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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations 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 The Melrose
other names/site number The Melrose Apartments; NeHBS No. D009:0214-003

2. Location

street & number 602 North 33rd Street N/A not for publication
city, town Omaha N/A vicinity
state Nebraska code NE county Douglas code 055 zip code 68131

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
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. Samson October 13, 1989
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.

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. Beth Boland 11/29/89
 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 of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

work in progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Other: L-court apartment

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

roof ASPHALT

other LIMESTONE

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Melrose apartment complex, constructed in 1916, is comprised of two separate three-story buildings positioned adjacent and attached, but perpendicular to each other, giving the appearance that the buildings are one large L-shaped structure. A large courtyard lies between the buildings and the street corner. While the west building is larger than the north one, both are of brown brick with identical limestone and darker brown brick detailing. Both feature balconies flanking the entry bays with "The Melrose" inscribed above each entrance. The Melrose exhibits a high degree of integrity with virtually no alterations to the exterior and only minor changes in the interior.

The Melrose apartment complex, constructed in 1916, is comprised of two separate three-story buildings with raised basements positioned adjacent and attached, but perpendicular to each other, giving the appearance that the buildings are one large L-shaped structure. They are situated near the back of a corner lot, creating a large garden or courtyard space between the buildings and the two streets. Built of brown brick with limestone and a darker brick detailing, the buildings are identical in appearance though not the same size. Each structure features central, projected foyers which house the stairwells for gaining access to the six apartment units. Balconies flank these three-story entry bays which are articulated by small gable porch roofs and the larger false frontal gables which rise from the parapet surrounds of the flat roof of the buildings. The name of the apartment complex is inscribed on a limestone slab above each main entrance. Street names are also noted in this manner on the appropriate facades of the structures, directly above the belt courses. Exterior decorative features include limestone quoining, sills, belt and drip courses, and pendant-like motifs which are positioned, in relief, below the third story drip course and also atop the brick piers supporting the balconies. Limestone keystones are centered above the main doorways which display transom and sidelight windows. Other fenestration in the buildings consists of symmetrically placed double-hung windows. The rear elevations are plain and lack the limestone and dark brick detailing of the other facades.

The interior space in both buildings provides for two apartment units on each level off either side of the central stairway, with a laundry room and physical plant housed in each basement. The larger west building, rectangular in plan, features two-bedroom housing units, while the smaller north building, square in plan, consists of one-bedroom apartments. The interiors of both structures feature imposing, darkly stained oak woodwork with neo-classical details. Scored plaster walls and mosaic tiled flooring are found in the bathrooms. Other outstanding features include pocket doors between the living room and bedroom/dining room in the west building and built-in wardrobes in the north building. Each unit is equipped with a rear entrance which leads directly outside to a recessed landing and metal stairway area.

The interior and exterior spaces of these buildings are in excellent condition, retain their original appearance and display exceptional architectural integrity. The building is currently undergoing rehabilitation.

See continuation sheet

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)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1916

Significant Dates

1916

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Frankfurt, H.D.
Beck, Alex

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

Constructed in 1916 during Omaha's first apartment house "Boom" period, the Melrose apartment complex is significant under National Register Criterion C as a noteworthy example of the L-court type apartment house design, one of several found in the Omaha area. The period of significance is derived from the original construction date of the buildings (1916).

The earliest buildings in Omaha that were specifically designed as multiple dwellings were St. Louis flats, consisting of commercial space on the first floor and residential space on the upper floors. The earliest known buildings in the city constructed solely for the purpose of housing multiple residential units were built in 1886. Up to the turn of the century about forty-four multiple dwellings were constructed in Omaha, three-quarters of which were rowhouses. The first decade of the twentieth century saw perhaps fifty to sixty new buildings erected, over a third of which were rowhouses. In 1910 the first real "boom" of apartment house construction started and continued through 1917. During this period over 100 buildings were constructed, with emphasis shifting from rowhouses to what was to become the more traditional apartment house design, i.e., single buildings housing multiple units whose entrances were to a common hall or hallways.

Most of the early apartment construction focused on the Central Business District (CBD) where the majority of industry and commercial activity was centered and therefore, where most of the working population was located, due to minimal public transportation. As the street railway system in Omaha converted from horse power to electricity in the first years of the twentieth century it began to expand its service area. The working population, having transportation to the industrial and commercial areas, could then live outside the crowded CBD. Most housing outside the CBD, however, was the more expensive single family home. This situation was soon rectified as developers recognized the housing need and began building apartment houses on or near the expanding street car lines.

Often intersections where street car lines crossed, met, ended, or changed direction were popular locations for commercial development. These commercial nodes also served as focal points for neighborhood identity and development.

Bryon R. Hastings and Edward T. Heyden were partners in a real estate investment company in Omaha prior to and during the apartment house boom period. In 1916 Hastings and Heyden took out a building permit for an apartment house to be located at 602-606 North 33rd Street, with the cost estimated at \$25,000. Local professionals H. D. Frankfurt and Alex Beck were listed as the architect and building contractor, respectively. Named "The Melrose", this apartment house was located on an 87½ foot by 96½ foot lot on the northwest corner of the intersection of 33rd and California Streets, the intersection at which a streetcar line running west along California turned north to proceed along 33rd. This intersection formed a focal point for neighborhood development and featured a small commercial district.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

The Building Owners' and Managers' Association of Omaha, Omaha, Nebraska, 1953.

Multiple Dwelling Study, Omaha City Planning Department, 1989.

Omaha City Directory, 1916.

Sanborn Insurance Company Maps of Omaha.

City of Omaha Building Permit No. 123 (3/8/1916)

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository:

Omaha City Planning Department

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one

UTM References

A

1	5
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2	5	1	8	7	5
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4	5	7	2	2	5	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

South 87.5 feet of west 96.25 feet of Lot 28, Block 2, Park Place Addition to Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The area includes all historically associated property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kathleen L. Fimple, Ph.D.

organization _____

date May 1, 1989

street & number 1144 S. 22nd Street

telephone (402) 474-3747

city or town Lincoln

state NE zip code 68502

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The Melrose itself is comprised of two buildings, which are located on the north and west sides of the lot and situated at right angles to one another, forming an L-plan. A courtyard area faces the street corner and the neighborhood commercial district. The two buildings are each three stories, and each has its own entrance. The building complex is large and impressive for this neighborhood, which is located several blocks east of the affluent Cathedral neighborhood, and comprised of lower and middle income residents. The Melrose rises above the nearby commercial buildings and stands as a landmark for the local community.

Among the approximately 400 extant apartment houses that have been surveyed to date in the city of Omaha, several types have been identified, including the rowhouse, flat, L-court, U-court, C-court, L-plan, T-plan, and several variations on the block plan. The Melrose apartment complex is significant as a well preserved example of the L-court type apartment house in Omaha. The primary distinguishing feature of this type is the L-shaped plan which can be the plan of a single building or two buildings situated perpendicular to each other. The building or buildings usually are located on a corner lot and situated near the two side lot lines, forming a garden or courtyard area facing the two streets. The apartment houses usually have three stories and more than one entrance.

One of several types common in the city, the L-court is not as ubiquitous as some of the other types, such as the various block plans. Only eleven others have been identified to date, all of which share the L-plan, multiple entrances, courtyard, and three-story height, with the exception of one two-story building. Among these eleven buildings, several distinctions can be made. The most obvious is size. Three of the apartments contain a large number of housing units, as high as twenty-eight, and have numerous entrances, most commonly four on the courtyard and a fifth to a basement unit. These complexes are on much larger lots, in the range of 200 feet by 150 feet.

A second group of three apartments could be classed as medium sized. They are all composed of a single building which has three entrances, one in the center of each side of the "L", and the third at the point where the two sides meet. They may also have a fourth entrance to a basement unit. It appears that these buildings have fifteen to eighteen housing units.

The final group is the small, twelve unit building or complex. These apartments have one entrance in the center of each side of the "L", and on rare occasion, one to a thirteenth unit in the basement. There are six buildings in this group, including the Melrose. The Glendale (D009:433-15), a 1928 structure, was built eleven years after the newest building of the other five and does not compare visually or stylistically with the others. It is composed of two two-story buildings with a six foot high exterior wall connecting the two. There are probably a maximum of eight units in the complex which is English Tudor in style. The effect is that the buildings appear to be two English cottages. And while there is considerable landscaping, the courtyard effect is almost lost, due to the positioning of the buildings on the lot. The remaining five are all reasonably good examples of the small L-court apartment, with variations. The Knickerbocker (D009:317-37) is composed of a single building whose third story is stuccoed. It has a hip roof with wide eaves that extend over the balconies which are enclosed by iron railings. The Dwight (D009:204-94) is also one building with a tile mansard roof, basement unit and awnings that do not appear to be original. The Stratford (D009:207-44), Fairview (D009:435-6) and Melrose were all designed by Frankfurt and bear a striking resemblance to one another. The Stratford also has a tile roof, but is two separate buildings whose corners lie just a few feet from each other. The courtyard is defined by a low

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wall of the same brick used to construct the buildings. The sidelights on both of the entrance doors have been boarded over. The Fairview was built in the suburb of Dundee and is located in a higher income neighborhood. Its resemblance to the Melrose is most striking, including the juxtaposition of the buildings and the street names inscribed above the beltcourses. The courtyard and its shrubbery has been well maintained. There appears to have been some alteration to the windows. It differs from the Melrose in that it has a hip roof, much less detailing, and its balconies, which are enclosed by iron railings, are independent units with no roof covering.

All of these five buildings are good examples of the small L-court apartment. Their exterior integrity is generally good with some exhibiting minor alterations. With the exception of the Melrose, the integrity of the interiors is not known. While the Melrose is only one among five good representatives, it has a "style" unlike any of the others. The flat roof, the all brick balconies adjacent to the entry bays, the gable porch roofs, false frontal gables, and extensive detailing cannot be found in combination in any other L-court apartment house. The Melrose is also the sole representative of the L-court in this portion of the city. Its role in the neighborhood and its exceptional integrity, both exterior and interior, make the Melrose a significant apartment house in Omaha's architectural history.

In addition to being an excellent representative of the L-court type, it is important to note that the Melrose is also the only extant apartment house from this boom period in this area of the city. Two smaller apartment houses were built to the west of the Melrose during the building boom of the 1920s, and several duplexes were built to the north. With the exception of a 1925 apartment building two blocks north, there are no other extant apartments along the streetcar route of California and 33rd Streets or for several blocks in the surrounding neighborhood district.

The integrity of the Melrose is excellent, with virtually no changes to the exterior and only minor changes to the interior. The interior alterations consist primarily of carpeting over some of the hardwood floors, painting of the banisters in the stairway, some light fixture replacement, and an occasional ceiling replacement with acoustical tile. The hardwood floors, original bathroom tile, oak woodwork, and windows all remain intact. The floor plans have not been altered. While not as lavish as it once was, the courtyard is still a large open area with grass and shrubs, a pleasant contrast to the still extant commercial district. Having suffered so little change over time, the Melrose easily conveys its historic significance in plan, design, setting, and materials.