

**MINNESOTA HISTORY / ARCHITECTURE INVENTORY FORM**  
**NORTHFIELD COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT**  
Rice County, Minnesota

PROPERTY LOCATION	
<b>Property Name:</b> Lawler Building <b>Other:</b> Thoreson Building	<b>Inventory No.:</b> RC-NFC-319
<b>Address:</b> 416 Division Street, Northfield, MN	<b>PIN:</b> 2206225024
<b>QTR/QTR/T/R/S:</b> NW NW Section 6 T111N R19W	
<b>USGS Quad:</b> Northfield, Minnesota	
<b>UTM Z 15</b> 487219E, 4922476N <b>NAD 83</b>	

PROPERTY INFORMATION	
<b>Construction Date:</b> ca. 1872	<b>Style:</b>
<b>Historic Use:</b> commercial	<b>Current Use:</b> commercial
<b>Property Type:</b> commercial	<b>Historic Context:</b> "Commerce, 1856-1945"
<b>Architect/Builder</b>	<b>Survey Name:</b> Northfield Historic District Survey Revision Project, 2016
<b>Previous NRHP Status:</b> Contributing to Northfield Commercial Historic District	<b>NRHP Recommendation:</b> Contributing to Northfield Commercial Historic District
<b>Form Prepared by:</b> Landscape Research LLC	<b>Survey Date:</b> 3/2016



2016, looking west



ca. 1880s



ca. 1965

### Description

This two-story, flat-roofed commercial building faces east on Division Street. The brick exterior is clad in stucco. The cornice has a simple metal flashing. By the mid-twentieth century, the original façade was completely remodeled. The three arched windows that had brick hoods with stone keystones are now rectangular, with two-over-two modern sash. Rusticated stone sills may be survivors. Some of the 1950s remodeling has been modified with a painted signband. The modern ground floor storefronts and recessed entrances are framed by brick-faced piers and display windows have aluminum frames. The rear of the building and exposed south wall are red brick. Segmental-arched windows and a door exposed at the south elevation have flat brick voussoirs and stone sills.

### History

The exact construction date of the Lawler Building is unknown, but owner Harald Thoreson made an addition in 1872 to create a total size of 28 x 120 feet. In 1874, Thoreson, a native of Norway, was one of the organizers of St. Olaf College. According to local anecdote, it then had the largest stock of general goods in Rice County. Thoreson ran the general store business from ca. 1870 to 1885. Hardware dealers Lee and Hitchcock (1870s), McChesney and Barnard Grocery; William Watson and Moses, Dry Goods and Notions Dealers; then Moses and Barnard shared the building. In 1893 it was the J & C Bierman

Historic photographs: Northfield Historical Society

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Hardware Company, with the Norsk Hotel on the second floor. Bierman Hardware remained until 1906; John and Thomas Lawler purchased the building from G.M. Phillips in 1908. Bierman & Hagen; Hagen hardware were occupants 1914-1918. A brick front was added in 1916. C.F. Falk purchased the Hagen stock in 1919; he was followed by J. P. Becker Hardware, 1920-1926. In 1926 G.G. Grunert purchased Becker Hardware (Your Own Hardware). In 1944 it was Gamble's, followed by Town and Country Office Supplies by ca. 1976. This was one of the city's earliest masonry commercial buildings, part of the generation that replaced frame buildings along Division and nearby streets.

**Significance and Historic Context(s)**

This building is associated with the earliest period of Northfield's commercial development, ca. 1856-1880. It is associated with the Northfield historic context, "Commerce, 1856-1945" (Northfield Preservation Plan, 1992).

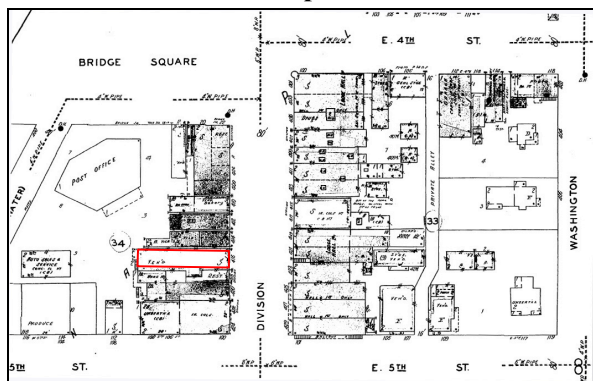
**Evaluation**

This property was listed on the NRHP in 1979 as contributing to the Northfield Commercial Historic District. Although it has had numerous alterations, many date from the district's period of significance (1857-1945), the building exterior continues to retain enough historic significance and integrity to be contributing to the district. Note: Thoreson Building, after builder Harald Thoreson, appears to be a more correct name for this building.

**References**

Edwins, Steve, ed. *Northfield Downtown Guidebook*. Northfield Heritage Preservation Commission, 1982, 20.  
"Northfield Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 1979.  
Northfield News. *All About Northfield, Minn: Directory of Name and Business Firms, Information in Regard to the City*. Northfield: Northfield News, 1889.  
Northfield Historical Society. Photograph and research files. Northfield, Minnesota.  
Sanborn Map & Publishing Company, New York. Northfield plates, 1886-1943.  
Zellie, Carole. "Northfield Heritage Preservation Plan." Prepared for the Northfield Heritage Preservation Commission, Northfield, Minn. by Landscape Research, 1992.

**Sanborn and USGS Maps**



Sanborn Map and Publishing Co., 1930, updated 1943.



USGS: Northfield 1984.