

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

658



National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable". For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Swartz Printing Company Building

Other names/site number DO09:0121-078

2. Location

Street & number 714 South 15th Street

Not for publication

City or town Omaha

Vicinity

State Nebraska Code NE County Douglas Code 055 Zip code 68102

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Michael J. ...
Signature of certifying official

May 17, 2007
Date

Director, Nebraska State Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.

see continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.

see continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): _____

Edson H. Beall 7-3-07

[Signature]
Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- X Building(s)
District
Site
Structure
Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for Buildings, Sites, Structures, Objects, Total.

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/specialty store

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCIAL STYLE

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Foundation BRICK

Walls BRICK

Roof ROLLED ASPHALT

Other

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- X A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B Removed from its original location.
C A birthplace or a grave.
D A cemetery.
E A reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F A commemorative property.
G Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

1910-1957

Significant Dates

1910

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Jacob Nachtigall (architect)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
Previously listed in the National Register
Previously determined eligible by the National Register
Designated a National Historic Landmark
Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location for additional data:

- X State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local Government
University
Other
Name of repository:

Swartz Printing Company Building

Name of Property

Douglas County, Nebraska

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one (0.13 acres)

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	15	254006	4570769	3.			
2.				4.			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Matt Hansen
organization Bahr Vermeer Haecker Architects date January 2007
street & number 121 South 13th Street, Suite 200 telephone 402-475-4551
city or town Lincoln state NE zip code 68508

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name/title Laura L. Shiffermiller
street & number 10917 Marcy Plaza telephone 402-731-3140 ext. 234
city or town Omaha state NE zip code 68154

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determined 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, (15 USC 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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7. Description of physical appearance:

The Swartz Printing Company building is a two-story, brick masonry structure that faces east onto South 15th Street in downtown Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska. It occupies a 45.4' by 132' site and the footprint of the building fills the site except for a 5' strip along the south and a 7' strip along the west edge of the property. The building itself is 40' wide in the north-south direction and 125' long in the east-west direction. The first story is 16' high and the second story is 12' high, giving the building an overall height of 28' from grade to the roof level. The exterior walls are multi-hued brick that is laid up in common bond courses with a header row at every seventh course.

The east façade is the primary façade and faces onto 15th Street. The first floor level of the facade is symmetrically divided into two wood-framed storefronts, each with its own entrance and separated from each other by a central door that opens onto the stairway leading the second floor. Each of the three doors has an entrance stoop. The center and south entrances retain their original limestone stoops while the north entrance stoop has been replaced in the past with a precast concrete stoop. Two basement windows, one on each side of the central door, are located in window wells that are covered with iron grates. The top part of these windows and their limestone headers project above the level of the sidewalk. The second floor contains seven window openings that are recessed slightly from the plane of the façade. These window openings contain modern, vinyl-clad, double-hung replacement windows. Above the level of the second floor windows is a limestone cornice and sign plaque that is supported by decorative brick corbelling. The limestone sign plaque is inscribed "The Swartz Printing Co." and refers to the business who occupied the largest percentage of the building for much of the 20th century. Above the level of the limestone cornice is a brick parapet that is capped with vitrified clay parapet tiles.

The north façade fronts the alley and is less ornate in terms of its architectural detailing. The first floor contains fifteen window openings that decrease in height as they move from east to west in response to the inclination in the grade of the site. All window openings contain their original double-hung, wood framed windows with multi-light sashes except for the easternmost window. An overhead door that has served as a freight entrance is located just west of this window opening. The second floor contains sixteen window openings of which the eight westernmost openings have been boarded over. The other openings have had their original windows replaced with vinyl-clad, double-hung replacement windows. The second floor opening at the far west end of the façade is deeper than all of the rest and may have once held an exit door. A simple corbelled brick cornice defines the top of the north façade and supports a metal gutter with downspouts in three locations.

Because of the slope of the site, the first floor at the west façade is almost entirely below grade level. The first floor level of the west façade contains a door at the north end and a single boarded-over window at the south end. Apparently in order to provide light for the window, a brick-lined area well was created along the entire length of the west façade. In more recent times, this area well has been covered over with a roof enclosure. Directly above the first floor door is another door at the second floor level. This door exits out onto the area well roof covering and has a wood stair leading down to grade. South of the door is a single window that has been boarded over. There is no cornice at the west façade, but the parapet is capped with vitrified clay tiles.

Similar to the north façade, each story of the south façade contains a row of windows. There are fifteen windows on the first floor, and the easternmost four window openings are taller than the others. The second floor contains sixteen window openings that are all the same height. All of the windows on the south façade have been boarded over on the exterior,

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7. Description of physical appearance: (continued)

but it appears that the original wood-framed, double-hung windows are still present beneath the coverings. The north façade parapet is capped with vitrified clay tiles.

The roof of the Swartz Printing Company building slopes from south to north and empties into a gutter along the north façade. There are brick roof parapets on the east, west and south sides of the building. The roof is currently covered with asphalt-based rolled roofing. There are two chimneys incorporated into the south parapet. The east chimney is the larger of the two and connects to the basement level where it originally provided ventilation for the furnace. The west chimney retains its original limestone chimney cap as well as its vitrified clay tile chimney liner.

The basement level is confined to the east end of the building and is only 20 feet deep in the east-west direction. It contains the furnace, ductwork, and a pair of small storage rooms. The concrete floor slab and the brick masonry walls exhibit signs of considerable water infiltration. The exposed structure of the first floor above serves as the ceiling. A wood stair with open risers connects the basement to the first floor. It descends to an intermediate landing at the east wall and then splits north and south where three additional risers continue the stair on down to the floor level.

The interior of the first floor can be divided into two main parts. The easternmost forty feet of the floor has interior partition walls that divide the space up into two retail storefronts. Separating the two storefronts is the stairway leading to the second floor. In more recent decades, the partition walls have been covered with wood paneling and a dropped acoustical tile ceiling has been installed in the storefront areas. The bulk of the first floor is a large, open space that is divided by a row of cast iron columns. This area has a smooth-finished concrete floor. A wood mezzanine has been built within the south half of this space. The walls are exposed brick with wood paneling wainscoting that varies in height. Painted plaster covers the first floor ceiling.

In terms of its spatial configuration, the second floor is very similar to the first floor. The east end of the floor contains several small offices with beadboard partition walls. The remainder of the second floor is a large open space with painted plaster walls and ceilings. The lath and plaster in one of the east end office has been removed revealing that the ceiling structure is 2x6 rafters supported by 2x14 joists. 2 1/4" wide tongue-and-groove flooring runs throughout the second floor and is covered by linoleum in the offices at the east end. There is an opening in the floor along the north wall to allow an elevated conveyor belt to connect between the first and second floors.

The overall physical integrity of the Swartz Printing Company building is excellent, and it possesses all seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The building remains at its original location, close to Union Pacific's transcontinental rail line which was an essential component in supplying the raw materials necessary for running a commercial printing operation. It was one of many wholesale and commercial businesses located in the area immediately north of the rail yards, and the preservation of many buildings in this area has allowed a high degree of the historic context and associations of the property to be retained. The building's setting has remained intact from the time of its period of significance, and even the adjacent open parking lot north across the alley remains in a use similar to its historic function as a used auto sales yard. As the work of noted Omaha architect Jacob Nachtigall, the Swartz building illustrates the design features and interior spatial organization of an early twentieth century commercial printing operation. Another design feature of particular note is how the building embraces its site through the way that the first story windows on the north and south facades respond to the changes in the exterior grade. The presence of intricate brick masonry detailing and tasteful yet restrained accents of limestone trim are examples of the quality workmanship and materials that went into the building's construction.

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Although the Swartz Printing Company is presently vacant, the current owner of the property is actively working with local architects and the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office (NeSHPO) on a certified rehabilitation of the building to take advantage of the federal tax incentive program and the state-sponsored Valuation Incentive Program (VIP). Current rehabilitation plans for the building include the creation of income-producing retail and residential spaces while retaining the historic character and integrity of the structure.

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8. Statement of significance

The Swartz Printing Company building is significant under Criterion A for its role in the broad pattern of commercial growth and development of Omaha, Nebraska. The building is situated on the border of the Omaha Rail and Commerce Historic District (NRHP 1996) and complements the architectural character and historic associations of the district.

This unique area of Omaha immediately north of the Union Pacific rail yards, derives its primary significance from the development of wholesale jobbing and commercial industries that developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Nebraska in general (and Omaha in particular) experienced a period of unprecedented economic growth and prosperity during the decade of 1880's. This economic boom resulted in the rapid expansion of business and industry in the downtown area, and this was especially evident in the areas along the rail lines. Wholesale jobbing was a relatively new type of commerce that developed during this time period and relied heavily on the railroad. Wholesale jobbers bought products directly from manufacturers and then wholesaled them out to local retail merchants. They located their warehouses in this part of Omaha because of its close proximity to the railroad lines that were absolutely essential for the delivery of goods and materials. Additional industries, such as commercial printers, also found the area desirable for their business operations because paper, ink, and other raw materials could be received by rail and easily transported a short distance to their shops. Although economic growth and development took a temporary downturn during the national economic depression of the early 1890's, it quickly rebounded and expanded as the twentieth century was ushered in. As business boomed many new commercial and industrial buildings sprang up in the areas near the rail lines. Residential neighborhoods on the southern fringes of downtown Omaha soon gave way to the expanding demands of commerce and industry.

At the dawn of the 20th century, the site where the Swartz Printing Company building was later built was occupied by a residential dwelling. As commercial growth displaced residential areas further away from downtown Omaha, many of the homes gave way to commercial and industrial buildings. City of Omaha building permit information indicates that the Swartz Printing Company building was constructed in 1910 from a design by Omaha architect Jacob Nachtigall. The business was owned and operated by Maynard T. and Milton J. Swartz. Both men had been involved with other printing operations in the city prior to opening their own business at 714 S. 15th Street. In addition to providing commercial printing services, Swartz Printing Company also served as a book publisher.

The Swartz Printing Company building was constructed with two storefront spaces (north and south) and these were listed as 714 and 716 S. 15th Street respectively in the city directories. From 1911 until 1918, the Swartz Printing Company shared the 714 S. 15th Street address with the Omaha Trade Exhibit which was a local trade newspaper produced by the Exhibit Company. From 1929 until 1936, the Food Facts Publishing Company was listed as co-occupant of the 714 S. 15th Street address. The Swartz Printing Company continued to operate in the building until 1974 when it moved to a new location. Then after standing vacant for a year, the building was purchased by the Driscoll Leather Company. They operated a retail leather goods supply and repair business from the facility until suspending their operations in 2005.

The south storefront (716 S. 15th Street) was shared by the Hogan Linotyping Company and the N.C. Leary Company (engravers) from 1911 until 1918, after which time the N.C. Leary Company was listed as the sole tenant. Leary continued to operate out of the south storefront until 1932 when they were replaced by United Advertisers. Several other tenants passed through the space during the 1930s and 1940s until Art Services and Signs opened a business there in 1948. They were joined the following year by the Ford Sign Company who eventually took over sole occupancy of the space in 1953 and continued on until 1974. It is interesting to note that remnants of painted wall signs for both the N.C. Leary Company and the Ford Sign Company are still visible on the south façade of the Swartz building.

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The Swartz Printing Company building is an excellent representative example of an early 20th century commercial/industrial building in downtown Omaha. The building remains in its historic context, on its original location associated with other area buildings in a unique economic district near the railroad lines. It possesses excellent design, quality materials and workmanship, and a relatively unchanged appearance and interior spatial configuration that all contribute to the historic feeling and physical integrity of the property.

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Bibliography

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Omaha City Planning Department, March 1996.
- Polk's City Directory for Omaha, Nebraska. Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, Nebraska. Various dates.

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Verbal Boundary Description:

Lot 8, Block 197 N 45.4 ft. lts. 7 & 45.4 X 132, Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska, USA

Boundary Justification:

These boundaries correspond with the legal description of the property and include all buildings and features historically associated with the property.

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The following information pertains to the following photographs:

Swartz Printing Company Building
Douglas County, Nebraska
Photographer: Kent Behrens
December 2006

Original negatives retained by photographer

Photographs

Photograph	Description of Photograph	View
Photo 1 of 7	View of east façade looking west	West
Photo 2 of 7	Detail view of southeast corner looking northwest	Northwest
Photo 3 of 7	View of north and west facades looking southwest	Southwest
Photo 4 of 7	Interior view of first floor looking west	West
Photo 5 of 7	Interior view detail at first floor, looking southeast	Southeast
Photo 6 of 7	Interior view of second floor looking east	East
Photo 7 of 7	Interior view detail of second floor looking northeast	Northeast

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The following information pertains to the following photographs:

Swartz Printing Company Building
Douglas County, Nebraska

Photographer: [Bostwick-Frohardt Photograph Collection, owned by KMTV, on permanent loan to the Durham Western Heritage, Omaha, Nebraska]

Original negatives retained by photographer

Supplemental Photographs

Photograph	Description of Photograph	View
Supplemental Photo 1 of 4	View of St. Philomena's Catholic School showing a portion of the Swartz Printing Company building under construction in the background (circa 1910).	Northwest
Supplemental Photo 2 of 4	Enlarged detail view of Supplemental Photo 1 of 4 showing cast iron columns awaiting installation (circa 1910).	Northwest
Supplemental Photo 3 of 4	View of St. Philomena's Catholic School showing a portion of the completed Swartz Printing Company building at right (November 6, 1913)	Northwest
Supplemental Photo 4 of 4	Enlarged detail view of Supplemental Photo 3 of 4 showing completed Swartz Printing Company building (November 6, 1913)	Northwest