

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

State Inventory No. 50-00711

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 Ramer Block

other names/site number Citizens State Bank, Bigelow's

2. Location

street & number 102 N. 2nd 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) 10 Lot(s) Part of 5

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)

02D02 COMMERCE/TRADE/bank

02E11 COMMERCE/TRADE/grocery

02A01 COMMERCE/TRADE/office building

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

02E COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store

01 DOMESTIC

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

05B LATE VICTORIAN/Italianate

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation 10 CONCRETE

walls (visible material) 03 BRICK

roof _____

other _____

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 102 N. 2nd Ave. E.

Site Number 50-00711
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)

02 ARCHITECTURE

05 COMMERCE

Significant Dates

Construction date 1896 check if circa or estimated date
Other dates, including renovation _____

Significant Person

(Complete if National Register Criterion B is marked above)

Architect/Builder

Architect unknown
Builder Theo. Fehleisen, Newton, IA

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 date 05/01/2012
organization Newton Historic Preservation Commission telephone 641-792-2787
street & number 101 W. 4th St. S. city or town Newton state IA 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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Ramer Block	Jasper
Name of Property	County
102 N. 2nd Ave. E.	Newton
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7. Building Description

Site Description

The Ramer Block is situated on the northeast corner at the intersection of 1st St. N. and N. 2nd Ave. E.; its façade faces south. It is adjoined on the east by a two story commercial building and on the north by a public alley, which provides access to the primary entrance of the second floor apartment. A public sidewalk runs along the south and west sides, providing entry to the building's recessed main door on the southwest corner. Entry to the upstairs residence is gained from the parking area adjacent to the alley. The building façade faces south.

Property Description

The Ramer Block is a two-story building of light-colored brick on what is likely a brick foundation. It is rectangular in form, stretching 111 feet northward from its 46-foot façade on N. 2nd Ave. E. Typical of commercial buildings, its roof is slightly sloped, with a step-down roofline. The parapet is finished by stone coping.

Seven pilasters, running vertically to the cornice, equally divide the second story's primary façade. A group of three cambered windows is located above each storefront. The east windows have three stacked panes; the west windows have two glass panes, with the top segment being filled in with non-historical material in a color matching the window trim and canopy. A segmented belt course of stone runs across the face of the building under the windows. Above the windows, stepped voussoirs are topped by a segmented belt course, both of red brick. The cornice area is divided equally by three pilasters. Corbelled brick forms the bottom of each of the cornice pilasters and the cornice itself. The rest of the cornice features a variety of decorative brickwork in two colors, which wraps around the building's southwest corner. Stone blocks near the top proclaim that this is the "Ramer Block", built in "1896."

The ground floor of the façade's west bay has been resurfaced in common brick that contrasts with the rest of the building. The chamfered primary entrance is located at the southwest corner of the building. The commercial door with transom is flanked on the west by a narrow display window and on the east by four display windows; all are steel-framed. The eastern storefront has an asymmetrically placed recessed entrance and a door to an enclosed stairway; both are kept locked and unused at the present time. The bulkhead under the four display windows is light stone set in a broken rangework pattern. A Mansard awning of non-historic material spans both first-floor storefronts and, supported by a brick-clad column, continues around the corner to cover the entryway. Non-historic signage is mounted on the awning.

On the west elevation the second floor fenestration is consistent with that of the façade. Five of the seven windows have two glass panes, with the third (top) pane filled in. The two northernmost windows have two smaller glass panes and the top half of the original window filled in with non-historic material. Four of the ground floor windows are topped by red-brick lentils. All of the ground floor windows and

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7. Building Description, cont'd.

doors have been infilled, three with light brick and the rest with non-historic material the color of the building's red-brick trim. Two doors have also been filled in with red corrugated metal. The historic proportions of the doors and windows have been retained, and the color of the infill matched to the red-brick trim on the building in order to minimize visual confusion. A segmented belt course of red-brick near the top of the ground floor window area contrasts with the light brick façade.

Integrity Considerations

The Ramer Block retains a very good level of integrity as it relates to design, materials, and workmanship. Although the filling in of ground floor windows and doors on the west elevation with non-historic materials is unfortunate, their sizes and shapes have been retained. The rest of the building retains the historic look it had when it was built. It also retains a high degree of integrity as it relates to location, association, and setting and contributes to the integrity of feeling created by the generally intact commercial district found in Newton.

8. Statement of Significance

The Ramer Block 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. The building is also eligible under Criterion C as a well-preserved example of Italianate architecture. The current owner has taken pains to retain the original look of the building while adapting it to modern-day needs.

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 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.

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8. Statement of Significance, cont'd.

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.

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

Built in 1896 for John P. Ramer, the Ramer Block originally bore the street addresses of 100 and 102 E. McDonald St (now N. 2nd Ave. E.) and, apparently, 104 and 106 N. Spring St. (now 1st St. N). The Citizens State Bank occupied the front half of the western storefront (#100) from construction until sometime in the 1920s. Bigelow's, a news and tobacco store which boasted a lunch counter, followed in the corner location and remained there for over forty years. Over the years Bigelow's lunch counter, with its soda fountain, was a popular destination for students from the nearby junior high and high school during "open campus" lunch periods, as well as after school. After a few years as a gift store, Forbes and Newell Office Equipment expanded their business into the west storefront and remain there today.

The Ramer Block's east storefront, (#102), was first occupied by Willis McColloms' Grocery, which eventually became the W. E. McMurray Grocery. Iowa Bake-Rite (a commercial, rather than retail, bakery) occupied the location from 1920 until January, 1925. After a brief period as a flower shop, the location once again became a grocery store under a variety of names (Red Ball Store, National Tea Co., and the City Market) from the middle 1940s until approximately 1960. They were succeeded by two separate radio & TV businesses and then a home improvement center before Forbes and Newell's Office Equipment opened in the late 1960s. After approximately ten years in the east storefront, Forbes and Newell expanded their business to occupy both storefronts, and in the early 1980s the building's

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8. Statement of Significance, cont'd.

official address has been listed as 102 N. 2nd Ave. E. Ron Forbes assumed sole ownership of the business, now known as Forbes Office Solutions, Inc., and became owner of the building. His son, Gary, now runs the business.

The Citizens State Bank did not extend the entire length of the Ramer Building. A large bay north of the bank was connected to the rear of the building's eastern bay, resulting in an "L"-shaped store with entrances on 1st Street as well as N. 2nd Ave. E. Between the late 1930s and 1960s, this area was divided into two bays, housing smaller businesses that over the years included barber and beauty shops, a travel agency, and a radio/TV store. By approximately 1980 the entire downstairs space had been configured as a single retail establishment.

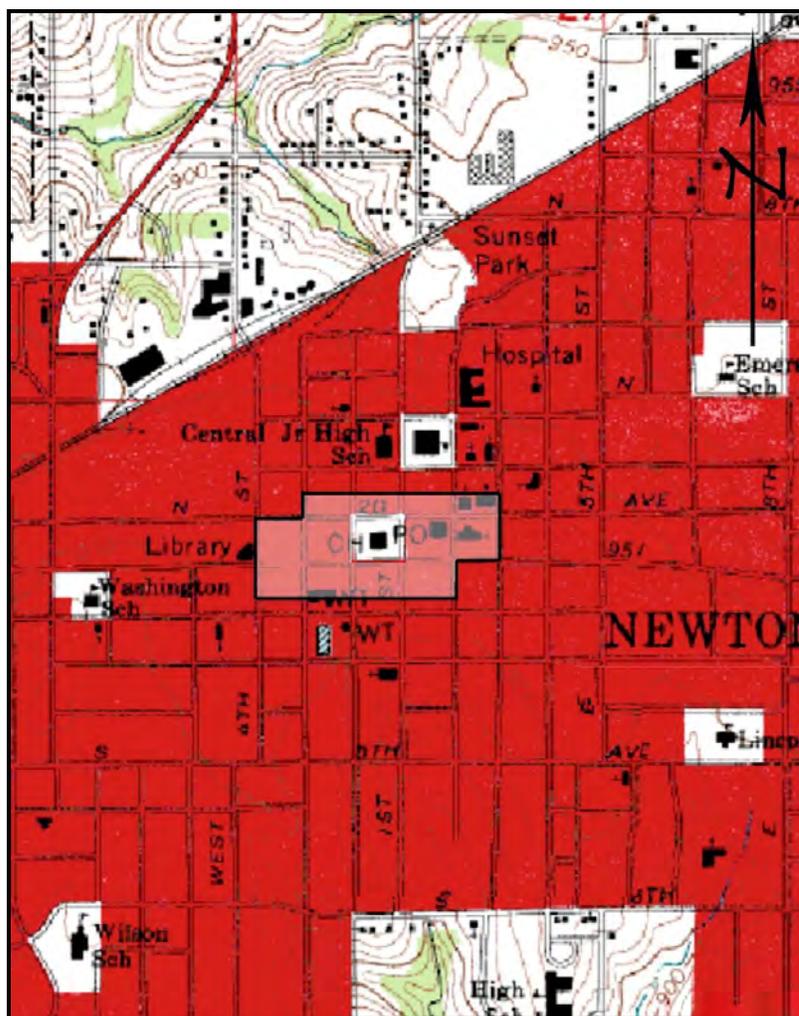
The building's second floor historically housed a variety of offices, with lawyers, insurance, and real estate /loan /abstract businesses being the most common tenants. City directories show no commercial tenants on the second floor after 1969. The second floor currently houses Forbes Office Solutions' business and executive offices, as well as the building owner's apartment.

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11. Additional Documentation - Maps

USGS 7.5 MINUTE TOPOGRAPHIC MAP - NEWTON – 1965



(MAP SOURCE: <http://www.trails.com>. Accessed 09/12/2012.)

The Newton Downtown Historic District, to which the Ramer Building is considered a contributing resource, is indicated.

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11. Additional Documentation - Maps

PARCEL MAP - AERIAL VIEW - 2011



(SOURCE: <http://beaconschneidercorp.com>. Accessed June 2011.)

The location of the building is indicated.

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11. Additional Documentation, cont'd.

Photographs



View of the façade (south) and west elevations of the Ramer Block (indicated), looking northeast across the intersection of N. 2nd Ave. and 1st St. N.

(All images by Sue Smith, July 1, 2011)

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11. Additional Documentation, cont'd.

Photographs



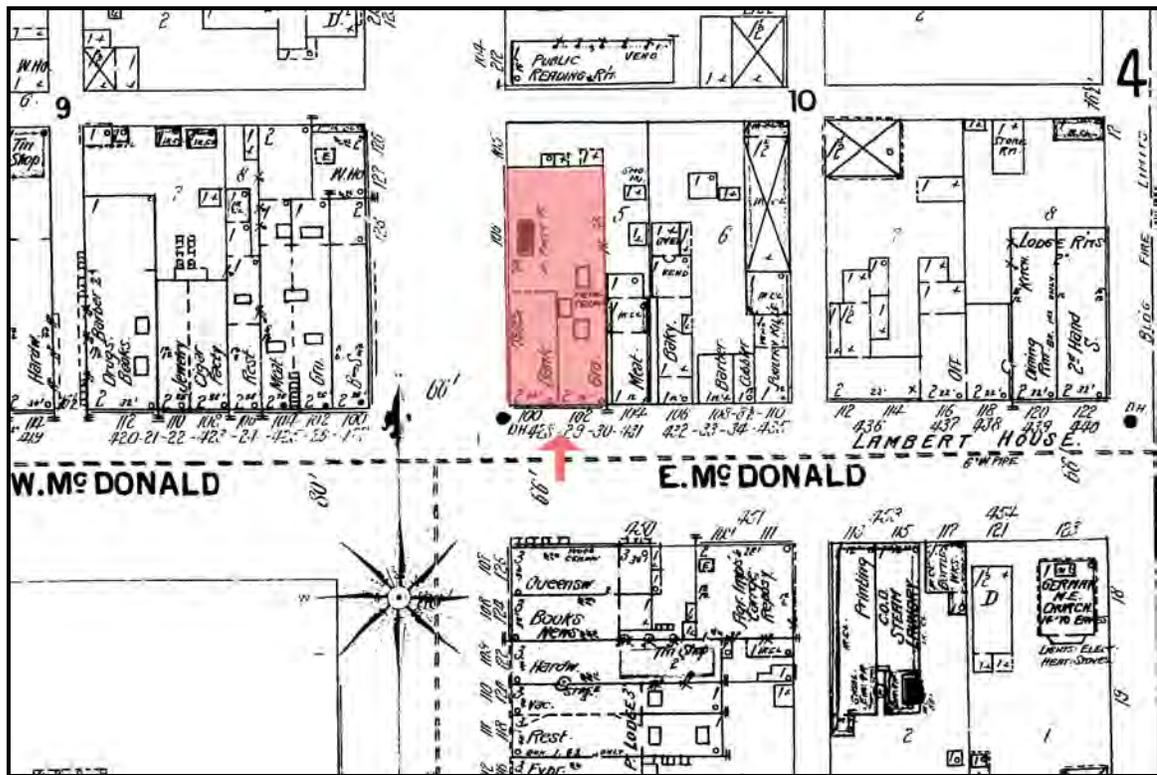
View of the upper story façade. Note the decorative brick details of the window headers and cornice as well as the stone building plaques noting “Ramer,” “Block” and “1896.”

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11. Additional documentation, cont'd

FIRE INSURANCE MAP - 1900



(SOURCE: Sanborn Company Fire Insurance Map, 1900)

The location of the resource is marked.

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11. Additional Documentation, cont'd:

HISTORIC PHOTO - 1904



(SOURCE: historic collection of Avery Wilson at the Newton Public Library)

Looking north across N. 2nd Ave. E., this photo is included on a postcard of multiple views of the town. The photo is copyrighted 1904. The Ramer Building houses both of the storefronts pictured. The Citizens State Bank occupied the corner storefront, and a grocery store occupied the eastern section of the building. A variety of professional and financial offices occupied the second floor offices.

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9. Major Bibliographic References

"Bake-Rite Co. a Newton Firm for Six Years." In Newton Daily News, Dec. 18, 1926. Sec. 8, p. 4.

Building permits on file in Newton Public Works office.

Jasper Co., IA, Assessor website. <http://jasperassessors.com>
beacon: Local Government GIS for the Web website. <http://beacon.schneidercorp.com>

Keiter Directory Co.'s Newton City and Jasper County, IA Directory, 1929. Norfolk, NE: Keiter Directory Co., 1929.

Newton (Jasper Co., IA) City Directory. Kansas City, MO: R. L. Polk & Co., 1939, 1951, 1956, 1959, 1964, 1969, 1974, 1979, 1984 editions.

Newton Telephone Directories, various years.

Personal interview with Gary Forbes, manager, Forbes Office Solutions. (2010).

Personal interview with Ron Forbes, building owner. (2010).

R.L. Polk & Company's 1910 Jasper County Directory. Des Moines & Detroit: R. L. Polk & Co., 1910.

Smith's Directory of Newton and Jasper County, Iowa for 1920. Dorchester, MA: Edgar Smith, 1920.

Young, J. M. (compiler & publisher). Newton City Directory, 1899-1900. Newton, IA: Journal Print (1899)