

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received MAY 24 1984
date entered JUN 21 1984

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Redick Tower' (D009:2-25)

and/or common Redick Tower

2. Location

street & number 1504 Harney St. N/A not for publication

city, town Omaha N/A vicinity of

state Nebraska code 031 county Douglas code 055

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	N/A <input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Redick Tower Associates, c/o Goldman-Kasin Company

street & number 10838 Old Mill Road, Suite 3

city, town Omaha N/A vicinity of state Nebraska 68154

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Omaha/Douglas County Civic Center

street & number 1819 Farnam

city, town Omaha state Nebraska

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date on-going federal state county local

depository for survey records Nebraska State Historical Society

city, town Lincoln state Nebraska

7. Description

Condition
 excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one
 unaltered
 altered

Check one
 original site
 moved

date na

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Redick Tower is a multifunctional urban structure housing office, commercial, and automobile parking facilities. Built of reinforced concrete with a brick and terra-cotta exterior, the stepped-back eleven story tower is designed in the "American Perpendicular" or Art Deco Style.

Erected in 1930, the Redick Tower was built by the Parsons Construction Company to the design of Omaha architect Joseph G. McArthur. The owner, Garrett and Agor, Inc., named the structure after the Redick family, pioneer settlers of Omaha and long-time owners of the Redick Tower site.

A multifunctional building, the Redick provided facilities for a variety of urban needs. Most notable is the large parking structure provided within the walls of the building on the first seven levels. Entrance to the garage is provided at the west end of the south facade at street level, with ramps connecting staggered parking levels between the south front and north rear of the building. Garage facilities included mechanical maintenance and petroleum product services (W.P.A.). An office tower, organized around a central vertical service core, rises above and steps back from the parking floors. Entry to the offices via the service core is provided through a spacious lobby, with the main, monumental entrance on the south facade and a secondary entrance on the east. Commercial store front spaces are provided on the main level along the east facade and southeast corner, and portions of the basement and second floors along the east side.

Structurally the building is as complex as the heterogenous functions would require. Exclusively constructed of a reinforced concrete skeleton system, the floor structure varies depending on load requirements. The chief concrete skeletal system aligns with the office tower above where a perimeter beam connects the outside edge of the structure. All major beams span along column lines from east to west. From south to north, the structural bays increase in number to accommodate ramps and parking requirements. The width and number of bays change, also, depending on the level of the building, because the structure steps back as it rises in height.

The floor structure spanning between the east-west beams also responds to the nature of the structural loads. Floors in the office portions are flat, reinforced concrete slabs, while floors in the parking garage are a reinforced concrete pan system. Multiple changes in floor levels to accommodate street grades, and the step-back character of the building complicate the structural manipulation beyond what is visible from the exterior. The structure, however, is not concealed even in the interior office space. Here the skeletal columns, pilasters, and beams are revealed in straightforward fashion along the walls and ceiling.

Formally the Tower is an impressive pile of brick and concrete -- a "squat" skyscraper. Rising to a height of 137 feet, nearly equal to its depth and slightly higher than the width of the front facade, the building eschews the bulkiness of its mass through a combination of formal techniques -- the use of the mounted tower form in combination with a set-back design (see Weisman, phases V and VI, p. 119). The flush facade of the south front, with vertical emphasis provided by the closely spaced pilasters and recessed windows, provides an impressive verticality which overshadows the Tower's width. Redick's distinctive form and verticality is further emphasized by the slight crenellated effect of the parapets.

Stylistically the building is executed in the Art Deco style, a style perfectly suited

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CONTINUATION SHEET Description ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

to its formal elaboration. Called by two writers "The Skyscraper Style," (Bletter and Robinson), stylistic features are primarily evident in the elaborate, stylized floriated patterns of the terra-cotta ornamentation of the exterior. The storefront level of the structure is entirely sheathed in terra-cotta with patterns of both soft and hard-edged design. The most elaborate terra-cotta panels occur in the window spandrel space at the building's apex, and above the monumental ziggurat-like terra-cotta south door surround. Decorative brick window spandrels, reinforcing the vertical emphasis of the facades, modernistic aluminum entrance doors, and the steel sash hopper and casement windows complete the decorative treatment of the facades.

Art Deco styling characterizes the interior as well. Most notable are the major public entrance lobbies, where alternating vertical bands of dark and light marble sheath the walls, and are highlighted with decorative cast-plaster panels at the cornice. Ceilings are cast-plaster as well, but in only a very subtle fashion and without any decorative plaster work.

Redick Tower has retained remarkable architectural integrity. Major problems with the concrete structure in the parking garage have been attributed to long-term deterioration due to street salts. The only other major problem is associated with perennial storefront remodeling. Fortunately both problems are being resolved through a certified rehabilitation of the structure, currently underway.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1930 **Builder/Architect** Parsons Construction Co./Joseph G. McArthur

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Redick Tower is significant in Nebraska architecture for both important functional and formal associations. Functional significance derives from the building's multifunctional urbanism -- a complex block of commercial storefront space, office tower, and automobile parking garage -- all neatly packaged within a single, tightly composed structure. Formal significance is associated with the building's modernistic design which incorporates a strong vertical emphasis in a mounted and stepped-back tower design, and is decorated in the Art Deco style of architecture; one of Nebraska's premier examples of the style.

Built in 1930 and located in Omaha's central business district, Redick Tower is one of few major buildings constructed anywhere in the state during the Depression. Construction occurred also at a time when the automobile was fast becoming the chief mode of transportation in the United States. The full impact of the phenomenon on the Country's urban centers would not be felt for another thirty years.

The structure was named for the Redick family which had owned the land where the tower stood since the 1870's. Redicks had been among Omaha's pioneer settlers with John Irvin Redick arriving in 1856. Redick made his living as an attorney, but also acquired a great deal of land in the Omaha vicinity, and platted and sold much of it as residential subdivisions when the city expanded to reach his holdings. His Victorian home, on one of these tracts... was an Omaha social center for years until it became the first [U]niversity of Omaha in 1909. The Redick home continued on in Omaha through John Redick's seven sons, several of whom followed him into law. One of them, Oak Chatham, managed the family interests by 1930 and announced construction of the new tower.

O. C. Redick represented the real estate corporation of Garnett and Agor, Inc., which managed the Redick Tower until the mid-1930's when it was purchased by the Redick Tower Corporation. Local capitalist, Walter Duda, purchased it in 1943 for \$35,000 and held it until 1973 when the Parking Corporation of America, a Denver firm, took over the building (Peters).

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Omaha North, Nebr.-Iowa

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	1	5
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Verbal boundary description and justification

All of lot 8 and the east 40 feet of lot 7, block 139, Original Town of Omaha, Nebraska, measuring 132 by 106 feet, and including all of the historically associated urban real estate.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title D. Murphy, Architect

organization Nebraska State Historical Society

date March 1984

street & number 1500 "R" Street

telephone (402) 471-3270

city or town Lincoln

state Nebraska

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Marvin W. Kineth 5/14/84

title Director, Nebraska State Historical Society

date

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date

6/21/84

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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CONTINUATION SHEET Significance ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

The Redick Tower is a very distinct and quite significant architectural product of the 1930's. Architectural significance is noted in two components; one functional, and the second in formal aesthetics.

Functional significance is related to the structure's context. Typically associated with an urbanized milieu, the earliest multi-functional commercial architecture identified in Nebraska to date includes the State Bank Block in Red Cloud (WT07-30) and the Clarke Buchanan Building in Hastings (AD04-6). Both were built in 1883 and are very similar in design, providing spaces for commercial retail, office and residential occupancy. The third previously identified structure, Omaha's Jewell Building (D009:6-10), was built in 1923. It housed commercial, retail, and residential functions on its main floor, and the public Dreamland Hall on the second floor. All three buildings serve divergent functional needs within a single block of rather sophisticated design.

The Redick Tower represents a 1930 manifestation of the multi-functional building class, and is the most urban in character of the group by virtue of its size and location. Providing for commercial storefront space at street level, and office occupancy in its mounted tower, the most unusual functional feature of the Tower is the incorporation of automobile parking within its walls.¹ This aspect of the Tower's design represents a very farsighted response to the developing urban environment, occurring at an early stage of the automobile's ascendancy as the major mode of transportation in urban America. The fact that this far-sightedness did not characterize the urban development that followed places the Redick alone in the context of an idealized urbanism, with consequences that are of obvious historical significance to our contemporary urban environment.

Architectural significance is also associated with the Tower's formal and stylistic development. Formally the building is a hybrid type of skyscraper, representing both an example of the "mounted tower" and the "set-back tower" forms (Weisman, 119). The mounted tower form was first realized by Cass Gilbert in the design of his Woolworth Building in New York (1911). Set-back tower designs developed out of the New York City zoning code revisions of 1916 (Weisman, 119), which were in force in many major American cities by the middle of the 1920's (Whiffen, 235). Both forms are still popular today. Redick stands as the most impressive of the few mounted tower schemes in Nebraska. Lincoln's Stuart Building (1929) and the Federal Building in Omaha (1933) both display very diminutive mounted-towers compared to Redick. The Tower must also be considered the most impressive of the few set-back tower designs in Nebraska, with Kimball, Steele and Sandham's Federal Building in Omaha registering a distant second in this regard.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Significance ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

The Redick Tower also stands as the single most important Art Deco skyscraper in Nebraska. The building perfectly exemplifies the 1920's manifestations of the style, also known as the American Perpendicular style or Perpendicular Moderne (Gebhard, 35).² In this regard, the Redick Tower is the only true version of Art Deco in Nebraska -- the Stuart Building and Omaha's Federal Building being eclectic borrowings of Perpendicular elements in essentially modernized Beaux Arts Products. In fact, most of Nebraska's examples of Art Deco, following Gebhard, would be considered examples of Modernized Classicism. The particular stylistic antecedents for McArthur's Redick Tower derive from the 1925 Parisian Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes. The exposition had a tremendous impact on the American scene, not only in architecture, but in furniture and industrial design as well.

The Redick Tower, then, is a singular product of the Art Deco in Nebraska. Wonderfully integrated at all levels of design, the building acknowledges the modernity of its era in both functional and aesthetic terms. The building's form and style achieve perfect harmony in the application of thoroughly modern ornamentation to the, then, most contemporary arrangement of the skyscraper form, the step-back and mounted tower.

1. "The concept for the high-rise garage, composed of a series of staggered floors connected by low grade (11%) ramps, was patented by Ramp Buildings Corporation of New York. During the early 1930's, the Redick Tower represented the most western point of operation of D'Humy Management, Inc., a subsidiary of the New York corporation." (Peters).
2. The stylistic terminology used here follows Gebhard's in drawing distinctions between the inherently different manifestations of what Whiffen together called the Modernistic style. Gebhard identifies three styles: Art Deco (American Perpendicular or Perpendicular Moderne), characteristic of the 1920's; Streamline Moderne, more characteristic of the 30's; and Modernized Classicism, a style with longer temporal boundaries, initiated in America by Goodhue on the Nebraska State Capitol and ending with "W.P.A. Moderne."

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CONTINUATION SHEET Bibliography ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

- Bletter, Rosemarie Haag and Cervin Robinson. "Skyscraper Style: Art Deco Architecture Re-evaluated." Progressive Architecture (February, 1975), 68-73.
- Gebhard, David. "Art Deco: About Style, Not Ideology," Architecture, 72:12 (1983), 34-44.
- [Peters, Robert]. "Redick Tower Landmark Designation," Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission -- Department Recommendation. Omaha: L.H.P.C., [1980].
- W.P.A. Collection, Nebraska State Historical Society. Office Buildings (Subject #616), Douglas County, April 28, 1936.
- Weisman, Winston. "A New View of Skyscraper History," in Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. (Ed). The Rise of an American Architecture. Published in Association with the Metropolitan Museum of Art. New York, Washington, London: Praeger Publishers, 1970, 115-160.
- Whiffen, Marcus. American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles. Cambridge and London: M.I.T. Press, 1969, 234-240.