

Cabot Building
274 and 282 10th Street
Heron Lake
Jackson County
Minnesota

HABS No. MN-139

HABS
MINN
32-HERLA,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

HABS
MINN
32-HERLA,
1-

HISTORICAL AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY
CABOT BUILDING

Location: Heron Lake, Jackson County, Minnesota
Tenth Street and Third Avenue

Lots 6 and 7, block 7, original town of
Heron Lake, Minnesota

Present Owner: Heron Lake State Bank
P.O. Box 258
Heron Lake, Minnesota 56137
Attn: Robert J. Gunther, President

Present Occupant: Not applicable; building uninhabitable

Present Use: Not applicable; building uninhabitable

Significance: The decorative design elements and integrity of the Cabot Building make it an excellent example of turn-of-the-century commercial architecture. The corner section of the building was completed in 1895 and has a canted corner and decorative brick and stone work at the top of the building. The northern addition to the building was completed in 1897 and features "Cabot" and "1897" in a metal balustrade with urn shaped balusters above a simple limestone cornice at the roofline. Both sections are of brown brick with light limestone trim and feature intact original storefronts. The building originally housed a general merchandise business on the street level and offices on the upper level. The Cabot Store dates to the period when the main streets of area small communities were undergoing extensive development and is of one of Jackson County's most ornate examples of a typical storefront/office building from this era.¹

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. The Community of Heron Lake

The village of Heron Lake was incorporated on November 17, 1881, with the first meeting of the Village Council held on January 9, 1882.²

According to the Heron Lake Centennial History, the year 1897 was the turning point in Heron Lake's early history. A grasshopper scourge began in 1873 and continued for several years. By 1897 the grasshoppers had disappeared and both crops and prices were good. This, coupled with the building of two new railroad lines in the vicinity, brought the return of economic prosperity and advancement to the community of Heron Lake.³

The Centennial History states:

In 1897 Heron Lake was an up and coming town as stated by one person. Heron Lake presents a prosperous appearance, has a number of nice business blocks and fine residences, good streets and sidewalks; an elegant brick school house and the best, prettiest park in this section of the state. A flag pole has just been added to go along with the trees, grass, gravel walks, iron fence and a band stand surrounded by seats and benches. A band concert and sociable is held once a week. The village has set aside \$200 per year to pay their band, which by the way enjoys the distinction of being the best amateur band in the state. The band concerts and socials draw large crowds of people. Heron Lake also has two newspapers, one edited by that rare plant, gold democrat; the other in mocery[sic] of fate, located in the rear of a bank.⁴

The Heron Lake 1900 census shows a population of 928, up from 496 in 1890. This growth was unusual for the town, which has remained with a population between 777 and 928 ever since. The Centennial History notes that there was an increased demand for houses in the village at the turn of the century. According to a local newspaper editor, in the year 1909 there were no vacant buildings in town. He reported a season of good crops, and high prices and more

land buyers in the area than in the past five years combined.⁵

The village minutes of 1907 included a mention that "Cement sidewalks were built 8 feet wide on 10th Street business blocks".⁶ The same source indicated that the village laid water mains, meters and hydrants for village water works in 1914.⁷

By 1916 it was estimated that not less than 500 auto tourists passed through Heron Lake weekly, with the community drawing trade from greater distances than any other town in Jackson County.⁸

1937 saw more changes in Heron Lake. A new church was constructed, a restaurant was under construction, the Ford garage built a new addition and another filling station opened. The Centennial History notes:

Every house in town is occupied, some by two or more families - one local couple forced to live in Windom. We believe tenants would quickly be found if a business structure were erected on that vacant space on the east end of main street.⁹

By 1949 horse and buggy days were over, as indicated by the removal of the hitching racks from behind the Hady Coffee Shop and Hardware Store.¹⁰

B. The Cabot Store

Chester Cabot, born in 1867 in Geneva, Minnesota, moved to Murray County with his parents at an early age. Following the death of his mother, Chester came to Heron Lake to reside with his sister, Mrs. J.W. Benson. When his father remarried three years later, Chester returned home. Upon finishing his schooling, he returned to Heron Lake, where he took a position at the J.W. Benson mercantile establishment, a position he held for six years. Cabot left Benson to go into business for himself "in a building then located on the corner where the Robson hardware store was located."¹¹ Later his brother John joined him in business and the two built "a fine brick building opposite the post office."¹² The corner building that this quote refers to and the brick building that

the Cabot brothers added have both come to be known as the Cabot Building.

According to the Heron Lake Centennial History:

A Heron Lake NEWS item on April 15, 1897, states: "Work is soon to be started on the two-story structure 24 x 100 feet, which is to occupy the lot between the Cooley and Cabot Brothers and Company. The new building to be put up by the Cabot Brothers and Company, the first floor will be used by them for their general merchandise business. The upper floor will be divided into neat offices. The plans call for a basement underneath the whole building. The first floor will be commodious store room, well-lighted by large plate glass front. The building when completed will be an ornament to the town and a credit to its owners. It will be brick."¹³

The Cabot Brothers and Company were in business from September 16, 1897 through 1903 when the business consolidated with the J.W. Benson establishment and incorporated under the name of Benson-Cabot Company. Chester Cabot was made manager, a position he held until his death in 1908.¹⁴ The Heron Lake Centennial History, concludes its remarks regarding the Cabot Store building by saying:

In the last fifty years [1933-1983] the building probably would be best remembered as the pool hall. Scarred by nearly a hundred years of "wear and tear," the old structure has not completely given up.¹⁵

In addition to the pool hall mentioned above, the corner portion of the Cabot Building housed a home interior retail business in recent memory. By the time Heron Lake celebrated its centennial in 1983 both portions of the Cabot Building had been vacated due to the building's deteriorated condition. As of spring 1993 it is no longer possible to determine interior floor plans, roof construction, etc., as much of the building's roof and interior have collapsed.¹⁶

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

The following information has been adapted from the work of Ronald W. Ewing, A.I.A. Ewing writes that the Cabot Building, located at the northwest corner of Tenth Street and Third Avenue in downtown Heron Lake, was constructed in two phases. The corner section was completed ca. 1895. The north section was built in 1897. The building originally housed a general merchandise store on the main level and offices on the upper floor.

The building exhibits construction techniques and building ornamentation somewhat typical of turn-of-the-century, two story, masonry, commercial buildings of the upper Midwest. The building was constructed primarily of local brown brick and cut stone.

As is typical of these buildings, a good deal of imagination is present in producing individual character, building identification, and monumentality on what is a two dimensional plane of low relief and with limited budgetary constraints. The south portion of the building was quite likely built with little, in any, pre-drawn design, as it seems a collection of disparate elements, placed in a fairly random manner. (Note upper level pilaster placed above and eccentric to lower level punched window.) This portion of the building is a pedestrian, utilitarian amalgam of elements the artisan felt were needed to support the wall, penetrate the surface, and to provide decoration.

The north portion of the east facade was quite likely designed with the relationship of its various elements examined with regard to their size, scale, and arrangement. Quite likely the artisan composed the elevation based on similar, flat, 25 foot frontage, two story, commercial facades previously done.

Each portion of the building has a main entrance. The corner section is entered through a canted entry facing the intersection of the two streets adjacent to the building. This entrance is reached by two stone steps and consists of a single door, with sidelights and transom in a wooden frame. The entry is framed by multi-colored masonry elements, consisting of light colored brick backgrounds and darker brown brick projecting pilasters; both banded with rough faced stone. The east face of this section has a

typical store front window, with transom, under an exposed steel lintel. The north portion of the east building elevation has a door for access to the second floor. The south face of the building's main floor repeats the store front window at the east end, adjacent to the corner main entrance and has an access door at the west end. This elevation has minimum fenestration, ornamentation, and character. The lower level of the south elevation has suffered degradation in inharmonious masonry repair at the west end, inappropriate masonry opening infill, and staining (probably due to moisture infiltration of the wall) at the second floor line.

The second floor, as is typical of indigenous vernacular buildings of this type, exhibits a varied array of brick work. The wall is interrupted by pilasters, stone window sills, punched windows and a band of contrasting brick. At some point nine of the thirteen windows in the corner section of the building's second floor were replaced. The window openings were enclosed with plywood and smaller windows of varying sizes, all about one-half to two-thirds of the size of the original windows, were inserted. The remaining windows on the upper story and all of the windows in the lower level have been covered with plywood. All of the windows in the 1887 section of the building are covered with plywood, with the exception of two of the three second story windows facing Tenth Street which have not been altered, and the double window over the door facing the alley which is missing its glass. The wall of the building is topped by a deep cornice of brickwork textured by alternating projections of adjacent units. This band is further crowned by an exuberant parapet of checkerboard light and dark brick work. This last element is out of character with the remainder of the building and seems to detract from the massing and overall character of the structure. The parapet has deteriorated severely, is in bad repair, and certainly contributed to the degradation of the south wall. The elements of the upper floor are rather erratically arranged, (i.e. some pilaster/window arrangements centered, some not) with the pilasters spaced at non-uniform locations. Apparently, to accommodate the slope of the roof, the sequencing of pilasters and window changes and the checkerboard cornice work stops about two-thirds of the building's length on the south elevation. The upper floor suffers from the deterioration of the parapet, degradation of the exterior integrity of the wall, and the use of inappropriate materials in the reduction of window

opening sizes.

The upper level east facade of the north portion of the building is the most interesting and attractive portion of the entire structure. Its elements of pilasters and punched windows are rigidly symmetrical and, through brickwork, create a classic tripartite assembly. The brick work cornice is extended vertically by a projecting sheet metal cornice crowned by a metal balustrade with urn shaped balusters and a large central arched element. The lower level of this portion of the building has a recessed entry and transomed store front under an exposed steel lintel. It exhibits faint echoes of the high-style Victorian buildings fashionable at its era. These can be seen in the relatively simplified features of the ornamentation, richly profiled cornice and elaborately shaped pediment embellished with molding, balustrades and inscription. Its relatively restrained arrangement would likely be derived from the earlier Italianate style rather than the more contemporaneous and elaborate Second Empire or Queen Anne Styles. The west side of the building is a typical alley face exhibiting no architectural merit. The buildings abut the adjacent building to the north. The floors and roof are wood framed and are not presently usable. The building has not been recently occupied and has suffered severe deterioration of its structure, weather integrity, and ornamentation condition.¹⁷

ENDNOTES

1. Minnesota State Historical Preservation Office, "Significance of the Cabot Building", 3/12/93.

2. Gary Richter, ed., Heron Lake, Minnesota Centennial History, 1883-1983 . (Heron Lake, Minnesota: Heron Lake Centennial Committee, 1983), 112.

3. Ibid., 365.

4. Ibid., 359.

5. Ibid., 362-363.

6. Ibid., 112.

- 7.Ibid.
- 8.Ibid., 359.
- 9.Ibid., 359.
- 10.Ibid., 364.
- 11.Ibid., 177-178.
- 12.Ibid., 178.
- 13.Ibid., 178-179.
- 14.Ibid.
- 15.Ibid., 178.
- 16.Robert J. Gunther, Heron Lake State Bank, interview by author, 17 May, 1993, Telephone.
- 17.Ronald W. Ewing, A.I.A., Huntington, Ewing and McKinney, Storm Lake, Iowa.

PART III. BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. Books and Published Sources

Richter, Gary, ed. Heron Lake, Minnesota Centennial History 1883-1983. Heron Lake, Minnesota: Heron Lake Centennial Book Committee. 1983

B. Documents and Reports

Minnesota Department of Trade and Economic Development
Community Profile, March 24, 1993.

C. Supplemental Materials

Ewing, Ronald W., A.I.A., Huntington, Ewing and
McKinney, Storm Lake, Iowa. "The Cabot Building."
April 2, 1993.

Minnesota State Historical Preservation Office, "The
Cabot Building", March 12, 1993.

D. Interviews

Gunther, Robert J., Heron Lake State Bank President,
Interview by author, 17 May, 1993. Telephone.

Part IV. Project Information

This document was produced as a result of a memorandum of agreement entered into between the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office, concurred by Heron Lake State Bank and the Advising Council on Historic Preservation.

In April of 1993 Heron Lake State Bank contracted with Greater Visions to accomplish the appropriate recording and preparation of materials.

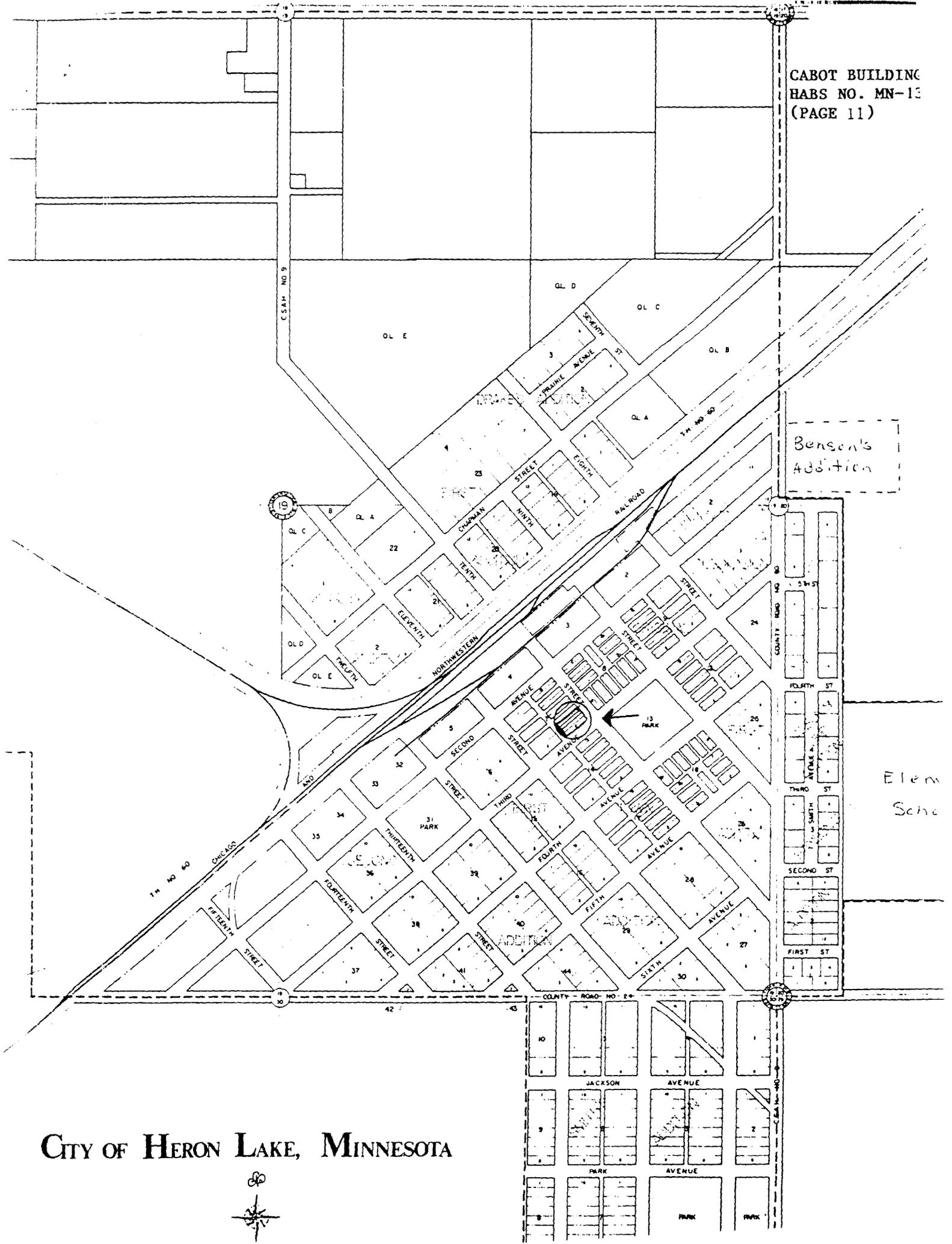
Initial field recording of the building was conducted on

April 2, 1993 by Ronald W. Ewing, A.I.A., of Huntington, Ewing and McKinney. On April 27, 1993 Rolf Hagberg of Greater Visions, assisted by Kay Mithaugan of Greater Visions, photographed the building. Compiling of information was done by Carrie Plamann, also of Greater Visions. This project was sponsored by Heron Lake State Bank.

Because of planned construction on the site, the Cabot Building will be demolished during the summer of 1993.

Prepared by: Carrie Plamann
Copy writer
Greater Visions
Terrace, MN 56380
June 8, 1993

CABOT BUILDING
HABS NO. MN-13
(PAGE 11)



Benson's
Addition

Elem
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CITY OF HERON LAKE, MINNESOTA

