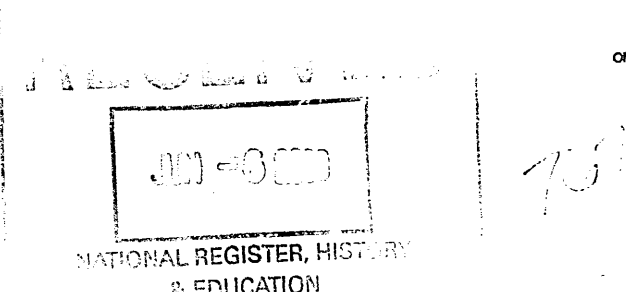


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



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

1. Name of Property

Historic name Balcony House

Other names/site number NeHBS #CH04-025

2. Location

Street & number 1006 Court Street

Not for publication

City or town Imperial

Vicinity

State Nebraska

Code NE

County Chase

Code 029

Zip code 69033

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Andrew Sommer
Signature of certifying official

5/31/00
Date

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

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

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.

see continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.

see continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): _____

Edson H. Beall 7/5/00

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

Balcony House

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- x Building(s)
District
Site
Structure
Object

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

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows: Buildings (1), Sites, Structures, Objects, Total (1).

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/hotel
RECREATION and CULTURE/campground

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/inn

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions.)

NO STYLE

Materials (Enter categories from instructions.)

Foundation CONCRETE
Walls WOOD
Roof ASPHALT
Other

Narrative Description

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

Balcony House
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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.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

Period of Significance

1921-1930

Significant Dates

1921

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location for additional data:

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

Balcony House

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Les than one acre.

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	14	275965	4488640	3.			
2.				4.			

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Greg Miller, Preservation Historian

organization Nebraska State Historical Society

date March 2000

street & number 1500 R Street

telephone 402 471-4775

city or town Lincoln

state NE

zip code 68501

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

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

Additional items

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

Property Owner

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

name/title Jim and Linda Pirog

street & number 1006 Court

telephone 308 882-5597

city or town Imperial

state NE

zip code 69033

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determined eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, (15 USC 470 et seq.).

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

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Balcony House

Name of Property

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Description

The Balcony House is located in Imperial, Nebraska, the county seat of Chase County. The eclectic two-story frame building was constructed in the 1880s and originally used as a school in rural Chase County. In 1921 the school was closed and the building moved. Shortly thereafter a two-story frame addition was constructed and enclosed balconies added giving the building its present appearance. The structure retains a high degree of integrity.

Located in Chase County in southwest Nebraska, the original wood frame building that later became the Balcony House was constructed in the 1880s just outside of Imperial and used as a school. A two-story addition was added around the turn of the century. In 1921 the State Fire Marshall condemned and closed the school. One month later Mr. E. E. Widger, of Imperial, moved the original 1880s school to its present location within a residential part of town. Soon after he constructed a two-story addition on the east side of the building closely matching the turn-of-the-century addition to the school that was not moved. The second floor of the addition included glassed-in balconies completely surrounding the historic school building and shelter the grade level concrete porch.

While there have been some alterations they are sensitive to the original school layout. It retains a gabled roof with asphalt shingles. The original two-over-two divided light double-hung windows remain on the first floor. The original school doors with vestibule and beadboard stairway remain on the south façade. The interior double loaded classroom corridor remains, however, the exterior walls of rooms were made one-half height to lead on to the balcony which every room has. The Balcony House is currently used as a Bed and Breakfast.

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Significance

The Balcony House, located in Imperial, Chase County is eligible at the local level under Criterion A for its association with transportation and more specifically the Detroit-Lincoln-Denver (D-L-D) Highway. It is also significant for its association with recreation and culture because of its use as a hotel at a tourist camp. Built as a rural school in the 1880s with a turn-of-the-century addition, the building was closed in 1921 and relocated to Imperial. It was then that the building was transformed to its current appearance and converted to use as a tourist camp along the D-L-D Highway. The period of significance begins in the c1880s with the construction of the building and ends in 1930 when it ceased operations as a hotel for a tourist camp. The nomination consists of one contributing building.

The Balcony House, located in Imperial, began life in the 1880s as a rural school. Around the turn-of-the-century an addition was constructed. In 1921 the school closed and the building moved into town. While the building still functioned as a school into the 1900s, the automobile began to play an increasing role in society.

In Nebraska, the State Board of Irrigation, Highways, and Drainage (the predecessor of today's Department of Roads) recognized the increasing impact of the automobile, and associated well maintained and established routes in its 1910-1912 Ninth Biennial Report. As a result they requested that the legislature place the responsibility for highway development and maintenance with its agency. (Prior to this the state was paying private contractors to do the work with varying degrees of quality).

The next biennial report, 1912-1914, expounds on the benefits of the three main transcontinental highways running through the state. The first was the Meridian Highway which closely followed the Sixth Principal Meridian and runs from Winnipeg, Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. The two newer transcontinental roads, which ran from east to west, were the Lincoln Highway and the Omaha-Lincoln-Denver (O-L-D) Highway. The O-L-D Highway would later merge with the Detroit-Lincoln-Denver (D-L-D) Highway. The report states that in 1915 "it is expected that there will be a very great amount of travel on... our transcontinental roads." It adds that these highways are a "good advertisement and money well spent either in a community or in a state at large to have good roads." Specifically, the Board claimed the O-L-D Highway is in very good shape (Tenth Biennial Report, 1912-1914, p.220).

The Sixteenth Biennial Report, 1925-1926, touts tourism as a good reason for a better road system. It states that automobile clubs, which sponsored the main highways, note the areas of natural beauty that can be visited in Nebraska (Sixteenth Biennial Report, 1925-1926, p.51).

The importance of the automobile, good roads, and tourism was not lost on the people of Imperial either. In the May 7, 1920 edition of *The Imperial Republican* is an article entitled "O-L-D Now The New National Highway Through Nebraska." According to the article the O-L-D Highway, which ran through Imperial, linked

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progressive towns. The highway also had a support organization that proclaimed 75,000 tourists passed over the O-L-D in 1919 and predicted that over 100,000 would use this route in 1920. With this many people traveling the O-L-D the newspaper concluded that businesses in Imperial and other communities along the route were surely profiting from the tourists. The article goes on to state that attracting tourists over the highway was only one feature of the O-L-D organization's work. "It is directly due to the agitation of the O-L-D (Association), the Nebraska Good Roads Association, and other similar organizations, that our State now has an extensive and consistent program of road construction and maintenance (*The Imperial Republican*, May 7, 1920). That same month the O-L-D held their 10th annual convention. There they decided to dissolve the O-L-D organization and merge with the larger Detroit-Lincoln-Denver (D-L-D) Association. The D-L-D would also pass through Imperial. It is within this context the significance of the Balcony House is realized.

While all this was going on the nominated building was operating in its original function as a school. In June 1921, however, the State Fire Marshall condemned and closed the school. By July of the same year Mr. E. E. Widger, of Imperial, moved part of the school to a tourist camp grounds in town. He then placed an addition on the west end and put enclosed balconies around the three sides of the original building.

Although the opening of a hotel on a camp grounds may now seem to be an insignificant piece of local history, just the opposite is true. *The Imperial Republican* regularly reported on the tourist camp and its hotel, the Balcony House, which indicates the important role it played in the community. Various articles commented on the number of visitors and activities at the camp. One piece stated that free band concerts were held at the camp grounds and these were advertised on the D-L-D road map. The article concluded by stating that more than "300 tourists swung around the D-L-D corner here Wednesday" (*The Imperial Republican*, August 18, 1922). With these kind of numbers it is easy to see why the Balcony House and its surrounding tourist camp were such an important part of Imperial's economic and social life.

This type of activity continued for some time. In 1926 the newspaper ran an advertisement for a D-L-D Repair Shop. The following year, because of the success of the Balcony House and tourist camp, the owner, Mr. Widger, purchased additional buildings to place on the grounds with the intention of making "a modern tourist camp with car booths and all that makes a modern tourist camp" (*The Imperial Republican*, August 28, 1927).

As might be expected the Great Depression impacted leisure and pleasure travel just as it did on most other activities and businesses. The Balcony House was no exception. Falling on hard economic times the hotel and camp grounds were forced to close in 1930. Despite this, the Balcony House, located in a residential neighborhood, remains a good example of a resource that gained significance in the 1920s when automobiles and tourism became popular and important to the economic development for those towns located on the prominent highways. Although outside the period of significance, the Balcony House did reopen as a rooming house and today operates as a Bed and Breakfast.

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Balcony House

Name of Property

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Bibliography

Koster, George E. A Story of Highway Development in Nebraska. Lincoln: Nebraska Department of Roads, 1986.

Ninth Biennial Report of the State Board of Irrigation, Highways and Drainage to the Governor of Nebraska. November 30, 1910 to September 1, 1912. University Place, Nebr.: The Claflin Printing Company.

Sixteenth Biennial Report of the Department of Public Works to the Governor of Nebraska. 1925-1926.

Tenth Biennial Report of the State Board of Irrigation, Highways and Drainage to the Governor of Nebraska. September 1, 1912 to September 1, 1914. University Place, Nebr.: The Claflin Printing Company.

Newspapers

The Imperial Republican

Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 14-15, Block 15, Original Town of Imperial

Boundary Justification

The boundary contains that parcel of land which has historically been associated with the property.