

SURF BALLROOM

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Photos/Maps/Figures

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form



Photograph 1: Site View - Looking east along North Shore Drive. In this view, we can understand how the roof forms vary to accommodate interior functional spaces with the barrel roof indicating the ballroom and the flat roof marking all other interior spaces. (McDowell, 2018)

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Photograph 2: Site View - Looking west along North Shore Drive. The lakefront site of the original Surf Ballroom is out of view on the left, immediately across the street from the 1948 ballroom. The original site has been occupied by single-family residences for many years. (McDowell, 2018)

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Photograph 3: Site View - Looking south. In this view, the barrel roof over the ballroom is in full view. A shallow section of roof at the west (right) end of the barrel roof marks the stage fly space. The property has included a large parking area from 1948, though the surfacing has been replaced multiple times. (McDowell, 2018)

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Photograph 4: Exterior - View of the façade (south) and east elevations, looking northwest. The lines of the Art Moderne style are apparent from this perspective. Although the canopy sign dates to ca.1963 (outside the period of significance), the stainless-steel canopy and ticket booth flanked by paired doors, and the mall-mounted signage are original to the building. The side (east) entrance is also original, though the brick adjacent to the entrance has been painted. (McDowell, 2018)

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Photograph 5: Exterior - View of the façade (south) and west elevations, looking northeast. From this perspective, the juxtaposition of roof forms is well understood. The view also shows the 1994-era landscaping and the 2012 bronze marker commemorating the property's listing on the National Register of Historic Places. (McDowell, 2018)

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Photograph 6: Exterior - View of the north and west elevations, looking south. The barrel roof over the ballroom dominates the building from the rear perspectives. (McDowell, 2018)

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Photograph 7: Exterior Detail - Primary (south) entrance. The canopy with its steel post supports and exposed-bulb lights on the underside, the ticket booth, and the paired entrance doors are original to the building (1948). The three-sided marquee atop the canopy was added in ca.1963. The signboard cabinets flanking the entrance were in place by 1950. The brick pavers date to the 1994 historic rehabilitation; they were part of a fundraising effort for the property. (McDowell, 2018)

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Photograph 8: Exterior Detail - Primary (south) entrance, ticket booth and doors. The ticket booth is accessed from the entrance vestibule and retains all original features. The doors retain Bakelite handles. The red pavers are non-historic alterations, but the buff-colored tile abutting the entrance doors is original. (McDowell, 2018)

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Photograph 9: Interior: Vestibule, looking northwest. The entrance vestibule retains original face-stone walls, timber beamed ceiling, glazed terra cotta tile floor, and paired, wood doors with Bakelite handles. A comparison with the 1948 historic photograph reveals no discernible alteration of the vestibule. (McDowell, 2018)

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Photograph 10: Interior: Lobby – west coat-check, looking southwest. When constructed (1948) in during the period of significance, the Surf had two coat-checks; the east coat-check was removed as part of the 1994 rehabilitation. Historic drawings and photographs document its configuration and appearance as a match to the west coat-check above, which remains unaltered and in use. (McDowell, 2018)

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Photograph 11: Interior - Lobby promenade, looking north toward the dance floor. The walls of the lobby promenade were re-stenciled in 1994 historic rehabilitation, having been painted over at an undetermined time. In 2016, the walls were again re-stenciled, this time using additional documentation that allowed a replication that was more accurate in detail and palette. The carpet was replaced in 1994 and again in 2018 using historic photographs. The color of the cove lighting is not historically grounded. (McDowell, 2018)

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Photograph 12: Interior Detail - Lobby - Alcove with telephone booth. On the night of February 2, 1959, Buddy Holly and Ritchie Valens made telephone calls to their families in the hours before their deaths. The booth retains the original phone used for those calls. (McDowell, 2018)

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Photograph 13: Interior - Women's Lounge – View of the outer room, looking northwest. The tile on walls and floor is original to the building. The wallpaper in this image dates to the 1994 rehabilitation, its choice derived from the beach motif of the original building. The original wallpaper has since been replicated from a sample to replace that in both the women's and men's restrooms. (McDowell, 2018)



Photograph 14: Interior - Ballroom, looking northeast from the ballroom promenade to the east booths. The original, beach-themed murals (background, right) are visible in this view as are the booths that line the dance floor and the original bar with curvilinear soffit (background, center). The contemporary images of Ritchie Valens, Buddy Holly, and the Big Bopper are representative of the continued emphasis of the ballroom's place in the history of the three performers. (McDowell, 2018)

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Photograph 15: Interior - Ballroom, looking east from the stage. Although the stage has been extended to accommodate the increasing size of bands and their equipment, the original stage form is discernible. In this view from the original portion of the stage, the scale of the dance floor is understood. The original wood floor, laid in a log cabin pattern, is retained. (McDowell, 2018)

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Photograph 16: Interior - Stage, looking north from dance floor level. From this perspective, the demarcation between the original stage and the later expansion is visible. The original stage footprint, including the rear portion, remains unaltered. The stage curtains were replicated from historic images as part of the 1994 historic rehabilitation. (McDowell, 2018)

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Photograph 17: Interior - Tiered booth seating, looking southwest toward the stage. When opened in 1948 and through the period of significance, the booths were intended to accommodate six. They are undersized for today's average person, but remain unaltered and in demand by concert-goers. The striped ceiling (representing a cabana awning) and flooring are also original. (McDowell, 2018)

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Photograph 18: Interior - Tiered booth seating, looking southwest toward the original bar. The original booths are arranged in tiers to maximize the view to the stage and access to the dance floor. The cabana awning gives way on the south (left) to the painted beach views. (McDowell, 2018)

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Photograph 19: Interior Detail - Original booths with stenciling representing an underwater motif. The booths remain unaltered from the period of significance. Although undersized for today's average person, reservations come at a premium due to high demand, particularly during the annual Winter Dance Party. (McDowell, 2018)

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Photograph 20: Interior - Ballroom promenade, looking east with lobby opening at right and dance floor at left. The ballroom promenade remains unaltered from the original and through the period of significance, with plan and finishes retained. (McDowell, 2018)

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Photograph 21: Interior - Surfside 6 Café, looking south from near the ballroom promenade. The Surfside 6 Café is minimally altered from the period of significance. In 1964, two openings were cut in the south wall (background) with double-wide sliding glass doors installed to access an exterior patio. The openings were located between the canted piers without impacting the beach motif. The hallway from the café to the lobby was altered in 1994 (background, right). In the previous decade, the property has elevated its function as a museum, with professionally designed and installed displays located in the Surfside 6 Café. (McDowell, 2018)

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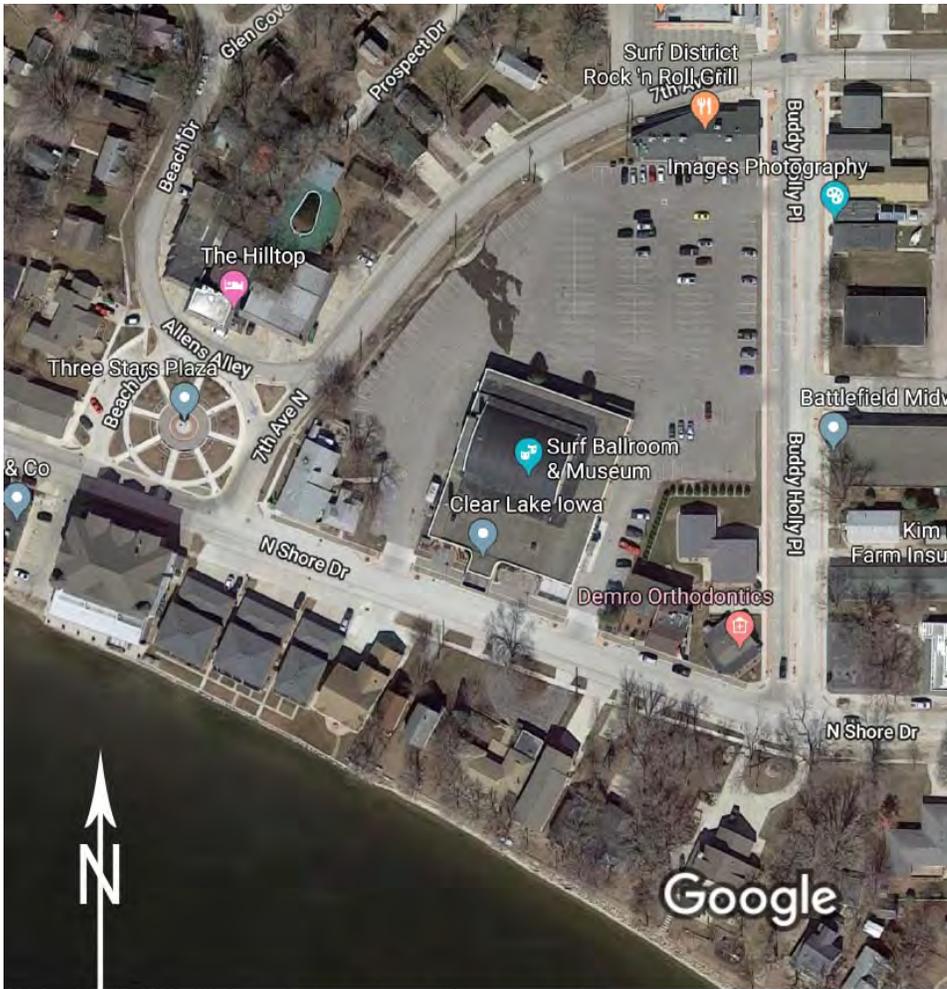
Photograph 22: Interior - Surfside 6 Café, looking northeast. The space retains the original streamlined bar with undulating soffit and its walls are lined with artifacts representing its long history. The families of Ritchie Valens, Buddy Holly, and J.P. Richardson have all gifted artifacts to the Surf so they are available to the many who visit the final performance site. (McDowell, 2018)

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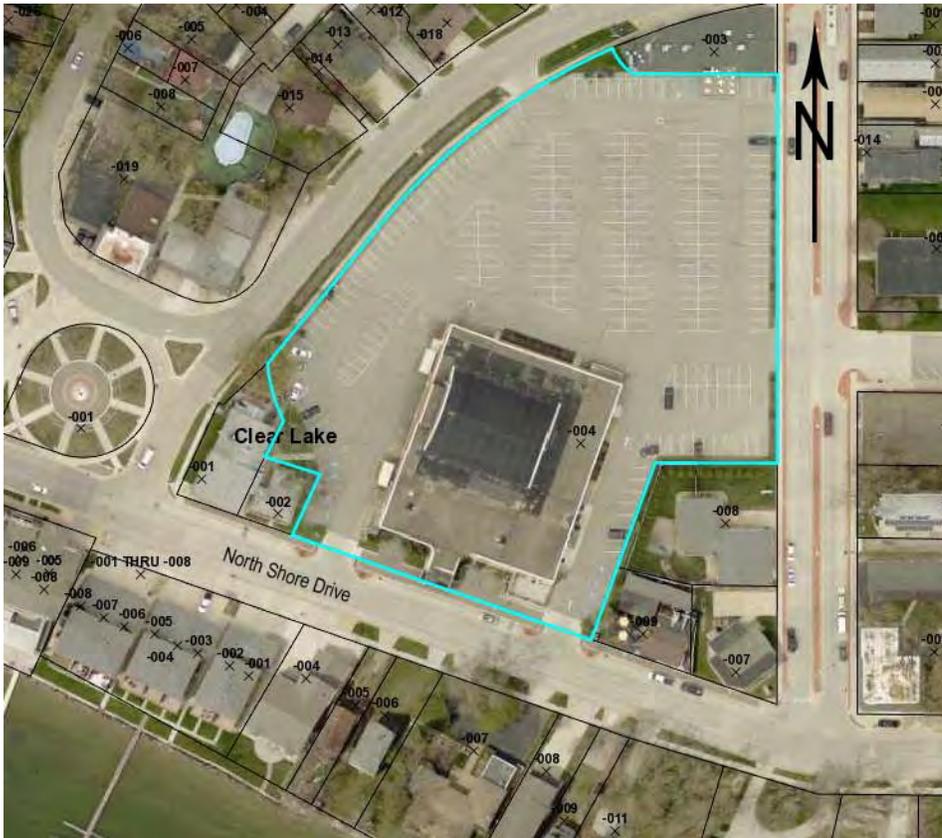
Map data ©2019 100 ft

Figure 1. Aerial View (Google) – 2019

Datum: WGS84

Latitude: 43.139924

Longitude: -93.389683



(Source: <https://beacon.schneidercorp.com>. Retrieved 10/13/2019.)

Figure 2. Assessor's Parcel Map – 2019

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Historic Image 1: Aerial View – 1948. Source: Mason City Public Library photo collection, SL18618; 8-23-48.



Historic Image 2: Aerial View looking – ca.1950. Source: Surf Ballroom and Museum.

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Historic Image 3: Surf Ballroom, Facade – ca.1950. Source: Surf Ballroom and Museum.



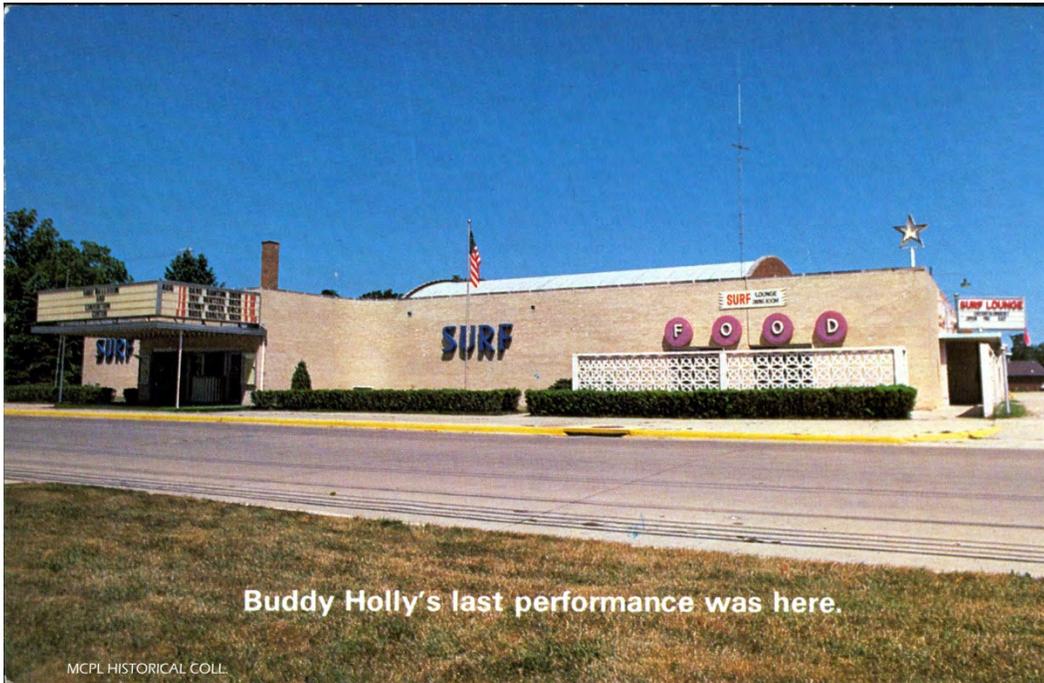
Historic Image 4: Surf Ballroom, Primary entrance – ca.1950. Source: Surf Ballroom and Museum.

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Historic Image 5: Surf Ballroom – ca.1970s. Source: Mason City Public Library photo collection.

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Historic Image 6: Interior - Vestibule – 1949. Source: Surf Ballroom and Museum.

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Historic Image 7: Interior – Lobby, looking northwest – 1949. Source: Surf Ballroom and Museum.

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Historic Image 8: Interior – Ballroom Promenade, looking east – 1949. Source: Surf Ballroom and Museum.

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Historic Image 9: Interior – Ballroom, looking west – 1949. Source: Surf Ballroom and Museum.

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Historic Image 10: Interior – Ballroom, looking northwest – ca.1949. Source: Surf Ballroom and Museum.

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Historic Image 11: Interior – Booth seating, looking north – 1949. Source: Surf Ballroom and Museum.



Historic Image 12: Surf Ballroom – Fans seated in a ballroom booth – ca.1959. Source: Surf Ballroom and Museum.



Historic Image 13: Surfside 6 Bar – looking southeast - 1948. Source: Surf Ballroom and Museum.