

FEB - 5 2016

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Memorial Building

Other names/site number OT06: A-044

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

2. Location

Street & Number 810 1st Corso

City or town Nebraska City State Nebraska County Otoe

Not for publication Vicinity

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance: national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C D

Michael J. Sant SHPO/Director 01-26-2016
Signature of certifying official/Title: Date
Nebraska State Historical Society
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting Official Date

Title State of Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
- determined eligible for the National Register.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

Joseph Sullivan 3-22-2016
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

Memorial Building
Name of Property

Otoe County, Nebraska
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- Private
- Public-local
- Public-state
- Public-federal

Category of Property (Check only **one** box)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	Sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	Structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	Objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL: Meeting Hall
RECREATION/CULTURE: Auditorium
DEFENSE: Arms Storage

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Italian Renaissance

Materials (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: CONCRETE
Walls: BRICK
Roof: CERAMIC TILE; ASPHALT

Memorial Building

Otoe County, Nebraska

Name of Property**County and State****Description**

Summary Paragraph (Briefly describe the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

The Memorial Building is a monumental, two-story Italian Renaissance building on a raised basement located on the corner of S 8th Street and 1st Corso in Nebraska City, adjacent to the downtown commercial district and opposite the former Nebraska City Post Office. The large brick building features a limestone veneer at the basement level, large arched steel windows, and a wide projecting tile roof with a wood cornice line and monumental brackets. The entrance is framed by a limestone triumphal arch. The interior includes an auditorium with balcony seating, meeting spaces, offices, and a large dining hall. The building was constructed to serve as community center and National Guard armory. It commemorates Nebraska City Veterans from WWI and earlier wars. The building retains a high level of integrity, despite a lack of maintenance since the building closed in 2007 and non-compatible alterations in the early 1980s as part of a modernization plan. Water damage is present in some portions of the building.

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable.)

Site

The Memorial building is located on the northwest corner of S. 8th Street and 1st Corso, across the street from the former United States Post Office (NRHP 1971) and between the existing Nebraska City Historic District (NRHP 1976, updated 1987) and the South Nebraska Historic District (NRHP 1976). A parking lot is adjacent to the building on the east side, occupying the location of a former filling station that was documented in the 1946 revision of the Nebraska City Sanborn Map. The building replaced an earlier house located on the site.

Exterior

The Memorial Building is a two-story Italian Renaissance style building, designed by Matthew Lahr and Carl Stangel of Omaha and constructed 1928-1929 (photo 1). The building consists of a two-story main block on a raised basement, with a one story block on a raised basement attached on the east side of the building between two projecting bays of the main block. The rear portion of the main block, corresponding to the rear of the auditorium, rises to the height of three stories. The building is constructed principally of brick laid in common bond. The raised basement is faced with cut limestone panels on the south and east sides and is visually separated from the upper stories by a sloping stone water table. A large, Italian Renaissance style wood cornice with large, rectangular brackets supports a green ceramic tile roof on the south and east sides of the building. The tile roof mimics the appearance of a hipped roof, but it does not extend across the entirety of the building and consists of only a single slope on the south and east sides, except over the projecting bays, which are capped by a full hipped roof. The remainder of the building's roof is a flat, built up asphalt roof, except over the one story block, which is roofed in modern composite materials.

The primary façade faces south, and is divided into three bays, which are occupied by large, two-story arched window openings that rise from the water table up to the base of the cornice (photo 2, figure 4). Steel, multi-light windows, painted white, are within the openings, which are framed by beige colored brick and capped by large projecting limestone keystones. The windows are in poor condition but operable, with both hopper and awning style casement sashes. Between the first and second floors, the windows are backed by plywood panels, which hide the floor structure. Originally, opaque dark green glass glazing would have hidden the floor structure. Three four-light windows are evenly-spaced below the east and west windows at the basement level.

The main entrance to the building is through a pair of glazed, wooden panel doors under a large fanlight window in the central bay (photo 6). The entrance is framed by a limestone triumphal arch constructed of limestone. Stylized corinthian pilasters frame the opening, the entablature is inscribed with "Memorial Building", and the dedication year is incorporated in bas-relief into two roundels located in the corners above the arch and below the entablature. A metal railing stretches across the top of the arch between two ornamental stone pinnacles.

Memorial BuildingOtoe County, Nebraska**Name of Property****County and State**

The east façade consists of a central section, divided into five bays, between two projecting wings (photo 3, figure 4). The projecting wings each have a large, two-story round arched steel window. The one-story block is located between the wings. The block is five bays wide. A large steel multi-light window is located in each bay; each window has both hopper and awning casements. Two six-light steel windows are located in each bay at the basement level. Five round arched, multi-light steel windows are located on the second floor level of the main building above the one-story block. All of the round arched windows are framed by beige bricks, while only the windows on the wings have projecting limestone keystones. Glazed, wood panel doors open onto the roof of the one-story block from the second floor of the main building. Historically, the roof of the one-story block was used as an outdoor terrace, and was enclosed by a decorative railing, which is now non-extant. The terrace was accessed via doors in the projecting wings, and by a door from the auditorium balcony in the southernmost window bay. At ground level, there are two exterior entrances to the basement, one on the south side of the one-story block and one on the north side. The entrances were enclosed circa 1983: the south entrance by an aluminum and glass vestibule, and on the north side a cinderblock and aluminum window vestibule for a wheelchair ramp.

The north façade faces the alley between Central Avenue and 1st Corso (photo 4, figure 5). It is three stories in height, constructed completely of brick, and asymmetrically organized. A large chimney rises above the roof line at the northwest corner. A soldier course of brick continues the line of the stone water table across the rear of the facade. The majority of the windows are tall and narrow, four light casement windows located at the first, second, and third floors. These correspond to utility and circulation spaces within the building. Four large, multi-light steel windows are located at the basement level, and retain varying levels of integrity. The two central windows corresponding to the basement kitchen were modified with air conditioners replacing their original hopper casements. Metal bars protect the two westernmost windows, which lit one of the National Guard company rooms. A smaller four-light window is located between the center two windows. A pair of glazed panel doors is centrally located on the first floor level and corresponds to a backstage area; above the doors is a projecting steel I-beam with a hook that allowed for the use of a rope and pulley system to lift heavy objects up to the backstage level.

The west façade faces a narrow alley which separates Memorial hall from 816 1st Corso (photo 5, figure 5). Both the limestone basement veneer and the wood cornice return and terminate on this façade. The façade is two stories in height, except at its northern end, where it extends to three stories in height, corresponding to the backstage area. The central portion of the façade is divided into five bays by brick buttresses. Each bay has a multi-light steel window at both the first and second floors; the first floor windows are within rectangular openings, while the second floor windows are arched and mirror the corresponding windows on the east façade. Five four-light steel windows are irregularly spaced at the basement level, and are protected by various types of metal bars. These windows corresponded to the National Guard rooms arranged along this end of the building in the basement. At the northern end of the façade, a series of steps descend adjacent to the building, providing access to both the basement level and a sub-basement, where the building's mechanical equipment is housed. Tall, narrow, eight-light windows are located at the northern and southern ends of the façade, and correspond to interior stairwells. A non-historic metal ramp is located in the alley and provides access to a modern doorway, which replaced an original window opening in 1983.

InteriorFirst Floor

The main lobby is on the first floor, which is accessed by a set of stairs from the main entrance (photos 9-11, figure 1). The lobby has a terrazzo floor with a black and yellow tile pattern. A ticket booth is flanked by two pairs of doors, which lead to the auditorium. The wood panel doors incorporate 15-light mirrors on the lobby side, but are solid panels on the auditorium side. The ticket booth is accessed from the auditorium; the ticket casement window incorporates mirrored glass instead of traditional transparent glazing. The lobby's plaster walls are original, and retain an original chair rail and crown molding. A plaster arch leads to a hallway to the east, while on the west the arched opening leading to a stairwell was filled in and a modern slab door installed. The lobby retains its original radiators on the east and west sides.

The auditorium is located north of the lobby (photos 7-8). It is two stories in height and has a prominent stage at the north end. The modern drop ceiling was installed in approximately 1983, and is suspended several feet below the original plaster ceiling, blocking the fan lights of the arched windows on the east and west sides of the space (figure 7). A wood mezzanine with built-in wood seating is suspended from the ceiling by threaded iron poles, which are linked by an iron pipe railing (photo 15-16). The mezzanine is accessed from the second story at the south end of the space, as well as stairways that

Memorial BuildingOtoe County, Nebraska**Name of Property****County and State**

flank the stage at the north end of the building. Access from the mezzanine balcony to the rooftop terrace over the veterans meeting room is provided by a short flight of stairs and multi-light glazed door in the southeast corner of the balcony. The main auditorium floor is wood, and retains the historic markings from its use as a basketball court. The walls are plaster. The walls and stage are decorated with large red curtains, which date to the 1983 renovation. The stage is constructed of wood and consists of multiple panel doors, which allow access to storage below.

Two offices are located to the east of the main lobby. They are accessed by glazed panel doors, have plaster walls, and terrazzo floors. The partition wall between the two offices intersects with the eastern window on the front façade. The building plans assigned these spaces to the Boy Scouts and the Nebraska City Chamber of Commerce.

An assembly room utilized by the various veteran organizations such as the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars, occupies the first floor of the one-story block (photo 12). Called the Veterans Room, the space has plaster walls and ceiling, original wood molding and chair rails, and a terrazzo floor with decorative border. It retains its original radiators. The room is in poor condition due to a leaking roof, with water damage to the plaster ceiling, walls, terrazzo floor, and radiators. A pair of glazed wood panel doors connects the assembly room to a lobby space, which provides access to the auditorium and an office space. The office, originally designated a trophy room on the building plans, is a square room with large plate glass windows that open to both the lobby and the assembly room (photo 13). It is accessed by glazed wood panel doors, one to the lobby and one to the assembly room. The room has plaster walls and ceiling, wood molding, and wood wainscoting.

An office is located to the north of the assembly room and is accessed by a narrow, glazed wood panel door. A water closet is located in the northwest corner of the office. An original sink is located in this room as well. A narrow doorway in the southwest corner provides access to a stairway leading to the auditorium backstage area. The room is in poor condition, with significant water damage to the plaster walls and ceiling adjacent to the assembly room.

The auditorium back stage occupies a two story space at the rear of the building (photo 14). The space has plaster walls and wood floors and base boards. Various rails for curtains, scenery, and lighting are suspended from the ceiling. The door opening leading outside to the alleyway has been covered over by cardboard insulation, which can also be found on the ceiling.

Two dressing rooms are located on the second floor adjacent to the backstage area. The northeast dressing room is accessed via a wood staircase and landing in the backstage area. The room has wood floors and plaster walls and ceiling. A water closet is located in the northwest corner of the room. A glazed, wood panel door in the southeast corner provides access to the roof top balcony that was located atop the one-story block, while a wood panel door in the southwest corner provides access to the auditorium mezzanine.

The northwest dressing room is accessed via a stair hall to the west of the backstage area (photo 15). These stairs lead up to the second floor dressing room and down into the basement. The dressing room is smaller than the northeast dressing room, and is a narrow space with wood floors and plaster walls and ceiling. Knee walls with wood molding flank the staircase leading down to the first floor. A water closet is located in the southwest corner of the space. In the southeast corner, a wood panel door leads to the auditorium mezzanine.

Second Floor

The second floor consists of a hallway, two former restrooms, and a meeting room that was subdivided into offices at an unknown date (figure 2). The hallway and restrooms were located in the western third of the second floor. These rooms have terrazzo floors. A pair of doors on the north side of the hallway and a short flight of steps provides access to the auditorium balcony. A stairwell at the west end of the hallway with terrazzo stairs connects the 2nd floor to the entry lobby (photo 19).

Two offices, located in-line with one another, are located in the eastern 2/3 of the 2nd floor (photo 18). Originally, this was one open space, designated as the "civic society room" in the original plans. A later partition wall subdivided the space to provide additional meeting space. The rooms are carpeted and have plaster walls and ceilings. A door in the northeast corner of the eastern room leads to the former rooftop balcony.

Memorial BuildingOtoe County, Nebraska**Name of Property****County and State**Basement

The basement level extends across the entire footprint of the building (figure 3). All of the floors are terrazzo, and most of the walls and ceilings are finished with plaster.

A staircase leads from the front lobby on the first floor to the basement lobby. Two pairs of doors once led to the dining room to the north; however, the doors have been removed and the openings filled in. A modern door in a new frame is located within the eastern former entrance. Two restrooms are located on the west side of the lobby. To the south is an unfinished storage space which is located under the front stoop.

A meeting room is located to the east of the lobby (photo 20). The room is lit by high windows and has a glazed, wood panel door which opens to the glass enclosed vestibule on the building's exterior.

The dining room is located to the north of the basement lobby (photos 21). It is a large room that extends across nearly the full width of the building. Six columns provide structural support. A modern dropped ceiling conceals historic acoustical tiles which were applied directly to the room's original ceiling. The dropped ceiling intersects with the original windows and obscures the upper $\frac{3}{4}$ of the openings, allowing only the lower panes to light the interior space. In the northeastern corner there is a historic built-in closet with wood panel doors. In the southeastern corner a modern door leads to a glass enclosed vestibule. Another modern exterior door in adjacent to the kitchen entrances on the north side of the room leads to the covered entrance ramp, which was added to the building when the Nebraska City Senior Center operated within this space.

The kitchen is located to the north of the dining room (photo 27). A large serving window with wood panel doors allows for the passage of food between the kitchen and the dining room. The serving window is flanked by two glazed wood panel doors. The kitchen retains historic cabinetry on the west side of the space, but all of the appliances have been removed. The kitchen has a tile floor and finished walls with scribed plaster mimicking subway tile. The original roof is obscured by a modern dropped ceiling, which returns upwards to allow the use of window-mounted air-conditioning units.

To the west of the dining room are a series of rooms used by the Nebraska City High School Alumni Association. The Alumni Foundation Office was the former check room, and has a large window and service counter adjacent to a historic glazed door (photo 22). In the rear of the room there is a historic vault with steel safe door for secure storage (photo 23).

The Memorial Room is located adjacent to the Alumni Foundation Office. The space does not have historic integrity, as it was remodeled into a trophy room and exhibition space in 1983 (photo 24). The original plan indicates that a locker room and a meeting or storage room for a company of the Nebraska National Guard occupied the space. The partition walls between these rooms were removed in order to create the new space.

A series of storage rooms, formerly offices, are located to the north of the Memorial Room (photo 25). These rooms are accessed by a hallway that connects to the northwest stair, and which also opens to the exterior alley to the west. The large room to the west of the kitchen, formerly the room for Company 1 of the National Guard, was subdivided into offices sometime in the late 1970s or early 1980s. The room is carpeted and has wood panel walls that do not rise to the full height of the room. To the west of this room is a former restroom, which has been converted into a storage room. The room retains some historic materials, including some scribed plasterwork mimicking tile.

Integrity

The Memorial Building retains a high level of interior and exterior integrity. The building retains many of its historic materials and finishes, and displays a high level of workmanship. However, a lack of maintenance following the closure of the building in 2007 has led to the degradation of some materials and finishes, namely historic plaster and the steel windows, due to water damage. Changes to the original design of the building are primarily limited to the basement and second floor, where interior spaces were reconfigured to accommodate changing uses. The most significant of these changes was the construction of the Memorial Room by the Nebraska City Alumni. Other changes, such as the installation of drop ceilings and the enclosure of exterior entrances to create vestibules, appear to be reversible, allowing a return to the original configuration or the exposure of historic materials. Overall, the building preserves its integrity of location, setting, materials, design, workmanship, feeling and association.

Memorial Building
Name of Property

Otoe County, Nebraska
County and State

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Social History

Architecture

Period of Significance

1929-1965

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Lahr & Stangel, architects

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Memorial Building is eligible at the local level of significance for the National Register under Criterion A: Social History for its direct association with veteran organizations as a commemorative building and as a center for social life in Nebraska City. Planning for the building commenced in 1927 when a citizen's committee of one hundred was formed to coordinate with the local chapter of the American Legion to construct a building to house local chapters of both the American Legion and the United Spanish War Veterans, as well as two companies of the Nebraska National Guard. The building opened on

Memorial BuildingOtoe County, Nebraska**Name of Property****County and State**

Armistice Day, 1929. The building quickly became a center for social life in Nebraska City. In 1943, ownership of the building was transferred to Nebraska City, which maintained the building as a community center and also utilized some of the spaces for city offices. Deed restrictions on the property assured that it would always be available to veteran organizations. The Memorial Building is also eligible at the local level of significance under Criterion C: Architecture as an early example of a National Guard armory in Nebraska.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)**Criterion A: Social History**

Nebraska City's Memorial Building is locally significant under Criterion A: Social History during the period 1928-1965. The building is directly associated with the growth of the American Legion in Nebraska City and its movement to commemorate veterans of World War I and earlier wars in the 1920s. Following its construction, the building served as a social hub for the community, hosting multiple veteran organizations, sports events, dances, banquets, and other celebrations, as well as the two companies Nebraska City National Guard. In addition to using the building as a training and storage site, the Guard also hosted associated social events. The importance of the building to the community was evident in 1942-43, when the organization responsible for maintaining and operating the building, the Memorial Building Association, faced foreclosure due to a lack of revenue following the mobilization of the National Guard in 1941. Nebraska City, aided by O. Fletcher Neal, a local businessman and philanthropist, acquired the building in 1943, allowing it to remain open and in use as a community center. The National Guard returned after the end of World War II and used the building until 1956, when a new, international style armory was constructed on the west side of the city. However, the Memorial Building remained in use throughout the 1960s until 2007, when it was finally closed by the city due to the high cost of addressing life safety code issues identified by the State Fire Marshall's office.

American Legion

The impetus for the construction of the Memorial Building grew out of a partnership between the local chapter of the American Legion, Adam Schellinger Post No. 8 and community leaders in Nebraska City. The American Legion was the largest veteran organization of the 1920s, and was instrumental in the commemoration of American involvement in World War I. The American Legion was founded in 1919, when a cadre of Army officers serving in the American Expeditionary Force in France proposed the creation of a veteran organization as part of a morale building effort following the 1918 Great War armistice. An initial caucus attended by 1,000 officers and enlisted men held in March of 1919 in Paris established an initial constitution and name for the organization. A subsequent caucus in St. Louis codified an official constitution and bylaws, and by September 1919 the organization was chartered by Congress. The first national convention was held in November of 1919, coinciding with the first anniversary of the armistice.¹

The American Legion was more than just a veteran's fraternal organization. It followed the pattern established by the Grand Army of the Republic, the organization of Union veterans from the Civil War, and was socially and politically active.² The Legion was an openly patriotic organization, which at times led to conflict in its early years as it became embroiled the first Red Scare of 1919-1920. It promoted service organizations such as the Boys Scouts and became an active promoter of sports such as baseball.³ Politically, the American Legion lobbied for the creation of the U.S. Veterans Bureau, which consolidated several federal offices into one agency that oversaw the provision of insurance, pension, and health benefits to veterans.⁴ Before and after America's participation in the Great War, Congress had expanded benefits for veterans, creating a subsidized life insurance program for soldiers, hospitals for injured soldiers returning from Europe, and vocational programs to assist soldiers in reintegration into civilian life.⁵

¹ "History," The American Legion, available online at www.legion.org/history, accessed December 2, 2015.

² William Pencak, *For God and Country: The American Legion 1919-1941* (Boston: Northeastern U. P., 1989), 26-30.

³ *Ibid.*, 31-34.

⁴ "History," The American Legion; Department of Veterans Affairs, *VA History in Brief*, available online at www.va.gov/opa/publications/archives/docs/history_in_brief.pdf, accessed December 2, 2015, 7-8

⁵ *VA History in Brief*, 7.

Memorial BuildingOtoe County, Nebraska**Name of Property****County and State**

Nebraska City's first American Legion Post was established in August, 1920, and was named after William A. Schellinger, a Nebraska City native who was killed at the battle of St. Mihiel, France, in 1918.⁶ The post had over 160 initial members, and was just one of several veteran organizations in the community including the Grand Army of the Republic, the United Spanish War Veterans, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The post was active in promoting patriotic holidays, organizing programs on both Armistice and Memorial Day, and sponsoring football, baseball, and basketball youth leagues.⁷ The post was also supported by an active women's auxiliary, and helped coordinate both the Boy and Girl Scouts in Nebraska City.⁸

Constructing the Memorial Building

The American Legion was the catalyst for the construction of the Memorial Building in Nebraska City. In 1927, twelve men came together to organize a citizen committee that would partner with the Legion and the United Spanish War Veterans to construct "a suitable Memorial for our Service Men."⁹ The proposed committee was named the "Committee of One Hundred of Nebraska City" and was designed to involve all facets of the local community in the funding, design, and construction of the building.¹⁰ The establishment of this committee, led by an executive committee of ten, appears to have been modeled on the committee of one hundred officers that was instrumental in organizing the initial Paris caucus that founded the American Legion in 1919.

The Committee of One Hundred first met on Armistice Day, November 11, 1927, at the Otoe County Courthouse, and would continue to meet until the completion of the building two years later. The committee worked closely with Adam Schellinger Post No. 8 of the American Legion, which had already purchased two lots at the intersection of 1st Corso and 8th Street across from the Post Office Building (NRHP 1971), and with the National Guard as part of the planning process for the new building. From the onset, the committee sought to construct a building with three primary purposes: a commemorative site, a community center, and a National Guard Armory. A proposed budget of \$40,000 to \$60,000 for a building 72 x 120 feet in dimensions was presented at the initial meeting, indicating some prior planning in advance of the first meeting.¹¹ Rental income from community activities and the National Guard would fund the maintenance of the building.

Selection of an architect and the preparation and approval of building plans absorbed much of 1928. Subcommittees were tasked with developing plans for the selection of an architect, approval of plans, and developing a financial plan to fund the construction of the building.¹² In April of 1928, the executive committees of both the Committee of One Hundred and the American Legion post met and agreed to solicit competitive plans from regional architects for the design of the building. The following month, two proposed designs were considered and the design by the Omaha firm of Lahr and Stangel was selected. The finalized plans were presented to the full Committee of One Hundred and members of the American Legion and other social and veteran groups on October 18, 1928 (see figure 8 for an early rendering). In addition, the estimated cost of the building was placed at between \$70,000 and \$75,000, which would be funded by a public subscription for \$40,000 and the remainder via a bond issue. After some debate, a motion to adopt the presented plans and to raise \$75,000 was approved by the committee. The \$75,000 would include a public subscription of \$50,000 and a \$25,000 bond issue.¹³ Finally, a subcommittee was established to contract for and oversee the construction of the building.

Construction of the Memorial Building lasted approximately one year. The public quickly subscribed to the building fund, with \$50,000 in subscriptions pledged by November 21, 1928.¹⁴ This facilitated the approval of a \$25,000 mortgage.¹⁵

⁶ "American Legion: Adam Schellinger Post No. 8," *Nebraska City 1854-1954* (Nebraska City, NE: Chamber of Commerce, 1954), 54.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁹ Minutes of the Committee of One Hundred, 1927-1929, RG1391.AM: Memorial Building Association (Nebraska City, Neb.) Nebraska State Historical Society, 1.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

¹² *Ibid.*, 8-9.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 46.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 46.

Memorial BuildingOtoe County, Nebraska**Name of Property****County and State**

General contractor James Welch was hired to carry out the plans. Construction drawings were completed by January of 1929, while grading of the site was not completed until March, allowing for the majority of the work to be completed between May and September of 1929. However, interior finishing of the building was not completed until the opening festivities in November, 1929.¹⁶

Upon its completion, the Memorial Building was one of only three buildings commemorating World War I in Nebraska. The first was Memorial Stadium at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, which was completed in 1923. The stadium was financed by the University of Nebraska Alumni Association, and was part of a nationwide trend of commemorating the war on university campuses in the 1920s.¹⁷ Contemporaneous to Nebraska City's Memorial Building was Memorial Hall at Camp Ashland, a National Guard training camp located on the Platte River to the east of the community of Ashland. Memorial Hall was constructed in 1929 and dedicated in 1930, and served as a drill hall, social hall, and office space for units on their annual training rotation.¹⁸

The Memorial Building was owned and operated by the Memorial Building Association (MBA), an organization created by the Committee of One Hundred in 1929. The impetus for establishing the MBA dates to 1928 when the plans for the financing and construction of the building were adopted by the Committee of One Hundred. In May of 1929, a draft constitution and bylaws for a non-profit organization were presented to the executive committee for approval. The constitution of the MBA was heavily influenced by the standard constitution for an American Legion post; for example, membership to the association was limited to "All residents of Otoe County, Nebraska, who have served in the army, navy, marine or nurse corps of the United States during the period of actual hostility in time of war, and who hold honorable discharges from such service..."¹⁹ The constitution called for seven trustees to oversee the organization, with four from the American Legion, one from the Spanish American War Veterans, and one appointed each by the mayor of Nebraska City and by the district court judge for Otoe County.²⁰

Memorial Building 1929-1943

The Memorial Building opened with a multi-day celebration starting on Armistice Day, November 11, 1929. Nebraska Governor Arthur Weaver dedicated the building before a crowd of 3,000 and congratulated the community on "your erection of this structure to commemorate the heroism and patriotism of your soldiers."²¹ The dedication was broadcast across the region via Lincoln radio station KFAB.²² The building was opened for tours, and over the next three days it hosted breakfasts, luncheons, dinner banquets, speeches, athletic contests, and a ball.²³ The celebrations concluded on November 13, American Legion Day, with a parade in the morning and evening of boxing featuring three bouts between fighters from Nebraska City, Omaha, and Decatur, Nebraska.²⁴

For the next eleven years, the Memorial Building served as a community center and National Guard armory. The primary meeting space adjacent to the auditorium was reserved for the American Legion, United Spanish War Veterans, and Veterans of Foreign Wars. The basement dining hall and kitchen were placed under the purview of the American Legion Women's Auxiliary.²⁵ The building also hosted other organizations, such as the Nebraska City Chamber of Commerce, Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, and the Women's Club. Common events in the 1930s included dances, graduations, concerts, and

¹⁶ Minutes of the Committee of One Hundred, 45.

¹⁷ "Memorial Stadium" *An Architectural Tour of Historic UNL*, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, available online at historicbuildings.unl.edu/building.php?b=38, accessed Dec. 11, 2015.

¹⁸ Douglas R. Hartman, *Nebraska's Militia: The History of the Army and Air National Guard, 1854-1991* (Virginia Beach, VA: Donning Co., 1994): 106.

¹⁹ Minutes of the Committee of One Hundred 34.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 34.

²¹ "3,000 Hear Dedication" *Nebraska City Daily News-Press*, Nov 12, 1929.

²² "Dedication Broadcast From Lincoln's KFAB" *Nebraska City Daily News-Press*, Nov 12, 1929.

²³ *Memorial Building Dedication and Diamond Jubilee Celebration*, dedication pamphlet (Nebraska City: Memorial Building Association, November 1929)

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Minutes of the Memorial Building Association, 1929-1943. RG1391.AM: Memorial Building Association (Nebraska City, Neb.) Nebraska State Historical Society, 40.

Memorial BuildingOtoe County, Nebraska**Name of Property****County and State**

other large social gatherings.²⁶ For example, starting in 1935, the Nebraska City High School junior-senior proms were held annually at the Memorial Building.²⁷ The Nebraska City High School alumni association was established in 1938, and met regularly in the building as well.²⁸ Basketball games were a large draw for the building, and were regularly held within the auditorium, with a basket attached to the gallery at the south end of the hall and another placed at the edge of the stage at the north end. The building hosted at least one basketball league in the 1930s (alternatively the Memorial Building Basketball League or the Nebraska City Basketball League), hosted tournaments, and rented space to churches and St. Bernard's Academy.²⁹

While the MBA managed to successfully weather the depression years, the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939 heralded major changes for the country and the association. In 1940, Congress approved the nation's first peacetime draft, and in December of that year President Roosevelt called up the National Guard for federal service. Prior to mobilization, the National Guard had expanded the use of the Memorial Building as part of expanded training requirements implemented by the Department of War; in November, 1940 the Guard requested full use of the whole building for ten days for training.³⁰ The next month the Nebraska National Guard Adjutant General notified the MBA that "the lease on the Memorial Building rented by them will be terminated as soon as the troops are withdrawn from the State."³¹

The mobilization of the 134th Infantry Regiment, Nebraska National Guard, placed the Memorial Building Association in a bind, as the National Guard was the building's largest source of revenue. Payments ended in January, 1941. The departure of the National Guard did not diminish the Memorial Building's importance in the community. In September, 1941, the MBA agreed to lease space to the Selective Service, which established the Otoe County Draft Board in the basement of the Memorial Building.³² The building also rented space to the local Community Service and Surplus Commodities Board, which helped coordinate local efforts to support the war.³³ However, the association continued to hemorrhage funds, and by 1942 it was in danger of foreclosure.

Memorial Building, 1943-1965

The Memorial Building Association was unable to rectify its cash flow by the end of 1942. To prevent foreclosure, the city moved to acquire the Memorial Building to preserve its role as community center. In March 1943, the building was transferred to the government of Nebraska City and the Memorial Building Association was dissolved. This transfer was facilitated by businessman and philanthropist O. Fletcher Neal, who paid off the MBA's outstanding loan and thus allowed the city to assume ownership without also becoming indebted (figure 9).³⁴ His action is commemorated by a bronze plaque on the exterior of the Memorial Building. In order to assure that the building would continue to host veteran organizations, the deed transferring the building to the city placed a condition that existing and future veteran organizations such as the American Legion and the VFW would be guaranteed free use of the building.³⁵

The reorganized Nebraska National Guard returned to the building following the conclusion of World War II until 1957, when a new armory was constructed on the western edge of Nebraska City as part a statewide armory construction program.³⁶ The return of the National Guard reinforced the building's position as community center, as the Guard utilized the building for non-military purposes as well. As Douglas Hartman states in *Nebraska's Militia: The History of the Army and Air National Guard 1854-1991*, "The National Guard...continued to be a focal point in local communities social calendars

²⁶ "Legion Will Give Thanksgiving Dance" November 28, 1929; "Chamber Banquet Set for Thursday," April 6 1933; "St. Mary's School Closing Exercises," May 14, 1933;

²⁷ "History," Nebraska City High School Alumni Foundation, available online at Nchsalumni.nbcityps.org/history, accessed December 4, 2015.

²⁸ "History," Nebraska City High School Alumni Foundation.

²⁹ Minutes of the Memorial Building Association, 55, 89, 126, 146, 148.

³⁰ Hartman, 111-112; Minutes of the Memorial Building Association 124.

³¹ Minutes of the Memorial Building Association, 127.

³² *Ibid.*, 139.

³³ *Ibid.*, 140.

³⁴ "Services are Wednesday For Fletcher Neal, 57, at Peru" *Nebraska City News Press*, September 6, 1949.

³⁵ Corporation Warranty Deed 472, March 1943.

³⁶ "Company A Armory Accepted for the State of Nebraska" *Nebraska City News Press* December 21, 1956.

Memorial BuildingOtoe County, Nebraska**Name of Property****County and State**

after World War II. Armories hosted dances, benefit dinners, and auctions while Guardsmen participated in annual parades, Veterans' Day services, and other community sponsored events. Local citizens and businesses, in return, provided Guardsmen with refreshments, food, and other incidentals for their annual training encampments"³⁷

The Memorial Building retained its central role in the community while under municipal control (figures 10-14). In 1947, the Girl Scouts moved into the building and utilized the meeting rooms on the second floor which formerly housed offices for the Veterans Administration.³⁸ The city also considered using the building for municipal offices following the departure of the National Guard; eventually, the city parks department would be located in the building.³⁹ Dances, performances, and banquets continued to be held in the building, which was suited to large gatherings. For example, in 1956, the Nebraska City Alumni Association held a 50 year anniversary banquet in the dining hall for its 1906 graduates that drew over 240 attendees.⁴⁰ The building would continue be closely linked to Nebraska City High School, hosting the junior-senior proms and the alumni banquets through the 1960s.⁴¹

Memorial Building, 1965-2007

The Memorial Building was utilized by the city until 2007. Between 1980 and 1984, the building was extensively renovated, with new ceilings, doors, and mechanical equipment installed to help reduce maintenance costs. The Nebraska City Alumni Association moved into the building and renovated the National Guard locker room space into a trophy room in 1983. In 1980, the building became home to the Nebraska City Senior Center, which operated out of the building for 27 years. The American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars also continued to meet in the building until it was closed by the city due to prohibitive costs in upgrading the building to comply with updated life safety codes as required by the State Fire Marshall. In addition, high maintenance costs and low revenues led to the closure of the building by the city.

Criterion C: ArchitectureNational Guard Armories

The Memorial Building is locally significant under Criterion C as a rare example of a pre-1930 National Guard armory building type in Nebraska. While utilized primarily as a social space, its use as a National Guard armory was an essential part of the initial plan of the building and was a clear determinant in the size and layout of the final building. At the Committee of One Hundred's first meeting on November 11, 1927, the local National Guard commander "explained the necessity of having suitable quarters for the National Guard, and a large enough building wherein two companies could drill."⁴² The Memorial Building's design shared many characteristics with National Guard armories across the nation, and is among the earlier buildings built for National Guard use in Nebraska outside of Camp Ashland and the State Arsenal in Lincoln.

National Guard armories developed as a building type following the Civil War with the expansion of state militias. Industrialization and urbanization led to social unrest which centered on conflicts between industrial workers and employers, and in response, states worked to revitalize and reorganize their militias to serve as peacekeepers and strikebreakers.⁴³ This movement gained momentum following the nation-wide violence associated with the Great Railroad Strike of 1877. Federal troops were also limited from serving as supplements to law enforcement following the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878, which was associated with the end of Reconstruction under the Hayes Administration.⁴⁴ States worked with the National Guard Association and the federal government to reform and expand their state militias, establish uniform regulations and training regimens, and standardize arms and equipment.⁴⁵ In 1903, the Militia Act, also

³⁷ Hartman, 175.

³⁸ Nebraska City Daily News, May 6, 1947.

³⁹ "Preliminary meeting is held by Building Group" *Nebraska City Daily News*, Sept. 16, 1955.

⁴⁰ "Dinner honors Class of '06" *Nebraska City Daily News*, May 31, 1956.

⁴¹ "Eleven of 1913 class are honored" *Nebraska City News Press*, May 28, 1963; "High School Prom Held at Memorial Building" *Nebraska City News Press*, May 13, 1963.

⁴² Committee Minutes, 4.

⁴³ Hartman, 43.

⁴⁴ Hartman, 43.

⁴⁵ Hartman, 43.

Memorial BuildingOtoe County, Nebraska**Name of Property****County and State**

known as the Dick Act, mandated that National Guard units train regularly to US Army standards while providing states with federal funds for arms and equipment.⁴⁶

The reform and expansion of the National Guard created a demand for specialized spaces where National Guard units could muster, drill, and store their arms. Armories needed three basic spaces: an open hall for muster and drills, smaller rooms for classes on military topics and offices for paperwork, and a secure storage space for the unit's arms and equipment.⁴⁷ Ideally, an armory would also have a firing range for marksmanship training. In large, industrialized cities such as New York, Chicago, and St. Louis, this demand resulted in the construction of large, fortress-like buildings known as Castle or Castellated Armories, which provided space for drilling units at the regimental scale, composed of multiple companies.⁴⁸ These buildings were funded and constructed by the units themselves, without substantial assistance from state governments. However, the majority of National Guard Units, which consisted of single companies stationed in towns scattered throughout their home state, used state funds to rent spaces such as opera houses, auditoriums, fraternal halls, or commercial buildings or warehouses for use as their armories.⁴⁹ These spaces were often inadequate—either too small for drills or lacking in secure storage for the unit's arms and equipment.

Nebraska lacked purpose-built armories for its National Guard units until the 1910s, when the state invested in the construction of a state arsenal in Lincoln and the federal government purchased the land for Camp Ashland next to Ashland, Nebraska. All of the state's twenty-five National Guard companies rented spaces for their armories, following the pattern found across the country. Hartman describes the situation prior to World War I: "Thirteen of the twenty-five company armories did not have drill halls adequate for indoor inspection; four had a nonmilitary purpose that interfered with their use as armories; four failed to provide proper protection from 'the elements or theft'; eight did not have indoor 'gallery practice'; and eleven had locations, construction, and equipment that 'discouraged enlistments or re-enlistments'."⁵⁰

The Memorial Building's original design met the programmatic requirements of a National Guard armory. Two companies of the Nebraska National Guard, Company A, 134th Infantry Regiment and Headquarters Company, 134th Infantry Regiment, were provided space in the basement. Blueprints show that each company had a dual purpose meeting and storage room for their arms and equipment, as well as an office staffed by an orderly responsible for the company's paperwork. A locker room provided for storage of uniforms and other items. The first floor auditorium provided an open space for company drills and inspections, while the meeting rooms on the first and second floors utilized by the American Legion and other social organization could have also been used as classrooms. Guardsmen could shower after drills in a separate shower and toilet area in the northwest corner of the basement. An important feature included in the design was an indoor firing range, which could be set up in the basement, stretching from the entrance hall on the south side of the building and terminating in a steel-reinforced alcove at the northwest corner of the dining room space. However, it is unclear how often this range was utilized or its effectiveness as a training or evaluation tool, as the range would only be approximately 75 feet long, and the enclosed nature of the space without dedicated ventilation would have resulted in a very loud and smoky shooting experience. The space may have been utilized early on as a space for "gallery practice" implying a shooting gallery for smaller firearms, but this cannot be verified.

The design of the Memorial Building is very similar to a contemporaneous, purpose built National Guard drill hall at Camp Ashland, also named Memorial Hall (figure 15). Camp Ashland was established as a training base and firing range for the Nebraska National Guard in 1913.⁵¹ The Camp was substantially expanded in the early 1920s with the construction of permanent and semi-permanent structures including a firing range, a canteen, a boxing ring, officer quarters, kitchen facilities, warehouses, and a water and sewer system.⁵² The Memorial Building was the final building constructed as part of

⁴⁶ Robert P. Wiegiers, *Missouri Armories: The Guard's Home in Architecture and History* (Kirksville, MP: Truman State University Press, 2012) 10

⁴⁷ Wiegiers 16-17; Hartman 81-82.

⁴⁸ Wiegiers 58.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 16-19.

⁵⁰ Hartman 81.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 101-104.

Memorial BuildingOtoe County, Nebraska**Name of Property****County and State**

the 1920s building boom. It was funded by over \$30,000 in withheld pay owed to guardsmen for their WWI service that was held in trust by the adjutant general of the Nebraska National Guard.⁵³ In 1928, Nebraska Guardsmen voted unanimously to use the funds to construct a Memorial Hall at Camp Ashland. It was a large, rectangular brick, hip-roofed building centered on an open, two story drill/auditorium hall lit by large round-arched windows. At either end of the hall were two story blocks which housed an entrance hall, small bar, offices, classrooms, and storage spaces. The entrance was framed by a brick triumphal arch inscribed with N.N.G. (for Nebraska National Guard) in the entablature.

Constructed with the National Guard in mind from the onset, the Memorial Building straddled the line between ad-hoc armories housed in leased buildings constructed for other uses, and purpose-built armories. The next armories constructed in the state would be funded by the WPA during the Great Depression, and were located in Kearney (1937) and Falls City (1939).⁵⁴ Most Nebraska National Guard units would not have purpose-built armories until the 1950s, when the state and federal government partnered to construct a new series of armories across the state between 1954 and 1957.⁵⁵ These armories were standardized in plan, with a two story drill hall, classrooms, offices, and secure storage for arms housed in a brick and concrete international style building.⁵⁶ In 1956, a new armory was constructed as part of this building campaign on the west side of Nebraska City on 4th Corso, and in 1957 the National Guard left the Memorial Building and occupied its new quarters.⁵⁷

Architectural Style

Designed by the Omaha firm of Lahr and Stangel, the Memorial Building's Italian Renaissance architectural style reflects the preference for classically-inspired styles for civic and commemorative buildings in the 1920s. The Matthew Lahr and Carl Stangel designed a variety of buildings in Omaha and other Nebraska communities in a multitude of historicist styles, ranging from Tudor style apartments in Omaha (Nottingham Court Apartments, NRHP 2013) to Gothic revival churches (St. Anselm's Catholic Church, NRHP 2008). The Memorial Building is the second major project by the firm completed in the Italian Renaissance style, after their 1926 Notre Dame Academy and Convent in the Florence neighborhood of Omaha (NRHP 1998). Unlike the more restrained use of the style for Notre Dame, the Memorial building exaggerates the proportions of the building's individual elements, primarily the windows and cornice line, to create a monumental effect. Lahr and Stangel use a similar three arched window motif from the Academy on the Memorial Building's primary façade facing 1st Corso, but they again monumentalize it. The incorporation of a triumphal arch framing the entrance to the building, rather than a portico like at Notre Dame, reinforces the building's commemorative purpose. Nebraska's two other Memorial buildings, Memorial Stadium in Lincoln and Memorial Hall at Camp Ashland, utilized the same architectural vocabulary.

⁵³ Hartman, 106.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 107-108.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 185-187.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 186-187;

⁵⁷ Hartman 187; "Company A Armory accepted for the State of Nebraska" *Nebraska City News Press*, December 21, 1956.

Memorial Building
Name of Property

Otoe County, Nebraska
County and State

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (Insert bibliography here – cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Newspapers

Nebraska City News Press
Nebraska City Daily News

Primary Sources

Corporation Warranty Deed 472, March 1943.

Memorial Building Dedication and Diamond Jubilee Celebration, dedication pamphlet (Nebraska City: Memorial Building Association, November 1929)

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Minutes of the Committee of One Hundred, 1927-1929. RG1391.AM: Memorial Building Association (Nebraska City, Neb.) Nebraska State Historical Society.

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Hartman, Douglas R. *Nebraska’s Militia: The History of the Army and Air National Guard, 1854-1991*. Virginia Beach, VA: Donning Co., 1994.

“Memorial Stadium” *An Architectural Tour of Historic UNL*, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, available online at historicbuildings.unl.edu/building.php?b=38, accessed Dec. 11, 2015.

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 #
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other (Name of repository)
Nebraska State Historical Society

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): OT06: A-044

Memorial Building _____ Otoe County, Nebraska _____
Name of Property **County and State**

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property <1 acre USGS Quadrangle Nebraska City

(Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates. Delete the other.)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

- | | | | | |
|----|----------|------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| 1. | Latitude | <u>40.675974</u> | Longitude | <u>-95.855432</u> |
| 2. | Latitude | _____ | Longitude | _____ |
| 3. | Latitude | _____ | Longitude | _____ |
| 4. | Latitude | _____ | Longitude | _____ |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Lots 10-12 Block 76, Nebraska City Proper.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes all of the property historically associated with the Memorial Building.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ruben A. Acosta
organization Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office date December 15, 2015
street & number 1500 R St. P.O. Box 82554 telephone 402-471-4775
city or town Lincoln state NE zip code 68503
email ruben.acosta@nebraska.gov

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO for any additional items.)

Memorial Building
Name of Property

Otoe County, Nebraska
County and State

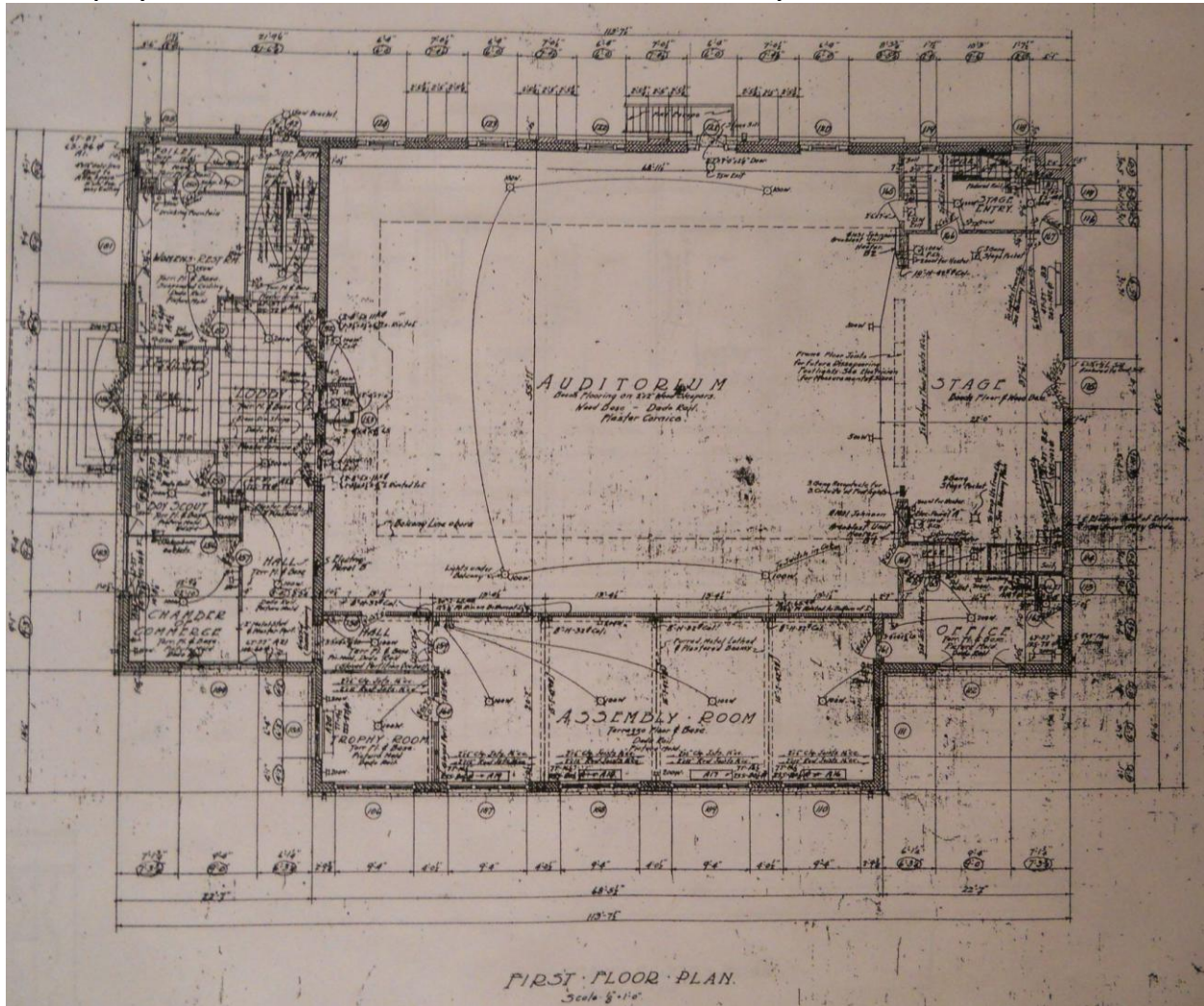


Figure 1: 1st floor plan, Memorial Building, 1928.

Memorial Building
Name of Property

Otoe County, Nebraska
County and State

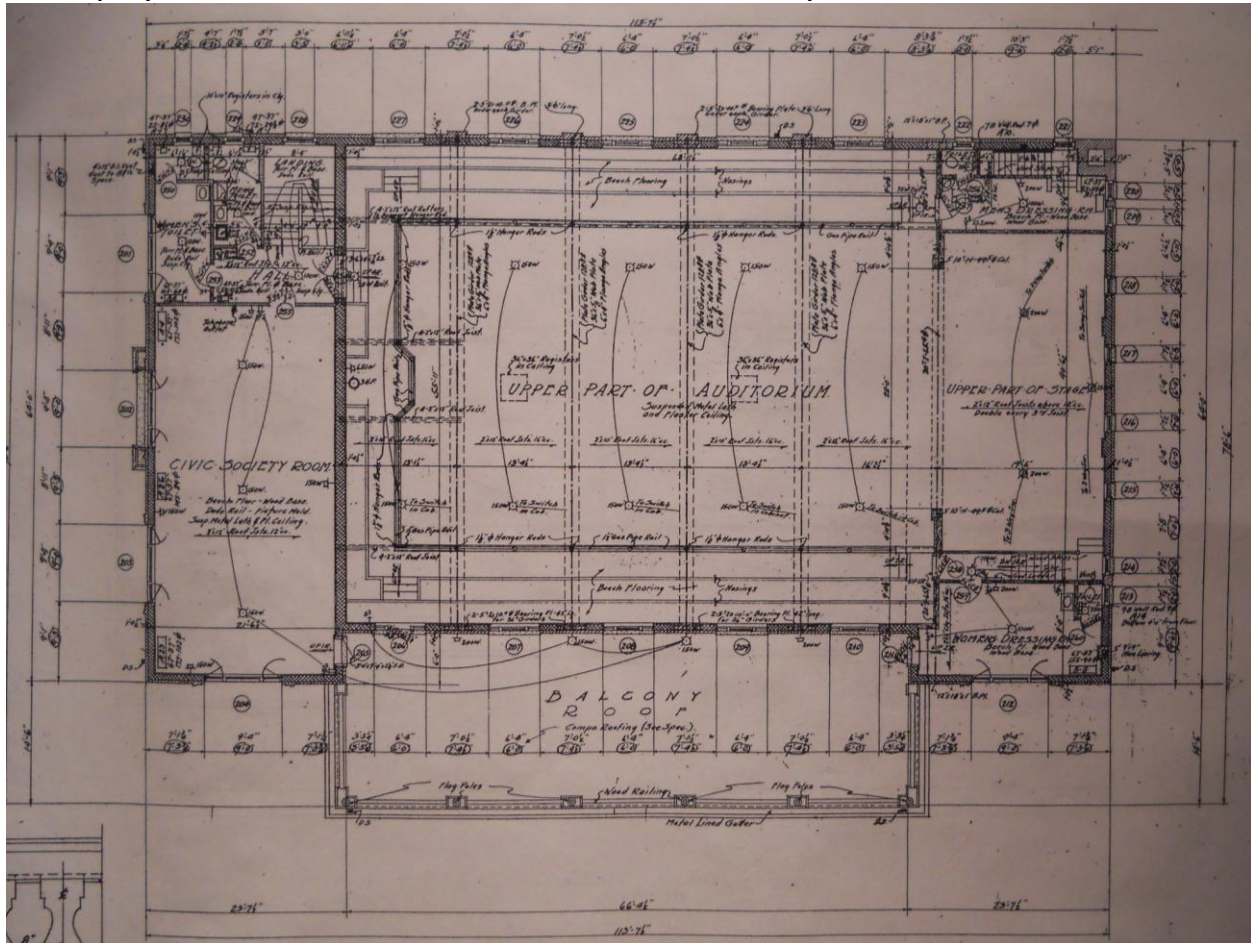


Figure 2: 2nd Floor plan, Memorial Building, 1928.

Memorial Building
Name of Property

Otoe County, Nebraska
County and State

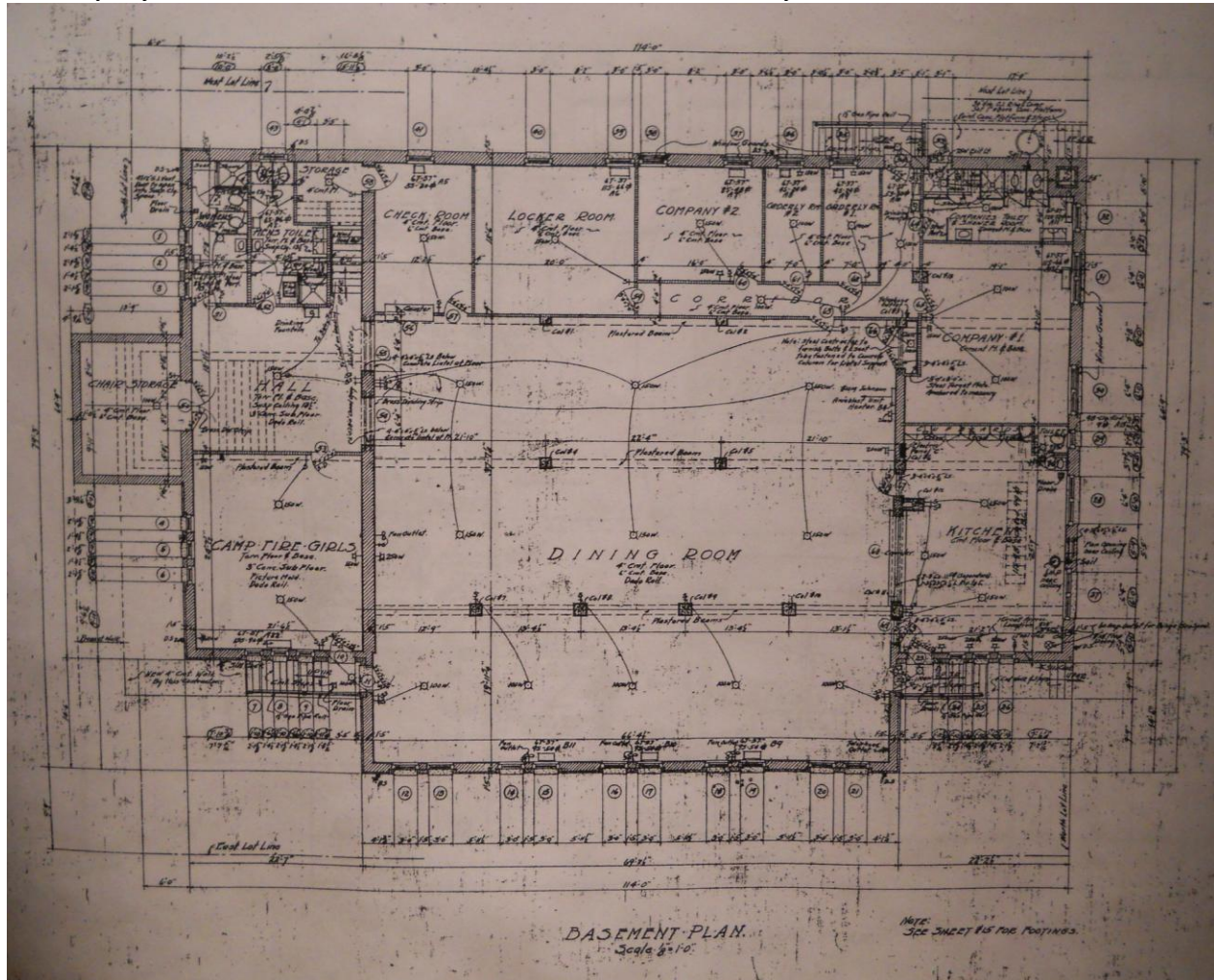


Figure 3: Basement plan, Memorial Building, 1928.

Memorial Building
Name of Property

Otoe County, Nebraska
County and State

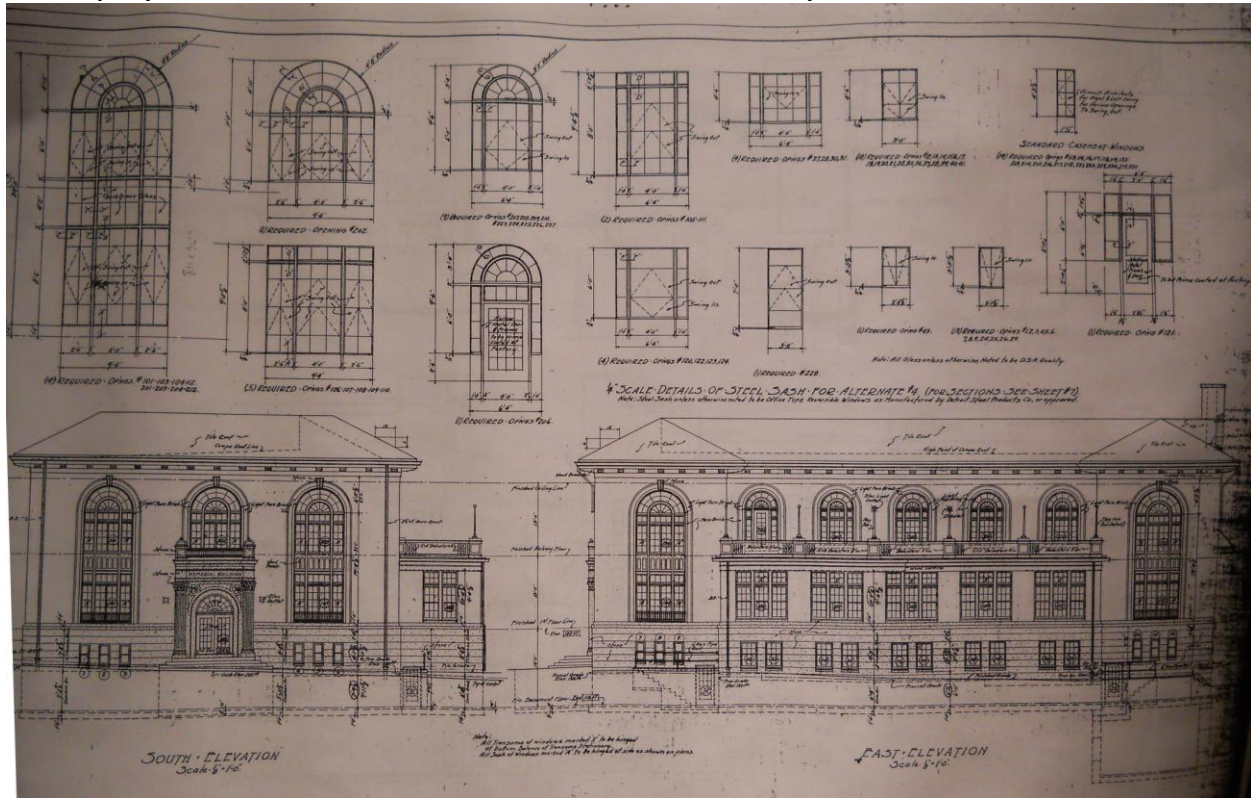


Figure 4: South and east elevations and window details, Memorial Building, 1928.

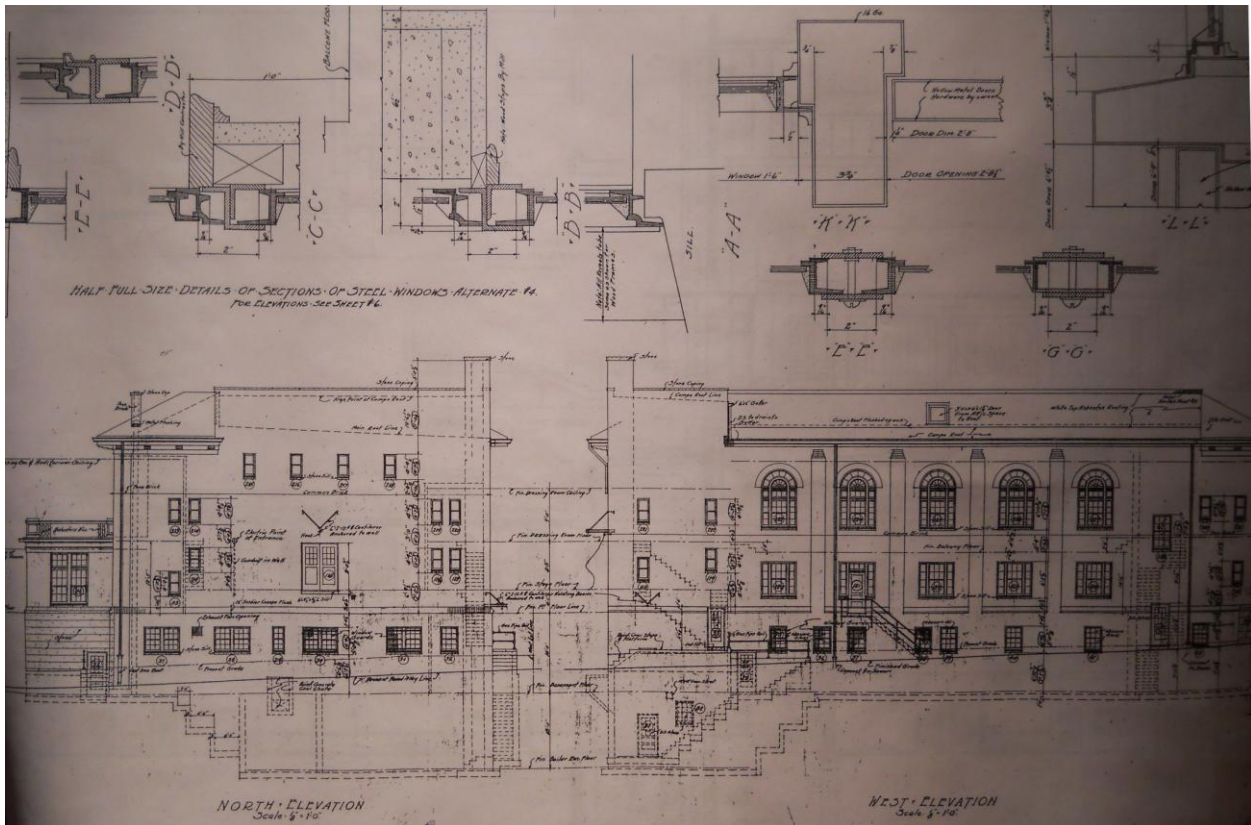


Figure 5: North and West elevations, Memorial building, 1928.

Memorial Building
Name of Property

Otoe County, Nebraska
County and State

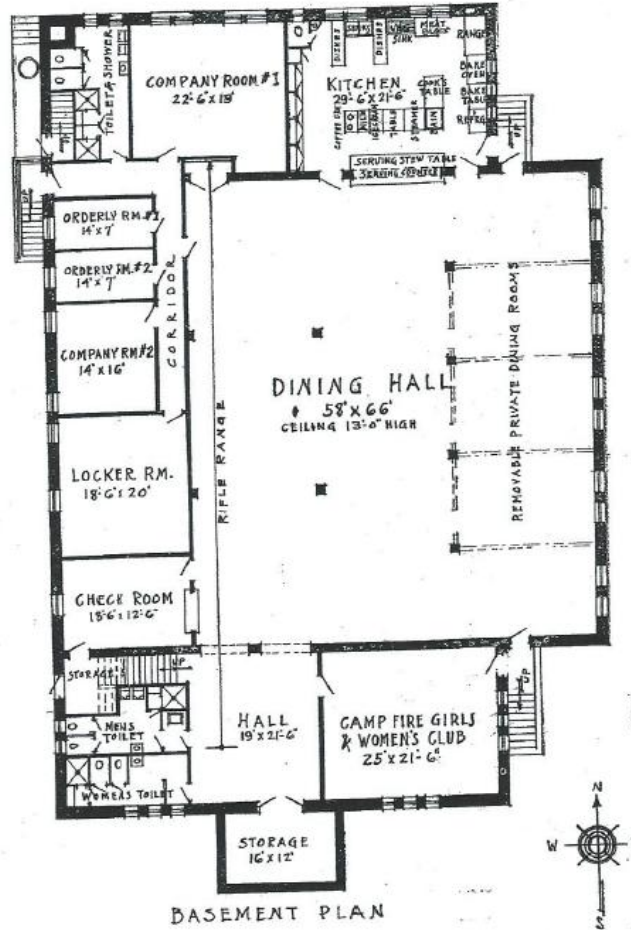


Figure 6: Plan from promotional brochure showing the proposed rifle range in the basement. ("Proposed Memorial Building for Nebraska City" Adam Schellinger Post No. 8, American Legion and Citizens Committee of One Hundred, 1928)

Memorial Building
Name of Property

Otoe County, Nebraska
County and State



Figure 7: Memorial Building auditorium balcony prior to the 1983 renovations showing the original plaster ceiling, roof beams, and lunette windows.

Memorial Building
Name of Property

Otoe County, Nebraska
County and State

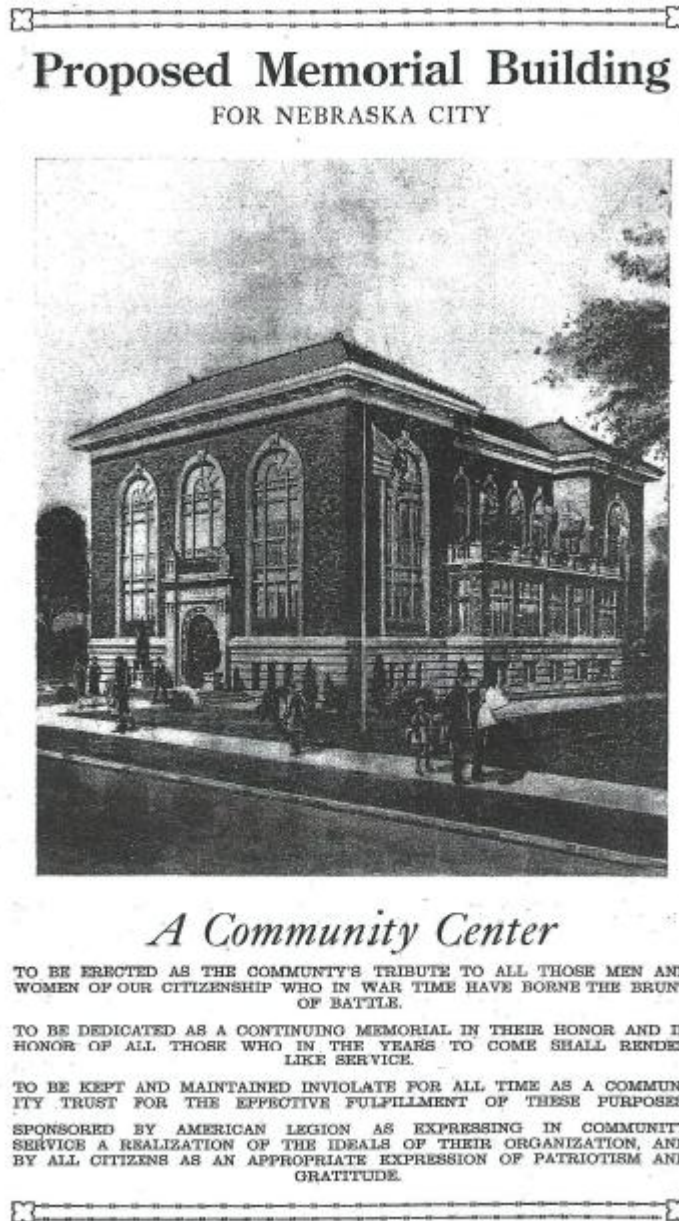


Figure 8: Rendering of proposed Memorial Building, 1928.

Memorial Building
Name of Property

Otoe County, Nebraska
County and State

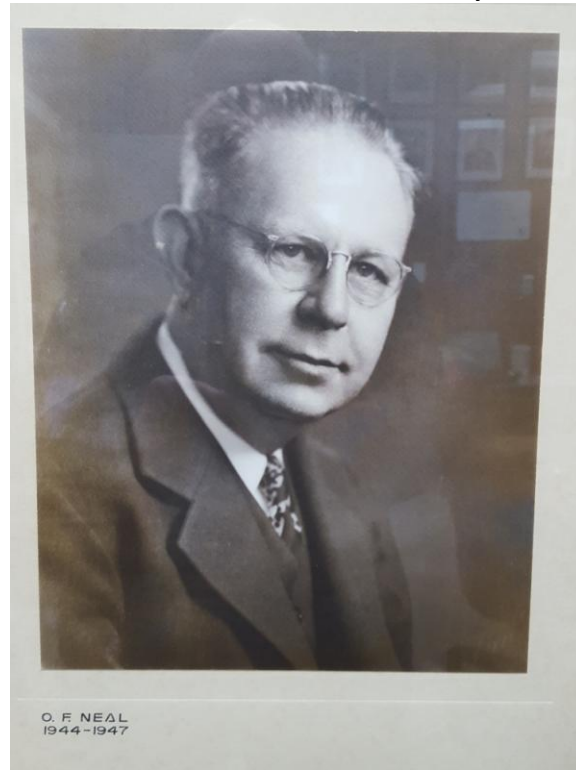
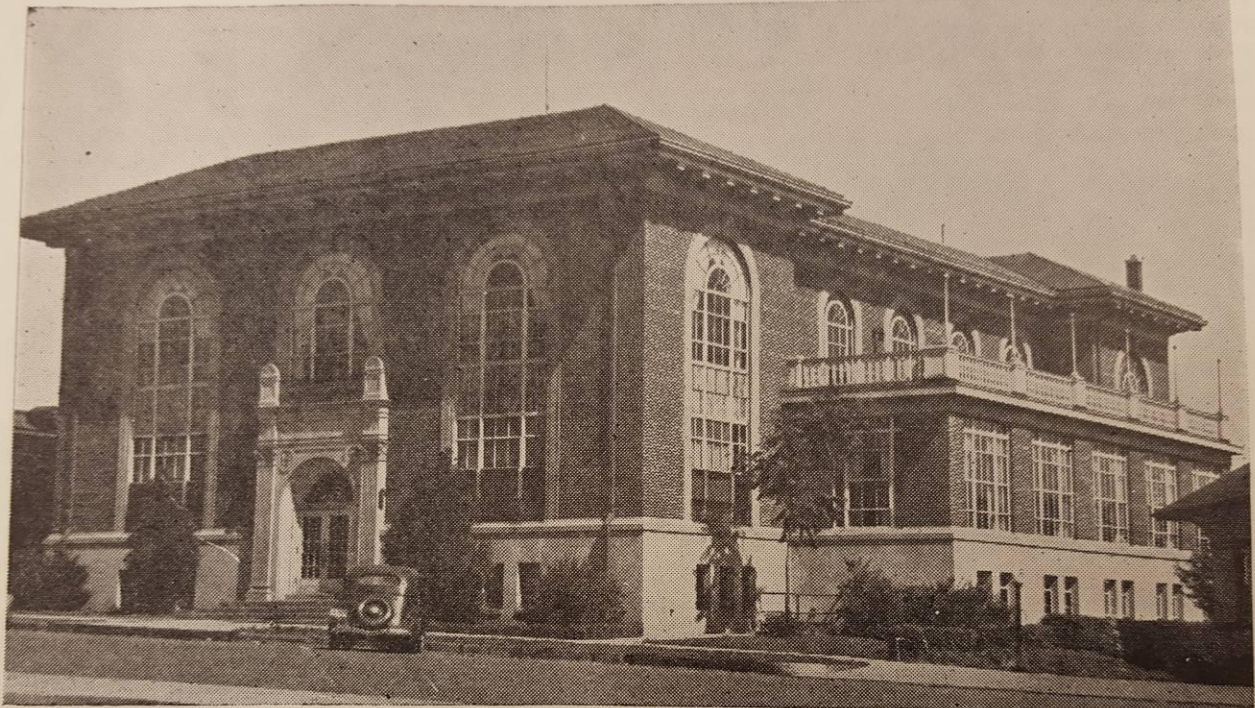


Figure 9: O. Fletcher Neal, c. 1944. Neal paid off the mortgage on the Memorial Building and facilitated the city's ownership of the building.

Memorial Building
Name of Property

Otoe County, Nebraska
County and State



MEMORIAL BUILDING—This fine \$75,000 building was erected by the people of Nebraska City and the surrounding community as a memorial to the men who served in the Civil, Spanish-American, and World Wars. It provides permanent quarters for veteran's organizations and civic organizations, as well as an armory for two Nebraska City National Guard companies. It contains kitchen and dining room facilities for public gatherings and has a prominent place in Nebraska City's "Civic Center" group.

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Figure 10: The Memorial Building in 1954. (*Nebraska City 1854-1954*. Nebraska City, NE: Chamber of Commerce, 1954. Pg. 54)

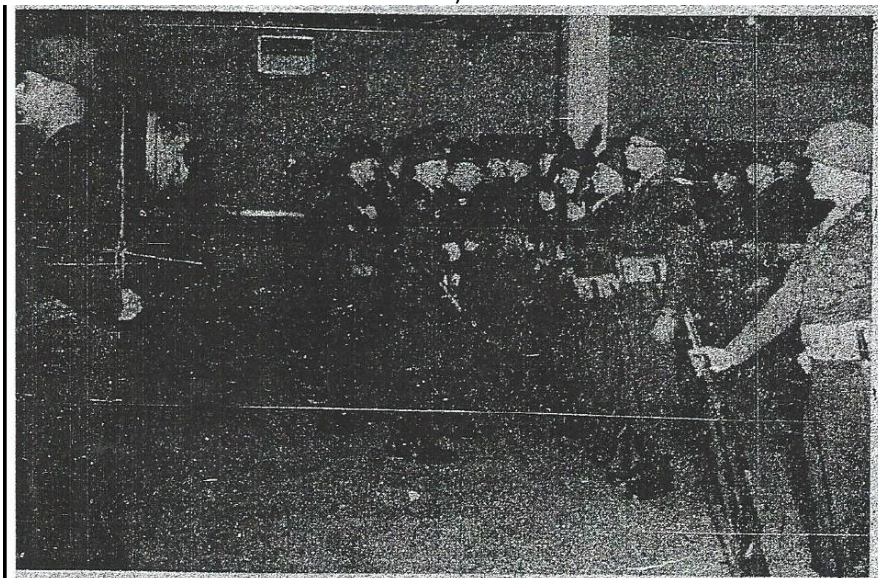


Figure 11: National Guard inspection in Dining Hall, 1954. ("Guards Get Check Okay" *Nebraska City News Press*, January 6, 1954)

Memorial Building
Name of Property

Otoe County, Nebraska
County and State



VFW CHRISTMAS PARTY AT MEMORIAL BUILDING, DECEMBER 1953

Figure 12: Christmas Party, 1953.



AMERICAN LEGION AUXILERY, PHOTO TAKEN IN MEMORIAL BUILDING, JUNE 1954

Figure 13: Legion Women's auxiliary, 1954.

Memorial Building
Name of Property

Otoe County, Nebraska
County and State

Dinner honors Class of '06

Nine members here;
Mrs. Willis new
president.

Nine members of the high school graduating class of 1906 were honored at the annual get-together of the Nebraska City Alumni Association at a Memorial Building banquet Tuesday evening.

The 240 persons attending adopted a constitution calling for the meeting to be held annually on the evening before Memorial day.

Members of the honored came from both coasts and class who had a special place at the reunion were: Louise Wirth Beausang, Denver; Mayme Thomas West, Seattle, Wash.; Truel Johnson Thompson, Council Bluffs; Carl Stahlhut, Easton, Md.; Louise Eisemann Tucker,

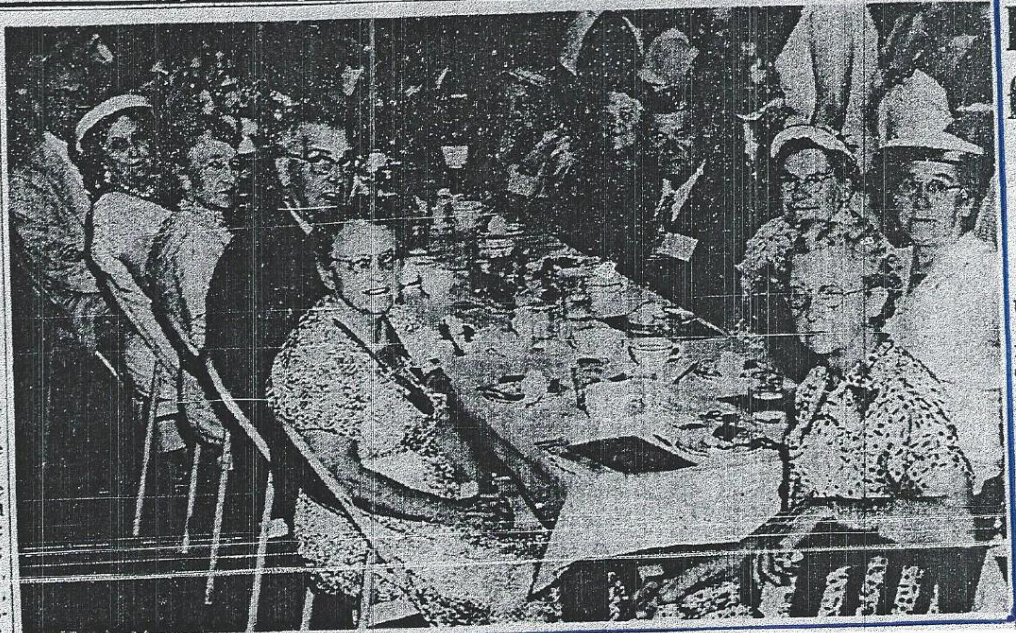


Figure 14: Alumni Association Dinner, 1956. (Nebraska City News Press, May 31, 1956)



West view of Memorial Hall in 1933. (Nebraska National Guard Historical Society)

Figure 15: Memorial Hall, Camp Ashland, 1933.

(Douglas R. Hartman, *Nebraska's Militia: The History of the Army and Air National Guard, 1854-1991*. Virginia Beach, VA: Donning Company, 1994. Pg. 106)

Memorial Building

Otoe County, Nebraska

Name of Property

County and State

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property Memorial Building

City or Vicinity Nebraska City County Otoe State Nebraska

Photographer Ruben A. Acosta Date Photographed November 16, 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera.

1. ¾ View, front façade, Memorial Building. View NW.
2. Front façade. View N.
3. East façade with one story block. View W.
4. North alley façade. View S.
5. West alley. View N.
6. Front triumphal arch entry. View N.
7. Auditorium, 1st floor. View N.
8. Auditorium, 1st floor. View S.
9. Entry lobby with ticket window and doors to auditorium. View N.
10. Entry, view from interior. View S.
11. Entry lobby, 1st floor. View E.
12. American Legion room, View N.
13. Trophy Room from the American Legion Room. View S.
14. Auditorium backstage. View W.
15. Northwest corner rear stairway. View N.
16. Auditorium balcony. View NE
17. Auditorium balcony and 2nd floor entryway. View SE.
18. 2nd floor meeting room. View SE.
19. Southwest stairway, 2nd floor. View W.
20. SE corner basement meeting room. View SE.
21. Dining Hall, basement. View S.
22. Dining Hall showing former entryways and Nebraska City High School Alumni Association rooms, former Check Room and Locker Room, basement. View SW.
23. Safe in Alumni Association Office, basement. View SW.
24. Alumni Association trophy room, basement. View N.
25. Former Orderly Room #2, basement. View W.
26. Dining hall serving window, basement. View N.
27. Kitchen, basement. View NW.

Memorial Building

Otoe County, Nebraska

Name of Property

County and State

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



The building is a three-story red brick structure with a prominent white cornice. The ground floor is finished with light-colored stone or concrete. The second and third floors are characterized by large, multi-paned arched windows with white frames. The central entrance on the left side is framed by a stone archway and features a small balcony above the door. An American flag is mounted on a pole to the left of the entrance. The building's roof is green, and a chimney is visible on the right side. The overall architectural style is reminiscent of early 20th-century commercial or institutional buildings.

A dark grey sedan is parked in a parking space on the left side of the image. The car is viewed from the rear, showing its taillights and license plate area.

A silver SUV is parked in a parking space on the right side of the image. The car is viewed from the rear, showing its taillights and license plate area.

A blue handicapped parking sign is visible on a black pole in the foreground, indicating a designated parking space for individuals with disabilities.



MEMORIAL BUILDING

19

20

EMERGENCY
PHONE
CALL
THE POLICE
911

HEIKERS HARDWARE



2 HOUR PARKING
9AM-5PM
Mon-Fri
← →

EMERGENCY
SNOW
ROUTE







MEMORIAL BUILDING

19

29









NO
ALCOHOL



FIRE



304























WELCOME
SANIT



WEL
SE





1920

1930

1940

1950

1960

1970

1980

1990







UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Memorial Building

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEBRASKA, Otoe

DATE RECEIVED: 2/05/16 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 3/15/16
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 3/30/16 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 3/22/16
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 16000106

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 3.22.2016 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Automatic Listing due to delayed FR notice.

Reviewed = no problems

outstanding, bldg. could also be eligible under C

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept A

REVIEWER J. Gabbit DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/~~N~~ see attached SLR Y/~~N~~

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



Nebraska State Historical Society
State Historical Preservation Review Board
P.O. Box 82554
Lincoln, NE 68501

Dear Members of the Board:

This letter is in support of the application of the Nebraska City Veterans Memorial Building for addition to the historical register.

American Legion Post 8 has a long history with the Memorial Building. The structure was built on land purchased and donated by Post 8 in 1927. The American Legion and other veteran's organizations had a dedicated room for meetings and other activities that was available to us the entire time the building was in use. The Nebraska National Guard armory was located in the basement of the building where they held meetings and had a permanent office. When the guard moved to a new armory built by the state the Nebraska City Alumni Association took over the empty space for their offices.

The history of the Nebraska City Memorial Building is significant to those of us who remember it for not only veteran's events but the activities of many organizations in the city over the past eighty five years.

The members of American Legion Post 8 believe it is appropriate that the Nebraska City Memorial Building be placed on the National Historic Register because of its historical significance to veterans and the entire community of Nebraska City.

Sincerely,

Cmdr. John R. [Signature] *Post 8, American Legion*

Nebraska City High School Alumni Foundation, Inc.

PO Box 188

Nebraska City, NE 68410

December 30, 2015

Mr. Michael J. Smith, State Historic Preservation Officer
Nebraska State Historical Society
P.O. Box 82554
Lincoln, NE 68501-2554

Dear Mr. Smith,

The Nebraska City High School Alumni Foundation supports the application to place the Nebraska City Memorial Building on the National Register of Historic Places.

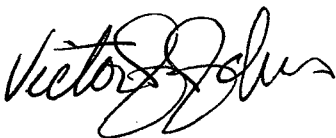
Before it's closure, the Memorial Building was used by our organization for over 50 years. It provided a meeting place for our board meetings, and class reunions were held in the auditorium where dinners, lunches and receptions were hosted for the alumni members.

During the 1980's, our Foundation sponsored fundraisers and were successful in raising over \$80,000 to make repairs to the building including an upgrade to the electrical system, provide new curtains for the building and kitchen appliances for use in the building.

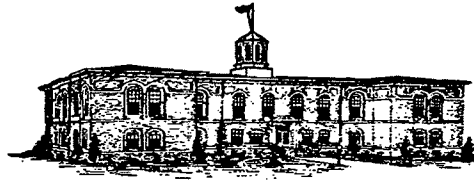
The Nebraska City High School Alumni Foundation also had a permanent office in the building that included a historical display of our memorabilia and artifacts that span over one hundred years.

We believe the Memorial Building's inclusion in the National Historic Register of Historic Places is a fitting tribute to the building's significance in our community history.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victor J. Johns". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "V".

Victor J. Johns, President
Nebraska City High School Alumni Foundation, Inc.



OTOE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Charles R Hauptman, 1st District
Rick Freshman, 2nd District
Jared Sornson, 3rd District
Timothy Nelsen, 4th District
Steven Lade, 5th District

PO Box 249
Nebraska City NE 68410
(402) 873-9505

December 18, 2015

Nebraska State Historical Society
State Historical Preservation Review Board
1500 R Street
PO Box 82554
Lincoln, NE 68501-2554

Dear Members of the Board:

On behalf of the Otoe County Board of Commissioners, I am writing this letter in support of the nomination of the Memorial Building to the National Register of Historic Places. The Memorial Building is located in Nebraska City, the County Seat of Otoe County.

The Memorial Building was built in 1927 with the purpose of establishing a memorial suitable for those who served in the Civil, Spanish-American, and World wars. Constructed entirely of brick and stone, the building has withstood the test of time and has proven to be a solid structure. Its beauty is enriched by huge Palladian windows and graceful stone arches.

The building hosted numerous veterans and civic organizations, as well as community events throughout the years. It served as the armory for two Nebraska City National Guard companies for a time. The Memorial Building housed War Trophies such as knives, flags, swords, uniforms, etc. The display was estimated to contain more than 1,000 pieces. One of these is a Civil War relic covered with pictures of Civil War generals and dates of important war events.

In previous years, the Memorial Building was utilized as a meeting place for various organizations including Disabled American Veterans, World War I Barrack, American Legion Auxiliary, VFW Auxiliary and Nebraska City Federated Women's Club. Community events were also held at the Memorial Building. The Nebraska City High School Alumni Dinner, the Arbor Valley Gem and Mineral Club show and the Nebraska City Coin Club show were annual events.

The Memorial Building provided the community opportunities to gather together for various reasons. Saturday night game parties and rummage sales, facilitated by the Knights of Columbus, were held there. The Parks and Recreation Department used the auditorium for youth sports activities. Dances for the local junior high were also held in the auditorium.

As you may have noticed, the verb tenses used when writing about the Memorial Building have been "past" tenses. However, my hope is that this letter will change that. Its initial purpose was to honor those who served our country, but it did more than that. The Memorial Building served all generations.

We support and humbly request your approval of adding the Memorial Building to the National Register of Historic Places. It will serve as a crucial center point for our community – regardless of age. This letter outlines the important roles the Memorial Building played in the past. Your support would enable it to make a difference in the present and future of Nebraska City and Otoe County citizens.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this letter of support.

Sincerely,

Rick Freshman
Otoe County Commissioner

CITY OF NEBRASKA CITY

1409 Central Avenue
Nebraska City, NE 68410-2223
Phone: 402-873-5515
Fax: 402-873-5685



November 4, 2015

Ruben A. Acosta
National Register and CLG Coordinator
Nebraska State Historical Society
State Historic Preservation Office
PO Box 82554
Lincoln, NE 68501-2554

Re: Application for listing of the Nebraska City Veterans Memorial Building to the National Register of Historic Places

Mr. Acosta,

Let it be known that the Nebraska City Veterans Memorial Building is currently owned and has been owned continuously since 1943 by the City of Nebraska City, Nebraska.

This letter is to document and communicate that the City Council of Nebraska City, Nebraska has, at its meeting on November 2, 2015, discussed and documented by majority vote that it supports the Historic Resources Inventory Form application for the addition of the Nebraska City Veterans Memorial Building to the Historic Resources Inventory and the National Register of Historic Places.

The signature below is given under the authority of the City Council of Nebraska City, Nebraska and the office of Mayor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bryan Bequette". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over the printed name.

Bryan Bequette
Mayor
Nebraska City, Nebraska



Nebraska City Historical Society
P. O. Box 175
Nebraska City, NE 68410-0175



December 28, 2015

Nebraska State Historical Society
Nebraska State Historic Preservation Review Board
P.O. Box 82554
Lincoln, NE 68501

Dear Members of the Board:

The Nebraska City Historical Society was pleased to learn an application for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places has been submitted on behalf of the Nebraska City Memorial Building.

The Memorial Building has played a major part in Nebraska City activities throughout the majority of the twentieth century. The building was a hub of activity for young and old alike. Girl scouts, boy scouts, school proms, Alumni reunions, senior citizen lunches and a host of other community events took place in the building. Veteran's organizations used the building daily and were provided permanent space for meetings and special events starting with the day the building was dedicated in 1929.

The Memorial Building is a massive structure with a limestone veneer reaching to the first floor and a transition of solid red brick masonry completing the building. The monumental steel arched windows allow natural light to enter the building and add to the uniqueness and beauty of the structure. The interior includes a stage and large auditorium with a seating capacity of 750 as well as many meeting rooms and a basement that includes a large dining room and kitchen area. The design and quality of the Memorial Building is unlike any other structure we have in Nebraska City.

The Nebraska City Historical Society is very supportive of the Memorial Building being listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The inclusion of the Memorial Building to the Registry would be a welcome addition to the other buildings in Nebraska City that have been placed on the registry. The Nebraska City Memorial Building is a vital part of the 162 year history of our community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Susan Quinn

President, Nebraska City Historical Society

Nebraska Main Street Network

P.O. Box 6808 | Lincoln, Nebraska | 68506

January 6, 2016

Nebraska State Historic Preservation Board

John Kay, Chair

c/o Nebraska State Historical Society

P.O. Box 82554

Lincoln, NE 68501

It is with pleasure that we join others in support of the National Register nomination of the historic Memorial Building in Nebraska City.

The Nebraska Main Street Program played a significant role in the preservation of this building in 2006 with the sponsorship of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Leadership Training in Nebraska City. There were 30 people from 18 states attending the week-long training, June 10-17, and they divided into five teams to study the building and propose new uses for the facility.

The teams gathered historical data and numerous plans for the building which had been compiled over a number of years. Nebraska Main Street provided coordination, resources and helped to select focus groups of city and county officials and citizens to provide input to the process. Plans for re-use ranged from a visitor center to an arts and recreation center and a cultural enrichment center. The plans were presented to the public at the end of the week-long workshop and were well-received.

The story behind the Memorial Building is a rich one that speaks to the very fabric of life in Nebraska and the state's significant role in national and international affairs. The Nebraska Main Street program believes that inclusion of this property on the National Register is both historically symbolic and financially wise as developers seek to follow through on the plans.



Elizabeth Chase, Executive Director
Nebraska Main Street Network Inc.

cc: Ruben Acosta

Visit Nebraska. Visit Nice.®

January 8, 2016

To: Nebraska State Historic Preservation Board

Re: National Register of Historic Places Application

Dear Members of the Review Board,

It has come to our attention that an application has been made on behalf of a property located at 810 1st Corso, Nebraska City, known as the Memorial Building and site reference number of OT06: A-044.

The Memorial building has welcomed and sheltered community members and residents of Otoe county and Nebraska for almost a century, and while it may have fallen into disrepair, designation as a national historic place is not only imperative to its future survival but to our state history as well.

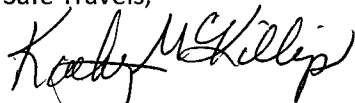
Historic sites are a critical component in the hub and spoke concept for tourism. As a visitor comes to see one attraction, they are often encouraged, motivated and enthusiastic to explore additional ones within the community or region. This stimulates a domino effect. When done correctly, the economic impact and revenue can out way and long last the immediate impacts of just saving a building.

Tourism is big business. Nebraska's history plays a crucial role in supporting and enhancing that big business. As the state's third largest industry, we need more products, meaning that the visitor is constantly seeking additional opportunities to enhance upon and explore when they are here. The more products we can provide, support and sustain makes for a healthier economy.

We support the application of the Memorial Building in Nebraska City along with the wonderful efforts the community members, once again, have made towards moving this application before you today.

We would like to encourage you to support this application and as always look forward to working with all of the wonderful components of Nebraska's history through Heritage Tourism.

Safe Travels,



Sincerely,

Kathy McKillip, Executive Director

Nebraska Tourism Commission



RECEIVED 2280

FEB - 5 2016

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

January 26, 2016

J. Paul Loether
National Register—National Historic Landmarks Programs
National Park Service
1201 "I" Street NW, 8th Floor
Washington, DC 20005

RE: Memorial Building
810 1st Corso, Nebraska City, Otoe County, Nebraska

Dear Mr. Loether:

The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the above referenced property to the National Register of Historic Places. This form has met all notification and other requirements as established in 36 CFR 60.

If you have any questions concerning this nomination, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ruben A. Acosta". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Ruben A. Acosta
National Register and CLG Coordinator
Nebraska State Historical Society

Enclosure

1500 R Street
PO Box 82554
Lincoln, NE 68501-2554
p: (800) 833-6747
(402) 471-3270
f: (402) 471-3100
www.nebraskahistory.org