

Site Inventory Form
State Historical Society of Iowa
 (December 1, 1999)

State Inventory No. 22-00220 New Supplemental
 Part of a district with known boundaries (enter inventory no.) 22-01381
 Relationship: Contributing Noncontributing
 Contributes to a potential district with yet unknown boundaries
 National Register Status:(any that apply) Listed De-listed NHL DOE
 9-Digit SHPO Review & Compliance Number _____
 Non-Extant (enter year) _____

1. Name of Property

historic name Northwestern Bell Telephone Building
 other names/site number American Legion Hall

2. Location

street & number 107 First Street NW
 city or town Elkader vicinity, county Clayton
 Legal Description: (If Rural) Township Name _____ Township No. _____ Range No. _____ Section _____ Quarter of Quarter _____
 (If Urban) Subdivision Original Town Block(s) 9 Lot(s) 2

3. State/Federal Agency Certification [Skip this Section]

4. National Park Service Certification [Skip this Section]

5. Classification

Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property	
	If Non-Eligible Property Enter number of:	If Eligible Property, enter number of: Contributing Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	_____ buildings	1 _____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____ sites	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____ structures	_____ structures
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____ objects	_____ objects
<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____ Total	1 _____ Total

Name of related project report or multiple property study (Enter "N/A" if the property is not part of a multiple property examination).
 Title Arch. & Hist. Resources of the Elkader Downtown Historic District MPD Historical Architectural Data Base Number 22-030

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
<u>10E Communications Facility (telephone exchange)</u>	<u>01B01 Duplex</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)	Materials (Enter categories from instructions)
<u>09D05 Hip Roof</u>	foundation <u>10 Concrete</u>
<u>06C Classical Revival</u>	walls <u>03 Brick</u>
_____	roof <u>08 Asphalt</u>
_____	other _____

Narrative Description (SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" representing your opinion of eligibility after applying relevant National Register criteria)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended	A Property is associated with significant events.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended	B Property is associated with the lives of significant persons.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended	C Property has distinctive architectural characteristics.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended	D Property yields significant information in archaeology or history.

County Clayton
City Elkader

Address 107 First Street NW

Site Number 22-00220
District Number 22-01381

Criteria Considerations

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B Removed from its original location.
- C A birthplace or grave.
- D A cemetery
- E A reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F A commemorative property.
- G Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

02 ARCHITECTURE

05 COMMERCE

Significant Dates

Construction date
1942 check if circa or estimated date
Other dates

Significant Person

(Complete if National Register Criterion B is marked above)

Architect/Builder

Architect

Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance (SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography See continuation sheet for citations of the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form

10. Geographic Data

UTM References (OPTIONAL)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	_____	_____	2	_____	_____
3	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

See continuation sheet for additional UTM references or comments

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Marlys Svendsen, Svendsen Tyler, Inc.

organization City of Elkader

date 7/2011

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telephone 715/469-3300

city or town Sarona

state WI zip code 54870

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION (Submit the following items with the completed form)

FOR ALL PROPERTIES

- Map:** showing the property's location in a town/city or township.
- Site plan:** showing position of buildings and structures on the site in relation to public road(s).
- Photographs:** representative black and white photos. If the photos are taken as part of a survey for which the Society is to be curator of the negatives or color slides, a photo/catalog sheet needs to be included with the negatives/slides and the following needs to be provided below on this particular inventory site:

Roll/slide sheet # _____	Frame/slot # _____	Date Taken _____
Roll/slide sheet # _____	Frame/slot # _____	Date Taken _____
Roll/slide sheet # _____	Frame/slot # _____	Date Taken _____

- See continuation sheet or attached *photo & slide catalog sheet* for list of photo roll or slide entries.
- Photos/illustrations without negatives are also in this site inventory file.

FOR CERTAIN KINDS OF PROPERTIES, INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING AS WELL

- Farmstead & District:** (List of structures and buildings, known or estimated year built, and contributing or non-contributing status)
- Barn:**
 - A sketch of the frame/truss configuration in the form of drawing a typical middle bent of the barn.
 - A photograph of the loft showing the frame configuration along one side.
 - A sketch floor plan of the interior space arrangements along with the barn's exterior dimensions in feet.

State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Use Only Below This Line

Concur with above survey opinion on National Register eligibility: Yes No More Research Recommended
 This is a locally designated property or part of a locally designated district.

Comments: _____

Evaluated by (name/title): _____ Date: _____

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Northwestern Bell Telephone Building

Clayton

Name of Property

County

107 First Street NW

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Address

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7. Description:

According to the Clayton County Assessor, this building is estimated to have been built in 1942. According to property transfer records, the parcel was acquired by Northwestern Bell Telephone Co. in 1940 making it likely that the 1942 construction date is accurate. The original front half of the building appears on the 1951 Sanborn Map for this block. The design and form of the building are consistent with the Assessor's date.

The Northwestern Bell Telephone Building at 107 First Street NW is an example of the use of the Classical Revival Style for a one-story commercial building form. The freestanding hipped-roof building form has a wide front with an irregular footprint measuring 35 feet across the front and a combined depth of 53 feet for the two residential sections. The building is tucked between two other freestanding commercial buildings – the former Miller Ice Cream Building to the north and a former office building converted to a restaurant, to the south.

The building has a low-pitched hipped roof, concrete foundation, and mottled tan, cream and gold-colored brick walls. The roof has deep eaves lined by a brick dentiled cornice. The off-set entrance on the right half of the front façade is surrounded by squares of dressed limestone arranged as simulated quoins and matching stone dentils across the upper edge of the stone lintel. The original commercial entrance door has been replaced with a wood paneled residential door.

Fenestration includes segmental arched 8/8 double-hung windows with the arches built from a single course of matching header brick. On the front façade, two windows flanked by applied paneled shutters are to the left of the entrance. On the south façade, three multi-light windows are present and on the north façade, two windows. Matching brick arches and applied shutters are found at each opening.

Alterations to the building include several new additions (brick and stucco) around the original rear wing and the addition of an attached single-bay frame garage at the southwest corner facing the alley. The other major alteration is the addition of a concrete patio and brick balustrade across the front. It has five stone or cast concrete pedestals evenly spaced across the front and a short closed brick balustrade between four of the pedestals. The one open section marks the entrance walk on the right side. Decorative wrought iron sections are located along the upper edge of the three balustrade spans. A decorative light fixture is located at the center of each pedestal. The building now contains two residential apartments.

8. Significance:

The Northwestern Bell Telephone Building at 107 First Street is an example of late Classical Revival Style commercial building from the World War II period. The building occupies a mid-block site along the west side of First Street NW where several other freestanding commercial buildings are located. The building is eligible for the National Register as a contributing resource in the Elkader Downtown Historic District under Criteria A and C. Under Criterion A, the district's commercial buildings are associated with the historic contexts developed for the downtown in the "Architectural and Historical Resources of the Elkader Downtown Historic District" Multiple Property Documentation form covering

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the years 1846 to 1960. Under Criterion C, the district contains good examples of both high style and vernacular commercial buildings dating from the 1850s through the 1950s.

Elkader Downtown Historic District Background:

The town of Elkader was laid out in 1846 along the banks of the Turkey River approximately 16 miles upstream from the Turkey River's confluence with the Mississippi River. The town was surveyed and laid out in 1846 with the Original Town Plat filed in June 22, 1846 by Timothy Davis, Chester Sage and John Thompson, friends and business partners, who began operating a sawmill on North Front (Main) Street in 1845 before the town was even platted. By 1849 they had a successful flour mill in operation. The new town was named for Abd el-Kader, an Algerian freedom fighter and world figure who was admired by Davis. The principal building stimulating development in the 1840s and 1850s was the Elkader Mill. After 1860 when the Clayton County voters selected Elkader as the permanent county seat, the downtown saw a variety of merchants set up shops, several hotels open, a number of newspapers begin publication, and small manufacturing concerns get underway in the city center. Elkader numbered 440 residents in 1860.

The new county court house saw its first section completed in 1869 opposite the downtown. New limestone buildings were erected along both North and South Main Street with public halls frequently located on upper floors. During the 1870s and 1880s 2-story brick buildings began replacing frame business houses. A permanent railroad connection was completed by the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul RR in 1886 but service remained poor as Elkader was located at the end of a spur rather than along a main line route. A more important transportation improvement during the 1880s was the completion of the Keystone Bridge across the Turkey River in 1880. Its completion prompted a period of economic vitality and community investment. The community was officially incorporated two years later in 1891 and a new waterworks system and city well were completed in 1896. Electricity was rejected by locals until the end of the decade in 1900, however. In the meantime, new churches were built in 1897 for the Congregationalists on the east side of the river and in 1897-1899 for the Catholics on the west side of the river. Coupled with a series of major fires during the 1890s, the downtown saw a period of rebuilding with a new hotel and bank at the entrance to the business district at the turn of the century. The new opera house was completed on North Main Street while other 2 and 3-story brick blocks appeared both north and south of Bridge Street.

By 1900, Elkader's population stood at its peak of 1,321 – an increase of 77 percent during the decade of the 1890s. Development continued in the downtown before and after World War I but at a much slower pace. Floods and fires damaged the Elkader Mill in 1902, 1906 and 1908, but it was nevertheless rebuilt by Schmidt Brothers & Co., retaining a key employer and anchor for Elkader's downtown. The business district began to extend to the west before and after the war with the principal changes seen along West Bridge Street. Here livery stables and wagon shops were replaced by automobile dealerships, implement companies and filling stations. Five stations eventually located along West Bridge with a sixth one block to the south along First Street SW. The national economic depression of the 1930s was coupled by the closing of the Elkader Mill in 1939 following a major fire. Natural disasters after World War I included major floods in 1922, 1947, and 1958 with a tornado destroying section of South Main Street in 1958 as well.

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Despite these natural and human made disasters, Elkader saw steady but modest population growth from 1,223 in 1920 to 1,526 in 1960. The impact of the automobile was seen in traffic patterns, parking patterns, and traffic signs and the introduction of electricity saw several generations of street lighting come and go. The popularity of the opera house waned and the first floor became the municipal fire station while two movie houses came and one stayed in the downtown drawing evening crowds for entertainment and shopping. As many as 130 people resided in downtown flats during this period. A good system of inter and intra-state highways connected Elkader and its downtown to other parts of the state and country in a way that railroads had never served the community. By 1960, downtown Elkader was well-established as one of several geographically dispersed retail centers serving Clayton County. Virtually every storefront was filled with start-up businesses or multi-generational family stores as Elkader's downtown achieved a stable and healthy status for local and countywide residents.

Historic Background for Northwestern Bell Telephone Building at 107 First Street:

Plans for the construction of the Northwestern Bell Telephone Building at 107 First Street began in 1940 when the decision was made to replace the existing telephone exchange located on the second floor of the William Reimer Building at 110 West Bridge Street. Reimer had developed the building in 1914, erecting the two-story concrete block building and leasing the upper level to the telephone company. On December 1, 1921 Northwestern Bell acquired the local exchange through a merger with the Standard Telephone Company. In 1922, the local exchange served 510 telephones, a number that quadrupled by 1950.

This exchange was replaced during World War II when Northwestern Bell Telephone under its parent company American Telephone and Telegraph purchased a property on First Street NW in June 1940. A building was completed two years later incorporating the stone foundation of the existing house on the site with the new building and several expansions made through the years. The building held the operator exchange that was in use until dial service was introduced in March 1967. Northwestern Bell traced its roots in Iowa to the Iowa Telephone Company that formed in 1896 and changed its name to Northwestern Bell Telephone in 1909. In 1921, it formally merged with other regional companies (including Standard Telephone Company) under the Northwestern Bell name. Headquarters were in Omaha for the telephone company's operations in Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North and South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

Both local and toll line service along with customer service and technical equipment were located at the Northwestern Bell Building in Elkader until 1969 when consolidation was completed at a regional level. The one-story brick building's simplified Classic Revival style suggested the company's intention to have permanence in the community, but it remained in use for less than three decades. Its design for telephone equipment use included the installation of steel I-beams to reinforce the floors for heavy telephone equipment. Among the many related services provided by the local operator, Marian Barton, during her 27 years of employment here was the coordination of calls to Santa Claus each December. She forwarded calls from children to her mother who played the role of Mrs. Claus informing callers that Santa was with his elves and she would forward a message.

Following use for the telephone exchange, the building became an American Legion Hall for a time. It is currently used as apartments.

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9. Major Sources:

- 1984 History of Clayton County.* Clayton County Genealogical Society, Elkader, Iowa: Griffith Press, 1984.
- Anderson, David C. *Reconnaissance Survey of Elkader Clayton County, Iowa.* Clayton County Historic Preservation Commission and Main Street Elkader, March 1, 1994.
- Andreas, A.T. *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa.* Chicago: Andreas Atlas Co., 1875.
- Appraisal Records for Elkader Downtown Properties, Clayton County Assessor's Office, 1949 – 1965.
- "Bird's Eye View Map, Elkader, Iowa, 1871." Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Doniat and Zastrow.
- Elkader Historical Society/Carter House Museum research file for 107 First Street NW; files focusing on downtown Elkader buildings, businesses, civic leaders and related information. Compiled by Marge Costigan and other museum volunteers. Research files contain hundreds of historic photos, newspaper articles, publication transcriptions, property ownership records, and information from interviews. Digital copies of some research files were loaned to Marlys Svendsen, October 2010 and others were made available in March 2011 for duplication.
- Census of State of Iowa* for the years 1856, 1867, 1875, 1885, 1895, 1905, 1915, and 1925 as printed by various State Printers.
- Clayton County, Iowa, Memories & Heritage from the Photo Albums of Clayton County.* Elkader, Iowa: The Clayton County Register, 1997.
- Downtown Building Survey (73 surveyed buildings) records including survey questionnaires, draft Iowa Site Inventory Forms and digital photographs. Main Street Elkader, 2009.
- Downtown Elkader Business Questionnaires completed by property/business owners, 2010.
- Downtown Elkader Individual Property Site Maps compiled by Eli Garms, Clayton County GIS, Engineer's Office, Elkader, November 2010.
- Elkader Building Survey (62 surveyed buildings). Main Street Elkader, 1994-1996.
- Elkader Historic Photograph Collection (digital). Elkader Public Library, Elkader. Digital files loaned to Marlys Svendsen, December 2008.
- "Elkader, Iowa 1846-1971, the Past, the Present the Future." 125th Anniversary Edition, *The Clayton County Register*, Elkader, Iowa, July 21, 1971.
- Elkader Telephone Directories, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1932, 1933, 1960 and 1966.

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Gottfried, Herbert and Jan Jennings. *American Vernacular Design, 1870-1940*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1985.

Griffith, Katherine. "Elkader Opera House." Elkader, Iowa: Elkader Main Street, ca. 1992.

Insurance Maps for Elkader. New York: The Sanborn Company, 1895, 1902, 1913, 1930, and 1951.

"Keystone Bridge Centennial Edition." *The Clayton County Register*, Elkader, Iowa, July 26, 1989.

Olson, Edward W. *Look What you Started Mr. Davis...Elkader, Iowa: History, Facts and Folklore about Elkader, Iowa U.S.A.*, ca. 2010.

Plat Book of Clayton County, Iowa, Minneapolis: Warner & Foote, 1886.

"Plat of Elkader, June 22, 1846." Recorder's Office, Clayton County, Court House, Elkader, Iowa,.

Powell, Harry. "The Elkader Story." unpublished first draft, December 1980; copy available at Elkader Public Library.

Price, Realto E., editor. *History of Clayton County, Iowa from the Earliest historical Times Down to the Present, Volumes I and II*. Chicago: Robert O. Law Company, 1916.

Property Transfer Records for Blocks 3 – 10 and Fractional Blocks 3-6 in Town of Elkader, Clayton County Auditor's Office and Recorder's Office, Clayton County Court House, Elkader, Iowa.

Shank, Wesley I. *Iowa's Historic Architects: A Biographical Dictionary*. Iowa City, Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 1999.

Standard Atlas of Clayton County, Iowa. Chicago: George A. Ogle & Co., 1902.

United States Census, 1850-2010. (population figures provided by State Library of Iowa, January 2011 and City of Elkader, March 2011).

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Additional Information:

Legal Description: Original Town, Lot 2 Block 9

Address: 107 First Street NW



Map Created By:
Eli Garms
Clayton County GIS
2010

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Photographs: 107 First Street NW, looking west and northwest (Elkader Downtown Survey Photograph, 9/16/2010, Marlys Svendsen, photographer).



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Photographs: 107 First Street NW, looking southwest and street view looking southwest from Cedar Street NW (Elkader Downtown Survey Photograph, 9/16/2010, Marlys Svendsen, photographer).



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Floor Plan: Clayton County Assessor's website available at: <http://beacon.schneidercorp.com/Application.aspx?AppID=227&LayerID=3115&PageTypeID=4&PageID=1684&Q=1881172127&KeyValue=2523307002>; accessed 4/24/2011.

