

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received JUN 28 1984

date entered AUG 1 1984

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic The Dakota Farmer Building

and/or common same

**2. Location**

street & number 1216 South Main Street NA not for publication

city, town Aberdeen NA vicinity of

state South Dakota code 46 county Brown code 013

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>NA</u> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Dakota-North Plains Corporation

street & number 1216 South Main Street

city, town Aberdeen NA vicinity of state South Dakota

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Registry of Deeds

street & number Brown County Courthouse

city, town Aberdeen state South Dakota

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title NA has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date NA federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records NA

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Designed by Franklin Farr Ellerbe and Olin Round in 1910-11, the original portion of the Dakota Farmer Building is a 30,000 square foot rectangular structure, two stories in height with a flat roof and a raised basement. Two additions had been made since 1911: a 32 foot extension added in 1916 to house an 80 ton rotary press; and, in 1975, a 15,000 square foot wing added to the southwest corner of the building.

The brick and concrete building is set on a landscaped corner lot that at one time had a clay tennis court. The large trees surrounding it had been hauled by wagon from the James River and then planted as saplings soon after the building was erected. An open area south of the building was seeded to plots of native grasses as a demonstration to be viewed by area farmers and ranchers.

Inspired by classical precedents, Ellerbe and Round used recessed Ionic columns to flank the raised main entranceway (west facade) which has a swan's neck pediment crowning the door and a large, multi-sashed window. Paired rectangular windows flanking the entranceway have surrounds and are single paned with multi-sashed transoms. Above the unadorned (except for the words "Dakota Farmer") cornice is a balustrade. The original outdoor lighting fixtures are intact and rest on small fluted Ionic columns. The side (north and south) facades display a series of paired rectangular windows while the rear (east) facade has large multi-sashed openings. The 1975 addition has two garage doors and a pedestrian doorway but no windows.

On the interior, a marble stairway leads to the second floor office area. Although most of the ceilings have been lowered and the original lighting fixtures removed, a portion of the tile floor remains.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1910-1911, 1916, 1975 **Builder/Architect** Franklin Ellerbe and Olin Round

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Dakota Farmer Building is significant in the areas of both agriculture and architecture. The building was constructed as the office and production facility for The Dakota Farmer magazine, a popular agricultural publication which was read by midwestern farmers from 1881 until 1979. The famed St. Paul architect/engineer Franklin Farr Ellerbe (1870-1921) and his partner Olin Round were hired to design the building. Their success with the Dakota Farmer Building led to many other commission in South Dakota.

Although it began as a newspaper, The Dakota Farmer has been a magazine since 1883. It was founded in 1881 by James Baynes at Alexandria, South Dakota, who moved the publishing company to Huron in that same year.<sup>1</sup> In 1883, it was relocated again to Aberdeen because of the rail service in the city. W.F.T. Bushnell controlled the magazine from 1885 until 1900 during which time he purchased other publications and merged them with The Dakota Farmer.<sup>2</sup> Herbert Myrick acquired the magazine in 1910. In 1967, Vern Laustsen took over the publication when it became part of the Dakota North Plains Corporation. Today, the corporation is a major printer of monthly magazines, publicaitons, annual reports and books. After serving mid-western farmers for many years, The Dakota Farmer magazine was sold in 1979 to the Webb Company of Minneapolis. The original bound editions of this magazine are now stored at South Dakota State University in Brookings.

The first Dakota Farmer building in Aberdeen was located on Main Street. In 1906, a new building, which still stands at the Eagles Club on South Main Street, was erected. In 1910, The Dakota Farmer magazine company commissioned Franklin Farr Ellerbe, the St. Paul architect/engineer, and his partner Olin Round (who joined the firm in 1911) to design a new printing plant. The publisher of the magazine explained to Ellerbe that shortly after the excavation for the facility had begun, the crew had run into quicksand. Although the person in charge of work believed that the project was hopeless, the published decided to contact Ellerbe before abandoning the prized downtown location.<sup>3</sup> Ellerbe pondered the problem and came up with an ingenious solution: construct a waterproof "hull" engineered to support the weight of the proposed building.<sup>4</sup> This proved to be a successful plan and the building was constructed in 1910-1911 by C. Lepper Construction Company of Aberdeen at a cost of \$129,760.00.<sup>5</sup> Ellerbe's son, Thomas, aslo assisted with the project.<sup>6</sup>

Since 1911, two addtions have been made to the original 30,000 square foot building. The first was made in 1916 when a 32 foot extension - compatible in design and materials with the original building - was added to house an 80 ton rotary press (which was used until 1964). In 1975, a 15,000 square foot brick addition was constructed to the southwest corner of the building.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Aberdeen Development Corporation Report. Business Centennial Series, "The Dakota Farmer." July 1, 1983, p. 7.

The Ellerbe Tradition, Seventy Years of Architecture and Engineering. From the Papers of Thomas Farr Ellerbe. Ed. Bonnie Richter. Minneapolis: Ellerbe, Inc., 1980.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property About One Acre

Quadrangle name Aberdeen East

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 

1	4	5	4	0	0	0	0	5	0	3	3	1	0	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 1-2-3-4-5-6, Block 2, Simmons First Addition, Aberdeen, South Dakota

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state NA code county code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title L.T. Lausten, President

organization Dakota-North Plains Corporation

date May 25, 1984

street & number 1216 South Main Street

telephone 605/225-5360

city or town Aberdeen

state South Dakota

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Director, Office of Cultural Preservation

date 06/20/84

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

**Entered in the  
National Register**

date 8-1-84

  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
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date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

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As a result of the success of the Dakota Farmer Building, Ellerbe became recognized in South Dakota and was awarded several other commissions throughout the state. Between 1911 and 1920, his work in South Dakota included The Science Hall (1911) and Gymnasium and Power House (1915) for the Dakota Wesleyan College at Mitchell; an armory at Brookings; the Dakota Central Telephone Company in Mitchell (1919, 1931); an engineering building for the state School of Mines at Rapid City; and, the Normal School at Spearfish. Later, Ellerbe's architectural firm designed the Telephone Building in Pierre (with Olin Round); an addition to the Alonzo-Ward Hotel in Aberdeen (1928); and, the Auditorium and Arena for Aberdeen High School (1937).

<sup>1</sup>Aberdeen Development Corporation Report. Business Centennial Series, "The Dakota Farmer." July 1, 1983, P. 7.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>The Ellerbe Tradition, Seventy Years of Architecture and Engineering. From the Papers of Thomas Farr Ellerbe. Ed. Bonnie Richter. Minneapolis: Ellerbe, Inc., 1980, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Dakota-North Plains Corporation.

<sup>6</sup>The Dakota Farmer Building was one of Thomas Farr Ellerbe's first jobs in his long career as an architect which also included his rein as president of Ellerbe firm.