

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received DEC 20 1985

date entered 116 1985

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

1. Name Seiler Building

historic Seiler Building

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 110 First Street East

N/A not for publication

city, town Jamestown

N/A vicinity of

state North Dakota

code 38

county Stutsman

code 093

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Daniel Buchanan

street & number 216 15th Avenue N.E.

city, town Jamestown

N/A vicinity of

state North Dakota

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Stutsman County Courthouse - Tax Assessor's Office

street & number 511 2nd Avenue N.E.

city, town Jamestown

state North Dakota

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date N/A N/A federal N/A state N/A county N/A local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A

state N/A

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input 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

Nomination of one contributing building.

SITE LOCATION

The Seiler Building is located at 110 First Street East in Jamestown, North Dakota. The building occupies Lot 8 in Block 32 of the original Jamestown townsite. Constructed in 1904 for lawyer Oscar J. Seiler, the building was located directly across from the Jamestown City Park and Northern Pacific Depot on what was then known as Main Street. (See Map #1 page 3) The Depot and surrounding public space formed the center of downtown Jamestown at the turn of the century. The Seiler Building was one of many commercial buildings which were located facing this space. Among these were the Capitol Hotel, Gladstone Hotel, Wallace Block and the "Alert" newspaper office.

The Seiler Building was originally constructed as a freestanding structure (See Photo 1) with no adjacent buildings on the east or west sides. However, between 1910-1920, a commercial block was constructed within six feet on the west side of the building. In the 1960's the Memorial Building was built and physically attached to the Seiler Building on the east side. As a result (See Photo 2) the Seiler Building is now flanked by two larger Buildings.

In 1904, Oscar J. Seiler hired the Hancock Brothers of Fargo, North Dakota to design a small, but prestigious, building to house his law, real estate and insurance office. The Hancock Brothers inturn produced drawings for a restrained Beaux-Arts building. The following paragraphs will describe the building as it exists today.

BUILDING DESCRIPTION

The Seiler Building is a rectangular, one story, brick structure with a flat roof. The building rests upon a rusticated, rough cut, granite foundation that forms a full basement level. This level is reached from the street by a sunken staircase which leads to a doorway on the east of the Building. There also exists a small display window in this level. Above both of these openings, are large slabs of roughed faced limestone which visually divide the basement and the raised first floor. This feature only exists on the front facade of the building.

The main entrance to the building is reached by a wide staircase constructed of smooth faced limestone slabs. Iron railings exist here and in front of the basement level. The arched doorway in the raised first floor and adjacent window are the main visual focal points of the front facade. The entrance is made up of two flanking brick pilasters and smooth limestone capitols from which the arch springs. The arch contains a rough cut keystone and radiating brickwork. The main window treatment in the front facade is equally elaborate. It too, has flanking brick pilasters with a limestone sill, pilaster bases, and capitols. The pilasters support a full wooden entablature complete with dentils that help form an elaborate window hood. Above this feature is another complete entablature

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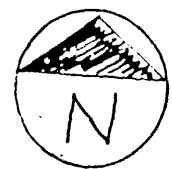
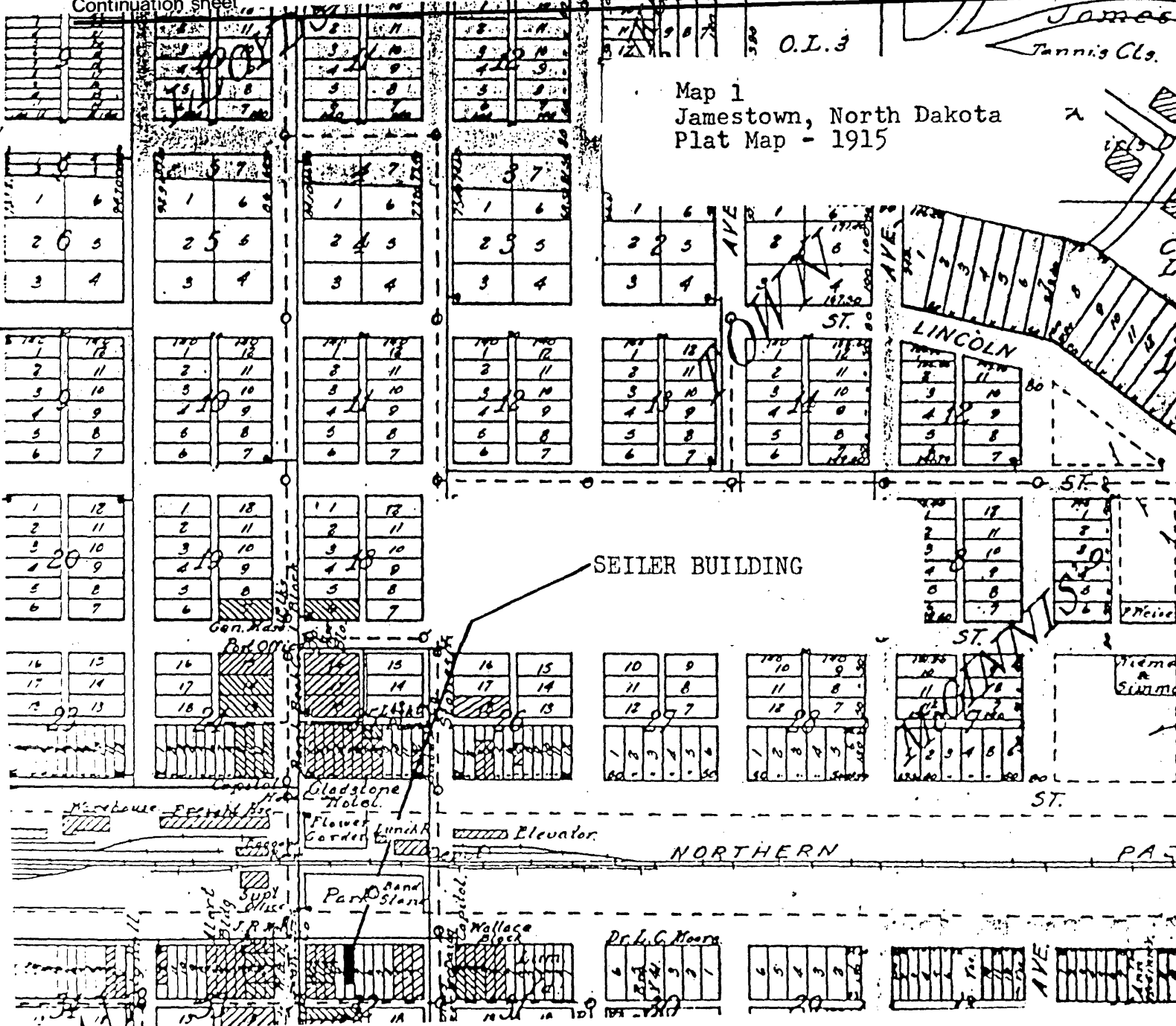
1

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NOT TO SCALE

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constructed of brick with dentils, recessed panels in the frieze, and wooden cornice. The entablature, as described, also exists on the exposed west facade, but not on the rear of the building. The front facade is surmounted by a brick pediment which contains a centrally located limestone block with the name "Seiler" carved in it. The pediment is capped with gently curving limestone. The rear of the building has four arched openings; three arched windows, one is the rear door. (See Photo 3)

The interior of the Seiler Building is accented with the use of oak woodwork. Specifically, the floor, chair rails, door trims, window trims and baseboards are all constructed of oak. The interior rooms boast eleven foot ceilings with one room having an original skylight. The basement level has been gutted and made into a large open space which still has both the original front and rear entrances.

ALTERATIONS

The Seiler Building retains much of its original integrity and has not been drastically altered. There have been minor alterations to the exterior of the building. These were the results of new construction on either side of the Seiler Building. The Building's greatest alteration occurred in the late 1960's when the Memorial Building was constructed immediately to the east. All five rounded arch windows on this side were bricked over and the parapet was removed. In addition, in the 1970's the leaded prism glass that existed above the entrance and main front window was removed and replaced with plain glass.

The interior remains very much intact, as there have been only two major interior alterations. In 1946, the front office was partitioned in such a way that the main entrance provided access to two individual offices and elaborate woodwork around a first floor safe was removed. In the 1970's the lower basement level was gutted. This alteration did not remove any major features as the basement lacked the "finished" appearance that the first floor had when constructed. It is important to note that since 1983 (See Photo 4) the present owner has been involved in an extensive restoration program on both the exterior and interior of the Seiler Building. This work has been done in strict accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Today, the Seiler Building retains excellent integrity and has not been compromised by alterations. Recent restoration work has reversed painted woodwork, covered wooden floors, and inappropriate ceiling treatments. It undeniably conveys a sense of time and integrity through the use of excellent design, materials and workmanship.

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 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1904 **Builder/Architect** George and Walter Hancock

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

SIGNIFICANCE

The Seiler Building is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places because it exhibits fine integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, and:

- Criterion B : It is associated with the lives of a person significant to Jamestown and North Dakota's past, namely O.J. Seiler; and
- Criterion C : The building embodies distinctive characteristics of the Beaux-Arts style of architecture, and is the design of master North Dakota Architects, George and Walter Hancock.

Oscar Joseph Seiler (see page 6) was born in a log house located near Stephenville, Wisconsin on March 20th, 1870. His father was a farmer and a Civil War veteran who moved from the Wisconsin farm to Jamestown, North Dakota in the early 1880's. Oscar and his brother Andrew arrived on March 20, 1886. Seiler recalled in 1938 that he and Andrew came out to Dakota Territory after seven days in an "emigrant box car with nothing but the clothes on their backs". In the fall of 1887 Seiler began to attend public school while working as a janitor, messenger and clerk in the Jamestown law offices of Lewis T. Hamilton. For a short period of time O.J. (as he was commonly known) worked in Grand Forks in a life insurance office but moved back to Jamestown in 1893. At that time he went into business for himself conducting a collection and insurance service. During this period Seiler began to establish himself as a prominent businessman in Jamestown; a status that was furthered when he was admitted to practice law in 1899. At the turn of the century he formed the Seiler Company which dealt in real estate, collections services, insurance and "surety" bonds. The company was in existence until 1925 when O.J. Seiler moved to California.

Seiler made important contributions to the City of Jamestown due to a sincere interest in the growth of the community. From 1899 until his departure he was an active member of Jamestown's Commercial Club and actively helped to promote new settlement in Jamestown and surrounding Stutsman County. Seiler also served as Treasurer of the North Dakota Hospital for the Insane in the first decade of the Twentieth century. In addition to his role as one of Jamestown's leading businessmen, Seiler also was involved in agriculture as he owned several farms and over two and a half sections of land devoted to grain production. He assisted in conducting Stutsman County's first soil survey and was a well respected source on County agriculture.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet: 4, Item 9 Page 9

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property Less than one acre

Quadrangle name Jamestown

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	4	5	2	2	3	2	1	0	5	1	9	1	4	8	1	0	1	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

West 3' of Lot 7 and all of Lot 8, Block 32 of original plat of the City of Jamestown, ND

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title James R. Schimmer/Historic Preservation Consultant

organization Schimmer Research + date 9/25/1985

street & number RR 3 Box 22A telephone 218-937-5340

city or town Hawley state Minnesota

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.

James E. Sperry
State Historic Preservation Officer signature

James E. Sperry
date 12/4/85

State Historic Preservation Officer (North Dakota) title date

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

Delores Byrne
Keeper of the National Register date 1-16-86

Attest: Chief of Registration date

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Oscar J. Seiler and advertisement
appearing in the 1915 edition
of Jamestown and Stutsman County,
N.D., published by the Jamestown
Commercial Club.



THE SEILER CO.

INCORPORATED

JAMESTOWN, NORTH DAKOTA

OSCAR J. SEILER,
Attorney at Law,
JAMESTOWN, N. D.

COLLECTIONS

We are prepared to handle all claims, no matter how bad. 20 years experience. Auto for country trips. Legal department in connection. Absolutely responsible.

INSURANCE

A dozen first-class old line companies in this agency; fair in adjustments, prompt in payment. We are trying by up-to-date methods and honorable treatment to build up this department.

REAL ESTATE

We handle, buy, sell, and rent City Property. Own some Choice Farms for sale.

SURETY BONDS

Instead of putting yourself under obligations to your friend by asking him to sign your bond, come and see us.

OSCAR J. SEILER, Attorney at Law

Phone 232, 415 Main Street West, Jamestown N. D.

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The Seiler Building is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under the "architecture" area of significance. This is due to the fact that the building remains an excellent, minimally altered example of Beaux-Arts style of architecture and; it is the work of two prominent North Dakota architects - George Hancock (1849-1924) and his brother, Walter B. Hancock (1865-1929).

George Hancock came to the Dakota Territory in 1882 and established a practice in Fargo. In the early 1890's he was joined by Walter who had completed training at Syracuse University. Together, George and Walter developed a practice which has given the State of North Dakota some of its finest buildings. They designed a wide variety of buildings including 15 Episcopal churches (one in Jamestown), college buildings at North Dakota State University, Valley City State College, Mayville State College and a proliferation of private buildings with various uses. The Hancock Brothers are known to have done at least one other building in the City of Jamestown besides the Seiler Building, that being St. James Catholic Church (1910-1914). The church has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Seiler Building is equally important because present research indicates it is the only office/commercial building designed by the Hancock Brothers in Jamestown. The Building possesses a high degree of integrity which helps to convey its significance. The adaptation of the Beaux-Arts style to this relatively small building demonstrates the excellent design skills of the Hancock Brothers. In addition quality workmanship can be easily seen in the highly sophisticated configurations and ornamental detailing. Although not a "giant" in the Jamestown streetscape, the Seilor Building retains far more integrity than any other commercial building in Jamestown's business district. This is primarily due to the great number of inappropriate alterations which have occurred in the downtown area.

The Seiler Building, therefore, is architecturally significant due to its fine representation of the Beaux-Arts style and the building's relationship to two of North Dakota's premiere architects - George and Walter Hancock. In addition the building is associated with Oscar J. Seiler an early promoter and businessman in Jamestown, North Dakota. For these major reasons, the Seiler Building is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

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