

A PLACE OF HISTORY

Central campus named to National Register of Historic Places

BY EMILY CHRISTENSEN | ARCHIVE PHOTO

THE HISTORIC CORE OF THE WARTBURG COLLEGE CAMPUS has been added to the National Register of Historic Places.

The 25-acre plot includes 17 buildings that contribute to the designation, along with columns that were salvaged from the original Wartburg Hall. The area begins near the roundabout on First Avenue Northwest and runs along that road to the Science Center, then extends north through campus, excluding the Wartburg-Waverly Sports & Wellness Center and Walston-Hoover Stadium, to Fifth Avenue Northwest. The Manors are included in the designation, but Knights Village is not. The district then runs from the newly named Ubuntu Center (formerly the Centennial Complex) on the corner of Fifth Avenue and Eighth Street Northwest back to First Avenue.


“Securing this designation was a team effort that was primarily driven by Rebecca Lawin McCarley, our historic tax credit consultant from Spark Consulting, and Scott Sharar, director of facilities and special projects at Wartburg,” said Rich Seggerman, Wartburg’s vice president for finance and administration. “Certainly, a great win for the college and the community.”

Karen Lehmann, a longtime member of the Waverly Historic Preservation Commission, called it a “tremendous honor for Waverly.”

“These districts contribute to the awareness of the community and the college’s histories,” she said. “It is a testament to how Waverly and the college have been maintained and that they are worth celebrating. There are many communities that are much older than Waverly and Wartburg, and they do not have these kinds of designations. We appreciate the college pursuing this.”

The Wartburg College district is the fifth in the city of Waverly. Old Main, on the college’s central campus, has been on the historic registry since 1978.

“I’m delighted that the campus has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Old Main is the only building left from the campus that Georg Grossmann knew,” said Dr. Terry Lindell, Wartburg professor of history. “That building was built in 1880 to serve the needs of the school for training teachers for parochial schools. The contractor for that building, by the way, was William Knight. The buildings built during the tenure of August Engelbrecht — including Luther Hall, the first gymnasium, Grossmann Hall (now Founders Hall), and Wartburg Hall (razed in the 1980s) — were a decisive factor in bringing Wartburg College back to Waverly in 1935.”

Though the designation does not place any explicit limits on future campus changes, the college did apply for and receive notification of an approximately \$2.6 million Historic Preservation Tax Credit from the Iowa Economic Development Authority for the Centennial and Vollmer Hall Renovation Project. All work must maintain character-defining features and meet federal Secretary of Interior standards. 

Students gather for an 1891 photo outside Old Main.

