

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

PROPERTY LOCATION	
Property Name: Ware Auditorium Other: Grand Theatre	Inventory No.: RC-NFC- 290
Address: 316 Washington Street, Northfield, MN	PIN: 2206225014 Northfield, MN
QTR/QTR/T/R/S: NW NW Section 6 T111N R19W	Plat Name: Original Town Block: 23 Lot: 1
USGS Quad: Northfield, Minnesota	
UTM Z 15 487354E, 4922583N NAD 83	

PROPERTY INFORMATION	
Construction Date: 1899	Style: Georgian Revival
Historic Use: Auditorium and theatre	Current Use: commercial
Property Type: commercial	Historic Context: "Commerce, 1856-1945"
Architect/Builder Harry Carter, architect (Bertrand and Chamberlain, Minneapolis); A.W. Kuehl, Faribault, contractor	Survey Name: Northfield Historic District Survey Revision Project, 2016
Previous NRHP Status: Contributing to Northfield Commercial Historic District	NRHP Recommendation: Contributing to Northfield Commercial Historic District
Form Prepared by: C. Zellie Landscape Research LLC	Survey Date: 3/2016



2016, looking west



ca. 1910

Description

The three-story Ware Auditorium faces east at the northwest corner of Washington and E. 4th Streets, one block west of Division Street. It fronts a primarily residential area. The exterior is painted brick red. The cornice and pediment have been removed, leaving a streamlined roofline. The principal elevations are divided into bays with shallow brick pilasters and horizontal brick beltcourses are placed below the parapet and the second story. Rusticated piers articulate each Washington Street corner. The slightly projecting central pavilion retains the arched window filled with a multi-paned lunette. It surmounts a modern three-part window. The rectangular windows in the upper story flanking bays have one-over-one modern sash. Other primary windows have similar sash. The original central portico has been removed, revealing double leaf entry doors and a modern glazed transom. The southeast corner bay has a restored storefront but the northeast corner bay has infilled windows. The Grand Theatre sign is intact above the E. 4th Street entrance.

History

A. K. Ware completed this building in 1899. Described as a newcomer to the city, Ware was Northfield Mayor 1902-1905. The Ware Auditorium offered 650-seat capacity for opera and theatre and a restaurant at the basement level. The building was remodeled in 1900 (after a fire) and talking pictures were offered

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in 1904. Its owner offered it for sale 1911. A local business group, Ware Auditorium Company, purchased it in 1912. Between 1912 and 1917 live and filmed productions were offered, and it was renamed the Grand Theatre in 1917. The manager, Everett Dilley, became the owner after World War I. A 1927 remodeling following another fire included relocation of the entrance to face E. 4th Street. The remodeling eliminated much of the Federal Revival façade and blocked in many of the windows. Dilley sold it to the Minnesota Amusement Company in 1927, buying it back in 1933 and then selling it to S. Heller. Vitaphone and Moviephone equipment were installed in 1929. Heller completed extensive remodeling, including removal of the cornice and infilling some windows with brick. More ownership changes followed. A wide screen was installed in 1947. By the late 1970s it was owned by the Salsbury Theater Company. The last movie was shown in 1985.

Significance and Evaluation

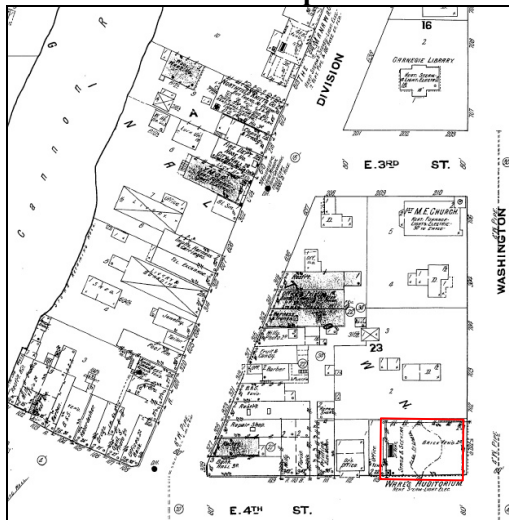
This building is primarily associated with the second period of Northfield's community development, from ca. 1900 to 1945, when the city's downtown achieved much of its present form. The building is associated with the Northfield historic context, "Commerce, 1857-1945" (Northfield Preservation Plan, 1992).

This property was listed on the NRHP in 1979 as contributing to the Northfield Commercial Historic District. Despite its past alterations it retains historic significance and integrity and remains contributing to the district.

References

Edwins, Steve, ed. *Northfield Downtown Guidebook*. Northfield Heritage Preservation Comm., 1982.
"Northfield Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 1979.
Northfield Historical Society. Photograph and research files. Northfield, Minnesota.
"Ware Auditorium/Grand Theatre" accessed at <http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/31219>.
Zellie, Carole. "Northfield Heritage Preservation Plan." Prepared for the Northfield Heritage Preservation Commission, Northfield, Minn. by Landscape Research, 1992.

Sanborn and USGS Map



Sanborn Map and Publishing Co., 1910.



USGS: Northfield 1984