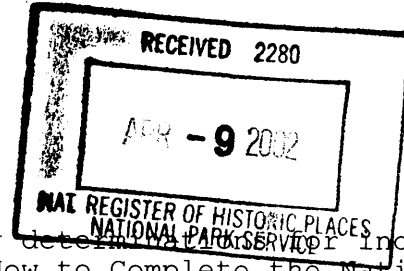


*ole*  
*541*

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 determination of 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 Fleming Building

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 218 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue not for publication N/A  
city or town Des Moines vicinity N/A  
state Iowa code IA county Polk code 153 n zip code 50309

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.)

*Donell J. Loke*

*March 21, 2002*

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

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

*Edson H. Beall* 5/22/02

other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

*Jan*

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>	_____ buildings
_____	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ 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)

Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance 1907  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates 1907  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)  
N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder Burnham, D.H. & Company, Chicago, Illinois (Architect)

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

- 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 acre

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	15	447518	4603633	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____
	See continuation sheet.					

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.)

=====  
11. Form Prepared By  
=====

name/title Sommer Reece

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date August 30, 2001

street & number 4522 1/2 Carpenter Avenue telephone 515/288/9536

city or town Des Moines state Iowa zip code 50311  
=====

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 Kirk V. Blunck

street & number 5223 Waterbury Road telephone 515/277-3316

city or town Des Moines state Iowa zip code 50312  
=====

=  
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.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Fleming Building  
name of property  
Polk County, Iowa  
county and State

Narrative Description:

The Fleming Building is an 11-story commercial office building located in the downtown business district of Des Moines, Iowa. The building is sited on the corner of two busy urban streets, Walnut Street and Sixth Avenue. It sits adjacent to several other multi-story office buildings. The adjacent building on Sixth Avenue, originally the Hippee Building, now the Midland Building, is a contemporary of the Fleming Building. These two were only part of a corridor of multi-story buildings which ran up Sixth Avenue from the area of the Polk County Courthouse south of Mulberry Street, north to Walnut Street, and beyond in the early twentieth century. The location of the Fleming Building was quite well chosen, as the building is just one block up Sixth Avenue from the Polk County Courthouse, which was completed in 1906, one year prior to the Fleming Building. The building was, and continues to be, home to numerous law offices seeking quick accessibility to the courthouse.

The Fleming Building features a front entrance on Sixth Avenue, and a secondary entrance within its Walnut Street façade. The Sixth Avenue streetfront is 132 feet wide, which was considered quite grand at the time of its construction. The property continues along Walnut Street for 68 feet, creating a large rectangular footprint. The building is composed of a brick step-footing foundation with a steel frame for structure, and is clad in brown, hydraulic-pressed brick masonry. The roof and second level cornices were formed of terra cotta. All of the single-hung windows were originally oak, but have been replaced on the north, east, and south elevations with aluminum windows. The building was considered to be of "fire-proof" construction.

The only major alteration to the exterior of the building took place in 1939, and resulted in the re-cladding of the first floor in brown granite, along with the alteration of the first floor fenestration. The extreme northwest bay of the north façade was also bricked in subsequently. The facades of the other ten floors remain original, and are delineated by the tripartite composition popular within the Chicago style. The lower division, separated by a terra-cotta cornice detailed with dentils and medallions, is comprised of the first and second floors. These floors originally featured the distinctive three-part "Chicago School" windows, characterized by large central fixed panes flanked by smaller, double-hung sash window on either side. The middle division, floors three through ten, features bays of triple windows. There are seven bays across the Sixth Avenue streetfront and four along Walnut. Finally, the top division, comprised of the eleventh floor, is more ornately detailed, is shorter in height, and features more numerous, smaller windows. It is capped by an over-hanging roof cornice that extends from the flat roof of the building, and figures prominently into the building's profile, creating a solid cap for the composition.

When viewing the full elevations, the grid of the steel structure around the bays of windows is clearly discernible, creating a very regimented expression, with little or no surface ornament. All four of the building's elevations feature the same fenestration, with the only exception being the entrances.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 2

Fleming Building  
name of property  
Polk County, Iowa  
county and State

=====

The 1939 re-cladding of the first floor resulted in the loss of the original window scheme on this level, though the Chicago style windows do remain intact on the second floor. The first floor has lost its original six individual storefronts on the east, and now features a more modern storefront scheme, with smaller windows, and relocated doors. The added granite over the first level has also obscured the lower halves of the original pilasters, which extended from ground level to the second level cornice. In addition, the main entrance on Sixth Avenue has receded from its original location flush with the façade. It is now recessed several feet into the building, the doors have been replaced, and the arch over the door on the second level has been replaced with an original solution.

Upon entering the building through the main entrance, one enters the elevator lobby, which retains much of its original marble wall finishes. The lobby is open to a central north-south corridor, around which the plan for all eleven floors is centered. The three elevators, located on the west wall of the central core, are still in operation. They are supplemented by a stair that is located directly south of the elevators on the first and second levels, and is situated in a stair hall at the northwest corner of the corridor from level three through level eleven.

Off the central corridor, the plan of the interior spaces varies from floor to floor. While the first floor originally featured eight retail shops, there are now only three retail locations. The second floor, which began as a bank lobby gridded by office enclosures and teller partitions, is now one large, open office. The plans of the other floors were divided up into small offices, as many as twenty-seven on one floor. As they were leased out, the offices were often combined with two or three others to create a larger suite. Currently, these floors are still divided into offices, though the suites are now much larger, averaging just three or four to a floor.

Much of the original finishes and detailing of the interiors is still present today. The original Deco style wrought iron stair railings remain, as does the Tennessee gray marble of the stair treads. The walls of the central corridors remain clad in their original white carrera marble. The original terrazzo floor of the second level corridor has been restored to original condition. The interior spaces of floors 2 through 11 have hardwood strip flooring over a concrete and clay tile floor system. While these wood floors have survived in place, all are now covered with carpet or tile. Many of the building's original two-paneled oak doors remain in their original locations. Original door hardware, which features the initials "FB" on the doorknobs, remains largely in use throughout the building, as does the original Cutler system mail chute, still operable on all eleven floors.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 3

Fleming Building  
name of property  
Polk County, Iowa  
county and State

=====  
Narrative Statement of Significance:

The Fleming Building is locally important under Criterion C, as a commercial office building of distinctive architectural and structural character designed by the nationally renowned architectural firm of D.H. Burnham & Company.

This building is an early example of the "skyscrapers" which began to crop up during the first part of the twentieth century, beginning in Chicago, and slowly moving outward toward cities like Des Moines. It characterizes a period in architectural history which marks the transition from the reliance on Beaux Arts Classicism to the new development of the "Chicago School" the modern architecture it inspired. The Fleming Building was known to be one of the finest buildings in Des Moines upon its construction, and was noted by city leaders as an example for future construction in the area. The building employs one of the first steel structural systems to be built in Iowa, and is one of very few structures in the state designed by the famed Chicago architectural firm of D.H. Burnham & Co.

D.H. Burnham & Company is the successor firm of Burnham and Root, which was originally established in Chicago, Illinois in 1873. The firm was originally under the leadership of Daniel Hudson Burnham and John Wellborn Root. Burnham and Root were two of a small pool of forward thinking Chicago architects who, along with Louis Sullivan, William Holabird and others, eventually became known as the "Chicago School." The two men formed a highly successful partnership in which Root was the principal designer and Burnham the manager and administrator. Together, they are responsible for many of Chicago's most important and lasting buildings of the late nineteenth century, including The Rookery, the Mondanock Building, and the Reliance Building, forerunners of the modern skyscraper, as well as for numerous advances in building technology, such as steel structures and floating foundations. John Root died, however in 1891, and the firm was from then on headed only by Burnham, as D.H. Burnham & Company. Both firms under Burnham's direction were prolific, and have made a lasting impact on the architectural composition of many cities throughout the United States.

Raised and educated in Chicago, Daniel Burnham gained his early architectural experience with William LeBaron Jenney, the so-called "Father of the Skyscraper." His partnership with Root made great strides in the development of the modern characteristics of the Chicago School, and established the firm as one of the largest, most prodigious, important, and influential design practices in the United States.

Established in 1891, D.H. Burnham & Company was to be even more high-profile, and Daniel Burnham's work set numerous precedents for the practice of architecture in the United States and abroad. In 1893, Burnham personally supervised the laying out and construction of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, for which he gained much admiration. In 1909, Burnham made his most significant contribution to the profession with his Plan for Chicago, which is considered the nation's first example of a comprehensive master-planning document. This document is the basis for the creation of Wacker Drive and many of the lakefront parks that grace

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section  8  Page  4

Fleming Building  
name of property  
Polk County, Iowa  
county and State

=====  
downtown Chicago. Burnham went on to create master plan documents for the cities of Cleveland, San Francisco, Washington D.C., and Manila, the Philippines, as well as many others.

In the midst of these activities, Burnham's firm was engaged in the creation of a vast collection of "big buildings for big business" all over the country. Daniel Burnham was a talented negotiator, and gained great favor with many of the richest and most prominent entrepreneurs of the Industrial Age. Since the death of John Root, the Burnham aesthetic had gravitated toward a less modern, more formal, monumental expression which greatly appealed to capitalists. This design sensibility, coupled with Burnham's reputation for involving clients in the design and working hard to meet their needs, led to his firm being sought out by financiers and merchants to create landmark structures all over the country. From 1891 to 1912, the firm produced plans for over two hundred executed structures of this type. Of these landmark buildings, still in existence are the Heyworth Building, the Monadnock Block, the Railway Exchange and the Butler Brothers Warehouse in Chicago, and New York City's famed Flatiron Building in Times Square, as well as the Fleming Building in Des Moines.

Daniel Burnham made significant and original contributions in four different areas of the profession. First, he influenced the development and systematized the internal arrangement of the skyscraper form. Second, he was one of the first to succeed in the creation of the large architectural office, which led to the eventual emergence of firms of various specialists and departments working together to advance the technology of design. Third, he was one of the first to put faith in the importance of the comprehensive planning concept that has positively impacted so many cities and regions in the last century. Finally, he was a leader in the promotion of public cultural institutions, as well as a noted philanthropist of cultural causes.

When the Fleming Building was constructed, Daniel Burnham already enjoyed celebrity status amongst those "in-the-know." In 1907, he was in the late years of his career, and had already made significant contributions to the world of architecture and planning. Beginning in 1910, Burnham served as the first chairman of the newly established national Commission of the Fine Arts, as appointed by President Taft. By 1912, when he was ready to retire, the common sentiment amongst the architectural profession was that Daniel Burnham had become the "emperor of architecture."

In Des Moines, the era in which the Fleming Building was constructed was distinguished by numerous large building projects, both public and private. In 1906, the new Polk County Courthouse was completed just one block south of the Fleming Building on Sixth Avenue. In 1910, the new Des Moines City Hall was finished. The private sector brought the extension of the Old Equitable building in 1911, and the Hippee Building, adjacent to the Fleming Building on Sixth Avenue was completed in 1912. Of these, the Fleming Building is the most important as a precursor to the steel and glass skyscrapers that followed in the later twentieth century.

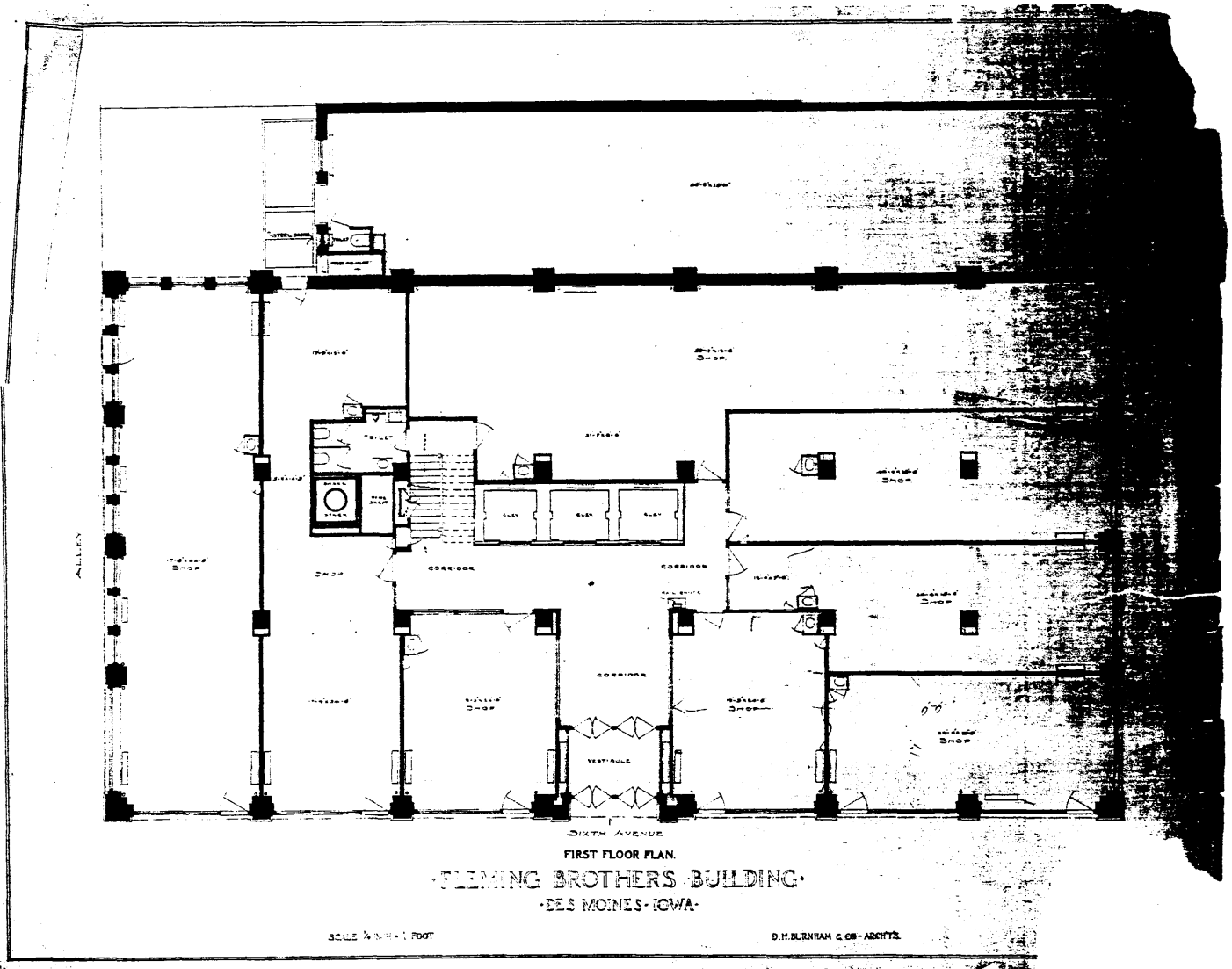
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 5

Fleming Building  
name of property  
Polk County, Iowa  
county and State

First Floor Plan, Individual Shops  
D.H. Burnham & Co. Architects, circa 1907



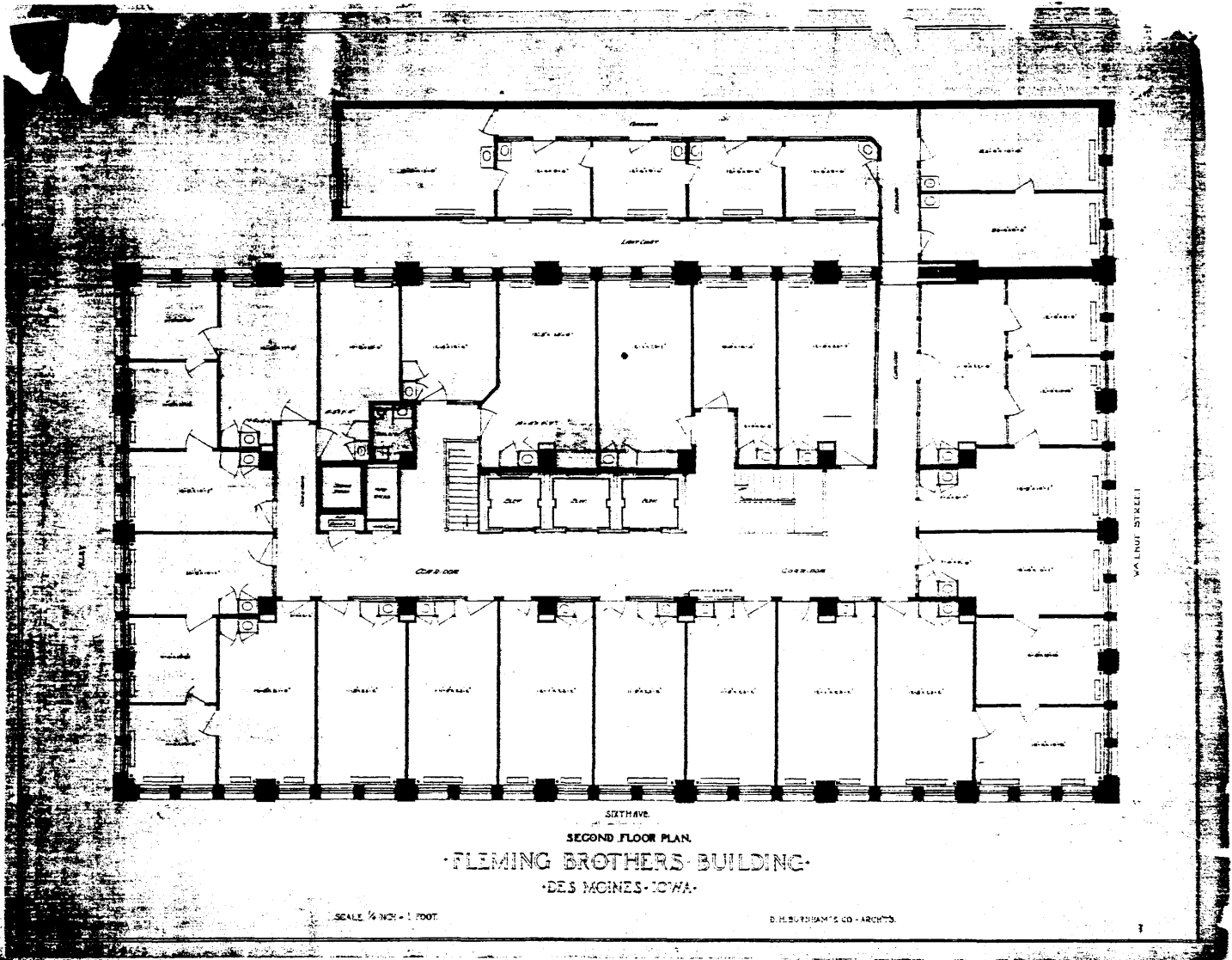
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 6

Fleming Building  
name of property  
Polk County, Iowa  
county and State

Second Floor Plan, Bank Lobby  
D.H. Burnham & Co. Architects, circa 1907



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

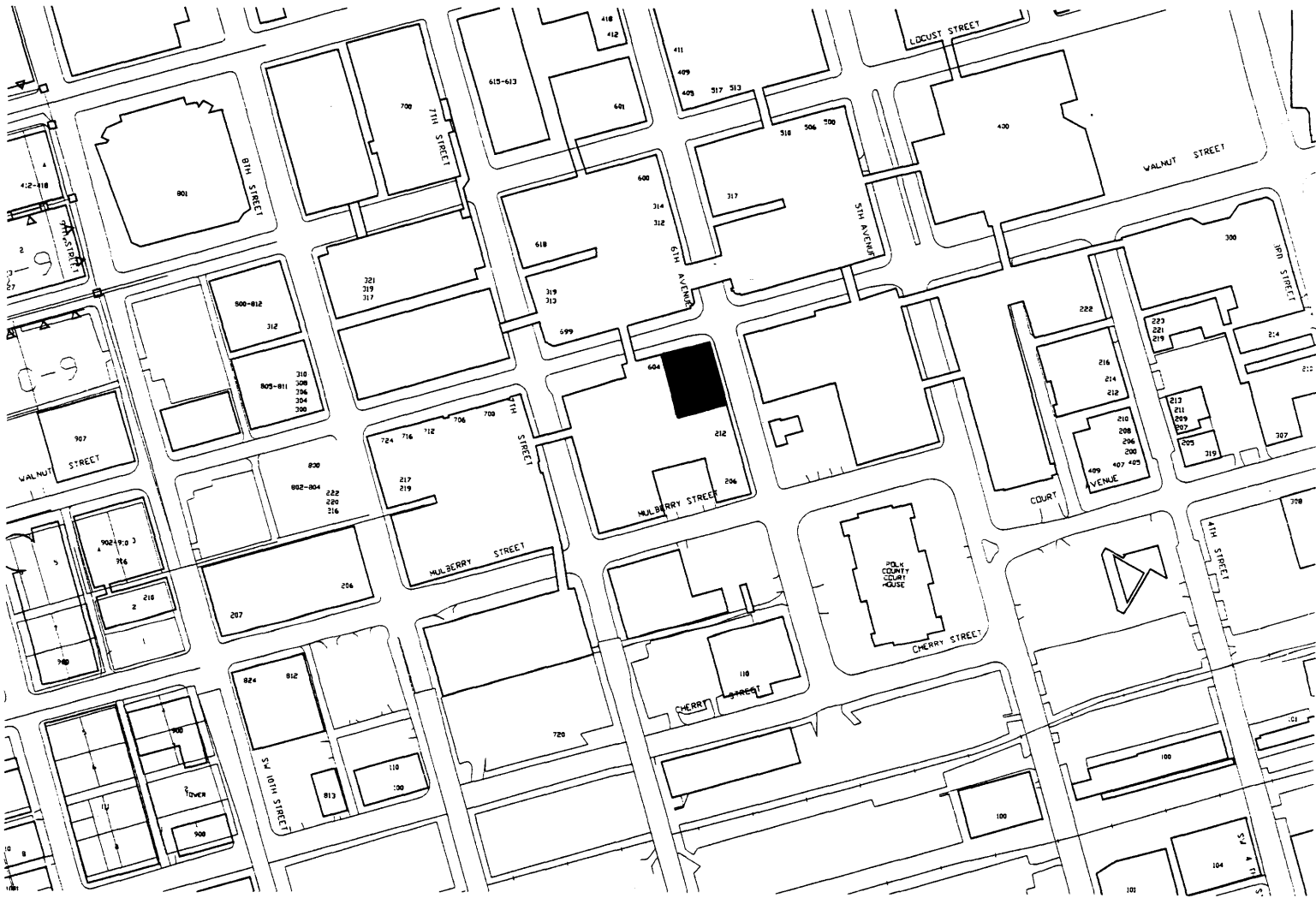
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 7

Fleming Building  
name of property  
Polk County, Iowa  
county and State

Site Plan Sketch Map

Source: City of Des Moines Planning and Zoning Department, Electronic File, 1994



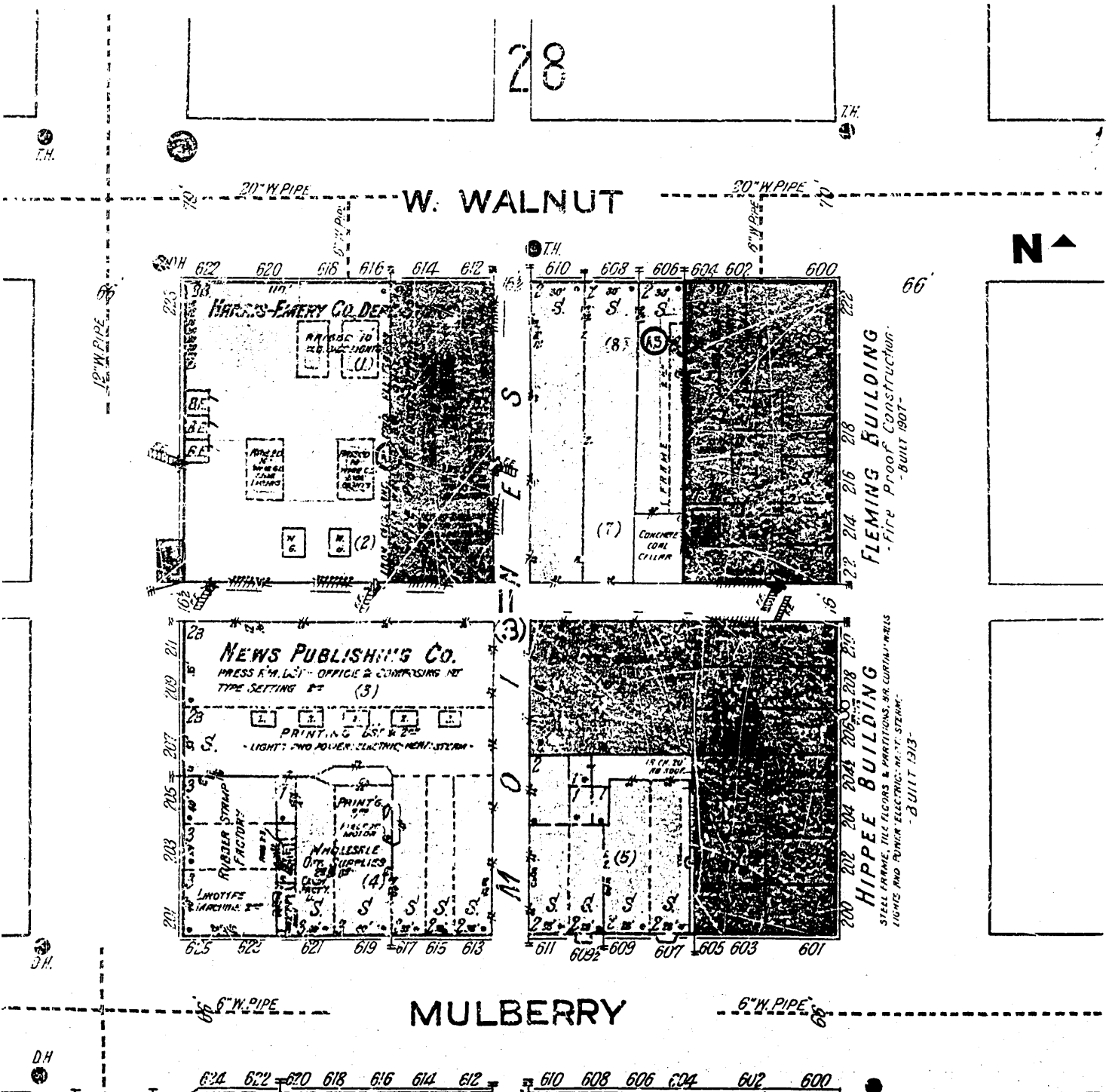
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 8

Fleming Building  
name of property  
Polk County, Iowa  
county and State

Site Plan Sketch Map  
Source: City of Des Moines Fire Map, 1920



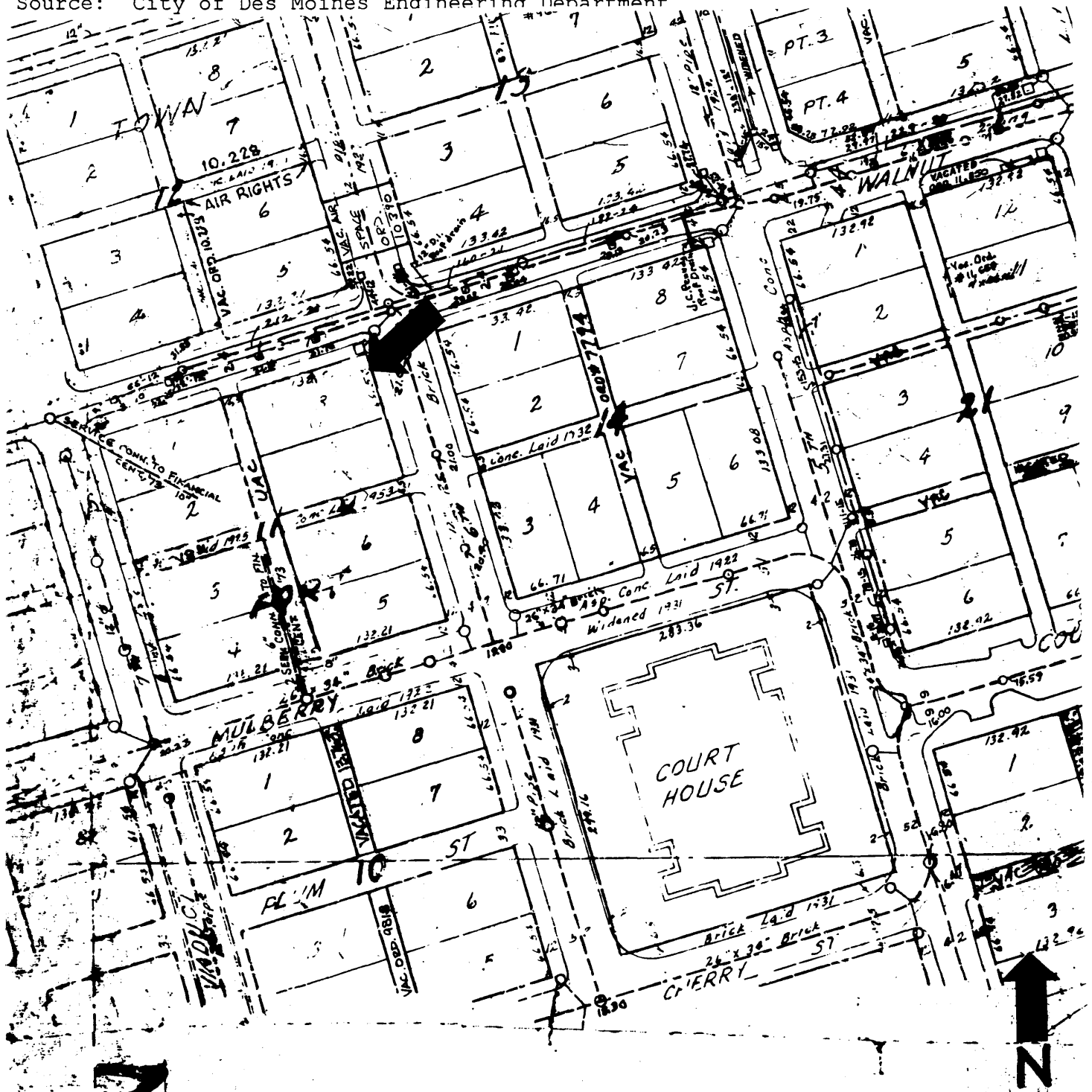
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 9

Fleming Building  
name of property  
Polk County, Iowa  
county and State

Plat Map SE ¼ Section 4 T.78 R.24, Last Revised 5.24.73  
Source: City of Des Moines Engineering Department



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9, 10 Page 10

Fleming Building  
name of property  
Polk County, Iowa  
county and State

=====  
Major Bibliographical References:

Brigham, Johnson. *History of Des Moines and Polk County, Iowa*. S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., Chicago, 1911. 2 Volumes.

City of Des Moines. *Fire Insurance Maps*, 1920, Number 14.

Denny, Pratt, et.al. *Perspectives of Polk County History*. Heartland Area Education Agency 11, 1988.

*Des Moines Register and Leader*. Des Moines, Iowa, November 10, 1907; November 25, 1907; December 2, 1907.

Gebhard, David and Mansheim, Gerald. *Buildings of Iowa*. Oxford University Press, New York, 1993.

Hines, Thomas S. *Burnham of Chicago*. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1979.

Pratt, Leroy G. *From Cabin to Capital*. State of Iowa Department of Public Instruction, Des Moines, Iowa, 1974.

Roth, Leland M. *A Concise History of American Architecture*. Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1979.

Shank, Wesley I. *Historic American Buildings Survey: Iowa Catalog*. University of Iowa Press, Iowa City, 1979.

Verbal Boundary Description:

E 1/2 Lots 7 & 8 BLK 11 Fort Des Moines

Boundary Justification:

The boundaries were selected because they are the legally recorded boundary lines historically associated with the Fleming Building and it is a single property.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 11 Page 11

Fleming Building  
name of property  
Polk County, Iowa  
county and State

---

Post Card

Source: Acmeograph CO., Chicago, Illinois (No Date Given)

*Fleming Building, Des Moines, Ia.*



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

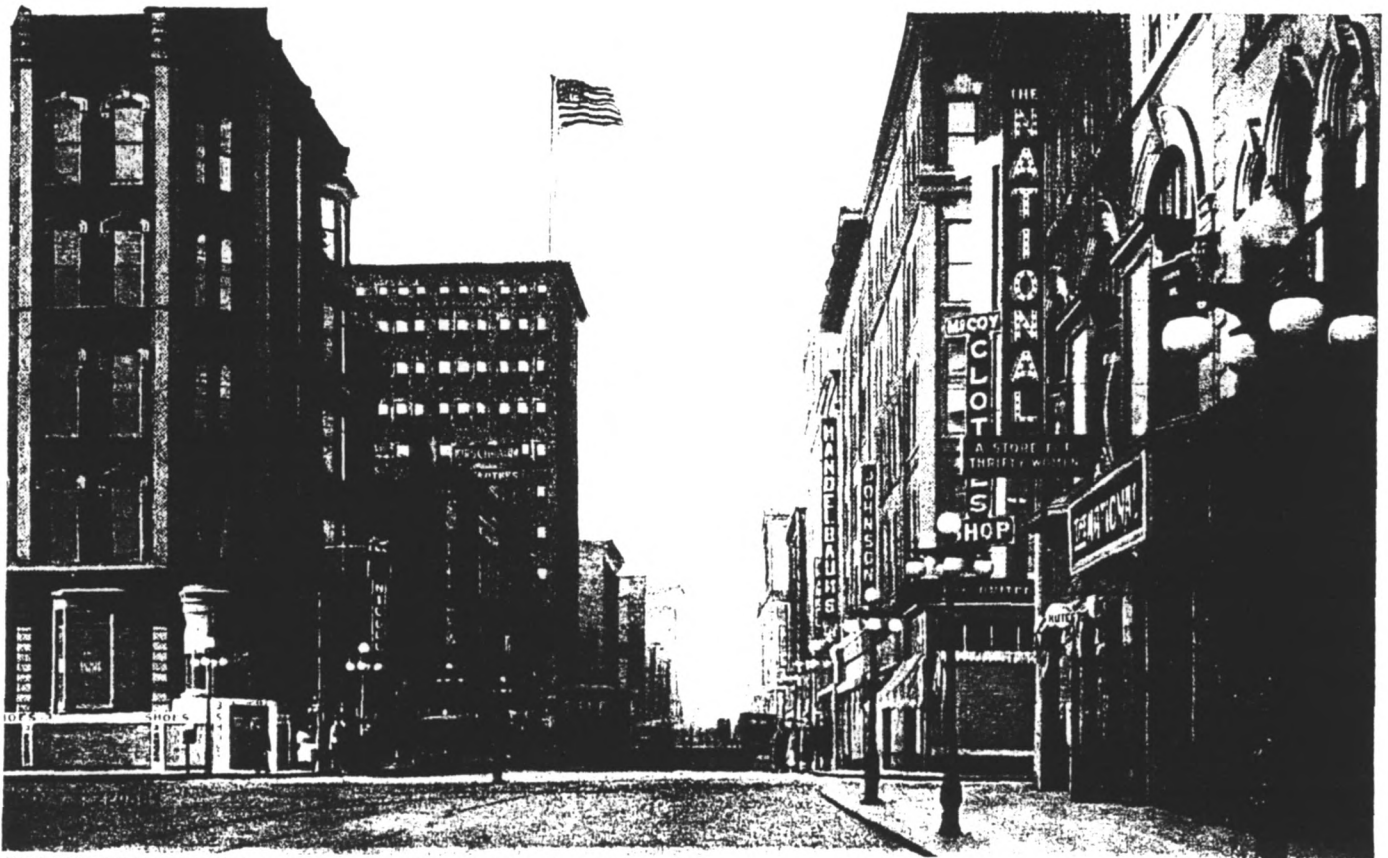
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 11 Page 12

Fleming Building  
name of property  
Polk County, Iowa  
county and State

=====

Post Card  
Source: Acmeograph Co., Chicago, Illinois (No Date Given)



WALNUT STREET WEST FROM FIFTH STREET, DES MOINES, IOWA.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Photos Page 13

Fleming Building  
name of property  
Polk County, Iowa  
county and State

=====  
**Photograph 1**      **Photographer: Mark Mickunas**      **Date: August, 2001**  
**Original Negative Location: Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck Architecture**

North and East elevations, taken from the north east corner of Sixth Avenue and Walnut Street.

**Photograph 2**      **Photographer: Mark Mickunas**      **Date: August, 2001**  
**Original Negative Location: Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck Architecture**

North and West elevations, taken from the middle of the block on Walnut Street. The lower levels of the west elevation are now partially obscured by recent construction.

**Photograph 3**      **Photographer: Mark Mickunas**      **Date: August, 2001**  
**Original Negative Location: Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck Architecture**

Main entrance on Sixth Avenue showing the brown granite re-cladding of the first level that was put on in the 1940's.

**Photograph 4**      **Photographer: Mark Mickunas**      **Date: August, 2001**  
**Original Negative Location: Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck Architecture**

Detail of Chicago style windows on the second level, as well as the medallions and Greek key detail on the second level cornice moulding (the dentils are in shadow). The top portions of the "giant order" pilasters are also visible on the second level.

**Photograph 5**      **Photographer: Mark Mickunas**      **Date: August, 2001**  
**Original Negative Location: Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck Architecture**

Detail of the bays of triple windows on floors three through ten.

**Photograph 6**      **Photographer: Mark Mickunas**      **Date: August, 2001**  
**Original Negative Location: Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck Architecture**

Detail of the eleventh floor windows and roof cornice on the north elevation.

**Photograph 7**      **Photographer: Mark Mickunas**      **Date: August, 2001**  
**Original Negative Location: Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck Architecture**

Close-up of intricate detail on the overhanging roof cornice.

**Photograph 8**      **Photographer: Mark Mickunas**      **Date: August, 2001**  
**Original Negative Location: Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck Architecture**

The first floor elevator lobby maintains much of its original marble wall finish.

**Photograph 9**      **Photographer: Mark Mickunas**      **Date: August, 2001**  
**Original Negative Location: Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck Architecture**

The second floor central corridor maintains its terrazzo floor, marble wall finishes, and windows along the east wall.

**Photograph 10**      **Photographer: Mark Mickunas**      **Date: August, 2001**  
**Original Negative Location: Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck Architecture**

The tenth floor corridor, typical of floors three through ten, maintains its marble wall finish and wood trim details. The original mail chute is on the left side.