

MEMORANDUM

TO: Michael Van Milligen, City Manager

FROM: Laura Carstens, Planning Services Manager *SBC*

SUBJECT: 429 Rhomberg Avenue – Historical Significance

DATE: October 2, 2014

INTRODUCTION

This memo provides information on the historical significance of 429 Rhomberg Avenue, as you requested. This property is one of 107 properties that the City of Dubuque acquired for the Bee Branch Creek Restoration Project. The City deconstructed 82 structures on these properties, which included 27 structures of varying degrees of historical significance.

BACKGROUND

In 1978, the City hired an architectural/historical consultant to prepare a community wide assessment of property to determine areas that are architecturally or historically significant. During that survey, five areas were identified to be significant. These areas was later designated as the City's five Historic Districts: Langworthy, Cathedral, Jackson Park, West 11th Street, and Old Main. During the survey, the consultant assigned a number value to different structures in these Historic Districts. These values correspond to the architectural/historical significance of a property as follows:

- 1 State or National – Structures felt to meet one or more of the criteria of eligibility for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places at the state or national level.
- 2 City - Structures felt to meet one or more of the criteria of eligibility for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places at the local level.
- 3 Neighborhood – Structure that are of significance when found in groups or are contributors to the significance of district felt to meet one or more of the criteria of eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (i.e. contributing structure).

429 Rhomberg Avenue – Historical Significance

- 4 Supportive – Structures of no particular architectural significance other than as background within districts felt to meet one or more of the criteria of eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.
- 5 Non-Supportive – Structures of no particular architectural significance because of recent dates of construction or because of insensitive and irreversible modifications.

DISCUSSION

The property at 429 Rhomberg Avenue has been identified as an Individually National Register Eligible property with local significance because of its distinctive architectural characteristics.

In 2009, as part of the federally mandated Section 106 Review Process for the Bee Branch Flood Mitigation Project, the City hired an architectural/historical consultant to prepare an Iowa Site Inventory Form for the property. The attached Iowa Site Inventory Form notes that the State Historic Preservation Office has determined that the property is individually eligible to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places. This would correlate to a number 2 rating if we were to use the 1978 survey rating structure.

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and Planning Services Department Staff rely on our in-depth Architectural/Historic Surveys/Evaluations. These surveys are prepared for the City by qualified architectural historians who meet standards set by the Secretary of the Interior (the overseeing federal body who regulates historic preservation). These surveys help identify properties that are architecturally and historically significant. They assist the HPC and Planning Services Department to make informed decisions when reviewing a property for a Design Review, Section 106 Review, National Register Eligibility, demolition, or disaster response.

If a situation would arise that there was no survey information available on a property, the Planning Services Department would prepare a detailed Iowa Site Inventory Form and submit it to the State Historic Preservation Office for their review and comment. This process can take a while to prepare the detailed form and the State Historic Preservation Office has a mandatory 30 day review period. Conducting these in-depth Architectural/Historic Surveys/Evaluations help position the City of Dubuque to act quickly and make informed decisions while providing excellent customer service to citizens, property owners, developers, etc.

Attachments

Prepared by Wally Wernimont, Assistant Planner

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

ELIGIBLE

State Inventory No. 31-02402 ☒ New ☐ Supplemental
☐ Part of a district with known boundaries (enter inventory no.) 31-08479
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 670431103
☐ Non-Extant (enter year)

1. Name of Property

historic name Hugo Ruh Building

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number 431 Rhomberg Avenue

city or town Dubuque

Legal Description: (If Rural) Township Name

☐ vicinity, county Dubuque
Township No. Range No. Section Quarter of Quarter

(If Urban) Subdivision

Block(s) Lot(s) see below

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)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

If Non-Eligible Property

Enter number of:

0 buildings
 sites
 structures
 objects
0 Total

If Eligible Property, enter number of:

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>

Name of related project report or multiple property study (Enter "N/A" if the property is not part of a multiple property examination).

Title

Historical Architectural Data Base Number

Arch. and Historical Resources of Dubuque

31-093

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

01-Domestic-01B-Multiple Dwelling-

01-Domestic-01B-Multiple Dwelling-

02E-Specialty Store

02E-Specialty Store

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

05-Late Victorian-05H-Renaissance

foundation Stone

walls Brick

roof Asphalt

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)

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ More Research Recommended
☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ More Research Recommended
☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ More Research Recommended
☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ More Research Recommended

- A Property is associated with significant events.
B Property is associated with the lives of significant persons.
C Property has distinctive architectural characteristics.
D Property yields significant information in archaeology or history.

County Dubuque Address 431 Rhomberg Avenue
City Dubuque

Site Number _____
District Number _____

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)

Significant Dates

Construction date

1889 ☐ check if circa or estimated date

Other dates

Significant Person

(Complete if National Register Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Architect/Builder

Architect

N/A

Builder

Unknown

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 James E. Jacobsen

organization History Pays! Historic Preservation Consulting Firm

date Nov. 22, 2009

street & number 4411 Ingersoll Avenue

telephone 515-274-3625

city or town Des Moines

state IA

zip code 50312

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: _____

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

Site Number ____
Related District Number ____

Page 1

Hugo Ruh Building
Name of Property
431 Rhomberg Avenue
Address

Dubuque
County
Dubuque
City

7. Narrative Description:

This narrow, three-story brick corner commercial building was built in 1889 by Hugo Ruh (cornerstone inscription). Its cast iron storefront was produced by the National Iron and Boiler Works of Dubuque. A number of features distinguish its design. First is its height. Second is the highly ornamental prominent parapet wall, half a floor in height, which splays outward at the corners. Third is the height of the main floor with its high transom lights. Finally the main façade has asymmetrical fenestration. The corner location meant that the front and sidewall shared the same formal façade design.

The building is a single storefront with a left-hand (west) side upstairs entry. The storefront is structurally present although the windows have been infilled and miniscule bar windows are centered in each bay. Three prominent corner brick columns are integrated with the cast iron work to support the main floor front. The cast ironwork features decorative rosettes, typical of this time period. There is a stone watertable and plain unadorned flat stonework forms the lintels and sills of the windows and caps the storefront. Paired window sets infill the west half of the main façade, while two single windows are grouped on the east half of the front. The east façade fenestration is vertically aligned above the ground floor. There is a cast iron fire escape near the center of that sidewall. Bands of angled brick, set soldier course fashion, run just below the lintel levels on the upper two floors. The parapet combines corbelled brickwork and a pressed metal cornice line in a very elaborate design.

8. Narrative Statement of Significance:

The Bee Branch sewer project will demolish the core of this potentially eligible historic district. Twenty three buildings will (or have) been demolished, leaving twenty-six standing. The west side of Kniest Street, between Rhomberg Avenue and East 22nd Street and the east half of the Rhomberg Avenue block, located west of Johnson Street will remain. The original district, like all of the potentially eligible predominantly residential districts that were identified in the successive Dubuque architectural and historical surveys, was identified based upon the high proportion of brick buildings at this key intersection. Due to the nearly complete use of vinyl and metal siding on the frame buildings, most of these buildings could not be evaluated in terms of style or integrity. The residual west side of Kniest Street will not comprise a significant district, being a one-sided array of eleven buildings, including only two or three brick buildings. The half block on Rhomberg Avenue, with fifteen buildings, lacks the scale and architectural distinctiveness to be a significant district as well. In short, it is recommended that the loss of so many buildings within the core of the original district, eliminates that district. There is no possibility that either of these fragments can be grouped with any other proposed districts, Washington and West 22nd in particular, which is located to the northwest.

Individual Building Evaluation:

This building is deemed to be individually significant on architectural grounds. While the city has dozens of these isolated corner combination commercial/residential buildings, this one looms out in terms of its scale, location, and ornamentation. Of particular interest is the very high first floor ceiling height. The building has likely lost its upper level windows although they might be simply covered over. The storefront has also been infilled but the structural columns are intact. The building is otherwise in

Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs
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Iowa Site Inventory Form
Continuation Sheet

Site Number ____
Related District Number ____

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Hugo Ruh Building	Dubuque
Name of Property	County
431 Rhomberg Avenue	Dubuque
Address	City

a very good of preservation. If the Five Points store/apartments (formerly a block to the west) were significant then this block is as well. It very likely led the way in the commercial development of this area and corner and its saloon was likely associated with the industrial presence that was immediately to the south.

Individual Building History:

This impressive building was built in 1889 by Hugo Ruh (name/date stone). The 1889 Perspective Map of the City of Dubuque shows frame houses on this corner. The *Herald* (December 29, 1889) reported that Ruh had built this three-story \$8,000 building during 1889. It was present on the Sanborn Map as of 1891, used as a saloon and grocery, addressed as 79 Rhomberg. The building's three-story rear porch was already present. It first appears as 99 Rhomberg in the 1890-91 city directory when it housed a grocery/saloon/feed store and residence for Huga A. Ruh. Ruh was a saloon keeper by 1894, addressed as 497 Rhomberg. Previously Ruh had been located at 2003 Washington. Mrs. Mary Ruh ran the saloon as of 1899-1900, this being the final Ruh listing (497 Rhomberg). Charles Griesse was here 1909-10 (was at 516 Rhomberg as of 1908). He operated a repair shop there but resided at 2404 Rhomberg. In 1908 he was at 516 Rhomberg.

9. Major Bibliographical References:

Atlas of Dubuque County, Iowa. Clinton: Harrison and Warner, 1874

Atlas of Dubuque County, Iowa. Davenport: Iowa Publishing Company, 1906

Atlas of Dubuque Iowa. Peoria: Austin Engineering Company, n.d.

Atlas of Dubuque County, Iowa. Rockford: W. W. Hixson, n.d.

Bee Branch Creek Restoration Alignment Study: Project No. 20959-39471. Dubuque: CDS in association with WHKS & Company, October 2004

"Birds Eye View of the City of Dubuque Iowa, 1872." Augustus Koch Engraver

Dubuque City Council Minutes, Volumes 29 (1899) to 36 (1906)

Jacobsen, James E. *Dubuque-The Key City: The Architectural And Historical Resources of Dubuque, Iowa, 1837-1955: Phase IV Edition.* Des Moines: History Pays Historic Preservation Consulting Firm, November 24, 2003

_____, _____. *Dubuque-The Key City: The Architectural And Historical Resources of Dubuque, Iowa, 1837-1955: Phase I Historical and Architectural Survey Report.* Des Moines: History Pays Historic Preservation Consulting Firm, January 15, 2002

_____, _____. *Dubuque-The Key City: The Architectural And Historical Resources of Dubuque, Iowa, 1837-1955: Phase II Historical and Architectural Survey Report.* Des Moines: History Pays Historic

Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs
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Iowa Site Inventory Form
Continuation Sheet

Site Number ____
Related District Number ____

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Hugo Ruh Building

Dubuque

Name of Property

County

431 Rhomberg Avenue

Dubuque

Address

City

Preservation Consulting Firm, January 15, 2002

____, _____. Iowa Historic Site Inventory Form: Rhomberg Avenue and Kniest Street Historic District.
____, Des Moines: History Pays Historic Preservation Consulting Firm, January 15, 2002

____, _____. Iowa Historic Site Inventory Form: East 22nd Street and Washington Street Historic District.
____, Des Moines: History Pays Historic Preservation Consulting Firm, July 22, 2000

Map of the City of Dubuque. Davenport: Iowa Publishing Company, 1906

Newspapers (as cited in the text)

Perspective Map of the City of Dubuque. Milwaukee: American Publishing Company, 1889

Plan of Dubuque, Dubuque County. Chicago: Charles Skober and Company, 1875

Plat Book of Dubuque County, Iowa. Davenport: Northwest Publishing Company, 1892

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Dubuque, Iowa:

1884, 1891, 1901, 1909, 1909/24, 1909/50, 1909/56, 1909/62

Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs
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Iowa Site Inventory Form
Continuation Sheet

Site Number ____
Related District Number ____

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Hugo Ruh Building
Name of Property
431 Rhomberg Avenue
Address

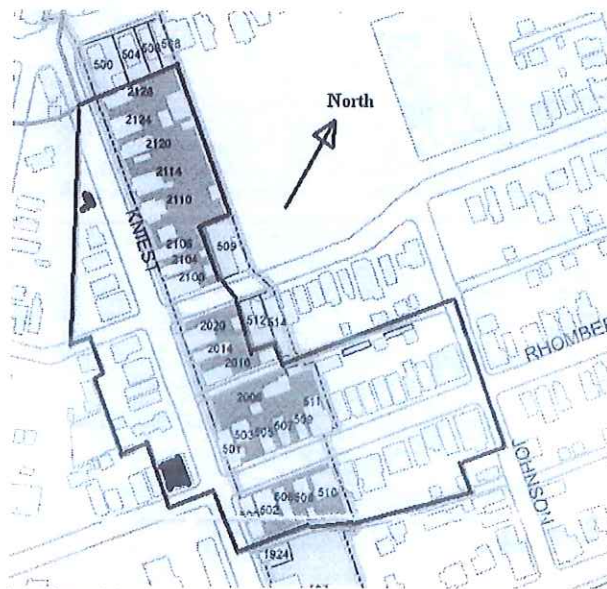
Dubuque
County
Dubuque
City

11 Additional Documentation:

Legal Description:

Lot 11, Smedley's Subdivision (no assessor's record, therefore no owner given)

Map:



District Map (black line denotes boundary, property is blackened)
(City of Dubuque, 2008)

Photographs:

See attached-Photographs were digitally taken by Deron Muering on November 20, 2009.

Iowa Department of Cultural Resources
State Historical Society
Iowa Site Inventory
Continuation Sheet

Page 4

Hugo Ruh Building
Name of Property
431 Rhomberg Avenue
Address

11 Additional Documentation

Legal Description:

Lot 11, Smedley

Map:

Photographs:

See attached-

