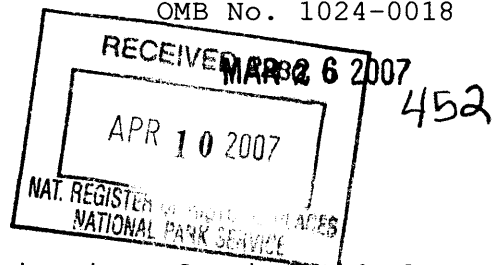


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



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 How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Antlers Hotel

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 1703 Hill Avenue not for publication N/A

city or town Spirit Lake vicinity N/A

state Iowa code IA county Dickinson code 059 zip code 51360

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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 _____ nationally _____ statewide X locally. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Ronell J. Lirke, Deputy SHPO April 5, 2007
Signature of certifying official Date

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

Antlers Hotel

Dickinson County, Iowa

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
determined eligible for the
National Register
 See continuation sheet.
determined not eligible for the
National Register
 removed from the National Register
 other (explain):

Edson H. Ball 5-24-07

Edson H. Ball

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

=====
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)

- 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.)

- 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)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

COMMERCE

Period of Significance 1902-1957

Significant Dates 1902

1928

1930

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation _____

Architect/Builder Kinney, Frank W.

Damon, Edward O.

Bartz, Charles A.

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 #

Primary Location of Additional Data

- X State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Table with 4 columns: Zone, Easting, Northing, and an unlabeled column. Row 1: 1, 15, 329870, 4809958, 3. Row 2: 2, See continuation sheet., 4.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form
Antlers Hotel

Dickinson County, Iowa

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sam Erickson, Vice President e-mail address sam@chihousing.com

organization Community Housing Initiatives, Inc. date March 7, 2007

street & number 500 East Locust, Suite 500 telephone 515-262-4932

city or town Des Moines state Iowa zip code 50309

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Community Housing Initiatives, Inc.

street & number 14 West 21st Street, Suite 3 telephone 712-262-5965

city or town Spencer state IA zip code 51301

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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Antlers Hotel

Dickinson County, Iowa

7. Narrative Description

Located in the heart of downtown Spirit Lake, the Antlers Hotel was constructed as an important social and tourism center at the turn of the 20th century. In fact, the Antlers Hotel building is one of the few remaining structures representing early 20th century tourism in Spirit Lake and the Iowa Great Lakes Region. The building's overall good condition and limited alterations to the exterior render the building a prime example of Classical Revival design. Constructed of natural colored Wisconsin sand-molded brick, the Antlers Hotel architecturally incorporates Roman and Beaux Arts styles with use of brick columns, arched windows, ornamental cornices and a dramatic wrap-around veranda.

Exterior:

The site of the Antlers Hotel on the corner of Hill Avenue and Lake Street was a very important location for commercial and retail business in Spirit Lake at the turn of the century. Therefore, the north and west facades of the Antlers Hotel were constructed with uniformly ornate and impressive design features. Masonry on the exterior of the building is natural colored Wisconsin sand-molded brick. Brick quoins were fashioned on the building's northeast, northwest and southwest corners. The wrap-around design of the building unifies the north and west facades as the "front" of the building. Similarly, the building's broad veranda wraps around the corner to emphasize the importance of both the north and west facades

Built in the Classical Revival style, the Antlers Hotel demonstrates influences of Classical Revival style with the use of brick columns, arched windows and simple ornamental cornices. The building's grand entrance faces Hill Avenue and was incorporated into the fifty-two foot wide veranda. The original veranda wrapped around 1/3 of the building's first two stories and was made of wood posts atop stone pillars. The veranda was intended to shade veranda diners on the upper level and shade shoppers on the lower level. When the wood veranda eventually deteriorated, owners opted to install brick pillars and the canopy was not replaced over any portion of the veranda except the front entry.

With the exception of the removal of the veranda, the exterior of the Antlers Hotel has not been significantly altered. Original windows have been outfitted with replacement windows, but there has been no permanent appearance altering-damage to the building's façade.

West Façade- Hill Avenue:

The west façade of the Antlers Hotel is the building's primary façade. The structure measures 68 feet on the west side and houses the building's grand entrance. The raised basement level of the building was designed so that half of the floor would be above ground and provide a light and airy space for businesses in that level, beneath the hotel proper. A special design feature was the open veranda that wrapped-around the northwest corner of the hotel. It was open underneath and shoppers were able to stroll under the veranda and view wares in large display windows

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Antlers Hotel

Dickinson County, Iowa

that were flush with the building's exterior masonry. The original principal hotel entrance was a straight runoff stairs that was incorporated into the southernmost bay of the veranda on the Hill Street front (Figure 1.)



Figure 1: Antlers Hotel c.1905 (Courtesy of David B. Weissman)

This arrangement necessarily intruded more into the public right-of-way, but then so did the veranda. The original veranda was constructed of wood and deteriorated over time. The wood veranda was replaced in 1928 with an uncovered brick veranda with columns topped by electric light fixtures. The remodel also included a build-out of windows under the veranda to add additional display window space for retailers, thus removing the walkway under the veranda. The existing veranda and the replacement windows are in disrepair.

Figure 2 illustrates the second stairway arrangement, one in which the stair was removed to the south end of the veranda proper and had two shorter run of stairs and an intervening landing. Figure 3 illustrates the final stairway arrangement, one in which the straight run of stairs was brought back. As part of the remodeled veranda, it alone was covered, while the remainder of the veranda was transformed into an open raised balcony area.

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Figure 2: Original veranda, Antlers Hotel, view northeast along Hill Street 1915
(www.pbase.com/luckybreak/okoboji.jpg)

Large windows with simple limestone lintels flanked by unornamented brick pilasters characterize the street-level commercial space. The 1910 wide stone staircase to the grand entrance of the building remains, as does the metal handrail that bisects the staircase. The steps approach is flanked by brick sidewalls and railings. The original entrance was fitted with a replacement brick and wood portico when the original veranda was removed. Two original wood and glass doors with a transom are deteriorated, but remain in place as the building's front doors. To the north and south of the portico, five large second story windows frame the building's entrance. The second story windows feature divided transoms.

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Antlers Hotel

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Figure 3: Antlers Hotel, c.1950, view southeast (note how the basement-level west storefronts were advanced south between the rebuilt veranda and the 1930 south addition)
(www.pbase.com/luckybreak/okoboji.jpg)

An addition to the Antlers Hotel (1930) expanded the hotel by 8,288 square feet to the south. The building measures 74 feet deep from east to west and 28 feet from north to south. The red brick addition to the Antlers Hotel is most visible on the west façade (Figure 3). The addition features elevated corner piers with stone caps above the cornice, the same stone belt course extends across the west façade at the cornice level, and the recessed panels between the second and third-story windows in each bay on the west façade. The addition extends sixteen feet further to the West than the original façade of the Hotel. Large retail windows with a high transom are visible on the street level and the basement level is not visible from the street.

Upper stories of the Antlers Hotel façade remain predominantly unaltered. The building's third and fourth levels retain historical integrity with original Wisconsin sand brown brick and limestone ornamentation. There are thirteen windows on each of the two uppermost stories on the Hill Street frontage (west). These rows are aligned vertically. The third floor windows comprise a continuous arcaded band of round-arched windows capped by decorative brick drip moldings. The springers for these arches are stone capitals, which mirror those found on the first floor. Stone sills fill only the base of each window opening. The second story windows have flat tops that are highlighted by soldier brick bands. These windows have matching sills with those on the third floor. The elevated first floor has six broader double window sets. These are separated by flat engaged brick pilasters with stone capitals.

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The only obvious visible alterations to the upper stories on the west and north facade of the Antlers Hotel are replacement windows (c.1970) and visible window air conditioning units. The roofline on the 1902 fourth story has classical-style moldings on an ornamental cornice which projects from the top of the building. The roof is flat in design and lined with rubber membrane.

North Façade- Lake Street:

Symbolic of its significance as a primary façade of the building, the north façade of the building features the same components as found on the Hill Avenue façade. However, the north façade measures 124 feet, whereas the West façade measures 68 feet. The exposed raised foundation, actually a walk-out basement at this part of the building, has a rusticated stone exterior that is strongly coursed horizontally. Thirteen windows are on each of the uppermost two floors, but these are more broadly spaced than those found on the west façade. There is no third floor window arcade as was effected on the west façade, although the same segmental-arches are used. The exception is that the outermost three windows, on each end of each floor level are grouped in a set and the arcade is repeated within those closely spaced windows. On the northwest corner is street level commercial space. The commercial space was built out from what was once the original veranda. The build-out is ten feet wide and now houses three large windows flanked by unornamented brick columns (Figure 3). Three doors to the building are situated along the ground floor on the north facade. One of the doors has a new wood canopy.

East Sidewall of the Building:

The east façade of the building faces the alley. This northernmost portion of the building is the original Wisconsin brown unornamented brick. Modern replacement windows are symmetrically spaced throughout the north wing. The center of the building on the east façade is also part of the original structure and crafted of brown brick. A grey concrete elevator shaft has been added to the exterior. The southernmost portion of the east façade is the newer portion of the building. It is constructed of contrasting red brick and has doors and windows spaced intermittently throughout.

South (or rear) Wall of the Building:

The south façade of the building is part of the 1930 addition and has modern replacement windows. Window openings are organized into bays but some blank wall surfaces separate the openings. "Antlers Hotel & Café" is painted in black on white on the side of the building.

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Dickinson County, Iowa

Interior- Basement

The interior of the basement of the Antlers Hotel has housed a number of local businesses over the past decade. As a result, the interior spaces have not retained historic integrity and will not be restored, but will be adapted for new use. The ten-foot build-out area from the original façade of the building now houses large display windows for retailers. This portion of the building is severely deteriorated and will be removed.

Interior- First Story

The first story of the Antlers Hotel housed the building's original lobby, writing room, ladies parlor, dining room, washroom and kitchen. The dining room, washroom and ladies parlor were finished with tile flooring that does remain but is in severely deteriorated condition. Some wood doors and wood door frames original to the building also exist on the first level. The original entry doors are surrounded by a wood and glass portico. Original tin ceilings have been removed and replaced with lower false ceilings and fluorescent lighting.

Interior- Second and Third Story

The Interior second and third stories of the Antlers Hotel have been altered several times. In the 1910 remodel, the original 51 guest rooms and only 10 bathrooms were re-configured into fewer hotel rooms with private washrooms attached. The 1930 addition to the building created additional guest rooms. In 1974, the building was adapted from hotel rooms to apartment living units. The living units are uninhabited and are in much deteriorated condition. The interior corridors are intact, but those are in dilapidated condition. Few original wood doors remain and are deteriorated. Wood flooring is beyond repair. Full restoration of the upper stories will be necessary in order to inhabit the space.

Integrity Statement

The Antler's Hotel maintains a high degree of all seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The integrity of the building's prominent location in the heart of Spirit Lake's central business district contributes significantly to the setting, feeling and association with early 20th century tourism and commerce. The building's Classical Revival design, workmanship and materials are also intact, adding to the striking image of a former first class hotel. The exterior of the building has undergone few alterations, with the exception of replacement windows, an early addition and replacement of the original veranda. All the other original materials and detailing, including window and door openings and ornamentation survive. Aluminum doors and windows have been replaced with materials that match or emulate the originals. The primary retail area, comprising 60% of the first floor, contains some original ornamental woodwork, terrazzo flooring and decorative molding. The remainder of the building's interior spaces has been significantly altered by several past owners. The interior corridors are in place, as are some of the original doorways and transoms. However, most of the interior spaces have been altered as a result of conversion to apartments in 1974. The current owner is working to restore the

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corridor spaces, cognizant of original door placement. The former hotel rooms have been converted to apartments and all wiring and plumbing have been updated.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps:

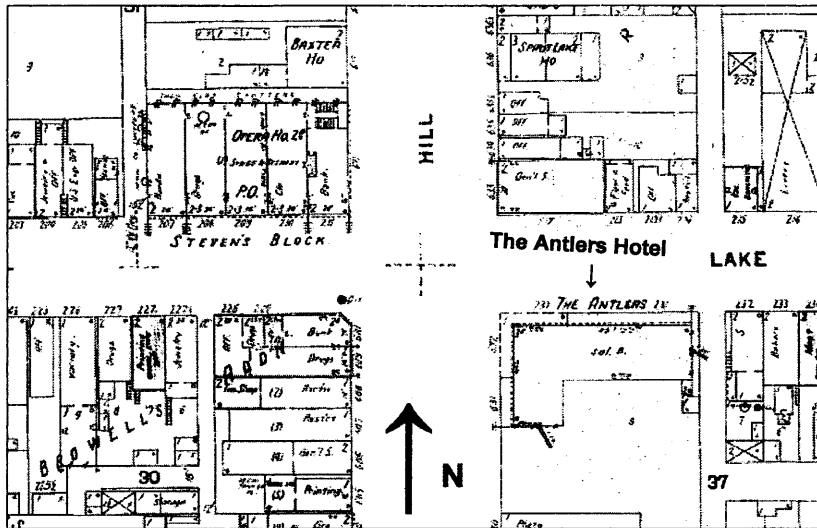


Figure 4: Detail from 1907 Sanborn Map, Sheet 2

Figure 4 depicts the original building. There are fire escapes on the alley and the south end of the south wing. The veranda is shown as a single story component, due to the raised basement. There is a saloon in the basement.

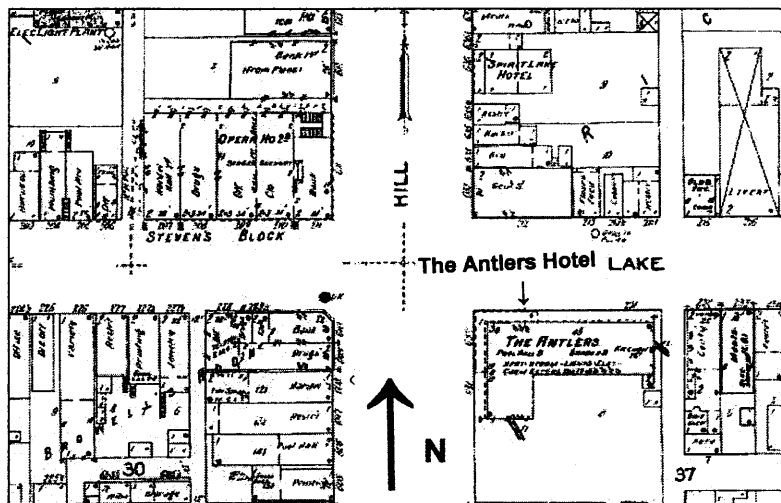


Figure 5: Detail from 1913 Sanborn Map, Sheet 3

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Some changed use patterns are apparent in the 1913 Sanborn Map (Figure 6). A billiard hall is located in the basement and the hotel kitchen is on the first floor.

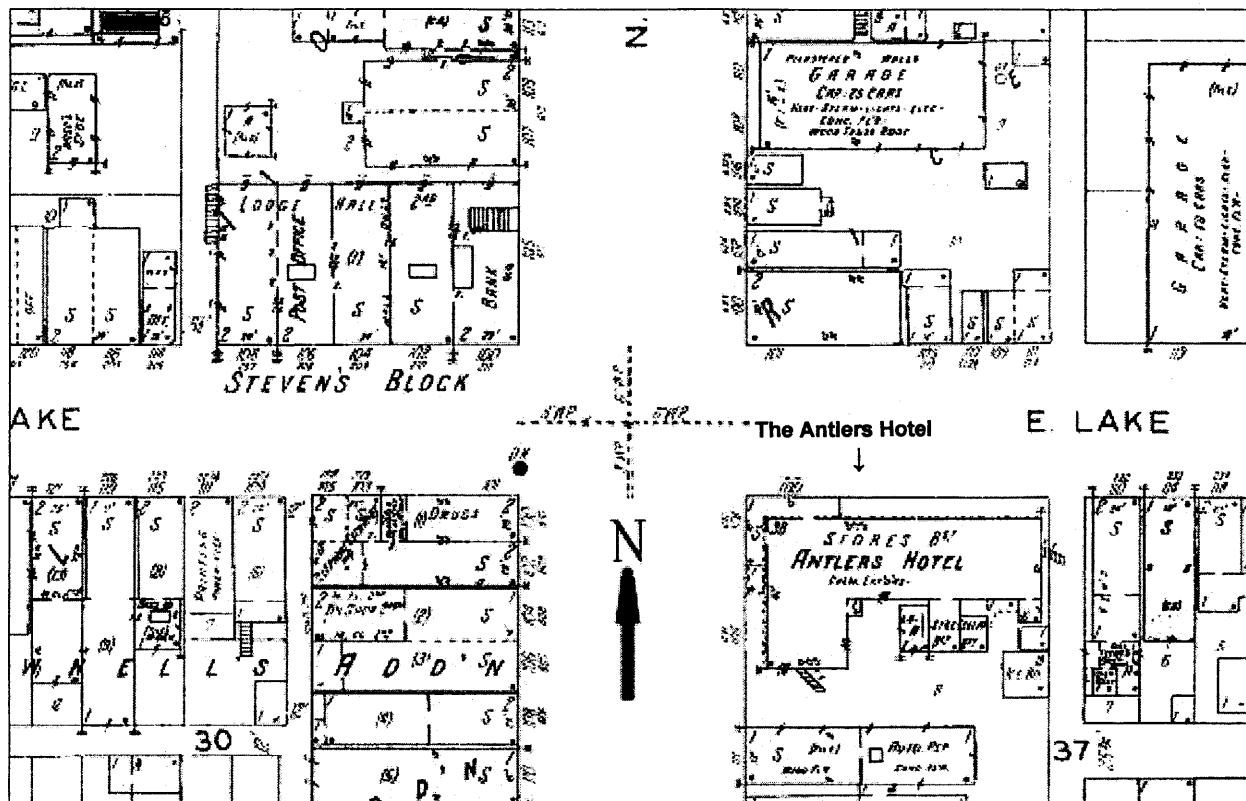


Figure 6: Detail, 1930 Sanborn Map, Sheet 2

Figure 6 documents the addition of a number of dependencies behind the hotel. One of these is a garage and another, along the alley is an "ice box." Stores occupy the basement. There is no later map that depicts the post-1930s addition or the remodeling of the veranda.

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8. Statement of Significance

The Antlers Hotel is locally significant under National Register Criterion A because of its direct and significant associations with early 20th century tourism and hospitality in Spirit Lake and the Iowa Great Lakes region. The period of significance is 1902-1957. This time period represents the lengthy and successful operation of what was a first-class hotel operation from its construction, its enlargement, and its continued postwar service.

Beginning in the early 1880's and continuing to the early 1920's, a coalition of railroad companies, local and out-of-state entrepreneurs, and sportsmen turned Spirit Lake and other communities around the lakes into a largely upscale tourist destination. Focusing on boating, hunting and gun tournaments, Spirit Lake became the scene of a famous annual regatta. It served as the departure point for several steamships operating on the lakes and as the host for numerous shooting tournaments. These featured local native Fred "Dood" Gilbert, who won numerous national and international championships. Constructed in 1902, during the heyday of this tourism boom, the Antlers replaced an early wooden structure on its site and was widely regarded as the finest hotel in the northwest part of the state. By 1906, four years after the completion of the Antlers, a locally published "Blue Book" for Spirit Lake and vicinity identified seventeen resort facilities in the area. This increase in the tourist trade in turn caused the construction of a major addition to the Antlers in 1930. During the 1920's and later, Iowa Lakes tourism evolved as the automobile came more into play and the railroad era resorts began a steady decline. Today, the Antlers Hotel, currently undergoing renovation, is one of only a small number of surviving buildings directly associated with railroad era tourism.



Figure 7: 1907 view of the hotel, viewed southeast (www.pbase.com/luckybreak/okobogi.jpg)

Spirit Lake entrepreneur John Burmeister owned two businesses at the turn of the 20th century. In the first week of September in 1901, Burmeister sold his interest in the local saloon in order to give his full attention to the Crandall House hotel that was constructed in 1881 and was his second Spirit Lake business venture. The sale of the saloon

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also cleared the way for Burmeister to focus attention on plans to expand his hotel business in Spirit Lake. Later that same month, he announced plans to build a new deluxe hotel in the resort community on the site of the Crandall House. Burmeister won immediate local support for his new hotel concept. The *Spirit Lake Beacon* declared "It is an enterprise of large importance to the community and it should have the most earnest consideration. The *Beacon* is not at this writing advised as to the details of Mr. Burmeister's plans or his proposition, but it is of the opinion that he is ready to take all the chances in the enterprise a prudent man ought to take. No town in Iowa is more in need of a good hotel building than Spirit Lake."

On November 1, 1901 John Burmeister announced plans for the new hotel. The structure was to be 124 x 68 feet, with three stories above a basement. A significant portion of the basement was to be above ground, in order to provide light and airy space for basement rooms. The office for the hotel was to be 34 x 36 feet, the reading room 18 x 20 feet and the dining room was to have capacity for 106 people. The office and washrooms would be tiled and the entire building heated with steam heat, and fitted with call bells. The building would be fully electrified and house 51 guest rooms and 10 bathrooms that would provide every modern convenience. A broad veranda was planned for the second story of the building. The veranda would extend fifty-six feet on the north and fifty-two feet on the west, providing a pleasant space for seasonal travelers. Exterior walls were planned with Wisconsin sand-molded brick and appropriate limestone trimmings. The entire project was estimated at between \$35,000 and \$38,000 fully furnished.



Figure 8: 1909 view north along Hill Avenue
(www.pbase.com/luckybreak/okobogi.jpg)

Burmeister hired Frank W. Kinney of Austin, Minnesota, as the project architect. Kinney with several other partners (Henry W. Orth during the late 1890s, and Menno S. Detweiler, 1900-04), designed a prolific number of buildings throughout Iowa. These included the Winneshiek County Courthouse, Decorah, 1903-05; the Winnebago County Courthouse, Forest City, 1896; the Hancock County Courthouse, Garner, 1899; the Clay County Courthouse, Spencer, 1900-01; the Lafayette County Courthouse, Darlington, Minnesota, 1903-05; the McLeod County Courthouse, Glecoe, Minnesota, 1909, and other hotels in Mason City, Crystal Lake (Hancock County) and Calmar (Winneshiek County). Another of Kinney's works, the Mahanomen County Courthouse in Mahanomen,

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Antlers Hotel

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Minnesota, was added to the National Register of Historic Places on February 16, 1984 (Shank, p. 198).

Mr. Burmeister envisioned a hotel grander in scale than the Crandall House. Project estimates totaled \$30,000 and Burmeister quickly surmised he would not be able to finance the newly planned hotel without significant capital contributions from local investors. In mid-September of 1901, Burmeister made an appeal to the Spirit Lake Commercial Club to raise \$25,000 in capital for a new luxury hotel, the likes of which were not available in all of northwest Iowa. The *Spirit Lake Beacon* reported on September 20, 1901, that a local hotel committee had been formed and gave a further endorsement to the project by writing "Those who have not already done so should give the hotel committee substantial encouragement and the enterprise will be assured before another issue of the *Beacon*. It will take united support of the town to succeed. Indifference on the part of any citizen who should aid the project courts failure in this matter." Within two weeks, local businessmen had raised over \$20,000 of the total \$25,000 needed to start construction of the new hotel. An appeal to the public was made to help raise the remaining \$5,000 for the project. An unusual design provision for a hotel, and likely a principal reason for the hotel's raised basement, was the housing of a saloon on that level. The state Mulct Law required that the saloon interior be publicly visible among other things. A 1930 account states "[the hotel] was built by John Burmeister and the Ham[ms] Brewing Company and at that time it was the most outstanding hotel property in all these parts. The basement arrangements was [sic] first constructed primarily for the accommodation of the saloon..." (*Spirit Lake Beacon*, November 13 1930).

By September 27th of 1901, Burmeister had changed his financial plans, and decided to front the cost of the new facility himself. He presented the Commercial Club with a summary of his plans. The new hotel would be a fifty-room facility that would cost \$22,000 to \$25,000 to build. The cost of the building site and furniture would bring the total cost of the hotel to \$38,000. He again appealed to the Commercial Club to assist in the project, but this time with a more modest \$5,000 bonus for himself for undertaking the project. The Commercial Club formed a committee charged with raising a credible bonus. Committee members were A.W. Osborne, Dr. E. L. Brownell, E.R. Sully, John A. Miller and W.T. Davidson. The committee raised funds locally and within a month was able to counter offer Burmeister \$4,500, a sum agreeable to Burmeister, and soon plans for the new hotel were underway. Kinney arrived in Spirit Lake in November of 1901 to oversee demolition of the Crandall House and begin clearing the site for the new hotel. The old hotel was demolished on November 10, 1901, so that work could be started before winter set in and stopped construction. Construction bids were let in December of 1901, with Charles A. Bartz of LaCrosse, Wisconsin, the lowest bidder at \$18,000. Other bidders included:

Le Roy Davis of Spirit Lake- \$23,628

A.F. Miller of Estherville- \$21,167

P.R. Wells, Emmetsburg- \$24,787

T.J. Francis of Spirit Lake- \$23,760

William Hitaffer, Estherville- \$21,787

J. McMahan of Mankato- \$18,012

The contract for the Antlers Hotel did not include heating, plumbing, electric light, call bells, bath fixtures or frescoing and floor finishing. The complete building was estimated to cost \$23,000. The contract was stated to complete construction in June of 1902.

John Tintinger of Heron Lake, a builder and the father-in-law of Mr. Burmeister, acted as superintendent of the job. Work on the Antlers Hotel began in late 1901 and continued over the winter. In March, C.A. Masters of

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Mankato won the bid for plumbing the new hotel for \$1,417. Pond and Hasey of Minneapolis beat ten other bidders to provide heating fixtures for \$1,480. Despite several construction delays, including late shipments of brick, back-ordered door locks and troubled shipments of millwork, the building was complete in June of 1902.



Figure 9: 1926 Decoration Day view southeast
(www.pbase.com/luckybreak/okobogi.jpg)

The office, reading room and dining room were all outfitted with steel ceilings. Frank Wright, declared by the *Beacon* to be an “artist with the brush”, was charged with selecting pleasing paint colors for the interior of the building. The interior carpets were Wilton velvet and Brussels, and the furniture was a grade fine enough to correspond with such fine flooring. Tiled floors were laid in the office, reading room and washroom.

On June 20, 1902, the *Spirit Lake Beacon* reported “The Antlers ought to have a formal opening. The right time will be after the Chautauqua and when everything about this fine new hostelry is in proper working order. Then John Burmeister ought to get up a banquet and invite all the town folks and some from the outside and we all ought to feel pleased and proud to get together and felicitate the town and the traveling public over the happy consummation of this important enterprise”.

The Antlers Hotel opened its doors to the restaurant for the noon meal on June 28, 1902. At this time, the local townspeople were able to share in the joy of being able to offer a grand hotel with the comforts of steam heat and private bath to patrons who were in the area to enjoy the lake and fishing. The completed Antlers Hotel was the largest hotel for many miles and one that was grand enough to provide quality service rarely found in towns twice the size of Spirit Lake. Comfortable rockers could be found in the main office and veranda. A large writing room, ladies parlor and dining room completed the first floor public spaces. The kitchen was located in the back of the building and was created to prepare meals for large crowds of people.

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A few days later, the guest rooms of the Antlers Hotel were ready for business. The first guest to register in the new hotel was Iowa's newly elected Governor, Albert Baird Cummins (Governor from 1902-1908). He was followed by thirty-four prominent businessmen who formed a dinner party given in honor of the Governor. This was the first formal party to be held in the Antlers Hotel. All in attendance of the opening of the Antlers Hotel determined it was by far the finest facility in northwest Iowa and predicted the hotel's long and continued success.

Throughout the past century, the Antlers Hotel has on many occasions served as an important community center. At 5:00 am on November 11, 1918, word of the end of World War I came to the Antlers Hotel in Spirit Lake via telegraph. The news of the end of the war spread quickly and a celebratory bonfire was immediately started on the corner in front of the Antlers Hotel. The fire burned all day and was fed by boxes, old wood and several outhouses from the alleys of downtown Spirit Lake.

It was during this period of the hotel's history that it fell into the hands of "land traders" and its reputation was allowed to be "sadly neglected." On July 26, 1919 the Antlers Hotel was sold to W.R. Neal and his wife, Bert Potter Neal. Mr. and Mrs. Neal owned and operated the Antlers Hotel for 43 years. On three occasions during the ensuing Great Depression, the Neals nearly lost ownership of the Antlers for back taxes. In each case, a local community member or group of individuals was able to loan the Neals the money necessary to pay the back taxes and continue to operate the hotel that was so important to the community and the Iowa Great Lakes tourist region. Historical records provide numerous occasions in which the Antlers served the community. On December 31, 1927, a severe fire swept through Hill Avenue in Spirit Lake, taking with it a number of historic structures. While the Antlers Hotel was fortunately spared from the fire, the hotel was able to help the community continue normal functions by providing office space for the Spirit Lake post office in the lower level of the hotel. The post office remained at this location for several years. In April of 1959, members of the Spirit Lake Rotary, Kiwanis, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Chamber of Commerce, Parent Teachers Association, Legion Auxiliary and VFW Auxiliary created a community chest to be called the Good Neighbor Fund. The first Good Neighbor Fund drive goal was set at \$8,952. The kickoff for the new program was held on October 23, 1959, with a breakfast at the Antlers Hotel. The event was a smashing success, raising \$12,000, a sum much higher than the original anticipated goal (*Spirit Lake Beacon*, November 13, 1930).

The Neal family was committed both to keeping the hotel open and making the best hotel in the community. Nine years after the purchase, the first substantial change was made to the hotel:

Two years ago [1928] the old wooden porch was dismantled, and a most attractive brick porch and an entirely new entrance was constructed, which added materially to the outward appearance of the hotel and also afforded the most attractive display windows available.

This work marked the beginning a key change in the basement level commercial use. The new veranda was a permanent extension of the interior basement stores pace and display windows occupied what previously was a void between brick pier supports. At that time the basement was a mixed use area with some commercial, the hotel heating plant and some residential use. Mr. and Mrs. Neal had an apartment in the basement of the hotel (*Spirit Lake Beacon*, November 13, 1930).

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The clients in a hotel were a varied group. While the majority were the come and go over-night or short-term guests, others were permanent boarders, although some weren't always there. W. L. Finnicum, a railroad conductor, used hotels given the nature of his job. He was housed in the old Crandall house before it was replaced and had found temporary quarters in a private house when the Antlers Hotel was built. He moved into the new hotel and as of 1930, had resided there, staying every other night, for 30 years. Others kept what were termed "winter apartments." Locals would close up their drafty houses during the cold season and decamp to hotel room and board on a long-term basis (ibid.).

Eleven years after buying the business, a \$25,000 annex was constructed along the south edge of the hotel. The principal reason for the enlargement was "the demands of the traveling public and those desiring winter apartments during the past few years, which Mr. Neal has been unable to accommodate." The addition continued the tradition of combining hotel services with leased basement/ground level storefronts. The pre-arranged tenant for the new storefront was the W. L. Moore Furniture Company. The design of the storefront was tailored to that firm, providing "a double-deck storeroom with balcony." Such a mezzanine arrangement was then popular with furniture dealers. Moore's firm had come to Spirit Lake in 1924, having bought out George Stoerlein's furniture business that had served the community for 42 years. Moore did undertaking as well and brought the first limousine hearse to the town. Two months before it moved in, Moore's firm held its first and only sale to reduce inventory. The grand opening took place on November 14, 1930 (*Spirit Lake Beacon*, May 29, August 14, September 6, November 13, 1930).

The hotel was thriving and that also argued for more room. J. W. Jarnagin, report for the Mid-West Reporter, inspected the hotel on a late July day when temperatures reached 104°. He recounted:

The dining room at the evening meal was filled with guests. From the number and size of the families present it was quite obvious that the housewives are not inclined to prepare meals when the weather is so oppressively hot and so the hotel dining room is sought. Mr. Neal is doing a fine business and scarcely a night passes when he has not turned people from his hotel. This condition compelled the erection of a large addition to the house the excavation for which is now under way. All of the business rooms on the ground floor are occupied by profitable tenants and already the rooms that will be in the new addition are rented (*Spirit Lake Beacon*, July 24, 1930).

The first public announcement for the addition came at the end of May. Edward O. Damon (1876-1949/50), architect from Fort Dodge had already completed the plans. Damon was an architect with the federal government between 1900 and 1912. Previous to having his own practice in 1930, he partnered with architects James B. Hills and Patrick M. O'Meara. He was already noted in Spirit Lake for his having designed a replacement building for the First National Bank, that had just burned. The bank and this addition would have been some of the earliest solo designs that he prepared. The design was certainly innovative given the storefront arrangement already described. On the upper two floors 26 rooms were arranged with baths and closets so that they could be readily converted into

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Figure 10: The newly-completed annex (*Spirit Lake Beacon*, November 13, 1930)

five two or three room winter apartments or suites. Two hotel halls, running north/south, were extended to link up with the upper floors of the addition. Spencer Construction Company, from Spencer, Iowa, was selected as general contractor. H. L. Jackson had the plumbing contract. Spencer Construction was established in 1920 and by this time enjoyed a market area that included Minnesota, South Dakota, Kansas, Missouri and northwest Iowa. Excavation work started during the last week of June 1930, and the northern wall of an adjoining Asher auto garage was removed to make way for the south wall of the addition. Mr. Neal had also purchased the Asher property, and remodeled a single-story double storefront, as a "protection" for his hotel expansion (Shank, p. 50; *Spirit Lake Beacon*, May 29, June 26, July 3, November 13, 1930).

The enlargement gave the Antlers Hotel 70 rooms and 20 baths, judged by the local press to be "one of the finest hostelries in this section of Iowa."

The comfort of the guest was the main object in the arrangement in the new annex and also I the recent improvements in the Antlers proper. Each room is of unusual size for hotel construction, but the rooms are what the occupants desire in the winter apartments and the tourist demands in the summer...The arrangements and furnishings are the last word and he [Neal] will continue this end until all the comforts and accommodations are extended to all rooms thru out the hotel.

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The additional space allowed Mr. Neal to complete his broader plan, that being to use the entirety of the basement level for commercial purposes. The Neals occupied one of the new suites in the addition and two others were already immediately claimed. The heating plant was removed to an exterior building outside of the building proper to the south. The bump-out of display windows was continued south to connect with the façade of the addition, which had been pushed forward for that purpose (Figure 3). This added two new storefronts. Basement tenants as of late 1930 were Stillwell and Bradfield realtors (ensconced in the former saloon space), the Antlers Barber Shop remained where it had been since the new building opened in 1902, and the Northwestern Light and Power Company occupied one of the new storerooms (ibid).

It is interesting that the hotel expanded during the onset of the national Great Depression, but the first effects of that miserable period had yet to really impact Iowa. A summer census of lake visitors tallied 7,916 vacationers in “cottages, summer houses, hotels, camps and tents around the lakes.” The first bad news arrived in mid-September 1930 when the Arnold’s Park Savings Bank briefly closed to protect its depositors, although it soon reopened (Spirit Lake Beacon, August 7, September 11, 1930).

W. R. and Bert Neal did not have any children to inherit the Antlers Hotel. However, it was important to the Neals that the Hotel stay in operation as a quality facility. Upon his death in 1962, W. R. Neal left ownership of the Antlers to three relatives; brother John Neal, sister Lacy Neal Cain, and sister-in-law Alby Wakely. The will stipulated that the trio own and operate the Antlers as a hotel for at least one year. The Neals heirs owned and operated the Antlers as a Hotel until 1974 (Property Abstract).

By the early 1970’s, the Iowa Great Lakes region had become a major Midwest recreational destination. Hotels and motels of all kinds dotted the banks of the Iowa Great Lakes and were built along Highway #71 in Spirit Lake. Growth of the “Great Lakes Tourism and Industrial Corridor” took a severe toll on the businesses in downtown Spirit Lake by virtue of the city’s being bypassed and competing highway-based lodging being built. In 1974, the Antlers was sold for a symbolic \$1.00 to Heritage House Associates of Spirit Lake. The new owners immediately undertook a massive remodeling project that converted the hotel rooms into one-bedroom apartments. The Antlers Hotel has operated as rental apartments since the conversion in 1974. Because of serious disinvestment in the property, the Antlers Apartments were operating at an 80-90% vacancy rate prior to purchase by the current owners.

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Future Plans:

The limited alterations to the upper stories of the exterior of the Antlers Hotel have preserved the building as a wonderful example of the Classical Revival style. Future plans for the building are to clean and restore the upper stories of the exterior of the building according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

The first floor will be restored and available for commercial renters. The upper stories of the Antlers Hotel will undergo adaptive re-use to residential rental units. The upper stories of the building will be converted to 14 one and two bedroom apartment units. Eight one-bedroom units will average 733 square feet. Six two-bedroom units will average 1107 square feet. Amenities will include on-site laundry facilities, common space, stove, refrigerator, and central air. The total adaptable space for apartments and corridors on three floors of the Antlers Hotel will be 12,506 square ft. Total estimated project cost for restoration of the Antlers Hotel is 3.5 million dollars.

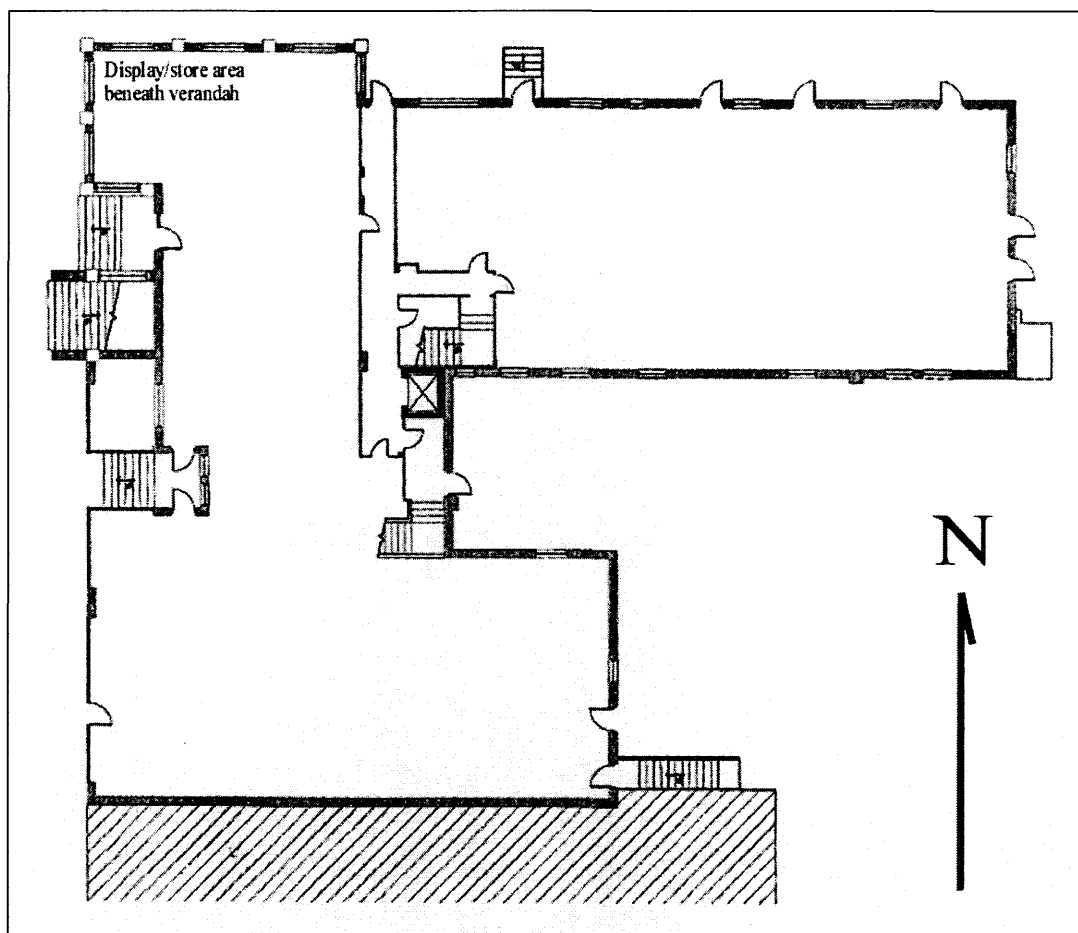


Figure 11: Basement Plan (InVision Architecture, November 15, 2004)

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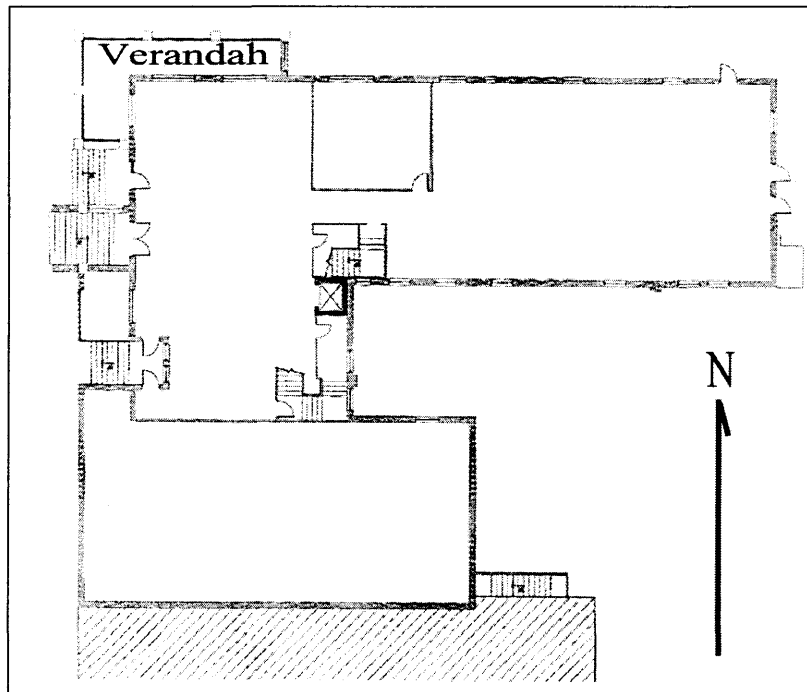


Figure 12: First Floor Plan (In\Vision Architecture, November 15, 2004)

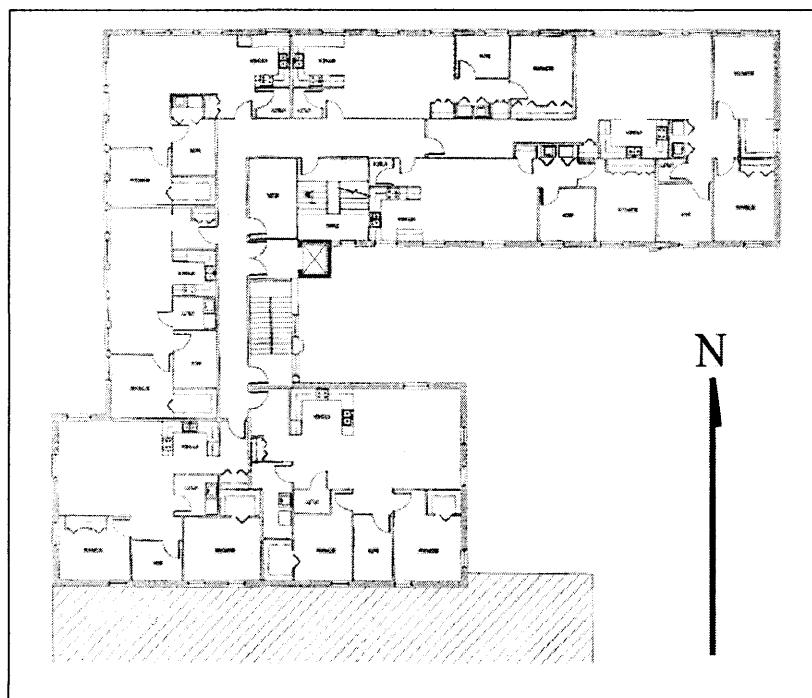


Figure 13: Second Floor Plan (In\Vision Architecture, November 15, 2004)

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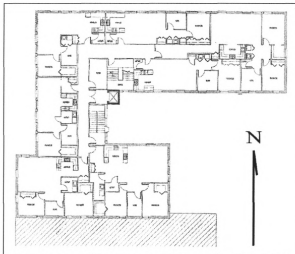


Figure 14: Third Floor Plan (In\Vision Architecture, November 15, 2004)

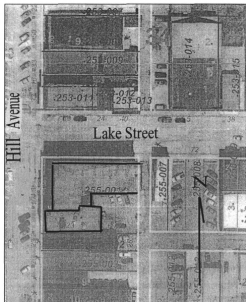


Figure 15: Aerial Site Plan (Dickinson County Assessor, 2004)

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Antlers Hotel- Legal Description

The North 127.5 feet of Lot 8, Block 37, and the South 26 feet of Lot 8, Block 37, all in Crandall's Addition to the City of Spirit Lake, Dickinson County, Iowa, except the following two described tracts: Tract I: Commencing at a point 26.0 feet North of the Southwest corner of Lot 8, Block 37, Crandall's Addition to the City of Spirit Lake; thence North 23.2 feet; thence North 89°11' East 73.23 feet; thence North 1.2 feet; thence North 89°11' East 60.1 feet; thence South 26.3 feet; thence West 67.6 feet; thence North 0.93 feet; thence South 89°11' West 65.05 feet to the point of beginning; Tract II: Commencing at the southwest corner of Lot 8, Block 37, Crandall's Addition to the City of Spirit Lake; thence North 26.0 feet; thence North 89°11' West 65.05 feet; thence South 0.93 feet; thence East 67.6 feet; thence South 26.0 feet; thence West 132 feet to the point of beginning;

VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Antlers Hotel.

Site Map:

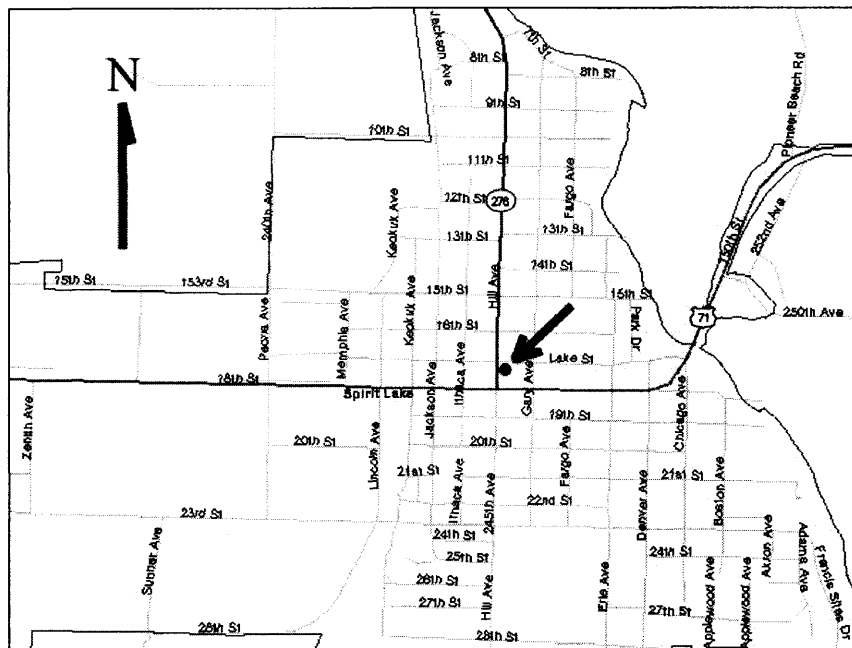


Figure 16: Locational Map (USGS template, 2007)

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Photographs:

All Photographs #1-6:

Antlers Hotel
Spirit Lake, Dickinson County, Iowa

Photographer- Dale McKinney, In/Vision Architecture, Sioux City, Iowa
Photo Date- May 2005

Negative Location- Community Housing Initiatives, Inc. Des Moines, Iowa

Photo #1- Antlers Hotel camera facing East, Hill Avenue facade

Photo #2- Antlers Hotel camera facing South, Lake Street façade

Photo #3- Antlers Hotel camera facing North, side facade

Photo #4- Antlers Hotel camera facing Southwest, rear facade

Photo #5- Antlers Hotel camera facing West, rear façade

Photo #6- Ornamental brick detail

All Photographs #7-9:

Antlers Hotel
Spirit Lake, Dickinson County, Iowa

Photographer- Dan Garrett, Iowa Equity Fund, Des Moines, Iowa
Photo Date- July 2006

Negative Location- Community Housing Initiatives, Inc. Des Moines, Iowa

Photo #7- Antlers Hotel first floor tile detail

Photo #8- Antlers Hotel, primary wood staircase

Photo #9- Antlers Hotel first floor interior