

1110

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Union Block other names/site number

2. Location

street & number 109-113 W. Monroe not for publication city, town Mount Pleasant vicinity state Iowa code IA county Henry code 087 zip code 52641

3. Classification

Table with 3 columns: Ownership of Property, Category of Property, and Number of Resources within Property. Includes checkboxes for private/public ownership and building/site/structure/object categories.

Name of related multiple property listing: Architectural & Historical Resources of Mount Pleasant, listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet. Signature of certifying official: State Historical Society of Iowa Date: 7/15/91

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of commenting or other official Date State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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):

Entered in the National Register

Signature of the Keeper: Melissa Byers Date of Action: 9/6/91

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/Specialty

COMMERCE/Specialty

Business

SOCIAL/Meeting Hall

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

Mid-19th century

foundation limestone

Other: Vernacular Italianate

walls brick

roof asphalt

other metal cornice

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

This three story brick building (1861), measuring 70'x75', is located on the north side of the Square, immediately east of the alley, at 109-113 W. Monroe. Unlike other buildings around the Square, it features a gable roof, with ridge parallel to the street. The walls are of the locally produced rosy red brick found on other buildings of the period in the business district. The building has a double storefront with a symmetrical eleven bay facade. A central doorway leads to a four foot wide stairway to the second and third floors. Windows on the second and third floors have round arched tops with brick patterned hoodmolds, the corbeling meeting in such a way as to suggest an arcade at the third floor level. Second floor windows appear to be set between brick pilasters. Simple metal brackets are found at the cornice. Although panels cover the third floor windows (original windows are intact on the inside), those in the east half of the second floor show the original trefoil design that was used in the tops of all the windows. Both storefronts have been altered at street level, but this appears to be the only major alteration to this building. These alterations are not intrusive because the overall integrity of the building has been maintained.

On the interior, the first floors have been altered, primarily by dropped ceilings. At the second floor level (originally used as offices), the west half appears to be in unaltered condition. A wide arched doorway opens into the office space from the broad central hallway. The east half has been altered by conversion into apartments. It appears that this involved the lowering of ceilings and addition of plaster board walls. These alterations should be reversible. The central hall leads to large double doors, behind which the stairway continues to the third floor. This level has always been used as meeting space: a courtroom, opera hall, and fraternal lodge hall. The only alterations made to the third floor appear to be the installation of electricity and the addition of plumbing for the kitchen and rest rooms. The integrity of the third floor is remarkable.

The Union Block is one of two buildings in Mount Pleasant which have been documented as being constructed by William McCandless, although it is strongly believed that McCandless was probably responsible for many of the brick buildings around the Square from this period.

 See continuation sheet

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

ARCHITECTURE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

1861  
\_\_\_\_\_

1861  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N.A.  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N.A.

Architect/Builder

William McCandless, Bldr.

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

This building is significant under Criterion C as an outstanding example of a Type II building, an early Italianate design as seen in Mount Pleasant between 1855-c.1870, built by William McCandless.

The Union Block represents one of the best examples of early Italianate commercial design in the community. This style became locally popular following the construction of the Brazelton House Hotel (NRHP) in 1856. The local version of the style featured round arched windows with brick patterned hoodmolds, and a simple bracketed cornice. The brick used in the construction of these buildings was locally manufactured, rosy red in color, and soft due to low temperature firing. The Union Block shares these characteristics with the other examples found in Mount Pleasant. The use of a gable roof on the Union Block is unusual. While it reflects the design of the earliest brick buildings along the south side of the Square, the gable roof was probably used for the practical purpose of providing attic space above the meeting hall.

Henry Ambler and Edward Penn announced in April 1861 that they were going to have a building constructed on the north side of the Square. It would be three stories high, with space for four businesses on the first floor, offices on the second, and a third floor that would be leased to the county for a courtroom, and also be available for community use (suppers, lectures, etc.). It replaced an earlier wood frame building on the same lot. William McCandless is identified as the builder of what was named the Union Block in August of that year. It is not known exactly when the building was completed, but a supper was held there on Christmas Eve 1861.

Although it was not actually built as an Opera House, the Union Block served that purpose for a number of years. Presley Saunders had included a hall (sometimes referred to as an opera house) as part of

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Historic photographs of the north side of the square.  
Mount Pleasant Home Journal, 13 April 1861, 11 May 1861, 8 June 1861,  
31 August 1861, 5 October 1861, 28 December 1861.  
Opera Houses in Iowa, Thematic NR nomination in progress, BHP files.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property Less than one acre.

UTM References:

A 

1	5
---	---

6	2	1	7	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	5	3	5	7	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

  
Zone Easting Northing

C 

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

B 

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

  
Zone Easting Northing

D 

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

W 1/2 Lot 8 and W 1/2 S 16' Lot 7, Blk 7, Original Town, City of Mount Pleasant.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

This is the area historically associated with this resource.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

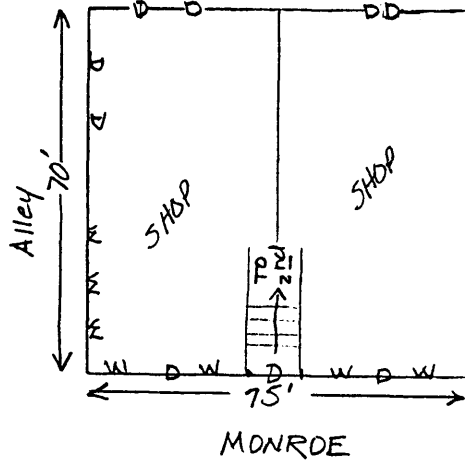
name/title Molly Myers Naumann, Consultant (515) 682-2743  
organization City of Mount Pleasant date May 1991  
street & number City Hall, 202 W. Monroe telephone (319) 385-1470  
city or town Mount Pleasant state IA zip code 52641

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

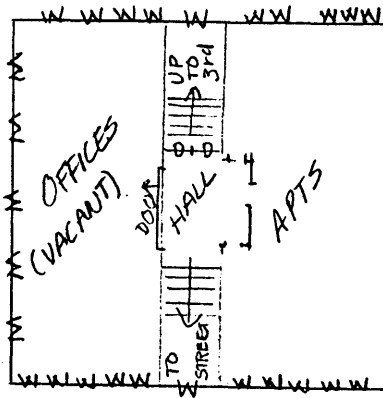
National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

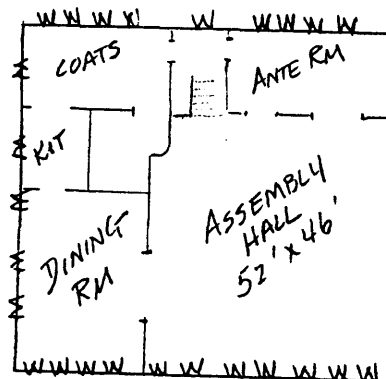
CFN-259-1116



1<sup>ST</sup> FLOOR



2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR



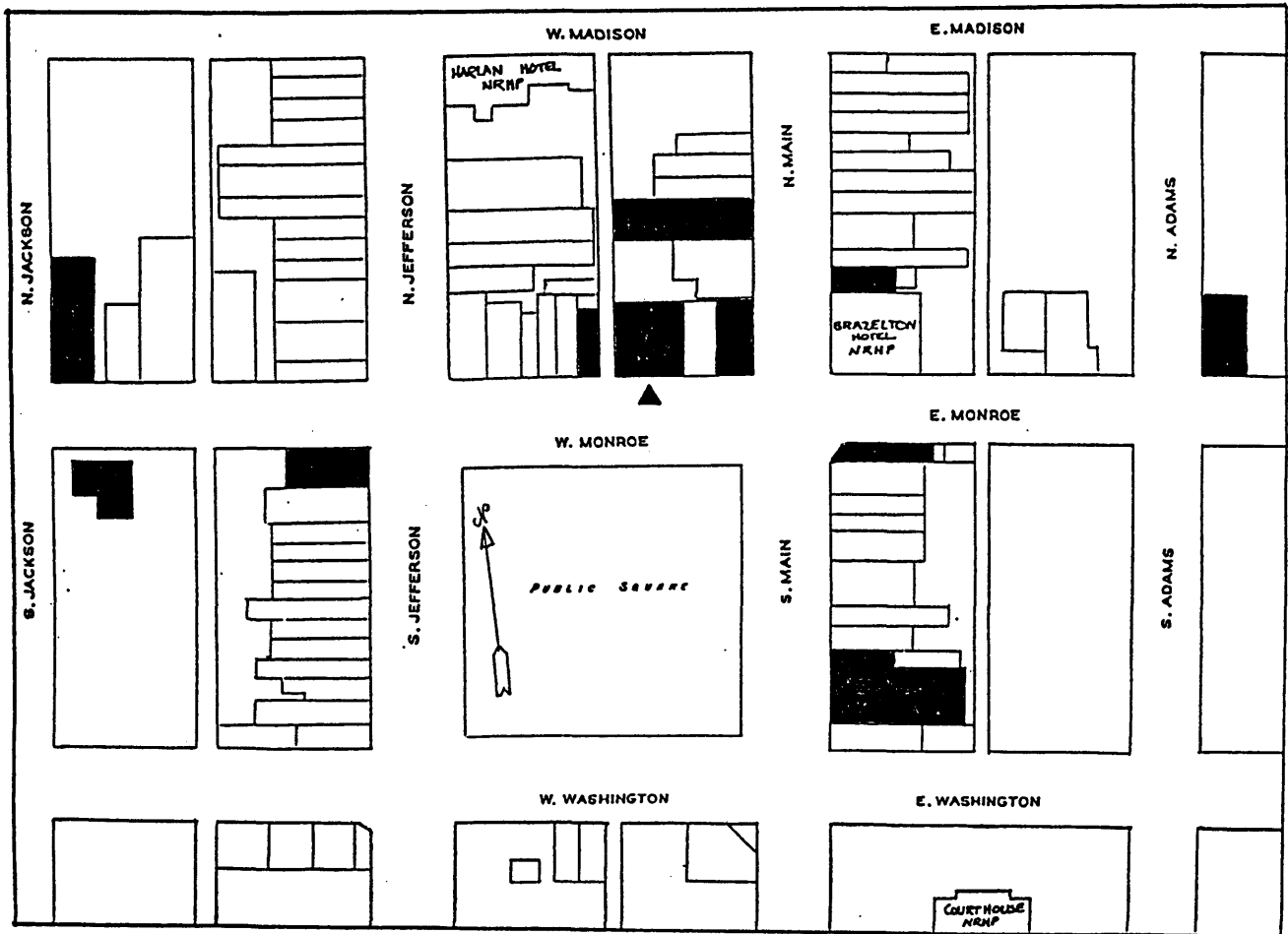
3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

CFN-259-1116



MOUNT PLEASANT PUBLIC SQUARE

Shaded buildings are those being nominated.

▶ indicates specific building being nominated.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 2

CFN-259-1116

his large brick building on the west side of the Square in 1858, and by 1886, the Bon Ton Opera House (a wood frame structure) was located on N. Main, next door to the Baptist Church. The Union Block however, appears to have been the center of the social and cultural gatherings in the community. It must be remembered that this was an intelligent, well educated community, and many of the affairs of Iowa Wesleyan University took place at the Union Block. Further research may establish significance under Criterion A as well.

It is interesting that there were two owners at the time this building was constructed: one owned the east half, one owned the west half, and they shared ownership and use of the central stairway. This ownership pattern continues today.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Photo Page 1

CFN-259-1116

