441

RECEIVED 2280
OCT 31 2014
NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Hoffman Building

Other names/site number SD01-098 and SD01-099

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

2. Location

Street & Number 1325 and 1341 Silver Street

City or town Ashland State Nebraska County Saunders

Not for publication [] Vicinity []

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] 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 [X] 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 [X] local**

Applicable National Register Criteria: **[X] A [] B [ ] C [] D**

SHPO/Director — 10-27-2014

Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date**

Nebraska State Historical Society

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property [X] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting Official **Date**

Title **State of Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

[✓] entered in the National Register.
[ ] determined eligible for the National Register.
[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.
[ ] removed from the National Register.
[ ] other, (explain):

Signature of Keeper — 11.21.2014 **Date of Action**

Hoffman Building | Saunders, Nebraska
Name of Property | **County and State**

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- [X] Private
- [] Public-local
- [] Public-state
- [] Public-federal

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

- [X] Building(s)
- [] District
- [] Site
- [] Structure
- [] Object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		Buildings
		Sites
		Structures
		Objects
1		Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

Commerce/Trade
Recreation and Culture

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

Commerce/Trade

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions.)

Other: Vernacular Two-Part Commercial Block

Materials (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick, Limestone

Hoffman Building | Saunders, Nebraska
Name of Property | **County and State**

Description

Summary Paragraph (Briefly describe 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.)

The Hoffman Building is located at the southeast corner of 14th and Silver Streets in Ashland, Nebraska (2010 pop. 2,453), a prominent intersection in the town's historic commercial area. The building is a community landmark, a two-story brick structure, with a matching one-story section on the east, and is a vernacular version of the two-part commercial block.[1] The Hoffman Building housed a family owned and operated grocery/variety store on the first level and a large auditorium on the second level for more than 60 years. A restaurant operated in the one-story east portion of the building during the same time period.

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable.**)**

The Hoffman Building, erected in 1917, anchors the east end of the Silver Street business district. This historic commercial area comprises about ten square blocks that retain brick paving down the center of the streets that dates to 1918. The Hoffman Building was constructed for use as a grocery/department store and restaurant, and served in that capacity for more than 60 years.

This commercial building is a two-story brick building with a full basement, and a pitched roof concealed by a parapet. A one-story retail space on the east side originally housed the main public stairway to the second floor auditorium, and Race's Restaurant. The building's footprint runs from the Silver Street sidewalk on the north, south to the alley, and is situated on lots 4, 5, and 6, block 30, Flora City, Ashland. A chicken house and hitching posts originally occupied the green space to the south and east of the building.

The structure's exterior exhibits components of the two-part commercial block, particularly on the north, or front façade. There is a distinction between the first and second floors accentuated by horizontal construction elements. The lower level space, designed for the retail store, features large showcase/display windows on the north separated by engaged columns. Transom lights, covered and/or removed over time, were installed above the display windows on the north and west facades. Preliminary evidence suggests the transoms were made of textured glass. Belt courses of limestone, probably from a local quarry, mark the crowns of the first floor transom windows and also the base of the upper story windows, creating a long rectangular tablet for painted signage. A cornice with simple

[1] Richard Longstreth, *Main Street, A Guide to American Commercial Architecture.* (Washington D.C., The Preservation Press, 1987), 82-85.

design elements, including patterned, stepped brickwork, caps the building. A limestone tablet, or date stone, placed at the top center of the front façade, is inscribed "Hoffman 1917" (photo 2). The cornice line is raised above this stone, to bring attention to this design detail. Patterned vertical brickwork in relief descends periodically from the cornice line, and similar brick patterns provide hoods over the second floor windows.

The windows on second floor are placed symmetrically and originally had 20-section mullions in the transoms above the double-hung lights (photo 1, 8, 9). These upper windows were replaced on the main building, presumably in the 1990s, and the transoms are now single pane windows. The original fire escape is intact on the west façade.

The one-story Race's Restaurant, sometimes called a Confectionery, was built by Hoffman at the same time as the main building and shares the same ornamental brickwork (photo 1, 4).[2] The small retail space is separated from the two-story portion of the building by the enclosed, double-doored, wide stairway to second floor that leads to the Hoffman Auditorium (photo 3). The café portion of the building is currently under separate ownership and is being used as a workshop. The eight-section transom lights and windows in the restaurant are not original, but were hand-made by the current owner in the 1990s, in a vintage design. When he purchased the building, it was in disrepair due to fire damage and lack of maintenance.

The placement and height of the shed roof on the restaurant made it possible for the east façade of the second floor to accommodate four of the same large windows that bring light into the auditorium space on the north (front) and west facades. A large, colored glass window, designed with the word "Auditorium" in the pattern, welcomed guests at the entrance to the stairway to the large second floor hall (figure 1). This window, removed years ago, was originally installed in line with the restaurant transoms. This window, separated from the building at some point, has been recovered intact, and will be exhibited in the renovated building.

The west entrance to the grocery department on 14th Street was originally a recessed doorway flanked by display windows and sheltered by an awning topped with decorative transom lights that are of the same design as the auditorium entry window (figure 2, photo 37-38). Now altered, the massive, original door was moved a few feet south of its initial location at some point prior to 1957, and installed on the same plane as the outer wall (figure 3, photo 8). The display windows were removed and the original entrance area was covered. Renovation plans include restoring this recessed west entrance with display windows using the original door.

[2] *Ashland Gazette*, December 6, 1917.

Both portions of the building had transom lights above large display windows, and one 20-light transom from the larger Hoffman store survives in the basement (photo 10). Unfortunately, only one historic photograph, published in 1957, has surfaced to date showing the historic second floor transom window configuration and other modifications (figure 3).

The structure's location on a corner lot, allowed for two prominent entrances into the retail areas, one on the west, and the other deeply recessed on the northwest corner of the building. The entrances allowed customers to gain access separately to the grocery and dry goods departments. The grocery entrance was on the west, and the dry goods/variety departments were found inside the northwest corner door. A beauty salon was also located inside the building.

Also on the west façade, south of the grocery entrance, is a doorway leading to the back part of the building and to a service stairway rising west to east from 14th Street to second floor. This entrance accessed the backstage space, so that performers could discreetly enter the upstairs dressing rooms. Above the outside door to this entrance is a 16-light colored glass transom window (photo 11). The service elevator opens at the top of this stairway in the back stage area (photo 12-14). The elevator will be restored and rendered inoperable, as an interesting design feature of the renovated building.

The south façade that adjoins the alley features a delivery dock (photo 7).

The interior of the building originally consisted of the department/grocery store retail and receiving space on the first floor, storage and warehouse space in the basement, and a large auditorium and back stage area on the second level. Pressed tin ceilings and hardwood floors enhance first and second floors and are in good condition. Shelving for grocery storage and a cooler were housed in the basement (photo 16-18).

A good portion of the first floor is still a wide open space suggestive of the grocery/variety store operation. A fitness center and dance studio are now located in this area (photo 19-22, 39). Some partition walls are in place on this level from various reincarnations of the building that took place during the Hoffman era and since the grocery closed. The rear section of this level originally housed work and preparation space for the grocery store, a walk-in cooler, and a freight elevator that served all three floors of the building. The elevator was used to bring products up to the store from the basement storage area, and also to move large items up to the auditorium (photo 23).

The second level of the building is home to the Hoffman Auditorium (photo 32-36). It is complete with a stage, scenery flats and curtains, dressing rooms, rest rooms, and a backstage work and prop area. The main auditorium entrance has double doors, and opens to a wide stairway rising from Silver Street (photo 3, 24). At the top of the stairway was a foyer space that included a ticket booth and

coat room. The auditorium had moveable theatre seating so that the space was versatile. The large hall is currently painted a dull green and is decorated with geometric shapes and lines (photo 25-26). This décor was probably completed by the local Girl Scout troop in 1955, a group that regularly used the auditorium as a meeting space at that time.

Behind the stage are two original dressing rooms, and a stage work/storage area. A large space to the south of the backstage rooms, currently houses a modern apartment with a deck and exterior stairway on the east façade (photo 27). An area that might have served as a "green room," the place where performers waited to go on stage, is to the west of the stage.

The original light fixtures are still extant in the auditorium ceiling (photo 28). The pressed tin ceilings and hardwood floors are in good condition as are the stage curtains, olio curtains, and flats. These stage appointments were made by the well-known Twin City Scenic Company, based in Minneapolis (photo 29-31).

Since the Hoffman grocery closed in about 1980, the building has been a viable home to several retail enterprises, including Donco Tools that occupied the building for several years. At some point the restaurant area came under separate ownership with an easement in place for auditorium stairway use.

In 1995, the larger, two-story portion of the building was purchased by Dennis and M.J. Jeffrey, and was used as a photography studio and also for other retail purposes. The building was named Silver Street Square at this time. The Jeffreys replaced the original windows, and made some changes and repairs to the building, including removing the covering that had concealed the historic, painted signage above the transom area. They also installed a new roof.

The Hoffman Building was sold to Hanlie, LLC in 2012. This company has an adaptive reuse plan prepared that will preserve the historical integrity of the exterior and interior spaces of the building, while providing a premium home for Linoma Software, a growing company also owned by the Hanlie owners. The first level fitness center and dance studio will remain, and the auditorium will become home to the software company.

Hoffman Building | Saunders, Nebraska
Name of Property | **County and State**

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [X] **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 a grave.
- [ ] **D** A cemetery.
- [ ] **E** A reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- [ ] **F** A commemorative property.
- [ ] **G** Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Commerce
Entertainment/Recreation

Period of Significance
1917-1964

Significant Dates
1917 – Year of construction

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
unknown

Hoffman Building | Saunders, Nebraska
Name of Property | **County and State**

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

The two-story brick Hoffman commercial building represents an era of successful, local independent retail operations that emerged in small town Nebraska during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The building is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A: Commerce, at the local level, for its association with events that have made important contributions to the broad patterns of our history. The building has been a community landmark since its completion in 1917. It was home to Oscar Hoffman's successful grocery and department store, a much-utilized auditorium space that served the community in various capacities, and a small café. The Hoffman name was a constant in Ashland's commercial history for 80 years (1884-1964), and this substantial building, the company's final retail space, is a tribute to the success of the family business, and the support the community of Ashland gave to this business. The Hoffman building is representative of the commercial growth of small Nebraska towns, how general merchandise stores grew in the 1910s and 1920s, and how businesses adapted to new economic circumstances in the post-war period. The building also shows the symbiotic relationship between large retailers and smaller service businesses, as shown by the inclusion of the small café building on the east side of the store. The Hoffman store represented one-stop shopping until the late 1940s when the large dry goods inventory was sold, and the Hoffmans concentrated on expanding the grocery department. While Ashland was home to a few grocery and general merchandise stores during the Hoffman era, the Hoffman store was the largest and operated the longest. The inclusion of the café represents an entrepreneurialism that ensured customers could satisfy their appetites conveniently adjacent to the retail business. The Hoffman building is also significant under Criteria A: Entertainment and Recreation because of the second floor auditorium space that provided a versatile performance and event venue, and also served the community in various capacities in the spirit of a community center.

The period of significance was determined to be from the date of construction (1917) until 1964, a date that represents 50 years prior to the present time, and also the year in which the Hoffman's sold the business. During these four and a half decades, Hoffman's thriving general merchandise/department store operated in the building, as did the regularly used second floor auditorium. The café housed in the one-story portion of the building was also important during this time period as a place of relaxation following a shopping trip or an auditorium event.

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

Settlement began on the site of present day Ashland in the 1850s. Located on the banks of Salt Creek in Saunders County, Nebraska, the town of Ashland emerged near a ford on the creek on the site of the Saline Ford trading post. The ford, a safe crossing on the Ox Bow Trail for freighters and settlers traveling west, was a limestone outcropping in the creek bed that made a firm foundation for wagons.[3] The freighting firm Russell, Majors and Waddell used the ford in the late 1850s as they moved supplies via ox-drawn wagons from the Missouri River towns of Plattsmouth and Nebraska City. The ford was located at about First Street and what is now known as Birch (originally Main) Street. The first commercial district grew in the lowlands near the ford during the 1860s, and several buildings were constructed in this area along both sides of Salt Creek. In the hills above the ford, a village called Flora City was platted. Soon Saline Ford and Flora City merged and the town was re-platted in 1866 and renamed Ashland. The town was formally organized in 1870 and as the town grew, a commercial district emerged along Silver Street. [4] Ashland served as the Saunders county seat from 1866 until 1873, when the county records were moved to Wahoo. Ashland was also in the running to be the location for the Nebraska State Capitol.

The Burlington Missouri River Railroad was built to Ashland in 1870 and became the mode of choice for transporting freight, rather than the old trail. The Omaha-Lincoln-Denver highway route (OLD) was designated in 1911 and the route came through Ashland bringing travelers into town along Silver Street. Later named the Detroit-Lincoln-Denver (DLD) highway, automobile-related businesses were built along this route on Silver and 14th Streets. This highway turned north at the corner of Silver and 14th Streets, the intersection at which the Hoffman building is located.[5]

The Hoffman Building is significant under Criteria A: Commerce for its association with the Hoffman retail business whose owners constructed the building. The business was the largest and most successful general merchandise store in Ashland. There were approximately four other grocery and five general merchandise stores in Ashland in the late 19th century; these businesses survived into the first half of the 20th century.[6] However, after 1917, these stores were not a large, and did not offer the

[3] William E. Lass, *From the Missouri to the Great Salt Lake, An Account of Overland Freighting.* (Lincoln, Nebraska: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1972), 68, 69.
[4] A.T. Andreas, *History of the State of Nebraska*. (Chicago: The Western Historical Company, 1882), 1390.
[5] Centennial Committee of the Ashland Chamber of Commerce. *The First 100 Years, Ashland, Nebraska: 1857-1957*. (Ashland, Nebraska: The Ashland Gazette, 1957), 39.
[6] Sanborn Map, 1897.

diversity of the Hoffman business. They did not advertise as vigorously, and each went out of business years before the Hoffman store closed.[7]

Oscar Hoffman was born in Illinois in 1867, and came to Ashland with his parents, George and Josephine, and his siblings in 1871.[8] Oscar was a teenaged entrepreneur; he opened his first small general store in Ashland at the age of sixteen. Since he was underage, his father George, a farmer and dray line operator, had to sign legal documents for him and lend his name to the business. The modest grocery/general merchandise business that young Oscar started in 1884 prospered, and moved to several locations in downtown Ashland, before he built this substantial, two-story brick building on Silver Street in 1917. Between 1888 and 1898, the business was known as George Hoffman and Company. Oscar ran the business, with the help of his younger brother John, using their father's name. In 1898, the name was changed to Hoffman Brothers to reflect the partnership of Oscar and John.[9] By 1902, their store was located on north 4th Street, between Elm and Silver Streets, a block north of the future location of the Hoffman Building.

In 1908, John left the business, and Oscar renamed the store Oscar Hoffman, General Merchandise.[10] He continued to further expand his stock until one could buy just about anything at Hoffman's, thereby transforming his store into Ashland's primary general merchandise store. Decades of regular aggressive advertising in the *Ashland Gazette* revealed the variety of merchandise offered to customers. Food staples and holiday delicacies, meat, clothing, shoes, accessories including golf gloves, dry goods, including bedding, curtains, fabric and yarn, toys, stationery, home décor, rugs, animal feed, and live poultry in season could be had there. Oscar also advertised local eggs and fresh garden produce, and even offered delivery service. By 1917, Hoffman outgrew his 4th Street location, and sought out a new location for a larger store, which had he developed into a basic department store as a result of continuous expansion.

Hoffman purchased lots at the southeast corner of 14th and Silver Streets, a major downtown intersection on the OLD Highway, and on February 1, 1917, the *Ashland Gazette* announced that the construction of a new Hoffman store would be part of a major building boom. Oscar's new store building was modern with steam heat, electricity, and a telephone. The corner location was ideal for a new store. It was available for redevelopment after the demolition of the former Commercial Hotel,

[7] Ibid.
[8] Charles Perky, Ed. *Past and Present of Saunders County, Nebraska*. (Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1915), 598-602.
[9] *Ashland Gazette*, March 29, 1939.
[10] *Ashland Gazette*, February 14, 1908.

which stood on the lots through at least 1902 (figure 4).[11] The year 1917 also brought plans for brick paving, a new high school, a new telephone company, and several other new business buildings to the town. Community lectures, given by guest speakers, were also held during this time to rally and energize Ashland citizens to support the improvements.[12] Hoffman's store held a grand opening on Wednesday, December 5, 1917 that lasted into the evening hours. Despite a storm, a large number of people came out to see the new store where they enjoyed live music and refreshments. The store was decorated for the holidays, and each guest was presented with a carnation.[13]

Oscar's son, Oscar Harvey, who went by the name Harvey, joined him in the business in 1907 as a teenager and worked along his father for 32 years, until the senior Hoffman's death. Father and son further expanded their service offerings by adding a beauty salon within the store that was still operating in the late 1940s.[14] For the next three decades, the store prospered through both the boom years of the 1920s, and during the depression years. The dry goods department developed over time to become a very large division of the store, however when Oscar Hoffman died in 1939, it was difficult for his son Harvey to manage the entire operation. He eventually sold the dry goods inventory to Norman Ruberg in 1946, and Ruberg and his wife ran Ruberg Dry Goods from within the Hoffman building, while Harvey worked to expand the grocery and meat departments.[15] The two businesses shared the building until 1951 when Rubergs moved to their own space in the next block west, and operated their dry goods business for many years at 1425 Silver Street.[16]

Hoffman's store became a member of the newly created Independent Grocers Alliance, (IGA) in 1927, soon after that organization was founded. IGA was created in 1926 to allow cooperative wholesale buying by merchants, hence lowering costs. IGA and other associations also had their own brands and shared advertising. This cooperation assured that the best prices could be extended to the customer, and ensured that small grocery businesses could compete with the wholesale buying power of chain stores.[17] Hoffman's Grocery was a member of the IGA family until Oscar's son Harvey sold the business in 1964. His successor, Carl Poggemeyer, also continued the affiliation with IGA until he sold

[11] Sanborn Map, 1902; 1912.
[12] *Ashland Gazette*, March 15, 1917
[13] *Ashland Gazette*, December 6, 1917.
[14] Saline Ford Preservation Society, *Ashland's Main Street Remembered*. (Ashland, Nebraska, 2004), 69.
[15] *Ashland Gazette*, July 10, 1946.
[16] Centennial Committee of the Ashland Chamber of Commerce. *The First 100 Years, Ashland, Nebraska: 1857-1957*. (Ashland, Nebraska: The Ashland Gazette, 1957), 92.
[17] James M. Mayo, *The American Grocery Store, The Business Evolution of an Architectural Space.* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1993), 118-121.

the business in 1974, and it became a Jack and Jill affiliate.[18] The large first floor area in the Hoffman Building ceased to house a grocery store in about 1980. Donco Tools was housed in the building for a few years after it was vacated by Jack and Jill, and then a series of retail entities occupied the space.[19]

The second generation of Hoffmans was active in the Methodist church, and in several social and civic organizations. Harvey was a long-time member of the Ashland Chamber of Commerce, chairman of finance for the Methodist Church, and a member of the Saunders County Hospital Board. Harvey was also a charter member of American Legion Post 129, founded in 1919, and served as commander. His wife, Gretchen, was a charter member of the American Legion Auxiliary, and served as the group's first president.[20]

The Hoffman Building is also significant under Criteria A: Entertainment/Recreation because of the auditorium space on the upper level that provided a venue for a variety of activities, events, dances, and stage shows. The auditorium became a popular community center that proved to be more convenient than the 19th century Sears Opera House located one block to the west at 15th and Silver Streets (figure 5).

The Sears Opera House opened in a brick building on Silver Street in the 1880s. In typical opera house design, the street-front level of the building housed two stores, while the theatre was on second floor. This venue served the town as an opera house until about 1920, and then later served as a movie theatre. The building still stands at the southeast corner of Silver and 15th Streets, but has been substantially altered. Virtually no physical evidence of the buildings tenure as an opera house remains, and the building is currently occupied by an auto parts store. Other entertainment houses in Ashland in the early 20th century were two movie theatres, in addition to the one in the Sears building, and a roller rink. Chautauqua entertainment also took place in Ashland between 1907 and the mid-1920s.[21]

The Hoffman Auditorium represents a transitional era in Nebraska, when 19th century opera houses were fading from popularity, and were being replaced by more modern venues. The prime era of the opera house in Nebraska has been identified as 1867 – 1917, ending the very year that the Hoffman

[18] *Ashland Gazette*, January 30, 1964,
[19] *Ashland Gazette*, January 30, 2014.
[20] *Ashland Gazette*, January 30, 1964, April 16, 1964.
[21] Centennial Committee of the Ashland Chamber of Commerce. *The First 100 Years, Ashland, Nebraska: 1857-1957*. (Ashland, Nebraska: The Ashland Gazette, 1957), 40, 41.

Building was completed.[22] The Hoffman Auditorium was modern in floor plan, and also offered electricity and central heating, major improvements from the 19th century opera house. Unlike the Sears Opera House, the Hoffman auditorium had an extensive back stage area with dressing rooms, storage, and elevator access that allowed for the movement of props and other necessities to the second floor.

The stage itself was outfitted with Twin City Scenic Company hand-painted flats and olio curtains, several of which remain intact and in good condition. The Twin City Scenic Company was a prominent, prolific Minneapolis scene design company that painted backdrops and curtains, and also built cycloramas and constructed sets for theatres, opera houses auditoriums, and fraternal halls around the country between 1895 and 1979. The company sent traveling salesmen to call on customers. The salesmen telegraphed or phoned orders back to the factory so that artists could quickly paint the sets and send them out by train to the customer. The company made scenery for Ringling Brothers Circus, many Masonic Temples, and the 1925 Shrine National Convention in addition to hundreds of local and regional theatres, large and small. Twin Cities also did the notable decoration and design of the Minnesota building for the 1933 Chicago Century of Progress Exposition.[23]

A wide variety of events, performances, and dances took place in the Hoffman Auditorium, giving the people of Ashland a taste of culture and opportunities to enjoy fine entertainment close to home. In November, 1919, for example, a traveling minstrel troupe, Arnold and Quick's Greater Minstrels with their Silver Coronet Band, performed, and there was also a dance held that month with "a good six-piece orchestra." A tight wire duo, billed as the "greatest novelty show on the road" appeared in the auditorium that year as well.[24] Many acts appear to have been booked by Harvey Hoffman. Big name bands such as Tommy Dorsey also appeared there.[25] Various entertainment options were offered regularly and were advertised in the *Ashland Gazette*.

The Hoffman Auditorium served as a theatre, dance hall, meeting place, general entertainment venue, but it also served the community during times of distress. When the old central school was destroyed by fire in November 1919, the Hoffman Auditorium was partitioned off and housed high school classes until the new school building was finished.[26] During World War II, sewing machines

[22] D. Layne Ehlers. Opera House Buildings in Nebraska, 1867-1917, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, 1988.
[23] "A Scenic History…" Old Arizona, www.oldarizona.com. Retrieved January 18, 2014.
[24] *Ashland Gazette*, November 6, 13, and 27, 1919.
[25] Saline Ford Preservation Society, *Ashland's Main Street Remembered*. (Ashland, Nebraska, 2004), 35.
[26] *Ashland Gazette*, November 29, 1919; December 4, 1919.

were brought in, and the hall was transformed into a sterile place for local women to stitch war-time bandages.[27] The auditorium was the first meeting place for Ashland's American Legion Auxiliary when they organized in 1930. [28] In 1955, the hall became home to the Ashland Girl Scout troop, who with their parents, cleaned and repainted it, presumably with the color scheme and geometric designs still currently in place.[29] The auditorium has been vacant for many years, but there are plans to rehabilitate the space.

An additional component of the Hoffman Building, Race's Restaurant (sometimes called Race's Confectionery), was located in the one-story space to the east of the auditorium entrance, and housed a lunch counter that served ice cream, candy, hot and cold lunches, and sold cigars and tobacco.[30] The café operated continuously from 1917 until the 1970s. There were three other cafes operating in Ashland in the early and middle 20th century for various lengths of time, including one at the Burlington Railroad station, and another at the bus depot, both catering to travelers.[31] The inclusion of this small café in the Hoffman building offered a convenience to Hoffman shoppers and to auditorium patrons as well, who benefited from the café's location adjacent to the auditorium entrance stairway; therefore, the café contributes to the building's Criterion A significance.

Evidence suggests that the Hoffman family was not involved in the daily management of the restaurant. Race's Restaurant was already in existence at a different location at least ten years before the construction of the 1917 Hoffman Building, and was possibly near the earlier Hoffman store on North 14th Street. It is interesting that the newspaper advertisements for the store, even as early as 1907, were always placed next to Race's Restaurant advertisements, especially at Christmas, and had a compatible flavor to them, suggesting that perhaps the two businesses were always connected.[32] A restaurant continued to occupy this Hoffman space for many years under various names. The Al Blanco Café, a long-running eatery, was in operation in the building in the 1950s, and was still in existence in the 1970s. Later the space served as a flower shop.[33] The café area now serves as storage and a workshop.

---

[27] Ashland Historical Society, unpublished files, n.d.
[28] *The First 150 Years, Ashland, Nebraska: 1857-2007*, (Ashland, Nebraska: The Ashland Gazette, 2007), 58.
[29] Centennial Committee of the Ashland Chamber of Commerce. *The First 100 Years, Ashland, Nebraska: 1857-1957*. (Ashland, Nebraska: The Ashland Gazette, 1957), 87.
[30] *Ashland Gazette*, December 6, 1917.
[31] Centennial Committee of the Ashland Chamber of Commerce. *The First 100 Years, Ashland, Nebraska: 1857-1957*. (Ashland, Nebraska: The Ashland Gazette, 1957), 91.
[32] *Ashland Gazette*, December 13, 1907, December 27, 1917,
[33] Centennial Committee of the Ashland Chamber of Commerce. *The First 100 Years, Ashland, Nebraska: 1857-1957*. (Ashland, Nebraska: The Ashland Gazette, 1957), 62. Lowell Krueger, Ashland, Nebraska, telephone interview by author, March 5, 2014.

The Hoffman Building remains a landmark in Ashland's historic downtown business district. The building retains its interior and exterior architectural integrity, and anchors one of the most prominent intersections in Ashland. The Hoffman Building is the remnant of an early 20th century destination venue where people could find merchandise, entertainment, and dining in one convenient location -- a diversified commercial space that successfully endured for decades. It is one of the best preserved local commercial buildings of its time period. The building is undergoing renovation that will preserve its interior and exterior architectural features, retain commercial space on the first level, and adapt the auditorium space for Linoma Software.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (Insert bibliography here – cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form.)

"A Scenic History…" Old Arizona. www.oldarizona.com. Accessed January 18, 2014.

Andreas, A.T. *History of the State of Nebraska.* Chicago: The Western Historical Company, 1882.

Centennial Committee of the Ashland Chamber of Commerce. *The First 100 Years, Ashland, Nebraska: 1857-1957.* Ashland, Nebraska: The Ashland Gazette, 1957.

Ehlers, D. Layne. "Opera House Buildings in Nebraska, 1867-1917," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, 1988.

Harris, Cyril M. *Dictionary of Architecture and Construction*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2006.

Lass, William E., *From the Missouri to the Great Salt Lake, An Account of Overland Freighting.* Lincoln, Nebraska: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1972.

Longstreth, Richard. *Main Street*. Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1987.

Mayo, James M. *The American Grocery Store, The Business Evolution of an Architectural Space*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1993.

Perky, Charles, Ed. *Past and Present of Saunders County, Nebraska*. Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1915.

Saline Ford Preservation Society, *Ashland's Main Streets Remembered*. Ashland, Nebraska: 2004.

The First 150 Years, Ashland, Nebraska: 1857-2007. Ashland, Nebraska: The Ashland Gazette, 2007.

Newspapers
The Ashland Gazette newspaper. Ashland, Nebraska, 1916-2014.

Maps:
Ashland, Nebraska. Chicago: Sanborn Map Company, 1897, 1902, 1912, 1923, 1932.

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:

__X__ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
__X__ Other (Name of repository)
Ashland Historical Society, Berggren Architects

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): SD01-098 and SD01-099

Hoffman Building | Saunders, Nebraska
Name of Property | **County and State**

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property: Less than one | USGS Quadrangle: Ashland East, Nebraska

(Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates. Delete the other.)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

1.	Latitude	41.038888	Longitude	-96.368186
2.	Latitude		Longitude	
3.	Latitude		Longitude	
4.	Latitude		Longitude	

OR

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map): _____

___ NAD 1927 or ___ NAD 1983

1.	Zone		Easting		Northing	
2.	Zone		Easting		Northing	
3.	Zone		Easting		Northing	
4.	Zone		Easting		Northing	

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

The property is situated on lots 4, 5 and 6, block 30, Flora City, Ashland, Saunders County, Nebraska. Currently the property has two owners. The west part, with the two-story portion of the building, is described as lots 5 and 6 and the West 3 feet of lot 4, block 30, Flora City, Ashland, except the north 80 feet of the west 3 feet of lot 4, and except the north 80 feet of the east half of lot 5. The east parcel, containing the one-story restaurant section of the building, is described as the north 80 feet and west 3 feet of lot 4 and the north 80 feet of the east half of lot 5 and the west 19.5 feet and the east 39 feet of lot 4, block 30, Flora City, Ashland.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

These boundaries correspond with the legal description of the property and include the area historically associated with the property.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Janet L. Jeffries, Historian/Architectural Historian
organization: Berggren Architects | date: October 10, 2014
street & number: 1201 O Street | telephone: (402) 310-4252 or (402) 475-0597
city or town: Lincoln | state: NE | zip code: 68508
email: janet.jeffries@doane.edu

Hoffman Building | Saunders, Nebraska
Name of Property | **County and State**

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO for any additional items.)

Figure 3: Detail of "Auditorium" transom window originally installed above auditorium entrance (see photo 3). Photo by Robert Luebbe, 2013

Figure 4: Circa 1940s view, 14th Street (west) façade, grocery store entrance, view facing east. Owner's collection.

Hoffman Building | Saunders, Nebraska
Name of Property | **County and State**

Figure 5: 1950s view of north (left) and west facades, view facing southeast. Owner's collection.

Hoffman Building | Saunders, Nebraska
Name of Property | **County and State**

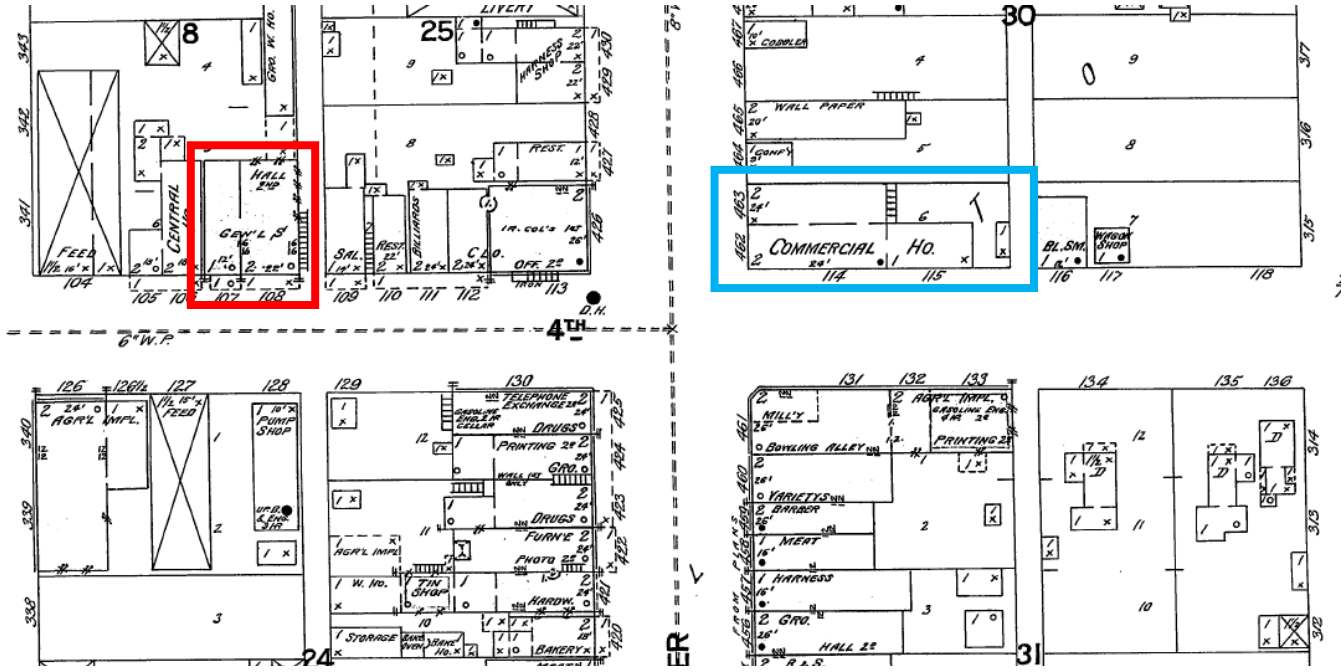


Figure 4: The 1902 Sanborn Map showing the location of the first Hoffman Store (red) and the commercial hotel (blue). North is to the left.

Hoffman Building | Saunders, Nebraska
Name of Property | **County and State**

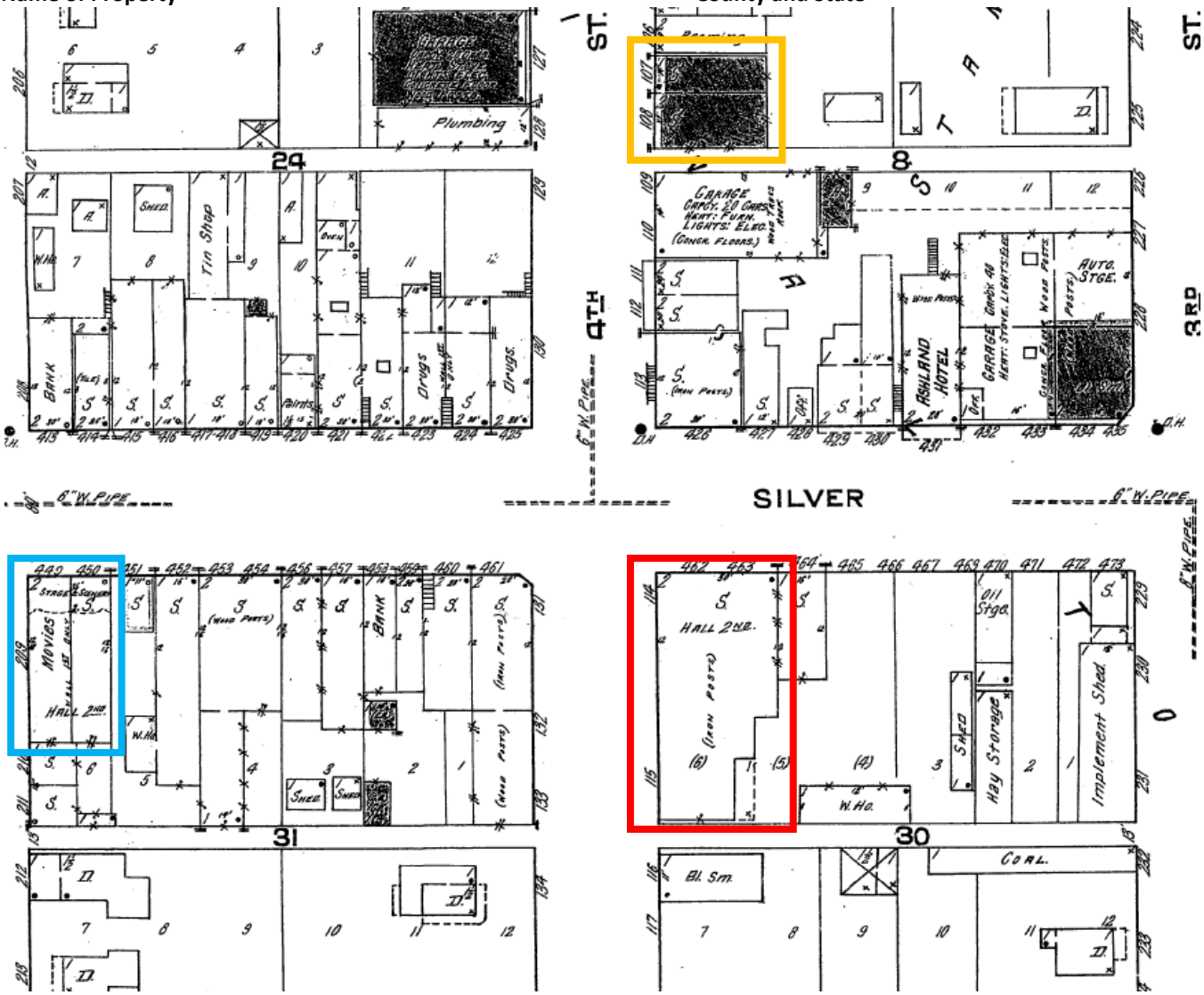
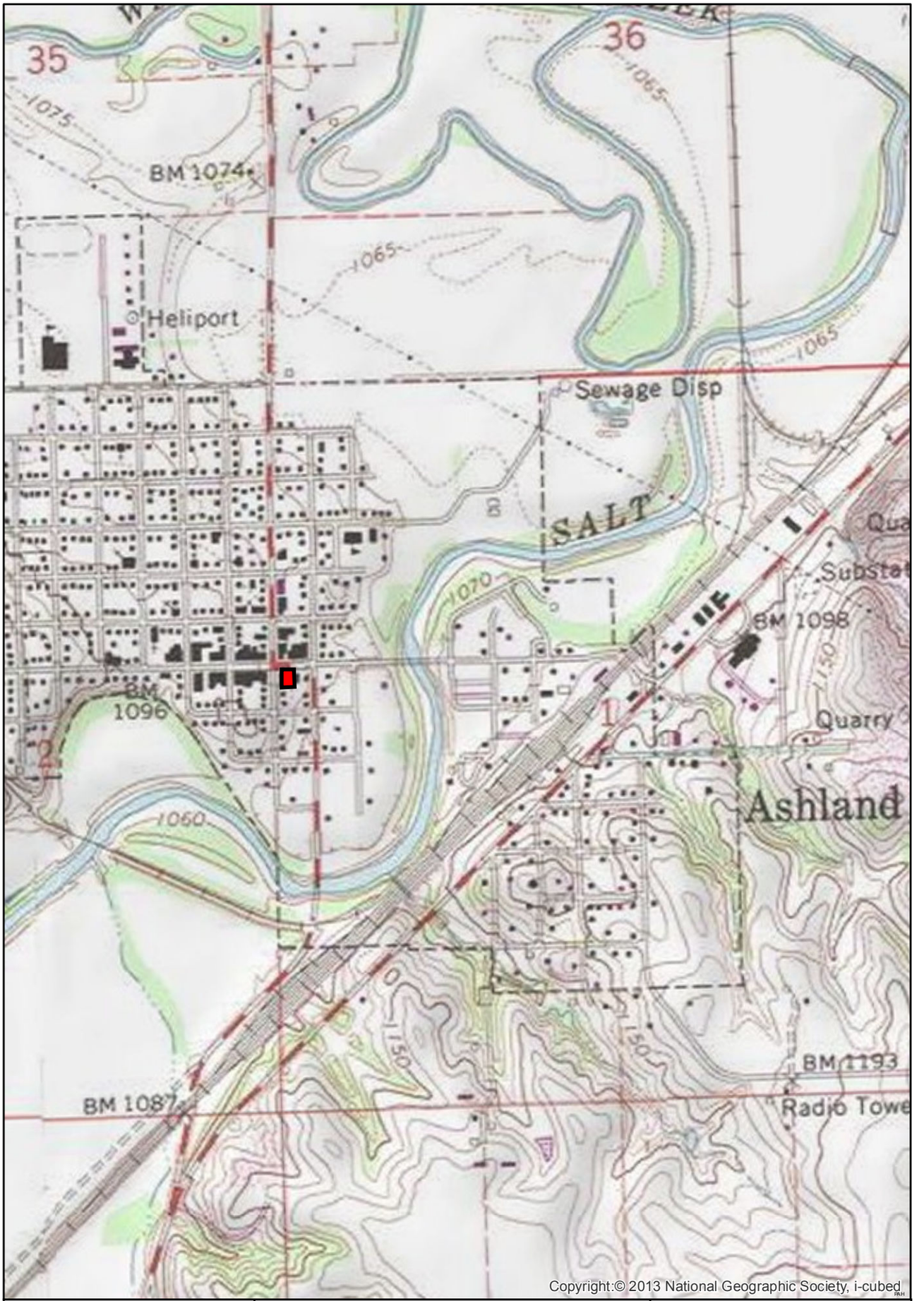


Figure 5: 1923 Sanborn Map showing the location of the 1917 Hoffman Store on the site of the former Commercial Hotel at the southeast corner of 4th and Silver Street (red). The former Hoffman Store is located on North 4th Street (orange). The Sears Opera House is located at the far left of the map at Silver and 5th Street (blue).



Legend

NRHP Boundary

USGS Quadrangle Map: Ashland East

Hoffman Building

Ashland, Saunders County, Nebraska

Feet
0 150 300 600 900 1,200

1:12,000

Datum: WGS 84

Legend

NRHP Boundary

Aerial View

Hoffman Building

Ashland, Saunders County, Nebraska

Feet

062.5125 250 375 500

1:5,000

Datum: WGS 84

Hoffman Building | Saunders, Nebraska
Name of Property | **County and State**

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, 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 **Hoffman Building SD01-098 and SD01-099**

City or Vicinity **Ashland** County **Saunders** State **Nebraska**

Photographer **Patrick Haynes**
Nebraska State Historical Society
Janet L. Jeffries, Berggren Architects

Date Photographed **March 2014**
January 2014

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

Photographs taken by Patrick Haynes, Nebraska State Historical Society, March 2014, unless otherwise noted.

Photo #1 of 39 Silver Street (north) façade, view facing south. Janet L. Jeffries
Photo #2 of 39 Detail of date stone on north façade, view facing south. Janet L. Jeffries
Photo #3 of 39 Detail of Silver Street auditorium entrance, north façade, view facing south.
Photo #4 of 39 Detail of café portion of building, Silver Street (north) façade, view facing south.
Photo #5 of 39 East façade of café portion of building, view facing west. Janet L., Jeffries
Photo #6 of 39 East façade/elevations, view facing northwest. Janet L. Jeffries
Photo #7 of 39 Dock door, south façade, view facing north.
Photo #8 of 39 West façade, view facing east. Janet L. Jeffries
Photo #9 of 39 North (left) and west facades, view facing southeast. Janet L. Jeffries
Photo #10 of 39 Original second floor transom window.
Photo #11 of 39 View facing west down back stage service stairway. Janet L. Jeffries
Photo #12 of 39 Freight elevator shaft and platform, view facing down from second floor.
Photo #13 of 39 Service elevator access, second floor at top of service stairway, view facing south.
Photo #14 of 39 Service elevator head frame and machinery, second floor, view facing southwest.
Photo #15 of 39 Basement cold storage area, view facing west.
Photo #16 of 39 Basement cast iron/steel support system.
Photo #17 of 39 Basement storage area, view facing north.
Photo #18 of 39 Basement stairway, view facing east.
Photo #19 of 39 Former dry goods space, view facing west.
Photo #20 of 39 Former dry goods space, view facing north.
Photo #21 of 39 Former dry goods space, view facing northwest toward recessed corner doorway.
Photo #22 of 39 Former dry goods space, cast iron structural system, view facing south.
Photo #23 of 39 First floor freight elevator entrance, view facing north. Janet L. Jeffries
Photo #24 of 39 Auditorium entrance stairway, view facing north and downward. Janet L. Jeffries
Photo #25 of 39 Main auditorium entrance, second floor, view facing east.
Photo #26 of 39 Stairway to auditorium stage area, view facing southeast.
Photo #27 of 39 Apartment behind stage area, view facing east.
Photo #28 of 39 Original light fixture, auditorium ceiling.
Photo #29 of 39 Stage curtains displayed on auditorium floor.
Photo #30 of 39 Scenery flats on stage, view facing south.
Photo #31 of 39 Detail of Twin City Scenic Company mark.

Hoffman Building | Saunders, Nebraska
Name of Property | **County and State**

Photo #32 of 39 Auditorium, view facing northeast toward main entrance.
Photo #33 of 39 Auditorium, view facing north.
Photo #34 of 39 Auditorium, view facing southeast toward stage and "green" room.
Photo #35 of 39 Auditorium, view facing south toward stage.
Photo #36 of 39 Auditorium stage area, view facing south/southeast.
Photo #37 of 39 Original grocery space, 14th Street storefront, view looking north.
Photo #38 of 39 Original grocery space, 14th Street storefront, view looking west.
Photo #39 of 39 Original dry goods retail space, currently a dance studio, view looking southeast.

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,

HOFFMAN
1917
DRY GOODS and SHOES
OSCAR HOFFMAN
GROCERIES and FEED

HOFFMAN
1917

BODY
MOTOR CAR
REPAIR

DRY GOOD

1331

KRUEGER'S
BODY
MOTOR CAR
REPAIR
Silver Street Square

Silver Street Square
Welcome
FITNES

10 cm
20 cm

B40
Bsmk.

EXIT
VERSA
CLIMBER

EXIT
EXIT
ALARM WILL SOUND

the brick house
OFFICE

BADMINTON&VOLLEYBALL

FROM
TWIN CITY
SCENIC STUDIO
MINNEAPOLIS