For NPS use only JUN 2 0 1983

date entered 7/21/83

_NA not for publication

code 055

(D009:6-10)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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

1. Name

historic Jewell Building

and/or common Dreamland Ballroom

2. Location

street & number 2221-2225 North 24th Street

Omaha

city, town

_NA vicinity of

031

code

state

Classification 3.

Nebraska

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
district	public	occupied	agriculture	museum
X building(s)	_X_ private	X_ unoccupied	commercial	park
structure	both	work in progress	educational	private residence
site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	entertainment	religious
object	<u>NA</u> in process	_X_ yes: restricted	government	scientific
-	being considered	yes: unrestricted	industrial	transportation
	-	no	military	<u>X</u> other: vacant

county Douglas

Owner of Property 4.

name	Omaha Economic De	evelopment Corporation	
street & number	5620 Ames Avenue		
city, town	Omaha	NA vicinity of	state Nebraska
5. Loca	ation of Leg	gal Description	
courthouse, regi	istry of deeds, etc. Re	gister of Deeds, Omaha-Dou	glas County Civic Center
street & number	1819 Farnam Stro	et	

city,	town Omaha		state Nebra	ska
6.	Represe	ntation in Ex	cisting Surveys	.*
title	A Comprehensive Preservation in	Plan for Historic Omaha	has this property been determined eligible?	yes no
date	1980		federal state	county <u>X</u> local
depo	ository for survey reco	r ds Omaha City Pla	nning Department	

city, town Omaha state Nebraska

7. Description

Condition excellent	deteriorated		Check one _X_ original site moved date NA_
good _X_ fair	ruins unexposed	altered	moved date <u>NA</u>

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Jewell Building is a two-story commercial building erected in 1923 in a vernacular interpretation of the Georgian Revival style. The first floor accomodates two storefronts which are divided by the entrance and stairway to the second floor dance hall and two apartments at the rear. The building has been vacant and boarded up for the last several years, but appears to be relatively unchanged from its original plans. Rehabilitation plans are underway.

The Jewell Building, designed by local architect Frederick A. Henninger, exhibits eclectic elements of the popular Georgian Revival style, one of the historical styles frequently applied to Omaha's vernacular commercial and residential buildings in the years between 1900 and 1940. The structure's first floor accommodates two 1600 square foot storefronts with individual entrances and display windows. Two apartments are located at the rear of the first floor with main entrances on the north (2233 and 2235 Grant Street) and rear doors in a recessed open-air corridor on the south. The northern storefront, on the corner of 24th and Grant streets, has a corner entrance, quite unlike the southern example.

The storefronts are separated on the west (24th Street) facade by a central straight-topped entry which leads to the second floor ballroom. This entrance, flanked by brick pilasters and surmounted by an arch and brick gable composition, provides the major pedestrian level focal point. The arch, which surrounds a brick and stucco field, is repeated over straight-topped second-story windows on the west and north. A parapet composed of brick string courses frames a limestone slab inscribed "Jewell Building, 1923." Smaller stone tablets, located above a free-standing brick corner column, are inscribed with the street names, "24th Street" and "Grant Street." Additional relief is found on the northern (Grant Street) facade where a limestone arch leads to two first floor apartments and on the southern facade where a four-bay portico is inset within the structure's walls.

The ballroom and auxiliary rooms encompass the second floor. The original stage covers the east end of the floor, flanked by small side rooms, later converted into restrooms. In addition to the original stage, the other noteworthy interior feature is the original pressed metal ceiling which survives intact and in good condition. Office rooms are located in the east end of second floor on each side of the stairway. At the doorway to the ballroom, there is a ticket window with cloak room and refreshment stand, respectively, on each side of the doorway with openings from the ballroom.

The Dreamland Ballroom was in operation until 1965; the barber shop and pool hall on first floor were open until the mid-1970's. The building has been vacant since that time. James C. Jewell, Sr. and then Jr., retained ownership of the building until March, 1983, when it was sold to the Omaha Economic Development Corporation for rehabilitation. In 1980 the building was designated a landmark by the City of Omaha Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—C	heck and justify below		
	 archeology-prehistoric archeology-historic agriculture architecture art commerce communications 	conservation economics education engineering exploration/settlemen	law literature military _X_ music	science sculpture _X social/ humanitarian theater
Canalific datas	1000	Duilden/Architect T		1

Specific dates	1923	Builder/Architect	F. A	. Her	mi	nger,	Omaha,	architect	-
Statement of Si	anificance (in one	naragranh)	John	Lof	&	Sons,	Omaha,	builder	

The Jewell Building has served an important role in Omaha's musical, social, and Black heritage. As the Dreamland Ballroom, it was a music center where nationally-prominent jazz musicians performed from the 1920's to the 1960's. It has served as a gathering place for the Black community, located in the heart of the Black business district.

The Jewell Building represents an important era in the cultural evolution of Omaha's Black community. Erected in 1923, the structure indicates the beginning of Black movement into the Near North Side neighborhood. Before the 1920's, the center of the Black business district was proximate to 14th and Dodge Streets, where James C. Jewell, Sr., operated "Jewell & Phannix," a billiard parlor. The influx of Blacks into Omaha during World War I, due to expanding wartime industries, forced increasing numbers of them to settle in the Near North Side where housing was available. Consequently, the Black business district jumped to the area surrounding 24th and Lake Streets so that it could more efficiently serve its customers.

During 1923, James C. Jewell, Sr., (1873-1930) employed John Lof and Sons to construct a vernacular, two-story, steel frame, brown brick veneer structure at 24th and Grant Streets. The 46' by 130' flat-roofed structure when complete would accommodate shops and apartments on the lower floor, and a large public hall on the upper level. James C. Jewell and his son lived in one of the apartments and operated a billiard parlor at the "2221" storefront and a barber shop at the "2225" storefront, as well as the ballroom.

This second story hall assured national prominence for the structure, for it housed the Dreamland Ballroom, a center for jazz and home to a variety of America's greatest jazz entertainers from the 1920's until the early 1960's. Among those who appeared on the Dreamland stage were Duke Ellington, Nat King Cole, Count Basie, Lionel Hampton, Charlie Barnet, Dizzy Gillespie, Dinah Washington, Ray Charles, Sarah Vaughn, Earl Hines and Louis Armstrong. Prior to the erection of the Jewell Building, Blacks had rented halls at Krug Park and Peony Park or the downtown Brandeis Theater for special programs or community group activities. Thus, the establishment of the ballroom provided the Black community with its own entertainment facility.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10.	Geograp	hical Data			
-	gle name <u>Omaha</u>	ty <u>less than one</u> North, NE	·	Quadrang	e scale <u>1:24000</u>
A 1 5 Zone C E G	2 5 3 2 3 0 Easting	$\begin{bmatrix} 4 & 5 & 7 & 3 & 7 & 6 & 0 \\ Northing \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ \hline 1 & 1 &$	B Zone D F L	Easting	
Lot asso	9, Block 1, Fos ciated with thi				and historically
	states and countion NA	es for properties ove		county boundaries	
state		code	county		code
state	NA.	epared By	county		code
name/title organizat street & n	Penelope Cha Omaha City ion Nebraska St 1819 Farnam		eservation Hist	torian date April, 198 telephone 402/471	
city or to	~ 4 ~ ~			state Nebraska	·
12.	State His	storic Pres	ervation	Officer C	ertification
The evalu	ated significance of	this property within the	e state is:		
		state	local		
665), I hei according	reby nominate this p g to the criteria and p	roperty for inclusion in procedures set forth by	the National Regist	er and certify that it ha	t of 1966 (Public Law 89– as been evaluated
	toric Preservation O		11/orm	V Anen	6///053
		a State Historica	al Society	date	·
l he	Delousp	yers Nat:	the National Regist ered in the ional Register	er date	7/21/83
/ Keepe	er of the National Re	gister	× *		:

Chief of Registration

Attest:

date

.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY 6/20/83 RECEIVED 7/21/83 DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET Significance ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

James C. Jewell, Jr., took over operation of the Jewell Building and Dreamland Ballroom after the death of his father in 1930. He was known as "Omaha's Ace Promoter," and it was through his efforts that Dreamland Ballroom became a renowned jazz center. Jewell's dedication to the establishment of this center is evidenced by his refusal to obtain a liquor license so that young people could attend the performances.

The Jewells were an influential family in the growing Black community due to their many business and political activities. Thus it was natural that Dreamland served for over four decades as a meeting place for the Black neighborhood. It was said that any Black coming through Omaha eventually met Jimmy Jewell, since his business attracted travelers and residents alike.

In 1945 the United States government took over Dreamland Ballroom and established a U.S.O. Center for Black soldiers. Although the structure was returned to Jewell after a year, he sued the government for compensation and in a landmark court battle was awarded \$3,000 in damages. He continued to operate Dreamland Ballroom until 1965, when it ceased to be a profit-making enterprise. A barber shop and the Tuxedo Pool Hall, on the first floor, remained open until the mid-1970's.

The unpretentious Jewell Building exists as a monument to Omaha's tradition as a jazz center. Dreamland Ballroom gave Omaha a reputation among Blacks as one of the prime music locations in the United States. In addition, the structure is a meaningful part of Omaha's Black community in that it was one of the first substantial commercial buildings to be constructed in their developing neighborhood during the 1920's. The Jewell family's involvement in community affairs also led to the building's use as a gathering place and focal point for Blacks in Omaha.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY 6/20/83 7/21/83 RECEIVED DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET Bibliography ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

- A Comprehensive Program for Historic Preservation in Omaha. Omaha City Planning Department, 1980, p. 70.
- Deed record, Register of Deeds Office, Omaha/Douglas County Civic Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

Omaha City Directories, 1928.

Omaha World-Herald, January 23, 1930, p. 24, James C. Jewell death notice.

- Peters, Robert , Jewell Building Landmark Designation, Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission, Omaha City Planning Department, June, 1980.
- Nebraska Federal Writers' Project, W.P.A., "Omaha Guide, Part II, Points of Interest in the City," MS. 1939, pp. 113-114. Filed at Nebraska State Historical Society Library.
- Smith, Alonzo N., "Omaha's Dreamland Ballroom: A Black Cultural Landmark," MS. presented at the Popular Culture Ass'n. Annual Meeting, April, 1983. Copy from Alonzo N. Smith, Black Studies Department, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, Nebraska.