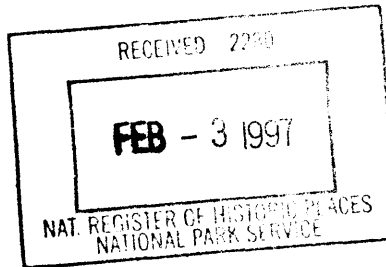


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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



### National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

#### 1. Name of Property

historic name The Fisher/Plane Commercial Building

other names/site number N/A

#### 2. Location

street & number 119/121 1st Str. E. N/A  not for publication

city or town Independence N/A  vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Buchanan code 019 zip code 50644

#### 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  nationally  statewide  locally. ( see continuation sheet for additional comments).

Patricia Murkins DSHPO 1-29-97  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State Historical Society of Iowa  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

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

Edson R. Beall 3/8/97  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The Fisher/Plane Commercial Building  
Name of Property

Buchanan County, Iowa  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

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

**Number of Resources within Property**

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2		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**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN/Italianate

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE/limestone

walls STONE/limestone

BRICK

roof SYNTHETICS

other \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

The Fisher/Plane Commercial Building  
Name of Property

Buchanan County, Iowa  
County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1874

**Significant Dates**

1874

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Netcott, George, Jr.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository:

Collection of the owners



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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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The Fisher/Plane Commercial Building, Independence, Buchanan Co., Iowa

The Fisher/Plane Commercial Building is locally significant under Criterion "C" as an example of Late Victorian architecture in the Italianate style. It is one of a continuous block of similar buildings which line the south side of 1st Street East in the business district of Independence, Iowa. The double wide commercial building was built in 1874. The east half was originally owned by Henry A. Fisher and the west half was originally owned by Robert R. Plane. The building was built following a fire which destroyed most of the commercial property of the young town. As a reaction against the former situation, the building was built of limestone, brick, and brick veneer over an irregularly laid limestone foundation. A masonry fire wall divides the building longitudinally. The flat roof, which is covered with synthetic roofing material, slopes evenly from the front to the back.

Although each half of the building has always been owned by different parties and has always functioned as two buildings, it presents a single, unified front facade in the main commercial area of Independence. For the purpose of this nomination the property is considered to be two contributing buildings due to this dual ownership. The front or north facade of the two story building contains two store fronts which flank a common stairway to the second floor. Both store fronts were modernized sometime during the early 1900's. The entry to the west store has a mosaic floor with the words "I.C. Plane Hardware" worked into the pattern. The entry to the east store is deeper and features a geometric pattern. The depth reflects the difference between the merchandise presented on each side. The west store was a hardware store at the time the new fronts were installed and a relatively small display area was required. The east store was a clothing store and the deeper entry allowed a much larger display window. The door to the common stair is modern and the opening has been reduced in size, but the original transom of small square panes of frosted and textured glass remains. The decorative cast iron vertical members which form the edges of each store also remain. On the outer edges of the building, the masonry is covered by fluted pilasters with flat corinthian capitals. The inner corners of the stores are capped with iron posts which were made with a rope twist pattern above a low pedestal base. These inner columns are labeled products of the Megow Foundry which operated in Independence in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Modern umbrella awnings shade each store front. The wall above the glass display windows is supported by an exposed "I" beam that is decorated with cast metal rosettes. The running bond brick wall above the "I" beam contains seven evenly spaced, tall, narrow, double-hung windows with arched tops. The sashes of the four windows on the west have four lights, while the three on the east have single lights. The tops of the upper sashes in the three east windows have been lowered to accommodate a dropped ceiling in the living area of the second floor. Metal hoods ornament the windows and a metal cornice spans the building at the top of the

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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The Fisher/Plane Commercial Building, Independence, Buchanan Co., Iowa

front wall.

The dual nature of the building is immediately evident as one views it from the south. The east wall of the east store is a party wall shared with the property to the east and therefore, there is no exposure on this facade. The front 60 feet is two stories high and then there is a one story extension which continues for another 60 feet on to the south. Above the one story section, the second story of the west store is visible. This wall is composed of several types of brick and cement block. There is no pattern and the placement of the different materials suggests several major repairs.

The ground level south of the building falls to the west as one approaches the Wapsipinicon River, so the rear door of the east store is roughly four feet above grade. A short flight of concrete steps leading to a concrete loading dock provides access to this rear door. There is a wooded stair from the loading dock up to the roof of the one story extension of the east store. This provides access to the second story of the east store. The south face of this second story is of running bond brick and contains two double-hung windows and a door. The window and door openings have arched tops constructed of headers. The window sashes have four lights and there is a fan light transom over the door. The south facade of the west store presents a three story elevation. There is a modern overhead garage door (covered with plywood) and a door at the basement level. The door is built of two layers of beaded tongue-in-groove lumber running at opposing angles. The walls of the basement are of limestone faced with concrete. Unpainted brick in a running bond pattern forms the remainder of the wall. There are four windows and a wooden hatch (which provided access to an early tin ship) in this upper wall. All of the openings have rowlock arched tops. The windows are widely spaced, two per floor, and the hatch (currently covered with a metal sign) is in the middle of the space. The lower windows are filled with single light, fixed sashes and the upper windows are covered with plywood. The hatch is filled with a wooden door.

The west face of the building is two stories tall above the exposed basement. Again, this wall is composed of a mixture of brick, cement block, glass block, and concrete faced limestone. The glass block is located in two window openings which have been closed. This, again, is evidence of several dates of construction or major repairs. The northern section of this facade is, again, a party wall shared with the commercial building to the west. The basement level of the south and west walls has been covered with a painted mural. Sanborn Fire Insurance maps and contemporary newspaper accounts prove that the exposed basement level of the west store was originally a separately functioning one story addition to the front half of the store. This is visually evident when the building is viewed from

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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The Fisher/Plane Commercial Building, Independence, Buchanan Co., Iowa

the south and the west. The upper walls which rest on the concrete faced limestone base were laid so that the inner surfaces are flush. This creates a ledge on the exterior surface of the wall.

The interior of the east store is one large open space. The fourteen foot high ceiling is covered with embossed metal and a metal cornice. A large beam supports the end of the second story. South of the beam there is a sky light which has been closed. The full basement is entered through a trap door at about the midpoint of the store. The current owners also use the commercial space of the adjacent store to the east, so they have cut a walkway in the common wall between the two spaces. The second story is reached from the front of the building by a common stair between the stores or by the exposed wooden stair and over the roof of the one story addition at the rear of the building. There is a small common area at the top of the front stair. Extending to the rear of the building along the east side of the midline is a hallway. Two vacant one bedroom apartments open off of this hall. Original pine and oak flooring and milled door and window casings are visible and the ceilings of the apartments have been lowered.

The interior of the west store can be divided into a front half and a back half on all three levels. The floors are not at the same levels in the two halves. This is due to the declining grade of the land behind the building and changes in the building's usage. The front half is roughly 97' long and the rear half is roughly 55' long. The full basement under the front half is the lowest level. Passing through a doorway and up a short incline to the south, one reaches the basement of the rear half which was originally the one story extension. This is an unfinished storage area at the present time. Up a short flight of stairs to the north, one enters the main level commercial space of the front half. A small work area is partitioned off at the south end of this space. A modern dropped ceiling covers the original tongue-in-groove beaded board ceiling. A metal track for a rolling ladder remains on each side of the original ceiling. These ladders would have been necessary to reach the upper levels of the shelving which originally lined the walls. There is an office loft above the work area at the south end of this space. Windows in what would have originally been the south exterior wall remain visible in this loft area. The upper sashes are still in place. Up another short flight of stairs to the south from the work area, is the main commercial space of the rear half. This space is used as additional display space by the current owners. An enclosed "L" shaped stair at the south end of this space leads past the hatch in the south wall to the second floor of the rear half. This is an unfinished work space which is believed to have been the tin shop of the original owner. Work benches and several large stumps and molds used to form the tin remain covered with dust in this area. Through a door in the north wall of this area is a shallow enclosed area (less than

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The Fisher/Plane Commercial Building, Independence, Buchanan Co., Iowa

10 feet in depth) between the front and rear halves of the building. The north wall of this area would have been an exterior wall originally. Low on the walls, the tar line of the original roof for the one story addition is visible. Also, the tops of the windows in the office loft extend a few feet above the floor level. Higher up in the north wall of the space are three tall, narrow, arched top windows that are double-hung with four light sashes. In the northwest corner of this space is an open timbered elevator shaft. The elevator is still in place. A large loop of rope engages a pulley system to move the platform between the different levels of the building. It extends from the low basement to the top level of the front half of the building.

The second floor of the front half of the building is reached most easily by ascending the common stair which rises from the front of the building between the two stores. From the common area at the top of the stair, one can move to the northwest into a large finished room at the front of the building. This room was rented by the original owner as office space. Through a door to the south from the common area is a large unfinished storage area. This area was warehouse space for the hardware store of the original owner. The elevator was used to move merchandise from this area to the main commercial area below.



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The Fisher/Plane Commercial Building, Independence, Buchanan Co., Iowa

The Fisher/Plane Commercial Building is locally significant under Criterion "C" as a fine example of Italianate commercial architecture. Located at 119 and 121 1st Street East in Independence, Iowa, it is one of a group of similar buildings which forms the southern wall of the business district. The original plat of Independence was in the traditional town square pattern. However, commercial activity was localized outside of that area near the Wapsipinicon River and the mills which took advantage of the water power. Therefore, the business district in Independence developed originally as a strip of stores which led to the bridge over the river and the mills located on the west bank.

The business district of Independence was destroyed by two disastrous fires in 1873 and 1874. The buildings which were built to replace the earlier wooden structures were built of stone and brick over a relatively short time period immediately after the fires. Also wooden sheds which had been located behind each of the buildings were eliminated. Independence is significant in that this collection of buildings presents a unified character in the main business district of the town today. Several events have claimed some of the original buildings in the last 120 years, but most of the post fire buildings remain. The Fisher/Plane building exists largely in its original condition. With the exception of the two store fronts and several window sashes which have been replaced, all of the original features remain. When areas of the building were modernized or lost their usefulness, historic materials were covered (to create a type of time capsule) instead of being removed.

A vintage stereopticon picture taken from an upper floor of the Wapsipinicon Mill shows the south side of 1st Street East under construction. The line of buildings was built as one continuous project. The grade of the street falls as it nears the river and the buildings form a slight stair step as they descend the hill. The rate of this grade is believed to have determined the division of the buildings' front elevations. Each of the store fronts was owned by a separate individual, but if the grade was slight enough, two adjacent stores were grouped to form one unified building front. The Fisher/Plane Commercial Building is one of several double units in this line of buildings. As other property owners in the area become aware of the significance of their buildings, they will undoubtedly pursue registration.

Histories of Buchanan County published in both 1881 and 1914 mention that George Netcott, Jr., was a mason who was actively involved in several large building projects. An English immigrant, he moved to Independence in the early 1870's. He is credited with building "practically all the best brick structures in his city." His son, Harry E. Netcott (born in 1867), would become the architect and designer of many of those structures. He was also the owner of the George

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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The Fisher/Plane Commercial Building, Independence, Buchanan Co., Iowa

Netcott Brick Yards which were established in 1880. Although his involvement cannot be proven, Netcott would have certainly had the knowledge and resources to complete the rebuilding of the young city's core.

The Fisher/Plane building displays its architectural style basically on the second floor. The smooth running bond brick wall is interrupted by uniform, evenly spaced windows. These windows, all of which were originally double-hung with four light sashes, have semicircular arched tops that are ornamented with cast metal hoods. A prominent metal architectural cornice extends across the top of the wall. This front wall rests on an exposed "I" beam which spans the distance above the glass and cast iron store fronts. The iron corners of the store fronts are signed products of the Megow Foundry owned by Frank Megow and located in Independence during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Originally the store windows extended from the "I" beam down to a low wooden base. These windows were divided into quarters. Sometime in the early twentieth century the store fronts were modernized. The height of the store windows and doors was reduced and the iron corner pieces at the central corners of the stores were eliminated. Although not original, the redesigned store fronts are old enough to have developed significance of their own as they relate to the continuity of the property's development. The display windows are panelled in solid oak with narrow board oak flooring. The ceilings in the windows are coffered. The entry area leading to the front doors of both stores is paved with a mosaic. The floor of the west store identifies it as the I.C. Plane Hardware (I.C. Plane was the son of Robert Plane) store and the floor of the east store is in a geometric pattern.

Henry A. Fisher opened his grocery store at this location in 1866. His sister, Clara J. Scott, owned the store building and H.A. Fisher purchased it from her in 1869. Their brother, Sanford S. Fisher, was also involved and so the Fisher Grocery was truly a family business. In May of 1874, the building was burned in the "Great Fire of Independence." The Fisher Brothers had a loss of \$8,000 of which half was covered by insurance. They rebuilt and Henry and his wife, Hester, and son, Henry W., moved into the living quarters above the new store. H.A. Fisher operated his grocery at this location for a total of 32 years before his death in October of 1897. After his death, his wife's brother, S.C. White, continued the business for several years.

The Sanborn and Perris Insurance Map of Independence for 1905 shows the space occupied by a clothing store and a telephone exchange. In 1902, H.W. Fisher sold the east store building to Emerson E. Hasner. E.E. Hasner was an attorney and he probably maintained an office on the second floor. The rest of the second floor was leased to B.B. Sells, M.D., and the Corn Belt Telephone Co. It was probably

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The Fisher/Plane Commercial Building, Independence, Buchanan Co., Iowa

about this same time that Albert Israel moved his men's clothing and furnishings store into the main floor.

Albert Israel came to the United States with his mother, Florentine, from Germany in 1885. He was 14 years old. They lived with relatives in Cedar Falls, Iowa, and eventually moved to Independence in 1894. E.E. Hasner died in 1917 and A. Israel purchased the property from the Hasner heirs. Mr. Israel's nephew, Ronald Baum, joined him in the business and purchased it after Israel's death in 1933. The Baum family restored the second floor to a residential rental space with two one bedroom apartments. Baum's Clothing was a landmark in Independence until 1989.

Connie and Donald Brown purchased the property from the Baum heirs and expanded their business into the space. At that time they were operating a Sears Catalog Outlet Store in the next building to the east. After purchasing the east half of the Fisher/Plane building, they cut a doorway between the two commercial spaces and the new area became the home of Connie's Hallmark Store. They have sensitively adapted the space to fit their needs and have retained much of the original architectural details. The second floor is now vacant.

Robert R. Plane came to Independence with a wagon load of hardware merchandise in 1854. He established the first hardware store west of Dubuque, Iowa, and shipped goods to points as far west as Fort Dodge, Iowa. The fire in May of 1874 destroyed his store building and stock with a loss valued at \$22,000. Insurance covered only \$6,000 of the loss. His new store and tin shop were rebuilt at the same location on Main Street at the south end of Chatham Street (2nd Ave. N.E.) Two succeeding generations of the Plane family operated the hardware store until ceasing operations in 1960.

The west half of the Fisher/Plane Building was then sold to George D. Conklin and it became the home of Conklin Decorating. Conklin Decorating had operated in Independence at various locations since 1935. Besides operating the store, Conklin and his two sons, Charles M. Conklin and Carroll G. Conklin, lead work crews which performed exterior painting and interior decorating services. Their signatures on their work are scattered all over northeastern Iowa. When the elder Conklin retired, C.M. Conklin and his wife, Audrey M. Conklin, purchased the store and business and continued operations until they retired in 1992. Leanne Harrison and her son, Trevor Harrison, became the new owners and renamed the business First Street Decorating. The Harrison's have worked to maintain the building and are continually expanding their operations to fill the empty portions of the structure.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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The Fisher/Plane Commercial Building, Independence, Buchanan Co., Iowa

### Bibliography:

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Church, Harry, and Katharyn Joella Chappell. History of Buchanan County Iowa and Its People. Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing, 1914.

Green, Fayal. The Anatomy of a House. New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Pub. Group, Inc., 1991.

History of Buchanan Co. Iowa. Cleveland, Ohio: Williams Bro., 1881.

Independence Newspapers, files. Located at Office of the Buchanan County Auditor, Buchanan County Court House, Independence, Iowa.

Sanborn and Perris Map Co. Map of Independence, Iowa. New York, 1892 - 1932.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 9

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The Fisher/Plane Commercial Building, Independence, Buchanan Co., Iowa

### Verbal Boundary Description:

Commencing at the Northwest corner of Lot 4, Block 4, of Stoughton and McClure's Addition to Independence, Buchanan Co., Iowa, thence West 40'6", thence South 165', thence East 40'6", thence North 165' to point of beginning.

### Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes the property historically associated with the buildings discussed in this nomination.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Photographs Page 10

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The Fisher/Plane Commercial Building, Independence, Buchanan Co., Iowa

The following information is common to all photographs:

Photographer: Mark A. White

Date: April 1996

Negatives in the possession of the owners

1. North facade - camera facing south
2. East facade - camera facing northwest
3. South facade - camera facing north
4. West facade - camera facing northeast
5. Tin ceiling of east half commercial space
6. Tin shop - second floor of south half of west half of building - camera facing southeast
7. Original second story exterior wall of west half of building - elevator visible on left - tar line for original roof of one story extension visible under windows - camera facing northeast

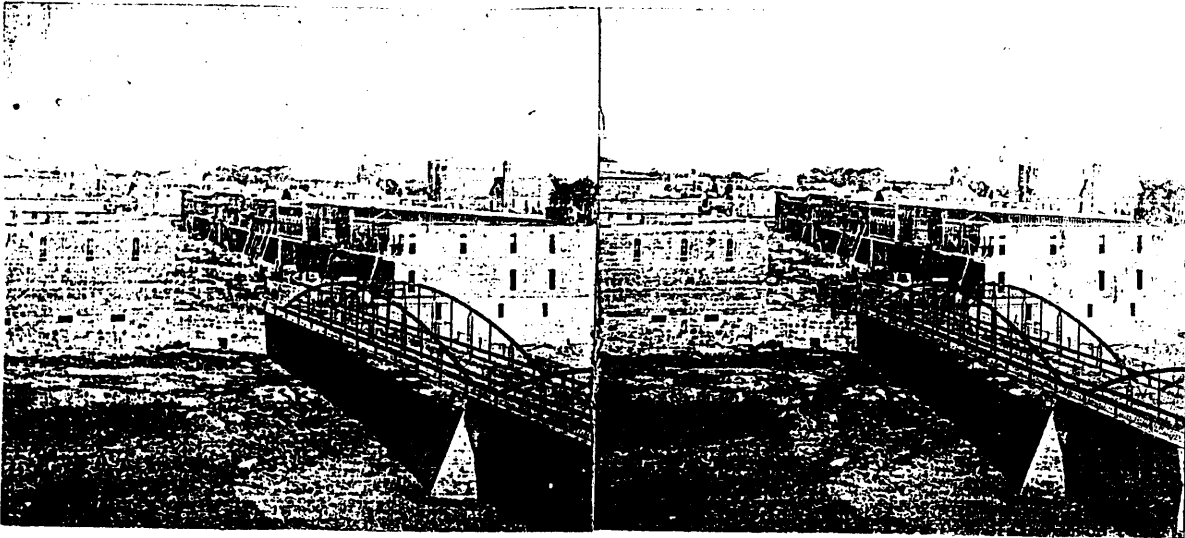
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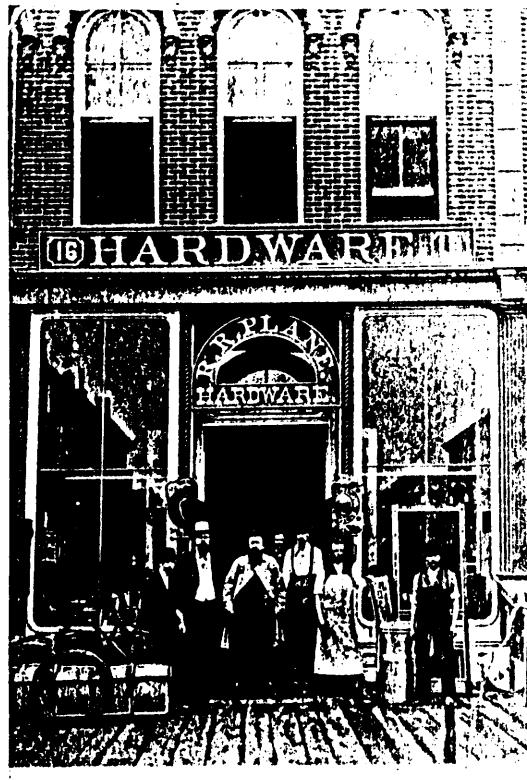
Section number Photographs Page 11

The Fisher/Plane Commercial Building, Independence, Buchanan Co., Iowa

South side of 1st Street East under construction - taken from an upper floor window of the Wapsipinicon Mill



Original store front of the west half of the building



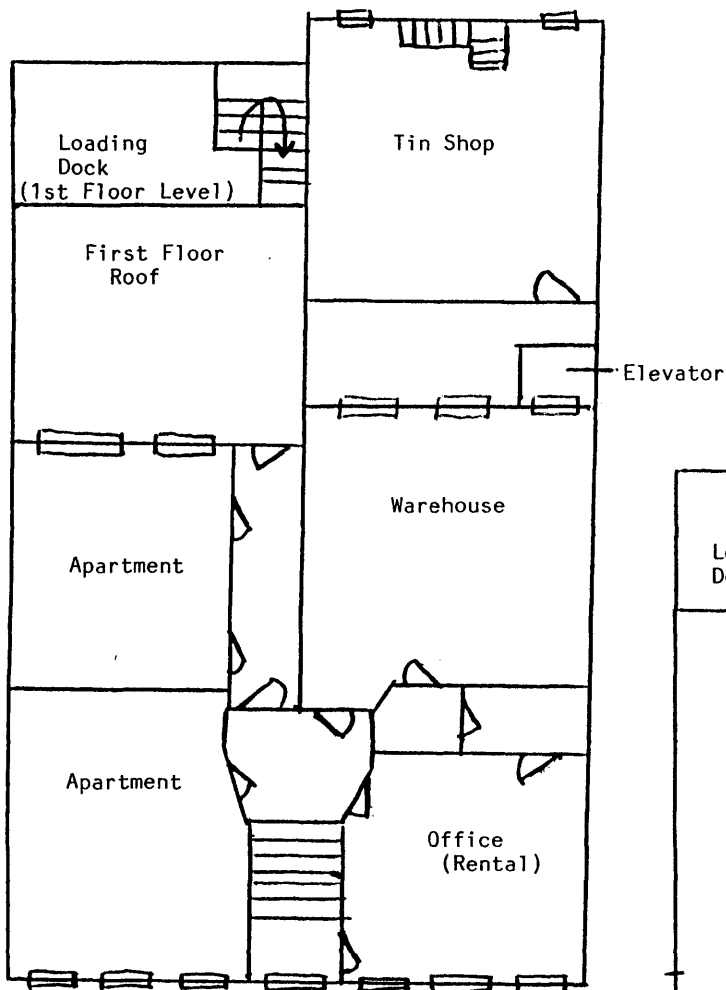
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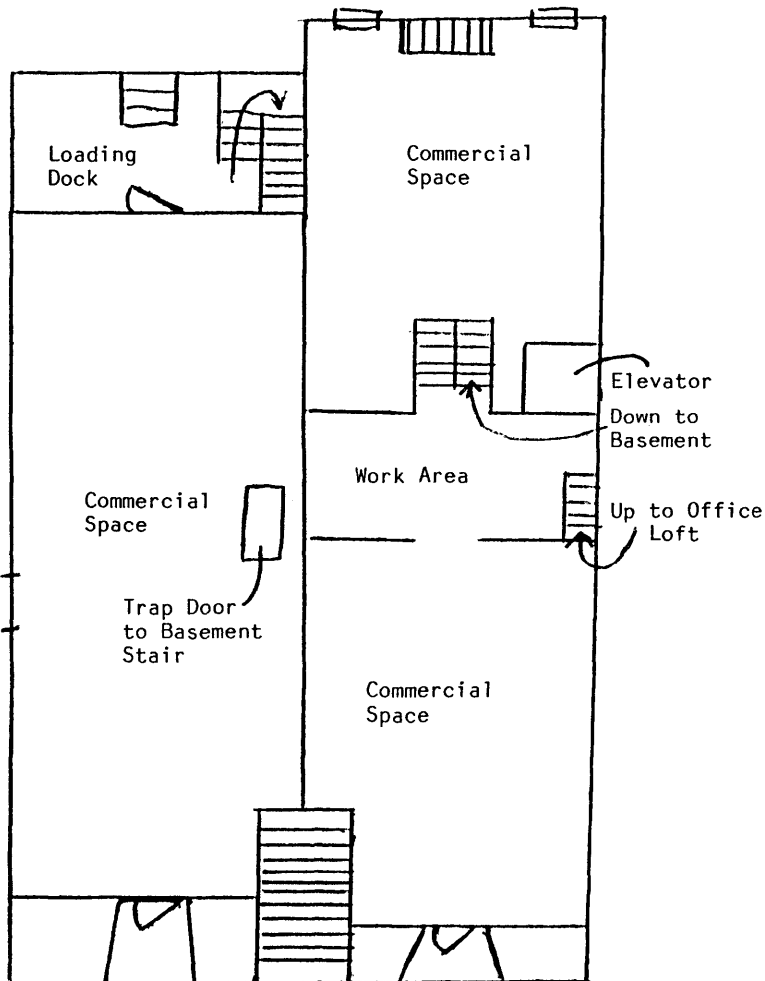
Section number Floorplan Page 12

The Fisher/Plane Commercial Building, Independence, Buchanan Co., Iowa

Second Floor



First Floor



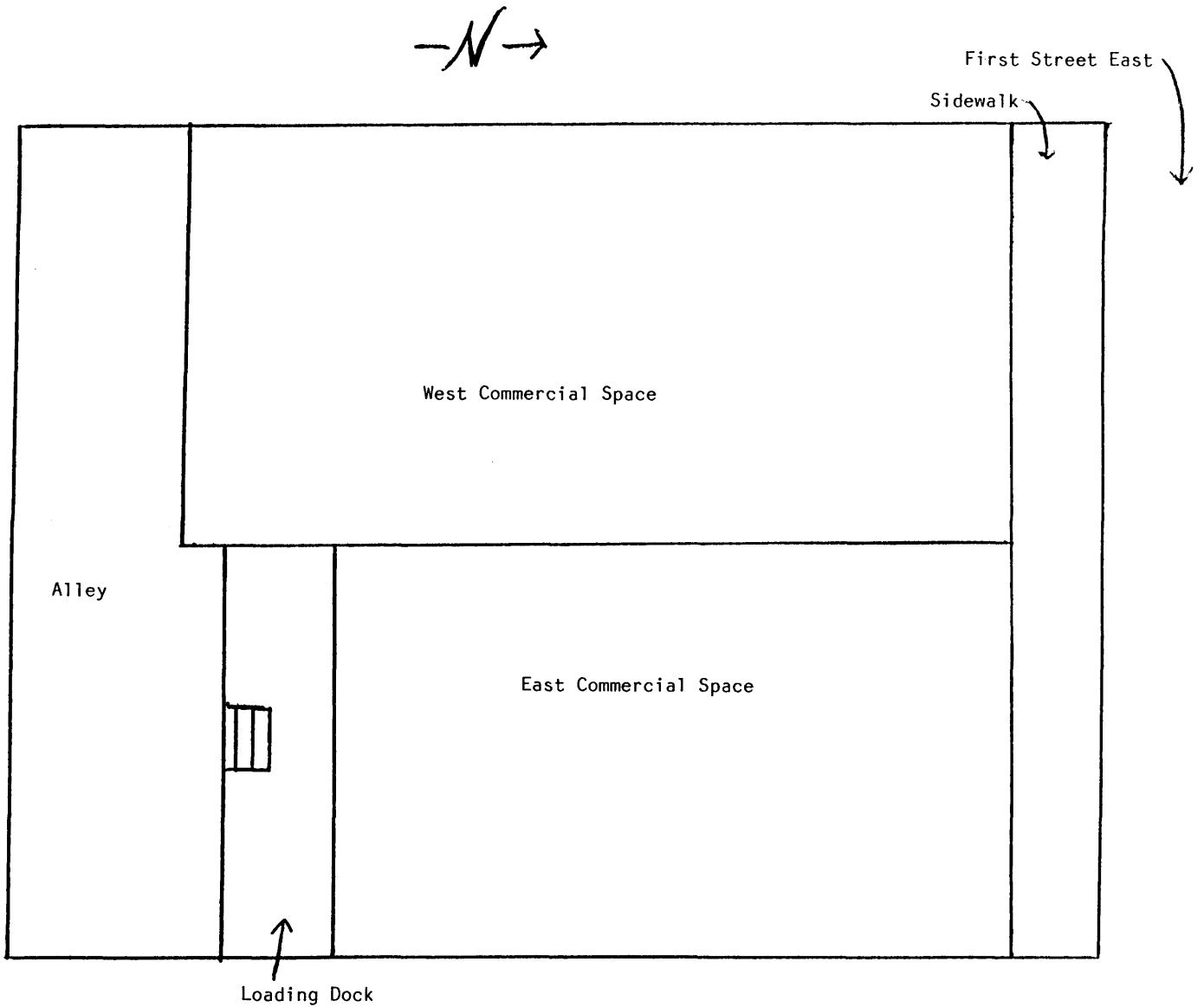


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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Site Plan Page 13

The Fisher/Plane Commercial Building, Independence, Buchanan Co., Iowa



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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Plat Map Page 14

The Fisher/Plane Commercial Building, Independence, Buchanan Co., Iowa

