

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received FEB 9 1987
date entered MAR 13 1987

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Bellevue Apartment Building

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 29 E. Wilson St. not for publication

city, town Madison vicinity of

state WI code 55 county Dane code 025

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N.A.	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Thomas Link

street & number 86589 Bailey Hill Rd.

city, town Eugene vicinity of state Oregon 97405

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds, City-County Building

street & number 210 Monona Ave.

city, town Madison state WI

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title WI Inventory of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1984 federal state county local

depository for survey records SHPO, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

city, town Madison state WI

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Bellevue Apartment Building is a four story red brick structure that sits on a medium sized lot in the heart of downtown Madison. The building is only minimally set back from East Wilson Street, a one-way thoroughfare on the south edge of the city's capitol square. The neighborhood of the Bellevue was once one of the poshest in the city, but in the twentieth century the large houses and mansions in the vicinity were gradually replaced primarily by large government buildings. When the Bellevue was constructed in 1913-14, the area still was primarily residential, but today, mainly state and local government buildings, private offices, and commercial buildings dominate the streetscape. There are some other residential structures near the Bellevue, although not immediately adjacent to it. Directly at the rear of the Bellevue is a steep drop-off which ends at a thoroughfare that is the main bypass around Madison's downtown. To the south of this thoroughfare is a small, narrow park adjacent to Lake Monona.

The Bellevue is totally constructed of red brick, including the raised basement. It has a rectangular shape with numerous bay projections dominating the facades. These bays are either rectangular bays extending from first floor to the roof on the building's side facades, or shallow bays that extend from first to fourth floor on the front facade. Decoration on the building includes large red brick chimneys that project from the roofline; a small stepped parapet on the front facade; a substantial pressed metal cornice encircling the building at the roofline; a concrete cornice separating the first and second stories of the front facade; a concrete water table; a concrete frontispiece on the main entrance; and some subtle brick corbelling throughout the building's facades. Windows are all original, although they have been covered with aluminum combination storm-screen sashes. The original windows are double-hung sashes of various sizes. The upper panes of the windows consist of twelve lights. Some windows are grouped, particularly on the square bays. The windows have concrete sills and there are a few concrete tabs decorating front facade windows. The concrete frontispiece on the front entrance covers a recessed entry of double wood and glass doors topped with a transom. Above the cornice of the frontispiece is a concrete plate engraved "Bellevue" and the cornice is supported by two scroll brackets.

The interior of the Bellevue has seen few changes throughout its history. The basic apartment plan is repeated on all floors except for the basement and first floor. In the basement there are equipment and service rooms. And, one of the innovative features of the original building the basement laundry facilities, are still intact there. The first floor has four apartments on half of the floor and storage facilities on the other half of the floor. The upper floors have eight apartments on each floor. The hallways are wide and both doors and windows from the apartment face the hallway. Originally the four corner apartments were divided from the four inner apartments by double doors. While containing similar features, the corner apartments and inner apartments have a slightly different plan, but are identical within each group. The corner apartments are larger and have a living room, dining room, kitchen, bath, bedroom, and dressing room. The interior apartments are identical except they do not have the dining room or the dressing room. All the apartments have 5'x10' porches that were originally screened sun porches. Permanent windows have been added making these porches year-around small rooms. These porches are what make up the bay projections seen on the building's side facades.

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The apartments have an unusual interior, including an abundance of woodwork throughout executed in the craftsman tradition. This woodwork includes wide moldings on doors and windows, cornice moldings, and picture rails. All apartments have identical fireplaces of plain brick construction. They are also decorated with large wooden mantels. The mantels have simple lines and resemble an exterior cornice. The woodwork and the mantels on the fireplace combine to create a sleek, horizontal effect. Each apartment also has a built-in wooden cabinet with leaded glass doors. The lower doors of the cabinets opened up and originally a bed could be pulled out from this area. Some of the outstanding original features of the apartments are still in evidence including kitchen cabinets, built-in bedroom dressers, and a few of the original service elevators to the basement kitchen. Most of the apartment's original hardware is still there as well, although in some cases covered up with paint. Bathrooms have had some remodeling, although there are some original features remaining and one can see that the original baths in the larger units were somewhat fancier than those in the smaller units. Except for minor remodeling and the addition of some piping for an updated heating system, the apartments have a high degree of integrity. They have an elegant appearance that is not usually found in modern-day apartment houses, even luxury apartment houses.

NOMINATION INCLUDES:

ONE Contributing Building.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400-1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science
___ 1500-1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/
___ 1700-1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ humanitarian
___ 1800-1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1909	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ transportation
___ 1913-1936		___ invention		___ other (specify)

Specific dates 1913-14¹ **Builder/Architect** Charles E. Marks²

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Bellevue Apartment building is architecturally significant because it is the best extant example of Madison's early twentieth century apartment houses, a type of construction of which only a few buildings on the scale of the Bellevue were built during the first two decades of the twentieth century. The Bellevue is also a good example of an apartment house which catered to the middle and upper middle class tenant, a person who desired a home in downtown Madison in a neighborhood which was still considered a prestige neighborhood at the time the building was constructed. Local builder Charles E. Marks built the Bellevue and it is an important example of his career, being his only known apartment house project.

Architecture

During the 1910s a new type of housing sprang up in Madison's downtown. This type of housing--the apartment house--met several housing needs in the city. It provided a larger number of housing units on a small city lot than did a single-family residence or flats. Therefore, apartment houses increased the housing capacity of Madison at a time when the central city was well built up and new housing developments were in the suburbs, several miles from downtown. The apartment house also provided convenient housing for a growing population of white collar workers in Madison, many of whom worked for the state government in offices located downtown. And, the apartment was a smaller alternative for the middle and upper middle classes who may have found a single-family residence difficult to maintain, or too expensive to acquire. The convenience and practicality of apartment houses made them immediately popular. Today, the apartment house is a significant and ever-growing part of Madison's housing stock.

From the beginning Charles Marks designed the Bellevue for a middle and upper middle class tenant who wanted convenience and services. In the spring of 1913, when construction of the Bellevue got underway, Marks advertised the building for prospective tenants. The half-page advertisement emphasized the luxuries that would be available in the building. "Do you wish to live in ease and comfort?" the ad stated. It went on to say that the Bellevue was equipped with an electric passenger elevator, special service elevators to a large kitchen in the basement, a central vacuum system, a private phone system, soft hot water, special garbage disposal system, individual apartment heating controls, and finally, "relief from the servant problem" (because of all the services provided). The ad also stressed such features in each apartment as a screened porch, a large fireplace, built-in bookcase with leaded glass doors, a built-in dresser in the bedroom, a bed on rollers (so it could be put in the screened porch in summer), a gas stove, and a refrigeration system.³

The Bellevue was completed in the spring of 1914. When it opened, it was noted in the Wisconsin State Journal as the "last word in convenience." The article pointed out the features previously mentioned in the advertisement and emphasized the "sun parlor," the moveable bed, abundant closets in the bedroom, and the large living

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation pages

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1

Quadrangle name Madison West, Wis.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 1 6 3 0 6 2 2 0 4 7 7 1 4 4 0
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

Same as legal description: Original Plat. NE 1/2 Lot 4, All Lot 5, Ex. Part used for Railroad.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carol Lohry Cartwright, Consultant

organization Prepared for Owner

date 10/24/86

street & number R.2, 5581A Hackett Rd.

telephone (404) 473-6820

city or town Whitewater

state WI 53190

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title

date 1/27/87

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 3-13-87

for 
Keeper of the National Register

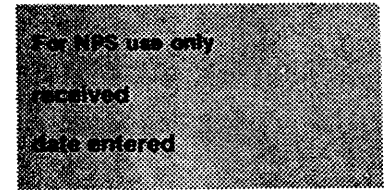
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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and/or dining rooms. "The kitchenette," the article stated, "is perhaps the most unusual little room. It contains a china closet, an ice box, cuboards, and a large gas range. . . . The ice box is cooled by an amonia brine plant in the basement which circulates brine to all apartments. In the icebox is a receptacle which delivers ice cold drinking water at the front of the ice box." Also lauded were the apartments' hot soft water, central vacuum system, garbage removal system, and the two laundries in the basement.⁴

Because the Bellevue was the largest of the early apartment houses built in Madison, it was the most expensive. However, proportionately, its "luxuries" made it much more expensive than similarly sized buildings. The Baskerville Apartments, about 28 units (as opposed to 36 in the Bellevue), was also built in 1913 with an estimated cost of \$50,000. The Bellevue had an estimated cost of \$90,000. A moderately-sized apartment building, the Pinckney Apartments, 15 units, was estimated to cost only \$10,000. After construction, the Bellevue attracted the clientele that Marks had intended. During the first few years of the building's existence, the tenants were all middle or upper middle class white collar workers. Occupations included salespeople, businesspersons (such as an executive of the Madison Gas and Electric Company), state government professionals (such as the president of the Board of Control), and university professionals (such as the dean of the university extension).⁵

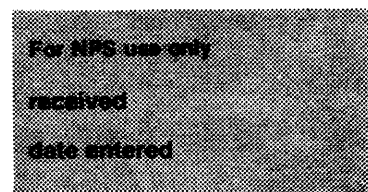
The Bellevue is significant for architecture primarily because it is the largest and most intact of all the earliest apartment houses constructed in Madison during the first two decades of the twentieth century. It is also the most attractive, and its interior may be the most unusual. The group of apartment houses built during the first two decades of the twentieth century brought a new and ultimately popular type of housing to the isthmus, making it possible for more people to live on already built-up land. The pervasiveness of apartment buildings today make the early appearance of this type of housing significant and the best example of this type of housing most significant. In 1919, the first group listing of apartment houses appeared in the city directories and in this year there were 29 apartment houses listed. By checking individual listings in earlier directories for each building in the 1919 directory, estimated construction dates for the pioneering apartment houses were determined. No apartment building listed in the 1919 directory appeared before 1909, and most appeared between 1914 and 1917. These years, then, were the boom years of apartment house construction during the first two decades of the twentieth century, when this type of housing first appeared in Madison. The Bellevue's construction date of 1913-14 makes it part of the boom era.

That the Bellevue is the largest and the best example of the early apartment houses in Madison is supported by a comparison of downtown apartment houses of a moderate to large size that were built during the era the Bellevue was built. Again, the 1919 city directory was used to determine the comparison group. Only one apartment house that was close to the Bellevue in size is no longer extant. The others are the Baskerville apartments (121-29 S. Hamilton), 28 units; the Stratford (433 W. Gilman), 18 units; the Pinckney apartments (204 N. Pinckney), 15 units; the Cass (202 N. Pinckney), 14 units; the Hamilton (222 N. Hamilton), 12 units; and the Eleanor (405 N. Frances), 13 units. Except for the Mediterranean revival style Pinckney Apartments, all these examples have plain brick construction and few

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architectural details. In fact, there is a similarity of design to all the apartment houses of the era, including the Bellevue. They are all rather plain buildings and architectural emphasis is on the type of building rather than the style. Of these examples, though, the Bellevue does stand out. It is the most impressive because of its size, its quality of construction, its more interesting facade, and its level of integrity. It is also the most impressive building in relationship to its site. Because the Bellevue is the best example of the pioneering group of a new and important type of residential construction in Madison, it is an important landmark in the city.

The Bellevue is also significant for architecture because of its outstanding interior design and unusual features, almost all of which are still extant in the interior. The craftsman details, utilizing a large amount of woodwork is the most impressive interior detail. But it is the sleekness of the design of the woodwork that makes it particularly distinctive. The way in which the woodwork is applied gives the apartments a horizontal feeling and a more modern appearance. The built-in conveniences, almost all intact, are important artifacts that indicate how particular urban dwellers lived in Madison during this era. The large, spacious rooms and the sun porches give the individual apartments, even the smaller units, a sense of elegance and space. The high level of interior integrity complements the exterior integrity and adds to the building's overall architectural significance.

Of less importance, but interesting to the history of architects and builders in Madison, the Bellevue is the work of local builder Charles E. Marks. Marks worked in Madison alone between 1911 and 1916. He was also associated with his brother Eugene H. Marks, another builder. The buildings that have been identified as the work of Charles or Eugene Marks are all fine and well-constructed small residences in the Prairie style or Craftsman tradition. The Bellevue is the largest project associated with either Marks, and its craftsman interior design indicates that their exterior design principles could extend to their interiors. The Bellevue is an important work in the career of Charles Marks in Madison. It is his only known large-scale project, and as a pioneering type of structure in the city, it identifies Marks as an innovative builder in the city.

The apartment house is one of the most numerous forms of housing in the late twentieth century in any larger community. The earliest apartment houses in Madison are special because they began the trend toward this type of housing in the city. The Bellevue, because it is the best example of the early apartment house in Madison, and because it was an unusual type of apartment house, built with special services for an upper-class clientele, is a significant Madison landmark.

Notes

¹City of Madison Tax Rolls, Building Abstract, "Cozy Corner in One of furnished Bellevue Apartments," Wisconsin State Journal, April 20, 1914, p. 6.

²Advertisement for the Bellevue Apartments, Wisconsin State Journal, May 8, 1913, p. 10.; Building Abstract.

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Notes (continued):

³Advertisement for the Bellevue Apartments.

⁴"Cozy Corner."

⁵"Three Million Is Being spent for Buildings Here," Wisconsin State Journal, May 21, 1913, p. 12; Madison City Directories for 1914 and 1916.

ITEM 9: MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bellevue Apartments advertisement, Wisconsin State Journal, May 8, 1913, p. 10.

"Cozy Corner in One of Furnished Bellevue Apartments," Wisconsin State Journal, April 20, 1914, p. 6.

Madison City Directories, 1900-1919.

Mollenhoff, David. Madison A History of the Formative Years. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1982, pp. 352-357, footnote 278, Chapter 6.

"Three Million Is Being Spent for Buildings Here," Wisconsin State Journal, May 21, 1913, p. 10.

ADDENDUM TO SECTION EIGHT:

In December of 1986, the Bellevue Apartment Building was designated a City of Madison Landmark having completed a landmarking process similar to that required of a National Register nomination. It was designated a city landmark because it is the best example of the early apartment houses in Madison.