

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received JUN 20 1983
date entered 7/21/83

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

1. Name

historic Jewell Building (D009:6-10)

and/or common Dreamland Ballroom

2. Location

street & number 2221-2225 North 24th Street NA not for publication

city, town Omaha NA vicinity of

state Nebraska code 031 county Douglas code 055

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

4. Owner of Property

name Omaha Economic Development Corporation

street & number 5620 Ames Avenue

city, town Omaha NA vicinity of state Nebraska

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds, Omaha-Douglas County Civic Center

street & number 1819 Farnam Street

city, town Omaha state Nebraska

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

A Comprehensive Plan for Historic Preservation in Omaha has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1980 federal state county local

depository for survey records Omaha City Planning Department

city, town Omaha state Nebraska

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		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 accommodates 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.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Omaha North, NE

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 9, Block 1, Foster's Addition, City of Omaha, Nebraska, the land historically associated with this property.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state NA code county code

state NA code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Robert Peters, Preservation Administrator

Penelope Chatfield Sodhi, Preservation Historian

organization Omaha City Planning Department

Nebraska State Historical Society date April, 1983

1819 Farnam Street

street & number 1500 R Street telephone 402/471-3850

Omaha

city or town Lincoln state Nebraska

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Murray D. Knott 6/7/83

title Director, Nebraska State Historical Society date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

for Deborah Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the National Register date 7/21/83

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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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.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Bibliography ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

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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.