

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Property

\_\_\_\_\_  
County and State

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

### SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 100001354

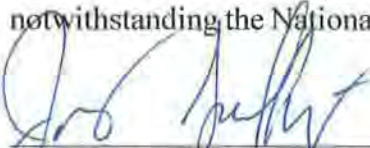
Date Listed: 7/24/2017

Property Name: J. A. Gross Commercial Building

County: Douglas

State: NE

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper  
For

7-25-2017

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 9: Previous Documentation on File

This building was not "previously listed in the National Register;" it was given a preliminary determination of eligibility under 36 CFR 67.

The nomination is hereby amended to correct this oversight.

\_\_\_\_\_  
The Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

#### DISTRIBUTION:

**National Register property file**

**Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**

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 National Register Bulletin, How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. 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.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name The J. A. Gross Commercial Building  
Other names/site number Hinky Dinky #3 / DO09:0443:076  
Name of related multiple property listing \_\_\_\_\_  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

## 2. Location

Street & Number 4801-4811 Northwest Radial Highway (Military Avenue)  
City or town Omaha State Nebraska County Douglas  
Not for publication  Vicinity

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:  national  statewide  local

Applicable National Register Criteria:  A  B  C  D

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title  
Nebraska State Historical Society  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date 5/31/17

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Commenting Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title State of Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

- I, hereby, certify that this property is:
- entered in the National Register.
  - determined eligible for the National Register.
  - determined not eligible for the National Register.
  - removed from the National Register.
  - other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper  
For

7-24-2017  
Date of Action

J. A. Gross Commercial Building  
**Name of Property**

Douglas County, Nebraska  
**County and State**

**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** (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		Buildings
		Sites
		Structures
		Objects
1		Total

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register** N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions** (Enter categories from instructions.)

Commerce/Trade  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions** (Enter categories from instructions.)

Commerce/Trade  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions.)

Spanish Colonial Revival  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Foundation: Brick, Concrete; Walls: Brick, Glass; Roof:Rubber

J. A. Gross Commercial Building

Douglas County, Nebraska

Name of Property

County and State

### Description

**Summary Paragraph** (Briefly describe the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

The J. A. Gross Commercial Building at 4803 Northwest Radial Highway (old Military Avenue) was designed by local architect Charles W. Rosenberry and constructed in 1925 in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The design is a commercial six-bay construction on a stepped foundation plan. Each bay has a main entrance on the north side and the easternmost bay had a grand entrance on the northeast corner of the building. The grand entrance has copper brackets above it. Above each door entrance there is raised ornamentation with metal sunken panels. The property was one of the few places in the vicinity that was zoned for commercial use making it a main market place for the surrounding community. Modes of public transportation, such as the bus system and the streetcar, were available to this area and had routes on Military Avenue.

**Narrative Description** (Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable.)

This brick building sits on a brick foundation with load bearing walls separating each interior space and is one story tall. The design exhibits characteristics of the Spanish Colonial Revival style including decorative terra cotta tile on the parapet with shallow bracketed eaves. The north and east parapet facades are dominated by the decorative terracotta. Each interior space has a main storefront entrance. Plate glass at each storefront is held in place by copper cornering. The wood door entrances have a transom window above with raised ornamentation on the recessed doorway. Each section of building has raised brick sign band with stucco and glossy black diamond tiles set on their corners. The foundation is stepped CMU with slab on grade concrete.

The interior features pressed tin ceilings and tin crown molding. A load bearing CMU wall with plaster separates each interior space. The ceilings are pressed tin with tin crown molding. The flooring is inconsistent with each bay; some floors have hardwood flooring, and some have slab on grade concrete floors. One bathroom exists in each bay that is approximately 4ft x 6ft in space that has wainscoting for the walls. A lot of the wainscoting has deteriorated due to lack of maintenance. Each main area consists of a long narrow space with a separate back area which was used for the coal bin and the bathroom. Each store has a masonry chimney that vented smoke when coal was used as fuel for heating the building.

J. A. Gross Commercial Building  
**Name of Property**

Douglas County, Nebraska  
**County and State**

**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.)

Property is:

- 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.  
A reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- E** A commemorative property.
- F** Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

A: Commerce

**Period of Significance**

1925-1963

**Significant Dates**

1939, 1946

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Charles Rosenberry

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Gross Building at 4803 Military Avenue is a six bay building that was built for Jacob A. Gross and Bernard Gross in 1925. It was designed and permitted as an 8700 square foot area designed for six separate retail stores. The J. A. Gross Building has historic significance under Criterion A: Commerce. Hinky Dinky grocery stores started out as a few stores on street corners in Omaha which developed

J. A. Gross Commercial Building

Douglas County, Nebraska

**Name of Property**

**County and State**

within 60 years into a major regional chain of more than eighty stores in Nebraska and surrounding states. Owner Jules Newman amassed a large inventory of groceries in a short amount of time and costing very little. His many innovations include the idea of big displays and 30,000 square foot supermarkets. Hinky Dinky was a major player in the grocery store market controlling 30% of the grocery market share in Omaha until the mid-1960s. J. A. Gross Building construction was completed on December 3, 1925, with the third Hinky Dinky store opening February 13, 1926. The building was fully occupied with tenants by the time the building was legally permitted and constructed in 1925. The building cost \$20,000 to erect according to the building permit. Charles W. Rosenberry was the architect, as noted on the blueprints. The Hinky Dinky started in one of the six bays then underwent two expansions taking three of the six bays total and is the best surviving grocery store of the Hinky Dinky chain of buildings that is still standing, is at least 50 years old and retains sufficient architectural integrity and changes from the two expansions Hinky Dinky went through.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

**History of the Gross Building**

The land originally was purchased by Erastus Benson as part of Kountze Addition that catered to upper middle class families.<sup>1</sup> The lot changed hands several times from 1907 to 1925 before the three lots in Grammercy Park were purchased by Bernard Gross around September 20, 1925 for \$9,500. Bernard Gross and his brother Jacob Gross owned several grocery stores throughout the Omaha area. Jacob was an advocate of the grocery store owners association in Omaha and spearheaded the idea that grocers should work together instead of against each other. Bernard Gross had a grocery located at 1618 Gilmore. Jacob A. Gross also had a grocery store at 2404 Ames. The construction of this building cost \$20,000 according the building permit. This building was not used by Bernard or Jacob for their own grocery store, but rented as six separate bays. The original tenants of the building according to the 1926 Omaha City Directory were A.M. Kingdom Drugs at 4801 Military, Hinky Dinky at 4803 Military, G.W. Gregg who was listed as a baker at 4805 Military, 4807 Military was vacant, 4809 Military was vacant and 4811 Military was a barber shop owned by E.L. Schaeffer.<sup>2</sup> Hinky Dinky at 4803 Military was the third store in the Hinky Dinky franchise. Ultimately they wanted to have 250 stores by 1930 according to its ads in the Omaha World Herald. It was the longest tenant in the building lasting a span of thirty-seven years until 1963. Hinky Dinky also expanded to 4805 in 1939 and 4801 in 1946. This modification changed the storefront at these three addresses including the windows with the copper trim and closing off the entrances at 4803 and 4805. The main northeast corner entrance was moved to the Military Avenue side to accommodate the Hinky Dinky expansion. The east door was modified to a double door to act as a loading dock for deliveries. Businesses that occupied the other spaces included barbers, bakers, beauty shops, shoe repair stores, hardware stores and drugstores. With land use restrictions the Gross Commercial Building was the only commercial lot for a couple blocks which made it prime retail space at the time. The land was advertised as “no other competition on three other corners by reason of restrictions.”<sup>3</sup> This area is a residential area with few storefront operations scattered from 48<sup>th</sup> and Military Ave. to 52<sup>nd</sup> and Military Ave. Other storefronts exist at 4871 Military Ave which was constructed in 1926, and 5115 Military Ave which was constructed in

<sup>1</sup> Reconnaissance Survey of Select Neighborhoods in Omaha, Nebraska, Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey, Mead & Hunt, April 2002.

<sup>6</sup> Omaha City Directory 1926

<sup>3</sup> Omaha World Herald, March 22, 1925 Sunday Edition.



J. A. Gross Commercial Building

Douglas County, Nebraska

**Name of Property**

**County and State**

1926. A small strip mall was constructed in 1923 on 50<sup>th</sup> and Military. Only three other storefronts were constructed after 1936 between 48<sup>th</sup> and Military and 52<sup>nd</sup> and Military.

**Architect Charles W. Rosenberry**

Charles W. Rosenberry is best known for his contribution to the Happy Hollow and Historic Country Club District where he designed over 50 residential homes. He had an architecture firm from 1923-1937 as noted in the city directories. He has four known non-residential structures associated with his firm, Charles W. Rosenberry and Company. One was the Motion Picture House between 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> and Leavenworth which is a Spanish Colonial Revival style of superior quality constructed in 1926. This building is non-extant due to the construction of US Highway 75.<sup>4</sup> Another is the Synagogue for the Congregation of Israel constructed in 1926 it was used as a church, community center and auditorium. It was built in modern style according to Rosenberry. This building is still standing and sits on the corner of 25<sup>th</sup> and J.<sup>5</sup> Another commercial store building at 42<sup>nd</sup> Leavenworth was constructed by David and Herbert Goldsten and designed by Rosenberry. This building was demolished in 2013 due to car accident and the building structure being deemed unsafe by the City of Omaha.<sup>6</sup> He created his own construction company, The Charles W. Rosenberry Home Company in 1927. Most of his work after this time seemingly points to the residential sector in particularly the Happy Hollow and Country Club areas. Around June 11, 1939, Rosenberry died at the age of 47.

**J. A. Gross**

Jacob Arthur Gross was considered by his contemporaries as a leader in the grocery field in Omaha. He had a baker for a father, a grocer for an older brother and a butcher for a father-in-law. It seemed evident that Jacob would follow suit in the food business. He was born in 1886 and was part of the original Jewish immigrants in Omaha. He first had a grocery store on 24<sup>th</sup> and Fort Street around 1910 at the age of 24. He moved to owning a store at 1224 S. 24<sup>th</sup> Street on 24<sup>th</sup> and E, a block away where he lived. The store is standing today and has apartments above it. In January 1918, there was a fire that severely damaged the store at 24<sup>th</sup> and E. He owned and managed this store for six years. He then got an offer from Reuben Kulakofsky who wanted to start a huge downtown grocery store on 16<sup>th</sup> and Harney (known as the Central Market) asked Gross to partner his store at 2404 Ames while Reuben started up his new venture. Gross said yes and turned his store at 24<sup>th</sup> and E St. over to another brother in law, Louie Ziev. A few years later he bought out (his) brother in-law and owned the store outright for about 20 years.<sup>7</sup> At the time the J.A. Gross Grocery at 2404 Ames was the largest store in Omaha outside of the Central Market downtown. It covered a quarter block and is not standing today. Jacob also set up other stores for Jewish Grocers by acquiring land in September 1925 at 48<sup>th</sup> and Military, land on the Southwest corner of 16<sup>th</sup> and Laird St. He was also associated as a leader in the Omaha Retail Grocers Association, a group that aimed to keep prices low by working together with wholesalers, distributors and other grocers. Most of the officers of the grocers association were well known in the community such as Louis Sommer, Al Wohlner, R. C. Paxton, Jules Newman, Sam Rosenblum and J.A. Gross, who was the chairman of the annual food show. The food show was a big event to engage housewives who did most of the shopping and promote retailers' products. It was a Monday – Saturday event that sold

<sup>4</sup> "New Theater of Spanish Design". *Omaha World Herald*. February 28, 1926, Page 19.

<sup>5</sup> "Proposed New Synagogue", *Omaha World Herald*. June 27, 1926. Page 12.

<sup>6</sup> "Leavenworth Gets Store Building". *Omaha World Herald*, August 22, 1926. Page 14.

<sup>7</sup> Memories of the Jewish Midwest Mom and Pop Grocery Stores. Nebraska Jewish Historical Society, Volume 14, Autumn 2011. Page 24.

J. A. Gross Commercial Building

Douglas County, Nebraska

**Name of Property**

**County and State**

around 44,000 tickets and was held at the City Auditorium. Gross was also a real estate entrepreneur. He bought a home at 5315 N 24<sup>th</sup> in December 1912, a duplex flat for 10,500 in March of 1921, The Steiger Apartments at 34<sup>th</sup> and Jackson in August of 1921, and an apartment complex in May of 1923 for \$115,000. Jacob and his wife Millie had 4 children, Stanley, Gordon, Jerry and Sandra. Jacob died in 1963 at the age of 77.

**Omaha's Jewish Immigrants**

The Gross families were part of an early 20th century wave of Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe into the city of Omaha. Although Jewish immigrants first arrived in Nebraska as early as the 1850s, it was the later immigrants, who made their mark on Omaha's business community. Jewish immigrants came to this country because of political discontent and religious persecution, and for the financial opportunities available. In 1882, Omaha welcomed 161 Jewish people. By 1904, the Jewish population in Omaha was 3,000, and by 1917 there were 10,000 Jewish immigrants in the city. Many Jewish residents in Omaha were placed there by the Industrial Removal Office (IRO), an American organization that encouraged new Jewish immigrants to the United States to settle in the interior of the country. The IRO operated between 1899 and 1922. While the time frame of the IRO operation overlaps the immigration of the Gross families these families already had extended family and friends firmly settled in Omaha who could help them find housing and jobs. Early 20th century Jewish immigrants to Omaha were mostly orthodox, Yiddish speaking people from Eastern Europe, primarily Russia. They came from small villages and were used for hard work. These people were grateful for their freedom and embraced their new country with energy, while also maintaining a strong ethnic identity. Education was important to these immigrants, and they had a reputation for being highly intellectual. While threats to their religious beliefs were not totally erased in America, the pressures of persecution were generally relaxed and Jewish people were allowed the freedom to pursue career opportunities and religious activities. In the late 19th century, many Jewish families settled in an area near the packing houses in South Omaha. Most of the Grocers families and many other 20th century Jewish immigrants, however, did not follow this pattern. They immediately established commercial enterprises in whatever areas of the city had good clientele bases and need, hence the success of businesses such as the neighborhood grocery. Also, the business startup costs of these stores were relatively small compared to other industries. For example, Jules Newman saved up \$1800 (five years' salary) to start his first grocery store. These later immigrants resided and established businesses throughout the city, and did not necessarily live in enclaves with other Jewish people. In the early part of the 20th century, in addition to the religious activities held at the synagogue, the cultural life of this immigrant group centered on a Jewish Community Center where regular social and cultural activities were held. The Center housed an auditorium, gymnasium, library, and a *Talmud Torah*, a parochial school for teaching Hebrew, Bible studies and Jewish history. This facility and its programming assured that traditions would be passed down. *The Jewish Press* newspaper also helped preserve Jewish culture and served as a strong communication network for this immigrant group. A newer Jewish Community Center in West Omaha, and the on-going publication of *The Jewish Press* continues to sustain and nurture the Jewish culture in Omaha.<sup>8</sup>

**Jewish Immigrants and the Grocery Business**

<sup>8</sup> Memories of the Jewish Midwest Mom and Pop Grocery Stores. Nebraska Jewish Historical Society. Volume 14, Autumn 2011. Pages 7-8.



J. A. Gross Commercial Building

Douglas County, Nebraska

**Name of Property**

**County and State**

Many Jewish immigrant businessmen began their careers in Omaha as peddlers who sold fruits, vegetables, and other wares on the streets of the city. Other ethnic groups also practiced peddling, and stiff competition developed. The Jewish peddlers, however, had the most robust reputation. The more diligent peddlers prospered enough over time to become established shopkeepers who served manufacturing and industrial plant neighborhoods. These immigrant peddlers and shopkeepers supported their countrymen working in manufacturing or industrial plants through neighborhood commercial operations. Many Jewish grocers who started as peddlers became exceptional merchants, continued to expand their businesses throughout their lifetimes, and played major roles in Omaha's growth. When the Jewish grocers expanded their businesses or their business became too large for their stores, as noted with J. A. Gross, they often offered partnerships to other smaller Jewish grocers who then worked their way up as well.

The early 20th century immigrants found Omaha experiencing rapid suburban growth, commercial expansion, and a multitude of capitalist opportunities were available. As with most ethnic groups who settled in new countries, individuals formed strong cultural ties to one another creating a sense of "community" even when families did not live in contiguous housing. The Jewish families ardently supported one another.

J. A. Gross himself was a major influence in the Jewish grocery community having several stores. In addition he was one of the thirteen organizers of the United Agriculture Stores which urged grocers to work together rather than remain independent groceries. The Jewish imprint on Omaha grocery store market is unmistakable with Bakers, Wohlner's, No Frills, and Hinky Dinky, and Bag and Save being the major players, all with local Jewish beginnings.

**Hinky-Dinky Supermarkets, an Omaha Institution**

With a name coming from a famous World War I war tune "Hinky-Dinky Parley Vous," Hinky Dinky Grocery stores became a household name for groceries in Omaha and its surrounding communities for 60 years. Hinky Dinky originated from a few Jewish grocery storefronts in Omaha to becoming a major midwest innovative supermarket grocery chain. The founders, Jules Newman and Albert Wohlner, were of Jewish descent. Newman's first store with Wohlner was the Benson Grocery located at 6110 Military in 1920. Newman was a shrewd businessman and buyer and amassed a large inventory which had cost very little. Wohlner wanted to cash in his interest in the partnership not knowing how much inventory Newman had. Wohlner sold his interest for \$40,000 which he quickly regretted after knowing what he missed out on.<sup>9</sup> Newman and his wife, Ester, went on to build a chain of Hinky Dinky stores with his brothers Henry and Albert Newman.

Newman also recruited his cousin, Ben Silver, and his sister, Sally, to help manage the operation. Jules Newman went on to open his first Hinky Dinky at 2324 Vinton Street in August 1, 1925, featuring Omaha-made, Omaha-jobbed products with all fixtures and display cases made in Omaha. Also, locations were selected at the time the first store opened according to the Omaha World Herald article on August 2, 1925.<sup>10</sup> With his large inventory Newman opened a lot of stores in a short amount of time in the mid-1920s. The second Hinky Dinky store was opened at 3503 Leavenworth on August 29, 1925.

<sup>9</sup>Memories of the Jewish Midwest Mom and Pop Grocery Stores". Nebraska Jewish Historical Society, Volume 14, Autumn 2011.

<sup>10</sup>Omaha Business Topics Hinky Dinky Stores. Omaha World Herald, August 2, 1925. Page 12.

J. A. Gross Commercial Building

Douglas County, Nebraska

**Name of Property**

**County and State**

The third was at 4803 NW Radial Highway on February 13, 1926. The lofty goal of Jules Newman was to have 250 cash and carry Hinky Dinky stores by 1930, according to their weekly ads. They did not get there by 1930 but had 26 stores by at the end of 1931 and 36 stores by 1960, which is still impressive.

Typically, Hinky Dinky's early stores were built in high traffic areas. They were usually less than 1500 square feet in size housed in brick buildings. Most of these brick buildings had adjacent bays that could be expanded upon if the store was doing well. Stores #4 - #26 followed the pattern of the store being established in a high traffic area with potential for expansion. Most of the storefronts had basements to hold excess inventory, but Hinky Dinky also had a central warehouse located in downtown Omaha on the corner of 9<sup>th</sup> and Jones Street. Stores traditionally stayed small in size until after the Korean War (Mid 1950s).

Other grocery chain stores that were around at the time of Hinky-Dinky were Piggly Wiggly, Safeway and Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company stores. Piggly-Wiggly first opened its doors in 1916. It was one of the original self-service stores with its concept invented by Clarence Sanders in Memphis, Tennessee. It first opened three stores in Omaha on June 22, 1922, at 16th and Dodge, 24th and Farnam and 39th and Farnam. This national chain had approximately 2600 stores nationally at its peak around 1932 with nine stores in Omaha before selling its Midwest stores to Safeway stores making Safeway the largest grocer west of the Mississippi at the time in 1929, according to the *Omaha World Herald* article.<sup>11</sup>

Safeway was a local chain grocery store started in 1915 by M. B. Skaggs with a model to expand his store rapidly and keep a narrow profit margin. Safeway grew to 266 stores by 1926 and by 1930, Safeway merged with Piggly Wiggly and increased their store total by 322 stores which included 16 stores in the Omaha area around 1930. By this time Hinky Dinky had forty stores with twenty-three in the Omaha area. Safeway was a major competitor to Hinky Dinky at this time. Safeway remained a major influence in the Omaha grocery market until the decision to close stores in the Omaha area in April of 1982.<sup>12</sup>

Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company (known as A&P) was the first grocery store chain founded in 1859 by Gilman & Brothers Company. From 1915 to 1975, A&P was the largest grocery chain in the United States. By 1930, A&P had four food stores in Omaha located at 3916 Farnam, 4801 S. 24th Street, 24th & Leavenworth and at 2917 Leavenworth. These stores closed by 1935. A&P was slow to react to the emerging idea of the larger supermarket and by the early 1950s most of their buildings were out of date. This struggle led to substantial loss in profits nationally and by the spring of 1975, A&P closed its two remaining supermarkets in Omaha to maintain operations close to its central operations in the northeast.<sup>13</sup>

As early as the mid 1930's, Hinky Dinky's share of the Omaha retail grocery market was at least 30% every year. This dominance continued until the mid-1960s. Although the name of the chain was "Hinky Dinky Stores," roughly half of the stores owned and operated by the Newman family interests were ultimately not run under that banner. Unknown to most local people was the fact that the Newmans also opened and operated some thirty-five "leased food departments" located throughout the continental

<sup>11</sup> "Piggly Wiggly Stores to open here." June 22, 1922. *Omaha World Herald*. Page 2.

<sup>12</sup> "Chain Stores Merge Financial Interest." October 4, 1928. *Omaha World Herald*. Page 19.

<sup>13</sup> "A&P Stores likely to close here." April 23, 1975. *Omaha World Herald*. Page 70.

J. A. Gross Commercial Building

Douglas County, Nebraska

**Name of Property**

**County and State**

United States, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. The above numbers are approximate because over time stores were relocated, closed, and opened.

For the next forty-five years Hinky Dinky owned over seventy stores throughout Omaha, Iowa, South Dakota, Missouri and Kansas battling giant national chains like Piggly Wiggly and later Safeway, who sought to weaken the regional chain giant. A few years before the Pearl Harbor attack (early 1940s) Safeway, which had previously bought the Omaha Piggly Wiggly stores, began slashing prices in Omaha, ostensibly in an effort to eliminate or weaken A&P, which had five or six stores in Omaha at the time. In the eyes of all other grocers in the area the purpose was to drive them out of business. Hinky Dinky believed it was the primary target, Safeway being strong enough in its other markets to easily handle an isolated price war. For example, chicken was being sold at 15 cents a pound and eggs at 10 cents a dozen, far below cost. Regular headlines in the local papers at the time daily listed the numbers of single store owners which had gone out of business. All told, many dozens of small grocers were forced to close their doors. Next Jules traveled to Washington, D.C., the headquarters of the National Association of Food Chains (NAFC), of which Hinky Dinky was a member. At the time there was talk in Congress of passing a federal law which would tax every chain an annual fee of something like \$150 per store. NAFC was established primarily to protect the giant nationwide chains against such laws. To add legitimacy, small regional chains, such as Hinky Dinky, were encouraged to join. By belonging, such companies could keep up with new technology and maintain valuable contact with each other. In Washington, Jules sat down with the NAFC president and described the dire situation in Omaha. He pleaded that it would be in the interest of the large chains to stop predatory pricing and, thereby, fend off such a tax. The next morning, Jules called home to see how things were going. He was told that, to everyone's surprise, Safeway had begun raising prices that very morning!

Hinky Dinky also was innovative in that it helped shape what we know today as the modern supermarket such as wheeled baskets, automated checkout stands and was among the first grocery stores in the Midwest to expand its product lines beyond groceries. Hinky Dinky was a pioneer in its markets. Originally, Hinky Dinky operated "cash and carry stores", as opposed to "credit and delivery" stores. These stores, called "basket stores", used lightweight wooden shopping baskets with fold up handles. Cashiers tossed the empty baskets into an adjoining bin for reuse by entering customers. The success of these original Hinky Dinky stores, in combination with the founder's ambition, resulted in perpetually expanding store size, variety, and more perishable departments. Hinky Dinky introduced to the Omaha market wheeled, nesting shopping carts, wider aisles, and automated checkout counters. Hinky Dinky Stores were the first stores in Omaha to offer frozen foods in open "coffin-style" sales cases, to sell meats self-service from refrigerated cases, and to employ automatic entrance doors.

Shortly after the Korean War (mid 1950s), Jules proposed giant sized stores, of 30,000 square feet and up, another innovation at that time. When asked what could be done with all that surplus space, he answered that we could fill it with massive displays of advertised items and other special values, that we could increase customer appeal with added variety, and that, if need be, we could add lines of general merchandise which were appropriate for self-service. His foresight proved correct as all of these aspects are now common features in today's supermarkets.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> "E R "Bob" Newman interview, <http://hinkydinky.net/hinky-dinky-history/>, located at Nebraska Jewish Society. 2009

J. A. Gross Commercial Building

Douglas County, Nebraska

**Name of Property**

**County and State**

In 1972, Newman sold the stores to a Dallas company called the Cullum Company who operated the Tom Thumb Stores. The last store with the Hinky Dinky store closed in 2000. Jules Newman passed away in 1988 at the age of 91.

**Conclusion**

Overall, J.A. Gross Building is the best remaining representative of the rise, growth and longevity of Hinky Dinky grocery store franchise. The location of the store on a high traffic street corner of 48<sup>th</sup> and Military is a trademark of the early stores. The chain lasted from 1926 to 1963 at this location before outgrowing the space. The building is also another landmark of the Jewish independent grocery store owners that have influenced Omaha along with J.A. Gross, Albert Wohlner, Jules Newman and others.

Significantly, Hinky Dinky thrived and survived for 75 years as a family owned food chain that originated in Omaha. This is in an era where independent family run grocery stores were challenged to change with the increasing pressures from the larger supermarkets that were forming. Most independent stores did not survive. Jules Newman was an innovative leader that had a vision to lead these stores to be successful for over 60 years.

The building changes are due to the expansion of the Hinky Dinky store. Hinky Dinky started in bay two which is address 4803 NW Radial Hwy. In its expansion to bay three in 1939, which is 4805 NW Radial Hwy, a loadbearing CMU wall was removed and replaced with beams which are supported by four pipe columns at a 15 foot spacing. In 1946, Hinky Dinky expanded into 4801 NW Radial Hwy. which is bay one. A loadbearing wall was removed and replaced with another beam supported by columns at 15 foot spacing. The tin roof ceiling and crown molding remains. Bays four, five and six remain structurally intact along with the original windows. The front storefront door in bay four has changed.

As for the storefronts in bays one, two and three, these have changed due to the Hinky Dinky expansions in 1939 and again in 1946. The windows have changed from plate glass that are in bays 4-6 to a 1" thick frame with a three tiered window between each 1" frame. The original transom windows remain. The door in bays 2 and 3 were removed to and replaced by the windows in 1946. The door was also moved from the northeast corner of the building to the north facade of bay 1.

The windows have not been altered and are still intact since the last Hinky Dinky expansion. The north elevation middle windows are clear and the windows above and below have been painted over with gray paint on both sides. The transom glass windows above the storefront doors have been painted over with purple, gray and black stripes along the north façade and wrapping around to the east side. The changes that were made structurally and to the windows were directly related to its significance and the building's period of significance, and whose story cannot be told without these changes.

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**9. Major Bibliographic References**

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**Bibliography** (Insert bibliography here – cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form.)  
“E R “Bob” Newman interview, <http://hinkydinky.net/hinky-dinky-history/>, located at Nebraska Jewish Society. 2009

J. A. Gross Commercial Building

Douglas County, Nebraska

**Name of Property**

**County and State**

Nebraska Jewish Historical Society, "Memories of the Jewish Midwest Mom and Pop Grocery Stores", Volume 14, Autumn 2011.

Nebraska State Historical Society, Country Club District nomination form. 2005.

Nebraska State Historical Society, Wohlner's Grocery nomination form. 2008

Omaha City Directory, 1926 – 1962

*Omaha World Herald*. June 22, 1922. "Piggly Wiggly Stores to Open Here."

*Omaha World Herald*. March 22, 1925. Sunday Edition, Ad. "No competition on three other corners by reason of restrictions."

*Omaha World Herald*. March 27, 1925. Ad March 27 1925. Lot for sale \$300.

*Omaha World Herald*. August 2, 1925. Sunday Edition

*Omaha World Herald*. September 27, 1925. Sunday Edition, Lot sales for \$9500 to Bernard Gross, Stores Planned for 48<sup>th</sup> and Military Ave.

*Omaha World Herald*. December 4, 1925. Sunday Edition Building Permits, \$20,000 for permit.

*Omaha World Herald*. October 4, 1928. "Chain Stores Merge Financial Interest."

*Omaha World Herald*. April 23, 1975. "A&P Stores Likely to Close Here."

Nebraska Jewish Historical Society, "Memories of the Jewish Midwest Mom and Pop Grocery Stores", Volume 14, Autumn 2011.

Reconnaissance Survey of Select Neighborhoods in Omaha, Nebraska, Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey, Mead & Hunt, April 2002.

**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 #
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other (Name of repository)  
Nebraska Jewish Society

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

J. A. Gross Commercial Building \_\_\_\_\_ Douglas County, Nebraska \_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of Property** **County and State**

Acreage of property .39 acres USGS Quadrangle \_\_\_\_\_

(Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates. Delete the other.)

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

- |    |          |                  |           |                   |
|----|----------|------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| 1. | Latitude | <u>41.281435</u> | Longitude | <u>-95.985677</u> |
| 2. | Latitude | _____            | Longitude | _____             |
| 3. | Latitude | _____            | Longitude | _____             |
| 4. | Latitude | _____            | Longitude | _____             |

**OR**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ NAD 1927 or \_\_\_ NAD 1983

- |    |      |       |         |       |          |       |
|----|------|-------|---------|-------|----------|-------|
| 1. | Zone | _____ | Easting | _____ | Northing | _____ |
| 2. | Zone | _____ | Easting | _____ | Northing | _____ |
| 3. | Zone | _____ | Easting | _____ | Northing | _____ |
| 4. | Zone | _____ | Easting | _____ | Northing | _____ |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

48<sup>th</sup> Street to the east, NW Radial highway to the north. Lots 1, 2 and 3, Block 1, In Grammercy Park, an Addition to the City of Omaha, as surveyed, platted and recorded in Douglas County, Nebraska.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary corresponds with the area historically associated with the J.A. Gross Commercial Building.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Lawrence Butler, Managing Member

organization Butler PPA1, LLC date February 1, 2017

street & number 4809 NW Radial Highway telephone 402.960.8557

city or town Omaha state NE zip code 68104

email Lbut\_21@hotmail.com

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to map.

J. A. Gross Commercial Building

Douglas County, Nebraska

**Name of Property**

**County and State**

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO for any additional items.)

**Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

**Photo Log**

Name of Property J.A. Gross Commercial Building

City or Vicinity Omaha County Douglas State Nebraska

Photographer Lawrence Butler Date Photographed December 9, 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera.

1. J. A. Gross Commercial Building. View to SW
2. East and South Elevation. View to NW
3. South Elevation. View to NE
4. 4801 Interior. View SW
5. 4801 Interior. View SE
6. 4807 Storefront Entrance Interior. View S.
7. 4809 Storefront Entrance Interior. View S.
8. 4811 Storefront Entrance Interior. View S.

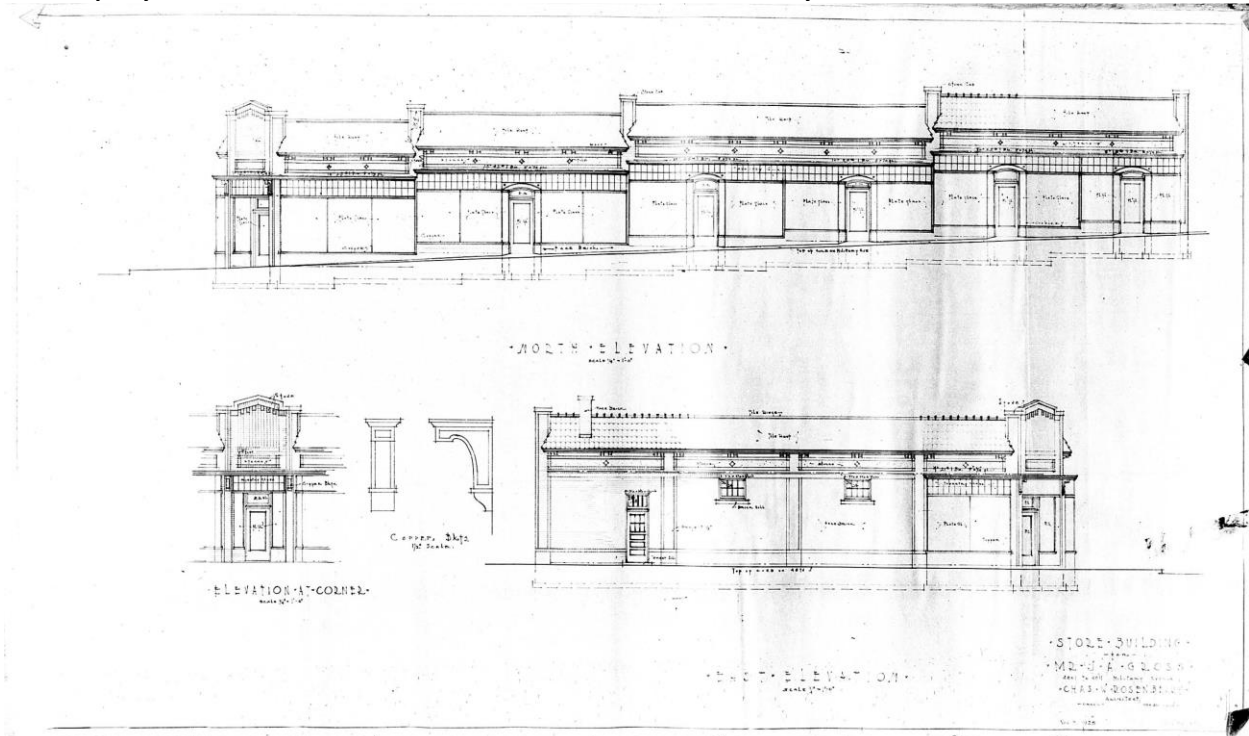
**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

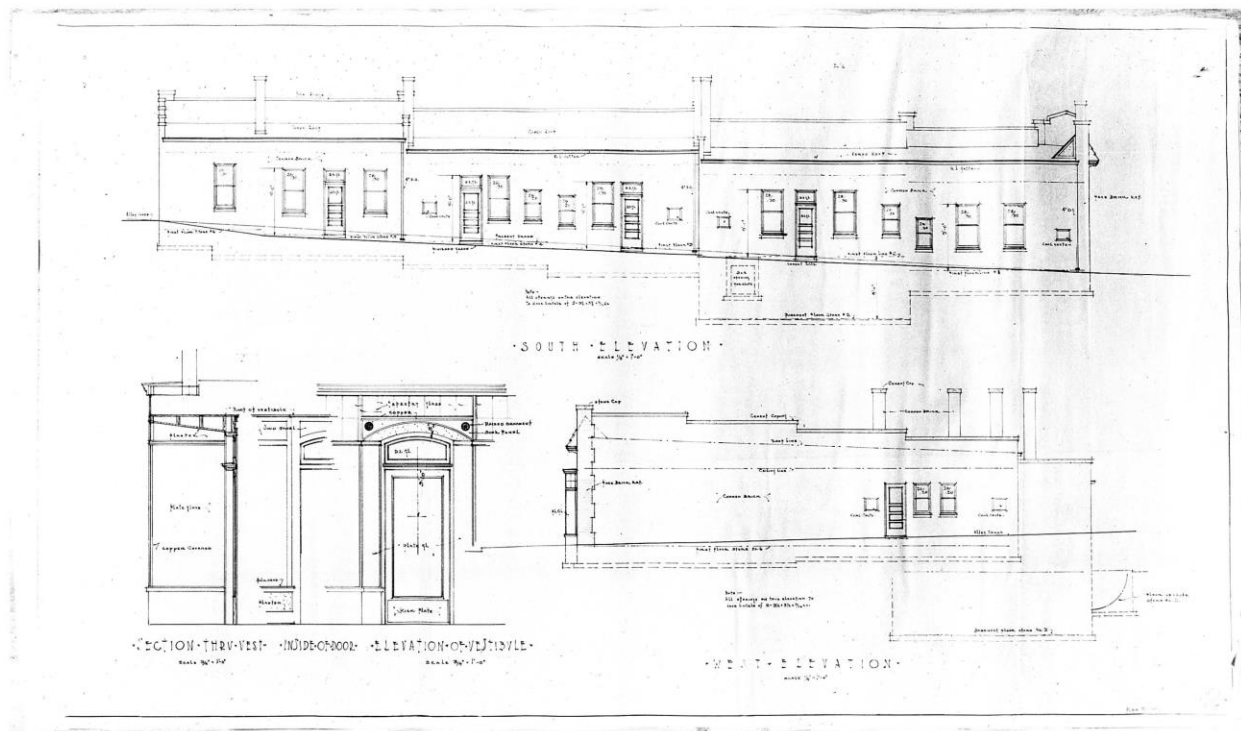


J. A. Gross Commercial Building  
Name of Property

Douglas County, Nebraska  
County and State



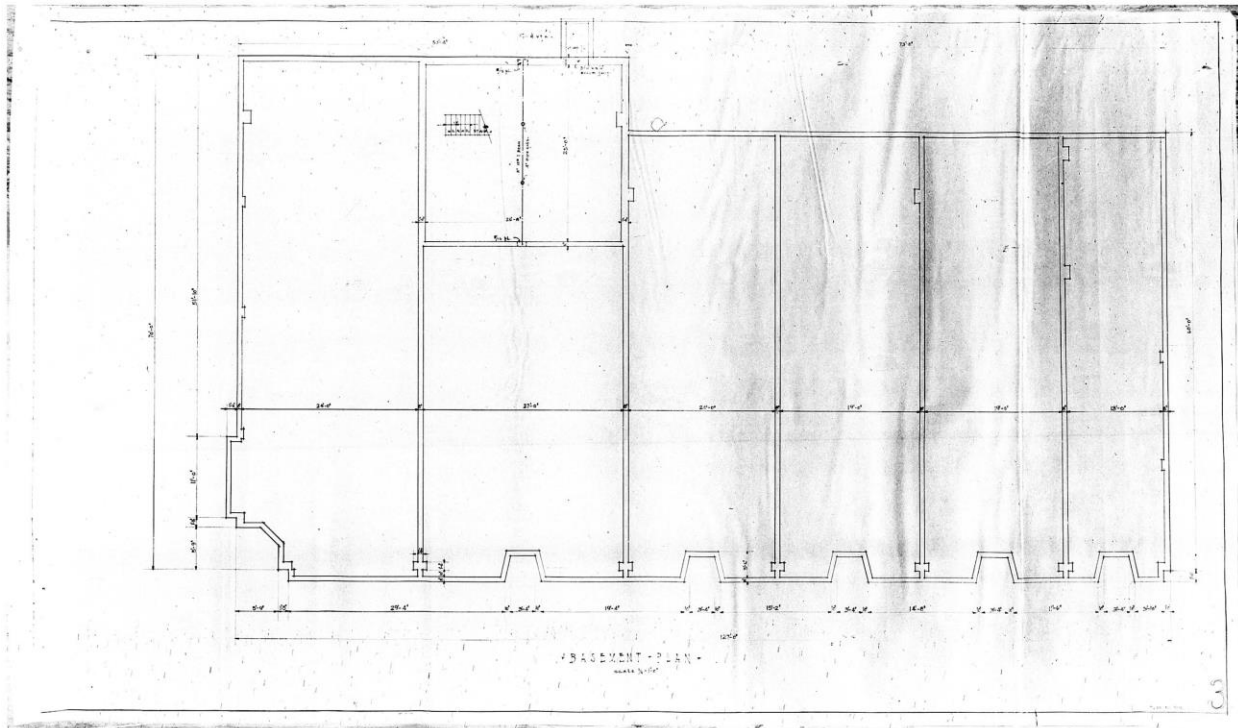
North and East Elevation



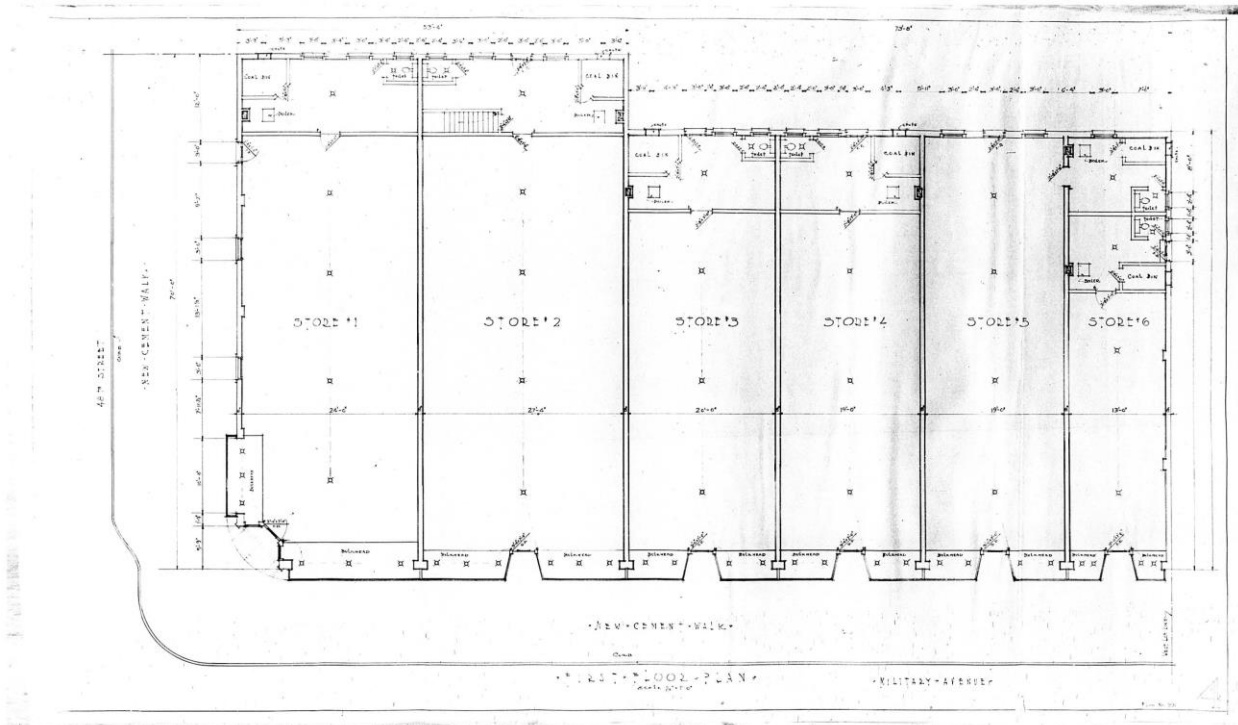
: South and West Elevation. Door decorative details

J. A. Gross Commercial Building  
Name of Property

Douglas County, Nebraska  
County and State



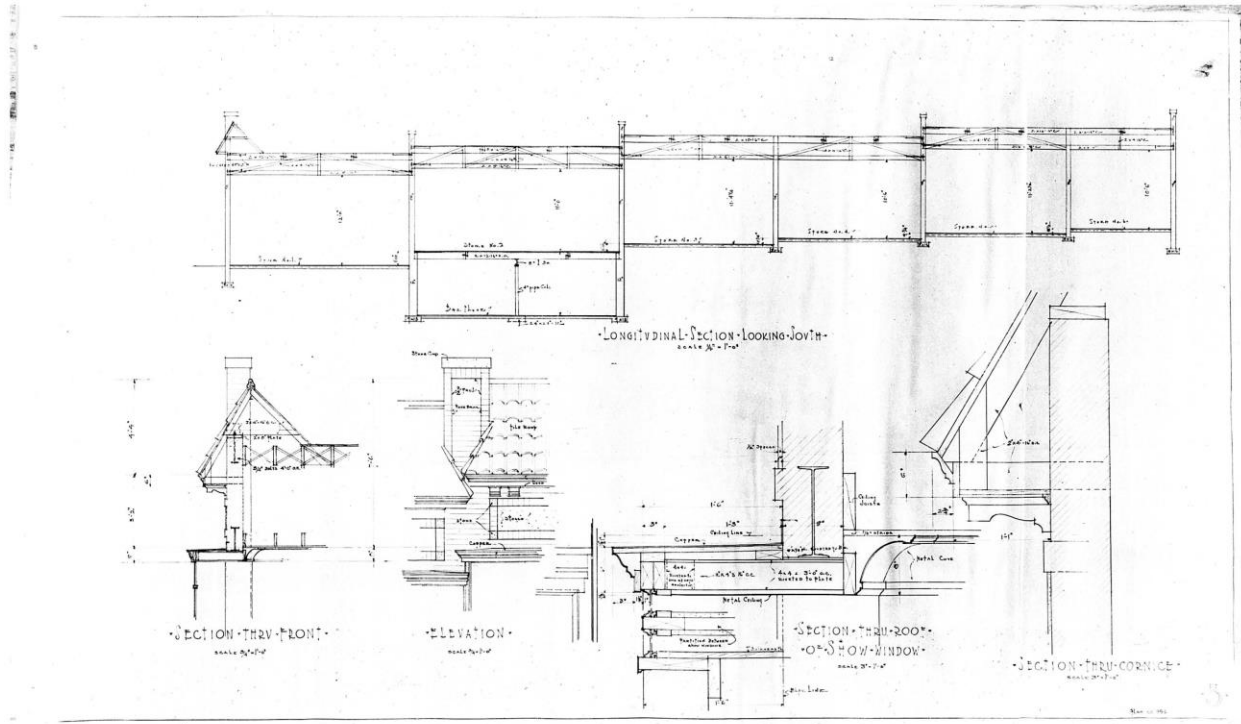
**. Basement Plan**



**First Floor Plan**

J. A. Gross Commercial Building  
Name of Property

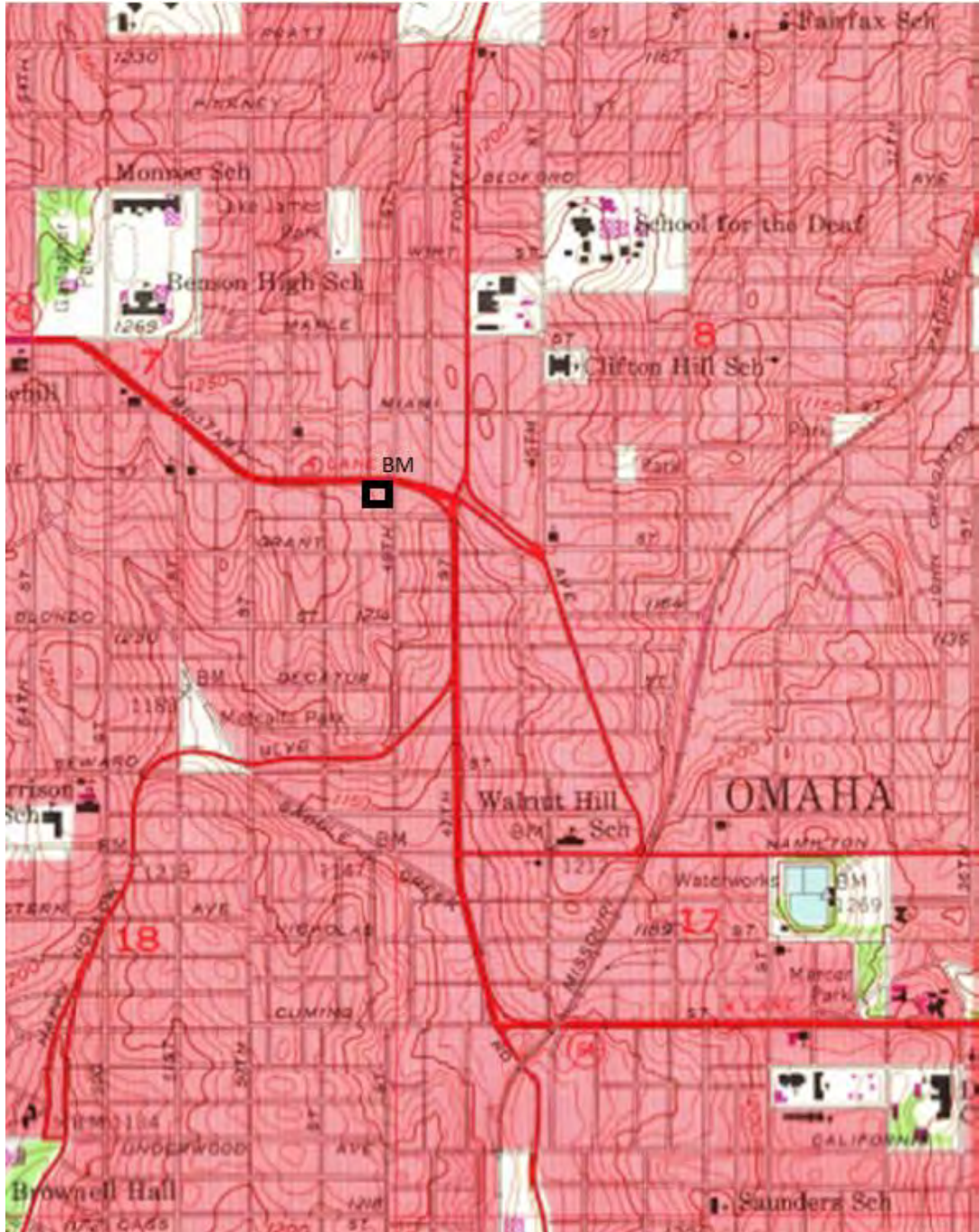
Douglas County, Nebraska  
County and State



Section through building, decorative details

J. A. Gross Commercial Building  
Name of Property

Douglas County, Nebraska  
County and State



Source: USGS OMAHA NORTH, NE-IA HISTORICAL MAP GEOPDF 7.5X7.5 GRID 24000-SCALE 1984 USGS 7.5 Map 1:24000 view



J. A. Gross Commercial Building  
**Name of Property**

Douglas County, Nebraska  
**County and State**



J. A. Gross Commercial Building  
**Name of Property**

Douglas County, Nebraska  
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**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

N.W. Radial Hwy.

641 1ST CORPUS AVE.  
DALLAS, TEXAS 75201

7



















UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 6/9/2017      Date of Pending List: 7/18/2017      Date of 16th Day: 8/2/2017      Date of 45th Day: 7/24/2017      Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

- |                                       |  |   |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape       | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver       | <input type="checkbox"/> National        | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other        | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP             | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
|                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG             |   |

Accept       Return       Reject      7/24/2017 Date

Abstract/Summary

Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria

Reviewer Jim Gabbert      Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275      Date \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION:    see attached comments : No    see attached SLR : **Yes**

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.





June 5, 2017

Ms. Alexis Abernathy  
NPS – National Register of Historic Places  
Mail Stop 7228  
1849 C St, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

RE: Jacob A. Gross Building NRHP Nomination

Dear Ms. Abernathy,

Enclosed is the complete nomination packet for the Jacob A. Gross Building in Douglas County, Nebraska. The enclosed contents are as follows:

1. The signed first page of the Jacob A. Gross Building nomination
2. One archival disk with the true and correct copy of the nomination for the Jacob A. Gross Building to the National Register of Historic Places in pdf format.
3. One archival disk with the photographs for the Jacob A. Gross Building nomination.

If you have any questions regarding the submitted materials, please feel free to contact me at the number of email address below.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jill E. Dolberg".

Jill E. Dolberg  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer  
Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office

Phone: (402) 471-4773  
Fax: (402) 471-3100  
[Jill.dolberg@nebraska.gov](mailto:Jill.dolberg@nebraska.gov)

Enclosures: 2 disks and one page

1500 R Street  
PO Box 82554  
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(402) 471-3270  
f: (402) 471-3100  
[www.nebraskahistory.org](http://www.nebraskahistory.org)