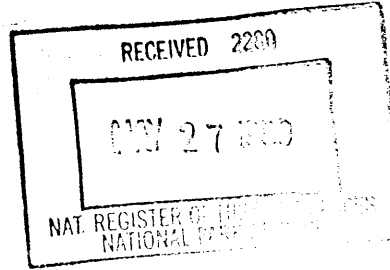


United State Department of the Interior
National Park Service



751

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 Livestock Exchange Building

other names/site number Do09:0183-002

2. Location

street & number 2900 O Plaza not for publication

city or town Omaha vicinity

state Nebraska code NE county Douglas code 055 zip code 68107

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.)

Lawrence Sommer

Signature of certifying official

5/24/99

Date

Director, Nebraska State Historical Society

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 certifying official/Title

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): _____

Linda McVillard

7/7/99

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
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade:business/livestock exchange

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instruction)

Work in Progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals:
Other: Romanesque Revival
Other: North Italian Renaissance Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instruction)

foundation : brick
walls : brick

roof : concrete, tar
other : stone, terra cotta

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.)

Property is:

- 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
economics, industry
architecture

Period of Significance

1926-1949

Significant Dates

1926

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

George Prinz, Architect/Peter Kiewit & Sons, builder

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation of 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 for Additional Data:

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

Name of repository:

Omaha City Planning Department

Livestock Exchange Building

Name of Property

Douglas County, Nebraska

County and State

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	252520	4566060	3.			
2.				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 Melissa Dirr; Lynn Meyer
organization Nebr. St. His. Soc.; Omaha City Planning date March, 1999
street & number 1500 R Street; 1819 Farnam Street telephone 402.471.4787; 402.444.5208
city or town Lincoln; Omaha state NE zip code 68501; 68183

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.)

Property Owner

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

name/title City of Omaha; James Thele
street & number 1819 Farnam Street telephone 402.444.5206
city or town Omaha state NE zip code 68183

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 ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetLivestock Exchange Building

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Section 7 Page 1**Description**

The Livestock Exchange Building is an imposing 11 story, H-shaped office and commercial building designed by local architect George Prinz to serve the business needs of the Omaha Union Stockyards. Visually dominating the South Omaha area, the exchange building also provided many commercial services to the surrounding community. The building is of concrete-encased steel frame construction with concrete floors and brick curtain walls. Aesthetically, the Livestock Exchange Building is a combination of the Romanesque and the northern Italian Renaissance revival styles. Brick, stone and terra cotta are the primary materials employed for the stylistic features.

The Livestock Exchange Building was designed by Omaha architect George Prinz as a multi-functional building, serving the needs of the livestock industry as well as many of the needs of the surrounding community. The ground floor of the building housed a bakery, cafeteria, and consolidated railroad offices. The main lobby was located on the mezzanine or second level and was decorated with Italian marble and tile. Stockyards National Bank was located just off the main lobby and complemented the marble with its mahogany woodwork. A soda fountain, cigar stand, and telephone and telegraph offices filled the rest of the main floor. Floors two through nine housed commission firm offices. A convention hall, dining room, and kitchen filled the top floors of the building. Apartments and sleeping rooms were available for ranchers bringing in their cattle on the trains to trade, and a clothing store catered to the desires of many of the wives of stockyard workers. Because of all the services available in the building people would visit to shop and eat without having livestock business. The top two floors of each leg of the building are ballrooms with massive windows and are currently used for weddings and parties.

Formally, the Livestock Exchange Building is an imposing 11 story, H-shaped brick building that dominates the South Omaha skyline. Constructed by Peter Kiewit and Sons, the building was meant to be a lasting legacy and was built to be as fireproof as possible with a steel frame encased in concrete, reinforced concrete floors and brick curtain walls.

Stylistically, Prinz's design for the Livestock Exchange Building combines elements of the Romanesque and the northern Italian Renaissance revival styles. The primary Romanesque revival style feature is the use of an arched corbel table that encircles the top of the building and is repeated at the top of the building's entry portico. The entrance, which is also primarily Romanesque, is trimmed with elaborately carved limestone, and exhibits a double compound arch. An arcade with coupled columns spans the width of the entry portico, and is open to the space formed by the two front legs of the H-shaped plan. Details that are generally Renaissance in character include the three stone medallions placed above the double-arched entry and the Venetian-arched windows that occur on each side of the entry doors. The majority of the building other than the entrance is trimmed in brick and a limited amount of terra-cotta. The main masses of the building -- the legs of the "H" and the central tower -- have a slightly vertical emphasis through the use of brick piers that run the entire height of the building. This is countered by the horizontal lines of recessed spandrels that are decorated alternately with various zig-zag and other brick patterns. Corbel tables of a shallower relief than the main corbel tables help distinguish the top two and bottom three floors visually from main body of the building, reinforcing the horizontal emphasis of the spandrels and imparting a subtle three part -- base, shaft, and capital -- composition to the building's elevations.

Currently the building is under-utilized. Although it still houses what's left of the livestock trade in South Omaha, these offices occupy only a portion of the main level. Overall the building retains a high degree of historic integrity and its presence continues to anchor the South Omaha downtown.

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Statement of Significance

The Livestock Exchange Building is significant under criterion A at the national level for its contribution in the areas of agriculture, commerce, economics, and industry. The largest and most visually prominent building constructed on the Omaha Union Stockyards site, the Livestock Exchange Building is the most significant structure associated with the Omaha stockyards. Upon its completion in May 1926, it served as the center of the livestock industry in the Omaha area. It is also one of the most important extant properties in the country associated with the history of stockyards and meatpacking. From the time of the construction of the Omaha Livestock Exchange Building and throughout the historic period, the Omaha livestock market was one of the busiest in the nation. The three largest meatpacking centers in the history of the nation were Chicago, Kansas City and Omaha. The only remaining property associated with the Chicago stockyards is the "Old Stone Gate" (NRHP). An 8-story exchange building (NRHP) and a few former packinghouses are the only remnants of the Kansas City stockyards.

The Omaha Livestock Exchange Building is also significant under criterion C for its architectural integrity and style. The building is an eclectic mix of the Romanesque revival style and the northern Italian Renaissance revival style and is the only extant major office and commercial building in Omaha to exhibit extensive Romanesque revival features. Sitting like an island in the center of what once were expansive stock pens in South Omaha, the building retains an autonomous and imposing position over this section of the city, standing as a symbol of the important role played by the Omaha Union Stockyards in the nation's industrial history. The Livestock Exchange building is the most prominent building in South Omaha and the most significant representation of the development of that part of the city.

History

In 1883, a Wyoming cattleman and six prominent Omaha businessmen created Union Stockyards Company of Omaha (USY) and acquired land for the establishment of a livestock market in South Omaha. By April of 1884, construction began on the stockyards, and the first cattle arrived in August of the same year. South Omaha's population was less than 150 people when it was incorporated in 1885, and the only businesses consisted of fifteen saloons. At this time, from 1883-1885, the original stockyard office was in the nearby Frederick Drexel farmhouse. Solely because of the establishment and growth of the livestock trade the population of the city grew to 8000 by 1890, merely five years later.

USY realized that in order to compete with much larger livestock markets in Chicago and Kansas City, South Omaha's stockyards needed to expand to incorporate packing plants. USY, therefore, began promoting South Omaha throughout the country. Their first order of business was to attract national meat packing firms to the city. In May of 1885, by offering to build a \$200,000 facility, USY convinced the George Hammond Packing Company to locate in South Omaha. With the arrival of the first national company, USY found it necessary to build a livestock exchange building, all activities of which had previously been located in the farmhouse of Frederick Drexel. The 3-story brick building, built by J.E. Riley with assistance from the architecture firm of Mendelssohn and Fisher was built in 1885, and housed 40 offices, 25 commission firms, and a hotel. It was located on "O" Street just east of the current location. The following year saw the construction of the third Exchange building. In 1886 a much larger brick building was attached to the west side of the previous Exchange Building which remained a part of the complex. This third building (Frederick Drexel first, 1885 Mendelssohn and Fisher building second) was the first to bear the Exchange name on its main facade. The building had an arched entrance and three relief sculptures of the animals that made the building possible; a shorthorn resides directly above the keystone, and a sheep and hog were on either side of it.

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In the next two years, USY brought the Armour-Cudahy Packing Company and Swift and Company, two more national firms, to South Omaha. By 1892, these large companies along with several smaller local firms combined to form the third largest meat packing center in the world, employing 5000 people and paying over \$2 million in wages each year. In order to maintain the integrity of the market and insure the conformity of trade practices in the midst of astonishing growth, the USY organized the Omaha Livestock Exchange. This exchange eventually became the largest of its kind and was used as a model for other markets around the country. The new organization encouraged more growth which manifested itself through the construction of new buildings. In 1903 the existing sheep barn was rebuilt to accommodate 50,000 head, but the number of animals arriving far exceeded that number and it was again enlarged in 1908. The addition allowed the building to house 100,000 head of sheep. At this time USY was the largest sheep market in the world, and the total livestock intake made USY the third largest in the world. This new building phase caught on and many improvements and new technology were added to existing buildings. For example a raised catwalk was installed above the pens to make viewing the livestock easier and allowed easier access to the pens. All the latest agricultural technology was included in the barns and pens.

In 1914 the USY built what was claimed to be "the largest and best single barn in the world". The barn was built to house the horse and mule trade and was designed by the engineers at the stockyards as Everett Buckingham, the president of the USY, knew that no other existing barns were of the quality he desired. The completed building covered 2 1/3 acres and had a sawtooth shaped roof and was built of brick and steel. Inside the barn had a 33 x 123 foot arena and every modern convenience. At the time the horse and mule trade was the largest in the world and remained so throughout World War I as it served many foreign countries with horses for their armed services and the 1920s when the current building was constructed. As of 1920 USY covered 211 acres of pens and buildings.

The success of the Omaha Livestock Exchange (USY) and ten slaughtering and packing plants continued to bring jobs and capital into South Omaha. In 1910, South Omaha packing houses slaughtered 50,000 head of livestock each day while commission firms traded another 20,000 in the stockyards. In 1916, South Omaha became the second largest livestock market in the United States, receiving livestock from 20 states and territories transported to Omaha on the nation's ten largest railroads, and bought and sold by 45 commission firms and 23 buyers and traders. With the addition of the Skinner Packing Company in 1920, the South Omaha stockyards and packing plants employed over 13,000 people, and had a combined annual payroll of nearly \$15,000,000.

By the 1920's, the South Omaha stockyards had outgrown the 1885 livestock exchange building, and with their prosperity wanted a landmark building to represent the business. Everett Buckingham, the well respected and well liked President of USY in 1924, expressed his vision for the new exchange building perhaps better than anyone. He did not design nor build the 11-story building, but he had long dreamed and planned "for an exchange building that would physically symbolize the returning prosperity and constructive spirit of the stockyards." In November of 1924, ground was broken for the new building, beginning construction that would not end until May 1926. The impressive new exchange building was a symbol of the continued growth of the livestock industry and became the hub for most of South Omaha activity. This building is the manifestation of the success of the industry that continued to prosper through the thirties, despite the financial problems of the Great Depression. Twenty-five years after the construction of the new building, the stockyards were doing an estimated \$1,750,000 in business every day. Much of this money passed through the exchange building's commission firms, banks, and other businesses.

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In 1934 Wilson and Company decided to move to Omaha to lease an older packing-plant and begin operations. At this time Wilson owned packing houses around the world. Their presence made Omaha the only site in the country of the big four packing houses, Armour, Cudahy, Swift, and Wilson. These four houses would lead Omaha to the position of the world's largest meat packing center, and its sheer physical size continued to dominate South Omaha. By 1948, 100 acres of land was used for pens, sheds and scale houses necessary to care for the livestock. In addition to the commission firm offices, by 1950, the exchange housed a federal credit union and two branch banks. Over 1000 people visited the building every day, many of whom were not even directly involved in the livestock exchange. People came to the building to shop in its clothing store, get a hair cut, drop off clothes at the cleaners, visit the full time physician in the first aid room, or take a sick animal to the veterinarian. The year 1951 saw the stockyards on the verge of beating their longtime rivals, Chicago, in sales and the business was so large that the profits from manure rivaled the value of the Florida citrus crop that year. In 1955, the South Omaha stockyards finally reached the goal the USY and had been working toward for 65 years. Omaha had grown into the largest stockyard and meat processing center in the country. In all, the stockyards traded and processed more than a half billion dollars in livestock each year, and by 1957, the livestock industry employed half of Omaha's work force.

The livestock industry reached its peak in Omaha during the late 1950s. Changes in marketing methods led to a decline in the need for a central market, and decentralized feedlots and packing plants began to replace those in South Omaha. In 1967 and 1968, three of the largest packing companies closed. In 1973, having lost its position as the leading livestock market, USY merged with the Kay Corporation of New York City and became the Kay Omaha Livestock Market Incorporated. Finally, in 1976, the last major packing house closed, signaling the end of the great era of the South Omaha stockyards.

Today, Omaha stockyards and packing companies receive and process only a fraction of the livestock they once did. Only a fraction of the extensive pens remain and the other support buildings are gone. Changes in the marketing and direct selling of livestock caused the centralized packing houses to become obsolete. The packing industry became decentralized and changing labor unions also contributed to the demise of the once great packing houses. As a result, the Livestock Exchange Building today houses only a reception hall, museum, and a few offices, while the majority of the building remains empty.

Architecture

The Livestock Exchange Building is singly the most important property associated with the history of the Omaha Union Stockyards. It towers over the site of the stockyards and is a visual landmark for the surrounding South Omaha community. Since its construction in 1926, it has symbolized the national role that Omaha played in the stockyard and meatpacking industry.

The form of the Livestock Exchange Building is based primarily on functional requirements. The very large overall size of the plan of the Livestock Exchange Building is broken into smaller components through the use of the H-shaped plan. The central tower serves as the primary vertical circulation core, while each leg of the H is narrow enough to get light and ventilation to the offices and spaces that are most interior in the building.

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Aesthetically, architect George Prinz employed elements of the Romanesque and Renaissance revival styles as he composed the elevations of the immense exchange building. The building is important stylistically in Omaha because of its Romanesque revival features. Romanesque had been used in Omaha for many of the city's most important buildings such as the former Post Office and City Hall, and other major institutional buildings including hospitals and schools. Most of these buildings, however, were patterned after the buildings of architect H. H. Richardson and his followers, a period which was sometimes referred to as the "modern" Romanesque. Prinz appears to have modeled his Romanesque details on medieval Romanesque structures rather than those of the Richardsonian era. Also, Prinz includes Renaissance elements such as medallions in his design.

The Livestock Exchange Building is unique among the very few buildings extant in Omaha today associated with the Romanesque revival style. Of the buildings of the style that remain, all are either Richardsonian Romanesque or are other types of buildings functionally, such as churches. The Livestock Exchange Building is the only major office and commercial structure in Omaha that exhibits Romanesque revival elements. The use of the corbel table, the double compound arched entry, the blind arcade with coupled columns and the type of decorative stone carving employed are all important Romanesque revival features not found to this degree on any buildings standing in Omaha today.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The Stockyards Exchange Building is located on a tract of land described as follows:

Lot 1, Livestock Exchange Addition, as platted and recorded in Douglas County, Nebraska, lying in the Southeast Quarter Section 4, Township 14 North, Range 13 East of the 6th P.M., being more particularly described as follows:

Commencing at a point on the southernmost line of Lot 1, Stockyards Plaza Four, as platted and recorded in Douglas County, Nebraska, where it intersects the easterly right-of-way line of Edward Babe Gomez Avenue; thence south 88°51'24" east (record bearing) along the south line of said Lot 1, Stockyards Plaza Four and an extension thereof, a distance of 916.50 feet to the point of intersection with the exterior face of wall of the existing Stockyards Exchange Building, said point of intersection also being the point of beginning; the following courses and distances circumnavigate the existing Stockyards Exchange Building along the aforesaid exterior face of wall; thence N01°08'00"E, a distance of 18.98 feet; thence S88°52'00"E, a distance of 0.30 feet; thence N01°08'00"E, a distance of 18.30 feet; thence S88°52'00"E, a distance of 133.00 feet; thence S01°08'00"W, a distance of 18.30 feet; thence S88°52'00"E, a distance of 0.30 feet; thence S01°08'00"W, a distance of 26.90 feet; thence N88°52'00"W, a distance of 0.30 feet; thence S01°08'00"W, a distance of 18.30 feet; thence N88°52'00"W, a distance of 1.40 feet; thence S01°08'00"W, a distance of 13.00 feet; thence S88°52'00"E, a distance of 3.00 feet; thence S01°08'00"W, a distance of 32.70 feet; thence N88°52'00"W, a distance of 3.00 feet; thence S01°08'00"W, a distance of 12.90 feet; thence S88°52'00"E, a distance of 1.40 feet; thence S01°08'00"W, a distance of 18.30 feet; thence S88°52'00"E, a distance of 0.30 feet; thence S01°08'00"W, a distance of 26.90 feet; thence N88°52'00"W, a distance of 0.30 feet; thence S01°08'00"W, a distance of 18.30 feet; thence N88°52'00"W, a distance of 133.00 feet; thence N01°08'00"E, a distance of 18.30 feet; thence N88°52'00"W, a distance of 0.30 feet; thence N01°08'00"E, a distance of 4.60 feet; thence N88°52'00"W, a distance of 8.40 feet; thence N01°08'00"E, a distance of 13.50 feet; thence S88°52'00"E, a distance of 8.40 feet; thence N01°08'00"E, a distance of 8.70 feet; thence S88°52'00"E, a distance of 0.30 feet; thence N01°08'00"E, a distance of 18.30 feet; thence S88°52'00"E, a distance of 57.60 feet; thence N01°08'00"E, a distance of 58.90 feet; thence N88°52'00"W, a distance of 57.60 feet; thence N01°08'00"E, a distance of 18.30 feet; thence N88°52'00"W, a distance of 0.30 feet; thence N01°08'00"E, a distance of 7.72 feet to the point of beginning. The above-described building footprint contains 21,454 square feet (0.493 acres), more or less.

Boundary Justification

This boundary was chosen because it encompasses the original site and original features of the Livestock Exchange Building.