

## Earlham Commercial District Intensive Survey Update

The output of this project is a 582-page report that includes a “site inventory” of every building which consists of 4-8 pages with historic information and photos. Here is a broad overview of what has been accomplished to date:

- 37 properties were evaluated with 29 properties being recommended as eligible, excluding Bricker Price, which is already on the National Register. Although Bricker Price is excluded from the survey, it still serves as an important anchor within the recommended district.
- 503 volunteer hours; Earlham residents were very helpful.
- The “period of significance” for the existing commercial district is from 1895 through 1969, from the time of buildings were built to advent of Interstate 80 and decline of railways.
- Earlham Savings Bank is not eligible due to being built after the period of significance, but can be considered for Nomination to the National Register at a future date.

The Madison County Historic Preservation Commission feels this has been a very worthwhile project that has gathered and preserved the history of the Earlham Commercial District. This work can now be used as a springboard for economic development and future historic preservation of Earlham’s core.

### Historic “Fun Facts”

- The estimated cost of damage to the southwest block of the Commercial District from the 1901 fires of \$34,000, adjusted for inflation, would be \$1,226,984 in 2024.
- The Two Rivers building was verified through research as being the site of Clyde Morrison’s drug store.
- Jennings P. Osborn is noted several times throughout the report as a contractor for several of the buildings, a restaurant owner and member of the IOOF. His son Orman Osborne is also noted in the report as a contractor and owner of a grocery store. Jennings Osborn served in the Civil War and was in an unmarked grave in the Earlham Cemetery until 2022 when the Historic Preservation Commission installed a new veteran’s headstone for him.

**Then and Now:** Photos of the NW corner of Chestnut and E. First from: c.1905, 1970, and today.





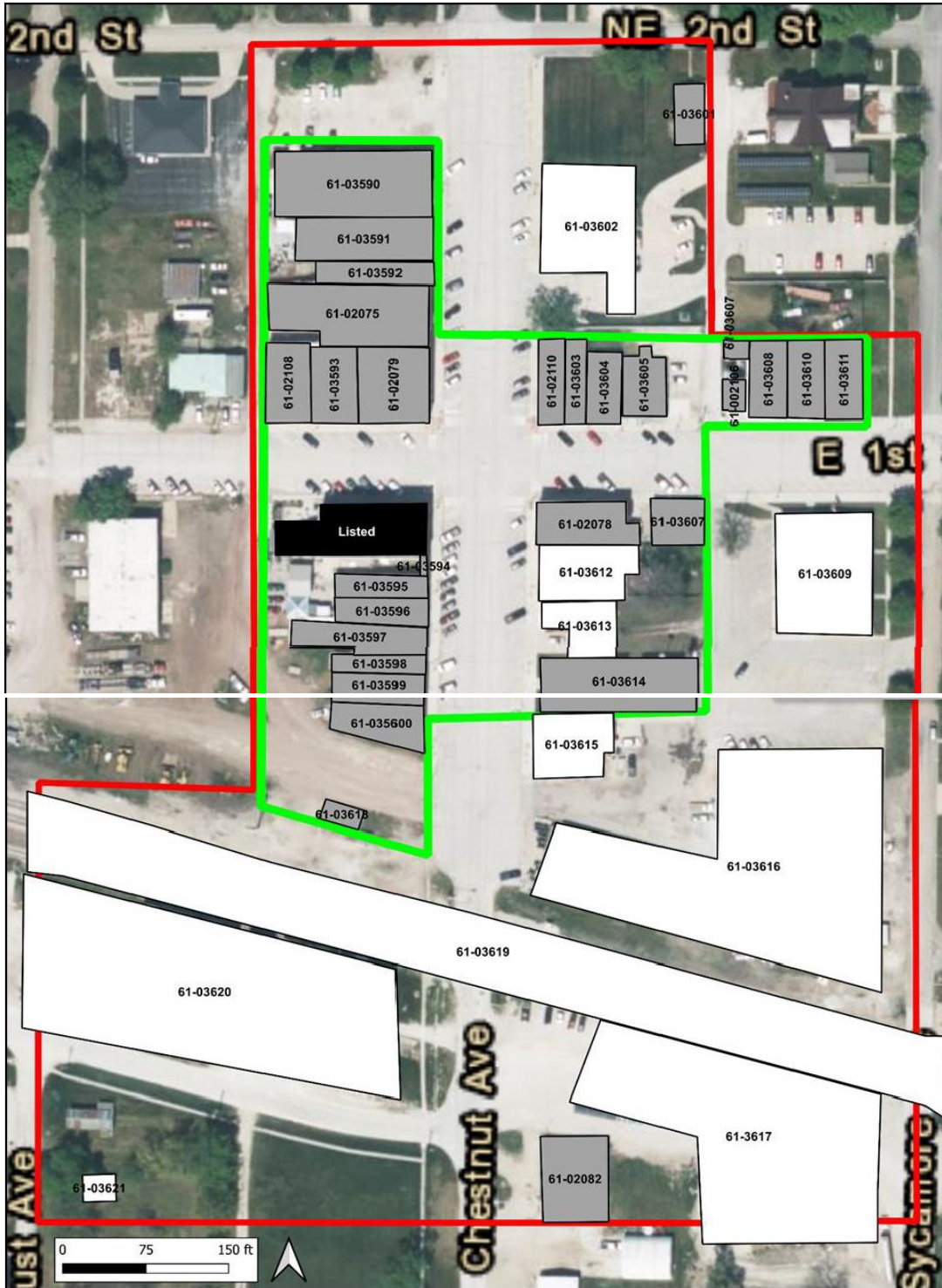


Figure 23. Recommended boundary of the Downtown Earlham Historic Commercial District (green outline) within the bounds of the current survey area (red outline) and showing the recommendations for individual resources by ISIF number. Black = Listed. Grey = Recommended Eligible. White = Recommended Not Eligible. Basemap: Current Bing Maps satellite image, accessed through QGIS mapping software, December 2023.