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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NOV 18 2014  
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by SHPO  
NOV 28 2014  
NAT REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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" on the appropriate line 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 ELLIOTT FURNITURE COMPANY  
other names/site number Newlen Block, Elliott-Anderson C0. Elliott Furniture

2. Location

street & number 424 East Locust Street N/A not for publication  
city or town Des Moines N/A vicinity  
state Iowa code IA county Polk code 153 zip code 50309

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.)

[Signature]  
Signature of certifying official/Title  
State Historical Society of Iowa

11-24-2014  
Date

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)

[Signature]  
Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

1/14/15

Elliott Furniture Company  
Name of Property

Polk County, Iowa  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**    **Category of Property**  
(Check as many lines as apply)    (Check only one line)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-local       | <input type="checkbox"/> district               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-State       | <input type="checkbox"/> site                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal     | <input type="checkbox"/> structure              |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> object                 |

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		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**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

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

COMMERCE/TRADE/business

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

COMMERCE/TRADE/business

DOMESTIC/single-dwelling

**7. Description**

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

MODERN MOVEMENT/Art Moderne

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE

walls BRICK

TERRA COTTA

roof SYNTHETICS/rubber

other GLASS

**Narrative Description**

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

Elliott Furniture Company  
Name of Property

Polk County, Iowa  
County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" on one or more lines 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" on all the lines 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

COMMERCE

**Period of Significance**

1882-1959

**Significant Dates**

1882

1899

1936

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

**Narrative Statement of Significance** - (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

**9. Major Bibliography 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):**

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

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository

Elliott Furniture Company  
Name of Property

Polk County, Iowa  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** Less than one acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 | 15 | 490040 | 4604050 |  
Zone Easting Northing

2 |    |    |    |  
Zone Easting Northing

3 |    |    |    |  
Zone Easting Northing

4 |    |    |    |  
Zone Easting Northing

**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**

name/title William C. Page, Public Historian  
organization R. E. Properties 1, L.L.C. (titleholder of land & improvement) date November 30, 2013  
street & number 520 East Sheridan Avenue (Page) telephone 515-243-5740 (Page)  
city or town Des Moines state Iowa zip code 50313-5017

**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** - (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

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

name R. E. Properties, L.L.C.  
street & number 512 -1/2 E. Locust St. , #203 telephone 515-419-1445 (Tim Rypma)  
city or town Des Moines state IA zip code 50309

**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.

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**National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
**CONTINUATION SHEET**

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CFN-259-1116

Elliott Furniture Company, Polk County, Iowa.

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

Topographically, the immediate area surrounding the Elliott Furniture Company is almost level with a slight upward incline to the east. The commercial block itself is located in the East Des Moines business district, a 19<sup>th</sup> century counterpart to the city's main business district on the west side of the river. Historically, the East Des Moines business district was known locally as "the east side," but it is now called the "East Village" in recognition of its revitalization in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The Elliott Furniture Company stands at 424-426 East Locust Street (now known legally as 424 East Locust Street). This street is one of four parallel east-west corridors, which, with a series of cross streets perpendicular to them, form a grid in the East Village. This grid is aligned to the course of the Des Moines River and, as a result, slightly skewed to the cardinal points of the compass. For simplicity's sake, however, directions given in this nomination ignore this positioning. Commercial buildings, mostly 2- and 3-story in height and of brick construction, line this grid of streets. Many of these buildings date prior to or around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with newer buildings now intermixed among them. The Iowa State Capitol Building (also known as the Iowa Statehouse) terminates the East Locust Street vista on a hill four blocks to the east. Other state government buildings cluster around it. In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Locust was converted to a one-way street going east. Early in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it returned to a two-way street, calming vehicular traffic and benefiting pedestrian usage. Street trees are variously planted along the public pedestrian walks, including one in front of the Elliott Furniture Company. Unfortunately, the lanky vertical line of this poplar tree blunts the sense of speed, which the facade of this building otherwise conveys.

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

Introduction

The Elliott Furniture Company possesses a rectangular footprint measuring 40 x 132 feet and occupies virtually the entire parcel of land on which it rests. The block faces south.

Originally erected in 1882 and known as "Newlen's Block," the Elliott Furniture Company has evolved from this core (as described below) into what now should be considered a mid-20<sup>th</sup> century edifice. Historian Roger G. Reed of the National Park Service corroborates this assertion:

The early twentieth century commercial block appears to be eligible under criteria A and C and retains character-defining features that embody the distinctive characteristics of the

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Elliott Furniture Company, Polk County, Iowa.

building, its site and environment. These features include the exterior façade with its glazed white brick, second floor display windows surmounted by transoms, 1940 storefront and interior components, (plan and finishes) reflecting the evolution of this commercial block. (Reed)

Although the Newlen Block remains at the core of the structure today, exterior of the Elliott Furniture Company, including its front façade (as remodeled circa 1936 and 1940) and its rear façade (as built in 1891), remain its most prominent visual elements.

Architectural Evolution

The following paragraphs explain the architectural evolution of the Elliott Furniture Company. A series of six Sanborn fire insurance maps, historic newspaper accounts, and historic photographs nicely document this evolution. It is unclear what stood on this site before the erection of the block.

*Original Block and Early Additions.* The first graphic documentation of the edifice shows a double-fronted, 2-story brick edifice, identified as the "Newlen Block" at 424-426 East Locust Street. (Sanborn 1884; Figure 2) The front facade features an Italianate-influenced design with a pressed metal cornice above the storefront and heavy hood molds, likely of cast stone, over the second story windows. The pressed metal cornice flares outward from the storefront. Wooden columns run from its front to its rear and separate the first story into two rooms with a furniture business occupying both of them. The second floor of the east room also houses furniture. The basement of the west room serves as a warehouse. A wood, 2-story wing is shown attached to the rear of 426 and extends to the alley. It is used for furniture repair on the first floor and a warehouse room on the second floor. An historic photograph (Figure 8) pictures a portion of the Newlen Block circa 1885 with a high commercial storefront capped with a pressed metal cornice and surmounted by a second floor with windows and heavy hood molds.

By 1891, the rear wing of the Newlen Block had expanded or been replaced. (Sanborn 1891; Figure 3) The entire block is now 2-story in height and extends all the way back to the alley. A furniture business occupies the front of the block with a cabinet shop at the rear. The rear of the west room on the second story includes a window. (By 1940, it had become one of two doors providing access to the commercial block at 422 East Locust Street.)

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*New Front in 1899.* According to newspaper reports, two façade improvement projects occurred in 1899 to the property.

Work was commenced today on the new front of the Elliott building on East Locust street. Formerly occupied by Gus Newlen. A modern front will greatly improve this building into which the Elliott-Anderson Furniture company are soon to move. (Des Moines *Capital*, June 14, 1899)

No historic image of this remodeling has been uncovered, so the extent of these changes is unclear. Later that summer, another newspaper account described further changes:

Improvements are soon to be commenced on the Skandia building and the room east of it soon to be occupied by Bishop & Lindquist on East Locust street, and now fronts similar to the Elliott Anderson building adjoining on the west will be put in. East Locust promises to be one of the main business streets of the city from the river to East Seventh street. (*Ibid.*: July 4, 1899)

An historic image of these changes does exist. (Figure 9) It shows that the front façades of the 424-426 East Locust Street property and the adjoining commercial block at 428-430 East Locust Street had been unified into a common, Italianate-influenced design. The most prominent change to the 424-426 Locust property was the removal of its prominent cornice above its storefront. By this time, the title to this property had transferred to the Elliott family, and these improvements reflect the changes the family made to establish its furniture retail business in it. (See Section 8.)

As a result of these two construction projects, the appearance of the Elliott Furniture Company and the two buildings to its east became unified in appearance. One can perceive in this extensive remodeling the cooperation of those entrepreneurs who owned and operated these businesses, clearly working in concert to help establish "one of the main business streets" of the East Des Moines business district.

*Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century.* The front façade of the Elliott Furniture Company remained largely unchanged during the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, although some minor interior changes to the building did occur. By 1901, a room sheathed in iron had been erected at the rear of 426 East Locust Street, likely to provide protection against flammable painting and varnishing processes associated with furniture repair. (Sanborn 1901; Figure 4) Wood ceilings are in place at this time, and one business apparently occupies the entire block. By 1920, the ironclad room has disappeared. (Sanborn 1920; Figure 5)

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*New Front circa 1936.* Major changes occurred during the second quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which radically transformed the front façade of the Elliott Furniture Company into an Art Moderne-influenced design. By 1936, this remodeling had stripped away this façade and replaced it with a sleek design of display windows on both its first and second floors. An historic image pictures this new front façade. (Figure 10) This new design clad the front façade with creamy white brick and created a dramatic visual contrast between it and its neighboring buildings. (See attached photographs.)

*1940 Improvements.* In 1940, the Elliott Furniture Company expanded its operations to the west and occupied the commercial unit at 422 East Locust Street. This unit formed the east half of the commercial block at 420-422 East Locust Street, a late 19<sup>th</sup> century brick, 2-story commercial block. Only minor changes occurred at this time to the 424-426 property, but the storefront at 422 East Locust Street was remodeled to conform to the Art Moderne-influenced storefront at 424-426 East Locust Street. (This Art Moderne storefront at 422 East Locust Street is nonextant.)

A building permit in 1940 allowed the remodeling of the 422 East Locust Street unit. This remodeling featured the installation of fluted terra cotta tile pilasters on the storefront and the erection of a neon sign (nonextant). Several doorways were cut between the party wall between 422 East Locust Street and 424 East Locust Street and a second floor was added to the rear of the 422 unit. The cost of this improvement totaled \$1,000 according to the permit. (Jacobsen 2011: n.p.) An historic image of the property in 1940 pictures these improvements soon after their completion. (Figure 11) The new storefront at 422 East Locust Street closely repeated the design of the circa 1936 face-lift at 424-426 East Locust Street. A sign reading "Elliott Furniture Co." was installed above and across the 422-424-426 East Locust Street storefronts.

The 1940 improvements also included a 3-story vertical sign attached to the east end of 426 East Locust Street. (*Des Moines Plain Talk*, August 20, 1940) Reading "ELLIOTTTS," this immense neon sign (nonextant) towered out of scale over the streetscape. (Figure 12)

The appearance of the Elliott Furniture Company remained largely unchanged through the rest of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. (Sanborn 1950, 1957)

*Early 21<sup>st</sup> Century.* Recently, the East Des Moines Business District—"the East Village"—has experienced revitalization, including the rehabilitation of many of its commercial buildings. In



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2009, the front façade of the 422 East Locust Street was remodeled with a Victorian-influenced design.

In 2011, the Elliott Furniture Company underwent rehabilitation. Repairs were made to its storefront, its second story was converted to residential use, and all its mechanical systems were replaced. This rehabilitation included the placement of a pedestrian door at the west end of the front façade to provide an outside entrance to the second floor. Previously, the access to the second floor had been internal. This entire rehabilitation project was undertaken in consultation with the National Park Service, met the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. In 2013, the National Park Service and the State Historical Society of Iowa approved the project's *Historic Preservation Certification Application Part 3*, and the project received both federal and State of Iowa Historic Preservation tax credits.

Exterior Today

The following paragraphs describe the exterior of the Elliott Furniture Company as it appears today.

The front façade features three bays stacked symmetrically on each of its two floors. With the exception of the center bay on the first floor (which features an inset vestibule) each of these bays features display windows divided horizontally in two by thin metal mullions. (As another exception, the west end of the first floor bay includes an outside door to the second story.) Transom windows surmount all of the front façade bays: two transoms above each first floor bay and three transoms above each second floor bay. The first floor windows rest on bulkheads clad with panels of beige-colored cast stone.

Pilasters flank these windows, project slightly from the front façade, and extend upward to the top of the block. The base of these pilasters is faced with the same beige-colored cast stone as the bulkheads under the windows. Then—extending upward to the top of the first floor display windows—the pilasters are faced with terra cotta tile glazed in an ivory color. Some of the tile are reeded and laid in columns. The pilasters above this tile are faced with ivory glazed brick similar in color to the terra cotta but speckled with black flecks. A rectangular design is worked in the pilasters by lines of bricks projecting slightly from the face of the pilasters. These bricks alternate in dimension to form long and short patterns in the lines. Instead of the traditional architrave, the top of the façade features the same ivory glazed brick as the pilasters, but laid in a Commercial Style-influenced basketweave design. A simple coping of cast stone caps the front façade. The use of the ivory color for facing materials on this block is unusual among the many historic red brick commercial structures in the East Village.

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Elliott Furniture Company, Polk County, Iowa.

The open vestibule on the first floor is deeply set back to form a hallway flanked on each side with four display windows comparable in design with those across the front façade. The vestibule's floor is laid with light and dark beige-colored tile with a name plaque, also worked in tile, near its entrance. This plaque reads "Elliott/Furniture Co." and likely dates to the early 1950s. A set of two 2011 metal doors, flanked by sidelights and surmounted by two transoms, is situated at the rear of the vestibule. The door on the west provides access to 424 East Locust Street, and the door on the east provides access to 426 East Locust Street. The height of the vestibule ceiling matches that of its display windows.

The west elevation and most of the east elevation of the Elliott Furniture Company are hidden from view by adjoining structures. A portion of the east elevation is clad with stucco. The north elevation abuts the alley at the rear of the block and is faced with red-colored common brick laid in gray-colored mortar. The first floor at 426 East Locust Street now features an overhead vehicular door, built in 2011. The first floor at 424 East Locust features three bays original to its construction. The center bay contains a modern steel door flanked by segmental-arched windows with 2/2 double-hung wood sash. The second floor features six bays symmetrical placed across the elevation, each bay with segmental-arched windows with 2/2 double-hung wood sash.

A steeply pitched membrane roof with proper flashing covers the block.

Interior Today

The following paragraphs describe the interior of Elliott Furniture Company as it appears today. This interior has changed far less than the exterior of the building and retains the feeling of a late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial space.

The basement of the 424 unit is used for commercial purposes today with recently rehabilitated surface finishes, and a new staircase to the first floor. The basement of the 426 unit is used for storage and retains an early 20<sup>th</sup> century appearance, although with a late 19<sup>th</sup> century staircase to the first floor. (Figure 14)

The first floor of the 424 unit contains two rooms, the main room and a room at the rear rehabilitated as a storage area and open to the rear room of the 426 unit. The main room is now used as a workroom for textile production. The 2011 rehabilitation of the first floor installed restrooms in the storage area. (Figure 15)

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Elliott Furniture Company, Polk County, Iowa.

The first floor of the 426 unit contains two rooms, the main room and a room at the rear recently rebuilt as a garage and open to the rear room of the 424 unit. The main room retains historic hardwood floors and pressed metal ceilings. These ceilings post-date 1901. In 1901, they were wood. (Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1901) A wood staircase, dating to 1882, is situated on the east wall. It features one turned newel post and several other plain newel posts, banisters, turned balusters, wood risers, and wood treads. This staircase provides access to the basement but now terminates at the ceiling of the first floor. Original wood support columns, chamfered on their edges and capped with pressed metal capitals, remain visible on the west wall. The 2011 rehabilitation of the first floor installed restrooms in the garage area. (Figure 15)

The second floor of this block was rehabilitated in 2011 as a single living unit. It features an open floor plan with built-in modules for kitchen, bath, and living room purposes and with demising walls lower in height than the original ceiling. This allows natural light to flow across the space from windows on the south and north elevations. The first floor entrance to this unit is on the west side of the front façade.

**CONDITION AND INTEGRITY CONSIDERATIONS**

Condition

The condition of the Elliott Furniture Company is fine, having been well maintained for most of its life and rehabilitated according to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* in 2011.

Integrity Considerations

The Elliott Furniture Company retains character-defining features that embody the distinctive characteristics of its design, site, environment, and seven aspects of its integrity.

Because the Elliott Furniture Company remains on its original site, its level of integrity as it relates to *location* is excellent.

The integrity of the building, as it relates to its *design* from when the remodeling was done, is very good. The historic front façade retains its mid-20<sup>th</sup> century brick, terra cotta, cast stone, and ceramic tile surfaces, as well as its historic vestibule and display windows on both the first and second floors.

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Elliott Furniture Company, Polk County, Iowa.

Although these windows have been replaced, the new windows meet the Department of the Interior's standards for rehabilitation. (National Park Service)

The integrity of the Elliott Furniture Company's *setting* is good. The block stands near the middle of a city block lined with commercial masonry buildings, mostly of 2-story height and dating to the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The entire area remains densely built-up commensurate with its historic character as a commercial center.

The integrity of the Elliott Furniture Company as it relates to *materials* is fine. The enamel brick facing the front façade has weathered without any sign of peeling. (Sweet's: 114) The condition of exterior terra cotta detailing, mortar joints, and interior features, including pressed metal ceilings, staircases, and wood floors, remains sound. All of these materials evidence quality.

The integrity of the block's *workmanship* is fine. The installation of the ivory glazed brick, terra cotta detailing, and cast stone bulkheads are laid with care.

The Elliott Furniture Company retains an excellent *feeling* of its historic function. Viewers today immediately perceive the building's original intended purpose as a commercial edifice, note the large display windows on the second floor, and, when explained, understand the historic function of the building.

The building retains a high level of integrity as it relates to *association*. Visitors from the building's period of significance would readily recognize its exterior and surroundings today.

Interior Integrity

The storerooms on the first floor, staircases, and stairwells possess good integrity, relatively few changes having occurred. Although the rear portion of the block has been rehabilitated as a vehicular garage, this area of the building has low visual impact. As described above, the second floor retains a sense of openness commensurate with its original design.

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Elliott Furniture Company, Polk County, Iowa.

**SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Elliott Furniture Company is significant, locally and under National Register Criterion C, because it calls attention to the influence of the Modern Movement on its design. Display windows occupy virtually the entire front façade of this 2-story commercial block showing the influence of functionalism on its design. Art Moderne-influenced features include the block's clean, horizontal lines, light colored building materials, and gleaming surfaces. In contrast, the interior retains late 19<sup>th</sup> and turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century elements, which reflect the evolution of this commercial block's construction as outlined in Section 7. Although newspaper accounts document most of these changes, the names of architects or architectural firms responsible for them are not identified, supporting the belief that anonymous contractor-builders were responsible for them.

The Elliott Furniture Company is significant, locally and under National Register Criterion A, as a representative example of a furniture retailer in Des Moines during the late 19<sup>th</sup> to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Next to the automobile, the furniture industry ranked as the largest producer of consumer durable goods in the United State at the time. The retailing of these products constituted an important sector in Des Moines' economy.

The period of significance under Criterion C for the Elliott Furniture Company is 1882 to 1936, the time when the building was originally constructed and when it evolved. The period of significance under Criterion A is 1882 to 1959, the time that furniture businesses occupied the building. Significant dates include 1882 (the date of the building's original construction), 1899 (when the building was remodeled and the Elliott Furniture Company first occupied it), 1936 (when a major remodeling project took place), and 1959 (when the Elliott Furniture Company ceased operations at the site). The nomination contains one contributing resource—the commercial block itself, which is counted as a building and as one contributing resource.

**ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN**

The front façade of the Elliott Furniture Company emerged from a series of anonymous remodelings to reflect the modernist design aesthetic of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The building is architecturally significant because this façade calls attention to the influence of functionalism and Art Moderne styling on its design. These influences are best seen in the façade's vast expanse of glass, neutral colors, sleek lines, and surface gleam.

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Elliott Furniture Company, Polk County, Iowa.

### Form Follows Function

Glass in the form of display windows occupies almost the entire front façade of the Elliott Furniture Company. Of course, the goal of these windows is to entice consumers inside the store. This purpose trumps all other design considerations for the façade (except protection from the elements). The result nicely fulfills the basic tenet of modernism that form follows function.

Display windows occupy both the first and the second floor of the building. Those on the second floor are as large as the latter with glass running almost from the floor to the ceiling. Second floor display windows would be impractical to display many retail goods, but given the scale of furniture, these objects and their display on the second floor no doubt succeed in attracting consumer attention. This unconventional method of display introduced an element of curiosity among street viewers, luring them inside the store for a closer look at the goods. When consumers inspected the home furnishings on the second floor, they also could look out its vast display windows and experience the sense airy openness, which functionalism afforded domestic interiors. Whether intended by the Elliott firm or not, this environment provided a futuristic experience for shoppers. This experience came of age in Des Moines during the 1950s, when the Cloud Room opened at the Des Moines airport—a second-floor restaurant, whose ribbon windows allowed diners to view airplanes and passengers coming and going.

Yet another series of display windows add to their total at the Elliott Furniture Company. These windows flank both sides of the outside vestibule, which is deeply setback from the front façade and penetrates the interior of the building. These two ranks of display windows double the area occupied by glass on the first floor.

A note about second story display windows in Des Moines is in order. While they were not unusual for retail establishments in Des Moines, the rate of their survival is limited. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Downtown Des Moines, the Younker Bros. department store at 7<sup>th</sup> and Walnut Streets (built in 1899) featured prominent, Chicago-style windows running all the way to the top of this commercial block. A massive fire in 2014 destroyed this building and these windows.

By 1911, second floor display windows had appeared on more modest establishments with the Chicago-style windows and their prominent sidelights giving way to other designs. The second floor front façade of the Willner Bros. Co. Building (“Des Moines’ Most Popular Men’s, Boys’ and Children’s Outfitters”) is a case in point. Its second floor featured twelve large, display windows. (Wilkinson: n. p.) They occupied most of the second story’s front façade, featured hundreds of

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panes of glass mounted in thin mullions, and contrasted to the big glass display windows, which occupied most of the first story front façade. (This nonextant building stood at 413-415 Walnut Street. [*City Directory* 1911: 1116])

The second floor display windows at the Elliott Furniture Company stand in contrast to these earlier examples and take functionalism to its logical conclusion. In the Elliott building, glass replaces virtually all the front façade with windows fixed in place by thin, silver colored metal framing as visually unobtrusive as possible. The result is a smooth and unencumbered finish and a marked planar surface.

#### Art Moderne

The Elliott Furniture Company sought through its front façade to signal to consumers that its merchandise offered up-to-date modernity. The use of Art Moderne styling for the façade's design thus reflected a conscious decision by the Elliott firm to create a marketing tool to stimulate sales and overcome competition.

As American studies scholar Jeffrey L. Meikle has noted:

As a consumer culture assumed social dominance for the first time in history [following World War I, *ed.*], the commercial practice of design became more significant than ever. New products—automobiles, phonographs, radios, toasters, washing machines, refrigerators, vacuum cleaners—had to be given forms reflecting modernity. Places where they were sold or promoted—shops, showrooms, department stores, trade shows, and exhibitions—had to be made visually and stylistically coherent. (Meikle: 90)

The sleek lines, neutral colored building materials, and gleaming surfaces employed by the Elliott Furniture Company shows how that firm created a “visually and stylistically coherent” façade for its merchandise. The look of this façade remains strikingly modern even today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### Sleek Lines, Gleaming Surfaces

The linear placement of multi-story display windows and transoms of the Elliott Furniture Company façade creates sleek horizontal lines across this surface, showing the influence of streamlining on its design. Superfluous decoration is eschewed. Although curved corners so often associated with Art

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Moderne styling are missing, the horizontal lines created by the sills and lintels of the windows and transoms convey the feeling of aerodynamic flow. This feeling of modernity dramatically contrasts with the heavy-looking Victorian buildings, which flank the Elliott Furniture Company and accent visual movement of its façade by holding its horizontal lines in check.

The building materials selected for the Elliott Furniture Company's façade—sheets and sheets of clear glass and glaze-finished ivory brick—reflect light and create gleaming surfaces. Although chrome, another popular modernist material, is missing from this façade, its other architectural elements give its design a sparkling appearance.

Neutral Colors

The Elliott Furniture Company uses glazed ivory-colored brick, beige terra cotta, and glass to convey the feeling of fresh modernity and cleanliness, which distinguishes the front façade of the firm's showrooms. Neutral colors became the most popular hues used for the exteriors of Art Moderne-influenced buildings, such as Walter Dorwin Teague's iconic Texaco service stations. (Meikle: 123) Within this context, the Elliott Furniture Company shows its debt to this design aesthetic.

In the 1920s, the use of white (or ivory) for commercial façades was novel except for those that broke convention for intended purpose. As a color perceived as to be clean and pure, builders sometimes chose these colors for businesses associated with sanitation and cleanliness. The Ames Pantorium Building at 410-412 Douglas Avenue in Ames, Iowa, is a good example. Built in 1925-1926, this dry-cleaning establishment features ivory glazed brick on its front façade. In the early 1920s, the White Castle fast food chain chose white porcelain enamel steel for the exterior of its buildings to distinguish its brand, a choice that helped propel the company's rise in national popularity.

The selection of light-colored brick on the façade of the Elliott Furniture Company served a similar purpose. In addition to signaling the stylishness of its merchandise, the use of neutral colors associated the firm with the emerging science of home economics and its concern for cleanliness, natural light, and unencumbered living.

The façade consciously called attention to itself and contrasted with its Victorian, red brick neighbors along East Locust Street. Equally important, the Elliott firm's new façade dramatically



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contrasted with that of its archrival on the east side, the Anderson Furniture Company at 516-526 East Grand Avenue. Years earlier, the Victorian brick façade of this building had been stuccoed over to update its appearance. By the 1930s, the stucco had taken on a heavy and dowdy look to consumers—particularly when compared with contemporary advertisements of streamlined products in home decorating magazines and the new façade of the Elliott Furniture Company.

**COMMERCE**

A fine and representative example of a furniture retail business in Des Moines, the Elliott Furniture Company and the building at 426 East Locust Street, which housed it, call attention to the importance of furniture retailing for Des Moines' economy. This was one of the largest retail sectors in the city and highly competitive. Few buildings associated with this sector remain extant in the downtown. The Elliott Furniture Company stands out among them because of its modernist front facade—a dramatic example of the firm's aggressive advertising techniques, which in this case employed architecture to convey a "visually and stylistically coherent" design to lure consumers inside the building, as noted above.

Background

Throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> and much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, furniture formed one of the biggest consumer durable goods industries in America. George Nelson, head of design at the Herman Miller Furniture Company, stated in the upmarket business magazine *Fortune* in 1947 that the furniture industry constituted the nation's second biggest producer of consumer durable goods behind only the automobile industry. Nelson reminded readers that, while only a few auto manufacturers made up that industry, thousands of companies made up the furniture trade. (Meikle: 144)

The furniture trade certainly constituted an important sector of Des Moines economy. James E. Jacobsen, who has researched this sector, concluded:

The furniture manufacturing and wholesale and retail sales in this commercial sector were central in the emergence of Des Moines as a statewide commercial hub, between 1885 and the First World War. (Jacobsen: n.p.)

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The furniture trade in Des Moines has evolved for over one hundred years with big and small firms participating in the story. The big leaders in the trade based their operations in downtown Des Moines. This central business district is located on the west side of the Des Moines River. The river historically had stood as a natural and psychological division between the east and west sides of the city. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, another commercial district emerged directly across from downtown Des Moines on the east side of the river.

Known as the East Side Business District (or simply "the east side"), this district provided a convenient market for Des Moines residents living on that side of the river. Entrepreneurs in this area included furniture retailers like the Elliott Furniture Company. These furniture retailers competed with those larger and grander firms on the west side of the river by offering popular goods, marketing promotions directed to surrounding neighborhoods, and even linking lower prices to their less prestigious location. In 1935, for example, the Elliott Furniture Company advertised its store as "Out of the Way—Less to Pay." (*Des Moines Register*, July 26, 1935)

During a period of retail consolidation in the Gilded Age of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, home furnishing department stores emerged across the nation to absorb under one roof those earlier specialty shops like cabinetmakers, ironmongers, and drapers, which previously had carried on the trade in these goods. In Des Moines, Hassenbusch Furniture & Carpet Co. at 9<sup>th</sup> & Walnut Street (nonextant) exemplified the phenomenon, as evident in an 1899 advertisement:

FURNITURE. . stoves, curtains, pillows, carpets, dishes, draperies, pictures, mirrors, lamps, gasoline stoves, cook and heating stoves, ranges (both steel and cast).

Parlor Goods, reed and rattan ware, cooking utensils, blankets, comforters, rugs, iron and brass beds, and everything to complete a home. . . (*City Directory* 1899: 22)

Also by 1899, the furniture dealers, which later came to dominate Des Moines' furniture trade, had established stores in the city. They included Saul Davidson (S. Davidson & Bros., Inc., at 315 Walnut), Louis Ginsberg's Reliable Furniture Store (217-223 Walnut Street), and Chapman Bros. (Joseph and William Chapman) at 719 Walnut Street. (*Ibid.*: 211, 253, 329, 902)

All of these firms were located in downtown Des Moines in big buildings. Saul Davison's firm occupied the 11-story Davidson Building on the southeast corner of 7<sup>th</sup> and Walnut Streets. Ginsberg's Reliable Furniture Store occupied a 6-story building at 217-223 Walnut Street and featured large display windows for furniture on both its first and second floors. Younker Bros., Inc., (Iowa largest department store) offered bedding in its flag store on Walnut Street between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>.

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The smaller rivals in the city's furniture trade based their operations in other parts of downtown Des Moines or in the East Des Moines Business District. A few of the small firms located in outlying areas. The largest among the east side retailers were the Elliott Furniture Company at 424-426 East Locust Street and the Anderson Furniture Company, housed in the Baker-DeVotie-Hollingsworth Block at 516-526 East Grand Avenue.

As Des Moines emerged from the worst years of the Great Depression in 1938, furniture retailers in the city numbered 22. Three of these were located in the East Des Moines Business District. Sixteen were located in downtown Des Moines. The remaining stores were located in outlying areas. Three firms remained dominant—Davidson's, Ginsberg's, and Younkens—and they all were located downtown. Also in 1938, second-hand furniture dealers in Des Moines numbered 12, indicating a demand for inexpensive furniture and the continued effect of the depression. Fifteen furniture repair shops also provided related services, another indication of the depression's effects. (City Directory: 1210-1211)

Following World War II, all this changed. New home construction boomed in Des Moines in response to a pent-up housing shortage during the war and to the post-war demand among service personnel returning home for new homes to start new families. The need for new furniture accompanied this housing boom, and a healthy local economy provided the means to fulfill it.

For a while, furniture retailing remained centered downtown. Capitalizing on the building boom, Younkens opened in 1955 its "Store for Homes" at 312 8<sup>th</sup> Street, across the street from its Walnut Street flag store. A tunnel under 8<sup>th</sup> Street connected both buildings for consumers' convenience. The Store for Homes offered home furnishings, appliances, and up-scale entertainment equipment. Customers could sample phonograph records in special listening booths before purchase.

As the construction boom in the 1950s continued and the number of automobiles grew, more and more residents moved to the city's newer neighborhoods and to the suburbs. The opening of Park Fair mall on the city's north side in the 1950s and Merle Hay Mall in the 1960s on the far northwest side signaled a new style of retail shopping in Des Moines. A decline in downtown shopping accompanied this trend. Younkens closed its downtown Store for Homes and relocated it to Merle Hay Mall in the 1970s. Other furniture stores sprang up in outlying sections of the city where land was cheaper than in the downtown and storeowners could offer customers vast showrooms on one level for browsing. Cole Furniture, one of the biggest of these, located at 4230 Fleur Drive on the south side. Gray's Furniture, another of them, established a new store at 5035 Avenue Frederick M.

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Hubbell on the far east side. In the face of this competition, Davidson's and Ginsberg's also closed, encouraged in part by the rising values of their downtown property for redevelopment. The Elliott Furniture Company likewise fell victim to the decentralization of Des Moines' furniture trade and ceased operations in 1959. The Anderson Furniture Company, Elliott's chief rival on the east side, hung on a little longer and then closed a few years later.

Today, the East Village (as the East Side Business District is now known) has experienced a remarkable revitalization. A number of specialty and boutique shops have located there, including Projects Contemporary Furniture, an upscale store specializing in European designer merchandise located in the Studio Building (NRHP) at 501 East Locust Street and bringing in full circle the retailing of furniture back to greater downtown Des Moines.

As noted above, several other buildings remain extant in greater downtown Des Moines to call attention to the city's historic furniture trade. The home of the Anderson Furniture Company, the Baker-DeVotie-Hollingsworth Block, is also likely significant under Criterion A as another example of a small retailer within this historic context. This property was listed on the National Register in 1978 for its architectural significance. Another property, the Younker Bros. Inc., building at 7<sup>th</sup> and Walnut Streets and one of the big furniture retailers historically in the city, suffered a catastrophic conflagration in 2014 placing the fate of that building in the balance.

### Ownership and Management

The following biographical sketches outline the evolution of the Elliott Furniture Company's ownership and management. From these sketches, one discerns the Elliott Furniture Company's business strategy: updating the look of its building, stocking up-to-date merchandise, pricing competitively, and marketing aggressively through newspapers and other advertising.

These sketches also show how the Elliott Furniture Company spawned a series of competing furniture retailers. As some of the company's employees gained experience in retailing furniture, they moved on to establish their own furniture stores. Adolph F. Anderson stands as a premier example.

*Gustav Newlen.* In 1882, "Gus" Newton built what later became the core of the Elliott Furniture Company. Newton trained in woodworking in his native Sweden before emigrating to America in

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1862 and settling, after a sojourn in Chicago, in Des Moines in 1866. (Halsted: 13) After engaging in various occupations, he became a furniture dealer and undertaker, a frequent combination of occupations in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Newlen also sold carpets, rugs, and draperies and upholstered and repaired furniture. (Des Moines *Capital*, September 10, 1883) He advertised that he offered "A complete Line of Furniture in the most Improved Styles." (*Ibid.*, March 8, 1886) Newlen's business achieved sufficient success for him to construct a spacious commercial block at 424-426 East Locust Street. Known as Newlen's Block, this edifice was a 2-story brick structure, which, as described in Section 7 of this nomination, forms the core of the present Elliott Furniture Company. By 1897, this property was offered for rent (Des Moines *Daily News*, May 12, 1897), as Newlen had moved his business to East Grand Avenue, Ivor Newlen, his son, having entered the business as well. (Halsted: 17) A rental advertisement stressed that Newlen's Block was suitable to handle large and heavy merchandise: "two full stories and basement with elevator splendid location for furniture, buggies or implement house." (*Ibid.*) Newlen was also one of the founders of Scandia Savings and Loan in Des Moines, a financial institution closely associated with the city's Swedish community. He died in 1901.

*A. B. Elliott.* Around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Alexander B. Elliott was well known in Des Moines as city treasurer for three terms and as an officer of the American Savings Bank. Elliott was said to be "independently wealthy and has been a force for good government in East Des Moines." (Des Moines *Daily News*, January 6, 1906) In 1889, Elliott partnered with Adolph F. Anderson to found a retail furniture business, variously known as "Elliott Anderson & Co." and "Elliott-Anderson Co." (*City Directory* 1899: 287). The new firm occupied Gus Newlen's former premises. Before moving into their new store, Elliott and Anderson had the front façade of Newlen's Block updated.

Work was commenced today on the new front of the Elliott building on East Locust street, formerly occupied by Gus Newlen. A modern front will greatly improve this building into which the Elliott-Anderson Furniture company are soon to move. (Des Moines *Capital*, June 24, 1899)

This façade improvement was undertaken in conjunction with similar improvements to the two buildings to the east as outlined in Section 7. Following the dissolution of his partnership with Adolph F. Anderson, A. B. Elliott partnered with Arthur M. Elliott and continued the business in the Elliott Block under the name A. B. Elliott & Son. By this time, Oliver M. Elliott (another of A. B. Elliott's sons) was serving as a salesman for the firm, whose offerings included rugs and stoves. (*City Directory* 1913: 357, 358)

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*Adolph F. Anderson.* Anderson served as a junior partner in the Elliott firm. He had worked for nine years previously for Gus Newlen (Baldwin: 16), likely making coffins, having trained as a cabinetmaker in his native Sweden before emigrating to America. Anderson then partnered with Solon Whinery in the firm of Whinery & Anderson, dealers in furniture at East 5<sup>th</sup> Street in East Des Moines. When Whinery retired from business, the two partners sold their stock; Anderson purchased Whinery's remaining interest, and subsequently partnered with A. B. Elliott to form the new Elliott Furniture firm. In 1911, Adolph F. Anderson broke with A. B. Elliott and established his own business—the Anderson Furniture Company—in the Baker-Devoite-Hollingsworth Block (NRHP 1978) at 516-526 East Grand Avenue. Anderson's new firm, which lasted into the 1960s, became Elliott's chief business rival on the east side. It remains a testament to Anderson's and to A. B. Elliott's entrepreneurial skills that both businesses could compete successfully with one another and with furniture retailers on the west side of the river in this sector of relatively low profit-margins.

*Edward Paterson.* In 1916, Edward Paterson acquired the Elliott firm. He continued its operations from the same premises. (The Riley Drapery Co. also occupied a portion of the block. [*City Directory* 1920:1527]) Paterson remained in business until 1923, partnering with Oliver W. Elliott (A. B. Elliott's son) from 1920 to 1923.

*Oliver W. Elliott.* In 1923, the Elliott Furniture Company reorganized, and Oliver W. Elliott became its head. (*Des Moines Tribune*, August 22, 1923) Also by this time, Elliott had taken on Jacob Chauncey Artis (known as J. C. Artis) in the business, although the name of the store did not include the Artis name in its title. This partnership enjoyed palmy days during the economic boom of the 1920s and successfully sought to expand their market share outside of Des Moines by advertising in Polk County and surrounding counties. (*Altoona Herald*, January 30, 1930) After weathering the Great Depression, Oliver W. Elliott launched an expansion program for the furniture business in 1940. For several years beforehand, Elliott had owned the property at 422 East Locust Street and used its upper floor for storage, but only after the first floor tenant vacated that space in 1940 could Elliott incorporate all of that building into his furniture store to the east. To do so, he cut several doorways between the 422 and 424 properties and extended the storefront design of the 424-426 property across the front of the 422 one.

*J. C. Artis.* After partnering with Oliver W. Elliott, Artis went on in 1929-1930 to establish his own retail furniture operation. Artis Home Gallerie, a successor firm, remains in business to the present day in West Des Moines, Iowa, and carries on the Artis name in interior design.

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*Marlin F. Cole.* By 1952, Marlin F. Cole had become the owner of the Elliott Furniture firm where he served as president and manager. Cole continued, however, to use the Elliott name for the business, an indication of the name recognition and good will it had established in the community. When Cole decided in 1959 to construct a large and up-to-date furniture store under his own name at 4320 Fleur Drive on Des Moines' south side, the Elliott Furniture Company ceased operations.

**REPRESENTATION IN OTHER CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEYS**

In 2011, James E. Jacobsen of History Pays! prepared a Part 1-Evaluation of Significance application for historic preservation certification through the National Park Service. He recommended that the Elliott Furniture Company be found National Register eligible under Criteria A and C. (Jacobsen: 2011, n.d.) The National Park Service concurred that the property appeared to meet the National Register Criteria. (Roger G. Reed) Jacobsen's research, including many of the embedded images, provided much of the information used in this nomination. The author acknowledges with appreciation and gratitude this work.

**POTENTIAL FOR HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY**

Although the site's potential for archaeological research is, as yet, unevaluated, there appears to be little in this regard. Excavation for the construction of this and previous buildings on the site substantially have compromised this potential.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND REGISTRATION**

Further research might reveal what, if anything, previously stood on this site. One conjecture posits a frame building, structurally relying on the masonry party walls of adjacent buildings, as occupying the site. (Jacobsen, 2011, n.p.) Further research might prove or disprove this supposition.

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**MAPS**

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**LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS**

1. Elliott Furniture Company  
424 East Locust Street  
Des Moines, IA 50309  
Streetscape looking northeast  
William C. Page, Photographer  
November 27, 2013
2. Elliott Furniture Company  
424 East Locust Street  
Des Moines, IA 50309  
Front facade looking north  
William C. Page, Photographer  
November 27, 2013
3. Elliott Furniture Company  
424 East Locust Street  
Des Moines, IA 50309  
Entrance looking north  
William C. Page, Photographer  
November 27, 2013
4. Elliott Furniture Company  
424 East Locust Street  
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Brick detail looking northwest  
William C. Page, Photographer  
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5. Des Moines Building  
405 Sixth Avenue  
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Terra cotta detail on facade looking northeast  
William C. Page, Photographer  
November 27, 2013
6. Elliott Furniture Company  
424 East Locust Street  
Des Moines, IA 50309  
North facade on alley looking southeast  
William C. Page, Photographer  
November 27, 2013
7. Elliott Furniture Company  
424 East Locust Street  
Des Moines, IA 50309  
Interior, 426 Locust Street, looking north  
William C. Page, Photographer  
November 27, 2013

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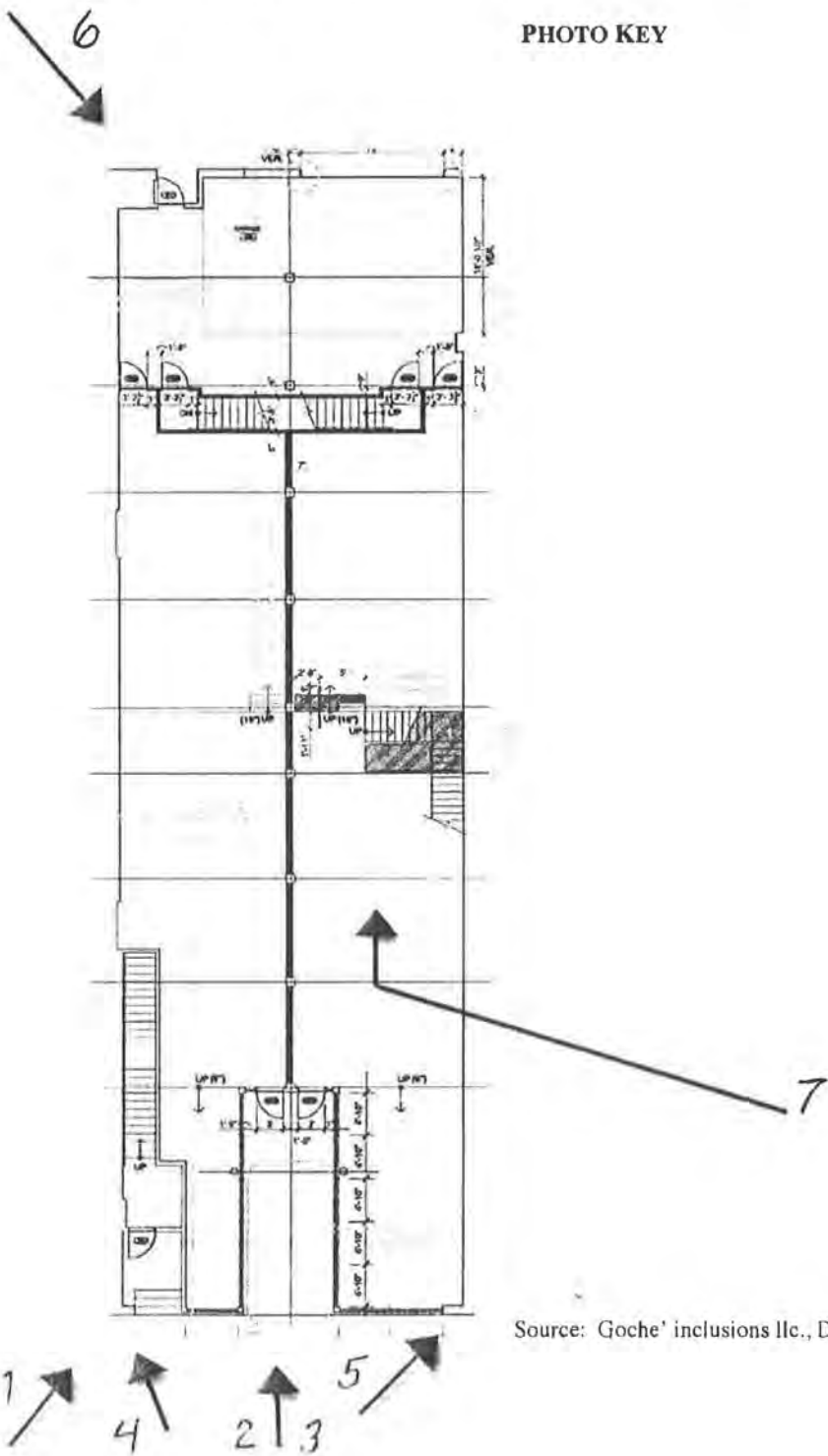


PHOTO KEY

Source: Goche' inclusions llc., Des Moines, Iowa, 2011.



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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

West two-thirds of Lot 13, Block 9, East Fort Des Moines, in the City of Des Moines, Iowa.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The National Register boundary contains all land historically associated with the Elliott Furniture Company except the east one-half of the property at 422 East Locust Street, which is excluded because the design of its storefront has been entirely altered.

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Elliott Furniture Company, Polk County, Iowa.

## LOCATION

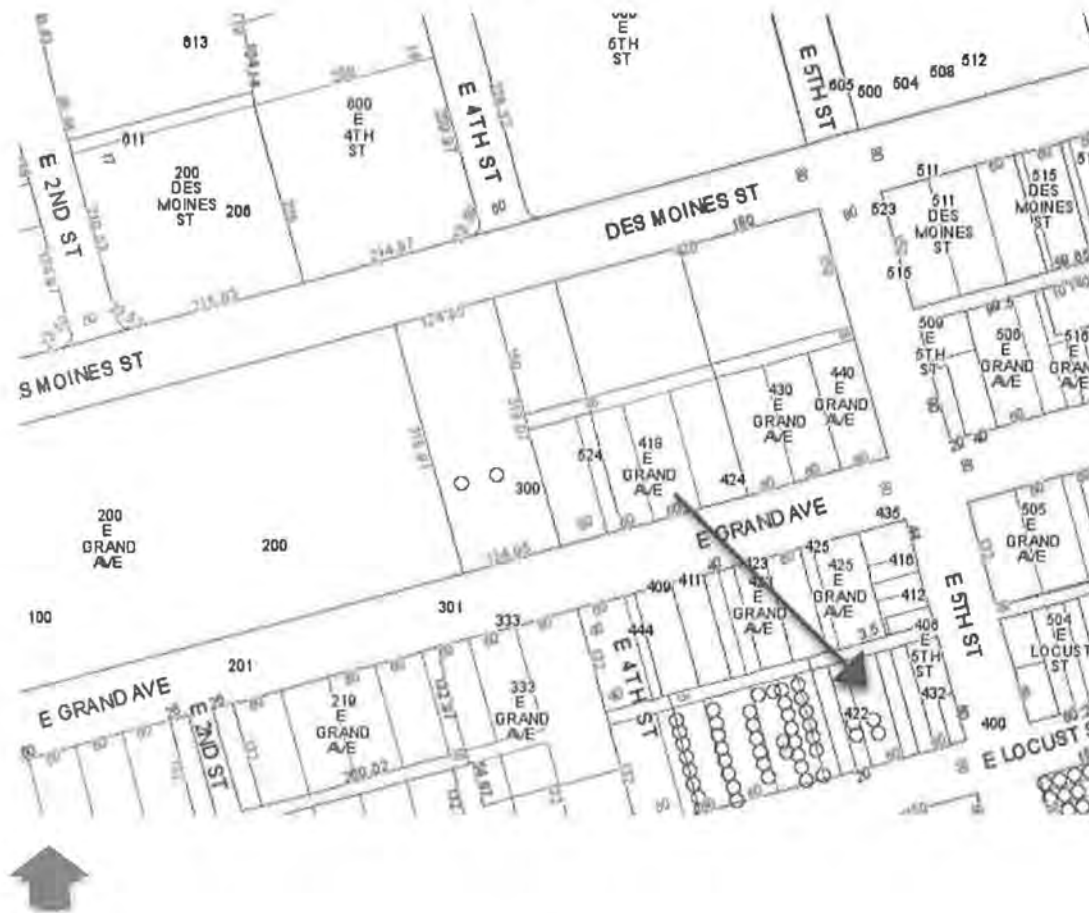


Figure 1

The long arrow locates the Elliott Furniture Company at 424 East Locust Street.  
It is situated adjacent to the property shown on the map as "422."

Source: Polk County Assessor's Website, viewed March 4, 2014.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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CFN-259-1116

Elliott Furniture Company, Polk County, Iowa.

### Fire Insurance Map 1884

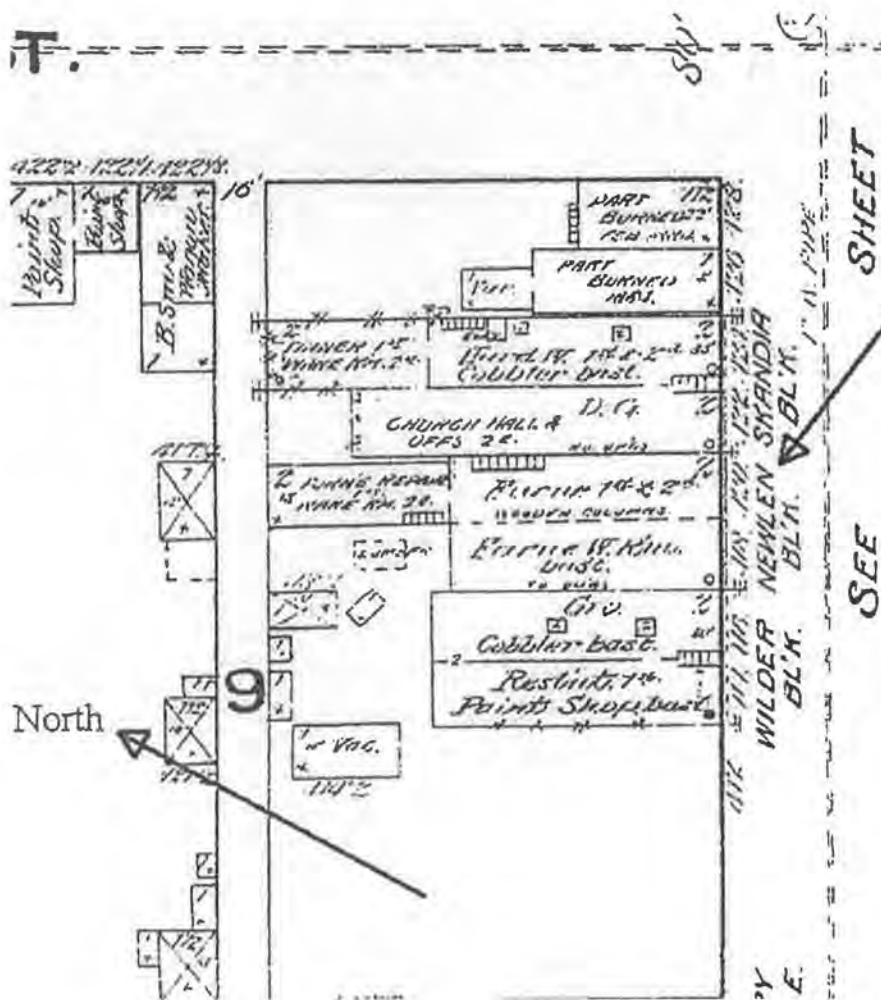


Figure 2

This drawing, the first Sanborn published map of the site, identifies the Newlen Block by name (arrow) and pictures it as a 2-story commercial block. A 2-story frame wing is shown at the rear of the 426 unit. The rear of the unit at 424 by the alley is unimproved.

Source: Sanborn Map Company, March 1884.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Elliott Furniture Company, Polk County, Iowa.

## Fire Insurance Map 1891

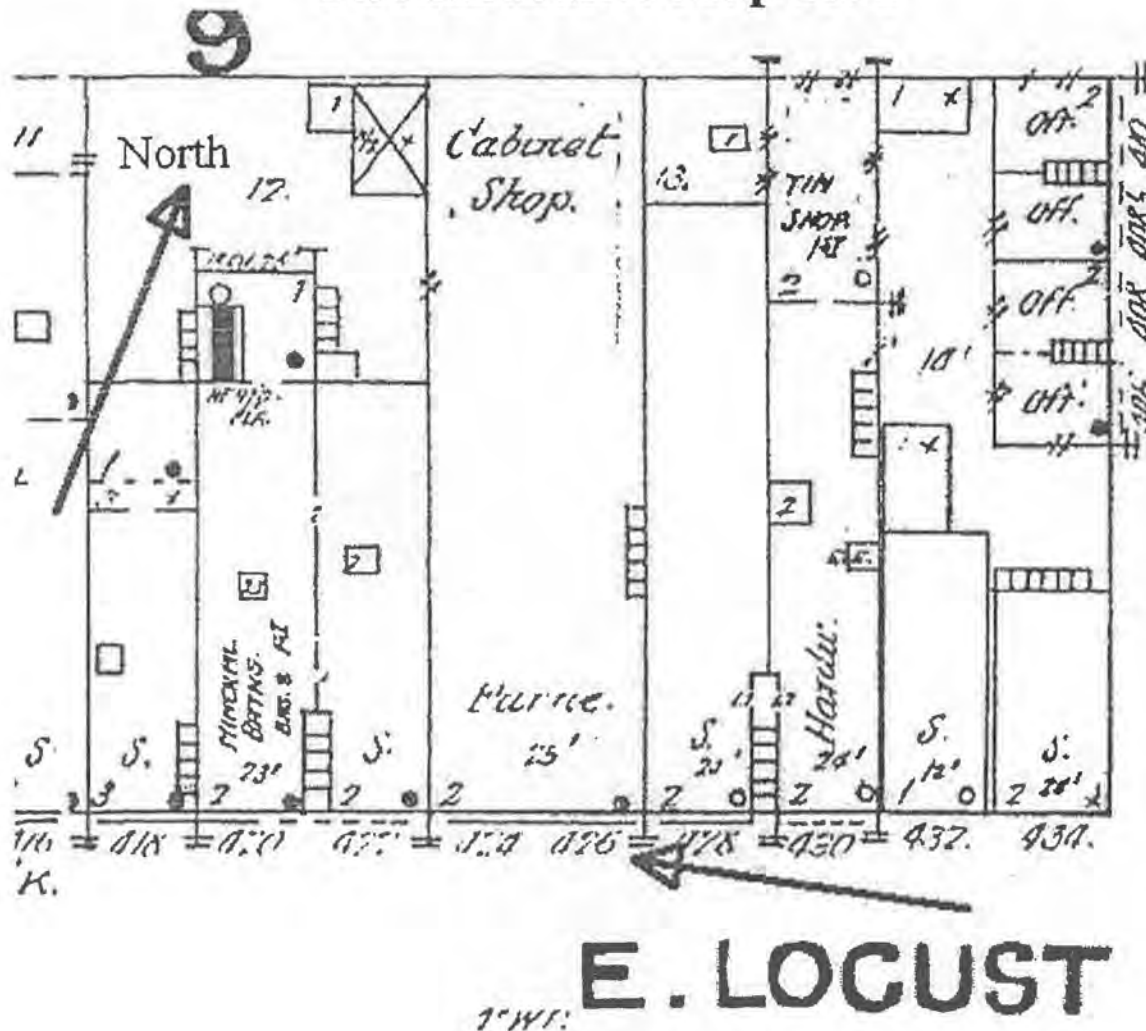


Figure 3

This drawing pictures the Newlen Block (424-426 East Locust Street) with both rooms of the property extended northward to the alley at the rear. Gustav Newlen continued to hold title to the property at this time.

Source: Sanborn Map Company, 1891.

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National Park Service

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Elliott Furniture Company, Polk County, Iowa.

### Fire Insurance Map 1901

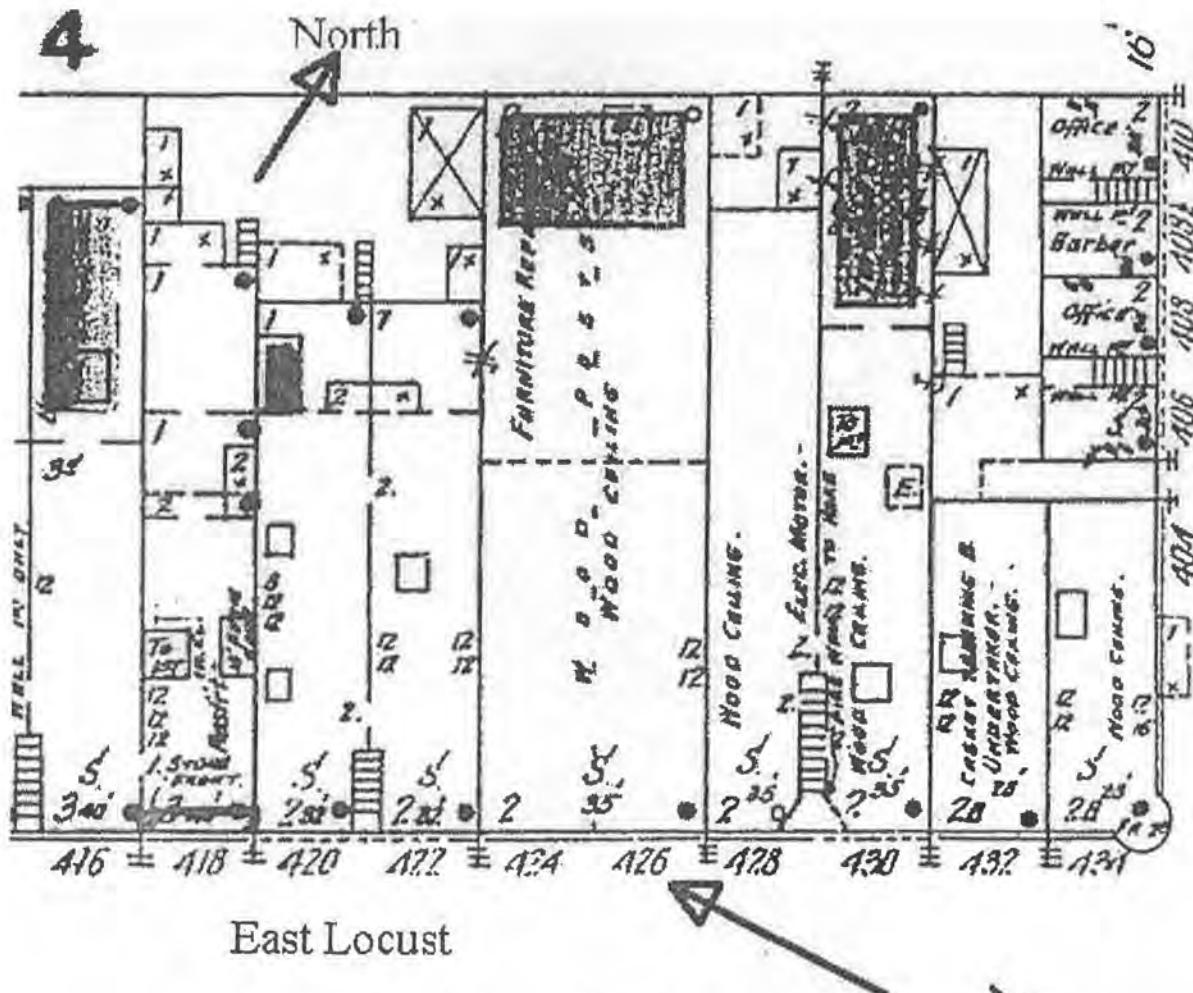


Figure 4

An ironclad room is shown at the rear of the Elliott Furniture Company Block, likely for flammable paints and varnishes for furniture repair. An elevator is situated at the rear of the block. The first floor features a wood ceiling. By 1899, Alexander B. Elliott had established his furniture retail business in this block.

Source: Sanborn Map Company, 1901.



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National Park Service

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Elliott Furniture Company, Polk County, Iowa.

## Fire Insurance Map 1920

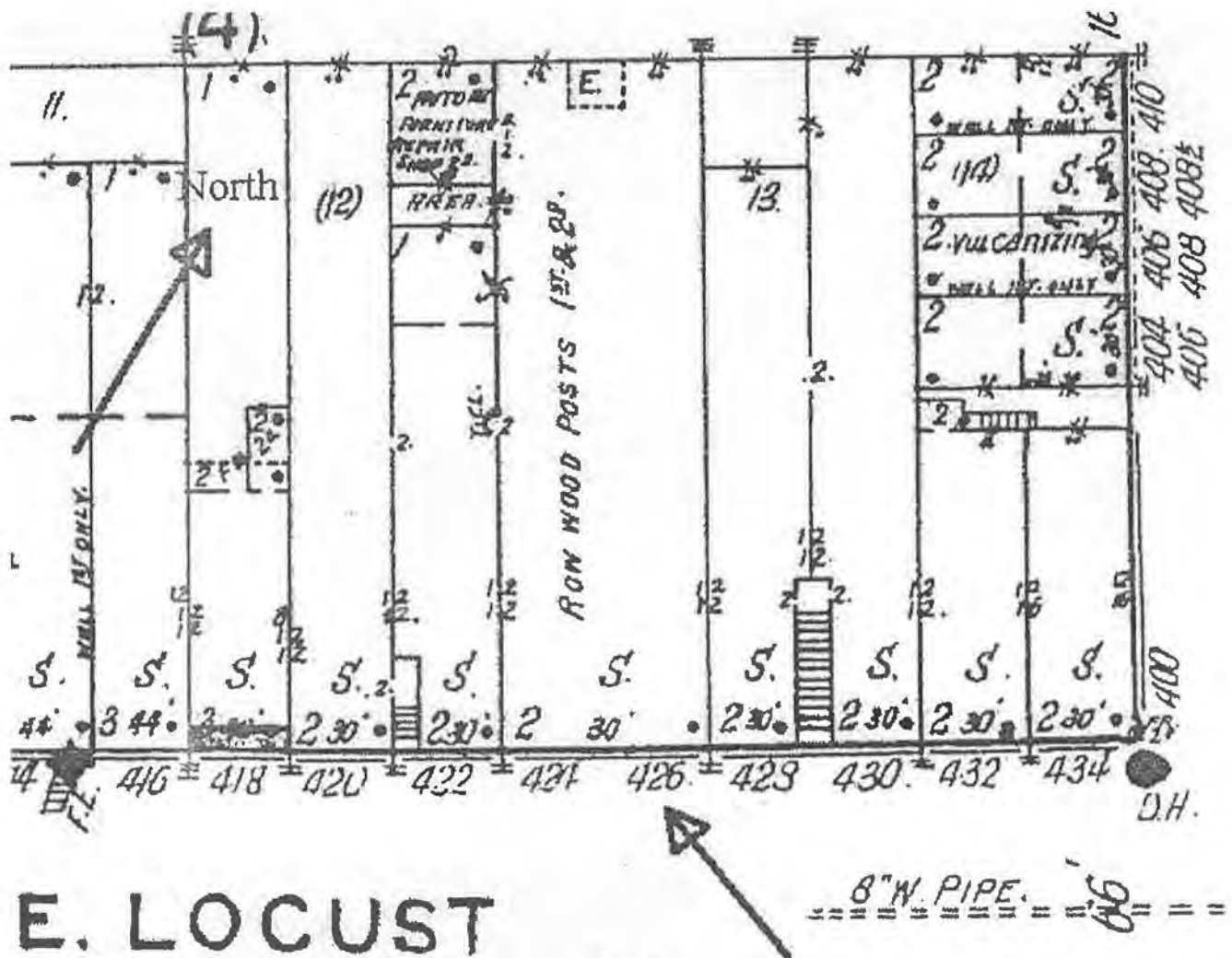


Figure 5

The Elliott Furniture Company remains largely as in 1901.

Source: Sanborn Map Company, 1920.

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National Park Service

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Elliott Furniture Company, Polk County, Iowa.

## Fire Insurance Map 1950

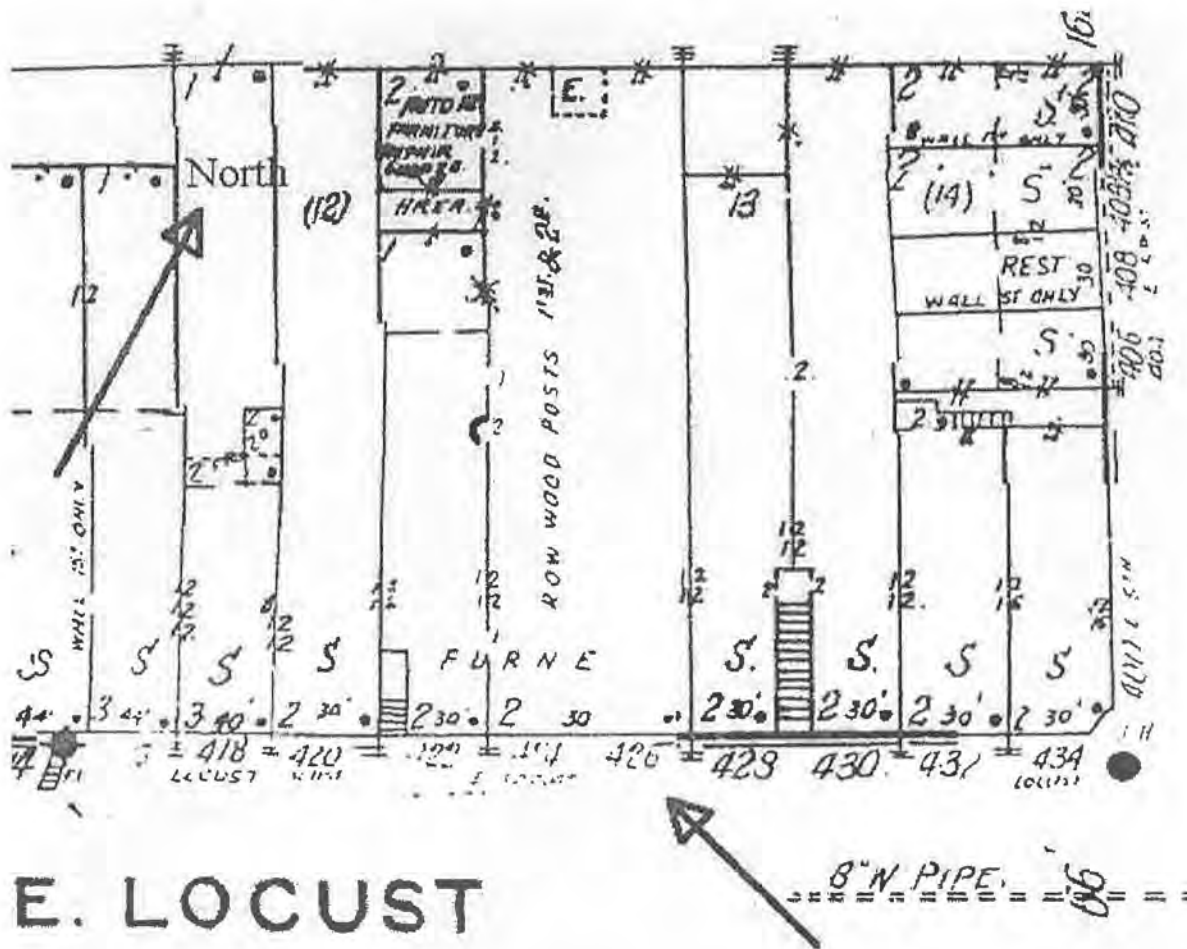


Figure 6

This map shows the expansion of the Elliott Furniture Company into 422 East Locust Street.

Source: Sanborn Map Company, 1950.

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Elliott Furniture Company, Polk County, Iowa.

## Fire Insurance Map 1957

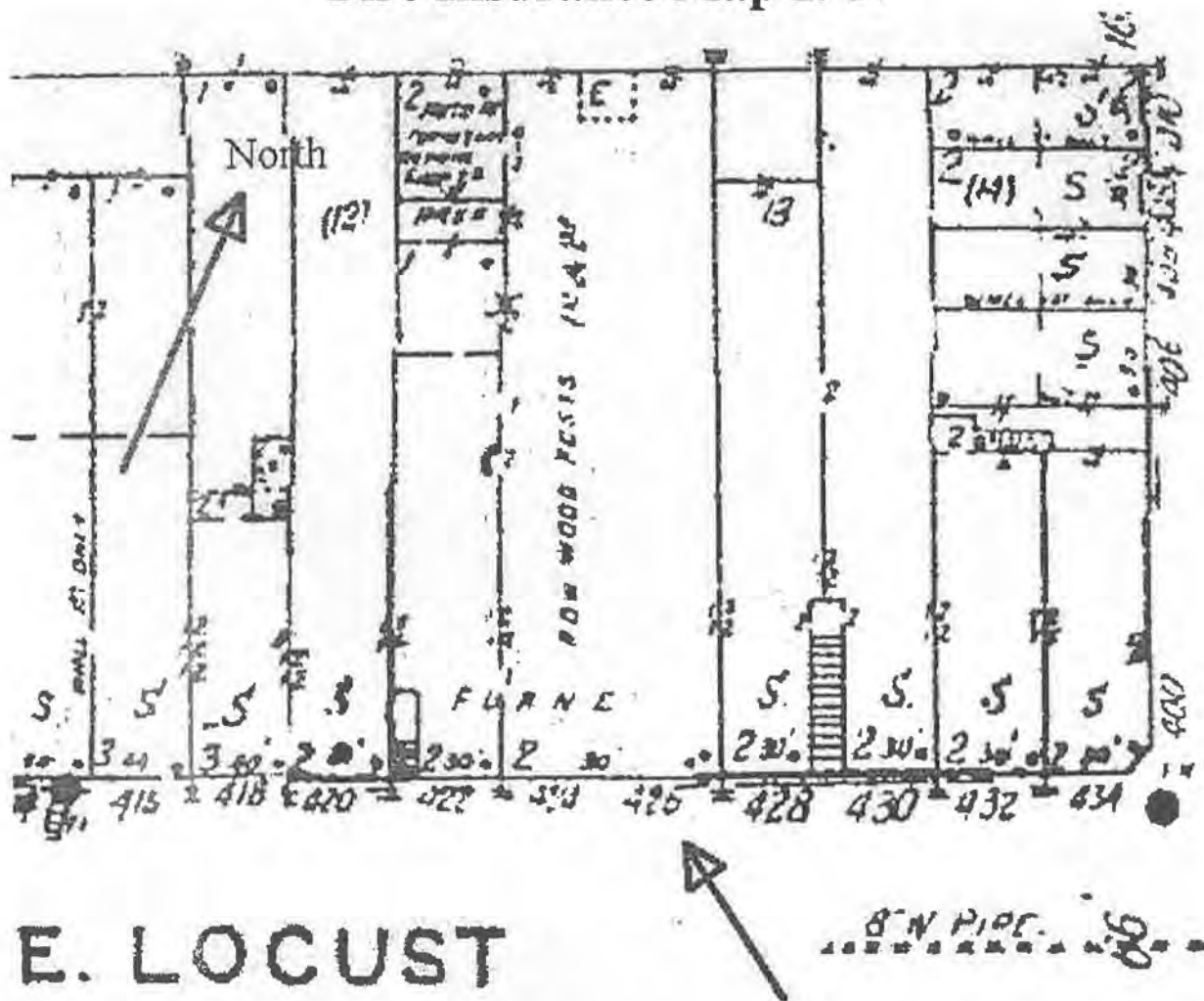


Figure 7

The Elliott Furniture Company went out of business in 1959-1960. This map shows that the floorplan of their block remained generally unchanged from 1950.

Source: Sanborn Map Company, 1957

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Elliott Furniture Company, Polk County, Iowa.

## East Locust Street circa 1885

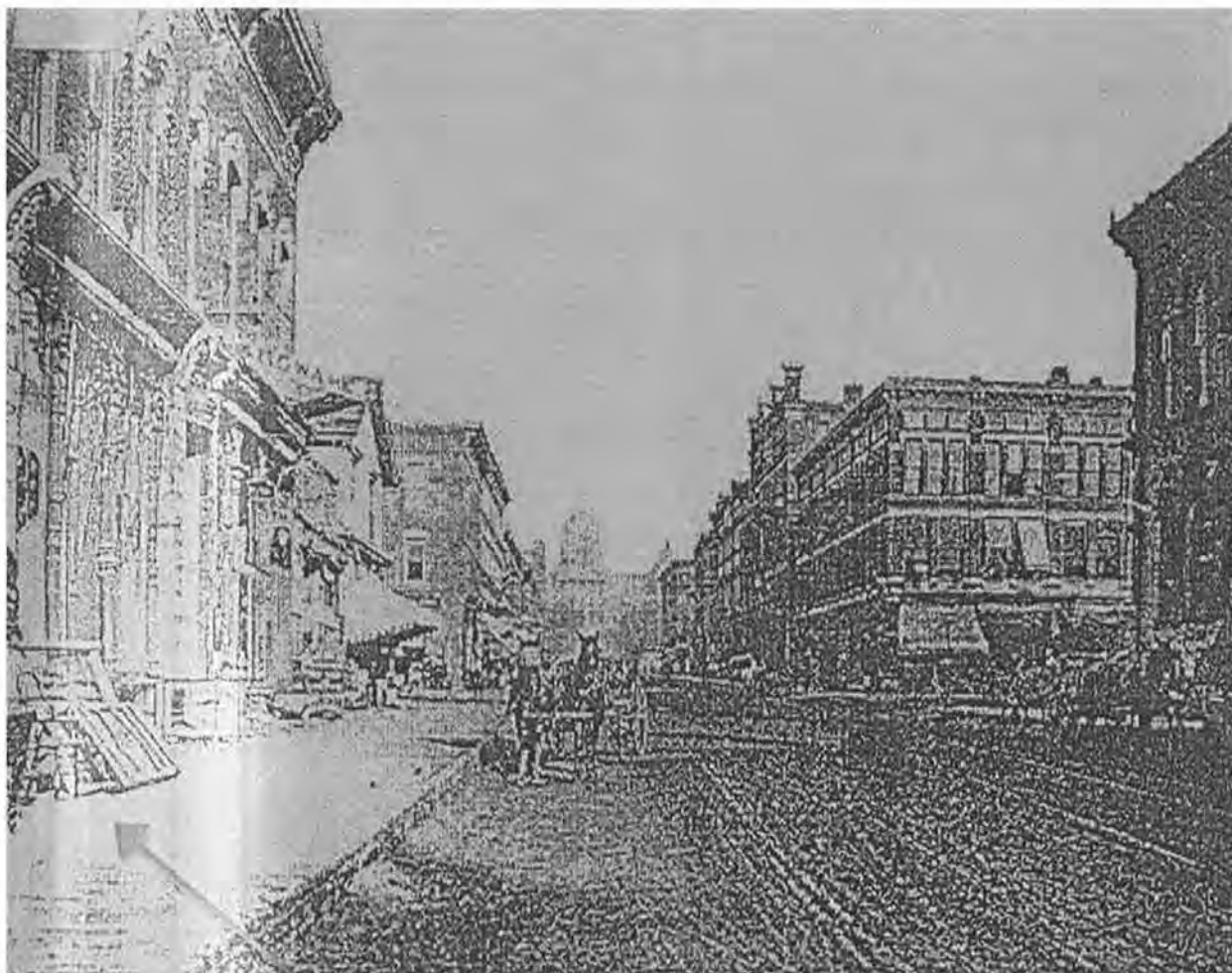


Figure 8

Looking to the east, this image pictures the east portion of the Newlen Block (arrow). It appears that Gus Newlen has merchandise placed on the pedestrian walk to attract attention. The Iowa State Capitol terminates the East Locust Street vista.

Source: Collection State Historical Society of Iowa.

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National Park Service

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Elliott Furniture Company, Polk County, Iowa.

## East Locust Street circa 1910



Figure 9

This photograph pictures the 1899 improvements to the Elliott Furniture Company (far left), its neighbor to the east at 428-430 East Locust Street, and their complimentary architectural designs.

Source: Collection State Historical Society of Iowa.

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National Park Service

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Elliott Furniture Company, Polk County, Iowa.

August 23, 1936

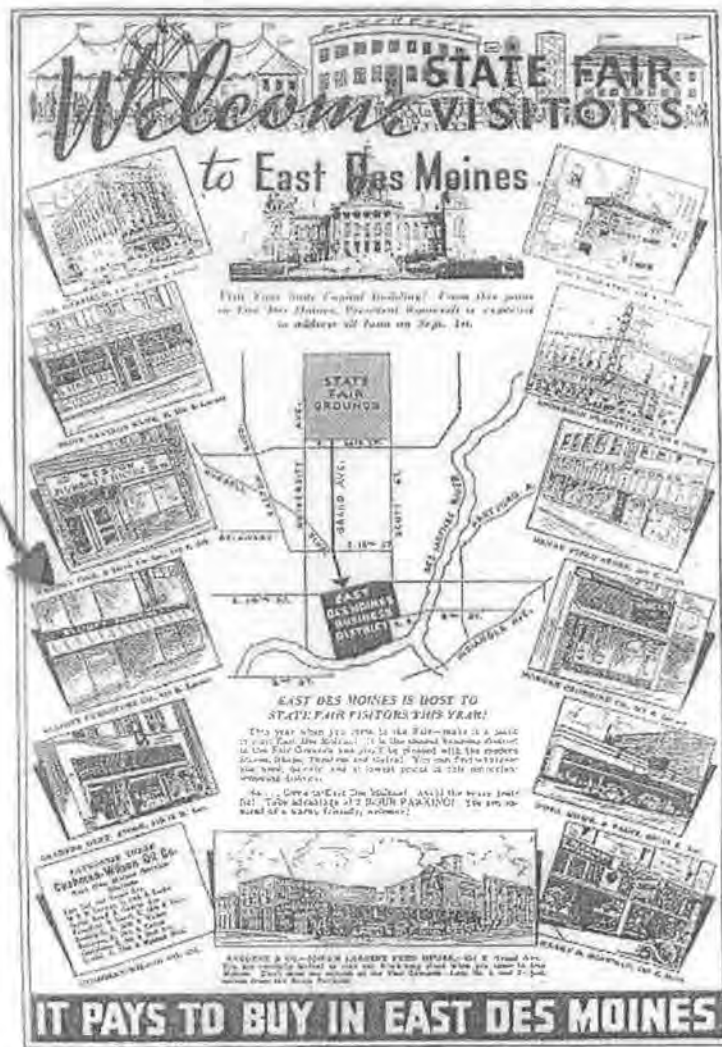


Figure 10

This graphic pictures the Elliott Furniture Company (arrow) as remodeled in the 1920s. It shows the front facade as the glass box it essentially remains to the present day, including the transoms above the second story display windows.

Source: *Des Moines Register*, August 23, 1936.

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Elliott Furniture Company, Polk County, Iowa.

## October 14, 1940



Figure 11

This photograph pictures the remodeled front facade of the Elliott Furniture Company in 1940 and how it included the storefront at 422 East Locust Street (bay at left). The photograph has airbrushed out the entire second floor. An unmanipulated photograph would have revealed, on the second floor, a Late Victorian facade at 422 and the display windows at 424-426 installed circa 1936. The photograph conveys the feeling of the block at night and accentuates its lighted interior and merchandise, exactly the inviting welcome the owners sought.

Source: *Des Moines Register*, October 14, 1940.

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Elliott Furniture Company, Polk County, Iowa.

1958

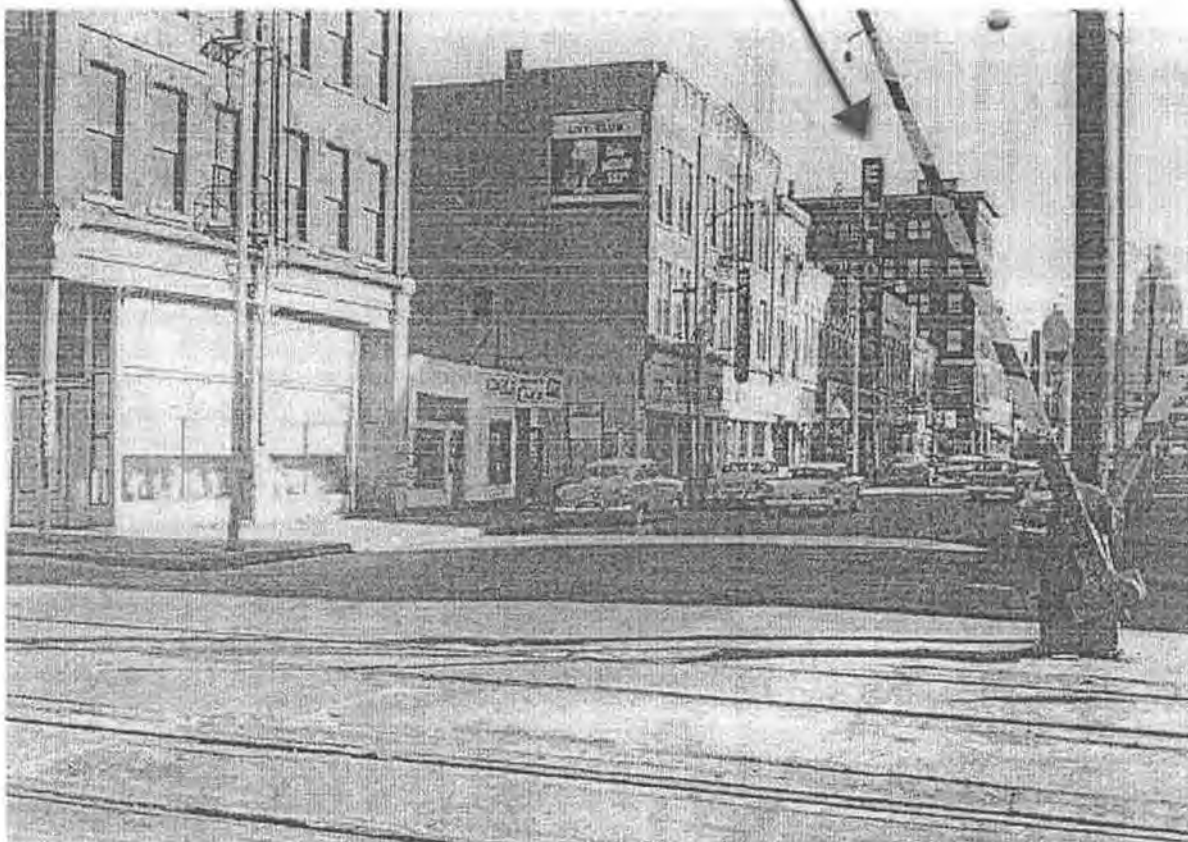


Figure 12

This 1950s photograph looks to the east along East Locust Street and shows the immense vertical sign affixed to the Elliott Furniture Company. This nonextant sign read "ELLIOTT'S." East Locust Street is shown in the picture as a one-way street.

Source: Collection State Historical Society of Iowa.



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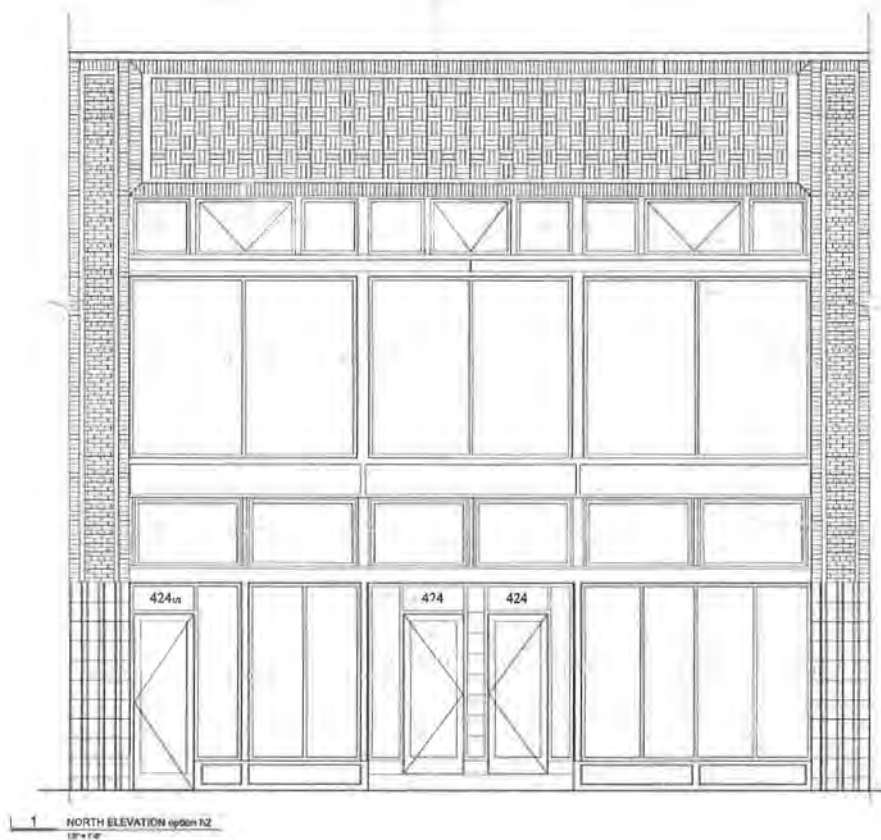
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Elliott Furniture Company, Polk County, Iowa.

## South Elevation Drawing, 2011



Geche' Inclusions llc 424 East Locust  
 1000 County Club Boulevard Ames, Iowa 50014  
 515-281-1888  
 www.gecheinclusions.com

Architect/Engineer  
 424 East Locust  
 Ames, Iowa 50014  
 515-281-1888  
 www.gecheinclusions.com

Scale: As Shown  
 1/8\"/>

Figure 13

On the one hand, this drawing nicely details the brick patterns on this facade. On the other hand, this detailing misrepresents the overall visual impression conveyed by the facade. All of the mortar lines so accurately depicted visually blend, in reality, with the face brick to project a nearly monolithic plane to the casual viewer. The drawing shows the south facade of the building not the north facade as captioned.

Source: Geche' inclusions llc, Des Moines, Iowa, 2011.

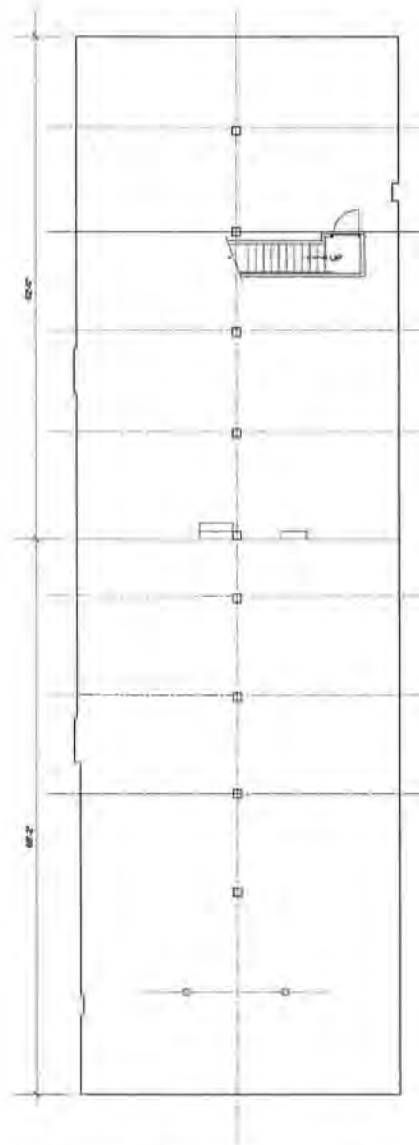
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Elliott Furniture Company, Polk County, Iowa.



**1** NEW PLAN - BASEMENT  
SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"

Figure 14 Source: Goche' inclusions llc, Des Moines, Iowa, 2011.



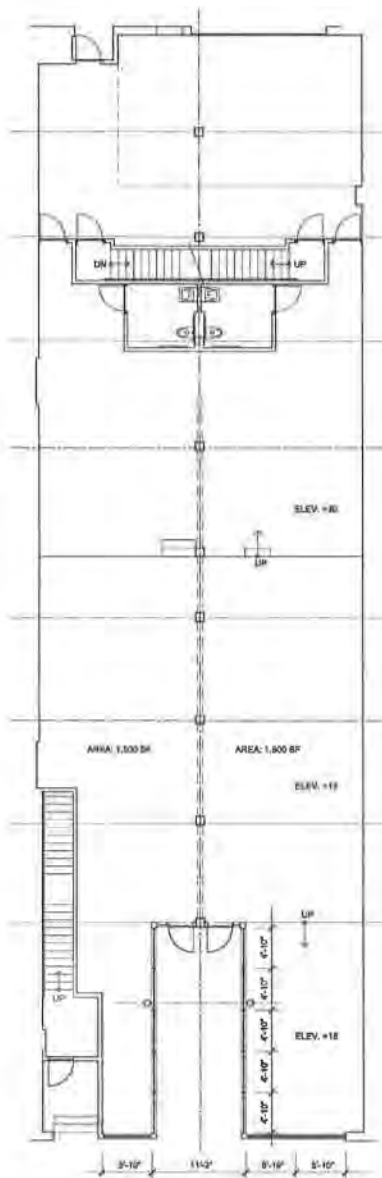
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Elliott Furniture Company, Polk County, Iowa.



**2** NEW PLAN - FIRST FLOOR  
SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"

Figure 15 Source: Goche' inclusions llc, Des Moines, Iowa, 2011.



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Elliott Furniture Company, Polk County, Iowa.



**3** NEW PLAN - SECOND FLOOR  
SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"

Figure 16 Source: Goche' inclusions llc, Des Moines, Iowa, 2011.





**JIMMY JOHN'S**  
GOURMET SANDWICHES

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FAST  
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FROM YOUR  
PHONE  
TABLET!

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DONATE  
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BLOOD  
GIVE LIFE

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SUB SHOP  
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STELLA ARCTUS

COURTESY

DRAUGHT



424

426

ELLIOTT  
FURNITURE CO.

EL 418











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LOVE

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MEAN WHAT YOU SAY

ai

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Elliott Furniture Company

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: IOWA, Polk

DATE RECEIVED: 11/28/14      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 12/30/14  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 1/14/15      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 1/14/15  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 14001149

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

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

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT     RETURN     REJECT    1/14/15 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER AWerday      DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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.

# IOWA DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

MARY COWNIE, DIRECTOR  
CHRIS KRAMER, DEPUTY DIRECTOR

TERRY E. BRANSTAD, GOVERNOR  
KIM REYNOLDS, LT. GOVERNOR

IOWA  
ARTS  
COUNCIL

PRODUCE  
IOWA

STATE HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY OF IOWA

STATE HISTORICAL  
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STATE HISTORIC  
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OFFICE OF IOWA

IOWA  
HISTORICAL  
FOUNDATION

November 24, 2014

Carol Shull, Interim Keeper  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 Eye Street, N.W.-- 8th Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20005

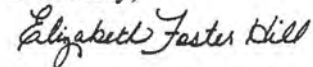
Dear Ms. Shull:

The following National Register nomination(s) are enclosed for your review and listing if acceptable.

- Elliott Furniture Company, 424 E. Locust Street, Polk County, Iowa

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Foster Hill  
National Register

