



Date April 7, 2025

**RESOLUTION CLOSING HEARING AND APPROVING THE DESIGNATION OF THE
ULYSSES S. GRANT SCHOOL, LOCATED AT 1031 23RD STREET, AS A LOCAL
LANDMARK, NAMED “ULYSSES S. GRANT SCHOOL”**

WHEREAS, the Ulysses S. Grant School building, located at 1031 23rd Street (“Property”), by petition, has been nominated to designate the Ulysses S. Grant School, as a Local Landmark named “Ulysses S. Grant School”; and

WHEREAS, the Property is legally described as follows:

**LOTS 5 AND 6, CAIN’S SUBDIVISION OF LOT 3 AND THE NORTH 96 FEET
OF LOT 6 BLOCK 3 COTTAGE GROVE ADDITION TO THE CITY OF DES
MOINES, IOWA, AN OFFICIAL PLAT,**

AND

**-EXCEPT THE NORTH 143.08 FEET-, LOT 7, BLOCK 3, COTTAGE GROVE, AN
OFFICIAL PLAT,**

AND

-EXCEPT THE NORTH 96.0 FEET-, LOT 6 IN SAID BLOCK 3,

AND

**A PART OF LOT 5 IN SAID BLOCK 3, AND MORE PARTICULARLY
DESCRIBED AS FOLLOW:**

**BEGINNING AT THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF SAID LOT 5; THENCE
SOUTH ALONG THE WEST LINE OF SAID LOT 5, A DISTANCE OF 64.0 FEET;
THENCE EAST TO A POINT ON THE EAST LINE OF SAID LOT 5, SAID POINT
BEING 66.0 FEET SOUTH OF THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF SAID LOT 5;
THENCE NORTH ALONG SAID EAST LINE, 66.0 FEET TO SAID NORTHEAST
CORNER; THENCE WEST ALONG THE NORTH LINE OF SAID LOT 5 TO THE
NORTHWEST CORNER OF SAID LOT 5 AND TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING,
ALL NOW INCLUDED IN AND FORMING A PART OF THE CITY OF DES
MOINES, POLK COUNTY, IOWA.**

WHEREAS, on February 19, 2025, the Historic Preservation Commission voted 5-0-1 to recommend that the “Ulysses S. Grant School” be designated a local Landmark; and

WHEREAS, the application contains detailed references and explanation regarding the historical nature of the building located at 1031 23rd Street; and

WHEREAS, the City Plan and Zoning Commission has advised that at a public hearing held on March 6, 2025, its members voted 12-0 in support of a motion to recommend APPROVAL of a petition to designate the Ulysses S. Grant School, as a Local Landmark named “Ulysses S. Grant School”; and



Date April 7, 2025

WHEREAS, the Des Moines Municipal Code section 58-60 requires a public hearing be held to consider the application; and,

WHEREAS, on March 26, 2025, by Roll Call No. 25-0438, it was duly resolved by the City Council that the request for Local Landmark Designation be set down for hearing on April 7, 2025, at 5:00 p.m., to be held in the Council Chambers, City Hall, 400 Robert D. Ray Drive, Des Moines, Iowa; and

WHEREAS, due notice of the hearing was published in the Des Moines Register, as provided by law, setting forth the time and place for hearing on said proposed Local Landmark Designation.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council of the City of Des Moines, Iowa, as follows:

1. The public hearing on the application is hereby closed.
2. The “Ulysses S. Grant School” meets the requirements of Des Moines Municipal Code section 58-58 to be designated as a local landmark because the Property located at 1031 23rd Street:
 - Is significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, and culture; and,
 - 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 may lack individual distinction.
3. The City Council accepts the recommendation of the Historic Preservation Commission and the Plan and Zoning Commission and grants the petition to have the “Ulysses S. Grant School” designated a local landmark.
4. The City Clerk is directed to file the designation and description of the “Ulysses S. Grant School” with the Development Services Department and record this resolution as the designation and description of “Ulysses S. Grant School” in the office of the county recorder.



Roll Call Number

Agenda Item Number

48

Date April 7, 2025

Moved by _____ to adopt. Second by _____.

(Council Communication No. 25-140)

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

/s/ Chas M. Cahill

Chas M. Cahill

Assistant City Attorney

(CAHP-2025-000007)

COUNCIL ACTION	YEAS	NAYS	PASS	ABSENT
BOESEN				
SIMONSON				
VOSS				
COLEMAN				
WESTERGAARD				
MANDELBAUM				
GATTO				
TOTAL				
MOTION CARRIED		APPROVED		

CERTIFICATE

I, LAURA BAUMGARTNER, City Clerk of said City hereby certify that at a meeting of the City Council of said City of Des Moines, held on the above date, among other proceedings the above was adopted.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal the day and year first above written.

Mayor

City Clerk

March 13, 2025

Communication from the City Plan and Zoning Commission advising that at their March 6, 2025 meeting, the following action was taken on nomination of the Ulysses S Grant School, located at 1031 23rd Street, as a Local Landmark, by petition. The property is owned by New Life Center.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION: 12-0

After public hearing, the members voted as follows:

Commission Action:	Yes	Nays	Pass	Abstain	Absent
Francis Boggus	X				
Leah Rudolphi	X				
Kayla Berkson	X				
Chris Draper	X				
Laura Kessel	X				
Todd Garner	X				
Johnny Alcivar	X				
Justyn Lewis					X
Carolyn Jenison	X				
William Page					X
Andrew Lorentzen					X
Emily Webb	X				
Katie Gillette	X				
Rick Trower	X				
Jane Rongerude	X				

Approval that the Ulysses S. Grant School be designated as a Local Landmark.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION TO THE P&Z COMMISSION

Staff recommends that the Ulysses S. Grant School be designated as a Local Landmark.

STAFF REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. **Case Overview:** The subject property is located on the east side of 23rd Street next to Drake Park, with Cottage Grove Avenue and Interstate 235 directly to the south. The site contains the Ulysses S. Grant School building constructed circa 1885, and a non-historical addition to the north of the Grant School constructed in 1981, according to the Polk County Assessor website.

On February 19, 2025, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed the proposed nomination and voted to support its designation as a Local Landmark. The Historic Preservation Commission and the Plan and Zoning Commission recommendations will be forwarded to the City Council for review in accordance with Chapter 58-60 and Chapter 82-40 of the City Code. If the Ulysses S. Grant School is designated as a Landmark then any alteration, new construction, or demolition would be subject to review by the Historic Preservation Commission.

2. **Size of Site:** 1.224 acres.
3. **Existing Zoning (site):** "P2" Public, Civic and Institutional District.

4. **Adjacent Land Use and Zoning:**

North – "N5"; Uses are a mix of low and medium density residential.

South – "ROW", "N5" & "P1"; Uses are a mix of low and medium density residential and Woodland Cemetery.

East – "N5"; Uses are a mix of low and medium density residential.

West – "P1"; Use is parks and open space.

5. **Applicable Recognized Neighborhood(s):** The subject building is located in the Drake Neighborhood and within 250 feet of the Woodland Heights Organization. All neighborhood associations were notified of the public hearing by emailing of the Preliminary Agenda on February 14, 2025, and of the Final Agenda on February 28, 2025. All Neighborhood Association mailings are sent to the primary contact designated by the recognized Neighborhood Association on file with the City of Des Moines' Neighborhood Services Department.
6. **PlanDSM Land Use Plan Designation:** Low-Medium Density Residential.
7. **Applicable Regulations:** Pursuant to Chapter 82-40(a) of the City Code, the Plan and Zoning Commission is an advisory body to the City Council and is a key factor in the growth and development of the city. Therefore, the Commission reviews all local Landmark and Historic District nominations in accordance with the Historic Preservation Ordinance and for compliance with the City's Comprehensive Plan and forwards a recommendation to the City Council.

II. **APPLICABLE SECTIONS OF THE CITY CODE**

Section 58-56 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance contains the landmark purpose statement. Section 58-58 contains the criteria for the designation of a landmark and Section 58-60 establishes the nomination process.

Sec. 58-56. Purpose.

It is declared as a matter of public policy that the protection, enhancement, perpetuation and use of improvements of special character or special historical or aesthetic interest or value is a public necessity and is required in the interest of health, prosperity, safety and welfare of the people. The purpose of this article is to:

- (1) Effect and accomplish the protection, enhancement and perpetuation of such improvements which represent or reflect elements of the city's cultural, social, economic, political and architectural history;
- (2) Safeguard the city's historic, aesthetic and cultural heritage, as embodied and reflected in such improvements;
- (3) Stabilize and improve property values;
- (4) Foster civic pride in the beauty and accomplishments of the past;
- (5) Protect and enhance the city's attractions to residents, tourists, and visitors and serve as a support and stimulus to business and industry;
- (6) Strengthen the economy of the city; and
- (7) Promote the use of landmarks for the education, pleasure and welfare of the people of the city.

Sec. 58-58. Designation criteria.

- (a) For purpose of this article, a landmark or landmark site designation may be placed on any site, natural or improved, including any building, improvement or structure located thereon that possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association and that:
 - (1) Is significant in American history, architecture, archaeology and culture;
 - (2) Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
 - (3) Is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
 - (4) 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 may lack individual distinction; or
 - (5) Has yielded or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.
- (b) Ordinarily cemeteries, birthplaces, or graves of historical figures; properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes; structures that have been moved from their original locations; reconstructed historic buildings; properties primarily commemorative in nature; and properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years shall not be considered eligible for the landmark designation. However, such properties will qualify if they fall within the following categories:
 - (1) A religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance.

- (2) A building or structure removed from its original location which is significant primarily for architectural value, or which is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event.
 - (3) A birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance, if there is no appropriate site or building directly associated with his or her productive life.
 - (4) A cemetery which derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events.
 - (5) A reconstructed building when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other building or structure with the same association has survived.
 - (6) A property primarily commemorative in nature, if design, age, tradition or symbolic value has invested it with its own historical significance.
 - (7) A property achieving significance within the past 50 years, if it is of exceptional importance.
- (c) The historic preservation commission may adopt specific operating guidelines for landmark and landmark site designations, providing such are in conformity with this article.

Sec. 58-60. Procedures.

- (a) The historic preservation commission shall consider the nomination of landmarks and landmark sites, and make a report and recommendation on such nomination to the city plan and zoning commission and city council as provided below.
- (b) Notice that an application for designation of a landmark or landmark site is being considered shall be given to the owner of the parcel on which the proposed landmark is situated or which is part of the proposed landmark site in accordance with the following:
 - (1) Such notice shall be served by certified mail, addressed to the owner at his or her last known address as such appears in the records of the county treasurer's office, or if there is no name on such records, such notice may be served by regular mail addressed to "owner" at the street address of the property in question.
 - (2) Such owner shall have the right to confer with the historic preservation commission prior to final action by the commission or board on the application.
 - (3) The historic preservation commission may, in addition, hold the public hearing of the proposed designation by giving notice as required by law.
- (c) After such investigation by the historic preservation commission, but in no case more than 60 days after the receipt of the complete application, the application for designation shall be recommended for approval or disapproval. Such recommendation shall be in writing and shall state the reasons for recommending approval or disapproval. The recommendation may limit itself to the proposed landmark or landmark site as described in the application or may include modifications thereof. Such recommendation shall be forwarded to and filed with the plan and zoning commission, within five days after making such recommendation.
- (d) Upon receipt of such recommendation, the plan and zoning commission shall schedule a public hearing at a specific place, date and time, not more than 30 days after such receipt, by giving notice as required by law.
- (e) Within 30 days after the public hearing, the plan and zoning commission shall forward such application to the city council, together with the recommendation of the historic preservation commission. The plan and zoning commission may adopt the recommendation of the historic preservation commission as its

own or may prepare a written recommendation of its own. The plan and zoning commission may limit itself to the proposed landmark or landmark site or may include modifications thereof. If the modification requires an additional public hearing, the plan and zoning commission shall hold such hearing before forwarding the application to the city council.

- (f) Upon receipt of such recommendation, the council shall schedule a public hearing to consider the recommendation at a specific place, date and time, not more than 30 days after such receipt, by giving notice as required by law.
- (g) The city council, after public hearing, may approve, approve with modification, or disapprove the recommendation of the plan and zoning commission by a majority vote of its membership. If the plan and zoning commission shall have failed to act within the time limit set forth in this section, the city council may, nevertheless, approve, approve with modification, or disapprove the proposed landmark or landmark site as originally proposed or modified by a majority vote of its membership.

II. ANALYSIS

- 1. Landmark Nomination Criteria:** A nomination must demonstrate that the subject building or site possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association and meets one or more of the following criterion.

- (1) Is significant in American history, architecture, archaeology and culture;
- (2) Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
- (3) Is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- (4) 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 may lack individual distinction; or
- (5) Has yielded or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

The following information from the submitted nomination form and other sources make the case for how the Ulysses S. Grant School “is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history” and “embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction.”

- The Ulysses S. Grant School is one of the oldest public school buildings still remaining in Des Moines. It was built in 1885, with additions in 1895 and 1910. Its design is typical of school buildings in Des Moines from the 1880s. It is a two-story brick building that was stuccoed in the early part of the 20th century. The design is unique yet simple in form, with a detailed cornice that runs the perimeter of the building and a decorative archway over doors that face south. The Sanborn maps indicate that a crematorium was connected to the school at one time (area later shown as boiler room on the Sanborn maps), and that the building was stuccoed between 1901 and 1920.
- The Grant School is an important remnant of the early school history of Des Moines and represents the pride in which the City held its school buildings, teachers and

school system. A Des Moines register article from 1886 described the school in the following manner:

“The new school house on Cottage Grove Avenue, called the Grant School, is rapidly nearing completion, being now under roof and ready for the carpenters. The building is one of the most tasty of many already adorning the city, and will prove a decided addition to the collection of which the city is so proud. There has been no striving after ornamentation in its design, but everything is so arranged as to convey an idea of stability and use. It will be fitted up in the most complete manner, and will be ready for occupancy soon after the beginning of the school year.”

Most of the early Des Moines school buildings have been lost over time, with the exception of the Grant School. The successor of the Grant School in the Des Moines Public School systems is Edmunds Elementary School, located at 950 15th Street. The Grant School was sold in 1974. Prior to its sale, it was a K-8 school in the old West Des Moines school district, which was in existence until 1907 when several school districts merged.

- The Grant School was built to accommodate the growing population of Des Moines as the city expanded westward. Demand for school buildings continued to increase after the original 6-room Grant School building was built in 1885, resulting in an addition of 4 rooms in 1895. In 1910, the school expanded yet again with another 4-room addition plus a cafeteria. An article from the Des Moines Register from 1945 shows the construction of a one-room annex that contained a classroom and a cloakroom (visible on the 1957 Sanborn).
- The Grant School was named for Ulysses S. Grant (1822–1885). Grant was the 18th President of the United States (1869–1877), and a leading Union general during the Civil War. As president, he supported Reconstruction efforts and advocated for public education as essential to a strong democracy.

The nomination has demonstrated that it meets criterion 2 and 4 and designation as a landmark would meet the purpose of the Historic Preservation Ordinance as defined by section 58-56.

2. **PlanDSM Creating Our Tomorrow:** The PlanDSM Comprehensive Plan was approved on April 25, 2016. The nomination is supported by numerous PlanDSM Goals and Policies including:

Land Use Goal 6

Recognize the value of Des Moines’ historic building stock and landscapes and ensure their preservation.

LU 33: Promote preservation, restoration, and reuse of historical structures and landmarks.

LU 35: Encourage expansion and establishment of National Historic Districts, local historic districts, and local landmarks.

Community Character and Neighborhood Goal 1

Embrace the distinct character offered in each of Des Moines' neighborhoods.

CCN1: Celebrate the City's culture and diversity through the creation of vibrant neighborhood nodes and corridors.

Community Character and Neighborhood Goal 4

Protect Des Moines' historic and cultural assets that contribute to neighborhood and community identity.

CCN25: Partner with the historic preservation community to promote Des Moines' rich history through education and outreach on historic structures, districts, and landscapes.

CCN27: Develop policies that prioritize rehabilitation over demolition of historic structures and in historic districts.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Stacey Hanley presented the staff report and recommendation.

Laura Kessel asked if the designation also applied to the addition that was built in 1981.

Jason Van Essen explained that the entire property would be designated. Changes to non-contributing aspects of a designated property require review but are typically viewed differently.

Johnny Alcivar wanted verification that the designation would not stop further development on the property, rather it would be subject to Historic Preservation Commission review.

Stacey Hanley explained that any development or work to the exterior of the building would be subject to review of the Historic Preservation Commission and require a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Johnny Alcivar questioned if someone could buy the building and demolish it.

Stacey Hanley stated it would have to be reviewed and approved by the Historic Preservation Commission.

Francis Boggus asked if the building was currently occupied.

Stacey Hanley stated that the church is using the 1981 addition and does not believe they are currently using the school building portion of the property.

Francis Boggus inquired about the condition of the interior of the building.

Stacey Hanley explained that the interior is in relatively good condition, but the boiler is no longer working. The building will need attention soon.

Jason Van Essen stated there are some limited roof leaks that need to be addressed before they become significant issues.

Rick Trower asked if the ownership of the building was in support of the landmark designation.

Jason Van Essen stated that an owner representative attended the Historic Preservation Commission meeting, and they expressed a neutral stance on the nomination.

Leah Rudolphi ask if the designation placed any extra restriction or conditions on the ownership for the upkeep of the property.

Jason Van Essen explained that the designation an related code are not maintenance code. Work is reviewed at the time change is proposed.

Carolyn Jenison asked who initiated the request for the Landmark designation.

Jason Van Essen stated it was initiated through a petition.

Chris Draper questioned how the Landmark designation would impact the process for revitalization of this building. Would there be an economic impact on the ownership with this sort of designation.

Jason Van Essen stated that staff does not have data on the economic impact. Noted that local designation makes the property eligible for the State Historic Tax Credits program, which is a potential funding source.

Stacey Hanley discussed the key differences between this type of property and a residential property, emphasizing the scale of renovations. She highlighted that the redevelopment opportunity lies in preserving the building's historic integrity. Strong proposals should already consider this, aligning with the design guidelines for historically appropriate redevelopment.

CHAIRPERSON OPENED PUBLIC HEARING

Phillip Gustafson, 1150 14th Place, a board member of the Des Moines Historical Society, initially had concerns that the building's ownership might pursue demolition. After meeting with the owners, he found them open to obtaining historic designation but uncertain about how to maintain or repurpose the building. He informed them about potential tax credits that could assist with preservation efforts.

Gustafson noted that organizations like Invest DSM might be interested in purchasing the building for redevelopment. One concept suggested converting the space into multi-family housing, aligning with Invest DSM's goals for the area.

Having toured the building in 2017, he observed issues such as a non-functional boiler and damage to the plaster due to temperature fluctuations. He emphasized the importance of preserving the building, as it is the oldest and last remaining Des Moines school constructed in this architectural style. Its visibility from the interstate and significance to the Drake area make it a priority for Landmark designation and preservation.

Chris Draper asked if the 1981 building addition is separable and still usable.

Phillip Gustafson noted that it might be possible to separate the building into a separate parcel despite it being attached to another structure. He explained that the buildings have separate water and sewer services, and the separation would only require a legal description and power connection to be finalized.

David Barzen, 420 51st Street. President of the Des Moines Historical Society, spoke in favor of adding the school to the Landmark designation. He noted that many former school buildings in Des Moines have been demolished once they were no longer in use. However, during a tour of this building last year, he observed it was in good condition and had strong potential for repurpose.

Chris Draper questioned what kind of use he felt most appropriate for a building like this from a historical perspective.

David Barzen suggested that the building would likely need support through Historic Tax Credits. He believed it could be suitable for multi-family housing, a coffee shop, or commercial space, noting that the existing parking could accommodate these uses.

CHAIRPERSON CLOSED PUBLIC HEARING

COMMISSION ACTION

Johnny Alcivar asked whether the Landmark designation would impact the use of the property or only apply to the building itself.

Jason Van Essen stated the designation does not regulate the use of the building.

Rick Trower made a motion for approval that the Ulysses S. Grant School be designated as a Local Landmark.

THE VOTE: 12-0

Respectfully submitted,



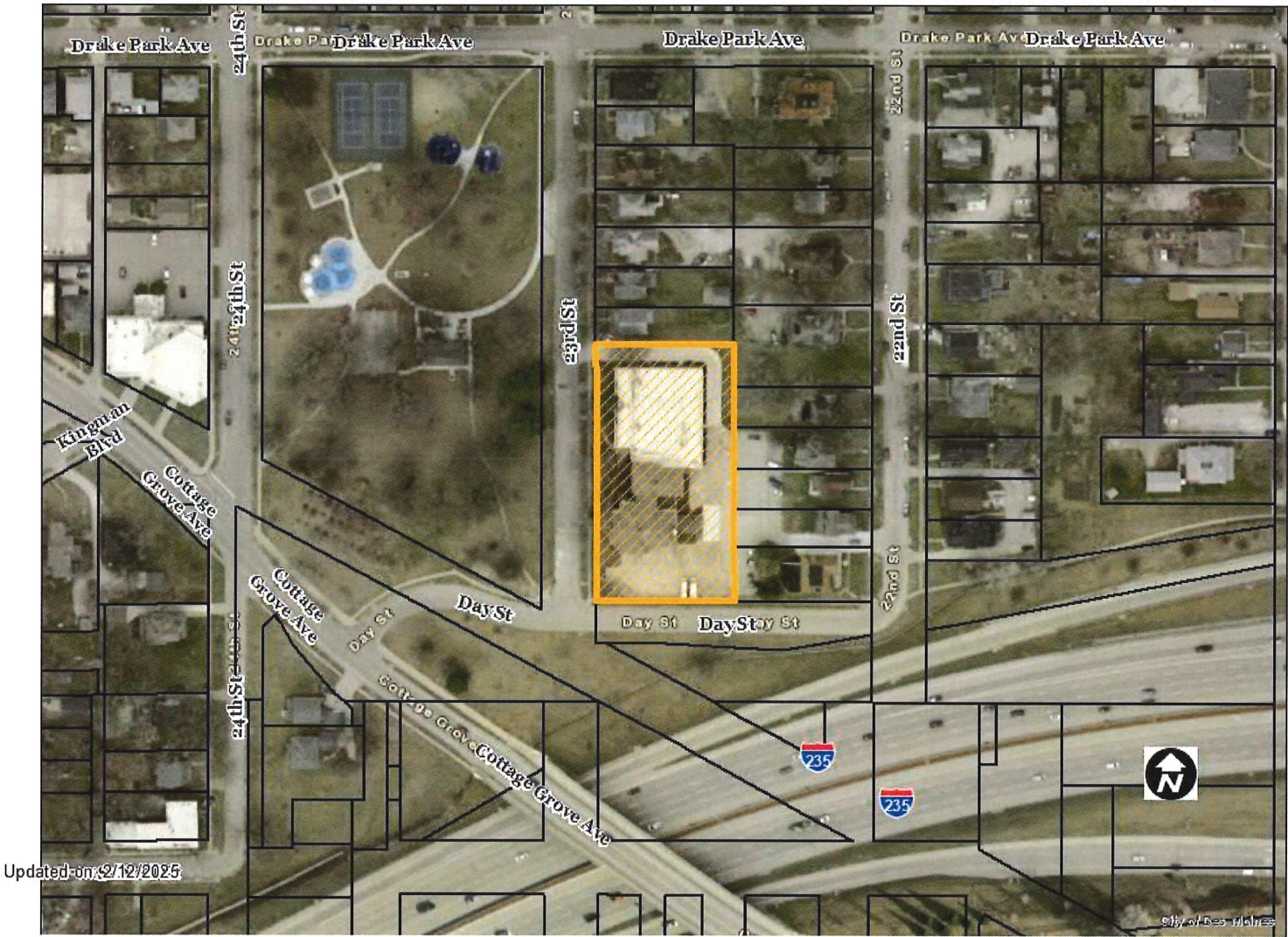
Jason Van Essen

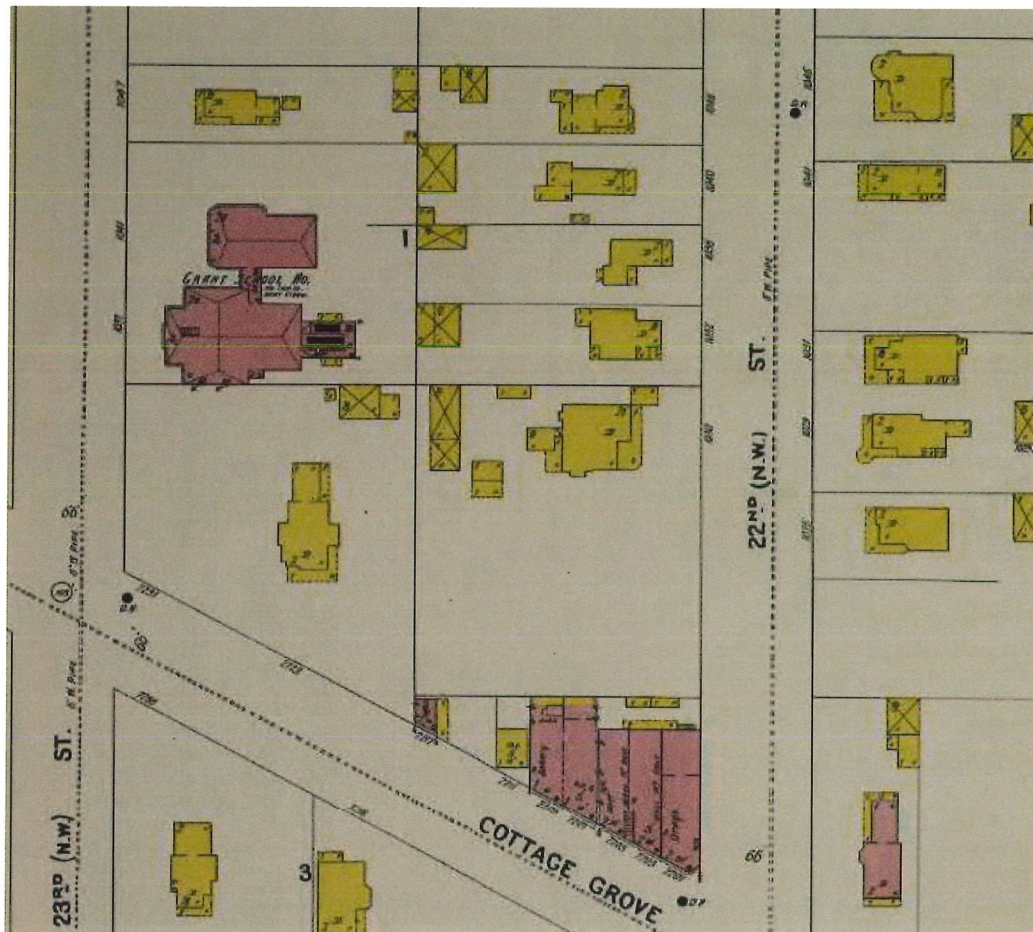
Planning & Urban Design Administrator

JMV:mrw

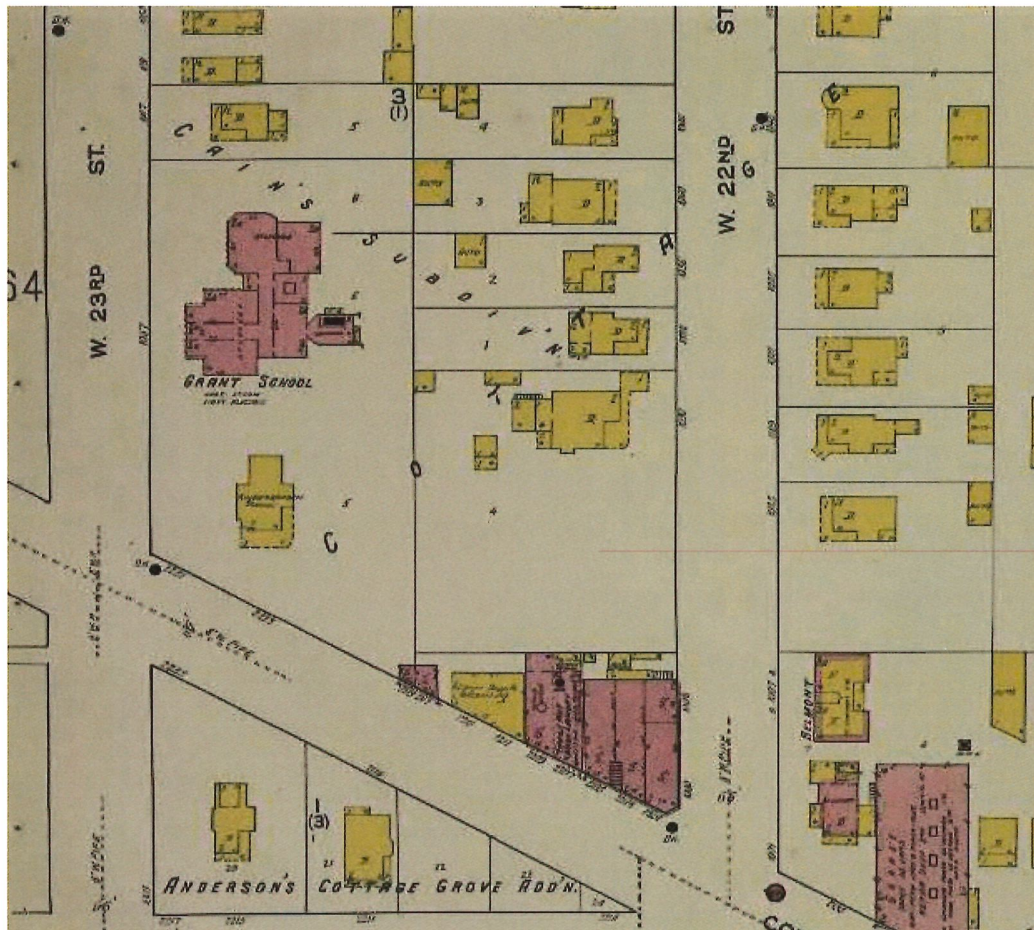
New Life Center 1031 23rd Street

CAHP-2025-000007

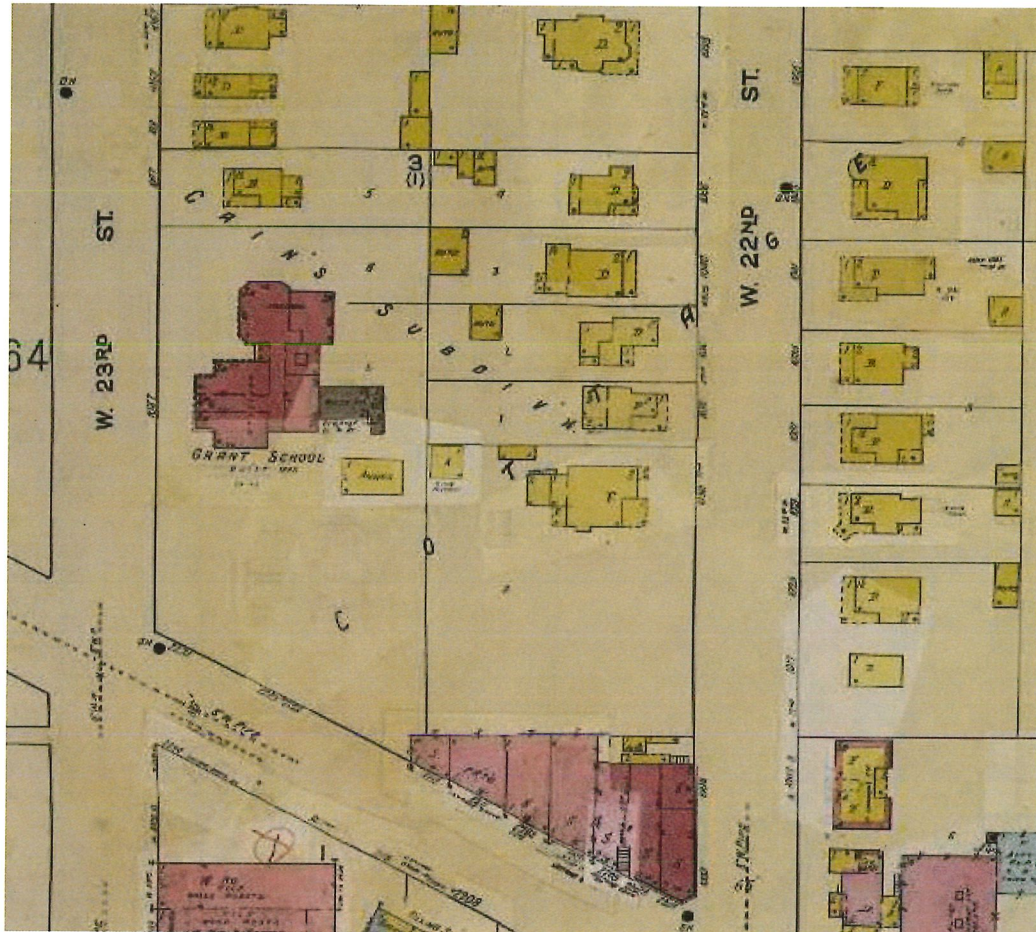




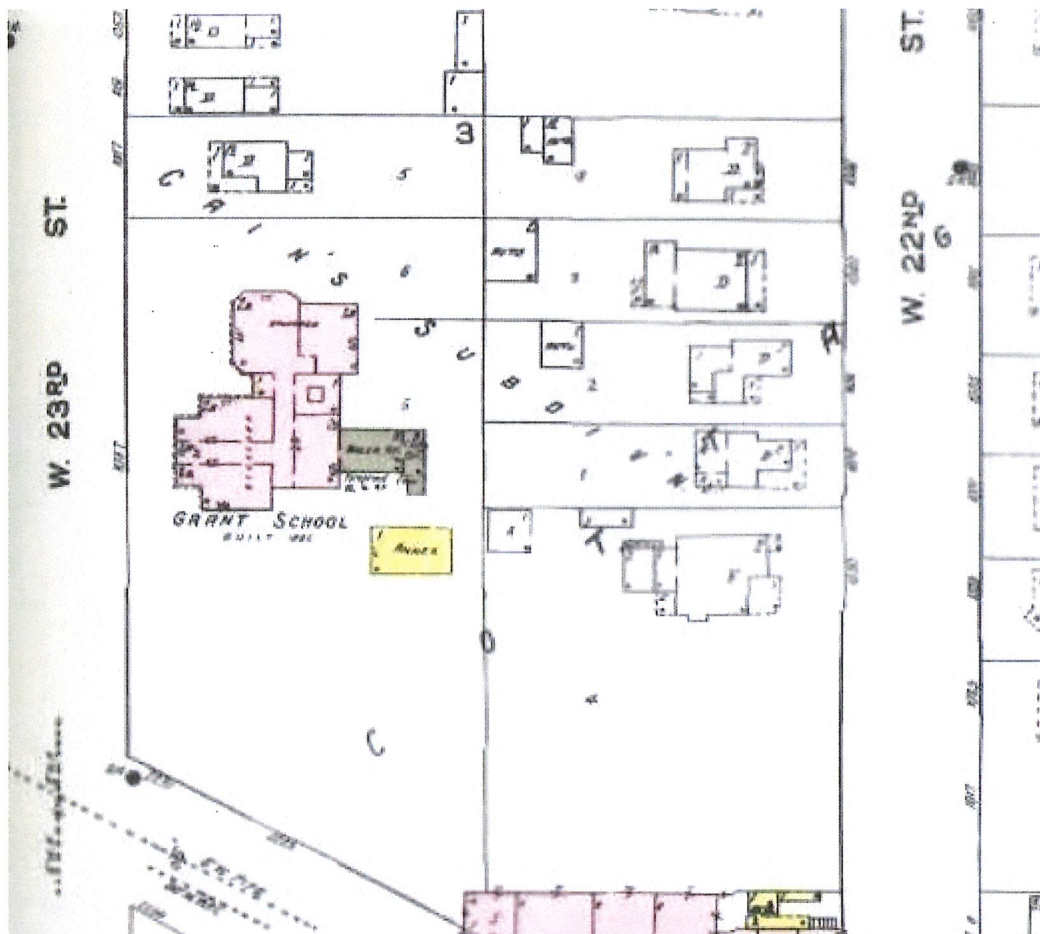
SANBORN MAP 1901



SANBORN MAP 1920



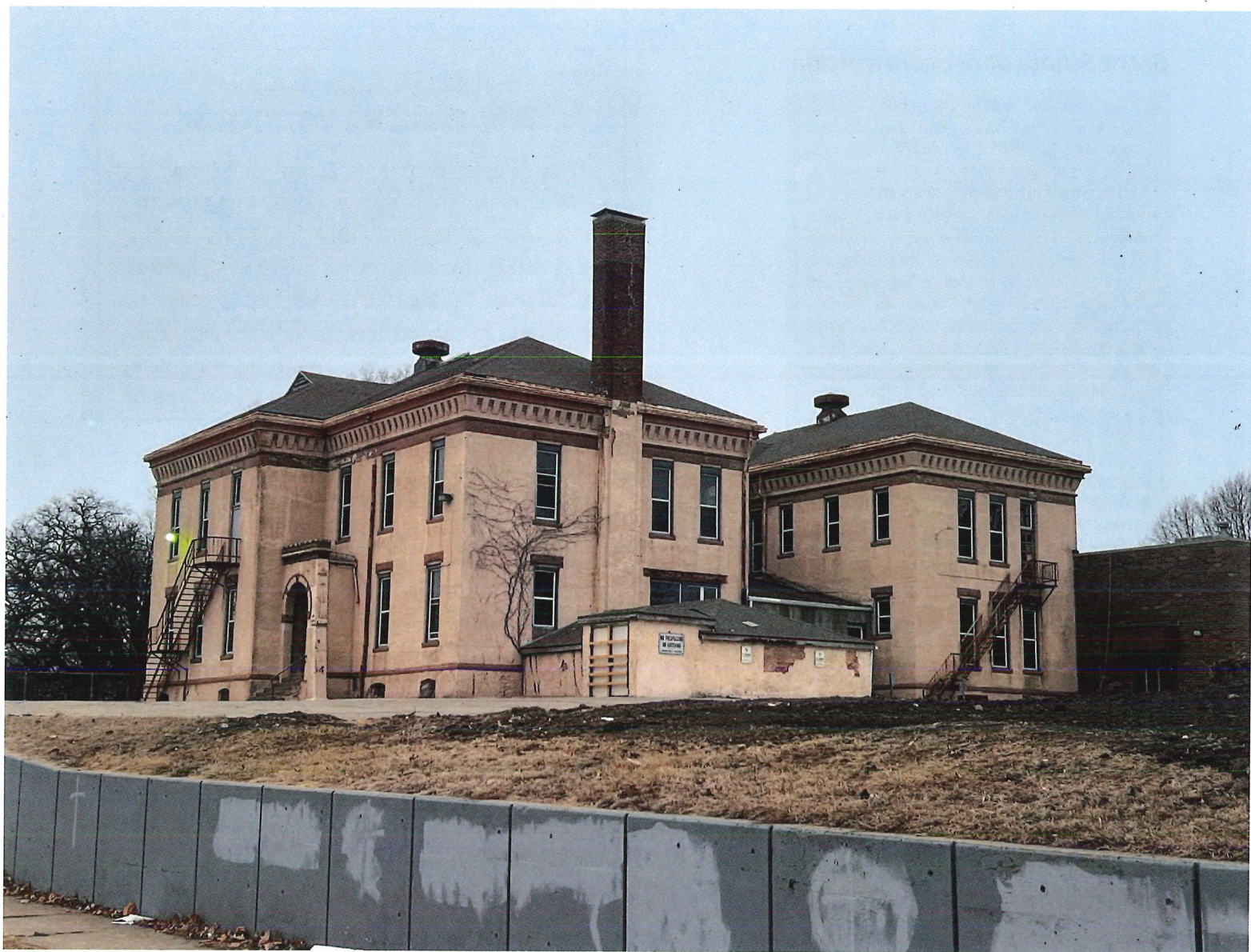
SANBORN MAP 1920 - 1950



SANBORN MAP 1957







Grant School under construction

SCHOOL BOARD MEETING.

THE West Side School Board met last evening at the office of the Secretary. The committee to purchase a lot for the new school building reported that they had purchased the south 100 feet of lot 6, block 3, Cottage Grove Addition. This is a fine location, facing on Forest street, near Cottage Grove avenue, and will make a very convenient school site. The following contracts were let, provided the contractors execute bonds and enter into contracts in three days: J. D. Nelligan, the brick work for \$4,059; John Lenan, the carpenter work for \$3,379; James & Maine, the plastering for \$418. The Board made the following levy of taxes for the ensuing year: Teachers' fund, \$48,000; school house fund, 23,000; contingent fund \$25,000. This levy includes the \$8,000 voted at the last annual election for the purchase of school house sites, and \$10,000 to redeem outstanding bonds. The Board also elected Miss Earhart as teacher for the next year in place of Miss Day in the Hawthorne School, who had decided not to wait. The following resolution was passed by the Board: *Resolved*, That all bills must be accompanied with a written order from an officer or member of the school board in order to be allowed, and that the secretary be instructed to notify all parties presenting bills of this resolution. An adjournment was then taken to meet next Monday evening.

School Board makes the decision to purchase the land for the Grant School and hire contractors.

Des Moines Register - May 1886

DES MOINES SCHOOLS.

The West Side School Board paid the school houses of this district a visit of inspection yesterday forenoon, and reported finding everything in admirable shape. The new building on Cottage Grove avenue is progressing finely, being now ready for the floor joists, and they hope to have it ready for occupancy by fall. It has been named the Grant School.

Des Moines Register - June 1886

THE new school house on Cottage Grove Avenue, called the Grant School, is rapidly nearing completion, being now under roof and ready for the carpenters. The building is one of the most tasty of the many already adorning the city, and will prove a decided addition to the collection of which the city is so proud. There has been no striving after ornamentation in its design, but everything is so arranged as to convey an idea of stability and use. It will be fitted up in the most complete manner, and will be ready for occupancy soon after the beginning of the school year.

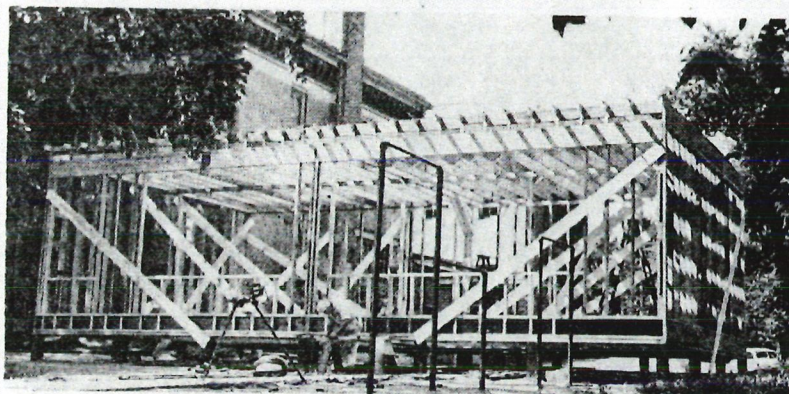
Des Moines Register - September 1886

Construction of Additions

To the Grant school there has been built a four-room addition. This has been absolutely necessary. For the last two years the school has been so crowded that it has been impossible to accommodate the scholars in the Grant building proper and so the school board rented a storeroom for the kindergarten, and one room in Hawthorne was utilized as an overflow for pupils. An addition to Bird school has also been made by the school board, who appropriated \$15,000 for the additions of both the Grant and Bird schools. Fifty feet north of the Bird

***Construction of a 4-room addition in 1895
Des Moines Register - August 1895***

Build Annex for Extra Classroom at Grant School



Under construction is this one-story frame annex at Grant school, Twenty-third street and Cottage Grove avenue. The building, 22 by 40 feet, will provide large classroom and cloakroom.

***Construction of a one-room annex in 1945
Des Moines Register - July 1945***

Grant School Students through the years

Oh, Girls! Look Who Are Here—Champ Boy Knitters



Grant school boys and girls are doing their bit. Since the first of November they have completed two knitted comforts, which have been given to Major Cooper for the base hospital at Camp Dodge. Sweaters, helmets and mufflers have been completed, the children of the fifth, sixth and seventh grades working at the noon hour and at recess.

Their work was contributed to Camp Dodge officials with the following poem written by one of the teachers:

"Readin' and writin' and 'rithme-
tic
Were once our pride and joy
But that was before we learned to
knit.
Squares for the soldier boy.

Now we'd rather knit than learn
We'd rather knit than play
We'd like to lay our books aside
And knit the live long day.

'Twas thought a boy could never be
As expert as a girl
But our sixth, seventh and eighth
grade boys
Have even learned to purl.

The square of many shades are
made
The size not all the same
If some seem larger than the rest
The yarn is most to blame.

So please accept this knitted quilt
Given with right good will
By the boys and girls who do their
bit.

To whip old Kaiser Bill.
Upper picture—Left to right,
Rex Barrun, Gerald Rowatt, Ed-
win Robinson, George Smith, Gar-
ner Farrell.

Lower picture—Standing, left to
right, Ted Cray, Chester Ford, Wil-
lis Ford, William Vestral. Seated,
George Peterson and Harold Bren-
naker.



DES MOINES
'BOILED'

Mrs. Zoe Pearl Park, originator
of the "company mother" idea and
who acts in that capacity for the

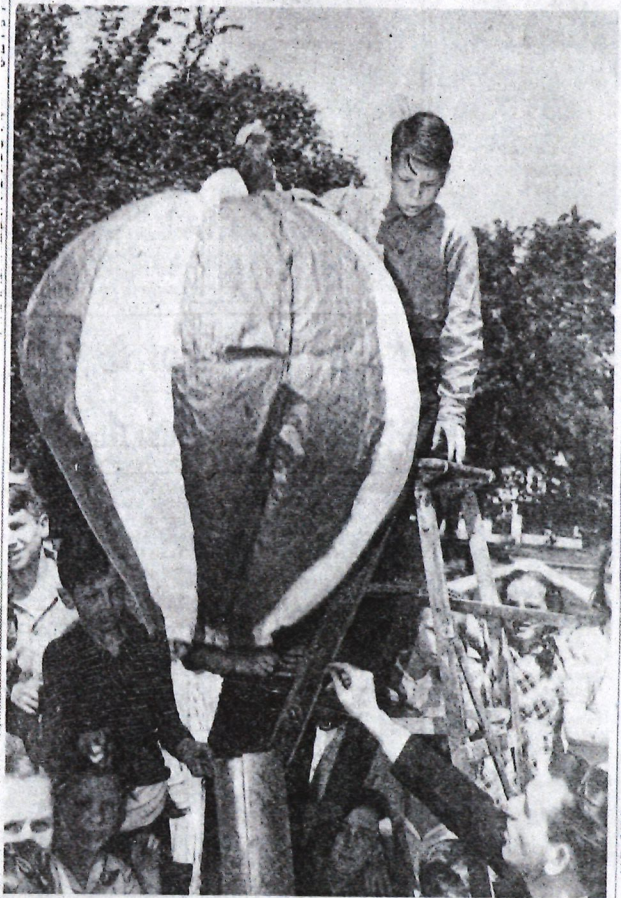
evening at 7:30 at Newlen's funeral
parlor. Interment in Woodlawn
cemetery. Friends kindly request-
ed to omit flowers.

Amusements.

PRINCESS—"Noblesse Oblige"—every
night at 8:15 o'clock. Matinee Sunday
and Saturday at 2 p. m. Tuesday and
Thursday at 2:30 p. m. Next week—"Just
a Woman."
REXCEL—"Solene, Dancer, Doll"—Sat-
urday at 8:15 and 10:15. Coming "Follies."
JAY—10 and 11.
GRIPHUM—Vaudeville every day 8:25
p. m. Matinee daily 2:30 except Sunday,
12 p. m. Trixie Fripiana and Sarah Pad-

Des Moines Tribune - 1918

STUDENTS LEARN FLIGHT PRINCIPLES



The results of class study in the principles of flying were demonstrated at Drake park by sixth grade students at Grant school, when this balloon, filled with hot air, took off and flew for more than a block. Holding the balloon as it filled was Billy Tucker (top), while James L. Daugherty, lower right, vice principal at the school, supervised preparations for the flight.

Des Moines Tribune - 1941

Description of the Grant School - 1887

"Though the existence of this building is probably unknown to a large portion of Des Moines citizens owing to its having been in use so short a time, yet it is one of the most complete of the many elegant school structures in the city. Viewed from without it is a plain, two story brick structure without pretensions to beauty, but within everything is arranged in the most satisfactory manner for the accomodation of teachers and pupils. Entering the main hall the first object to attract attention is a large picture of General Grant, from whom the building derives its name."

GRANT SCHOOL.

IN making his rounds yesterday morning the wandering scribe dropped in for a few minutes at the new Twenty-third street school building. Though the existence of this building is probably unknown to a large proportion of Des Moines citizens owing to its having been in use so short a time, yet is one of the most complete of the many elegant school structures in the city. Viewed from without it is a plain, two story brick structure without pretensions to beauty, but within everything is arranged in the most satisfactory manner for the accommodation of teachers and pupils. Entering the main hall the first object to attract attention is a large picture of General Grant, from whom the building derives its name. The school is in charge of Mrs. Hanna who, besides her duties as principal, instructs the three grades in room No. 4. She is assisted by Mrs. Miller in No. 3, Miss Chandler in No. 2, and Miss Randolph in No. 1, all thoroughly competent instructors, as their work amply testifies. Everything

was in the best of order and the work was progressing with that exactness and definiteness of purpose that always marks the perfection of discipline. Each room was comfortably filled with pupils, despite the rigors of the winter, and the interest manifested by them in the work before them was the best possible testimonial of the excellence of their instructors. Des Moines has certainly every reason for feeling a pride in its schools and in their teachers.

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Des Moines Register - 1887



Bicentennial Reflections --

**The History
of the
Des Moines Public Schools**

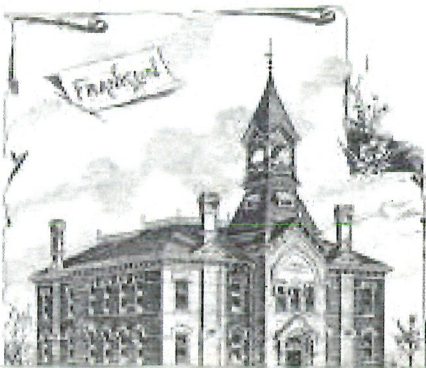
1846-1976

by
Robert R. Denny
Des Moines Public Schools
Des Moines, Iowa

**Forest Home School,
Forest and Gordon Avenue**



**Benjamin Franklin School,
12th and Crocker**



**Frisbie School,
60th and Muskegon**



**Ulysses S. Grant School,
23rd and Cottage Grove**

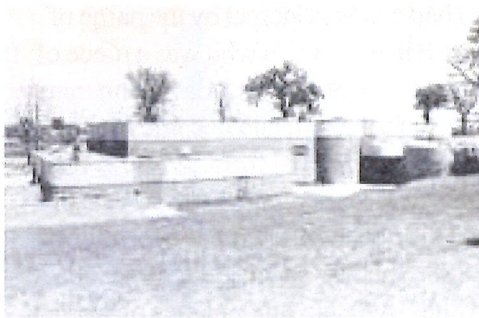


of the west, costing at the time it was erected some \$80,000. Some newspaper reports point out that it was erected in the heart of one of the residential districts in the city.

The Lincoln building which is pictured here was somewhat reminiscent of castles out of England. Notice the many chimneys that adorned the building; they were not for looks but for the simple expedient of fireplaces that were used to heat this large structure. Lincoln housed all the high school students not only from the West Des Moines school district, which was that area which is basically downtown Des Moines at the present time, but also included those who lived south of the Raccoon River which is now the present southside Des Moines.

West High School had a lady principal by the name of Miss Charlotte Mann in the 1870's who was a niece of Horace Mann. The records show that Miss Mann married the president of the school board and became Mrs. Cooper. Miss Mann was principal from 1871-72. It is pointed out that there were other women principals of West High through the years; Mrs. Louise Morrow was principal 1886-1888. She was succeeded, by a Celia Ford, principal, 1888-1890. No other names of women principals appear for West High from this point on. In the same vein of recognizing outstanding women, May Goodrell, of course, was the outstanding principal of East High School for many years and in turn joined the central staff and became the director of what is now the Pupil Services Department.

A continued growth of Des Moines and the increasing school population soon made even the new magnificent Lincoln school building overcrowded. There was a demand by more and more citizens for an adequate high school building to serve students adequately. The prosperity in the nation of the 1870's, and 1880's was such that people were demanding more education for their young people. Business was booming and there was general prosperity. Just as the previous school buildings became crowded, history continued to repeat itself. Then in the year 1888 it was decided that a new building should be erected at 15th & Center and that the high school unit which was on the top floor of the Lincoln building at 9th & Mulberry should be abandoned. A splendid three-story red brick building was dedicated April 19, 1889, with imposing



Edmunds

Date of construction-1974

Principals of Edmunds School include:
-1973 - Don Brubaker

their new attendance center. In the mid-1970's Dunlap has the following compensatory programs for students: Title I Reading, K-6; Title I Math, K-4; Follow Through, K-3 as well as Head Start classes. There are also classes for the educable mentally retarded. Dunlap is a school in the community action program that involves a great deal of participation by parents in after-school activities. One of the innovative programs that has received nation-wide recognition has been the family learning center. It is an active participant in the community cultural recreational activities program.

EDMUNDS SCHOOL Grades K-6 1601 Crocker Street Site-3 acres

For the 1973-1974 school year, Edmunds School was housed in two former elementary schools that were fore-runners of Edmunds. These were Bird School at Harding Road and Woodland and Grant School at 23rd and Cottage Grove. Bird School was demolished in 1975.

Grant School was one of the oldest school units in the district having been built originally in 1885 with additions in 1895 and 1910. Grant was sold in 1974. Each of these had been K-8 units in the old West Des Moines school district that existed until 1907 when the general merger of school districts took place.

Thus, these two former schools possessed a proud heritage that formed the background for a striking new educational unit that was soon to be built-Edmunds, which was based upon an open-space philosophy of education. Along with this educational idea was the philosophy that the school board used for all of the schools in the 1970's and that was, input from the school community as to the type of school facility that the individuals who lived in that neighborhood wished to have built. In the case of Edmunds and King, a unique planning process called the Educational Charrette was utilized. It was the first one in the State of Iowa and in the midwest. The idea was espoused by the U.S. Office of Education and endorsed by the State Department of Public Instruction.

The history of Edmunds School goes back to two elementary schools- Bird School at Harding Road and of these two buildings that were to become Edmunds School.

In 1968, plans were beginning to take form which would eventually result in a new, single educational facility to

Landmark Nomination Form

IDENTIFICATION:

SITE NAME Ulysses S. Grant Elementary School - 1031 23rd Street

LEGAL DESCRIPTION LTS 5 & 6 CAINS SUB DIV; AND N 64F ON W LN & N 66F ON E LN LT 5 & S53.08F LT 7 & S 100F LT 6 BLK 3 COTTAGE GROVE

OWNER(S) NAME New Life Center

OWNER(S) SIGNATURE Public Petition Attached
(signed owner's letter of support or petition can be attached in lieu of signature here)

OWNER(S) ADDRESS 1057 23rd Street Des Moines IA 50311
(street address) (city) (state) (zip)

CATEGORY:

STRUCTURAL/ARCHITECTURAL X **LANDSCAPE** **ARCHEOLOGICAL**

COMPONENTS original school building and its additions (stucco portion of building); New Life Center 1981 addition (brick addition, not historically significant)

USE (present) Unused/Storage (past) Church, School

DESCRIPTION:

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION 1885 **ARCHITECT/BUILDER** Unknown

BUILDING TYPE:

Single-family dwelling Industrial Other institutional Religious
Multiple-family dwelling Educational X Public X Agricultural
Commercial

EXTERIOR WALLS: clapboard ☐ stone ☐ brick ☒ board and batten ☐ shingles ☐
stucco ☒ other _____

STRUCTURAL SYSTEM: wood frame with interlocking joints ☐ masonry load-bearing walls ☒
wood frame with light members (balloon frame) ☐ iron frame ☐ steel frame with curtain walls ☐
reinforced concrete ☐ other ☐

CONDITION: excellent ☐ good ☐ fair ☒ deteriorated ☐

INTEGRITY: original site ☒ moved--if so, when _____
from where _____

Information on alterations, additions (with dates & architect, if known) and any other notable features of building/site: Original school building built 1885 (two fifths), first addition built 1895 (one fifth), third addition built 1910 (two fifths). Non historically significant church building built circa 1981. No available information on architects for any of these buildings.

RELATED OUTBUILDINGS AND PROPERTY: barn ☐ other farm structures ☐ carriage house ☐ garage ☐ privy ☐ other Attached church meeting building (built in 1981, not historically significant)

SURROUNDINGS OF THE SITE: open land ☐ woodland ☐ scattered outbuildings ☐
commercial ☐ industrial ☐ residential ☒ densely built-up ☐ other _____

Prepared by Philip Walter Gustafson Date 1/10/2025

Address 1150 14th Place, Des Moines, IA 50314

Telephone (515) 901-9668 Email philipwgustafson@msn.com

Organization Norseman Construction Solutions

SIGNIFICANCE: (Indicate all sources of information for all statements)

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

This building is a typical school structure of Des Moines from the 1880s. Many like it once existed. It has all the common characteristics of such a building and should be cherished as the only example left of these early school buildings. If demolished or compromised, Des Moines would lose the only example left of many of these unique and fascinating design features, which were so common place in its day but today are so unique and fascinating.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Grant school is the oldest existent standing public school building in Des Moines. It predates all other standing such buildings by at least 15 years. It was built in structural brick and stucco'd in the early part of the 20th century. Construction began in 1885 and began use sometime during the winter of 1886/1887. At the time it was one of the new schools built by the West Des Moines School District in an area still considered largely quite rural, but beginning to experience a large residential boom. The original portion was a 6 room building. An additional 4 rooms were added in 1895. It continued to be an important part of the northwest corner of the city's development through the late 19th century and played a vital role in education during the beginning of the 20th century as it began to shift to more of an inner city role. In 1910 an additional 4 rooms were added as well as cafeteria accommodations. It was abandoned as a School building by the school district in the 1970s and sold to New Life Center, who used it as a church and added a church building on in 1981.

Excerpt from "History of Des Moines Schools 1846-1866":

"Grant School

23rd and Cottage Grove

Grades K-6

January, 1966 enrollment 226

Dates of construction ---- 1885 - two fifths

1895 - one fifth

1910 - two fifths

Site - 1 acre

Grant School was named after Ulysses S. Grant (1882-1885). He achieved great fame as a commander in chief of the Federal armies during the last year of the War of Secession. He was the eighteenth president of the U.S.A., serving from 1869-1877.

In 1961, Grant School had to give up the south portion of its playground to the Des Moines Freeway. It is interesting to observe that Grant escaped the freeway demolition that took three of its sister schools of the 1800s - Crocker at 6th and School, Longfellow School on East Fifth and Webster School on East 12th.

SOURCES (for primary and secondary sources give complete facts of publication: author, title, place of publication, date, etc.):

History of Des Moines Schools 1846-1866; by Robert Denny; Published June, 1967; Des Moines, IA by Des Moines Public Schools

Personal research of Philip Gustafson

Des Moines Register, 1886/9/2, page 7

Des Moines Register, 1887/02/11 page 7

Des Moines Register, 1895//08/21 page 6



New Life Center 1031 23rd Street

CAHP-2025-000007

