

**Site Inventory Form**  
**State Historical Society of Iowa**  
 (November 2005)

**State Inventory No.** 29-00139  New  Supplemental  
 Part of a district with known boundaries (enter inventory no.) 29-03685  
 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 (R&C) Number \_\_\_\_\_  
 Non-Extant (enter year) \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Benner Tea Company  
 other names/site number Latona Coffee and Spice Mills, Benner's Home Tea Store, Downtown Survey Map # DT-67

**2. Location**

street & number 312 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
 city or town Burlington  vicinity, county Des Moines  
 Legal Description:(If Rural) Township Name \_\_\_\_\_ Township No. \_\_\_\_\_ Range No. \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_ Quarter of Quarter \_\_\_\_\_  
 (If Urban) Subdivision Original City Block(s)\_Lot(s) 443 S-10', Lot 444 N 10', Lot 444 Und. 1/2 N 4' S50'6" S 1/2

**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            |            | If Eligible Property, enter number of: |                 |
|   | Enter number of:                    |            | Contributing                           | Noncontributing |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | —                                   | buildings  | <u>1</u>                               | — buildings     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> district               | —                                   | sites      | —                                      | — sites         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site                   | —                                   | structures | —                                      | — structures    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure              | —                                   | objects    | —                                      | — objects       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object                 | —                                   | Total      | <u>1</u>                               | — 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 Intensive Level Historical and Architectural Survey of "East" Downtown Burlington, IA Historical Architectural Data Base Number 29-034

**6. Function or Use**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Historic Functions</b> (Enter categories from instructions) | <b>Current Functions</b> (Enter categories from instructions) |
| <u>10A01 Industry - Coffee &amp; Spice Mill</u>                | <u>99-Other – Travel Agency</u>                               |
| <u>02E – Specialty store (millinery)</u>                       |   |
| <u>02E – Specialty store (gift shop)</u>                       |   |

**7. Description**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Architectural Classification</b> (Enter categories from instructions) | <b>Materials</b> (Enter categories from instructions) |
| <u>05G Romanesque</u>  | foundation <u>04: Stone</u>                           |
| <u>09F05 Brick Front</u>   | walls (visible material) <u>03: Brick</u>             |
|  | roof _____  |
|  | other <u>iron by Murray Iron Works</u>                |

**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 type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended            | D | Property yields significant information in archaeology or history. |

County Des Moines Address 312 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street Site Number 29-00139  
City Burlington District Number 29-03685

**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)

05: Commerce  
02: Architecture

**Significant Dates**

Construction date 1892  check if circa or estimated date  
Other dates, including renovation \_\_\_\_\_

**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 Susan Beckman, volunteer Rebecca L. McCarley, consultant, Davenport  
organization Burlington Historic Preservation Commission date October 26, 2012  
street & number City Hall, 400 Washington Street telephone 319-753-8158  
city or town Burlington state Iowa zip code 52601

**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 noncontributing 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 Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

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Benner Tea Company

Des Moines

Name of Property

County

312 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street

Burlington

Address

City

## 7. Narrative Description

This is a two-story brick commercial building. The façade is buff brick. The first story storefront was remodeled in the 1970s, with a recessed entry at the left and large glass windows. Historic wide iron columns remain at either end of the storefront, with a plate noting "Murray Iron Works." Murray Iron Works operated west of downtown in Burlington, and they advertised in the *Hawk-Eye* on February 20, 1897 that they had modern iron storefronts for sale, including columns, lintels, door plates, and sill (page 7). The second story has three arch windows, accented by large brick arches, divided by pilasters with decorative capitals, and sharing a common sill band. The windows have been replaced. A row of arches extends across the frieze of the building above the windows, with small pilasters and rosette detail. The cornice extends across the top of the frieze, with a decorative parapet wall rising above it. The rear portion of the south side elevation is exposed, with a building of less depth to the south. This elevation is red brick, with an exposed stone foundation due to the slope of the lot. The windows have segmental arch openings, and they are generally covered with wood. The rear (east) elevation is along the alley. A garage is located in the basement at this level, with covered windows on the two upper stories.

## 8. Narrative Statement of Significance

Benner Tea Company appears to contribute historically and architecturally to the potential Downtown Commercial Historic District. The building was evaluated in 1976 as an excellent example of Romanesque Revival in downtown Burlington, despite the recent storefront changes. The key elements of this style remain on the second story and cornice of the building. The building would likely also be individually eligible for its significant historic association with the Benner Tea Company. This company grew to one of the largest historic businesses in Burlington, with its start and early growth tied directly to this building. Further assessment of the interior integrity would be required to solidify this determination.

The 1892 Sanborn map shows a vacant lot. The property was sold on February 7, 1891 by Henrietta Strause to R.M. Raab. The 1893 city directory lists Latona Coffee and Spice Mills at 312 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, run by Otto Lorenz. He was listed with Latona Coffee and spice mills at 411 Jefferson in the 1892 directory. Latona Mills is then listed here in the 1894 and 1898 city directories.

A.J. Benner bought this earlier business and reorganized the company as the Home Tea Company on July 1, 1899. Benner was raised in Burlington, and starting working for Boesch & Co dry goods in 1884 while completing studies at Elliott's Business College. He worked for the company for 15 years and desired to run his own business (Antrobus 1915, Vol 2: 311). This property appears on the Sanborn map in 1900 as A.J. Benner's Coffee and Spice Mills. The roaster is clearly labeled on the map. The 1900 and 1902 city directories list Benner's Home Tea Store, run by Arthur J. Benner. The company was then incorporated as Benner Tea Company in 1908, with A. J. Benner as president; W. F. Rensch, of Waterloo, Iowa, as vice president; and P. G. Benner as secretary. By 1915, Benner Tea Company was noted as one of the important industries in this line in the state. While their home office remained in Burlington, they had branches established at Keokuk, Ottumwa, Waterloo, and Cedar Rapids. They

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|                                     |                   |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <u>Benner Tea Company</u>           | <u>Des Moines</u> |
| Name of Property                    | County            |
| <u>312 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street</u> | <u>Burlington</u> |
| Address                             | City              |

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dealt in tea, coffee, spices, and baking powder. They bought wholesale and distributed from Burlington, in addition to their roasting plant in Burlington (Antrobus 1915, Vol 2: 312). City directories from 1910, 1913, and 1916 list Benner Tea Company at this address. This remained their only address listed in the 1916 Burlington city directory prior to moving to 210 N. 5<sup>th</sup> Street by 1920. The company would continue to grow and expand as one of Burlington's largest business concern in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They expanded into the grocery business, with six Benner Tea Company stores and 19 Benteco Kash Stores (coffee and food products) by 1925. In 1954, they bought an earlier competitor, John Blaul Sons' Company, expanding their wholesale grocery line. In 1964, another long-time Burlington-based wholesale grocery and fruit company, Lagomarcino-Grupe Company, merged into Benner Tea Company as well. In 1976, Charles Fitzmorris sold the Benner Tea Company (then 24 stores) to a West German company, Aldi (All-Discount), who then ran the company as Aldi-Benner stores. Thus, this building is the original location of what would grow into one of the largest companies in Burlington.

The Raab family sold the building to the Remey family in 1903. They then sold the building to Millie S. Eastman in March 1913. E.D. and Millie S. Eastman sold the building to Susan Hoelzen in September 1922 for \$12,000. She continued to own it until her death in 1957.

After Benner Tea Company moved out, the 1920 city directory lists Moss Millinery here. In 1924, ArtsCraft Art and Gift Shop was listed here. Duke Cleaners was then here in 1930, run by H.G. Graner. The Sanborn map in 1931 simply indicates "S" for store. In 1940, it is identified as The Music Shop. In 1945, it was listed as the Kleinkopf & Co. Stationery and Invitation Store. Kleinkopf Stationery continues to be listed here in 1951. By 1955, the Farm Bureau moved here. The estate of Susan Hoelzen sold the property to the Des Moines Co. Farm Bureau in 1957. County Farm Bureau is listed here through the 1960s. Farm Bureau Insurance is listed here in 1970.

In 1971, Farm Bureau sold the building to Edward Ealand, who in turn sold it to Fairlie family, and in 1991 it was sold to Norma McCartney.

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Related District Number 29-03685

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Benner Tea Company

Des Moines

Name of Property

County

312 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street

Burlington

Address

City

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Antrobus, A.T. *History of Des Moines County Iowa and Its People*. Chicago, IL: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1915.

City Directories, Burlington, Iowa, various dates. On microfiche at the Burlington Public Library

Deed records, per transfer books at Des Moines County Auditor's Office.

Newspapers, various titles and editions. Particular special editions utilized:

*Burlington Evening Gazette*, March 24, 1906

*Daily Hawk-Eye Gazette*, September 2, 1938

*Burlington Hawk-Eye Gazette*, August 4, 1942

*Burlington Hawk-Eye*, July 10, 1962

*Burlington Hawk-Eye*, July 4, 1976

Sanborn Map Company. "Burlington, Iowa," Fire Insurance Maps. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1886, 1892, 1900, 1931, 1952.

Smith, Claudia, and Marie Landon. 1976 survey of sites in Burlington. Iowa Site Inventory forms prepared on file at State Historic Preservation Office, Des Moines, IA.

Vertical files. Files on business/industry as well as individual businesses. Burlington Public Library, Burlington, Iowa.

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Benner Tea Company  
Name of Property

Des Moines  
County

312 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Address

Burlington  
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## Location map



Base aerial photography by Aerial Services Inc for Des Moines County GIS Commission, March 2010.

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Benner Tea Company  
Name of Property

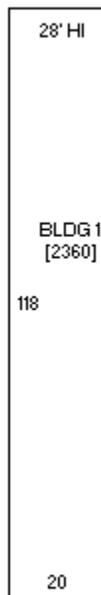
Des Moines  
County

312 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Address

Burlington  
City

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## Building plan (from assessor's website)



## Historic images

*none identified*

Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs  
State Historical Society of Iowa  
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Benner Tea Company  
Name of Property

Des Moines  
County

312 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
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Burlington  
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**Digital photographs**



Photograph 29-00139-001 – West elevation, looking east (McCarley, June 20, 2012).

Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs  
State Historical Society of Iowa  
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Benner Tea Company  
Name of Property

Des Moines  
County

312 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
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Photograph 29-00139-002 – South and east elevations, looking northwest (McCarley, June 20, 2012).