

Iowa Site Inventory Form

State Historic Preservation Office

(January 2016)

State Inventory Number: 44-00246 New Supplemental

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

Non-extant Year: _____

Read the Iowa Site Inventory Form Instructions carefully, to ensure accuracy and completeness before completing this form. The instructions are available on our website.

• **Property Name**

A) Historic name: Masonic Temple Theater

B) Other names: 2023 downtown survey # DT-077

• **Location**

A) Street address: 115 N. Main St

B) City or town: Mount Pleasant (Vicinity) County: Henry

C) Legal description:

Rural: Township Name: _____ Township No.: _____ Range No.: _____ Section: _____ Quarter: _____ of Quarter: _____

Urban: Subdivision: Original Block(s): 7 Lot(s): Lot 7 - N20' and S 20' Lot 6

• **Classification**

A) Property category: *Check only one*

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

B) Number of resources (within property):

<i>If eligible property, enter number of:</i>		<i>If non-eligible property, enter number of:</i>	
Contributing	Noncontributing		
<u>1</u>	Buildings	<u>—</u>	Buildings
<u>—</u>	Sites	<u>—</u>	Sites
<u>—</u>	Structures	<u>—</u>	Structures
<u>—</u>	Objects	<u>—</u>	Objects
<u>1</u>	Total	<u>—</u>	Total

C) For properties listed in the National Register:

National Register status: Listed De-listed NHL NPS DOE

D) For properties within a historic district:

- Property contributes to a National Register or local certified historic district.
- Property contributes to a potential historic district, based on professional historic/architectural survey and evaluation.
- Property *does not* contribute to the historic district in which it is located.

Historic district name: Mt Pleasant Downtown Historic District Historic district site inventory number: 44-02280

E) Name of related project report or multiple property study, if applicable:

MPD title Intensive Level Historical and Architectural Survey of Downtown Mt Pleasant, Iowa Historical Architectural Data Base # HADB-02986

• **Function or Use** *Enter categories (codes and terms) from the Iowa Site Inventory Form Instructions*

A) Historic functions

08A02: RECREATION/CULTURE / movie theater

03A04: SOCIAL / fraternal hall

B) Current functions

08A02: RECREATION/CULTURE / movie theater

• **Description** *Enter categories (codes and terms) from the Iowa Site Inventory Form Instructions*

A) Architectural classification

06C: EARLY 20th CENTURY REVIVALS /

Classical Revival

B) Materials

Foundation (visible exterior): 04C: Limestone

Walls (visible exterior): 03: Brick

Roof: 15C: Rubber

Other: _____

C) Narrative description **SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED**

Site Number: 44-00246 Address: 115 N. Main St City: Mt Pleasant County: IA District Number: 44-02280

• **Statement of Significance**

A) Applicable National Register Criteria: *Mark your opinion of eligibility after applying relevant National Register criteria*

- Criterion A: Property is associated with significant events. Yes No More research recommended
Criterion B: Property is associated with the lives of significant persons. Yes No More research recommended
Criterion C: Property has distinctive architectural characteristics. Yes No More research recommended
Criterion D: Property yields significant information in archaeology/history. Yes No More research recommended

B) Special criteria considerations: *Mark any special considerations; leave blank if none*

- A: Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes. E: A reconstructed building, object, or structure.
 B: Removed from its original location. F: A commemorative property.
 C: A birthplace or grave. G: Property less than 50 years of age or
 D: A cemetery achieved significance within the past 50 years.

C) Areas of significance

Enter categories from instructions

05: Commerce

02: Architecture

D) Period(s) of significance

E) Significant dates

Construction date

1924 *check if circa or estimated date*

Other dates, including renovations

F) Significant person

Complete if Criterion B is marked above

G) Cultural affiliation

Complete if Criterion D is marked above

H) Architect/Builder

Architect

Owen, Payson & Carswell

Builder/contractor

K.A. Bergdahl

I) Narrative statement of significance **SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED**

• **Bibliography** *See continuation sheets for the list research sources used in preparing this form*

• **Geographic Data** *Optional UTM references* *See continuation sheet for additional UTM or comments*

Zone	Easting	Northing	NAD	Zone	Easting	Northing	NAD
1				2			
3				4			

• **Form Preparation**

Name and Title: Rebecca Lawin McCarley / research by Joy Lapp Date: April 8, 2024

Organization/firm: SPARK Consulting / Mt Pleasant HPC E-mail: sparkconsulting@octaspark.com

Street address: 1630 Park Ave SE Telephone: 319-200-9767

City or Town: Cedar Rapids State: IA Zip code: 52403

• **ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION** *Submit the following items with the completed form*

A) For all properties, attach the following, as specified in the Iowa Site Inventory Form Instructions:

- 1. Map** of property's location within the community.
- 2. Glossy color 4x6 photos labeled** on back with property/building name, address, date taken, view shown, and unique photo number.
- 3. Photo key showing each photo number on a map and/or floor plan, using arrows next to each photo number to indicate the location and directional view of each photograph.**
- 4. Site plan** of buildings/structures on site, identifying boundaries, public roads, and building/structure footprints.

B) For State Historic Tax Credit Part 1 Applications, historic districts and farmsteads, and barns:

See lists of special requirements and attachments in the Iowa Site Inventory Form Instructions.

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

The SHPO has reviewed the Site Inventory and concurs 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: _____

SHPO authorized signature: _____ Date: _____

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7. Narrative Description

Masonic Temple Theater was remodeled/rebuilt in 1923-24 for the Masonic lodge and Temple Theater. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1991 under Criterion C for its architecture. The narrative description of the nomination written by Molly Myer Naumann states:

This two story brick building (40'x150') is located one-half block north of the Square, on the west side of N. Main. Constructed in 1923 as a Masonic Lodge and movie theater, it has been relatively unaltered over the years.

The facade of brown pressed brick with limestone trim creates the impression of a three story building, but it is actually only two, as the second floor has sixteen foot ceilings. The building is two lots wide and it features a three part storefront at street level: theater entrance in the center, with a small shop on each side. The three areas are separated by brick pilasters with stone bases. The central doorway features an arched opening of stone. Transoms above the large display windows and the arched opening are of prism glass. Above the theater entrance the upper level is treated with a variety of Neo-classical details. A stone balustrade runs across the facade, creating an effective division between the levels. The center of the second floor contains a large stone medallion with the Masonic insignia. On each side of this is a group of three windows, capped by volutes, and seeming to support a small window at the third floor level. A chain link patterned frieze at the cornice, and an elaborate date stone complete the detailing on the facade. Side and rear elevations are of common brick covered with stucco. Exterior alterations appear to be limited to the installation of new entrance doors, and a triangular projecting marquee. Although this marquee is not original, it has been in place since the 1930s and should be retained.

The interior of the first floor reflects the three part division of the exterior. The central lobby extends back 60' from the entrance, with a small shop on each side. The shops are entered from the lobby, not the street. At the back (west end) of the lobby, the traffic pattern divides, with stairs on each side leading up to small balconies and the projection booth, and two doors on the main level leading into the theater proper. The stairs lead into a central area with cloak rooms, and kitchen. The west end of the building is completely taken up by the dining room, 40'x40'. The lodge hall proper is in the front (east end) of the building and measures 40'x90'. Ceilings in both the dining and lodge hall areas were originally sixteen feet. The area over the central hall and cloak room contains a small third floor storage area. A suspended ceiling has been installed in the lodge hall. From the third floor area you can look out over the ceiling and see the original plasterwork and the "third floor" facade windows. The second floor appears to be in unaltered condition. The woodwork, floors, and lighting have been unchanged for decades.

No alterations to the exterior appear to have been made since the listing in 1991. The interior was not assessed as part of the survey project. Renovations on the interior were completed by Lowe Holdings (Scott and Amy Lowe) in 2014.

8. Narrative Statement of Significance

The Masonic Temple Theater appears to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing building within the potential Mount Pleasant Downtown Historic District. The building contributes to the historic commercial character of the downtown, and it reflects the period of downtown development in the 1920s. Temple Theater opened in 1924, and it continues to operate in this building

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as the only movie theater in Mt Pleasant. The building retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance as a historic commercial building in a historic district.

The Masonic Temple Theater was listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places in 1991 under Criterion C for its architecture. The nomination written by Molly Myers Naumann states:

The Masonic Temple Theater is significant under Criterion C as a very good example of a Type IV building, a Neo-classical design used for a commercial building.

Few commercial buildings were constructed around the Square in the 1920s, but two of them are outstanding examples of Neo-classical design: the First National Bank and the Masonic Temple Theater, both constructed in 1923, and both designed by architectural firms from outside Mount Pleasant. The Masonic Temple Theater, designed by Owen, Payson & Carswell, is a blending of use, commercial and fraternal. This is accomplished successfully on the interior by a strict division according to floor level. On the exterior, there is a blending of materials (brick and stone), and the conscious application of Neo-classical details to what could have been a straight forward commercial facade. The contrast of brick and stone, plain and elaborate, is carried out from top to bottom. Neo-classical elements used on the facade include: the balustrade, medallion with Masonic insignia, volutes above the windows, ornamental frieze and cornice with date stone, and the parapet roof. This interest in Neo-classicism can be traced directly to the public buildings of the early 20th century, and the influence of the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

For decades fraternal orders (Masonic, I.O.O.F., A.O.U.W., K.of P., etc.) had taken pride in the erection of handsome buildings that would enhance their community as well as provide the needed lodge hall space. This approach continued into the 20th century. In the past, first floors had been rented as retail shops. The advent of the motion picture provided another candidate for that space. The combination of theater and lodge hall seemed fitting. An elegant design would be considered appropriate for both building types. In the case of the Mount Pleasant Temple Theater the first floor was actually paid for by the theater owner, while the Masons built the upper level. This double ownership continued until the Masonic Lodge moved to a new building in 1989.

Developmental history of property

The three-story Kaster Block was built on this site in 1866, with the main three-story portion of the building remodeled on the interior and with a new façade for the Masonic Temple and Temple Theater in 1923-24. The rear section of the building for the theater was constructed as part of the project in 1923-24.

In 1866, the *Mt Pleasant Journal* reported, "The Business House of J. W. Kaster, on Main Street, North of the Square, is rapidly going up, and when finished, will have two very fine rooms for business with a large hall above them" (November 16, 1866, p. 3). The transfer books indicate that by the 1860s, J. W. Kaster had purchased the N¼ of Lot 7 in Block 7 and that Daniel Phillips purchased the S¼ of Lot 6 in Block 7. It is unknown when Kaster purchased the S¼ of Lot 6, but presumably prior to construction of his building in 1866. Historic photos show a three-story building with a row of seven tall, evenly spaced windows with an arched top on the second and third floors. The first-floor windows are obscured by awnings in the photo, however, on the 1869 bird's eye view map, there appear to be seven windows across the first floor as well, although two of them must have been doors to the two businesses.

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Per the earlier numbering system, this building would have been No. 15 and No. 17 N. Main St, if the numbers were used consecutively. The numbers may have started this way and then shifted to No. 17 and No. 19. The 1892 Sanborn map suggests that the south half was No. 15 and the north half was No. 19, with No. 17 perhaps associated with the center entry and a second story location. However, other numbering was used for addresses on this block by that date.

The 1867 City Directory lists Bowyer & Pugh, Dry Goods and Notions, Wholesale and Retail at 15 North Main. An ad in the *Henry County Press* on Nov. 4, 1868, locates Bowyer & Pugh at "One Door North of Post Office" (then located at 13 N. Main), which would be the south half of the Kaster Block. In 1869, Gilleland & Faber moved into "the Room lately occupied by Bowyer & Pugh as a Notion store, in Kaster's Block." They advertised "Family Groceries and Provisions" (*Henry County Press*, Nov 24, 1869, p. 2).

There is an ad in the *Mt Pleasant Journal* on August 16, 1867, under "New Advertisements" for Holcomb & Andrews which sold "China, Glass, and Queensware," located in the Kaster Block (p. 4). Another ad on Sep. 6, 1867, locates Holcomb & Andrews "two doors north of the post office" (*Mt Pleasant Journal*, p. 8), which would be located on the second story or in the north half of this building. In 1869, Holcomb & Andrews moved to new quarters "on Snell's corner, opposite the Presbyterian Church" due to "the increase in trade and the immense stock just received" (*Henry County Press*, May 12, 1869, p. 3). The 1867 City Directory lists the Plantation Spinner Manufacturing company with President Geo. B. Corkhill at 17 N. Main, which seems likely to have been on the second story in the Kaster Block.

The 1870 City Directory lists Bowyer & Pugh at 17 N. Main, which may then have been associated with the south half of the building at that point. The 1870 Directory also lists M. W. Farber, Groceries and Provisions at 19 N. Main and Gilliland (*sic*) & Kelsey, Millinery & Fancy Goods at 19 N. Main, which would then be associated with the north half.

In 1872, Misses Gilleland & Kelsey were listed in the *Henry County Press*, offering "millinery and dress making Kaster's block, upstairs" (June 21, 1872, p. 1). The Hover Brothers were listed in the *Henry County Press* in Kaster's Block as Photographers (July 12, 1872, p. 1).

In 1872, W.W. Pennington & Son, who had been located on the north side of the square, moved to No. 15 Main Street (south half of this building). They advertised dry goods, including Jeans, Sheetings and Shirts, Dress Goods, Notions, Carpets, Oil Cloths, etc. (*Henry County Press*, September 20, 1872, p. 2). W. W. Pennington continued to advertise at No. 15 N. Main until 1881. In 1881, W. W. Pennington moved out of the Kaster Block to No. 27 N Jefferson (*Free Press*, January 13, p. 3).

On Sep. 15, 1876, ownership of the N 20' of Lot 7 and the S½ of the S½ of Lot 6 transferred from J. W. Kaester (*sic*) and wife to the First National Bank. On Dec. 6, 1881, Kate E. S. Hill purchased the N 20' of Lot 7 and the S½ of the S½ of Lot 6 from the First National Bank.

The 1886 Sanborn Map shows a three-story brick building with a one-story brick section on the back. It lists the uses as Barber in the south half, Store in the north half, and Billiard Hall on the third floor. Stairs are located in the center of the building to the upper stories. M.H. O'Connor advertised the City Billiard Hall in the *Free Press* on August 31, 1886 (p. 1). He was located in the Castor Block, upstairs, and advertised "Good Tables, Pleasant Attendants, and Good Light." In 1889, Cable (*sic*) & Williams were listed in the *Free Press* as a Barber Shop in the Castor block (January 10, 1889, p. 2). In 1893, the

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barbers Cobb & Williams announced in the *Mt Pleasant Journal* that they were moving 3 doors south to 107 N. Main (April 27, 1893, p. 4). Thus, they were likely the barber in the south half (No. 15) on the 1886 map. An article on Cobb & Williams in March 1893 notes that they came to Mt Pleasant about 8 years ago (1885), when James Davis, Mr. Mosley and Mr. McCracken had the leading barber shops of the city (all African American men). They did not know if they could make a barber shop pay. They started in a room occupied in 1893 by O.F. Griffith's hardware store with two chairs. With success, they moved across the street to where they remained located prior to moving in 1893. In March 1893, they were moving to their own building purchased some time ago from L. Woolson next to Morehart & Shepp's shoe store ("Cobb & Williams," *Mt Pleasant Journal*, March 23, 1893, 4). The store in the north half of the building has not been identified.

The 1892 Sanborn Map has the same footprint as the 1886 map, with the exception of a small frame one-story addition on the rear of the north half, with a small, brick oven attached. The uses are listed as Barber in the south half, Restaurant in the north half, and Museum on the 3rd floor. No further information could be found about the museum.

The 1893 City Directory lists the Stockdale House and Hotel at 115 N. Main. The *Mt Pleasant Daily News* commented in 1895 that "The Stockdale House, North Main street is the most popular in the county. Mr. Stockdale knows how to take care of his guests, gives them a good meal, and good bed, and at a very reasonable rate" (July 17, 1895, p. 4). No business was identified in the other half of the block in the 1893 city directory.

In 1897, the *Mt Pleasant Journal* reported that Prof. L. Antrim was planning to run a private school in the third story of the Castor Block (July 1, 1898, p. 3). By 1898, Prof. Antrim's Mt. Pleasant Academy had expanded to include the second floor, as well (*Mt Pleasant Daily News*, Feb 19, 1898, p. 1). The Mt. Pleasant Academy on the second and third floors was thriving in August 1899, having expanded to full-time three teachers – Antrim, Larkin, and Hebel. It was "dedicated to worthy young men and women, independent, non-sectarian, thorough" (*Free Press*, August 10, 1899, p. 5). The Academy remained on the second and third floors until it moved to larger quarters on the north side of the square in 1900 (*Atlas Henry County*, June 29, 1900, p. 1).

Two new businesses moved into the Kaster Block in 1898. In a column in 1948, C.S. Rogers, the publisher of the *Mount Pleasant News*, wrote, "In 1898, the News, requiring more room for more machinery and equipment, as well as office space, moved from its North Jefferson street location to North Main street, leasing the ground floor rooms on the south side of the Castor Block, now remodeled and known as the Masonic Temple" (*Mt Pleasant News*, January 2, 1948, p. 5). The *Mt Pleasant Daily News* reported January 3, 1898, "Mr. T. L. Roberts has recently moved his stock into new quarters at No. 115 North Main street." The article went on to say that Roberts carried "a complete variety stock, a full line of crockery and glassware, and school supplies of all kinds" (p. 1). The 1899 Sanborn map shows Printing on the south side, Variety on the north side, and School on the third floor. The small frame addition and brick oven that had been attached to the rear of the north side on the 1892 map are now gone. Stairs remain in the center of the building.

On March 25, 1899, ownership of the N 20' of Lot 7 and the S½ of the S½ of Lot 6 transferred from John S. Hill to Irma A Hill. On February 18, 1901, E.G. Linn purchased the N 20' of Lot 7 and the S½ of the S½ of Lot 6 from John S. Hill et. al. for \$4500. At the time, the News was still on the south side of the

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first floor and Roberts Variety store on the north side. In July 1901, the Athenian Club moved into the quarters on the second and third floors that had been vacated by the Mt. Pleasant Academy. The *Mt Pleasant Daily News* reported that the second floor would be used by the club as a reading room, parlors, and receptions rooms while the third floor would be used as an amusement hall, "fitted up" for dancing and theatricals (July 26, 1901, p. 1).

On Oct 14, 1907, the ownership of the N 20' of Lot 7 and the S½ of the S½ of Lot 6 was transferred from E. G. Linn to W. L. Weller for \$6000. The *Mt Pleasant Journal* reported that W. W. Weller (*sic*) had purchased the building "known as the News building" that was occupied on the ground floor by the News office and T. L. Roberts, and on the two upper floors by the Athenian Club (October 18, 1907, p. 1). The 1909 Sanborn map has the same footprint as the 1899 map except that the one-story section at the back of the north side is a bit longer and yellow to indicate frame construction rather than brick. The uses listed are Printing on the south side and Variety on the north side.

The *News* moved out of the Kaster Block in September of 1910 to a new location on the south side of the square (*Mt Pleasant News*, Jan 2, 1948, p. 5). The *Mt Pleasant Journal* reported that Ralph Hulings had purchased the Roberts Variety store and that it would probably be run by Mrs. Hulings (Jan 10, 1911, p. 4). The 1911-12 City Directory lists J. L. Siver, Chiropractor at 115 N. Main and Ralph Hulings, Chinaware, at 117 N. Main. In 1913, City Style Shop, a tailor and cleaner, moved into 113 N. Main, the "Old News Office" (*Mt Pleasant Journal*, March 7, 1913, p. 8). Thus, it appears that 113 was the south half of the building, 115 indicated a second story office, and 117 was the north half of the building.

On Aug 12, 1913, W. L. Weller sold the N 20' of Lot 7 and the S 20' of Lot 6 to E. C. Kauffman. The *Mt Pleasant Journal* reported that Weller was selling the building occupied by the Athenian Club, the City Style Shop, and Hulings' Variety Store (September 18, 1913, p. 3).

On September 8, 1914, E. C. Kauffman sold the N 20' of Lot 7 and the S 20' of Lot 6 to H. B. Cook. In 1915, the Smith Dress Club Co. was located on the south side (*Free Press*, Mar 11, 1915, p. 5) and B. A. Jean & Co, which did cleaning, dying, and tailoring, moved into the room formerly occupied by the Hulings Variety Store (*Mt Pleasant Daily News*, September 27, 1915, p. 4). The 1915 and 1917 telephone directories list Smith's Dress Club on N. Main. The 1915 directory lists B.A. Jean at 115 and 121 N. Main. The 1921 telephone directory lists Wardrobe Cleaners at 115 N. Main.

On Mar 31, 1916, the *Mt Pleasant Daily News* reported that the Castor block, occupied by the Athenian Club, would be sold at sheriff's sale (p. 4). Ownership of the N 20' of Lot 7 and the S 20' of Lot 6 was transferred from H. B. Cook by sheriff for \$5,676.59 to W. L. Weller, who had previously owned the building from 1907-1913.

On Nov 6, 1918, W. L. Weller sold the N 20' of Lot 7 and the S 20' of Lot 6 to Lodge No. 8 Masonic for \$6000. The Masons had been located at the Y.M.C.A., but in 1918 the school board decided to accept the Y.M.C.A. "for remodeling into a high school" (*Mt Pleasant Daily News*, August 5, 1918, p. 4). Thus, the Masons moved to the Kaster block, and the Athenian Club moved to quarters over the Dyall Studios, two doors to the north, on North Main (*Mt Pleasant Daily News*, November 20, 1918, p. 3).

The 1920 Sanborn map has the same footprint as the 1909 map. It lists the uses as Plumber on the first floor south, Tailor on the first floor north, and Hall on the third floor. L.A. Miller Co, 115 N. Main, advertised

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plumbing and heating. They suggested getting your Mother or Wife a sink for the kitchen to add the final touch of convenience (*Mt Pleasant Daily News*, December 22, 1920, p. 4). Leslie Miller, plumbing, is listed on N. Main in the 1917, 1919, and 1921 city directories.

In 1923, the Masons undertook a major construction project, adding a two-story addition to the back of the building, that spanned all the way to the back of the lot, for a movie theater. In May, the *Mt Pleasant Daily News* reported that "Work on the new Masonic temple is progressing fast. The entire one story building to the rear is now down and excavations began for the new floor of the picture house. The three story section will not be taken down until the rear part is well under way" (May 15, 1923, p. 1). However, an article in August reported, "Work on the Masonic Temple and play house is suspended and has been for some weeks owing to the inability to secure the huge steel beams which will support the roof of the new part" (*Mt Pleasant Daily News*, August 25, 1923, p. 3). The reference to the "new part" suggests that the "old part" – the three story front core of the building – remained. A 1935 story in the *Mt Pleasant News*, by long-time editor C. S. Rogers, is titled "The Old Caster (*sic*) Block Became Masonic Temple." There is a photo of the Caster (*sic*) Block beside a photo of the new Masonic Temple. The caption states that the second photo "shows the same building after it was remodeled into the present Masonic Temple" (*Mt Pleasant News*, October 25, 1935, p. 1). The 1942 Sanborn map shows the same footprint for the front three-story portion of the building, with the rear two-story section (with steel girders) behind the rear wall of the original footprint. The center (formerly stairs) is now the entry to the movie theater, with a small storefront space to either side of it. In 1948, C. S. Rogers wrote in his Bystander's Notes that in 1898, the *News* had moved into rooms "on the south side of the Castor Block, now remodeled" (*Mt Pleasant News*, January 2, 1948, p. 2). The new building has an elaborate neo-Classical façade. The Masons moved into their new space with great celebration on May 19, 1924. The theater was also opened on the same day (*Mt Pleasant Daily News*, May 19, 1924, 1; "Masonic Temple is Dedicated with Great Solemnity," *Mt Pleasant Daily News*, May 20, 1924, 1). The 1991 National Register of Historic Places nomination notes that the building was designed by Owen, Payson, and Carswell, an architectural firm with offices in Burlington and Fort Madison. The contractor was K.A. Bergdahl of Mt Pleasant.

The Masonic Temple was located at 115½ North Main from 1924 until 1990 when the Masons moved to a new building which they constructed at 206 N. Main (*Mt Pleasant News*, May 3, 1990, p. 3). The Temple Theater, which opened in 1924, is still in operation today. M.L. Dickson ran the Temple Theater from 1925 until his death in 1969. He also operated The Auditorium Theater (later The Colonial) from 1922 to 1953, and he opened and operated the Ridge Drive-In from 1953 to 1969 ("M.L. Dickson, Theater Owner, Passes Away," *Mt Pleasant News*, August 13, 1969, 1; "Heartland Buys Two Local Theaters," *Mt Pleasant News*, March 7, 1970, 1).

The lobby of the theater originally had a small retail space on flanking the entrance on each side. The 1925 Phone Book listed the Temple Barber Shop in the Masonic building, although it does not specify which side it was on. The 1927 telephone directory lists Shannon Dry Cleaners in the Masonic Temple.

The Mills Shoe Hospital has an ad in the *Mt Pleasant News* on May 2, 1935, stating their location as the Temple Theater Building (p. 6). They remained on the north side of the theater lobby through 1983, listed in each of the Telephone and City Directories. Beginning in the 1957 City Directory, the name was changed to Mills Shoe Repair, and the address shifted from 115 to 117 N. Main. They continue to be listed here through the 1960s and 1970s.

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The retail space on the south side of the lobby was occupied by Wolf's Men's Shop in 1941. It is listed in the South Wing, Temple Theater in the 1941 City Directory. It was listed simply on N. Main in the 1938 city directory. In 1943, the *Mt Pleasant News* reported that Art Wolf was moving to the Pitcher Building and Sunderlin Printing was moving to the room he was vacating (November 20, 1943, p. 1). In 1945, Sunderlin Printing was located at the Masonic Temple (*Mt Pleasant News*, October 23, 1945, p. 5). In 1949, the Beauty Nook moved into the south wing of the Temple Theater vacated by Sunderlin Printing (*Mt Pleasant News*, March 15, 1949, p. 5). The Beauty Nook is listed in the 1950 Phone Directory in the Masonic Temple Building. The 1957 and 1960 City Directories list the Magic Mirror Beauty Shop at 113 N. Main, with addresses shifting to current numbering.

An article in the *Mt Pleasant News* in 1962 states that the Temple building housed the Masonic rooms, Mills Shoe Repair, the Temple Theater, and the Magic Mirror Beauty shop. In the 1960s, the south room in the building was 113 (Magic Mirror Salon), the Temple Theater and Masonic Temple was 115 (center), and the north room was 117 (Mills Shoe Repair).

On March 1, 1970, Heartland Cinema Co of Des Moines bought the Temple Theatre and Ridge Drive-In Theater after the death of M.L. Dickson in August 1969. The company owned six other theaters in Iowa, and the two local theaters were managed by Thomas Rachford ("Heartland Buys Two Local Theaters," *Mt Pleasant News*, March 7, 1970, 1).

The Magic Mirror Beauty Shop continued to be listed at 113 in the City Directories until 1972. Beginning in the 1977 City Directory, the number for the Magic Mirror Beauty Shop changed to 115 N. Main. In 1981, the owner of the Magic Mirror changed the name to Performance Plus (*Mt Pleasant News*, August 11, 1981, p. 3).

In June 1979, the *Mt Pleasant News* announced that the Temple Theater would be putting in a new theater in the space formerly occupied by Walker's Office Supply (in the north half of the building to the south) so that two films could be shown at the same time. The theater had leased the space from Wendell Smith and hired Jim Prottzman as general contractor. The floor of the building would be excavated so a sloping cement floor could be poured. The cost was estimated at \$50,000 (*Mt Pleasant News*, June 20, 1979, p. 1). This space in the north portion of the building to the south at 111 N. Main continues to be used as a theater.

The 1985 City Directory lists the Temple Home Video business in the space previously occupied by the Mills shoe repair, although the number was changed back to 115 N. Main. Temple Home Video is listed in the City Directories of 1985, 1988, 1989, and 1993.

On April 1, 1988, the Mt. Pleasant Masonic Association sold the N 20' of Lot 7 and the S 20' of Lot 6 to Peter J. and Jeanne K. Frederick. At the time, Performance Plus hair salon was on the south side of the lobby, and Temple Home Video was on the north side of the lobby. Frederick Theatres of Des Moines received a building permit to remodel the theater in May 1988, including new carpet and a suspended ceiling. The theater then re-opened as Temple Twin Theaters. In 1991, the Masonic Temple Theater building was added to the NRHP. The 1993 City Directory lists the Sheer Delight hair salon on the south side of the lobby, and Temple Home Video in the north side of the lobby.

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The building was sold to Associated Theatres, Inc. in August 1994. They then sold it to R.L. Fridley Theatres, Inc. in September 2001. The theater continued to be known as Temple Twin Theatre in 2009.

On February 10, 2012, RL Fridley Theaters, Inc. sold the N 20' of Lot 7 and the S 20' of Lot 6 to Main Street Mount Pleasant, which in turn sold it to Lowe Holdings, LLC owned by Scott and Amy Lowe. They made extensive renovations to the building, including upper-level residential apartments (*Mt Pleasant News*, January 7, 2021, p. 12). By the 2014 City Directory, the name of the theater was changed to Main Street Cinemas. A permit for a sign for Cinema Lofts was approved in 2015. In 2016, residential apartments were listed at 115 N. Main, as well as the theater. Scott and Amy Lowe died tragically in a private plane accident in 2020 (*Mt Pleasant News*, January 7, 2021, p. 12). In 2022, Scott and Amy Lowe were posthumously awarded the 2022 Historic Preservation Award by the Mount Pleasant Historic Preservation Commission for their renovations on the Masonic Temple Theater (*Mt Pleasant News*, May 12, 2022, p. 1).

In 2019, the N 20' of Lot 7 and the S 20' of Lot 6 was sold by Lowe Holdings, LLC to MGL Theaters, Inc., the current owner. The name of the theater was changed back to Temple Theater by the 2023 City Directory.

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Location map



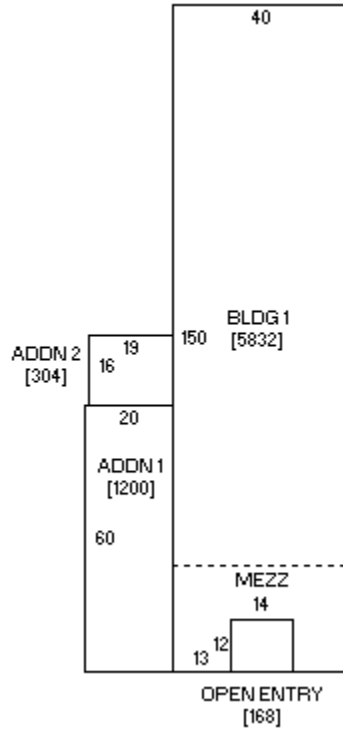
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Building footprint



Sketch by www.camavision.com

Henry County Assessor (<https://beacon.schneidercorp.com>)

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Historic images



Three-story building visible at right (HCHT Facebook album)

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Three-story building on right in 100 block of N. Main St in 1900s (HCHT Facebook album)

three story building with arch windows

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Owen, Payson & Carswell, Architects
K. A. Bergdahl, Contractor

Sketch of building in 1923 (HCHT Facebook album)

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100 block of N. Main St in late 1920s, looking south (HCHT Facebook album)

remodeled façade of building at right

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Building at left in 1941 (HCHT Facebook album)

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Building around 1960 (HCHT Facebook album)

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Building around 1962 (HCHT Facebook album)

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Building in July 1965 (HCHT collection)

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1990 survey photograph (Naumann 1991)

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Digital photographs



Photograph 44-00246-001. East elevation, looking west (October 2023)

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Photograph 44-00246-002. South elevation, looking north (October 2023)

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Photograph 44-00246-003. North elevation, looking southeast (October 2023)

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Photograph 44-00246-004. West elevation, looking northeast (October 2023)