

MP2663



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 National Register Bulletin, How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Firestone Tire and Rubber Building

Other names/site number Barnhart Press; DO09:0209-016

Name of related multiple property listing Historic and Architectural Resources of the Lincoln Highway in Nebraska
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & Number 2570 Farnam Street

City or town Omaha State Nebraska County Douglas

Not for publication Vicinity

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance: national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C D

 SHPO/Director

5/22/18
Date

Signature of certifying official/Title:
Nebraska State Historical Society
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting Official

Date

Title

State of Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
- determined eligible for the National Register.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____


Signature of Keeper
For

7-16-2018
Date of Action

Firestone Tire and Rubber Building
Name of Property

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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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store/garage

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT: Not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Commercial Style

Materials (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick, stone, concrete

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Name of Property**County and State****Description**

Summary Paragraph (Briefly describe the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

The Firestone Tire and Rubber building is located at 2570 Farnam Street in the heart of the former Automobile Row in Omaha, Nebraska. The three-story building has a concrete and steel structure with brick façade, and storefront windows extending the width of the first floor. The Commercial style building falls into the Chicago school of architectural design with its columnar tripartite façade division and Chicago School windows. The building is surrounded on both sides by the Drummond Motor Company Building to the west and the Studebaker Automobile Building to the east. Although the windows and storefront have been replaced the interior retains its open footprint on each floor. The building retains its physical integrity and expresses significance for its contribution to the automobile industry on Automobile Row.

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable.)

The Firestone Tire and Rubber Building was built in 1915 by noted Omaha architect John Latenser and Sons. John Latenser was an Omaha architect who had been in practice in the city since 1885. In 1914 he brought his two sons, both architects, in to the practice and named the new partnership John Latenser and Sons. There are 18 National Register listings in Nebraska credited to the various iterations of the Latenser family firm.¹ Among these are the Sanford or Conant Hotel in Omaha, the Douglas County Courthouse in Omaha, and Omaha Central High School. It was built for the Firestone Company as a tire and rubber storefront serving the automobile dealers on Automobile Row in Omaha, Nebraska. The *Omaha Daily Bee* noted that the building will be “especially designed to accommodate the large and growing business of the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company. John Latenser and Sons are the architects and the building is to be either reinforced concrete or of mill construction to be decided at a later date.”² The building is three stories with a first-floor storefront. It has a narrow footprint with a width only three windows wide, approximately 37 ½ by 140 feet, compared to its immediate neighbor to the west which has approximately 75-foot width. The brown face brick clads the main façade with limestone window sills and simple geometric ornamental panels between the second and third story and between the third story and cornice line. At the cornice a series of four stylistic limestone brackets appear to support a cornice extending across the façade of the building. Above this cornice line is a projecting brick parapet.

Historically the storefront extended the width of the main façade. It had large open picture windows set in steel frames and a prismatic glass transom. The entry door was at the east end of the storefront. The Firestone Tire and Rubber CO sign consisted of individual letters mounted in a steel frame. A canvas awning projected over the storefront. Most notably on the main façade was the use of Chicago style windows. Chicago style window originated with the Chicago school of architecture. It is a three-part window consisting of a large fixed center panel flanked by two smaller double-hung sash windows. The windows in the Firestone Building had not only Chicago style windows at each of the six openings of the main façade, but also had prismatic glass transoms above each of these windows.

The interior of the first-floor lobby/office space had a coffered ceiling with square columns with geometric capitals. A large wood paneled reception desk with rounded corners was centrally located at the storefront. The wood paneling along the office walls at the east elevation matched the wood paneled reception desk. The first floor was utilized as display, reception, office, and service bay at the north end. The second and third floors were stock rooms and were adequate to carry sufficient Firestone equipment of all sizes to fill immediate needs and

¹ Nebraska National Register database, information provided by David Calease, Nebraska National Register Coordinator, March 2018.

² Firestone Firm to Build Three-Story Building in Omaha,” *Omaha Daily Bee*. 31 Jan 1915.

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reduce delayed orders. The newspaper article documenting the opening noted that there was good lighting everywhere with two large skylights to direct work and light the shop and stock rooms with front windows and indirect electric light to illuminate the showroom and offices.³



Opening article in the *Omaha Daily Bee* on 27 June 1915 describing the new Firestone Tire and Rubber Company building.

³³ "New Office of the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company," *Omaha Daily Bee*, 27 June 1915.

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Firestone Tire and Rubber Building, c. 1933, photo courtesy Bostwick Frohardt Collection, Durham Museum.

Today the original storefront has been replaced with a modern storefront, however the configuration and location of the storefront and entry door remains the same. The new storefront consists of five glass panels set in an aluminum frame. Signage today is in the same location above the storefront and identifies the occupant in the building since 1939, Barnhart Press. The main pedestrian entrance retains a brick surround with pediment above the door and curved bracket at the overhang. The recessed entrance has a black and white decorative tile pattern floor at the exterior only. The window units themselves have been replaced. New fenestration in the building retains the configuration of the Chicago style with a tripartite division in the units. Each of the three panels in the existing window is a fixed single pane, however the rhythm and syncopation of the Chicago style units is reflected in the replacement panels. The prismatic glass transoms over the storefront and the window openings have all been removed. Simple brown infill panels occupy the space where the transoms were located above the windows. The parapet wall has been repaired and repointed.

The back of the building is minimally visible from an alley to the north. The back side is simple brick that has been painted brown. Six segmental arched window openings extend the width of the north elevation with the pedestrian door at the third story. The second story has four segmental arched windows, a pedestrian door and a large opening that has been infilled with concrete masonry unit and painted to match the facade. The windows are steel four over four units. The pedestrian doors at all three levels are at the east end of the façade. A pedestrian door and an overhead garage door are at the first floor. A second pedestrian entrance and recessed opening where a second vehicular entrance was located have been infilled with concrete masonry unit. A metal fire escape connects the pedestrian doors between the third and second story.

Inside the building has three main levels and a basement. The second and third floors are simple open space with no subdivided office or storage space. The floors are accessed by a freight elevator with an interior stair at the center of the east wall. Both the second and third floors are a simple rectangular floor plan, with concrete floors, exposed brick walls that are painted white, and square concrete columns. Fluorescent light panels hang from wires from the ceiling. The second and third floors have access to the neighboring Drummond building (west) through two doors, one at the north end and one at the south end of the west wall between the two buildings. These provided access for Barnhart Press when they utilized both buildings. Extensive ductwork and is exposed

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in the ceiling. The north, south, and west walls are exposed brick that has been painted white, while the eastern most wall is also painted brick with a combination of hollow clay tile and concrete masonry units at the central stairwell also painted white. The freight elevator remains open and functional with a pull-down gate rather than doors and the interior stair immediately adjacent to the elevator consists of painted wood railing with concrete steps.

The lower level is also one open space with concrete floors and exposed brick/masonry unit walls all painted white. Fluorescent light panels hang from wires from the exposed original ceiling. The first floor that was formerly the historic retail space has been subdivided into reception area and office space utilizing temporary walls with lay-in drop ceiling panels. The partition walls served the most recent occupant of the building, the Barnhart Press. A pedestrian door connects this building with the Drummond Motor Company Building immediately to the west within the first-floor retail space and near the front of the building. City directories indicate that after Firestone left the building, the Greenlease-Lied Motor Company occupied a portion of the front retail space, most likely for offices.

These partition walls are non-historic installations. Near the front of the building on the first floor are two square columns with detailed capitals that meet a coffered ceiling configuration. These features are intact, but mostly hidden by hanging fluorescent light fixtures, ductwork, piping, and partition walls. Interior office space at the south end of the first floor has wood paneling and door trim original to the building. The wood paneling and trim match the original reception desk documented in historic newspaper articles.

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Auto Row on Farnam Street looking west from 25th Street. Firestone building located near center of photo with large banner sign, 4 April 1927. Photo courtesy Bostwick Frohardt Collection at Durham Museum, Omaha.

Advertisements for its grand opening on Monday, June 21, 1915 invited the public to visit the building. It was designed for the “most commodious and convenient housing of all departments, a service room large enough to accommodate all cars and trucks requiring immediate attention”, along with a well-equipped machine shop and huge accessible inventory. The building was the new factory branch headquarters for Firestone.⁴ Vehicle access was through two automobile entrances at the north façade in the alley. Newspaper articles do not indicate where the service area was, but the large freight elevator would have been capable of transporting automobiles between floors in the building.

Firestone Tire and Rubber Company operated an automobile accessory store from this building supplying tires and other rubber products to the neighboring automobile dealers which included Drummond, REO, Studebaker, Hupmobile, and Cadillac. In 1939, the long-established business of Barnhart Press moved into the upper floors of the building, and remained in the building, eventually expanding to the Drummond building to the west until 2016. Alterations to the building include a new storefront and windows along with a subdivided first floor, however, overall the property retains its open floor plan and interior materials. The feeling, association, setting, materials, and design are all expressed through the physical integrity retained in the building today including the interior structural columns throughout, wood office paneling, and open floor spaces.

⁴ “New Firestone Headquarters.” *Omaha Daily Bee*. 20 June 1915

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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.
A reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- E** A commemorative property.
- F** Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Commerce

Transportation

Period of Significance

1915-1939

Significant Dates

1921-Lincoln Highway routed off Farnam Street

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

John Latenser and Sons

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Firestone Tire and Rubber Company building is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for its significance in the history of Commerce and Transportation on Omaha's Automobile Row. Firestone Tire Company was founded in 1900 in Akron, Ohio and quickly grew to be one of the world's most innovative and successful tire companies. The building at 2570 Farnam Street was constructed in 1915 and designed by noted Omaha architecture firm John Latenser and Sons and built as the new Firestone factory branch headquarters in

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Omaha. It is associated with the early rise of automobile commerce and accessory industry. Firestone Tire and Rubber Company chose to construct the building on Farnam Street supporting the commerce and transportation related resources along Omaha's Automobile Row. The building is significant at the local level and the period of significance begins in 1915 with the construction of the building and extends to 1939 when Firestone no longer occupied the space. In addition, the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company building meets the significant contexts identified in the *Historic and Architectural Resources of the Lincoln Highway in Nebraska Multiple Property Documentation Form*. It represents the Automobile Agencies, Garages and Dealerships property type.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Omaha's early automobile industry was concentrated along Farnam Street between 18th and 27th Streets. Farnam proved to be an ideal location for these early auto dealers and accessory shops because the first major planned automobile route, the Lincoln Highway was routed through Omaha along Farnam Street in this area. As the auto industry began to sweep the nation, the need for standard, signed and maintained automobile routes was necessary. The Lincoln Highway became the first transcontinental interstate highway system connecting New York City in the east to San Francisco in the west. The Lincoln Highway Association was formed in 1913 and began the process of connecting a collective 3,300 miles of country roads, downtown streets, and bridges to create the highway. Leaders from the automobile, tire, and Portland cement industries joined the association to promote the highway and mark it with standardized red, white, and blue signs with a capital L.⁵

In Omaha the Lincoln Highway began at Douglas Street, continued east to 15th Street, then connected to Farnam Street and continued along Farnam to 40th Street. At this point the highway shifted over to Dodge Street and continued on Dodge out of the city limits. Lincoln Highway was rerouted in 1921 to travel outside of the main downtown core in Omaha primarily in response to increased traffic and the growing commercialization along the route. However, the years spent along Farnam Street constituted years of immense growth of the automobile and accessory industry.

The growth along automobile row consisted primarily of automobile dealers, accessory stores, and other support businesses such as service stations, gas stations, car washes, and miscellaneous entrepreneurs seeking to capitalize on the established commercial success. In 1915 when Firestone constructed this building, this block of Farnam Street was a hub for auto sales, repair, and maintenance. Within a five-year span, the four major buildings that comprise this extended block were constructed. First the Drummond Motor Company Building which shares a party wall with the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company building was completed in 1912 for a local entrepreneur and automobile designer and builder. Drummond sold his cars for four years in the building on the northeast corner of 26th and Farnam. Along with Drummond, Omaha's Automobile Row was home to other well-known dealers including Ford and Cadillac along other more obscure dealers such as White Electric, REO, and Hupmobile. All four buildings on this double block were built for automobile related services. They include the Drummond Motor Company Building, the Opper Van Brunt Automobile Company Building which housed REO dealer and the Studebaker building at the northwest corner of 25th and Farnam.

Firestone saw the opportunity to provide accessories to not only these neighboring businesses, but the traveling public as well. City directories indicate that although there were many other automobile accessory shops in Omaha and along Automobile Row, Firestone Tire and Rubber Company building is the only building on Omaha's automobile row constructed to serve not only as the company headquarters, but as the main retail and service outlet for an individual brand. As a result, Firestone saw a booming business at this location.

The Firestone company was founded in 1900 in Akron, Ohio by Harvey Firestone. Firestone entered the tire industry because,

⁵ Mead and Hunt. *Reconnaissance Survey of Downtown and Columbus Park Neighborhoods*, Omaha, Nebraska. 7

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“it was really becoming an industry, because the making of automobiles was really becoming an industry. Fewer people were in the automobile game and more in the automobile business...no tire maker could guarantee his tires to go any certain mileage, because none of us knew how to manufacture tires to a uniform grade. We did not know much about the properties of rubber and every process in tire making was pretty much on the rule-of-thumb basis...we thought we knew a little about how a tire acted in service, but we actually knew nothing at all.”⁶

Firestone collaborated with three Akron men who shared a patent for a sidewire device which would keep tires in place on the rims safely and without popping off. Early rubber tires were built to fit tightly onto wheels. Many of the tires manufactured did not fit standard wheel channels and as a result would pop off the rim while in use. One solution to solve this problem included a mechanic spring device to hold tires in place. However, Firestone differed in that they held the patent on a device that applied rubber tires directly to standard wheel channels that applied even pressure to hold the tire firmly to the channel and wheel rim.⁷ This innovation helped form the Firestone Tire company, and after his first year in business when he broke even, Firestone realized that in order to profit he needed to manufacture his own product. So, by 1903 he was producing his own “Perfect Side-Wire Tire.” Firestone also manufactured a pneumatic tire which prevented the rubber tire from expanding with pressure and rolling off a wheel rim. These two products saw a slow and steady growth in their first five years of production.⁸

Firestone supplied the tires for the new Ford automobiles in production and the company grew from 12 employees to 130 overnight and a new factory was built. By 1906 Firestone produced 28,000 tires and had sales of more than \$1 million. Part of Firestone’s immense success was his creativity and flexibility to pursue new and changing business markets. In 1906 he developed the first commercial demountable rim, which allowed drivers to change their own tires. In 1908 he hired a chemist to help meet the demand for bigger tires and develop rubber that would respond. This required a non-skid tire and rather than taking innovation from existing products like in the bicycle industry Firestone, and his staff established a research and development department to solve these problems independently. In 1908 Ford introduced the Model T and within a week Firestone introduced the first no-skid tire tread. By the following year 40 percent of all tires sold were non-skid.⁹ Firestone’s catastrophic growth exceeded \$1 million in profits by 1910. The company built a huge new plant to support the business and began distributing their product around the country. Firestone shifted their business model during World Wars I and II and manufactured products to support the war efforts as well as tires. The company also survived significant labor issues but continued to thrive as one of the most profitable tire and rubber companies in the country.¹⁰ Firestone became close friends with Henry Ford and Thomas Edison and they would travel and vacation together. Firestone made his first stop in Omaha to inspect their new headquarters on his way to San Francisco from Ohio to vacation with Ford and Edison.¹¹

It was during this period of massive growth that Firestone built sales rooms and distributors across the country. In Omaha Firestone had a significant presence due to the success of the automobile industry, and the need for accessories not only for new cars, but for replacements on existing autos. The building at 2570 Farnam Street served retail clientele and distributed product across the region, solely for Firestone products. Contemporary advertisements for Firestone tire and rubber products in local papers illustrated the popularity of the brand. The *Omaha Daily Bee* newspaper noted that excavation commenced in February 1915 and that new construction will be rushed as much as possible. The space was greatly needed as they suffered insufficient floor space and storage for the large amount of stock they carried at their current location which was approximately four blocks east on

⁶ Harvey S. Firestone and Samuel Crowther. *Men and Rubber: the Story of Business*, 1926.

⁷ Elizabeth Corbin Murphy, Firestone Tire and Rubber Company National Register Nomination, 10.

⁸ *Ibid*, 10.

⁹ *Ibid*. 11.

¹⁰ *Ibid*. 11.

¹¹ “H.S. Firestone Pays His First Visit to Omaha.” *Omaha Daily Bee*, 19 October 1915.

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Farnam Street. Construction was critical as the company increased the number of Firestone dealers across the country by 50 percent.¹²

Latenser and Sons created a design that served, “the most commodious and convenient housing of all departments” with a machine shop, service room to accommodate all sizes of cars and trucks, and stock rooms to supply all their products.¹³ At the opening visitors were presented with a paper weight shaped like a tire as a souvenir or what the company called a dealer help. In Omaha the new building accommodated sales that according to the manager F.C. Rudisell were projected to increase 200 or 300 percent from the previous year (1914).¹⁴ This volume of sales convinced the company that Omaha deserved the new and better headquarters in order to house sufficient stock to overcome delays in delivery and to provide the most competent tire service.

Firestone Tire and Rubber company president H. S. Firestone reported in his annual address to company directors on September 5, 1919 that the August sales were \$10,000,000 and because of the huge increase in business the company needed to reorganize financially. The sales in the month of August alone exceeded the sales for the entire year in 1911. In 1919 alone, the company estimated sales in excess of \$90,000,000.¹⁵ Though actual numbers for this location are not specifically known, local newspaper articles document that business in Omaha was so swift it was growing at a rate of 200 to 300 percent between 1914 and 1915.¹⁶

Omaha competed by manufacturing its own tire and rubber products for the automobile industry with three manufacturers including the Sprague Tire and Rubber Company, the Nebraska Tire and Rubber Company, and the Overland Tire and Rubber Company scattered throughout downtown. The Omaha Chamber of Commerce statistics for 1921 show \$3,275,740 of automobile tires and tubes were manufactured and sold in Omaha that year. However, large national companies like Goodyear and Firestone dominated the market with more than \$20,000,000 worth of tires and accessories sold.¹⁷ The automobile and accessory industry was so hot it was anticipated that this number could grow by more than 30 percent the following year.

Firestone built a business model that provided education for their sales teams, not only in the high quality of their product, but also how to make their clients the best dealers in the industry, and their employees the most loyal and well educated. An example of how integral the company made itself to the Omaha automobile economy was revealed in an article in the local paper in 1916. The Omaha Firestone branch announced that the company would pay salaries to employees who entered army service in Mexico. All employees who had worked for Firestone for three years would receive their full salary, those employed for one to three years would receive two-thirds their salary and those employed for six months to a year would receive one-half their salary.¹⁸ Not only did programs like this in Omaha build loyalty, but they also served to bolster the company’s patriotic platform.

During World War I, firestone increased its manufacture of tires as the American truck and automobile, particularly Henry Ford’s Model T were utilized throughout the European theatre. In November 1918, in lieu of a national conference in deference to the sacrifices being made for World War I, Firestone held a series of regional conferences to develop better merchandising methods for its dealers and maintain profitability during war years. The Omaha conference which included a territory that encompassed portions of Iowa, South Dakota, Colorado, Wyoming and Nebraska, directed distributors not only to sell to their dealers, but to train their buyers of how the

¹² “Work Has Commenced on New Firestone Building.” *Omaha Daily Bee*, 28 February 1915.

¹³ “New Firestone Headquarters.” *Omaha Daily Bee*, 20 June 1915.

¹⁴ “New Office of the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company.” *Omaha Daily Bee*, 27 June 1915.

¹⁵ “News of the American Rubber Industry.” *India Rubber Review: A Monthly Journal for the Maker, Seller and User of Rubber*, Volume 61. October 1, 1919. 35

¹⁶ “New Office of the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company,” *Omaha Daily Bee*, 27 June 1915.

¹⁷ “Nebraska Tire Factories Look for Big Year.” *India Rubber Review: A Monthly Journal for the Maker, Seller and User of Rubber*, Volume 22. January 1, 1922. 63.

¹⁸ “Firestone Company to Take Care of Soldier Employees.” *Omaha Daily Bee*, 2 July 1916.

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factory insured the highest quality control standards and to teach them how to merchandise the product successfully and profitably. The distributors wanted not only to sell to the dealers, but to teach the dealer how to move the tires they bought, thus building effective teams from the top down and selling more product. Of course, to go along with the training and conference and Firestone company emphasized the importance of advertising through “dealer helps.” Dealer helps were essentially free advertising materials manufactured by the company to give away to customers. These included things like matches, tool bags, and gas gages to give away.¹⁹ The building at 2570 Farnam was the focus of much of this activity for Firestone. A reception at the building hosted company officials including H.S. Firestone and R.J. Firestone the president and vice president of the company in from Akron, Ohio to inspect the local branch.

Although the Firestone Company nationwide kept up with the times and economic climate, the stand alone local branches began to change. Automobile row in Omaha realized numerous changes during the Great Depression of the 1930s and the World War II era. At this time many manufacturers and dealers closed or moved to newer locations. Individual accessory and tire stores such as Firestone either closed or began new business models combined with service stations. In 1928 Firestone began a shift to one-stop master service stores which included tires, gas, oil, batteries, and brakes in a single outlet format. This provided a diversified platform for sales that was more beneficial than the stand-alone store model. Omaha City Directories document that by 1939 or 1940 the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company headquarters was no longer located at 2570 Farnam Street, but its product was scattered in retail outlets throughout the city. Further, to serve the cause during World War II, the company had a major shift in production, manufacturing everything from artillery shells to plastics for the government. In 1939 the Barnhart Press Company occupied the upper floors with Greenlease-Lied Motor Company offices on the first floor.²⁰

Barnhart Press is a local printing company established by John W. Barnhart in 1904 as the Waters Barnhart Printing Company. The press was in downtown Omaha and changed their name to Barnhart Press in the 1920s. As the business grew, the company needed more space and relocated to the Firestone Building at 2570 Farnam Streets in 1939. The company continued to expand and grow its press. They expanded into the building immediately adjacent to the west when the Greenlease-Lied automotive dealership there closed. By 1965 Barnhart Press occupied the buildings at both 2570 and 2600 Farnam Streets. The company renovated the buildings in the 1980s and added large presses to their commercial endeavors. This location served their needs until the company relocated to a new building on the west side of Omaha in 2016. Since that time the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company has been vacant.²¹

The Firestone Tire and Rubber Company Building and the Lincoln Highway

Omaha’s early automobile industry was concentrated along Farnam Street between 18th and 27th Streets. Farnam proved to be an ideal location for these early auto dealers and accessory shops because the first major planned automobile route, the Lincoln Highway was routed through Omaha along Farnam Street in this area. As the auto industry began to sweep the nation, the need for standard, signed and maintained automobile routes was necessary. The Lincoln Highway became the first transcontinental interstate highway system connecting New York City in the east to San Francisco in the west. The Lincoln Highway Association was formed in 1913 and began the process of connecting a collective 3,300 miles of country roads, downtown streets, and bridges to create the highway. Leaders from the automobile, tire, and Portland cement industries joined the association to promote the highway and mark it with standardized red, white, and blue signs with a capital L.²²

In Omaha the Lincoln Highway began at Douglas Street, continued east to 15th Street, then connected to Farnam Street and continued along Farnam to 40th Street. At this point the highway shifted over to Dodge Street and

¹⁹ “More Head Work and Less Foot Work.” The Motor Age, Volume 34, November 21, 1918. 17.

²⁰ Omaha City Directories, 1918-1965.

²¹ Barnhart Press: Making Great Impressions Since 1904.” www.barnhartpress.com accessed 3-2-2018.

²² Mead and Hunt. *Reconnaissance Survey of Downtown and Columbus Park Neighborhoods*, Omaha, Nebraska. 7

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continued on Dodge out of the city limits. Lincoln Highway was rerouted in 1921 to travel outside of the main downtown core in Omaha primarily in response to increased traffic and the growing commercialization along the route. However, the years spent along Farnam Street constituted years of immense growth of the automobile and accessory industry.

The Firestone Tire and Rubber Company building represents the property type *Automobile Agencies, Garages and Dealerships* as identified in the *Historic and Architectural Resources of the Lincoln Highway in Nebraska* multiple property listing. The building was constructed in 1915, two years after the Lincoln Highway was established in 1913, and it maintained significance throughout the period of the Lincoln Highway along Farnam Street in Omaha. According to the property type context established in the multiple property listing, automobile sales and repair dealerships soared in the 1920s and offered new automobiles along with expanded line of parts and services. Construction methods of early dealerships resembled commercial buildings of the period and were usually constructed of brick. These buildings were exclusive to the sale and/or servicing of automobiles. The Firestone Tire and Rubber Company building meets the registration requirements identified in the multiple property document under Criterion A as it was located on or within close proximity to the historic alignments of the Lincoln Highway and marketed products and services for the traveling public.²³

Summary

The Firestone Tire and Rubber Company building at 2570 Farnam Street is significant under National Register Criterion A for its contribution to Omaha's automobile row automotive accessory business, and as a representative automobile accessory and repair shop/garage under the *Historic and Architectural Resources of the Lincoln Highway in Nebraska* multiple property listing. From its construction and design by John Latenser and Sons in 1915 for the tire company, the Firestone product was sold and distributed from this location until 1939 when Firestone left the building. The building retains a high degree of historic integrity. It is significant at the local level and the period of significance begins in 1915 the date of its construction and ends in 1939 when the building no longer served the automotive industry in Omaha.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (Insert bibliography here – cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Barnhart Press: Making Great Impressions Since 1904.” www.barnhartpress.com accessed 3-2-2018

Elizabeth Corbin Murphy, Firestone Tire and Rubber Company National Register Nomination, Akron, Ohio, U.S. Department of the Interior, 20 June 2014.

“Firestone Company to Take Care of Soldier Employees,” *Omaha Daily Bee*. 2 July 1916.

“Firestone Firm to Build Three-Story Building in Omaha,” *Omaha Daily Bee*. 31 Jan 1915

“H.S. Firestone Pays His First Visit to Omaha.” *Omaha Daily Bee*, 19 October 1915.

Harvey S. Firestone and Samuel Crowther. *Men and Rubber: The Story of Business*, 1926

Mead and Hunt. Reconnaissance Survey of Downtown and Columbus Park Neighborhoods, Omaha, Nebraska

²³ L. Robert Puschendorf. *Historic and Architectural Resources of the Lincoln Highway in Nebraska*, Multiple Property Listing, May 2007.

Firestone Tire and Rubber Building

Douglas County, NE

Name of Property

County and State

“More Head Work and Less Foot Work.” *The Motor Age*, Volume 34, November 21, 1918.

“Nebraska Tire Factories Look for Big Year.” *India Rubber Review: A Monthly Journal for the Maker, Seller and User of Rubber*, Volume 22. January 1, 1922

“New Firestone Headquarters.” *Omaha Daily Bee*. 20 June 1915

“New Office of the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company.” *Omaha Daily Bee*, 27 June 1915.

“News of the American Rubber Industry.” *India Rubber Review: A Monthly Journal for the Maker, Seller and User of Rubber*, Volume 61. October 1, 1919

Omaha City Directories, 1918-1965

“Work Has Commenced on New Firestone Building.” *Omaha Daily Bee*, 28 February 1915

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

Primary location of additional data:

- 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 #
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other (Name of repository)

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DO09:0209-016

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one USGS Quadrangle Omaha North

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

- | | | | | |
|----|----------|---------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| 1. | Latitude | <u>41°15'28.8"N</u> | Longitude | <u>95°57'01.1"W</u> |
| 2. | Latitude | _____ | Longitude | _____ |
| 3. | Latitude | _____ | Longitude | _____ |
| 4. | Latitude | _____ | Longitude | _____ |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Firestone Tire and Rubber Company Building resides on an urban lot in downtown Omaha, Nebraska. The lot is defined as Paxton Court Lot 7 Block 0, 75.1 by 144 feet.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary for the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company Building incorporates the parcel historically associated with the urban building. The three-story building has no setback and no associated land outside of the lot on which it resides.

Firestone Tire and Rubber Building Douglas County, NE
Name of Property **County and State**

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Melissa Dirr Gengler
organization Historic Resources Group, Inc. date March, 2018
street & number 442 South 28th Street telephone 402-770-5877
city or town Lincoln state NE zip code 68510
email melissa@hrg-nebraska.com

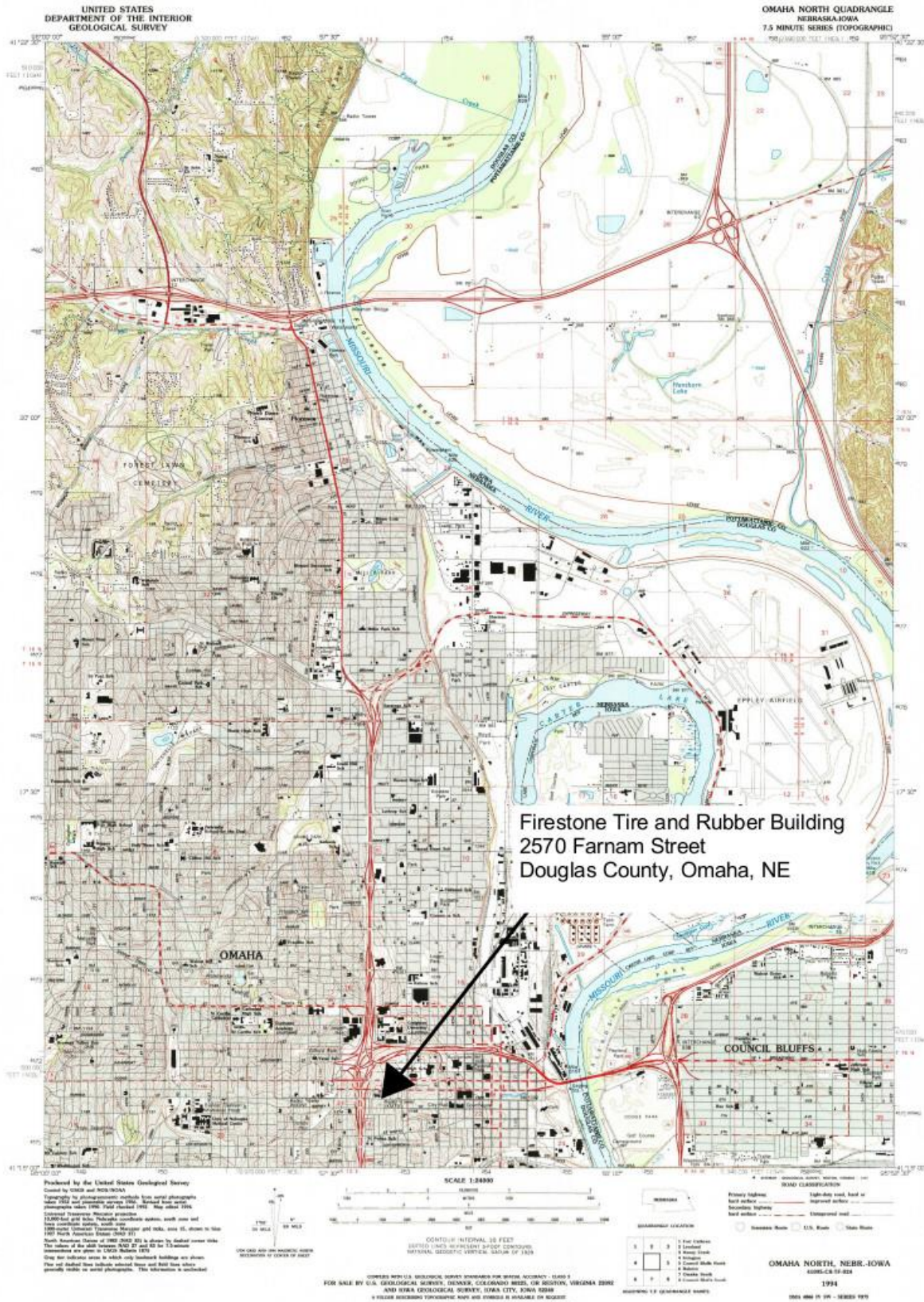
Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO for any additional items.)

Firestone Tire and Rubber Building
Name of Property

Douglas County, NE
County and State



Firestone Tire and Rubber Building

Douglas County, NE

County and State



Firestone Tire and Rubber Building

2570 Farnam Street
Omaha, Douglas Co.,
Nebraska

Legend

 Proposed NRHP Boundary

1:2,000



0 70 140 280 Feet
0 20 40 80 Meters

Esri, HERE, DeLorme, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

Firestone Tire and Rubber Building

Douglas County, NE

Name of Property

County and State

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property Firestone Tire and Rubber Company

City or Vicinity Omaha County Douglas State Nebraska

Photographer Melissa Dirr Gengler Date Photographed February 2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera.

Image 1: View of main façade, camera facing north and east

Image 2: View of south elevation looking north and main façade.

Image 3: Detail view of entry door with pediment, tile floor and bracket at south elevation, camera facing north.

Image 4: View of north elevation camera facing south.

Image 5: Interior third floor looking south from center point of floor plate.

Image 6: Interior, second floor looking north toward back of building

Image 7: Interior Second floor looking east at freight elevator and interior stair

Image 8: Interior second floor looking west through door opening between Firestone and Drummond building

Image 9: Interior lower level looking north

Image 10: Interior first floor entry showing wood paneling looking east.

Image 11: Interior first floor office space showing wood paneling looking east

Image 12: Interior, first floor looking up at column capital and coffered ceiling panels

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



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Engine Room
Office Located
Next Door West

49 Subways
North of N. West











**FIRE
EXIT**



630





EXIT





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 5/30/2018 Date of Pending List: 6/28/2018 Date of 16th Day: 7/13/2018 Date of 45th Day: 7/16/2018 Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver | <input type="checkbox"/> National | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG | |

Accept Return Reject 7/16/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria:

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



Preserving the past. Building the future.

May 25, 2018

Jim Gabbert
NPS-National Register of Historic Places
1849 C Street, NW
Mail Stop 7228
Washington, DC 20240



Re: Firestone Tire & Rubber Building, Omaha, Douglas County, NE

Dear Mr. Gabbert,

Enclosed is the complete nomination packet for the Firestone Tire & Rubber Building, in Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska. The enclosed contents are as follows:

- The signed first page of the Firestone Tire & Rubber Building nomination;
- One (1) archival disk with the true and correct copy of the nomination for the Firestone Tire & Rubber Building to the National Register of Historic Places in PDF format; and
- One (1) archival disc with the photographs for the Firestone Tire & Rubber Building nomination.

If you have any questions regarding the submitted materials, feel free to contact me at the phone number or email address below.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'David L. Calease'.

David L. Calease
National Register Coordinator
Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office

Phone: 402-471-4775
Fax: 402-471-3100
david.calease@nebraska.gov

Enclosures (2): 1 disk with Nomination
1 disk with National Register Photographs

1500 R Street
Lincoln, NE 68508-1651
P: 402.471.3270
P: 800.833.6747
F: 402.471.3100
history.nebraska.gov