

Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs
State Historical Society of Iowa
Iowa Site Inventory Form
Continuation Sheet

Site Number __ 82-00280 _____
Related District Number _____

Page ____ 1 ____

Name of Property _____ Henry Berg Building _____ County _____ Scott _____

Address _____ 246 (226-236) W. 3rd Street _____ City _____ Davenport _____

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Henry Berg Building is located on Lot 1, Block 44 of LeClaire's 1st Addition. The building is sited on the northeast corner of the intersection of Third and Harrison Streets, with major elevations on both the south and the west, the south being primary. The building is bound on the north and the east by commercial structures of similar scale, but later construction periods. An alley runs east-west at its rear. A public sidewalk provides access to the building's entrances on West Third and Harrison.

It should be noted that various early documents indicate the building address as 230 West Third Street.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The Henry Berg Building is a three-story, brick structure built on what is likely a stone foundation. The focus of the building's façade is directed on the corner entrance, with the elevations retreating from that point. Both elevations are divided into bays by brick piers that rise from the first story. The upper stories of the south elevation are divided into three-bays, each with three windows; those of the west elevation are divided into three-bays as well – two consisting of paired windows, and the third of a single window. The net result is a uniform, yet asymmetrical building.

The detail of the Berg Building is what provides its sense of character. The use of uniformly sized, double-hung windows with arched heads creates a sense of restraint and control, while the ornate window hoods and highly detailed brickwork cornice add energy and visual interest.

Special note should be made of the decorative brickwork of the upper elevations. As a visual line of demarcation, turned bricks separate the storefront level from the upper stories. From that line, paired pilasters with simplified capitals provide the bay definition. Within each bay, double-hung windows dominate the wall space. On the second floor the windows have fully arched heads, while those of the third floor are flat arches. All of the windows are capped with hoods created of turned bricks and keystones. The brickwork cornice is created from a series of turned bricks, layered in rows, one over the other, to create an unusually ornate pattern.

Condition

As the following historic images reveal, the reconfiguration of the building's storefronts has diminished the historic integrity of the Berg Building. The brick infill of the storefront and introduction of dark, fixed-paned glass clearly disturbs the building's character. However, given the retention of its original form, upper story fenestration, and decorative detail, the building remains a significant contributor to the block.

As a masonry structure, the greatest concern for the building is the condition of its brick. From street level, significant joint loss can be seen across the face of the upper story elevations.

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PROPERTY HISTORY

The building at 246 (230) West Third Street was constructed in c.1875, for use by Henry Berg, a gunsmith. The structure provided a storefront for Berg, who occupied the space until approximately 1910. Two additional storefronts were utilized by various businesses, including the Hickey Brothers Cigar Store Number 6, Griffin's Confectionery, and Davenport Brick and Tile Company.

The Berg Apartments and Suburban Home Mortgage currently occupy the Henry Berg Building.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Henry Berg Building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1983. The resource remains significant under Criterion A in its association with the history of Davenport commerce. The building is also considered significant under Criterion C as an unusual, vernacular adaptation of the Late Victorian Italianate in commercial construction.

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View of the Henry Berg Building (noted with an arrowhead) in the context of its streetscape.

(SOURCE: AKAY Consulting – November 2004)

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View of the Berg Building's upper story fenestration and decorative brickwork (south elevation). Both elements are critical to defining the building's architectural character. Their high level of integrity is of particular importance given the loss of the storefront level.

(SOURCE: AKAY Consulting – November 2004)

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This oblique view of the corner elevation emphasizes the layering of stone and brick details, which results in a dynamic façade.

(SOURCE: AKAY Consulting – November 2004)

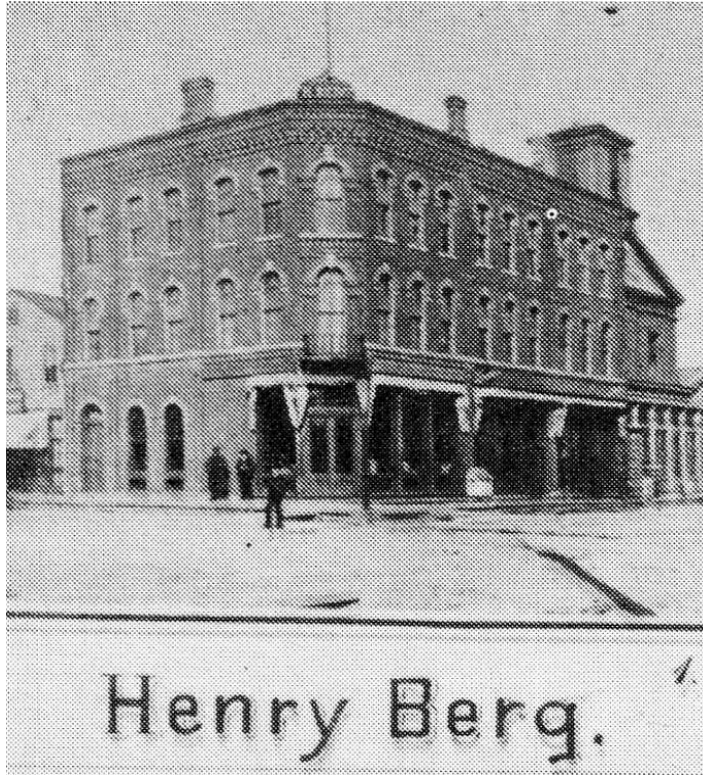
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This historic image from the 1887 publication, "First Album of Davenport, Iowa", documents the Henry Berg Building approximately ten years after its construction and before the addition of its current neighbors. Note the configuration of the original street level elevations.

(SOURCE: Putnam Museum of History and Natural Science – Davenport, Iowa)

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This 1880s view of West Third Street, looking east from the middle of the 300 block, documents the Berg building within the context of its original streetscape.

(SOURCE: Putnam Museum of History and Natural Science. Davenport, Iowa.)

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Judging from the automobiles lining West Third Street, this historic image dates to the late 1940s. As the photograph indicates, Bond Drugs occupied the storefront at this time. Note that the brick building had been painted and that the storefront of the south elevation, though changed, remained much the same. The street level of the west elevation had been changed by this time.

(SOURCE: Putnam Museum of History and Natural Science – Davenport, Iowa)

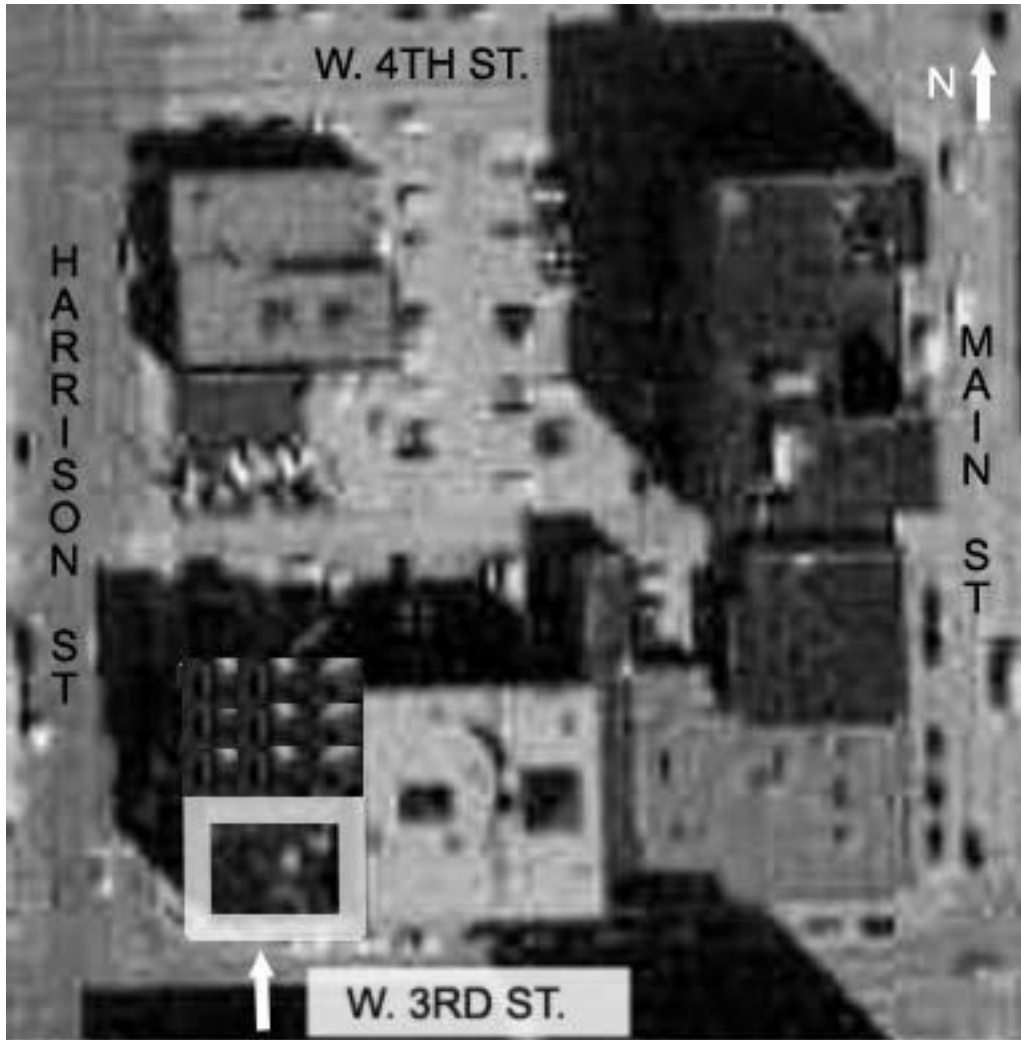
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The arrow indicates the location of the Henry Berg Building.

(SOURCE: City of Davenport – Planning Department – 1/2005)

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Davenport Public Library; Richardson-Sloane Special Collections
Davenport City Directory Collection 1890-1940
Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Collection
Quad Cities Photograph Collection

Putnam Museum of History and Natural Science – Davenport, Iowa.

Local Publications

Svendsen, Marlys. “Davenport, Where the River Runs West: A Survey of Davenport History & Architecture”. ND

Huebinger, Adam. “First Album of the City of Davenport, Iowa”. Davenport, IA. 1887.

Internet Resources

www.scottcountyiowa.com/assessor. Scott County Assessor.