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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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NATIONAL REGISTER

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name President and Ambassador Apartments  
other names/site number LC13:C8-26

2. Location

street & number 1330 and 1340 Lincoln Mall  not for publication N/A  
city, town Lincoln  vicinity N/A  
state Nebraska code NE county Lancaster code 109 zip code 68508

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.  See continuation sheet.  
Arthur Sommer 11/1/93  
Signature of certifying official 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.  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. 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):  
for Entered in the National Register 12/10/93  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Art Deco

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation not visible

walls BRICK

roof not visible

other STONE: Limestone

**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The President and Ambassador Apartments in Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska are a pair of five-story, flat-roofed, brick apartment buildings adjacent to the Nebraska State Capitol. They were constructed in 1928-1929 of reinforced concrete with red brick veneer and limestone trim. The President occupies the more prominent corner site; the Ambassador is located about 35 feet west. The buildings match closely in height, materials, rectangular plan, and ornament, with one major exception. The east facade of the President, opposite the Capitol, is the most ornate elevation of the complex, with a canopied center entrance and extensive carved limestone trim. New center entrances have been created to both buildings from the intervening courtyard, providing an awning-covered, wheelchair accessible link between the two buildings. Both interiors have a central, double-loaded corridor running north and south. Most of the units are small efficiencies. "Murphy" fold-down beds were used extensively and many still remain. The buildings retain a high degree of integrity.

The President and Ambassador Apartments are located at the south edge of Lincoln, Nebraska's central business district, facing Lincoln Mall (originally called J Street) at the northwest corner of 14th Street. To the east, across 14th Street from the President, is the State Capitol (1922-1932, National Historic Landmark). The five-story, flat-roofed apartments have rectangular plans measuring about 45 feet east-west and 90 feet north-south. They are separated by a 35 foot wide courtyard. The apartments reflect their prominent neighbor by matching the cornice height of the Capitol's outer ring of offices and in the Art Deco-inspired, carved limestone ornament of the President's east facade.

The principal exterior material of both reinforced concrete apartment buildings is red brick laid in stretcher bond, with considerable brickwork decoration on all facades except to the rear (north). The buildings have six-over-one windows throughout.

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The south facades are divided into five bays by use of pilasters of soldier and rowlock brickwork. The center three bays are capped with arched patterns and raised brick designs above the fifth story windows. The south facades feature one-story stone-trimmed porches featuring three bay limestone arcades with chamfered stone piers and modified Ionic capitals. Decorative moldings outline the arches, with dentils over the center arch, and sawtooth moldings above the flanking pair. The porches also have limestone quoins and cornices. Both south porches have original signs on their cornices, identifying the buildings in red neon script, outlined with sheet metal. Brick panels combining basketweave, soldier, and rowlock patterns decorate the west, south, and east facades. The rear (north) elevations have center exits and simple rowlock trim.

The corner President is set apart from its simpler neighbor by extensive stone trim on the east facade, highlighted by a center entrance with a metal canopy and second neon "President." The limestone entry pavilion is decorated with deep relief carvings above the first and second level windows, and two relief panels carved with peacocks and naturalistic floral designs. The first story of the President's east facade is faced with ashlar limestone, decorated with geometric floral carvings above the windows.

The interiors of both structures retain their double-loaded, central corridors with terrazo floors, central terrazo stairs with wrought iron railings, and small apartment units. A secondary, cast-concrete staircase is located at the north end of each building, and both structures have elevators. The floor plans offer a variety of small units, all designed with space-conserving features such as fold-down "Murphy" beds, which remain in many units.

The integrity of the buildings is very high. New accessible entrances have been created at the center of the secondary facades facing the courtyard between the buildings, with a canopy-covered sidewalk linking the new doorways. Some alterations have occurred to individual units, but original floorplans and features such as the center corridors, staircases, and Murphy beds are largely intact.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)  
architecture

Period of Significance  
1928-1929

Significant Dates  
1928-1929

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Alexander, John A.

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The President and Ambassador Apartments, built in 1928-1929 in Lincoln, Nebraska, are of local significance under Criterion C as outstanding examples of the final stage of historic apartment construction in that city. They are very prominently sited adjacent to the State Capitol and possess a high degree of integrity.

The President and Ambassador Apartments were built in 1928 and 1929 by Lincoln builder/architect John A. Alexander for the Coryell family, whose diverse business interests included several Lincoln apartment houses. Levi Leland Coryell originally purchased the site in 1925, and prior developing the buildings, transferred the land into corporate ownership. The Ambassador was under construction in late 1928 in the name of the Nebraska Building Corporation; the President was begun the next year following nearly identical plans, for the L. L. Coryell Building Corporation. Both buildings remained in Coryell ownership through 1979. The period of significance of the pair of buildings is based on their dates of construction, at the end of the last major historic period of apartment house construction in Lincoln.

Several distinct periods of multi-family housing construction can be identified in the development of Lincoln, and representative properties from several of these periods have already been listed on the National Register. A thematic nomination of four "Terrace Houses" in 1979 included two distinct types of early multi-unit buildings, rowhouses and flats. Rowhouses, such as Lyman Terrace and Bahr Terrace (11th and H, both ca. 1890), consist of multi-story, attached houses, each standing on its own plot of ground, sharing sidewalls with neighbors but retaining separate entrances, stairs, and hallways. Helmer-Winnet-White Flats, also listed in the 1979 nomination, is a slightly later example (ca. 1898) of a different multi-family type, with stacked, horizontal units ("flats") that retained their own exterior entrances and stairs.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

City of Lincoln Building Permits #18044 and #18739.

"The Ambassador, Forty Fireproof Apartments," full page advertisement, Lincoln Star, p. A9, March 17, 1929.

"19th Century Terrace Houses of Lincoln, Nebraska," National Register nomination by Penelope Chatfield, listed Oct. 1, 1979.

"Not Far from Million Mark: Apt. House Construction in Lincoln in 1916 Marks a Change in City Building," Lincoln Sunday State Journal, p. 1C:1, Jan. 7, 1917.

"John Alexander, 84, Lincoln Realtor, Dies," Lincoln Journal, page 9:3, April 6, 1972.

"Lincoln Historic Apartment Study," typescript, March 30, 1989, E. F. Zimmer et al., Lincoln/Lancaster County Planning Dept.

See continuation sheet

**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

**Specify repository:**

Lincoln/Lancaster Cty Planning Dept.

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property .33 (less than one acre)

**UTM References**

A 14 693875 4519810  
 Zone Easting Northing

C         

B           
 Zone Easting Northing

D         

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

This property is described as Lots 5 and 6 of Block 122 of the Original Plat of Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska.

See continuation sheet

**Boundary Justification**

These boundaries include all of the property historically associated with the President and Ambassador Apartments.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Edward F. Zimmer, Ph.D. Historic Preservation Planner

organization Lincoln/Lancaster County Planning Dept. date Sept. 29, 1993

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city or town Lincoln state NE zip code 68508

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The first rowhouses coincide with a period of rapid population growth, as Lincoln boomed from 13,000 residents in 1880 to over 55,000 in 1890. Lincoln's few rowhouses were clustered between the Capitol and the County Courthouse in a prestigious residential area, and seem indicative of the Capital's emergence as an urban place. The Panic of 1893 halted most construction, including rowhouses, and Lincoln's population declined 27% in the 1890s, to 40,000 in 1900. The city experienced steady recovery in the first decade of the twentieth century, with about 1% annual growth to almost 44,000 by 1910, then more rapid expansion of 25% in the 1910s, to 54,000 by 1920.

True apartment houses--multi-family dwellings with horizontally arranged units, shared entrances, stairs, and corridors--did not appear in Lincoln until population growth resumed in the early twentieth century. The oldest apartment block identified in Lincoln is the Knapp (LC13:C7-881), built in 1905 at 1227 G as a four-unit, flat-roofed, wood-frame block with a two story porch. The modest Knapp was followed almost immediately by the ambitious Orlo of 1906, a four-story brick building with 32 units, located at 14th and K opposite the Capitol grounds (until demolition in 1981).

Apartment construction in Lincoln burgeoned in the 1910s. Thirty-two buildings erected in that decade are still extant. In 1915 alone, building permits for 15 apartment blocks were issued, and nine more were granted in 1916-17. This boom in apartment construction was duly noted by the Lincoln Sunday State Journal of Jan. 7, 1917, in a lengthy article which begins: "The extraordinary activity in apartment house construction during the year 1916 marks a new era in the history of building for the city of Lincoln." Nearly \$1,000,000 in apartment construction was underway at that time, providing 282 dwelling units. The significance of Lincoln's "boom" era apartments was recognized in 1988 with the National Register listing of the nine-story Metropolitan (LC13:C8-239), built in 1916-1917.

Apartment construction in Lincoln continued to be strong through the 1920s, when Lincoln's population grew by another 21% (approximately 11,000 new residents, exclusive of the 13,000 added through annexation). Thirty-six apartment blocks remain from that decade. This final era of historic apartment construction in Lincoln is characterized by taller (on average) and more ornate buildings than those of the previous decade. The extant buildings of the 1910s average 2.9 stories tall, while those of the '20s average 3.3 stories. If the 9-story Metropolitan of 1916 is excluded from these calculations, the remaining 31 buildings (of the 1910s) average 2.7 stories.

Lincoln's population growth flattened out during the Depression years of the 1930s (3% growth, or fewer than 3,000 new residents). Only a few more, small apartments were built before World War II, mostly located far south of the areas of earlier apartment concentration in proximity to the Capitol.

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The richer and more varied ornament of the best Lincoln apartments of the '20s include the terra cotta cladding of the Palisade and the Regent at 17th and D Streets, the polychromatic terra cotta frontispiece of the William Penn at 14th and E Streets, and the decorative brickwork and carved limestone of the President and the Ambassador. The latter pair are unmatched among Lincoln apartments in their carved limestone ornament, as befits their location opposite the richly carved limestone Capitol. They are also the largest matched pair of historic apartments in Lincoln, far outstripping such contemporary pairs as the two-story Bert Lee and Lee Bert (17th and F Streets, LC13:D8-70,71) and the three-story Premier and Chancellor (18th and J Streets, LC13:C7-685,686). The President and the Ambassador also offer a very high degree of integrity of historic fabric, including such period details as the functioning neon signs and Murphy beds. The buildings have recently been rehabilitated for low-income housing by a coalition of Lincoln churches. As part of that project, a "Part 1--Determination of Eligibility" for National Register listing was submitted and resulted in a determination by the National Park Service that the pair of buildings appeared to meet the criteria for listing on the National Register.