

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received AUG 19 1986

date entered

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

SEP 22 1986

1. Name

historic Brazelton House Hotel

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 100 North Main Street _____ not for publication

city, town Mount Pleasant _____ vicinity of

state Iowa code 019 county Henry code 087

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Panther Drug Company, C/o Mrs. J. E. Panther

street & number Route 3 Westwood, Box 61

city, town Mt. Pleasant _____ vicinity of state IA 52641

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Recorder's Office

street & number Henry County Courthouse

city, town Mount Pleasant, state IA 52641

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date _____ federal _____ state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Since its construction in 1856, the four story red brick Brazelton House Hotel has been the focal point of Mount Pleasant's downtown commercial district and a local visual landmark. Located on the northeast corner of the Square, this Italianate structure dominates because of its size as well as its style and early date.

Viewed from the Public Square, the 80' x 96' Brazelton appears to be a massive rectangular block. In reality, the four story portion is "L-shaped" along the Main Street and Monroe Street sides. The north part of the building is two stories high, while the east wall (now stuccoed) is three. The center portion was originally open as a courtyard. In 1911 it was roofed over creating a two story lobby with skylights.

The hotel presents a symmetrical five bay facade on the west (primary) elevation. Exterior walls are of the same soft red-orange brick found on several other early Mount Pleasant structures. These brick measure approximately 8" x 2 1/4 x 4" with some variations. The exterior walls are laid in running bond, with a few headers appearing randomly. Limestone is used for the foundation, and for structural support at the first floor level. Octagonal brick piers 18" in diameter rest on a limestone base and support a limestone lintel approximately 12" square and of varying lengths. Above this lintel is a limestone stringcourse on both facades at the sill level of the second floor windows. The brick piers are uniformly spaced on the Main Street facade. The main entrance is on the west elevation and is indicated by a shallow pavilion with a set of triple windows on each of the upper three floors. This central bay is 16' wide, while two 16' bays are located on each side. The original 1856 lobby was on the second floor and was reached by stairs through this central entrance. Two iron columns remain at the street level of this entrance. A wrought iron balcony opened off the lobby via the triple windows. Circa 1900 this balcony was replaced by the present 13' x 19' iron porch which extends across the sidewalk to the curb.

The secondary facade along Monroe has thirteen octagonal brick piers at the first floor level, spaced at varying distances (five at 5'10", one at 4'4", four at 7'9", and two at 6'8"). The upper floors have twelve windows each. Since these are placed between the piers, this spacing is also irregular and breaks the rhythm established by the Main Street facade.

On the street elevations all windows above the first floor are round arched, tall, and relatively narrow in the Italianate manner. Those on the second floor are 8', those on the floors above measure 6' tall. The round arches are topped by brick hoods of simple design with a slightly projecting outer rim of bricks, Brick labels complete the decorative treatment.

The entire structure is capped by a wooden cornice with Italianate brackets. Note the relative simplicity of these brackets to those of later Italianate structures. These brackets occur at regular intervals of approximately 4', with twenty brackets on the primary facade, and twenty-three on the secondary elevation. The main entrance is highlighted by a low pitched wooden pediment, the full width of the 16' bay.

Alterations to the exterior have been well documented photographically. The

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400-1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science
___ 1500-1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600-1699	XX architecture	___ education	___ military	XX social/
___ 1700-1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ humanitarian
X 1800-1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ theater
___ 1900-	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ transportation
		___ invention		___ other (specify)

Specific dates 1856, 1856-57* **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) Contributing Structures: 1 Criteria: B, C

Since its construction in 1856, the four story red brick Brazelton House Hotel has been the focal point of Mount Pleasant's downtown commercial district and a local landmark. Erected as part of the building boom sparked by the arrival of the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad, this relatively unaltered Italianate structure is the best preserved commercial building from the boom era. It is the oldest of the two surviving 19th century hotels in Mount Pleasant, and the only one originally built as a hotel.

From its location on the northeast corner, the Brazelton dominates the Public Square because of its size and style. It is the only four story building and measures 80' x 96'. It appears to be a massive rectangular block, but in reality, the four story portion is "L-shaped" along Main and Monroe Streets. Exterior walls are of the same soft red-orange brick found on several other early Mount Pleasant structures such as the Ambler and Brazelton residences, NRHP. It is believed that these brick were made on the west edge of town. The 1859-60 Henry County Directory specifically notes, "Any quantity of stone, lime, sand and brick clay can be had from within one and two miles of the city."¹ These brick, measuring approximately 8' x 2 1/4" x 4" are laid in running bond. Limestone, probably of local origin, is used for the foundation and structural support at the first floor level. Octagonal brick piers 18" in diameter are found along both the primary and secondary facades. Decorative elements characteristic of the Italianate style include the tall, narrow round arched windows with simple brick hoods, the wide wooden cornice with Italianate brackets, and low pitched pediment over the main entrance. The main entrance is centered on the west elevation and is indicated by a shallow pavilion with iron columns at the street level, and triple round arched windows on the floors above. The round arched brick hoods and the relatively simple brackets are typical of the earliest Italianate structures in Mount Pleasant, later examples were more elaborate. Though there are a number of good residential examples of Italianate design in Mount Pleasant dating from the late 1850's, and Old Main (1854-55) on the Iowa Wesleyan campus has Italianate characteristics, the Brazelton is the finest, and earliest, commercial example of the style. The only other example around the Square is the Union Block on the north side from 1862. The Harlan House Hotel was built in 1857 in the Italianate style, but was originally designed as a residence.

The 1911 remodeling is documented by a complete set of plans for the project. These were drawn by Keokuk architect H. E. Ratcliffe and the contractors were Whitney and Bergdahl of Mount Pleasant. The primary effect of this remodeling was the change in emphasis from the second floor to the main floor with a large two story central lobby.

In 1926 W. F. Weibley of Burlington designed a new coffee shop to be located at the east end of the Monroe Street side. Work for this project included the pouring of a 5' x 5' x 16" concrete footing in the basement to hold a 16' x 16' concrete pier 14'6" in from the south wall, and the installation of two 12' I-beams between the newly dropped first floor ceiling and the second floor. These reinforcements appear to be the only ones made to the building over the years.

In 1978 the present owners purchased the Brazelton and began a long-term restoration project. The exterior was sandblasted and repointed to return it to the

9. Major Bibliographical References

Refer to Continuation Sheets 9-2+

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Mt. Pleasant

Quadrangle scale 1/24,000

UTM References

A

1	5
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6	2	1	8	8	0
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4	5	3	5	7	3	0
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C

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 4, Block 9, Original Plat of Mt. Pleasant. Includes subject property only.

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Text, Research by Ms. Molly Myers Naumann, Public Historian
Form: James E. Jacobsen, National Register Coordinator

organization Iowa State Historical Department
Bureau of Community Programming date 11 August 1986
Office of Historic Preservation

street & number E. 12th & Grand Avenue telephone 515-281-4137

city or town Des Moines state IA 50319

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature David [Signature]

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 8/12/86

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

[Signature] Inter...
Keeper of the National Register date 9-22-86

Attest: [Signature] date
Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

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Continuation sheet Description Item number 7 Page 2

earliest photos (c. 1859 and c. 1875) show one more bay to the north with three round arched windows. Both the windows and the cornice appear to match the hotel. However, chimney placement indicates a wall where the present north wall is, and primary facade is symmetrical without this three window unit. It was gone by the time the 1886 Sanborn was drawn, and the present three story brick building was in place. Locally it is said that this northern portion was never actually part of the hotel itself.

Around 1900 the original windows were replaced by the present 2/2 wooden double hung windows. At that time the building was painted and the iron porch replaced the balcony. On the Monroe Street side it appears that the space between some of the brick piers was enclosed by this date.

A 1911 remodeling project created a large two story central lobby, shifting the emphasis from the second floor to the main level. The second floor was designated the "Parlor Floor" and devoted to reception rooms, sample rooms, and the large dining room. The hotel rooms proper were located on the third and fourth floors as they had always been. In 1926 a coffee shop was designed for the Monroe Street storefront area.

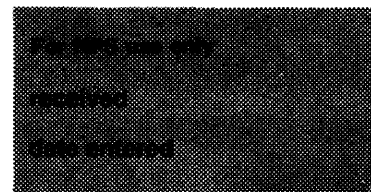
The third and fourth floors retain the flavor of a turn of the century hotel with few changes. They have not been used as hotel rooms on a regular basis since around 1970. The second (Parlor) floor has been vacant since c. 1978. It retains some elements from the 1911 remodeling, though some changes have been made over the years. The spacious dining room, kitchen, corner apartment, and mezzanine level public room remain. In 1973 Panther Drug expanded its store to include all of the first floor of the building. At that time a floor was installed at the second floor level of the central lobby, and the first floor totally opened up by replacing the brick walls around the lobby with columns.

In 1978 the Brazelton was purchased by the Panther family. The exterior was sandblasted and repointed to return it to the original red brick surface. New brickwork was laid on the west elevation below the store windows. Though this does not recreate the original frame and glass storefronts, it is less intrusive than the earlier "modernizations". This new brick matches the 1856 original very closely. The entire cleaning and repointing process has not adversely affected the building. The mortar lines are similar to the original and the surface of the brick is not highly textured and/or pitted. A close examination of the exterior did not reveal any spalling of the brick.

Stylistically, the Brazelton represents the commercial aspect of the most popular mid-19th century style in the area: Italianate. There are a number of good residential examples of Italianate design in Mount Pleasant dating from the late 1850's, and on the Iowa Wesleyan campus are two early brick buildings, one of which, Old Main (1854-55) exhibits Italianate characteristics, but the Brazelton is the finest (and earliest) commercial example.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet Significance

Item number 8

Page 2

original red brick surface. A comparison of the photos from c. 1875 and 1985 shows that the cleaning and repointing process has not apparently adversely affected the building. The mortar lines appear to be similar to the original and the surface of the brick is not highly textured and/or pitted. A close examination of the exterior did not reveal any spalling of the brick.

This building represents a significant period in the settlement of Mount Pleasant. From the very earliest days Mount Pleasant had been on a major transportation route, first the Military Road, and then the Territorial Road. The sheer volume of the traffic heading westward in the 1840's indicated the need for a better, more weatherproof road. On 18 December 1851 a celebration was held in Mount Pleasant to mark the completion of the Plank Road. Made of white oak planks, it was 8' wide and 28 miles long, stretching from Burlington to Mount Pleasant. Toll booths were placed every four miles and numerous taverns and hotels sprang up along the route. Jobe's Washington Hotel in Mount Pleasant was located in the east part of town, directly opposite the first toll booth. Of the five hotels in the community mentioned during this period, Jobe's is the only one described as being built of brick.²

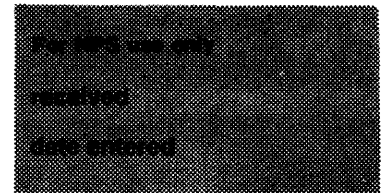
At the 1851 celebration a resolution was made " . . . ardently look for the time when the Mississippi shall be connected with the Missouri by railway" ³ At the very moment when the plank road was completed, they were already thinking of rails.⁴

On 15 January 1852 articles of incorporation were drawn up for the Burlington and Missouri River Rail Road Co. For several years railroad fever ran high, but little was accomplished. Finally, during the summer of 1855, a bid was received to build a single track from Boundary Street in Burlington to the east bank of the Skunk River in Henry County by 1857.⁵

Neither the Mount Pleasant Observer nor the Mount Pleasant Home Journal survive for the year 1856, so we must rely on the Burlington Hawk-Eye & Telegraph (both weekly and daily) for information on Mount Pleasant's development while the rails were approaching. Like Mount Pleasant, Burlington was a county seat town, and, as the starting point for the railroad, it was full of optimism for this newest means of transportation. As early as January 1856 the paper noted that 200 homes had been constructed in Mount Pleasant that season, and that there were still not half enough to supply the demand.⁶ On 16 July 1856 the Hawk-Eye & Telegraph said that 60 new buildings, costing from \$1,000 to \$30,000 were under construction and it was said that 100 dwellings and business houses would find tenants in one day "at heavy rents" if they were to be had. In 1854 Mount Pleasant had a population of 1,300 people. By mid 1856 when the railroad came through, the boom had boosted it to 3,245 "with 1,000 more expected by the end of the year."⁷ Two Mount Pleasant hotels advertised in the Hawk-Eye & Telegraph that year: the Madison House, "south side of the Square. E. Pakenham, Prop.;" and the Mount Pleasant House, "formerly Plank Road House," near the southwest corner of the public square, T. L. Pollard and E. R. Wolcott.

The rapid growth of Mount Pleasant is illustrated in an 1856 map by McBrideWaite & Co. The Burlington and Missouri River tracks are shown curving through town,

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**



**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Continuation sheet Significance Item number 8 Page 3

between the campus of Iowa Wesleyan University and the Public Square four blocks south. Four hotels are marked (two on the north side of the Square, one block west of the Square, and the Washington Hotel on the far east side of town). The Brazelton House Hotel is not shown, and nothing is noted at its site. However, a Brazelton Banking House is marked on the southwest corner of the Square and a lithograph of the bank building appears at the top center of the map.

It was in this climate that the articles of incorporation were filed in May 1856 for the Brazelton House Company. The company was formed because of the "estimated need" for a larger and better hotel due to the coming of the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad. The directors of the corporation included Wellington Bird, President, William P. Brazelton, William R. Robeson, T. V. Taft, W. W. Fluke, and M. L. Edwards, Secretary. The corporation purchased the west two-thirds of lot 4, block 9, from William and Jane Brazelton that same month. The capital stock was \$20,000, but the hotel cost \$30,000 by the time it was completed.

Why the hotel was named the Brazelton House rather than the Bird House is unclear, but the Brazelton family had long been active in Mount Pleasant, and both William and his brother Samuel were involved with the hotel project. William had served both as a city councilman and as treasurer of the City of Mount Pleasant. His brother Samuel (a general during the Black Hawk War) had arrived in Henry County in 1835, and been elected one of the three original Henry County commissioners the following year. Samuel was active in the community and promoted not only commercial but educational enterprises such as Iowa Wesleyan University. Brazelton Street in the east part of town is named for him. It appears that both William and Samuel were part of the Brazelton Banking House.

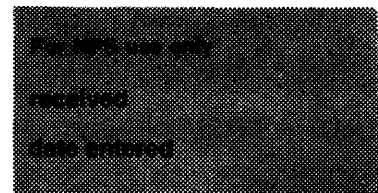
Lacking the Mount Pleasant newspapers from this period we have no firm primary documentation on the construction of the hotel, and no identification of architect and/or builder. We know that the land was purchased and articles of incorporation filed in May 1856. On 11 January 1857 the hotel was complete, because we have a Bill of Fare for Sunday dinner on that date. It carries the notation that John Eichelberger was the proprietor.

From the very beginning the Brazelton seems to have had financial problems. Circuit Court records from 1858 to 1865 show an almost continuous list of cases against William P. Brazelton, his company, and various members of the board of directors. Samuel Brazelton became actively involved because of a \$10,000 mortgage he took on the property in May 1857. William Brazelton and his wife Jane disappear around 1858 and are never mentioned again.

Theoretically the idea for a large first class hotel was a good one with the railroad coming to town. In reality, however, the community and the economy simply could not support it. The building was sold and re-sold over the years. As owners changed, so did the proprietors of the hotel. Directories and atlases show the following:

- 1859-60 Samuel Brazelton, Prop. (He dies in 1860 at age 65.)
- 1865&67 S. D. Swan, Prop.
- 1870 Col. R. Root, Prop. (He had purchased the hotel from banker Timothy Whiting the previous year.)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**



**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Continuation sheet Significance Item number 8 Page 4

- 1875 James D. Soles, Prop. (He arrived that year from Illinois, the hotel was then called the Commercial House.)
- 1884-85 Edward Stahl, Prop. (It was again called the Brazelton. Stahl was also the proprietor of the Harlan House Hotel.)

There were several other hotels in Mount Pleasant during this same time period. In 1867 the City Directory lists the Brazelton House, Mount Pleasant House, Union House, and the Wiggins House. By 1870 the Mount Pleasant House is no longer listed, but the City Hotel is. In 1875 traveler E. C. Hussey noted "There are a number of Fair Hotels in the city, among them the Harlan House, \$2.50 per day; Wiggins House, \$1.50 per day; and the Commercial House (Brazelton), \$2.00 per day."⁹

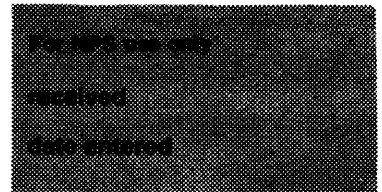
A study of the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps from 1886 to 1931 shows the changing retail use of the first floor storefronts. There were four stores along Main Street, and room for three on the Monroe Street side. Most of the stores show a variety of tenants over the years, except for the two on the corner. The shop just north of the corner was a cigar store throughout the Sanborns, but disappeared in later city directories, giving way to a news stand.

The corner location is shown as a drug store on all of the maps and city directories. It is the oldest continuous business on the Square. H. T. Bird opened his drug store in this corner shop in 1861. Soon after it opened, J. W. Satterwaite purchased an interest in the store, and bought out Bird in 1875. In 1889 John J. Hericho purchased the business and it remained in the Jericho family until 1945. That year it was purchased by Joe Panther and Jim O'Connor, with O'Connor selling his share to Panther in 1948. It was Panther Drug until 1983 when it became Drug Fair.¹⁰

Historically the Brazelton House is symbolic of the spirit of adventure and progress that was sweeping the area in the 1850's. Everything was growing, everything held bright promise. There was no limit to what could be accomplished. The Brazelton was built as a fine hotel, based on the premise that the railroad and the city both needed a large, grand hostelry. Overconfidence in both the economy and the future provided a building that was too large and too grand to be financially responsible. However, it has served as a visual landmark and a symbol of what Mount Pleasant's promoters believed it would be.

*The periods of significance were determined as follows. 1856 is naturally the year of construction, and therefore the period for the architectural significance. 1856-57 represents the brief boom building period in Mt. Pleasant which elapsed between the completion of this hotel and the onset of the panic of 1857-58 which terminated investment and construction in this and every other American city.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**



**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Continuation sheet Bibliography

Item number 9

Page 2

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2. Ben Hur Wilson. "Planked from Burlington." Palimpsest. Vol XVI, No 10, (Oct 1935), p 320.
3. Burlington Daily Telegraph, 22 Dec 1851.
4. Richard Overton, Burlington West. (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1941), p 50.
5. Ibid. p 71.
6. Burlington Weekly Hawk-Eye & Telegraph, 9 Jan 1856.
7. Overton, p 72.
8. Articles of Incorporation, Brazelton House Company.
9. E. C. Hussey, Victorian Home Building: A Transcontinental View of 1875. (Reprint. Watkins Glen, N.Y.: American Life Foundation, 1976), p 351.
10. Sandy Williams, "Henry County History Series", Mount Pleasant News, 19 May 1973.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Bibliography

Item number 9

Page 3

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

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Item number 9

Page 4

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HISTORIC IMAGES

Bill of Fare, Brazelton House, 11 January 1857.

Photograph, c. 1859, unknown source.

Photograph, c. 1875, unknown source (shows as "Commercial House").

Picture Post Cards, c. 1900, 1907, 1908, 1945.