

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Downtown Oswego Historic District

other names/site number _____

Name of Multiple Property Listing _____

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

2. Location

street & number Roughly bounded by one-half block north of Jackson Street on the north, the alleys immediately west and east of Main Street on the west and east, respectively, and one-half block south of Washington Street. not for publication

city or town Oswego vicinity

state Illinois county Kendall zip code 60543

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

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

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

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

Illinois Department of Natural Resources - SHPO
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official _____ Date _____

Title _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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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.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
16	3	buildings
	1	site
		structure
		object
16	4	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- DOMESTIC/single dwelling
- COMMERCE/TRADE/business
- COMMERCE/TRADE/organizational
- COMMERCE/TRADE/financial institution
- COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store
- COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant
- COMMERCE/TRADE/warehouse
- SOCIAL/meeting hall
- SOCIAL/clubhouse
- GOVERNMENT/post office
- GOVERNMENT/fire station
- EDUCATION/school
- TRANSPORTATION/road-related (vehicular)

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- COMMERCE/TRADE/business
- COMMERCE/TRADE/organizational
- COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store
- COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- MID-19TH CENTURY/Greek Revival
- LATE VICTORIAN/Italianate
- LATE VICTORIAN/Queen Anne

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- foundation: BRICK, CONCRETE, OR LIMESTONE
- walls: BRICK, STONE, OR SIDING
-

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- LATE VICTORIAN/Romanesque Revival
- LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/
Classical Revival
- OTHER/Modern
- OTHER/Contemporary
- OTHER/Mansard
- OTHER/New Traditional
- OTHER/Commercial Vernacular

roof: N/A

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Narrative Description

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

Summary Paragraph

The Downtown Oswego Historic District (DOHD) is the original city center for commerce, transportation, and residential development in the Village of Oswego. The district follows Main Street roughly bounded between Jackson Street on the north and Washington Street on the south. The DOHD encompasses five acres with sixteen contributing buildings, three non-contributing buildings, and one non-contributing site. No properties within the district boundaries have been previously individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The existing historic resources were constructed between 1845 and 1974. The DOHD is predominately composed of one and two-part commercial blocks that housed storefronts on the first floor and social/assembly halls, clubrooms, or offices on the upper floors. Interspersed among the commercial buildings are a few remaining mid-nineteenth century and early twentieth-century dwellings that have been converted to commercial. The period of significance is from 1845, the construction date of the oldest building in the district, to 1972, the fifty-year cutoff for the National Register of Historic Places.

Narrative Description

Located in the Fox River Valley of northeastern Illinois, the Village of Oswego spans the northeastern quadrant of Kendall County, as well as a portion of the northwestern quadrant of Will County. The Village is approximately bounded on the north by the unincorporated Boulder Hill subdivision in Oswego Township and US Route 30, the Fox River and Illinois Route 71 on the west, Reservation Road on the south, and US Route 30, Grove Road, and a half-mile west of Douglas Road on the east. The Downtown Oswego Historic District (DOHD) is approximately five acres located at the center of the Village at the confluence of the Fox River and Waubonsie Creek. The district follows Main Street roughly bounded between Jackson Street on the north and Washington Street on the south.

The composition of the DOHD is predominately commercial with few commercial-converted historic residential buildings interspersed. The areas directly south, east, and north of the district are predominately residential, while the area west of the district was historically industrial though many of the buildings have been demolished and the lots remain undeveloped.

Situated in the floodplain of the Fox River the topography of the district is relatively flat. Though located in close proximity to the river, it is not a distinct visual feature of the district due to the district being historically physically and visually separated from the river by the riverfront industrial corridor.

Due to the district's location two-and-a-half blocks east of the eastern bank of the Fox River, the street pattern was laid out in a standard grid, with alleys, but its alignment varies on the curvature of the river. The orientation and layout of the streets remain unchanged since the earliest development in the district. The main arterial road through the district is the east-west US Route 34 (Washington Street/Walter Payton Memorial Highway) which bifurcates the district near the southern boundary. It is a 211.37-mile east-west highway established in 1926 which runs from the Iowa state line at Gulfport, west of Galesburg, to Illinois Route 43 and Historic US Route 66 at Harlem Avenue in Berwyn, Illinois. The secondary east-west streets within the district (Jackson and Washington Streets) serve as local streets which connect to the primary north-south through street of Main Street.

For connectors and thoroughfares, widths are consistent at forty-five to fifty feet, with or without on-street parallel parking. The only exception is Van Buren Street which is substantially narrower at twenty-four feet in width due to its location as a border street between the downtown and residential area to the south. Historically, the portions of the

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streets located within the district were wider to allow for the larger horse-drawn carriages and ox-drawn wagons, street vendors, and general commercial activities. Today, the extra width has been converted to parallel parking along Main Street and Jackson Streets. All streets and alleys are paved with contemporary asphalt.

Alleys run east-west and north-south bisecting each block into four quadrants, with the exception of both alleys on the block located on the west side of Main Street between Jefferson and Jackson Streets and the north half of the north-south alley on the block located on the west side of Main Street between Jackson and Washington Streets. In both instances, the alleys have been vacated and replaced with parking lots.

The district was also serviced by the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad's (CBQ) Ottawa, Oswego & Fox River Valley (OOFRV) Railroad, with the line running parallel to the Fox River and one block west of Main Street. The line ran from Ottawa, in La Salle County, to Elgin, in Kane County, by way of Oswego, in Kendall County. Historically, the CBQ passenger and freight depot was located on the south side of Jackson Street on the east side of the railroad. The railroad provided passenger service to downtown Oswego, as well freight service to Oswego's industrial district located west of downtown between the railroad and Fox River, as well as the Wayne and Sons Steam Elevator and Oswego Co-operate Creamery Co. located just outside of the district at Adams and Tyler Streets. The depot was demolished in 1972, following the discontinuance of service to Oswego. Today, the rail line is operated by the Illinois Railway and connects the sand mines near Ottawa, Illinois with the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF) line in Aurora, Illinois.

The buildings in the district follow national trends in architectural styles and building typologies popular at their time of construction. Each building reflects its construction date based on architectural details and construction methods. All buildings can be identified by their typology. Typical building typologies found in the district include commercial types such as the one and two-part commercial blocks, as well as a few remaining mid-nineteenth century and early twentieth-century dwellings. Furthermore, many buildings can be identified by an architectural style. During the development of the DOHD, details of the Greek Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, Late Classical Revival, Romanesque Revival, and the later Modern style were applied to common commercial and residential building forms.

Individually notable resources include the Oswego Post Office, Knapp Building, Union Block, Schickler Building, and the Burkhart Block. All buildings are contributing to the district. Descriptions of each building follow.

Oswego Post Office (64 Main Street), 1874, Photo NO. 0006

Constructed in 1874, the Oswego Post Office building is a two-story gabled building with a prominent false-front facade. A false-front is an applied or fake front façade. False-fronts, like that of the Oswego Post Office, are easily identifiable by the extension of the applied front façade above the building's main roofline and lack of depth to the storefront. It was common for false-fronts to reference popular or historic architectural styles, or to be relatively austere and unadorned like the post office - which is only ornamented with Doric pilasters which flank each fenestration opening at the first floor storefront and simplified classical window hoods at the second floor windows of the front facade.

The post office was constructed by Oswego Postmaster Lorenzo Rank. While the first floor served as the post office the second floor housed Rank and his family's living quarters. The building served as the post office until 1911 when it relocated to the newly constructed Burkhart Block. The building was then donated to Oswego in Rank's will and re-opened as a library operated by the Nineteenth Century Club.

Knapp Building (69-71 Main Street), 1898, Photo NO. 0005 and 0009

Constructed in 1898, the Knapp Building was commissioned by Rudolph Knapp, a livestock dealer, meat market operator, and developer in Oswego. When the building was first completed it housed the G.M. Croushorn Furniture

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Store and Undertaking Parlor, and the Malcolm Meat Market in the first floor storefronts, while the second floor housed a dance hall, which later served as the present-day Masonic Lodge (Raven Lodge #303 A.F. & A.M).

The building is an example of the two-part commercial block building typology which first appeared during the late nineteenth century. Two-part commercial blocks are typically two to four stories in height, without setbacks from the primary facade lot lines, along public sidewalks, and have display windows facing that sidewalk. The two-part distinction is made according to the visual arrangement of the principal façade which has a projecting cornice or other strong horizontal design element dividing the first floor from the upper floors and separating this typology from the one-part commercial block.

Typically applied to the two-part commercial block typology are either architectural features from a popular or historic architectural style or individual vernacular details popular at the date of construction, such as the minimal yet striking brick corbel table at the cornice which crowns the Knapp Building.

Union Block (72-78 Main Street), 1867, Photo NO. 0007 and 0008

Following the 1867 fire, which ravaged the east side of downtown Oswego, local businessmen immediately set to work rebuilding. One of the first buildings constructed following the fire was the Union Block which was composed of three two-story buildings. In the first floor storefronts, the building housed drug, hardware, grocery, and dry goods stores when it first opened. The second floor housed the Odd Fellows Hall (northern building), storage and a dwelling, as well as later offices (center building), and a school, and later hall (southern building). Today, only the center and southern buildings remain, as the north building was replaced in 1974 with the existing brick building following a fire.

The Union Block was designed in the popular Italianate style as three two-part commercial blocks. The buildings were constructed of brick with locally quarried limestone foundations and architectural ornamentation. The first floor is raised above grade and a platform spanned the full width of the block with stairs located at the corner of Main and Washington Streets. The platform and stairs exist today though they were rebuilt in 1959 and a roof was added in 1972, along with several other Mansard canopy additions to Oswego's downtown buildings. Arched top display windows dominated the first floor façade and a simple cornice above the storefronts visually divided the front façade into two distinct sections. The second floor was defined by a series of fifteen windows set within round arch openings crowned by a limestone window hood. Each building had five symmetrically-placed windows. Historically, the building also featured an eye-catching bracketed cornice, which was removed in 1954 and replaced with the existing parge coating in its place.

Schickler Building (73-79 Main Street), 1900, Photo NO. 0009

Constructed for John Schickler's retail businesses with a cigar factory in the basement, the Schickler Building is similar to its neighbor, the Knapp Block. It was designed as a two-part commercial block with applied architectural details popular at the time of construction. The simple two-story brick commercial block housed two storefronts at the first floor, one with a corner entrance at Main and Washington Streets and the other facing Main Street. The first floor remained unadorned while the second floor was crowned by a handsome brick corbel table at the cornice (extant) and a projecting oval bay window (demolished) clad in pressed metal and embellished with classical motifs and ornamentation which defined the northwest corner of Main and Washington Streets.

Burkhart Block (100 Main Street), 1911, Photo NO. 0010

Located at the central intersection of Main and Washington Streets, the Burkhart Block was completed for Oliver Burkhart in 1911. When the building first opened it housed the Oswego Post Office, the telephone exchange, Burkhart's garage, and the Oswego State Bank – the community's first financial institution since Levi Hall's bank was closed during the depression of the 1890s. The Great Depression forced the closure of the Oswego State Bank in 1937, and the community lost its only financial institution until the Oswego Community Bank opened at 25 Main Street in 1958 (demolished). The Burkhart Block also continued to house the post office until it relocated in 1955 to the northwest

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corner of Main and Washington Streets, where it remained until 1969 when it moved to its current location at the northeast corner of Madison and Jackson Streets.

The building is only one of four examples in the district of the one-part commercial block. This typology is similar to the two-part commercial block, but is typically only one story in height and the facade can be read as a single design element, with no strong horizontal design element dividing it. Popular architectural styles or details of the time were also applied to the one-part commercial block façade, but at the Burkhart Block, the facade was designed with little to no ornamentation except for one sawtooth brick course at the cornice with alternating brick relief headers two courses below it.

Today, the Downtown Oswego Historic District remains intact and appears much as it would have looked when fully developed at the end of the period of significance. The district retains a high degree of integrity making it eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The majority of the properties are unaltered and have sustained little if any exterior modifications. Most alterations and noticeable changes that have occurred are window and door replacement, installation of contemporary storefronts, window infill, cornice removal and/or rebuilding of the parapet, and less frequently, new brick veneer cladding at the front façade. Those buildings identified as non-contributing were either constructed outside of the period of significance or lacked architectural integrity. There are three non-contributing buildings that were constructed between 1845 and 1974 and one non-contributing site, a vacant lot at 55 Main Street. The three non-contributing buildings are historic buildings, constructed during the period of significance but lack architectural integrity due to the primary façades having been re-clad in brick veneer or siding where the original design intent is indiscernible and character-defining architectural features have been removed.

The following is an inventory for each of the existing contributing and non-contributing resources including their historic building name or use, if known, address, date of construction, primary architectural style, building typology, and current photograph which corresponds to the photograph log of this nomination. A "Building Key" is located in the "Additional Documentation" section of this nomination. If a building is listed with two dates, the later date is for an addition or remodeling, as noted.

*Abbreviations Note: ARCH: Architectural; BLDG. TYP.: Building Typology; C: Contributing; NA: Not Applicable; NC: Non-Contributing; NO: Street Number; ST: Street; SUF: Suffix.

ID	NO.	ST.	SUF	HISTORIC NAME/USE	DATE OF CONSTRUCTION	RESOURCE TYP.	ARCH. STYLE/DETAILS	C/NC	PHOTO NO.
1	17-19	MAIN	ST	N/A	C.1855 (CONSTRUCTED BETWEEN 1843-1870); C.1931-1952 (ONE-STORY SOUTH ADDITION); C.1957 (EXTENSION OF THE ONE-STORY STOREFRONT TO THE FRONT FAÇADE OF THE I-HOUSE)	COMMERCIALY CONVERTED RESIDENCE (I-HOUSE)	GREEK REVIVAL (I-HOUSE); NO STYLE ONE-STORY SOUTH ADDITION)	C	0001
2	26	MAIN	ST	N/A	1968	ONE-PART COMMERCIAL BLOCK	COMMERCIAL VERNACULAR	C	0002
3	27	MAIN	ST	STONE STORE (OPERATED BY W.O. PARKE)	C.1845 (CONSTRUCTED B/T 1843-1850, TWO-STORY GREEK REVIVAL SECTION AT SOUTHEAST); C. 1967 (REAR ADDITION AT	ONE-PART AND TWO-PART COMMERCIAL BLOCK	NEW TRADITIONAL, HISTORICALLY GREEK REVIVAL (ORIGINAL) AND MANSARD (LATER ADDITIONS), THE	NC	0001

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ID	NO.	ST.	SUF	HISTORIC NAME/USE	DATE OF CONSTRUCTION	RESOURCE TYP.	ARCH. STYLE/DETAILS	C/NC	PHOTO NO.
					NORTHWEST AND REMODELING OF REAR ONE-STORY SECTION AT SOUTHWEST AND ONE-STORY SECTION AT NORTHEAST); C.1931-1952 (NORTHEAST SECTION CONSTRUCTED)		FRONT MANARD ALTERATIONS HAVE BEEN REMOVED		
4	54	MAIN	ST	N/A	C.1915 (CONSTRUCTED BETWEEN 1905 AND 1931); C.1972 (MANARD CANOPY)	ONE-PART COMMERCIAL BLOCK	COMMERCIAL VERNACULAR	C	0003
5	55	MAIN	ST	N/A	C. 2005-2007 (DEMOLITION OF TWO BUILDINGS: 1) COBBLER 2) WITH AN ATTACHED STORE AND REAR DWELLING)	VACANT LOT	N/A	NC	N/A
6	56-58	MAIN	ST	N/A	1974	TWO-PART COMMERCIAL BLOCK	NEW TRADITIONAL	C	0006
7	57-61	MAIN	ST	OSWEGO FIRE STATION 11	1954	FIRE STATION	UTILITARIAN	C	0004
8	60	MAIN	ST	BOHN'S GROCERY	1954; UNKNOWN (STOREFRONT ALTERATIONS AND RECONFIGURATION)	ONE-PART COMMERCIAL BLOCK	NO STYLE (HISTORICALLY MODERN)	NC	0006
9	64	MAIN	ST	POST OFFICE – OSWEGO, ILLINOIS (WITH SECOND FLOOR DWELLING)	1874	FALSE-FRONT	COMMERCIAL VERNACULAR	C	0006
10	67	MAIN	ST	OSWEGO SALOON	C.1892-1898; 2007 (STOREFRONT REPLACEMENT)	TWO-PART COMMERCIAL BLOCK	COMMERCIAL VERNACULAR	C	0005
11	68-70	MAIN	ST	N/A	1974	TWO-PART COMMERCIAL BLOCK	NO STYLE	C	0007
12	69-71	MAIN	ST	KNAPP BUILDING	1898	TWO-PART COMMERCIAL BLOCK	COMMERCIAL VERNACULAR	C	0005
13	72-74	MAIN	ST	UNION BLOCK	1867; 1870 (CORNICE ADDED); 1954 (CORNICE REMOVED); 1959 (LIMESTONE PLATFORM AND STAIRS REBUILT IN CONCRETE)	TWO-PART COMMERCIAL BLOCK	ITALIANATE	C	0008
14	73-79	MAIN	ST	SCHICKLER BUILDING	1900	TWO-PART COMMERCIAL BLOCK	COMMERCIAL VERNACULAR (HISTORICALLY QUEEN ANNE THOUGH DETAILS SUCH AS	C	0009

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ID	NO.	ST.	SUF	HISTORIC NAME/USE	DATE OF CONSTRUCTION	RESOURCE TYP.	ARCH. STYLE/DETAILS	C/NC	PHOTO NO.
							ROUNDED BAY WINDOW HAVE BEEN REMOVED)		
15	76-78	MAIN	ST	UNION BLOCK	1867; 1870 (CORNICE ADDED); 1954 (CORNICE REMOVED); 1959 (LIMESTONE PLATFORM AND STAIRS REBUILT IN CONCRETE)	TWO-PART COMMERCIAL BLOCK	ITALIANATE	C	0008
16	100	MAIN	ST	BURKHART BLOCK (HOUSED OSWEGO STATE BANK AND NEW POST OFFICE, TELEPHONE EXCHANGE, AND OLIVER BURKHART'S GARAGE WHEN COMPLETED)	1911	ONE-PART COMMERCIAL BLOCK	COMMERCIAL VERNACULAR	C	0010
17	103-107	MAIN	ST	VOSS BUILDING	1918; C.1919-1930 (CORNER STOREFRONT ADDITION)	ONE-PART COMMERCIAL BLOCK	COMMERCIAL VERNACULAR	C	0011
18	116	MAIN	ST	N/A	C.1931-1952 (WHEN CONSTRUCTED IT WAS A FRONT ADDITION ON THE SOUTH SECTION OF THE BURKHART BLOCK)	GARAGE	NO STYLE	C	0010
19	14-20	WASHINGTON	ST	UNION BLOCK	1867; UNKNOWN (EXTERIOR ALTERATIONS)	ONE-PART COMMERCIAL BLOCK (HISTORICALLY THE REAR ADDITION ON UNION BLOCK BUT HAS BEEN HEAVILY REMODELED)	NO STYLE	NC	0008
20	19	WASHINGTON	AVE	AMERICAN LEGION POST 675 (LOCATED HERE SINCE 1947)	C.1885-1892; C.1952-1983 (REAR ADDITION)	SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENCE (UNKNOWN TYPOLOGY DUE TO HISTORIC ALTERATIONS)	NO STYLE (ALTERATIONS MAKE ORIGINAL STYLE/FORM UNDISCERNIBLE)	C	N/A
21	62	WASHINGTON	ST	JOHN W. CHAPMAN RESIDENCE	1852	GABLE-FRONT	GREEK REVIVAL	C	0012

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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

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Commerce

Period of Significance

1845-1972

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation (if applicable)

Architect/Builder

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

Encompassing 177 years of history and development, the Downtown Oswego Historic District (DOHD) endures as the center of commerce and trade for the Village of Oswego since its initial establishment in 1835. The period of significance is from 1845 to 1972, reflecting the date of construction of the oldest building in the district, up until the 50-year cut-off for the National Register of Historic Places. Buildings were constructed in the District throughout the period of significance, with the last contributing property constructed in 1974.

The DOHD is eligible under Criterion A for Commerce/Trade, and continues to function as it has historically, as the commercial center for the Village of Oswego, and has sufficient integrity for listing in the National Register.

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

PRE-HISTORY AND EARLY SETTLEMENT OF THE ILLINOIS TERRITORY

The DOHD resides on the ancestral lands of the Illiniwek (Illini or Illinois Confederation) who inhabited these lands for thousands of years as the rich forests, prairies, and rivers provided for their hunting and fishing grounds. The land is also associated with the Council of the Three Fires composed of the Potawatomi, Ottawa, and Ojibwe (also known as Chippewa) tribes. Prior to 1600, the Potawatomi lived in present-day lower Michigan, where they had resided for over a century. In a tradition shared by the Potawatomi, Ottawa, and Ojibwe, all three tribes came from the northeast to the eastern shore of Lake Huron. This is believed to have occurred around 1400 after the North American climate became colder. The Ottawa remained near the French River and on the island of Manitoulin, but the Potawatomi and Ojibwe continued north along the shoreline until they reached Sault St. Marie. Around the year 1500, the Potawatomi crossed over and settled in the northern third of lower Michigan. Threatened by the Ontario tribes trading with the French during the late 1630s, the Potawatomi were forced to leave their homeland at the beginning of the following decade and relocated to the western side of Lake Michigan in northern Wisconsin. Following the retreat of the Iroquois at the end of the Beaver Wars (1640-1701), the Potawatomi and other neighboring tribes relocated into present-day Illinois and seized Illiniwek land.

Prior to the arrival of European explorers and missionaries, and American settlers, the area that is present-day Kendall and Will Counties were inhabited by the Illiniwek (Illini) or Illinois Confederation. The confederation was composed of twelve independent tribes of the Algonkian speech family who lived in the central Mississippi River Valley including the Kaskaskia, Cahokia, Peoria, Tamaroa, Moingwena, Michigamea, Chepoussa, Chinkoa, Coiracoentanon, Espeminkia, Maroa, and Tapouara. In the first documentation of the Illini, by European explorers at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the confederacy's population was recorded at 10,000. This number would quickly dwindle over the next century, as seven tribes, including the Chepoussa, Chinkoa, Coiracoentanon, Espeminkia, Maroa, Moingwena, and Tapouara, would disappear due to the fur trade conflicts of the Beaver Wars, also known as the Iroquois Wars or the French and Iroquois Wars.

Following the end of the Beaver Wars at the end of the eighteenth century was the Revolutionary War (1775-1783) and ultimately American expansion westward. Illinois joined the union in 1818, and the Illini met with Illinois Governor Ninian Edwards, and the founder of St. Louis, Missouri Auguste Chouteau, at Edwardsville in September. At this meeting, the Illini surrendered their last holdings in Illinois for about six thousand dollars and were forced to relocate across the Mississippi River to St. Genevieve, Missouri. Unlike the Illini, the Potawatomi who were located north of early American settlements did not lose significant portions of their land until 1821. Through a series of treaties over only the next eight years, the Potawatomi lost seventy percent of their land.

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One of the last treaties to impact the young state of Illinois and the future Kendall County and Oswego Township was the second Treaty of Prairie du Chien, on July 29, 1829. Signed between the United States and representatives of the Council of Three Fires, it included the establishment of two reservations, Mo-Ah-Way and Waish-Kee-Shaw, at the southwestern corner of present-day Oswego Township and the northwestern corner of adjacent Na-Au-Say Township. The treaty preserved the rights of the Council of Three Fires to hunt in the ceded territory "so long as the same shall remain the property of the United States," though, with the Indian Removal Act of 1830, the stage was set for the nation's complete removal west of the Mississippi.

Implementation of the act was delayed while the United States government focused on the Sauk tribe at Rock Island which denounced the 1804 treaty that stipulated their removal from western Illinois. The events which followed are commonly known as the Black Hawk War of 1832. Roughly 800 Sauks, led by Black Hawk, Sauk band leader and warrior, chose to stay on their native lands and resist the United States' westward expansion. They were determined to protect Saukenuk, but when his group returned to the village after their winter hunts in 1829-1831, they found their village increasingly occupied by white squatters. Their homes claimed by white settlers, their corn hills used as storage for wagons, and the bones of their ancestors disturbed and laid bare upon the ground by the plow.

United States officials were determined to force the Sauk tribe out of Illinois. Under General Edmund P. Gaines, a full assault was launched against Saukenuk on June 26, 1831, only to find that Black Hawk and his followers had abandoned the village and crossed the Mississippi River.

In April 1832, Black Hawk prepared to re-cross east of the Mississippi River leading a faction of Sauks, Meskwakis, and Kickapoos, east of the Mississippi and into Illinois, from Iowa which was "Indian Territory." While Black Hawk's exact motives were unknown, the presence of children, women, and elders indicated that they were a peaceful party, only hoping to resettle on their native lands.

Convinced that the group was hostile, a frontier militia was organized and opened fire on the group on May 14, 1832. The group responded with a successful attack on the militia at the Battle of Stillman's Run. Black Hawk led his faction to a safe location in southern Wisconsin. Under the command of General Henry Atkinson, the U.S. troops tracked the group to Wisconsin. On July 21, they were defeated by Colonel Henry Dodge's militia at the Battle of Wisconsin Heights. Weakened by starvation and death, survivors retreated toward the Mississippi River.

The Black Hawk War ended in September 1832 following the signing of the Treaty of Chicago. As part of the treaty, five million acres of First Nations homelands were ceded to the United States government, and the people removed. The Prairie Potawatomi were removed in 1834, with the Ojibwe and Ottawa of northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin, to land in present-day Council Bluffs in southwest Iowa, before being relocated to a reservation north of Topeka, Kansas in 1846.

CREATION OF KENDALL COUNTY (CA.1830-1850)

Settlement in Kendall County began in the early 1830s. Contemporary accounts state that the spring of 1832 enjoyed early warm weather, causing the dirt roads to dry out much earlier than usual. These conditions were favorable for travel and persuaded hundreds of settlers from New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Ohio to load their wagons and head west to settle on the Illinois prairie. The Town of Oswego was first platted at its current location on the bluff overlooking the Fox River and Waubonsie Creek in 1835, followed by Newark (1835), Yorkville (1836), Little Rock (1836), Lisbon (1838), and Millington (1838).

Early on settlers and businessmen found that it was a long way to the county seat when it came time to conduct their legal business. Residents of Oswego, Bristol, and Little Rock townships had to travel north to the Kane County

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Courthouse in Geneva, while those living in Na-Au-Say, Kendall, Fox, Big Grove, Lisbon, and Seward townships had to travel to Ottawa to visit the courthouse and county officials.

Settlers living along the Fox River between Ottawa and Aurora decided to establish a new county and the original petition circulated in the fall of 1840. The petition contained the names of 109 settlers and asked the Illinois General Assembly to establish a new county comprised of nine townships.

Originally named Orange County, named after the area in New York State from where many of the new county's settlers had originated, the county was established by the General Assembly in early 1841. However, upon a motion by supporters of President Andrew Jackson, the name was changed to Kendall County, in honor of Jackson's Postmaster General, Amos Kendall. A bill to create the new county was approved by the Illinois legislature and signed into law on Feb. 19, 1841.

On April 5, 1841, the first elections in Kendall County were held, and the business of county government began. In June that year, a three-man commission was appointed by the General Assembly to find a permanent site for the county seat. Eventually, the commission chose Yorkville as the county's first seat of government, due to its central location.

It is unknown where the county board met for the first months of its inception. In 1842, a private dwelling owned by Daniel Johnson was leased by the county board for use as the county courthouse and seat of county government. The first county courthouse was then constructed on Lot 8, Block 15 in the Village of Yorkville, about two-and-a-half blocks southwest of the present historic courthouse complex on Fox Road.

In January of 1845, a petition was presented to the General Assembly asking that the county seat be moved to Oswego. The matter was referred to the voters of Kendall County, and in August 1845 a special election was held to select a new county seat.

Oswego reportedly furnished some fifty teams and wagons to transport voters to the polls. Allegedly, some of those wagons brought Kane County voters to the polls in violation of the law. No single location received a majority of the votes, and a second election was held on September 1. Though not as central a location as Yorkville, Oswego received a majority of the votes, and county commissioners certified the vote three days later. The first term of the circuit court in 1846 was held in the stately National Hotel on Main Street in Oswego (demolished). The new Oswego courthouse wasn't completed for two more years.

Prior to 1850, the townships of Kendall County had no formal names. That year, new legislation allowed the creation and naming of the individual township governments. The same legislation also established a new system of county government which utilized a board of supervisors with the nine township supervisors making up the county board, in lieu of the three-person county commission.

Oswego Township was named after the Village of Oswego, which was named after the largest city in New York, the home state of many of the township's first settlers. Oswego comes from the Seneca (Iroquois Confederacy) word meaning "place of the flowing out or mouth of the stream." Similar to Oswego, New York which sits at the mouth of the Oswego River, Oswego (Illinois) sits at the mouth of Waubonsie Creek where it meets the Fox River.

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CRITERION A: DEVELOPMENT OF DOWNTOWN OSWEGO

The DOHD is locally significant under Criterion A as the original and only center of commerce in Oswego. The following sections illustrate the history and development of the Village of Oswego, of which the downtown was and continues to be the heart of, and provide examples of how the built environment of the district developed and transformed relevant to the history of the Village.

Early Settlement of Oswego (1833-1859)

The site for the Village of Oswego was a clear choice for settlers. Located at the confluence of Waubonsie Creek and the Fox River and the site of a natural limestone ford that provided settlers with the opportunity to cross the Fox River between Ottawa and Geneva for access to Chicago and Joliet. The first settlers to the area that would become Oswego were William Smith Wilson and his wife, Rebecca (Pearce) Wilson in 1833. The family homesteaded along the south side of Waubonsie Creek, purchasing the southwest fractional section of Section 17 in the township, and the future site of the original Village of Oswego. Other pioneering landholders in the area included Walter Loucks, who later purchased Wilson's holdings and facilitated further subdivision of the town; Levi G. Gorton; and Nathaniel Rising.

In 1835, businessmen Lewis Brinsmaid Judson and Levi F. Arnold arrived from New York and formally platted the Village of Oswego, at the time known as Hudson, in the present-day area bounded by Jefferson, Harrison, Benton, and Monroe Streets. Arnold would go on to construct Oswego's first store at the site of 68 Main Street (destroyed by fire in 1867).

Two years later the community would be renamed to Lodi after the first post office was established. The name would be permanently changed to Oswego, in honor of Oswego, New York, from the home state of several of the Village's earliest pioneers. "Oswego" is believed to be a Seneca (Iroquois Confederacy) word meaning "the flowing out place," appropriate for a community situated where the Waubonsee Creek flows into the Fox River.

Upon settlement, Oswego's early millwrights quickly harnessed the hydraulic power of the Fox River, Waubonsie Creek, and Bartlett's Creek. Merritt Clark's Mills, located at the north end of Adams Street (today the site of Millstone Park), provided flour and ground corn, while Hopkins Mill supplied fresh-sawn lumber for new construction in the burgeoning town.

Within the first decade of Oswego's founding, bridges over the Fox River and Waubonsie Creek and dams were built to connect with the surrounding agricultural lands and developing northeastern Illinois region.

In 1836 the Temple stagecoach line (later known as Frink & Walker) began regular service on the "High Prairie Trail" (central) and western branches of the Chicago to Ottawa Road through the Village. At the time of the United States Government's survey in 1842, Oswego consisted of about thirty wooden buildings and hotels, including the stately National Hotel on Main Street, the Kendall House, and the Smith House.

Settled for its natural and man-made transportation potential, there were already four major roads converging in Oswego, as early as the 1842 federal government survey:

- The Galena Road which extended from Chicago to Naperville then west to Montgomery before intersecting with the Joliet-Dixonville Road (now Dixon) northwest of Oswego. The road approximately followed what is now Ogden Avenue/US Route 34.
- "The River Road" which ran between communities on the east and west sides of the Fox River. The road often abruptly terminated at geographic or natural barriers in the landscape and traversed both sides of the river at fording locations. The road approximately followed what is now IL Route 25 on the east and IL Route 31 on the west side of the Fox River.
- The Plainfield-Oswego Road which later became part of the Joliet-Dixonville Road and ran on a northwest-southeast axis between the two cities along what is Plainfield Road today.

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- The Chicago-Ottawa Road which spanned from Chicago to Ottawa and later developed into three branches: the central or "High Prairie Trail" (Riverside-Plainfield-Platteville-Lisbon-Holderman's Grove), the western branch (Naperville-Oswego-Newark), and the eastern branch (followed the DesPlaines and Illinois Rivers to connect Joliet and Ottawa). The western branch into Oswego approximately followed what is now Ogden Avenue/US Route 34 north of Oswego and IL Route 71 south of Oswego.

The restructuring of LaSalle and Kane Counties to create Kendall County on February 19, 1841, with Oswego's budding population and commercial enterprises, prompted the United States Government to publish the first survey map of Oswego Township in 1842 to facilitate future land sales.

Three years later, the community's first public school was opened in downtown at Madison and Van Buren Streets (demolished), and the county seat was moved from Yorkville to Oswego in September 1845 following petitions from 432 Oswego residents. Oswego served as the county seat until 1864 when a second referendum moved the county seat back to its central location in Yorkville. Circuit Court was held in the National Hotel on Main Street until a new courthouse was built in 1848 on the downtown block bounded by Madison, Jackson, Monroe, and Jefferson Streets (demolished).

Despite Oswego's flourishing growth, the extension of the Chicago Burlington & Quincy Railroad (CBQ) from Turner Junction (West Chicago) to Aurora bypassed the Village and constructed the Oswego Station in 1853 approximately two miles northwest of the downtown and Village center in remote Oswego Township. Without a central railroad link, Oswego Township farmers and the burgeoning industries located on the Fox River and Waubonsie Creek were not able to take advantage of commercial opportunities in Chicago created by the railroad. The loss of the county seat combined with decentralized railroad service nearly stunted further growth and development of Oswego over the following two decades.

Oswego and the Ottawa, Oswego, and Fox River Valley Railroad (1860-1899)

Regardless of the challenges facing Oswego, local real estate developers, such as Lewis B. Judson, and Loucks and Stafford, subdivided and annexed the immediate areas surrounding the Village in anticipation of future development, while a thriving agricultural economy continued to support the businesses located in Oswego's downtown. Businesses such as general stores, hardware stores, drug stores, cooper shops, tailor shops, blacksmith shops, and livery stables lined Main Street in rows of two-story frame buildings with gabled roofs obscured by false-front parapets. In the district today, only the Oswego Post Office building at 64 S. Main Street, constructed in 1874, remains as an example of Oswego's early commercial architecture. Much of Oswego's downtown was destroyed by a fire in 1867, which inadvertently, prompted the transition from simple, frontier wood frame commercial and residential structures to considerable brick structures for commerce and living.

Following the fire, Oswego's merchants rebuilt with fireproof materials such as brick. The extant Union Block, located at 72-78 (formerly 70-78) Main Street was the first building to be constructed after the fire and started a brick building tradition that continues in present-day downtown Oswego.

After the fire, Oswego received an economic boost when the Ottawa, Oswego, and Fox River Valley Railroad (OOFV) was constructed through the Village in 1870, along the western edge of downtown. The same year, the CBQ acquired the line, and Oswego residents would soon reap the benefits of freight and passenger service when the Oswego Station of the OOFV opened on Jackson Street near North Adams Street (demolished).

With a centralized rail line, Oswego's economy prospered as farmers from across the township could now easily ship raw materials, such as corn and wheat, or finished products processed at the mills located along the rail line. Approximately four years after the OOFV line opened, Oswego's first grain elevator, Wayne & Son's Steam Elevator, was constructed in c.1874, at the southwest corner of Adams and Van Buren Streets. The original grain elevator remains intact at 171-73

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Adams Street, as well as a later cribbed construction grain elevator built under the direction of local grain dealer William Cliggitt in 1914. In conjunction with Oswego's grain economy, the Village had a thriving livestock economy. Cattle and hog sheds were constructed near the depot by the railroad in 1872. Farmers would drive their livestock to town typically for shipment to Chicago's Union Stockyards.

In addition to Oswego's well-known agricultural economy, the community also relied on the lesser-known limestone and flagstone stone quarries and lime kilns, surrounding the Village. Prior to the first white settlement of Oswego, Native Americans mined the chert veins layered in the limestone along Waubonsie Creek. Some of the earliest known non-native operations are those recorded on the 1870 Kendall County atlas map. At this time, there were four quarries in operation within approximately two miles of the Village center including:

- The Hopkins Quarry, located just north of the historic platted town of Troy near the present-day junction of the Fox River Trail, Madison Street, and the creek;
- The Wormley Quarry, operated by Civil War veteran George D. Wormley, and produced both cut limestone and flagstone located directly across from the Hopkins Quarry on the west bank of the Fox River;
- One unnamed stone quarry near the north end of present-day Saw Wee Kee Park; and
- J. Steiner's Lime Kiln and Stone Quarry, located at the intersection of Madison Street and Waubonsie Creek.

By the turn of the twentieth century, the region's stone began to lose favor to Indiana's Bedford limestone and less expensive building materials such as brick and concrete, and by the 1903 Kendall County atlas all of Oswego's quarries were closed.

Many of Oswego's oldest surviving buildings, dating from the mid-nineteenth century, are constructed from limestone quarried in the community. Two of these buildings are located in the DOHD, the Stone Store (constructed and first operated by W.O. Parke) at 27 S. Main Street (altered and non-contributing) and the John Chapman Residence at 62 W. Washington Street (contributing).

Oswego continued to diversify its industrial base throughout the late nineteenth century with dairy companies, wagon shops, and lumber and grist mills. Mid-nineteenth century newspapers reported the establishment of the Moore shops, which manufactured sash, doors, and wagons, Roe and Seely's Cheese Factory, and the W. S. Bunn lumber company. Sanborn Insurance Maps of Oswego in 1885 document companies such as M. J. Pogue and Son Lumber Company, D. M. Haight's Grist Mill, William Parker and Son Mill, William Parker and Son Furniture Factory, Esch Brothers and Rabe Ice Houses, Fox River Butter Company, and Hebert & Son Carriage Shop. The Sanborn Maps of 1892 and 1898 show additional businesses including the Oswego Co-operative Creamery Company, John Young and Son Wagon Shop, F. D. Winslow Flour Mill, and the P. Cooney Feed Mill – all located adjacent to downtown and the OOFR rail line.

Oswego witnessed a small population boom during the 1870s and into the 1880s when a great number of residences and downtown commercial buildings were constructed. Streetlamps were installed for the first time in 1882, and a new school building was constructed called the Red Brick School following a fire in the Old Stone School. It was built on the site of the old Kendall County Courthouse.

Despite a township-wide decrease in the population at the beginning of the 1890s, Oswego's economy remained stable and its downtown continued to thrive. In addition to offering typical goods and services found in a commercial center, the downtown also provided space on the upper floors of the commercial buildings for prominent clubs and fraternal organizations to meet, including the Modern Woodmen of America, the Knights of Pythias, and the Freemasons. Also available for the socialization of Oswego residents were a small number of saloons, like the Oswego Saloon at 67 Main Street (contributing) and the Star Roller Rink at 70 Main Street (demolished). The town improved itself with its first concrete sidewalks and its own waterworks and elevated tank completed by 1895.

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The Arrival of the Interurban and the Automobile In Oswego (1900-1945)

Improvements to Oswego's infrastructure continued into the twentieth century with the arrival of the Aurora Elgin & Yorkville Railway, an interurban trolley line, in 1900. The line made another connection to Oswego with Aurora to the north and Yorkville to the south, while undoubtedly adding to the economy and quality of life for Oswego's residents. The electric interurban railway appeared in America around the turn of the century and served suburban and rural communities that were either too small or too remote for mainline railroad service. Later, larger cities adopted this mode of transportation for commuter service.

The Fox River Valley had already established itself as an important commuting area west of Chicago, with railroad lines that operated eastward to and westward from the city. However, a new passenger line, in the form of an interurban, was desired to operate north and south through the Fox River Valley. The first interurban line was established in 1895 from Elgin to Carpentersville under the Carpentersville, Elgin and Aurora Railway Co. Additional segments were completed in 1896 (Elgin to St. Charles and Aurora to Geneva) and 1900 (Aurora to Yorkville), operated by the Carpentersville, Elgin and Aurora Railway Co., and the Aurora and Geneva Electric Railway, respectively. Additionally, there was a second branch between Aurora and Yorkville operated by The Aurora, Yorkville & Morris Railway to connect its namesake towns. This branch included Oswego along its route, reaching the Village by 1900, and completing the line to Yorkville by 1901.

The three individual interurban lines merged in 1901, along with the earlier Aurora Street Railway Co., to form the Elgin, Aurora & Southern Traction Company (EA&S). In 1906, the EA&S merged with the Aurora Elgin & Chicago Railway (AE&C) and incorporated as the new Aurora Elgin & Chicago Railroad's Fox River Division. The company was separated by order of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in 1923 and formed the Chicago Aurora and Elgin Railroad, which acquired the assets of the former AE&C, and the Aurora, Elgin and Fox River Electric Company, which obtained the assets of the former EA&S.

Although interurban railways had their own rights-of-way in the countryside, they often were found running down the main streets of the towns they served, with depots that were located in a storefront along the community's main commercial street. The interurban in Oswego crossed the river and CBQ tracks at Washington Street until it turned south onto Main Street which it followed out of the Village limits on its way to Yorkville. Oswego's downtown district was at the heart of the interurban in the community, as the first stop/last stop in Oswego was reportedly located in the former Chapman Residence (contributing) at the central intersection of Main and Washington Streets. Most interurbans in Illinois did not last past the Great Depression, mainly because of economic conditions and the rising use of the automobile. Interurban operations were terminated from Aurora to Yorkville on the AE&C in 1924.

Despite the discontinuance of the interurban, with the advent of the automobile, Oswego again found itself as a central transportation hub located at the junction of three state highways, Illinois Route 25, Illinois Route 71, and Illinois Route 31, and one national highway, U.S. Route 34.

Because of Oswego's historic location at the junction of multiple major transportation routes, little change occurred in the downtown during the early twentieth century, but instead, the district saw the development of historically vacant lots. The established historic downtown continued to serve as the heart of the community, sustained by individual and family-run businesses including dry goods stores, tailors, drug stores, bakeries, butchers, and hardware stores. One of the most historically significant commercial blocks to open during the early twentieth century was the Burkhart Block at 100-08 South Main Street (1911). It housed the Oswego State Bank in its corner storefront, the new Oswego Post Office, telephone exchange, and the Burkhart Garage. Oswego also received a combination building for its Village Hall, Water Works, and Fire Department at 113 South Main Street (c. 1925, demolished). Previously Village Hall was located on the south side of Washington Street just east of Adams Street (demolished) and the Fire Department was located in the old Oswego Post Office Building. Other commercial buildings such as the Voss Building at 103-107 South Main Street (1918)

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which housed a barbershop, real estate office, and dentist were also constructed during the first quarter of the twentieth century.

Road improvements of the early twentieth century also increased the mobility of Oswego residents and travelers from Chicago who took advantage of the recreational opportunities along the Fox River. The automobile age ushered in significant and rapid change to the rural landscape outside of our nation's cities. In the first decade of the automobile, motoring was a hobby pursued mostly by the wealthy. However, as the purchase price and upkeep of mass-produced automobiles steadily decreased in the late 1910s, private automobile ownership increased. With automobile ownership, residents were afforded freedom and mobility beyond the interurban and railroads that radiated out of Chicago prior to 1920. Urban dwellers began to ride out to the country on newly paved roads for pleasure and recreation, many on day, weekend, or longer-term vacations. The joys of the open road and touring potential created by the automobile were captured and popularized in magazines in the 1920s. Others saw beyond the excursion possibilities of the automobile and used their cars to commute greater distances between their home and work.

To serve the growing population of car owners, newly-formed auto clubs and automobile enthusiasts lobbied for new and improved roads across the country. The need for better roads led to the passage of the Federal-Aid Highway Act by Congress in 1916, which catalyzed nearly two decades of road building. The era became known as the "golden age of highway building" in the United States, with more than 420,000 miles of roads constructed. Many states including Illinois established a highway department, and smooth, macadamized roads were built outward from Chicago and on established routes, including former dirt roads, throughout the state. Township roads slowly were "pulled out of the mud" and improved, while others remained dirt roads until booming suburban development following World War II forced their improvement.

In Oswego, these improvements would result in the paving of Washington Street as today's U. S. Route 34, a major national highway that begins at Chicago's city limits in Berwyn, Illinois, and runs in a southwesterly direction through Oswego toward its western terminus at the Iowa state line at Gulfport, Illinois.

Three former trails became major state highways including Illinois Routes 25, 31, and 71. Oswego's five-corner intersection, at the junction of Chicago Road (U.S. Route 34), Madison Street, and Jefferson Street, became a hub of auto traffic through Oswego by the end of the 1920s. It was here that Oswego experienced the impact of the automobile when its first gas stations were opened including the extant Tudor Revival style Tydol (Tidewater Oil Company) service station at 25 South Madison Street.

In addition to the commercial and auto-related developments encouraged by the improvements in transportation infrastructure, new residential development was also promoted on the remaining rural land along these new highways which remained affordable and allowed families to build single-family houses on substantial acreage. An excellent example of a country estate developed along the newly paved roads is the estate of local physician, the Dr. Lewis Weishaw House (known commonly as "Stonegate," constructed 1926-1927), located just north of downtown. The estates were typically sited on large lots that had not been previously subdivided for development. With an interest in estate homes pervading the media of the day, prominent and wealthy clients were motivated to search for large parcels where they could build a spacious home in a private, yet natural setting.

Due to the improvements of the first half of the twentieth century, and the subsequent commercial and residential development, Oswego continued to be the largest town in Oswego Township, supported by residents of the Village and the surrounding unincorporated rural areas, yet would not see much growth and development until the post-World War II era.

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Oswego Post-World War II to Present-day (1945-2022)

Following World War II, the rural landscape of Illinois would be dramatically altered with the availability of federal funds to improve and build expressways under the series of Federal-Aid Highway Acts. The modern interstate system would impose new suburban development pressures as previously remote rural communities were now easily accessible via the automobile.

The rising population, suburban development, and new jobs spurred the creation of the Village's first residential subdivisions since 1907. Simultaneously, these subdivisions prompted the construction of new services and institutions, several in downtown Oswego, including the new Oswego High School at 51-61 Franklin Street (1951), the former fire station constructed at 59 South Main Street (1954), and a new library at 32 West Jefferson Street (1964).

With an increase in population and a national shift to an automobile-centric society, downtown Oswego was also impacted as the changing habits of both the merchant and the shopper produced a new kind of shopping experience. As people became more dependent upon the automobile, small pedestrian-oriented, historic commercial centers with limited available parking could not meet the demand. Additionally, department stores and supermarkets sought to service smaller towns, but needed larger spaces, beyond what could be accommodated in the historic downtown, to incorporate wider aisles, larger displays, and deeper shelves. Historic commercial districts, like Oswego, began competing with shopping centers and strip malls located on the periphery of the Village. Meeting modern retailing needs presented challenges for the downtown's continued viability. To maintain the viability of downtown Oswego, parking lots were created on the edges of Main Street and storefronts were modernized.

Additionally, with the completion of the national highway system, the advent of trucking, and the decline of rail traffic, industrial development could now also relocate outside of the central business district to larger campuses on the periphery of communities. In Oswego, this shift in industrial development first occurred in the mid-1950s when the Western Electric and Caterpillar plants were built just north of the Village.

The extensive growth of neighboring Naperville and Aurora during the mid-to-late twentieth century also spurred large-scale developments around Oswego in the 1980s. The Village extended its boundaries west of the Fox River and annexed areas to the east and north, with the majority of construction activity concentrated along U.S. Route 34. In the 1990 U.S. Census, Oswego's population stood at 3,875. By the 2000 census, Oswego's population had grown to 13,326, making Oswego the largest community in Kendall County. Two decades later, Oswego's population has nearly tripled to 34,585, and the Village remains one of the fastest-growing communities in the Chicago metropolitan area.

CONCLUSION

The last 177 years of commerce and trade history and development of Oswego is depicted through the notable and well-preserved commercial structures of the Downtown Oswego Historic District, from 1845, the date of the oldest building in the district, through the end of the period of significance in 1972. The district continues to serve and provide the community with many of the same goods and services it has over the last century while retaining sufficient architectural integrity and a strong sense of place representative of the commercial history of Oswego making it eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

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———, ed. *The Black Hawk War, 1831–1832: Volume II, Letters and Papers, Part III, Appendices and Index.* Springfield, Illinois: Illinois State Historical Library, 1978.

OTHER SOURCES:

1. Transcriptions provided by the Little White School Museum of Oswego Township and Kendall County news sources, including the *Illinois Free Trader* (1849), *Kendall County Courier* (1853-59), *Kendall County Free Press* (1860-1863), *Kendall County Record* (1864-1951), and the *Oswego Ledger* (1950-1969).
2. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps: November 1885, November 1892, February 1898, and August 1905.
3. Kendall County Atlas Maps: 1870 and 1903.
4. Historic Aerial Maps: 1952, 1973, 1983, 1984, 1994, 1999, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2017, and 2019
5. 1842 U.S. Surveyor General's Records for Illinois Federal Township Plats of Kendall County T37N_R8E_3PM.

Downtown Oswego Historic District
Name of Property

Kendall, Illinois
County and State

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: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

Downtown Oswego Historic District
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10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 5.07

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

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

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

1	<u>41.684948°</u> Latitude	<u>-88.352278°</u> Longitude	3	<u>41.683532°</u> Latitude	<u>-88.352830°</u> Longitude
2	<u>41.683532°</u> Latitude	<u>-88.352830°</u> Longitude	4	<u>41.683532°</u> Latitude	<u>-88.352830°</u> Longitude

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

Roughly bounded by one-half block north of Jackson Street on the north, the alleys immediately west and east of Main Street on the west and east, respectively, and one-half block south of Washington Street.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries selected are based on historical written narratives, Sanborn Maps, atlas maps, and historic photographs which depict the location of the historic downtown Oswego.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Erica Ruggiero/Architectural Historian date March 25, 2022
organization McGuire Igleski & Associates, Inc. telephone 847. 328. 5679 ext. 5
street & number 1330 Sherman Avenue email erica@miarchitects.com
city or town Evanston state Illinois zip code 60201

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

Downtown Oswego Historic District
Name of Property

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Photographs:

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

Photo Log

Name of Property: Downtown Oswego Historic District
City or Vicinity: Oswego
County: Kendall **State:** Illinois
Photographer: Erica Ruggiero
Date Photographed: April 23, 2022

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

Photo 1 of 12:

View of the west side of Main Street, north of Jackson Street, looking northwest from the southeast corner of Main and Jackson Streets.

Photo 2 of 12:

View of the east side of Main Street, north of Jackson Street, looking northeast from the southwest corner of Main and Jackson Streets.

Photo 3 of 12:

View of the east side of Main Street, south of Jackson Street, looking southeast from the corner northwest corner of Main and Jackson Streets.

Photo 4 of 12:

View of the west side of Main Street, south of Jackson Street, looking southwest from the northeast corner of Main and Jackson Streets.

Photo 5 of 12:

View of the south half of the west side of Main Street, mid-block between Jackson and Washington Streets, looking southwest.

Photo 6 of 12:

View of the north half of the east side of Main Street, mid-block between Jackson and Washington Streets, looking northeast.

Photo 7 of 12:

View of the south half of the east side of Main Street, mid-block between Jackson and Washington Streets, looking southeast.

Photo 8 of 12:

View of the south half of the east side of Main Street, mid-block between Jackson and Washington Streets, looking northeast.

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Photo 9 of 12:

View of the south half of the west side of Main Street, mid-block between Jackson and Washington Streets, looking northwest.

Photo 10 of 12:

View of the east side of Main Street, south of Washington Street, looking southeast from the northwest corner of Main and Washington Streets.

Photo 11 of 12:

View of the west side of Main Street, south of Washington Street, looking southwest from the northeast corner of Main and Washington Streets.

Photo 12 of 12:

View of 62 Washington Street looking north from the south side of Washington Street.

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.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Downtown Oswego Historic District
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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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List of Figures

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



FIGURE 1: GIS MAP OF THE DISTRICT. MAP IS ORIENTED NORTH. RED BOUNDARY IDENTIFIES DISTRICT BOUNDARIES.

LATITUDE/LONGITUDE COORDINATES

1	<u>41.684948°</u> Latitude	<u>-88.352278°</u> Longitude	3	<u>41.683532°</u> Latitude	<u>-88.352830°</u> Longitude
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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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FIGURE 2: BUILDING KEY. MAP IS ORIENTED NORTH. **RED** BOUNDARY AND FOOTPRINTS DEFINE DISTRICT BOUNDARIES AND CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS, RESPECTIVELY. **TURQUOISE** FOOTPRINTS IDENTIFIES NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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**FIGURE 3: PHOTOGRAPH KEY. MAP IS ORIENTED NORTH.
*PHOTOGRAPH NUMBERS DENOTE THE LOCATION OF THE CAMERA.**

Property name:
Illinois, County: