

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



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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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Undine Apartments
Other names/site number Bevrick Court Apartments, Bevrick Court Apartments, Beveridge Court Apartments, Georgeanna Court Apartments (NeHBS #DO09:0209-048)

2. Location

Street & number 2620-2626 Dewey Ave Not for publication
City or town Omaha Vicinity
State Nebraska Code NE County Douglas Code 055 Zip code 68105

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Michael J. Sul 1-29-08
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 for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. 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): _____

Edson H. Beall 3.12.08

[Signature] _____
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

Undine Apartments

Name of Property

Douglas County, Nebraska

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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	
2		Buildings
		Sites
1		Structures
		Objects
3	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Multiple Dwelling

COMMERCE/TRADE: Specialty Store

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Mixed

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Foundation Concrete

Walls Brick

Roof EPDM

Other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1918-1932

Significant Dates

1918

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Traver Brothers

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 for additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

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10. Geographical DataAcreage of property Less than one

UTM References (place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet).

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	15	252763	4571156	3.			
2.				4.			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jennifer Honebrink, AIA
 organization Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture P.C. date November, 2007
 street & number 1213 Jones St telephone 402-341-1544
 city or town Omaha state NE zip code 68102

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets**Maps**A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.**Photographs**Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name/title Mr. Louis Wright, President, Georgeanna Court Development LLC
 street & number P.O. Box 641623 telephone (402) 320-1318
 city or town Omaha state Nebraska zip code 68164-1623

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determined 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, (15 USC 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Undine Apartments

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The Undine Apartments were completed in 1918 in the area that is now the west edge of downtown Omaha. The site consists of a pair of three-story rectangular brick buildings with the short end of the rectangle facing the street, and the long sides spaced to form a courtyard between the two buildings. Each building originally contained 12 apartment units. They now contain 14 in the East building and 16 in the West building. The courtyard is formally landscaped and focuses on a central in-filled pond or fountain. The buildings are typical of builder/developer apartments of the era; vernacular in style, with influences of Italian Renaissance and Jacobethan Revival and interiors with smaller rooms and simpler finishes than earlier apartment buildings.

Site

The Undine Apartments are located in the Park East neighborhood of Omaha, an area which developed among a network of popular streetcar lines as the city expanded westward from its original plat. Over time, the area grew from a few single family residences, to a concentration of multi-family dwellings – mixing duplexes, row houses, four-plexes, and apartments buildings, with commercial structures along the busier streets. Due to the construction of Interstate 480 to the West in the late 1960s, this neighborhood has maintained a strong connection to downtown. The buildings are currently surrounded by parking lots on three sides and a pair of row houses on the East. The parking lots replaced several houses to the West and North of the Undine in 1950, and the Winona apartment building to the South in the late 1970s.

Construction

Both buildings are concrete frame structures with load-bearing masonry demising walls between units. Each rectangular building is divided by circulation cores between the first and second bay, and between the third and fourth bay. Each of these cores consists of two concrete framed stairs - one accessible from the front of the building and the other accessible from the rear.

Exterior

The structures are nearly identical, with the exception of the basement level of the South façade. The West structure originally held the grocery store and had a door to the sidewalk on this facade. This door and window configuration has been altered over time. The East structure had no openings in the façade at this level, and has remained unaltered.

The primary South and front (courtyard) facades exhibit a mix of architectural styles, including elements of Jacobethan Revival and Italian Renaissance that would be recognized by laypeople as stylish. Jacobethan Revival characteristics are responsible for the larger outline of the building, including a tri-parti design of rusticated base, smooth body and short attic, as well as wall gables above each stair tower and centered on the South façade. Additionally, the stair towers are emphasized by a series of balconies, which create projected bays typical of this style. Finally, pairs of one over one double hung windows flanking the stair towers and the single one over one double hung windows that line the corners and center of the South façade are surrounded by decorative brick hoods with shoulder stones and lug stone sills, another hallmark of Jacobethan Revival. Italian Renaissance influences are responsible for the finer details of the primary facades, including the visor roof of green Spanish tile supported by double wooden brackets and Juliette balconies. An even closer examination of the details on the primary facades also reveals experienced contractors who knew how to subtly impress visitors. The mortar changes color from a light grey to dark brown between the main brick body and brick trim details to deftly create emphasis at the entries and window surrounds.

The rear and North facades change to secondary construction, with common brick, a poured in place concrete water table cap and exposed exterior concrete stairs located opposite each entry stair hall. A three course, brick rowlock arch spans over each window head, and a rowlock sill supports the bottom of each window on these facades. Along the rear façade, large one over one double hung windows are paired at the ends and twice in the center of the building; smaller one over one double hung windows line either side of the stairs, creating an A, B, stair, B, A, A, B, stair, B, A rhythm. The pattern of the windows on the North façade matches that of the South.

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Interior

The interior contains a compact plan arrangement. Each stair hall leads to two apartments at each level. Every apartment contains a bathroom, efficiency kitchen, separate bedroom, large closets, and combined living/dining area.

Integrity

Overall, the property has retained substantial integrity. The exterior of the buildings have maintained a high degree of integrity. The door and window configuration at the basement level of the West building are the only noteworthy alterations. On the interior, a 1980s remodeling appears to have consisted of an update of finishes in the bathrooms and kitchens, with minor rearrangement of the floor plan. The basement of the East building contains the boiler plant for both buildings. The basement of the West building originally contained a retail space which accommodated a grocery store. In the late 1970s, four apartments and a laundry room were added to the basement of the West building, and two apartments were added to the basement of the East building. All six of the basement apartments were not rented out in the 1990s. The courtyard has become slightly overgrown, and although the fountain/pond has been in-filled its perimeter is still evident. The decorative fence has been lost, however a chain link fence marks its original location.

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Undine Apartments

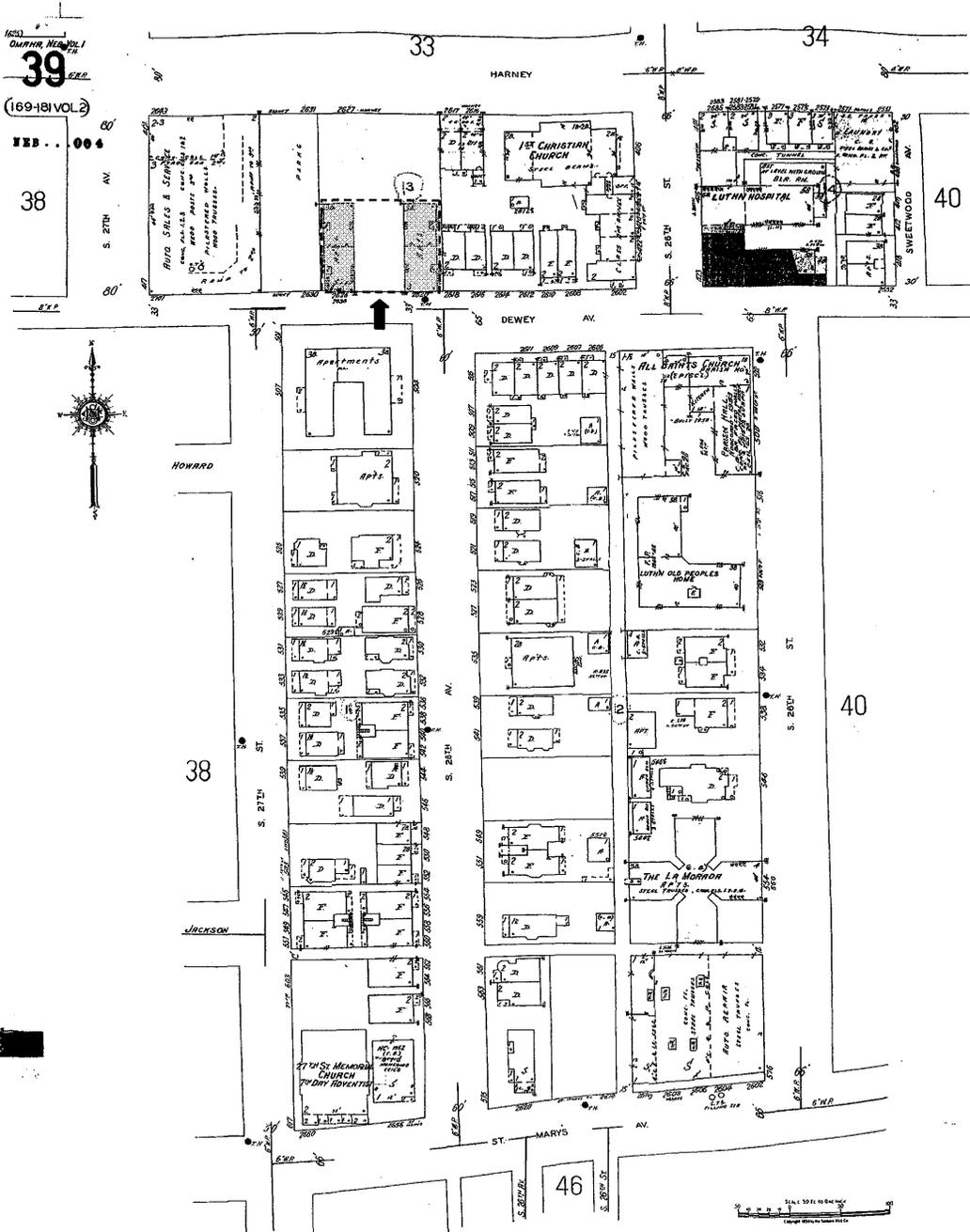
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Sanborn Map Updated to 1962



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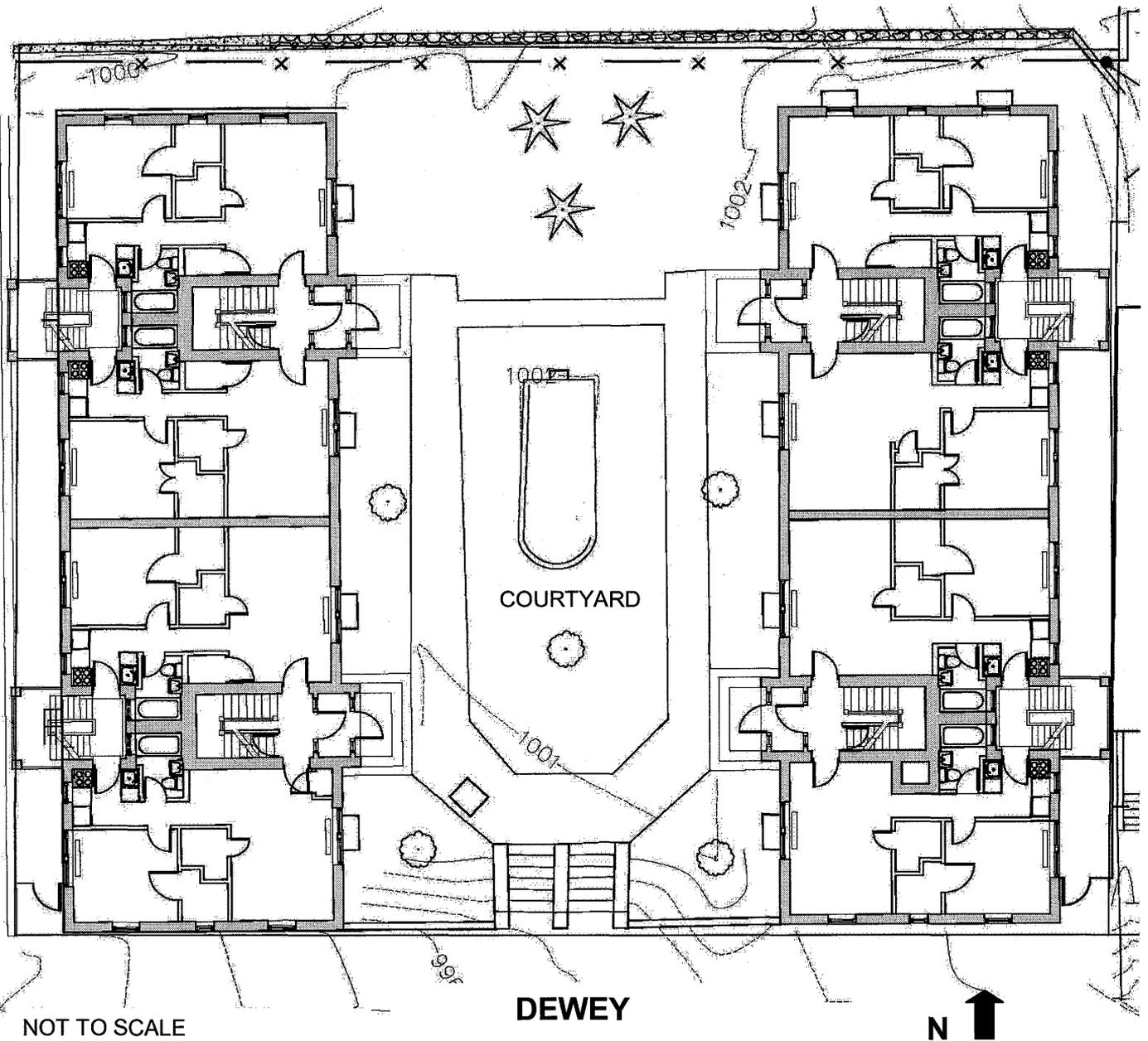
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Current Floor Plan/Site Plan



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Synopsis

The Undine Apartments are locally significant under Criterion A as buildings that represent a broad pattern in our history, and under Criterion C, as buildings that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type and period of construction. Constructed in the midst of an apartment building boom that lasted from 1912 to 1924, the Undine Apartments are a pair of 12 unit apartment buildings that face each other across a landscaped courtyard. They represent the work of a typical combination builder/real estate developer in the Omaha housing market in the early part of this century whose properties appealed to white collar workers living along streetcar lines.

The Builder/Developer

It is unclear at this time how many builder/developers there were nationally, or what type of work they did. Locally however, it is certain that there were a handful of active builder/developers who completed numerous buildings. According to a 1953 Omaha Building Owners' and Managers' Association pamphlet, prior to 1929 the Traver Brothers were the second only to the Drake Realty Company, who had constructed 1100 apartment units in Omaha. Other apartment developers in their class included V.P. Chiodo, Hastings and Heyden, Edward Johnson, and Byron G. Burbank. Each of these companies developed around 100 apartment units. Several also acted as the builder for their construction projects.

Although not well known outside of their profession, the Traver Brothers Company made a significant impact on the apartment housing market of Omaha through the number of units they built and managed. Charles Traver came to Omaha in 1906, working for a year as a painter, before becoming a real estate agent. In 1909, he expanded into construction as well; completing the St. Mary's apartments. In 1911 his brothers Charles and William, and Nellie Traver¹ joined him to form the Traver Brothers Company. The business operated in Omaha until 1932. Altogether, the Traver Brothers Company constructed and managed over 200 apartment units, on 11 properties. The Traver Brothers' work was generally concentrated in an area between 20th to 40th streets and Dodge to Leavenworth streets. Their multi-family residential property types range from a street court row house development to 25 unit apartment buildings. Known works include the following:

Yr blt	Name	Units	Address	Notes
1909	St. Mary	23	526 S 21 st Ave	(Nonextant)
1910	Alsation	12	115 S 35	(Nonextant – current location of Mutual of Omaha campus)
1913	Nodway	24	541 S 24 th	Apt Block w/ short end to st (little integrity)
1915-16	Travorhurst Sub.	24	26 th & Jones-St. Mary's Ave	St Crt Row Houses
1918	Undine	24	2620-2626 Dewey	2 Apt Blks w/short end to st and interior courtyard
1921	Marley	8	528 s 29th	Apt Block w/ short end to st
1924	Bretnor Court	8	2536 N 16th	"U" Court Row House (1 st of this type in Omaha)
1926	Boulevard	25	604 S 32 nd Ave	"L" Court Apt
1927	Roycroft	12	5017 Underwood	"U" Court Apt Bldg
1927	Radcliff	36	3716 Dodge & 105 N 38 th	2 Apt Blks w/ long sides to st
1929	Tudor Arms	22	131 S 39 th	"U" Court Apt

The majority of these are vernacular structures that utilize a variety of stylistic influences. The buildings are well crafted, with a limited number of well selected details and characteristics know to appeal to their target market of white collar workers. The Undine is a good representation of their work.

¹ Nellie's relationship to the brothers is unclear. She is not the wife of any of these three brothers. She may have been a sister, or the wife of another brother or relative.

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Building Type and Period

The Undine was completed in 1918; timing which is significant for two reasons. The first is that the Undine's construction comes at the middle of an apartment building boom in Omaha which lasted from 1912 to 1924, and tapered off just before the Great Depression.² This same boom period coincides with the period of existence of the Traver Brother's Company, which lasted from 1909 to 1932. The building boom however, was not a steady increase in construction. There were several years with-in that boom of little or no activity. The first was due to WWI. A national building ban was in effect in 1918 which locally cut both the number and dollar amount of building permits in half. After four years with 10 apartments constructed per year, the Omaha World Herald reported that only four apartment building permits were taken out in 1918; one for the Drake Court buildings 9 & 10, and the other three unnamed. The Undine was likely another one of those.

Nationally, many apartment buildings constructed in the late nineteen-teens still catered to white collar workers aspiring to an upper class lifestyle.³ The early renters were often couples with no children where the wife stayed at home and the husband worked downtown. Many were on or near street car lines and at the fringes of the downtown areas. Buildings were typically completely residential in nature, had spacious living quarters with the planning features of an individual residence, and high quality finishes. Phone service, electricity, and steam heat were expected amenities, as well as an elevator for larger buildings.

Local buildings appear to have followed many of the same trends.⁴ Apartment buildings from the 1890s through 1912 include the Sherman Apartments, the Normandie, the Barnard and the Unitah. These were formal structures with distinct architectural styles and house-like layouts which included large living rooms, separate bedrooms, and full kitchens. Additionally, they were generally designed by architects, located along streetcar lines, and catered to white collar workers. Apartment buildings constructed during the boom period include the Colbert Apartments, Terrace Court Apartments, and Forrest Apartments. These buildings appear to have continued to appeal to the aspiring upper class, but began to offer a broader range of rental opportunities. At the high end were buildings that continued the interior features and layouts begun by the earliest apartment structures. At the lower end, were more modest apartments, which still contained details to signal their high-end aspirations, but with finishes typical of the average home of the period, and more efficient spaces, such as kitchenettes instead of full kitchens, and the inclusion of some efficiency apartment units. A group of builder/developers arose who were able to finance the projects as well as construct them. Keeping the work "in-house" kept the cost down. All of this combined to create a class of apartment buildings that looked affluent, but were more affordable, which made apartment living more attainable for the average white collar worker.

As a builder/developer driven building, the Undine was more budget conscious and less stylistically cohesive than those apartments designed by architects and built by speculative investors. It was a balance of upscale features and efficient space planning. It contained fashionable details such as Juliette Balconies, a courtyard, fountain, and lattice fence on a framework of massing and scale that were set to appeal to white collar workers. Although details were minimal, those that were used were striking for the signifying impact they gave to the overall appearance of the building. In the case of the Undine, the character defining feature of the Juliette Balcony is used to give the entire façade an Italianate flair. The smaller size of each unit likely made them more affordable than some of the previously constructed apartment buildings and architect designed structures. Each unit contained a kitchenette, instead of full kitchen, and a combined living/dining area. In plan, the building is more comparable to an apartment hotel without the larger amenities such as a restaurant, car service, etc. In place of some of these upscale conveniences, the west building originally housed a grocery store in the basement which served the building's residents and the adjacent neighborhood. Clearly, the Undine met its target market. The 1920 census shows that the Undine was occupied by an auditor, salesman, veterinarian, accountant, etc; white collar workers who could ride the nearby streetcar in to work. In fact, Charles Traver and his wife Edith lived here for a time.

² See graph, Section 8, page 4.

³ See National Register Nomination for the Margaret, Omaha Nebraska

⁴ Lynn Meyer's Apartment Study concentrated on the exterior appearance and site layout of the buildings, and did not investigate their interior configuration or who constructed them.

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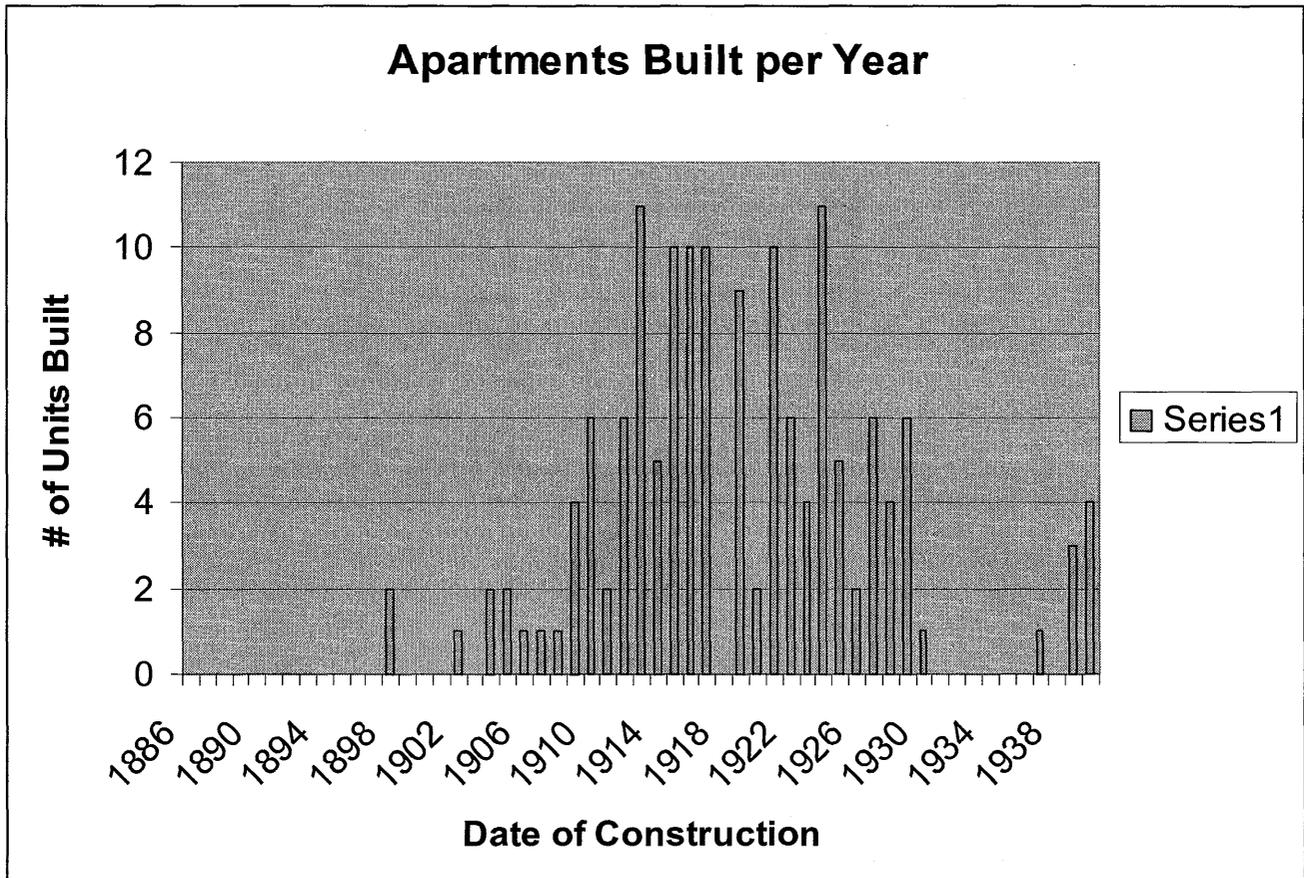
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Conclusion

The Undine is eligible under Criterion A for its association with the development of the apartment building type in Omaha. As Omaha's apartment building stock grew, so did the diversity of its planning and final form. The Undine is a good example of a typical builder/developer designed apartment building that used iconic details to appeal to its target audience.

Under Criterion C, the Undine is also eligible for its distinctive characteristics of a type and period of construction. Like many other apartment buildings constructed during the early 20th century in Omaha, the Undine was located with-in a network of streetcar lines, making it readily accessible from downtown where many of its residents worked. Like many apartments built by contractors who were also developers, it was built on a smaller framework of massing and proportions that made it more affordable to the average white collar worker, while retaining the features they would recognize as upscale and desirable.

Altogether, the Undine is a solid representative of both the work of a typical builder/developer in Omaha in the late nineteen-teens and an apartment building constructed for white collar workers in the middle of Omaha's first apartment building boom.



Redrawn from Lynn Meyer's Study

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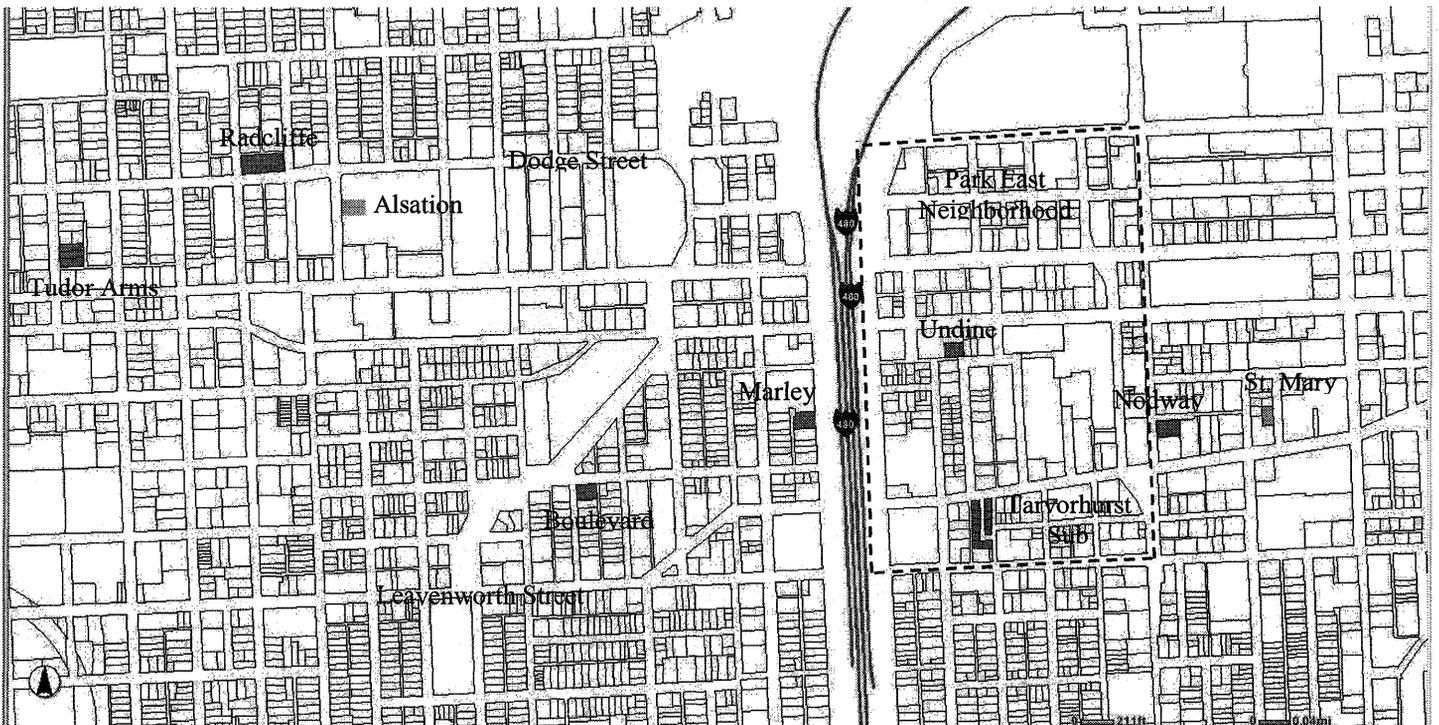
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1924 Photo of the West building of the Undine



Map of the Traver Brothers Work

Orange (light grey) Buildings are Non-extant
Green (dark grey) Buildings are Extant



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Newspaper Articles

"Building Ban Keeps 1918 Totals Down," *Omaha World Herald*, Morning Edition, Jan 1, 1919, p. 8.

"Mrs. Traveler Rites Friday," *Omaha World Herald*, Morning Edition, Thurs July 6, 1978, p. 39.

Journal Articles

The American Architect, Wednesday, November 29, 1916, Vol CX, Number 2136. (Issue devoted to apartment buildings)

Books

Chudacoff, Howard P. *Mobile Americans: Residential and Social Mobility in Omaha 1880-1920*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1972.

Gordon, Stephen C. *How to Complete the Ohio Historic Inventory*. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio Historic Preservation Office, Ohio Historical Society, 1992.

Hawes, Elizabeth. *New York, New York: How the Apartment House Transformed the Life of the City (1869-1930)*. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1993.

Meyer, Lynn. *Multiple Property Document for Multifamily Dwellings in Omaha, NE*. unpublished.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Knopf, 1992.

Maps

Sanborn Map Company. Insurance Maps of Omaha. New York: 1901, updated 1918. Online Digital Format. Love Library Reference. Lincoln NE.

Sanborn Map Company. Insurance Maps of Omaha. New York: 1934, updated 1970. Online Digital Format. Love Library Reference. Lincoln NE.

Other

The Building Owner's and Manager's Association of Omaha, *Annual Report*, Omaha NE, 1953.

Douglas County Assessor's Office, Records for Capitol Hill Addition, Block 3, Lots 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Omaha City Directories, 1906-2007.

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Other addresses

Formerly 2652 Dewey Ave

Verbal Boundary Description

The South ½ of Lots 5 & 6, Block 3, Capitol Hill Addition, an addition to the city of Omaha, Douglas County Nebraska

Boundary Justification

This includes all of the property historically associated with the Undine Apartments.