

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Watseka Downtown Historic District

other names/site number _____

Name of Multiple Property Listing _____

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

street & number Roughly bound by First, Oak, Walnut, Fifth, and Union Pacific Railroad

☐

not for publication

city or town Watseka

☐

vicinity

state Illinois

county Iroquois

zip code 60970

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ 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 ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance: ___ **national** ___ **statewide** ___ **local**

Applicable National Register Criteria: ___ **A** ___ **B** ___ **C** ___ **D**

Signature of certifying official/Title: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Date _____

Illinois Department of Natural Resources - SHPO

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date _____

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Watseka Historic Downtown District

Name of Property

Iroquois, Illinois

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | private |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | public - Local |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | public - State |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | public - Federal |

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | building(s) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | district |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | structure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | object |

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
34	15	buildings
		site
		structure
		object
34	15	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/ Hotel

COMMERCE/TRADE/ Business, Finance,
Specialty Store

SOCIAL/ Meeting Hall

GOVERNMENT/ City Hall, County
Courthouse

TRANSPORTATION/ Train Depot

RECREATION & ENTERTAINMENT/ Theater

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE/ Business, Financial,
Specialty Store

GOVERNMENT/ Police Station

RECREATION & CULTURE/ Theater

TRANSPORTATION/ Train Depot

SOCIAL/ Meeting Hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/
Tudor Revival

MODERN MOVEMENT / Art Deco

LATE VICTORIAN/ Italianate, Romanesque
Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Limestone, brick, concrete

walls: Brick, limestone, stucco, tile, glass,

metal, synthetics

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois ,Illinois

County and State

MID 19th CENTURY

LATE 19TH & EARLY 20TH CENTURY

AMERICAN MOVEMENTS

roof: Asphalt, metal, shingle

other:

Watseka Historic Downtown District

Name of Property

Iroquois, Illinois

County and State

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity).

Summary Paragraph

Watseka is a city of approximately 5,000 persons located 90 miles south of the City of Chicago and approximately 15 miles west of the Illinois-Indiana state line. The city encompasses approximately 3 square miles near the center of Iroquois County, at the intersection of U.S. Route 24 and Illinois Route 1. The Iroquois River winds along the north side of town and is joined by Sugar Creek on the west side. Incorporated in 1865, the name "Watseka" derives from the Potawatomi name "Watch-e-kee", meaning, "Daughter of the Evening Star" after daughter of a Potawatomi chief and wife of early eastern Illinois settler Gordon Salstonstall Hubbard. The downtown commercial district of Watseka developed with the broader national trends of the late 19th century, post-Civil War era, including industrialization, urbanization and westward expansion. The Watseka Downtown Historic District is primarily located on Walnut Street bounded between 1st Street to the west and 5th Street east. The district contains 34 contributing resources and 15 non-contributing resources, as well as one property that was previously listed in the National Register and which contributes to the district. The non-contributing resources were either constructed after the period of significance or have undergone modern façade renovations and no longer retain sufficient historical integrity to contribute to the district.

The district is composed of one- to two-story buildings with first-floor storefronts and upper floor residential space. Until as recently as 2014 the upper floors of the district were restricted to only residential use. This zoning policy is being reevaluated with an emphasis on maintaining the historical integrity of the facades of impacted buildings. The majority of the structures are brick, limestone, and stucco. The district is a mix of Italianate and Art Modern style, but also includes Tudor Revival, Romanesque Revival, and Art Deco. Common elements include segmented arched windows, decorative cornices, and ornamental brick facades.

Contributing buildings have maintained an overall adequate level of historical integrity through the upkeep of individual buildings' architectural styles and building elements. In addition, buildings along the central business corridor on W. Walnut Street and E. Walnut Street have maintained their original functional use. Resources were evaluated for integrity based mainly on façade condition and the nature of alterations to the original structure. Original facades that were historically intact were deemed contributing, as were renovated facades that were altered prior to 1974 and maintained their historical appearance. Buildings that were constructed after 1974 were deemed non-contributing.

Narrative Description

The Downtown Watseka Historic District's story follows many national trends which have influenced the local population and economy throughout its history. Watseka experienced growth in the early 20th century, driven by agricultural expansion, the arrival of railroads, and the economic prosperity of the pre-World War I era. As a county seat with a burgeoning commercial district, the town saw increased population and development. The Great Depression led to significant economic challenges in Watseka, as it did nationwide. Watseka's population growth slowed as economic hardships affected agriculture and local businesses. In the post-war era of 1950-1970 the national trend was characterized by urbanization and suburbanization as people desired to live in large cities or near them which resulted in a slight population decline locally.

During the post-war period Watseka lost some notable historic buildings including the old Iroquois County

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois, Illinois

County and State

Courthouse, the Iroquois Hotel, several significantly altered or demolished early-20th century commercial buildings as well as the Peter's Block. At one point, the Romanesque hotel stood 4 stories tall and was the tallest building on Walnut Street. It was razed in the early 2000s. Large groups of buildings, however, do remain in good condition ranging from an adequate to high level of integrity. While the commercial district contains some gaps where buildings have been demolished or facades altered excluding them from historic consideration, the boundary and resources designated as contributing express a clear character and retain their integrity to form a cohesive district.

Setting

The Downtown Watseka Historic District represents the central business district of the town of Watseka. It is bound loosely by Fifth Street on the east, Oak Street on the north, Walnut Street, and the Norfolk Southern rail line to the south, and First Street and the Union Pacific rail line to the west. The Norfolk Southern and Union Pacific lines, historically known as the Louisville, Evansville and St. Louis Railroad and Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad, respectively, have served as conduits of connectivity for passengers and goods since the late 19th century. North and south of the historic district, the area transitions into residential buildings. To the east, commercial buildings become less dense as they are mixed with single- and multi- family residential structures, and buildings dating to after the period of significance. The area west of the proposed district boundary is primarily composed of industrial purposed buildings.

While parking primarily takes place along West and East Walnut Street, there are a few public parking lots available for travelers to get out and walk the strip. The first parking lot is located near the western boundary of the district and is sandwiched between building 32 and 33 on the North side of W Walnut Street. The second lot is on the south side of W Walnut Street, between building 40 and 41. Finally, the last parking lot and the largest of the three, is on the corner of E Walnut Street and S 3rd Street. There are no parks, squares, or green spaces within the district boundary. The city has developed a comprehensive plan which outlines plans for development of pedestrian park spaces as well as additional public parking.

The Downtown Watseka Historic District exhibits good overall historical integrity, and the contributing structures are typically clustered together. The collective integrity of these buildings creates a unified downtown district that exhibits a range of architectural characteristics on structures original to the district, as well as those added during post-war economic prosperity. The district embodies the economic and social evolution exemplary of a resilient Midwestern community. Original structures in the area that have been lost to new construction or were deemed non-contributing have been removed from the district boundaries wherever possible to maintain a contiguous area.

Individual Building Descriptions

1. Celebrations, 209 W. Oak Street; ca. 1951

1 Contributing building

This one-story brick building of the mid-century modern era has a tiered parapet wall and limestone coping. A central door is covered by a canopy awning, flanked by a fixed window to the East, and a row of stacked, glass masonry units to the West. This building previously served as the Farmers Home Administration for the US Dept. of Agriculture and is currently being used as a banquet hall.

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois, Illinois

County and State

2. 107 N. 2nd Street; ca. 1951

1 Contributing building

This one-story running bond brick building of the mid-century modern era contains a central door with sidelights and a transom. The door is flanked by a triple pane fixed window resting on a precast concrete sill on each side. The parapet and limestone coping are tiered, with signage directly underneath on the parapet wall.

3. Office Supply, 105 N 2nd Street; ca. 1941

1 Contributing building

This one-story brick building of the 20th century commercial vernacular style has an East façade composed of a central door flanked by inset, fixed pane windows. All fenestrations have a black panel transom. Metal coping drapes over the tiered parapet, with a sloped stretch of metal on each side. Renovations- The building contains updated fixed windows and transom window panels. Metal coping has been added to the original parapet wall. Previous uses for this building include Weber Plumbing & Heating Inc. Creative Office Systems, and Gagnon's Firestone Store.

4. Neighborhood Watch Program, 228 E. Walnut Street; ca. 1914

1 Contributing building

Two story brick building of the 19th century revival style contains arched windows with a limestone string course at sill level on the second story. The central tower acts as the organizing element, and hosts the main entrance, as well as a bull's eye window surrounded by keystones. Fenestrations on the ground level have a smooth limestone surround and keystone, with limestone corbels and glass transom at the main entrance. Renovations- The ground level west of the main entrance appears to be a filled in opening originally for a garage door system. The roof and soffit also appear to be recently redone. This building originally served as city hall, then a fire station, then a police station, and now serves as the headquarters for the Neighborhood Watch Program.

5. Watseka Theater, 218 E. Walnut Street; ca. 1931

1 Contributing building

Two story art deco style theatre designed by architect Louis Skidmore. A recessed entrance with theatre signage awning hoisted to the structure. Above the signage is a tall, ornate fixed window. Along the parapet wall is a multi-layered limestone belt course, punctuated with round ornamentation units. The ground level fenestrations rest on grey granite veneer bulkheads. Renovations- The building appears to have replaced their second level fenestrations and the ground level display glass. The signage awning also appears to be an addition.

6. 100F, 212-214-216 E. Walnut Street; ca. 1926

1 Contributing building

This two-story brick building of the late 19th, early 20th century commercial vernacular style is composed of 3 storefronts. Above the storefront windows is batten siding, topped with a soldier brick course. A smooth limestone stringer course lies at the base of the parapet wall, with limestone ornament, signage, and coping on the parapet wall above. Renovations- The building appears to have updated sliding windows on the lower level, one infilled storefront and batten seam siding above the storefront. 2 of the 3 storefronts maintain a friendly face to the street. This building served as a variety of stores and offices.

7. 208-210 E. Walnut Street; ca. 1924

1 Contributing building

This two-story brick building of the late 19th, early 20th century commercial vernacular style contains diagonal recessed entries lined with fixed windows. Above the entrance openings is a

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois, Illinois

County and State

soldier brick course. Second story fenestrations rest upon rowlock course sills, with a soldier brick course and limestone block accents above. The limestone coping rests above a soldier belt course. Renovations- The ground level windows and wall panels appear to be more recent. In addition, the single hung windows on the second level have been updated. This building was previously used as a grainery, liquor store, and hall, and is still used as the latter.

8. Aunt Martha's, 200 E. Walnut Street

1 Non-contributing building

This one-story contemporary glass building has a glass-encased arcade on its south elevation was constructed circa 1980. Primary exterior building materials include metal batten-seam siding and secondary materials are glass. A central glass atrium extends from the entry foyer. The overall integrity of the construction is good. This building was deemed non- contributing due to it being constructed after the 50-year cutoff. The associated parking lot operates as a loading area for the building and was likewise constructed after the period of significance.

9. 132 E. Walnut Street; ca. 1885

1 Non-contributing building

This two-story building is a blend of Italianate and contemporary styles and is comprised of brick and colored stucco. Second level fenestrations contain arched window surrounds, with painted panel window transoms. The ground level is brick, with the east storefront entry being recessed, and the west entry flush with building face. Signage separates the first and second story. Below the parapet are layered stucco dentils. Renovations- The building has covered the original brick façade on the second level with a new stucco finish system. The original cornice and stringer course had been removed and replaced with stucco dentils. The fixed windows on the second level appear to be newer and are surrounded by modern window hoods and transom panels. Previously, this building served a variety of uses, such as boots & shoe shop, bookstore, beauty shop, bakery, and offices.

10. Fay Drug, 130 E. Walnut Street; ca.1885

1 Non-contributing building

This two-story contemporary building contains a recessed storefront entrance. The building envelope is composed of stucco on the first and second story to match the color scheme of the neighboring building. Stucco window surrounds and triangular transoms outline the second story fenestrations. Below the parapet is a slightly projected eave. Renovations include a new exterior finish system, windows & hoods, and ground level storefront. Previous building uses include offices and pharmacy.

11. McColly Rosenboom, 128 E. Walnut Street; ca.1885

1 Contributing building

This two-story running bond brick building contains elements of contemporary, Italianate, and commercial architecture and has a typical 19th century storefront with a recessed entry. On the second story, wall faces between pilasters are recessed, with ornate brick cornices in each alcove. Second story windows have exposed stone lintels. Batten siding topped with a rowlock brick course hosts the signage. Renovations include modern storefront glazing, updated single hung windows on the second level, and the batten seam siding hosting the building's signage. This building served a variety of past uses, such as a hardware & stoves shop, clothing store, general goods, meat shop, and office space.

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois, Illinois

County and State

12. First Trust Bank, 120 E. Walnut Street; ca.1885

1 Contributing building

This two-story modern building is clad in limestone panels. The recessed central entrance is one story and divides the two-story massing of the building. Vertical batten siding with painted panels above separates the second story from the ground level in elevation. Renovation- This building was previously 3 buildings given a limestone panel façade with modern glazing and batten seam siding. Previous building uses include a millinery, dry goods, hardware store, boots & shoes, and a grocery store. On the south side of Walnut Street the parking lot, owned and maintained by First Trust Bank is contributing to the historic district having been in operation as a parking lot since 1971.

13. Snyder Jeweler, 116 E. Walnut Street; ca. 1883

1 Non-contributing building

This two-story brick building of the Tudor revival style contains a storefront with a recessed entry on the ground level, and apartments on the second story. The signage above the shingle awning is topped with a double layer of rowlock course brick. Similarly, the second story windows share a rowlock course brick surround, with diamond shaped brick extrusions on the parapet wall. The parapet is topped with precast concrete. Renovations- This building appears to have received a modern brick façade with updated glazing, storefront system, and shingle awning circa 1999. Prior building uses include Republican Printing, bank, dry goods, gentleman's store, and Hi-Lo store. This structure was deemed non-contributing due to the façade updates being applied after the period of significance.

14. Atrium Building, 112 E. Walnut Street; ca. 1999

1 Non-contributing building

This contemporary, one-story running bond brick building has a soldier course running along the facade at sill level. A double soldier course runs above the fenestrations. Windows are covered with green awnings to match the ornate cornices. Entries to the building are recessed, with the main entrance having a transom with a large fanlight above it. The main entrance has a multi-layered brick surround with a central keystone. Above the central entrance is the building's signage, surrounded by soldier course brick and a keystone. An ornate cornice with corbels sits above the cornices of the neighboring parapet walls and matches them in style. The parapet wall hosts rowlock framed basket weave brick patterns. This structure was deemed non-contributing due to the structure being built in 1999, after the 50-year cutoff.

15. Main Street Gifts, 106 E. Walnut Street; ca. 1903

1 Non-contributing building

This one-story, contemporary brick building has a recessed storefront entry. A single awning covers the ground level fenestrations. Above the signage runs a double soldier course. Below the parapet coping is another band of double stacked soldier course bricks. Rectilinear brick extrusions to match the building east of it, run vertical up the side of the facade. Basket weave brick patterns are framed on the parapet wall between the soldier courses. Renovations- The building appears to have a modern brick façade with an updated storefront glazing and canopy awning circa 1999. Previous building uses include a clothing store and Gro. & Queens Warehouse. This structure was deemed non-contributing due to the façade updates being applied after the period of significance.

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois ,Illinois

County and State

16. Imperial Hairstyling, 104 E. Walnut Street; ca.1892

1 Contributing building

This one-story brick building of the contemporary has a typical recessed storefront entry. Fenestrations sit above painted wood bulkheads and are covered by a single awning. Above this is the building's signage attached to the limestone cladding behind it. The buildings parapet wall is lightly checkered with triple standing course brick in a cubic pattern and is topped with a precast concrete parapet cap. Renovations- The building has received an updated storefront system with modern glazing, door, and bulkheads. Behind the building's signage is what appears to be recent limestone cladding. Previous building uses include drug store, grocery store, shoe store, and restaurant.

17. Kunkel Building, 100 E. Walnut Street; ca. 1892

1 Contributing building

This two-story running bond brick building contains elements of art-deco and commercial architectural style, with storefronts on ground level and apartments above. Black marble bulkheads sit below the storefront windows. Recessed entry and sidelights have black trim to match storefront. A limestone string course runs along sill level on the second story, and above the building's signage. The wall face recesses above the second story windows up to the precast parapet. Ornate limestone lintels top the second story windows, along with an ornate, limestone pediment above the parapet coping. Renovations- At some time between 1912-1950's, this building underwent the transition from Queen Anne to Commercial style. The original turret on the southwest corner of the building has been removed and the original brick façade has been replaced with more modern brick. The large arched openings on the ground level have been removed, along with the rough-cut limestone string course on the 2nd level. In addition, the building has received a new storefront glazing system with modern black marble cladding bulkheads. Previous building uses include hair salon, bank, offices, barber shop, and Kunkel's Five & Dime Store.

18. Stephen Brothers' Opera House, 100 W. Walnut Street; ca. 1884

1 Contributing building

This two-story building of the Italianate style is clad in running bond brick painted white with a recessed storefront ground floor. A separate cornice is above the precast panel wall where the signage would be, between the ground level and the second story. The second story windows are double height single hung and have painted concrete sills, with decorated window hoods and corbels. In a similar vein, the ornate classical cornice contains corbels of different scales. Above the cornice is a grand gabled pediment with the buildings main signage and year on it. Renovations- This building appears to have received a more modern storefront system with newer sign board above. The original brick façade has been painted white. The most recent building use is a JCPenny store.

19. G.A.R. Hall, 104 W. Walnut Street; ca. 1908

1 Contributing building

This one-story contemporary building is clad in running bond brick and a black, stone veneer above sill level. A brick soldier course runs beneath the awning covering the ground level's fenestrations. Strips of rough-cut limestone are integrated into the brick course on the parapet wall, between the soldier course and the precast coping. Renovations- This building has received modern stone veneer cladding around the entrance. At some point, the second story of the building was removed. Previous building uses include a jewelry store, restaurant, and drug store.

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois, Illinois

County and State

20. The Head Quarters Beauty Studio, 106 W. Walnut St; ca. 1903

1 Contributing building

This two-story brick building of the Italianate style contains a recessed store front entry on the ground level and apartments above. The ground level is painted black, with a basket weave brick pattern beneath the storefront. The ground level fenestrations are covered by a single awning, with signage painted on the brick course above. The second story windows have ornate, arched transoms and matching sills. Engaged pilasters taper out between the second story windows, with brick cornices running between to meet flush with the parapet wall. The parapet is decorated with an ornate classical cornice and centered pediment. Renovations- This building appears to have received updated second level fenestrations. The ground level contains a more recent storefront system with newly painted brick. Previous building uses include a salon, meat shop, Sears store, offices, and a cigar manufactory.

21. Center Street Productions; 108 W. Walnut St; ca. 1911

1 Contributing building

This two-story brick building contains elements of the Italianate and Queen Anne Revival style. It has a typical recessed storefront entry on the ground level, and apartments above. A single awning covers the buildings fenestrations on the ground level, with a painted wall panel directly above it. The second story hosts a bay window. Two limestone string courses stretch along the parapet wall, with limestone blocks in-between. The parapet is tiered over central limestone blocks, with limestone battlemented coping. Renovations- The building has received a more modern storefront system with recent bulkheads and paneling above. The bay windows and siding have been restored and painted. Previous building uses include Truitt Drug store, saloon, restaurant, and various stores.

22. Caporal's Jewelry, 110 W. Walnut Street; ca. 1885

1 Contributing building

This two-story building of the Italianate style contains a recessed storefront entry. Metal batten seam bulkheads match the bay awning covering and surrounding trim for the signage. The second story fenestrations and walls are inset between the pilasters. Above the windows are ornate pediment window hoods, painted green and red. The parapet has been altered with limestone cladding above the staggered brick cornice. Renovations- The cornice has been removed on the parapet wall. The cornice stringer course has also been removed and replaced with a bay awning. The building has received a modern brick façade to match the previous architecture, with new window hoods above second level fenestrations. In addition, the metal batten seam siding and storefront system are more recent. Previous building uses include a bakery, dress maker, hardware store, and jewelry store.

23. A Cut Above Salon & Spa, 114 W. Walnut Street; ca. 1885

1 Non-contributing building

This two-story contemporary storefront has a typical recessed storefront entrance with a glass transom and sidelights. The entrance is flanked with fixed pane glazing mounted on painted wood panel bulkheads. The primary exterior building material is a slip cover corrugated sheet metal applied circa 1970, with building signage mounted above the entrance. Due to the nature of renovations, this building was deemed non-contributing. The historical integrity of the façade is unknown.

- Weathered sheet metal
- 2 story with stepped parapet

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois, Illinois

County and State

24. Garcia's Mattress and Furniture, 116 W. Walnut Street; ca. 1885 1 Non-contributing building

This two-story contemporary storefront has a typical recessed storefront entrance with building signage mounted above. The entrance is flanked with fixed pane glazing. A slip cover of corrugated sheet metal applied circa 1970 covers the original façade. The primary exterior building material is corrugated sheet metal. Due to the nature of renovations, this building was deemed non-contributing while the historical integrity of the original façade is unknown.

- 2 story with stepped parapet

25. Scrapbooking Now & Then, 118 W. Walnut Street; ca. 1885 1 Non-contributing building

This one-story contemporary building has a typical recessed storefront entrance with glazed sidelights and transom. Fixed pane windows flank the entrance on both sides and sit on sheet metal covered bulkheads. The primary building material is prefinished corrugated sheet metal with exposed fasteners applied circa 1970. Building signage is hoisted perpendicular to the building, overhanging the sidewalk below. Due to the nature of the renovations, this building was deemed non-contributing. The historic integrity of the original façade is unknown.

26. Pellegrini's, 120 W. Walnut Street; ca 1903 1 Non-contributing building

A one-story building that has a typical recessed storefront entrance with a glass transom above. The fixed pane windows flanking the entrance on both sides sit above a rowlock course brick sill. The parapet wall and the awning partially extending over the sidewalk are comprised of prefinished corrugated sheet metal with exposed fasteners circa 1970. Although the date is unknown, due to the nature of the renovations, this building was deemed non-contributing. The historic integrity of the original façade is unknown.

27. Hear Here Dance Studio, 128 W. Walnut Street; ca. 1923 1 Contributing building

This contemporary, one-story brick building contains a typical 19th century storefront characterized by the large plate glass, and recessed entry. Limestone panels painted blue surround the storefront glazing, topped by a shallow, batten seam awning, painted to match. The tiered parapet wall is peppered with soldier course brick accents and topped with precast coping. Remodel in 1962 and 1977 – This building has a more recent storefront system with batten seam siding. Previously, this building served as the Gamble Store.

28. Mary's Emporium, 132 W. Walnut Street; ca. 1918 1 Contributing building

This one-story contemporary brick building contains a storefront and recessed entry. The metal standing seam mansard awning wraps around the South and West elevation. Signage is fastened parallel and perpendicular to the storefront. Renovations- The building has received a newer roof system and had the existing brick parapet wall removed. A modern standing seam mansard awning wraps around the façade. The storefront system appears to be more recent. Previous building uses include the LaBounty & Riley Grocery Store and the Nuf Sed Super Market.

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois, Illinois

County and State

29. La Potosina Restaurant, 200 W. Walnut St, ca. 1992

1 Non-contributing building

This two-story commercial style brick building contains an arched central doorway with a transom and sidelights. Windows with arched transoms rest on rowlock course sills and flank the entrance. Arched rowlock course bricks make up the lintels above fenestrations. The parapet coping is a slightly protruding rowlock brick course. Renovations- The building contains updated fixed windows and a modern entrance with transom and sidelights. Previous building uses include a billiards hall and Elmo's Cocktail Lounge. The structure is considered non-contributing due to the renovations circa 2000. The associated parking lot is non-contributing as its official date of designation as such could not be verified prior to 1975.

30. La Potosina Restaurant, 202 W. Walnut St, ca. 1892

1 Non-contributing building

This one-story commercial style brick building with an arched, recessed doorway has two fixed pane windows to the East of it. The windows rest upon rowlock course sills and have arched transoms. A slightly projected rowlock brick course acts as the parapet coping. Renovations- The building appears to have a more recent brick façade with modern fixed windows. Previously, this building was used as a steam laundry facility. The structure is considered non-contributing due to the renovations circa 2000.

31. LaCroix Garage, 234 W. Walnut Street; ca. 1924

1 Contributing building

This two-story commercial style brick building contains a storefront covered by a canopy awning. Ground level windows rest upon rowlock course sills. The parapet above features corbeled brick which rise slightly above the adjacent parapet walls in a classical, symmetrical proportion, visually dividing the façade into thirds. Adjacent to the storefront entry is a garage door. A brick soldier course, painted white, runs between the ground level and the second story. Three pairs of double hung windows are surrounded by glass masonry units, and framed with long, concrete lintels and sills, painted white to match. Another brick soldier course runs between the second story lintels and the parapet wall. The parapet tiers towards a central dormer with limestone building signage underneath it. Layered wall segments interrupt the parapet, and further articulate the order of the windows below. Renovations- This building appears to have received a more recent storefront system. The second story single hung windows have been updated. The parking lot associated could not be verified as existing during the period of significance and is deemed non-contributing.

32. 215 W. Walnut Street ca. 1980

1 Non-contributing building

This one-story brick contemporary building has a shingled, mansard awning extending up to the parapet. The north façade is comprised of stone veneer and partially wraps around the west entrance. One double fixed pane window punctuates the storefront façade. Due to the nature of renovations performed circa 1980, this building was deemed non-contributing. Beyond the lack of a historic façade the building the integrity is unknown.

33. Railroad Theater, 213 W. Walnut Street; ca. 1917

1 Contributing building

This three-story building displays an art deco style on the ground level, with a limestone panel and tile façade. The upper two levels are composed of common bond brick, with three single hung windows on each level. The recessed entry hosts two double doors that share a transom, and are covered by a metal, batten seam awning. Renovations- The building appears to have a more recent awning. The single hung windows on the second and third levels have been updated since original construction.

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois, Illinois

County and State

34. Boot Leggers, 211 W. Walnut Street; ca. 1924

1 Contributing building

This two-story contemporary building has elements of the Italianate style, a stone veneer ground level and a painted brick second story. The ground level hosts a recessed entry, a clerestory window surrounded by batten panels, and an opening filled with glass masonry units. The second story windows have concrete sills and lintels. Dentils line the cornice on the parapet, with a modillion on the East side of the façade. Renovations- The ground level has been clad in a stone veneer, punctuated by a fixed window and paneling. The façade is the same as it was in a 1979 photograph. Previously, this building served as office space and a bar.

35. Eastburn Building, 209 W. Walnut Street; ca. 1924

1 Contributing building

This two-story commercial style brick building contains a recessed storefront entry on the ground level, and apartments above. The storefront and apartment entry sit beneath a large, square grid transom. Storefront windows rest upon smooth limestone sills above a rowlock brick course. Second story windows have limestone sills to match, with a double rowlock arched lintel. A layered brick cornice and limestone coping top the building off, with limestone building signage integrated into the parapet wall below it. Renovations- The building has received a more modern storefront system, with updated single hung windows on the second level. Previous building uses include a fitness & dance studio and King Don's TV Store.

36. 201 W. Walnut Street, 1978

1 Non-contributing building

This one-story brick building has wood batten siding around its fenestrations. An entry foyer protrudes from the façade. The main building is flanked by an attached garage to the East, and an attached structure to the West. A shallow, asphalt shingled awning extends over the main building and attached structure. The garage has white, vinyl siding. Renovations- In 2001, the garage and concrete pad were added. This building was deemed non-contributing due to its original construction date of 1978 taking place after the 50-year cutoff.

37. Compass Insurance, 109 S. 2nd Street; ca. 1942

1 Contributing building

This one-story modern building has a stone veneer and recessed entry. A smooth limestone band stretches across the East façade. The fixed pane windows rest upon thick, concrete sills. Renovations- The building appears to have received updated fenestrations. Previously, this building served as the Watseka Building & Loan Association.

38. Smith's Office Products, 117 W. Walnut Street; ca. 1965

1 Contributing building

Single story mid-century storefront of the Googie Style with an overhanging, batten seam awning spanning across the North facade. Signage supports penetrate the awning by the recessed, Northeast corner entrance. Storefront windows are wrapped in metal trim and sit above a stone veneer bulkhead. The parking lot serving the building has operated and been maintained since the construction of the building circa 1965. Previous building uses include a restaurant, Grab-It-Here Grocery, Littlefuse MPG, and a food pantry.

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois, Illinois

County and State

39. Post Office, 101 W. Walnut Street; ca. 1935

1 Contributing building

This one-story 20th century revival brick building has a tiered façade and English bond brickwork. A limestone block course lay at the base of the building, with a more ornate, belt course above the fenestrations to frame the parapet wall. The central fenestrations are placed between pilasters that have ornate, limestone capitals to match the belt course directly above it. Metal flashing drapes over the concrete coping of the parapet wall, with the building signage directly beneath it. Renovations- Since its original construction, the building has received a new main entrance door. In addition, the limestone ornament on the parapet walls have been removed. Previously, this site served as the ladies' park.

40. Trudeau Drugs, 115 E. Walnut Street; ca. 1950

1 Contributing building

This one-story commercial vernacular style brick building has a recessed entry and fixed pane with storefront windows of a typical 19th century proportion governed by cast-iron span limitations. Fenestrations have rowlock course sills with a brick soldier course above. The parapet coping is composed of precast concrete. Renovations- The building appears to have updated fixed windows on the ground level. Previous building uses include Agricultural Implements, furniture store, and a bowling alley.

41. The Zone, 117 E. Walnut Street; ca. 1892

1 Contributing building

This one-story contemporary building is clad with precast concrete and contains a recessed entry. Storefront display windows sit upon concrete masonry units and are separated by a masonry veneer accent wall. Metal coping runs along the parapet. Renovations- The building has received a modern precast concrete panel façade circa 1960, with updated fixed pane windows. In-between the windows is a more recent stone veneer. Previous building uses include a law office, Watseka Republican Printing, and Peoples Coal & Lumber Co.

42. Edward's Hair Salon, 127 E. Walnut Street; ca. 1885

1 Contributing building

This one-story commercial style brick building has a recessed storefront entrance. The bulkhead beneath the sill is of a stone veneer finish, with a soldier belt course above the lintels. Above the signage is a precast string course running along the façade, with some rough-cut limestone strips on the parapet wall above. The precast coping of the parapet wall matches the building west of it. Renovations- The building has received a more recent storefront system, hosted on top of a modern stone veneer bulkhead. The soffit above the recessed entrance appears to be a more recently development as well. Previous building uses include a hair salon, millinery, and a boots & shoes shop.

43. 129 E. Walnut Street; ca. 1900

1 Contributing building

This two-story running bond brick building displays elements of the Italianate and Queen Anne Revival style. It has a shared, recessed storefront entrance flanked on each side by fixed windows. The ground level is composed of painted wood siding, with wood bulkheads to match. A steel beam acts as the course between the ground level and second story. The outer windows on the second story are single hung with smooth limestone sills and lintels. Two separate bay windows supported by brackets protrude from the second story, with ornate bulkheads and lintels. The bay covers have their own ornate cornices and dentils. The parapet is comprised of dentils, corbels, and a cornice with the egg and dart motif running along its span. Renovations- The bay windows have been updated with ornate bulkheads and transoms. The brick façade on the

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois, Illinois

County and State

second level appears to be supported by a new steel beam, painted to match. All fenestrations have been updated. On the second level, the cornice has been painted and touched up to match the bay windows. Previous building uses include a millinery, restaurant, hardware & storage, offices, and the Republican Hand Printing.

44. 131 E. Walnut Street; ca. 1885

1 Contributing building

This two-story building contains storefront windows with a recessed entrance. The ground level is comprised of brick and maintains a 19th century storefront proportion. The original brickwork accentuates the windows with an arch over painted glass reminiscent of the Victorian Era of the mid 19th century. The original decorative cornice has been removed. The building appears to have received an updated storefront system with partially updated windows on the second level. Previous building uses include an Ace Furniture store, bakery, millinery, post office, and chocolate shop with apartments above. The historic integrity of the original façade needs repair but is overall intact and maintained.

45. Lamplighter Building, 135 E. Walnut St; ca. 1884

1 Contributing building

This two-story brick building contains elements of the Italianate Style and the Commercial Style. It is clad with painted, running bond brick and contains an angled corner entrance. The ornate, arched door lintel matches the arched window hoods on the second story. On the second story, above the corner door is a wrought iron Juliet balcony. Dentils line the parapet and the brick cornice. Renovations- The building appears to have received modern windows on the ground and second level. The original brick façade has been painted, and the ornate dentils, and window hoods have been restored. Metal batten seam siding and metal coping have been added on the parapet wall above the cornice. Previous building uses include the Iroquois County Times (1884), millinery, offices, furnishing, post office, stationary, grocery store, restaurant, warehouse, and the Ellenwalt Hotel (1930's).

46. Illiana Lock Service, 106 S. Fourth St; ca. 1892

1 Contributing building

This two-story 19th century revival style brick building has a recessed entrance, containing a door with sidelights on both sides and a transom above. The first and second story are comprised of different brick colors. Fenestrations on the second story include two sets of single hung windows. Renovations- The building appears to have received updated single hung windows on the second level, and modern entrances with sidelights on the ground level. A steel beam supports the second level brick façade, while the ground level appears to have received new brickwork. Previous building uses include a real estate office, bakery, tailor, and the Gaines Insurance Agency.

47. 203 E. Walnut Street; ca. 1925

1 Contributing building

This two-story 19th century revival brick building contains multi-unit commercial spaces on the ground level and apartments above. The façade consists of typically proportioned 19th century storefront openings with prism glass transoms above dividing the façade. A limestone string course lies just above the transoms. Second story fenestrations have smooth limestone lintels and sills. Framing the space between the second story and parapet wall is a more elaborate limestone string course. The parapet coping is limestone and hosts block ornamentation. Renovations- Beneath the existing glass masonry blocks appears to be more recent storefront systems. The second story single hung windows have been updated, and the parapet wall has

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois, Illinois

County and State

received metal coping. Previous building uses include Peter's Book Store, department store, offices, and the Times Newspaper Printing.

48. 209 E. Walnut Street; ca. 1905

1 Non-contributing building

This contemporary, two-story storefront with a recessed entry is comprised of a stone veneer finish on the ground level, and metal batten seam siding on the second story. Shallow, shake shingle awnings cover the fenestrations on both levels. The storefront windows sit on a limestone sill. Renovations- The ground level has received a modern stone veneer while the second level is clad with metal, batten seam siding over the original façade circa 1950-1970. Former building uses include a tailor, restaurant, and tavern with an apartment above. Due to the nature of the renovations, this building was deemed non-contributing.

49. Union Depot, 121 S. Second Street; ca. 1906

1 Contributing building

This two-story building is clad in running bond brick and exhibits the Tudor Revival style. Limestone belts wrap the buildings base and at sill level. A hip roof rises above the intersection of two gables and reintroduces their lineation in its dormers. Beneath the dormers are stucco and half- timber framed walls above fixed pane windows. Renovations- The entire building has been moved from its original location. The original design had been preserved, while the existing windows were replaced with more modern fixed windows. A new roof has been added, and the existing woodwork has been restored and painted as well. This building is currently under the National Register #99001595.

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois, Illinois

County and State

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.

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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Transportation

Architecture

Period of Significance

1884-1974

Significant Dates

1906

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation (if applicable)

Architect/Builder

Louis Skidmore

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois, Illinois

County and State

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations).

The Watseka Downtown Historic District, located in the city of Watseka, Iroquois County, Illinois is significant under Criterion A in the area of transportation and Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The period of significance for the Watseka Downtown Historic District is encapsulated from 1906 to 1974.

Using its influence as the county seat of Iroquois County, Watseka attracted the development of rail lines to what is now the downtown commercial district of the city. This resulted in population growth and the development of infrastructure and industry in the early 20th century. This era saw the construction of many prominent buildings such as hotels, banks, department stores and two local theaters in the heart of the city.

Architectural styles prevalent in downtown Watseka align with the national architectural movements of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, illustrating how local design preferences were influenced by broader trends. The majority of the structures are brick, limestone, and stucco. The district is a mix of Italianate and Art Modern style, but also includes examples of Tudor Revival, Romanesque Revival, and Art Deco. Common elements include segmented arched windows, decorative cornices, and ornamental brick facades.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The period of significance for the Watseka Downtown Historic District stretches from 1906 to 1974 bookended by the opening and closing of the Watseka Union Depot constructed by the TP & W and C & EI railroads. The depot on the western edge of downtown Watseka marks a significant milestone of economic growth and development for the city and serves as an artifact of the golden age of the railroad.

Early History

Incorporated in 1865, the name "Watseska" derives from the Potawatomi name "Watch-e-kee", meaning, "Daughter of the Evening Star" after daughter of a Potawatomi chief and wife of early eastern Illinois settler Gordon Saltonstall Hubbard. Prior to incorporation in the early part of the 19th century Hubbard is credited with helping to establish "Hubbard's Trail". The trail was a significant route for settlers and traders moving through the Illinois territory and contributed to the development of the area, including the founding of Watseka.

Areas of Significance: Criterion A

Established in the late 19th century, The Watseka Downtown Historic District emerged as a bustling hub of commerce and industry, reflecting the prosperity and growth of the region during a period of rapid development. Key landmarks, including historic storefronts and public buildings, showcase the architectural styles and urban planning of the era, offering a tangible connection to the past. The district has been central to Watseka's identity, serving as the heart of local trade, culture, and social interaction.

Transportation

The Illinois Central Railroad, designed to create a north-south transportation corridor to connect Chicago to New Orleans began construction in 1851. In 1855 the railroad arrived in Watseka and significantly boosted development, enhancing transportation and economic growth. The railroad did not directly connect to Watseka when it first arrived to the local area but served the town through a branch line. Shortly after the arrival of the Illinois Central Railroad, Watseka was officially incorporated as a village in 1865. After establishing itself as the county seat, further development of rail lines continued including the introduction of the Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad in the 1870s and the Louisville, Evansville and St. Louis Railroad in the 1880s. The Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad ran in an east-west direction, linking Chicago with southeastern destinations in Indiana and Kentucky. This established Watseka at an intersection of commerce and trade preempting an era

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois, Illinois

County and State

of population and economic growth for the district. In 1915, it was announced that the Illinois 1 (Dixie Highway), previously established as Hubbard's Trail, would run through Watseka. Watseka residents made the decision to pave concrete sidewalks along Walnut Street in 1919 to better facilitate the heavy pedestrian traffic. By 1924, the new highway brought so much vehicular traffic through the business district on Walnut Street that the city's first stoplights were introduced on the intersections of 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th streets.

The Iroquois Hotel, originally called the Iroquois House, built in 1888, demolished in the mid 20th century, served as a convenient location adjacent to the C & EI tracks and the Watseka Union Depot. The Watseka Union Depot was built in 1906 just south of the hotel. The depot features a smaller Lady's waiting room in addition to the main waiting room. This smaller room was intended for women travelling alone and was a deviation from the typical depots constructed at the time. The design of this depot is a direct result of the Watseka Women's Club advocating for the exclusive space. The depot is listed in the National Register as a historic place worthy of preservation.

The synergistic operation of the depot and the hotel on the western edge of the Watseka Downtown Historic District played a major role in its initial growth. Operating as a transportation hub for passengers and goods alike and providing connection to the outlying areas. Much of the exchange with the greater region was facilitated through these two buildings contributing to the success of the district.

Areas of Significance: Criterion B

Architecture

Architectural styles prevalent in Watseka's downtown, including Romanesque Revival and Art Deco, align with the national architectural movements of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, illustrating how local design preferences were influenced by broader trends. Apart from a few key buildings, the building architects are unknown. The district contains one resource previously listed on the National Register. While many of the buildings in the district lack the distinguishing factors necessary to be individually listed, their integrity remains intact, contributing to the district, representing the evolution of the city of Watseka as a quintessential resilient Midwestern community main street scape.

Historical Styles and Building Types

The architecture of the Watseka Downtown Historic District falls generally within three eras of building and development: Late Victorian Italianate and Romanesque Revival, Early 20th Century Commercial Style, and Art Modern and Art Deco Style. With the exception of a few key buildings, the building architects are unknown. Buildings in the proposed district are primarily comprised of these architectural styles and exhibit the spirit of Watseka's unique history.

1865-1900

The Late Victorian traditional row buildings clustered along East and West Walnut Street mostly date back to the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century. The buildings primarily exhibit Italianate features popular on commercial buildings prior to the turn of the century. Prominent features of these buildings include heights of 2 to 3 stories with low-pitched roofs, large, decorative brackets under ornamental cornices, and tall, narrow windows that are arched above (Neighborhood Watch Program #5 and Head Quarters Beauty Studio #22). The contributing resources retain these elements and collectively retain a high degree of integrity and architectural detail. In addition to commercial Italianate architecture, resources from this period include buildings in the Queen Anne style (Center Street Productions #23 and 129 E. Walnut Street #45) and Romanesque Revival style (132 E. Walnut Street #11).

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois, Illinois

County and State

In 1884, the Stephen's Brother's Opera House was constructed in the Italianate style. The building still maintains its style on its exterior, but the integrity is questionable. The exterior still hosts the original Stephens Brothers' Opera House pediment above its highly decorated parapet. The double-story windows are covered by their original ornate window hoods. The ground floor, however, has been modified to operate more as a commercial storefront rather than a performance center. The town is making efforts to restore its integrity and put the building back into use, where it can continue to contribute to the city's culture and the Walnut Street cityscape.

1900-1930

The second major building period within the district was from 1900-1930. These years saw construction of one- and two-story buildings of the commercial style that exhibit running brick façade patterns and simple architectural styling (100F Building #7 and LaCroix Garage #33). Most of these buildings are vernacular architecture that rose out of necessity during the WWI and WWII eras when manufacturing was on the rise. The buildings representing this style in the proposed district have mostly kept their integrity intact and have seen little renovations due to the low-maintenance nature of their design and style.

In this time, the Union Depot was constructed as the intersection of the east-west running TW&P rail line and the north-south running C&EI Rail line. The depot is of the Tudor Revival style and is comprised of brick and stucco with a timber-trussed roof. The north and west facades are virtually identical, providing passengers with the same striking elevation. On the north and west, double pitched roofs overhang and provide shelter for passengers. Below the gables are sets of ribboned windows. These ribboned windows, along with the extended eave lines and stone sill courses, continue the horizontal theme throughout the design of the exterior of the building. The south and east elevations are comprised of brick and are basically unornamented.

1930-1974

The third major period of development in the downtown area was from 1930 to 1973, the 50- year cut off for the period of significance. Resources built in this time range from examples of early Art Deco (Watsaka Theatre #6 and the Railroad Theatre #35) to Post-War Modernist and Art Modern buildings with large massing (Compass Insurance #39 and the post office #41) as well as some Googie influence (#38 Smith's Office Products). Buildings from this time have kept their integrity intact and have undergone little if no renovations to their exterior appearance due to lack of necessity.

The district contains a few resources with excellent integrity and worth note, including the Watseka Theater built in 1930 and designed by the prominent architect Louis Skidmore of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. Skidmore's design for the theater was influenced by the Art Deco style which was popular during that period. It is believed to be the only theater that Skidmore designed. The theater portrays the golden age of entertainment in Watseka with its original black marble ticket booth and neon marquee. The lobby still maintains its original terrazzo floors, floor-to-ceiling columns, brass and frosted glass chandeliers with matching wall sconces, and original houndstooth crown molding.

The contributing resources within the district were constructed between 1884 and 1974 and represent methods of construction typical of the period. Ornamentation and architectural style are representative of the architectural preferences of the eras in which they were constructed. The buildings convey the commercial nature of the core downtown district, and their past and current uses demonstrate the variety of enterprises the residents were engaged in.

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois, Illinois

County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

1. Longstreth, R. W. (2000). *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture*. Rowman & Littlefield.
2. Beckwith, H. W. (2018). *History of Iroquois County: Together With Historic Notes on the Northwest, Gleaned From Early Authors, Old Maps and Manuscripts, Private and Official Correspondence, and Other Authentic, Though, for the Most Part, Out-of-the-Way Sources (Classic Reprint)*. Forgotten Books.
Boland, Beth. Watseka Union Depot, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, November 22, 1999.
3. Ginkgo Planning & Design Inc. (Orland Park, Illinois). 2014 Comprehensive Plan: The First Comprehensive Plan for Watseka. Watseka, Illinois. :Ginkgo Planning & Design, 2014.
4. Illinois. Iroquois County. Property Record Commercial – Industrial, 1865 -present. Iroquois Circuit Court Clerks, City of Watseka
5. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Watseka, Iroquois County, Illinois. Sanborn Map Company, Sep, 1885. Map. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <www.loc.gov/item/sanborn02214_001/>.
6. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Watseka, Iroquois County, Illinois. Sanborn Map Company, Nov, 1892. Map. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <www.loc.gov/item/sanborn02214_001/>.
Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Watseka, Iroquois County, Illinois. Sanborn Map Company, Dec, 1897. Map. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <www.loc.gov/item/sanborn02214_001/>.
7. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Watseka, Iroquois County, Illinois. Sanborn Map Company, Oct, 1905. Map. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <www.loc.gov/item/sanborn02214_001/>.
8. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Watseka, Iroquois County, Illinois. Sanborn Map Company, July, 1911. Map. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <www.loc.gov/item/sanborn02214_001/>.
9. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Watseka, Iroquois County, Illinois. Sanborn Map Company, May, 1924. Map. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/item/sanborn02214_001/
10. Smith, Frank W. "The Stephens/Braden Brothers Opera House In Watseka, Illinois." Watseka, IL, 1973.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

_____ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been

Primary location of additional data:

_____ State Historic Preservation Office

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois ,Illinois

County and State

☐ 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 # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☒ Local government
☐ University
☒ Other

Name of repository: Watseka Historic Society

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois, Illinois

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 16.7 Acres

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage; enter "Less than one" if the acreage is .99 or less)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84:

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1	<u>40.777096</u>	<u>-87.737049</u>	3	<u>40.774245</u>	<u>-87.729306</u>
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude
2	<u>40.777104</u>	<u>-87.729297</u>	4	<u>40.774144</u>	<u>-87.736936</u>
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Downtown Watseka Historic District represents the central business district of the city of Watseka and is roughly bound by First street on the West, Oak Street on the North, Fifth street on the East, and the Union Pacific Railroad on the South.

Commencing at a point on W. Oak Street west of the N. 2nd street and W. Oak Street, go east along W. Oak Street until reaching the intersection of N. 2nd street and W. Oak Street. From here, go south to the alley between W. Oak and W. Walnut. Follow the alley east to N. 5th Street. From here, head south until reaching E. Walnut Street, head west. Near the midpoint between 5th and 4th street go south to the Union Pacific Railroad. Follow the Union Pacific Railroad west until reaching the alley running north to south between S. 2nd and S. 3rd street (after inventoried building #38), then go north to W. Walnut Street. On W. Walnut, go west until reaching S. 2nd Street, then go south until reaching the intersection of W cherry Street and S. 2nd Street. From here, go west on W. Cherry Street just past the Watseka Union Depot (inventoried building #49), then go north until reaching the starting point just west of the intersection of W. Oak Street and N. 2nd Street (near inventoried building #1).

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries of the district were drawn to include the largest concentration of contiguous contributing buildings in the city's historic commercial center, largely concentrated on Walnut Street between First and Fifth Streets. Commerce flourished in this area due to adjacency to the Union Pacific Railroad running East to West directly south of W. Walnut Street. Oak street acts as the northern boundary of the district, loosely separating the commercial district south of the road from residential areas north of it.

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois ,Illinois

County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jacob Carlile – Principal date March 31, 2025
organization Carlile Architects LLC telephone 815-401-0526
street & number 5 South Main Street email jcarlile@carlile-group.com
city or town Manteno state Illinois zip code 60950

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **GIS Location Map (Google Earth or BING)**
- **Local Location Map**
- **Site Plan**
- **Floor Plans (As Applicable)**
- **Photo Location Map** (Include for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map and insert immediately after the photo log and before the list of figures)

Property name: Watseka Downtown Historic District
Illinois, County: Iroquois

List of Figures

(Resize, compact, and paste images of maps and historic documents in this section. Place captions, with figure numbers above each image. Orient maps so that north is at the top of the page, all document should be inserted with the top toward the top of the page.

1. Map – Google Earth



Proposed Watseka Historic District Boundary Coordinates		
Place Marker	N Coordinates	W Coordinates
A	40.7770077 N	87.736371 W
B	40.7766486 N	87.736371 W
C	40.7766486 N	87.7311712 W
D	40.7763831 N	87.7311712 W
E	40.7763831 N	87.7321899 W
F	40.7758459 N	87.7321899 W
G	40.7758459 N	87.7356287 W
H	40.7761819 N	87.7356287 W
J	40.7761819 N	87.7363823 W
K	40.7751717 N	87.7363823 W
L	40.7751717 N	87.7371703 W
M	40.7770077 N	87.7371703 W

Property name: Watseka Downtown Historic District
Illinois, County: Iroquois

2. Map – Resource Key



Property name: Watseka Downtown Historic District
Illinois, County: Iroquois

3. Map – Historic District indicating contributing versus non-contributing, previously registered resources, green spaces and parking lots.



Property name: Watseka Downtown Historic District
Illinois, County: Iroquois

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 pixels, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property:

City of Watseka

City or Vicinity:

Witseka

County:

Iroquois

State:

Illinois

Photographer:

Carlile Group

Date Photographed:

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois County

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 11 Page

Photo Log

1. View of Celebrations (#1) on the north side of the 200 block on W Oak Street. View facing south.
2. View of 105 N 2nd Street (#2) and 107 N 2nd Street (#2) on the east side of the 100 block on N 2nd Street.
3. View of Neighborhood Watch Program (#3) on the south side of the 200 block on E Walnut Street. View facing north.
4. View of the Watseka Theater, IOOF Building, and 208-210 E. Walnut Street (#4) on the North side of the 200 block on E Walnut Street. View facing north.
5. View of McColly Rosenboom (#5) on the south side of the 100 block on E Walnut Street. View facing north.
6. View of First Trust Bank (#6) on the south side of the 100 block on E Walnut Street. View facing north.
7. View of Imperial Hairstyling (#7) on the south side of the 100 block on E Walnut Street. View facing north.
8. View of the Kunkel Building (#8) at southwest corner of N 3rd Street and E Walnut Street. View facing north.
9. View of E Walnut Street (#9) on the south side of the 100 block. Facing east.
10. View of W Walnut Street (#10) on the south side of the 200 block. Facing west.
11. View of Stephens Brothers Opera House (#11) at the southeast corner of N 3rd Street and W Walnut Street. View facing north.
12. View of Head Quarters Beauty Studio (#12) on the south side of the 100 block on W Walnut Street. View facing north.
13. View of Center Street Productions (#13) on the south side of the 100 block on W Walnut Street. View facing north.
14. View of Caporal's Jewelry (#14) on the south side of the 100 block on W Walnut Street. View facing north.
15. View of Mary's Emporium (#15) on the south side of the 100 block on W. Walnut Street. View facing north.
16. View of LaCroix Garage (#16) on the south side of the 200 block on W Walnut Street. View facing north.
17. View of the Railroad Theater (#17) on the north side of the 200 block on W Walnut Street. View facing south.
18. View of Boot Leggers Bar (#18) on the north side of the 200 block on W Walnut Street. View facing south.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois County

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 11 Page

19. View of the Eastburn Building (#19) on the north side of the 200 block on W Walnut Street. View facing south.
20. View of Compass Insurance (#20) on the east side of the 100 block on S 2nd Street. View facing west.
21. View of Smith's Office Supplies (#21) on the north side of the 100 block on W Walnut Street. View facing south.
22. View of the Post Office (#22) on the northeast corner of S 3rd Street and W Walnut Street. View facing south.
23. View of 117 E Walnut Street (#23) on the north side of the 100 block on E Walnut Street. View facing south.
24. View of 129 E Walnut Street (#24) on the north side of the 100 block on E Walnut Street. View facing south.
25. View of 131 E Walnut Street (#25) on the north side of the 100 block on E Walnut Street. Facing south.
26. View of the Lamplighter Building (#26) on the northeast corner of S 4th Street and E Walnut Street. View facing south.
27. View of Illiana Lock Service (#27) on the west side of the 100 block of S 4th Street. View facing east.
28. View of 203 E Walnut Street (#28) on the north side of the 200 block on E Walnut Street. View facing south.
29. View of E Walnut Street (#29) on the south side of the 100 block. Facing east.
30. View of the Union Depot (Already in the National Registry) (#29) on the south side of the 200 block on W Walnut Street. View facing southeast.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois County

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 11 Page

Photo 1



View of Celebrations (#1)

Photo 2



View of 105 N 2nd Street (#3)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois County

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 11 Page

Photo 3



View of Neighborhood Watch Program (#3)

Photo 4



View of Watseka Theatre, IOOF Building, and 208-210 E. Walnut Street #4)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois County

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 11 Page

Photo 5



View of McColly Rosenboom (#5)

Photo 6



View of First Trust Bank (#6)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois County

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 11 Page

Photo 7



View of Imperial Hairstyling (#7)

Photo 8



View of the Kunkel Building (#8)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois County

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 11 Page

Photo 9



View of E Walnut Street from the corner of 3rd Street looking East (#9)

Photo 10



View of W Walnut Street from the corner of 3rd Street looking West (#10)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois County

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 11 Page

Photo 11



View of Stephens Brothers Opera House (#11)

Photo 12



View of The Head Quarter Beauty Studio (#12)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois County

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 11 Page

Photo 13



View of Center Street Productions (#13)

Photo 14



View of Caporal's Jewelry (#14)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois County

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 11 Page

Photo 15



View of Mary's Emporium (#15)

Photo 16



View of LaCroix Garage (#16)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois County

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 11 Page

Photo 17



View of the Railroad Theatre (#17)

Photo 18



View of Boot Legger's Bar (#18)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois County

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 11 Page

Photo 19



View of the Eastburn Building (#19)

Photo 20



View of Compass Insurance (#20)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois County

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 11 Page

Photo 21



View of Smith's Office Supplies (#21)

Photo 22



View of the Post Office (#22)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois County

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 11 Page

Photo 23



View of 117 E. Walnut Street (#23)

Photo 24



View of 129 E. Walnut Street (#24)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois County

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 11 Page

Photo 25



View of 131 E. Walnut Street (#25)

Photo 26



View of the Lamplighter Building (#26)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois County

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 11 Page

Photo 27



View of Illiana Lock Service (#27)

Photo 28



View of 203 E. Walnut Street (#28)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Watseka Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Iroquois County

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 11 Page

Photo 29



View of 200 block of E Walnut facing east. (#29)

Photo 30



View of the Union Depot (#30)