

Site Inventory Form
State Historical Society of Iowa
 (November 2005)

State Inventory No. 50-00648

New Supplemental

Part of a district with known boundaries (enter inventory no.) 50-01703

Relationship: Contributing Noncontributing

Contributes to a potential district with yet unknown boundaries

National Register Status:(any that apply) Listed De-listed NHL DOE

9-Digit SHPO Review & Compliance (R&C) Number _____

Non-Extant (enter year) _____

1. Name of Property

historic name Lefty Sprague Mobil Oil

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 121 1st Ave. E.

city or town Newton

vicinity, county Jasper

Legal Description: (If Rural) Township Name _____

Township No. _____

Range No. _____

Section _____

Quarter of Quarter _____

(If Urban) Subdivision Original Plat

Block(s) 21

Lot(s) 1

3. State/Federal Agency Certification [Skip this Section]

4. National Park Service Certification [Skip this Section]

5. Classification

Category of Property (Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

If Non-Eligible Property

Enter number of:

— buildings
 — sites
 — structures
 — objects
 — Total

If Eligible Property, enter number of:

Contributing Noncontributing

1 — buildings
 — — sites
 — — structures
 — — objects
1 — Total

Name of related project report or multiple property study (Enter "N/A" if the property is not part of a multiple property examination).

Title

Downtown Newton, Iowa

Historical Architectural Data Base Number

50-010

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

14D07 TRANSPORTATION/gas station

02E SPECIALTY STORE

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

02E08 SPECIALTY STORE/beauty shop

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

09F Commercial

09D02 Roof Form/Gable

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation

walls (visible material) 06 STUCCO

roof

other

10B CONCRETE/poured

08A ASPHALT/Shingle

03 BRICK

Narrative Description (SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" representing your opinion of eligibility after applying relevant National Register criteria)

- Yes No More Research Recommended

- A Property is associated with significant events.
- B Property is associated with the lives of significant persons.
- C Property has distinctive architectural characteristics.
- D Property yields significant information in archaeology or history.

County Jasper
City Newton

Address 121 1st Ave. E.

Site Number 50-00648
District Number 50-01703

Criteria Considerations

- 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

05 COMMERCE
30 TRANSPORTATION

Significant Dates

Construction date
1922 check if circa or estimated date
Other dates, including renovation
1951, 1984

Significant Person

(Complete if National Register Criterion B is marked above)

Architect/Builder

Architect

Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance (☒ SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography See continuation sheet for citations of the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form

10. Geographic Data

UTM References (OPTIONAL)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	_____	_____	2	_____	_____
3	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

See continuation sheet for additional UTM references or comments

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rita Reinheimer and Mary Jo Niskin
organization Newton Historic Preservation Commission
street & number 101 W 4 ST S
city or town Newton state Iowa date 06/01/12
telephone 641-792-2787 zip code 50208

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION (Submit the following items with the completed form)

FOR ALL PROPERTIES

- Map:** showing the property's location in a town/city or township.
- Site plan:** showing position of buildings and structures on the site in relation to public road(s).
- Photographs:** representative black and white photos. If the photos are taken as part of a survey for which the Society is to be curator of the negatives or color slides, a photo/catalog sheet needs to be included with the negatives/slides and the following needs to be provided below on this particular inventory site:

Roll/slide sheet # _____	Frame/slot # _____	Date Taken _____
Roll/slide sheet # _____	Frame/slot # _____	Date Taken _____
Roll/slide sheet # _____	Frame/slot # _____	Date Taken _____

- See continuation sheet or attached *photo & slide catalog sheet* for list of photo roll or slide entries.
- Photos/illustrations without negatives are also in this site inventory file.

FOR CERTAIN KINDS OF PROPERTIES, INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING AS WELL

- Farmstead & District:** (List of structures and buildings, known or estimated year built, and contributing or noncontributing status)
- Barn:**
 - A sketch of the frame/truss configuration in the form of drawing a typical middle bent of the barn.
 - A photograph of the loft showing the frame configuration along one side.
 - A sketch floor plan of the interior space arrangements along with the barn's exterior dimensions in feet.

State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Use Only Below This Line

Concur with above survey opinion on National Register eligibility: Yes No More Research Recommended
 This is a locally designated property or part of a locally designated district.

Comments: _____

Evaluated by (name/title): _____ Date: _____

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Lefty Sprague Mobil Oil	Jasper
Name of Property	County
121 1st Ave. E.	Newton
Address	City

5. Classification, cont'd.

Lefty Sprague Mobil Oil is considered a building and counted as a contributing resource to the Newton Downtown Historic District.

7. Description

Site Description

The former Lefty Sprague Mobil Oil is located one block east of the historic town square at the southwest corner of the intersection of 1st Ave. E. and E. 2nd St. The main entrance faces north, and there are public sidewalks to the north and east of the building. There is street-level parking to the east of the building; off-street parking is available on the property on both the north and east sides of the building.

Property Description

Built to function as a gas station, the structure is constructed on a slab-type foundation. The exterior walls of the building are covered in stucco, with turned brick along the foundation and under the original window openings. The presence of common brick, inlaid at the corners of the building in a quoin pattern, appears to be for decorative purposes.

The building appears to have been constructed in three sections. The original one-room structure functioned as the office. In 1937, there was major construction on the site, the exact extent of which has not been determined. Either the fifteen-year-old building was demolished and a larger station constructed or the canopy which ran from the office to the gas pumps was removed and a single service bay added onto the west side of the office. The underground gasoline storage tanks were relocated to the east side of the building and the pumps were moved farther to the north. In 1951 the building was extended farther westward to its present dimensions with the addition of a second service bay which, according to the building permit, housed the "lubricating room."

During 1983 and 1984 the building was converted into office/retail space for two separate businesses. The station's service area was closed off from the main office, its two overhead doors were removed, and the openings were filled in with display windows trimmed in non-historic material which mimicked the approximate dimensions of the bays' original doors. A separate pedestrian entrance was added at the northeast corner of the former service area. A gabled roofline, with painted wood paneling on the east end and below the eaves, was added over the former service bays to complement the existing roof line above the former station office. Matching wood paneling was added on the east gable of the office. Windows on the north and east sides of the office were retrofitted with smaller windows and surrounds which hinted at the size and shape of the original windows. A door on the east side of the office was sealed with stucco, although its outline is still plainly visible.

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7. Description, cont'd.

The latest renovation, in 2009, by the owners of Trenz Hair Studio gives the building an appearance befitting a hair salon. The decorative awnings, the multi-colored trimming of the windows and doors, all of non-historic material, and the painted trim above the windows exude eye-catching appeal. A non-historic door hood that projects slightly over the main entrance consists of a series of interlocking triangular forms that are outlined in the same bold color that defines all four windows.

Integrity Considerations

As it relates to design, materials, and workmanship, the building has suffered a loss of integrity from multiple additions, roof line changes, and introduction of non-historic materials. However, despite extensive remodeling, the design of the building immediately evokes the impression that it originally functioned as a gasoline service station. The eastern portion of the building still resembles a customer service area in an early to mid-20th century gas station, while the large windows and surrounds directly to the west of the main entrance are suggestive of the service bay doors.

As it relates to location, association, and setting, the building retains a high degree of integrity. The Lefty Sprague Mobil Oil building, together with the buildings in its visual unit, contributes to the integrity of feeling created by the generally intact commercial district found in Newton.

8. Statement of Significance

This building is considered a contributing resource to the Newton Downtown Historic District. The building is eligible under Criterion A in association with the history of Newton commerce, significant in its ability to contribute to our understanding of the evolution of the business district and its impact on the economic success of the community of Newton. Further, as a resource constructed to serve the automobile Lefty Sprague Mobil Oil is locally significant in its association with the history of transportation.

From its inception as the Rainbow Service Station, the former Lefty Sprague Mobil Oil building has been an important part of the Newton downtown. As one of the oldest gas stations and the closest one to the Newton square, it had a longstanding, loyal clientele among downtown businessmen and shoppers. For over forty years "Lefty's" was known for its amenities, including full service and friendly attendants.

Historical Background

Newton was platted as the Jasper County seat in 1847. The commercial district grew up around the courthouse square with the earliest buildings, which commonly housed both commerce and dwellings, constructed of wood. The development of the downtown from its platting in 1846 to c.1890 is tied to its status as the county seat and the 1867 arrival of the Mississippi-Missouri Railroad. The character of

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8. Statement of Significance, cont'd.

the commercial downtown is recorded in images of the contiguous brick commercial Italianate buildings surrounding the courthouse square.

Beginning in the 1890s, it was industry, specifically the washing machine industry, that drove Newton's economy and the commercial success of its downtown. Due to the success and longevity of the Maytag Company, its history presents the greatest impact on Newton's downtown commercial district. From 1890-1920, a period in Maytag history marked by the company's incorporation and the development of the first electrically powered washing machine, a number of significant buildings were constructed in the Newton Downtown District. The addition of these buildings (and others) introduced a 20th century architectural sensibility to the district; moving the visual character away from the Late Victorian era Italianate style that had previously dominated the streetscapes.

During the decade of 1920 to 1930, Newton's population nearly doubled. The period is marked by the Maytag Company's ascension to the nation's leading manufacturer of washing machines. The economic prosperity brought by the company's success is reflected in the Newton Downtown Historic District with the construction of some of its most important buildings including the First Newton National Bank (1920) and the Maytag Hotel (1926). Both buildings lend a sense of importance to the downtown district. It was also during this decade that numerous auto-related properties (including Lefty Sprague's) established themselves on the district's main roadways, typically at the edges of the fully developed commercial district.

The visual character and composition of the downtown district remained generally constant through the Depression era and war years – a period when industry and commerce (including the Maytag Company) were focused on surviving and on supporting the war effort. The boom that came in the wake of Maytag's 1946 introduction of the automatic washing machine was apparent in the Newton Downtown Historic District by the mid-1950s. Between about 1954 and 1963 the downtown buildings underwent dramatic alteration, a nearly wholesale removal of the Italianate façades and replacement with those reflecting a mid-20th century Modern aesthetic. Buildings altered during that period line the streetscapes of the district. In addition to the Victorian era buildings that were re-faced during this time, a number of new buildings were constructed, their stylistic character reflective of the era.

Although the washing machine industry in Newton is now a thing of the past, its mark on the Newton Downtown Historic District is undeniable.

Property History

Constructed in 1922 as the Rainbow Service Station, this was third gas station built in Newton and the first to have a water hose on its driveway. The station operated under several names for its first sixteen years of existence. In 1938 the business was leased by Raymond "Lefty" Sprague, who operated his Mobil gas station there until he retired in approximately 1980.

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8. Statement of Significance, cont'd.

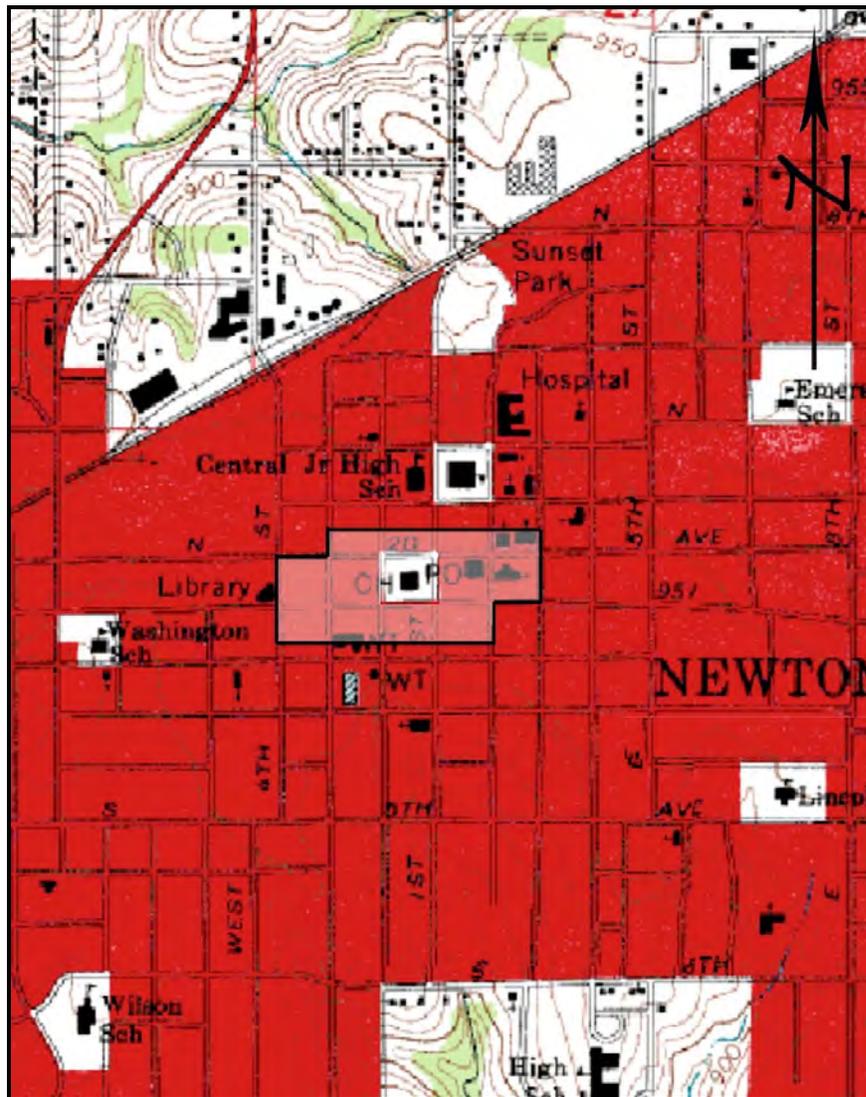
After the service station closed, the building was remodeled into retail and office space in 1983. For nearly twenty years the former service bays at the west end of the building were occupied by Cardinal Trophies & Awards; the office space on the east was home to the Des Moines Register's regional newspaper subscription/distribution office and, later, a beauty salon. Since 2000 the entire building has been home to Trenz Beauty Salon. Interior remodeling was done at that time to convert the building for a single occupant.

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11. Additional Documentation - Maps

USGS 7.5 MINUTE TOPOGRAPHIC MAP - NEWTON – 1965



(MAP SOURCE: www.trails.com)

The Newton Downtown Historic District, to which the historic Lefty Sprague Mobil Oil building is considered a contributing resource, is indicated.

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11. Additional Documentation - Maps

PARCEL MAP - 2010



(SOURCE: <http://beaconschneidercorp.com>)

The location of the building is marked with a black downward arrow.

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11. Additional Documentation - cont'd.

PHOTOGRAPHS



View of the south side of the 100 block of 1st Ave. E., looking southwest. The location of the building is indicated by an arrow.

(Photo by Sue Smith, July 1, 2011)

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11. Additional Documentation - cont'd.

PHOTOGRAPHS



View of the building, looking southwest across 1st Ave. E.

(Photo by Bob Sawyer May 30, 2011)

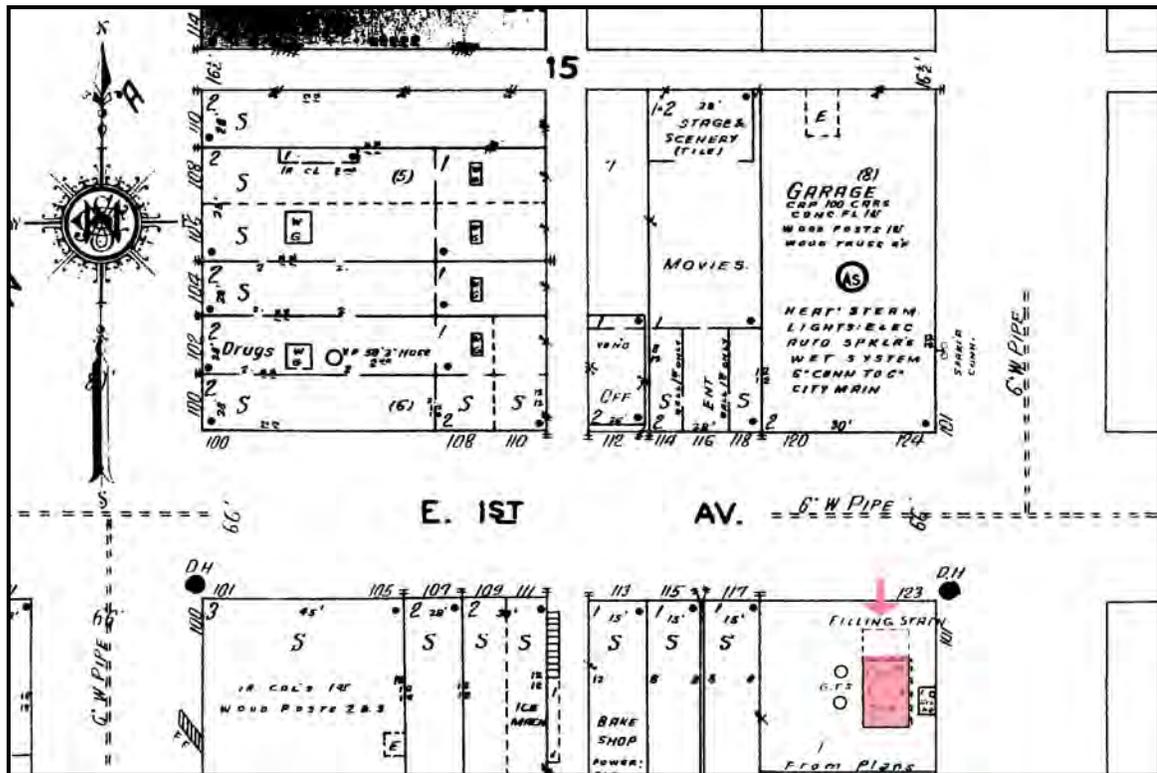
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11. Additional documentation, cont'd.

FIRE INSURANCE MAP - 1927



(SOURCE: Sanborn Company Fire Insurance Map, 1927)

The location of the resource is marked. The notation "From Plans" marked at the south end of the property appears to refer to the building directly to the south, rather than to gas station property, which had been in operation for approximately five years.

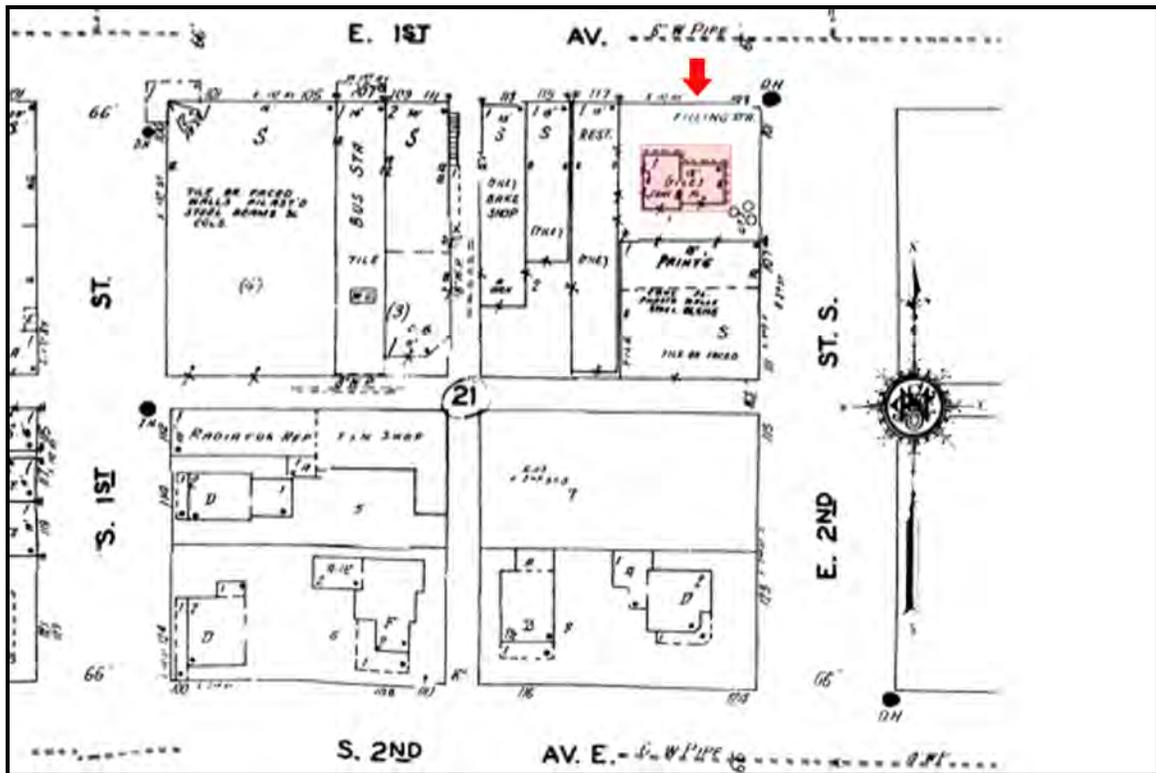
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11. Additional documentation, cont'd.

FIRE INSURANCE MAP – 1949 REVISION OF 1927



(SOURCE: Sanborn Company Fire Insurance Map, 1949 revision of 1927)

This map from 1949 shows the first addition to the original station (possibly made circa 1936). A second service bay was added onto the west end of the building in 1951, two years after this final Sanborn map was issued.

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11. Additional documentation, cont'd.

HISTORIC IMAGES – ca. 1923-1928



(SOURCE: Jasper County Historical Museum)

The photo looks southeast across 1st Ave. E. It shows the original building, constructed in 1922. The exact year of the photo is unknown, but by 1929 the station was known as the Dutch Mill Service Station.

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9. Bibliographic References

Advertisement of opening of Rainbow Oil Company Service Station. In Newton Daily, May 31, 1922.

Building permits file for this address, located at Newton Public Works Building.

"Newton Boasts 15 Gas Stations." In Newton Daily News, May 2, 1952.

Newton City Directories (various publishers) for the years: 1929, 1939, 1945, 1979, 1984, 1988, 1993, 1997, 2002/2003, 2007/2008.

"Newest Service Station to Open Here Saturday". In Newton Daily News, April 30, 1937.

Telephone directories for Newton, 1933, 1935.