Site Inventory Form

State Inventory No. 22-01341 ☒ New ☐ Supplemental
☒ Part of a district with known boundaries (enter inventory no.) 22-01381
☐ Contributing ☑ Noncontributing
☐ Contributes to a potential district with yet unknown boundaries
National Register Status: (any that apply) ☑ Listed ☐ De-listed ☐ NHL ☐ DOE
☐ 9-Digit SHPO Review & Compliance Number
☐ Non-Extant (enter year) ______

1. Name of Property

historic name Olson Building

other names/site number American Family Insurance; Clayton County Development; Kids on Main Clothing Store; Sears Catalog Store; dental office

2. Location

street & number 132 South Main Street
city or town Elkader ☐ vicinity, county Clayton

Legal Description: (If Rural) Township Name Township No. Range No. Section Quarter of Quarter
(If Urban) Subdivision Original Town Block(s) 5 Lot(s) S. 2/3 LOT 5

3. State/Federal Agency Certification [Skip this Section]

4. National Park Service Certification [Skip this Section]

5. Classification

Category of Property (Check only one box) Number of Resources within Property
☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

If Non-Eligible Property

Enter number of:

If Eligible Property, enter number of:

Contributing Noncontributing

Contributing Noncontributing

Name of related project report or multiple property study (Enter “N/A” if the property is not part of a multiple property examination).

Title Arch. & Hist. Resources of the Elkader Downtown Historic District MPD
Historical Architectural Data Base Number 22-030

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

02E Specialty Store

02A01 Office Building

02A01 Office Building

02B04 Insurance office

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

No Style

foundation not visible

walls 05F Steel; 02D Channel-cut wood

roof 08 Asphalt

other

Narrative Description (☐ SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark “x” representing your opinion of eligibility after applying relevant National Register criteria)

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ More Research Recommended A Property is associated with significant events.

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ More Research Recommended B Property is associated with the lives of significant persons.

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ More Research Recommended C Property has distinctive architectural characteristics.

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ More Research Recommended D Property yields significant information in archaeology or history.
Criteria Considerations

☐ A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
☐ E A reconstructed building, object, or structure.
☐ B Removed from its original location.
☐ F A commemorative property.
☐ C A birthplace or grave.
☐ G Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

02 ARCHITECTURE

05 COMMERCE

Significant Dates

Construction date

1978

☐ check if circa or estimated date

Other dates

Significant Person

(Complete if National Register Criterion B is marked above)

Architect/Builder

Architect

Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance (☐ SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED)

9. Major Bibliographical References

☐ See continuation sheet for citations of the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form

10. Geographic Data

UTM References (OPTIONAL)

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☐ See continuation sheet for additional UTM references or comments

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Marlys Svendsen, Svendsen Tyler, Inc.

organization City of Elkader
date 7/2011

street & number N3834 Deep Lake Road
telephone 715/469-3300

city or town Sarona
state WI
zip code 54870

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION (Submit the following items with the completed form)

FOR ALL PROPERTIES
1. Map: showing the property’s location in a town/city or township.
2. Site plan: showing position of buildings and structures on the site in relation to public road(s).
3. Photographs: representative black and white photos. If the photos are taken as part of a survey for which the Society is to be curator of the negatives or color slides, a photo/catalog sheet needs to be included with the negatives/slides and the following needs to be provided below on this particular inventory site:

   Roll/slide sheet # Frame/slot # Date Taken
   Roll/slide sheet # Frame/slot # Date Taken
   Roll/slide sheet # Frame/slot # Date Taken

☐ See continuation sheet or attached photo & slide catalog sheet for list of photo roll or slide entries.

Photos/illustrations without negatives are also in this site inventory file.

FOR CERTAIN KINDS OF PROPERTIES, INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING AS WELL
1. Farmstead & District: (List of structures and buildings, known or estimated year built, and contributing or non-contributing status)
2. Barn:
   a. A sketch of the frame/truss configuration in the form of drawing a typical middle bent of the barn.
   b. A photograph of the loft showing the frame configuration along one side.
   c. A sketch floor plan of the interior space arrangements along with the barn’s exterior dimensions in feet.

State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Use Only Below This Line

Concur with above survey opinion on National Register eligibility: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ More Research Recommended
☐ This is a locally designated property or part of a locally designated district.

Comments:

Evaluated by (name/title): ____________________________ Date: ____________________________
7. Description:

This building is estimated by the Clayton County Assessor to have been built in 1978. This date is confirmed by the owner.

The Olson Building at 132 South Main Street was built following a fire that destroyed the former retail business building. It is a 1-story commercial building with two office/store suites in the front and a residential apartment in the rear. Its foundation is stone and the walls are clad in enamel finished metal with German half-timbering on the front on what appears to be channel-cut wood paneling. The parapet has wood shake shingles along the upper edge and a pediment is applied to the front as part of the half-timbering design. The building measures 44 feet wide by 104 feet deep overall.

8. Significance:

The Olson Building at 132 South Main Street was built as 1-story commercial building with a German half-timbered front façade to house both offices and retail space. The district derives significance under both Criteria A and C. Under these criteria, the district’s commercial buildings are associated with the historic contexts developed for the downtown in the “Architectural and Historical Resources of the Elkader Downtown Historic District” Multiple Property Documentation form covering the years 1846 to 1960. Because this building was erected outside of the period of significance it is considered noncontributing.

*Elkader Downtown Historic District Background:*

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

The new county court house saw its first section completed in 1869 opposite the downtown. New limestone buildings were erected along both North and South Main Street with public halls frequently located on upper floors. During the 1870s and 1880s 2-story brick buildings began replacing frame business houses. A permanent railroad connection was completed by the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul RR in 1886 but service remained poor as Elkader was located at the end of a spur rather than along a main line route. A more important transportation improvement during the 1880s was the completion of the Keystone Bridge across the Turkey River in 1880. Its completion prompted a period of economic vitality and community investment. The community was officially incorporated two years later in 1891 and a new waterworks system and city well were completed in 1896. Electricity was
By 1900, Elkader’s population stood at its peak of 1,321 – an increase of 77 percent during the decade of the 1890s. Development continued in the downtown before and after World War I but at a much slower pace. Floods and fires damaged the Elkader Mill in 1902, 1906 and 1908, but it was nevertheless rebuilt by Schmidt Brothers & Co., retaining a key employer and anchor for Elkader’s downtown. The business district began to extend to the west before and after the war with the principal changes seen along West Bridge Street. Here livery stables and wagon shops were replaced by automobile dealerships, implement companies and filling stations. Five stations eventually located along West Bridge with a sixth one block to the south along First Street SW. The national economic depression of the 1930s was coupled by the closing of the Elkader Mill in 1939 following a major fire. Natural disasters after World War I included major floods in 1922, 1947, and 1958 with a tornado destroying section of South Main Street in 1958 as well.

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

**Historic Background for the Olson Building at 132 South Main Street:**

The Olson Building at 132 South Main Street was built in 1978 on the site of the former Niemeyer Building that burned earlier that year after having been in the November 1958 downtown tornado that damaged 15 buildings in the 100 and 200 blocks of South Main Street. In 1976 Edward and Ruth Olson purchased the building from the Niemeyer family. Following the fire two years later, they erected the present building. It was laid out with two shop or office suites in the front half and an apartment in the rear. Tenants through the years included Kids on Main Clothing Store, Sears Catalog Store, a dental office, and more recently office space for the American Family Insurance agency and Clayton County Development. The Olson family continues to own the building in 2011.
Olson Building

Name of Property: 132 South Main Street

Address: Elkader

County: Clayton

City:

9. Major Sources:


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

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

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

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


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


“Kleinpell’s Hardware.” *The Elkader Register*, September 10, 1925.


“Pages from the Past”, *Clayton County Register*, June 19, 2001

“Plat of Elkader, June 22, 1846.” Recorder’s Office, Clayton County, Court House, Elkader, Iowa.


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


United States Census,1850-2010, provided by State Library of Iowa and the City of Elkader.
Olson Building
Name of Property
132 South Main Street
Address

Additional Information:

Full Legal Description: Original Town of Elkader, S. 2/3 LOT 4 BLK 5

Address: 132 South Main
Iowa Site Inventory Form
Continuation Sheet

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Photographs: Historic view of 100 block, west side of South Main Street, ca. 1900, with Niemeyer Building at the corner, looking northwest (Elkader Historic Photograph Collection (digital), Elkader Public Library); contemporary view, looking northwest (Elkader Downtown Survey Photograph, 10/29/2010, Marlys Svendsen, photographer)