

Fourth and Broadway Historic District
Name of Property

Crawford County, Kansas
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

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

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

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

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 5 | 0 | buildings |
| 0 | 0 | sites |
| 0 | 1 | structures |
| 0 | 0 | objects |
| 5 | 1 | Total |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

2

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/ business

COMMERCE/ professional

COMMERCE/ financial institution

COMMERCE/ specialty store

COMMERCE/ restaurant

DOMESTIC/ hotel

RECREATION AND CULTURE/ theater

SOCIAL/ meeting hall

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/ business

COMMERCE/ professional

COMMERCE/ restaurant

COMMERCE/ specialty store

DOMESTIC/ multiple dwelling

WORK IN PROGRESS/ theater

VACANT/ NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late Victorian

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals: Classical Revival

Other: Two-Part Commercial Block

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Concrete

Stone

walls: Brick

Stone, Stucco

roof: Asphalt

Metal

other: Terra Cotta

Metal

Wood

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Narrative Description

Summary

The proposed Fourth and Broadway Historic District, in downtown Pittsburg, Kansas, features an intact grouping of seven commercial buildings that were constructed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The district is located on the north edge of the intersection of Fourth Street and Broadway, which are two of the most prominent streets in downtown Pittsburg. All of the buildings in the district were built for commercial use, and all continue to serve a commercial function. The oldest building in the district was built ca. 1886, and the newest was completed in 1926. Two of the buildings—the Colonial Theatre, 409 N. Broadway, and the Besse Hotel, 121 E. Fourth St.—are individually listed in the National Register. The other five buildings are contributing resources. All are of brick construction, and they vary widely in size and level of styling. Historic functions include banking, office, retail, a longtime restaurant, a theater, and a hotel. The intersection of Fourth and Broadway is anchored by two of the largest historic office buildings in downtown Pittsburg. The Commerce Building, (401 N. Broadway) was constructed in 1908 on the west side of the street. It has red brick walls and Renaissance Revival Style architectural detailing which includes arched windows and a heavy bracketed cornice. The National Bank Building (103 E. Fourth St.) is located on the east side of the intersection. It was built in 1889 as the Opera House Block, and soon after became the longtime home of the National Bank of Pittsburg. It was built with Victorian styling, and received its current Classical Revival Style limestone façade in 1931. The remaining three contributing buildings in the district are relatively modest two-part commercial blocks which retain their original patterns of fenestration and serve to unify the Broadway streetscape. In 1957, a drive through with an elevated screen wall was built for the National Bank of Pittsburg in an open lot on the north side of the National Bank Building. This structure is the only non-contributing resource in the district. Altogether, the district includes two previously listed buildings, five contributing buildings, and one non-contributing structure. The buildings are in fair to good condition, and all are intact. Together, they reflect well over a century of commerce in downtown Pittsburg Kansas.

Elaboration

The Fourth and Broadway Historic District is located on the south edge of the historic commercial center of Pittsburg, in Crawford County, Kansas. Pittsburg is the largest municipality in Crawford County and Southeast Kansas. It is eleven miles south of Girard, Kansas, the county seat, three miles west of the Missouri border, and thirty-five miles north of the Oklahoma border. The district is located in the center of the Original Town of Pittsburg, which was platted in 1876. (See Figure 4) Broadway and Fourth Street were the widest streets in that plat, and they have been prominent thoroughfares ever since. Broadway, now also known as Business Route 69, runs north-south through the center of town. It provides access to Pittsburg State University on the south side of the city and extends north to US Highway 69, which continues approximately one hundred miles to Kansas City, Missouri. Fourth Street, which is also State Route 126, is a primary east-west route west route through Pittsburg.

The intersection of Fourth and Broadway serves as an informal gateway to the historic commercial center of Pittsburg, which is concentrated north of Fourth Street, on either side of Broadway. Most of the historic commercial buildings in the community are located along Broadway, generally between Second Street, which is south of the Fourth and Broadway District, and Tenth Street to the north. Those blocks contain groupings of intact historic commercial buildings that are separated by open lots and late twentieth century buildings. The commercial center has a traditional layout, with an orthogonal grid of streets that aligns to the points of the compass. Historic commercial buildings in the area are set close together, usually close to the sidewalk with adjoining side walls.

The principal buildings in the Fourth and Broadway Historic District, which are among the largest in the entire commercial center, line the north side of Fourth Street. The four-story Commerce Building, the three-story Opera House and the twelve-story Hotel Besse were all designed to take advantage of the prominent intersection. Each of the buildings has two primary elevations—one facing the cross street and another long sidewall which overlooks Fourth Street. The remaining buildings in the Fourth and Broadway Historic District are located to the north, facing Broadway. All of the buildings are of masonry construction, and all were built for a commercial function. Most have traditional commercial

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building forms, with flat roofs, rectangular footprints and one or more storefronts on the ground floor. The exception is the large Hotel Besse, which has complex massing and rises more than twelve stories above Fourth Street.

Architectural styling in the historic district varies widely. Several of the buildings are simple vernacular two-part commercial blocks with minimal architectural embellishment, and others are among the largest and most carefully detailed historic buildings in downtown Pittsburg. Three of the buildings facing Broadway date from the late Victorian period and are recognizable to this period with their massing and some remaining ornamentation such as decorative brickwork on the façades and along the cornices. The Hotel Besse has ziggurat massing and ornamentation popular to the mid-1920s, and the Colonial Fox Theatre (407-409 N. Broadway) has an unusual combination of Italian Renaissance Revival and Arts and Crafts styling. The Commerce Building (401 N. Broadway) features finely rendered Classical Revival and Renaissance Revival detailing, and the west wall of the National Bank Building, which was remodeled to its current style in 1931(103 E. Fourth), is a good late example of the Classical Revival style.

Construction materials are more uniform than styling. All of the buildings in the district have brick walls, and many have stone and/or glazed terra cotta detailing. Several also have pressed metal cornices. The National Bank building has polished granite pilasters at the ground floor and smooth limestone cladding on the Broadway facade. The Commerce building utilizes limestone wall cladding, terra cotta that is glazed to look like stone, and a pressed metal cornice which also imitates stone. Terra cotta is also used for accents on the Colonial Fox and the Besse Hotel, both of which have oversized recessed arches that are trimmed with terra cotta. Round arches are a common theme; the elaborate Fourth Street entrance to the Commerce Building features an oversized arched window, and both the Commerce and the National Bank buildings have some round-arched windows on upper floors.

Alterations and Current Conditions

The majority of the buildings within the district are intact and continue to serve commercial functions. All of the contributing buildings retain commercial patterns of form and use, with open storefronts on the lower floors and offices or residences on upper floors. Although many of the storefronts have seen alterations over the years, most retain an open configuration, and there are also a number of notably intact historic display windows and transoms. Intact early storefronts include those on the west wall of the National Bank Building, which appear to date to 1931, and a row of four storefronts on the 1908 Commerce building that are early or original. Upper facades are also largely intact, with early or original wall materials and patterns of fenestration, and a significant array of original architectural ornament. Several masonry walls have been painted, and some secondary elevations have been stuccoed, but those changes have had a minimal impact. The Commerce building has most of its historic window sashes; most other masonry window openings are intact, albeit filled with newer sashes. It is also worth noting that most of the buildings in the district also retain at least some original interior features, including the many office spaces in the Commerce and the National Bank buildings. As a group, the resources of the district are immediately recognizable to their period of significance and they clearly reflect the area's long tenure as a commercial center.

Individual Property Descriptions

The historic names below are based upon first known commercial occupants. Dates in parentheses indicate first known date of occupancy for that business, if they differ from construction dates. [c]= contributing resource, [nc] = non-contributing resource. Resources are buildings unless otherwise noted.

1. Commerce Building: 401 N. Broadway, 1908. Renamed the Professional Building in 1951. [c] Photos 1, 4, 5, 15-17. KHRI#: 037-4460-00019

This four-story, Classical Revival style two-part vertical block has brick walls and a flat roof with a parapet. It occupies all of a rectangular lot at the northwest corner of Fourth and Broadway. It has two primary elevations; the narrow front wall faces east to Broadway, and the long south side wall faces West Fourth Street. Both of those walls are of dark red brick, and filled with symmetrically arranged windows, many of which have early or original wood sashes. Those two walls have matching architectural detailing which includes stone, and terra cotta and pressed metal that are finished to look like stone. The roof is edged with a wide frieze and an overhanging cornice. The cornice has scrolled brackets, and the frieze below it is edged with a row of dentils and a band of egg and dart molding. All of those components are of metal that is

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painted the color of limestone. Three smaller cornices run along the tops of the fourth, third and first floors. Additionally, most of the upper floor windows have sill bands that are ornamented with an egg and dart motif, as well as flared keystones and jack arches. The fourth floor cornice has a simple molded top over a flat band which integrates the jack arches of the fourth floor windows into a single horizontal strip. The fourth floor windows all have scrolled consoles in lieu of central keystones. The third floor cornice is accented with a narrow band of dentils, and the cornice at the first floor has shallow scrolled brackets above a row of dentils and a narrow band of egg and dart molding. All of that ornament is of pale glazed terra cotta.

The front wall, which faces Broadway, has a wide, slightly recessed center bay, and the side wall, which faces West Fourth, has a projecting entrance bay that is located off-center, near the west end of the building. The edges of the bays and the corners of the building are all accented with rusticated brick piers. The top floor of the front center bay has large round-arched windows that are topped with wide interconnected terra cotta bands which match the fourth floor cornice. The side south entrance bay is more elaborately ornamented, with a projecting gabled pediment at the cornice line that is bracketed to match the upper cornice. The words COMMERCE BUILDING are spelled out in raised letters on the upper frieze band below the pediment. (Photo 17) The lower two floors of the side entrance bay are faced with elaborate ornamentation which appears to be a mix of limestone and terra cotta. That ornament includes flat stone pilasters, a dentiled cornice, and terra cotta bas-relief panels. There is a wide doorway at the first floor and an oversized arched window at the second floor. The doorway contains newer doors and framing, as well as a ca. 1950s sign which reads PROFESSIONAL BUILDING. The second floor window and framing all appear to date to 1908.

The first floor of the south wall contains four small shop spaces located near the entrance bay, all of which appear to be historic. Each has an off-center recessed entrance, with wide display windows above short stone bulkheads. Two have transoms filled with prism glass tiles. The other two transoms are covered by flat modern signs. The east end of the south wall, which is sheathed with flat limestone panels, also had open storefronts when the building was new; those were infilled with stone panels and glass block before 1945.¹ (Figure 8) The first floor of the east wall, facing Broadway, is filled with open display windows which appear to date to the 1960s, and the bulkheads and flanking walls are sheathed with newer stucco and brick. A large yellow sign which advertises Crowell Rexall Drug and Country Kitchen runs along the top of the storefront on this building and onto the first floor of the small building to its north, at 405 N. Broadway. The sign has been there since 1962.² The interior of the first floor is open, with largely modern finishes, and the highly intact upper floors are filled with early or original office suites. The upper floors retain a large amount of original finishes, including extensive millwork and a large formal staircase that is located near the south entrance bay.

2. Baxter Building: 405 N. Broadway, ca. 1903. [c] Photos 4, 5, 6. KHRI#: 037-344

This modest two-story two-part commercial block, which is the smallest building in the district, has a flat roof with a parapet and red brick walls that bear traces of white paint. (Historic photos show it had light colored paint from the 1940s at least into the 1960s.)³ (Figures 8 and 9) The building faces east to N. Broadway and is flanked by larger commercial buildings. The upper facade has four large single masonry window openings and is ornamented with decorative brickwork with limestone accents. The wall is topped with rock-faced limestone coping and edged with simple brick and stone piers. Three wide bands of brick corbeling run just below the coping, above a pair of large panels of textured brickwork. The tall, close-set masonry window openings have rock-faced stone sills and lintels which merge together to form continuous bands of textured stonework. The masonry openings are fully intact, and filled with newer windows.

¹ "Fourth & Broadway Looking North," Postcard 1945," In *Pittsburg Scenes – Streets*, accessed Mar. 16, 2016, www.pittsburgskmemories.com.

² *Vonnie Corsini History Collection*. A 1962 image of Colonial Fox Theatre shows the Crowell Drug and Country Kitchen sign that is currently still in place; *Pittsburg City Directory*, 1961, 50. Crowell Drug Co. is listed at 401-403 N. Broadway and the Goodyear Tire Store is listed at 405 N. Broadway; *Pittsburg City Directory*, 1962, 23. A half page advertisement in the 1962 City Directory lists the address of Crowell's Drug Co. at 401-405 N. Broadway.

³ "Fourth & Broadway Looking North," Postcard 1945," accessed Mar. 16, 2016, www.pittsburgskmemories.com; "Fourth & Broadway Looking North," Photo 1966, accessed Mar. 16, 2016, pittsburgskmemories.com.

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The lower facade has an open storefront that is surrounded with flat white stucco panels that appear to have been installed after 1974.⁴ A large yellow sign installed in 1962, which advertises Crowell's Drug Store and Country Kitchen, runs along the top of the storefront on this building and on the first floor of the building to its south, at 401 N. Broadway. The interior of the first floor is open, with all modern finishes, and the second floor contains early or original offices that are largely intact and currently used for storage by Crowell's Drug Store.

3. Hotel (1892): 408-410 N. Broadway, ca. 1886. [c] Photos 2, 3, 9, 10. KHRI#: 037-346

This three-story building is a wide two-part commercial block with painted brick walls and a flat roof. It faces west to N. Broadway. The front half of the building, closest to N. Broadway, has three stories and an almost square footprint. The rear half of the building has two single-story sections, one at 408 and one at 410. The long rectangular additions extend the building to the back alley. The north wall abuts the two-story building at 412 N. Broadway, and there is an open lot to the south that was used as a drive-through. The upper façade is edged with simple brick piers and filled with symmetrically arranged windows that have wide stone sills. The tall narrow masonry window openings are all intact; they have flat wood infill at the head and 1/1 wood sashes that may have been installed sometime after 1966.⁵ The upper facade has a band of smooth wood or metal panels that have been painted a darker color to match the window trim. The panels are at the roof line, and cover area that, according to historic photographs, originally featured a bracketed cornice in that location.⁶ Historic photos show that the cornice was removed between 1966 to 1972. (Figures 8 and 9 and Photos 1-3 and 7-10) A simple stepped band of brick runs along the top of the front wall, below the flat panels.

The lower facade has largely modern materials, but retains its original patterns of fenestration, with two large open storefronts and a central doorway. Both storefronts are slightly recessed, with centered front doors and newer metal-framed display windows. The north commercial space has a wide ornamental tile mosaic threshold believed to have been installed around 1912.⁷ A newer, shallow awning that is finished with brown asphalt shingles spans the first floor of the façade, above the storefronts. The central front door opens to a wide staircase which leads to the upper floors. The central staircase and the north half of each upper floor is highly intact, with early or original room layouts, and finishes which includes extensive Late Victorian style millwork. The south part of the upper floors are filled with newer apartments.

4. Colonial Fox Theatre: 409 N. Broadway, ca. 1919.⁸ National Register listed. Photos 1, 5, 6, 7. KHRI#: 037-4460-00078.

Built as a theater in 1919-20, this large rectangular brick building occupies its entire lot from the front side walk to the alley in the rear; it faces east to North Broadway. It is two and one-half stories, with a taller section at the west end of the building which houses the stage; the height of the stage section is comparable to the four-story commercial building to the south. It has a dark brown brick façade, and windowless side walls. The north side wall, which overlooks a vacant lot, is stuccoed. The brick south wall adjoins the neighboring two-story commercial building. The roof slopes to the west, behind stepped side parapets. The façade has storefronts which flank a centered large arched entryway on the first floor, and decorative brick panels and historic masonry window openings on the second floor. All of the openings, decorative panels, and the perimeter of the façade, are outlined with decorative pale glazed terra cotta. A wide band of terra cotta divides the first and second floors, while thinner tiles outline early or original transoms and the display windows of the south storefront. The north storefront, and one bay of the south, have been infilled with yellow brick and newer window and door openings.

At the second floor, two square decorative brick panels flank the upper part of the arch, which is topped by a terra cotta name plate which reads "Colonial". Above the brick panels are three sets of paired masonry window openings with smooth stone sills. Two of the openings have newer replacement sashes and the remaining four are bricked in. At the

⁴ *Vonnie Corsini History Collection*. Photo ca. 1972, Crowell Drug Co.

⁵ "Fourth & Broadway Looking North," Photo 1966, www.pittsburgsmemories.com; Kansas Historic Resource Inventory #037-346, Accessed Mar. 7, 2016, <http://kshs.org/khri>.

⁶ "Fourth & Broadway Looking North," Postcard 1945," www.pittsburgsmemories.com; "Fourth & Broadway Looking North," Photo 1966, www.pittsburgsmemories.com.

⁷ A tile installation project at this location was mentioned in Ella Buzzard, "Pittsburg Will Have Pottery," *Pittsburg Daily Headlight*, Oct. 12 1912, "Pittsburg Pottery" Binder, Crawford County Genealogical Society.

⁸ For additional information on the Colonial Fox Theatre refer to John P. Rhodes, "Colonial Fox Theatre" *National Register of Historic Places*. National Park Service, March 5, 2008, accessed 14 Jan. 2016, <http://npgallery.nps.gov/pdfhost/docs/nrhp/text/08000301.pdf>.

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roofline is a terra cotta cornice that is supported by shallow scrolled brackets. The theater, which is undergoing rehabilitation, retains its early floorplan and a good deal of early interior finishes, including the theater seats, the stage and proscenium and decorative plasterwork.

5. Furniture Store (1897): 412 N. Broadway, ca. 1896. Harry's Café since ca. 1940. [c] Photos 3, 7, 8, 9, 10. KHRI: 037-345.

This two-story two-part commercial block has painted brick walls and a flat roof with a stepped parapet. It faces west to N. Broadway. It shares a wall with 408-410 N. Broadway to the south, and abuts a separate single-story modern brick wall that belongs to a late 1970s building located to the north. The upper facade features elaborate brick and stone masonry. Corbeled brick piers divide the upper facade into four bays, and the center bays contain tall narrow masonry window openings. The openings are filled with non-historic units. The piers continue above the roofline and are topped with double bands of rock-faced brick. Brick panels between each pier form the parapet and each section is topped with rock-faced stone bands. Similar stone bands also run across the facade at the base of the parapet and at the sill line of the second floor windows. Ornamental brickwork includes corbeling near the top of the wall, as well as a textured band of brickwork formed by dogtooth coursing. The masonry window openings and frames are historic, and the window sashes are modern. Faint marks in the masonry indicate that there were originally two other window openings in that wall, but historic photos show they were infilled and the upper facade was painted more than fifty years ago.⁹

The lower facade contains relatively small display windows that are flanked by single doors and surrounded by modern red brick. The northern door accesses a stair to the second floor and the south door is the entrance to the café that has occupied the ground floor since before 1940. That doorway is topped by an enameled metal and neon, character-defining marquee sign that reads "Harry's Café". The sign has been in place since at least 1966.¹⁰ The top part of the ground floor is covered with flat painted panels, and a newer sloped canvas awning shelters the lower facade. The dining room of the restaurant, which occupies the front of the ground floor, retains its original open configuration, as well as some millwork which appears to date to the 1940s or early 1950s.

6. National Bank Building (Opera House Block, 1889-1904): 105 E. Fourth St., 1889, new façade 1931. [c] Building, [nc] Structure. Photos 1, 2, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14. KHRI#: 037-317

This is a three-story, two-part commercial block with brick and stone walls. It was built as an opera house and office building in 1889, converted to a mixed-use office building in 1904, and remodeled to its current form in 1931. That remodel created a new central west side entry, which replaced the earlier corner entry. It occupies all of a rectangular lot at the northeast corner of Fourth and Broadway, and has two highly ornamented elevations. The narrow front wall faces west to Broadway, and the long south wall faces south to East Fourth Street. The west part of the building, which has always been used for offices and retail, has a flat roof. The east section, which originally contained the opera hall, has a low hipped roof.

The east end of the building retains a good deal of late nineteenth century detailing. A wide pressed metal cornice runs along most of the upper south wall and wraps around to the east and north walls. The brick east wall overlooks a narrow alley, and the north wall, which is stuccoed, overlooks a narrow paved lot. The south wall is topped by a large pediment that is constructed of the same type of pressed metal as the cornice. It projects out from the cornice line twelve to eighteen inches, with small brackets along its lower edge. (See Photo 12) The pediment is centered above a five tall shopfronts which fill the west end of the first floor. The storefront openings are all intact. They are topped by a long I-beam, and the individual bays are separated by ornamental cast iron piers. Each storefront bay contains a transom and display windows, and all but one has its own doorway. All or most of the storefront materials are modern. A wide formal entranceway which accesses an interior elevator and stair hall is located just west of the row of shopfronts. That doorway was remodeled to its current form ca. 1931; it is sheltered by a newer flat canopy. The upper walls of the south wall are lined with evenly spaced single masonry window openings. The third floor windows have round-arched tops, and those on the second floor have flat tops with tall splayed brick jack arches. Recessed spandrel panels below the third floor windows are ornamented with textured infill that appears to be made of terra cotta.

⁹ "Fourth & Broadway Looking North." Photo 1966. www.pittsburgksmemories.com.

¹⁰ "Fourth & Broadway Looking North." Photo 1966. www.pittsburgksmemories.com.

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The west elevation exhibits changes that were made to the building in 1931. It is faced with smooth limestone sheathing and detailed with Classical Revival style features. The upper facade has a heavy molded stone cornice and a tall parapet wall. A raised center section on the stone parapet has a large date-stone which reads 1931. The second and third floors are filled with evenly spaced windows that have flat tops and shaped stone surrounds. A wide flat stone inset into the wall between the second and third floors has incised lettering which reads "THE NATIONAL BANK OF PITTSBURG". (Photo 11) The first floor of the Broadway elevation has three large bays that are separated by stone pilasters and topped by a tall molded stone cornice. The end bays are filled with ca. 1930s transoms and display windows, over tall stone bulkheads. The center bay, which was an oversized doorway into the late 1950s or 1960s, has newer infill. The styling of the facade is continued onto the front bay of the south wall, which has all the same detailing as the facade. That bay contains a smaller panel between the second and third floors, which reads "BANK". All four walls of the building, including both stone and brick surfaces, have been painted off white.

Interior spaces on the first floor reflect late twentieth century uses, but the upper floors appear much as they did in the 1930s. Those floors have wide hallways that are flanked with large offices. Most of the upper floor spaces also retain early twentieth century finishes, which include extensive millwork and a formal staircase that was added ca. 1931.

On the north side of the building is a narrow open lot with a corrugated metal screen installed approximately fifteen feet above the ground, between the north wall of the National Bank Building and the south wall of the Hotel (410 N. Broadway). The lot was used as a bank drive-through from 1957 into the 1960s the screen served as a signboard and vehicle entrance is now blocked off by shrubbery planted near the sidewalk. The drive-through is a non-contributing structure.

7. Hotel Besse: 121 E. 4th St, 1926.¹¹ National Register Listed. Photos 2, 13, 14, 16. KHRI# 037-348.

Built in 1919-20 as the largest hotel in Pittsburg, this twelve-story commercial building is the tallest building in the district. It is built of reinforced concrete with brick veneer, and has ziggurat massing with setbacks that begin at the second floor and culminates with a tall narrow top story. It occupies a corner lot at the intersection of N. Locust and E. Fourth Streets. The street-facing south and west elevations are the most highly detailed. The exterior walls are faced with dark red brick, and accented with pale stone or terra cotta ornament. Light colored ornament is used to accent storefronts, entries and windows of the first two floors, as well as the parapet walls at the east, south, and west elevations. Belt courses visually divide the first and second floors and encircle the top floors of the building. The south and east walls are filled with even rows of windows, and the north and west walls have fewer masonry window openings. The window openings are all historic, and all of the window sashes are newer.

There are two formal entrances on the ground floor, one on each street-facing elevation. The south wall, which faces East Fourth Street, has a wide formal entrance that is located below an oversized arched recess that is lined with yellow brick. There is also an entry on the east wall, which faces Locust Street. It has a newer curved awning above a single doorway. The lower levels of the south and west walls are lined with open storefronts. The storefront openings are original and the infill is newer. The infill follows early designs, with low bulkheads and large display windows and transoms. A recent historically sensitive rehabilitation project converted the building to apartments, and it is in very good condition.

¹¹ For additional information on the Hotel Besse refer to Elizabeth Rosin and Rachel Nugent, "Besse Hotel," *National Register of Historic Places*. National Park Service, 2008.

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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

ARCHITECTURE

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

1886-1966

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Architects: Schmitt, William T., and Hawk & Parr

(Besse Hotel)

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance begins ca. 1886, with the construction of the first building in the historic district (408-410 N. Broadway), and ends in 1966, when the National Bank of Pittsburg (105 East Fourth Street) relocated to a new building outside of the Fourth and Broadway Historic District. The central business district began to see notable changes beginning in the late 1950s, and then more during the 1960s when multiple businesses began to relocate, some built additions onto existing buildings and many historic buildings were demolished to make way for new construction and large parking lots.

Criteria Considerations (justification) n/a

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Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary

The Fourth and Broadway Historic District in Pittsburg, Crawford County, Kansas is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Commerce, and Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The district is located at the prominent intersection of Fourth Street and Broadway, in the center of the original plat for the Town of Pittsburg. The streets at this intersection were the first to be graded and developed after Pittsburg was founded in 1876, and they have continuously served as the anchor for the business district that subsequently developed along Broadway. Pittsburg's growth was spurred by coal mining and zinc smelting. By the turn of the twentieth century, Crawford County was the largest coal producing area of the state, and Pittsburg was recognized as the center of the coal region.¹ Buildings in the historic district include a pair of large office buildings which were occupied by many of the prominent mining companies in Pittsburg, as well as their financiers and lawyers. The district was also home to numerous long-standing businesses that reflected the strong social and economic stature of Pittsburg in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. There are seven buildings within the district boundaries: five are contributing and two have already been listed in the National Register. Together they form one of the most intact concentrations of historic buildings in Downtown Pittsburg. The only non-contributing resource is a bank drive-through which was installed in 1957. It is a non-contributing structure. All of the buildings in the district were built for commercial use and they utilize common commercial building forms and architectural styles that were popular from the mid-1800s into the first quarter of the twentieth century. Most buildings in the district take the common form known as a two-part commercial block, and many of those have some ornament that is typical of the Late Victorian Style. Classical Revival styling became popular after the turn of the twentieth century; the Commerce Building, a three-part vertical block constructed in 1908, provides a refined example of the early Classical Revival Style. Contributing buildings include two of the largest historic bank and office buildings in the community, the Commerce Building at 401-403 N. Broadway, and the First National Bank Building, at 105 E. 4th Street. Two other buildings have already been recognized for their historic significance; the Colonial Fox Theatre and the Hotel Besse were both individually listed in the National Register in 2008. Two of the smaller buildings in the district have housed the same local businesses for decades. The Baxter Building at 405 N. Broadway has been home to Crowell's Drug Store for more than 100 years, and 412 N. Broadway has been occupied by Harry's Café since at least 1940. The period of significance for the district runs from ca. 1886, when the oldest building in the group was built, to 1966, when the National Bank of Pittsburg relocated to a new building. All of the contributing resources in the district are in fair to good condition, and all are clearly recognizable to their period of significance.

Elaboration

Following the Wealth of Natural Resources

In 1876, the town of Pittsburg, Kansas was platted within the heart of Crawford County, among coal fields that came to generate more than two thirds of the statewide coal production by the turn of the twentieth century.² It began with a population of approximately one thousand residents at incorporation in 1879 and due to mining of the coal, and industrious use of its by-product, coke, it experienced exponential growth into the new century, increasing to a population of 14,755 by 1910.³

Abundant surface coal, evident in bands along the ground and slopes in the southeastern part of Crawford County, had been collected since before the Civil War in strip pits. The coal was often turned up out of the ground with plows, collected into wagons and hauled to Girard, located about 11 miles north of Pittsburg, and to nearby Cherokee County, where it

¹ Frank W. Blackmar, ed., *Kansas: A Cyclopedia of State History, Embracing Events, Institutions, Industries, Counties, Cities, Towns, Prominent Persons, Etc.* vol. I, (Chicago: Standard Publishing Company, 1912), 377-378.

² Blackmar, vol. I, 377.

³ Blackmar vol. II, 480.

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was shipped out on trains.⁴ During this time, coal was so prevalent on the ground that settlers, and even the railroad companies who owned large tracks of land in the area, did not give much consideration to how much coal might be under the surface.⁵

Interest in underground coal deposits did not arise until developers from the lead and zinc ore refining industry came in search of an affordable source of fuel for their smelters.⁶ Rich deposits of zinc were discovered in southwest Missouri in the mid-1870s. In 1875, E.R. Moffatt and John B. Sergeant, two investors from Joplin, Missouri involved with zinc mining, traveled with Colonel Edwin E. Brown, a land surveyor from Girard, Kansas, to the current Pittsburg area to evaluate the potential of the coal fields to supply fuel for use in ore smelting. Soon after assessing the huge coal resources, the three men began to devise a plan to build a railroad that would stretch southeast from a junction with the Gulf railroad already at Girard to the zinc mines, passing through the coal fields of southeast Kansas.⁷ Moffatt and Sergeant, along with a young banker from Girard named Franklin Playter, financed the Joplin and Girard rail line and bought large tracks of land in the area from the Kansas City, Fort Scott & Gulf Railroad.⁸

In 1876, the town of Pittsburg was established with a plat that was drawn by Col. Brown, who was in charge of railroad construction at the time.⁹ By the fall of 1876, Pittsburg had one hundred residents and the rail line of the Kansas City, Fort Scott and Gulf Railroad had reached the new town.¹⁰ Within a year, coal was being extracted from both surface and underground mines and shipped to different regions of the country. Some of the largest early consumers were zinc smelting facilities, including smelters in Joplin, Missouri and LaSalle, Illinois.¹¹

The coal deposits continued to attract the interests of other businessmen involved in zinc smelting, including Robert and S. H. Lanyon of Mineral Point, Wisconsin, who moved to the city in the late 1870s. Robert Lanyon determined that it would be more efficient to process zinc ore close to the coal field instead of shipping the coal to distant smelting operations.¹² In 1878, Robert Lanyon began converting slack, a cheaply sold waste product that resulted from the blasting in the mines, into coke. The coke was then used to fuel the four zinc smelting plants he opened in Pittsburg between 1878 and 1879.¹³ Robert and S. H. Lanyon were soon joined by family members who also invested in the smelting business in Pittsburg.¹⁴ The Lanyon family went on to play a major role in the development of Pittsburgh, and they were active in financial and civic affairs there for decades. That legacy began with Robert Lanyon's successful arrangement to bring the zinc ore to the fuel, a business venture that proved to be far more profitable than moving the fuel to ore.

⁴ Blackmar, vol. I, 377.

⁵ Blackmar, vol. I, 377.

⁶ Fred Henney, "Mining History of Crawford County," in *Twentieth Century History and Biographical Record of Crawford County, Kansas*, by Home authors (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1903), 101-104.

⁷ Henney, "Mining History," 104.

⁸ "Pittsburg, Kansas Early History," Pittsburg, Kansas Memories, accessed Mar. 3, 2016, <http://pittsburgksmemories.com>.

⁹ A. J. Georgia, "History of Crawford County," in *Twentieth Century History*, 34. Henney, 102, 104. The railroad that had owned the land Moffet and Sergeant purchased is listed as the Missouri River, Fort Scott & Gulf Railroad but most other accounts list the Kansas City, Fort Scott & Gulf Railroad. Pittsburg Town Plat, 1876, Copy of original plat, Pittsburg, Kansas, Girard, KS County Courthouse.

¹⁰ Blackmar, vol. II, 480, 542.

¹¹ Blackmar vol. II, 117-118.; "Baxter Springs - First Kansas Cow Town." Kansas Legends, accessed Feb. 11, 2016 www.legendsofamerica.com/ks-baxtersprings.html.; Henney, 104-106.

¹² Henney, "Mining History," 107.

¹³ Blackmar vol. II, 119, vol. I, 380.

¹⁴ Georgia, *Twentieth Century History*, 40; Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Pittsburg, Kansas 1885, 3.

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Early Growth of Pittsburg

Pittsburg incorporated as a third class city in 1879, and the town saw rapid growth in the 1880s, driven by additional mines and smelting plants.¹⁵ By 1884 the population had jumped to four thousand.¹⁶ The first Pittsburg city directory, published in 1890, describes the town as the “largest zinc smelting city in the world” with a reported output of 26,400,000 pounds of zinc from the smelters and 1,320,000 tons of coal from the mines.¹⁷

The town that was laid out by Col. Brown developed rapidly, and an early description of the platting process shows that the intersection of Fourth and Broadway was intended to be a center of activity from the very start: “One hundred and sixty acres were platted, and Broadway and Fourth Streets were graded, each one-half a mile.”¹⁸ The intersection of Fourth and Broadway is at the center of the area platted, which included forty-eight large blocks with alleys. The boundaries of the plat generally follow First Street, Seventh Street, Olive Street and Joplin Avenue. Broadway, which was the primary north-south route, was the widest street at one hundred feet and Fourth Street, the main east-west street, was laid out at eighty feet wide. (See Figure 4.) The widths of those streets also shows their intended importance. All other streets were sixty feet wide.¹⁹

From the late 1870s into the first half of the 1880s commercial development was concentrated at the corners of Fourth Street and Broadway, and south along what are now the 200-300 blocks of Broadway. An early portrayal of the town describes it as “a cross roads country store at the crossing of the roads now called Fourth and Broadway.”²⁰ That country store was built by Franklin Playter, the young lawyer who had joined Moffat and Sargent in the initial investment of land in the Pittsburg area. He built the store over the winter of 1876-77 for his brother-in-law, William Seabury.²¹ By that time Playter, who is considered to be one of the original town founders, owned many lots in the new town, including the property that the Seabury Grocery Store was built on. That early construction project was the first of many investments, development projects, and business dealings that Playter was involved in over the next several decades.

In 1877, George E. Richey followed in Playter’s footsteps and built the first drug store at the southeast corner of Fourth and Broadway, and others soon followed suit.²² A Sanborn Fire Insurance map of Pittsburg that was published in 1885 shows that lots along the 200 and 300 blocks of Broadway were densely filled with one- and two-story buildings which housed drug stores, dry goods businesses, hardware stores, clothing stores, offices, furniture stores, bakeries, dining halls, parlors, and barbers.²³ Many of those first buildings were of frame construction, but some were brick, like Lindburg Drug, which replaced George Richey’s wood shop in 1883.²⁴

The commercial district was supported by townspeople who had come to Pittsburg for employment with the expanding number and variety of industries. Residents were first employed by the coal and zinc industries, and soon thereafter by

¹⁵ Blackmar, vol. II, 480; Pittsburg, Kansas Memories, “A Historical Perspective of Main Street: Pittsburg, KS,” In *Pittsburg, Kansas Early History* by Mark Hill, 1996, accessed Mar. 3, 2016, www.pittsburgkansasmemories.com/Pittsburg_History/pittsburgkshistoryhill.html.; Georgia, *Twentieth Century History*, 40.

¹⁶ Blackmar, vol. II, 480.

¹⁷ Pittsburg City Directory 1890, Preface, 4, Crawford County Genealogical Society, Pittsburg, KS.

¹⁸ Georgia, *Twentieth Century History*, 34.

¹⁹ Pittsburg Town Plat, 1876.; Schaeffer, Janice and Ed McNally, Pittsburg Almanac 1876 -1976, Crawford County Genealogical Society, Pittsburg, KS, Timeline.; Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. Maps, 1897 (New York: Sanborn–Perris Map Co., Digital Sanborn Maps 1867-1970), ProQuest, accessed Jan. to Mar. 2016, <http://sanborn.umi.com.proxy.mcpl.lib.mo.us/cgi-bin/auth.cgi?command=AccessOK&CCSI=45n>.

²⁰ Henney, “Mining History,” 105.

²¹ “Playter’s son recalls boyhood in Southeast Kansas,” Pittsburg Almanac, Crawford County Genealogical Society, Pittsburg, Kansas; *Twentieth Century History*, 35. Discrepancies exist for the exact corner location of this early store. Mark Hill states that the building was located at the southwest corner of Fourth and Broadway, but the 1885 Sanborn suggests that it may have been at the northeast corner. Playter is listed as owning the land at the northeast corner of the intersection during the construction of the Opera House Block in 1889.

²² *Twentieth Century History*, 35.

²³ 1885 Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. map, Pittsburg, Kansas 1, 2.

²⁴ *Twentieth Century History*, 40.

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railroads, brick yards, limestone and sandstone quarries. Clay fields in the Pittsburg area proved to be a very profitable resource for the town beginning in the late 1880s. Early manufactories that made products varying from steam boilers to millwork played a vital role in the economic growth and stability of Pittsburg into the twentieth century.²⁵ Processing and local supply companies were also established early in the town's history. Two mills, the Pittsburg Flour Mill located on the west side of town and the Pittsburgh Roller Mills on the east, were processing flour and corn by the middle of the decade. By 1885 the town also had two large lumber yards and a furniture factory.

A growing population and ever-increasing industrial production attracted more railroad companies to Pittsburg in the 1880s.²⁶ In 1880 Moffat and Sergeant sold the Joplin and Girard Railroad to the St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad.²⁷ The Santa Fe and the Missouri Pacific railways had lines running through Pittsburg by 1886, and Arthur E. Stillwell, an early investor in the downtown commercial district, brought the Kansas City, Fort Scott and Memphis Railroad to Pittsburg in the late 1880s.²⁸ The location of the railroad tracks in Pittsburg helped shape patterns of development in the commercial district. By 1892, railroad tracks roughly encircled the original plat, and there were four depots in the downtown area, three of which were close to Broadway. The Missouri Pacific Depot was located just north of the original plat, on Eleventh Street, and the Kansas City and Fort Scott line had a large passenger and freight depot on Fourth Street a block east of Broadway. (See Figure 4)

The third depot served the St. Louis and San Francisco (Frisco) line, which had a series of tracks along Second Street, intersecting Broadway. The Frisco line developed into an unofficial southern boundary for the commercial district. Sanborn Fire Insurance maps from 1885 to 1902 show that the area south of the tracks developed into an industrial center which included Pittsburg Gas and Electric Light, Standard Oil, Kansas Boiler Works, Union Lime & Cement Co., the Pittsburg Foundry, and the J. A. Nutman Lumber and Yard.²⁹

Commercial Development North from Fourth and Broadway ca. 1886 to ca. 1900

In the mid-1880s the commercial district spread north along Broadway, from the first prominent intersection of Fourth Street and Broadway, filling blocks that had seen little commercial development. Most of Block 22, the northeast block at the Fourth and Broadway intersection, was owned by Franklin Playter at the time. His role in commercial property development along Broadway began with the modest Seabury grocery he built for his brother-in-law in 1876 and escalated from there. Gladys Mundt, a local author who referred to the Lanyon family as the "industrialist" of Pittsburg, titled Franklin Playter as the "salesman", who enthusiastically promoted all aspects of Pittsburg and Kansas - land, coal, zinc, and railroads.³⁰

Playter was involved in the construction of the oldest building in the historic district: the three-story two part commercial block at what is now 408-410 Broadway. That wide brick building, which has two ground floor shop spaces, plus a central stairway which leads to the upper floors, was titled as two separate buildings for much of its history.³¹ (It is now a single legal parcel.) In 1886, Playter bought the south half of the property (now 408.) The north half (now 410) was purchased by a Lucretia Clanton in 1885, and it appears that Playter teamed up with Clanton on construction of the double-bay building soon after he bought the property.³² The first known occupants of the shops on the ground floor of that building included a

²⁵ Pittsburg City Directory 1890, Preface.

²⁶ Blackmar, vol I, 474.

²⁷ Blackmar, vol II, 480.; Heeney, "Mining History," 108-109.

²⁸ "Pittsburg, Kansas Early History," accessed March 3, 2016, www.pittsburgksmemories.com.

²⁹ Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. maps, Pittsburg Kansas, 1885, 1892, 1897. 1902.; 1890 City Directory.

³⁰ Mundt, Gladys M. "Enterprising businessmen started city on prairie." Pittsburg Almanac 1876-1976, Crawford County Genealogical Society, Pittsburg, KS.

³¹ *Crawford County Numerical Index Town Lots C*, 383-385.

³² *Crawford County Numerical Index Town Lots C*, 383-385, Crawford County Courthouse, Girard, KS. Another building with a matching facade was also built just south of this one about that same time; it was demolished in the late 1950s.

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clothing store in the south and a meat shop in the north.³³ The upper floors contained a hotel, the first one to be opened on that part of Broadway. Playter and Clanton may have chosen that lot for a new hotel specifically to capitalize on its proximity to the Kansas City and Fort Scott depot, which was located less than a block away on Fourth Street. Most of the original hotel rooms are still in place in the north half of that building, complete with wood floors, plaster walls and elaborate Late Victorian style millwork. Playter may have purchased the property solely for the construction project; he sold it at a substantial profit just a few years later.³⁴

Playter and Clanton's new hotel, like most of the buildings in the commercial center at the time, utilized the common architectural form known as a two-part commercial block. The two-part commercial block became almost a standard form for modest multi-story commercial architecture in the United States during the late nineteenth century, and it remained popular well into the twentieth century.³⁵ This building type consists of two zones, where the single-story lower zone is intended for commercial use and the upper floors houses more private functions, such as offices, residences or meeting halls. They were commonly adorned with stylistic elements in vogue at the time. Most two-part commercial blocks constructed in Pittsburg in the late nineteenth century utilized Late Victorian styling, which included vertical compositions, with tall narrow windows, ornamental brickwork, and decorative cornices fashioned out of brick, stone or pressed metal.

Expansion of the commercial district was supported by civic leaders who wished to present Pittsburg as a municipality attractive to more industry and investors. Attainment of this goal involved constructing grander buildings and developing infrastructure that would allow Pittsburg to be seen as a financially and socially prosperous city. By the mid-1880s the town was in need of an ample supply of good water and a sewer system. The city council was slow to develop such systems, in fear of accruing too much debt.³⁶ Private investors responded by drilling a deep well at the corner of Seventh Street and Pine, and in 1885 the first waterworks was built at that location.³⁷ By 1887, the need for a sewer system was being deliberated among citizens, private businessmen and the City Council. Concurrently, the desire for a permanent opera house was also being discussed.

An opera house in Pittsburg would be a symbol of progress for the growing town. Lewis Atherton in *Main Street on the Middle Border*, writes that beginning in the 1860s, opera houses became popular in early frontier towns for exhibitions, lectures and theatrical performances, and that soon all progressive villages wanted one.³⁸ Eager to see the town advance, Franklin Playter joined with J. Foster Rhodes, an associate from Chicago, to find a way to build an opera house in Pittsburg. They made a deal with the city council to build the first permanent opera house if the city would construct a sewer system. According to one history of the opera house, Playter and Rhodes claimed that a new sewer system was needed "to assure that the facility would be of the utmost elegance and modern capacity."³⁹

In August 1888 construction of the Opera House Block began on property owned by Franklin Playter at the northeast corner of Fourth and Broadway. The local paper proclaimed that the new building was expected to be the "handsomest opera house in the state" upon completion.⁴⁰ The building was finished in time for opening night on April 1, 1889.⁴¹ The theater hosted well-publicized traveling circuit shows through the 1890s and into the first few years of the twentieth century. One author stated that "This allowed Pittsburg to have the top stage productions; lectures and artist of the day

³³ 1892 Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. map, Pittsburg Kansas, 3.

³⁴ *Crawford County Numerical Index Town Lots C*, 383-385, Crawford County Courthouse, Girard, KS.

³⁵ Richard Longstreth, *Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture* (Washington, D.C.: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2000, updated ed.), 24.

³⁶ "Pittsburg, Kansas" 1905, accessed Mar. 8, 2016, www.pittsburgksmemories.com/Pittsburg_History/pittsburgkshistory1905.html.

³⁷ "Pittsburg, Kansas" 1905; Randy Roberts and Janette Mauk. *Images of America: Pittsburg*, (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2009), 108; "Pittsburg Opera House The National Bank." In *Pittsburg Scenes - Buildings & Business*, accessed 27 Jan. 2016, www.pittsburgksmemories.com/Pittsburg_Buildings/pittbldgoperahouse.html.

³⁸ Lewis Atherton, *Main Street on the Middle Boarder*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 135.

³⁹ "Pittsburg Opera House," accessed Jan. 27, 2016, www.pittsburgksmemories.com.

⁴⁰ "Pittsburg Opera House," accessed Jan. 27, 2016, www.pittsburgksmemories.com.

⁴¹ "Pittsburg Opera House," accessed Jan. 27, 2016, www.pittsburgksmemories.com.

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stop by and entertain the citizens, including John Phillip Sousa and his band on 26 Jan. 1901.⁴² Traffic generated by the large new opera house also benefitted other businesses in the area, including the hotel Playter had helped to build nearby. By 1901, that business was operating as the Opera House Hotel.⁴³

Although the opera hall was one of the most prominent early occupants of the Opera House Block, it was far from the only business in the new building. In addition to the opera house, which was located on the upper floors of the east end, it housed a financial institution, commercial spaces, and offices. Smaller shops filled with businesses selling cigars and confections, paint and wallpaper, and clothing faced both Broadway and Fourth Street. The anchor tenant of the Broadway side of the building on the west end was the Manufacturers National Bank, which occupied the prominent corner of the first floor.⁴⁴ (See Figure 5)

There were also at least twenty offices on the west end of the upper floors. One early description of the construction project noted that the owners intended to have large office rooms which would have gas lights and steam heat.⁴⁵ A stair hall and lobby, accessible from the south elevation, provided access to both the opera hall and the offices. The offices were home to a number of different businesses, including coal and mining companies, such as the Cherokee and Pittsburg Coal Mining Co., and medical professionals such as J. S. Lafary, dentist.⁴⁶ A primary occupant was Franklin Playter, who by 1890 was listed as an officer, usually as president, vice president, or manager of at least ten different companies in Pittsburg, including a title company that occupied a ground floor space in opera house building. Playter's office was located just west of the Fourth Street entrance; an early drawing of the building shows a large sign which reads FRANK PLAYTER mounted above the first floor windows on that wall. (See Figure 5)

The new opera hall building was the largest commercial building in the business district at that time, and its design and layout represented a marked departure in commercial development in Pittsburg. Almost all of the buildings constructed in the area before this time were relatively modest traditional two-part commercial blocks that contained no more than a few retail spaces each, with residences or small offices on the upper floors. The new building at Fourth and Broadway was clearly designed to accommodate a larger and more diverse set of commercial functions. Many of the exterior design elements, which utilize elements of the Late Victorian Style, reflect that variety of uses.

The architectural design also capitalized on the location on a prominent corner lot. Both street-facing walls were highly ornamented, and a two-story rounded corner turret with a conical roof extended up above the roof line. The turret gave the building a distinguishing characteristic that could be seen from several blocks away. The narrow Broadway frontage was maximized by a corner entrance into the bank, as well as an open storefront for a retail tenant. Additional retail space was provided by a row of five large storefronts on Fourth Street. The long south wall included an arched doorway into the lobby, as well as an oversized pediment at the roofline to mark the location of the opera hall. (See Figure 5)

The scale and design of the opera house addressed civic leaders' desire to have Pittsburg seen as prosperous and cultured, and it was soon joined by another significant building. In 1889, the Stillwell Hotel at the southwest corner of Seventh Street and Broadway became an anchor for the northern section of the entire business district.⁴⁷ The new four-story hotel, also of late Victorian style, was constructed of dark red brick and trimmed with light colored stone.⁴⁸ It was, at the time, the largest hotel in Pittsburg, with 250 rooms and a grand lobby and restaurant.⁴⁹ With the Opera House at Fourth Street and Broadway and the Hotel Stillwell at Seventh Street, the blocks between began to fill with businesses.

⁴² "Pittsburg Opera House," accessed Jan. 27, 2016, www.pittsburgsmemories.com.

⁴³ Pittsburg City Directory 1891.

⁴⁴ 1892 Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. map, Pittsburg Kansas, 3.

⁴⁵ "Pittsburg Opera House," accessed Jan. 27, 2016, www.pittsburgsmemories.com.

⁴⁶ Pittsburg City Directory 1890.

⁴⁷ The Hotel Stillwell was individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places April 30, 1980. The building is outside the Fourth and Broadway Historic District.

⁴⁸ "Hotel Stillwell," accessed Mar. 6, 2016, www.pittsburgsmemories.com/Pittsburg_Hotels/pitthotelsstilwell.html.

⁴⁹ Pittsburg City Directory 1890, preface.

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The most concentrated growth occurred along Broadway, between Fourth and Fifth Streets, and east along Fourth Street to Locust.

About one year after the completion of the Opera House Block, two additional municipal projects boosted development along Broadway. In December of 1890 the Pittsburg City Council approved the “petition presented requesting the council to adopt for the improvement of Broadway a first class vitrified brick for pavement,” and paving Broadway began in 1891.⁵⁰ That same year, B.F. Hobart, owner of the Kansas and Texas Coal Company and the Pittsburg Town Company, was granted the right of way to lay tracks for the Pittsburg Electric Railway Company. This trolley car company ran tracks on Broadway between Second and Tenth Streets, and eventually became an interurban line which linked many outlying towns around Pittsburg.⁵¹ (See Figure 6)

By 1890 the population of Pittsburg had increased to 6,697, and it was being promoted as the most successful city in Southeast Kansas.⁵² New industries developed and social events showcased the growing prosperity of the city. In May 1892 the Grand Lodge of Kansas, Knights of Pythias chose Pittsburg to be the site of the twenty-first annual session. According to a newspaper article “Knights of Pythias,” printed on May 17, 1892 in the *Pittsburg Daily Headlight*, approximately one thousand people attended the conference. Out of town visitors arrived by train and most stayed at the Hotel Stillwell. On the evening May 16, a grand procession began in front of Hotel Stillwell at Seventh Street and moved south along Broadway to the Opera House at Fourth Street. The conference attendees filled the Opera Hall for an evening of speeches and ceremony.⁵³

Development along Broadway continued, and by the late 1890s the entire 400 block and most of the 500 block of Broadway were lined with commercial buildings.⁵⁴ The variety of business available had expanded from the necessary everyday services offered by grocers, drugstores, dry goods, bakeries and barbers to include specialty stores such as millineries, furniture dealers, jewelers and music stores.⁵⁵

That development included the ca. 1896 construction of a two-part commercial block at 412 N. Broadway, just north of the Opera House Hotel at 408-410 Broadway.⁵⁶ The long, narrow building had an open storefront on the first floor and a stairway on the north side that led to the second floor. The first occupant of the building may have been the Miexsell, Z. Mercantile and Undertaking Co. [sic], who were listed in the city directories at this location from 1900-01 until ca. 1905. Goods sold by the Miexsell Mercantile and Undertaking Co. included, glass, china, Queensware, carpets, mats, rugs and furniture.⁵⁷

About the same time the Miexsell Company moved into their new home at 412 Broadway, the Manufacturers National Bank closed, and the National Bank of Pittsburg took over the offices of the Manufacturers National Bank in the first floor of the Opera House Block.⁵⁸ The National Bank of Pittsburg was owned and operated by members of the Lanyon family. That move marked the beginning of a sixty four year-long tenure for National Bank of Pittsburg at that location. The bank was headed by members of the Lanyon family the entire time, and it was often referred to as the Lanyon Bank in later years. The first president of the bank was S. H. Lanyon, who came to Pittsburg in the 1870s to work with Robert Lanyon in

⁵⁰ Gladys M. Mundt, “City progressed during gay nineties,” 1876-1976 Pittsburg Almanac, 33, Crawford County Genealogical Society, Pittsburg KS.

⁵¹ Pittsburg City Directory 1890, 28-29; *Twentieth Century History*, 40; Edward A. Conrad, *Tri-State Traction* (Blue Springs, MO: Heartland Rails Publishing Co. 2004), 60.

⁵² Blackmar, 480; Pittsburg City Directory 1890, Preface.

⁵³ “Knights of Pythias,” *Pittsburg Daily Headlight*, (Pittsburg, KS) 17 May 1892, 4, accessed Jan. 29, 2016 <https://www.newspapers.com/image/94671963>.

⁵⁴ 1897 Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. map, Pittsburg Kansas, 8.

⁵⁵ 1897 Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. map, Pittsburg Kansas, 8.

⁵⁶ *Crawford County Numerical Index Town Lots C*, 356-359.

⁵⁷ Pittsburg City Directory 1903, 189.

⁵⁸ “Pittsburg Opera House,” accessed Jan. 27, 2016, www.pittsburgksmemories.com.

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the smelting business. He founded the National Bank of Pittsburg in 1880.⁵⁹ He and other members of the Lanyon family had been diversifying their business investments since the early 1880s, and by 1890 they were involved with smelting, mining, banking, mortgages, and even jewelry.⁶⁰ The National Bank was just one of many occupants in the Opera House Block, which was still one of the largest multi-use commercial buildings in the town at the time. The 1901 city directory shows that its occupants included real estate companies, rental agents, mortgage companies, as well as Morris Cliggett, corporate lawyer for the Lanyons. Franklin Playter was also still there, working as the manager of the Lanyon Mortgage Company.⁶¹

Development ca. 1900 to ca. 1927

Pittsburg saw continued growth into the twentieth century in all sectors, including industry, education, housing and the commercial district. By 1900, the population had increased to 10,112.⁶² There were now forty-four coal mines and fifty-five coal companies in Pittsburg, and products made from the local clay became so desirable that the clay industry began to surpass zinc smelting.⁶³ In 1903 the Auxiliary Manual Training School was established under the State Normal School, which would eventually become Pittsburg State University.⁶⁴ In the commercial district, businesses filled every lot along the 400, 500 and 600 blocks of North Broadway.⁶⁵ Some of the larger buildings included the Pittsburg Daily Headlight building and the Standard Mercantile Company building at Seventh and Broadway, near the Hotel Stillwell. The 400 block had six larger two and three-story buildings, on both the west and east side, infilled with smaller single-story buildings. The intersection of Fourth and Broadway had the Opera House Block on the northeast corner, Lindburg Drug on the southeast and the three-story Globe offices building on the southwest corner.

Through the rush of construction in the commercial district in the late nineteenth century, three small buildings built before 1885 remained in place at the northwest corner of Fourth and Broadway. One of these buildings housed the T. J. Crowell Drug Store. Thomas J. Crowell had operated a drug store in a two-story wood frame shop at what is now 401 Broadway since 1890.⁶⁶ Adjacent to this building were two one-story shops which housed a cigar store and barber at 403 Broadway and the High Class Tailor shop at 405 Broadway.⁶⁷

Around 1903 Abram Baxter, a local farmer who was also involved in coal, real estate, and the Joplin and Girard Railroad, constructed a two-story brick, two-part commercial block building at 405 Broadway. It is referred to in many early city directories as the Baxter Building, but it does not appear to have ever been occupied by him.⁶⁸ The ground floor of the building was occupied by T. J. Crowell, who moved his drug store two doors north from the small building at 401 N. Broadway.⁶⁹ The second level of the Baxter building housed offices for various medical professionals.⁷⁰ Most of those upper floor offices, which were lighted by individual skylights, are still in existence, now used for storage.

By the time Crowell's moved into the Baxter Building, business at the opera house had been waning for several years. One history of the building noted that increased competition and a hall that was too small for major acts had impacted

⁵⁹ *Twentieth Century History*, 39-40.

⁶⁰ Pittsburg City Directory 1890, 50.

⁶¹ Pittsburg City Directory 1901-02; *Twentieth Century History*, 205.

⁶² Blackmar vol. II, 480.

⁶³ Blackmar vol. II, 480; Roberts, *Images of America: Pittsburg*, 9.

⁶⁴ "History of Pittsburg," in *Pittsburg Binder*, Crawford County Genealogical Society, Pittsburg KS.

⁶⁵ 1905 Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. map, Pittsburg Kansas, 3-4.

⁶⁶ "Commerce Building - 401 N. Broadway," Mar. 6, 2016, www.pittsburgskmemories.com.

⁶⁷ *Chittenden Directory Co.'s Pittsburg Miscellaneous Directory*, 1901-1902, 1, Crawford County Genealogical Society, Pittsburg, Kansas.

⁶⁸ *Twentieth Century History*, 442; *Crawford County Numerical Index Town Lots C*, 358-359.

⁶⁹ "Commerce Building, 401 N. Broadway," accessed Mar. 6, 2016, www.pittsburgskmemories.com; City Directories, various years beginning in 1905.

⁷⁰ Pittsburg City Directory 1905-1931.

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crowds, and in 1903 Rhodes announced that he would be remodeling the building and selling it.⁷¹ It appears that he decided instead to simply sell it as-is and leave the remodeling to the new owners. Following the final production in the hall on May 4, 1904, the National Bank of Pittsburg purchased the building from Rhodes and began a major remodeling project. The bank added ten large new offices to the second floor, and the east end of the third floor became an open lodge room.⁷² The National Bank also enlarged and improved their rooms on the ground floor, and the building became known as the National Bank Building, a name it has retained to modern times.

That remodeling project was followed by the construction of another multi-use commercial building at the northwest corner of Fourth and Broadway. In 1908, a four-story brick building replaced the last of the older frame buildings at the northwest corner of Fourth and Broadway. The new building at what is now 401 N. Broadway, was the tallest and most ornate commercial building in downtown Pittsburg. Like the National Bank Building across the street, the new building had a bank in the most prominent commercial space on the ground floor. It was named the Commerce Building, for its leading occupant and majority shareholder, the National Bank of Commerce.⁷³

It was also similar to the National Bank Building in that it was built to house a variety of commercial functions. The bank occupied the southeast corner of the ground floor, which was described as “the most desirable room in the building,” and there were additional retail spaces along both street-facing elevations.⁷⁴ Killiam Jewelry and a cigar store, possibly the Pittsburg Cigar Store, were the first occupants of storefronts on Broadway.⁷⁵ The cigar store may have relocated from one of the buildings that was on the lot before the Commerce Building was built. Sanborn Fire Insurance maps and city directories show that a cigar store occupied this same address from at least 1897 until around 1940.⁷⁶ Occupants of the new shops on the Fourth Street side included offices, a cobbler, and a barber.

Also like the National Bank Building, the upper floors were filled with offices that were reached by a formal entrance on the south wall. The south elevation of the Commerce Building features a projecting entrance bay which includes a pediment and name plate for the building at the roofline, and an ornate two-story entranceway to a formal lobby. (See photo 17) The lobby contains an elaborate staircase and a pair of elevators that provide access to offices on the upper floors. The offices proved to be immediately popular; a local newspaper article about the upcoming opening of the building noted that half of the offices had been leased before the building was completed.⁷⁷ Early city directories show that the offices were occupied primarily by coal companies, medical professionals, lawyers and justices.⁷⁸ That lobby and the upper floors of the building are still remarkably intact, and most of the offices appear today very much as they did in 1908.

The new Commerce Building was one of the first large buildings in the commercial center to use a relatively new building form referred to as the three-part vertical block. According to Richard Longstreth in *The Buildings of Main Street*, three-part commercial blocks mimicked the three parts of a classical column, with a base, shaft and capital.⁷⁹ They became popular in the early years of the twentieth century, as maturing city centers began seeing the construction of taller buildings. The Commerce Building was also the first building in the district to feature Classical Revival styling, which included a symmetrical composition, clean lines and extensive use of classically inspired ornamental features. This

⁷¹ “Pittsburg Opera House, The National Bank, Northeast Corner Fourth & Broadway,” accessed Jan. 27, 2016, www.pittsburgksmemories.com.

⁷² “Pittsburg Opera House,” accessed Jan. 27, 2016, www.pittsburgksmemories.com.

⁷³ “Commerce Building - 401 Broadway.” Pittsburg Scenes - Buildings & Business, accessed Jan. 27, 2016, www.pittsburgksmemories.com.

⁷⁴ “Bank Moves In. National Bank of Commerce Occupies Corner Room of New Building,” *Pittsburg Daily Headlight*, May 25, 1908, p. 2, col. 3.

⁷⁵ “Commerce Building - 401 Broadway.” Pittsburg Scenes - Buildings & Business. Jan. 27, 2016, www.pittsburgksmemories.com/Pittsburg_Buildings/pittbldgoperahouse.html; *Chittenden Directory Co.'s Pittsburg Miscellaneous Directory*, 1903-1904, 18, Crawford County Genealogical Society, Pittsburg, KS.

⁷⁶ 1913 Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. map, 9; Pittsburg City Directory 1940, 255-256.

⁷⁷ “Bank Moves In. National Bank of Commerce Occupies Corner Room of New Building,” *Pittsburg Daily Headlight*, May 25, 1908, p. 2, col. 3.

⁷⁸ Pittsburg City Directory 1911, 290.

⁷⁹ Longstreth, *Buildings of Main Street*, 93.

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maturing form and the Classical Revival style of the new century stood in contrast to the varied massing and multi patterned, ornamental details of the Late Victorian style common a couple decades earlier.

Within five years of the construction of the Commerce Building, two other prominent buildings at the intersection of Fourth and Broadway were remodeled to reflect the growing popularity of the Classical Revival Style. In 1911, the three-story Globe Building on the southwest corner was dramatically altered. Victorian style elements were removed, a fourth floor was added and the roof was finished with and a new Classical Revival parapet.⁸⁰ The National Bank Building was also quick to follow the modern trend. By 1913, the turret at the southwest corner of the building had been replaced with a squared corner, and new storefronts facing Broadway were topped by a tall molded stone cornice and framed with wide stone pilasters. (See Figure 7)

The addition of another bank to the prominent intersection continued a trend of bank development in the commercial center. There were four banks in operation in 1908, and all were located in the 400 block of North Broadway. That block served as the banking district of Pittsburg for much of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Both the National Bank of Pittsburg and National Bank of Commerce had relocated from other buildings on the block, and they remained there for decades to come. City directories show that the 400 block of North Broadway was consistently home to all or most of the banks in the city into the middle of the twentieth century. One other early bank building is still in place at 417 N. Broadway, just outside the boundaries of the Fourth and Broadway Historic District. The former First State Bank, which now has a large modern addition, is now home to the Harris Bank. (See photo 6)

When the Commerce Building was constructed in 1908, the city directory listed the population of Pittsburg at 21,770, and the intersection of Fourth and Broadway was a busy center of activity.⁸¹ People from surrounding farms, small towns, and mining communities within the Tri-State area, came to Pittsburg to shop and work in the district by way of the electric trolleys.⁸² The commercial center stretched along several blocks of Broadway and Fourth Street. The local YMCA and City Hall were at the intersection of Fourth and Pine streets, just west of the district, and businesses lined Fourth Street all the way east to Locust, where the Orpheum Theater and Hotel and the Kansas City and Fort Scott passenger depot were located.⁸³

Although all the lots in the commercial district along Broadway had been filled by the early 1900s, businesses were changing and older buildings were being replaced. The furniture store that had first occupied 412 Broadway had been replaced by a drug store ca. 1905. The Pittsburg Drug Company and Banta C.E. Jewelers were on the first floor, while physicians occupied the second floor.⁸⁴ The Playter and Clanton building at 408-410 Broadway had been expanded with long, single-story additions at the rear of the building, and part of the upper floor was being used as a lodge hall for the Knights of Pythias. The first floor shops were occupied by clothing businesses. Coulter-McGuire Clothing occupied 410 for many years, and 408 housed the Hub Shoe and Clothing store in 1903 and the Beasley Mercantile Co. by ca. 1914.⁸⁵

After the Rhodes Opera House closed in 1904, the blocks immediately around the intersection of Fourth and Broadway remained a popular area for social and cultural entertainment. The 200 block of East Fourth Street was home to the Labelle Theater, which opened just before the Opera Hall closed, and then the much larger Orpheum Theater by 1913.⁸⁶ There were also two moving picture theaters on the 400 block of North Broadway by 1913. The theater at 414, north of

⁸⁰ Robert, 47, 41.

⁸¹ Pittsburg City Directory 1908, 12.

⁸² Conrad, *Tri-State Traction*, 9-10. The Tri-state area refers to southeast Kansas, southwest Missouri and northeast Oklahoma.

⁸³ 1913 Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. map, Pittsburg Kansas.

⁸⁴ 1905 Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. map, Pittsburg Kansas.; "Pittsburg Jewelers Since 1890." n.p., n.d. *Pittsburg binder*, Crawford County Genealogical Society, Pittsburg, KS. ; City Directories 1910-11 through 1930.

⁸⁵ Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. maps, Pittsburg Kansas, 1902, 1905, 1913. 1923-1944; *Crawford County Numerical Index Town Lots C*, 383-385.; Pittsburg City Directories 1903-04 through 1914.

⁸⁶ Pittsburg City Directory 1911, 305; Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. Map, Pittsburg Kansas, 1913, p. 17; "Pittsburg Opera House," accessed Jan. 27, 2016, www.pittsburgksmemories.com.

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the Pittsburg Drug Company, was first listed as Moving Pictures and Vaudeville on the 1913 Sanborn Fire Insurance map and later became the Midland Theater. This theater remained open into the late 1950s.⁸⁷

In 1919-1920, a two story furniture store at 407-409 Broadway was demolished and replaced by the Colonial Theatre. It was the third theater on the 400 block of Broadway and the only one that currently remains. The Colonial Fox Theatre was individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places April 16, 2008. The nomination describes the building as a combination of various architectural trends popular in the first quarter of the twentieth century, including elements from Italian Renaissance Revival and the Arts and Crafts movement with Beaux-Arts details. The Colonial Theatre was built with a tall, arched central opening facing Broadway which was flanked by four shops. The Smoke Shop and Pittsburg Shoe Shining Parlor were on the south side at 407 and the Colonial Lunch Room and Consumer's Coffee Company were on the north side at 409.⁸⁸ The four business could be accessed from Broadway and from inside the lobby of the theater.

The theater seated 1,200 people and was a popular attraction for the working class of Pittsburg. Described as "primary attraction in downtown Pittsburg's thriving nightlife" the theater was owned and operated by the Pittsburg Amusement Company, and managed by Alexander Besse from its opening in 1920 until 1944.⁸⁹ Besse was a stockholder in the Pittsburg Amusement Co. and a long time civic leader who helped to promote and develop the commercial district of Pittsburg. Although he was involved in the coal and zinc industries, he seemed to have had an early interest in the entertainment business. He owned a music shop at 413 Broadway before becoming involved with the Pittsburg Amusement Company.⁹⁰ The Colonial Theatre saw exterior and interior alterations within six years of its original completion. The arched entrance was enclosed to create a new small front lobby, and a square marquee was added to the facade.

While alterations were underway at the Colonial Theatre in 1926, Alexander Besse and the Pittsburg Chamber of Commerce were involved in the planning and construction of Hotel Besse at 121 East Fourth Street, which would be the largest hotel ever constructed in downtown Pittsburg. The Besse Hotel was individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places the same day as the Colonial Fox Theatre, April 16, 2008. In the nomination, authors Elizabeth Rosin and Rachel C. Nugent discuss the concerted efforts of the local leaders to construct a large commercial building that was intended to bolster the growth of the commercial district east of the city's center and they note that it "reflects the latest trends in building form that were gaining popularity in the nation's larger cities."⁹¹

Plans for the hotel began in 1924, and through local funding the twelve story high-rise hotel opened on June 14, 1927.⁹² The Hotel Besse was named for Alexander Besse because he believed the project was so important to the continued vitality of the downtown commercial district that he provided for the final funding of the building. The hotel was designed by architects W.T. Schmitt and Hawk & Parr of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, with ziggurat massing and set-backs that begin at the second floor and lead up to the twelfth floor. The fire-proof concrete structure was built with ten commercial storefronts on the first level, large ballrooms and assembly rooms for social gatherings, and approximately 125 guest room with private baths on the remaining floors. The nomination notes that the Besse Cigar Stand and Postal Telegraph Company were accessible from the inside lobby. Eight other businesses occupied street-front shops, including service-oriented business such as a tailor, barber and the Besse Coffee Shop, along with offices for the V & C Radio Company, Leo F. Costello Investments and the Chamber of Commerce.⁹³ Advertised as the "Pittsburg Address of Distinction" in

⁸⁷ Pittsburg City Directory 1950, 312.

⁸⁸ Pittsburg City Directory 1921, 290.

⁸⁹ Rhodes, John P. "Colonial Fox Theatre" *National Register of Historic Places*. (National Park Service: March 5, 2008.) 1-2, 9-10.

⁹⁰ "Alexander Besse," *Pittsburg Almanac 1876 -1976*, 132, Crawford County Genealogical Society, Pittsburg, KS.

⁹¹ Elizabeth Rosin and Rachel Nugent, "Besse Hotel," 5-9.

⁹² Rosin, "Besse Hotel," 9, 11.

⁹³ Rosin, "Besse Hotel," 9, 11-12.; 1944 Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. map, Pittsburg Kansas, 7.

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visitor guides in the 1940s, it was one of the leading hotels in southeast Kansas.⁹⁴ Throughout the mid-century, the Hotel Besse helped stabilize the commercial district by attracting local residents and out of town visitors to downtown Pittsburg.

Continued Modernization ca. 1928 to ca. 1966

The Hotel Besse was not the only symbol of continuing modernization in the commercial district In the 1920s and 30s. The skyrocketing popularity of the automobile began to make itself felt on the streets of Pittsburg. Cars and trucks lined the curbs of the district, and multiple garages, service stations, and automobile shops had moved into downtown Pittsburg beginning in the 1920s. The 1923 Sanborn Fire Insurance map shows businesses that catered to automobile owners were distributed throughout the commercial center at Third, Fourth and Fifth streets, with a concentration along Locust Street. Locust is one block east of Broadway and runs parallel to the main thoroughfare. In 1923, ten of the sixteen businesses along the 400 and 500 block of Locust were automobile-related. By 1936 the electric trolleys that had brought patrons to the business district for forty-six years were discontinued and the tracks were pulled up to make room for the automobiles that now dominated the roads.⁹⁵

At the corner of Fourth and Broadway, the National Bank of Pittsburg was updated again in 1931. The angled entrance was removed from the first floor corner, which allowed for two of the storefronts to be enlarged. The west wall that had been altered in 1913 was updated to present a more refined Classical Revival facade, complete with a date stone and nameplates to identify the bank. New features included smooth stone panels applied over the brick walls, shaped stone reveals around the newly squared windows, a molded stone cornice, and a tall stone-clad front parapet, all of which are still in place today. The front bay of the south side wall was given a matching update, and farther east on that wall, the arched entry to the lobby was squared and reduced in size. (See Photo 11 and Figure 8) The change to the archway was likely done to make room for a new interior staircase and elevator which were added to the lobby as part of the updates. Other interior work included updating and possibly expanding the banking spaces on the first floor. Finally, all or most of the office spaces on the second and third floors were gutted and remodeled.⁹⁶

The amount of work that went into the National Bank building in 1931 is particularly impressive in light of the fact that it was done in the midst of the Great Depression, a time when the bank industry saw closures much more often than upgrades. The National Bank was one of just two banks in Pittsburg that survived the difficult years of the Depression. Between 1919 and 1940, the number of banks in operation in the community dropped from six to two—the National Bank of Pittsburg and the First State Bank of Pittsburg.⁹⁷ The National Bank of Pittsburg, was by that time the oldest bank in the community.

The Depression also had an inevitable impact on the local retail market, and several buildings saw changes in occupancy during that time period. By 1940, for example, the small shop at 412 Broadway had a new tenant, a restaurant called Harry's Café.⁹⁸ The restaurant replaced the Pittsburg Drug Store, which had occupied the ground floor for thirty-five years. Harry's Cafe has proven to be even longer lived; that business is still in operation. There is a large metal and neon marquee sign bearing the name of the restaurant in place above the front door since at least 1966. (See Figure 9) Other early advertising included ads in local publications, such as the complimentary visitors' guides distributed by the

⁹⁴ "The Pittsburg Guide, Published for the Out of Town Visitor," Pittsburg: Hotel Stillwell, 1949, back cover; *Pittsburg Binder*, Crawford County Genealogical Society, Pittsburg, KS.

⁹⁵ Conrad, *Tri-State Traction*, 64.

⁹⁶ "The National Bank," accessed Jan. 27, 2016, www.pittsburgskmemories.com.

⁹⁷ Pittsburg City Directory 1940 lists only two banks in Pittsburg, the National Bank of Pittsburg at 402 N. Broadway and the First State Bank of Pittsburg at 417 N. Broadway, 339.; Pittsburg City Directory 1912, 12 The National Bank of Pittsburg was organized in 1882.

⁹⁸ Pittsburg City Directory 1940, 256.

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downtown hotels. Harry's Café ran a half-page advertisement in a 1949 booklet which proclaimed it to be the "only competitor against mother's cooking."⁹⁹

The Commerce Building also experienced changes in the 1930s and 40s, including the loss of its namesake ground floor bank. The National Bank of Commerce closed around 1930, and by 1940, the former banking rooms had been converted to retail space. According to the 1940 city directory, the Kroger Grocery and Baking Co. occupied 401-403 Broadway.¹⁰⁰ The upper floors of the building continued to house medical professionals, coal companies, insurance agents and lawyers into the 1950s and 60s. Photos from ca. 1945 show the storefront at the southwest corner was changed to suit the needs of the new business. Some of the open storefronts along the south wall of the first floor were enclosed, and modern display windows were added to the east wall. (See Figure 8) The storefronts at the west end of the building were not impacted, and they have survived to the present with no alterations of note. (See photos 16 and 17)

The 1950s brought additional changes to the office buildings of the district. In 1951, the Commerce building was sold and renamed the Professional Building.¹⁰¹ The name change appears to have been accompanied by only minor physical changes, which included a remodeled side entrance, with new doors and a sign which reads "PROFESSIONAL BUILDING" mounted just above the new doors. (See Photo 17) By 1953 Crowell's Drug Store had expanded into the retail space that had been occupied by Kroger.¹⁰² That larger retail space became Crowell's new permanent home, and for the first time in almost fifty years Crowell's did not occupy 405 Broadway in the Baxter Building next door. City directories show that from 1953 until 1961, 405 Broadway housed the Goodyear Service Store.¹⁰³ By 1962 however, Crowell's had expanded back into the ground floor of the Baxter building.¹⁰⁴ That move was accompanied by the installation of a large new yellow and blue sign across the lower facades of those two buildings, plus a matching projecting sign at the southwest corner of the Professional Building.¹⁰⁵ (See Figure 9) The signs still exist; the one on the façade reads "Pharmacy Cosmetics Crowell Rexall Drugs Country Kitchen." A 1962 advertisement listed Crowell's services which included pharmacy, cosmetics, photo supplies, and a "Fountain Luncheonette".¹⁰⁶ The installation of the signs and the addition of the lunch counter suggests that the existing openings between the two buildings were also installed around 1962. Crowell Drug Co. still occupies those spaces. The business began at 401 Broadway in 1890, and it has remained at the northwest intersection of Fourth and Broadway for 126 years. It is the longest-running business in the Fourth and Broadway Historic District today.

By the late 1950s, suburban shopping areas with new buildings and large parking lots were challenging the status of the commercial center, and downtown businesses began to make changes to remain competitive. Over the next two decades, many downtown buildings were replaced with new buildings and surface parking lots. The first demolition in the 400 block of Broadway took place in 1957, when the National Bank of Pittsburg removed a three-story building adjacent to its north wall to make room for a new drive-through banking lane.¹⁰⁷ (See Figure 9) That change apparently helped for only a few years. In 1966 the bank purchased a long row of properties located on Broadway between Second and Third Streets and demolished some of the oldest buildings in the community to make way for an all-new banking facility. They moved into it later that year, after seventy years at the northeast corner of Fourth and Broadway.¹⁰⁸ That move marks the end of the period of significance for the Fourth and Broadway Historic District.

⁹⁹ "The Pittsburg Guide, Published for the Out of Town Visitor," Pittsburg: Hotel Stillwell, 1949, 2 and back cover; *Pittsburg binder*, Crawford County Genealogical Society, Pittsburg, KS.

¹⁰⁰ Pittsburg City Directory 1940, 255-256.

¹⁰¹ *Crawford County Numerical Index Town Lots C*, 360.

¹⁰² Pittsburg City Directory 1953, 71.

¹⁰³ Pittsburg City Directories 1953, 1956, 1961.

¹⁰⁴ Crowell's address in the 1962 city directory is listed as 401-405 Broadway. Pittsburg City Directory 1962, 23.

¹⁰⁵ *Vonnie Corsini History Collection*. A 1962 image of Colonial Fox Theatre shows the Crowell Drug and Country Kitchen sign that is currently still in place.

¹⁰⁶ Pittsburg City Directory 1962, 23.

¹⁰⁷ "Pittsburg Opera House," accessed March 4, 2016, www.pittsburgsmemories.com.

¹⁰⁸ "Pittsburg Opera House," accessed Mar 22, 2016, www.pittsburgsmemories.com.

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Those were far from the only demolitions around Fourth and Broadway over the next two decades. The Globe building at the southwest corner of Fourth and Broadway was torn down in 1965, and four two-story buildings at the southeast corner were later replaced with a parking lot. On the 400 block, at least six other buildings were removed in that time period. Three two-story buildings directly north of Harry's Cafe were demolished in the 1970s.¹⁰⁹ (They are visible in Figure 9) Those buildings were replaced soon after with a wide one-story commercial building. Another loss occurred in the 1970s, when the Jones' Store, north of the Colonial Fox, burned.¹¹⁰ That building was never replaced and the lot today is used for parking. Finally, two buildings at the northwest corner of the 400 block were replaced with a large addition and new parking lot for the State Bank of Pittsburg building, which is now home to the Harris Bank. (See Photo 6)

The pace of demolition and redevelopment slowed in the 1980s, and there have been few changes to the 400 block of N. Broadway since. A few of the more prominent historic buildings in the downtown area have been rehabilitated in recent years, including the Besse Hotel and the Colonial Theatre. The Besse Hotel had experienced several decades of decline, and closed in 2006, but it was later rehabilitated and reopened in 2010 with forty-seven new apartments. The Colonial Theatre has also recently benefitted from renewed attention. Renamed the Fox Theatre in 1959, it was the primary movie theater in the downtown district through the 1960s and 70s, but finally closed in the 1980s. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2008, and is currently under renovation to return it to its original patterns of use. This nomination of the Fourth and Broadway Historic district accompanies plans for a substantial amount of additional historic rehabilitation. That project is slated to include complete rehabilitation of four of the five newly listed buildings in the district.

Conclusion

The spate of demolition near the intersection of Fourth and Broadway which began in the 1950s resulted in a scattered collection of historic buildings in the blocks around the city's most prominent early intersection. The buildings of the Fourth and Broadway Historic District form a discrete grouping of intact properties which together reflect decades of commercial development in Pittsburg. Today the district provides an impressive entrance to the traditional commercial center to the north. All of the buildings in the Historic District are either contributing resources or individually listed in the National Register. District buildings include some of the largest and most intact historic commercial buildings in the community—the National Bank Building, the Commerce Building, and the Hotel Besse—as well as the only historic theater in the downtown area, the Colonial Fox Theatre. The National Bank Building is the largest nineteenth century multi-use commercial building in downtown Pittsburg, and significant as the longtime home of Pittsburg's oldest bank. The Commerce Building was the largest commercial building in downtown Pittsburg when it was completed in 1908, and it is one of the largest and most highly styled historic buildings in the community today. All of the buildings in the district are clearly recognizable to their period of significance, ca. 1886 to 1957. During that time, the downtown commercial district was the heart of commercial activity in the community, providing residents of Pittsburg and surrounding towns with amenities and entertainment common to larger cities around the nation.

¹⁰⁹ Robert, *Images of America: Pittsburg*, 47.

¹¹⁰ "Midland Theatre," accessed March 4, 2016, www.pittsburgksmemories.com; Rhodes, "Colonial Fox Theatre," 1.

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Appendix A. Timeline of major Events within the District

- 1886 Construction 408-410 N. Broadway.
- 1889 Construction of Opera House Block, 105 E. Fourth St. (This corner building was also often listed at 402-404 N. Broadway in Pittsburg City Directories.)
- 1892 408-410 served as the Opera House Hotel on the 2nd and 3rd Floors.
- 1896, ca. Construction of Furniture Store, 412 N. Broadway.
- 1902, ca. 408 N. Broadway expanded with one-story addition at rear of building.
- 1903 Construction of the Baxter Building, 405 N. Broadway.
Crowell Drug Co. occupies 405 N. Broadway.
- 1904 Opera House Block at 105 E. Fourth St. was purchased by the National Bank of Pittsburg and converted to a multi-use office building.
- 1908 Construction of Commerce Building, 401 N. Broadway.
- 1912, ca. 410 N. Broadway expanded with one-story addition at rear of building and interior remodeled to include entryway encaustic tile floors that are still intact.
- 1913, ca. Removal of corner turret and remodel of first floor west wall of the National Bank Building, 105 E. 4th Street.
- 1919 Construction of the Colonial Theatre, 409 N. Broadway.
- 1926 Construction of Besse Hotel, 121 E. 4th St.
- 1926 First alterations of Colonial Theatre. Arched entrance enclosed and square marquee installed on façade.
- 1931 National Bank Building, 105 E. 4th St, remodeled and new façade constructed on west wall.
- 1940, ca. Harry's Café moved into 412 N. Broadway.
- 1951 Commerce Building, 401 N. Broadway, renamed Professional Building.
- 1953, ca. Crowell Drug Co. moved to, the first floor of the Professional Building, 401-403 N. Broadway.
Goodyear Service Store occupied the first floor of the Baxter Building, 405 N. Broadway.
- 1957 Building north of the National Bank Building demolished to make way for a new drive-through banking facility.
- 1959 Colonial Theatre renamed Fox Theatre.
- 1962 Crowell Drug Co. expanded into 405 N. Broadway and installs large new sign for Crowell Rexall and Country Kitchen.
- 1966, ca. Cornice of 408-410 N. Broadway removed.
- 1966 National Bank of Pittsburg of Pittsburg leaves 105 E. 4th Street to occupy a newly constructed building at Third St. and Broadway.

End of Period of Significance

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Fourth and Broadway Historic District

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Fourth and Broadway Historic District
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Pittsburg, Kansas Memories. "Fourth and Broadway" Postcard ca. 1910. In *Pittsburg Scenes – Streets*. Accessed December 12, 2015. http://www.pittsburgsmemories.com/Pittsburg_Streets/pittstreets.html

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository: Kansas Historical Society

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): n/a

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Approximately 1.5 acres

Provide latitude/longitude coordinates OR UTM coordinates.
(Place additional coordinates on a continuation page.)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

| | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | <u>37.411165°</u> Latitude: | <u>-94.703354°</u> Longitude: | 5 | <u>37.411622°</u> Latitude: | <u>-94.704677°</u> Longitude: |
| 2 | <u>37.411154°</u> Latitude: | <u>-94.705590°</u> Longitude: | 6 | <u>37.411619°</u> Latitude: | <u>-94.704096°</u> Longitude: |
| 3 | <u>37.411549°</u> Latitude: | <u>-94.705591°</u> Longitude: | 7 | <u>37.411460°</u> Latitude: | <u>-94.704090°</u> Longitude: |
| 4 | <u>37.411552°</u> Latitude: | <u>-94.704677°</u> Longitude: | 8 | <u>37.411452°</u> Latitude: | <u>-94.703356°</u> Longitude: |

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The district is bounded on the south by East Fourth Street, which is a major east-west road through the community. The east boundary is along Locust Street, which runs north-south along the east side of the Besse Hotel. The north boundary of the district is defined by a parking lot to the north of the Besse Hotel and marked changes in the streetscape along the 400 block of N. Broadway. On the west side of Broadway, the north boundary edges an empty lot, and on the east side of the street it runs between an intact two-story commercial building, 412 N. Broadway, and a wide low one-story commercial building which was construed in the late 1970s, 416 N. Broadway. (See photos 3, 8.) The western boundary of the district follows a narrow public alley behind the buildings on the west side of Broadway. (See Figures 1-3.) The boundaries of the district are shown as a heavy dashed line on the map in Figure 3.

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Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The buildings in the Fourth and Broadway Historic District form a discrete collection of intact historic commercial architecture. Although the original commercial center of Pittsburg covers many blocks along Broadway, both north and south of Fourth Street, late twentieth century changes have resulted in fragmented groupings of historic commercial architecture in the area. The district is bounded on the south by East Fourth Street, which is a major east-west road through the community. Nearby properties on the south side of Fourth Street contain newer or greatly altered older buildings, which makes Fourth Street a natural south boundary. The same holds true for Locust Street on the east, which is bounded by a parking lot east of the Hotel Besse. The north boundary of the district is defined by marked changes in the streetscape along the 400 block of N. Broadway. On the west side of the street, the district boundary edges an empty lot, and on the east side of the street, it runs between an intact two-story commercial building, 412 N. Broadway, and a wide low one-story commercial building which was construed in the late 1970s, 416 N. Broadway. (See photos 3, 8.) Those two buildings are structurally separated by an additional brick wall at the south edge of 416 N. Broadway, and the striking change in the character of the streetscape in this area merits the placement of a boundary line in the middle of the block. The western boundary of the district follows a narrow public alley behind the buildings on the west side of Broadway. The properties west of that alley contain newer and greatly altered older commercial buildings, as well as a large surface parking lot. (See Figures 1-3.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Andrea Herries and Debbie Sheals
organization Debbie Sheals: Historic Preservation Consulting date March 2016
street & number 29 S. 9th St., Suite 210 telephone (573) 874-3779
city or town Columbia state MO zip code 65201
e-mail debsheals@gmail.com

Property Owner: (complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name See attached continuation sheets
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each digital image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to a sketch map or aerial 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.

Photograph Log

Name of Property: Fourth and Broadway Historic District

City or Vicinity: Pittsburg

County: Crawford State: Kansas

Photographer: Debbie Sheals

Date
Photographed: December 2015 and March 2016

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

- 1 of 17: 4th Street and Broadway intersection. Camera facing north on Broadway.
- 2 of 17: Left to Right: 412 and 408-410 N. Broadway, 105 and 121 E. 4th Street. Camera facing northeast.
- 3 of 17: Left to Right: 412 and 408-410 N. Broadway, noncontributing site, 105 E. 4th St. Camera facing northeast.
- 4 of 17: Northwest corner of 4th St. and Broadway intersection. 401, 405 N. Broadway. Camera facing northwest.
- 5 of 17: Left to Right: 401, 405 and 409 N. Broadway. Camera facing southwest.
- 6 of 17: West side of 400 and 300 block of N. Broadway. Camera facing southwest.
- 7 of 17: Looking south along Broadway. Camera facing south.
- 8 of 17: East 400 block of Broadway with 121 E. 4th Street (Hotel Besse) in background. Camera facing southeast.
- 9 of 17: Left to Right: 412 and 408-410 N. Broadway, noncontributing site, 105 E. 4th St. Camera facing southeast.
- 10 of 17: Left to Right: 412 and 408-410 N. Broadway, noncontributing site, 105 E. 4th St. Camera facing northeast.
- 11 of 17: 402 N. Broadway / 105 E. 4th St. Camera facing southeast.
- 12 of 17: 402 N. Broadway / 105 E. 4th St. Camera facing northwest.
- 13 of 17: 4th Street. Left to Right: 401 Broadway, 105 and 121 E. 4th St on north side of street. Camera facing northwest.
- 14 of 17: 4th Street. Left to Right: 401 Broadway, 105 and 121 E. 4th St on north side of street. Camera facing northwest.
- 15 of 17: 4th Street and Broadway intersection. Camera facing west on 4th St.
- 16 of 17: 4th Street. Left to Right: 401 Broadway, 105 and 121 E. 4th St on north side of street. Camera facing northeast.
- 17 of 17: 401 N. Broadway, 4th Street entrance. Camera facing north.

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Figures

Include GIS maps, figures, scanned images below.

1. Aerial photo map from Google Earth, with Scale. Accessed March 12, 2016.
2. Aerial photo map from Google Earth, with Coordinates. Accessed March 12, 2016.
3. District Map.
4. 1892 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map, with district location, original plat boundaries and train depot locations.
5. "Opera House." Drawing ca. 1889. In *Pittsburg Scenes – Buildings & Businesses*. Accessed Mar. 16, 2016. www.pittsburgksmemories.com.
6. "Fourth and Broadway." Postcard ca. 1910. In *Pittsburg Scenes – Streets*. Accessed December 12, 2015. www.pittsburgksmemories.com. Addresses added in 2015.
7. "Fourth & Broadway." Photo 1915. In *Pittsburg Scenes – Streets*. Accessed Mar. 16, 2016. www.pittsburgksmemories.com.
8. "Fourth & Broadway Looking North." Postcard 1945." In *Pittsburg Scenes – Streets*. Accessed Mar. 16, 2016. www.pittsburgksmemories.com.
9. "Fourth & Broadway Looking North." Photo, 1966. In *Pittsburg Scenes – Streets*. Accessed Mar. 16, 2016. www.pittsburgksmemories.com.

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1. Aerial photo map from Google Earth, with Scale. Accessed March 12, 2016.



Google earth



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2. Aerial photo map from Google Earth, with Coordinates. Accessed March 12, 2016.



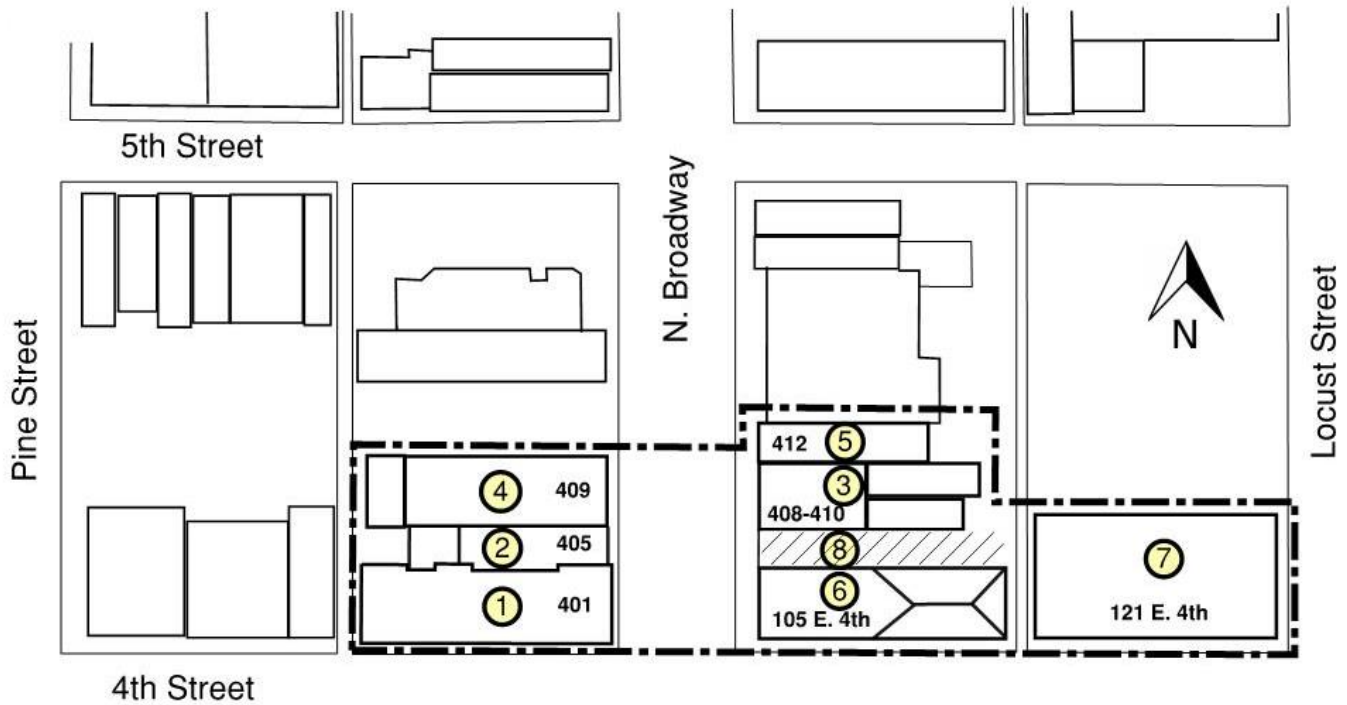
Fourth Street and Broadway Historic District

1: 37.411165°, -94.703354° 2: 37.411154°, -94.705590° 3: 37.411549°, -94.705591° 4: 37.411552°, -94.704677° 5: 37.411622°, -94.704677° 6: 37.411619°, -94.704096° 7: 37.411460°, -94.704090° 8: 37.411452°, -94.703356°


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3. District Map.



KEY

1. Commerce Building 401 N. Broadway. Built 1908. Contributing Building.
2. Baxter Building (Crowell's Drug Store) 405 N. Broadway. Built ca. 1903. Contributing Building.
3. Hotel 408-410 N. Broadway. Built ca. 1886. Contributing Building.
4. Colonial Theater 409 N. Broadway. Built 1919-1920. Individually listed, not in resource count.
5. Furniture Store 412 N. Broadway. Built ca. 1896. Contributing Building.
6. National Bank Building 105 E. 4th St. Built 1889; new facade 1931. Contributing Building.
7. Hotel Besse 121 E. 4th St. Built 1926. Individually listed, not in resource count.
8. Drive-through lane. Part of 105 E. 4th Street. Non-Contributing Structure. 

 Dashed outline of Fourth and Broadway Historic District

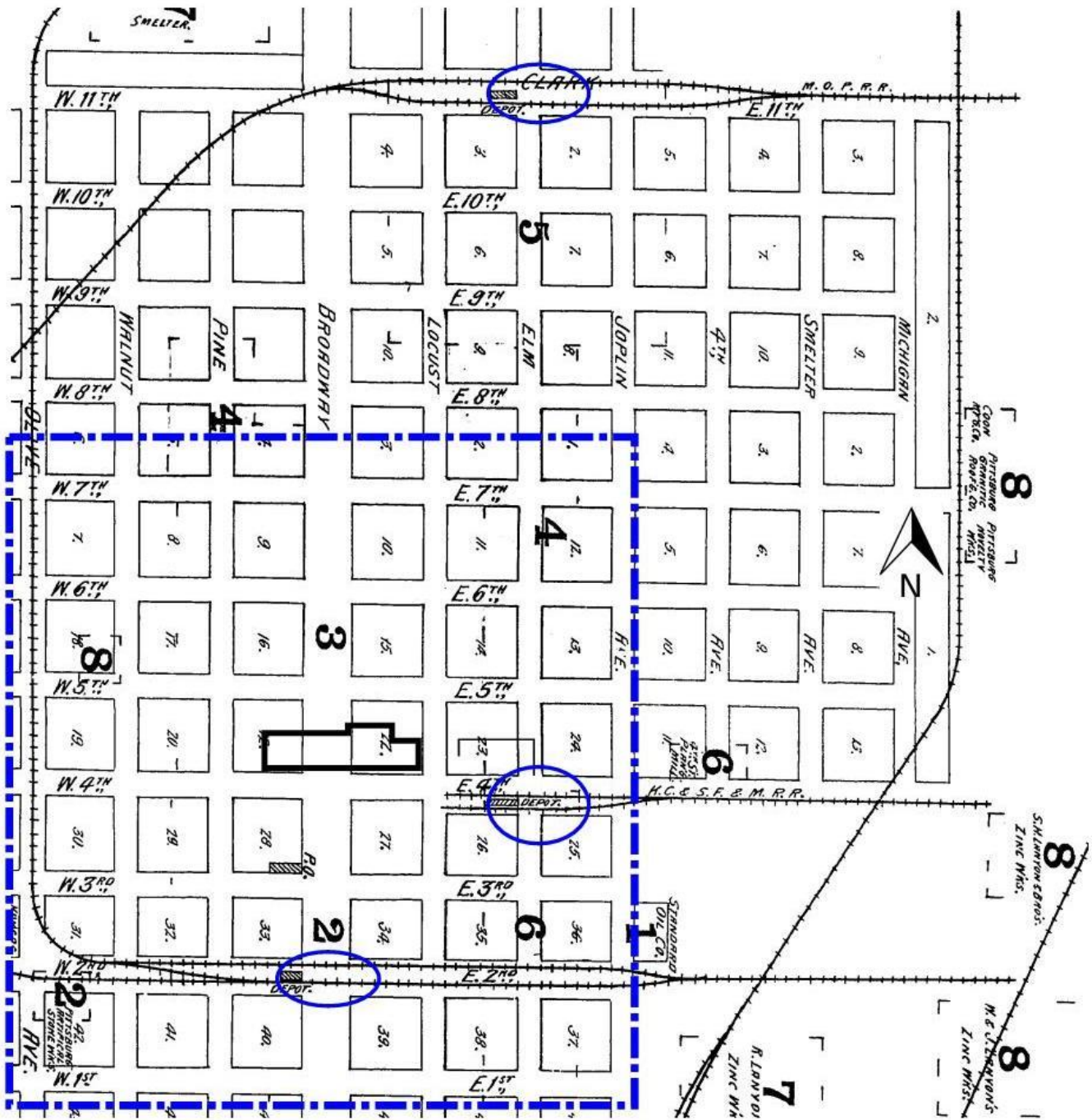
Fourth and Broadway Historic District

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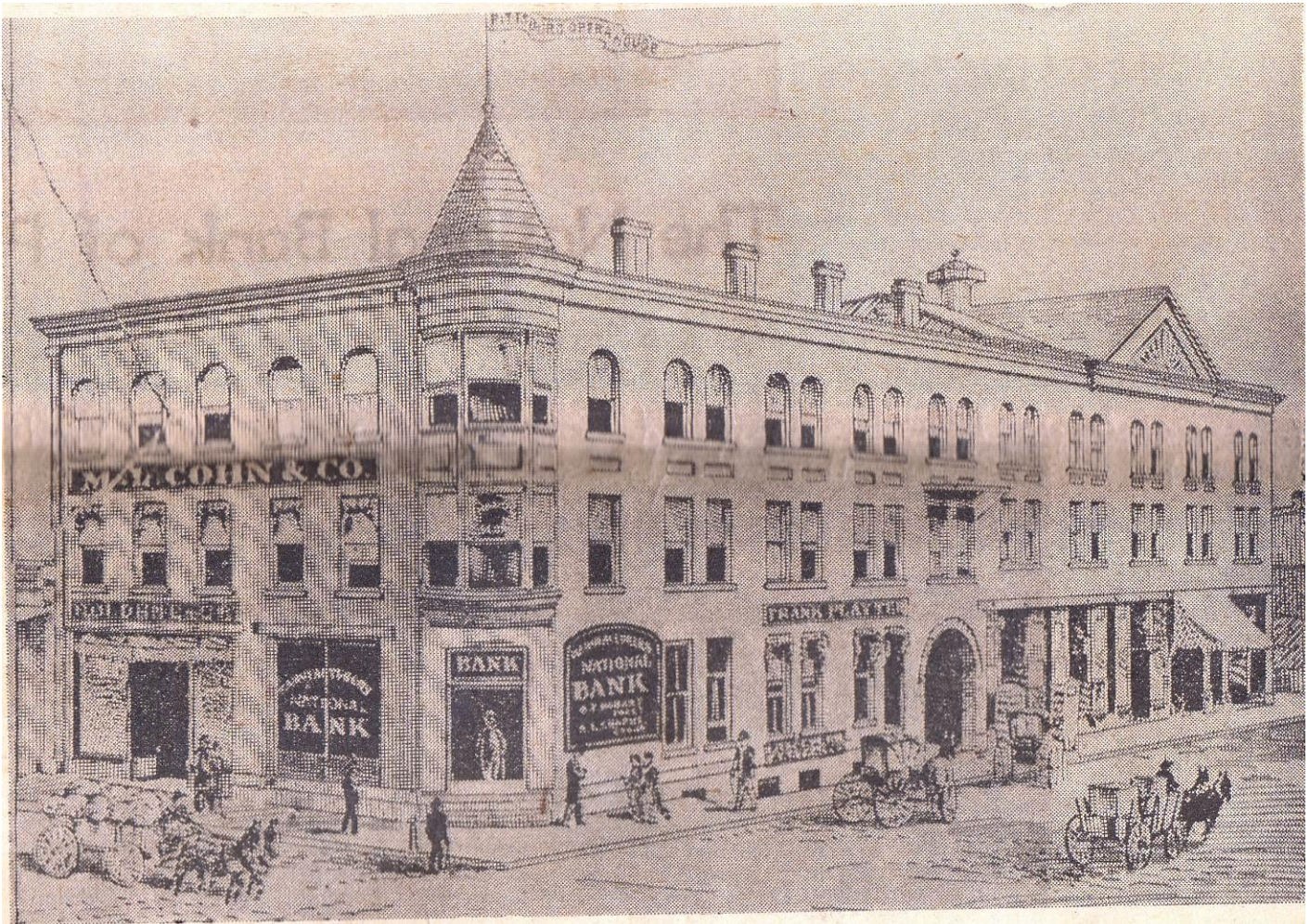
- 4. 1892 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map, with district location, original plat boundaries and train depot locations.



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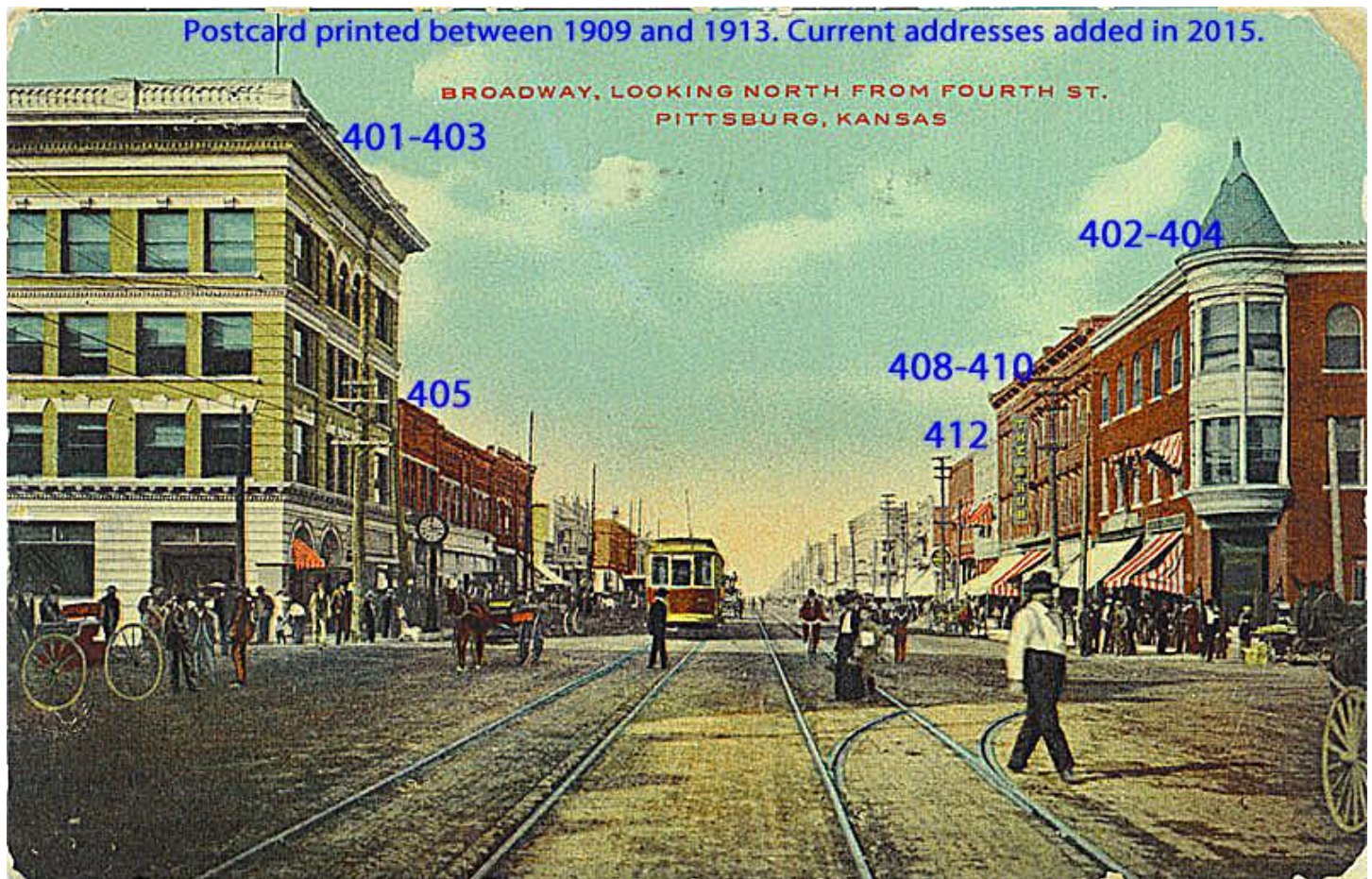
5. "Opera House." Drawing ca. 1889. In *Pittsburg Scenes – Buildings & Businesses*. Accessed Mar. 16, 2016. www.pittsburgsmemories.com.



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6. "Fourth and Broadway." Postcard ca. 1910. In *Pittsburg Scenes – Streets*. Accessed December 12, 2015. www.pittsburgsmemories.com. Addresses added in 2015.



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7. "Fourth & Broadway." Photo 1915. In *Pittsburg Scenes – Streets*. Accessed Mar. 16, 2016.
www.pittsburgsmemories.com.



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8. "Fourth & Broadway Looking North." Postcard 1945." In *Pittsburg Scenes – Streets*. Accessed Mar. 16, 2016. www.pittsburgsmemories.com.



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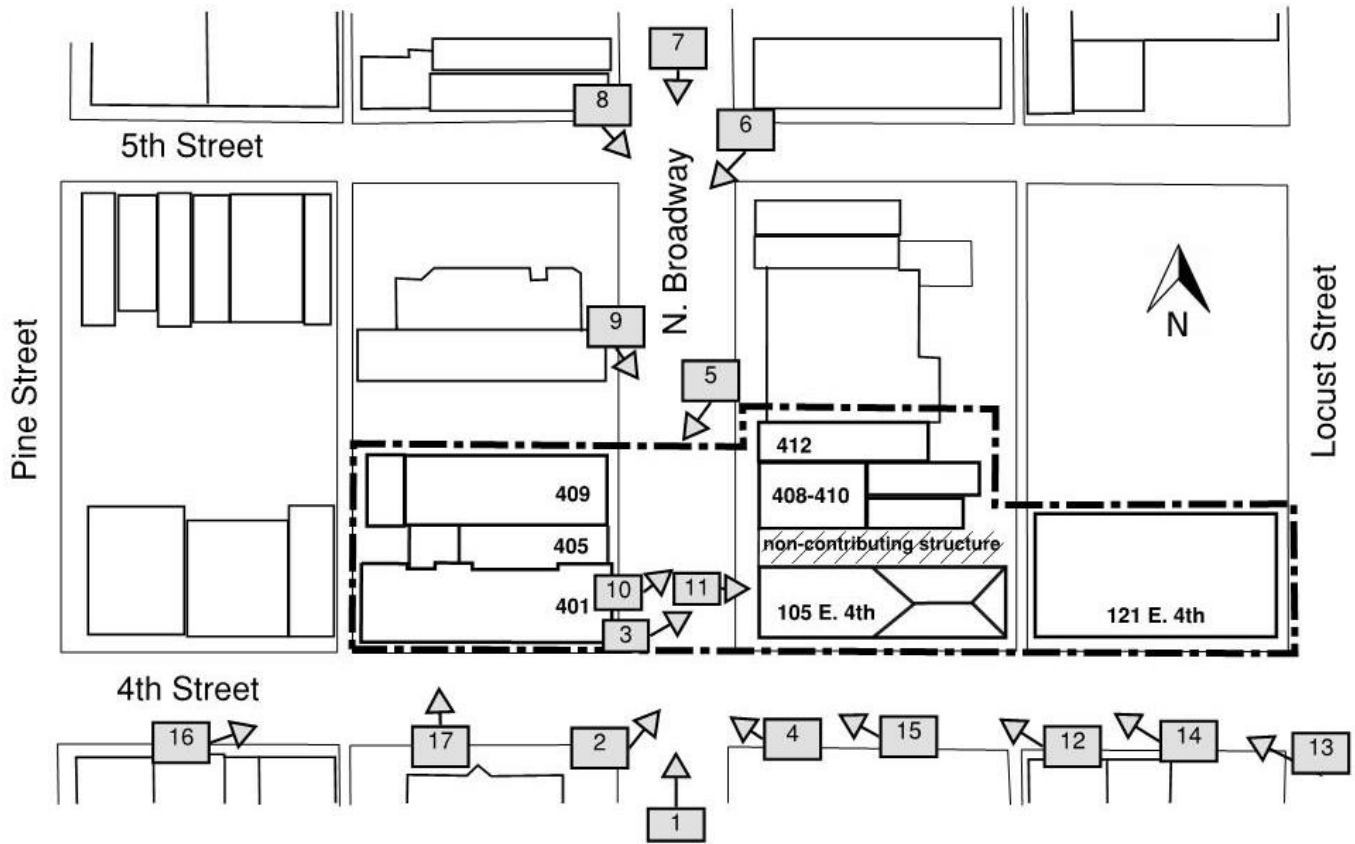
9. "Fourth & Broadway Looking North." Photo, 1966. In *Pittsburg Scenes – Streets*. Accessed Mar. 16, 2016. www.pittsburgsmemories.com.



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Photo Key



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1 of 17: 4th Street and Broadway intersection. Camera facing north on Broadway.



2 of 17: Left to Right: 412 and 408-410 N. Broadway, 105 and 121 E. 4th Street. Camera facing northeast.



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3 of 17: Left to Right: 412 and 408-410 N. Broadway, noncontributing site, 105 E. 4th St. Camera facing northeast.



4 of 17: Northwest corner of 4th St. and Broadway intersection. 401, 405 N. Broadway. Camera facing northwest.



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5 of 17: Left to Right: 401, 405 and 409 N. Broadway. Camera facing southwest.



6 of 17: West side of 400 and 300 block of N. Broadway. Camera facing southwest.



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7 of 17: Looking south along Broadway. Camera facing south.



8 of 17: East 400 block of Broadway with 121 E. 4th Street (Hotel Besse) in background. Camera facing southeast.



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9 of 17: Left to Right: 412 and 408-410 N. Broadway, noncontributing site, 105 E. 4th St. Camera facing southeast.



10 of 17: Left to Right: 412 and 408-410 N. Broadway, noncontributing site, 105 E. 4th St. Camera facing northeast.



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11 of 17: 402 N. Broadway / 105 E. 4th St. Camera facing southeast.



12 of 17: 402 N. Broadway / 105 E. 4th St. Camera facing northwest.



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13 of 17: 4th Street. Left to Right: 401 Broadway, 105 and 121 E. 4th St on north side of street. Camera facing northwest.



14 of 17: 4th Street. Left to Right: 401 Broadway, 105 and 121 E. 4th St on north side of street. Camera facing northwest.



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15 of 17: 4th Street and Broadway intersection. Camera facing west on 4th St.



16 of 17: 4th Street. Left to Right: 401 Broadway, 105 and 121 E. 4th St on north side of street. Camera facing northeast.



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17 of 17: 401 N. Broadway, 4th Street entrance. Camera facing north.

