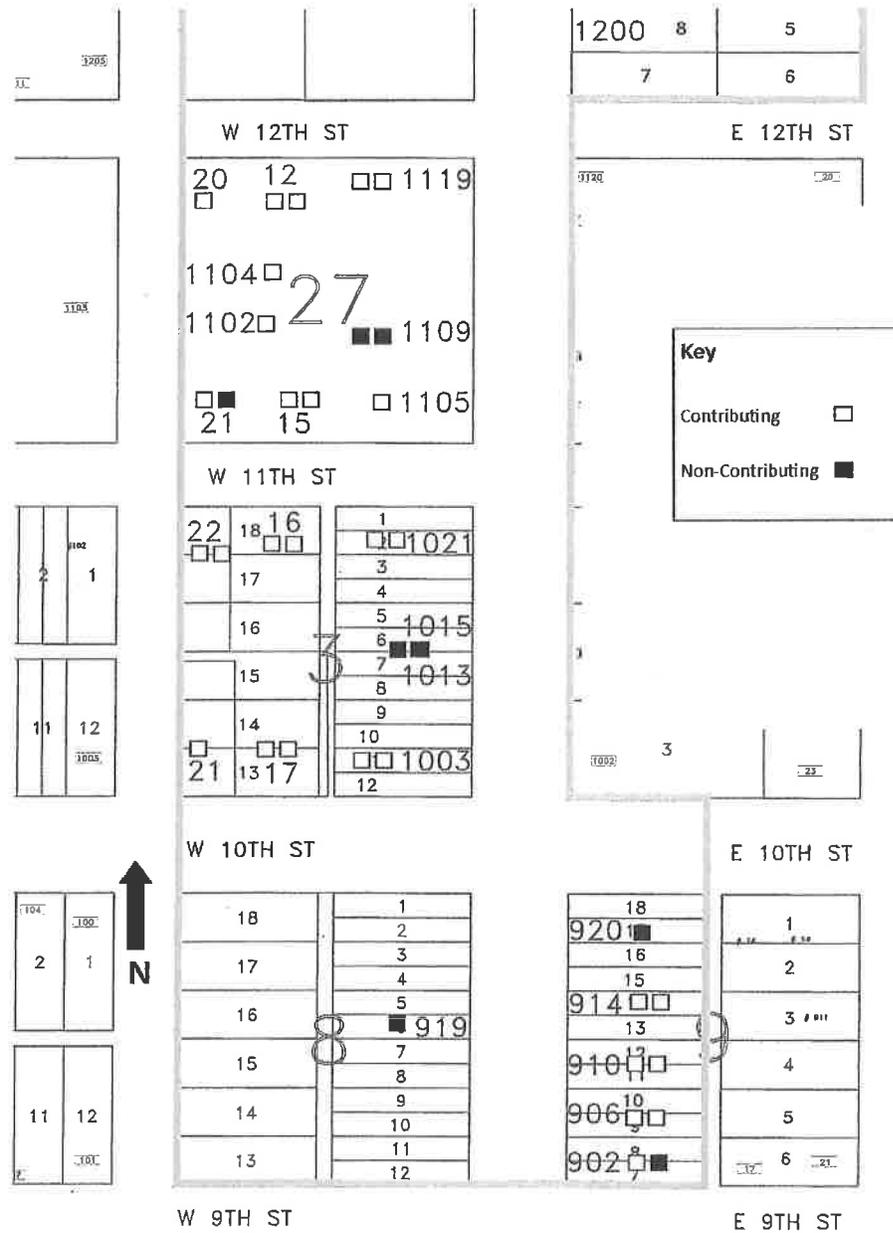


Figure 6: Blocks 900-1100 of North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District. Map courtesy of the City of Spencer, May 2013. The size of the rectangle used to symbolize buildings is not representative of the actual size of the building or the orientation of one building to another.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number Embedded Images Page 37



Figure 7: Shortly after the A.W. Miller House (1003 North Grand Avenue) was constructed and prior to being covered in stucco. c.1880. Postcard of the house, original source unknown, copy from the Grand Avenue Improvement Corporation. Photographer unknown.



Figure 8: The A.W. Miller house (1003 North Grand Avenue), c. 1915, following the original brick exterior covered in stucco. Postcard of the house, original source unknown, copy from the Grand Avenue Improvement Corporation. Photographer unknown.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number _____ Embedded Images _____ Page 38

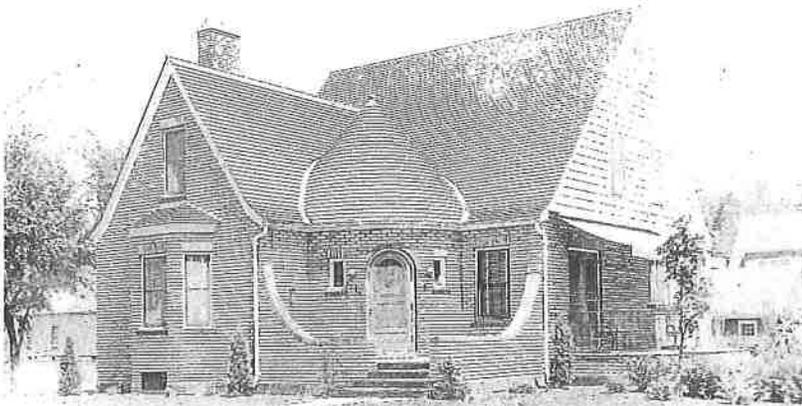


Figure 9: The Jacob C. Sorenson house (1620 North Grand Avenue) upon completion. Date is unknown c.1925. Postcard of the house, original source unknown, copy from the Grand Avenue Improvement Corporation. Photographer unknown.

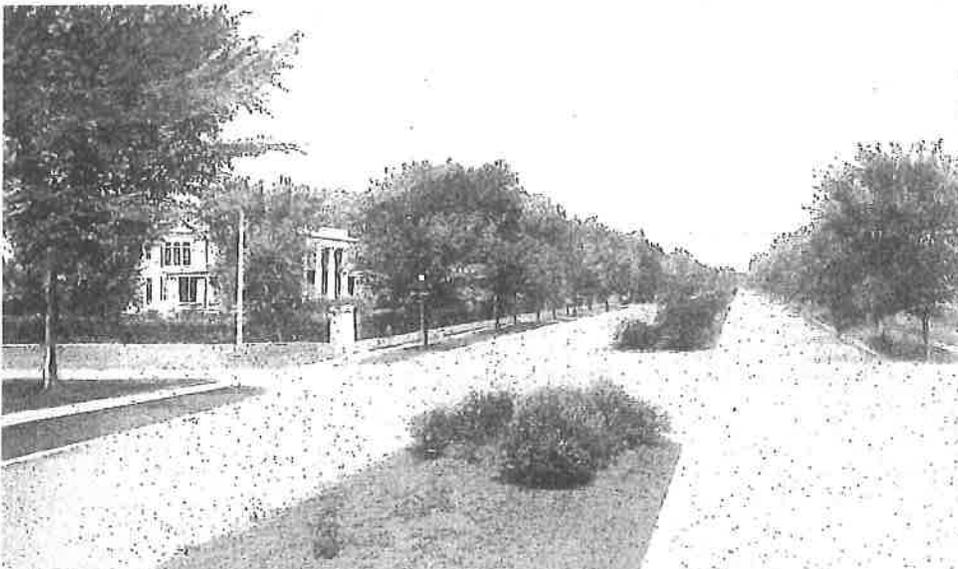


Figure 10: Postcard of North Grand Avenue, c.1900. The Higgins Mansion (1215 North Grand Avenue) is to the left in the image. Original source unknown, copy from the Grand Avenue Improvement Corporation. Photographer unknown.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number _____ Embedded Images _____ Page 39



Figure 11: Postcard of North Grand Avenue (North Main) looking north. The largest landscape element is the landscaped boulevard, which still exists today. Original source unknown, copy from the Grand Avenue Improvement Corporation. Photographer unknown.



Figure 12: Postcard of North Grand Avenue (North Main) Neighborhood. The John Cory House (1119 North Grand) is to the right of the photo and in the background is the Bjorn Bjornstad House (1105 North Grand Avenue). Original source unknown, copy from the Grand Avenue Improvement Corporation. Photographer unknown.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number Embedded Images Page 40



Figure 13: Image of the exterior of the House of Tomorrow (1420 North Grand Avenue) looking to the northeast at the south side and west façade. Original source Spencer Daily Reporter, September 27, 1935, page 5. Photographer unknown.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number _____ Embedded Images _____ Page 41

PHOTO KEY PLAN

These items apply to all photos that are included as part of this nomination:

Name of Photographer: Sheriffa M. Jones

Date of Photographs: May 5, 2013

Location of Original Negative: Sheriffa M. Jones/CD-R

Ink Used: traditional black and white emulsion process (not ink)

Archival Paper Used: Liford True Digital Black and White Paper (100+ year archival paper)

Photo #1: North streetscape and the 1700 block of houses, camera pointed north.

Photo #2: View of the streetscape and houses on the west side of the 1600 block of North Grand, camera pointed southwest.

Photo #3: View of the streetscape and houses on the east side of the 1600 block of North Grand, camera pointed northeast.

Photo #4: View of the streetscape and houses on the east side of the 1500 block of North Grand, camera pointed southeast.

Photo #5: View of the streetscape and houses on the east side of the 1500 block of North Grand, camera pointed northeast.

Photo #6: View of streetscape and houses on the west side of the 1500 block of North Grand, camera pointed northwest.

Photo #7: View of streetscape and houses on the east side of the 1400 block of North Grand, camera pointed northwest.

Photo #8: View of streetscape and houses on the east side of the 1300 block of North Grand, camera pointed southeast.

Photo #9: View of streetscape and houses on the west and east side of the 1300 block of North Grand, camera pointed south.

Photo #10: View of streetscape and houses on the west side of the 1300 block of North Grand, camera pointed northwest.

Photo #11: View of Higgins Mansion (1215 Grand Avenue) and First Congregational Church (1212 1st Avenue W) on the west side of the 1200 block of North Grand, camera pointed southwest.

Photo #12: View of the east side of the 1200 block of North Grand, camera pointed southeast.

Photo #13: View of the streetscape north from the 1100 block, camera pointed north.

Photo #14: View of streetscape and west and east sides of the 1000 block, camera pointed south.

Photo #15: View of the east side of the 900 block and streetscape, camera pointed southeast.

Photo #16: View of the district from the boulevard on West 9th and Grand Avenue, camera pointed north.

Photo #17: View of the east side of the 900 block and streetscape, camera pointed north.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number Embedded Images Page 42

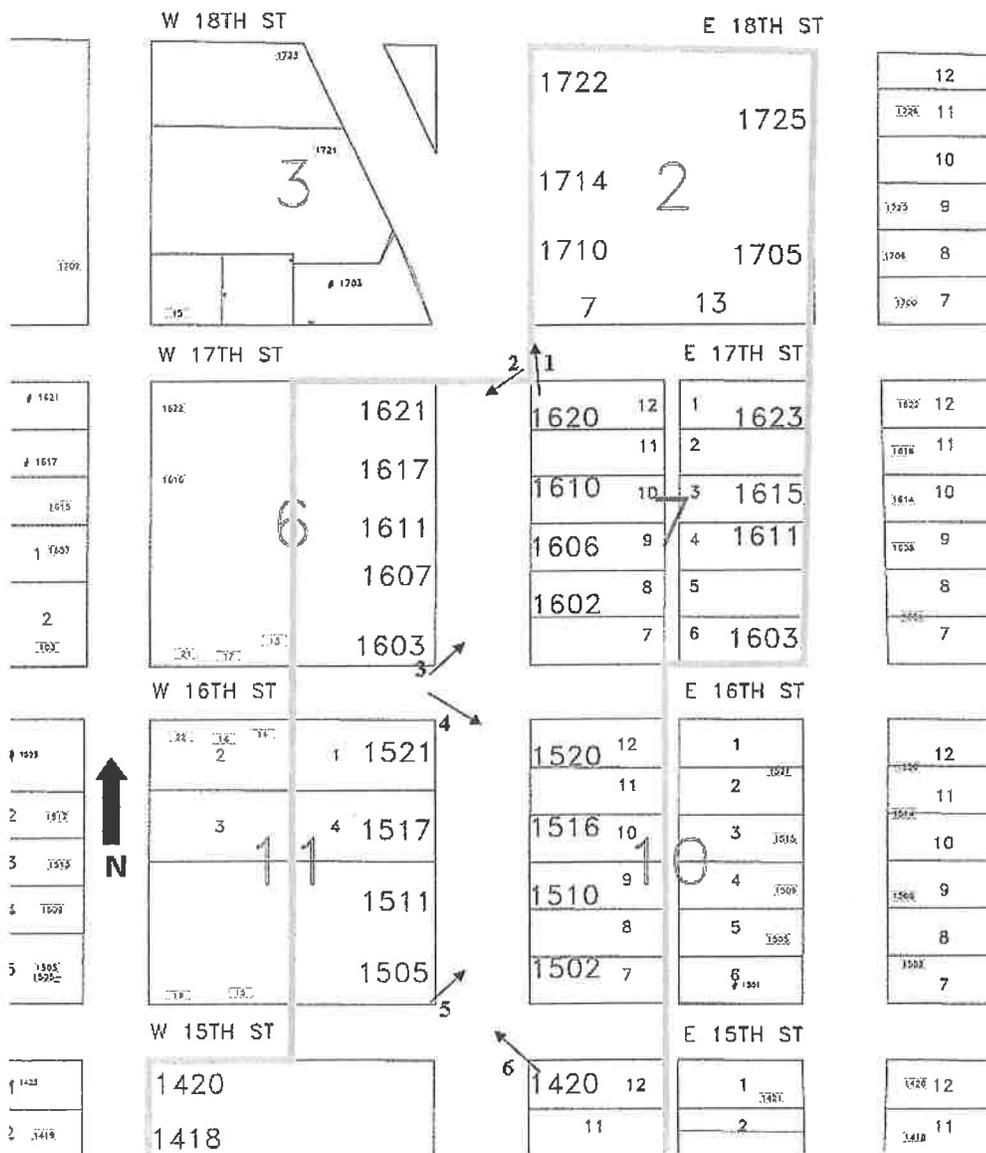


Figure 12: Blocks 1500-1700 of North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District. Map courtesy of the City of Spencer, May 2013.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District
Clay County, Iowa

Section number Embedded Images Page 43

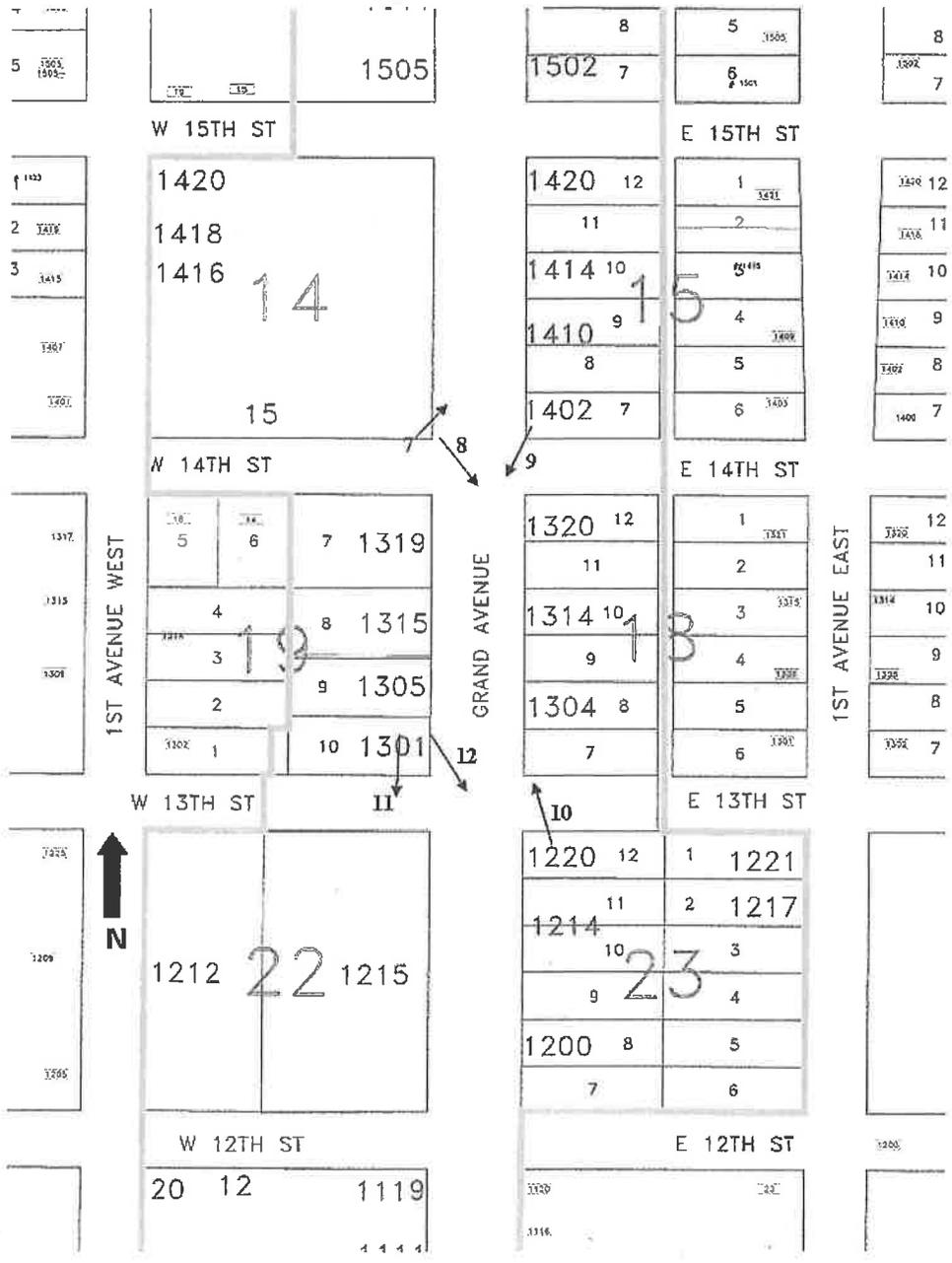
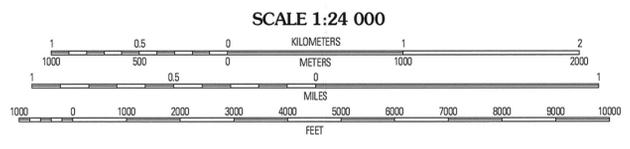
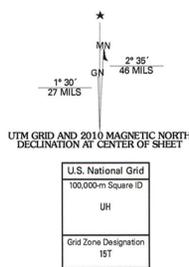


Figure 13: Blocks 1200-1400 of North Grand Avenue Residential Historic District. Map courtesy of the City of Spencer, May 2013.



Produced by the United States Geological Survey
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83)
World Geodetic System of 1984 (WGS84). Projection and
1 000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, Zone 15T
10 000-foot ticks: Iowa Coordinate System of 1983
(north zone)

Imagery.....NAIP, September 2009
Roads.....US Census Bureau TIGER data
with limited USGS updates, 2004
Names.....GNIS, 2008
Hydrography.....National Hydrography Dataset, 2009
Contours.....National Elevation Dataset, 2005



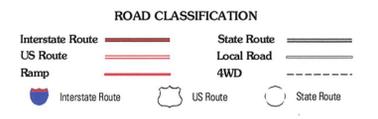
CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET

This map was produced to conform with version 0.5.10 of the
draft USGS Standards for 7.5-Minute Quadrangle Maps.
A metadata file associated with this product is also draft version 0.5.10



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

Lake Park SE	Milford	Spirit Lake SE
Everly	Spencer	Dickens
Royal	Greenville	Gillett Grove



SPENCER, IA
2010

ADJOINING 7.5' QUADRANGLES



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11:00

FOR SALE
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W 14th St





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ANY
TIME







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W 11th St

Spencer
Hospital



JORGENSEN
Hearing Center

3014
JORGENSEN
HEARING CENTER

Walmart





SPEED
LIMIT
35

W 9th St

St. Edmund Church

