

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

COPY

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name: Newens Sanitary Dairy Historic District

other names/site number: Newens Sanitary Dairy, Newens House

2. Location

street & number 2300-2312 University Avenue, and 2225 University Avenue not for publication   
city or town Des Moines vicinity N/A  
state Iowa code IA county Polk code 153 zip code 50311

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally,  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Ronell J. Soble December 2, 2003  
Signature of certifying official Date

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	sites
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	structures
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)  
N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Agriculture/Subsistence Sub: Processing  
Domestic Single Dwelling

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Commerce/Trade Sub: Professional  
Commerce/Trade Specialty Stores  
Domestic Multiple Dwelling  
Commerce/Trade Restaurant

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Movements

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: brick  
Roof: rubber  
Walls: brick and wood/weatherboard  
other: asphalt  
wood/shingle

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a 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)

Agriculture  
Commerce  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance: circa 1913 to 1946  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates: circa 1913  
1922  
circa 1946

Significant Person: (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)  
Lynn Newens and Susan Newens

Cultural Affiliation: N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder: Contractor for 1922 building expansion,  
H.H. Barton

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone Easting	Northing	Zone Easting	Northing
1	15	446023	4	605381
2			3	
			4	

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Jennifer Irsfeld James, member

organization: 2300 University Avenue L.L.C. date: November 14, 2003

street & number: 1056 26<sup>th</sup> Street

telephone: 515/284-2775

city or town: Des Moines

state: IA

zip code: 50311

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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Property Owner

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name: 2300 University Avenue L.L.C.

street: & number 1056 26<sup>th</sup> Street

telephone: 515/205-2158

city or town: Des Moines

state: IA zip code: 50311

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.). *Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.*

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1 Newens Sanitary Dairy Historic District

name of property

Polk County, IA

county and state

**Description**

The commercial district where the Newens Sanitary Dairy operated in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was located in the heart of a middle-class neighborhood near the Drake University campus. The commercial node developed around a streetcar stop at 24<sup>th</sup> Street and University Avenue, with buildings dating from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century onward. It was here that brothers Adrian and Lynn Newens chose to build their small brick dairy building in circa 1913 on the corner of 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and University Avenue, on the site of a late-19<sup>th</sup>-century house. Lynn Newens and his wife, Susan, moved to a house a few doors down from the dairy, and later moved to a Victorian house located diagonally across the street from the dairy, a close proximity that assisted in managing the dairy. The two structures as a district form a rare surviving example of a large early-20<sup>th</sup>-century commercial dairy and nearby owner's house.

The dairy as it stands today is a two-story brick building, which was built over time from circa 1913 to 1922 as a combination commercial building in the front (with storefronts on the first floor and offices on the second floor) and milk processing plant and delivery vehicle storage in the rear. The building is situated on seven lots, including a corner lot. The integrity of the building is good, with some alterations made after the 1920s expansion; however, most of these changes are reversible, such as bricked-up window opening and doorways on the rear and sides of the building, and the addition of decorative plastic shutters and awnings.

The footprint of the dairy consists of a rectangle, which measures 140' x 83' (width by depth) and which directly abuts the pedestrian walks on the front facing University Avenue and one side facing 23rd Street, and directly abuts the public alley in the rear.

The north façade of the building serves as its primary façade. The storefronts have been somewhat altered over time, but retain the large storefront windows like the one shown in the earliest known photographs of the building, taken in circa 1916, 1922, 1929, and circa 1936. The most altered area is the easternmost storefront, which originally housed the dairy offices; it has been covered with artificial stucco over the brick face, and the office door has been relocated several feet.

On the second story of the north and east façades, the regularly spaced rectangular windows remain, with decorative brick lintels above each. Between the windows and roofline is a projecting stringcourse of three horizontal bands of brick topped by horizontal rectangular vents spaced between identically shaped decorative recesses. The vents and decorative recesses are aligned above the second-story windows. The projecting stringcourse above the lintels and the rectangular vents spaced between identically shaped decorative recesses above the stringcourse show attention to detail and a graceful approach to incorporating industrial design needs into a building located in a smaller commercial node within a residential neighborhood. The brickwork on the north and eastern sides, except for the previously mentioned decorative details, is in the running-bond pattern.

The rear of the building exposes how the building was built over time: the older eastern section built on two city lots and the newer western section built on five city lots. The older section dates to circa 1913, and was at one time a one-story brick building. A squared-off brick chimney thrusts upward above the roof on the rear/east side second-story corner; the chimney was extended when the second story was added in a 1922 expansion. On the first story of the rear, nearly all windows have been bricked up and some door openings have been closed with brick or cement block. On the second story of the rear, several windows of various shapes have been bricked up or covered with wood. The brickwork on the rear of the building is running bond with irregularly spaced courses of headers.

The westernmost part of the newer section was originally built as a separate two-story building to house automobiles on the first floor and horses on the second floor. The closed up windows on this portion of the building march diagonally upward, following the slope of an interior cement ramp used by the horses, which pulled the milk-delivery wagons, to reach their second story stable. The building incorporates cast-in-place concrete, a construction type that is rather sophisticated for a vernacular building built in the late 1910s or early 1920s in Des Moines. The concrete floor is monolithic with the floor support beams, which were constructed using wood forms. This area is framed with cast-in-place concrete columns and beams that were created using wood forms. The builder either had heavy equipment to get the large amounts of concrete up to the second story or relied on a lot of manpower. (Alfson interview) The 1922 remodeling and expansion connected the auto storage/horse stable with the rest of the building.

The west side of the building abuts the Augustus Watkins Blacksmith Shop/University Auto Repair on the first story. On the second story, a row of horizontally rectangular windows is located on the northern portion of the sidewall. The wall is constructed of structural clay tile with several courses of brick at the top.

The roof is flat and is covered with a rubber-type membrane. A portion of the parapet walls are edged with roof tiles, some of which are badly cracked and appear to be allowing water into the parapets, leading to damage to the brick. The rest of the parapet walls are capped with sheet metal.

Presently, the Newens Sanitary Dairy Building is in fair condition. The present owners are working on an architectural plan for restoring storefronts and bricked up windows, removing the small area of artificial stucco from the exterior brick added in the last 25 years, removing the plastic shutters and awnings, tuck-pointing the brick, and either removing the paint from the brick or repainting the brick a more appropriate color.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7, 8 Page 2 Newens Sanitary Dairy Historic District

name of property

Polk County, IA

county and state

=====  
**Description (continued)**

Kitty-corner from the dairy building stands the two-and-a-half-story frame vernacular Queen Anne-style house with Colonial Revival architectural details built circa 1895 with a pre-1941 one-story commercial addition that served as the Lynn and Susan Newens' home and later a dairy "plant man's" home. (City directories) The building is situated on one city lot. The integrity of the house is good; save for the addition, few alterations have been made to the exterior of the house. The detached garage, located east of the house, is a non-contributing structure. The house is positioned so that the front is on the wide side (80.65 feet) of the lot, facing south, and the sides are on the short side (60 feet); that positioning leaves wide side yards but only a narrow strip of yard in front and in back. Original brick-paved public pedestrian walks line the front yard along University Avenue, a busy main thoroughfare, and west side yard along 23rd Street, a quiet residential street.

The simple one-story commercial addition is nestled into a recessed portion of the house's footprint on the west side; it extends south nearly to the public pedestrian walk. The doorway is set at an angle on the southwest corner of the addition. The pre-1941 addition was originally faced with structural clay tile in a running-bond pattern, but the front of the addition has been re-faced with red brick in a running-bond pattern. This addition was built while the property was still owned by the Newens family. (Sanborn maps and Polk County land transfer records)

To date, the house has been divided into three rental apartments and a restaurant occupies the addition. Presently the Newens House with commercial addition is in fair condition.

**Statement of significance**

The Newens Sanitary Dairy Historic District is locally significant under Criterion A for its association with the development and marketing of modern sanitary retail dairy operations in response to advances in regulations and technology regarding food sanitation, which affected agriculture and commerce. The Newens Sanitary Dairy Co.'s urban retail dairy plant is a rare surviving example of an early-20th-century retail dairy processing and manufacturing facility located in Des Moines, Iowa. The Newens Sanitary Dairy, through its safe business practices and resulting good reputation, along with marketing strategies that capitalized on these practices, became successful as a commercial dairy. Expansion and modernization of the physical plant helped convey that the dairy was a modern, sanitary operation. Other dairies that did not project an image of sanitation and modern operations while producing a good product did not succeed. The Newens Sanitary Dairy Building plant housed operations that continued around the clock and included housing the horses used to pull the milk-delivery wagons. The dairy owner lived across the street in a house (the Newens House) that was close enough to the plant where he could oversee operations at all times. The district is significant under Criterion B for its association with co-owners Lynn Newens and Susan Newens, wife of Lynn. Lynn Newens was a leader in commercial dairy issues in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Des Moines and in Iowa. He, vice president and later president of the dairy firm, and Susan, who was bookkeeper and later treasurer of the business, lived across the street from the dairy plant in an extant house. Mr. and Mrs. Newens were active in University Place Christian Church (today First Christian Church); in industry associations; and in other volunteer work. Lynn's brother, Adrian M. Newens, a former professor of oratory at Drake University and a well-known lecturer, served as the first company president for nearly a decade. (*Abstract*) Adrian got his start in the retail dairy business working as a milk-wagon driver in Chicago in the late 1880s or early 1890s. ("Adrian M. Newens," page 2) Adrian came to Des Moines around 1890 to attend Drake University and returned to teach at the Drake School of Oratory from 1894-1895. He went on to teach public speaking and English at Iowa State College in Ames. In 1908, he returned to the University Place neighborhood, living about five blocks away from the dairy at 2805 Cottage Grove Avenue (extant). By then, Adrian was a well-known monologue lecturer and program director and critic with the Redpath Lyceum Bureau, which booked talent for traveling Chautauqua programs throughout the Midwest. His lecturers gained him fame and even a listing in the *Who's Who in America* directories from 1916 through the 1940s. Despite his busy speaking schedule, his involvement in the dairying business remained an important part of his life. Adrian wrote in a circa-1916 Chautauqua lecture promotional brochure that he considered "dairying and dairy cows...his hobby." ("Adrian M. Newens," page 4) Even while giving 150 lectures a year, the brochure says that he gave "some attention to the Newens Sanitary Dairy of Des Moines, Iowa, one of the most modern and sanitary dairies in the west." ("Adrian M. Newens," page 4) He felt such a connection to the dairy that he included a panoramic exterior photograph of the dairy building and an interior shot of the cream separator in the same brochure.

The Newens Sanitary Dairy Building and Newens House are located within the University Place neighborhood, three blocks east of the Drake University campus on the main thoroughfare University Avenue. This neighborhood, located about two miles northwest of the downtown core, was first developed in the 1880s as a suburb surrounding the newly incorporated Drake University. The Newens family founded the dairy circa 1910, possibly as a one-man dairy-product-delivery business. The business was first headquartered out of a residential house, 1160 26th Street (non-extant), just south of the Drake University campus. Lynn Newens used the house as both his business and home addresses, first listing the business in the 1910 city directory.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 3 Newens Sanitary Dairy Historic District  
name of property  
Polk County, IA  
county and state

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**Statement of significance (continued)**

Starting in 1913, the Newens Sanitary Dairy listed its address as 2300-2306 University Avenue. By 1916, the dairy's address was 2300-2312 University Avenue, showing that it was occupying all seven lots. Two years later, in 1918, Newens Sanitary Dairy purchased the last two lots. (*Abstract*) In 1922, the business took out a city building permit for a \$40,000 project. (City Building Permit Log) (The early permits no longer exist, so it is not possible to look up further details about the work.) In a caption accompanying a large photograph in the October 22, 1922, *Des Moines Register*, it was reported that "This building is being erected at 2300 University avenue (*sic*) for the Newens Sanitary Dairy company (*sic*). It will house the company's houses (*sic*) and wagons, and covers an area of 140 by 83 feet. The estimated cost is \$25,000. Former Mayor H.H. Barton has the contract." (Barton served one term as Des Moines mayor, from 1920 to 1922.) To fund the building and outfitting of the dairy, Adrian M. and Lynn Newens took out mortgages for \$1,200 in 1911, \$6,000 in 1913, \$2,000 in 1915, \$25,000 in 1923, and \$30,000 in 1925, paying off each mortgage before taking out another one. (*Abstract*)

Around the time that the Newens Sanitary Dairy was being founded, many developments were taking place regarding sanitation. In 1905, California passed the Sanitary Dairy Law, prohibiting the sale of milk produced by unhealthy animals or under unsanitary conditions. In 1908, Chicago passed the first compulsory pasteurization law. In 1910, the U.S. Department of Agriculture demonstrated that pasteurization killed toxin-producing organisms in raw milk without destroying beneficial lactic acid bacteria. Pasteurization and sanitation were important because "dirty" milk could cause death through diseases such as tuberculosis and undulant fever. In 1911, a group of dairy inspectors formed the International Association of Dairy and Milk Inspectors, eventually headquartered in Des Moines, to advocate for improved cleanliness in milk production. A history of the association puts the problem of contaminated milk in perspective:

The problem was not one of quantity: the supply of milk was ample for the needs of the population. Rather, the need was for better quality—bluntly, a more clean (*sic*) product.... In many cities and states, laws had been passed requiring that dairies be maintained in reasonably sanitary condition and that milk meet certain minimum requirements before it could be sold in those areas. Such laws were not intended simply to prevent consumer deception by practices such as the sale of watered-down milk or adulteration of butter with cheaper substitutes. The laws were, rather, often a matter of life and death. Diseases rampant at that time—typhoid fever, diphtheria, scarlet fever, pneumonia, and tuberculosis—were known to be spread via the milk supply. Further, it had been shown that if a city efficiently supervised the production and sale of milk, this alone could greatly reduce its infant mortality rate. Conservation of human life and prevention of disease, then, were the goals of those early pioneers in milk sanitation. (Haverland, page 1)

Despite such efforts to systematize and regulate sanitation to protect the public's health, as late as 1938, 25 percent of all disease outbreaks resulting from contaminated foods and water supplies were due to milk-borne disease outbreaks. In contrast, in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, less than one percent of such disease outbreaks were linked to milk and milk products. (Shearer, page 5)

Because of the public health implications, cities got involved with monitoring and regulating milk production. The city of Des Moines began to take an active role in supervising dairy sanitation in 1910, when it hired its first city milk inspector. Prior to then, the city had taken few precautions to protect the milk supply, resulting in unclean dairies and dairy products. An editorial in *The Evening Tribune* described the state of dairy affairs in 1910: "It was easy to find wagons that were unclean and cans and measures that were unfit for use. There were dairy stores in the city that were repulsive in their uncleanness and swarming with flies."

The stage was set for new, modern dairies in Des Moines that would produce and deliver a product that was healthful rather than harmful, sanitary rather than unsanitary. The name Newens Sanitary Dairy communicated the type of product that customers could expect: sanitary pure milk. The inclusion of the family's name was important, too, as it backed up the product with an established reputation. The Newens name would have been familiar to those in the surrounding neighborhood because co-founder Adrian M. Newens graduated from nearby Drake University and then taught speech at the college before launching a successful speaking career. In addition, the family was active in the University Place Christian Church, one of the largest churches in the city. (First Christian Church archives; *The Des Moines Register*, 1932)

Over the years, the dairy operated under different names at different addresses. The business started out operating under owner Lynn Newens' name. Then the business was renamed Newens Sanitary Dairy Co., a name it used for more than 15 years. The name was shortened to Newens Dairy Co. sometime in the 1920s. In 1929, a three-way merger with Newens Dairy, competitor Northland Dairy, and Furnas Ice Cream company created the Newens-Northland Co. (*The Des Moines Register*, 1929) Circa 1935, the business

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 4 Newens Sanitary Dairy Historic District  
name of property  
Polk County, IA  
county and State

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**Statement of significance (continued)**

moved out of the University Avenue plant. The last name change, to Northland Milk Co., occurred in the 1940s. Out of this array of names, "Newens Sanitary Dairy" was selected as the historical name for the historic building at 2300-2312 University Avenue because of the name's importance in establishing the dairy's reputation, which led to the business's growth.

As further proof of commitment to high-quality products, dairy co-owner Lynn, wife and dairy bookkeeper Susan, and their daughter moved a half block east of the Newens Sanitary Dairy Building around the same time the dairy started operations at 2300 University Avenue, circa 1913. (That house, 2220 University Avenue, is non-extant.) A few years later, the 1916 city directory lists the Newenses as living across the street at 2225 University Avenue, a large Victorian house on a prominent corner lot kitty-corner from the dairy building. The couple would remain at the house for more than 15 years. After the death of his wife, Susan, Lynn Newens moved to his daughter's house several blocks away, making way for dairy "plant man" Carman G. Mount and family, who remained in the house until about 1938. (City directories) The house remained in the Newens family until the mid 1940s. (Polk County land transfer records)

Living near the dairy allowed Lynn Newens to play an active role in day-by-day, even hour-by-hour, administration of the dairy. The dairy plant included a front office, milk processing and bottling area, and vehicle and horse storage. Horses were stabled on the second story of the vehicle storage building, which was separate from the other dairy buildings according to the 1920 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. (Horses provided transportation for the dairy at least until 1940, when a stable fire killed twenty-two Newens-Northland Co. horses at a different location.) Milk was purchased from local farmers, as evidenced in a Newens Sanitary Dairy advertisement in the 1916-17 Polk County farmers' directory that said: "Farmers! Bring your milk to us. We pay highest price all the time for good milk." (*Farmers' Directory*, page 124)

Dairy delivery routes started around midnight. To have the milk ready for delivery required testing, clarifying, pasteurizing, and bottling, according to the process used by a competing dairy, the Flynn Dairy Company, in 1917. The two main objectives of milk processing are destruction of human pathogens through pasteurization and maintenance of product quality. The environment contributes the primary sources of bacteria that make humans ill, so cleanliness was of utmost importance. ("The Production of Quality Milk") However, pasteurization was not mandatory and it added expense to the finished product, so some retail dairies did not use the technique. Newens Sanitary Dairy advertised prominently in the annual Des Moines city directories that it pasteurized its milk. From 1915 until the early 1940s, the Newens Dairy stated in its ad: "Pasteurized Milk and Cream, Buttermilk and Cottage Cheese" and "You are invited to inspect our plant at any time. We pride ourselves on our cleanliness." The key words are "pasteurization" and "cleanliness."

"Is all milk dangerous?" was one of the questions posed in a 1917 *Evening Tribune* advertorial for competitor Flynn Dairy, in celebration of its new \$125,000 plant. "No," was the answer, "but there is no way of telling by casual inspection the good from the bad. The dangers in milk may be avoided in a modern sanitary dairy by clarification and pasteurization of the milk and a thorough mechanical sterilization of milk containers." The accompanying story reported that Flynn Dairy, headquartered at Seventh Street and University Avenue, was operated by college graduates who were experts in hygiene and sanitation. By 1922, Flynn Dairy staffed its own bacteriological laboratory and maintained its own force of dairy inspectors, according to an *Evening Tribune* story.

Another form of competition that Newens Dairy and other home-delivery dairies had to contend with was canned milk sold at grocery stores, which cost less than fresh milk delivered to the house. In 1922, Libby's canned unsweetened evaporated milk advertised in *The Evening Tribune* that it was "keeping milk pure and wholesome" through "clean surroundings, up-to-date equipment, proper cooling of milk—just a few ways that Libby protects your milk supply." In another ad, Libby's encouraged housewives to "let your grocer be your milkman."

The competition from the Flynn Dairy's "complete, new, modern, sanitary home" and the competition from canned milk might have been part of the push behind the Newens Dairy expansion and remodeling efforts in the late 1910s and early 1920s. A modern-looking facility portrayed an image that could only help a dairy's reputation. And a well-designed building that complemented the surrounding neighborhood offered good public relations for a business that relied on customers' willingness to pay a bit more for a fresh product delivered to their door. To further boost public relations about the quality of its product, the Newens Sanitary Dairy published a monthly "Safe Milk" newsletter in the late 1920s (and possibly earlier or later), that extolled the virtues of pasteurization with the cover line "Pasteurization Shows Astounding Growth as Protective Measure." ("Safe Milk")

Milk safety was still so important in the 1930s in Des Moines that milk was tested daily by city inspectors, who reported the results directly to the mayor. Upon passage of a new Des Moines milk ordinance in 1931, the mayor barred 100 dairy farms from selling milk in the city. Mayor Parker Crouch told *The Des Moines Tribune* that "...the city's only objective in insisting on compliance with the milk ordinance provisions is the production of safe milk for the people of Des Moines.... I believe we now have the best milk in the history of the city, but eternal vigilance is necessary as we are to maintain or improve the quality here."

The positive public relations backed up by a good product brought the Newens family and the Newens Dairy high regard from

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8, 9 Page 5 Newens Sanitary Dairy Historic District  
name of property  
Polk County, IA  
county and state

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**Statement of significance (continued)**

the community. This is evident by the prominent front-page placement of *The Des Moines Register* obituary for Lynn Newens' wife, Susan, who served as dairy bookkeeper and treasurer, when she died at age sixty-four in 1932.

A few years before Susan Newens' death, in 1929, the Newens family brokered a \$500,000 deal to merge their business with Northland Dairy—the local branch of powerhouse Minneapolis, Minnesota-based Northland Milk and Ice Cream Co.—and locally owned Furnas Ice Cream Co. It was perhaps the first merger of Des Moines dairy firms with an out-of-state dairy. The Newens-Northland Co furnished 25,000 families with milk, purchased \$500,000 of milk each year, and employed 150 workers, according to a front-page story on the deal. The newspaper said of the deal in the deck under the banner headline: "Newens Joins Northland and Furnas Firms; All Plants Will Continue to Be Operated as at Present." The story quotes Northland manager Albert Horman as saying, "We have consolidated these three companies into one larger institution on account of the steady growth of Des Moines and the constantly broadening field for the finest type of dairy services which we feel exist in this territory." (*The Des Moines Register*, 1929) For about six years, the merged dairy business, Newens-Northland Co., operated out of three plants: Newens' 2300-12 University Avenue, Northland's 600 Des Moines Street (non-extant), and Furnas' 612 E. Second St. (non-extant). Circa 1935, the business consolidated operations at the Des Moines Street plant, where the dairy remained until it closed in 1960.

In part because of high standards set and met by large dairies like Newens, the emphasis on milk sanitation decreased somewhat in Des Moines by 1942, when the city asked dairies to take on some of the city milk inspection work. In a role reversal from a decade prior, it was the dairy owners who protested the cuts, saying that the relaxing of inspections would drive down the quality of milk, as reported in a *Des Moines Tribune* article. *Des Moines retail dairy advertising in the 1940s reflects this increased confidence in the safety of milk: taste and healthful benefits of milk replaced sanitation and purity as the most important attributes in milk advertising in Des Moines. But a new type of flash-pasteurization ("Exclusive Electro-Pure Method") was still worthy of extolling in Newens-Northland Co. city directory advertisements in the 1940s.*

Another way the dairy was influential was through its participation in the Des Moines Milk Dealers Bottle Exchange, Inc., a local trade group that, among other things, washed and returned empty bottles from participating dairies. Lynn Newens was a member and probably served as an officer. Following the Newens-Northland Co. plant consolidation, which left much of the University dairy plant vacant, the bottle exchange moved in and listed that address in city directories from 1934 to 1947. An April 1934 letter written by the bottle exchange general manager is on letterhead listing 2300 University Avenue as the trade group's address, which confirms that the it was at that location by at least 1934. (Brockway, page 18) The bottle exchange's presence is further significant to the building's role in the dairy business. John Brockway, retired executive vice president of the Iowa Dairy Foods Association, explained the bottle clearinghouse function in this way:

Milk bottle exchange(s) in larger cities were used to sort stray glass milk bottles and return them for a charge to dairy plants owning them. In later years, the Des Moines Bottle Exchange was located at 1501 Maine St. It was closed when paper and plastic milk containers became the most popular milk containers. (Brockway, page 18)

The Des Moines Milk Dealers Bottle Exchange also collectively set daylight milk delivery times during the Depression and World War II that helped expand employment and conserve resources, respectively, as requested by the federal government, according to newspaper stories of the time. Newens-Northland dairy also played a leadership role in the 1930s in establishing the Milk Dealers of Iowa, an industry lobbying group that focused on "uniformity in the various health regulations," among other issues. (Brockway, 1, 4)

After moving out of the University Avenue plant, the Newens-Northland firm retained ownership of the building until 1946, renting out space to various businesses. (*Abstract*) In 1951, another neighborhood family, the Biermanns, purchased the former dairy. Harry Biermann ran his electrical shop out of the old dairy front office. His sons would join him in the business, branching out into electrical engineering under the name Biermann Electric Co. The company used the former dairy processing area and vehicle storage space, and rented out storefronts and offices to various tenants. After 50 years of ownership, Biermann Electric sold the building to 2300 University Avenue L.L.C. in fall 2001.

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 6 Newens Sanitary Dairy Historic District  
name of property  
Polk County, IA  
county and state

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*The Des Moines Register*, October 19, 1940, page 1. "22 Horses Die in Fire at Northland Dairy Stables."

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9, 10 Page 7 Newens Sanitary Dairy Historic District  
name of property  
Polk County, IA  
county and state

---

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**Verbal boundary description**

Newens Sanitary Dairy Building: Lots 11 through 17, Drake University's 3rd Addition to the City of Des Moines, Iowa

Newens House: W 80.65 F Lot 402 University Land Co.'s 2nd Addition to the City of Des Moines, Iowa

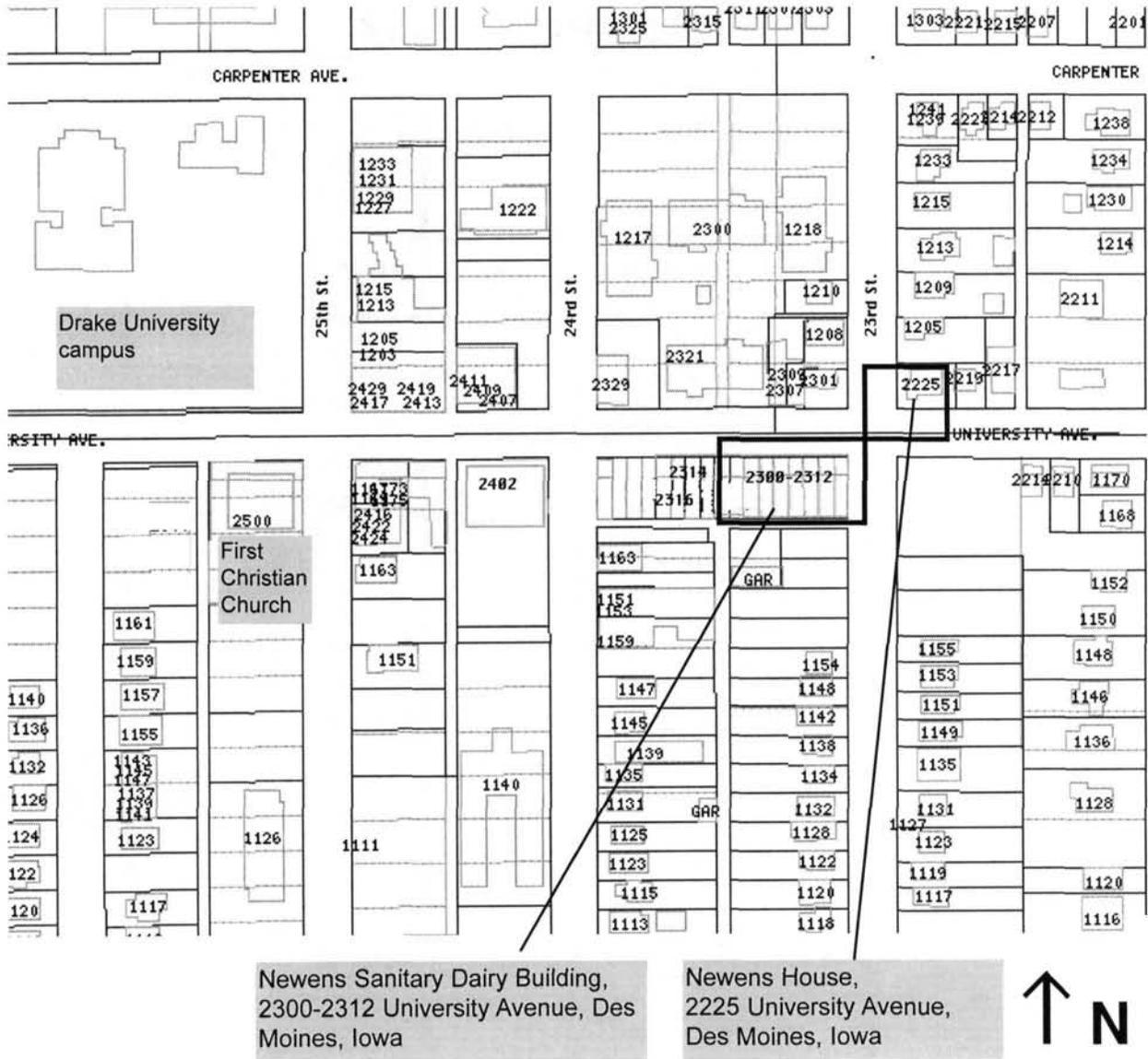
**Verbal boundary justification**

The nominated district includes parcels historically associated with the Newens Sanitary Dairy plant and Newens House, which are located diagonally across the street from one another.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Add'l Page 8 Newens Sanitary Dairy Historic District  
name of property  
Polk County, IA  
county and state



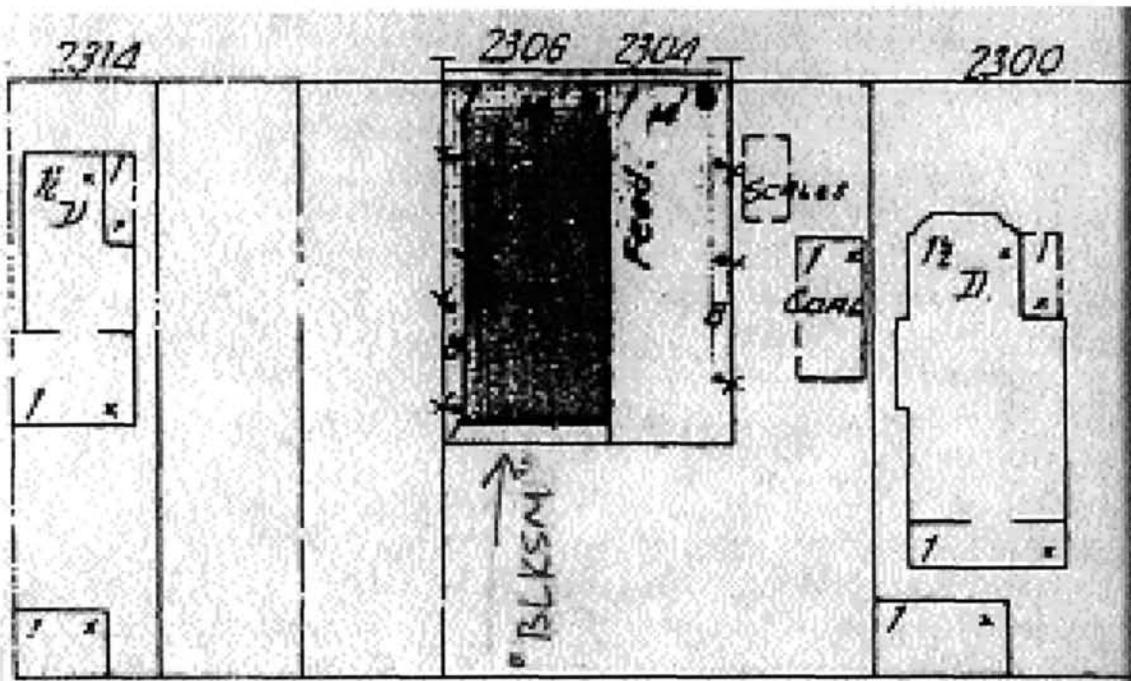
Map 1: This 2002 assessor's map shows the location of the two Newens Sanitary Dairy Historic District buildings in the commercial node near Drake University campus in Des Moines, Iowa. Street addresses, buildings, and lot lines are indicated on the map. (Polk County Assessor's Office)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Add'l Page 9 Newens Sanitary Dairy Historic District  
name of property  
Polk County, IA  
county and state

---



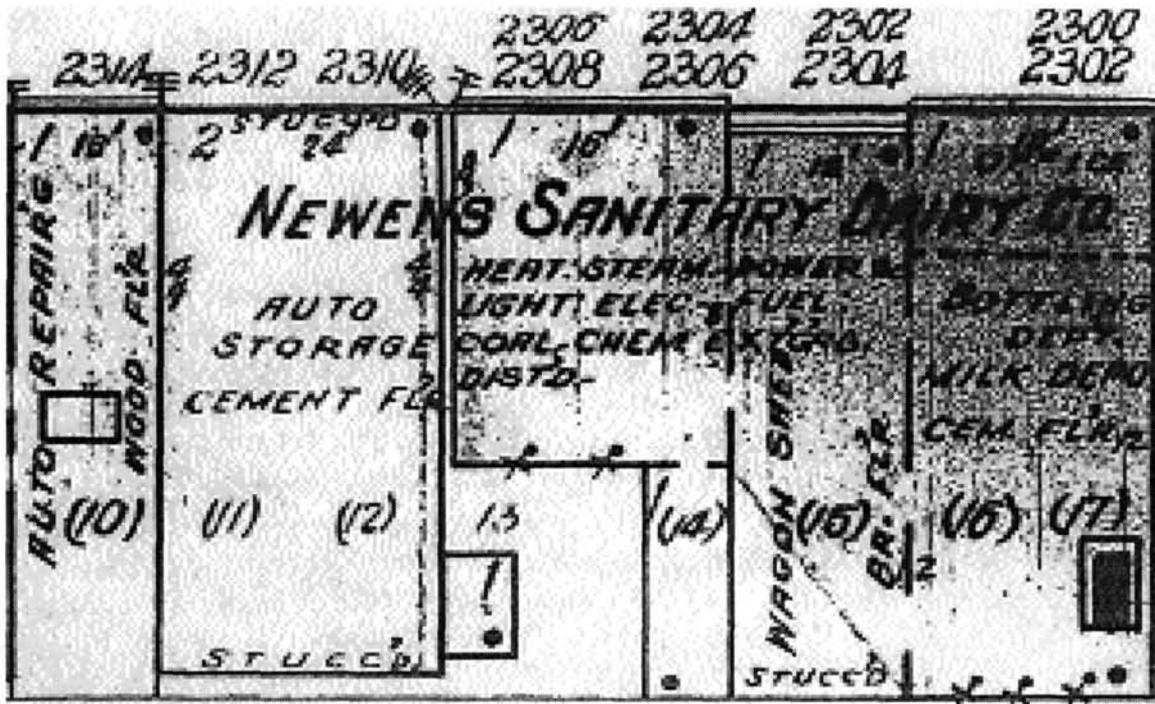
Map 2: The 1901 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows a blacksmith shop at 2304-2306 University Avenue (today known as 2306-2308 University Avenue). The darkened blacksmith shop building was built of a fireproof material, hence the shading on the map; the blacksmith shop is labeled "BLKSM." The house to the right of the blacksmith shop was replaced by the earliest portion of the Newens Sanitary Dairy Building (2300 University Avenue). (Public Library of Des Moines)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Add'l Page 10 Newens Sanitary Dairy Historic District  
name of property  
Polk County, IA  
county and state

---



Map 3: The 1920 Sanborn Map shows the Newens Sanitary Dairy operations before the 1922 expansion. The numbers in the upper left corner of each building denote the number of stories. (Public Library of Des Moines)

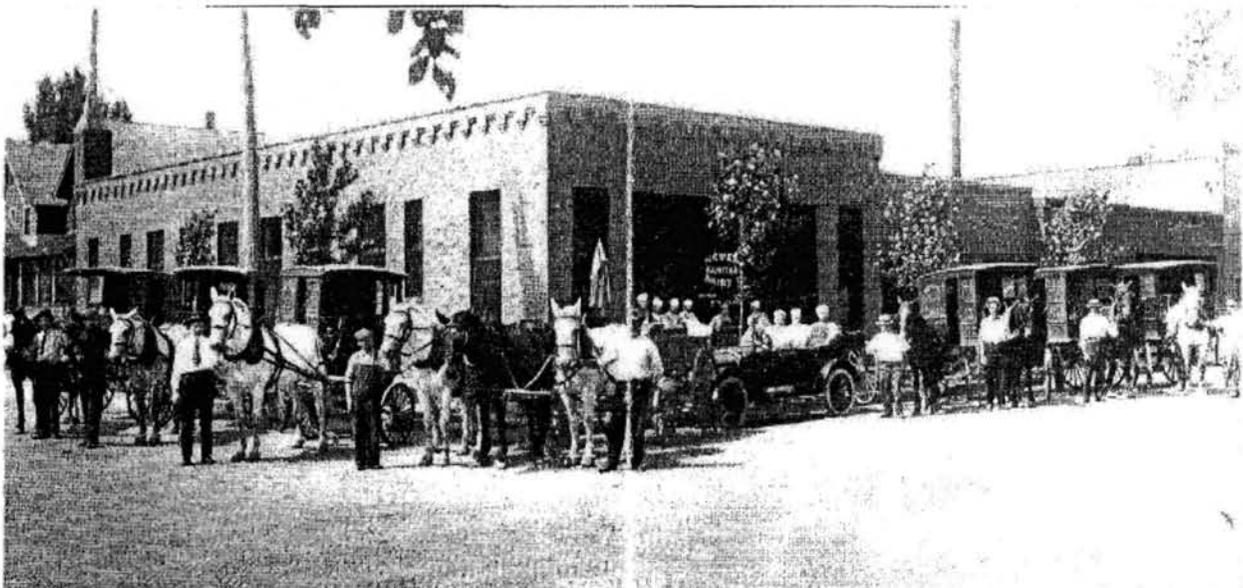


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Add'l Page 12 Newens Sanitary Dairy Historic District  
name of property  
Polk County, IA  
county and state

---



*Photo 1: A small portion of the decorative brick stringcourse that once decorated the roofline of the one-story Newens Sanitary Dairy Building on the corner of 23rd Street and University Avenue is still evident at the base of the chimney, left, as seen facing west in March 2002. (Jennifer James)*

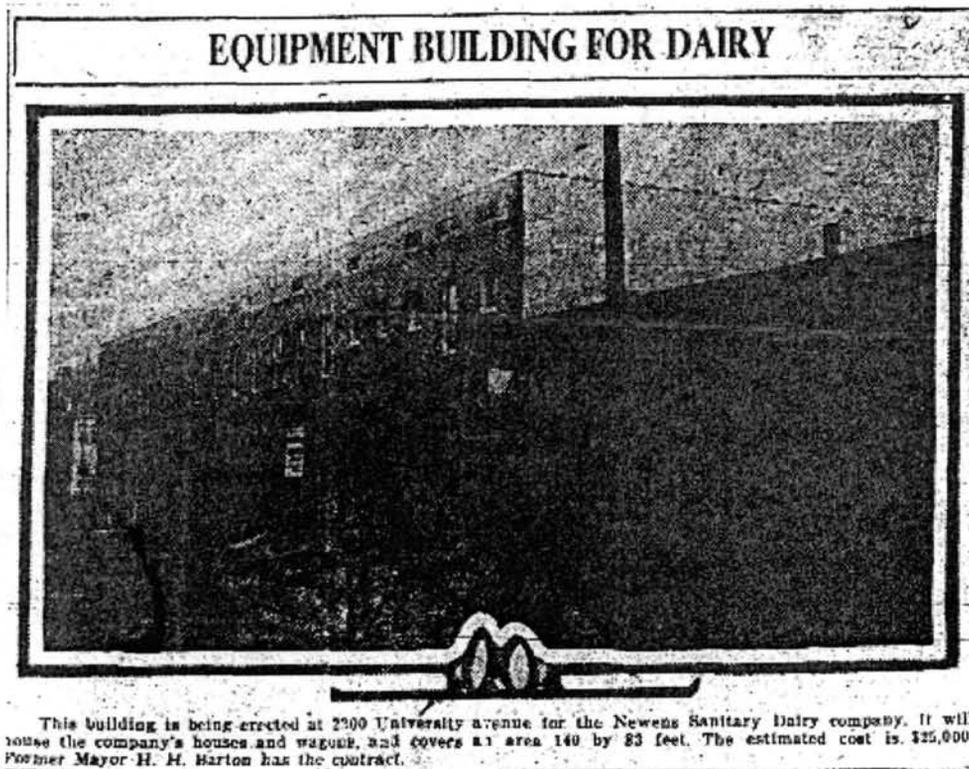
*Ephemera 1: The earliest known image of the Newens Sanitary Dairy, above, as pictured in the circa-1916 "Adrian M. Newens, The Mars Man" promotional speaking brochure, shows the dairy housed in a collection of buildings that were later united in a 1922 expansion. The window openings on the corner building still exist today. (University of Iowa Special Collections)*

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Add'l Page 13 Newens Sanitary Dairy Historic District  
name of property  
Polk County, IA  
county and state

---

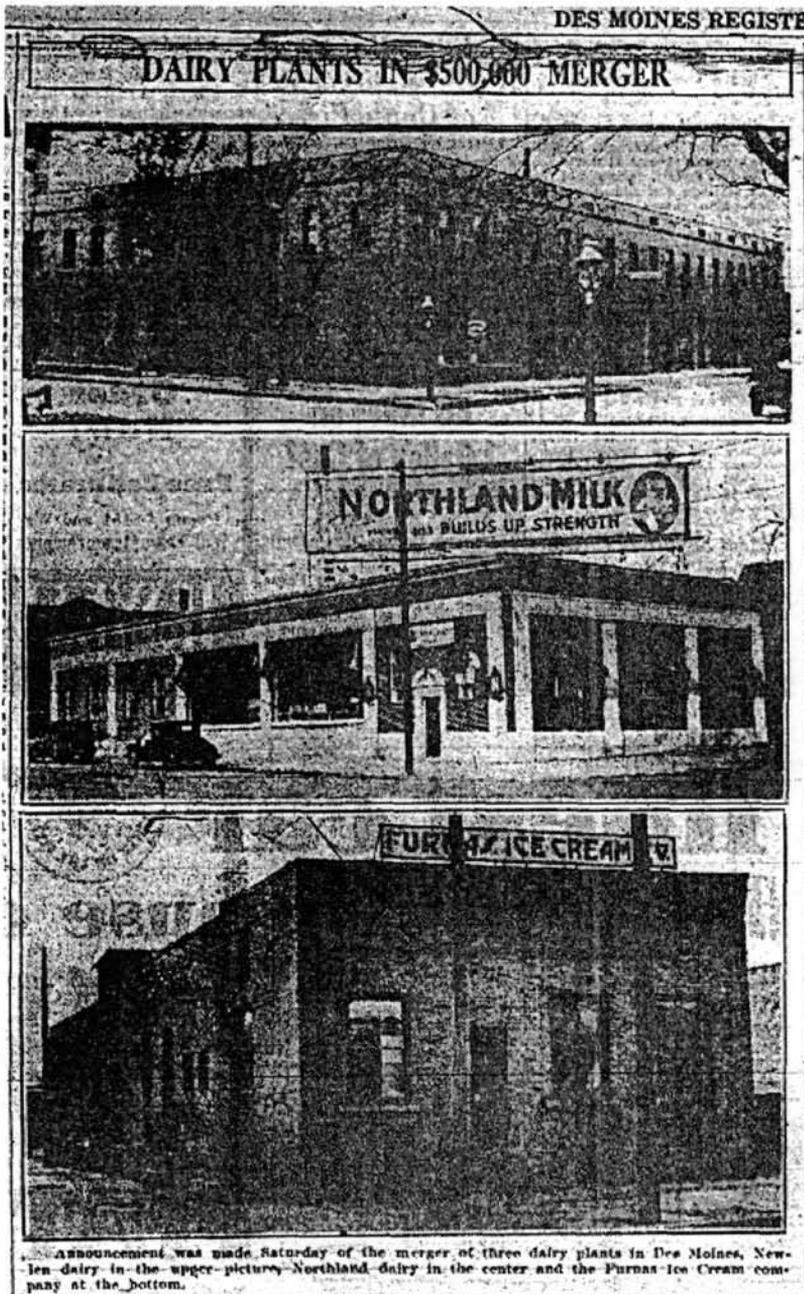


*Ephemera 2: The Des Moines Register daily newspaper captured this image of the Newens Sanitary Dairy Building expansion on October 22, 1922. This copy is from a very dark microfilm, but the second-floor windows, vents, and decorative brick stringcourse are visible. (Public Library of Des Moines)*

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Add'l Page 14 Newens Sanitary Dairy Historic District  
name of property  
Polk County, IA  
county and state



*Ephemera 3: The Des Moines Register daily newspaper recorded the three "Dairy Plants in \$500,000 merger" in the November 3, 1929, Sunday morning edition. The photographs accompanied a front-page story with the banner headline: \$500,000 Dairy Plant Merger." (Public Library of Des Moines)*

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Add'l Page 15 Newens Sanitary Dairy Historic District  
name of property  
Polk County, IA  
county and state

---



*Photo 2: This circa-1936 photograph shows how the corner facade looked before it was remodeled. The sign painted on the building reads "Better Bakers Incorporated," the name of the business that rented the dairy's former front office for about a year, according to city directory listings. Better Bakers was listed as being located at 2300 University Avenue in the 1936 city directory. (William Biermann)*



*Photo 3: The brick stringcourse, vents, and decorative brick recesses on the second story above the windows are prominent in this 1968 photograph, part of an appraisal report for the Biermann Electric Co. (2300 University Avenue L.L.C.)*

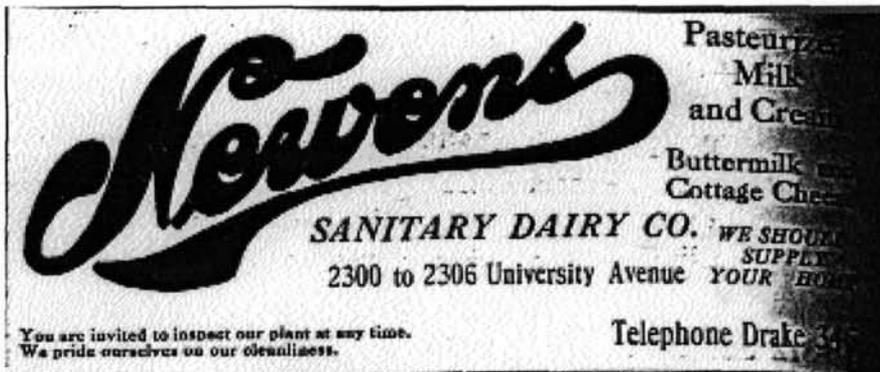
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Add'l Page 16 Newens Sanitary Dairy Historic District  
name of property  
Polk County, IA  
county and state



*Photo 4: Windows on the first story had not been bricked up yet when this photograph of the west and rear sides of the building was taken in 1968 as part of an appraisal report for the Biermann Electric Co. The brick on the first story of the building appears to be a different shade than that used on the second story. Note the remnant of the decorative stringcourse at the base of the chimney. (2300 University Avenue L.L.C.)*



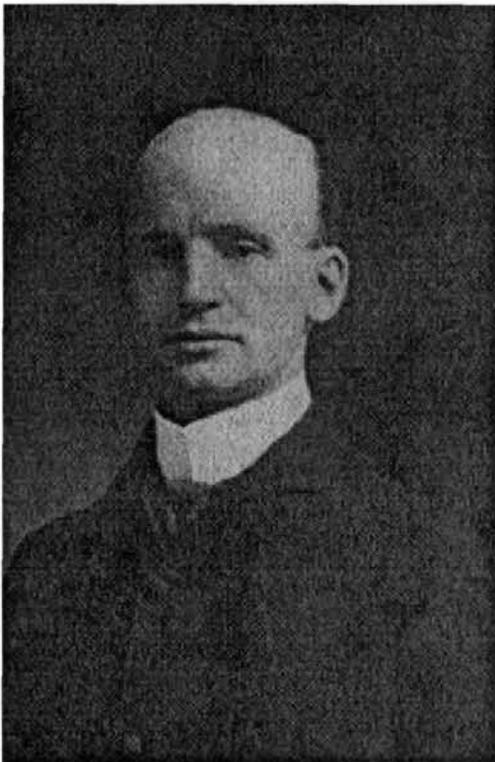
*Ephemera 4: The first advertisement in the Des Moines City Directory for Newens Sanitary Dairy Co. ran in the 1915 edition. (Public Library of Des Moines)*

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section  Add'l  Page  16   Newens Sanitary Dairy Historic District   
name of property  
 Polk County, IA   
county and state

---



*Ephemera 5: Adrian M. Newens, first president of the Newens Sanitary Dairy Co., as pictured in the promotional brochure about his speeches "Adrian M. Newens: All About Him," circa 1910. (University of Iowa Special Collections)*



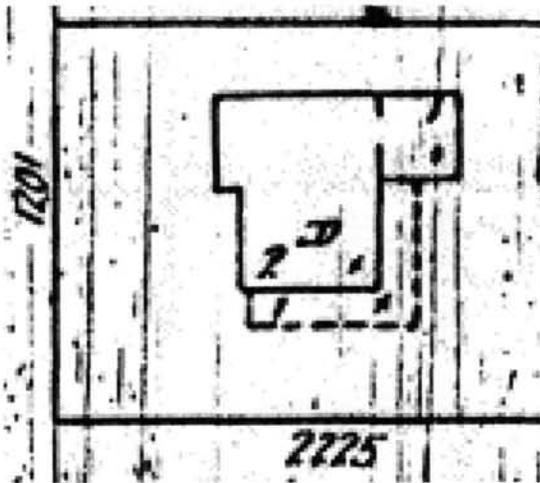
*Ephemera 6: Adrian M. Newens, first president of the Newens Sanitary Dairy Co., as pictured in the promotional brochure about his speeches "Adrian M. Newens, The Mars Man," circa 1916. (University of Iowa Special Collections)*

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

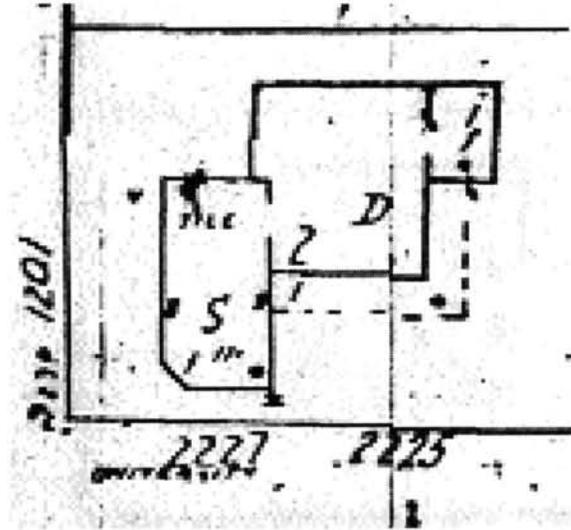
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Add'l Page 17 Newens Sanitary Dairy Historic District  
name of property  
Polk County, IA  
county and state

=====



Map 5: The 1901 Sanborn Map shows the Newens House, 2225 University Avenue, before the commercial addition was added. The map lists it as a 2-story house; this report lists it as a 2-1/2-story house because of the height of the attic. (Public Library of Des Moines)



Map 6: The 1941 update to the 1920 Sanborn Map shows the one-story commercial addition, 2227 University Avenue, added onto the Newens House. (The 1920 map was updated in portions from 1939 until 1941; the even-numbered side of University Avenue was updated two years before the odd-numbered side.) The addition is labeled "S" for store; the word "tile" describes the exterior cladding. (Public Library of Des Moines)







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