

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received MAR 13 1986

date entered APR 21 1986

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

1. Name

historic Elizabeth Apartments

and or common same

2. Location

street & number 402 Second Avenue N.W. N/A not for publication

city, town Jamestown N/A vicinity of

state North Dakota code 38 county Stutsman code 093

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence apts.
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
			<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name 402 Elm Square, A Limited Partnership

street & number 402 Second Avenue N.W.

city, town Jamestown N/A vicinity of state North Dakota 58401

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Stutsman County Court House

street & number Register of Deeds

city, town Jamestown state North Dakota 58401

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date N/A federal state county local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	<input type="checkbox"/> slightly	

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Elizabeth Apartments is a two and a half story rectangular building situated on the corner of Second Avenue N.W. and Fourth Street N. W. just north of downtown Jamestown. It has exterior load-bearing walls of clay tile and wood horizontal members (joists and beams). This structure constitutes a single building nomination.

It was built in 1921 to accommodate 28 apartments, 14 each on the two top floors. The "English," or raised basement, consisted of 14 single room apartments, a laundry room, janitor's room, storage room, and soft water tank. The building measures 60 feet wide by 140 feet long.

The exterior of the building is Hebron tile stucco with red pressed brick trim. The Hebron Brick Company, Hebron, North Dakota, manufactured a scored clay tile block to which stucco was directly applied on the exterior walls and plaster directly applied to the interior walls. The stucco exterior finish is light tan on the upper floors and slightly darker on the raised basement. Brick accents consist of corner quoining, a brick course at the basement window sill line, a soldier course above the basement windows, and a rowlock course at the third floor ceiling line. The flat roof is trimmed with a cast stone parapet cap. Entries are recessed and outlined with brick quoining located at the center of the symmetrical facades facing Second Avenue and the rear of the property. These entries lead to a mezzanine stair landing with a half flight down to the basement (or first floor) and up to the second floor. The style of the building is a toned-down Classical Revival style accented with brick banding and quoining at the corners and entries.

The interior of the structure is in virtually original condition. Flooring is maple on the top two floors. Woodwork is fir, stained a dark natural brown, with glass transoms on the panelled entry doors to each apartment. Minor modifications have been made to the interior, such as updating of the basement laundry room. Apartments are grouped along the north and south sides of a central hallway on each floor. Access panels are visible in the hallways, used originally for the delivery of ice to each apartment without disturbing the tenants. Light/ventilation shafts from roof skylights provide natural light and air into interior kitchens and bathrooms. These shafts were so positioned that one shaft could serve kitchens and baths in two apartments on each floor. Within the shafts, windows were positioned high on the wall for the third floor apartments and at the bottom of the shafts in the second floor ceilings of interior rooms.

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1921 **Builder/Architect** Builder: Elof A. Moline of Bottineau

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Elizabeth Apartments is significant in Jamestown for its association with the business lives of the John H. Canhams and Ormsby McHargs, leading developers and owners of Jamestown's utility companies from 1888 to 1924. It is also significant architecturally and historically as the best example in the city of affordable multi-family housing constructed in response to the population boom in Jamestown between 1910 and 1920 when housing was scarce, Post-World War I labor costs were high, and there was a severe shortage of building materials. The simplicity of the apartment building design and the extensive use of stucco were directly related to the need for quick construction and the lack of good building materials, including brick, in the early 1920s.

When the Elizabeth Apartments were built in 1921 by John H. Canham and Ormsby McHarg, the two men and their wives had owned and operated the Western Electric Power Company in Jamestown for 19 years. Mrs. Agnes Canham, a sister of McHarg, was President and her husband, John, was Chairman, Manager, and Secretary. John Canham, born in 1864, had come to Dakota Territory with his homesteading parents in 1879 and settled on the Wild Rice River. He worked along the Missouri River and lived in Bismarck for several years working as a steam engineer before settling in Jamestown in the mid-1880s. In 1888, he married Miss Agnes McHarg and together they started the Jamestown Electric Light Company, which they owned and ran. Jamestown had several small competing family-run light companies in the late 1880s and 1890s using either AC or DC current. Six of these small private companies servicing Jamestown were merged into the Western Electric Company in 1902 under Canham control and reorganized in 1910 with four shareholders: John and Agnes Canham and Ormsby and Grace McHarg. The two couples retained ownership and management of Western Electric which expanded to serve the surrounding towns until it was sold to Otter Tail Power Company in 1924. When the company was sold in 1924, Western Electric had annual gross operating expenses of over \$627,000 as supplier to Jamestown, Medina, Eldrige, Windsor, Cleveland, and the surrounding area. It became the largest acquisition of Otter Tail Power.

During the time from 1910–1924 when the McHargs and Canhams owned Western Electric, the company supplied steam power to run the city's electric lights, supplied electricity, heat and power to run businesses and the city water system, heated and lighted Jamestown's residences, and sold coal and gas in the area surrounding Jamestown. The presence of John Canham was felt all over town while his brother-in-law, Ormsby McHarg, remained in New York as the financial power behind the company. Western Electric was also incorporated to

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet #3

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Jamestown, N. Dak.

Quadrangle scale 7.5' Series

UTM References

A

1	4	5	2	2	1	2	2	5	1	9	5	1	8	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 in Block 10, Original Townsite, City of Jamestown

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dr. Norene A. Roberts

organization Historical Research, Inc.

date December 15, 1986

street & number 5535 Richmond Curve

telephone (612) 929-2921

city or town Minneapolis

state Minnesota 55410

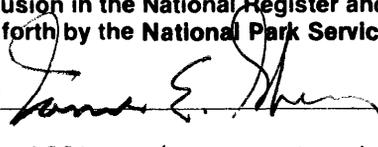
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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

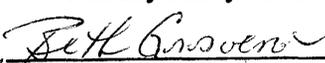


title State Historic Preservation Officer (North Dakota)

date March 4, 1986

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

yr 
Keeper of the National Register

date 1/21/86

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

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Continuation sheet Significance Item number #8 Page 1

sell fixtures and machinery for production and use of light, heat and power, erect light poles and construct underground pipes and subways, operate a gas company and ice business, and equip, furnish, conduct, operate, manage, lease and maintain hotels, apartment houses, warehouses, and other buildings. Both men engaged in many of these activities in the course of supplying power, light, and heat to the population of Jamestown, but when it came to building the Elizabeth Apartments, they financed construction privately. The building was named after Ormsby McHarg's daughter, Elizabeth.

The Elizabeth Apartments is the only known commercial block remaining in Jamestown associated with the Canhams and McHargs and their business activities in Jamestown. The original power plant, set back in the alley behind the main business block in Jamestown to the rear of the Gladstone Hotel was destroyed years ago. Its brick smokestack remained until it was pulled down after the fire that destroyed the Gladstone Hotel in 1968.

The Elizabeth Apartments was built as a response to the severe shortage of housing in Jamestown following a population boom between 1910 and 1920. During that decade, the population of Jamestown increased 52.1% to 6,627, making it the second fastest growing city in North Dakota after Fargo (whose population increased by 53.2%). The other towns and major cities in North Dakota maintained their populations or decreased slightly (The Jamestown Weekly Alert, April 22, 1920). The growth in Jamestown was, in part, due to the reopening of Jamestown College in 1909, which by 1915, had an enrollment of 249 students.

To the severe shortage in housing brought on by increased population was added the inflation which followed World War I, the rise in labor costs for new construction, and the post-war shortage of all building materials, including lumber and brick. This was the era before 30 year fixed mortgages and The Jamestown Weekly Alert (April 22, 1920) reported that new houses of 4-6 rooms were selling for \$4,500 to \$6,000 and required 10% down and full payment within 15 years. In addition labor costs were high. These factors combined to put affordable housing outside the reach of most young families.

John Canham and Ormsby McHarg saw an opportunity to increase the business in their utilities company by entering the construction business and real estate development, which they were incorporated to do through Western Electric. Although the building materials shortage remained acute, the price of labor began to ease. Agitation began in Grand Forks among the building contractors to set lower wages to encourage construction in the depressed industry. The Grand Forks Builders' and Traders' exchange proposed a 20% reduction in the wage scale and urged the Fargo association to follow suit. When the Fargo builders cut construction wages by 1/5th in April, 1921, the rest of North Dakota's builders followed suit at the annual conference (The Jamestown Weekly Alert, February 24, 1921 and April 14, 1921).

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Continuation sheet

Significance

Item number

#8

Page 2

Overnight, the stagnation in the building trades began to dissipate. By the middle of July, 1921, the first court house in Jamestown had been town down and preparation was under way to build the Elizabeth Apartments on its site. The "large, modern apartment building" was hailed as "an important building improvement in the city" (The Jamestown Weekly Alert, July 21, 1921). The paper continued, "The erection of a large modern apartment building ... is something that has been needed in Jamestown for a long time, and will be welcomed by many persons who have desired to become residents of this city, and who have been unable to find suitable living accommodations heretofore. Travelling men from other parts of the state who have desired to make Jamestown headquarters will be interested in this new building enterprise of Messrs. McHarg and Canham."

The simple style of the Elizabeth Apartments belies the quality of its construction. The building was erected at a cost of \$90,000 to \$100,000. The restrained use of brick for only the trim was an economic necessity because of the continuing scarce supply of brick following World War I. In its place, Hebron tile stucco was used to sheath the exterior walls while the brick was reserved for the Classical Revival quoining and banding.

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Continuation sheet Major Bibliographic References Item number #9

Page 3

Agreement of Sale of Western Electric Power Company, dated March 31, 1924. On file with the Ottertail Power Company, Fergus Falls, Minnesota.

Corporate certificates of shareholders' meetings, Director's Certificates, and Articles of Incorporation of the Western Electric Company of Jamestown. On file: Office of the Secretary of State, State Capitol Building, Bismarck, North Dakota.

Elof A. Moline file, Eddy Funeral Home, Jamestown, North Dakota.

The Jamestown Weekly Alert, Various articles from 1910-1921. On file: Heritage Center, Bismarck, North Dakota.

Lounsberry, Clement A. North Dakota History and People: Outlines of American History. Vol. 2. (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1917), 920-921.

Northwest Bell City Directory for Jamestown, June, 1925, p. 8.

Robinson, Elwyn B. History of North Dakota. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), 315.

Smorada, James and Lois Forrest. Century of Stories: Jamestown and Stutsman County. (Jamestown: Fort Seward Historical Society, Inc., 1983), 327.

Telephone interviews with James Smorada, Editor, Jamestown Sun, and Mary Young, Jamestown historian.