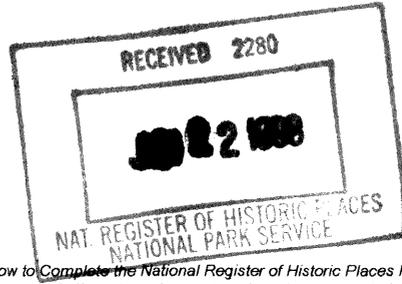


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



1971

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 Fontenelle Apartment House

other names/site number SF11-165; Fontenelle Apartments

2. Location

street & number 1424 Fourth Avenue not for publication [NVA]

city or town Scottsbluff vicinity [NVA]

state Nebraska code NE county Scotts Bluff code 157 zip code 69361

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.)

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official

6/10/98
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): _____

[Signature: Gibson A. Beall]

7.23.98

[Signature]
Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		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)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instruction)

DOMESTIC\multiple dwelling

DOMESTIC\WORK IN PROGRESS
multiple dwelling
inn

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements\
Arts and Crafts

foundation Concrete
walls Brick

roof tar
other _____

Narrative Description

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

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

1917-1948

Significant Dates

1917, 1941

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Otto John Hehnke-Architect

Gus Appleburg-Builder

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:

Fontenelle Apartment House
Name of Property

Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	13	611480	4635020			
2.						
3.						

[x]See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Bill Callahan
organization Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office date April, 1998
street & number 1500 R Street, Box 82554 telephone (402) 471-4788
city or town Lincoln state NE zip code 68501

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 Brenda and William Dean
street & number 1713 Fifth Avenue telephone (308)-635-7200
city or town Scottsbluff state NE zip code 69361

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. 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.

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 1

Fontenelle Apartment House

Name of Property

Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska

County and State

Description

The Fontenelle Apartment House is located in Scottsbluff, the largest community in Nebraska's Panhandle (1990 Pop. 13,711). Scottsbluff is in Scotts Bluff county, approximately 400 miles northwest of Lincoln, the state capital and approximately 100 miles northeast of Cheyenne, Wyoming. Platted in 1900, Scottsbluff is in the North Platte River Valley. The surrounding countryside is dominated by flat river plains dissected by dramatic hills and bluffs. Scottsbluff is in the shadow of the Wildcat Hills and Scotts Bluff National Monument, which rises several hundred feet above the surrounding plain west and south of the community. Farming, ranching, associated industry and beet sugar processing dominate the local economy. Scottsbluff is primarily laid out in a grid pattern, and the Fontenelle Apartment House is positioned four blocks east of the central business district. Built on the southwest corner of Fourth Avenue and Fifteenth Street the Fontenelle is three blocks directly east of the Lincoln Hotel (NRHP 3\5\98). The Fontenelle is located in a residential neighborhood dominated by craftsman bungalows, one of which is located immediately south of the building.

The Fontenelle Apartment House was constructed in 1917 by G.J. Appleburg, and designed by architect Otto John Hehnke. The structure is rectangular in form, approximately 114'x 35', and is situated on a corner lot which measures 160' x 65'. The Fontenelle is two stories tall with a half basement. The building is constructed of brick, and the primary visible material is a buff face brick with thin, light colored mortar joints. The Fontenelle sports ornamental brickwork at the cornice line, at the half-basement and around the windows and vestibules. These ornamental details are comprised of dark raised face brick with distinct color variations within the coursework.

The Fontenelle has two primary facades. The east facade has one centrally located entryway partially enclosed by a brick vestibule that extends to the bottom of the second story. Ten broad concrete steps lead straight to the doorway. The steps are flanked by raised, stepped brickwork and each of the three brickwork steps are capped with a rectangle of concrete. The vestibule is topped by a broad band of decorative variegated brick. The decorative brickwork is composed of headers and stretchers partially protruding from the wall face and punctuated by large vertical wooden brackets. The entryway and vestibule are flanked by a total of eight (two on each side on both floors) paired, four-over-one wood double hung windows. In the Arts and Crafts tradition, the upper panes have four vertically divided lights; the lower window is a single pane of glass. All windows in the Fontenelle have the same 4\1 configuration, and all but the half-basement and secondary facade windows are framed by decorative brickwork.

The banded pattern of decorative brickwork found on the vestibule, including the wooden brackets, is repeated at the cornice line just above the second floor windows. This feature wraps around the structure on the north side, which is the building's second primary facade. The Fontenelle is topped by a stepped parapet which extends around the building on the east and north sides. The center of the north facade parapet contains the word FONTENELLE in dark brick, below which are four more large wooden brackets. The brackets are also found on the northwest corner of the cornice line.

The north facade is dominated by two identical entryways asymmetrically positioned at the east and west ends. These entryways have vestibules nearly identical to the one on the east facade. However, the entrance stairs on the north facade are on the sides of the vestibules instead of in the center. Entry to the basement apartments is located between the east and west north side vestibules opposite these stairs. The center of both north facade vestibules contain a semi-circular window at the half-basement level.

Eight pairs of wooden double-hung windows are located between the north entryways, four each on the first and second floors. Four more pairs of windows are located east of the eastern north facade entrance, as opposed to two pairs of windows located west of the western north entrance. This arrangement creates a minor overall asymmetry in the north facade of the building. Finally, a single window is centered above both north entryways on the second floor.

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 2

Fontenelle Apartment House

Name of Property

Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska

County and State

The exterior of the half-basement level is highlighted by broad bands of dark face brick, punctuated by double hung wood windows. These windows, though smaller than their counterparts on the first and second floors, retain the Craftsman detail of four vertically divided lights on the upper panes and a single pane in the lower sash.

The western and southern side of the Fontenelle are secondary facades that display red common brick. A continuous wood frame screened porch is attached to the south side second floor of the building. This porch dates from the original construction of the Fontenelle. The west end of the building has smaller frame porches, however these have been enclosed and sided with faux brick asphalt, and serve as storage rooms. The south and west porches also serve as secondary entrances and fire escapes.

When originally constructed, the Fontenelle Apartment House had twelve apartments: "...two five-room, four four-room, two three-room, three two-room at the second and third floor and one two room on the first floor."¹ (The quote refers to the half-basement as the first floor) The first and second floor apartments were arranged along a double loaded central corridor. The five-room apartments were those on the extreme east end of the building, and the first floor five-room apartment was accessed from the east entry. Entry to the second floor apartments was historically and continues to be from interior stairs and from access through the attached porches.

In 1941, the central corridor was subdivided and some apartments reconfigured to create space for new apartments. This project added four dwelling units, for a total of sixteen. These changes do not adversely effect significant architectural or historic features that make the Fontenelle eligible for the National Register. The current owners of the Fontenelle are themselves reversing some aspects of the 1941 rehabilitation. Although the central hallway will not be reintroduced, one subdivided apartment has already been restored to its original configuration, and at least two others have been rehabilitated in their current configuration. The owners of the property are participating in a certified rehabilitation for tax incentive purposes, and plan to provide nine units as an operating inn, four permanent apartments and one unit (the former first floor five-room apartment) to be used as a common room\dining area, for a total of thirteen rehabilitated dwelling units and one non-residential unit. At the time of this nomination, April 1998, work is in progress on the remaining units.

¹ Scottsbluff Star Herald, Nov. 6, 1917 "May Well Feel Proud of Building: The Fontenelle Apartment House Has Been Completed and Occupied"

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 1

Fontenelle Apartment House

Name of Property

Scotts Bluff, Nebraska

County and State

Statement of Significance

The Fontenelle Apartment House is eligible for the National Register at the local level under criteria A and C. Under Criterion A, the Fontenelle is significant through its association with the historic pattern of community planning and development in Scottsbluff, Nebraska. The Fontenelle represents a rare urban property type in Scottsbluff that was constructed a scant seventeen years after the birth of the city. The Fontenelle is a good representation of a young community's eagerness to develop into an urban and cultural center for the surrounding region.

The Fontenelle is eligible under Criterion C because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a vernacular representation of the Arts and Crafts style, an architectural movement popular in the United States from 1900-1940. The Arts and Crafts movement's most distinctive forms were the Prairie and the Craftsman styles. Elements of both of these styles may be found in the Fontenelle. The Fontenelle also represents a relatively rare type of property in Scottsbluff, that of an urban apartment house. The period of significance for the Fontenelle, 1917-1948, is derived from the construction date of the building through fifty years before the writing of this nomination. It is the Fontenelle's status as a relatively rare type of property in this community that establishes continuous use through 1948 as significant.

Criterion A

Scottsbluff was founded as a community in 1899, when an employee of the Burlington Railroad platted the original townsite. Between 1910 and 1930, the population of Scottsbluff skyrocketed from 1,746 to 8,465. In 1911, Scottsbluff officials were forced to upgrade the sophistication the new city's government, changing from a village board to a mayor and city council.¹ The boom-like growth of Scottsbluff is evidenced not solely through population figures and changes in political structures, but also through the types of construction that took place during the city's boom period. For example, construction was begun on the Lincoln Hotel (NRHP 3\5\98) in early 1917. The seventy-six room Lincoln was an enormous hotel for this part of the country, as well as supremely elegant.

In April of the same year, Gus Appleburg began construction on the Fontenelle Apartment House. The Fontenelle was considered sufficiently elaborate during a period tremendous growth in Scottsbluff that the local newspaper, the *Star-Herald* remarked upon the initiation of its construction in an article that sums up the spirit of the quickly growing city:

"Every resident of Scottsbluff is aware that the city is growing, growing so rapidly in fact that the ordinary resident finds difficulty in keeping track of the advancement unless his avocation is such as requires him to travel over the city daily. ...for the present time representatives of the *Star-Herald* made a tour of the city and counted the newer improvements. ...Some are very elaborate and represent an outlay of several thousand dollars...the new apartment house being erected by Gus Appleburg, to cost \$30,000, has begun..."²

Further evidence of the optimism, rapid growth and economic strength of Scottsbluff during this period is that Mr. Appleburg chose to hire "...west Nebraska's first registered professional architect..."³ Otto John Hehnke to design the Fontenelle. Hehnke came to the Scottsbluff area in 1906, and was responsible for overseeing all construction of the Tri-

¹ Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey Reconnaissance Survey Final Report of Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska. Lincoln, NE: Nebraska State Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office, 1995. P.38.

² Scottsbluff Star-Herald, 26 April, 1917.

³ Gering Centennial Committee. History of Gering, Nebraska: The First 100 Years. Gering, Nebraska: Curtis Meda Corporation, 1989. P.318.

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 2

Fontenelle Apartment House

Name of Property

Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska

County and State

State Land Company.⁴ Tri-State Land Company was partially responsible for the construction and economic boom of the area. Tri-State developed and speculated on land acquisition and irrigation construction throughout the North Platte River Valley. Anecdotal evidence indicates that Hehnke designed the Tri-State Land Company's headquarters building (NRHP 1\25\97). The Tri-State Headquarters was constructed in 1907, after Hehnke arrived in the area, and is the only known example of Dutch Colonial Revival architecture in the entire Nebraska Panhandle. In any event, the fact that Appleburg hired a locally well-known architect to design his new apartment house indicates that Appleburg desired to construct a property that would rise above the ordinary construction occurring during this time period.

Appleburg was apparently quite successful in this regard, as the Fontenelle received excellent reviews from the *Star-Herald*. In an article describing the tremendous changes in Scottsbluff entitled *Yesterday-Village, Tomorrow-A City* the *Star-Herald* states: "The Fontenelle Apartment House is completed...This is one of the most elegant apartment houses in any city of the state and equipped with every modern convenience which science has developed for such structure (sic)."⁵ When the Fontenelle was opened for occupancy, the *Star-Herald* saw fit to write an entire article about the building. Entitled *May Well Feel Proud Of Building...Would Be a Credit to Any City No Matter How Large Population of Latter Might Be* the article indicates that the building was fully occupied, save for two units, despite not being completely finished.⁶

Evidence in Scottsbluff's built environment of the city's tremendous construction and population boom from 1900-1930 abounds. Many of the extant commercial properties in the Central Business District date from this period. Properties associated with the sugar beet industry constructed during this era are scattered about town, indeed throughout the county. Scottsbluff has a number of residential neighborhoods that consist primarily of Craftsman style bungalows and Prairie Boxes that almost certainly date from 1910-1930. The Fontenelle Apartment House is located in such an area.

However, in 1995 the Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey identified only one extant multiple dwelling with historic integrity from this era of Scottsbluff's history: the Fontenelle. The Fontenelle is a grand representative of a period when Scottsbluff's growth potential appeared unlimited, and the need for multiple dwelling complexes would be so great that the extra investment of a modern, architect-designed structure appeared to be necessary. Scottsbluff remains a growing city with tremendous potential, however it is unlikely that the city will ever replicate the rapidity of development that took place from the city's birth in 1899 to 1930. By 1930, Scottsbluff had gained over sixty percent of its current population: nearly 8,500 people in the first thirty years of the city's existence, a little over five thousand in the nearly seventy years since. The Fontenelle, with its contemporary design and rather singular existence, is a physical representation of the premier growth and development period of the city of Scottsbluff.

Criterion C

The Fontenelle was constructed at the height of the popularity of the Arts and Crafts architecture movement in the United States, generally considered to run from 1900-1940.⁷ Although structurally little more than a rectangular box, the Fontenelle sports details and ornamentation that exemplify both of the major styles that are identified with the Arts and Crafts movement: Prairie and Craftsman. The Fontenelle's significant features that reflect its Arts and Crafts influence

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Scottsbluff Star-Herald, 16 October, 1917.

⁶ Ibid. 6 November, 1917.

⁷ McAlester, Virginia and Lee. A Field Guide to American Houses New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984. P.10.

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 3

Fontenelle Apartment House

Name of Property

Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska

County and State

also retain a high degree of physical integrity.

The ornamental brickwork located at the top of the Fontenelle's windows, vestibules and at the cornice line display Craftsman elements. The wooden brackets evenly interspersed throughout the linear detail of the cornice and the vestibules replicates the exposed rafters common in the Craftsman style. Additionally, the relatively massive brick columns that support the roofs of the vestibules are common to the Craftsman style.

The linear form of the cornice and vestibule brickwork also reflects a Prairie influence by tending to visually lower the profile of the building, and creating a less massive facade than would otherwise be the case. This linear detailing is also clear in the dark face brick patterns of the half-basement level. Instead of designing a solid, massive pedestal-like base for the building, Hehnke introduced four thin horizontal bands of lighter brick that breaks up the inherently massive character of the base of the building. Hehnke also used very thin mortar joints and a light-colored mortar that creates a smooth, light colored wall face between the decorative bands of darker face brick. This repeated linear motif is inherent in Prairie elements.

Otto John Hehnke oversaw construction for the Tri-State Land Company, which was a large, initially very successful land speculation company made up primarily of stockholders from New Jersey. As mentioned, indications are that if Hehnke did not design the rather bold and singular (for this part of the country) Tri-State Headquarters Building, he almost certainly signed off on the design. Although the Fontenelle is not a textbook example of the Arts and Craft movement, Hehnke certainly introduced architectural elements that embody the characteristics of the most popular residential style of the time. The Fontenelle is the only known apartment building in Scottsbluff with integrity that exhibits Arts and Crafts design elements.

Aside from exhibiting features that identify a specific architectural style, the Fontenelle also represents a type of property not common during any period of Scottsbluff's history, save possibly the current era. The 1995 Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey of Scottsbluff identified only the Fontenelle as a residential multiple dwelling with sufficient integrity to be considered eligible for listing on the National Register. Throughout Scottsbluff's history, the construction of apartment buildings has been quite rare. A largely rural community, Scottsbluff has a wealth of historic single-family residential properties, and a few duplex types, however very few multi-unit apartment buildings with the Fontenelle's urban character were ever constructed. The Fontenelle's existence in Scottsbluff is rare enough: to retain such an excellent level of historic integrity is exceptional indeed. The Fontenelle represents a singular example of both an architectural style and a type of construction in the community of Scottsbluff.

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 1

Fontenelle Apartment House

Name of Property

Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska

County and State

Bibliography

History of Gering, Nebraska: The First 100 Years. Gering, Nebraska: Gering Centennial Committee. Curtis Media Corporation, 1989

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. A Field Guide to American Houses. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984

Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey Reconnaissance Survey Final Report of Scotts Bluff County. Lincoln, Nebraska: Nebraska State Historical Society, Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office. July 1995

Scotts Bluff Star-Herald, April 26, 1917

Scotts Bluff Star-Herald, October 16, 1917

Scotts Bluff Star-Herald, November 6, 1917

Scotts Bluff Star-Herald, September 7, 1920

Scotts Bluff Star-Herald, February 29, 1924

Scotts Bluff Star-Herald, November 27, 1925

Chain of title, Fontenelle Apartments, 1424 4th Avenue, Lot 1, Block G, Second Addition, Scottsbluff, Nebraska. Provided by current owner, April, 1998. Copy on file at offices of the State Historic Preservation Office, 1500 R St., Lincoln, NE 68508.

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 1

Fontenelle Apartment House

Name of Property

Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska

County and State

Verbal Boundary Description

Lot One Block G, Second Addition, Scottsbluff, Scotts Bluff County, NE

Boundary Justification

Boundary includes that parcel of land historically associated with the Fontenelle Apartment House.

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section Additional Documentation Page 1

Fontenelle Apartment House

Name of Property

Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska

County and State

Fontenelle Apartment House
Scottsbluff, Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska
Photographs by Bill Callahan-Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office
March 24, 1998
Negatives at the Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, NE

The above information applies to all of the following photographs:

Photo #1 of 3
East facade, facing Northwest

Photo #2 of 3
East and North facades, facing Southwest

Photo #3 of 3
North facade, facing Southeast