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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Nat. Register of Historic Places
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. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

Historic name Blissfield Downtown Historic District

Other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Bounded roughly by Pearl Street, Jefferson Street, Giles Street and the not for publication
Adrian and Blissfield Railroad

city or town Blissfield vicinity

State Michigan code MI county Lenawee code 091 zip code 19228

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

Brian D. Lankford
Signature of certifying official

5/11/15
Date

MI SHPO
Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

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 the Keeper
Patrick Andrews

Date of Action
6/29/2015

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
 (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal
- private

Category of Property
 (Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property
 (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
43	8	buildings
1		sites
		structures
		Objects
44	8	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

None

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- DOMESTIC – Multiple Dwelling
- COMMERCE/TRADE - Business
- COMMERCE/TRADE - Professional
- COMMERCE/TRADE - Organizational
- COMMERCE/TRADE – Financial Institution
- COMMERCE/TRADE – Specialty Store
- COMMERCE/TRADE – Department Store
- COMMERCE/TRADE – Restaurant
- SOCIAL – Meeting Hall
- SOCIAL - Civic
- GOVERNMENT – City Hall
- GOVERNMENT – Post Office
- GOVERNMENT - Firehouse
- RECREATION AND CULTURE - Theater
- RECREATION AND CULTURE – Music Facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- DOMESTIC – Multiple Dwelling
- COMMERCE/TRADE - Business
- COMMERCE/TRADE - Professional
- COMMERCE/TRADE - Organizational
- COMMERCE/TRADE – Specialty Store
- COMMERCE/TRADE – Restaurant
- GOVERNMENT – City Hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN - Italianate
LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY
REVIVALS - Classical Revival
LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY
AMERICAN MOVEMENTS -

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: STONE
CONCRETE
walls: BRICK
OTHER - Exterior Insulation Finishing System (EIFS)
WOOD - Weatherboard
STONE - Sandstone
OTHER - Sheet metal
WOOD - Shake
Roof: ASPHALT
other: GLASS; METAL - Aluminum

Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The Blissfield Downtown Historic District encompasses 14.3 acres of the city's historic commercial district, centered at the intersection of Adrian and Lane streets. Located near the River Raisin, which borders the district on the north, the downtown consists of two business nodes separated by the River Raisin and the low ground bordering the river to the east. Although the west business district is the oldest part of the village, the historic district is located in the east business district, which contains the village's concentration of remaining historic resources. Close-set brick buildings line the streets on either side, flanked by wide sidewalks which contain a variety of street trees, planting beds, and other furnishings. The district contains fifty-one buildings dating from the 1870s to the 1960s that range from one to three stories in height, but one and two story buildings predominate. The predominant styles are late nineteenth-century Italianate and early twentieth-century Commercial Brick, with a few other styles and variations included.

Narrative Description

Downtown Blissfield is centered on the intersection of Lane and Adrian streets. Situated on relatively level ground, the village is located on the banks of the River Raisin, which enters the village from the southwest, flows north through Ellis Park, crosses US 223, turns east, and then gradually meanders its way north and east towards Monroe and Lake Erie. The Adrian and Blissfield Railroad roughly parallels US 223 through Blissfield and runs east-west through the district, bisected by Lane Street. US 223 (Adrian Street) also runs east-west through the district and connects with the city of Adrian to the northwest and US 23 to the east. Newer commercial development is located along US 223 outside the district to both the east and west, while a small industrial development is located on the south side of the village.

The Blissfield Downtown Historic District has two distinct commercial areas connected by US 223 and the railroad. The first downtown area, known originally as Blissfield and later as West Blissfield, is a smaller development west of the river, with a compact collection of one block of commercial buildings along West Adrian Street (West Blissfield does not retain enough historic resources to be included within the district boundaries). To the east is the larger downtown area, known originally as Lyons and later as East Blissfield. The intersecting north/south and east/west streets form several city blocks approximately 300 by 500 feet. East Blissfield encompasses approximately two blocks of buildings on Lane Street and two blocks on Adrian Street. The district is primarily commercial in nature. It is bordered by historic residential neighborhoods, and by Ellis Park and the River Raisin. Commercial businesses continue to the east and west along Adrian Street, while the residential areas north of the district quickly give way to rural agricultural land. Other uses on the perimeter of the district as it transitions to residential include educational (schools, library), religious, commercial/retail and light industrial.

Circulation into/out of and within the district is primarily vehicular and focused on US 223 and Lane Street. The primary connector into and out of the district is US 223, with smaller residential streets feeding into the district and onto US 223. Vehicular parking is permitted along South Lane Street, with angled parking on the west side and parallel on the east, and in surface parking lots around the perimeter of the district. Alleys behind the principal buildings provide secondary access for deliveries and limited parking for tenants and residents. The streets, alleys, and parking lots are all paved with asphalt or concrete. The railroad is another major transportation feature within the district and is actively being used, with several trains running through the village every day. The railroad is carried over the River Raisin by a historic metal truss bridge to the west of the district boundary.

The streets are lined with sidewalks for pedestrian circulation. These are typical modern concrete sidewalks with brick accents. At the middle and ends of South Lane Street, semi-circular extensions have been installed to provide protected pedestrian crossings.

Vegetation within the district is confined to a few street trees and small planters clustered at street intersections. Deciduous street trees are mostly located along Adrian and Lane Streets. Other trees are located in parking areas and at the perimeter of the district as it transitions into residential use. The street trees are generally small and do not provide any significant canopy cover. Decorative annuals are planted in individual planters set along the streets. A small "pocket park" is located between commercial buildings on the east side of South Lane Street, featuring a concrete path, mixture of annuals and perennials and small trees, and a wood and metal gazebo.

Small scale furnishings provide character throughout the district. Lighting is uniformly provided by reproduction black metal light poles with white glass globes; at the corners are larger fixtures with five globes as opposed to the one on the standard poles. These fixtures are reminiscent, but not exact reproductions, of lighting fixtures seen in historic photographs from the early 1900s. Iron slat benches provide seating in selected locations. Other small scale furnishings include trash receptacles and signage.

The district's building stock contains an architecturally diverse mix of one, two, and three story buildings ranging from the 1870s to the mid-twentieth century. They are chiefly of brick construction and the majority are two stories tall. Stylistically, Italianate and Late Victorian Commercial dominates the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century buildings, while a more restrained Commercial Brick style is characteristic of the 1920s to 1950s period. The Commercial Brick buildings of the early to mid-twentieth century are almost uniformly vernacular, with no cornices and only restrained decorative brickwork. They are chiefly constructed of yellow or red-brown brick.

In recent decades, a few commercial buildings within the district have succumbed to the fashion for synthetic wall cladding (Exterior Insulation Finishing System (EIFS), commercially known as Dryvit). In most cases, the original exteriors of these buildings are still present under their later cladding.

In general, however, the Blissfield Downtown Historic District presents the appearance and feel of a classic historic downtown, with close-set nineteenth and early twentieth-century brick commercial buildings lining the intimate downtown streets, facilitating a mixture of vehicular and pedestrian traffic and providing constrained vistas along tree-accented downtown streets. With its high occupancy rate, the downtown is a thriving district that reflects the continuity of its historic character and economic sustainability.

RESOURCE INVENTORY

Site

1 Contributing Site

The landscape of the Blissfield Downtown Historic District qualifies as one contributing site.

Integrity Analysis

The Blissfield Downtown Historic District retains integrity related to a number of significant landscape characteristics present during the period of significance. Spatially, the district's organization along the major intersection streets of US 223 (Adrian Street) and Lane Street, with buildings built out to the lot lines and with their principal facades facing the sidewalks and streets, fostered its development as a commercial center. The district also retains its close visual and functional relationship to the River Raisin, which was a key element in the foundation and siting of the commercial district; its periodic

flooding also represented significant events in the history of the downtown. The character of the buildings (siting, height, massing, shape, materials) is in keeping with the historic nature of the district's built environment. With the exception of some missing buildings, this character remains in place. Patterns of circulation are similarly intact, particularly the main streets and their associated sidewalks, which served to drive pedestrian and vehicular traffic into the district and functioned as an extension of the business owners' retail space. The Adrian and Blissfield Railroad is integral to the spatial organization, circulation patterns, and general visual character of the district, and with trains still running regularly through the district, even provides a sense of the district's historic soundscape. Surface finishes and materials are less important than patterns, as these showed continual evolution both during and after the period of significance, e.g. the change in street materials from dirt to brick to asphalt, and the replacement of board sidewalks with concrete and the more recent incorporation of brick accents. The district's continuity of use as a center of commercial activity for the village also provides an element of landscape integrity.

The visual character of the district also reflects its historic integrity. Views into and out of the district are generally defined as they were historically by the two to three story buildings lining the streets. At the edges of the district, particularly to the north and south, the neighboring residential districts are still visible along tree-lined streets. Views of the river, the railroad, and the remaining historic bridge to the west are particularly key to the district's visual integrity. Some alteration has taken place, particularly the loss of commercial buildings lining the south side of Adrian Street to the west of the district, which historically provided a visual and functional link to West Blissfield. Post period-of-significance construction to the east has also somewhat altered views out of the district on that side, although not as significantly.

The most significant impacts to the district's integrity are in the more ephemeral characteristics of vegetation and small scale features, which is typical of most historic landscapes. Features typically seen during the period of significance, such as lighting, signage, etc. do not survive or have been replaced, and other elements necessary to the modern functioning of the downtown, such as planters and benches, have been added. In general, historic views of the downtown show very little vegetation: few to no street trees and very little ornamental vegetation with the exception of some plantings at individual buildings. In more recent years, street trees and annual/perennial planters have been installed along the sidewalks. Changes in both small scale features and vegetation are an acceptable evolution within the district and do not significantly detract from its historic integrity.

Buildings

*A Note on Sources: The following sources were used for most or all inventory entries. Additional sources or specific references within those sources are listed under the individual entry.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (1893, 1899, 1907, 1912, 1919, 1929, 1944); Historic Photographs; Blissfield Village Directories (1897, 1915, 1916-21, 1926, 1934, 1949); Charles Lindquist, *Spanning the Years* (Adrian, MI: Lenawee County Historical Society, 2000); Bob Barringer, *Blissfield* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing Company, 2014); "Blissfield Michigan Main Street Project" (survey); Blissfield Township Assessor's Records.

East Adrian Street

North Side:

101 East Adrian. 1923, remodeled ca. 1930s and 1977.

Non-contributing (built within the period of significance but subsequent alterations have sufficiently impacted integrity to render it non-contributing)

Description

This one-story professional building has a rectangular footprint with an angled extension on the west side facing the corner of Lane and Adrian streets. The brown brick walls feature brick piers at the corners and bay windows carried on brick walls on the angled elevation. It has a double-pitch mansard or pent roof covered with shingles on the south and west elevations. The main roof is flat. The secondary elevations are also brown brick; the east elevation is not visible due to an

adjoining building. A single entry door is centered on the angled corner with half-round brick entry steps and wood railings. The entry is flanked by bay windows with double-hung aluminum sash.

History

Sanborn maps and historic photographs show two one-story retail buildings on this corner from approximately 1899 to 1919. The *Blissfield Advance* reported in March of 1923 that the building "formerly on the lot" was being torn down for construction of a Hi-Speed gasoline station, the first in Blissfield; construction was well along the following month when it was noted that the building would be a "one-story building with a metal covering of steel sheeting." That building, with a small rectangular footprint, was enlarged in the 1930s, and it remained a gas station under a series of names (Hi Speed, Cities Service Station, Pure Gas) until the 1970s. In 1977, Glidden Realty significantly remodeled the building to its present appearance, remaining in that location for twenty years. It is still a Realtor's office, currently under the name Binns Realty.

Integrity Analysis

The building was constructed in 1923 with a small rectangular footprint; early photographs show a hipped roof that extended over a covered space to shelter customers as their gas was pumped, and the building was angled to face the intersection of Lane and Adrian streets to the southwest. The building was enlarged in the 1930s with vehicle service bays wrapping around the north, east, and south sides of the original building. Advertisements in the 1930s also noted the building as the "white tower on the corner"; this is visible as a small, square two-story section on the 1944 Sanborn map. Glidden Realty installed the present brick exterior, fenestration, and double-pitch pent or mansard roof in 1977. The building no longer retains any visual connection or material integrity reflecting its appearance and use during the period of significance.

Sources

"Local and Personal," *Blissfield Advance*, March 8, 1923, p. 8.
Blissfield Advance, April 12, 1923, p. 2.
"Trivia," *Blissfield Advance*, March 23, 1977, p. 2.

103 East Adrian. Ca. 1937.

Contributing

Description

This one-story building is constructed of concrete block with a red brick façade on the south elevation and a flat roof. The building is rectangular except for angled bays to either side of the central bay on the south elevation. The south elevation has painted brick piers dividing the three bays. The central bay has two garage doors, one slightly narrower. The east bay has a garage door and a fixed aluminum window with a fabric awning. The west bay has a glass and aluminum storefront consisting of a central door flanked by fixed display windows, surmounted by a fabric awning.

The rear (north elevation) is painted concrete block. There is a center glass and steel entry door, one fixed aluminum window, and four two over two aluminum windows with operable bottom sash. Another entry door opening has been infilled with an air conditioning unit installed. The east and west elevations are for the most part not visible due to the adjoining buildings, except for a small concrete block wall on the west elevation.

History

The west half of this site had a one-story building on it from at least the 1890s, according to Sanborn maps, which housed a blacksmith shop, and then a "poultry, butter, and eggs" store in the early twentieth century. To the east was an empty lot and a dwelling. The 1920 Sanborn map shows another one-story commercial building attached to the original store. Between 1929 and 1944, all three buildings had been replaced by the current one-story building, listed on that Sanborn map as an auto sales and service store. It was constructed around 1937 as a DeSoto-Dodge Dealership. It remained a dealership/automotive repair shop under different names (Blissfield Sales and Service, 1951-55, Les Frank Mercury, 1955-1976, Nichols Repair, ca. 1980-1993) into the 1990s. It is now D&N Upholstery.

Integrity Analysis

In form, this building is the same as the footprint showing on the 1944 Sanborn map.

Sources

N/A.

105/107 East Adrian. 1920s.

Contributing

Description

This L-shaped building is one story and is constructed of painted concrete block. It has stepped parapets on the south and east rooflines and a row of rusticated stone block just below the cornice line of the south elevation closest to the street and the south front of the east wing. That façade has a center entry door with a small stone step flanked by two fixed aluminum windows. The south elevation recessed from the street has a garage door on the east side and two window openings, one of which has been infilled with concrete block. The east elevation of the ell has a steel entry door with glass and aluminum storm door at the south side, a steel entry door at the north side, and an infilled window opening between. There is another fixed pane window on the west elevation of the ell. All the openings have bars covering them. The north elevation is also painted concrete block with its openings infilled; most of the elevation is obscured by brush.

History

This lot had a two-story dwelling from the late 1890s until 1919. By 1929 the current building had been constructed as a feed warehouse. It served in that capacity for various grain elevators, which were located just north of the railroad tracks behind the building. It later served as the office for Blissfield Cooperative Company's coal operation, and housed Quality Signs from the 1990s to 2008. It is currently occupied by Blissfield Coins and Jewelry.

Integrity Analysis

In form, this building is the same as the footprint showing on the 1929 and 1944 Sanborn maps.

Sources

N/A.

109 East Adrian. Ca. 1979.

Non-contributing

Description

The rectangular one-story building is set back from the street with a gravel parking area in front. The building is covered with vertical board siding on the north and south elevations; the east and west elevations are not visible due to adjoining buildings. It has a side gabled roof covered with asphalt shingles. The roof is slightly raised at the east end. There is a glass and aluminum storefront entry on the west end consisting of a glass and steel entry door with false muntins flanked by a fixed display window to one side. Another fixed window with wood shutters is located farther east on that elevation. At the far east end of the south elevation is a garage door with another steel entry door just to the east. There is an entry door on the north elevation adjacent to the railroad tracks.

History

This site had a series of coal and other storage bins for the nearby grain and coal elevators throughout most of the twentieth century; the lot in front of the bins was also used as overflow storage and display space by the nearby automotive dealers. The current building was constructed around 1979-80 for Diesel Fuel Systems, which occupied the building until the mid 1990s. It is now the home of the Blissfield Model Railroad Club.

Integrity Analysis

The building does not appear to have been altered significantly since its construction, which was after the period of significance.

Sources

N/A.

115 East Adrian. William Rothfuss Bldg., 1902.

Contributing

Description

Constructed in 1902, this Late Victorian Commercial building is two stories tall and is constructed of red-brown brick. The second floor façade of the south elevation is divided into two bays flanked by brick piers. Each bay has brick corbelling and brick dentil molding at the cornice. The center pier has a small stone plaque bearing the legend "W. R. 1902." The windows have brick segmental arches but the windows themselves are aluminum double-hung replacement units. A modern wood porch with shed roof is located on the east half of the first floor. Within the porch are two side by side entry doors. Next to and partly behind the porch, the an older broad central door opening has been removed and replaced with a three-paned window; the area below has been infilled with newer brick.

The east elevation is not visible due to the adjoining building. The west elevation is partially visible and consists of the same brick wall with several segmental arch window openings, again with replacement units, and several rectangular windows. The rear (north elevation) of the building is also brick. The entry door on the west side has a modern door surrounded partially by vertical board infill and with a transom window and a segmental arch. A larger segmental arch opening in the middle of this elevation has been infilled with wood and two small fixed windows.

History

Prior to 1902, this was the site of an earlier one-story wood-framed agricultural implements store. In 1902, William Rothfuss constructed the present building for his agricultural implements business (at the time, he was a leading citizen of Blissfield and also vice-president of the Blissfield State Bank; he also had a double storefront on South Lane Street). The 1929 Sanborn Map shows it as an automobile storage facility. The H. J. Hoenig Seed Company operated out of the building from the mid 1930s to 1987. It is currently occupied by the Raisin River Valley Railroad and Steve's Hobbies.

Integrity Analysis

This building is generally intact. The major alteration is at the first floor storefront. Sanborn maps from the early 1900s depict a one-story porch across the entire storefront; by 1929 that was gone. It is unknown when the current porch was installed.

Sources

N/A

121 East Adrian. Blissfield Fire Department, 1916.

Contributing

Description

This is a two-story building constructed of rusticated concrete block. The first floor of the south elevation has two large garage doors of unequal width with a steel entry door just to the east. A narrow band of brick stretches across the doors and down the center pier between the garage doors. The second floor has double-hung, one over one aluminum windows; there is a small two-paned wood window at the far east side. A small concrete name plaque carries the inscription "W. R. Rothfuss 1916" at the center of the elevation.

The rear (north) elevation is covered with metal corrugated siding. It has a steel entry door at the east end, double-hung aluminum windows (two on the first floor, one on the second), and a square vented opening near the eaves at the east end. A gable-roofed, plywood covered tower at the west end of the roof may have been a hose-drying tower.

History

Prior to 1916, this space was either vacant, or occupied by a series of storage sheds. This building was constructed in 1916 by William Rothfuss, who had earlier built the brick building just to the west. Rothfuss had a thriving trade in carriages and harness, and in 1908 had added automobiles to his line of offerings, and this building was constructed as a display room for his automobiles and "other wares." In both 1919 and 1929 it was listed in the Sanborn maps as a garage. It housed Strickland's gas station and garage in the 1930s (perhaps after Rothfuss' death in 1933). In 1935-1937, the Blissfield Library was housed in the building. In 1940, the Blissfield Fire Department moved into the building; they stayed there until a new fire hall was built farther east on Adrian in 1996. It currently houses Scott Cantrell's Garage.

Integrity Analysis

This building appears to be fairly intact, aside from the upper floor windows and some apparent changes at the first floor. The brick band above the garage doors extends farther than the current length of the east side garage door and entry door, and the concrete block next to that appears to be infill. The garage doors may have originally been of equal length and the current door was made smaller to accommodate the entry door.

Sources

- "In and Around Blissfield," *Blissfield Advance*, February 24, 1916, p. 1.
"The Schultz-Holmes Memorial Library, Special Issue: Annual Report," Vol 5, issue 4, Winter 2011 (reprinted in the *Blissfield Advance*, January 19, 2011).
"Blissfield Township Fire Hall," Blissfield Home Tour, 1997.

203 East Adrian. Blissfield Electric Light Company, 1900 (with later additions)

Contributing

Description

This address contains a complex of adjoining buildings built over time, including a three-story center section, one- and two-story additions to each side, and a long two-story manufacturing building stretching across the rear of all three buildings and a considerable distance to the east.

The building farthest to the west is a one-story, concrete block structure with a flat roof. It has a garage door on the west end, a five-paned steel window, and a steel entry door on the east end. The remainder of the elevations are not visible due to adjoining buildings.

To the east of that is a red brick building that has a three-story section at the street end and a two-story section behind. The south elevation is faced with three-story banks of window openings, which are now covered with aluminum siding separated by aluminum spandrel panels. The lower floors of the remaining elevations are covered by adjoining buildings, but the upper walls are brick, and there is a multi-paned steel window on the west elevation of the three-story section.

Adjoining it to the east is a one-story red brick addition. On the south elevation of this building there is a glass and aluminum entry door on the east side with a transom panel and brick soldier-course brickwork above. In the center is a large area of infilled brick, possibly a former storefront, with a band of glass block below a projecting metal cornice. The second floor has a band of narrow window openings in a 3-9-3 pattern. Each set of windows has a projecting brick sill. The majority of the windows are either boarded up or replaced with aluminum one-over-one double hungs, but there is one original wood window with a taller upper pane and a short lower pane (potentially operable). The east elevation of this section is also brick; it has two contrasting sets of windows. To one side are narrow window openings similar to those on the south elevation; the pattern is four each on the first and second floor. Here again, they are a mixture of infilled openings, double hung-one-over-one replacements, and original wood windows. Another rectangular opening with a vinyl window has been cut in below the second floor windows. On the other side of the wall are three two-story tall window openings with multi-paned steel sash; below each are infilled basement window openings. At the far north side of this elevation are double steel doors with six pane inset windows. A wood platform and steps provide access to this door. The remainder of the elevations are not visible due to adjoining buildings.

Finally, a long, narrow, gable-roofed two-story building spans the length of the site adjacent to the railroad tracks, extending behind the other three buildings. It is constructed of concrete block, with the east half of the building covered in aluminum vertical siding. There is a garage door opening on the south elevation and several steel entry doors on the north elevation adjacent to the railroad track.

History

The voters of Blissfield passed a bond in 1899 to build an electric power plant for the village and that building was completed in 1900 in an area on the north side of East Adrian that had previously held a few dwellings and storage buildings. Lindquist's *Spanning the Years* notes there were additions in 1910 and 1920, although it is unclear which additions those were, as there is little change on Sanborn maps in 1907, 1912, and 1919. The 1929 Sanborn map shows the front section of the plant extended out to the street, so that may have been the 1920 addition (perhaps the three-story section). The two-story addition dates to 1936, a project that received funding assistance from the Works Progress Administration; this served as an office in the front and engine room in the rear. The village funded another expansion in

1948 (it is unclear what that consisted of), but following that, the village refused to fund additional work. In 1950, the Blissfield Electric Light Company was sold to Consumers Power Company, which ran it for a short time before moving power generation elsewhere. In 1956, Consumers Power sold the facility to Norton Equipment, a manufacturing company. The building initially sat vacant until Norton started to use it in 1962. Norton built an addition in 1968. Although Norton built a new plant in a nearby industrial park in 1995, it continues to own and utilize the building on East Adrian.

Integrity Analysis

The history of this building is one of expansion and alteration, but its essential historic character is intact. While there have been later additions, the building is still visually dominated by the early 1900s three-story section and the 1936 addition, while somewhat altered, still retains its overall character.

Sources

Lindquist, *Spanning the Years*, 74, 103-104, 137-138.

Barringer, *Blissfield*, 54-55.

"Blissfield Gains New Industry," *Adrian Daily Telegram*, June 14, 1962.

"New Light Plant to be in Operation Thursday," *Adrian Daily Telegram*, June 17, 1948.

East Adrian Street

South Side:

106 E. Adrian. Ca. 1900

Contributing

Description

This two-story, Late Victorian Commercial building is constructed of brick painted red and has a flat roof. The upper story of the front façade facing Adrian Street has two bays outlined by brick piers. The windows are one-over-one double hung replacement units with brick segmental arches. The storefront has a recessed center entry in an unusual V-shape with doors on the angled sides. The entry is flanked with wood windows with wood muntins and wood panels below. To either side of the recessed entry are iron columns with a fleur de lys motif. The storefront is capped with a simple cornice, and there are stamped sheet metal panels in the ceiling of the V-shaped entry. The step up to the entry is stone.

The east elevation is also brick with segmental arch windows with aluminum replacement units and a simple dentil molding at the cornice. The steel entry door at the south end of this elevation has a transom window and segmental brick arch above. An enclosed exit stair has been added to this elevation; it is two stories at the back (south) end and slopes down to one story at the north end. It is sided with clapboards. A small projecting addition hangs off the east side of this structure at the second floor; it has vertical board siding and side-by-side double-hung windows.

The rear (south) elevation is only visible at the second floor due to an adjoining building. It is also constructed of red brick with no decorative details. There is an entry door with two double-hung aluminum windows to the west. The west elevation is not visible.

The first floor of the interior is divided into two retail spaces. The east space has been remodeled with a dropped ceiling and modern wood wainscoting, but does retain the original floor with some ghosting visible. The west side has a stamped sheet metal ceiling, plaster walls, a high beadboard wainscot, and wood floors.

History

The lot directly east of the Blissfield State Bank building remained vacant until the mid to late 1890s, when a small one-story grocery store was built here. By 1907, that had been replaced by the current two-story brick building. The 1907 Sanborn map shows a billiard room in the space. By 1912 it was an office and in 1919 a produce store. The "Main Street Survey Project" suggests that Rothfuss Farm Machinery was in this location in the early part of the century, but this may be referring to the storefront next door at 104, which connected to Rothfuss' carriage showroom on South Lane. Other tenants referenced by the Main Street Survey include Belman's Barbershop, K&B Western Shop, and the Wooden Whistle (2005-2007). It is currently vacant.

Integrity Analysis

This building appears to retain good integrity. Impacts include the (presumed) removal of the original cornice and the replacement of the original windows. The enclosed stair on the east side appears to be an early addition based on Sanborn maps. The storefront is highly intact and of a rather unusual configuration for Blissfield in particular and for this era in general.

Sources

N/A

110-112 East Adrian. Ca. 1936 with ca. 1968 addition.

Contributing

Description

This property consists of the main building at 112 East Adrian and an addition at 110 East Adrian. 112 East Adrian is a one-story Commercial Brick building with gable roof hidden behind a brick parapet. The north elevation is red brick with decorative brickwork in the upper frieze, including rows of soldier-course bricks, piers, recessed panels, and corbelling. The storefront has a recessed center entry with angled walls to either side of the door. There is a wood and glass transom over the entryway. To the east of the entry is a large fixed display window with a glass transom. On the west side of the entry are two smaller fixed display windows with transoms. The westernmost transom has been covered with a metal or fabric screen; part of this screen has deteriorated, revealing a frosted glass transom panel on which writing can be seen ("Deal" and "Year" are visible).

The east and south elevations have been covered with aluminum standing seam siding. The east elevation has double-hung aluminum replacement windows, four single units to the north and two paired windows to the south. The south elevation has a large garage door and a smaller entry door beside it. The west elevation is not visible due to the adjoining building.

110 East Adrian is a rectangular, one-story, shed-roofed addition to the brick building next door at 112 East Adrian. It is covered in metal standing seam siding. The north elevation consists mainly of glass and aluminum storefront windows with an entry door. The remaining areas are covered with metal siding. The west elevation is also metal-sided with no openings. The north elevation is metal-sided with two garage doors. The east elevation is not visible due to the adjoining building.

History

In the 1890s, there was a small dwelling on the corner where 112 East Adrian now stands. This was replaced around 1900 by a two-story livery stable which converted to an 18-car garage in the late 1910s. The 1929 Sanborn map shows a one-story garage in this location; other sources suggest the current building wasn't constructed until 1936, so it is unclear if this is the same building (the 1929 building was not as long as the present building). It has always been an automotive garage/service station, under names including Blissfield Machine Shop and Garage, Blissfield Motor Sales (Sinift Chevrolet 1934-1940), Tine Shedler Chevrolet (beginning 1940), Schwyn Chevrolet, and Bill's Service. It is currently Larry's Body Shop.

The lot at 110 East Adrian remained largely vacant until the the early 1920s, when a small one-story concrete block building was constructed as Clyde Atkin's fresh produce market; following Atkin's death in 1950, his partner Russell Ries continued the business (as Russell Ries' Rural Produce) until he sold the property to Oswald (Bill) Lietzke in 1968. The 1920s building was torn down and the current structure was constructed as an addition to 112 East Adrian after Lietzke's purchase of the building in 1968 for his lawn and garden service. It still contains lawn and garden equipment, now attached to Larry's Body Shop.

Integrity Analysis

Although the east and south elevations have been covered with later siding, the principal façade of 112 East Adrian facing the street is very intact, including original windows, decorative brick details, and even historic signage. The appearance and materials of the addition at 110 East Adrian are consistent with its 1960s period of construction. The addition does not significantly detract from the integrity of 112 East Adrian.

Sources

"Local Chevrolet Agency Under New Management," *Blissfield Advance*, October 10, 1940, p. 1.

"Russ Ries Seeks New Career As He Closes Rural Produce," *Blissfield Advance*, August 29, 1968, p. 1.

116 East Adrian. Ca. 1920s.

Contributing

Description

This rectangular one-story Commercial Brick building has an interesting arched steel truss roof structure. The north elevation is a typical early twentieth-century brick facade. The three bays are flanked by brick piers which project slightly above the parapet. The brick panels above the storefronts are outlined with corbelled bricks. The north elevation storefront has three sets of wood and glass windows and transoms, but no entry door.

The secondary elevations are also of brick. The west elevation, facing narrow Newspaper Street, has garage doors in the first and seventh of nine bays; the remainder of the bays have multi-paned steel windows separated by brick piers. On the east elevation, the storefront wraps around to the first bay; this elevation also features brick piers. There is a small casement window on the storefront bay, but the remainder of the windows on this elevation have been covered up. The curvature of the roof is visible on the south elevation; this side has a center door with a segmental brick arch; it is flanked by multi-paned steel windows to either side, but the two windows to the east have been covered over.

History

This area represented the eastern edge of Blissfield's commercial district, and there was a residence on this site until at least 1919. As automobiles became more popular in the early decades of the twentieth century, this block of East Adrian (both north and south side) became the nexus of Blissfield's first automobile sales and service district. This building was built as a dealership and garage in the early 1920s. It was a Ford dealership under a series of names, including Moore and Seeburger, Jim Vince, Fisher, McDowell, and Burwitz-Billington. It later housed Tom Pierce's car restoration service before being taken over by the current owner, Bill's Service, who moved from the building next door at 110-112 East Adrian.

Integrity Analysis

116 East Adrian appears to have changed little since its initial construction, and retains many features (storefront, steel windows) that are characteristic of its period.

Sources

N/A.

120 East Adrian. Mid 1800s.

Contributing

Description

This Late Victorian two and a half story building has a main section in a hip and cross-gable roof form with asphalt-shingle roofs; attached to the rear (south) are a series of one and two-story additions with asphalt-shingled gabled roofs. The building has a brick foundation and is sided with vinyl siding. The double-hung windows are a mixture of wood (with aluminum storms) and newer vinyl replacement windows. Decorative details include fish-scale shingling in the gables, decorative bargeboards, and a front porch with turned wooden columns. There is a wooden two-story fire escape on the west side and concrete stairs and landing on the east side. The area to the rear (south) of the building has been paved for parking.

History

Located on the edge of the Blissfield commercial district, this building was originally a dwelling that was later converted into a professional office, a typical transformation for dwellings in the transitional zone between commercial and residential districts. In the 1940s it was the office of Dr. Ray Tubbs, a general practitioner who was also the president of the village council and of the board of education. It is currently the office of chiropractor Larry Sutherland.

Integrity Analysis

This house appears in the first (1893) Sanborn map for the village and likely dates from the 1880s or early 1890s. The building generally retains its historic form and appearance. Later additions are confined to the less significant south elevation of the building. The exterior has been resided in vinyl siding but retains original shingle siding in the gables and other Eastlake/Queen Anne trim.

Sources

N/A.

West Adrian Street

North Side:

102 West Adrian. Drew House, 1875.

Contributing

Description

This Commercial Italianate building is one story with a raised basement level. It is constructed of brick with a stone water table on the south and east elevations. The east elevation is the main street-facing façade and has a center entry with a round-arched brick hood. To the north of the entry door is a double-hung, one-over-one wood window and another entry door, both with segmental-arch brick hoods. To the south of the entry door is a square window opening with fixed window and transom. A wood porch with a shed roof and bracketed bevel-edge square wood columns stretches across two-thirds of the east elevation.

The south elevation is also brick with a stone water table. On the first floor, there is a square window with transom at the east end, five double-hung one-over-one wood windows with brick segmental-arch hoods and carved panels in the transoms, a door opening with a wood and glass door and a brick segmental-arch hood, and, at the west end, a wood-framed bay window with double-hung one-over-one windows and a hipped roof. The basement level has eight double-hung two-over-two wood windows with segmental arches and an infilled entry door with a projecting brick surround and segmental arch hood. Also on this elevation is a stone plaque inscribed with "Drew's Music Hall 1875."

The north (rear) elevation is also brick but without a stone water table. There are six irregularly spaced wood double-hung windows with segmental arch brick hoods; the easternmost three are one-over-one units with carved wood panels in the transoms and segmental-arched brick hoods, while the westernmost three are arched two-over-two windows. There is also a door opening in this elevation with a wood and glass paneled door and a segmental-arched brick hood. There are no windows visible in the basement level. A small enclosed entry porch at the east end of the lower level leads into the basement. Adjacent to that is a shed-roofed lean-to addition with board and batten siding and an asphalt shingled roof. This extends halfway along the elevations.

The west elevation is brick with a brick water table. At the first floor level it has three double-hung, two-over-two arched wood windows with brick segmental-arched hoods, and two wood and glass paneled doors with segmental arched brick hoods. One arched opening at the basement level has been boarded over. There is also a small square opening near the top of the wall that has also been boarded up. A narrow space separates this from the adjacent building at 108 West Adrian.

History

This site had a hotel on it from at least 1857. That hotel was owned by John Young. Col. W. H. Drew purchased the hotel in 1866 when it was named the Dewey House. This building succumbed to the January 1875 fire that destroyed much of the East Blissfield downtown area. Col. Drew rebuilt the hotel as a three-story brick Italianate building during mid to late 1875, and it finally opened in December of 1875 as the Drew House. Although known by several names throughout the next 100 years (the Pennsylvania House, Coon's Tavern, the New Tavern and Steam Inn), it remained in business as a hotel and restaurant. In the early 1960s, Harry Empson purchased the hotel and worked through the next decade and a half to rehabilitate the building, culminating in its designation in 1977 as a State of Michigan Historic Site. Early the following year, on February 24, 1978, fire broke out in the hotel, destroying much of the second and third floors and threatening, but not spreading to, nearby buildings. The owner was forced to demolish the upper two floors but salvaged

the basement and first floor. It closed as a hotel in 1986 and was converted into a gift shop. It is currently home to the Victorian Garden.

Integrity Analysis

As an effect of the 1978 fire, the Drew House, Blissfield's first three-story building and once one of its most prominent downtown structures, is now only one story high. Although reduced to a single story above the raised basement, the remnant retains significance as an important historic resource in the downtown. The surviving ground story retains its historic character, in particular the arched window hoods, some original windows, and the Drew House name plaque. The corner square display windows and Italianate porch on the east elevation are visible in photographs from the early 1900s.

Sources

"Nine Business Houses and Dewey House Destroyed," *Blissfield Advance*, January 14, 1875, p. 3.

"Blissfield Hotel Has Lively History," *Adrian Daily Telegram*, March 20, 1974.

Ned Bell, "102 Year Old Blissfield Hotel is Still a Profitable Business," *Toledo Blade*, November 8, 1977.

Matt Gryzan and Phyllis Robertson, "Blaze Guts Historic Blissfield Hotel," *Adrian Daily Telegram*, February 25, 1978.

108 West Adrian. Odd Fellows Hall, 1914.

Contributing

Description

The Odd Fellows Hall is a two-story red brick building with a raised basement level and a side gabled roof. The principal (south) façade has a decorative wood cornice line with an alternating bar and circle pattern, and a brick Mission Revival gable parapet rising above the roof line. The fenestration pattern has single window openings on the second floor and on each end bay of the first and basement levels. The middle three bays of the first and second floor have paired window openings, and there are two below-grade entry doors at the basement level with concrete steps down to them. A paired window opening is centered in the Mission Revival gable parapet. The window sash are missing from all windows except the basement level, which have wood double-hung one-over-one sash. Railings around the basement steps are constructed of salvaged radiators from the building interior. There is a plaque in the center of the south elevation inscribed "IOOF No. 258 1914."

The north elevation is brick with no decorative detailing aside from stone door and window lintels. It has a short projecting wing at the east end. There is a brick chimney in the center of the elevation and a metal fire escape. The three single window openings on the second floor are boarded up. A fourth window has been partially bricked-in and converted to a door opening with a five-paneled wood door. The second floor has two paired windows in the center of the elevation with two double-hung one-over-one wood windows remaining in place. A single window opening on the east bay has been bricked in from the interior but still has the upper window sash in it. The single window opening on the west bay is boarded up. The basement has a variety of single and paired openings, some reduced in size, others boarded up.

The east and west elevations are brick with brick Mission Revival gable parapets. The west elevation has two window openings on the second floor which have been boarded up and one on the first floor at the north end which has a wood one-over-one window sash still in place. The east elevation has five windows on the second floor and three on the first floor, all irregularly spaced and with one-over-one double-hung wood sash still in place; some of these have wire glass windows. There is also a set of double wood-paneled doors between the first and second floors (possibly the original main entrance) and several basement-level window openings which have been boarded up.

The building has been open to the elements for a number of years and most interior elements are missing or highly deteriorated. Some original floors and a staircase remain in place.

History

The site adjacent to the Drew House Hotel sat mostly vacant until the International Order of Odd Fellows constructed their hall here in 1914 (the lodge was instituted in 1875). The IOOF had their lodge rooms on the upper floor, while the first floor served as a dance hall and meeting space for local gatherings, with a kitchen/dining room in the basement. For a time, the IOOF hall was the center of social activity in Blissfield. The auditorium of the first floor hosted community events, including plays, benefits, dancing, teen events, political rallies, and Rotary/Kiwanis Club meetings. After the IOOF moved out in 1983, Blissfield Township had its offices here for a time, as did the Justice of the Peace. After sitting vacant for a number of years, it is currently being rehabilitated as offices and residential.

Integrity Analysis

Aside from the loss of most of the window sash, the Odd Fellows Hall retains high integrity on the exterior.

Sources

"IOOF, Rebekahs Observe Anniversary," *Adrian Daily Telegram*, October 30, 1975.

116 West Adrian. Toledo and Western Electric Railway Company Passenger Station, 1901.

Contributing

Description

The two-and-a-half story Toledo and Western Electric Railway Company Passenger Station is a brick Arts-and-Crafts style square building. It has a belcast hipped roof with exposed rafter tails and the dormer on the south side of the roof also has a belcast hipped roof. The brick on the east, south, and west elevations is painted and there is a brick lintel course beneath the second floor windows on the south and east elevations. The windows are all double-hung, one-over-one aluminum replacement units. The windows on the south, east, and west elevations are square headed while those on the north elevation (with one exception) have brick segmental arches. A wood board-and-batten storefront has been constructed over the first floor of the south and west elevations. It has fixed aluminum and glass windows and a steel and glass entry door on the west elevation. A wood porch is located over one of the windows on the west elevation.

On the north elevation there is a steel fire escape with a board-and-batten enclosure on the west end of the second floor. The north elevation is stuccoed at the basement level and the brick is not painted.

History

Sanborn maps show a two-story frame hotel on this site in the 1890s. In 1901, the Toledo and Western Electric Railway Company began operating an interurban line through Blissfield between Adrian and Toledo, and built this building as a passenger station. A freight building was located just to the west of it. After the T&W closed operations in the mid 1930s, this building was converted to a gas station under the name Lynn Rouget's Gulf Gas Station and operated as such from the 1940s to the 1960s. After that, it became a professional office, including Herb Kodelman Real Estate in the 1970s and Bill Carleton Tax Service in the 1980s. It was most recently occupied by David Walters CPA, and also has apartments on the second floor.

Integrity Analysis

Early 1900s photographs show this building as unpainted brick. It had a slate tile roof with a dormer on the south side. The first floor of the front (south) elevation had a center entry with a brick bay window on the west side and a larger picture window on the east side. A pent roof canopy hung over the first floor on this elevation. The windows were one-over-one double hung wood and the building had wood five-paneled doors. It is unknown when the brick was painted. The wood storefront probably dates to the 1970s or 1980s.

Sources

N/A.

West Adrian Street

South Side:

101 West Adrian (also 104 South Lane). A. D. Ellis and Company, 1875.

Contributing

Description

This two-story, Commercial Italianate building was constructed in 1875 and is constructed of brick. It occupies the entire southwest corner of Adrian and Lane streets. The west half of the building on West Adrian Street was originally a separate address (103 West Adrian) but is now included in 101. The north elevation is the principal façade. The east half of the

façade (original 101 address) is gray-painted brick with raised brick piers framing the three bays of double-hung replacement windows with decorative ogee window hoods. The raised piers transition with ogee corners into a raised frieze with dentil moldings. The building is capped by a stringcourse and a bracketed projecting cornice. The storefront has three sets of display windows with multi-paned glass transoms; the center window has a vertical muntin, and there is a rectangular pattern of etched prism glass panes in the transom panels. The windows are set in wood frames, separated by iron pilasters and resting on stone sills. The west half of the north elevation is also gray-painted brick with arched brick window hoods and stone sills. The cornice is decorative brick in a stylized version of the Doric order, with raised brick "triglyphs" above corbels suggestive of fascia with guttae beneath. The storefront has a recessed center entry and is constructed with wood paneling and glass display windows resting on stone sills. The entry door is flanked by iron round engaged columns resting on paneled plinth blocks with stylized acanthus leaves on the capitals. The storefront has multi-paned glass panel transoms, but these have no etched glass.

The east elevation has an inset corner at the north half that creates a small alcove on the sidewalk. This elevation is also painted gray brick with round arched brick window hoods. The second floor windows are double-hung, one-over-one replacement units. One window at the inset corner has been infilled with brick. At the first floor, the north half of the building has no window or door openings. A single glass and aluminum entry door with wood infilled transom is located in the center of the wall. At the south end of the facade is a storefront with recessed center entry, glass and wood display windows, and multi-paned glass transoms separated by iron pilasters. Above the storefront are three brick segmental arches. To the south of the storefront is an open square head entry with an internal stair leading to the second floor.

The majority of the remaining walls are hidden by adjoining buildings. There is a small section of exposed brick on the east side of 101; this has an entry door at the first floor and two windows at the second floor. Similarly, a small corner of the former 103 building is also visible; it is painted brick with an entry door on the first floor; the arched window openings have been infilled with brick.

The interior has a number of historic features remaining, including tongue and groove wood floors and bead board ceilings. There is a spiral stair leading to the second floor at the south end of the building.

History

This has long been one of the most significant commercial buildings in Blissfield. The corner of Adrian and Lane streets is the major crossroads for the commercial district and the stretch of buildings along West Adrian was among the first to be developed in the mid 1800s, at first as wood frame buildings, although a few brick buildings had been constructed here and on the west side. By the early 1870s, Clinton Williams had a produce store on this corner. In January of 1875, a catastrophic fire swept through this block and the hotel across the street, destroying nine businesses. The merchants of Blissfield immediately began rebuilding, this time in brick, and this was one of the first buildings to go up in the summer and fall of 1875. In 1878, one of Blissfield's most venerable businesses, the A. D. Ellis Company, dry goods, opened in the 101 building. A. D. Ellis was one of Blissfield's most respected citizens and would eventually donate the land for the Ellis Park and Playground. A. D. Ellis Company would eventually become Blissfield's oldest business until it closed in 1943, almost twenty years after A. D. Ellis' death. Following its closure, the Joy Shop occupied the corner building in 1943-1953, then the Gambles Hardware Store, which had started in the 103 building, expanded into 101 in 1953. It remained in this location until 1989. The building is now home to Blissfield Antique Mall, along with several neighboring addresses. The storefront at 103 West Adrian, originally a separate owner/store, was occupied by Wiley Lane and Company's dry goods store from 1875 until the 1930s; Gambles Hardware moved first into this building in 1939 and later expanded next door.

Integrity Analysis

The building is remarkably intact, both interior and exterior. At the north elevation, historic photographs seem to indicate that there was a center entry on the 101 side, which is consistent with its original separation from the 103 side. On the east elevation, the blank wall north of the center entry originally had arched windows similar to the second floor; a later twentieth-century photo shows one corner of this wall with what appears to be large rectangular display windows, which have now been infilled with brick. The inset corner is an interesting feature of this building. Early photographs show a fire escape stair here, leading from a door in what is now the bricked-up opening in the second floor. It was later the location for a series of temporary covered open-air market spaces; local residents remember the Gambles store displaying seasonal goods like lawnmowers in this area.

Sources

"Nine Business Houses and Dewey House Destroyed," *Blissfield Advance*, January 14, 1875, p. 3.

105 West Adrian. Lamley's Saloon, 1875.

Contributing

Description

This is a two-story Commercial Italianate building constructed in 1875. The principal façade faces Adrian Street. It is constructed of painted brick. The second floor double-hung one-over-one replacement windows have stone window sills and stone arched window hoods with keystones. The cornice is divided into three sections by raised brick piers resting on a raised brick decorative molding strip; each section has a narrow dentil molding. The storefront has a recessed center entry with wood and glass display windows and multi-paned prism glass transoms. The entry is flanked by engaged iron columns that have twisted column upper portions. The storefront is capped with a bracketed projecting cornice and rests on stone sills.

There is small gap between 105 and 101/103 West Adrian which originally contained a stair; the space has been infilled by concrete block to prevent entry from the street.

The west elevation is not visible due to the adjoining building. The east elevation is barely visible due to the proximity of 101/103, but appears to be brick with no openings. The rear (south) elevation is brick with segmental arched window and door openings; the brick is partially stuccoed on the first floor. The two windows on the second floor and two on the first are replacement aluminum double-hung units. A center opening in the second floor has been infilled with brick. The first floor entry has a four-paneled wood door with glass pane in the top, sidelights, and a transom. A wood stair to the adjoining building's second floor deck is attached to the west side of the first floor.

The interior retains many historic features, including wood tongue and groove floors, beadboard ceilings, plaster walls with wood plate rail, and wood trim at the doors and windows.

History

This stretch of West Adrian is one of the oldest in Blissfield. There were a number of buildings constructed along West Adrian in the 1850s and 1860s, chiefly of wood with only a few brick buildings. The entire block was destroyed by the January 1875 fire which devastated the fledgling downtown district. Almost immediately, David Lamley, who had owned a saloon on this site, began rebuilding in brick along with his neighbors. Lamley's Saloon occupied the building until it was succeeded in the early 1900s by Charles Shaffer's Saloon. Not long after that, Moses Kerbawy opened a "newsstand" in the building (it also sold candy, ice cream, food, and tobacco). The Kerbawy Newsstand would become another institution in Blissfield, run first by "Mose" and then passed down to his son Harold "Kie" Kerbawy. Following Kie's death in 1968, the Gambles Hardware expanded west into this building; after it closed in 1989 the building housed an antique shop run by Mike Weeber. It is now part of the Blissfield Antique Mall.

Integrity Analysis

This building is highly intact. The only significant changes appear to be the loss of its projecting cornice (seen in early photographs) and the replacement windows.

Sources

"Nine Business Houses and Dewey House Destroyed," *Blissfield Advance*, January 14, 1875, p. 3.

107 West Adrian. 1875

Contributing

Description

This is a two-story Commercial Italianate building constructed in 1875. The principal façade faces Adrian Street. It is constructed of painted brick. The second floor has a Chicago-style window with a larger fixed window flanked by two narrower double-hung one-over-one windows. The window group has a stone window sill and is capped by a small projecting cornice with dentil molding. The building is topped by a bracketed cornice shared with the building to the west. The current storefront has a side entry at the east end with three multi-paned glass and aluminum windows carried on a low brick wall. It is capped by a frieze panel and a small projecting cornice; the transoms above the cornice have been infilled. An arched opening at the west end of the storefront leads to the second floor; the transom has been infilled and a replacement steel door installed.

The east and west elevation are not visible due to the adjoining buildings, except for a small section of the east elevation, which is painted brick. The second floor of the south elevation is painted brick with two arched window openings infilled with aluminum replacement windows with an entry door centered between. A newer brown brick addition has been added to the first floor of the south elevation. It has two glass and aluminum doors on the south elevation sheltered by an overhang. Wood stairs on the east side of the addition lead to a rooftop deck accessed by the second floor tenants.

The interior has been remodeled as a restaurant with modern finishes. Openings have been cut into the adjoining buildings to provide access between the various antique stores.

History

This building sits on one of the earliest commercial blocks in Blissfield. The entire block was destroyed by the January 1875 fire which devastated the fledgling downtown district. The owner of the previous building on this site, John J. Clark, operated a drug store. Following the fire, Clark rebuilt the present building in brick. Clark's drug store operated out of the building until the early 1900s, making it one of the oldest businesses in the village at that time. In 1937, Larry Mygett moved his restaurant, Ye Olde Towne Pump, into 107 West Adrian. Mygett had founded the business in 1923 on South Lane Street, naming it "after a pump that everyone used for water." The restaurant continued under the same name after it was purchased by Russell and Fran DeGroff in 1965. Fran DeGroff operated the business after her husband's death until the late 1990s. Since then, it has continued as a restaurant to the present, including a Mexican eatery and the current Liv's Diner.

Integrity Analysis

Early photographs from the 1870s show this building with the more typical round-arched Italianate windows on the second floor. However, the alteration to the current window configuration took place early in the twentieth century, as it is present in a photo of Phillips Hardware (in the building to the west) during that period. The other major alteration is the storefront, which was originally a traditional recessed center entry. It is not clear when the current storefront was installed.

Sources

"Nine Business Houses and Dewey House Destroyed," *Blissfield Advance*, January 14, 1875, p. 3.
Lindquist, *Spanning the Years*, 235-236.
Blissfield Advance, October 21, 1875, p. 3.

109 West Adrian. Clinton Hall, 1875/1894

Contributing

Description

This Late Victorian Commercial building is two stories tall and spans two storefronts. It is constructed of painted brick. The six bays of the upper story are flanked by raised brick piers and each bay features stone sills, replacement double-hung aluminum windows, segmental arch window hoods, and corbelled brickwork capping the recessed window bays. The façade is capped with a bracketed cornice. The storefront is a mid twentieth-century replacement; it has a recessed center double entry flanked by glass and aluminum display windows on low brick walls, and a center column at the entry encased in enameled aluminum paneling which also faces the former transom area.

The east and west elevations are mostly covered by the adjoining buildings, with the exception of a small section of the west elevation, which is painted brick. The upper floor of the south elevation is brick. The four replacement double-hung aluminum windows have stone sills and brick segmental arches. Portions of the first floor arched windows are also visible above the one-story addition, but the openings have been infilled. A one story-shed roofed addition is constructed of brown brick. There is a small garage door on the east side and a double glass and aluminum entry door on the west side.

History

In 1872, Giles and White Hardware, one of the leading businesses in early Blissfield, built a brick two-story building on this site. On the upper floor was Clinton Hall, a community gathering space. However, that building succumbed, like the rest of the block, to the January 1875 fire. Following the fire, Clinton Williams spent \$5,000 rebuilding Clinton Hall; it was the first double store in Blissfield. Giles and White remained in the building, as did Williams' store and the second floor gathering space. Giles and White was succeeded in the 1890s by Phillips Hardware. In April of 1894, fire broke out in the basement of the Phillips store; fortunately it was contained in this building. It is likely that the change in appearance of the building (see Integrity Analysis, below) is related to this fire. In 1910 or 1919 (sources differ), employee Clarence Gilson purchased the hardware business and renamed it Gilson's. At Clarence's retirement in 1960, his son took over the business. In 1975

Gilson's relocated farther west on US 223. Schaedler Plumbing and Heating then occupied the building until the 1990s. It then became an antique store, first as J&B and now as Decades.

Integrity Analysis

Photographs from just after this building was constructed in 1875 show a slightly different exterior. It was slightly taller than the buildings to either side, the bracketed cornice was taller and had differently shaped brackets, and the second floor windows were taller and more overtly Italianate round-arched with keystone hoods. The current fenestration pattern and appearance was in place in an early 1900s photograph of Phillips Hardware, and given that and the documented fire in 1894, it is likely that this building was substantially remodeled as a result of the 1894 fire. The 1875 storefront had two entries that were flush with the display windows; the 1894 storefront had recessed entries flanked by display windows. The date of the current storefront installation is unclear but it likely occurred during the 1950s or 60s based on its appearance.

Sources

"Nine Business Houses and Dewey House Destroyed," *Blissfield Advance*, January 14, 1875, p. 3.

"Gilson Hardware One of the Oldest," *Blissfield Advance*, March 27, 1974.

Lindquist, *Spanning the Years*, 70, 202.

Phyllis Robertson, "Clarence A. Gilson to Mark 50 Years in Hardware Business This Week End," *Adrian Daily Telegram*, March 31, 1960.

113 West Adrian. Kurtz Building, 1875

Contributing

Description

This is a two-story Commercial Italianate building constructed in 1875. The principal façade faces Adrian Street. It is constructed of unpainted red brick. The second floor has three windows with stone sills and round-arched stone hoods with keystones; the original upper window sash have been infilled and the lower sash replaced with shorter double-hung one-over-one windows. Below a plain brick parapet there is a projecting row of header-course bricks. The storefront has a recessed center entry flanked by wood and glass windows and wood panels. Round iron posts with twisted-column upper portions also flank the entry; they are cast with "J. W. Watson" at the base. The frieze above the storefront is plain wood and there is a sign box over the entry door. At the east end is a second-floor entry door; the opening is arched and has a stone keystone inscribed "WK 1875." The door is wood and the transom has been infilled.

The east and west elevation are not visible due to the adjoining buildings. The second floor of the south elevation is covered with vinyl siding and has a sliding door leading onto a small deck over a ground-story addition. The addition is constructed of concrete block. There is a central door entry with a steel and glass door, and two glass block windows.

History

This store was built by W. W. Kurtz for his dry goods business in 1875, the previous building having been destroyed in the January 1875 fire that destroyed the whole block. Kurtz was succeeded by John Heinrich's Department Store in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Joseph Nizzarda, an Italian immigrant and World War I veteran, arrived in Blissfield in 1920 and opened an ice cream store named Joe's Confectionery in this storefront. Nizzarda operated that until he was killed in an accident in late 1933. The store later housed Willoughby's Shoes in the 1970s and Copies and More in the 1990s; it is currently vacant (although the second floor apartment is occupied).

Integrity Analysis

The building has good integrity. The major alterations are the replacement windows and infilled transom, and the loss of the cornice. A ca. 1875 photograph shows this building sharing a cornice line with the two to the west, with the cornice rising to a peak in the center building (115). The only remnant of that cornice is the header row of bricks on this building. The storefront appears to be the original.

Sources

"Nine Business Houses and Dewey House Destroyed," *Blissfield Advance*, January 14, 1875, p. 3.

115 West Adrian. 1875

Contributing

Description

This is a two-story Commercial Italianate building constructed in 1875. The principal façade faces Adrian Street. It is constructed of painted brick. The second floor is divided into three bays separated by raised brick piers. Within each bay is a round-arched window with stone sill and highly ornamental window hoods with cut-out quadrants in the upper corners and a flat-top cornice cap in the center. The windows are double-hung nine-over-nine replacement aluminum sash with fan lights in the window arches. The raised piers transition with rounded corners into a raised frieze. The storefront is covered with EIFS and has a recessed offset entry flanked by aluminum and glass windows. The frieze above the storefront is covered in EIFS and has a simple projecting cornice.

The east and west elevation are not visible due to the adjoining buildings. The south elevation is covered with vinyl siding. There is an enclosed porch addition at the second floor and an addition on the first floor with a pent roof canopy. The addition has an entry door at the east end. Between this building and the one to the east there is an exterior wood stair leading from the second floor; it is roofed and sided with corrugated metal.

The interior has been remodeled with drywall and dropped ceilings.

History

Like the rest of the buildings on this block, 115 West Adrian was reconstructed in brick following the January 1875 fire. The 1893 Sanborn map shows it occupied by a dry goods store that also spanned into 113 West Adrian, probably either W. W. Kurtz's or perhaps Heinrich's Department Store. Other tenants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries included a tailor, jeweler, and 5 and 10 Cent store. In 1911, young Clement Hoagland, who at one time worked for Gilson's Hardware and would later run Richland Furs, became one of the city's first motion picture theater owners by building the Star Theatre in 115 West Adrian. Two years later, he installed a new lobby and raised the floor at the rear of the building. Hoagland sold the Star the following year; it was later known as the Princess and Temple Theatres. Cecil B. DeMille's "Madame Satan" was the first "talkie" featured in the Temple Theatre. The Temple closed in 1932; it was succeeded by the Elvona, which continued through the Depression but closed during World War II. A church was listed in the building in the 1944 Sanborn map. Other tenants through the years included the Wilcox Book Store, the offices of Dr. Homer Isley, Howard Sliker Realty, the Blissfield Chamber of Commerce, Harold Jones Insurance, Reiter Construction, and Curves. It is now Found Treasures Antiques.

Integrity Analysis

The building has fair integrity. The major alterations are the replacement window, the altered storefront, and the loss of the cornice. A ca. 1875 photograph shows this building sharing a cornice line with the buildings to either side, with the cornice rising to a peak on this building. The original (ca. 1875) storefront had a center entry with double doors flush with the display windows to either side. It is unclear if there was an interim storefront; a small corner of this building seen in a photo of 117 West Adrian in the early 1900s shows one bay of the storefront. A portion of it is recessed behind a shallow arch and the corner of a bay window – possibly the theater ticket office – can be seen. The current storefront probably dates from the mid twentieth century.

Sources

"Nine Business Houses and Dewey House Destroyed," *Blissfield Advance*, January 14, 1875, p. 3.

117 West Adrian. Jipson-Carter State Bank, 1875

Contributing

Description

This is a two-story Commercial Italianate building constructed in 1875. The principal façade faces Adrian Street. It is constructed of painted brick. The second floor is divided into four bays separated by raised brick piers. Within the three westernmost bays are round-arched windows with stone sills and highly ornamental window hoods with cut-out quadrants in the upper corners and a flat-top cornice cap in the center. The windows are double-hung one-over-one replacement wood sash with starburst panels in the window arches. The easternmost bay is narrower and has no window. The raised piers transition with rounded corners into a raised frieze. The storefront has a side entry with two glass and wood display

windows to the west. The entrance has glass and wood double doors and a transom with multi-paned prism glass panels. The storefront bays have wood panels on the bottom and are divided by round iron columns with twisted-column upper portions and with "J. W. Watson, Blissfield MI" cast at the base. The westernmost bay of the first floor has a second-floor entry stair door with an arched opening and a multi-pane glass transom panel. A stone keystone has the inscription "A. D. 1875." A raised concrete stoop is located in front of the doors and has a wood balustraded railing.

The east elevation is not visible due to the adjoining building. The west elevation is covered with EIFS. It has several windows on the second floor, including three square head double-hung one-over-one aluminum windows, and two round-arched openings with replacement double-hung one-over-one aluminum windows and starburst panels in the window arches. There is also a small rectangular fixed window on the first floor. The south elevation is painted brick. It has two round-arched window openings in the second floor with replacement double-hung aluminum windows and starburst panels in the arches. The first floor has small covered porches at each end with entry doors; the west door is boarded up.

The interior has stamped sheet metal ceilings, wood beams at the ceiling, and built-in cabinetry.

History

117 West Adrian was the last of the buildings on this block to be destroyed by the January 1875 fire. It was rebuilt in brick in the summer of 1875; a Blissfield *Advance* article from October of 1875 notes that "Mrs. John Rentz [milliner] is occupying the first floor of the new brick building at the corner of Adrian and Pearl Streets, owned by Messrs Rentz and Rehklaue."¹ In 1885, the newly formed Jipson, Carter and Company Bank moved into this building. It would later become the Jipson-Carter State Bank and would remain in this location until 1935. After the bank moved onto Lane Street, the Blissfield Library occupied the space until 1956; the Blissfield Village offices were also located in this building, joined by the Police Department after the library moved to its new location on South Lane in 1956. After the Michigan State Police post farther east on Adrian reverted back to the village, first the village police (1979) and then the village offices (1989) moved there, leaving 117 West Adrian vacant. It was then used as a gift shop and is currently an antique store.

Integrity Analysis

The building appears much as it did in the 1870s. The storefront arrangement has been slightly altered (1870s photographs show a center entry but images of the Jipson-Carter State Bank in the early 1900s show the present arrangement), the cornice is missing, and the west elevation has been covered in EIFS. Otherwise it is in good condition.

Sources

"Nine Business Houses and Dewey House Destroyed," *Blissfield Advance*, January 14, 1875, p. 3.
"Jipson-Carter State Bank Moves to Lane & Jefferson," *Blissfield Advance*, September 15, 1935.

201 West Adrian. First United Methodist Church (Methodist Episcopal Church), 1923.

Contributing

Description

Blissfield's Methodist Church is located at the corner of Pearl and West Adrian streets. The 1923 church is constructed of red brick with a cross gabled asphalt shingled roof. The main church building has a stone water table and gable returns. The main floor has a number of stained glass windows, including a tripartite group of lancet windows on the north elevation and an arched window on the west elevation. A three-story bell tower is located on the northeast corner of the church; it is constructed of brick and has a crenellated roofline and triple-arched openings on each elevation. The auditorium has a ceiling with central arches or vaults running in both directions between the gables and seating in curving rows focusing on the chancel. Stained glass fills round-arch and square-head windows on each side, and the back of the auditorium contains a tripartite group of lancet windows, facing W. Adrian Street, that were apparently retained from the previous church building. The church also has a number of additions, including a brick and stone entry porch into the bell tower, a two-story red brick addition across the rear (south) of the building, and a recent two-story brick addition connected to the northwest corner of the original church. An asphalt parking lot is located on the west side of the building.

History

The Methodist church was one of the earliest denominations operating in Blissfield, with a circuit rider holding services in the school as early as the late 1820s. There was a church on this corner in Blissfield as early as 1849, when the

¹ *Blissfield Advance*, October 21, 1875, p. 3.

Universalist Church constructed a wood-framed building here.² The Methodist Episcopal congregation in Blissfield organized a few years later, in 1852, and then purchased the Universalist Church building in 1869. After enlarging that building with a chapel, classroom, kitchen, and bell tower in 1876 and 1889, the growing congregation elected to replace it with the current church in 1923. The new building was similar to the old church in form and some details, but was rendered in brick and stone rather than wood. The "educational unit" on the south side of the building was added in 1958 and included ten classrooms, a pastor's study, kitchen and dining room, and a chapel. The two-story addition was constructed in a complementary red brick with stone trim with a projecting two-story entry bay on the east side. The brick and stone entry porch into the bell tower was added in the 1960s, and the two-story brick addition at the northwest corner was added within the last several years.

Integrity Analysis

The 1923 building appears little changed since its construction. The additions to the rear (south) and northwest have altered the original form but are generally sympathetic to the 1923 building and do not significantly detract from its character.

Sources

"New Education Unit," *Adrian Daily Telegram*, September 5, 1958.

"History of Blissfield Methodist Church," dated September 7, 1958, in Pamphlet File, Schultz-Holmes Memorial Library, Blissfield, Michigan.

North Lane Street

East Side:

110 North Lane. Blissfield Motor Works, 1898.

Contributing

Description

This two-story Late Victorian Commercial building is constructed of painted brick. The west elevation, facing North Lane Street, has five segmental-arched openings, two window openings each on the first and second floors, and a larger ground opening on the center of the first floor. At the first floor, the northernmost opening has been infilled with brick, the center opening has been infilled with paired aluminum double-hung replacement windows and the rest of the opening infilled with brick and vertical wood siding, and the south opening has been converted to a steel entry door, with the upper half infilled with brick. The second floor windows have been cut down to smaller square double-hung aluminum replacement windows, with the remaining space infilled with plywood. The frieze has decorative brickwork, and a stone panel with "Harry C. Davenport 1898" inscribed on it is located on the wall plane below between the second-story windows.

The south elevation is painted brick; the brick arched window openings on the second floor (five) and first floor (three), have all been infilled with brick. A large brick-arched center entry has been infilled with an aluminum double-hung window and vertical board siding. This elevation also has a decorative brickwork frieze, and the base of the wall has been parged. The east elevation is brick with no decorative frieze. It has three brick-arched window openings, two on the second and one on the first floor. These have all been infilled with smaller replacement windows and plywood. A larger arched entry on the first floor has been replaced with a steel door and sidelight, while another arched door opening next to it has been infilled with brick. The base of the wall has been parged.

The east elevation is brick. There are five brick-arched window openings on the second floor, all infilled with double-hung replacement windows and plywood panels. Two window openings and a door opening on the first floor are infilled with brick; the remaining two windows have replacement double-hung aluminum sash and vertical board siding. This elevation also has a decorative brickwork frieze.

² One church history suggests that the proto-Methodist church helped to build this church and shared the space with the Universalists for several years. "New Education Unit," *Adrian Daily Telegram*, September 5, 1958.

History

Located just to the north of the railroad tracks in a historically industrial area, this building was constructed by Harry C. Davenport as a machine shop for Blissfield Motor Works, which provided a variety of goods and services, including leather belting, plow sharpening, general repair work and machining, pipes and pipe fittings, brass goods for steam and water, etc. Davenport purchased the lot, at the time on the north side of the flour mill, in March of 1898; the building was completed and in use by the following August. Sanborn maps also show a blacksmith shop in one corner of the building, and a frame office and lumber storage building to the east of the main building. In 1919, it was a hardware store, and by the 1940s it was a seed warehouse. Southward Custom Wood Products occupied the building during the 1970s to 1990s, and it was then converted into apartments.

Integrity Analysis

The building's basic character remains intact despite the infilled windows and doors. Sanborn maps suggest there was once a cornice over the west elevation which is now gone.

Sources

"Local Brevity," *Blissfield Advance*, March 11, 1898, p. 5.

"Local Brevity," *Blissfield Advance*, August 12, 1898, p. 5.

North Lane Street

West Side:

107 North Lane. Ca. early 1900s.

Contributing

Description

This is a two-story rectangular frame building with a stone foundation and a side-gabled roof covered with asphalt shingles. The roof has exposed rafter tails. The walls are sided with shiplap wood siding. The east elevation has a center entry door with a small gabled porch roof. To the south of the entry are paired double-hung vinyl windows; to the north is a set of three folding barn or garage doors, with wood panels on the lower half and four glass lights on the upper half. The three windows on the second floor are double-hung one-over-one wood units. The north and south elevations are also wood. The south elevation has four wood windows in the gable peak – a six-paned window above three four-paned sash. There are also two four-paned sash on the lower wall at the west end. The north elevation has two four-paned windows in the peak of the gable, as well as two more on the lower wall at the west end. A second floor entry door has a wood landing and stair leading to the ground level. The west elevation has three paired double-hung one-over-one windows and an entry door at the south end; the second floor has five double-hung wood windows with iron grates over the lower halves. A wood balcony is hung off the first floor of this elevation.

This building stands immediately adjacent to the River Raisin. Attached to the southwest corner is a box-like concrete structure that appears to be a former intake for a water works system. Two concrete arms extend toward the river and have vertical grooves. Metal rip-rap extends into the river.

The first floor has been remodeled but the second floor retains exposed timber ceilings and refinished barn wood floors.

History

This area of Blissfield was just to the north of the developed commercial and industrial neighborhood and was not depicted on the late nineteenth century Sanborn maps. This structure first appears on the 1912 Sanborn map as a two-story frame barn with a one-story section attached at the north end. The Blissfield Main Street Project survey suggested that the horses housed in the barn were hauling ice from the ice plant located upriver. By 1919, a centrifugal pump was depicted on the southwest corner which was later (1929) expanded to include a pump house. The Main Street survey said this was the water inlet for the Blissfield Power Plant; however, Howe's Feed Mill and Water Works system was located just to the southwest of this building and it seems more likely that the inlet and pumphouse were related to that enterprise. In the mid to late twentieth century, there were at least two separate veterinary practices here, as well as a used car dealership. A lab is noted on the second floor in the 1944 Sanborn map but it is unclear whether this was related to the veterinary practice or the water works system. It is currently a beauty shop on the first floor and a residence on the second.

Integrity Analysis

No historic photographs of the building have been found. The current appearance is consistent with the 1940s form of the building as seen on Sanborn maps, as are the building materials and details. The Blissfield Main Street survey photograph shows a garage door in the south elevation which is no longer present.

Sources

N/A

South Lane Street**East Side:****101 South Lane. Blissfield State Bank, 1922-23****Contributing***Description*

The Blissfield State Bank is a two-story Commercial Brick building constructed of brown brick. The west (front) elevation, facing South Lane Street, has six rectangular double-hung three-over-three wood windows upstairs. There are two small vent openings above the second floor windows. The storefront has a center entry with glass and aluminum doors, sidelights, and transoms. To either side of the entry is a large glass and aluminum display window. A blank metal name panel stretches above the storefront. There is a short angled section at the northwest corner of the building. The north elevation is similar to the west façade, having eight windows on the second floor, and the street level has four large display windows. There is also a small entry door at the east end and a steel bank depository box under one of the windows. The south and east elevations are not visible due to adjoining buildings.

Also part of this address is another nineteenth century building, the former 104 East Adrian. This is a red brick building; the upper floor of the north elevation has three double-hung one-over-one aluminum windows with yellow-buff brick segmental arch hoods. The storefront has been incorporated into 101 South Lane with matching brown brick, a metal transom panel, and a single fixed window. This storefront post dates 1944, since that year's Sanborn Map still shows a separate store. A single remnant of the old storefront is a stone step at the west end.

The interior has been remodeled.

History

The Blissfield State Bank was founded in 1873 as the Gilmore and Company Bank, and was Blissfield's first bank. Originally located on the west side of Blissfield, the bank reincorporated as the Blissfield State Bank in 1893 and opened in this new location at the corner of Lane and Adrian. In 1922, the 1893 building was torn down and replaced with a new building, enlarged into the north half of William Rothfuss' former double store at 103 South Lane. The new building was designed by Mills, Rhines, Bellman, and Nordhoff, of Toledo and included five office suites on the second floor. It was completed in 1923. The second story housed a number of professional offices, particularly medical professionals (Dr. George Lamley was one of the tenants who had to move when the 1893 building was torn down in 1922). The Blissfield State Bank carried on business until it moved to a new building at the corner of Giles and Jefferson in 1982. Since the bank moved out, it has had a number of businesses, including a jewelry store, ceramic shop, and resale store, and the current computer and game room.

The former 104 East Adrian appears on the 1893 and 1899 Sanborn maps as a barber shop. At that time, it was separate from both 101 and 103 South Lane. Beginning in 1907, it appears to be joined to 103 South Lane as part of an expansion of William Rothfuss' growing carriage and bicycle business. It continued in that use as Rothfuss' business transitioned into automobiles; the 1919 Sanborn map notes there was an auto showroom in the first floor storefront. With the 1920s expansion and remodeling of the Blissfield State Bank building, this building became part of 101 South Lane; the opening to 103 was walled off and it was instead opened into 101.

Integrity Analysis

The current building dates to 1922-23, replacing an 1893 Late Victorian Commercial building that extended only one bay along South Lane Street. The 1893 building had a corner entry, a stone stringcourse, and a large projecting cornice. This building form is confirmed in the Sanborn Maps up to 1919; the Rothfuss carriage showroom was in the adjoining building. The 1893 building and the adjoining north half of 103 South Lane were demolished in 1922 and the current building constructed, completed in 1923. The 1929 Sanborn map shows the current enlarged footprint along South Lane Street, and a 1940s photograph confirms that the current façade was in place at that time. A 1972 newspaper article notes an "extensive renovation" of the interior in 1972, although the alterations to the storefront doors and windows may also date to this renovation.

Sources

"New Bank Building for Blissfield," *Blissfield Advance*, March 23, 1922, p. 1.

"Personal and Local," *Blissfield Advance*, June 15, 1922, p. 8.

Robert Sinclair, "The Blissfield State Bank, a 125 Year History, 1873-1998," pamphlet, May 1998, at Lenawee County Museum and Historical Society.

"Oldest Bank is 81 Years Old," *Blissfield Advance*, May 6, 1954.

"The Blissfield State Bank..." *Blissfield Advance*, July 12, 1972.

103 South Lane. Rothfuss General Store, 1892.

Contributing

Description

The Rothfuss General Store is a two-story brick building. The second floor has three bays divided by raised brick piers; each bay has a double-hung one-over-one replacement window with a stone sill and yellow brick segmental arch window head. A yellow brick belt course extends across the wall between the window heads. Each bay is capped with decorative brick corbelling; there is also a row of decorative brick corbelling in the frieze.

The storefront has a c. 1950s asymmetrical recessed center entry with glass and aluminum entry doors and transom and angled display windows to the north side. A fabric canopy extends across the storefront transom.

The north and south elevations are not visible due to adjoining buildings. The east elevation has a one-story rusticated concrete block addition with a steel entry door and glass block windows. The second floor of the main building is brick; it has three plywood infilled arched window openings with yellow brick segmental arch hoods. A stair enclosure is attached to the second floor wall.

The interior has been remodeled with modern finishes.

History

William Rothfuss constructed this building in 1892. It was originally a double store that extended to the north into the south half of the lot currently occupied by the Blissfield State Bank. That north store served as a carriage storage and display space (and later a music store), while the current building had a general store selling everything from sewing machines to bicycles to pianos. The concrete block addition first appears in the 1907 Sanborn map. The north half was demolished in 1922 for expansion of the Blissfield State Bank. After Rothfuss' death in 1933, the building housed a variety of retail stores, and is currently the home of the Squishy Tushy, selling baby diapers and accessories.

Integrity Analysis

Aside from the loss of the north half of the building (which occurred in 1922) and the altered storefront and windows, this building appears much as it did in the early twentieth century.

Sources

N/A.

105 South Lane. Dolph Building, 1893.

Contributing

Description

The Dolph Building is a three-story building constructed of red brick. The second and third floors are divided into three bays flanked by raised brick piers. The outer bays have double-hung one-over-one aluminum windows; on the second floor each window has yellow segmental-arch window hoods with a yellow brick stringcourse running across the elevation along the springlines of the arch, matching the front of 103 South Lane. The third floor has simple red brick arch hoods. The center bays are blank, except the second bay has a yellow brick panel with "Dolph 1883" painted on it. Decorative brick corbelling is featured at the top of each window bay and along the second level cornice line, connecting to the Rothfuss building to the north. The storefront has a recessed center entry with angled glass and aluminum display windows carried on low brick walls. The storefront transom is brick with a wood sign for the current tenant.

The north and south walls are brick where they are visible at the third floor. The east wall of the third floor is brick; it has an arched door opening which has been infilled. There is a two-story brick addition faced with rusticated concrete block on the east elevation. This pre-1907 addition has an original arched entry door with a newer door; a second double-arched opening on the first floor has an older eight-paned casement window; the other side has been partially infilled with newer concrete block. Another newer entry door has been installed on the south side of the addition. There is a second-floor window with a double-hung one-over-one aluminum window.

The interior retains its tongue-and-groove ceilings and wood plank floors.

History

Today the only three-story building in Blissfield's commercial downtown, the Dolph building was originally constructed as a two-story building at the same time as the original Blissfield State Bank and the Rothfuss store to the north. Wira H. Dolph had moved to Blissfield several years earlier, in 1890, and started a furniture and undertaking business. His success was evident in the construction of this building just three years later. Between 1899 and 1907, Dolph enlarged the building with a third story and an extension to the rear (east). After Dolph sold the business in 1921 (he died in 1933), it remained a furniture store for a number of years, then housed a variety of retail businesses until the current tenant, the Blissfield General Store, opened.

Integrity Analysis

Aside from the altered storefront and windows, this building appears much as it did in the early twentieth century.

Sources

N/A.

107-109 South Lane. Ca. 1920s.

Contributing

Description

This double store is a two-story Commercial Brick building with a front constructed of dark red brick. The upper wall has raised brick piers in the center and either end transitioning into a raised brick frieze. Each half of the building has two sets of paired double-hung one-over-one aluminum windows. A soldier course of bricks runs across the window lintels of each bay and there are vented openings at the top of the wall. The two mirror-image storefronts have entries at the outer ends of the façade with glass and wood display windows to each side and a prism glass transom. A second floor entry door is located at the south end of the front.

The north elevation is not visible due to the adjoining building. The south elevation is covered in metal standing-seam siding. The east elevation is faced in brown vitrified clay tile. It has paired double-hung one-over-one windows at each end; in between on the first floor are two entry doors. The second floor has a single double-hung one-over-one window and an entry door. A wood landing and stair lead from this door to the ground.

The interior first floor has stamped sheet metal ceilings and older wood-paneled walls.

History

The Blissfield Main Street Project survey suggests this double building was constructed in 1893, but the Sanborn map for that year shows a one-story frame agricultural implements store in this location. A two-story building was present here in 1899, but subsequent maps in 1907, 1912, and 1919 show a one-story building, with three stores, on the site; early 1900s photographs also show this one-story building. The 1929 Sanborn map, however, shows a two-story building here. Given the Sanborn map and photographic evidence, as well as the building's style, it is likely that it was constructed during the 1920s. The Blissfield Post Office was housed in the north half from the mid 1920s until it moved farther south on Lane Street in 1938. Lehman's Tire Company and a Western Auto store were also located in the north half. The south half housed a number of women's clothing stores in the 1930s, 40s, and later, including Scot McComb's, Ruth Ann's Shop, and Karen Frost fabric shop. The upper floor had a meeting room used by the Masons and Eastern Star, and also housed a pool shop called Heis' and later Teen Town.

Integrity Analysis

The building appears to retain its 1920s appearance, aside from window replacements.

Sources

N/A.

115-117 South Lane. Lenardson's Department Store, ca. 1899.

Contributing

Description

Lenardson's Department Store is a very deep two-story red brick double-width Late Victorian building. The second floor façade is outlined with brick piers carrying a brick frieze with brick corbelling. A tripartite glass and aluminum window is centered on the second floor with a wood transom and non-original metal drip cap. To either side is a double-hung, one-over-one aluminum window with a pedimented metal hood. The building is capped by a metal cornice ornamented with swags and dentils with flowers. The cornice and window caps are products of the Geo. L. Mesker Co. Architectural Iron Works of Evansville, Indiana (see below). The entire storefront is recessed several feet behind brick end walls and supported by iron columns with Corinthian capitals. There are two recessed entries with wood and glass display windows with copper or bronze trim and wood panels. A double second-floor entry is located on the south end. The storefront is capped with a cornice and rollout fabric canopy.

The north (side) elevation is brick; its east end has four arched window openings on each floor; the bottom openings are infilled, as are two on the second floor; the other two have double-hung replacement aluminum windows. The east elevation is brick. It has an arched double-entry door at the center of the elevation, two arched brick window openings with replacement double-hung aluminum windows to either side, and a small arched window opening at the north end. The second floor has a center arched double-hung aluminum window and two arched door openings leading onto a modern second floor wood balcony; this balcony wraps around to the south elevation. The south elevation is not visible due to the adjoining building except for a small brick section at the east end at the second floor; this section has two arched window openings with replacement windows and an entry door.

The interior retains stamped sheet metal ceilings but is otherwise remodeled.

History

This location was the site of a livery stable in the mid 1890s. The present building is depicted as under construction on the 1899 Sanborn map; it was constructed for C. H. Holt as an agricultural implements store. By 1907, the Lenardson Brothers had opened their department store in this location. In the mid 1910s they shifted focus to a variety store of the five and dime type. There was a dance hall in the second floor for many years. C. E. Lenardson sold his building to the Masons in 1927. Lenardson continued to operate his variety store on the first floor under a term lease, while the Masons remodeled the second floor for their lodge hall (although the 1929 Sanborn map continued to designate the second floor as a dance hall; the change in use may not have been recorded or the remodeling may have been delayed). The first floor housed a variety of businesses, many carrying on the five and dime tradition of Lenardson's, including Stavers (beginning in 1933) and Petits. Other businesses in the building include a beauty shop, the Progress Stores, and Green's Antiques; it is currently the Packrat with a dance studio on the second floor.

Integrity Analysis

Aside from replacement windows, this building appears much as it did in historic photographs. The entire ground floor storefront is an outstanding survival of a traditional storefront from the early 1900s; the configuration of a recessed

storefront with the upper story carried on freestanding iron columns is somewhat unusual for the period. The current large second floor window appears to have originally been an oriel window; it is not clear when it was replaced. A ca. 1900 photograph also showed a decorative parapet above the cornice; this was gone by 1940. The cornice and other metal trim is almost certainly the product of the Geo. L. Mesker Co. Architectural Iron Works of Evansville, Indiana. Although a precise match was not found in the 1900 catalogue, many of the elements of the cornice exactly match motifs used by Mesker. This and another Mesker firm, Mesker Brothers of St. Louis, Missouri, were the largest manufacturers of cornices and metal storefront materials in the country from the 1880s to the 1910s. The interior ceiling may also be a Mesker product but again, an exact match was not found.

Sources

"Plans for New Masonic Home Taking Form," *Blissfield Advance*, May 12, 1927, p. 1.

"New Variety Store Will Open Saturday," *Blissfield Advance*, August 24, 1933, p. 1.

Geo. L. Mesker and Company Architectural Ironworks, 1900 catalogue.

121 South Lane. Ca. 1900.

Contributing

Description

This Late Victorian Commercial building has two stories and is constructed of red brick. The second floor is outlined with brick piers and has five brick segmental arched window openings with wood double-hung one-over-one windows and aluminum storms. The piers support a brick frieze with brick corbelling. The first floor storefront, remodeled in 1961, is recessed about three feet back from the upper façade between brick end walls and finished with aluminum and glass display windows. Its central double-door front entry is further recessed between slanting display windows. There are low bulkheads of blonde Roman brick. There is a glass and aluminum transom above the storefront, and a freestanding center post clad in aluminum supports an aluminum trim lintel. A glass and aluminum second floor entry door with transom is located on the south end of the storefront.

The north elevation is not visible due to the adjoining building. The south elevation is brick with a brick chimney midway down the elevation. There are two double-hung windows with brick arches on the second floor and a second floor entry door with iron fire escape as well.

The second floor of the original building's east wall has four arched window openings with double-hung windows. A one-story rusticated concrete block addition extends to the east and south of the original building. The roof parapet steps back from the west end; there are two double-hung windows on the south elevation of the addition, and two garage doors on the east elevation.

The interior has been remodeled.

History

There was a residential dwelling on a portion of this site until the early 1900s. By 1907 the Sanborn map shows a two-story harness and agricultural implements store, with an auto sales room included in the building in the 1919 Sanborn map. The addition was in place by the date of the 1929 Sanborn map – it was likely related to the auto sales business. In the mid twentieth century, Vern Hazzard's Hardware store was located here; he installed the new storefront currently on the building in 1961. In 1969 Loar's Appliance moved from 108 East Adrian to this building, where it had been founded in 1945. Loar's has remained in the building, first under founder Thornton Loar and then his son Allan, until the present day.

Integrity Analysis

This building is relatively intact. The storefront replacement dates from 1961, and the addition was present as early as 1929.

Sources

N/A.

127-129 South Lane. Ca. early 1900s

Non-contributing (built within the period of significance but subsequent alterations have sufficiently impacted integrity to render it non-contributing)

Description

This one-story building is constructed of brick and faced with EIFS on the principal (west) façade facing South Lane Street. It has a tall recessed center entry with a modern glass and steel door; the entry is flanked by two glass and aluminum windows. A thin stringcourse in EIFS divides the storefront from the frieze. The current store's signage is located in the frieze. The south elevation is not visible due to the adjoining building. The north elevation is brick with a brick chimney. There is one square opening on this elevation, infilled with a vent inset. The east elevation is brick with an entry door and a brick arched window with a replacement double-hung window. An EIFS covered one-story addition is located off part of the east elevation.

The interior is remodeled.

History

In the late 1800s, this area of South Lane was still residential, with two dwellings set back on the block. By 1899, commercial development had crept south on Lane Street, with a small, one-story wood framed doctor's office in this lot. In the early 1900s, a one-story bakery was constructed here. A one-story addition had been constructed off the back by 1912. It remained a bakery throughout much of its history; an early 1900s photograph shows a sign for Angell's Bakery and Confectionary over the door (the Maccabees were noted in the early 1900s as having rooms above Angell's Bakery). Later, it was the Just Rite Bakery; the Blissfield Main Street survey noted that in the 1940s and 50s this had a "jukebox and crank telephone which made it a popular hangout for high school kids at lunchtime." It was later Sue's Pizza and Stop & Rock, a 50s style diner. It is currently Bailey's Chiropractic.

Integrity Analysis

Early 1900s photographs show a one-story Commercial Brick building with a corbelled cornice, recessed center entry, and glass display windows with multi-paned glass transoms. This appearance continued into the 1930s as seen in historic photographs. While the general configuration of the façade remains in place (including the traditional recessed center entry with flanking display windows), the current EIFS covering obscures the historic exterior materials and presents a blank, featureless façade that is not in keeping with the character-defining features of the historic district.

Sources

N/A.

131 South Lane. Ca. 1900

Non-contributing (built within the period of significance but no historic exterior features are now evident)

Description

This building is two stories high. It has a brick storefront at the first floor with a center entry, two fixed pane windows flanking the door, and colonial trim around the openings. The upper floor is faced with vinyl siding outlined with vinyl trim. The two windows are double-hung one-over-one aluminum units. The south elevation is not visible due to the adjoining building. The north elevation is partially visible on the second floor; it is covered in vinyl siding. The second floor of the east elevation is covered in vinyl siding; it has one double-hung one-over-one aluminum window and a steel entry door. There is a one-story addition to the east; it is sided with vertical wood siding but a small area of rusticated concrete block is visible at the north end. There is one entry door on the east elevation.

The interior has been remodeled.

History

The 1899 Sanborn map shows a two-story building here with the notation "to be mill'y." There was a harness shop here through the mid 1910s. The offices of the Blissfield *Advance* then moved in, and stayed here until 1971, when they moved to the current location on Newspaper Street. Bailey's Drugs at 133 next door bought the space and expanded into it. It is currently the Royal Expressions Flower and Gift Shop.

Integrity Analysis

An early 1900s photograph show this building with a stone or rusticated concrete block exterior, an oriel window on the second floor, and a glass and wood storefront with a recessed side entry. A 1948 photograph shows a similar façade with a bracketed cornice; the storefront was altered to a center entry, and the Blissfield *Advance* sign is visible in the window. After Bailey's Drugs expanded into the space (1971), they remodeled the exterior with a shingled upper front and a brick storefront with two sixteen-paned windows and a vertical board siding frieze above. In 2010, this building was severely damaged by a fire in the adjoining 133 South Lane Street and was substantially rebuilt. The new façade does not reflect the building's appearance during the period of significance.

Sources

"Fire Erupts in Downtown Blissfield," *Blissfield Advance*, February 24, 2010, p.1.

133 South Lane. Bailey's Drug Store, ca. early 1900s.

Non-contributing (built within the period of significance but subsequent alterations have sufficiently impacted integrity to render it non-contributing)

Description

This two-story building is constructed of brick. The upper floor has two segmental arched windows with aluminum double-hung windows and a plain metal cornice. The storefront is recessed behind the plane of the second floor façade which is carried on freestanding round steel columns. It has a center recessed entry with glass and aluminum windows surrounded by wood panels. The south elevation is not visible due to the adjoining building. The north elevation, partially visible, is brick. The east elevation is brick on the lower floor and vinyl horizontal siding on the upper floor. There is a brick arched center entry with an aluminum and glass door, sidelights, and transom. An arched window opening to the south is infilled with brick, while another to the north has a small rectangular window with the rest infilled. On the second floor are two one-over-one aluminum windows and a steel entry door with a metal landing and fire escape.

History

This building was constructed in the early 1900s as a drug store with a Fraternal Order of Eagles hall on the second floor. It was originally S. A. Johnson's and then Sim and Wilson's Rexall drug store; they sold it in 1922 to F. D. Bailey. Bailey's Drug Store became a downtown institution, remaining in this space until 1990. Later, Mim's Kitchen occupied the space; it is now Cakes and Shakes, a soda fountain.

Integrity Analysis

Early 1900s photographs show this as a brick building with two second-floor windows, a large cornice with several rows of brick corbelling, and a traditional center-entry storefront; this remained in place into the mid twentieth century. In August of 1948, a fire did over \$45,000 in damage, destroying the basement and first floor and causing water and smoke damage to the second floor (this followed by two weeks another devastating fire across the street). A circa 1976 photograph shows the center-entry storefront configuration still in place, but with the original materials replaced with aluminum and the transom windows covered with a metal frieze sign. By that time the building's cornice had been lowered and the upper floor covered with vertical wood siding. In 2010, another fire broke out, severely damaging the building. It was substantially rebuilt after that, including the installation of a new facade. Although the main façade was reconstructed in a historic style, it does not match the proportions or details of the original façade, particularly the upper floor, frieze, and cornice.

Sources

"Bailey's Drug Guttled by Fire," *Blissfield Advance*, August 19, 1948, p. 1.

"Fire Erupts in Downtown Blissfield," *Blissfield Advance*, February 24, 2010, p.1.

135 South Lane. Seeger's Clothing and Shoes, 1907.

Contributing

Description

This is a two-story Commercial Brick building constructed of tan brick. The upper floor has three double-hung, nine-over-one replacement windows. The frieze is decorated with sunken panels in the brickwork. The storefront is recessed behind the plane of the second floor façade which is carried on freestanding round steel columns. The recessed center entry is

glass and wood with wood columns, wood paneling, and a prism glass transom. A steel entry door with glass transom above is on the south end of the storefront.

The north and south elevations are not visible due to adjoining buildings. The rear (east) elevation is brick. The first floor has a brick arched center entry with double doors and transom, and two double-hung nine-over-one windows. The second floor also has two double-hung nine-over-nine windows, and a glass and steel entry door, but with no stairway or balcony leading to it.

The interior retains a stamped sheet metal ceiling.

History

Carl F. Seeger opened a clothing store in Blissfield in 1902. He constructed this building for his store in 1907. The Seeger family briefly lost the store during the Depression, but were able to regain it and continue the business until Christmas of 1992, making it one of Blissfield's longest-running businesses. It is now Slusher Flooring.

Integrity Analysis

On the exterior, the building is nearly unchanged from its original construction, with the exception of the second floor windows. One Blissfield history notes the interior was remodeled in 1975, although it does still retain its stamped sheet metal ceiling.

Sources

Paul Heidbreder, "Seegers say so long to customers after 90 years of sales, service," *Blissfield Advance*, December 29, 1992.

137 South Lane. Kerbawy Dry Goods, ca. 1908.

Contributing

Description

This is a two-story Commercial Brick building constructed of painted brick. The upper floor has three double-hung, nine-over-one replacement windows. The frieze is decorated with sunken panels in the brickwork. The storefront is recessed several feet back from the brick upper façade, supported by a round steel column at each end. The recessed center entry is glass and aluminum with vertical wood paneling, and a wood paneled transom.

The north elevation is not visible due to the adjoining building. The south elevation is brick. It has a glass and aluminum display window at the west end, a square window opening, and an entry door and double-hung window at the east end. The second floor has one paired and five single windows; all are double hung, nine-over-nine units. The rear (east) elevation is brick. The first floor has a brick arched center entry that has been infilled, and another single infilled door opening. The second floor has one double-hung aluminum window and a steel entry door with a wood landing and stair covered with a corrugated metal roof.

The interior has dropped ceilings but some areas of stamped sheet metal are still visible above the window display areas.

History

This building was constructed around 1907-8 along with the building next door; the owner of this building was the Kerbawy family, Lebanese immigrants who were active members of the Blissfield community for decades. George Kerbawy ran the business here for many decades. The building then went through periods of vacancy; for a short time it served as the headquarters of the Blissfield Sesquicentennial in 1974. It is now occupied by D&P Communications.

Integrity Analysis

Aside from changes to the storefront, this building is relatively intact. The display window on the south elevation is apparent in 1950s-era photographs. The original storefront looked much like the Seeger Clothing Store next door.

Sources

N/A.

201 South Lane. Doan House, 1904.

Contributing

Description

This two-and-a-half story Queen Anne style residence is a hipped roof structure with gables facing the streets to the north and west and a wraparound porch. It is sided with wood clapboard, sits on a rusticated concrete block foundation, and has an asphalt shingled roof. The gables are sided with fishscale shingles. The windows are chiefly double-hung, one-over-one units; some are wood and some are vinyl. The porch wraps around the west and north elevations and has a rusticated concrete block foundation and balustrade, Doric columns, and an asphalt shingled roof.

History

This house was constructed in 1904 for the Doan family; they occupied it until 1971, first under the original owners, William and Nellie, then under their son Harry Clifford Doan and his wife Lynn. The house was nearly demolished in the 1970s by the Jipson Carter State Bank for parking, but public outcry made the bank change its plans. The house was briefly used as an antique shop, but otherwise has remained residential.

Integrity Analysis

The house appears to be in good condition. Its footprint has remained unchanged according to Sanborn Maps; a detached garage at the east end of the house is now gone.

Sources

"Doan House," Blissfield Historical Home Tour, 1994.

203 South Lane. Lippens Cleaners, 1959.

Contributing

Description

This one-story building is constructed of brick. The main façade facing South Lane (west elevation) is unadorned. It has a glass and aluminum storefront consisting of an entry door at the north end with four windows to its south, leaving the southern part of the façade windowless. The north and south elevations are concrete block with raised concrete block piers. The rear (east elevation) is concrete block with two steel doors, one double and one single.

History

This lot was the site of a residential dwelling into the 1950s. In 1959, Lippens Cleaners demolished the house and built this one-story building for their business. It remained in that use until the 2010s, when the present small engine service moved in.

Integrity Analysis

The building does not appear to have been changed since its original construction.

Sources

N/A.

South Lane Street

West Side:

106 South Lane. Ca. 1890s.

Contributing

Description

This is a two-story building constructed of painted brick. The upper floor has three bays surrounded by raised brick piers; the piers transition to quarter-round corners and corbelled brickwork that supports a plain frieze. The center bay is blank brick. The two side bays have round-arch window openings with highly ornamented window hoods with cut-out quadrants in the upper corners and a flat-top cornice cap in the center; the windows have been cut down to smaller one-over-one replacement units with the rest of the opening infilled with brick. A stringcourse molding extends from the storefront at 104 South Lane to the north but there is no projecting cornice. The storefront is glass and aluminum with a recessed side entry and angled windows; the first floor piers and transom panel are covered with metal vertical siding.

The north and south elevations are not visible due to adjoining buildings. The west elevation is parged brick. There is an entry door at the first floor and another entry door and a small double-hung window on the upper floor. A metal balcony with wood stairs is attached to this elevation.

The interior has been remodeled with dropped ceilings and drywall. An opening has been cut into 101 West Adrian/104 South Main to the north.

History

The 1893 Sanborn map shows a two-story retail store selling jewelry, boots, and shoes. By 1899, it appears in the Sanborn map as a millinery shop. In the 1900s and 1910s it was a fruit store. For a number of years the Federal Land Bank was in the building, then in 1972 it was purchased by Dan Hacker for his jewelry business. It is currently occupied by Vine House Gardens.

Integrity Analysis

This building has suffered some impacts to its integrity; early 1900s photographs show the original full height windows and traditional center-entry storefront, and the bracketed cornice on 104 South Lane extended to this building. However, it does retain sufficient integrity through its brick walls and decorative window hoods to be deemed contributing.

Sources

N/A.

108-110 South Lane. Lamley Opera House, 1894.

Contributing

Description

The Lamley Opera House is a two-story Late Victorian Commercial brick building. The upper façade is divided into three unequal bays. The center bay is narrower than the flanking bays and has two large brick piers transitioning into a raised brick frieze with a monumental brick arch atop the second story window. Within the bay is a double-hung, one-over-one replacement window; above that is a transom window with the original half-round, divided light window. Below the window is a stone sill and a row of projecting header course bricks. The two flanking bays each have three tall and narrow windows separated by brick piers with sandstone bases and capitals. Above each window is a round-arch transom set beneath a brick arch. The windows are replacement double-hung one-over-one units and the transoms have been infilled. Beneath each set of windows is a sandstone sill course, a row of projecting header course bricks, and a set of raised brick piers. The end bays are flanked with raised brick piers. The double storefronts each have recessed center entries with glass and aluminum windows to each side, a prism glass transom, and rolling fabric awning. At the center of the façade is a double entry door with eight-paneled wood doors and a multi-paned glass transom; the brick piers flanking the door have rusticated stone trim blocks. The entire storefront is capped by a projecting cornice with foliated end blocks.

The north and south elevations are brick with exposed iron tie ends. The west elevation is brick with a full height concrete block addition with stepped footprint. It has two sets of doubled entry doors.

Both sides of the interior have stamped sheet metal ceilings. The second floor is currently vacant and has suffered some water damage in the past. The opera house space was not rebuilt after the 1902 fire, but remnants of the Masonic temple use remain, including a stage on the west side and a raised platform at the east side. Later finishes, including carpet and a dropped ceiling, have been installed.

History

Nearly every downtown in late nineteenth-century Michigan needed an opera house, and Blissfield was no exception. David Lamley, who had run a saloon on West Adrian since the 1870s, decided to build the showplace Lamley Opera House in 1894 on this site, which had formerly held a residential dwelling. The two-story building reportedly had central heating and a theater on the second floor that could accommodate 500 people. The architects (not named) were from Toledo, and the builder was Henry Lapoint. The theater opened in October of 1894, and the space was also used for a time by the local schools for graduation ceremonies. On the first floor was Brown's dry goods store and boots and shoes store. Lenardson Brothers also ran their store here during the early 1890s. In 1902, a fire gutted the building, leaving only the exterior walls standing; the interior was rebuilt, but not the opera house. By the early 1900s, the second floor was being used as a Masonic Hall after the Mason's original lodge on the west side of Blissfield burned down. Wesley's Department Store was in the first floor retail space. The Masonic Temple remained in the building until they purchased the Lenardson Block at 115-117 South Lane in 1927 and remodeled the upper story for a lodge. In the mid twentieth century, Lipps Market was an anchor in this space, expanding the business in 1952. It lasted until 1977. The current occupants are a coney island restaurant and a bar and grill.

Integrity Analysis

Despite the 1902 fire, the building retains quite good integrity. Early 1900s photographs show a taller cornice and stone trim around the arches that are now gone. The windows have been altered, but the storefront retains much of its historic configuration and appearance.

Sources

"Short Locals," *Blissfield Advance*, February 23, 1894, p. 3.

"Short Locals," *Blissfield Advance*, March 30, 1894, p. 3.

"Short Locals," *Blissfield Advance*, April 6, 1894, p. 3.

"Lamley's Opera House Block Destroyed by Fire," *Blissfield Advance*, April 3, 1902, p. 1.

112 South Lane. Phoenix Building, 1890s.

Contributing

Description

The Phoenix Building is a two-story Late Victorian Commercial building. The east, north and south elevations are faced in stamped sheet metal with decorative patterns that mimic the look of brick and stone. The second floor has a brick-like wall plane with stone-like piers at the wall ends. The replacement double-hung one-over-one windows have metal window hoods. The building is topped with a projecting metal cornice with dentil molding. A shingled pent-roof canopy extends over the storefront, with a central portion running up to cover the center window on the second floor. The storefront has a recessed glass and aluminum center entry door flanked by wood and glass windows. A working barber pole is affixed to the south end of the storefront.

The north and south elevations are also covered with stamped sheet metal, as is the upper floor of the west elevation. There are two double-hung one-over-one windows on the second floor. Two one-story additions extend out to the west; one is faced with stamped sheet metal, the other has vinyl siding. The west addition has a window on the west elevation and two on the north elevation.

The interior has been remodeled with dropped ceilings and drywall.

History

This building is present on the 1893 Sanborn Map, and was a meat and grocery store from its earliest years. The post office was located here in 1919, until it moved across the street and then later farther south on Lane Street. The A&P

Grocery store was housed here from the 1920s until the 1970s, the last of its kind in Michigan. The building is currently a barber shop.

Integrity Analysis

Like its neighbor at 117-117 South Lane, the Phoenix Building is notable for being clad in a Geo. L. Mesker facade (see discussion of the Mesker companies under the entry for 115-117 South Lane). Although no exact model match was found in the available catalogs, many of the motifs seen in the Phoenix Building are visible in the Mesker catalogs of the 1890s and early 1900s. In the early 1900s, the building had a projecting parapet with the name "Phoenix" displayed in it and had a traditional center-entry storefront and windows. During its tenure, the A&P store clad the storefront in aluminum panels and cut down the second floor windows, but the Phoenix sign was still in place. It is unclear when that disappeared, or when the pent-roof canopy was installed. The storefront was last remodeled in 2008.

Sources

N/A.

114-116 South Lane. Ca. late 1800s

Contributing

Description

This Late Victorian Commercial building is constructed of red brick and stretches across three storefronts. The upper façade is brick with six segmental arched window openings; the arched heads are constructed of yellow brick and the windows are replacement double-hung one-over-one units with stone sills; the northern two windows have been cut down and the remainder of the openings infilled with brick. The broad frieze displays upper and lower rows of sunken panels separated by several courses of sawtooth brickwork; the red brick panels are outlined by yellow brick. The storefront is currently divided between two retail stores. The northern section has a side entry on the south end with display windows to the side; the rest of the storefront is covered with wood plank panels; there is a projecting sign in the transom. The remainder of the storefront has two glass and aluminum entry doors side by side with glass and aluminum display windows to either side. The transom is covered with wood paneling with some decorative details, and a fabric awning.

The north and south elevations are brick; there are a few infilled arched window openings on the second floor level and some paint remnants. The west elevation is painted brick; the north end second floor has two rectangular double-hung windows and an aluminum and glass entry door leading to a roof deck, and the south end has four segmental arch windows with double-hung aluminum sash. Both the north and south end have one-story brick additions of different dates; the north end addition is slightly taller and has a single entry door in the west elevation. The south end addition is wider and has a glass and aluminum center entry with glass and aluminum display windows to either side and a metal roof canopy.

The interiors have been remodeled with dropped ceilings and drywall.

History

The Main Street survey project dates this building to the 1860s, but its style and appearance is more in accordance with similar buildings from the early to mid 1890s in Blissfield (Dolph Building, Seeger's Clothing, etc). It was in place as a three-storefront building in the 1893 Sanborn Map. There was a saloon/restaurant in the north storefront from the 1890s until the 1990s, sometimes accompanied by a billiards parlor in the middle storefront. Other tenants included Hechinger's Bakery (1934-1960s) and Cameron's Market. The north end is currently vacant while the south end houses a sporting goods shop.

Integrity Analysis

Aside from alterations to the storefronts, the building appears much as it did in early 1900s photographs.

Sources

N/A.

120 South Lane. Ca. late 1800s.

Non-contributing (built within the period of significance but no historic exterior features are visible in the front)

Description

This is a two-story brick building. The upper story of the east (main) façade has been covered with painted wood shingles; a plain frieze projects slightly from the wall plane. Under a shingled pent-roof canopy, the storefront is replacement brick with a center door entry with colonial-style trim and paired double-hung six-over-six windows to each side. The south elevation is obscured due to the adjoining building. The north elevation is brick covered with aluminum vertical siding on the lower half. Several arched window and door openings on the second floor have been infilled. The west (rear) elevation has a two-story concrete block addition with a large garage door and entry door on the lower half and two double-hung one-over-one windows with shutters on the upper floor.

History

This building was present in the 1893 Sanborn map and, judging by its original appearance, was constructed in the 1870s or 1880s. It was originally part of a three-storefront building including 122-124 to the south. There was a grocery and meat market here from the 1890s to the 1960s, first under Newcomb's Meats and then as Brownie's Meats. Brownie's closed in 1971; Tagsold Furniture next door then expanded into this space until they closed in 1981. Blissfield Township moved into the building in 1983 and remains the current tenant.

Integrity Analysis

Early photographs show this building as similar to the ones to the south, with round-arched windows with brick hoods, a plain cornice, and a shed-roofed porch with bracketed posts. The exterior was likely altered either by Tagsold Furniture when they acquired the building (1971) or when Blissfield Township occupied the building (1983). The exterior no longer reflects the building's appearance during the period of significance.

Sources

N/A.

122 South Lane. Ca. late 1800s.

Contributing

Description

This two-story, Late Victorian Commercial building is constructed of brick. The upper façade has four replacement double-hung windows with segmental arch hoods and stone sills. The frieze has decorative raised brickwork with dentil moldings. The storefront has a double center entry with glass and aluminum display windows to either side and a fabric awning across the transom.

The north elevation and lower half of the south elevation are not visible due to the adjoining buildings. The upper half of the south elevation is covered with wood shingles. At the rear (west) elevation, there is a concrete block addition on the north half, with double-hung one-over-one windows with shutters on the first and second floors and a steel entry door. The south half is covered with wood shingles and has a shed roofed porch enclosure on the first floor. There is a double-hung window in the second floor and a double entry door on the first floor.

The interior is remodeled with dropped ceilings and drywall.

History

This building was present in the 1893 Sanborn map and, judging by its original appearance, was constructed in the 1870s or 1880s. It was originally part of a three-storefront building including 120 to the north. It was a furniture store and undertaking business for much of its history, first under George Palmer, and then Otto Tagsold and his descendents from 1913 on. In 1971 Tagsold's expanded into 120 to the north. That business closed in 1981; Walper Furniture occupied it for an additional two years. It is currently a gift shop.

Integrity Analysis

The building looks much as it did in the early 1900s, aside from the remodeled storefront. Like 120 South Lane next door, this had an applied façade during the 1980s and 1990s; that was removed and the original building restored in the early 2010s.

Sources
N/A.

130 South Lane. Jipson-Carter State Bank, 1968.

Non-contributing

Description

This one-story Colonial Revival building is constructed of brick and occupies the northwest corner of South Lane and West Jefferson streets. The glass and aluminum double entry doors on the east elevation have a stone surround with carved cartouches containing the Michigan state seal. The sliding aluminum windows on the east and south elevations have colonial-style wood shutters; a glass block window and two fixed pane windows are also located on the south elevation. The east and south elevations are capped by a stucco frieze and cornice; the area over the entry door is raised and has "Village of Blissfield" in attached letters. The north elevation is not visible due to the adjoining building. The west elevation is brick and is recessed under a roof extension. It has double glass and aluminum entry doors with sidelights and a display window to the south. A brick and stucco addition has been constructed at the southwest corner of the building to house the village police department; it has three garage doors each on the north and south elevations.

The interior has recently been remodeled for the Village offices.

History

Prior to 1967, this corner had three separate buildings, including the Jipson-Carter State Bank (at the corner, its second location), the Delzeith Pharmacy, and the Woods Clothing Store. Jipson-Carter State Bank demolished those to build its new headquarters here in 1968. It later became Key Bank, and has recently been remodeled to serve as the new offices for the Village of Blissfield.

Integrity Analysis

The building has not changed significantly since its construction in 1968, which is outside the period of significance. The recent remodel for the village offices has seen the installation of the new entry and cornice, as well as the addition for police vehicles at the rear.

Sources
N/A.

202 South Lane. Ca. early 1900s.

Contributing

Description

This is a two-story building currently covered in stucco. The upper floor has two arched window openings with double-hung one-over-one windows; the stucco steps out at the top, suggesting the presence of a cornice below. The storefront has a center entry and glass and aluminum windows with a stucco surround and transom panel, and a rolling fabric awning.

The south elevation is not visible due to the adjoining building. The north elevation is also covered in stucco. There is a glass and aluminum display window at the east end of the north elevation, and two double-hung arched windows in the second floor. There is a one story addition along the north elevation with a paired window opening, a single entry door, and another window set within an infilled garage door. The rear (west elevation) is also covered with stucco. The one-story addition wraps around to the west side and has a single entry door and a wood stair leading up to a wood roof deck.

The interior is remodeled.

History

This building was present in the early 1900s according to Sanborn Maps. A grocery was housed here from at least 1893; the grocery was run by the Sprunk family from 1932 to 1986. It later became Jenson's Food Store and then a Christian book store; it is currently a physical therapy and yoga business.

Integrity Analysis

This corner was not often photographed. The earliest found photograph, ca. 1930s or 1940s, shows this and the building next door (204) as a two-story brick double-block with segmental-arched brick window hoods and a brick-accented frieze with panels similar to those seen at 135-137 South Lane and 114-116 South Lane. In 1947, these two buildings and the adjoining 206 were joined by a remodeled storefront that expanded across all four buildings. At 202 and 204, the traditional center entry configuration remained in place, but with updated glass and aluminum materials. At around the same time, both 202 and 204 were faced with stucco, as seen in a ca. 1950s image. This stucco coating remains on 202 South Lane, as does the 1940s storefront.

Sources
N/A.

204 South Lane. Ca. early 1900s.

Non-contributing (built within the period of significance but subsequent alterations have sufficiently impacted integrity to render it non-contributing)

Description

This is a two-story building currently covered in EIFS. The upper floor has two arched window openings with double-hung one-over-one windows. Window keystones, corner quoining, and a projecting cornice are rendered in EIFS. The storefront has a center entry and glass and aluminum windows with brick accents walls and an EIFS surround and transom panel with a projecting EIFS cornice. There is a fluted column with Ionic capital in the storefront recess.

The north elevation is not visible due to the adjoining building. The south elevation is brick with one arched double-hung window. The rear (west elevation) is covered with vinyl siding and has an entry door and a small window opening.

The interior is remodeled.

History

This building was present in the early 1900s according to Sanborn Maps. It was Bussing's Meat Market for many years, and had a Grange Hall in the upper floor in the early 1900s. It is currently a hair salon.

Integrity Analysis

This corner was not often photographed. The earliest found photograph, ca. 1930s or 1940s, shows this and the building next door (202) as a two-story brick double-block with segmental-arched brick window hoods and a brick-accented frieze with panels similar to those seen at 135-137 South Lane and 114-116 South Lane. In 1947, these two buildings and the adjoining 206 were joined by a remodeled storefront that expanded across all four buildings. At 202 and 204, the traditional center entry configuration remained in place, but with updated glass and aluminum materials. At around the same time, both 202 and 204 were faced with stucco, as seen in a ca. 1950s image. On 204 South Lane, the stucco exterior was replaced with or covered over with the present EIFS sometime after the 1980s, and the storefront was similarly reconfigured. The EIFS, particularly the faux quoining, covers the historic exterior materials and does not represent the historic configuration or reflect the historic character of the building or the district.

Sources
N/A.

206 South Lane. Sprunk & Liewert Heating and Cooling, 1945.

Contributing

Description

This is a one-story building constructed of concrete block. The east elevation is faced with vinyl siding below and vertical metal siding above. The frieze above the storefront is outlined with metal strips and contains a sign. The storefront has a recessed center entry with glass and aluminum display windows. There is a rolling fabric canopy over the storefront.

The north and south elevations are not visible due to adjoining buildings. The west elevation is painted concrete block. It has a center entry door and two fixed aluminum windows.

History

This building was constructed in 1945 for Sprunk and Liewert Heating and Cooling. In 1979, it was converted to the Bliss-Liewert Senior Center, which remains in the building.

Integrity Analysis

This corner was not often photographed. A ca. 1950s photograph shows this building along with 202 and 204 with the 1947 remodeled storefront that expanded across all three buildings. That was later removed.

Sources

N/A.

208 South Lane. Sprunk and Liewert Hardware, Ca. 1950s.

Contributing

Description

This is a one-story building constructed of concrete block. The east elevation is faced with aluminum siding. The storefront has a recessed double center entry with glass and aluminum display windows. There is a shingled pent-roof canopy over the storefront.

The north elevation is not visible due to the adjoining building. The south elevation is concrete block with one small fixed-pane window. The west elevation is painted concrete block with two entry doors.

History

This building was constructed in the 1950s for Sprunk and Liewert, who opened a hardware store next to their heating and cooling business at 206 South Lane. It was later an insurance and accounting office and currently serves as a private office for the owner.

Integrity Analysis

This building does not appear to have changed significantly since its original construction.

Sources

N/A.

West Jefferson Street

South Side:

105 West Jefferson. Ca. 1890s.

Contributing

Description

This is a two-story, narrow-fronted and deep gabled-ell late Victorian dwelling. It has a stone foundation, vinyl siding, and a cross-gabled asphalt shingle roof. The windows are simple rectangular openings with double-hung vinyl replacement sash. There is a bay window on the east side of the house and a covered concrete porch with metal railings and posts at the northeast corner. A wood fire escape is located off the back (south) elevation.

History

This residence was present in its current form from the early 1900s, when Sanborn maps first picked up this side of the street. It appears to have remained a residence for much of its history, but is now the home of Vachette Business Services.

Integrity Analysis

Although the building has vinyl siding and replacement windows, it retains the basic appearance of a late nineteenth/early twentieth century village residence.

Sources

N/A.

107 West Jefferson. Riley Law Office, 1935.

Contributing

Description

The Riley Law Office is a one-story Commercial Brick structure with a flat roof. The north elevation is red brick with decorative brickwork at the corner piers and in the frieze panel. The entry door at the east side is outlined by rock-face quoining and a flat arch cap with keystone. The triple front windows are double-hung six-over-one sash and appear to be original. There is a row of soldier course bricks over the windows and at the watertable. The front's frieze displays a row of limestone slab panels. The south, east, and west elevations are similar, with brick walls, paired double-hung six-over-one wood windows, and soldier course bricks above the windows and at the water table.

History

Sanborn maps show a small office on this site in 1919; in the 1934 Blissfield Directory it was the office of Dr. W. T. Clemes. Frank Riley tore down that building and constructed the present one in the spring and summer of 1935. The Riley and Riley Law Firm, descendants of the founder, still have offices in this building.

Integrity Analysis

The building is remarkably intact and appears to retain all its historic character.

Sources

"Construction of New Law Office Underway," *Blissfield Advance*, May 23, 1935, p. 2.

"Moves into New Offices," *Blissfield Advance*, July 11, 1935, p. 2.

Newspaper Street

East Side:

121 Newspaper Street. Meyer's and Reynold's Appliance, 1937.

Contributing

Description

This is a nearly square, one-story building constructed of concrete block with a flat roof that slopes gently down toward the rear. The west front is painted blue. It has entry doors at either end of three sets of low fixed glass and aluminum windows. At the south end of this elevation is a wood and glass paneled door with a sidelight, wood trim, and wood clapboard surround. The elevation is capped with a Mansard-style asphalt shingle roof. The north and south elevations are also painted concrete block. The south elevation has several infilled window openings. The north elevation has four window openings, two of which are infilled and the other two have double hung windows with aluminum storms. There is also an entry door at the east end. The east elevation was not visible due to tall shrubs and the neighbor's privacy fence.

History

The Meyers and Reynolds firm had opened a poultry, cream, and egg business in 1930, at the height of the Depression. It rapidly expanded, moving into new quarters in 1935 and adding refrigerators to their business line. In 1937, they built this building to house what was now a full line of appliances. The *Blissfield Advance* moved their offices here in 1971 and have remained ever since.

Integrity Analysis

No historic photographs have been found of this building, but its present materials and appearance are consistent with its period of construction. Newspaper articles at the time of its construction noted that it was a "cement block" building with separate partitioned areas for the poultry, eggs and feed on one side and the cream business on the other.

Sources

"Work is Started on New Building For Meyers and Reynolds," *Blissfield Advance*, October 14, 1937, p. 1.

"Meyers and Reynolds Will Hold Grand Opening Saturday," *Blissfield Advance*, December 2, 1937, p. 1.

Lindquist, *Spanning the Years*, 108-109.

"Weekly Acquires New Home in its 98th Year," *Blissfield Advance*, March 17, 1971.

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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- ARCHITECTURE
- COMMERCE
- ENGINEERING
- ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION
- RELIGION
- TRANSPORTATION

Period of Significance

1875-1960

Significant Dates

1875

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

James Saunders, Architect and Builder

Mills, Rhines, Bellman, and Nordhoff (Toledo, OH)

Architects

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 grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance begins in 1875, representing the earliest remaining resources that were erected following the 1875 fire. The period of significance ends in 1960. The downtown had reached its zenith in the 1950s, and the construction of the Coach Light Plaza Shopping Center in 1960 was a marker of the subsequent gradual decline of the traditional downtown and its historic buildings. While a number of key businesses remained in place after that date, commercially the district had its greatest significance before that date, and architecturally, no significant buildings were constructed after that date.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Criteria Consideration A applies to the Methodist Episcopal church at 201 West Adrian. For a full discussion, see context discussion under Religion, below.

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

The Blissfield Downtown Historic District meets National Register Criterion A for its association with the commercial, business, and social history of the village's historic core since its establishment in the 1820s. The district contains historic resources dating to 1875, with the bulk of its physical development taking place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Collectively, the district's resources housed the bulk of the city's commercial activities during that period, as well as the community's prominent business and professional offices and activities. The village was also a center for Blissfield's social and entertainment activities, including fraternal organizations, visual and performing arts, vaudeville and films, and other recreational pursuits. The Blissfield Downtown Historic District also meets National Register Criterion C as a collection of late nineteenth to mid-twentieth-century commercial buildings representing the prevailing styles in commercial architecture during that period, including Italianate, Late Victorian, Arts and Crafts, and Commercial Brick styles. Several buildings represent outstanding and well preserved examples of those styles within the local historic context.

Narrative Statement of Significance (provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance)

Blissfield Historical Overview

At the time of its settlement (1824), Blissfield was still part of Monroe County. Two years later, in 1826, Lenawee County was set off from Monroe, with Blissfield Township comprising the current townships of Blissfield, Riga, Ogden, Fairfield, Deerfield, and Palmyra. The closest village was Petersburg, about ten miles northeast, and it was from here that Hervey Bliss set out to stake a claim on the west bank of the River Raisin in 1824. This would make Blissfield the second settlement in Lenawee County.³ Within a year of Bliss' settlement, the Erie Canal would open, drawing more and more settlers to the state in what later became known as "Michigan Fever" in the 1830s.⁴

In 1826, George Giles also settled in what would become known as Blissfield, on the east bank of the river. While Hervey Bliss had optimistically platted a village on the west bank of the river and named it Blissfield, George Giles platted his own settlement on the east bank, naming it Lyons and setting up a rivalry that would continue into the twentieth century. Although Giles provided a canoe for hauling baggage and maintained a ford across the river, Blissfield and Lyons would develop separately for the next fifty years.

Both Blissfield and Lyons remained small settlements in the 1820s and 1830s, with only a few scattered businesses, including a hotel and a general store, enough to support the residents and surrounding farms as well as some transients. That began to change in the late 1830s, after the Erie and Kalamazoo Railroad put its line through Blissfield and opened a depot on the west side. That strategic location meant that the west side would eclipse the east side in development, at least in the early years, and most of the key businesses and industries, as well as the village hall and post office, would locate there first.

Three of Blissfield's most notable citizens, the brothers Guy, Joel, and David Carpenter, moved to Blissfield in the 1830s. Joel ran a law practice and eventually became a state senator; David would be instrumental in platting and developing West Blissfield, including constructing the first brick building in the village (1868); and Guy was originally an engineer who went into business with his brother David, was elected a state legislator in 1843, and drafted the state's first drainage law, which passed in 1845-46. All three brothers were also leaders of the Blissfield Anti-slavery Society, which had over forty members by 1838, including a number of women. It is also very likely that one, if not all, of the Carpenter brothers were active in the Underground Railroad; in 1894, Ohio's former governor James M. Ashley, who was himself involved in the

³ Tecumseh was the first, Adrian the third. *Illustrated History and Biographical Record of Lenawee County*, 16.

⁴ While typically referring to the fever for buying land, it had a second meaning – Michigan's marshy lands meant that malaria was endemic in the state; Blissfield was likely no exception due to the extensive swamp lands in the southeastern portion of the state.

Underground Railroad, remembered that a neighbor sent an escaped slave to Blissfield Michigan "where lived two brothers Carpenter by name" suggesting that they were conductors.⁵ It is unknown where the slaves were hidden, although the David Carpenter House, now the Hathaway House, is a likely location, or possibly one of Carpenter's businesses in West Blissfield (all of these are outside the district).

Religious organizations were also an early feature of life in Blissfield. The Methodist church was one of the earliest denominations operating in Blissfield, with a circuit rider holding services in the school as early as the late 1820s. The oldest organized church in Blissfield was the Presbyterian church, formed in 1829 and still holding services in their 1849 Greek Revival building at 304 Franklin Street in West Blissfield. In 1849, the Universalist church built a wood-framed structure at the corner of Adrian and Pearl streets, the first church on the east side. The Methodist Episcopal church formally organized several years later, in 1852. When the Universalist church moved out of their building in 1868, the Methodist Episcopal church purchased it and moved in. The congregation periodically enlarged the building, including a chapel, classroom, kitchen and bell tower in 1889. By 1923, the congregation had outgrown the building and elected to replace it with a brick and stone edifice which nonetheless evoked the old building in its form and detailing. This building too has been gradually expanded, including the addition of the "educational wing" (at the south side of the building) in 1958.

In the 1860s and 1870s, landowners began an extensive program of land clearing in the townships around Blissfield, including draining the swamps and cutting down the trees. The resultant boom in agriculture and timbering set off a period of expansion for the village of Blissfield on both sides of the river. Timber-related industries such as a barrel stave company and broom handle factory opened in the village, and farmers in the area brought their cattle to Blissfield to ship on the railroad. Although the river itself had been bridged by at least 1857, the low, swampy ground on either side made travel between the rival settlements difficult until a raised causeway leading to the bridge was built c. 1870. In 1874 an iron bridge, the first in the county, replaced the earlier one. It was during this period that the east side began to eclipse the west side, in part because the east side was able to persuade the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railroad (successor to the Erie and Kalamazoo) to move its depot to the east side. The east side, originally known as Lyons, would gradually become known as East Blissfield and the original Blissfield as West Blissfield. A serious fire in January of 1875 wiped out the fledgling businesses along West Adrian Street on the east side, but the rebuilding of the block in brick would further spur East Blissfield's growth. The village, including both East and West Blissfield, incorporated in 1875.

Into the 1880s and 1890s, Blissfield remained a dual town, supported chiefly by the agricultural economy of the surrounding area. The east and west sides maintained separate schools, and as late as the 1880s the west side was perceived as the more prosperous; the east side of Lane Street was largely undeveloped and the space at the southeast corner of Lane and Adrian, where the Blissfield State Bank later stood, was facetiously called "the Park" but was in reality little more than an empty lot.⁶

With so many wood buildings and factories utilizing wood products, fire was a constant danger. In addition to the before-mentioned fire of January 1875, the Dewey, Lane and Company stave factory (on the north side of Adrian at the corner of Lane) had a serious fire earlier in 1874 and Clinton Hall on West Adrian burned in 1894. Townspeople constantly complained about their lack of firefighting equipment and the time it took Adrian or Toledo to send assistance in the event of a fire; due to a badly timed breakdown of the Blissfield fire engine during the 1894 fire and the prioritization of a freight train over the emergency train from Adrian, the entire block of West Adrian was threatened with destruction again. Only the timely assistance of the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern depot personnel, who had a small hose, restrained the spread of the fire. In 1884, the village established a "fire zone" in the business district, mandating the use of stone, brick or iron in construction with slate, tile or metal roofs, and restricting what could be stored in and around buildings.⁷

Other disasters visited Blissfield during the period; the most spectacular was the collapse of Blissfield's iron bridge on the morning of December 7, 1887. Fortunately, the people then on the bridge were only injured, not killed, and the bridge was rebuilt the following year. With the River Raisin running right through the downtown, floods were inevitable; the worst such flood came on March 7 of 1908, when the river rose more than two and a half feet above its previous high water mark. Most of Adrian Street was under water. Another major flood occurred in May of 1914, and flooding remained an issue as late as 1981.

⁵ Interview with Ex-Gov James M. Ashley of Toledo, Ohio, Latter Part of July 1894. Transcript in the possession of Carol Mull, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

⁶ Irene Kendrick, "Recollections of Early Days," no date (ca. 1930s), in Lenawee County Historical Society Clippings File, Blissfield I.

⁷ Lindquist, *Spanning the Years*, 35.

Municipal improvements happened in a piecemeal fashion, and over many years. Roads were a perpetual issue, especially with the regular appearance of cattle droves in the streets. In 1891, the village purchased some broken stone to improve the roadbed on West Adrian between Pearl and the bridge, but this did little to help. In 1897, the village council paved Lane Street between Adrian and Jefferson with brick, and assisted in paying for sidewalks on the south side of Adrian Street. By the early 1900s, photographs show concrete sidewalks, an impressive line of hitching posts, and electrical lines running down South Lane Street. Adrian Street was paved with brick and cobblestone in 1910. A curious feature is noted in a number of historic images: a bandstand in the middle of the north side of the intersection of Adrian and Lane Streets. This also had a circular trough at the base for watering horses. The exact dates of its construction and removal are unknown, but it was certainly present in the early 1900s.

In 1901, the Toledo and Western Railroad (Interurban) began offering passenger service between Toledo and Adrian. Its bridge over the River Raisin was the third, side by side, leading to Blissfield's designation as the only location in the world with a "triple bridge." The interurban facilitated passenger traffic and special event excursions to Toledo and Adrian, and remained in operation until the mid 1930s.

Blissfield got its first telephone service in 1898, but that was originally a private venture. In 1900, the village opened Blissfield's first power plant on East Adrian; this would be added onto over the years. In the beginning electricity was only available for a few hours in the evening.⁸ A municipal waterworks was established in 1923; prior to that, the only public water supply was a town pump on Lane Street. A municipal filtration plant followed in the early 1930s, and rural electrification proceeded under assistance from New Deal programs in the mid 1930s; these programs also partially funded another expansion of the Blissfield power plant. Another New Deal project was the 1937 post office on the corner of South Lane and Union (outside of the district). Several years later, the Blissfield Library moved into the back of the former Jipson-Carter State Bank Building at 117 West Adrian, joining the village offices; the library would stay there until 1956, while the village offices wouldn't move out until 1989.

The cross town rivalry between East and West Blissfield had not disappeared in the early twentieth century, but by that point the east side had clearly won. In 1918, the village post office moved to South Lane Street, on the east side, and in 1923 the east and west side schools finally merged.

Agriculture remained important to the development of Blissfield in the early decades of the twentieth century, with businesses such as the Home Canning Company and the Continental Sugar Company plants opening. However, during the early to middle twentieth century, the economic base slowly transitioned from agriculture support and industry to a more diversified industrial economy, with industries such as the National Bundle Tyer Company, which made machines for tying various bundles, and Richland Furs in the early 1900s and later industries like Blissfield Manufacturing, producing refrigeration equipment, in the post World War II boom. The village benefitted from the post-war boom; many of its traditional businesses thrived during the period and a number of municipal improvements were introduced, including new schools like West Elementary (1954) and the new high school (1957), the Schultz-Holmes Library (1956), a municipal sewage treatment plant (1956), a swimming pool at Ellis Playground (1957), storm sewer separation, and curbs, gutters, and paving on South Lane. At the same time, formerly municipal services were being dropped, including electricity (the village sold the franchise to Consumers Power in 1950), and telephone (the Blissfield Exchange sold out to General Telephone in 1951). A number of downtown businesses put new "modern" storefronts on their buildings, including Vern Hazzard's Hardware store at 121 South Lane, Gilson's Hardware at 109 West Adrian, and the group of buildings at 202-208 South Lane, which were remodeled with gray vitrolite siding and joined rooflines to present a uniform front.

The 1950s would prove to be the zenith of downtown Blissfield's viability as a traditional downtown. The construction of the Coach Light Shopping Plaza west of town marked the beginning of a transition away from traditional bread-and-butter businesses in the downtown, and the subsequent gradual closure of the grocery stores, drug stores, department stores, and meat markets. The downtown's automobile dealers also moved out of the business core in the 1960s in search of larger lots to display their vehicles. While industry continued to grow, it mostly occurred outside the downtown, in the industrial park south of the village and in pockets east and west along US 223. The downtown fought back, installing new mercury vapor lights in 1961 and attempting to expand parking, but the closures continued; in their place, the downtown transitioned to an economy of antique stores, gift shops, craft centers, and other specialty shops. Rather than servicing the local population with basic goods, the downtown began to attract visitors from the bigger cities of southeast Michigan and northern Ohio. In 1974, Blissfield celebrated its sesquicentennial with parades and events, headquartered in the old Kербaw store at 137 South Lane.

⁸ "Blissfield's First 150 Years," published in the *Blissfield Advance*, January 16, 1974, 8.

Despite (or perhaps because of) the transition in the village's downtown business types, the downtown remained viable through the latter years of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, with relatively low vacancy rates. A few buildings were lost to fire, including the old Bliss Theatre in 1986 and the two buildings at 131 and 133 South Lane in 2010 (although those were both rebuilt). Parking lots were added behind the buildings on the west side of South Lane and north of the Adrian/Lane crossroads (Bachmeyer lot) after the approval of a bond issue in 1994, and the presence of an active Downtown Development Authority has ensured that business owners are supported by joint programs and downtown beautification projects. Architecturally, the village has also maintained its largely late nineteenth/early twentieth century character, with the loss of a few buildings and the introduction of some inappropriate facades; but overall it remains a charming example of a traditional Michigan main street.

Commerce

Although Blissfield's first business, the hotel established by George Giles in the 1820s, was on his land on the east side of the river (in what was then Lyons), most of the early commercial development in Blissfield was on the west side of the River Raisin, where Hervey Bliss platted the original Blissfield (later West Blissfield). The 1909 *Memoirs of Lenawee* noted that the first store in Blissfield was a general store on the west side owned by Almond Harrison, who also owned a grist mill in the area.⁹ These earliest businesses in Blissfield catered to the subsistence needs of the village and surrounding farms, and included a saw mill to supply building materials, a grist mill to produce flour, general stores, a blacksmith, and saloons.

In the early to mid 1800s, Blissfield's commerce was generally founded on the agricultural activity in the surrounding townships but the land, while potentially rich, was also covered with forested swamps that made both travel and cultivation difficult. By the mid 1800s, the southeast corner of Michigan was being drained of its swamps through the large-scale construction of ditches, and denuded of its rich cottonwood and other trees. The consequent rise in farming and timber sparked the first boom in Blissfield's economic development. Timber-related businesses included a broom handle factory on the west side and Dewey, Foster and Company's barrel stave factory, located on the north side of Adrian at the corner of Lane (100 block of East Adrian). Blissfield's strategic location and the presence of the Erie and Kalamazoo railroad depot turned the village into a major shipping point for cattle and other livestock from the surrounding farms; older citizens would remember that farmers drove cattle up Lane and Adrian streets well into the early twentieth century and herds of livestock were not an unusual sight on the main commercial streets of the village. As agricultural activity grew, the Blissfield business community began to specialize; where once a general store had sufficed, by the 1860s and 1870s the village supported a hotel, bakeries, stores for clothing, millinery, shoes, jewelry and furniture, two drug stores, a grocery, meat market and butcher shop, doctors' offices, a harness shop, blacksmith and wagon shop, and on the industrial side, a tobacco factory in addition to the saw and grist mills.¹⁰ In 1873, the first (private) bank opened in Blissfield. In 1874, Blissfield acquired its first newspaper, the *Blissfield Advertiser*, which shortly was renamed the *Blissfield Advance*; later in the year it would move into the "new Post Office building" on the west side of the river.¹¹

On the professional side, Blissfield's first doctor was, uncommonly, a woman; George Giles' wife Margaret, who arrived in 1826 with her husband when he laid out the village of Lyons, was the only person with medical experience in the area until the 1840s and would ride around the village and townships tending to patients.¹² Interestingly, Mary Newcomb, the daughter of another early Blissfield physician, Dr. Roland Newcomb, would later be one of the first women to earn a medical degree from the University of Michigan.¹³

By the early 1870s, the west side remained the principal business district in the village. In that decade, Blissfield began a building boom, driven by the rapid rise in agriculture in the area. While the building boom affected both sides of the river, it was during this period that the east side, still identified as the village of Lyons, began to eclipse the west. As late as 1874, the *Blissfield Advance* noted that there were twenty buildings being constructed on the west side of the river.¹⁴ However, several years earlier, the west side lost a crucial resource: the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railroad relocated its depot to the east side; this would eventually be one factor in the rise of the east side as the principal commercial district. Another was the 1875 fire that wiped out the entire block of West Adrian west of Lane Street (north and south); that would prompt the rebuilding of the businesses there in brick. These included some well-known and long-running businesses, including the Dewey House Hotel (later Blissfield Hotel, etc. 102 West Adrian), David Lamley's saloon and restaurant (105

⁹ Bonner, *Memoirs of Lenawee*, 253.

¹⁰ DeLoach, "Blissfield's First 100 Years."

¹¹ "Weekly Acquires New Home in its 98th Year," *Blissfield Advance*, March 17, 1971.

¹² Lindquist, *Spanning the Years*, 4-5.

¹³ "Blissfield's First 150 Years," 4.

¹⁴ *Blissfield Advance*, May 28, 1874.

West Adrian, and Clint Williams' Clinton Hall (109 West Adrian), as well as, several years later, the A. D. Ellis Dry Goods Company (opened in 1878 at 101 West Adrian).

In the latter decades of the nineteenth century, the east side continued to grow as the west side gradually declined in importance as a commercial center. The 1893 Sanborn map, the village's first, shows a number of businesses still in place on the west side, including a hotel, grocery stores, a drug store, a jeweler, and the Masonic Lodge, but there were also a number of vacant storefronts. On the east side, however, the business district was expanding south on Lane Street; both of the village's banks were located there, as well as barbers, millinery shops, a livery stables, hardware store, and a tailor. Long running Blissfield businesses that opened during this period include attorney John F. Riley, who set up business in 1888 and whose descendents still practice law at 107 West Jefferson, Wira Dolph's furniture and undertaking business (105 South Lane, operated 1893 to 1921) and William Rothfuss' general store (103 South Lane, operated 1892 to 1933). Bert Belman also began his barbershop in 1897; he would remain in business for over sixty years, at various locations on South Lane Street.¹⁵ The following year (1898), the Blissfield Telephone Company was organized by local businessman John Rentz; the switchboard would occupy a number of locations over the years, starting above the Lamb Grocery at 120 South Lane, then moving to Gilson's Hardware (109 West Adrian), and then the Jipson-Carter State Bank (117 West Adrian).¹⁶ Despite the national depression of the 1890s, Blissfield's industrial growth remained strong, in part because of the continued expansion of agriculture in the surrounding townships; both the Blissfield Cannery and the Home Canning Company opened in the 1890s to process local crops. On the west side, the Blissfield Robe and Tanning Company, later Richland Furs, was founded in 1899.

Agriculture remained the driving economic factor in Blissfield into the first decades of the twentieth century. By 1903, Blissfield was known as the principal trading point for the southeastern part of Lenawee County, and it was noted that it was probably "the largest shipping point for fat livestock on the line of the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railroad."¹⁷ In 1903, a Continental Sugar Company plant opened in Blissfield to process sugar beets; the farming of sugar beets was labor intensive and would bring a number of immigrant workers to the Blissfield area, both to farm and to work in the plants; these were typically Germans, Belgians, and Russians in the early decades of the twentieth century and Hispanics after the 1920s, but they did not appreciably add to the population as most were seasonal workers rather than permanent residents.¹⁸

A number of new businesses in Blissfield in the early 1900s would become familiar names. One of the longest-running businesses in Blissfield's history, Seeger's Clothing Store, opened in 1902; it moved to the newly constructed 135 South Lane in 1907 and remained in business until 1992. George Kerbawy, a Lebanese (or Syrian) immigrant whose family came to Blissfield in the early 1900s, opened a dry goods store next door at 137 South Lane in 1908; this business would remain in operation, first under George and then his daughter Minnie, until 1967. Another Kerbawy, Moses, opened a newsstand at 105 West Adrian in the early 1900s; it too was passed down to the next generation (in this case Harold "Kie" Kerbawy) and then closed after his passing in 1968. In 1913, Otto Tagsold took over George Palmer's furniture store at 122 South Lane; under Otto and his descendents, the business would thrive for decades, eventually expanding into 120 South Lane next door in 1971 before closing in 1981. On West Adrian, Clarence Gilson took over the hardware store at 109 West Adrian (originally Giles and White, later Philips Hardware) in 1919; Gilson's would remain there until it relocated to the west side in 1975. Other notable businesses opening in the early 1900s included Lenardson's Department Store (115-117 South Lane) and Bailey's Drug Store (133 South Lane).

While agriculture remained the dominant industry in Blissfield (local farmers organized the Blissfield Cooperative Company to handle marketing of livestock and produce in 1915), other types of industry were also locating in Blissfield. In 1912, the National Bundle Tyler Company opened on the west side of the river.

By the 1920s, Blissfield's commercial district along Lane and Adrian streets was largely built out; Sanborn maps trace the gradual transformation of the east side of South Lane Street, which in the early 1900s still had several residential dwellings. By 1919, both sides of the street were completely built out with one to three story commercial buildings, and development had crept south of Jefferson Street on the west side. A few notable businesses that would open during the 1920s include the A&P Grocery in the Phoenix Building at 112 South Lane and Lipp's Market next door at 110 South Lane.

Despite a few closures, in general Blissfield's commercial downtown weathered the worst of the Depression and World War II without too much alteration. There were few new businesses opening or constructing buildings during this period,

¹⁵ Phyllis Robertson, "60 Years of Hair Cuts," *Adrian Daily Telegram*, August 21, 1957.

¹⁶ "How Times Have Changed in 64 Years!" *Blissfield Advance*, Jan 4 1962.

¹⁷ *Illustrated History and Biographical Record of Lenawee County*, 1903, 17.

¹⁸ Lindquist, *Spanning the Years*, 59-60.

one of the exceptions being Frank Riley, attorney and son of John Riley, who opened a new modern office at 107 West Jefferson in 1935. Meyers and Reynolds, who opened a poultry, egg and cream business in 1930 at 112 East Adrian, built a new facility at 121 Newspaper Street in 1937 and expanded into appliances. As part of the New Deal, a new post office was constructed south of the business district at South Lane and Union streets in 1937. The Blissfield Library moved into the back of the former Jipson-Carter State Bank at 117 West Adrian in 1939. In 1943, the venerable A. D. Ellis department store at 101 West Adrian closed, replaced by the Joy Shop.

Although agriculture remained an important economic sector for Blissfield, the post World War II boom brought a more diversified industrial base to the village. Industrial businesses that came to Blissfield in the late 1940s and 1950s included Blissfield Manufacturing, which produced refrigeration units, Adrian Products, Norton Power, and Snyder Manufacturing. Two alfalfa mills, Piel's and R. J. Ireland, also opened during this period and the Blissfield Cooperative built a new grain elevator east of the downtown. They all joined Great Lakes Sugar (formerly Continental Sugar), Home Canning, Richland Furs, and National Bundle Tyer, all of which continued strongly into this period. While most of this development was taking place on the outskirts of the village, it did help to maintain a strong downtown commercial district. A few new businesses opened downtown, including Sprunk and Liewert Heating and Cooling at 206 South Lane (1945), Sprunk and Liewert Hardware at 208 South Lane (1950s) and Lippens Cleaners at 203 South Lane (1959).

A number of factors resulted in the gradual decline of the downtown commercial district in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1956, the New York Central Railroad ceased passenger operations, cutting off one source of traffic directly into the downtown. While suburbanization was not a large factor in the small village of Blissfield, the downtown did suffer from the increasing presence of the automobile; many customers and businesses complained about the lack of parking downtown. To cater to the new trade, the Coach Light Shopping Plaza opened in 1960 on the west side of town with plenty of surface parking. The initial draw was the Tibbs Supermarket, but other businesses would soon open there, including a pharmacy, bowling alley, car wash, and donut shop. A mobile home park opened behind the shopping plaza in 1969. Blissfield's automotive dealers were also moving outside the downtown in the 1960s in search of bigger lots to display their cars. The downtown attempted to provide more parking, first at the Bachmayer lot north of the four corners and then west of the commercial buildings on South Lane, but development of both lots took a number of years.

As a result, in the 1960s and 1970s, many of Blissfield's long-established businesses would close, either as the result of declining sales or as their founders passed away. These included Cannon's Market at 204 South Lane, Ted Delzeith's pharmacy on South Lane, Kerbawy's Dry Goods and Kerbawy's Newsstand, the A&P at 112 South Lane, and Brownie's Meats at 120 South Lane. When Walter Marks closed his barber shop in 1972, there was only one barber shop in downtown; there had been as many as half a dozen in town when Marks began in 1927.¹⁹ Gilson's Hardware moved west of town in 1975, and Lipp's Grocery closed in 1977. There were a few bright spots during these decades: both Bailey's Drugs and Tagsold's furniture expanded in 1971, and Loar Appliance moved to 121 South Lane in 1969 from its previous location at 108 East Adrian. In 1978, the flagship Blissfield Hotel at 102 West Adrian was devastated by a fire; the top two floors were subsequently demolished.

In the 1980s, closings seemed to accelerate, taking down businesses such as Tagsold's (closed 1981), Sprunk's Grocery (closed 1986), Gambles Store (at 101 West Adrian, closed 1989), and Bailey's (closed 1990). Although industry continued to be a strong economic sector for Blissfield, Richland Furs closed in 1990. Finally, in 1992, Seeger's, the last of the multi-generational stores in Blissfield, closed, leaving Loar's Appliance as the only "practical" business left downtown.

As the traditional downtown businesses such as grocery stores, department stores, drugstores, and furniture stores closed, the downtown transitioned into new types of businesses in an attempt to draw in new clientele from outside the local area. The downtown has a strong antiques sector, with a number of shops dotted around the downtown, including the flagship Blissfield Antiques at 101 West Adrian, now expanded into a number of neighboring storefronts. A number of these buildings along West Adrian are now connected internally, facilitating business for all. Craft and gift stores, specialty shops, and restaurants are also well-represented in the downtown. Vacancy rates are relatively low for an older downtown, and the presence of community resources including the township and village offices and the Bliss-Liewert Senior Center also serve to draw patrons into the downtown.

Banks (subset of Commerce)

Banking came to Blissfield in 1873, when the village's first private bank, Gilmore and Company, opened on the west side of the river. The following decade, Webster Jipson founded the village's second private bank, Jipson and Company, in

¹⁹ Phyllis Robertson, "Walter Marks, 45-year Barber, Locks Shop Forever Tonight," *Blissfield Advance*, 4-1-1972.

1885. Jipson's bank moved into the commercial building at the southeast corner of West Adrian and Pearl (117 West Adrian). It later incorporated as the Jipson-Carter State Bank.

Both of Blissfield's banks successfully weathered the financial storms of the 1890s. Gilmore and Company Bank reincorporated in 1893 as the Blissfield State Bank and moved to the growing east side of Blissfield, opening a stately building at the prominent southeast corner of Adrian and Lane streets, which also gave space to a number of professional tenants in the upper floors.

The Blissfield State Bank and Jipson-Carter Bank were joined in 1920 by the First National Bank, which constructed a Classical Revival style building at the northwest corner of Lane and Jefferson streets.²⁰ Not to be outdone, the Blissfield State Bank replaced their 1893 building with a new brick building in 1922, also expanding one storefront to the south. The First National Bank was short-lived, however, closing in the midst of the Great Depression in 1931.²¹ Both the Blissfield State Bank and Jipson-Carter Bank survived the Depression; in 1935, the Jipson-Carter Bank moved from its original address at 117 West Adrian into the First National Bank's former building in 1935.²² In the late 1960s, the thriving Jipson-Carter State Bank demolished that building and two buildings to the north and constructed a one-story Colonial style bank building on the corner in 1968.

In the early 1980s, citing a lack of space for expansion and the difficulty of finding parking, the Blissfield State Bank constructed a new building, complete with a drive-through teller window, at the corner of Giles and Jefferson on the site of the old Blissfield Central School, and moved from its original location at the corner of Adrian and Lane streets.²³ The Jipson-Carter State Bank remained at 130 South Lane, but was acquired by, and became a branch of, the Society Bank of Lenawee in 1988, which in turn merged with Key Bank in 1990.²⁴ Key Bank remained in operation at this corner into the 2010s; the building was remodeled in 2014 for the offices of the Village of Blissfield. Both the Blissfield State Bank building at 101 South Lane and the Jipson-Carter State Bank building at 117 West Adrian retain integrity to represent the banking history of Blissfield, despite the banks themselves moving elsewhere.

Transportation

Despite its apparently remote location, Blissfield has been a key location along several important transportation routes in the southeastern area of Michigan. Flowing for over 139 miles, the River Raisin winds its way through Lenawee, Monroe, Washtenaw, Jackson, and Hillsdale Counties in southeast Michigan. The Potawatomie and Wyandot Indians canoed the River Raisin in the pre-contact and early settlement era, and French settlers near Monroe created ribbon farms along the banks of the river. The earliest Euro-American settlers, including Hervey Bliss and George Giles, claimed land along the river and utilized the river for water power for their early grist and saw mills. The River Raisin was the major geological feature in early Blissfield and, although there was a bridge as early as 1857, the river's swampy banks made transportation between the east and west sides difficult until the construction of a causeway between the two sides in 1870; the "flats" around the riverbanks also frequently flooded and were unsuitable for construction. By the 1870s, however, there were excursion boats operating on the river,²⁵ and the Ellis Playground and Bachmeyer Park were later developed along the banks of the river. Although no longer a practical transportation route, the River Raisin is still an integral part of the village.

Like many of the earliest settlers in Michigan, the founders of Blissfield had to cut their way through forests to reach the land they intended to farm. This was hampered by the swampy terrain in the area. George Giles, the second landowner in Blissfield, cut a road from Petersburg, in Monroe County to Blissfield shortly after he arrived in 1826, and a second road to the head of Ottawa Lake, eight miles away, in 1834-35. However, roads would remain primitive and difficult to traverse until the beginning of the twentieth century, when the state government began creating and improving a trunkline system. The route from Toledo to Blissfield and on to Adrian was eventually designated US 223 and would run through Blissfield along Adrian Street, one of the major routes through the village.

In 1874, the village built the first iron bridge in the county on West Adrian to carry vehicles and pedestrians over the River Raisin. The bridge spectacularly collapsed on the morning of December 7, 1887, injuring several people who were crossing it at the time, but was rebuilt the following year. This bridge was replaced in 1940 by the present bridge.

²⁰ Lindquist, *Spanning the Years*, 90.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Lindquist, *Spanning the Years*, 206.

²⁴ Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation Key Demographic Information, https://www2.fdic.gov/idasp/confirmation_outside.asp?inCert1=14301 and https://www2.fdic.gov/idasp/confirmation_outside.asp?inCert1=970; accessed October 2014.

²⁵ Blissfield *Advance*, May 14, 1874.

In 1836, the first railroad operated west of the Alleghenies, the Erie and Kalamazoo, opened for business (with the line initially running between Toledo and Adrian), with the first steam engine (replacing horses) appearing the following year. The railroad ran through Blissfield, just north of present-day US-223, with regular stops in Blissfield for both passengers and freight. The initial depot for the Erie and Kalamazoo was on the west side of Blissfield, but was relocated to the growing east side in 1870. In 1907, the railroad replaced its original bridge with a Baltimore through-truss bridge constructed by the American Bridge Company of New York, which remains in use today. The Erie and Kalamazoo would later be absorbed by the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railway, which in turn became part of the New York Central Railroad. The New York Central carried passengers until 1956; it closed its depot and freight warehouse in Blissfield in 1959 (the depot was torn down in 1963), but the railroad still carries traffic daily through the district.²⁶

In 1901, the Toledo and Western Railroad brought interurban passenger service to Blissfield; village citizens could board the train at the Toledo and Western's depot at 118 West Adrian Street (completed 1901) and spend the day shopping in Toledo or Adrian or take an excursion train for special events. The construction of the Toledo and Western's bridge over the River Raisin in Blissfield gave the village its claim to fame in the early 1900s: the famous "Triple Bridges" (consisting of the highway bridge, railroad bridge, and Toledo and Western Bridge) were the subject of numerous post card views and were featured in "Ripley's Believe it or Not" as the only triple configuration of bridges in the world. With the advent of the automobile, however, ridership declined and the Toledo and Western went out of business in the mid 1930s; the bridge was removed in the late 1930s in conjunction with the construction of a new automobile bridge, completed in 1940. The Toledo and Western Railroad passenger depot remains in place at 118 West Adrian.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, automobiles became popular and, with the introduction of the moving assembly line in 1913, ever more affordable. Business owners in Blissfield were quick to develop businesses to cater to the growing clientele, most of them clustering on East Adrian. In the earliest years, it was most likely for an established business to add automobiles onto its current line of carriages and buggies; this was the case with William Rothfuss, who in 1892 built a double store at 103 South Lane, with one side used to display and store his carriages. In 1902, Rothfuss constructed a building at 115 East Adrian for his agricultural implements business, but by the late 1920s was using it as an automobile showroom and storage facility. Rothfuss built a garage at 121 East Adrian in 1916; it would later house a gas station and garage into the 1930s.

As the automobile industry expanded in the 1920s, purpose-built auto sales and service businesses began appearing, again within the same general area on East Adrian. These included the ca. 1920s building at 116 East Adrian, originally built to house a Ford dealership under the name Moore and Seeburger, the ca. 1936 garage at 112 East Adrian, and the 1937 DeSoto-Dodge Dealership building at 103 East Adrian.

Although automobile dealerships began moving out of the downtown area for larger lots east and west of the downtown in the 1950s and 60s, several of the downtown buildings that housed automotive-related service businesses remain, including 112, 116, and 121 East Adrian.

Social History/Entertainment

Social activities and entertainment venues were an early and ongoing feature of city life and thus represent an important theme in the city's history. In the 1860s and 1870s, several downtown merchants provided public halls on the second floors of their buildings, spaces that could hold village meetings, social gatherings, and dancing. The first of these public spaces was in the 1868 Carpenter and Furman building at 313 West Adrian; this was long known as Carpenter Hall and was the social hub of West Blissfield; meetings were still held there into the twentieth century. The building survives today, though located outside the district. On the east side, Clinton Hall (109 West Adrian, constructed 1875/rebuilt 1894) was a prime early meeting place.

Like many other villages and cities, Blissfield had its share of fraternal organizations. The two most prominent were the Odd Fellows and Masons. The Masonic Hall was originally located in a stand-alone building on the west side; the Masons later moved to the second floor of the former Lamley Opera House (108-110 South Lane), but by 1927 they had purchased the former Lenardson's Department Store at 115-117 South Lane and had their lodge quarters on the second floor. The Masons and Eastern Star also reportedly had space at 107-109 South Lane, perhaps later in the twentieth century. The International Order of Odd Fellows rented space above 114-116 South Lane in the late 1800s and early 1900s, before

²⁶ "Old NYC Depot Coming Down," *Blissfield Advance*, July 4, 1963.

building their stand-alone building at 108 West Adrian in 1914. Other fraternal organizations with space in the downtown included the Maccabees (127-129 South Lane), the Grand Army of the Republic (in a now-demolished building on the present site of 130 South Lane), and the Fraternal Order of Eagles (133 South Lane).

The Opera House was an important symbol of any small downtown's sophistication and culture, and Blissfield was no exception. In 1894, David Lamley, who had operated a saloon and restaurant on West Adrian for many years, constructed the two-story, double-storefront Lamley Opera House. It is unclear how successful the building was as an opera house, for less than ten years after its opening, when a fire gutted the building, the opera house area was not rebuilt. Instead, the Masons used the space as their Masonic Hall.

Motion pictures fared better in Blissfield. The first movie theater was apparently called the Nickelo, but little is known of it.²⁷ In 1911, Clement Hoagland, later known as the founder of Richland Furs, opened the Star Theatre at 115 West Adrian. It was later renamed the Princess and then the Temple Theatre. The People's Theatre was also in operation in Blissfield, although its location is not clear. The Temple Theatre continued into the 1930s, when it screened its first "talkie" but it closed, one of the few victims of the Depression, in 1933.²⁸ In 1939 the Bliss Theatre opened at 111-113 South Lane Street. It featured a projecting marquee and first-run movies, but it only lasted until 1962; the building itself burned down in 1986 and was not replaced.

Architecture

The Blissfield Downtown Historic District contains an architectural stock that spans most of the village's history, from the brick blocks built immediately after the 1875 fire to a handful of mid-twentieth century buildings. In general the variety of architectural styles is limited, but contains some fine examples of characteristic styles from each period.

A large portion of the village's building stock consists of late nineteenth to early twentieth century brick Italianate commercial blocks, a common style for commercial downtown buildings in this period in the United States and particularly in the Midwest. Italianate commercial architecture was an exuberant expression of the boom in downtown commercial districts following the Civil War, mirrored in the similar popularity of Italianate residential architecture during the same period (1860s-1880s). Generally, the buildings in Blissfield display the arc of the style's development from the elaborate examples of the 1870s and 1880s to the more restrained versions in the early 1900s.

The earliest examples of the style were the buildings constructed immediately after the 1875 fire which featured the classic details of the Italianate style. The collection of buildings on the south side of the 100 block of West Adrian is an unusually intact example of the high Italianate style and gives much of downtown Blissfield its strong historic visual character. All of the buildings on this block were constructed after the fire in 1875 and complement each other in style while still presenting individualized touches. In general, the buildings of this style are characterized by projecting bracketed cornices, corbelled and decorative brickwork, and arched windows with decorative hoods and keystones, all of which are more or less present on the block. The most prominent of these is 101-103 West Adrian, at the southwest corner of Adrian and Lane streets, where the bracketed cornice, ogee window hoods, and raised frieze are typical of the style. Both 107 and 109 West Adrian retain a shared bracketed cornice that exemplifies the style, and 105 West Adrian has a fine decorative brickwork frieze. The second floor windows across almost the entire block (excepting the Chicago-style window at 107 West Adrian) demonstrate the variety of decorative hoods employed during the period, including round-arched (103, 105, 113), ogee (115, 117), and segmental-arched (109) and often exhibit a high degree of detailing. Similarly, the storefronts are remarkably intact, with most retaining the original glass and wood display windows, wood paneling, center or side entry configuration, and iron storefront columns (many stamped with their maker and date); decorative detailing is likewise prominent in these historic storefronts. A few non-historic materials intrude (remodeled storefronts), but the block is otherwise an outstanding survival of Italianate commercial architecture that establishes Blissfield's architectural legacy.

Another prominent example of this style was the Dewey Hotel across the street at 102 West Adrian, also constructed following the fire in 1875. This three-story Commercial Italianate building historically had a projecting bracketed cornice and a combination of round and segmental arched window hoods; the top two floors were demolished after the 1978 fire that damaged the building, but it does retain a number of original features, including the arched window hoods, some original windows, and an early 1900s storefront. Despite the unfortunate loss of the upper two stories, the one-story remnant remains an important element on Adrian Street and reflects the downtown's historic character.

²⁷ Lindquist, *Spanning the Years*, 71.

²⁸ It was briefly succeeded by the Elvona which also did not last long. Lindquist *Spanning the Years*, 111.

The *Blissfield Advance* reported that the architect for many of these buildings on West Adrian was James Saunders. Saunders was a native of Buckinghamshire, England, who immigrated to Michigan around 1870-72. He operated as an architect, builder, and carpenter in Blissfield and the surrounding areas in the 1870s and 1880s. Aside from the West Adrian buildings, he mostly worked on residential construction, but other works included a summer house for the Mineral Springs Hotel in 1875 and a schoolhouse in Ogden Center in 1883. He moved to Dundee in 1883 and by 1900 was living in Detroit and working as a contractor and joiner. He died in 1915 in Detroit.²⁹

In the closing decades of the nineteenth century and into the first years of the twentieth, the classical Italianate commercial style transitioned into a more free-form style loosely described as Late Victorian. Builders in this period continued to use some elements of Italianate, such as the bracketed cornice, but experimented with different window forms and decorative elements. A number of prominent examples remain intact in the downtown. The three-story Dolph Building at 105 South Lane and the neighboring two-story Rothfuss General Store at 103 South Lane both date to 1892-93 and have a matching architectural theme which includes a doubled line of decorative brick corbelling at the second floor and yellow segmental-arch window hoods with a yellow stringcourse aligned with the arch springlines. Both storefronts have been altered. On the opposite side of the street at 108-110 South Lane, the Lamley Opera House (1894) was designed in an exuberant style meant to attract attention as one of the village's socio-cultural centers; the monumental projecting brick arch of the center bay and decorative brickwork below are expressive of that purpose. The 1902 fire that gutted the building fortunately left the exterior and storefronts mostly intact.

The entire east façade of the Phoenix Building at 112 South Lane (1890s) is clad in decorative galvanized iron sheet metal, including faux stone piers, window hoods, and bracketed cornice. Along with the cornice and window caps at 115-117 South Lane Street, this almost certainly the product of the Geo. L. Mesker Co. Architectural Iron Works of Evansville, Indiana. Although a precise match was not found in the 1900 catalogue, many of the elements of the facade exactly match motifs used by Mesker. This and another Mesker firm, Mesker Brothers of St. Louis, Missouri, were the largest manufacturers of cornices and metal storefront materials in the country from the 1880s to the 1910s. The survival of the entire storefront at 112 South Lane is rather unusual. It is also worth noting that 115-117 South Lane is a particularly nice surviving storefront of this era, and notable for the configuration of the storefront recessed beneath the upper façade, a characteristic shared by three buildings of a similar era farther down the street, 133-137 South Lane.

Other notable and intact examples of Late Victorian Commercial in Blissfield include:

- 115 West Adrian – William Rothfuss, 1902.
- 106 East Adrian – ca. 1900.
- 107 West Adrian – 1875, remodeled 1894.
- 109 West Adrian – Clinton Hall, 1875 remodeled 1894.
- 110 North Lane – Blissfield Motor Works, 1898.
- 121 South Lane – ca. 1900.
- 114-116 South Lane – ca. late 1800s
- 122 South Lane – ca. late 1800s.

Another prominent architectural style in downtown Blissfield is Commercial Brick, a style in which the patterns of the brickwork itself, rather than references to historic styles such as Colonial, forms the "style." They are characterized by brick exteriors with little to no ornamental detailing aside from the restrained use of brickwork patterns, simple rectangular panels, and minor stone or concrete trim. In Blissfield, the style prevailed from the 1900s until the late 1950s, with earlier buildings representing a transitional style in the early period and becoming plainer towards the end of the era. The Blissfield Commercial Brick style typically features horizontal strips of brickwork, particularly soldier-coursed, that run across upper level facades above windows, and shallow horizontal sunken panels in the brickwork (seen at 135-137 South Lane, 114-116 South Lane, and in historic photographs of 202-204 South Lane). A significant example, although somewhat altered, is the Blissfield State Bank (1922) at 101 South Lane. Replacing an earlier Late Victorian Commercial block, the 1920s building, expanded one storefront to the south, relied on bands of decorative soldier-course brickwork and stacked brickwork panels below the windows to express the conservative yet up-to-date character of Blissfield's leading bank. At the other end of the block, 135 and 137 South Lane are both characteristic of the earlier style as it transitioned from Late Victorian Commercial; the decorative brick panels in the upper cornice evoke the bracketed cornice

²⁹ United States Federal Census, 1880, Blissfield, Lenawee County; United States Federal Census, 1900, Detroit, Wayne County and 1910, Detroit, Wayne County. Local news sections, *Blissfield Advance*, May 27, 1875, May 15, 1877, January 24, 1878, and September 7, 1883.

of the Late Victorian era but the wide expanses of plain brick and the square windows look forward to the Commercial Brick era. The storefronts, however, are classical late Victorian with their recessed center entries and prismatic glass transoms. At 107 West Jefferson, the Riley law office is a simple one-story variegated red brick with shallow piers and soldier-course brick banding, but it is highlighted by an unusual rock-faced, quoined entry door surround with a flat arch cap and keystone. Two other examples are the 1920s era 107-109 South Lane buildings, rendered in red brick with projecting brick piers, corbelling below the frieze, and overlapping bricks in the obtuse squints of the bulkheads edging the storefront entry recesses, and 112 East Adrian, featuring a soldier course brick strip above the storefront transoms and recessed panels in the frieze outlined by corbelled brickwork. A very late example is 203 South Lane (Lippens Cleaners, 1959) which has a simple tan brick façade.

The downtown district also has several singular examples of other styles. At 116 West Adrian, the 1901 Toledo and Western Railroad Depot is a fine example of the Arts and Crafts style with its belcast roof, exposed rafter tails, and belcast-roofed dormer. Next door at 108 West Adrian is the 1914 Odd Fellows Hall, a relatively simple red brick building with square windows, but capped by a decorative wood cornice line with an alternating bar and circle pattern, and brick gabled parapets reminiscent of the Mission Revival style.

The First United Methodist Church's 1923 building is a landmark in the downtown district and city. The church building is first and foremost an auditorium church building of the type commonly built by Protestant denominations in the last years of the nineteenth century or early years of the twentieth. It retains its pews set in concentric arcs that radiate out from the chancel so that all directly face the worship center and retains its colorful art and stained glass windows, including three lancet windows apparently retained from the previous church building. Like many of these buildings, First United Methodist has a traditional steeply pitched roof emblematic of a church building but then unselfconsciously combines design features from a variety of styles – here Colonial and round-arch Romanesque – into a successfully eclectic and appealing design. This borrowing and combining of features from various styles into a whole that says church in no uncertain terms was a common practice for Protestant churches during this time period as seen both in the buildings actually constructed and in designs in church plan books such as *The Church. A Book of Churches, Containing Twenty-Eight Various Designs*, published in the early twentieth century by Grand Rapids, Michigan, architects J. & G. Daverman. Successive additions to the building have been made subservient in massing and height to the historic church and together form a strong historic, visual, and architectural focal point for the district's west edge.

Finally, the district includes three residential dwellings, two of which are now offices. Both 120 East Adrian and 105 West Jefferson are late Victorian domestic buildings; 105 West Jefferson is relatively plain although it has a bay window; 120 East Adrian is a more characteristic example with fish-scale shingles in the gables, decorative bargeboards, and a front porch with turned wood columns. The Doan House at 201 South Lane, a 1904 Queen Anne style building, remains a residence. It, too, features fish-scale shingles in the gables and has a large wrap-around porch with Doric columns.

Architecturally, the downtown's historic character has been negatively impacted by the recent invasion of EIFS (Exterior Insulation Finishing System) facades on some of its buildings. Like the earlier generation of aluminum screens, the intent has been to "modernize" older buildings and to avoid repairs to the original exterior. However, EIFS is a very short term exterior covering (it is designed for a lifespan of less than ten years) and it can trap moisture behind it which is damaging to the underlying exterior materials and structure.

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preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
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 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Name of repository:

Schultz-Holmes Memorial Library,
Blissfield; Lenawee County Museum and
Historical Society, Adrian.

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 14.3
(do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>17</u>	<u>262202</u>	<u>4635237</u>	4	<u>17</u>	<u>262241</u>	<u>4634934</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>17</u>	<u>262389</u>	<u>4635224</u>	5	<u>17</u>	<u>262082</u>	<u>4635062</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
3	<u>17</u>	<u>262575</u>	<u>4635057</u>	6			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

Beginning at the center point of the intersection of East Adrian and Giles Streets, then south along the center line of Giles Street to the intersection of Giles street and the south line of parcel 0410, then west along the said parcel line to the east line of parcel 0492, thence south along said parcel line to the south line of parcel 0492, thence west along said parcel line to its intersection with the center line of Newspaper street; thence south along the center line of Newspaper Street to the east line of parcel 0721, thence south along the parcel line to the south line of parcel 0722, thence west along the parcel line to the center line of South Lane street; thence north along South Lane Street to the intersection of South Lane Street and the south line of parcel 0706, thence west along the south line of parcels 0706, 0702, and 0701 to the west line of parcel 0701; thence north along the said parcel line to the center line of West Jefferson street, thence west along West Jefferson Street to its intersection with the center line of Pearl street; thence north along Pearl street to the south line of

parcel 0040, thence west along the parcel line to the west line of parcel 0040, thence north to the north line of the railway right of way; thence east to the center line of North Lane street, thence northeast along the center line to its intersection with the west line of parcel 0221, thence northwest to the north line of parcel 0221, thence northeast along the parcel line to the east line of parcel 0221, thence east across North Lane street, continuing east along the north line of parcel 0241 to the southeast corner of said parcel; thence south to the north line of the railway right-of-way, thence east along the said right-of-way to its intersection with the east line of parcel 0310, thence south along the parcel line to the center line of E. Adrian street, thence west along the center line of East Adrian street to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The boundaries have been drawn to include the contiguous historic commercial core of the downtown and to reflect the concentration of buildings that retain integrity to the period of significance. To the northwest of the district are low-lying grounds that contain a park lacking in historic features and beyond, across the river, the commercial node of West Blissfield (original village of Blissfield) remains, but with only a few scattered significant resources remaining, not enough to justify extending the district. The blocks to the south of the district are largely residential, and the few non-residential resources (including the library and post office) are too far separated from the downtown to extend the district in that direction. The area to the north quickly transitions to residential outside the district boundary. The area north of the railroad tracks and west of N. Lane contains a modern garage structure at the east, modern warehouse structure to the west, and, between them, a late nineteenth-century wooden railroad depot (these are the three buildings showing in gray along the north edge of the district map; see photo 19, left edge, for the depot and garage). The depot is a well preserved Late Victorian structure, but was located in Deerfield, about six miles away, on a different line from the one passing through Blissfield, and relocated to Blissfield in the 1990s – thus it has no historic significance for Blissfield itself. To the east, while the commercial area extends in that direction, the resources largely date to after the period of significance.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ruth E. Mills, Stephanie Austin
organization Quinn Evans Architects date May 2015
street & number 219 ½ North Main Street telephone 734-663-5888
city or town Ann Arbor state MI zip code 48104
e-mail rmills@quinnevans.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive black and white photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Blissfield Downtown Historic District
City or Vicinity: Village of Blissfield
County: Lenawee State: Michigan
Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: March 2015

**Description of Photograph(s) and number: Adrian Street looking west
001 of 039.**

**Description of Photograph(s) and number: South Lane Street looking south
002 of 039.**

**Description of Photograph(s) and number: South Lane Street looking north
003 of 039.**

**Description of Photograph(s) and number: East Adrian Street, odd numbers (north side), looking northeast
004 of 039.**

**Description of Photograph(s) and number: East Adrian Street, odd numbers (north side), looking east
005 of 039.**

**Description of Photograph(s) and number: East Adrian Street, odd numbers (north side), looking east
006 of 039.**

**Description of Photograph(s) and number: East Adrian Street, odd numbers (north side), looking southwest
007 of 039.**

Description of Photograph(s) and number: East Adrian Street, even numbers (south side), looking southeast
008 of 039.

Description of Photograph(s) and number: East Adrian Street, even numbers (south side), looking southwest
009 of 039.

Description of Photograph(s) and number: West Adrian Street, even numbers (north side), looking northwest
010 of 039.

Description of Photograph(s) and number: West Adrian Street, even numbers (north side), looking northeast
011 of 039.

Description of Photograph(s) and number: West Adrian Street, even numbers (north side), looking southwest
012 of 039.

Description of Photograph(s) and number: West Adrian Street, odd numbers (south side), looking southwest
013 of 039.

Description of Photograph(s) and number: West Adrian Street, odd numbers (south side), looking southeast
014 of 039.

Description of Photograph(s) and number: West Adrian Street, odd numbers (south side), looking northeast
015 of 039.

Description of Photograph(s) and number: 201 West Adrian Street, looking southwest.
016 of 039.

Description of Photograph(s) and number: 201 West Adrian Street, looking northwest.
017 of 039.

Description of Photograph(s) and number: North Lane Street looking south.
018 of 039.

Description of Photograph(s) and number: North Lane Street looking north.
019 of 039.

Description of Photograph(s) and number: 100 Block South Lane Street, even numbers (east side), looking east.
020 of 039.

Description of Photograph(s) and number: 100 Block South Lane Street, even numbers (east side), looking east.
021 of 039.

Description of Photograph(s) and number: 100 Block South Lane Street, even numbers (east side), looking
northeast 022 of 039.

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Pocket park between 127 and 127 South Lane, looking east
023 of 039.

Description of Photograph(s) and number: 100 Block South Lane Street, even numbers (east side), looking
southwest 024 of 039.

Description of Photograph(s) and number: 100 Block South Lane Street, even numbers (east side), looking
northwest 025 of 039.

Description of Photograph(s) and number: 200 Block South Lane Street, even numbers (east side), looking southeast 026 of 039.

Description of Photograph(s) and number: 200 Block South Lane Street, even numbers (east side), looking northeast 027 of 039.

Description of Photograph(s) and number: 100 Block South Lane Street, odd numbers (west side), looking southwest 028 of 039.

Description of Photograph(s) and number: 100 Block South Lane Street, odd numbers (west side), looking southwest 029 of 039.

Description of Photograph(s) and number: 100 Block South Lane Street, odd numbers (west side), looking northwest 030 of 039.

Description of Photograph(s) and number: 100 Block South Lane Street, odd numbers (west side), looking northeast 031 of 039.

Description of Photograph(s) and number: 100 Block South Lane Street, odd numbers (west side), looking southwest 032 of 039.

Description of Photograph(s) and number: 200 Block South Lane Street, odd numbers (west side), looking west 033 of 039.

Description of Photograph(s) and number: 200 Block South Lane Street, odd numbers (west side), looking northwest 034 of 039.

Description of Photograph(s) and number: 200 Block South Lane Street, odd numbers (west side), looking southeast 035 of 039.

Description of Photograph(s) and number: 200 Block South Lane Street, odd numbers (west side), looking northeast 036 of 039.

Description of Photograph(s) and number: West Jefferson Street, odd numbers (south side), looking southeast 037 of 039.



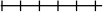

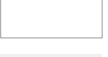
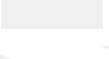
Description of Photograph(s) and number: West Jefferson Street, odd numbers (south side), looking northeast 038 of 039.

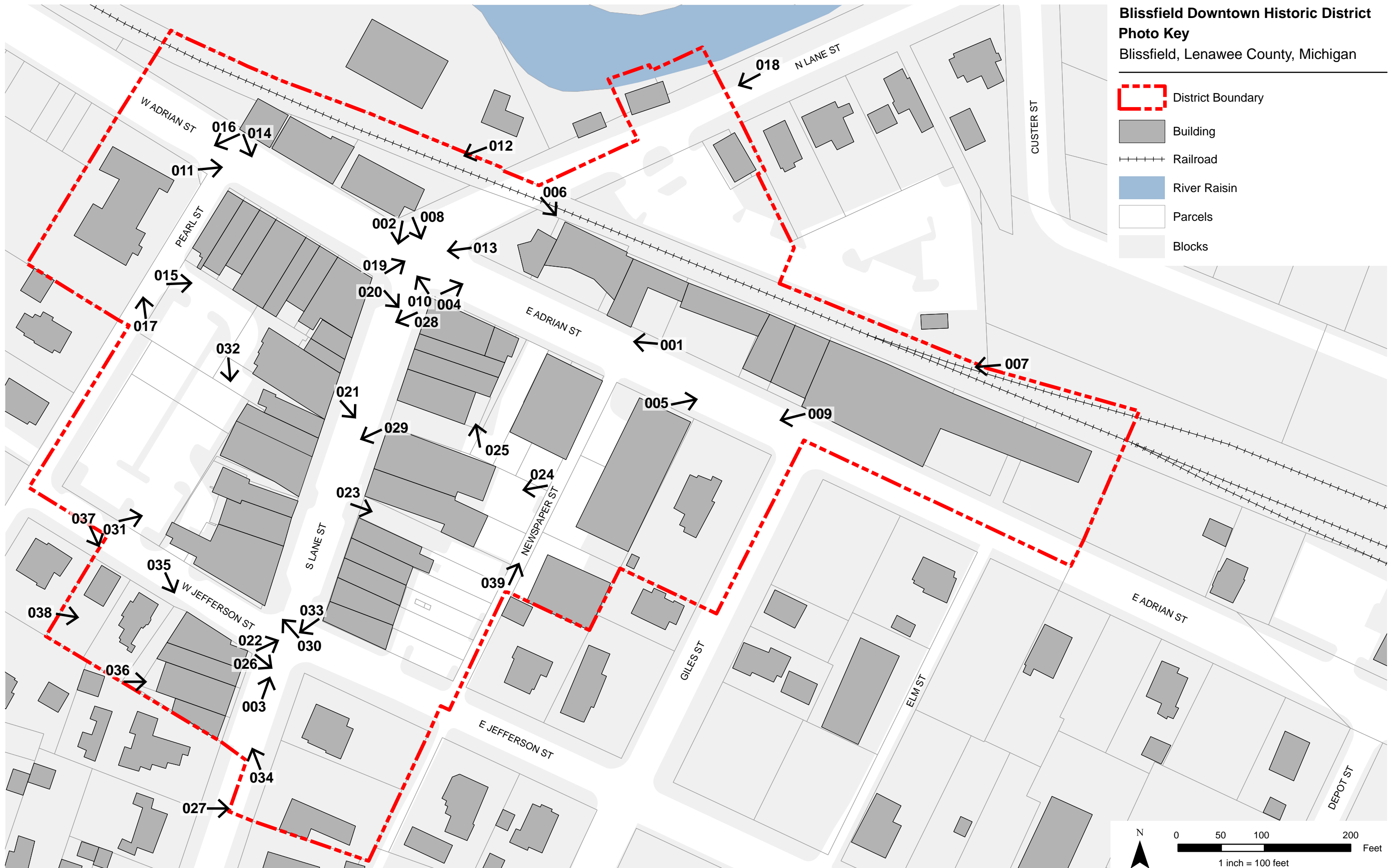
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Newspaper Street, looking north 039 of 039.

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 18 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

Blissfield Downtown Historic District
Photo Key
Blissfield, Lenawee County, Michigan

-  District Boundary
-  Building
-  Railroad
-  River Raisin
-  Parcels
-  Blocks



Blissfield Downtown Historic District
Blissfield, Lenawee County, Michigan

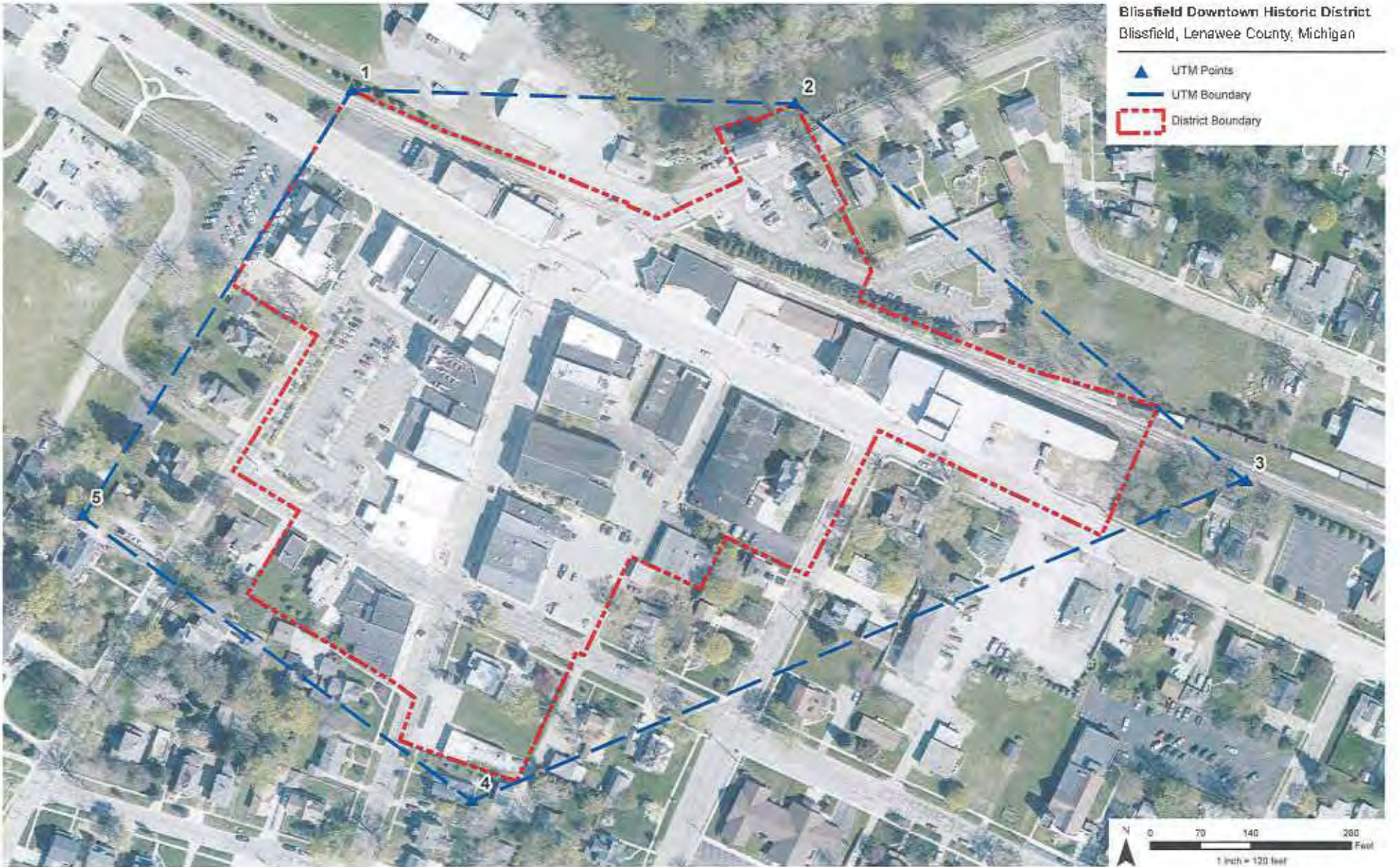


- District Boundary
- Contributing building
- Non-contributing building built within the period of significance
- Non-contributing building
- Building outside of project boundary
- Pocket Park
- Railroad
- River Raisin
- Parcels
- 2 ft contours
- Blocks



Blissfield Downtown Historic District
Blissfield, Lenawee County, Michigan

- ▲ UTM Points
- UTM Boundary
- ⋯ District Boundary





Blissfield
Business
District
←

BINNS
REALTY

Upholstery
286-0000
**UNIQUE PIECE
IN WINDOW
FOR SALE**



GAME ROOM

Sally's Pub

BLI



D & P
COMMUNICATIONS

High Speed Internet

- Telephone
- Cable TV
- Internet
- Long Distance

OPEN







NO
ADMITTANCE
BEYOND THIS
POINT
WITHOUT
PERMISSION
OF THE
PROPERTY
MANAGER





Sutherland
Family Chiropractic

STIHL

Larry's Body Shop







BLISSEFIELD ANTIQUE MAL

NO
PARKING
ON THIS
SIDE



BLISSFIELD ANTIQUE MALL

ANTIQUE
MALL
3 FLOORS

LIY'S DINER







B
First Street
PUBLIC
PARKING
LOT
Provided by
Blissville, Ohio

OPEN

BLISS



401 W
FIRST UNITED
METHODIST
CHURCH

FIRST UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH
EXPRESS YOURSELF
KINDLY, BEING HONEST
DOESN'T MEAN
BEING CRUEL







BRASSFIELD

BI

RAILROAD

RAILROAD

R R



Squishy Tushy

GENERAL STORE
ANTIQUES - GIFTS

517-486-4500

ANTIQUES & GIFTS



THE PACKRAT

HOUSEHOLD CONSIGNMENT

THE PACKRAT

GE Appliances
ELECTRIC APPLIANCES
800.685.4363

ROYAL

American Truck
800.685.4363



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Local Phone Service Cable TV High Sp
Internet

- Telephone
- Cable TV
- Internet
- Long Distance



ROYAL





B

BLISSFIELD

NORTH DAVENPORT

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	-----



A two-story brick building with a wooden balcony. The balcony has vertical wooden slats. The ground floor has a sign that reads "Bicycle" and "Cycling". There are several windows, some with white shutters. A utility antenna is on the roof.

A black SUV parked in a parking space. The license plate is visible.

A black sedan parked in a parking space.

A gold SUV parked in a parking space.

A silver Chevrolet pickup truck with a "4x4" badge on the rear. The license plate is visible.

A blue recycling bin with a red star logo and the text "RECYCLING BIN" and "RECYCLING INC.".

A black SUV parked on the street.

The rear of a white vehicle.

A black street lamp with a white globe.



NO PARKING
THIS SIDE



BLISSFIELD
OUTDOOR POWER
517-682-1886

HAUL
TRAILERS

MOWING?
\$129
\$139

Generac
ECHO
Kohler
DOLMAR
DOLMAR
ECHO
ECHO
ECHO

TRUCKS & TRAILERS
FOR RENT





BLISSFIELD
ANTIQUE
MALL
3 FLOORS
← Entrance



WFO
WORLD OF FOODS
CENTRAL
CITY

BLISS
YOGA
A HYPERAGE

Bliss

STOP

WFO

WFO

+

WFO



VILLAGE OF
BLANSPER

B...





Handicapped parking sign

BLISS

BLISS



BLISS-HE WEST
SENIOR CENTER

Linn's Cafe

Linn's Deli





BLISS-LIEWERT
SENIOR CENTER

100 & 10th

Joan's Co

BARBENT

PIZZA



STOP

STOP

DOOSE

Handicap Accessible Sign

Handwritten text on window









PRINTING

NEWSPAPER

PRINTING



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Blissfield Downtown Historic District
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MICHIGAN, Lenawee

DATE RECEIVED: 5/15/15 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 6/09/15
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/24/15 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/30/15
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000364

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 6/29/2015 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA accept A's c
REVIEWER Patricia Andrews DISCIPLINE Historian
TELEPHONE _____ DATE 6/29/2015

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



April 22, 2015

Mr. Brian D. Conway
State Historic Preservation Office
P.O. Box 307040
Lansing, MI 48909-8240

Dear Mr. Conway:

The village of Blissfield is strengthened by its historic past. Its aesthetics speak not only of Michigan's history, but of its life story. Blissfield earnestly works to preserve this culture and the community's well-being that it supports. Recognition as a National Historic Place would pay respect to those who have come before us and secure that their culture and our way of life would be perpetuated; we are grateful for this consideration.

Within each shop, festival, and drive through the town, the foundations built years ago still speak on behalf of the community's identity. The support of this recognition would continue the town's common goal of health, heritage, and historic culture that Blissfield's community relies on.

The Central Business District has proven itself true to the integration of historical identity and community revitalization. While preserving Michigan's past, Blissfield and its Main Street program have promoted new businesses, opportunities, and community engagement within and outside of Lenawee County.

Indeed, the century-old buildings where many shops and businesses are established are supported by Blissfield's historic allure. The potential historic district alone would consist of forty-four contributing buildings built between 1870–1960, with two buildings in Blissfield already on the National Registry of Historic Places—the David Carpenter House, known as the Hathaway House, and the First Presbyterian Church of Blissfield—and several more buildings on the State of Michigan's Historic List. Victorian and commercial buildings built in 1875 and in the 1890's rest in the Village's heart. Lenawee County itself is home to forty-two National Historic Places and has always valued integrating Michigan's past and current culture, with architecture dating back to as far as 1896.

Lenawee Now is a proud supporter of Blissfield's endeavor to be recognized as a National Historic Place and continue the County's legacy for historic preservation. Their goal affects all of us here in Lenawee County, as we all seek to build a community on the foundations laid just over a century ago. With this recognition, we can continue to bring back vitality to many of Michigan's oldest, most treasured buildings and support the future entrepreneurs and businesses that will reside in them.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. Van Doren".

James E. Van Doren
Executive Director

Pc: Jim Wonacott
Patricia Rayl



RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN STATE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

KEVIN ELSENHEIMER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

RECEIVED 2280

MAY 15 2015

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

May 8, 2015

Mr. J. Paul Loether, Chief
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street, NW, 8th Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

Enclosed is a national register nomination form for the Blissfield Downtown Historic District in Lenawee County, Michigan. This property is being submitted for listing in the national register. All written comments concerning this nomination submitted to us prior to the submission of this nomination to you are enclosed.

Questions concerning this nomination should be addressed to Robert O. Christensen, national register coordinator, at 517/335-2719 or email at christensenr@michigan.gov.

Sincerely yours,

Brian D. Conway
State Historic Preservation Officer

