

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

For NPS use only

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

received JUL 23 1985

date entered AUG 23 1985

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

**1. Name**

historic Kennedy Building (D009:0121-065)

and/or common Union Outfitting Company

**2. Location**

street & number 1517 Jackson Street NA not for publication

city, town Omaha NA vicinity of

state Nebraska code 031 county Douglas code 055

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>NA</u> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Vacant

**4. Owner of Property**

name Union Plaza Apartments, an Iowa Limited Partnership

street & number P.O. Box 989

city, town Council Bluffs NA vicinity of state Iowa 51502

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds, Omaha/Douglas Civic Center

street & number 1819 Farnam Street

city, town Omaha state Nebraska

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

1984 Omaha/Douglas County

title Historic Building Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1984 - on going  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Omaha City Planning Dept. & Nebraska State Historical Society

city, town Omaha/Lincoln state Nebraska

## 7. Description

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

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Kennedy Building is a commercial/warehouse structure built in 1910 by the Kennedy Investment Company; technically it is a hybrid structure, built of a combination of masonry load bearing walls, and steel and wood framing; formally the building is a seven story rectangular brick corner building articulated on its two street-facing sides; stylistically the building exhibits elements of the Commercial style and the influence of Chicago architect Louis Sullivan.

The Kennedy Building was constructed in 1910 at a cost of \$100,000 by the Kennedy Investment Company as a speculative commercial showroom/warehouse building. It is situated in a transitional area of downtown Omaha, bordering the southern edge of the retail core and the western edge of the wholesale/warehousing district and thus reflects the architectural requirements of both.

The seven story (plus basement) rectangular brick building measures 132' X 66' in plan. Only the north and west facades are articulated. The building utilizes a hybrid structural system of masonry bearing walls supported upon continuous stepped concrete footings at the east and south walls and independent steel columns and footings at the west and north walls. Interior columns bear on independent footings and are cast iron at the basement and first floors and pine at the upper floors. Interior framing consists of light wood floor framing (2 X 14's @ 12" o.c.) supported on regularly spaced yellow pine girders. For fire protection the building was equipped with a sprinkler system along with fully plastered ceilings and beams.

Functionally, the building is divided into three zones vertically. Storage and mechanical functions originally occupied the basement level. The first and second floors, characterized by their lofty, open spaces and massive display windows related mainly to pedestrian needs and served as the main retail show rooms. The third through seventh floors, also open in plan, served as additional storage/display space. The major entrance is centrally located at the building's western facade. A passenger elevator and stair located directly beyond at the eastern wall, along with a freight elevator at the southeast corner provide the necessary vertical circulation.

Stylistically, the Kennedy Building is a local adaptation of the Commercial style (Whiffen), reflecting the then current trends of realism and the requirements of business and commerce for light, space and air. Architects Fisher and Lawrie also employed Louis Sullivan's method of giving unity to a multi-storied building; the tripartite scheme of dividing an elevation into base, shaft and capital, analogous to a classical column. At the principal (north and west) facades the first and second stories form the building's rather transparent base through the use of continuous strips of glazing. The continuous band of display windows at the first floor, some of which are 12'-6" X 12'-6", are set out from the structure and are joined by thin structural steel mullions. At the second floor the band of display windows discontinue at the building's corners and are surrounded by terra cotta relief and face brick. A continuous horizontal band of projecting terra cotta trim divides the base (1st and 2nd floors) from the shaft (3rd through 6th floors). The third through the sixth floors are of brick piers articulated with Chicago windows arranged vertically in equally spaced rows, reflecting the structural bays behind. Pressed brick surrounds each row of windows emphasizing the vertical, with terra cotta trim at the head and sill of each window. Another projecting band of terra cotta divides the 6th from the 7th floor creating the impression of a capital. Groups of double hung windows with large terra cotta jack arches occur at the seventh floor. The building is crowned with an elaborate projecting, galvanized sheet metal (iron) cornice, wrapping only slightly beyond the west and north facades.

Continued

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Continuation sheet    Description    Item number    7    Page    2

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The general integrity of the Kennedy Building is good, despite several remodelings to the exterior and interior. In a 1936 remodeling, black Carrara glass covered most of the display windows, but has since been removed. The most severe remodeling occurred when a bar/lounge was installed at the first floor level. Again, most of this work has recently been removed, leaving the interior spaces open as they were originally constructed. The utilitarian interior space contains no significant elements. The building is presently in the early stages of a certified historic rehabilitation.

# 8. Significance

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

**Specific dates** 1910 **Builder/Architect** Fisher and Lawrie, architects

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Kennedy Building is architecturally significant to Omaha as a unique local adaptation of the Commercial Style, as an example of the early twentieth century tripartite method of multi-story design inspired by Louis Sullivan, and as a work of the prominent Omaha architectural firm of Fisher and Lawrie.

A local family corporation, the Kennedy Investment Company, built the Kennedy Building as a speculative Commercial building in 1910, leasing it first to the People's Furniture and Carpet Company and later to the Union Outfitting Company in 1924. Principal shareholders in the Kennedy Investment Company were Anna M. Kennedy, James A.C. Kennedy, Thomas F. Kennedy, and Marie and Edward Kennedy. Of these, James A.C. Kennedy gained notariety in the metro area as a state legislator in 1903, as Deputy Douglas County Attorney (1903), as Referee in U.S. Bankruptcy Court and as Attorney General in Nebraska for the Missouri Pacific Railroad.

Architecturally, the Kennedy Building is representative of the Commercial style (Whiffen), and of the formal characteristics first set forth by Chicago architect Louis Sullivan for the design of multi-story buildings. Commercial style elements include the large, Chicago windows at the third through the sixth floors, the use of a moderately projecting cornice and the composition of the facade with large expanses of glass that reflect the buildings skeletal frame. The Sullivanesque (Whiffen) influence is also evident in the Kennedy Building, recalling Sullivan's tripartite scheme of designing buildings with a distinct base, middle and top. A unique feature of the building is the composition and structuring of the first and second floors. The almost totally glazed "curtain wall" technology of the first floor is in contrast to the rather accepted building technology and forms in the stories above. The location of the Kennedy Building along south 16th Street, where the warehouse area meets the southern edge of downtown Omaha's primary retail street, probably accounts at least partially for the adundant use of glass for street level display windows.

The Kennedy Building was designed by the locally prominent firm of Fisher and Lawrie, a firm responsible for at least twelve buildings in Omaha's historically significant Warehouse/Light Industrial District (8th to 10th, Douglas to Jackson Streets) and many others in the "Old Market" Historic District (NRHP, 1979) and Downtown Retail Center. Harry Lawrie, who had worked in the pioneering Chicago firm of Burnham and Root, and George Fisher, a civil engineer from Michigan, used the Kennedy Building to express their advocacy of honesty, structure and function.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Omaha North, NE-Iowa

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

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4	5	7	0	9	3	0
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### Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 4 and 1 foot adjacent south, Block 171, Original City of Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska

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

state	code	county	code
NA			

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dan Worth/Architect, Planner

organization Omaha City Planning Department date March, 1985

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  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 *Richard E. Gern*

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date 6-19-85

### For NPS use only

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

*James M. Sammons* 8/23/85  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

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date entered

Continuation sheet

Bibliography

Item number

9

Page 1

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Omaha Chamber of Commerce Journal, June 1936.

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Whiffen, Marcus American Architecture Since 1780, A Guide to the Styles. Cambridge;  
The M.I.T. Press, 1969.