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OCT 27 1989

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 Park School
other names/site number D009:0203-023

2. Location

street & number 1320 South 29th Street N/A not for publication
city, town Omaha N/A vicinity
state Nebraska code NE county Douglas code 055 zip code 68105

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>1</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>1</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. Danman 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)
EDUCATION/school

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
work in progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

Late Gothic Revival
other: Collegiate Gothic

foundation CONCRETE
walls BRICK
roof ASPHALT
other STONE/Limestone

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Park School was built in 1918 by the Omaha Public School District as an 18-room elementary school facility. The flat-roofed, masonry building, which is U-shaped in plan, includes two floors over a raised basement; a framing system of reinforced concrete supports the structure. The building incorporates features of the Collegiate Gothic Style, expressed in a straightforward and restrained manner. Sited on a 1.3-acre parcel, the building is located in one of the city's older residential districts, less than a mile from the central business district. Because the building has been subject to few alterations and little deterioration or removal of historic fabric has occurred, Park School retains a high degree of historic and architectural integrity. A certified historic rehabilitation of the property for use as apartments is currently underway.

Located in a neighborhood adjacent to Omaha's central business district, Park School was constructed as an 18-room elementary school in 1918. The building occupies a 1.3 acre-parcel bounded by Woolworth and 29th Streets in Hanscom Place, a subdivision platted in 1873 by pioneer Omaha attorney and real estate developer Andrew J. Hanscom. Prior to platting his subdivision, Hanscom donated a portion of his landholdings in the area to the city for use as a park. Encompassing fifty-eight acres of rolling, wooded terrain, Hanscom Park lies one half-block southwest of the school site.

Proximity to the park combined with the advent of streetcar lines along its principal artery, Park Avenue (30th Street), encouraged rapid residential settlement in Hanscom Place; a city atlas shows that by 1887 the subdivision was already filling up with single family dwellings. Soon after, multi-family apartment buildings appeared in the district, concentrating along streetcar lines. The neighborhood's historic patterns of development remained relatively unchanged until the late 1950s when Interstate Highway Route 480 cut through the area. Extending in a north-south direction parallel to 29th Street, the highway cleared land south of the street for a 300-foot right-of-way.

The Park School site includes about 400 feet of frontage on the west side of 29th Street. Oriented to the street with a 12-foot setback, the school building now faces the highway; on the south, the property is bounded by Woolworth Avenue. A retaining wall on the west reconciles a grade change between the property line and the block's public alley. The wall also extends along the site's northern edge where it serves to enclose a grass play yard. A series of steps provides access to the yard from 29th Street. Apart from a narrow strip of lawn at the front of the building, the remainder of the site has been paved for parking and student activities on the west and south.

Sited toward the north end of the lot, the brick school building, U-shaped in plan, consists of two stories over a raised basement. The principal (east) facade measures 180 feet while side walls are 102 feet; at the rear elevation a court occupies approximately 6,000 square feet. The structure's flat, composition roof is concealed by a shaped parapet.

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A reinforced-concrete skeleton frame resting on concrete pads, reinforced concrete floors and a built-up roof composes the building's technical system. Curtain walls are of masonry construction: red-colored, American bond face brick with limestone trim is used for principal and secondary elevations; common brick appears on rear elevation walls including those of the court.

The building's interior space was originally divided into 16 classrooms on two upper floors with a kindergarten, manual training and toilet rooms in the basement. According to newspaper accounts, the auditorium and gymnasium that appear in the court area on the original plans were excluded from the building program due to excessive costs. Building plans were altered further with the elimination of a library and teachers' lounge, however, major aspects of the architect's original interior arrangement were retained in the building's construction, and there have been no subsequent major floor plan modifications. The building's utilitarian program is also evident on the interior where plain finishes include 2-inch strip maple flooring; smooth plaster walls; painted wood doors, door and window moldings and baseboards; and cast iron newel posts with wood hand rails.

Plans for each of the building's three floors are similarly configured with rooms aligned in a single-loaded fashion along a wide corridor which is situated adjacent to the rear court wall. First- and second-floor plans are identical — each contains eight classrooms with wardrobes. The basement plan features rooms which vary in size according to their differing functions. Vertical circulation through the structure is provided by a central stairway originating from an entrance vestibule and secondary stairways located at the west ends of the corridors.

With regard to style, Thomas Kimball's design for Park School exhibits characteristics of the Collegiate Gothic style simplified by the constraints of wartime construction. On the principal (east) elevation, the central entrance consists of a vertically oriented bay reminiscent of a medieval gatehouse. Defined by tower-like wall projections, the bay carries the building's stylistic interest. Contrasting with the structure's red brick walls, the Tudor arch door surround, crenelated moldings and tower finials are carved from light-colored stone. Stone is also used for parapet coping, window sills and belt courses.

The facade follows a bilateral arrangement: four bays flank each side of the entry. Wide bays contain a grouping of twelve symmetrically ranked windows; narrow bays contain three smaller windows with corbelled brickwork creating the effect of pointed arch window heads. While the larger, grouped windows appear to be paired, double-hung units, they actually employ a unique folding-type sash that projects outward when opened.

The historic and architectural integrity of Park School remains relatively high. The primary alteration in the building's historic appearance results from the covering of transom windows on both the principal and secondary elevations.

9. Major Bibliographical References

(See Continuation Sheet)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

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 1.3

UTM References

A

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2	5	2	4	2	0
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4	5	7	0	0	6	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

C

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B

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 Zone Easting Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of Park School is shown as the shaded area on the accompanying map entitled, "1984 Omaha/Douglas County Historic Buildings Survey: Park School, D009:0203-023."

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the parcel that has historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lynn Bjorkman, City Planner
 organization Omaha City Planning Department date August 1989
 street & number Omaha/Douglas Civic Center; 1819 Farnam Street telephone (402) 444-4927
 city or town Omaha state NE zip code 68183

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
1918

Significant Dates
1918

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
Kimball, Thomas Rogers

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

Built to the designs of Nebraska's pre-eminent architect, Thomas Rogers Kimball, Park School is significant in the area of architecture on a local level under Criterion C representing the work of a master. During the span of his 30-year career in Omaha, Thomas Kimball was responsible for the designs of a number of Omaha's most architecturally distinguished buildings, including St. Cecilia's Cathedral, the former Omaha Public Library and the Fontenelle Hotel. Referenced to the historic context, "The Work of Thomas Rogers Kimball in Omaha, Nebraska, 1891-1934," Park School is representative of Kimball's designs for public buildings in Omaha and qualifies for registration on the basis of its relative importance among others of its property type. The date of the school's construction has been noted as both the period and date of the building's significance.

A \$1 million bond issue passed by Omaha voters in 1915 provided funding for nine major building projects undertaken by the Omaha Public School District's Board of Education in 1916. Among the projects was the replacement of the district's then-oldest extant facility, Hanscom Park School, an 1886 structure located at 29th Street and Woolworth Avenue. At a cost of approximately \$142,000, a new building was put into use on the site in the fall of 1918. Park School functioned as a public elementary school for seventy years — from its opening until deaccession by the district in 1988.

Five different Omaha architectural firms were selected to produce plans for the first group of building projects authorized by the Board early in 1916. Thomas Kimball received the commission for one of the two largest projects ordered by the Board at this time, the new building on the Hanscom Park School site.

Representing the work of master architect Thomas Kimball, Park School achieves significance in the area of architecture on the local level under Criterion C. The property is associated with the historic context, "The Work of Thomas Rogers Kimball in Omaha, Nebraska, 1891-1934." To determine its significance, Park School was evaluated against buildings with similar associations to the context identified by the Omaha/Douglas County Historic Buildings Survey.

Briefly summarizing the historic context, Thomas Rogers Kimball (1862-1934), Nebraska's pre-eminent architect, received his professional training at the Cowles Art School and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston, and at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. In 1891 he entered into practice with C. Howard Walker in Boston and in the same year opened an Omaha branch of the firm. That partnership was dissolved in 1899; Kimball headed his own practice in Omaha until 1928 when the firm of Kimball, Steele and Sandham was formed. He remained associated with that partnership until his death six years later.

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Responsible for the designs of a number of Omaha's most notable buildings — including St. Cecilia's Cathedral (NRHP 1979), the Burlington Headquarters Building (NRHP 1974), the former Omaha Public Library (NRHP 1978) and the Fontenelle Hotel (razed in 1982) — Thomas Kimball occupied a position of central importance in the shaping of Omaha's architectural development. The architect's design talents were also recognized beyond Omaha: Kimball received commissions for numerous buildings in a number of Nebraska communities and in the Midwest.

Highly respected for his administrative and leadership skills, Thomas Kimball also rose to a position of prominence for his involvement in national architectural affairs. Selected as a fellow in the American Institute of Architects in 1901, he served from 1918-1920 as the organization's National President. In 1909, President Theodore Roosevelt appointed Kimball to membership on the first Commission for Fine Arts. In addition, Kimball served with C. Howard Walker as Architect-in-Chief for the 1898 Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition in Omaha, and on the basis of that work, the architect was named to the architectural Board of the 1903 Louisiana Purchase Exhibition. Acting as professional advisor to the Nebraska State Capitol Commission from 1919-32, Kimball directed the competition which led to the selection of architect Bertram Goodhue.

The Omaha/Douglas County Historic Buildings Survey has identified thirty extant properties representing the historic context related to Thomas Kimball's work in Omaha. From this group of resources, several property types having relevance in illustrating the historic context can be defined. Based on similar physical and associative characteristics, Kimball's designs for public facilities constitute one such property type.

The architect's earliest and perhaps most significant design for a public building in the city is the 1891-92 Omaha Public Library, listed in the National Register in 1978. Completing the group of property type members are the five elementary school buildings that Kimball completed for the Omaha Public School District over a twenty-three year span. The first project, Monmouth Park, was completed in 1903 and Beals followed one year later. Kimball designed a second building on the Beals site in 1926, and soon after completed plans for Belvedere, his final school project. Of these four commissions, the Beals buildings and Belvedere are still in use as elementary schools; Monmouth Park School was sold by the district in 1983. Noted for its significance in the area of architecture for its Second Renaissance Revival design, Monmouth Park School was subsequently listed in the National Register and adapted for reuse as apartments through a certified historic rehabilitation.

In terms of its physical characteristics, Park School conforms to a formal and compositional scheme that Kimball frequently used in his designs for a wide range of building types: the flat-walled rectangular box with architectural interest focused on a central entry. With respect to style, the building incorporates features derived from the Collegiate Gothic, evident specifically in the Tudor-arched door opening and tower-like forms enriched with carved stone at the primary entrance. The building can best be characterized, however, by its straight-forward functionalism and absence of extensive ornamentation. Economic conditions necessitated the utilitarianism of Kimball's design as a 1918 World-Herald article explains: "[W]artime economies have been wrought out in replanning this as other schools built in the past two years. Still it remains attractive, well ventilated, fireproof and up to date" (Omaha World-Herald, "New School Will Be A Delight To Pupils").

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Although two other resources representing Thomas Kimball's public commissions have previously been entered in the National Register, Park School also possesses sufficient relative importance to qualify it for registration. First, the building is representative of the architect's work in form and composition and attests to the range of his interest in historical revivalism. Kimball's designs for the Beals School addition show a somewhat more fully developed interpretation of the Collegiate Gothic style, however, that property is still in active use and its physical integrity and prospects for long-term protection are not assured. Park School, then, may remain as a singular example of Kimball's interest in Gothic revivalism, an involvement which he emphatically expressed in his 1914 Fontenelle Hotel, a major work that was demolished in 1982.

Finally, according to Kimball's own records (Omaha Architects File), it appears that the architect produced plans for a total of more than three hundred new buildings, the majority of which were built in Omaha. Of the thirty Kimball buildings included in the Omaha/Douglas County Historic Buildings Survey, only five have been listed in the National Register. The registration of Park School will help to insure that a representative sample of Thomas Kimball's work will survive to form the basis for further study of this important Omaha architect's career.

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