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 K. J. Taralseth Company
   other names/site number Taralseth Building

2. Location
   street & number 427 N. Main Street
   city or town Warren
   state Minnesota code MN county Marshall code 089 zip code 56762

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 X does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant X nationallX stateX local X. (X See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
   Signature of certifying official/Title Ian R. Stewart Date 7/23/02
   Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
   State of Federal agency and bureau Minnesota Historical Society
   In my opinion, the property X meets X does not meet the National Register criteria. (X See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
   Signature of commenting 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.
   X See continuation sheet.
   □ determined not eligible for the National Register.
   □ removed from the National Register.
   □ other, (explain):

   Signature of the Keeper Date of Action
5. Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ownership of Property</th>
<th>Category of Property</th>
<th>Number of Resources within Property</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☑ private</td>
<td>☑ building(s)</td>
<td>Contributing: 1 Noncontributing: 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ public-local</td>
<td>□ district</td>
<td>buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ public-State</td>
<td>□ site</td>
<td>sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ public-Federal</td>
<td>□ structure</td>
<td>structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ object</td>
<td>objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historic Functions</th>
<th>Current Functions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMMERCE/TRADE/department store</td>
<td>WORK IN PROGRESS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMERCE/TRADE/business</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL/meeting hall</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Description

Architectural Classification
Enter categories from instructions

LATE 19th AND 20th CENTURY REVIVALS/

Tudor Revival

Materials
Enter categories from instructions

foundation  Brick
walls  Brick

roof  Asphalt
other

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

Commerce

Period of Significance
1911-1938

Significant Dates
1911

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
DeRemer, Joseph Bell (architect)

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 granted: 12/13/01
☐ 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:
10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property  less than one  

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>3210</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By  See continuation sheet

name/title __________________________ date __________________________

organization __________________________ date __________________________

street & number __________________________ telephone __________________________

city or town __________________________ state __________ zip code __________

Additional Documentation
Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

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.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items
(For any additional items, check with the SHPO or FPO)

Property Owner
(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO)

name __________________________

street & number __________________________ telephone __________________________

city or town __________________________ state __________ zip code __________

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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.
The K.J. Taralseth Company is a commercial building with Tudor Revival characteristics (Whiffen 1992, 183-190). The building, built in 1911, measures seventy-five feet by one hundred-forty feet comprising 31,860 square feet on its three levels with a small, protruding loading dock. It stands in the center of the central business district that extends approximately four blocks in any direction and is mainly comprised of one and two story brick buildings (Sanborn 1927). The orientation of the streets surrounding the building in downtown Warren do not match with cardinal directions; the avenues that would normally run east and west are approximately thirty degrees north of east with streets perpendicular to them. For the sake of clarity from this point forward directions will be noted by their closest cardinal coordinate which assumes avenues to run east and west, streets north and south. The north and east facades of the building face the two major thoroughfares of Main Street and Johnson Avenue while a one story commercial building is located to the south and an alley followed by more one and two story buildings to the west.

The two story brick building is constructed using load bearing brick walls around the perimeter which rest on a brick masonry foundation and cast iron columns supporting iron beams and wood structure floors. A flat asphalt roof tops the building and is concealed by a parapet with varying heights and ornamentation. The north and east facades are made up of Twin City variegated brick, while the south and west facades exhibit a light colored common brick (Warren Sheaf, 5 October, 1911). On the north and east sides, a molded belt course runs along the top of the building below the parapet and another stretches underneath the second floor windows where it is incorporated into the limestone sills.

The east façade, which displays a symmetrical design, is divided into three bays; the center bay is set back approximately three inches from the outside bays. The center bay is made up of a glass storefront with four large viewing windows each topped with a transom and spanned with a limestone lintel. Three equally spaced windows with individual limestone sills and lintels are seen on the second floor. The outer bays are identical to each other with a centered double doorway covered with a triangular pediment and flanked by large windows and pilasters. On the second floor of the outside bays, three equally spaced windows are again found except now capped by a continuous limestone lintel and ornamented on each side with two small blocks of limestone. A limestone pediment with a small stepped gable and tracerly design pattern is seen at the center peak of both outside bays.

At the cornice the north façade is also symmetrical and comprised of seven bays. The center bay holds two large storefront windows separated by mullions each topped with two transom windows as well as a continuous limestone lintel. The second floor of this center bay displays four equally spaced windows with limestone sills and lintels. A pair of thinner bays flanks the center bay on either side, slightly outset from the center. Each bay has a replacement doorway flanked by large storefront windows all spanned by transoms and a limestone lintel. On the second floor of these bays are two equally spaced windows capped with a continuous limestone lintel with two decorative limestone blocks on either side. Above these windows is a decorative limestone inlay. Outside these bays lie the smallest bays set back to the same plane as the center bay with only a single glass storefront window spanned by transoms and a limestone lintel. The second floor shows two equally spaced windows with individual limestone sills and lintels. The two outside bays are again pulled out equal to the bays that flank the center bay. These bays each have a double entry door with a triangular pediment, windows on both sides, with transoms and limestone lintels above. On the second floor three windows are grouped and capped with a single limestone lintel and two limestone blocks on either side. Above the second floor on these bays rise stepped triangular pediments with inlaid limestone tracerly flanked by raised parapets. These outside bays are detailed very similarly to the outside bays on the east side with only one exception, the second floor windows are set closer together.

The west façade displays an asymmetrical design. Six windows with limestone sills, placed in three sets of two are evenly spaced on the second floor. A second floor doorway, accessed by an iron fire escape/stairway, divides the westerly and middle sets of windows. The first floor of the façade has three small windows with sills approximately five feet above grade. Limestone sills are located directly below the second floor door and the middle set of windows. Two windows are located below the south set of windows on the second floor.
A window matching the other first floor windows is located on the southwest side of the addition. On the westernmost corner, there is a brick chimney that rises about four feet above the parapet. Another unique feature occurs at ground level of the south and west corners of the building where large, monolithic granite bumpers protect the building from traffic.

After the closing of the building, of which the exact date is unknown but estimated as sometime in the mid 1970's, the elements and illegal occupants have taken their toll on the building. The first floor was completely gutted of any interior walls, and this large open space was littered with various items that had been stored there for a long time, in addition to building materials from the original construction as well as subsequent renovations. The original floorboards were exposed and the floor was severely rotted and buckled with several areas of open holes ranging from two inches to approximately fourteen inches in diameter. The interior walls of the building that face onto the street were lined with a raised display area that would have originally held window displays. These display areas were still somewhat intact but mostly in severe disrepair. There was evidence of interior partition walls and a dropped ceiling. Along the southwest side of the space are staircases leading to the second floor and the basement. The only real surviving element of the original interior construction is a stairway leading to a small office and restroom overlooking the first floor however these features were severely deteriorated.

When climbing the stairs to the second floor and arriving at the landing leading to the corridor and subsequent apartments, one of the most obvious sights was the evidence of transient occupation. Graffiti was seen throughout the building but mostly on the second floor corridors. The floor on the second level had buckled nearly two feet. The apartments appeared to have been last renovated sometime in the late 1960's or 1970's. Much of the gypsum wallboard and ceiling panels had fallen to the floor either by rotting from severe roof leakage or been torn down by vandals. In addition to the obvious damage done by the water leaking from the roof, materials such as wood and carpets were severely molded. It appears as though many of the apartment furnishings were left; including kitchen appliances, mattresses, furniture, and other miscellaneous items. In many of the apartments it was obvious that intruders had built fires resulting in charred finishes and burned walls and floors.

These conditions, which were observed prior to the start of rehabilitation in August, 2001, included the empty basement which was inundated with approximately ten inches of water yet had some walls still standing. The remaining walls were limited to the partition wall surrounding the main staircase that once lead downstairs, these were constructed of wood lath and plaster. Also, the masonry walls that enclosed what was once the coal storage room for the original heating system remained. In addition to the partition walls, construction of the perimeter walls was also deteriorated. The structural capabilities of the exterior walls were intact, although, the walls which were furred out and covered with plaster and wood lath, materials were completely deteriorated from exposure to water and other factors. Pipes were also hanging from the exposed ceiling structure above. The concrete floor was in very poor condition with numerous cracks and subsequent heaving.

When the rehabilitation began in August, 2001, the entire interior was removed down to the structural members. This demolition was part of the first phase of the project which also included some site work and exterior renovation. The exterior renovation consisted of replacing the windows with historically accurate replications using modern, clear glass and wood frames. The brick was cleaned and woodwork was repaired or replaced. No modifications of the exterior shell of the building were made with the exception of a new roof and reopening original window openings that had been closed. The second phase involved installation of modern mechanical and electrical systems. The third and final stage of the construction is currently underway and involves all interior rough and finished construction. The basement will be cleaned but left unused due to flooding and fire egress concerns. Approximately one third of the main level of the building will become home to a local law firm and the remaining two-thirds will be used as a community center. The second floor will be senior apartments accessible by stair and an elevator which is housed in the location of the original freight elevator.
The K.J. Taralseth Company in the city of Warren, Marshall County, Minnesota, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its local significance in the area of commerce. It is associated with the Minnesota state historic context of: Railroads and Agricultural Development 1870 - 1940. The K.J. Taralseth Company served as a department store from 1911, when it was first constructed, through 1959, when the Taralseth family sold the business. Even though the building as it exists today wasn’t built until 1911, the K.J. Taralseth Company was a significant part of the commercial and building fabric of this community from 1888 when Knud Taralseth opened his first department store through its decline, which began in 1938.

Prior to the late 1800’s, the area that is now known as Marshall County, Minnesota was a vast, fertile land inhabited by the native tribes of the area and later, fur traders who made their way south from Canada. The rich farm land opened the door to new settlers, a process that was expedited in 1878 when the tracks of the St. Paul and Pacific Railway, later known as the St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba, entered the area which would become Warren. Just four years earlier, the first Euro-American pioneer had settled in present day Warren (Warren 1980, 4). Marshall County was formed in 1879 and the same year James P. Nelson, Ethan Allen, and four other partners created the Warrant Town Site Company to organize the sale of land to new settlers. In the fall of 1879 the area was platted, lots sold and building commenced immediately. By 1881 approximately 90 buildings had been constructed and Warren was home to 108 residents (Solum 1976, 31-31. 1890 Federal Census).

An increase of settlement created a demand for a commercial center. Nelson, Allen and Company and the McCrea Brothers established the first two general stores in Warren in 1879. Two years later, on March 21, 1881, Warren was selected as the county seat. The village of 108 boasted a variety of businesses including five general stores, three land agencies, three hardware stores, two jewelers, two blacksmiths, three hotels, and two livery stables (Warren 1980, 4).

On May 31, 1882, Knud J. Taralseth opened a general store in a false front frame building on Main Street in Warren. Taralseth, an immigrant from Norway, had spent about ten years in this country before settling in Warren. He worked as a carpenter for the railroad in Minneapolis before trying his hand in business by purchasing a half interest in a small store in Osakis from 1878 to 1882 (Warren Sheaf 23 May 1912; Warren 1980, 29). In 1888, Warren’s growing clientele prompted Taralseth to move and purchase property, previously occupied by Mike McCann’s blacksmith shop, on the corner of Main Street and Johnson Avenue (Warranty Deed Book G, 128; Tax Rolls). Taralseth proceeded to erect the first two-story building, which measured twenty-five feet by ninety feet, in the city (Warren 1980, 9 & 29; Lottie Taralseth Collection). The new two-story brick-veneered building not only accommodated merchandise, but it also housed the Warren Masonic Lodge and the post office (Warren 1980, 9-12; Sanborn 1899). By 1897, the need for more sales floor space convinced Taralseth to attach twenty-five feet by ninety feet addition and a fifty-foot by fifty-foot annex to the building (Warren 1980, 29; Lottie Taralseth Collection).

By the late 1890s, approximately forty business firms, including the K.J. Taralseth general merchandise store, lined the streets of Warren (Warren 1980, 8). During this time, the Taralseth Store offered items such as dry goods, clothing, hats, shoes and groceries and was organized as a department store. It was noted in a local news article as being the “largest and best general store on the Great Northern road between Crookston and Winnipeg” (Warren Register 17 Oct. 1894). Commerce continued to flourish into the early 1900s and the population of Warren reached 1,276 in 1901 (Warren 1980, 20). By 1904, Taralseth’s store was incorporated as the K.J. Taralseth Company and his sons, Ralph and Olaf, served on the board and as managers. One year later, K.J. Taralseth died at the age of fifty-seven (Lottie Taralseth Collection). It was then when Ralph came forward to lead the family business into the future.
Disaster struck the store on October 24, 1910 when a fire swept through the Taralseth Building. The fire, which began in the basement, destroyed the building and all of the merchandise inside (Lottie Taralseth Collection). The financial loss of the building, valued at $25,000, and the merchandise totaled $100,000. It was the biggest loss in the history of Warren. Since the Taralseth’s only carried approximately $40,000 in insurance, they personally experienced a $60,000 loss (Warren Sheaf 27 October 1910; Warren 1956, 24).

Immediately after the fire, the Taralseth family decided to rebuild the store. During the interim, they sold merchandise in several locations throughout Warren. Based on advertisements located in the Warren Sheaf, after the fire the Taralseth’s sold: clothing in the Tornell Restaurant Building; dry goods and groceries in a building located to the east of their former store; and hardware in a building west of the old site. (Warren Sheaf, 23 November 1910).

On October 12, 1911, the new two-story brick Taralseth store opened its doors to patrons. The establishment employed a sales team of approximately fifteen people and offered a variety of adult and children’s clothing, groceries, and hardware. In an effort to attract customers and challenge the competition, store managers changed the display windows weekly. Furthermore, the Taralseth’s relied heavily on advertising through mailings and in the local newspaper (Lottie Taralseth Collection). According to advertisements in the Warren Sheaf from the 1890s to the 1920s, the Taralseth Store consistently sold the same sort of items, including clothing, dry goods, shoes, hardware and groceries (Warren Sheaf 17 Oct. 1894, 6 Dec. 1899, 23 Dec. 1909, 26 Oct. 1921).

After Taralseth’s new store opened, the types of departments and merchandise did not change significantly from the previous store’s stock, despite enlarged showroom and storage space. The Taralseth Store continued to carry groceries, hardware, clothing, shoes, and dry goods.

The Taralseth’s store was not the only entity this building was known for. As one of the largest, most significant buildings of the town, it was host to several other businesses and offices. Some of these offices that have been noted as primary tenants of the second floor are past judges, dentists and the Masonic Lodge. The store, and thus, the building were home to many social events that still hold a special meaning for many of Warren’s older residents. The Masonic Lodge upstairs was home to many dances for the young people of the area. The Holiday season provided special events for the young people of the area, not only were the shelves stocked with the newest, and best toys but store employees were known to dress as Santa Claus and distribute goodies to the youngsters. Perhaps the importance of the Taralseth Company can best be understood in quote from local patron Ella Peterson: “What I remember the most was the thrill I got when we walked into the Taralseth Store basement! Wonders of wonders... I am sure that people today would scarcely believe it if they were told about the toy department and the rest of the wares that could be found down there.” (Warren 1980, 166). In addition to the store’s importance to the region, so was its owner. Like his father, Ralph was very civic minded in his pursuits. It was his goal to serve the town and so he did as both mayor and fire chief for many years.
The Taralseth Company continued to be a major hub of commercial activity in the area for many years up to 1938 when it became apparent that other competitors had began to chip away at the dominance of the Taralseth Company as the major commercial vendor. As shown through various advertisements from the period, 1938 is seen as a time when it was truly visible that other stores in the area, the Gamble’s store in particular, were gaining much of the Taralseth Company’s market share in the area. The Gamble’s Store was part of what was a growing conglomerate of businesses owned by the Gamble-Skogmo Corporation. Indeed, it was this type of business that stores such as the Taralseth’s were falling victim to all across the country. It started with the advent of the cooperative, where groups of trade people such as farmers or craftsmen started cooperatives in order to buy goods in bulk and save money. These businesses saw huge profits in the volume of business they did and thus expanded to more locations which became the franchises that are known today as True Value and Coast to Coast to name just a couple. Their lower operating costs and thus lower product costs made it very difficult for small operations like the Taralseth Store to survive. Even today, this cycle is repeating itself as Wal-Mart puts franchise stores out of business with even lower prices and lower operating costs.

The K.J. Taralseth Company is a physical reminder of the early commercial development of Warren. Moving from a brick store that was destroyed by fire in 1910, Ralph Taralseth built a new store that reflected the company’s success. The new building not only carried a mixed product line for which the company had become known, but provided space for the growing number of professional services and fraternal organizations in the area. Over the next two decades the K.J. Taralseth Company was one of the principal suppliers of goods and services to Warren and to the nearby farming community whose members saw coming to town to shop as a much anticipated event. For its significant contribution to the commercial growth of Warren, the K.J. Taralseth Company is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A under the Area of Significance of Commerce.
Published Material


Other Material


Joseph Bell DeRemer File. Plans and Manuscripts at the Northwest Architectural Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota.


Verbal Boundary Description

Parcel I:

South Half (S 1/2) of Lot Five (5) in Block Nine (9) in the Original Townsite of the City of Warren, except that part conveyed to Harry Johnson by Deed recorded in Book 100 of Deeds, page 22;

North twenty-five feet (N. 25 ft.) of Lot Five (5) and all of Lot Six (6) in Block Nine (9) in the Original Townsite of Warren, Marshall County, Minnesota.

Boundary Justification

This boundary includes the entire city lots that have been associated historically with the property.
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

K.J. Taralseth Company
Marshall County, Minnesota

Barbara Kooiman
Mississippi Valley Archaeological Center
1725 State Street
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December 1993

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