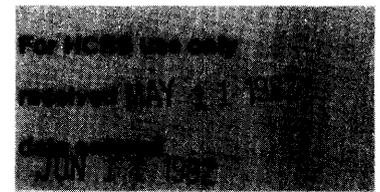


**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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



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

**1. Name**

historic Pi Beta Phi Sorority House (Preferred)  
and/or common Phi Kappa Theta Fraternity House

**2. Location**

street & number 3002 NW Harrison Boulevard N/A not for publication  
city, town Corvallis N/A vicinity of congressional district Fifth 1st  
state Oregon code 41 county Benton code 003

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" 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>N/A</u> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<u>N/A</u> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Brandis, Brinkmeyer & Company  
street & number P. O. Box 1087  
city, town Corvallis N/A vicinity of state Oregon 97330

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Benton County Courthouse  
street & number 120 NW 4th Street  
city, town Corvallis state Oregon 97330

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Statewide Inventory of Historic Properties has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no  
date 1981  federal  state  county  local  
depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office  
city, town Salem state Oregon 97310

## 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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

The Pi Beta Phi Sorority House, located close to the northern edge of the Oregon State University campus in Corvallis, is the town's singular example of the French Provincial Style based on architecture of the French Renaissance. Essentially rectangular in plan, the 3-1/2 story building occupies a 100 x 114-foot corner lot and is oriented to the north, facing NW Harrison Boulevard. Its most dominant characteristic is its steep-sided, high, hipped roof line with wall dormers cut into the eave lines and crested with wrought iron scroll work. The top of the wall is trimmed with a brick dentil course. The wall plane is finished with rough-textured off-white brick laid in a running bond. Corners are accented with quoining of the same material. A dentillated brick belt course marks the top of the ground story. The entrance is recessed under a round portal arch with a dentillated brick surround. A massive end wall chimney on a projecting section of the main facade is decorated with a corbelled cap and necking, a metal tie rod with wrought iron scroll, and a cast stone cartouche panel. The twelve-pane wooden sash windows are mostly of the casement type and many small panes. The rear porch is supported by paired posts. The small porch at the kitchen entrance was enclosed in later years. Traditional buildings of the 1920s and 1930s have been described by architectural historian Marion Ross as being "based on historic periods" and, tending to be "less archeological, they nonetheless retain appropriate formal composition while at the same time often incorporating very original features." The Pi Phi House is aptly characterized by this general description of type.

The interior finish of the Pi Phi House is comparatively simple, but certain details are noteworthy. In the living room are a deep, fluted coved cornice of plaster with a repeating garland motif and a Renaissance-style fireplace surround. The dining room cornice is a classical egg and dart frieze. The entry hall is an octagonal space with shallow, domed ceiling from which the original lighting fixture is suspended from a rosette. Alternative sections of the ceiling are articulated with wood molding and raised plaster decoration in tympanae of arches over doorways. Doorway lintels in this space are "carried" by cast plaster corbels. The staircase, with its scrolled wrought iron railing, lies to the west of the vestibule. Typical wall treatment in the living room and dining room consists of plaster finish and "paneling" created by the application of wood molding. Floors are of a fine-grained oak where visible. The motifs are appropriate to the French Renaissance, and the overall treatment is purposefully plain so as to be maintenance-free.

The focal point of the original library space on the second floor is a bay-fronted corner fireplace. Each bedroom on the second floor has a mirror alcove with built-in drawer units below.

The sorority house has not been altered substantially despite its use by a fraternity from 1964 to 1981. Typically, the first floor contains the public spaces--kitchen, cook's quarters, and a separate apartment for a house supervisor. The second floor contains study and dressing rooms, bathrooms, and the library. The topmost floor contains several additional rooms, bathrooms, a meeting room and a very large sleeping room originally ventilated by casement windows which were later modified as screened vents. The basement contains the heating plant, laundry and party room.

## 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" 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** 1928

**Builder/Architect**

Rowe Davis Kennedy

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Pi Beta Phi Sorority House at the southwest corner of NW Harrison Boulevard and NW 30th Street on the northern periphery of the Oregon State University campus in Corvallis, Oregon is a noteworthy and singular example, locally, of architecture in the French Provincial Style inspired by French chateaux, or country houses of the 16th and 17th centuries. The house was designed by Corvallis architect Rowe Davis Kennedy and completed in 1928 for Beta Chapter, Pi Beta Phi. At the time of its local chartering in 1917, Pi Beta Phi was the second national fraternal organization to be established at what was then Oregon Agricultural College. Rowe Kennedy (1892-1975) received his initial training in mechanical engineering at Oregon Agricultural College and was an early member of the Architectural Club, an organization of students and faculty which promoted development of a degree course in architecture. Kennedy took post graduate work in architecture at the University of Pennsylvania and launched his career with the Portland, Oregon firm of Houghtaling and Dougan, with whom he had an opportunity to practice in the traditional styles which became his specialty. Kennedy designed the Arts and Crafts/Colonial Dorchester House (1929), a resort at Lincoln City on the Oregon coast which has been entered into the National Register. While Kennedy's hand has been documented in as many as six other fraternity/sorority houses in Corvallis, the Pi Phi House is the only one in the French Provincial Style. Each of his period houses is distinguished by a high standard of design and craftsmanship. Following the sorority's move to a new location in 1964, the nominated building was occupied by Alpha Theta Chapter, Phi Kappa Theta until 1981. Present owners plan to adapt the now-vacant building for office use. Commodious in the tradition of fraternal dormitories, the 3-1/2 story house has exterior walls of brick, the dominating, steeply-pitched hipped roof forms, dormer and casement windows, and prominent chimneys characteristic of the French Provincial Style. Originally, its massive roof was covered with wood shingles laid in a naturalistic wavy pattern -- a stylized allusion to the thatched roofs of provincial archetypes. The original roof cover was eventually replaced by composition shingles. As in most vintage fraternity houses, the interior has undergone some remodeling over the years. However, the important spaces of the ground story--the entry stair hall, living and dining rooms-- are intact with their distinctive plaster ornament. The Pi Beta Phi Sorority House possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association with a distinguished local architect and the second oldest national Greek letter fraternity chartered at Oregon State University.

Rowe Davis Kennedy, architect of the Pi Beta Phi House, was born on the Davis family ranch in Little Shasta Valley, California, October 29, 1892, the first of two children born to Clarence and Emma Davis Kennedy.<sup>1</sup> The Kennedys were ranchers in Merrill, Oregon before moving to Cottage Grove, where Rowe completed high school. Thereafter Clarence Kennedy moved his family to Corvallis, settling in a house on 15th Street, so that his children could attend Oregon Agricultural College.<sup>2</sup> In 1915, Rowe Kennedy was graduated from Oregon

<sup>1</sup> Interview with Bessie F. Kennedy, May 13, 1981.

<sup>2</sup> Oregon Agricultural College became Oregon State College and then, in March 1961, Oregon State University.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Corvallis, Oregon

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 

1	0	4	7	7	5	0	0	4	9	3	5	2	1	0
Zone	Easting		Northing											

B 

Zone	Easting		Northing											

C 

Zone	Easting		Northing											

D 

Zone	Easting		Northing											

E 

Zone	Easting		Northing											

F 

Zone	Easting		Northing											

G 

Zone	Easting		Northing											

H 

Zone	Easting		Northing											

Verbal boundary description and justification

The property nominated occupies Lots 1 and 2, Block 1, Hollenberg's Addition to Corvallis, Benton County, Oregon, and is also described as Tax Lot 7500.

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

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Nancy Vandewater and Sue Brinkmeyer

organization Brandis, Brinkmeyer and Company

date June 12, 1981

street & number 3907 NW Clarence Circle

telephone (503) 757-1199

city or town Corvallis

state Oregon 97330

# 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date March 26, 1982

For HCRS use only

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

date 6-14-82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date 6-14-82

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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



Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 1

Agricultural College with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. During his four years at OAC, Kennedy developed a strong and abiding interest in architecture. He demonstrated this interest by becoming President of the Architectural Club his junior year. The club, an organization of students and faculty, promoted development of a degree course in architecture at OAC. Following graduation, Kennedy studied architecture and received an advanced degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1915. Upon his return to Oregon, he launched his career in Portland with the firms of Houghtaling and Dougan and Cash and Lucas. An example of his early work can be seen in the Alameda School built in 1922. Soon after his marriage, February 1, 1923, to Bessie F. Bush, daughter of a Portland carpenter, he took a job with an architectural firm in Seattle, Washington. He received his license from the Oregon State Board of Architecture Examiners in 1923.

In 1925 Kennedy returned to Corvallis, Oregon, and in the ensuing four years worked in an office in the Hout Building on 3rd Street and Madison Avenue. It was there that he completed the designs of no fewer than six sorority and fraternity buildings, a new Benton County Jail,<sup>3</sup> and several homes. His buildings reflect careful study of proportion and scale as well as his training during a period when the Beaux Arts school of design still exerted great influence.<sup>4</sup> Kennedy's facility with period styles is exemplified in the French Renaissance design of the Pi Beta Phi House. The house was constructed on land purchased in April, 1928, from Bert L. Dunham by Oregon Beta Chapter of Pi Beta Phi Sorority, which was the second national sorority on the Oregon Agricultural College campus when installed as the "Pi Phi" local on July 23, 1917. H. R. Sinnard, professor of architecture at Oregon State University and the University of Oregon until his retirement in the 1970s, used this sorority house as a teaching tool, taking his classes there to study the design and construction.<sup>5</sup> Interviews with those sorority members who first lived in the "Pi Phi" house attest to the pride and pleasure taken by those who were able to live in the building after its completion.<sup>6</sup> Although the house was sold in 1964 to Alpha Theta Chapter, Phi Kappa Theta Fraternity, and, in turn to Brandis, Brinkmeyer, and Company, in 1981, it has retained its character and detail and is in good condition.

The Depression Era greatly affected the building industry. With little work to do in Corvallis, Kennedy returned to Portland, where greater professional opportunities were hoped for and he variously practiced independently and with local firms. At one time, he formed the partnership of Ann and Kennedy. As the Second World War came to end, the market for new buildings grew, as did the demand for architects. Kennedy spent

<sup>3</sup>The Benton County Jail was torn down, despite local protests, to make room for a new law enforcement building, 1972.

<sup>4</sup>Interview with W. Ray Glass, A.I.A., Professor of Architecture, Oregon State University, June 3, 1981.

<sup>5</sup>Interview with H. R. Sinnard, Corvallis, Oregon, May 5 and 19, 1981.

<sup>6</sup>For example: Interview with Rita DeTemple Dunkin, Portland, Oregon, May 19, 1981. Interview with Estora Moe, Corvallis, Oregon, May 5 and 19, 1981.

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page

2

much of the 1950s and 1960s remodeling public buildings. Rowe Davis Kennedy became partially paralyzed by a severe stroke in 1973 and died May 17, 1975 at the age of 82. During his lifetime he was respected by his peers and laymen alike as a talented and dedicated architect. Kennedy was known throughout the state for his design in schools, fraternity and sorority houses and private residences. His training in the traditional styles is reflected in his work, which shows imaginative variations on well-known styles popular at the time. He was the designer of the well-known Dorchester House in Lincoln City, a coastal resort hotel combining the Arts and Crafts and Colonial Styles and which represented Kennedy's feeling that architecture should be "picturesque" and possess "eye appeal."

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<sup>7</sup> Interview with Alfred Edelman, A.I.A., Portland, Oregon, May 25, 1981.

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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



Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 1

Bibliography

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Gearhart, Dick (ed.). The Orange and Black. Corvallis: The Oregon State College Alumni Association. 1938. p. 131.

The Beaver - Yearbook, Corvallis, Oregon. 1929. p. 305.

The Orange: Oregon Agricultural College - The Book of the Class of 1916. Corvallis, Oregon: Oregon Agricultural College. 1916. p. 387, 251.

The Orange: Oregon Agricultural College - The Book of the Class of 1915. Corvallis, Oregon: Oregon Agricultural College. 1915. p. 276, 277.

Interviews

Dunkin, Rita DeTemple. Portland, Oregon. May 19, 1981.

Edelman, Alfred, A.I.A. Portland, Oregon. May 25, 1981

Glass, W. Ray, A.I.A. Professor of Architecture, Oregon State University. June 3, 1981.

Kennedy, Bessie F. Bush. Portland, Oregon. May 13, 1981.

Moe, Estora. Corvallis, Oregon. May 5 and 19, 1981.

Sinnard, H. R. Corvallis, Oregon. May 5 and 19, 1981.

Kennedy's Buildings of Note in Corvallis, Oregon

Phi Sigma Kappa Fraternity, 209 NW 14th Street, Corvallis, Oregon, 1920.  
(Now the Pi Kappa Alpha Fraternity).

Alpha Chi Omega Sorority, 33 NW 26th Street, Corvallis, Oregon.  
(Now the Co-Ed Cottage at Oregon State University). 1927.

Theta Chi Fraternity, 361 NW 26th Street, Corvallis, Oregon. 1927.

Phi Gamma Delta Fraternity, 348 NW 25th Street, Corvallis, Oregon. 1928.

Phi Sigma Kappa, 309 NW 26th Street, Corvallis, Oregon. 1929.

Benton County Jail, (stood north of the Benton County Courthouse, was torn down, 1972). 1928.

Home of Dr. and Mrs. Nicholas Tarter, 154 NW 30th Street, Corvallis, Oregon. 1929.

Home of Professor Ballard, 147 NW 31st Street, Corvallis, Oregon. 1929.

Alpha Chi Omega Sorority, 311 NW 26th Street, Corvallis, Oregon. 1955.

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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



Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 2

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Other Buildings of Note

Dorchester House, Lincoln City, Oregon. c. 1932. (National Register of Historic Places, 1980).

Alameda School, 2732 NE Fremont, Portland, Oregon. 1922.