



111 2nd Street
Construction of the store was reported in the *Daily Star* December 1, 1938, "The front is the newest on a Niles store - of porcelain

in blue and ivory, and the latest type produced by the Kawneer Company]" 1-story single-storefront Moderne with brick north side wall facing alley and concrete block south and rear side walls; enameled metal panel façade with broad deeply recessed square-plan entry with the entrance itself set into a slant-sided recess at the southeast end; deep blue-color bulkheads and central sign panel and horizontal stripes extending out from it across the façade against a pale yellow base color; horizontal aluminum canopy built for Hess & Mainstock Shoes Built by Williams Brothers of Niles.

214 N 2nd Street

1968 represents the first use of Shadowform- the distinctive dark bronze facing that, by 1973, covered much of the north side of Main Street, and was removed in an 18month façade restoration that began ne 16, 2003.



*Niles DDA MainST
210 East Main Street
Downtown Niles, MI 49120
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Architectural Walk
Downtown Niles, MI



100 Years of Innovation

416 Sycamore Street

Francis J. and Jennie (Barber) Plym House (c. 1909). Plym, Kawneer's founder, and an architect by training, had this house built as his residence about 1909. The front faced west on North 4th Street, with its front lawn where the Star Building stands. The Plym's resided here until 1925 or 26. In 1926 Plym constructed the Star Building in the former front yard of the house, and the house became the home of the business and news departments of the Plym-owned *Niles Daily Star* newspaper.



The 2-story side-gable-roof Prairie School former house, now sandwiched between Star Building, to which it is attached along the west (original front) side and south and east to Star Publishing Plant. The north façade, originally an end wall, fronts on Sycamore; exterior sheathed in red-brown brick, above concrete foundation with limestone sill course, up to 2nd-story window-sill height, and stucco above, with header brick accents - forming a window sill for an attic window and a band at 2nd-story window lintel level connecting with bands below the gable eaves; broad modern windows downstairs and casements upstairs; aluminum entrance with flat-roof aluminum canopy adjoining rear façade of Star Office Building.

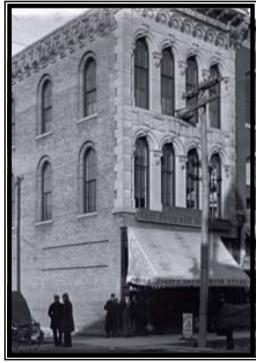
217-25 4th Street.

Star Blding (1925-26).

Half-block long 2-story red Commercial Brick commercial/office building with rear wing at south end; street-facing facades modernized in the 1960s.



As built the building displayed seven limestone-trimmed storefronts along 4th, four north of and three south of a narrower bay containing a 2nd-story entry. The red brick upper façade contained fifteen more or less evenly spaced copper-finish casement windows, with transoms, the openings outlined by brick bands with limestone corner blocks and keystones. The same pattern of vertical and horizontal limestone elements that demarcated the 4th Street storefronts appeared on the Sycamore façade as well, but with the two side "storefronts" simply panels of brickwork outlined by bands of stretchers and headers and only the center section actually containing a storefront. Directly above three side-by-side windows of same design as the front ones filled the central bay, while the rest of that façade was finished in brick. The south side wall displays the structure's reinforced concrete frame and is otherwise faced in common red brick. The street-facing facades were entirely modernized after 1961. Today the building's most visible feature is the green vertical-rib Zourite that clads the 2nd-story 4th and Sycamore facades. Deeply sunk into the Zourite facade, the fifteen original Kawneer casement windows on the 4th side and three facing Sycamore remain in place. The street level on the 4th street side now displays vertical-rib dark blue Zourite paneling covering the storefront piers toward either end, enameled metal panels in pale yellow and light and dark blue below glass set in aluminum frames between the Zourite piers, and, toward the south end, pebble-finish concrete aggregate panels flanking a deep recessed main entry, with aluminum-trim door and window. The north side's storefront is also now filled with dark blue panels and glass set in aluminum frames.



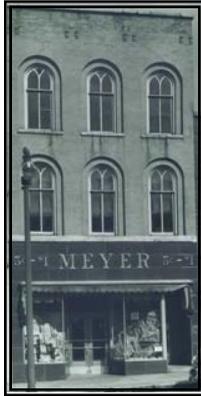
101 East Main Street
 Dec. 10, 1924, *Daily Star* advertisement for “Kawneer Solid Copper Store Fronts” Lists the Paris Candy store on Main’s north side as one of seventy-three Niles businesses for which the company had provided store front trim up to that time.

105 East Main Street
 Dec. 10, 1924, Kawneer advertisement in the *Daily Star* lists The Fair, the building’s occupant in the 1920s, another of the of seventy-three Niles businesses for which Kawneer



209 East Main Street
 The Dec. 10, 1924, “Kawneer Solid Copper Store Fronts” advertisement in the *Daily Star* lists Reynolds Hardware, occupant of this building from the 1920s down to at least 1960, as one of the Niles businesses for which Kawneer provided a storefront.

211 East Main Street

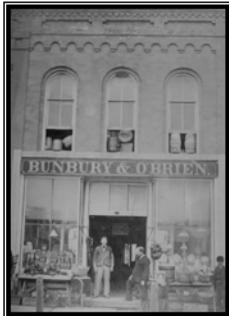


This building contains one of four porcelain enamel metal panel store building facades by Kawneer. Kawneer president Lawrence J. Plym referred directly to the store in remarks made at the annual stockholders meeting in March 1939 as reported in the March 17 *Daily Star*: “The porcelain enamel fronts, of the type installed at the Meyer Variety Store and Hess and Hainstock Shoe store have been well received by the public.”

215 East Main A photo and drawing appearing in two Kawneer publications from 1945 show the building at that date to have been of Late Victorian design, probably with a pressed-metal front, with paneled pilasters flanking the side windows and a central bay window structure upstairs and a bracketed cornice. The building’s façade was probably remodeled in its present form between 1950 and 1953, when it became the home of The Juvenile Shop.



216 East Main Street



The current storefront, installed for the Family Shoe Store, which occupied the space c. 1953, is probably the one for Family in the list of modern Kawneer store fronts in Niles in Kawneer’s advertisement in the September 30, 1953, *Daily Star*.

219 East Main Newly renovated in the December 10, 1924, *Daily Star* indicates that the building contained a Kawneer store front with square-plan twelve-foot deep recessed central entry (with diagonal angled outer corners and white tile floor) between nine-foot wide glass storefront windows and grayish marble bulkheads and prism glass transoms.



220 East Main

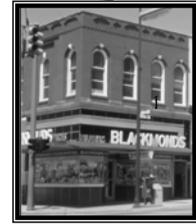
As with 216, the maps from 1873 on show the same footprint, suggesting that this is another nineteenth-century building with early twentieth-century façade renovation. The building was remodeled in 1928-29, the renovations including the still present Kawneer front, and then occupied what was originally one of two downtown Niles stores of the Paris Candy Shop until about 1985. James Patterson, who both owned the building and operated the candy shop, used the second story as a candy factory.



224 East Main Aug. 21, 1923 *Daily Sun-Star* report plans to renovate W. A. Thayer’s jewelry store with a Kawneer front and terra-cotta decorative work. In addition to the front, the floor was to be rebuilt at sidewalk level and a thirty-foot extension to the rear added. Schmitt, *Sullivan-esque* indicates that the façade with its Sullivan-esque terra-cotta trim was the result of a 1923 renovation designed by Kawneer. The terra-cotta trim appears to be stock items from the Midland Terra Cotta Company of Chicago.



301 East Main The enameled metal panel storefront was built for Blackmond’s Jewelry, which moved from 216 E. Main to this location in October 1941 and remained here down to about 1980. Plans to remodel 301 for Blackmond were reported in the Feb. 18, 1941, *Daily Star*. The storefront designed by Kawneer was to be state-



of-the-art in illustrating the company’s newest product line: “The Kawneer Company had free rein in the designing and making of the front and incorporated the newly-developed angles so that the front would stand out as a shining example for Kawneer dealers and specialists when they come to Niles.” The basic plan, including the footprint with recessed entry with diagonal windows at the outer corners, and the “lustrous” black aluminum porcelain enamel panels above the canopy, are parts of the 1941 work, as may be the doors and windows. The 1941 bulkheads were made of squares of black porcelain enamel panels upon a low black base, rather than the current grayish-blue panels, and the metal fascia above the windows was also black rather than the current white. The present W-Marquee canopy projects far more than the original light awning canopy.

305 East Main



In the late 1940s Kawneer hired New York architect Morris Ketchum, Jr., one of America’s leading store designers in the 1940s and 50s, to design schematic store modernization plans for its “Modernizing Main Street” demonstration project involving downtown Niles and to consult in creating Kawneer’s new post World War II line of storefront materials. The Little Shop’s storefront at 305 appears to be the only surviving example of Ketchum’s work for Kawneer in Niles. Kawneer’s own designers in the Contract Division apparently respected Ketchum’s work enough fifteen years later to incorporate it with only minor changes in their new two-building storefront for Worth’s.