United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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

1. Name

historic	Sanford Hotel (DO09: 124-38)
and/or common	Conant Hotel

2. Location

street & number	1913 Farnam Street	N/A not for publication
city, town	Omaha N/A vicinity of	
state	Nebraska code 031 county Douglas	code 055

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	_X_ occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
_X_ building(s)	_X_ private	___ unoccupied	_X_ commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	_NA_ in process	_X_ yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
		___ no	___ military	_X_ other: Hotel

4. Owner of Property

name	Sideris - Panos Realty Company
street & number	1913 Farnam Street
city, town	Omaha N/A vicinity of state Nebraska

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.	Omaha/Douglas Civic Center - Register of Deeds
street & number	1819 Farnam Street
city, town	Omaha state Nebraska

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title	1984 Omaha/Douglas Co. Historic Building Survey has this property been determined eligible? _X_ yes ___ no
date	1984 - on going ___ federal ___ state ___ county _X_ local
depository for survey records	Omaha City Planning Dept. & Nebraska State Historical Society
city, town	Omaha/Lincoln state Nebraska

7. Description

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Functionally, the Sanford Hotel is a large hotel building built in 1916-17 for Dr. Harold Gifford; technically, it is constructed of a brick-clad, concrete encapsulated steel frame with a concrete pan joist floor system; formally, the seven story building is rectangular in plan (basement and first floor) changing to an "H" plan at the second through seventh floors;stylistically, the architect John Latenser employed Louis Sullivan's method of giving unity to multi-story elevations by dividing the facade into the tripartite scheme of base, shaft, and capitol analagous to a classical column.

The Sanford Hotel, built in 1916-17, is a large seven-story over full basement building measuring approximately 86'-9" X 90'-0" (ground floor). Technically the Sanford is constructed of a steel skeleton frame encapsulated in concrete for "fire-proof" construction. The floors are a concrete pan joist system spanning between composite beams, while a brick veneer clads the concrete and steel structure.

The building is divided into three functional zones arranged vertically; the basement contains support and mechanical functions, the first floor contains the hotel lobby and adjacent commercial areas, while the second through the seventh floors contain hotel rooms. The major entrance, centrally located at the northern Farnam Street facade, opens directly into the hotel lobby. Vertical circulation is provided by two centrally located elevators, with secondary vertical circulation provided by an interior stair at the north eastern corner of the building and fire stairs at the east and west ends of the southern facade.

Formally, the rectangular plan at the basement and first floor changes to an "H" shaped plan at the second through seventh floors. This change in plan corresponds to a change in function, thus allowing light and air to interior hotel rooms. A flat roof tops the building, with the elevator penthouse projecting above the roof line at the building's center.

The Sanford basically has only one major facade. All articulation and ornamentation are applied to the buff brick northern Farnam Street elevation; the other elevations are constructed of utility brick, obviously anticipating other adjacent buildings.

Stylistically, architect John Latenser employed Louis Sullivan's method of giving unity to multi-story elevations; the tripartite scheme of dividing an elevation into base, shaft and capital - analagous to a classical column.

The "base", in this case, is the first story commercial storefront severely remodelled in recent remodellings. This level contains a central entrance covered by a large suspended canopy. A continuous horizontal band of carved limestone divides the "base" from the "shaft". The second through sixth floors are articulated by pairs of double-hung windows arranged vertically in seven equally spaced rows. Limestone trim surrounds each row of windows emphasizing the vertical, while recessed spandrels contain inset rectangular blocks of limestone and decorative rowlock brick coursing. Another band of limestone trim at the seventh floor creates the division of "shaft" to "capital". Pairs of double-hung windows, alligned with those below, are separated from each other by inset, rectangular limestone panels carved with circular and floral

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designs. An elaborate, projecting sheet metal cornice crowns the building, wrapping only the north, east and west sides of the northern wing.

   The integrity of the Sanford is very good. The ornately detailed plastered beam ceiling of the first floor lobby is now covered with a suspended ceiling, but is still intact. The hotel rooms and support areas, while constructed of relatively plain plastered walls and ceilings, have undergone some remodelling over the building's history. Much of the exterior is relatively unchanged, though with the street level commercial facade having undergone the most severe alterations, it is doubtful that much of the original store front fabric remains.

8. Significance

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Sanford (Conant) Hotel is significant to Omaha and Nebraska in the area of social/humanitarianism by its direct association with its developer and owner, internationally known ophthalmologist and, locally prominant philanthropist, Dr. Harold Gifford. The building is architecturally significant as one of the few remaining well preserved examples of high rise hotel architecture of early 20th century Omaha. Designed by locally prominent architect John Latenser Sr., it exhibits characteristics of the Commercial Style (Whiffen) and is a local adaption of Louis Sullivan's method of giving unity to a multi-story building.

The seven story Sanford Hotel, located at 1913 Farnam Street in Omaha, was built in 1916–17 at a cost of $140,000 for its owner and financier Dr. Harold Gifford. Dr. Gifford (Oct. 18, 1858 – Nov. 28, 1929) was known internationally as a pioneer in ophthalmology and locally as a kind, generous man of medicine and lover of nature.

Born in Milawukee, Wisconsin, Dr. Gifford attended universities at Cornell, Ann Arbor, Germany and Austria before arriving in Omaha in 1886 and establishing his practice at 20th and Harney. In Omaha, Dr. Gifford achieved international recognition for his efforts in diagnostic evaluation, clinical research and eye surgery. His treatment was "the finest to be obtained in this field" (Omaha World Herald, 11/29/29). Equally significant, Dr. Gifford helped found one of Omaha's largest medical centers, Methodist Hospital, and organized the Omaha Medical College – today known as the Universtiy of Nebraska College of Medicine – and acted as its dean.

Dr. Gifford's humanitarian efforts equalled his medical accomplishments. An avid naturalist, Dr. Gifford also helped to establish many City parks and donated much of the land to create the Fontenelle Forest wilderness preserve along the Missouri River. Although an avowed socialist and agnostic, Dr. Gifford invested continuously in Omaha real estate and hotels. In 1915 he built the Castle Hotel (623 So. 16th Street, razed 1974) and also developed the Sanford Hotel in 1916. (Building Permit)

The Sanford Hotel was built during a great construction era in downtown Omaha. This construction boom gave Omaha a look that characterized it for much of the 20th century. Among the buildings constructed from 1910 to the depression were such high-rises as the WOW Building, Fontenelle Hotel, 1st National Bank, Medical Arts Building and the Paxton Hotel. The Sanford was not only part of this downtown expansion, but was a part of a great period of hotel building as well. In all, Omaha has 117 hotels, in or near the downtown in 1917. (City Directory) Since then, the automobile has decentralized the commercial districts; people choose to stay in low-rise motels lining the highways. Today, the Sanford (Conant) and the Hill are the only high-rise hotels still functioning as hotels in Omaha.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____.28 acre_____

Quadrangle name _____Omaha North_____   Quadrangle scale ___1:24000___

UTM References

A |1,5| |2,5,3,5,6,0| |4,5,7,1,3,0,0| B |__| |__,__,__,__| |__,__,__,__|
   Zone Easting   Northing   Zone Easting   Northing

C |__| |__,__,__,__| |__,__,__,__| D |__| |__,__,__,__| |__,__,__,__|

E |__| |__,__,__,__| |__,__,__,__| F |__| |__,__,__,__| |__,__,__,__|

G |__| |__,__,__,__| |__,__,__,__| H |__| |__,__,__,__| |__,__,__,__|

Verbal boundary description and justification   *(all except W.56.75 feet)*

Lot 11 of Block 143, and Part of Lots 8 and 9 of Block 249½, original City of Omaha
Lots, Douglas County, Nebraska, including all historically associated real estate.

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

state ___N/A___   code ___   county ___   code ___

state ___   code ___   county ___   code ___

11. Form Prepared By

name/title   Dan Worth/Architect, Planner

organization   Omaha Planning Department   date   December, 1984

street & number   1819 Farnam Street, Suite 1110   telephone   402/444-4927

city or town   Omaha   state   Nebraska   68183

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

_____ national   _____ state   _X_ 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 Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer   date 6-19-85

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After its construction, the Sanford was leased to Harley Conant, who managed and operated it until 1950. Conant already owned and operated his own high-rise hotel "The Conant" at 16th and Harney (now the Regis Condominiums). Late in 1929 a four story addition was planned for the Sanford but never completed. Apparently, Dr. Gifford's death, in November, and the Great Depression brought the plans to a stand still. Conant sold his hotel at 16th and Harney in 1939 and devoted all his efforts to the Sanford (soon thereafter renamed The Conant Hotel).

The design for the Sanford was provided by John Latenser Sr. (1858-1930). Latenser, a native of Liechtenstein, arrived in Omaha in 1885. He soon achieved notariety by being appointed Superintendent of Public Buildings by President Cleveland after he successfully devised a system to stabilize the foundation of the Chicago Post Office. Latenser's practice in Omaha was prolific, with commissions including the Douglas County Court House (NRHP, 1979) and Omaha Central High School (NRHP, 1979).

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