

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/department storeDOMESTIC/multiple dwellingCOMMERCE/TRADE/business

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USEDOMESTIC/multiple dwellingCOMMERCE/TRADE/business**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Italianate

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETEwalls BRICKMETALroof Not Visibleother N/A**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The Klein and Sutmar Block (Photo 1) is located on the northwest corner of the main intersection of downtown Oakes, North Dakota. The building, facing southward on Main Avenue (formerly Union Street), is passed on the east side by Fifth Street North, on the north side by an alley, and is bounded on the west by a vacant lot. The building possesses a 75' frontage, occupying three lots on Block 9 of the Original Plat of Oakes. The historic portion of the building extends 100' to the north on the lot.

The building was constructed in two episodes. The first episode took place in 1890 and resulted in construction of a structure of 25'x 100' which is today the eastern one-third of the nominated property. That building carried the ornamental pressed metal facade which is presently on the building. The second episode occurred in 1904, when the frontage of the block was extended 50' to the west to include the adjacent business. Two 25' units of the original pressed metal pattern were added to the western two-thirds of the building, unifying the resulting 75' frontage. The eastern side, originally brick with projecting limestone hoods, was rebricked and windows added to light the grade level (Klein: 176).

The present two-story commercial structure has large glass display windows on the Main Avenue side first floor, brick on both floors of the west and east sides, and brick and concrete block additions on the rear (north side). On the second floor of the south side is a pressed metal facade which extends across the entire front and wraps around the east side the length of one bay. The pressed metal forms an ornate pattern of Corinthian columns in relief surrounding each of the side's nine windows. The columns stand above prominent bases composed of two floral relief motifs each. The columns support a corbelled straight arch, above which is an architrave comprised of paterae. The frieze is open and contains doubled brackets. Above the frieze is a projecting cornice/parapet with dentils and paterae. Atop the parapet are the building's original owners' names, "Klein and Sutmar."

The exposed brick of the second floor's east side is laid such that each sixth course is recessed and that segmental arches cap the windows. An unbroken run of dentils also defines the cornice of that side. The building sits beneath a flat roof and windows are double hung one-over-one sashes.

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The first floor level of the storefront has been changed but retains a feeling of openness from the original design (Photo 2). Originally the storefront appeared to serve two separate businesses, one consuming the eastern 50' of the frontage, the other on the remaining 25' to the west. The larger storefront had a central opening which has since been relocated to the southeast corner. Applied inverted board-and-batten covers the tops of the large display windows and wraps around nearly the entirety of the east side; the building did not have a transom. A modern sheet metal facade covers the western one-third of the storefront, which still possesses its original entry placement.

Further alteration to the two principal facades are the installation of display windows on the east side near the southeast corner, application of horizontal boards over the east side entry near the northeast corner, and permastone facing on the bulkhead of the eastern two-thirds of the storefront. The parapet has lost a pediment which sat above the name block and several lantern-like features which sat above corners and the 25' section breaks of the pressed metal facade.

The back (north) and west sides (Photo 3) have undergone more alterations, but are facades of secondary importance in determining the character of the design. Two one-floor masonry storage pens are appended to the north side. Second floor window and door replacements are evident on the north side. Removal of an apparently older structure from the building's west side has disturbed the setting somewhat: the bricks which abutted the adjacent building are exposed and less weathered in color; window rhythms which accommodated the other building have been disturbed, and the side has been left with a black line indicating the profile of the neighboring structure.

Interior of the main store (Photos 4 and 5) remains open and possessed of its original pressed metal ceiling and column capitals. The interior hall of the second floor assumes an L-shape. Three-panelled doors with glass lights and transoms flank the hall. Wide baseboards and door surrounds remain in place. While the woodwork appears more than fifty years, it is not known whether it remains from the building's original construction.

The building's main floor retail space is currently unoccupied and tenants are abandoning the rental office and apartment space on the upper floors. The major threat to the building's integrity is neglect.

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 N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
Architecture

Period of Significance
1904

Significant Dates
1904

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
Architect: Unknown
Builder: Unknown

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

The Klein-Sutmar Block is architecturally significant in the context of Commercial Development of Oakes, North Dakota. It exhibits an outstanding design which represents one important period of the town's commercial development: 1903-1908. The building's historic importance is suggested by the quality of its design and its size; the historical significance may be demonstrated after further research of Oakes commercial development.

Architecturally the building is the single remaining building with an ornate pressed metal facade. While Oakes may have had only one other building (the Oakes Times block) with such a decorative treatment, these two buildings arose during a significant episode of commercial construction in the town from 1903-1908. During this short period much of the present-day commercial area was erected. Owners who constructed buildings during this time sought more diverse and ostentatious designs in an effort to mark their business as superior. Buildings constructed in the periods before or after this short period of decorative competitiveness are plainer in their exterior ornament. Along with the former Oakes National Bank the Klein and Sutmar block is an outstanding example of design and state of preservation. An interesting note about the building is that apparently it was one of the first to utilize a plaster mixture of gypsum, wood fiber, and asbestos for the finish of interior walls (Oakes Times: March 15, 1906). Please refer to the contextual statement for more discussion of the architectural milieu of Oakes.

In 1894 Albert Franklin Klein, of St. Paul, formed a partnership with his cousin, A.L. (Tom) Sutmar, also of St. Paul, upon arrival in Oakes. They opened a general merchandise business in an Oakes business building which formerly owned by Mr. P.S. Peabody, the first town lot owner. Peabody's operation dated from 1886, but his original store was destroyed by fire in the early 1890s. Klein and Sutmar purchased the replacement he constructed (Klein: 175-176).

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Klein came to Oakes after working for eight years as a travelling salesman for a St. Paul dry goods warehouse. Klein and Sutmar operated their business from the building for ten years when it was removed from the lots in 1904 to make room for construction of the nominated property. The building cost nearly \$20,000 to complete. The following spring the upper stories containing offices were finished and the telephone exchange became one of the first tenants. By 1906 the entire interior space was finished and leased. Among users of the building's 43 rooms were the owners, each of whom occupied one of the building's several apartments. An additional \$10,000 went into the furnishing of the store which included long marble trimmed counters and an octagonal glass counter in the center. Klein and Sutmar sold the business in 1926 and a series of department stores and groceries occupied the space. The upper floors functioned many years as the only housing for Oakes' elderly (Klein: 176-177). Klein and Sutmar's large merchandise store represents only part of their total commercial activities.

Collectively Klein and Sutmar raised crops and operated a stock farm . Of their 3,700 acres of land in Dickey and Sargent Counties, about 1,000 acres were cultivated and the remainder given to grazing use for horses, cattle, and hogs. They specialized in Herefords and at one time owned 500 head. The pair also owned a feed store in Oakes. Klein's activities extended to nearby Fullerton, in which he co-owed a merchandise store under the name Klein and Lee. Klein and Sutmar continued to operate their business until 1926. At that time Klein and his wife opened Klein's Cafe, which they operated until his death in 1929. Of the buildings associated with his former business activities, the original Klein and Sutmar store, the feed store, and Klein's Cafe are extant. It is presumed that the nominated building represents the most significant commercial activity associated with Klein and/or Sutmar. Until research documents the actual economic place occupied by the Klein and Sutmar enterprise, the magnitude of their contribution to Oakes' commercial development must remain an inference from the character of their building.

A.F. Klein's social activities were as wide ranging. He served for three years on the local school board and was affiliated with the Odd Fellows, Macabees, and the Modern Woodmen of America. His generosity to the community expressed itself in the form of extended credit, reduced prices, and donations he made from the store. Such acts of kindness aided in buffering community residents from the ill effects of hard economic times which began in the 1920s. This practice is attributed to the decline and eventual demise of his business in 1926 (Klein: 176).

9. Major Bibliographical References

For bibliography see context statement.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- 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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository:

North Dakota Cultural Resource Survey
Site # 32 DI 26

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A
 Zone Easting Northing

C

B
 Zone Easting Northing

D

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

lots 1-3, Block 9, Original Townsite Plat of Oakes, North Dakota

N/A See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire resource whose boundaries coincide with the three city lots.

N/A See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title L. Martin Perry / Architectural Historian date 12/15/87
 organization State Historical Society of North Dakota telephone 701-224-2672
 street & number Heritage Center state North Dakota zip code 58505
 city or town Bismarck

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Klein and Sutmar Block
Oakes, Dickey County, North Dakota

Photo credit: L. Martin Perry
Date of photo: September 30, 1986
Location of negative: State Historical Society of North Dakota
North Dakota Heritage Center
Bismarck, ND 58505

Klein and Sutmar Block (left) and former Oakes National Bank (right), camera facing northeast.

Photo 1 of 7

Klein and Sutmar Block
Oakes, Dickey County, North Dakota

Photo credit: L. Martin Perry
Date of photo: September 30, 1986
Location of negative: State Historical Society of North Dakota
North Dakota Heritage Center
Bismarck, ND 58505

Klein and Sutmar Block, primary facades, camera facing northwest.

Photo 2 of 7

Klein and Sutmar Block
Oakes, Dickey County, North Dakota

Photo credit: L. Martin Perry
Date of photo: September 30, 1986
Location of negative: State Historical Society of North Dakota
North Dakota Heritage Center
Bismarck, ND 58505

Klein and Sutmar Block, rear and secondary elevations, camera facing southeast.

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Klein and Sutmar Block
Oakes, Dickey County, North Dakota

Photo credit: L. Martin Perry
Date of photo: September 30, 1986
Location of negative: State Historical Society of North Dakota
North Dakota Heritage Center
Bismarck, ND 58505

Interior, camera facing north.
Photo 4 of 7

Klein and Sutmar Block
Oakes, Dickey County, North Dakota

Photo credit: L. Martin Perry
Date of photo: September 30, 1986
Location of negative: State Historical Society of North Dakota
North Dakota Heritage Center
Bismarck, ND 58505

Ceiling detail, camera facing west.
Photo 5 of 7

Klein and Sutmar Block
Oakes, Dickey County, North Dakota

Photo credit: L. Martin Perry
Date of photo: September 30, 1986
Location of negative: State Historical Society of North Dakota
North Dakota Heritage Center
Bismarck, ND 58505

Interior, upper floor, camera facing southwest.
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Klein and Sutmar Block
Oakes, Dickey County, North Dakota

Photo credit: L. Martin Perry

Date of photo: September 30, 1986

Location of negative: State Historical Society of North Dakota
North Dakota Heritage Center
Bismarck, ND 58505

Interior, upper floor, camera facing north.
Photo 7 of 7
