

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JUN 07 1989

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Lincoln Hotel

other names/site number FRO3-55

2. Location

street & number 519 15th Avenue

n/a not for publication

city, town Franklin

n/a vicinity

state Nebraska

code NE

county Franklin

code 061

zip code 68939

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>2</u>	_____ buildings
_____	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
<u>2</u>	_____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
na

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

James A. Benson
Signature of certifying official

May 31, 1989
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.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. 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:)

Delores Byers
Signature of the Keeper

Entered in 1989
National Register

7/6/89
Date of Action

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Hotel

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

vacant/not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Georgian Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Limestone

walls Brick

roof Asphalt

other Limestone

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Lincoln Hotel is prominently located at the major downtown intersection of U.S. 136 or "M" Street and 15th Avenue in the central business district of Franklin, Nebraska. The three-story brick-faced hotel, constructed in 1918, is a rare small town example of the Front Light Court type hotel which exhibits characteristics of the Georgian Revival style. The building retains a high degree of interior and exterior integrity. The nomination includes two (2) contributing buildings: the hotel and a small one-story hip-roofed concrete block garage formerly used by the manager is located at the northwest corner of the property.

The Lincoln Hotel is located in Franklin, a county seat community (1980 population: 1,167) in the Republican Valley Region of south-central Nebraska, less than 10 miles from the Nebraska-Kansas border. Constructed in 1918 on the site of an earlier frame hotel, the three-story brick-faced Lincoln Hotel continues to be a visual and architectural landmark in the community.

The building's two main facades--east and south--are located at a major downtown intersection; the main or east facade fronts 15th Avenue, Franklin's main business street. The county courthouse (NeHBS FR03-37) is also located on 15th Avenue one block north. The building's south facade fronts "M" Street, which is also U.S. Highway 136. The building's prominent location is further emphasized by its signage; the hotel's name is painted on each main facade in large white block letters between the second and third floors. Also, a neon sign is located on the building's southwest corner. The sign, which extends between the first and third floors, features a representation of Abraham Lincoln's face above the horizontal word "Hotel" with the word "Lincoln" extended vertically. A 1940's postcard view of the hotel indicates that a large neon "HOTEL" sign, which has since been removed, was located on the roof at the southwest corner.

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The building forms a rectangular shape measuring approximately 76 feet on the east and west sides and 66 feet on the north and south sides. The hotel displays characteristics of the Georgian Revival style with its rectangular window fenestration, symmetry, and classical details. A simple stone beltcourse extends on the two main facades between the first and second floors; the unornamented stone detail is also repeated in lintels. The building's flat roof is located behind a low stone parapet which features a classically dentiled cornice. The east facade features a light court, creating two wings above the second story. A skylight over the second floor mezzanine level is located in the space between the wings. The wings are connected at the third-floor level by an iron railing. The main facade is further distinguished by an original tin marquee suspended above the main doors.

The Front Light Court hotel type is typically associated with the central business district of urban areas (usually of the metropolitan class) and is associated with the first quarter of the twentieth century. This hotel type is the most efficient of several possible forms; a result of the need to provide a maximum number of rooms, each with access via hallway with adequate light and ventilation on as little urban land area as possible. Typically, this hotel type has a minimum height of three stories and is of fire-proof construction, e.g. of steel or concrete construction faced with brick. In addition, the type is distinguished by the presence of a mezzanine and front-facing light court, which is significant to its architectural character. The resulting configuration of the type is a "U", "H", or "E" shaped mass atop a rectangular footprint of at least two stories. Rooms and hallways "wrap" around the light courts, providing windows to each room.

On the interior, the Front Light Court hotel type exhibits a characteristic second level mezzanine which is open to the main floor lobby and is dramatically lit by the skylight above. This two-level atrium effect of the Lincoln Hotel is visible upon entry through the east front doors. The main lobby, measuring 37 X 44 feet, exhibits a high degree of integrity: original woodwork, including columns, beamed ceilings, and the front desk are intact as are ceiling and column light fixtures and terrazzo floor. The original dining room, located beyond the lobby at the

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southwest corner of the building, was remodelled into a lounge in the early 1980s. The exterior of the building was not affected by this remodelling; however, a small frame vestibule was added to the south entry.

The second floor mezzanine retains its original oak railing columns and skylight; rooms are located in the wide U-shaped corridor that surrounds the mezzanine on the north and south, while a service core is located along the west. The original hallway area, woodwork, and individual doors are intact for all second- and third-floor rooms. Interior alterations have been limited to further division of some second-floor rooms on the south side, and the addition of temporary partitions on the east side of the mezzanine. Third-floor rooms, which retain original features such as sinks, telephones, and woodwork, are intact with the exception of the rooms on the north side which were remodelled into a large manager's apartment in the 1980s. A single rank of rooms open onto the mezzanine and stair hall on the second floor, while original rooms open onto doubled-loaded corridors on the third floor, the level of the light court.

The first floor main facade also features a separate entrance located near the northeast side of the building. According to a 1918 description of the hotel, this space was originally designed as a restroom for the "ladies of the city and farmers' wives when they come to town." Use of the room was without charge, courtesy of the Nebraska Hotel Company. (Franklin County News, April 11, 1918).

The original manager's garage, which is a contributing building, is located at the northwest corner of the property. The simple concrete-block building features a hipped roof covered with asphalt shingles. East of the garage is a large grassy area at the north side of the hotel which was originally the site of the hotel's vegetable and flower gardens; a concrete gutter and the shapes of the gardens are still evident.

The Lincoln Hotel has been an important Franklin landmark since it opened in 1918. Until recently, the building had witnessed continued operation as a hotel with the exception of a

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two-year period in the late 1970s. The building was then re-opened as a hotel and restaurant until 1987 when it again closed. Community support for reopening the hotel and having it listed on the National Register is strong; several years ago, volunteers donated hundreds of hours to restore interior woodwork. The current owner is interested in reopening the hotel and dining room as a potential certified rehabilitation project.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce
Architecture

Period of Significance

1918

Significant Dates

1918

Cultural Affiliation

na

Significant Person

na

Architect/Builder

Nebraska Hotel Company (builder)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Lincoln Hotel, constructed in 1918 in Franklin, is significant on a statewide level under Criterion A. It has been evaluated under the Retail Commerce context for the Republican Valley Region and found to be significant for its association with the commercial development of the town and with the building boom of second generation hotels that was occurring on a statewide basis during the first quarter of the twentieth century. The hotels built during this period, as exemplified by the Lincoln, were multi-floor, brick buildings that offered the most modern conveniences, and catered especially to the businessmen who travelled on the railroad. Aside from providing pleasant quarters for travellers, the new hotels became the symbol of a prospering community with a bright future. For this reason, towns and cities of all sizes thought it was important to showcase a "modern" hotel as an indication of their prominent standing in the state. It is within this context that the importance of the Lincoln Hotel is realized. The hotel is also significant under Criterion C as a rare, small town example of the Front Light Court hotel type which exhibits characteristics of the Georgian Revival style. The period of significance is 1918 which is the year the hotel opened.

On April 26, 1917, R. W. Johnston, manager of the Nebraska Hotel Company and proprietor of the Lindell Hotel in Lincoln, arrived in Franklin and met with a number of local businessmen. He proposed that Franklin could own a hotel second to none in the state "considering the size of the town" providing the citizens of the town and community "do their share in promoting the new

9. Major Bibliographical References

Franklin County News, 1917-1918.

Miller, Greg. "Retail Commerce: Towns in the Republican Valley Region." Historic Context Report 12.02.06.03. Lincoln, NE: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1989.

Murphy, David R. "Hotels." Property Type Analysis 12.3.1. Lincoln, NE: Nebraska State Historical Society. Draft. 1989.

Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey (NeHBS). "Final Report and Preliminary Inventory of Harlan and Franklin Counties Reconnaissance Survey." Lincoln, NE: Nebraska State Historical Society, September 1985.

See continuation sheet

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 of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one

UTM References

A

1	4	5	0	3	9	6	0	4	4	3	8	2	5	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 15-18, Block 11, Franklin People's Addition to the city of Franklin, Franklin County, Nebraska.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses all land historically associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carol Ahlgren, Architectural Historian/Greg Miller, Preservation Historian
organization Nebraska State Historical Society date April 18, 1989
street & number 1500 R Street telephone (402) 471-4787
city or town Lincoln state NE zip code 68501

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adventure." What would the local citizenry have to do to promote this project? Johnston explained that the Nebraska Hotel Company would undertake the building of a \$40,000 hotel provided that one-third of the capital could be raised in the community, with the company furnishing the balance. The locally-raised money would come from the sale of single shares of stock valued at \$100 each. The stock would be non-taxable and pay 7 percent interest semi-annually (Franklin County News, May 3, 1917).

Although two other hotels were in operation in Franklin at the time (the Commercial and the Moreland), most of the people attending the meeting were in favor of the venture. One of the main reasons the plan was generally welcomed may have been the result of a missed opportunity the previous year. At that time another hotel company had offered to build a hotel in Franklin, but no one took enough interest in the proposition and the project fell through. The same company went on to build a \$250,000 hotel in Grand Island, Nebraska (and another one in Kansas City). The Franklin County News (May 3, 1917) reported that this company's "plan has been a great success, so much so that they are now passing up the smaller places and building only in the cities." The paper went on to editorialize that: "Unless we want to lose out on this proposition everyone must take an active interest or we will lose the chance of a lifetime to get a modern hotel building." And it concluded by stating that "...a modern building of this kind will be a great advertisement for this section of the state and everyone will benefit indirectly..."

From this it can be seen that local business leaders and others felt the pressure of competing with other communities. Also during this time, the town was experiencing a building and business boom. The newspaper reported that "Travelling men say that Franklin is fast becoming one of the best points on the valley line" (Franklin County News, February 2, 1917). A new hotel would certainly contribute to the business climate as well as being a great addition to the construction occurring during this time.

On May 10, 1917, the Franklin County News stated that \$6,200 of the \$13,000 had been raised; and that the hotel could be built during the summer if the community would "take hold of the matter in the way they should." The dream of a new hotel came closer to reality in mid-May when a site was selected and the contracts for

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its sale were drawn up. The site selected was that of the old Commercial Hotel, which would be demolished to make room for the new structure.

The local newspaper continued to solicit support for the hotel and indicated its advantages through descriptions of the transactions of the Nebraska Hotel Company throughout the state. In the July 28th issue, the newspaper stated that the company in addition to taking control of the Evans Hotel in Columbus was building several new hotels in the state "where the hotel accommodations are practically none, or at best, very old fashioned." The article went on to praise the hotel chain system.

By the middle of July, the razing of the Commercial Hotel began; and by the end of the month, the demolition was complete. Before work started on the construction of the new hotel, the company told the residents of Franklin that the building costs would be well over \$50,000 because of increased prices for materials. The following week (August 9) the company placed an advertisement in the Franklin County News saying they would pay the extra expenses. In the same issue the newspaper ran an article saying excavation work on the basement had begun, and that when the hotel opened "...this city will be on the map as having one of the finest hotels in the state and it will also gain the reputation of being one of the best hotel towns in the state and this will be worth a great deal to every line of business in town."

In what would seem to be a continuing attempt to demonstrate the advantages of the new hotel, the newspaper stated on September 6, that "they (representatives of the company) informed us that the company expected to build or buy hotel buildings in every important town in the state..." Another article in the October 18, 1917, edition which discussed the rapid growth of Franklin, again said the new hotel would put Franklin on the map "as a good hotel town" and that people all over the state would know this.

By the end of October the first floor was done, and work on the second floor started in the middle of November. The December 6th edition of the newspaper reported that the brick work for the entire hotel was done. With the exterior of the hotel completed,

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the interior remained to be finished. Plasterers started working on the first floor in mid-February 1918, and by early March the rooms on the third floor were almost ready.

As the work neared completion the news of the hotel did indeed spread. The local newspaper reprinted an article that appeared in the April 5, 1918, issue of the Hastings Daily Tribune. The article stated "that the rest of the state is waking up to the fact that Franklin will soon be on the map with one of the best hotels in the state."

Finally on April 27, 1918, the Lincoln Hotel had its formal opening. Although the weather was less than ideal, a large number of people turned out to help dedicate the new building. During the ceremony, an officer of the Nebraska Building and Investment Company again related the importance of the hotel to the image of the town when he said, "it was one of a string of first class hotels situated in the best towns in the state..." (Franklin County News, May 2, 1918).

Upon completion, the Lincoln Hotel was one of the most prominent buildings in Franklin. But more importantly, it demonstrated the emphasis placed on having a new hotel, especially by local businessmen. To have missed an opportunity at having a new hotel at a time when hotel construction was occurring throughout the state, would have been an admission that the town was economically stagnant. This was especially true to Franklin which was on the railroad line, wanted to be considered a good business community, and was already in the midst of a moderate construction boom. Given these circumstances, it is evident that the Lincoln Hotel is significant on a local level under Criterion A. Having been evaluated under the Retail Commerce context for the Republican Valley Region, the hotel's importance for its association with the commercial development of Franklin and with the expansion in hotel construction that was occurring on a statewide basis during this period is unmistakable.

The Lincoln Hotel is also significant on a statewide basis under Criterion C as a rare small town example of a Front Light Court type hotel. Within the Republican Valley Region, the ongoing Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey (NeHBS) has identified three additional hotels: NU13-738, RW05-11, and RW05-45. None

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of these buildings, however, share the Front Light Court property type of the Lincoln Hotel, nor are they located in cities of comparable size. On a statewide basis, Omaha's Blackstone Hotel (D009:319-006) is the only Front Light Court hotel type on the National Register.

The Front Light Court type, because of its distinctive massing and particular stylistic development and its economy of room arrangement (more rooms can be built per square foot of urban land than other types), is prominently associated with urban areas. The other known Front Light Court hotels are the Blackstone in Omaha (D009:319-006) and Lincoln's Cornhusker (not extant), both constructed in metropolitan areas, and were also built in Georgian Revival style. The Front Light Court arrangement was also utilized in two urban buildings which are not hotels: Omaha's First National Bank Tower and the New York Life Insurance Building, both are listed on the National Register.

The distinct massing of the Front Light Court building type results in a very cosmopolitan character, enhanced by the Georgian Revival style of the identified examples. The Lincoln Hotel is significant as a rare and distinctive example of this type built outside of a metropolitan area. Architecturally, the building lends a distinct sophistication to the character of the community.