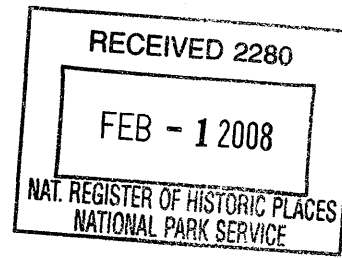


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



173

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 Nebraska Governor's Mansion
Other names/site number Nebraska Governor's Residence LC13:D08-002

2. Location

Street & number 1425 H Street Not for publication
City or town Lincoln Vicinity
State Nebraska Code NE County Lancaster Code 109 Zip Code 68508

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Michael J. ...
Signature of certifying official
Director, Nebraska State Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

1-29-08
Date

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

Signature of certifying official/Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

Date

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 3.12.08

for
Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

Governor's Mansion

Name of Property

Lancaster County, Nebraska

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- Private
Public-local
[X] 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, Sites, Structures, Objects, Total.

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling
GOVERNMENT/government office

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling
GOVERNMENT/government office

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19th AND 20th CENTURY REVIVALS/
Neo-Classical Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Foundation Concrete
Walls Brick
Roof Cement tile shingle
Other

Narrative Description

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

Governor's Mansion

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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.)

GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance

1957-1958

Significant Dates

1957

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Selmer A. Solheim, Architect

W. J. Broer Construction Company

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 Nebraska State Historical Soc
- Federal agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Governor's Mansion

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 2.1 acres

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	14	693992	4519613	3.			
2.				4.			

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jill E. Dolberg/Historic Buildings Survey Coordinator

organization Nebraska State Historical Society

date November 30, 2007

street & number 1500 R Street/Box 82554

telephone (402) 471-4773

city or town Lincoln

state NE

zip code 68501-2554

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 State of Nebraska – Department of Administrative Services

street & number 521 South 14th Street, Suite 500

telephone (402) 471-3191

city or town Lincoln

state NE

zip code 68509

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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Governor's Mansion

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The Nebraska Governor's Mansion is located in the center of a large block that lies adjacent to the Nebraska State Capitol (NHL, 1970) which dominates the Lincoln cityscape. The executive residence is approached either on foot through an iron gate and brick path that leads to the front door, or by car through the curved driveway that also gains entry through a gate. Sitting on an entire city block, the mansion has extensive grounds that are beautifully landscaped with a fountain, walking paths, and extensive lawns. The mansion block is completely surrounded by wrought iron fence, which at once addresses issues of security in this modern age, and also enhances its remoteness as a "mansion." Prior to the fence being installed in the late 1990s, the mansion simply had the appearance of an extremely grand house. With the fence, it is a bastion of the state government.

This Neoclassical Revival residence is a rectangular shaped, two story brick structure with a cement tile shingle, side-gabled roof. The mansion has boxed eaves and projecting brick ends at the roofline give the impression of dentils. It has a concrete foundation. There are two chimneys for the residence. The largest is situated toward the east end of the building, and serves the residence's four fireplaces, which are found in the Governor's library, the drawing room, the basement meeting space, and the Governor's family room. The second smaller chimney appears to be located near the kitchen.

The façade contains an off center entrance under a hexastyle columned portico. Six Doric columns support the two story dentiled pediment. A roundel window is found in the pediment. The entrance itself is surrounded by sidelights and a transom with muntins in a cross hatched pattern and has a twelve-panel door with the first executive mansion's door knob. The body of the building contains seven bays, three to the left of the entrance, and four to the right, which are more broadly spaced. All of the windows are flanked with non-functioning shutters and are uniform to each floor, with taller openings on the first floor and shorter openings on the second. The window openings have jack arch lintels. The windows themselves have been recently replaced although the openings have remained the same.

A one story, three car garage wing attached to the west elevation, is also constructed in brick and shares the similar fenestration. Built at the same time, the flat roof of the garage provides a second floor deck for the guest rooms above. The porch is uncovered, with a closed rail in brick and wood panels. When first constructed, the wood panels were simple wood cross hatching to allow for ventilation and views; however they were replaced to provide more privacy. The west portion of the main house contains a first floor entry porch into the kitchen, and an additional second floor balcony for one of the guest bedrooms. The first floor porch has a wrought iron railing, while the second floor balcony has a closed rail for privacy. There is a lunette window in the gable.

The south elevation faces the gardens. The dominant element on this side is the curved bay window of the State Dining Room. The rest of the fenestration on this elevation is less formally placed than the windows on the main façade. The windows may be single or paired, and seemingly randomly arranged from the outside. From the floor plans, the single windows are found in baths or dressing rooms, and larger windows are in bedrooms.

On the east elevation, a sunroom wing was built to provide balance to the garage on the west, as well as a second story deck for the use of the Governor's family. Here, as in the example on the garage, the wood cross hatching was replaced with panels of wood to ensure the Governor's privacy. Mirroring the opposite side, the end gable has a matching lunette window in the gable. The sunroom has a new patio and handicap-accessible ramp in red brick that is meant to match the brick in the building. Although a new feature to the building, it matches enough in character to be complementary, but not so much that one would think it had always been there.

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Upon entering the building, one steps into a vestibule with a black, red and green slate floor. A doorway with sidelights and a transom window lead into the foyer. The foyer is dominated by an elliptical stairway with a banister with white wrought iron scrollwork leading to the private quarters above. The end of each stair is embellished with carved wooden scrollwork and a corncob motif. The foyer has a tiled marble floor constructed of Cloud Gray Markwa marble.¹ The room features a broad and elaborate cornice with repeating motifs of acanthus leaves, waves and dentil molding. Additionally, a dado rail protects the walls at the chair line. Two crystal chandeliers grace this room, one suspended from the highest point of the ceiling by the stairs, and one in the center of the room.

Turning left, two arched doorways with keystone molding and fluted pilasters lead from the foyer to a hallway and then to the formal State Reception Room or Drawing Room. The focal point of this room is the south wall of wood paneling, painted white, in the midst of which, centered in the room, is a detailed fireplace. The mantel is elaborately carved with a basket of flowers in the center with a rinceau motif radiating on either side. A bracket embellished with leaves supports each side of the mantel and further foliage motifs frame the fireplace opening. Additional floral borders and patterns add visual interest. The fireplace, like the paneled wall, is painted white. A brass and crystal chandelier and two smaller crystal lights with four pendants provide light to the room. The Drawing Room contains several pieces of furniture that were used in the original Governor's Mansion: the grand piano and a claw footed Empire sofa came from the first mansion. The sofa was reupholstered in 1957 with blue and green silk velvet fabric from Scalamandre, a renowned American purveyor of fabrics.² The fabric is of such quality that the sofa has not yet needed to be reupholstered. French doors are situated on the east side of the south wall and lead into the sunroom.

The sunroom has a reddish-brown tiled floor, half brick walls, broad spans of windows, with frame walls above. The sunroom also contains a doorway into the Governor's library, which is also accessible through the hallway between the Drawing Room and the foyer. The dominant feature of the library is the oak paneled wall with the marble fireplace, both of which originated from the first Governor's Mansion. The paneled wall was part of the paneled main stair in the foyer, and the fireplace was one of six fireplaces in the original residence. The fireplace has a pink mottled marble surround with bronze details. The wood panels were fitted together to appear seamless, and contain a concealed door for a closet. Additionally, the architect commissioned an oak replica of the State Seal to be made by Keats W. Lorenz, a prominent Lincoln craftsman noted for his woodcarving.³ The library has been outfitted with new French doors to the sunroom and a new combination desk and bookshelves along the south wall.

Across the hallway from the Governor's Library is the State Dining Room, which can seat twenty-four for dinner. The room has a built in buffet with a colonial broken pediment. Additional built in china cabinets were intended to be used specifically to house the silver punch bowls of the USS Nebraska. These are graced by nautilus shell openings at the top, and curved doors that mimic the curved bay of the windows. The door moldings are also elaborately carved. The walls are currently covered in Zuber block printed wallpaper depicting scenes of 18th century America. The only other room in the United States with similar wallpaper is found in the White House. The wallpaper and other finishes were updated rather extensively in the late 1990s.

A hallway to the right of the foyer leads to the kitchen, which has been recently remodeled, and the Governor's Family Dining Room, a much smaller dining room for informal dining. The room seats eight, and is rectangular in shape, with four

¹ Selmer A. Solheim, Lincoln, to Cornhusker Tile and Marble Co., Lincoln, 13 July 1957, Library/Archives Manuscript Collections, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, Nebraska.

² Selmer A. Solheim, Lincoln, to William Ruge Associates, Omaha, 19 October 1957, Library/Archives Manuscript Collections, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, Nebraska.

³ Selmer A. Solheim, Lincoln, to Keats W. Lorenz, Lincoln, 7 November 1957, Library/Archives Manuscript Collections, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, Nebraska.

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china cabinets in the corners that give the room a chamfered appearance. The room has a carved cornice and dado rail. Additional rooms on the first floor include public bathrooms for men and women, storage rooms and coat closets. A modern alteration on the west end of the building was the addition of an elevator to allow for handicap accessibility.

The second floor contains the private living quarters of the Governor's family, and consists of numerous bedrooms and bathrooms, and a family room and "snack kitchen." When originally built, there were six bedrooms, three for family and three for guests. However, a recent renovation combined two of the bedrooms into a bedroom suite for the Governor, and includes a bathroom and dressing room.

The basement is accessed through several sets of stairs, the most prominent being the elliptical stair located under the open stair of the foyer. The east portion of the basement contains a large room the same size and shape as the Drawing Room above. According to plans⁴, this room was originally intended to be used as a recreation room, but is now used for meeting space for numerous luncheons and teas. South of this room is an informal meeting room, commonly referred to as the "Doll Room" as it contains cabinets that house the State's collection of dolls of Nebraska's first ladies in reproductions of their inaugural gowns. A large kitchen and offices are also located in the basement, although these spaces also had other purposes originally. Initial plans called for two bedrooms for staff and a billiards room.

Historic Integrity

The Nebraska Governor's Mansion exhibits excellent historic integrity, considering the heavy amount of use that the facility has experienced during the fifty years of its existence. At the time the building was planned, the State Building Commission abandoned the idea of a dual purpose for the facility, initially intending to use it for a residence and formal occasions. The idea was discarded due to the anticipated high cost of a facility that would meet both purposes. Interestingly, the executive residence, as built, has turned into a dual purpose facility. The basement intended to be used as private space for the Governor was repurposed for meeting space and entertaining long ago. However, as such, it no longer resembles the initial intent of the designer. Likewise, other changes to make the building more appropriate for modern living, such as a modern kitchen, an enlarged bedroom suite for the Governor, and an elevator, have had impacts on the historic integrity of the building as well.

From the exterior, these impacts are invisible, and the few changes that are evident are of minor concern. There has been a minor alteration to the frame rail on the second floor porches. Two handicap accessibility ramps have been added to the residence, one on the front façade, and one on the southeast corner of the building. As a public facility, these changes were necessary and were done well to make a minor impact. The most obvious alteration to the building is the recent window change, although admittedly, there is newspaper evidence that as early as 1960 the windows were leaking, rattling and considered inadequate.

None of these changes have such an impact that they preclude listing the property in the National Register of Historic Places, however they do prevent us from listing it under Criterion C for the building's architectural significance. The building certainly is still able to convey its historical significance.

⁴ Selmer Solheim, "Floor Plans," *Business Papers, 1956-1967*, Library/Archives Manuscript Collection, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, Nebraska.

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The Nebraska Governor's Mansion is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with state government, and especially as an expression of Nebraskans' notion that the Governor of their State deserved a dedicated residence that was built specifically for the purpose of housing the executive branch of state government. Prior to the construction of this building, governors had either received a housing stipend from the legislature that paid for their living expenses, or, after 1899, lived in the governor's mansion that the legislature purchased from its previous owner at 14th and H in Lincoln, near the State Capitol. These housing solutions worked for a time, however, the state government and the populace soon came to the conclusion that the Governor, as an officer of the state, deserved a home and a facility that was built distinctly for the purpose of embodying the executive branch, and everything that might entail including holding formal affairs, hosting guests of state overnight, and other highly visible uses. A mansion would give the public a place to look to that would personify the Governor, both the person and the office, and would be a source of pride for the people of the state, for certainly the opulence of the mansion would reflect the perceived wealth of the state. But within a budget. Being a largely rural state, extreme extravagance would have been looked upon askance. Those who planned the design of the mansion, the architect, the State Building Commission, and Governor Victor Anderson himself, would have to walk a fine line between giving the Nebraska public a source of pride and a cause for criticism.

Nebraska has had two Governor's Mansions. The first was acquired in June 1899 when the Legislature appropriated funds for the purchase of a residence for the governor. The 1890 D. E. Thompson House was purchased for an agreed upon price of \$21,385, which included the two lots the house sat upon, the house and the majority of the house's furnishings.⁵ The house was an imposing Neoclassical Revival structure with a two story wraparound porch with Tuscan columns, a Palladian window under the gable end, beautiful woodwork and a third story ballroom. However, by the middle of the twentieth century, it was generally felt that the mansion was ill-suited for the purpose of a Governor's residence, having both not enough space to entertain guests of state overnight, and rather too much space for the first family. Additionally, the entertaining spaces on the first floor were not sufficient to house the formal functions that may include as many as 350 guests. Structurally, the windows were in poor repair, and the curtains were said to wave in the wind even when the windows were closed.⁶ The third floor ballroom had been condemned as a fire hazard for the narrow stairway that provided access to it. For these reasons, the people of Nebraska were inclined to build a new home for their Governor, but not without a tinge of melancholy.

Now the old Mansion's days are numbered. It has served its purpose and is to be retired. The noise of children rushing up the winding staircase will sound no more. There will be no more polishing the dark woodwork. There will be no more fussing with balky fireplaces. The wind will howl no more along the breezy porches. The old Mansion has been an integral part of Nebraska's history for more than a half century. Many Nebraskans will miss the Mansion.⁷

Beginning in 1945, the Nebraska legislature appropriated \$100,000 for the construction of a new Governor's Mansion.⁸ Although the funds were made available, no project was undertaken at that time, and the funds were reappropriated in 1947 and 1949. In 1952, the prospect of the gift of a prominent home in an upscale neighborhood south of downtown was suggested. The estate of a prominent Lincolnite, Frank H. Woods, offered his home at 2501 Sheridan Boulevard (NRHP listed in 1995) to the state as a mansion for the chief executive.⁹ Woods had been an attorney who had pioneered the telephone industry in Lincoln, and was an industry leader throughout the United States. The legislature determined that it

⁵ *Nebraska State Journal*, 20 June 1899, "Mansion for the Governor: D. E. Thompson's House Bought for \$20,000."

⁶ *Omaha World-Herald*, 13 May 1945, "Plans to Build New Governor's Mansion Sure to State Heavy Discussions as to Location, Style and Costs."

⁷ *Omaha World-Herald Magazine*, 17 April 1955, "End Near for Governor's Mansion."

⁸ *Omaha World-Herald*, 13 May 1945, "Plans to Build New Governor's Mansion Sure to State Heavy Discussions as to Location, Style and Costs."

⁹ *Lincoln Star*, 13 November 1952, "Gift of Governor's Mansion to Be Studied."

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may be more costly to accept the gift of the home and repurpose it for official state uses than to build a new home. There were also concerns about it being located so far from the governmental locus of Lincoln. Ultimately the offer was turned down because the legislature's funds were appropriated only for the construction of a new building.¹⁰

By 1953, the Governor's office funded feasibility studies regarding the possibility of purchasing the remainder of the lots of the half block on which the current mansion sat. It was, at the time, a parking lot owned by the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce. The lots were planned to be used either for a new mansion or for a new office building for overflow from the State Capitol building, which was already crowded with state workers.¹¹ Having acquired the land and earmarked it for the mansion, the legislature graciously allocated additional funds for the construction of an executive residence: \$200,000 in total. According to the *Lincoln Star*, it was one of the legislature's least controversial measures of 1955, which implies that the sentiments of the people of Nebraska were firmly behind the venture.

In an editorial, the *Lincoln Star* praised the notion of a new mansion and exhorted Governor Victor Anderson and the State Building Commission to be selective in its design.

Nebraska is proud of its nationally admired state capitol and has confidence in the judgment and action of its building commission. It feels no differently about the new mansion. Its construction is in good hands and the results are expected to be worthy of equal pride. Beautiful and permanent structures bespeak a state's enlightenment and maturity. They imply a confidence in a going, successful and contented society, satisfied with its past and convinced that the future will last ever so long in the same or even more satisfying vein. Nebraskans will await with keen interest the results of the initial planning sessions. Meantime they have but one piece of advice to the planners. It is, "build something to last, something which time will never render unbeautiful nor inadequate."¹²

A committee of three noteworthy Nebraska architects was designated to study the new governor's mansion project. These architects included Frank Latenser of Omaha, president of the Nebraska State Architects' Association, Edward J. Sessinghaus of Omaha, the past president of the same group, and Professor Linus Burr Smith, the head of the University of Nebraska School of Architecture. The first job of the committee would be to discuss the best method for selecting plans from architects.¹³ Very quickly, the committee eliminated the possibility of having a competition to select designs for the mansion, as the competition may end up costing ten to twelve thousand dollars. Frank Latenser pointed out that the architect's code of ethics would not allow architects to submit sketches without being paid at least a percentage of a fee.¹⁴ Instead, the three committee members would obtain some preliminary sketches and floor plans.

In order to take into consideration all perspectives, Governor Anderson traveled to Arkansas to examine their new executive residence and gather ideas. He also requested the plans for Florida's governor's mansion, which was soon to be under construction.¹⁵ He also requested the input of past governors' wives, including Mrs. Dwight Griswold, Mrs. Val Peterson, and Mrs. Robert Crosby. Governor Anderson asked them to write their idea of the needs of a governor's mansion.¹⁶ Mrs. Peterson suggested reserving the first floor for official functions, and having the private residence upstairs, a plan that was eventually carried out in the present building.¹⁷ Early plans called for the mansion

¹⁰ *Omaha World-Herald Magazine*, 17 April 1955, "End Near for Governor's Mansion."

¹¹ *Lincoln Journal and Star*, 6 September 1953, "Purchase of Land for New Governor's Mansion Studied."

¹² *Lincoln Star*, 24 June 1955, "Our New House."

¹³ *Lincoln Star*, 19 July 1955, "Committee to Study Mansion for Governor."

¹⁴ *Lincoln Star*, 3 August 1955, "Competition on Mansion is Ruled Out."

¹⁵ *Lincoln Star*, 2 November 1955, "State Mansion in Arkansas Impresses Vic."

¹⁶ *Lincoln Star*, 3 November 1955, "Vic Seeks Feminine Viewpoint...on Mansion."

¹⁷ *Omaha Sunday World-Herald*, 7 August 1955, "State Seeking Mansion Tips."

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to serve not only as a residence, but as a large reception space for affairs of state that sometimes involved several hundred guests. However the commission decided early that adding this second function would so significantly increase the cost of the construction of the building that it would outstrip the funds set aside by the legislature.¹⁸ Since Governor Anderson had vowed not to request any additional funds for the project, the dual purpose plan was abandoned.

In January 1956, the State Building Commission selected Selmer A. Solheim as the architect for the project.¹⁹ Solheim was born in Fairfax, Minnesota in 1912, the son of Emma and Oscar Solheim. He attended college in South Dakota in Watertown and Rapid City, but left to attend the University of Nebraska, School of Architecture in 1935. Upon graduation, he chose to begin his career in Lincoln, Nebraska. For a time early in his career, he worked with prominent Lincoln architects, Meginnis and Schaumberg as a draftsman.²⁰ He designed many single- and multiple-family dwellings, most notably in the Brownbilt Subdivision between 37th and 40th Streets and A and D Streets in Lincoln.²¹ In the 1940s, he worked on war housing projects in Sidney, Hastings, Grand Island, Fremont, Kearney and Lincoln. Among his more notable work were the Weaver Potato Chip Company Building, Pound Junior High School, and Skypark Manor²², a twelve-story apartment building built in 1961.

The commission asked him to prepare a preliminary sketch, floor plan, and a preliminary report in regards to exterior and interior finish for the mansion. Early concepts for the building requested Indiana limestone, that the building should honor the materials and spirit of the State Capitol. However, this notion was quickly abandoned due to cost: the limestone would have increased the cost of the building by twelve to fifteen thousand dollars, an unpalatable amount in an already tight budget. The State Building Commission decided the building should be built of brick, which could be obtained locally for a much more reasonable price.

In preparation for the demolition of the first Governor's Mansion, over 300 items were sold at auction to raise additional funds and to empty the property.²³ Prior to the sale, the architect selected items that would be repurposed in the new building, thereby keeping down costs on some of the fine finishes. The Nebraska State Historical Society was given an opportunity to select items that should be preserved from the items left behind. Items on the sale ranged from simple serving trays to ornate punch bowls, and solid walnut chairs to the desk former Nebraska governors used in the State Capitol.²⁴ Five fireplaces were for sale, as well as all of the light fixtures and chandeliers.²⁵ The auction yielded \$2416.25, which went into a special fund to be used on the new building.²⁶ With the contents removed, the demolition of the building could move forward. Within days, a work crew from the Men's Reformatory began razing the old mansion, and quickly removed most of the doors, windows and siding.²⁷

At the same time, plans were proceeding with the new building: Governor Anderson was prepared to ask for bids. He announced that the State was separating the contracts to get the best, and therefore most affordable, bids for the work. The contracts would be separated into plumbing and heating, air conditioning and ventilation, electrical wiring,

¹⁸ *Lincoln Star*, 27 January 1956, "Dual Purpose' Said Too Costly for New Governor's Mansion."

¹⁹ *Lincoln Star*, 27 January 1956, "Dual Purpose' Said Too Costly for New Governor's Mansion."

²⁰ *Lincoln City Directory*, 1938.

²¹ *An Architectural Album*, Lincoln Junior League (1979), 88-89.

²² City of Lincoln, Nebraska Building Permit, #80261.

²³ *Lincoln Star*, 10 August 1956, "From Ornate Punch Bowls to Ordinary Trays: 300 Items from Mansion Auctioned."

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Lincoln Sunday Journal and Star*, 5 August 1956, "Some Mansion Furnishings to Go on Auction Block."

²⁶ *Lincoln Star*, 11 August 1956, "Auction Sale From Mansion Raised \$2400."

²⁷ *Lincoln Star*, 14 August 1956, "New Mansion General Bids Asked Sept. 11."

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finish hardware, exterior cement work on the sidewalks and driveway, and general contracting. A contract for grading the site would be let on August 24th, and the remainder of the bids were to be let on September 11th.²⁸

Plans were released to the press in mid August, 1956. Governor Anderson described the proposed mansion as "not lavish but nice" and stated that it should last a hundred years.²⁹ A governor helping to design his own mansion with public money could not afford to be seen as feathering his own nest, however, it did behoove him politically to emphasize that he was building something that would endure.

The floor plans called for living space for the governor's family on the second floor, with formal public space on the first floor. The largest spaces on the first floor are the Reception Room, now referred to as the Drawing Room, and the State Dining Room, which could seat twenty-four. The Dining Room would feature two china cabinets for the display of the silver punch bowls from the USS Nebraska, a 1907 battleship long since decommissioned. A private dining room was also provided for the convenience of the Governor's family, shaped in a subtle octagon due to the placement of china cabinets in the four corners. Solheim announced that the Governor's Library would feature a hand carved replica of the State Seal.³⁰ Upon entering the foyer, the entrant would be most impressed by the elliptical stairway that would lead to the private quarters above. Upstairs, plans called for three family bedrooms, as well as three guest bedrooms, and a family room.

In terms of the exterior, Architect Selmer Solheim described it at the time as a "Modified Georgian Revival." While Solheim had submitted approximately ten variations on the design for the exterior of the building, including two modern interpretations, most involved a similar grand entrance with a two story columned portico. His explanation for his inspiration for the design and its ultimate selection was "...that a style which leaned heavily on our basic American heritage might more soundly approach the permanency desired in the style of a building for the governor's mansion...the contemporary styles ...might appear quite dated 25 to 30 years from now."³¹

Immediately, controversy over the design ensued. Harry F. Cunningham, FAIA, formerly of Goodhue Associates, architects of the Nebraska State Capitol, spoke out against the design.

To the editor of the Lincoln Star: This letter is a difficult one for me to write, for I have a deep personal affection for Selmer Solheim, architect of the new governor's mansion, and a high regard for his professional attainments.

However, as one of the architects of the Capitol and the one who completed the design (notably the tower) after Mr. Goodhue's death, I am greatly disappointed in the published design for the new governor's mansion. It is altogether out of character with the great Capitol building which it faces and should complement.

The choice of the utterly inappropriate "modified Georgian colonial design" for the mansion was surely not the architect's - he knows better than to place a "pink" brick important building opposite the warm gray stone of the Capitol. The statement quoted from the governor that if limestone had been used, the building would "look too much like an office building" is, of course, supremely absurd.

The great weakness in this whole project is that there is not a single member of the commission who possesses any modicum of professional knowledge in building matters or any slightest suspicion of taste in such matters. When the Capitol itself was contemplated, the then building commission engaged the renowned architect, the late Thomas R.

²⁸ *Lincoln Star*, 14 August 1956, "New Mansion General Bids Asked Sept. 11."

²⁹ *Omaha Sunday World-Herald*, 19 August 1956, "Pink Bricks for Governor Mansion."

³⁰ *Lincoln Sunday Journal and Star*, 19 August 1956, "Colonial Motif Planned for Mansion Interior."

³¹ *Lincoln Sunday Journal and Star*, 19 August 1956, "Modified Colonial Design in U.S. Tradition: Governor's Mansion to Be Finished by May."

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Kimball of Omaha, as consultant and the design for the Capitol testifies to the wisdom of that old commission. This time, with the best of professional knowledge and taste and, above all, understanding of the Capitol, at its disposition, the commission blissfully and ignorantly went on its own unguided way and came up with this "modified Georgian colonial design" which would look very well in Piedmont or Eastridge – but will always look like a lost stray cat in the neighborhood of the distinguished Capitol.

I am sorry that the distinguished architect, Selmer Solheim, was forced to inflict this sorry anachronism upon the people of Nebraska. It is, of course, not too late to correct the grievous mistake that has been made.³²

Cunningham's charges were met with both indignation and agreement. Some Nebraskans felt the style was too "Eastern." Others felt that men who were in authority had made the best choice available to them, and were happy to trust them.³³ When Omaha architects weighed in on the controversy, their opinions were as divided as those of the general population. William L. Steele, Jr., a prominent Omaha architect stated, "Back East, the mansion would look wonderful. But this is the Midwest and not the proper setting. The Capitol is a fine example of modern architecture."³⁴ Dr. Wilfred Payne, author of *Architectural Styles*, said, "A little glass box opposite that magnificent Capitol would look ridiculous."³⁵ He went on to say that he considered the current design the best possible match for the Capitol. W. D. Aeschbacher, Director of the Nebraska State Historical Society, and Edward J. Sessinghaus, architect, agreed with his assessment. Sessinghaus stated, "The Georgian Colonial will be popular when these modern architectural conglomerations are forgotten."³⁶ Selmer Solheim defended his design by saying that he had "personally preferred two designs and the one that was selected was one of them."³⁷ The other had been a Contemporary Regency design in stone.

At the quarterly meeting of the Nebraska Chapter of the American Institute of Architects in Lincoln, Harry Cunningham offered a resolution asking Governor Anderson to instruct the Building Commission to require Selmer Solheim to restudy the proposed design "to bring it into keeping with the Capitol."³⁸ Frank Latenser, president of the chapter and formerly of the original committee that selected Solheim, stated publicly that he believed "an 'intelligent committee'... and a 'good architect' had approved the design and he 'would be willing to go along' with them."³⁹ At the meeting, Latenser led the discussion of Cunningham's request, and asked that no resolution be introduced. He pointed out that the objection to the design was that of individuals, and not the objection of the chapter as a whole, and therefore inappropriate for the chapter to act on. At the close of discussion, Harry Cunningham announced he was "impressed by what his fellow architects had said and that he was quite ready to call off the war."⁴⁰

In September, the bids for the construction came in and contractors were selected. The Walter J. Broer Construction Company bid the general contracting, as well as finishing grading, walks, drives, curbs and gutters. Natkin and Company was awarded the contract for ventilation systems and air conditioning, and plumbing and heating. The electrical wiring was awarded to Industrial Electric Service, and the finish hardware was offered to the R. L. White Company.⁴¹ Selmer Solheim was given authorization to finalize the bids and prepare final contracts.⁴² Although the

³² *Lincoln Star*, 21 August 1956, "Governor's Mansion."

³³ *Lincoln Star*, 23 August 1956, "Architect Likes Design for Governor's Mansion."

³⁴ *Omaha Sunday World-Herald*, 26 August 1956, "Battle of Tastes – Modernists, Traditionalists Join Dispute Over Mansion."

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Lincoln Star*, 23 August 1956, "Architect Likes Design for Governor's Mansion."

³⁸ *Lincoln Star*, 25 August 1956, "Architects to Consider Proposal Calling for Redesigned Mansion."

³⁹ *Lincoln Star*, 25 August 1956, "Architects to Consider Proposal Calling for Redesigned Mansion."

⁴⁰ *Lincoln Sunday Journal and Star*, 26 August 1956, "Mansion Style Protest Ends: Cunningham Calls Off War; Says 'Unhappy Episode.'"

⁴¹ *Lincoln Star*, 12 September 1956, "Lincoln Firms' Bids Low on Governor's Mansion."

⁴² *Lincoln Star*, 17 September 1956, "\$193,600 Low Bid Accepted for New Mansion Contract."

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total bids for the work contracted exceeded the money authorized by the Nebraska legislature for the construction of the mansion, Governor Anderson asserted that he felt that the proceeds from salvage of the old mansion would furnish enough money to make up the difference in cost.

Construction began and continued throughout the winter. By March, the newspaper published a photograph of the mansion as a work in progress, with two story brick walls and rafters in place.⁴³ The plans called for 134 doors and 137 windows. Contractors used 1,550 pounds of nails, thirty-one tons of structural steel, 35,634 bricks from the Yankee Hill Brick Company, and 17,280 cubic feet of concrete. The result was a 15,341 square foot building, which in materials cost less than \$12 per square foot to build. The mansion has twelve inch masonry walls and concrete floors.⁴⁴

In March, Solheim was ready to begin considering the interior design of the mansion, and hired a designer. He selected, with the blessing of the State Building Commission, Jack Peacock of Orchard and Wilhelm in Omaha to lead the design scheme for the mansion. Solheim stated that Peacock had "done many decorating jobs of note and was selected to do most of the interior decorating for the State Capitol building when it was built."⁴⁵

Within a month, Jack Peacock had largely laid his plans, which called for 719 square yards of carpeting for fourteen rooms, 653 yards of drapery materials, 53 chairs, four sofas and two settees, plus tables, desks and other furniture. A twenty-four foot Williamsburg table and twenty four Chippendale chairs were ordered for the State dining room. The Governor's bedroom furniture would include two twin beds and two upholstered Louis XVI chairs.⁴⁶ The new furnishings were all to be of good quality of traditional or "period" styles that would exist in harmony with the style of the residence. The Midwest Furniture Company of Chadron and William Ruge and Associates were the low bidders for providing the furnishings for the mansion.⁴⁷ Their bids were approximately \$10,000 below original estimates, and allowed for the original interior design plans to proceed as intended without the need to cut corners for cost savings. The first shipments of furnishings began arriving in August, and were stored in the vaults of the Capitol covered in plastic and tarpaulin awaiting the completion of the building.⁴⁸ Dishes, silver, some bedroom furniture, and draperies would be transferred from the former mansion, and had also been stored in the vault. Among the items repurposed in the new facility were the front door knob, lock and striker, which allowed Governor Anderson to use the same key to unlock the front door of the new mansion that he would have to gain access to the old one on the same site two years previously.⁴⁹

Up until August 1957, all of the plans for the residence had been established based on the availability of the north half of block 151, facing the State Capitol on H Street. In August, Governor Victor Anderson approached the State Building Commission and asked the committee to consider purchasing property on the south half of the block in order to allow for more grounds for the property.⁵⁰ The legislature had previously allowed for the purchase of one residence at a cost of \$20,000 to allow for a generous set back of fifty feet from H Street. Selmer Solheim had developed long range landscape plans that would include a formal garden featuring a lily pond, pin oaks, yews and Austrian pines, as well as a large parking lot for guests. The set back of the mansion lent an air of importance to the building, and a

⁴³ *Lincoln Sunday Journal and Star*, 17 March 1957, "Future Home of Nebraska's Governors."

⁴⁴ *Lincoln Sunday Journal and Star*, 9 March 1957, "Mansion's Cost Is About \$208,000, Plus \$50-60,000 for Furnishings."

⁴⁵ *Lincoln Star*, 18 March 1957, "Jack Peacock of Omaha To Plan Mansion Interior."

⁴⁶ *Omaha Sunday World-Herald*, 14 April 1957, "Wild Rice' Carpet Pattern - Governor's Mansion Furnishing Cost \$50,000."

⁴⁷ *Lincoln Star*, 17 April 1957, "Bids \$38,000 On Furnishing Of Mansion."

⁴⁸ *Lincoln Star*, 21 August 1957, "First Furniture Arrives for Governor's Mansion."

⁴⁹ McKee, James L., *Remember When...Memories of Lincoln* (Lincoln, Nebraska: J & L Lee Co., 1998), 9.

⁵⁰ *Lincoln Star*, 6 August 1957, "Purchase of More Mansion Land Studied."

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stately setting, when possible, would further enhance the idea that the mansion and indeed the entire site were meant to glorify the office of the governor.

While the Commission quickly authorized the purchase of one house and lot at 730 South 14th to enlarge the mansion's property, the Commission felt that the Capitol itself required updating and had more pressing needs than the landscaping of the governor's residence.⁵¹ In 1960, the Capitol Building Commission authorized the Attorney General to acquire the seven remaining properties on the south half of block 151 under eminent domain.⁵² Appraisal of the land and properties were estimated to amount to \$130,000. The first two properties were purchased in November at a cost of \$52,000,⁵³ and another three properties in January 1961 for a total of \$85,930.⁵⁴ Another property was acquired for \$34,500 in February.⁵⁵

In late August, Governor Anderson orchestrated a cornerstone laying ceremony to dedicate the construction of the new executive residence.⁵⁶ Within the cornerstone, he laid a copper box that contained a photograph of the old mansion; lists of the members of the State Building Commission, the State Supreme Court, the 1957-1959 Legislature and elected state officers; news releases regarding the construction of the new residence; a booklet on Nebraska history; two of each American coin minted in 1957; narrations from the Lincoln Girl Scouts, Camp Fire Girls and Boy Scouts; and A.I.A. Centennial medal, stamps and a 1957 roster of the Nebraska Architects Association; Solheim's poem, and a page from the *Lincoln Journal* showing contemporary buildings in Lincoln from 25 August 1957.⁵⁷ An editorial in the *Lincoln Star* commented on the pride Nebraska should feel in the completion of such a worthy project:

There it is – it will be ready for occupancy before the new year – and we're going to be mighty proud of that new mansion. In the building those responsible used excellent judgment and we are certain that thousands of Nebraskans will point with pride not only to the State Capitol but to the mansion across the street and finally up on the university campus, to a very beautiful building which houses the Nebraska State Historical Society. To us that is the significance of the dedication ceremonies. We kept pluggin' along in our own way until we got a job done.⁵⁸

And Nebraskans were proud. In March 1958, the Mansion was opened to the public upon its completion for two days from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm.⁵⁹ Nebraskans came in droves. Saturday, officials estimated between 6,000 and 7,000 Nebraskans toured the residence. Even more came on Sunday. All told, it was estimated that 35,000 citizens lined up in the cold to get a look at the new home of the Governor.⁶⁰ The tourists were not all from Lincoln: they came from as far away as Grand Island, Omaha, Geneva and Wahoo, and waited for hours as the line stretched around the block. When the time for tours was nearing an end and the line had not diminished, Governor Anderson encouraged the tours to continue, that everyone should have a chance to view the mansion that their tax dollars had helped to build. The first floor was available for tours, including the foyer, the drawing room, the Governor's library, the State dining room, the private dining room, and the kitchen.

⁵¹ *Lincoln Star*, 13 August 1957, "So. 14th Lot Purchase OK'd To Extend Site Of Mansion."

⁵² *Lincoln Star*, 24 August 1960, "State To Acquire Land For Mansion Grounds."

⁵³ *Lincoln Star*, 8 November 1960, "Nebraska Pays \$52,000 For Land Behind Mansion."

⁵⁴ *Lincoln Star*, 28 January 1961, "State Buys Land South of Mansion."

⁵⁵ *Lincoln Star*, 16 February 1961, "State Gets Land Near Mansion."

⁵⁶ *Lincoln Sunday Journal and Star*, 25 August 1957, "Mansion Cornerstone To Be Laid Wednesday."

⁵⁷ Selmer Solheim, "Articles in Cornerstone of New Governor's Mansion," *Business Papers, 1956-1967*, Library/Archives Manuscript Collection, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, Nebraska.

⁵⁸ *Lincoln Star*, 30 August 1957, "Dedicating The Mansion."

⁵⁹ *Lincoln Sunday Journal and Star*, 9 March 1958, "House with 1,452,000 Owners: Governor's Mansion: New Executive Residence Open For Public Look Next Week End."

⁶⁰ *Lincoln Sunday Journal and Star*, 17 March 1958, "35,000 Line Up To Tour New Governor's Mansion."

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Upon its opening, Selmer Solheim published a poem in its honor, and in honor of the many hands whose work together helped to build it, in the newspaper.

All have a share in the beauty,
All have a part in the plan
What does it matter what duty
Falls to the lot of man?
Someone has blended the plaster
And someone has carried the stone:
Neither the man nor the master
Ever has builded alone.
Making a roof from the weather,
Or building a house for the king,
Only by working together
Have men accomplished a thing.⁶¹

It could also be argued that he was writing in praise of the people of Nebraska, whose vision of a mansion for the executive branch of the state government allowed for its construction. Without the support of the people, the expenditure of such funds, all told something less than \$300,000, would have been an unjustifiable extravagance and a political nightmare for the governor and the legislature. Instead, the people embraced the project and viewed it as a source of pride which would soon face a slight assault.

Governor Anderson and his wife moved into the new mansion in September 1958. Within three months, his term of office was at an end, and Governor Ralph Brooks took up residence in the executive mansion. He was disappointed in the construction of the building. He observed trembling floors and rattling windows, and called attention to the deficiencies both by contacting Solheim, who stated that these problems were to be expected with steel bar joist construction, and dissatisfied with his answer, by having the media and legislators to lunch to experience the deficiencies for themselves.⁶² While all found the problems "readily apparent," the legislators did not take any immediate action to correct these problems. They agreed with the architect that such problems were to be expected, and dubbed the mansion "Quivering Heights." Former Governor Anderson quipped, "Maybe the Brookses jump around more than we did."⁶³ Members of the State Building Commission asserted that the building was structurally sound, and insisted no additional work needed to be done. Perhaps offended at the assertions that Governor Brooks was too sensitive, he invited Nebraskans to visit the mansion to test out the floors for themselves during business hours, and over 200 were said to have come to see it for themselves. "I don't deny that it is structurally sound," he said. "So are merry-go-rounds and ferris wheels, but you don't sleep in them or take baths in them."⁶⁴

In March 1959, Governor Brooks proposed that the State Building Commission take action to improve the construction problems of the mansion. He hoped that quick action would mean that the tax payers would not be burdened with the cost of the repairs, as the bond guarantees were still in effect. Brooks had hired an independent Nebraska architectural firm, the Leo A. Daly Co., and used the services of Chief Structural Engineer Ted A. Balderson, to look into the deficiencies in the construction of the residence. The company also consulted with a bar joist construction specialist from New York. The conclusion, according to the governor, was that the building was "never really

⁶¹ *Lincoln Sunday Journal and Star*, 9 March 1958, "Governor's Mansion."

⁶² *Lincoln Star*, 22 January 1959, "Brooks Hits 'Trembling Floors' Of New Governor's Mansion."

⁶³ *Lincoln Star*, 23 January 1959, "Mansion Tremors Do Not Worry Inspecting Senators."

⁶⁴ *Lincoln Star*, 27 January 1959, "Drove Test Brooks Bounce At Mansion."

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completed."⁶⁵ He stated that the problems lay in the bar joist construction, heating and plumbing, and that repairs to correct the issues might be made without much difficulty. Brooks released the report to the Building Commission with the architect's recommendation that a covering of sheet lead and a one-half inch pad of thick sponge rubber be laid on the concrete might provide the desired deflection.⁶⁶ After much physical testing with additional weight on the trembling floors, the architect then determined that the amount of lead that would be required to stop the motion of the floors would actually make the floors unsafe. The motion of the first floor drawing room and the second floor family room above were not moving independently, but as a unit. "It's a good structure for roofs but no good for floors." When Governor Brooks was asked what he planned to do, he stated, "If I were a private owner it wouldn't have happened in the first place."⁶⁷ The only alternative seemed to be the complete reconstruction of the floors themselves. Little else is found about this issue in the press. The issue seems to have been allowed to fade away, possibly when Governor Brooks died while in office the next year.

One alteration to the mansion's original design was a Cold War addition of an underground fallout shelter off of the basement, added during the Governor Morrison administration, from 1961-1967. It was such a dark, dank room that First Lady Pat Exon later used these qualities of the space to grow night crawlers for her favorite pastime, fishing.

The current Governor's Mansion differs from the old mansion in many respects, but most importantly in intention. The first mansion was purchased, as a previously existing house. As it was, it could have been anyone's house, at least, anyone who had the means to build such a large house. While its proximity to the State Capitol served its purpose well as a governor's mansion, its location was merely accidental. It was located on a corner of block 151, and the house did not face the Capitol. Neither did it face west; it really oriented itself more toward the northwest, or the corner. Its size was certainly grand and imposing enough for a governor's mansion, however, it was both too big and not big enough. The governors could not entertain adequately, for there was not enough formal space for that, and there were not enough bedrooms for larger families of governors. When they did entertain, guests often found themselves in the private quarters of the governor placing their coats on his bed. If Heads of State were to stay overnight, children often had to be kept elsewhere. As a house, it was simply too large for small families and too small for state business.

All of these problems were taken into account when planning the current executive residence. While they never intended to entertain 350 in the new mansion, they did incorporate formal spaces that could accommodate fairly large groups, and made sure to have plenty of closet space. They planned to have private quarters upstairs for the First Family so that guests would not ramble through private spaces, and also organized the space so that it felt cozy like an apartment. Most importantly, though, Solheim considered the siting of the mansion, and determined that it should be the focus of the entire block in order to visually lend it the importance that it should be afforded. He gave it a generous set back, and placed the building in the middle of the block. When the properties on the south side of the block were obtained, he landscaped the south half so that the grounds would bespeak the importance of the residence and therefore the office.

The Nebraska Governor's Mansion, more recently referred to officially as the Governor's Residence, has been lived in by twelve governors and their families since Governor Anderson.⁶⁸ In addition to providing a home to Nebraska's chief executive, the Mansion has been available for tours, teas, luncheons and small meetings to any number of groups that desired a meeting place. In this way, its use is very much like the use to which the original Governor's

⁶⁵ *Lincoln Star*, 10 March 1959, "Brooks Asks 'Repair' of Mansion 'Faults'."

⁶⁶ *Lincoln Star*, 13 March 1959, "\$5,000 Would Cut Mansion Vibration: Brooks Releases Independent Report To Capitol Building Commission."

⁶⁷ *Lincoln Star*, 13 August 1959, "Floor Shivers' Cure: Rebuild 'Em - Brooks."

⁶⁸ Peg Poeschl, "Housing Nebraska's Governors, 1854-1980," *Nebraska History*, Vol. 61, No. 3, Fall 1980.

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Mansion was put. Before the current building was constructed, it had become very fashionable to reserve the old Governor's Mansion for teas and other social gatherings, and this function is still very much a part of the current use of the mansion today. The popularity of such gatherings is to be attributed to the desire to be near something glorious or famous. In this way, the mansion is the personification or manifestation of the office of the executive branch of our government, an office to which few aspire and fewer still will achieve. But you could reserve the meeting room for tea and approach, for a time, that glory. And as a resident of the state of Nebraska, being part owner of the building, it is the citizen's right to do so. In essence, it is not only the Governor's Mansion, but the People's Mansion.

The Nebraska Governor's Mansion is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with the history of its construction and the notion that Nebraska and her people deserved a grand building dedicated to the residence of her executive officer, the Governor. All politics are fraught with controversy, but interestingly, the construction of this building, while occasionally contentious, was never controversial because the people did not believe that it was necessary or the right thing to be done. Nebraskans were proud of the construction of this residence, indeed they lined up for hours just for the chance to peek inside, and the fact that they will still enter the front door in hushed voices to descend to the basement for a meeting or a tea, just to be able to say they have been there tells us this building has stood the test of time. Nebraskans remain proud of the Governor's Mansion, for the visibility it lends to the separation of our branches of government, for the glorifying of the executive branch, and for its prudent beauty.

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Verbal Boundary Description

All of block 151, Original Plat, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes all of the property historically associated with the Governor's Mansion.