

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Property

\_\_\_\_\_  
County and State

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

### SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 100001357

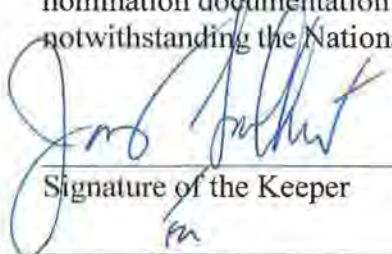
Date Listed: 7/24/2017

Property Name: Bellevue College Dormitories

County: Sarpy

State: NE

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

7-25-2017  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

#### Section 8: Period of Significance

The period of significance under Criterion A is hereby changed to 1897 – 1919, to reflect the extant resources associated with the college. Please refer to Bulletin 16A, page 42. A property must retain integrity from the period of significance – since there are no extant properties dating from 1890, the POS must begin from the later date.

\_\_\_\_\_  
The Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

#### **DISTRIBUTION:**

**National Register property file**

**Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**

56-1357



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 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 Bellevue College Dormitories

Other names/site number SY02-025 (Lowrie Hall), SY02-027 (Philadelphia Hall), SY02-028 (Hamilton Hall)

Name of related multiple property listing N/A

## 2. Location

Street & Number 400 W. 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue

City or town Bellevue State Nebraska County Sarpy

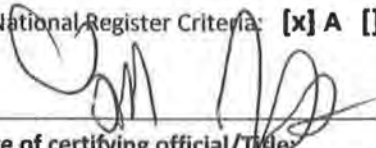
Not for publication  Vicinity

## 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

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title  
Nebraska State Historical Society  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

5/31/17  
Date

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Commenting Official  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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): \_\_\_\_\_

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper  
For

7.24.2017  
Date of Action

Bellevue College Dormitories  
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Sarpy County, Nebraska  
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**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>3</u>	<u>0</u>	Buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	Sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	Structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	Objects
<u>3</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.)

EDUCATION: education-related

**Current Functions** (Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions.)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals: Late Gothic Revival – Collegiate Gothic

Late 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals: Classical Revival – Neo-Classical Revival

**Materials** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundations: Brick  
Walls: Brick (stone: window sills, keystones)  
Roofs: Composition/Asphalt

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**Description**

**Summary Paragraph**

Bellevue College is located on approximately four acres immediately northwest of downtown Bellevue, Sarpy County, Nebraska at 400 West 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue, just west of its intersection with Wayne Street. The property contains three, two-story dormitory buildings with brick exterior walls supported by brick basement foundations. Philadelphia Hall, constructed in 1897, is a square, Collegiate Gothic-style building with a cross-gable roof. Lowrie Hall, constructed in 1900, is a rectangular, Neo-Classical Revival-style building with a flat roof and a central entrance pavilion with a gable roof. Hamilton Hall, constructed in 1901, is a rectangular, Neo-Classical Revival-style building with a hip roof. The building exteriors retain a high degree of integrity, such as fenestration patterns, brick pilasters, banding, quoins, water tables, and cornices. The buildings all feature modern vinyl replacement window sashes and modern metal-framed glass entry doors, except as noted below. The interiors retain original or historic materials, such as door and window trim and stairwells (balusters and newel posts).

**Narrative Description**

**SITE**

The Bellevue College Dormitories are located northwest of downtown, Bellevue, just outside the "Mission Reserve" that forms most of the original circa 1855 town site. The original property of approximately 260 acres was assembled by Henry T. Clarke and donated by him to the trustees of Bellevue College as one of the many inducements made by Clarke to have the Presbyterian Synod of Nebraska agree to locate the college in Bellevue. The area immediately around the college grounds appears to have remained largely undeveloped until after World War II. Other original college buildings, such as Rankin Hall (the president's house), Clarke Hall (the original college building), and a gymnasium were removed before the 1950s. A fourth dormitory, Fontenelle Hall, burned in 2006 and was razed. The buildings are arranged in an "L" shape along the south and west side of the street, on the south slope of a hill historically known as Elk Hill. The lot features a large undeveloped area on the north end (the former site of Fontenelle Hall) and features mature trees and brush between the buildings and around the perimeter of the property generally. Modern apartment buildings are located to the north and east, with suburban-style single-family homes and small apartment buildings along the linear and curvilinear streets surrounding the property. West 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue extends along the east side of the parcel, and it becomes Lawrie Circle as it continues north uphill, ending in a cul-de-sac in front of modern apartment buildings north of the Bellevue College dormitories.

**EXTERIOR**

**Philadelphia Hall**

Philadelphia Hall is a square, two-story building constructed of load-bearing brick exterior walls supported by a brick basement foundation. The building is oriented to the north. All four sides of the building feature a slightly projecting central pavilion originally surmounted by a stepped parapet wall flanked by brick piers, creating the crenellated parapet wall common to many Collegiate Gothic-style buildings. These parapets feature ribbons of decorative carved stone or terra cotta tiles. This parapet was retained on the south side of the building, but has been altered (made flat) on the north, east, and west sides. On the front (north) and rear (south) sides (Photographs 1 and 2) this center section features paired windows above a ground floor entry door. On the sides (east and west), this section has two windows or a door and window at the basement level and two windows at the ground and second floor levels.



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The main entry on the north (front) side is filled with a modern commercial-style aluminum-framed glass door, with large single-light sidelights. The entry is sheltered by a square porch with a flat roof, supported by two wood posts. The entry is flanked, as are the paired windows above it, by single windows. The north-end parapet features two small, single-light rectangular windows, and appears to be damaged. It still retains the decorative ribbon of tiles (Photograph 3). The eaves along the corners of the building between the four central sections feature a cornice with brick brackets or corbels. At the basement level on the west side, a retaining wall projects out from the central section to create space for a concrete stairway leading to an entry door into the basement. Windows in the northwest corner of the basement indicated by historic photographs have been enclosed with brick. The south side of the building features a central entry at both the basement and ground floor levels. The basement level door is filled with an original or historic four-panel wood door with sidelights (Photograph 4). This basement entry is sheltered by a modern porch surmounted by a balcony supported by wood posts (Photograph 5). The central entry at the ground-floor level, providing access to the balcony, features an interior entry with a modern replacement door and similar sidelights as those on the basement level. The east side features a modern wood staircase leading up to a second-floor window, presumably meant for emergency egress (Photograph 6). The hip and cross gable roof is covered in modern composition shingles.

**Lowrie Hall**

Lowrie Hall is a rectangular, two-story building constructed of load-bearing brick exterior walls supported by a brick basement foundation. The building is oriented to the east, and was designed in the Neo-Classical Revival style, and features a symmetrical façade with a central, projecting entrance pavilion. This projection has a front gable with cornice returns and brick quoins (Photograph 7). The building's four corners also have brick quoins. The central pavilion has an arched entry, filled with a modern aluminum-framed glass door and sidelights (Photograph 8). The entry is sheltered by a modern porch with a flat roof supported by wood posts. There are three windows overlooking the porch on the second floor, and an arched, central window flanked by two square windows in the gable (Photograph 9). The extensions on each side of the central pavilion have three windows at the first and second floors and on the south side at the basement level. On the north extension, there is only one window at the basement level, while another former window has been enclosed.

The north end of the building originally featured three windows at the first and second floors. The central window of the second floor in the north end has been resized for an emergency egress door, accessed by a modern wood staircase (Photograph 10). Historic photographs indicate a former central arched former entry at the ground-floor level on the building's rear (west) side was originally accessed by a porch and steps, no longer extant. This central entry has been resized for a window, and an arched window above this former entry retains original or historic sashes. These central windows are flanked by paired and single windows at regular intervals at the ground and second floors. The basement level features windows and two entries filled with modern doors (Photograph 11). The south end features three windows at regular intervals at all three levels (Photograph 12). A cornice with dentils encompasses the building, but a brick water table terminates at the north and south corners of the front façade. The front gable of the central pavilion is covered in composition shingles, but the building otherwise has a flat roof surrounded by a short parapet brick wall.

**Hamilton Hall**

Hamilton Hall, like Lowrie Hall, is a rectangular, two-story building constructed of load-bearing brick exterior walls supported by a brick basement foundation (Photograph 13). The building is oriented to the east and designed in the Neo-Classical Revival style. It features a symmetrical façade, with a central, projecting entrance pavilion with a front gable with cornice returns. The building features a large square entry filled with a modern aluminum-framed glass door and sidelights (Photograph 14). The entry is sheltered by porch with a flat roof,

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supported by wood posts. Paired windows above the porch feature a tripartite lunette window with original sashes. The central window arch features a large central keystone (Photograph 15).

The extensions on each side of the central pavilion have three windows at regular intervals at the first and second floor levels, and on the south end at the basement level. There is a window on the north side at the basement level, while another former window has been enclosed for a vent pipe. Historic photographs indicate the building featured an entry at the ground-floor level in the north end, and it appears the window above this entry has been resized for an egress door, and both are accessed by a modern wood staircase (Photograph 16). The rear of the building has six windows at regular intervals at the all three levels (Photograph 17). The south end of the building features three windows at regular intervals on the ground and second floors, but the central window on the basement level has been enclosed with brick. A metal fire escape ladder extends from the central, third-floor window (Photograph 18). A band of stone just under the second-floor windows, bands of brick around the second floor, and a brick water table between the basement and first floor levels encompass the building. A cornice with modillions and dentils encompass the building under the eaves of the hip roof. The soffit has been covered or replaced with modern materials. The hip roof is covered in composition shingles.

**INTERIOR**

**Philadelphia Hall**

The main entry provides access to an interior hallway that extends north-south along the length of the building at the ground level. The floors and stairways are carpeted. Original newel posts and balusters are exposed in some areas (Photograph 19), but the stairways are partially enclosed by partition walls in other areas (Photograph 20). The hallways feature original or historic wood trim such as baseboards, doors and window trim (Photograph 21). The walls of the hallways are partially covered with modern, painted paneling. The south side of the building features entries at the ground and basement levels. The entry in the basement level features a five-panel wood door and sidelights (Photograph 22) creating a small vestibule leading to the entry from the exterior (refer to Photograph 4). The apartments are a series of small rooms leading from one to another: a small living room/bedroom, kitchen, and a bathroom. The kitchens feature built-in wood cabinets with a stove and refrigerator. The apartments and hallways (except for the basement level) have wood floors, and all floors are covered in modern carpet and/or tile.

**Lowrie Hall**

The main entry provides access to a small lobby which leads to a stairwell that goes up to the first floor or down the basement level (Photograph 23). The floors and stairways are carpeted. The stairway features original or historic newel posts and balusters are exposed, but are partially enclosed by partition walls (Photograph 24). The hallways feature original or historic wood trim such as baseboards and door and window trim (Photograph 25). The walls of the hallways are partially covered with modern, painted paneling, and feature projections into the hallways to form larger interior apartment rooms (Photograph 26). Between the first and second floor, a large stair landing features paired windows with three small windows overlooking the porch. The apartments are one or two larger rooms with a small kitchen and bathroom. The kitchens feature built-in wood cabinets with a stove and a refrigerator (Photograph 27). The apartments and hallways (except for the basement level) have wood floors and all floors covered in modern carpet and/or tile.

**Hamilton Hall**

The main entry provides access to a small lobby which leads to a stairwell that leads up to the first floor or down the basement (Photograph 28). The floors and stairways are carpeted. The stairway features original or historic

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newel posts and balusters that are exposed, but partially enclosed with partition walls (Photograph 29). The hallways feature original or historic wood trim such as baseboards and door and window trim. The walls of the hallways are partially covered with modern, painted paneling. Between the first and second floors, a large stair landing is dominated by the paired and tripartite lunette windows overlooking the porch (Photograph 30). As with the other buildings, the apartments are small one and two room units with kitchens and bathrooms. The kitchens feature built-in wood cabinets with a stove and refrigerator (Photograph 31). The apartments and hallways (except for the basement level) have wood floors, and all floors are covered in modern carpet and/or tile (Photograph 32).

**INTEGRITY**

The buildings all retain their original footprints, original brick exteriors, and to a great degree, original fenestration patterns. The entries and most of the window sashes have been replaced. The buildings also retain much of their original exterior ornamentation: brick quoins, banding, water tables, arches, and stone and/or terra cotta details. The buildings appear to retain much of their original floorplans in public spaces such as stairwells and hallways, but the interior apartments have seen the greatest degree of change, with partitions constructed to create kitchens, bathrooms and separate bedrooms, and the enlargement of some rooms (extending into the hallways) in 1944 to create the apartments.

The buildings retain their integrity of location and setting, even though that character of the immediate area around the property has changed since 1920. The area now features more suburban-style development as the college property was subdivided and developed after World War II, including modern apartment buildings and single-family homes surrounding the property, and the loss of the other college buildings. The buildings also retain their integrity of design, materials, and workmanship, even with replacement of window sashes and doors and the changes to the interior. Some architectural losses (such as the original porches or supports and the stepped parapet walls of Philadelphia Hall) could be restored during future rehabilitations of the buildings. The buildings retain sufficient integrity of location, design, setting, materials, and workmanship to adequately convey the buildings' association and feeling. The buildings are structurally sound, and have been adequately maintained for over 100 years.

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**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.
- 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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

A: EDUCATION

C: ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

A: 1880 – 1919

C: 1897 – 1901

**Significant Dates**

1897 – construction of Philadelphia Hall

1900 – construction of Lowrie Hall

1901 – construction of Hamilton Hall

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Joseph S. Blake (Philadelphia Hall)

Fisher & Lawrie (Hamilton Hall)

John McDonald (Lowrie Hall)



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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph**

The Bellevue College Dormitories are locally significant and eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A: Education and Criterion C: Architecture. The buildings are rare extant examples in Bellevue, Nebraska of late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup>-century collegiate buildings originally constructed between 1897 and 1901 for Bellevue College, a small liberal arts college which operated from 1880 to 1919, established by the Nebraska Synod of the Presbyterian Church. The period of significance for Criterion A: Education begins in 1880, when the college was founded and Henry T. Clarke donated the property to the college's board of trustees and continues to 1919, when Bellevue College closed due to high costs, low attendance, and increasing debt. During this time, the college grew to include seven buildings, including four dormitories that could accommodate almost 200 on-campus students. The period of significance for Criterion C: Architecture is 1897-1901, during which the three extant buildings, Philadelphia, Lowrie, and Hamilton Halls, were constructed.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

**Criterion A: EDUCATION**

Nebraska's earliest history as a territory of the United States is intermingled with the history of Christian missionaries coming to the frontier to bring their own variation – Roman Catholic or Protestant – of Christianity, and, with it “civilization,” to the Indians and settlers of the American West. The Indian agency, previously at Council Bluffs, Iowa, was moved south and west in 1823 to Bellevue, Nebraska on the west side of the river. The important trading post previously established by the American Fur Company at Bellevue came under the management of Peter Sarpy, a French Creole native of St. Louis, in 1824,<sup>1</sup> and the village became the first major settlement in Nebraska, and one of the important points for traders and settlers moving west (to Oregon and Washington).

During the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, many Protestant faiths held that the Bible was “the only source of Christian faith,” and the teaching of children (and others) using this book was for most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century “the chief object of popular education.”<sup>2</sup> With this Protestant zeal for education, the various sects soon began to venture west to the American frontier, or west of the Mississippi River. In 1834, Rev. John Dunbar and Samuel Allis, missionaries from the First Presbyterian Church in Ithaca, New York, arrived in Bellevue.<sup>3</sup> Dunbar and Allis soon took up separate residence with two villages of the Pawnee tribe, learning their language, teaching some of them English and about the culture of the United States, and serving as interpreters.<sup>4</sup>

In 1846, the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions determined to establish a permanent mission for the Pawnee, Otoe, and Omaha tribes at Bellevue under the Rev. Edmund McKinney. A mission house was constructed in 1847-48.<sup>5</sup> Rev. William Hamilton was given charge of the Bellevue Mission in 1853 and two years later, Rev. and Mrs. Henry Giltner came to Nebraska to start developing a network of churches among Nebraska's white population. Over 400 additional missionaries and ministers followed Giltner into Nebraska throughout the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The growth of the Presbyterian Church in Nebraska during this period is indicated by the division of various presbyteries – regional administrative units of the church – from the Synod of Iowa South and creating the Synod of Nebraska in 1874.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Savage, 1894: 34

<sup>2</sup> Kiddle & Schem, 1877: 83

<sup>3</sup> Weyer, 1940: 7-8

<sup>4</sup> Weyer, 1940: 8-9

<sup>5</sup> Weyer, 1940: 10

<sup>6</sup> Morton & Watkins, 1918: 736

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Although the Baptists and Presbyterians were pioneers in bringing religion to early Nebraska, they were not the first to found institutions of higher learning in the state. As early as 1865, Methodists in Peru, Nemaha County, Nebraska founded "Mt. Vernon College." The school's initial lack of success may be indicated by the offer, during the first state legislative session in 1867, of the school building and property to the state for use as a normal school. The offer was accepted, and \$3,000 allocated to finish the building, and the first sessions at the new Peru State Normal School were offered in 1869.<sup>7</sup> That same year, the legislature authorized the creation of the University of Nebraska.<sup>8</sup> Private, religious institutions weren't far behind: Doane College was founded in Crete, Nebraska in 1872 by Congregationalists with the assistance of Thomas Doane,<sup>9</sup> and Creighton College was founded in 1874 following the expressed wishes of its Roman Catholic benefactor, Edward Creighton.<sup>10</sup> Other denominations followed in due course as population, demand, and funding allowed.

An earlier Presbyterian school – "Otoe University" in Nebraska City – was previously established, but it failed by 1872, and its building sold to the Episcopalians.<sup>11</sup> At the first meeting of the newly-established Presbyterian Synod of Nebraska in 1874, the delegates passed a resolution supporting the creation of a new Presbyterian college, but it was not until 1880 that the church leadership felt their numbers and financial resources could sustain the new school. The Synod of Nebraska ultimately chose Bellevue for the college's location, based upon donations by a wealthy Bellevue pioneer, Henry T. Clarke, of "three buildings and lots valued at \$5,000, 100 acres of land adjoining the town site of Bellevue, 1,000 to 1,500 lots in Bellevue belonging to the [Presbyterian] Board of Foreign Missions, and cash and subscriptions amounting to \$10,000."<sup>12</sup> Eventually, Clarke's total donations to the college included the construction of the college's first building at his own expense (\$20,000), approximately 264 acres of land, two houses and six lots in Bellevue. He would eventually organize a company to purchase 1,000 lots from the Board of Foreign Missions, with Bellevue College to receive half the price paid for the lots. At the college's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1906, its president singled out Clarke for his financial assistance, stating Clarke gave the college more than twice what he'd originally agreed, and that his donations stood as the single largest financial gift made by any Nebraska Presbyterian for either secular or religious education.<sup>13</sup>

The main building Clarke financed was designed by the Cleves Brothers architectural firm of Omaha, and cost approximately \$20,000.<sup>14</sup> A contemporary newspaper account suggests Clarke's donations amounted to more than \$50,000, including the erection of Clarke Hall. It described the location of the new college as "...[un]surpassed by any educational point east or west." Plans were underway for the construction of dormitories, but in the meantime, students were expected to live with local citizens.<sup>15</sup> The cornerstone of Clarke Hall was laid on July 6, 1883,<sup>16</sup> and the college was open for classes beginning on Sept. 10, 1883 (Figure 1), with classes for 26 students taught by three teachers in a house near the Bellevue Presbyterian Church until the college building was completed.<sup>17</sup> Clarke Hall was formally dedicated on Oct. 9, 1884. During this ceremony, "a large delegation of Omaha Indians" oversaw the reburial of bones, purportedly including those of Chief Big Elk – whose burial on the hill gave the site its historic name, Elk Hill - on a site adjacent to the new hall; the bones had

<sup>7</sup> Dundas, 1902: 62-63

<sup>8</sup> Morton & Watkins, 1918: 522

<sup>9</sup> Morton & Watkins, 1918: 495-496

<sup>10</sup> Morton & Watkins, 1918: 492

<sup>11</sup> Weyer, 1940: 47-48

<sup>12</sup> Weyer, 1940: 54

<sup>13</sup> Weyer, 1940: 54-55

<sup>14</sup> "A Theological College," *Omaha Daily Bee*, 28 May 1883: 8

<sup>15</sup> "Clarke's College," *Omaha Daily Bee*, 8 Jun. 1883: 8

<sup>16</sup> "Excursion to Bellevue," *Omaha Daily Bee*, 6 Jul. 1883: 8

<sup>17</sup> Weyer, 1940: 55

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been discovered during construction of Clarke Hall.<sup>18</sup> In 1954, the bones were again disinterred after that part of the Bellevue College property was slated for redevelopment and new construction. They were reburied in Bellevue Cemetery in September 1954.<sup>19</sup>

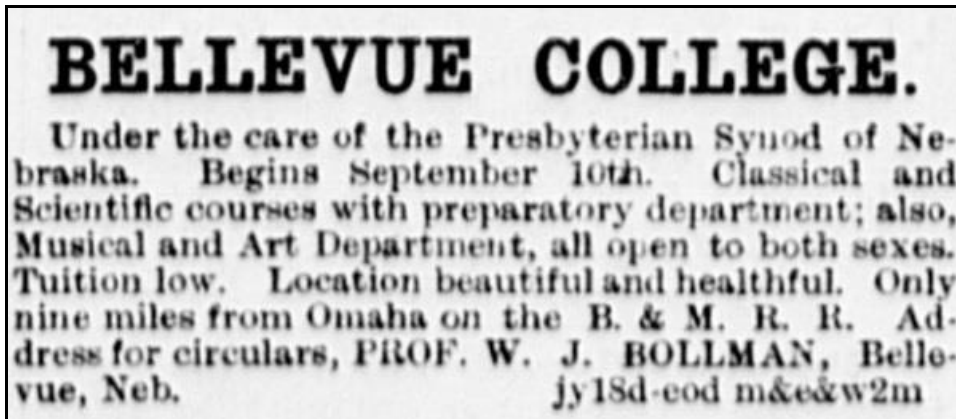


Figure 1: Advertisement for Bellevue College, from the July 18, 1883 Omaha Daily Bee.

While the college's general curriculum and degree requirements changed over the years, it originally included two courses of study: a "classical" course that would require four years, entitling a student to an "A.B." – the equivalent of a contemporary Bachelor of Arts degree – and a "scientific" course that would require three years, entitling the student to a "B.S." – the equivalent to the modern Bachelor of Science degree. The college included a "preparatory department" to provide basic instruction in "English, Latin, Greek, Modern Languages, and Mathematics." The college was co-educational, and students were required to provide "written testimonials of good moral character" from pastors or former teachers.<sup>20</sup>

The college sought to grow almost immediately: during a June 1884 meeting of the board of trustees (of which Clarke was president), it was determined to construct a dormitory as soon as sufficient funds were made to a building fund. The trustees also decided to subdivide the 264 acres Clarke had donated to the college into lots of more than five acres each, and to lease them for "a period of not less than sixteen years."<sup>21</sup> This was probably intended to provide the college with ample income above tuition and other fees. Eight students registered as the college first freshman class, and on June 1, 1889, four of those eight freshmen constituted the first graduating class from Bellevue College. By its third year, attendance at Bellevue College grew to 59 students, classified as academy students or specials; during the third year, students registered for work in the college departments.<sup>22</sup>

As late as 1889, the college still only had two buildings: Clarke Hall and a women's dormitory, Finlay Hall. Finlay Hall was probably named after John B. Finlay, a Presbyterian minister who settled in Omaha after 1880 and became an early patron of the college.<sup>23</sup> In 1891, the board of trustees adopted revised articles of incorporation, changing the institution's name to "The University of Omaha."<sup>24</sup> Many still referred to the school, however, as

<sup>18</sup> "Dedication at Bellevue," *Omaha Daily Bee*, 7 Oct. 1884: 8

<sup>19</sup> "Remains of Big Elk, Leader of the Omaha, To Get 3<sup>rd</sup> Burial," *Omaha World-Herald*, 16 Sep. 1954: 5

<sup>20</sup> "Clarke's College," *Omaha Daily Bee*, 8 Jun. 1883: 8

<sup>21</sup> "Bellevue College," *Plattsmouth Daily Herald*, 19 Jun. 1884: 4

<sup>22</sup> Weyer, 1940: 56

<sup>23</sup> Johnson, 1906: "Finlay – Finley"

<sup>24</sup> Weyer, 1940: 57

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Bellevue College. The main reason for changing the name was “the hope that [in so doing] Omaha would take a greater interest in the institution,” and also as part of the effort to make Bellevue College the new university’s “College of Arts & Sciences.”<sup>25</sup> While there was some interest in moving the college to Omaha, the ultimate failure was for the usual reasons, chief among them the lack of money (to secure a site and construct new buildings).<sup>26</sup> After his election to the presidency in November 1889, Dr. David Kerr sought to make improvements. After two years of steady fundraising for new buildings, however, Kerr’s ambitions were stymied by a national economic depression in 1893 and drought throughout the Great Plains.<sup>27</sup> Undeterred, Kerr frequently traveled to the east coast to raise funds; there, he met Dr. and Mrs. D.O. Wickham who periodically made up for budgetary deficits and provided some funds for the construction of dormitories. In 1895, William Rankin, another of Kerr’s wealthy benefactors, donated \$2,000 and the Presbyterian Board of Aid gave another \$1,500 toward the erection of a president’s house, which was named Rankin Hall.<sup>28</sup>

In 1897, Kerr met W.J. McCahan of Philadelphia, and from him, secured enough funding to construct the first men’s dormitory on the Bellevue College campus. Philadelphia Hall (Figure 2),<sup>29</sup> as it was named, was a brick building that cost \$5,000, had 20 rooms, and was constructed from plans by Omaha architect Joseph S. Blake.<sup>30</sup> At commencement in June 1897, the college announced it had 75 enrolled students, “a large proportion of whom at least partially paid their own expenses,”<sup>31</sup> which was important when the school frequently did not financially break even. Kerr nonetheless pushed forward with an infrastructure expansion program in the final years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the first half of 1901, a new dormitory for women, named Lowrie Hall (Figure 3), was completed. It was located between Philadelphia and Finlay Halls, and named in honor of Walter Lowrie, the first secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions. The Lowrie family was deeply involved in the Presbyterian mission at Bellevue during its early history.<sup>32</sup> The design of Lowrie Hall is attributed to Omaha architect John McDonald.<sup>33</sup>

In the summer of 1901, another dormitory for men at Bellevue College was announced: the building would be three stories, constructed of red brick with stone trimmings, and cost approximately \$10,000. Plans for the new building were drawn up by the Omaha architectural firm Fisher & Lawrie. It was constructed south of Lowrie Hall and contained 25 rooms for students, as well as a new heating plant for the whole college. It was expected that construction would be substantially complete by Thanksgiving 1901.<sup>34</sup> The building, located along the west side of the main part of the campus, was similar in style and size to the adjacent Lowrie Hall. It contained a gymnasium, bowling alley, and bathrooms in the basement, with rooms on the main and second floors for students and for a professor in charge of the building.<sup>35</sup> It would later be named Hamilton Hall (Figure 4), to honor Rev. William Hamilton, who began his Presbyterian missionary work among the Omaha Indians in 1853.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Weyer, 1940: 27

<sup>26</sup> Weyer, 1940: 59

<sup>27</sup> Weyer, 1940: 57

<sup>28</sup> Weyer, 1940: 58

<sup>29</sup> Weyer, 1940: 58

<sup>30</sup> “Bellevue College,” *Omaha World-Herald*, 8 Jun. 1897: 2

<sup>31</sup> “Graduates from Bellevue,” *Omaha Daily Bee*, 10 Jun. 1897: 5

<sup>32</sup> “Opening Lowrie Hall at Bellevue College,” *Omaha World-Herald*, 9 Apr. 1901: 1

<sup>33</sup> “Elevation of the Proposed New Dormitory Building...,” *Omaha World-Herald*, 29 Jul. 1900: 15

<sup>34</sup> “New Hall; Heat Plant at Bellevue College,” *Omaha World-Herald*, 18 Jul. 1901: 1

<sup>35</sup> “Another Building in Bellevue College Group,” *Omaha World-Herald*, 8 Aug. 1901: 1

<sup>36</sup> “Story of Nebraska as Written by Nature and Man,” *Omaha Illustrated Daily Bee*, 5 Jun. 1904: 5



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Figure 2: Philadelphia Hall, circa 1915, looking east-southeast. From the Durham Museum's Photography Archive.

In the summer of 1902, Finlay Hall burned,<sup>37</sup> and it was quickly determined to build a new dormitory to replace it. The new dormitory, Fontenelle Hall, was larger and constructed as a women's dormitory and was designed by John McDonald. When the college opened in September 1902, it had 175 students, 50 more than the previous years.<sup>38</sup> Fontenelle Hall contained a modern cafeteria in its basement, and served as a sort of college commons and a center of student life at the college. The college's early promise, however, began to fade after 1900: President Kerr resigned in 1904, and the college suffered from a period of unstable leadership for several years thereafter. This period culminated in another push to move the campus to Omaha, the college's debt doubling to \$30,000, and with a Presbyterian synod divided by loyalties to rivals Bellevue and Hastings Colleges (the latter in Hastings, Nebraska). Bellevue College included a college-preparatory academy for students who were taught by college professors, lived on campus, and had the same privileges as college students. The academy also "fed" these students directly into the freshman classes of the college. When the synod recommended that Bellevue's troubled college program be terminated and combined with that at Hastings College and that Bellevue continue as an academy only, the trustees of Bellevue College refused. In so doing, the college lost the approval and support of the synod,<sup>39</sup> which made Bellevue College an independent Presbyterian college in 1909,<sup>40</sup> exacerbating its precarious financial problems.

<sup>37</sup> "Finlay Hall Burns at Bellevue College," *Omaha World-Herald*, 27 Jun. 1902: 1

<sup>38</sup> "Rebuilding Finlay Hall," *Omaha World-Herald*, 20 Sep. 1902: 5

<sup>39</sup> Weyer, 1940: 62

<sup>40</sup> "Bellevue College," *Omaha World-Herald*, 17 Aug. 1913: E-7

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Figure 3: Lowrie Hall, circa 1915, looking west. From the Durham Museum's Photo Archive.

In late 1909, the college leadership announced plans to raise \$150,000 with the goal of creating a \$100,000 endowment. A contemporary newspaper story about the proposed endowment described the college's physical layout at the time: a 50-acre main campus, with six buildings: the main college building (Clarke Hall) containing recitation rooms, library, chapel, and classrooms; Fontenelle Hall, a dormitory for college women and also containing the college commons; Lowrie Hall, containing rooms for the academy girls and the conservatory (of music) and the academy classrooms; Hamilton Hall for college men, also containing the gymnasium; Philadelphia Hall, for the academy boys; and Rankin Hall, the president's home and college offices (Figure 5). The college also owned 217 acres of land "between Bellevue and South Omaha" and other property in Bellevue, all of which, the board of trustees stated, was rapidly increasing in value and conservatively valued at \$150,000.<sup>41</sup> Ultimately, the endowment plan, which was meant to secure its future, failed.

Despite mounting financial problems, or perhaps to overcome them with bold action, the college also announced a massive campus construction plan in 1912. Clarke Hall would have been radically renovated in the "Collegiate Gothic" style, and a new gymnasium built (in the same style) to its west. A new chapel and science hall would be built to the east, and both new buildings would be connected to Clarke Hall via gothic arcades. The plan, designed by Omaha architect Lloyd D. Willis, was never fully implemented, probably due to the college's continuing and mounting financial problems. Despite these, however, the college's leadership moved ahead with construction of the new gymnasium with a swimming pool (circa 1913) at a cost of \$25,000.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>41</sup> "Bellevue College Effort to Raise \$150,000 Now," *Omaha World-Herald*, 26 Nov. 1909: 11

<sup>42</sup> "Bellevue College," *Omaha World-Herald*, 17 Aug. 1913: E-7

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Figure 4: Hamilton Hall, looking west, circa 1915. From the Durham Museum's Photography Archive.

Exacerbating the college's financial problems, attendance and its public standing continued to fall throughout the 1910s, despite continued efforts to secure new students from Omaha and the surrounding area (Figure 6) The leadership crisis continued when William E. Nicholl, a professor and alumnus, was made acting president of the college in 1914, but resigned soon after. Dr. Kerr was persuaded to return to the presidency in 1916 in hopes he could revive the school as he had previously. He failed to do so, and the declines continued. Kerr's resignation was accepted in March 1918.<sup>43</sup> At its final commencement in June 1919, the college had only six graduates.<sup>44</sup> Two days after the final commencement, the board of trustees announced a plan to lease the school buildings and grounds to Cadagan & Hall, Inc., which would operate the Bellevue Military Academy on the grounds. One of the trustees criticized the level of support the school received from "the Presbyterians of Nebraska," adding that state-supported schools had also splintered the school's support among Nebraskans generally.<sup>45</sup>

Weyer suggests five main factors for the school's ultimate failure. The first was the reorganization and growth of the University of Omaha. At its opening in 1883, Bellevue College was the only Presbyterian institution in the Omaha area. Although nominally inter-denominational, the University of Omaha was increasingly controlled by Presbyterians, and thus viewed as a Presbyterian institution. With its expansion, Bellevue College lost students and financial support to the Omaha institution. The second was the establishment of rival Hastings College. The national Presbyterian Board of Aid for Colleges had a policy to provide aid to only one college in each synod. The synod ultimately favored Hastings College.<sup>46</sup> Another reason was the lack of financial support more generally

<sup>43</sup> Weyer, 1940: 62-63

<sup>44</sup> "Bellevue College to Graduate Six," *Omaha World-Herald*, 9 Jun. 1919: 2

<sup>45</sup> "Bellevue to be Made Boys' Military School," *Omaha World-Herald*, 11 Jun. 1919: 1

<sup>46</sup> Weyer, 1940: 65-66

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that led to budget shortfalls and an increasing accumulation of debt. The school was also hampered by a lack of effective leadership that could rally financial support for the college. Finally, the entry of the United States into World War I interrupted the college's education program and whatever financial progress it had been making, and depleted both is student and faculty populations.<sup>47</sup>

The Bellevue College Dormitories are significant examples of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century college dormitory buildings, and the only physical remnant of Bellevue College, a Presbyterian co-education liberal arts college that operated from 1880 until 1919 in Bellevue, Nebraska. The buildings are designed in modest variations of Collegiate Gothic (Philadelphia Hall) and Neo-Classical Revival architectural styles (Lowrie and Hamilton Halls). They were designed by three Omaha, Nebraska architects/firms: Joseph S. Blake, Fisher & Lawrie, and John McDonald. The buildings retain sufficient integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association to convey their significance, and while the setting has been negatively impacted by the loss of other, related college buildings and suburban-style development around the property, the buildings still maintain their spatial relationships with each other, creating a cohesive group of dormitory buildings that are locally significant under Criterion A: Education.



Figure 5: Bellevue College, circa 1905, looking north approximately from present-day Mission Street. From left to right: Hamilton Hall, Philadelphia Hall (four projecting piers), Lowrie Hall, Fontenelle Hall, Clarke Hall (with cupola) and Rankin Hall (two-story frame house). From the Durham Museum Photography Archive.

<sup>47</sup> Weyer, 1940: 67



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This is a Good Time to Enter  
**Bellevue College**  
**Second Semester Opens**  
**.... January 29th, 1912....**

COURSES ADAPTED TO THE NEEDS OF ALL.  
**BELLEVUE COLLEGE**  
**BELLEVUE NORMAL SCHOOL**  
**BELLEVUE MUSICAL CONSERVATORY**  
**BELLEVUE ACADEMY**  
Constituting  
**OMAHA'S HISTORIC COLLEGE**  
Located in Omaha's most beautiful suburb.  
The advantages of the city combined with the safety and quiet  
of the country.

**STRONG FACULTY OF TWENTY PROFESSORS**  
Representing Harvard, Johns Hopkins, Columbia, Princeton,  
Chicago, Wisconsin, Iowa, Leipsic, Edinburgh and Oxford.  
Thorough preparation for a  
**BUSINESS CAREER.**  
Graduates of the College and Normal School  
**GRANTED STATE CERTIFICATES**  
on the same basis as graduates of the State University.

**THE GROUP SYSTEM**  
Enables the student to make the most direct preparation for the  
**PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL IN LAW, MEDICINE,**  
**THEOLOGY, ENGINEERING, ETC.**  
Work accepted in Leading Universities.

**SUCCESSFUL ATHLETIC, DEBATING, ORATORY AND**  
**COLLEGE JOURNALISM.**  
Philadelphia Hall for boys and Lowrie Hall for girls of High  
School age under careful supervision.  
Expenses moderate, scholarships for Honor Students.  
Send for free Catalogue and Bulletin, Phone Bellevue 10.

Figure 6: Advertisement for the spring semester of Bellevue College, from the January 27, 1912 Omaha World-Herald.

**Criterion C: ARCHITECTURE**

Philadelphia, Lowrie, and Hamilton Halls are rare, extant examples of Collegiate Gothic (Philadelphia) and Neo-Classical Revival (Lowrie and Hamilton) collegiate buildings in Bellevue, Nebraska. The buildings were constructed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries when these two styles were common architectural styles used in the design of college buildings. Bellevue, a small village in 1880 when the college was founded, remained a relatively small town in Sarpy County, Nebraska at least until World War II. Bellevue's modest downtown, downhill from and southeast of the college grounds, is devoid of large public buildings like a city hall or courthouse, and even large private buildings, such as commercial buildings. Despite its age, the town boasts few historic buildings, aside from the circa 1857 First Presbyterian Church on the southwest corner of Franklin and 20th Streets and the circa 1857 former Sarpy County Courthouse/Fontenelle Bank building on the northeast corner of Main and Mission Streets. The Bellevue College Dormitories represent a unique chapter in Bellevue's history, and were some of the largest buildings in the town and county when they were constructed.

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Many early colleges and universities in the United States during the 18<sup>th</sup> and early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> centuries attempted to follow the example of Great Britain's Oxford and Cambridge Universities, where "residential colleges [were] the heart of their educational procedures."<sup>48</sup> This system, in which faculty and students lived together in communal conditions was thought to foster both an intellectual environment and a shared and reinforced moral code. Other American colleges during this time, however, followed instead the "continental" model for their student housing, leaving students responsible for their own housing and social lives beyond the lecture halls and classrooms. Despite the devotion of many wealthy Americans to the fashions and tastes of their British counterparts and the nobility, there were several reasons why the British system of residential collegiate life didn't take root in the United States until much later.

Early American colleges simply didn't have the resources to build simple dormitories, much less the communal arrangements found at Oxford and Cambridge Universities, and many early American scholars, most of whom were religious leaders as well, felt that such a housing system encouraged immorality to spread among students. Others felt that colleges and their towns simply attracted the "opportunities of idle and vicious expenditure," regardless of the barriers imposed to protect students.<sup>49</sup> Another major impediment proved to be the disciplinary system adopted by most American colleges: at Oxford and Cambridge, for example, special officials imposed discipline, freeing instructors to develop intellectual relationships with students. In the United States, instructors had to impose this discipline, and in so doing, became the "enemy" of American college student.<sup>50</sup> This created physical, spatial, and intellectual separations between instructors and students that often exist to this day: students claim residence halls as their "autonomous spaces," while instructors do much the same with their offices and sometimes their classrooms.<sup>51</sup> Another reason for the difference between the residential colleges in Great Britain and the colleges in the United States, American professors were often married and had families and thus had little interest in living in a cramped room or small apartment inside a dormitory building with their students.<sup>52</sup>

Where early colleges did offer on-campus rooms or dormitories, wealthier students often "took rooms" in the town, leaving these dormitories to poorer students.<sup>53</sup> This process continued into the late 19<sup>th</sup> century at the United States' preeminent institution of higher learning, Harvard, where throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the leadership had failed to build new dormitories, leaving the private market to build lavish private dormitories (still called the "Gold Coast") leaving the poorer students the old, on-campus rooms, cheap rooms in nearby Cambridge, or a daily commute from elsewhere in Boston.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, students at Bellevue College boarded with residents of Bellevue for more than ten years after the school's history, until the first dormitories were built in the late 1890s.

A turn to this "residential college" ideal occurred during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, probably due to the proliferation of new colleges and universities – like Bellevue College – throughout the United States and especially the American west, as the nation grew more diverse and economically prosperous. As the number of colleges grew, so did the number of instructors, who in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century were often younger, unmarried men and women. The value of education grew during this period for women as well as men, and many of these new colleges eventually required some form of on-campus housing to sustain and grow its student population. In many cases,

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<sup>48</sup> Brubacher and Rudy, 1997: 41

<sup>49</sup> Brubacher and Rudy, 1997: 41

<sup>50</sup> Brubacher and Rudy, 1997: 42

<sup>51</sup> Hankin, Seiber, and Townsend, 2016: 42

<sup>52</sup> Brubacher and Rudy, 1997: 42

<sup>53</sup> Horowitz, 1987: no page given

<sup>54</sup> Horowitz, 1987: no page given

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the dormitories, like the academy dormitories at Bellevue College (Philadelphia and Lowrie Halls) featured a live-in preceptor/preceptress who generally oversaw the young men or women in his or her dormitory.<sup>55</sup> The college dormitories, Hamilton and Fontenelle Halls, had a limited form of student self-government, but also had live-in faculty. To some degree, an unmarried instructor at a small college in a small town may have viewed a free room or suite of rooms in a dormitory as a privilege or a benefit, saving them the expense of a renting rooms elsewhere.

When it came to the architecture of their campuses, there is a long history in the United States of college and university leaders hoping to “set the academic tone” for their institutions through architecture and strict oversight over the development of their campuses. Perhaps one of the most famous examples was the “academical village” designed by Thomas Jefferson for the University of Virginia, a radical departure from the American colleges that preceded it. Unlike many colleges and universities of the time which were often affiliated with or controlled by the various religious denominations, Jefferson made the architectural and physical center of his campus a large library instead of a chapel. His library is modeled after the Pantheon in Rome, with a series of two- and single-story Classical Revival buildings stretching south of the it, all connected by a Tuscan arcade around a large lawn.<sup>56</sup> Jefferson is often credited as being one of the first adherents of the revival of Greco-Roman architecture that became nationally popular in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, during which Bellevue College was developed, architectural tastes had changed. Clarke Hall, the first building on the campus was constructed in 1883, was designed by Omaha’s Cleves Brothers firm in a variation of the then-nationally popular Second Empire style (with Gothic Revival details): a three-and-a-half story central tower had a Mansard roof, surmounted with an elaborate cupola with spired dormers (as originally constructed). Each side of the tower was flanked by a slightly projecting dormer and a small faux tower on each end, all with similar Mansard-style roofs. For almost 15 years, the school continued without dormitories and few other buildings, requiring students to live in private homes in Bellevue. When Dr. Kerr assumed the presidency with a determination to expand the campus and the college’s educational mandate, he likely sought to construct buildings that fulfilled the college’s needs but were also fashionable and spoke to the its ideals as a co-educational liberal arts college. The college’s second and third buildings (Finlay and Rankin Halls) were rather plain, vernacular frame buildings.

In the late 1890s, Collegiate Gothic style became popular for the development of college and university campuses and academic buildings generally. This style was inspired by the “secluded courts, beauty, and ostensive spirituality” of the two paragons of higher learning in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Oxford and Cambridge Universities in England.<sup>57</sup> The style’s similarity to the earlier Gothic Revival style is indicated by comparisons to surviving public buildings designed in Gothic Revival style, such as the Old Louisiana State Capitol in Baton Rouge and the Kentucky State Arsenal in Frankfort. In its most basic form, Collegiate Gothic architecture included at least a section of a façade delineated by towers and/or square pilasters. Crenellated parapet walls often extended between and beyond these towers (as in the Louisiana example), or the towers/pilasters themselves formed crenellations (as in the Kentucky example). Collegiate Gothic buildings usually include decorative carved stone details to the extent allowed by budgets or institutional taste.

Philadelphia Hall, the first of the extant dormitory buildings, was constructed in 1897 and designed by Joseph S. Blake in a restrained variation of Collegiate Gothic. It does not contain many Gothic Revival details, such as pointed-arch windows and doors or excessive carved stone ornamentation, which may have been due to its

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<sup>55</sup> Bellevue College, 1911: 16

<sup>56</sup> Lay, 2000, 14

<sup>57</sup> Coulson, et al., 2015: no page given

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modest construction budget which in turn dictated Blake's straightforward design. The original design included, however, simple variations on these typical Collegiate Gothic details. For example, each side of the building features a slightly projecting central section surmounted by a stepped parapet wall, which is flanked by pilasters that rise above this parapet wall, only to step down on each side still lower than the central parapet wall. The combination of these elements creates the crenellated appearance common to many Gothic Revival and Collegiate Gothic buildings. While many high-end Gothic buildings also include carved stone details (window and door surrounds, finials, cross bracing, and other decorative trim), Philadelphia Hall is more modest, and includes only bands of carved stone or terra cotta tiles across one level of the stepped parapet walls on all four sides. The only other decorative detail Blake used was brick corbels or brackets under the eaves projecting in the building's four corners. The 1912 redevelopment plan (refer to Figure 3) indicates the grasp the Collegiate Gothic style still had at that time among architects planning college and university campuses into the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and provides an interesting counterpoint to the Classical Revivalism of Lowrie and Hamilton Halls, built within less than five years of Philadelphia Hall.

As has happened throughout the history America's built environment, the national popularity of architectural styles swung back to classicism during this same period (late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries). Neo-Classical Revival architecture became nationally popular again in domestic and public architecture after the success of Daniel Burnham's 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition, at which visitors marveled at broad, clean streets with large, gleaming white buildings designed using the logical forms and symmetry of Imperial Rome and Ancient Greece.<sup>58</sup> The clean lines, rationalism, and simplicity of these designs and details contrasted sharply with the cramped urban streetscapes of America's large eastern urban cities, which witnessed massive urban growth in the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and which were dominated by the heavily ornamented architectural styles of the period.

The Neo-Classical Revival impacted academic and public just as it did domestic architecture. Three years after the restrained Collegiate Gothic of Blake's Philadelphia Hall, Bellevue College's Lowrie Hall, attributed to John McDonald of Omaha (Figure 7), illustrates that the leadership of Bellevue College was less interested in developing a singular architectural appearance for the campus so much as it was in choosing the newly popular style which, as indicated by the University of Virginia example above, easily spoke to the democratic ideal of promoting universal education even in symbolic ways such as architecture. Lowrie and Hamilton Halls are two stories on a basement foundation, but are rectangular and horizontal where Philadelphia Hall is square and vertical. These newer buildings feature typical Neo-Classical Revival details, such the projecting entrance pavilions with front gables with cornice returns and tripartite windows. Other details often rendered in stone are instead rendered with brick: quoins, water tables, and flat jack arches. The buildings feature a typical Neo-Classical cornice with dentils. Hamilton Hall a stone band just under the second-floor windows, and brick banding along the second floor. The central projection features an arched tripartite window with a stone keystone.

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<sup>58</sup> Goldfield, 2007: 109

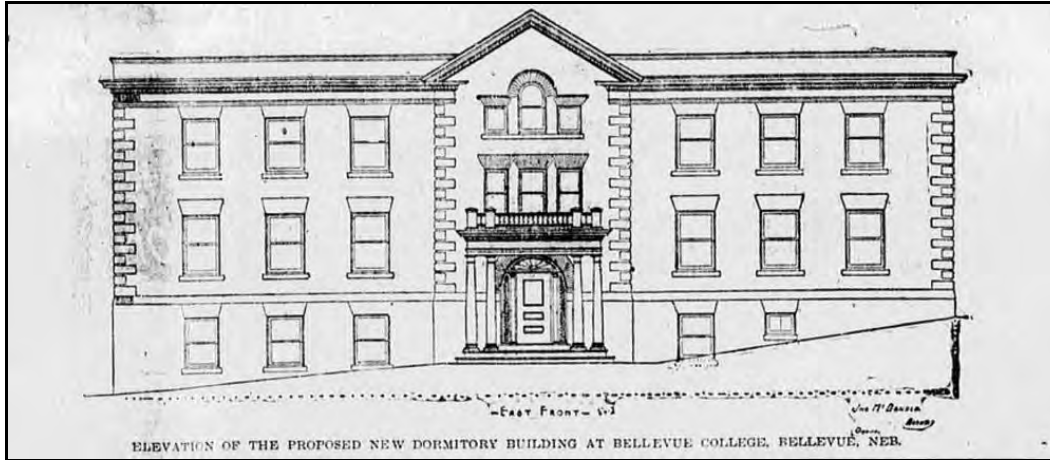


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**Figure 7: Architectural rendering of Lowrie Hall, signed by John McDonald (lower right corner), from the July 29, 1900 Omaha World-Herald.**

The exteriors of all three buildings have seen some modification over time (the exterior brick walls have been painted and the doors and window sashes have been replaced, for example), as one might expect in buildings that have seen multiple uses for over almost 120 years, including being converted to apartments over 70 years ago. The interiors have seen the most change, with individual dormitory rooms being joined together, and others subdivided and/or enlarged to create multi-room apartments, including bathrooms and kitchens. The hallways of Lowrie Hall, for example, appear to have projections into the hallways; these projections probably date from the time of the apartment conversion (1944) and provided necessary additional space in those units. Many units still appear to have original or historic details such as door, window, and baseboard trim, and modern carpet and tile flooring over original wood floors. The public spaces – lobbies, stairways, and even some hallways – retain original details such as paneled doors, door trim, transoms, stair railings, balusters, and newel posts. Some windows appear to retain original sashes, such as the multi-light, fixed sashes in the arched window of Hamilton Hall and the central, arched window on the rear side of Lowrie Hall.

The buildings have remained apartments until the present day. A fourth dormitory, Fontenelle Hall, built in 1903 after Finlay Hall burned, was designed in the same Neo-Classical Revival aesthetic as Lowrie and Hamilton Halls (Figure 8). The building burned in January 2006,<sup>59</sup> and was completely razed soon after. The gymnasium constructed circa 1913 was the only part of the 1912 Collegiate Gothic-designed campus redevelopment plan to be built, and even its design was not strictly Collegiate Gothic (it had rounded-arch instead of pointed-arch windows). This building burned in 1937 and was partially rebuilt using prefabricated panels in early 1941, and was eventually razed. Clarke Hall was razed in 1946.<sup>60</sup>

The Bellevue College Dormitories are significant examples of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century college dormitory architecture and are designed in modest variations of the Collegiate Gothic (Philadelphia Hall) and Neo-Classical Revival architectural styles (Lowrie and Hamilton Halls). They were designed by three Omaha, Nebraska architects or firms: Joseph S. Blake, Fisher & Lawrie, and John McDonald. The two distinct styles are indicative of the shift in popularity of these architectural styles both nationally and for academic buildings more specifically

<sup>59</sup> “Bellevue Apartments Burn: Recently repaired detectors, alarms credited with saving lives,” *Omaha World-Herald*, 22 Jan. 2006: 1B

<sup>60</sup> “Bellevue’s Old Clarke Hall Comes Down,” *Omaha World-Herald*, 14 Aug. 1946: 8

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during the period of significance. The buildings retain sufficient integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association to convey their local significance under Criterion C: Architecture.



**Figure 8: View of the main part of the Bellevue College campus, looking southwest from Clarke Hall, circa 1915. From left to right: Philadelphia, Hamilton, Lowrie, and Fontenelle Halls. From the Durham Museum’s Photography Archive.**

**Additional Historic Context: Property History Before 1880**

The lands in and around present-day Bellevue, Nebraska belonged to the Omaha tribe during the time the Presbyterian mission was founded there. When the tribe ceded their lands and moved to Thurston County, Nebraska in 1854, they requested that in appreciation to the Presbyterian mission for the school it provided for the Omaha, Otoe and other Indian youth, the mission should be granted “four adjoining quarter sections” of land adjoining the mission. These lands (Figure 9) were called the “Mission Reserve.”<sup>61</sup> The Mission Reserve is comprised of the northeast, southeast, and southwest quarters of Section 36, Township 14 North, Range 13 East and the northwest quarter of Section 1, Township 13 North, Range 13. The Bellevue College property, however, is in the northwest quarter of Section 36, Township 14 North, Range 13 East (Figure 10).

The history of the ownership of the 160-acre northwest quarter of Section 36 is unclear. This area was originally claimed by James C. Dellette, who filed claim A-189 on July 13, 1855. The claim was “bounded on the south and east by the Mission Reserve, west by lands claimed by C.D. Keller, on the north by land claimed by William A. Griffin. Containing 160 acres of land, laying in square form as near as may be.”<sup>62</sup> Dellette was treasurer of the “Bellevue (sic) Claim Association.”<sup>63</sup> It is unknown what became of Dellette’s claim, but the records of the Federal General Land Office indicate that the southeast quarter of the northwest quarter and “Lots 1 and 2” of

<sup>61</sup> Watkins, 1911: 67

<sup>62</sup> Watkins, 1911: 89

<sup>63</sup> Watkins, 1911: 74

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Section 36 was patented by Almarin Lockwood in April 1860.<sup>64</sup> In October 1860, the west half and the northeast quarter of the northwest quarter of Section 36 (a total of 120 acres) was patented by Stephen D. Bangs, assignee of William Thompson.<sup>65</sup> The land was probably subject to real estate speculation throughout the 1870s, and by the early 1880s, Henry T. Clarke had acquired the full northwest quarter of Section 36, as part of the land he would eventually donate to Bellevue College.

**Additional Historic Context: Property History After 1919**

After the school closed in 1919, the board of trustees saw no other option to pay the school's debt but to sell off the school's main asset: the approximately 215 acres of undeveloped property which Henry T. Clarke had donated in 1880 (Figure 11). A group of alumni sought to keep the school open, but, like an earlier attempt to lease the property for a military academy, their efforts came up well short of the financial resources the board of trustees indicated would be required.<sup>66</sup> There were other attempts to keep the school open in some way, including unifying Bellevue College with other small colleges and (again) with the nascent University of Omaha, or moving the Presbyterian Omaha Theological Seminary to Bellevue. Other ideas would have resulted in completely new uses such as a proposal to lease or sell it to the American Legion for a veteran's hospital, or to lease the grounds to an airport corporation.<sup>67</sup> In February 1920, the Chinese Mission Society (also known as the Columban Fathers) purchased the school's undeveloped farm property (215 acres).<sup>68</sup> This left the college with 50 acres and its buildings (Clarke's original deed to the College indicated these 50 acres was to remain with the college). Individual college buildings were leased for new purposes: Pioneer Union High School leased Philadelphia Hall for its classes for a brief time,<sup>69</sup> and the Federal government leased the grounds from 1921 to 1925 for a vocational school for World War I veterans.<sup>70</sup>

There were a variety of other uses proposed for the site throughout the late 1920s and early 1930s, including a proposed "Omaha-Bellevue air port (sic) project" with an "aviation college with a two-year course at \$1,500 annual tuition." The proposal included plans for the acquisition of 900 lots in the south half of Bellevue (over 200 acres) for the commercial airport and an additional 485 acres below the town (between the town and the river) for the training field. This plan, however, failed to materialize. In the end, the Bellevue College trustees realized they had few other options: to satisfy a \$75,000 mortgage on the property held by the Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, the trustees transferred title to the 50-acre Bellevue property to the Board of Christian Education in 1934, which in turn transferred the property to the trustees of Hastings College.<sup>71</sup> This transfer satisfied internal Board requirements that it support only one college in a Presbyterian synod. With this transfer, Bellevue College officially ceased to exist.

<sup>64</sup> "Land Patent for Almarin Lockwood," Bureau of Land Management/General Land Office, 1860

<sup>65</sup> "Land Patent for William Thompson," Bureau of Land Management/General Land Office, 1860

<sup>66</sup> "Bellevue College Not Likely to Open," *Omaha World-Herald*, 5 Aug. 1919: 9

<sup>67</sup> Weyer, 1940: 68

<sup>68</sup> Szmrecsanyi, 1983: 371

<sup>69</sup> "Pioneer Union High School Opens Monday," *Omaha World-Herald*, 5 Sep. 1919: 11

<sup>70</sup> Weyer, 1940: 68

<sup>71</sup> Weyer, 1940: 69

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Figure 9: Squatters Claims Map, from Watkins, 1911. The Mission Reserve is indicated in RED; the northwest quarter of Section 36, containing the bulk of the Bellevue College lands, is indicated in GREEN.

In December 1934, the Nebraska division of the New Deal-era Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) leased the college buildings from Hastings College to house a vocational training school in Bellevue. By 1937, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) had taken over management of the vocational school at Bellevue and similar programs nationally. The college gymnasium burned in January 1937.<sup>72</sup> Students in the National Youth Administration (NYA) who were part of the vocational programs at Bellevue constructed a new gymnasium on

<sup>72</sup> "Bellevue Rebuilding Program is Doubted," *Omaha World-Herald*, 23 Jan. 1937: 2

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the foundation of the old in late 1940 and early 1941, using prefabricated panels they built.<sup>73</sup> The college buildings remained under Federal lease through the early 1940s. As part of the national war housing program, the four dormitory buildings at Bellevue College (plus a fifth, unnamed building on the campus) had been converted to 59 apartments for the families of war workers (Figure 12),<sup>74</sup> and as early as the mid-June 1944, these apartments were advertised for rent as the “Bellevue College Apartments”(Figure 13).<sup>75</sup> After the war, old Clarke Hall was razed, but the dormitories continued to be rented as apartments.<sup>76</sup> With the exception of Fontenelle Hall, which burned and was razed, they remain privately-owned apartments to the present day.

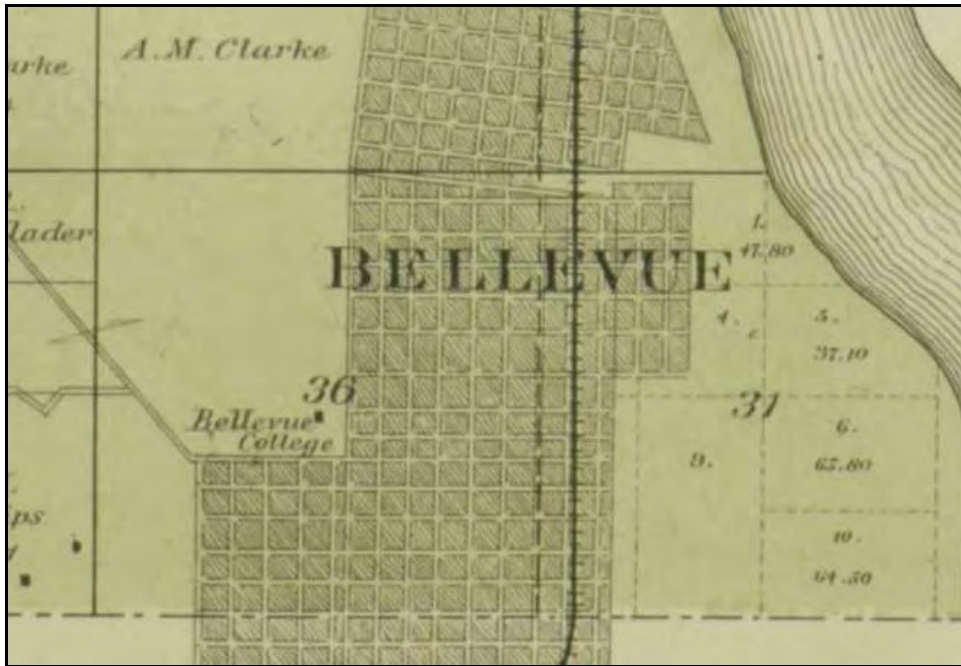


Figure 10: Detail of Plate 70, 1889 Atlas of Sarpy County, showing Bellevue, and Section 36 of Township 14 North, Range 13 East. From the Omaha Public Library Digital Collections.

<sup>73</sup> “Move Walls for Building,” *Omaha World-Herald*, 2 Feb. 1941: 8-D

<sup>74</sup> “Complete 115 U.S. Units,” *Omaha World-Herald*, 4 Jun. 1944: 8-D

<sup>75</sup> Advertisement, *Omaha World-Herald*, 18 Jun. 1944: 3-D

<sup>76</sup> “Oldest and Youngest City in the State,” *Omaha World-Herald*, 16 Dec. 1946: 5-C



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<b>215 ACRES</b>		
<b>Adjoining Bellevue College Campus</b>		
5 Miles From the Center of South Omaha	IDEAL FOR	On Main Automobile Road, Omaha to Kansas City
5 Miles From the Stock Yards	A Country Club	Close to Omaha Auto Club Camp
One-Half Mile From Bellevue Railroad Station	An Acreage Subdivision	High, Slightly Farm Overlooking Missouri River—Nearly All in Cultivation—About 60 Acres in Alfalfa—Old Buildings.
Interurban Car Service to Corner of Property	A Thoroughbred Stock Farm	
PRICE \$262.50 PER ACRE		ABOUT ONE-HALF CASH
OWNER—BELLEVUE COLLEGE		
<b>Payne Investment Company, Agents</b>		
537 Omaha National Bank Bldg.		Douglas 1781

Figure 11: 1919 advertisement from the *Omaha World-Herald* for the 215 acres belonging to Bellevue College.



Figure 12: Lowrie Hall, looking west-southwest, as the college dormitories were being renovated in 1944 into small apartments for war workers at the Martin Bomber Plant at Fort Crook, Bellevue, Nebraska. From the *Omaha World-Herald* Photography Archives.

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**Furnished Apartments 67**

**Bellevue College Apartments**  
Near bomber plant and Fort Crook.  
Now available, 2 and 3 rooms, priced  
\$35 to \$57.50. Some of the apartments  
are furnished. Consider these advan-  
tages:  
Newly remodeled and decorated. Stove  
and (ice box) Coolerator furnished.  
Suburban location, gas, lights, water  
paid, adequate hot water, heat fur-  
nished, good bus service to Omaha,  
spacious grounds, good ventilation.  
Garden space available. Near school  
and church.  
Four separate buildings. Ideal location  
for families with children. To rent  
apartment see superintendent on  
grounds at Bellevue.  
T. H. MAENNER CO.  
Certified Property Managers.  
Phone JA 2805 or Bellevue 117-W.

Figure 13: Advertisement for “Bellevue College Apartments” from the June 18, 1944 Omaha World-Herald. Note that the apartments were advertised specifically to workers at the Martin Bomber Plant at Fort Crook.



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## 9. Major Bibliographic References

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

### Books

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**Legal/Government Documents and Records**

United States. Department of the Interior. Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office Records: *Land Patent for Almarin Lockwood*. Web. Accessed 23 Feb. 2017

United States. Department of the Interior. Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office Records: *Land Patent for William Thompson*. Web. Accessed 23 Feb. 2017

**Maps**

*Atlas of Douglas, Sarpy, and Washington Counties, Nebraska and Mills and Pottawattamie Counties, Iowa....* 1913. Scale 1.5:1. "Map of Township 14 N. Range XIII E." Plate 16. Available online from the Omaha Public Library. Accessed 25 Feb. 2017.

*Bellevue, Nebraska* [map]. 1857. Scale not given. "Township No. 14 North Range No. XIII East of 6<sup>th</sup> Principal Meridian (NEB. TER.)" Available from Bureau of Land Management/General Land Office. Web. Accessed 15 Feb 2017

*Omaha, Nebraska* [map]. 1901-1918. Scale note given. "Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1867-1970 – Nebraska." Available online via Omaha Public Library. Accessed 7 Mar 2017.

--. 1901-1963. Scale note given. "Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1867-1970 – Nebraska." Available online via Omaha Public Library. Accessed 7 Mar 2017.

*Plat Book of Douglas & Sarpy Counties, Nebraska*. 1889. Scale 1:2. "Township 14 North, Range 13 and 14 East." Available from the Omaha Public Library. Accessed 25 Feb 2017.

**Newspapers**

Omaha Daily Bee: 1883, 1884, 1897, 1904

Omaha World-Herald: 1897, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1904, 1909, 1913, 1919, 1925, 1926, 1933, 1937, 1941, 1944, 1946, 2006

Plattsmouth Daily Herald: 1884

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**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)  
Sarpy County Museum

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property ~ 4 acres USGS Quadrangle Omaha South

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

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

- |    |          |                  |           |                   |
|----|----------|------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| 1. | Latitude | <u>41.140517</u> | Longitude | <u>-95.898766</u> |
| 2. | Latitude | _____            | Longitude | _____             |
| 3. | Latitude | _____            | Longitude | _____             |
| 4. | Latitude | _____            | Longitude | _____             |

**Verbal Boundary Description**

Lot 1, College Apartments Addition, Bellevue, Nebraska

**Boundary Justification**

This parcel, known as College Park Apartments, is that part of the original property of Bellevue College that contains the extant historic college buildings (Philadelphia, Lowrie, and Hamilton Hall).

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Patrick Thompson

organization Restoration Exchange Omaha date March 27, 2017

street & number 3902 Davenport Street telephone (402) 679-5854

city or town Omaha state NE zip code 68131

email info@restorationexchange.org

**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.

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**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 Bellevue College Dormitories

City or Vicinity Bellevue County Sarpy State Nebraska

Photographer Patrick Thompson Date Photographed February, 2017

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

1. NE\_Sarpy County\_Bellevue College Dormitories\_0001. Philadelphia Hall, north and west sides, looking southeast.
2. NE\_Sarpy County\_Bellevue College Dormitories\_0002. Philadelphia Hall, west and south sides, looking northeast.
3. NE\_Sarpy County\_Bellevue College Dormitories\_0003. Philadelphia Hall, detail of front façade parapet, looking south.
4. NE\_Sarpy County\_Bellevue College Dormitories\_0004. Philadelphia Hall, detail of basement-level central entry.
5. NE\_Sarpy County\_Bellevue College Dormitories\_0005. Philadelphia Hall, south and east sides, looking northwest.
6. NE\_Sarpy County\_Bellevue College Dormitories\_0006. Philadelphia Hall, east and north sides, looking southwest.
7. NE\_Sarpy County\_Bellevue College Dormitories\_0007. Lowrie Hall, south and east sides, looking west-northwest.
8. NE\_Sarpy County\_Bellevue College Dormitories\_0008. Lowrie Hall, detail of main entry.
9. NE\_Sarpy County\_Bellevue College Dormitories\_0009. Lowrie Hall, detail of second-floor windows/gable.
10. NE\_Sarpy County\_Bellevue College Dormitories\_0010. Lowrie Hall, east and north sides, looking south-southwest.
11. NE\_Sarpy County\_Bellevue College Dormitories\_0011. Lowrie Hall, west side, looking east.
12. NE\_Sarpy County\_Bellevue College Dormitories\_0012. Lowrie Hall, south side, looking north.
13. NE\_Sarpy County\_Bellevue College Dormitories\_0013. Hamilton Hall, east and north sides, looking south-southwest.
14. NE\_Sarpy County\_Bellevue College Dormitories\_0014. Hamilton Hall, detail of front entry/porch.
15. NE\_Sarpy County\_Bellevue College Dormitories\_0015. Hamilton Hall, detail of gable and tripartite lunette window.
16. NE\_Sarpy County\_Bellevue College Dormitories\_0016. Hamilton Hall, north and west sides, looking south-southeast.
17. NE\_Sarpy County\_Bellevue College Dormitories\_0017. Hamilton Hall, west side, looking east.
18. NE\_Sarpy County\_Bellevue College Dormitories\_0018. Hamilton Hall, south and east sides, looking north-northwest.
19. NE\_Sarpy County\_Bellevue College Dormitories\_0019. Philadelphia Hall, detail of newel post on second floor.
20. NE\_Sarpy County\_Bellevue College Dormitories\_0020. Philadelphia Hall, detail of stairwell/partition wall.
21. NE\_Sarpy County\_Bellevue College Dormitories\_0021. Philadelphia Hall, detail of hallway/apartment entry with trim.
22. NE\_Sarpy County\_Bellevue College Dormitories\_0022. Philadelphia Hall, detail of basement entry door on south side.
23. NE\_Sarpy County\_Bellevue College Dormitories\_0023. Lowrie Hall, detail of lobby and stairwell with newel posts.
24. NE\_Sarpy County\_Bellevue College Dormitories\_0024. Lowrie Hall, detail of stair baluster railing.
25. NE\_Sarpy County\_Bellevue College Dormitories\_0025. Lowrie Hall, detail of apartment entry door with transom/trim.
26. NE\_Sarpy County\_Bellevue College Dormitories\_0026. Lowrie Hall, detail of hallway with projections from apartments.
27. NE\_Sarpy County\_Bellevue College Dormitories\_0027. Lowrie Hall, an apartment kitchen with built-in wood cabinets.
28. NE\_Sarpy County\_Bellevue College Dormitories\_0028. Hamilton Hall, detail from lobby of newel posts and stairwell.
29. NE\_Sarpy County\_Bellevue College Dormitories\_0029. Hamilton Hall, detail of baluster rail/partition wall on second floor.
30. NE\_Sarpy County\_Bellevue College Dormitories\_0030. Hamilton Hall, second floor landing with tripartite lunette window.
31. NE\_Sarpy County\_Bellevue College Dormitories\_0031. Hamilton Hall, an apartment kitchen with built-in wood cabinets.
32. NE\_Sarpy County\_Bellevue College Dormitories\_0032. Hamilton Hall, view of a living room with a window and baseboard trim.

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Figure 14: Bellevue College Dormitories, with the parcel indicated in RED; Philadelphia Hall (ORANGE); Hamilton Hall (GREEN); Lowrie Hall (BLUE). From the Sarpy County Assessor's website: <http://www.sarpy.com/sarpyproperty/> accessed February 25, 2017.



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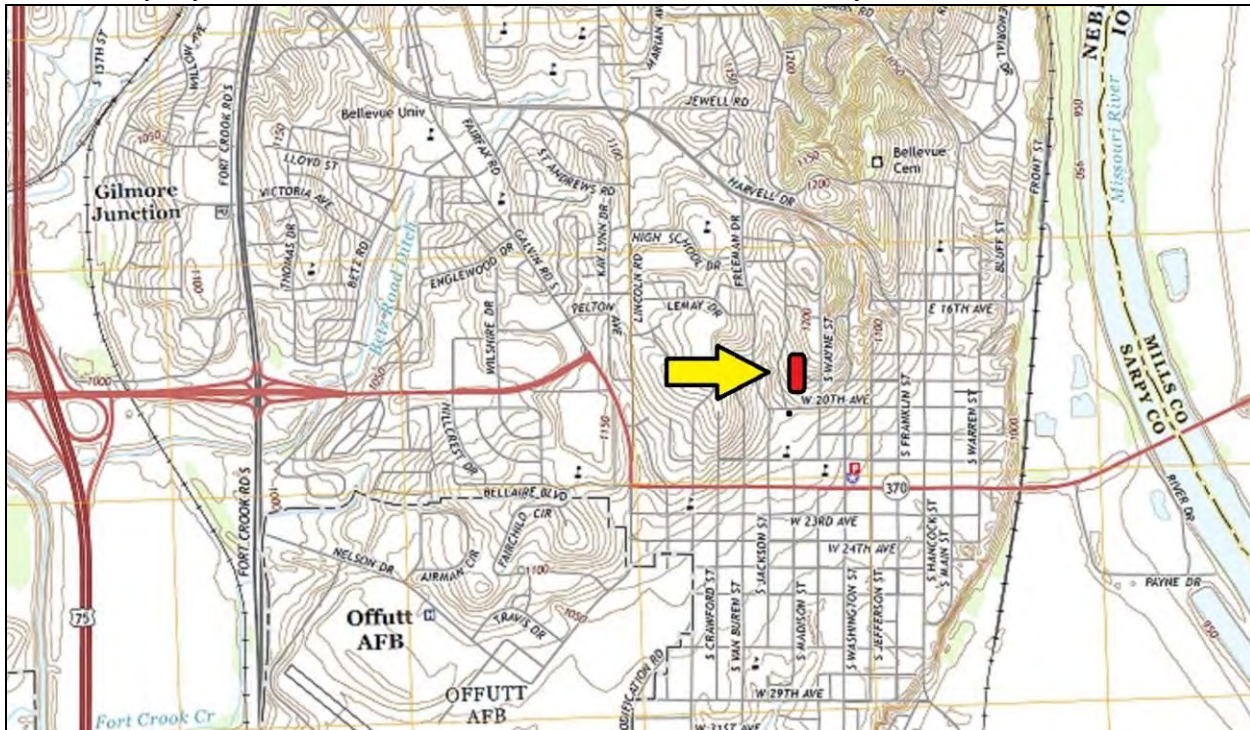


Figure 15: Detail of 2014 USGS Topographic Map for Omaha South, NE-IA, Scale: 1:24,000. The approximate location of the Bellevue College Dormitories parcel is indicated in **RED**. From the United States Geological Survey website, [www.usgs.gov](http://www.usgs.gov) accessed March 7, 2017.





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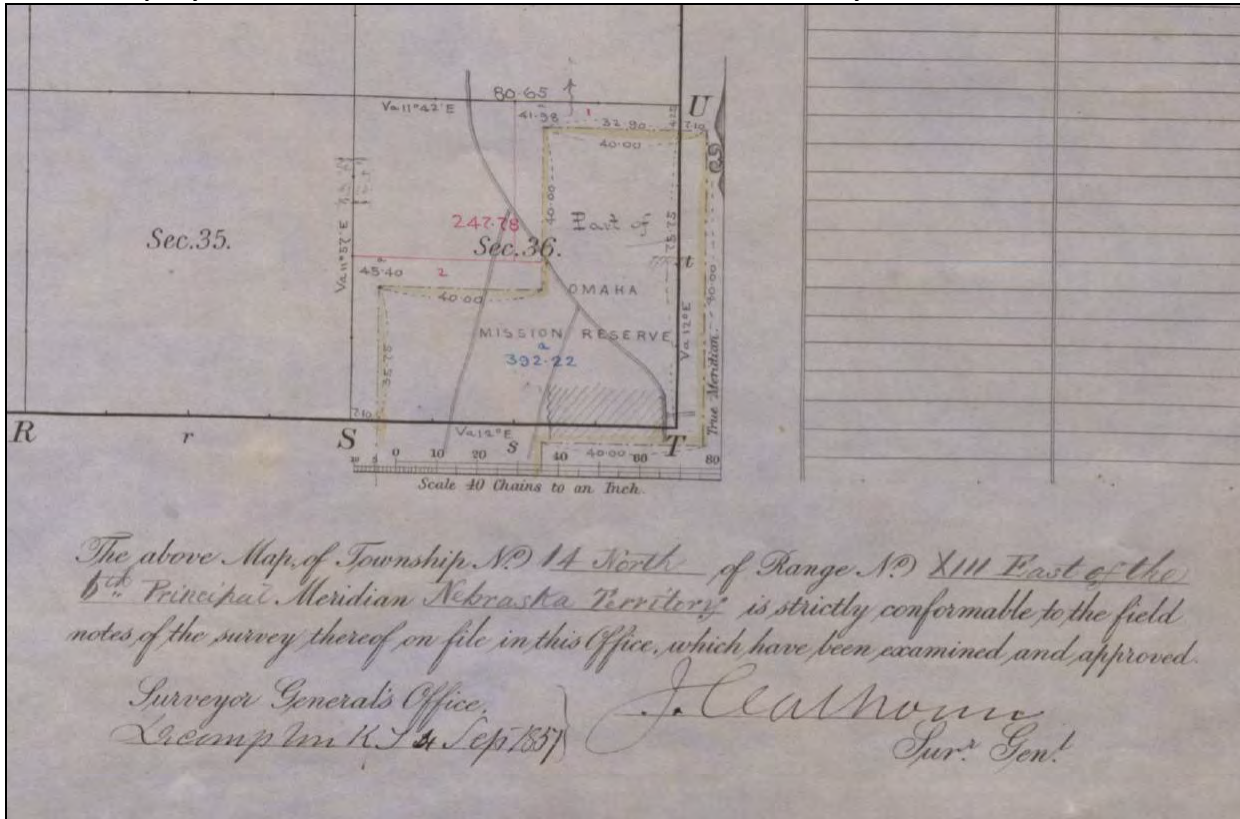


Figure 16: Detail of survey map of Section 36, Township 14 North, Range 13 East, showing part of the “Omaha (sic) Mission Reserve” (the location of present-day Bellevue, Nebraska) in the northeast, southeast, and southwest quarters of Section 36. From the United States Bureau of Land Management website, <https://gloreCORDS.blm.gov/default.aspx> accessed February 15, 2017.



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Figure 17: Detail of "Claims of Squatter Sovereigns in the Vicinity of Bellevue (sic) Nebraska in the Years 1854, 1855, 1856, and 1857," from Watkins, 1911, Plate 3, page 69. Note the "Omaha Mission Reserve" lands adjacent to those of William Hamilton, early missionary to the Indians in the area, and the northwest quarter of Section 36 claimed by "J.C. Bellette." S





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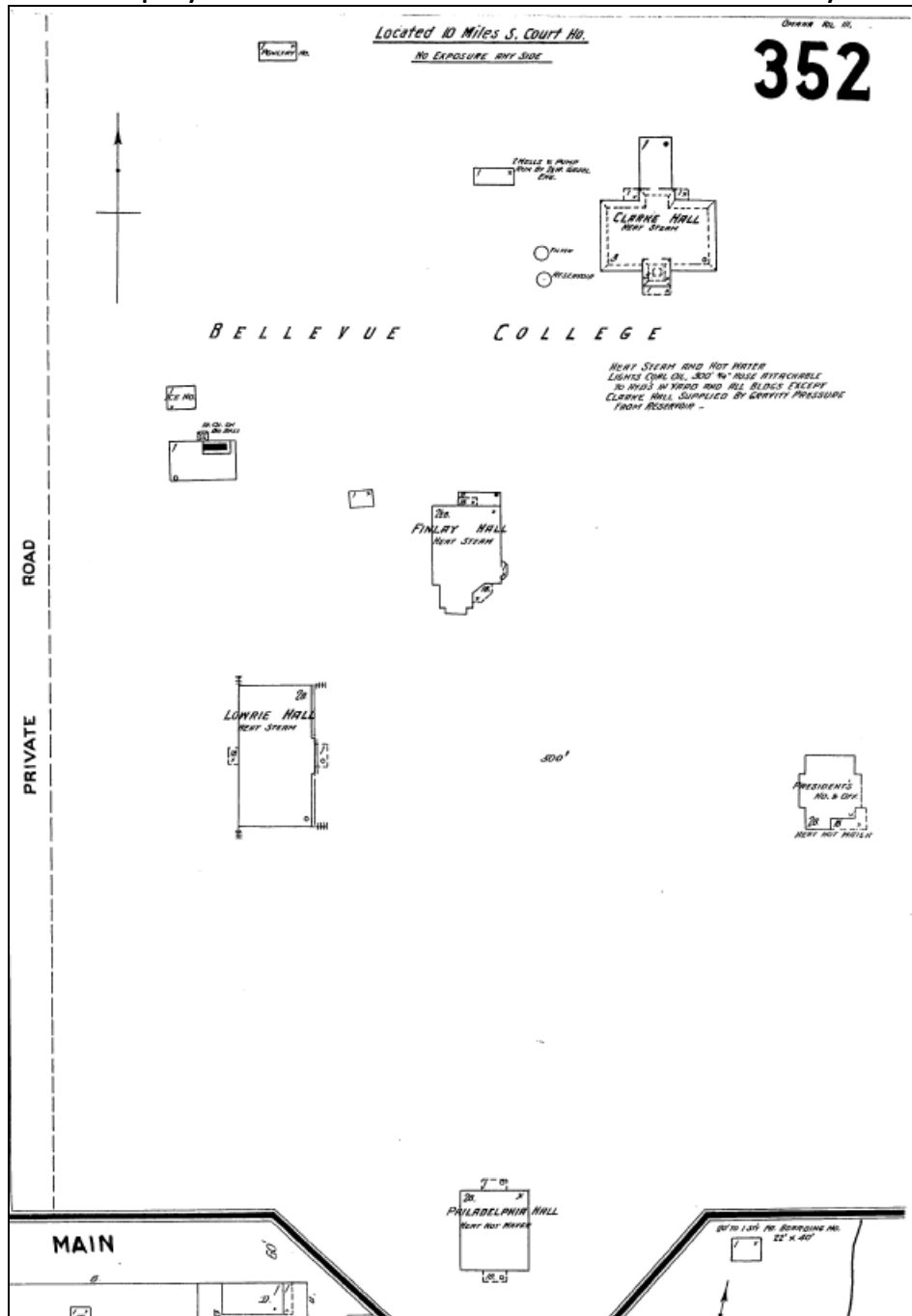


Figure 18: Detail of 1901 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Omaha, Nebraska, Vol. 3, Sheet 352, showing Bellevue College: Philadelphia Hall at the bottom, Lowrie and Rankin Halls in the middle (left and right, respectively), Finlay Hall to the north of Lowrie Hall, and Clarke Hall (t-shaped building near the top of the image), with scattered dependencies and smaller structures nearby. Available online from the Omaha Public Library.

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Figure 19: Clarke Hall as originally constructed. From the 1909 edition of "Old Elk Hill," the Bellevue College yearbook. From Bellevue University Special Collections.

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Figure 20: Clarke Hall, the original Bellevue College building, looking north-northeast after the May 12, 1908 tornado. From the 1909 edition of "Old Elk Hill," the Bellevue College yearbook. From Bellevue University Special Collections.

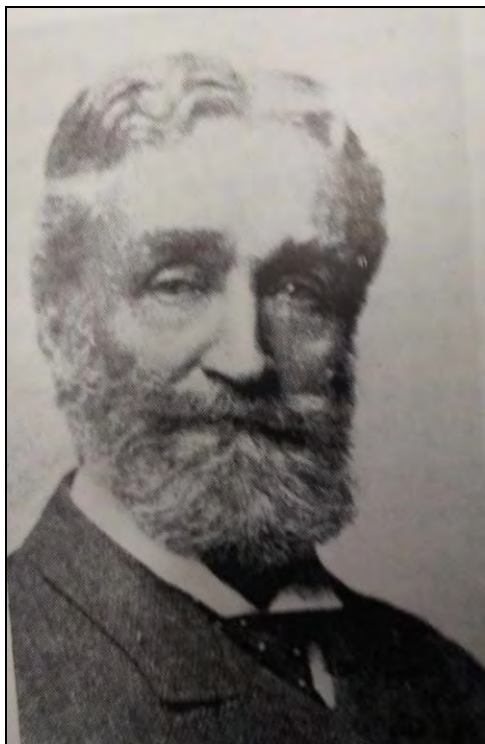


Figure 21: Henry Tefft Clarke, undated, benefactor of Bellevue College. From the 1909 edition of "Old Elk Hill," the Bellevue College yearbook. From Bellevue University Special Collections.

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Figure 22: Finlay Hall, Bellevue College's second building and original dormitory, undated, looking northwest. From the 1903 edition of "Old Elk Hill," the Bellevue College yearbook. From Bellevue University Special Collections.



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Figure 23: Rankin Hall, the president's home, looking northwest, circa 1903. From the 1903 edition of "Old Elk Hill," the Bellevue College yearbook. From Bellevue University Special Collections.



Figure 24: Philadelphia Hall, circa 1909, looking southwest. From the 1909 edition of "Old Elk Hill," the Bellevue College yearbook. From Bellevue University Special Collections.

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**Figure 254: Lowrie Hall, the second dormitory, circa 1915, looking west-southwest. From the Durham Museum's Photography Archive.**



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Figure 26: Lowrie Hall, looking west-northwest, circa 1903. From the 1903 edition of "Old Elk Hill," the Bellevue College yearbook. From Bellevue University Special Collections.



Figure 276: Tornado damage along the rear of Lowrie Hall, 1908. Note the central arched door in the center, and the arched window above it. From Creigh, 1963.

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Figure 28: Fontenelle Hall, looking northwest, circa 1903. It was constructed after Finlay Hall burned in 1902. From the 1903 edition of "Old Elk Hill," the Bellevue College yearbook. From Bellevue University Special Collections.



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Figure 29: Hamilton Hall, looking south-southwest, circa 1915. From the Durham Museum's Photography Archive.



Figure 30: Bellevue College gymnasium, looking north-northwest, circa 1916. From the 1917 edition of "The Bellevue Indian," the Bellevue College yearbook. From Bellevue University Special Collections.

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Figure 31: Bellevue College, circa 1915, looking east. From left to right: gymnasium, Clarke, Fontenelle, Lowrie, Hamilton, and Philadelphia Halls. From the Durham Museum's Photography Archive.

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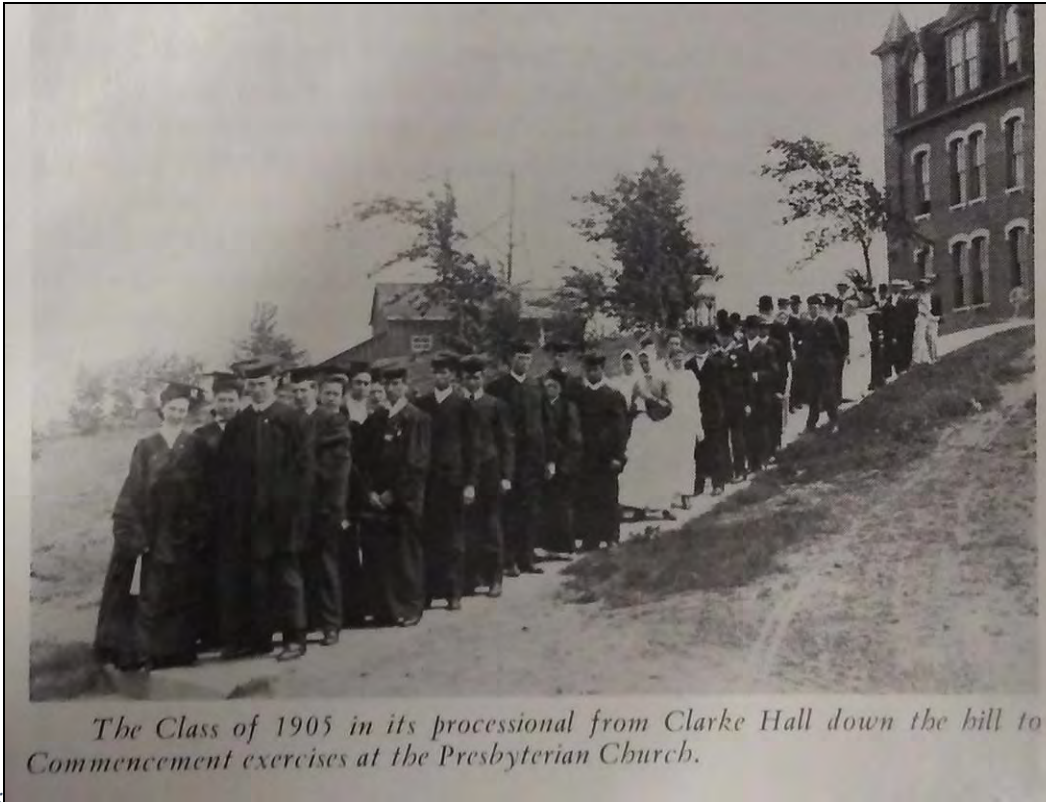


Figure 32: Bellevue College Class of 1905 in procession to Bellevue’s Presbyterian Church. From Creigh, 1963.



Figure 33: Bellevue College Class of 1905 posing with diplomas outside Bellevue’s Presbyterian Church. Note Clarke Hall on the hill in the background. From Creigh, 1963.



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Figure 34: Female Dormitory Room in Fontenelle Hall, undated. From Creigh, 1963.



Figure 35: Posed photograph of young men in a Hamilton Hall dormitory room, undated. From Creigh, 1963.

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Figure 36: Another female dormitory room from Bellevue College, circa 1910, from a postcard in the Bellevue University Special Collections.



Figure 37: Student cafeteria in the basement of Fontenelle Hall, circa 1907. The cook, Tommy Kurushima, is seen here posing with a cake he made in the shape of Clarke Hall. From the 1907 edition of "Old Elk Hill," the Bellevue College yearbook. From Bellevue University Special Collections.



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**Figure 38: Photograph of the Bellevue College campus looking north-northwest, circa 1915. From left to right: Hamilton, Lowrie, Fontenelle, and Clarke Halls. From the 1915 edition of "The Indian," the Bellevue College yearbook. From Bellevue University Special Collections.**

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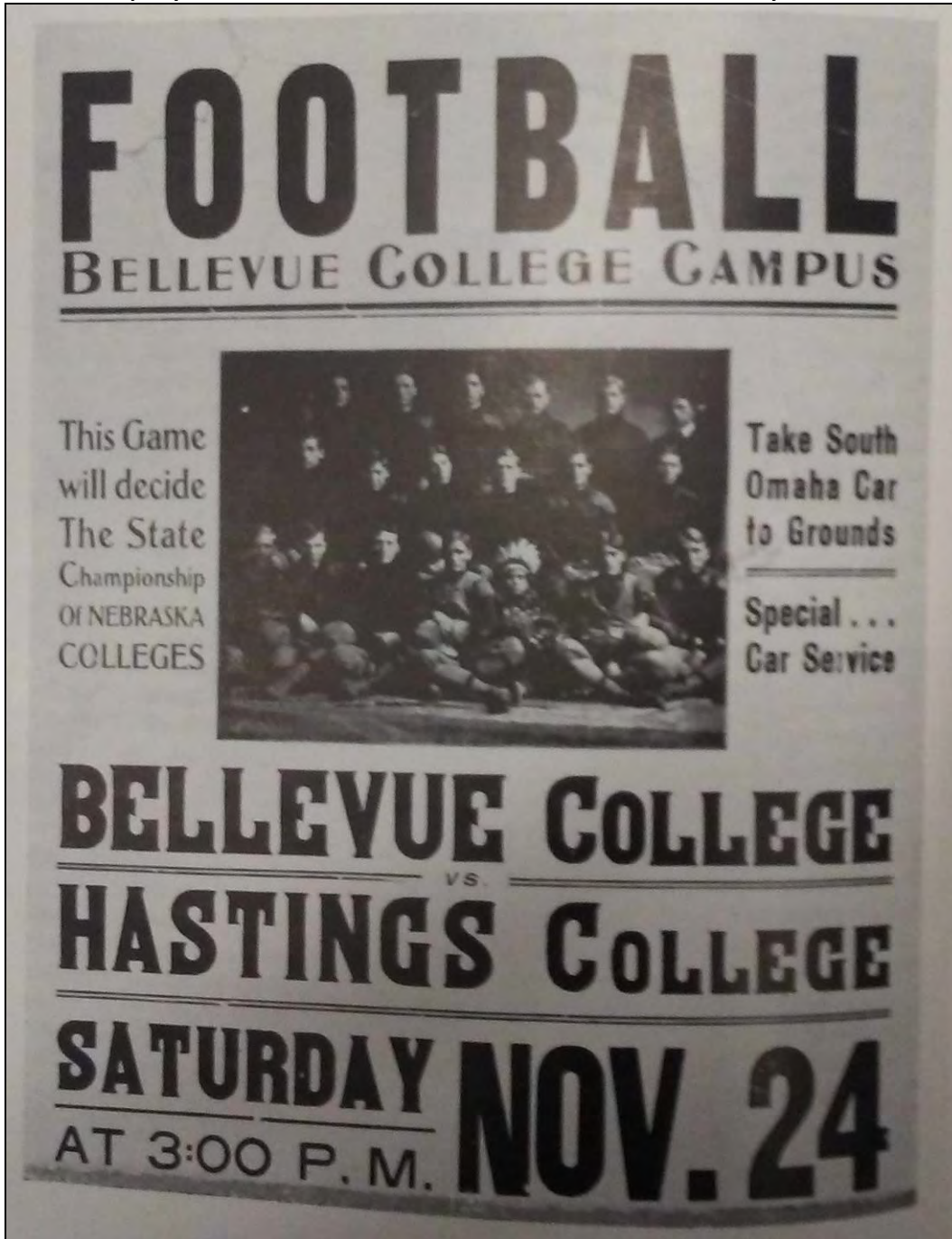


Figure 39: Copy of a poster announcing a football game between Bellevue and Hastings Colleges, undated. From Creigh, 1963.



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Figure 40: Announcement of a large-scale building program at Bellevue College, from plans drawn by Omaha architect Lloyd D. Willis using the “Collegiate Gothic” architectural style, from the March 3, 1912 edition of the Omaha World-Herald.



Figure 41: Detail of an atlas of Sarpy County, Nebraska. Note the Bellevue College campus is listed as “University of Omaha,” and the college property included a parcel to the west (left), north of the property of Henry T. Clarke. From Bee Publishing, 1913.



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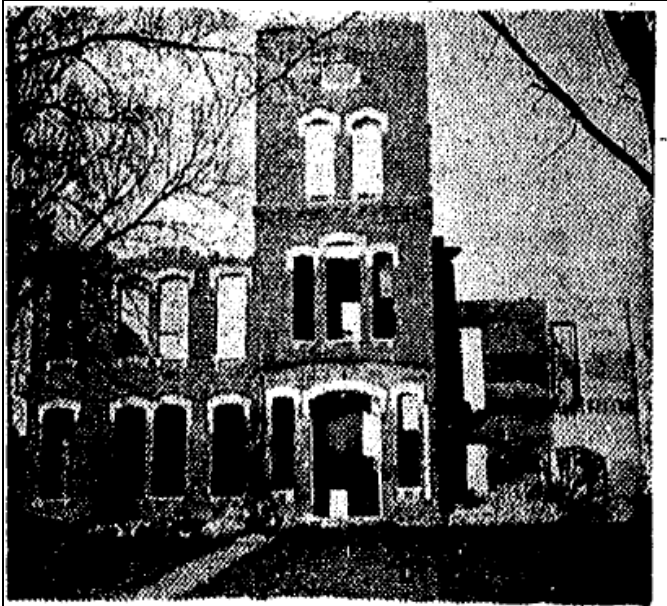
Figure 42: Fontenelle Hall, looking west-northwest, as the building is being renovated in 1944 into small apartments for war workers at the Martin Bomber Plant, Bellevue, Nebraska. From the Omaha World-Herald Photography Archives.

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**Old Clarke Hall, Bellevue College's main building, completed in 1884, is only a shell as workmen tear it down . . . The former dormitories near by are now apartments.**

Figure 43: Detail of a newspaper story about Bellevue, showing Clarke Hall being demolished. From the December 15, 1946 edition of the Omaha World-Herald.



Figure 44: Detail from aerial photograph of the Bellevue College property (outlined in RED), circa 1955, from the Sarpy County Assessor's website, <https://maps.sarpy.com/html5viewer/index.html?Viewer=SIMS>, accessed 25 Mar. 2017. The main part of the Columban Brothers campus is the rectangular parcel west of the Bellevue College property. North indicated by red arrow.



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Name of Property

County and State

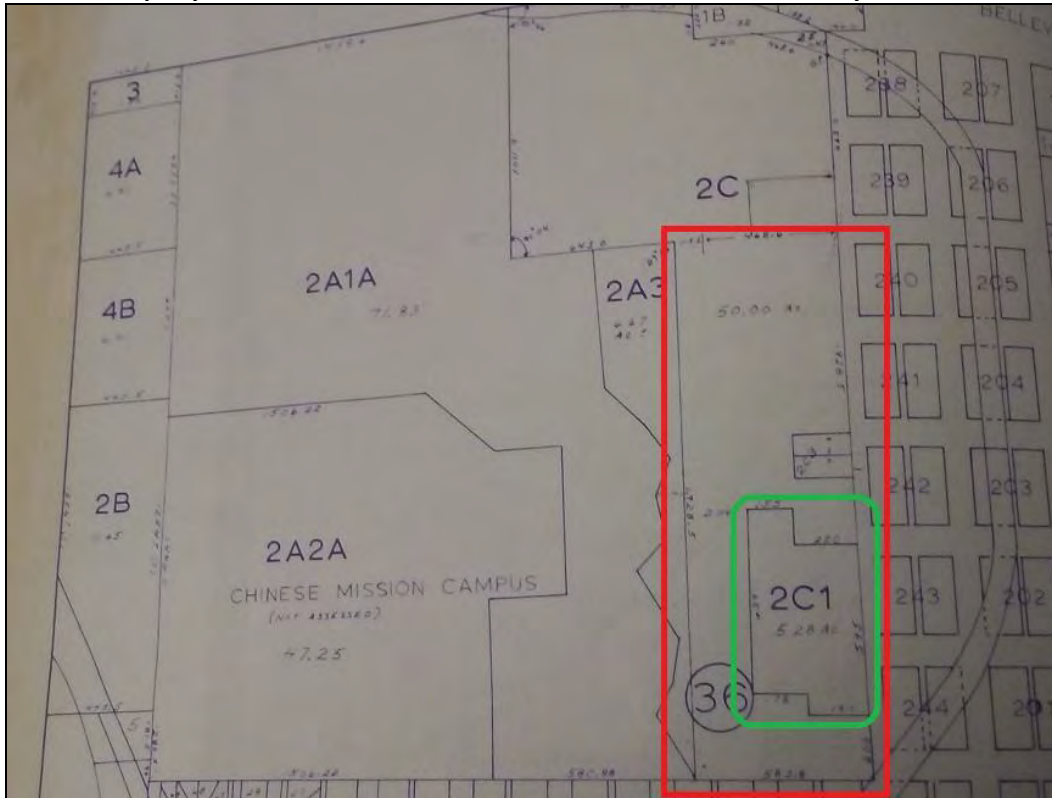


Figure 45: Former Bellevue College property plat, undated. The college's last vestige, the 50-acre lot, is indicated in RED, with a later subdivision of the dormitory buildings indicated in GREEN. From the Sarpy County Recorder of Deeds.

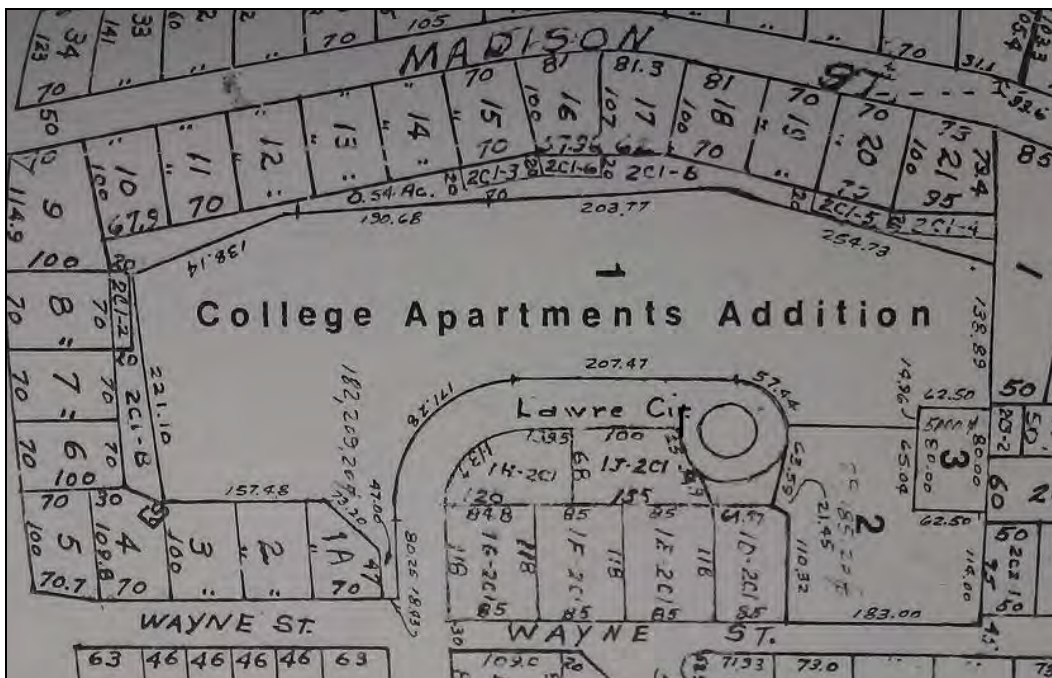


Figure 46: College Apartments Addition, the parcel containing the Bellevue College Dormitory buildings, circa 1961, from Sarpy County Recorder of Deeds.

Bellevue College Dormitories

Sarpy County, Nebraska

Name of Property

County and State

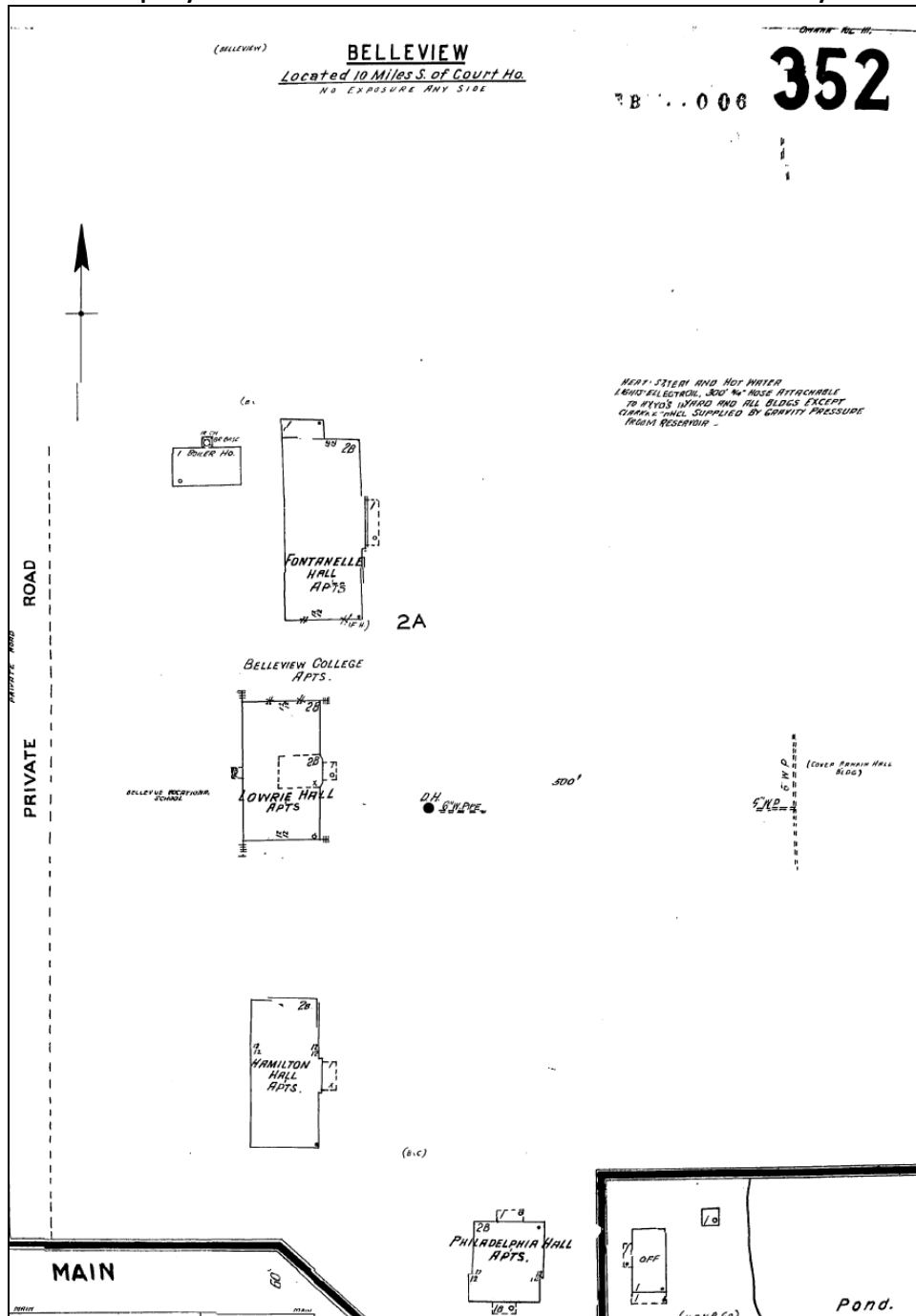


Figure 47: Detail of 1963 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Omaha, Nebraska, Vol. 3, Sheet 352, showing the former Bellevue College dormitories: Philadelphia Hall at the bottom, Hamilton, Lowrie, and Fontenelle Halls in the center left. Available online from the Omaha Public Library.

Bellevue College Dormitories

Sarpy County, Nebraska

Name of Property

County and State



Figure 48: Detail from aerial photograph of the Bellevue College property (outlined in RED), circa 2001, from the Sarpy County Assessor's website, <https://maps.sarpy.com/html5viewer/index.html?Viewer=SIMS>, accessed 25 Mar. 2017. Note the road leading to the rear of Fontenelle Hall is just visible along the western parcel boundary. North indicated by red arrow.



Bellevue College Dormitories

Sarpy County, Nebraska

**Name of Property**

**County and State**



**Photograph 1**



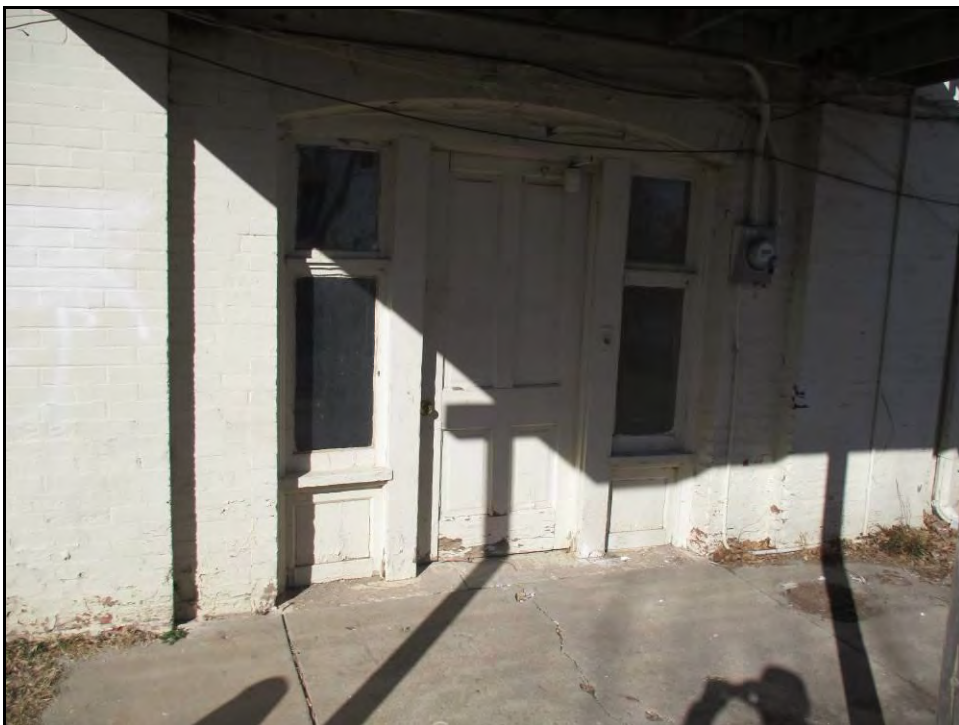
**Photograph 2**

Bellevue College Dormitories  
**Name of Property**

Sarpy County, Nebraska  
**County and State**



Photograph 3



Photograph 4



Bellevue College Dormitories

Sarpy County, Nebraska

Name of Property

County and State



Photograph 5



Photograph 6

Bellevue College Dormitories

Sarpy County, Nebraska

**Name of Property**

**County and State**



**Photograph 7**



**Photograph 8**



Bellevue College Dormitories

Sarpy County, Nebraska

Name of Property

County and State



Photograph 9



Photograph 10

Bellevue College Dormitories

Sarpy County, Nebraska

**Name of Property**

**County and State**



**Photograph 11**



**Photograph 12**



Bellevue College Dormitories

Sarpy County, Nebraska

Name of Property

County and State



Photograph 13



Photograph 14

Bellevue College Dormitories

Sarpy County, Nebraska

Name of Property

County and State



Photograph 15



Photograph 16



Bellevue College Dormitories

Sarpy County, Nebraska

**Name of Property**

**County and State**



Photograph 17



Photograph 18



Bellevue College Dormitories

Sarpy County, Nebraska

**Name of Property**

**County and State**



Photograph 19

Bellevue College Dormitories

Sarpy County, Nebraska

Name of Property

County and State



Photograph 20

Bellevue College Dormitories

Sarpy County, Nebraska

**Name of Property**

**County and State**



**Photograph 21**

Bellevue College Dormitories

Sarpy County, Nebraska

Name of Property

County and State



Photograph 22



Photograph 23



Bellevue College Dormitories

Sarpy County, Nebraska

**Name of Property**

**County and State**



Photograph 24



Bellevue College Dormitories

Sarpy County, Nebraska

**Name of Property**

**County and State**



**Photograph 25**

Bellevue College Dormitories

Sarpy County, Nebraska

**Name of Property**

**County and State**



**Photograph 26**

Bellevue College Dormitories  
**Name of Property**

Sarpy County, Nebraska  
**County and State**



**Photograph 27**

Bellevue College Dormitories

Sarpy County, Nebraska

**Name of Property**

**County and State**



Photograph 28

Bellevue College Dormitories

Sarpy County, Nebraska

**Name of Property**

**County and State**



Photograph 29



Bellevue College Dormitories

Sarpy County, Nebraska

**Name of Property**

**County and State**



Photograph 30

Bellevue College Dormitories  
**Name of Property**

Sarpy County, Nebraska  
**County and State**



Photograph 31

Bellevue College Dormitories

Sarpy County, Nebraska

Name of Property

County and State



Photograph 32

**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.





































3





















2

Building #2  
(9-25)  
400 W. 10th Ave.





2





















































17

















UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Bellevue College Dormitories

Multiple Name: \_\_\_\_\_

State & County: NEBRASKA, Sarpy

Date Received: 6/9/2017      Date of Pending List: 7/18/2017      Date of 16th Day: 8/2/2017      Date of 45th Day: 7/24/2017      Date of Weekly List: \_\_\_\_\_

Reference number: SG100001357

Nominator: State

Reason For Review:

- |                                       |  |   |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal       | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL            | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape       | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver       | <input type="checkbox"/> National        | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other        | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP             | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
|                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG             |   |

Accept       Return       Reject      7/24/2017 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: Local college whose sole remains are three dorms

Recommendation/ Criteria: Accept / A & C

Reviewer Jim Gabbert      Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275      Date \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION:    see attached comments : No    see attached SLR : **Yes**

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.





June 5, 2017

Ms. Alexis Abernathy  
NPS – National Register of Historic Places  
Mail Stop 7228  
1849 C St, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

RE: Bellevue College Dormitories NRHP Nomination

Dear Ms. Abernathy,

Enclosed is the complete nomination packet for the Bellevue College Dormitories in Sarpy County, Nebraska. The enclosed contents are as follows:

1. The signed first page of the Bellevue College Dormitories nomination
2. One archival disk with the true and correct copy of the nomination for the Bellevue College Dormitories to the National Register of Historic Places in pdf format.
3. Two archival disks with the photographs for the Bellevue College Dormitories nomination.

If you have any questions regarding the submitted materials, please feel free to contact me at the number or email address below.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jill Dolberg".

Jill E. Dolberg  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer  
Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office

Phone: (402) 471-4773  
Fax: (402) 471-3100  
[Jill.dolberg@nebraska.gov](mailto:Jill.dolberg@nebraska.gov)

Enclosures: 3 disks and one page

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