

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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

For HCRS use only

received MAY 28 1980

date entered JUL 3 1980

1. Name

historic	Trinity Seminary Building	(WN02-5)
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and/or common	Old Main, Dana College
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2. Location

street & number	College Drive	not for publication
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city, town	Blair	vicinity of	congressional district	second
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state	Nebraska	code	031	county	Washington	code	177
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3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name	The American Lutheran Church
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street & number	
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city, town	Minneapolis	vicinity of	state	Minnesota
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5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.	Washington County Courthouse
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street & number	
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city, town	Blair	state	Nebraska
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6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title	Historic Preservation in Nebraska	has this property been determined eligible?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no
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date	1971	federal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	state	<input type="checkbox"/>	county	<input type="checkbox"/>	local
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depository for survey records	Nebraska State Historical Society
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city, town	Lincoln	state	Nebraska
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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		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Old Main is situated near the center of Dana College's 250 acre hilltop campus in the western section of Blair, Nebraska. Built over a twenty year period from 1885-1905, the present structure reflects changing attitudes toward the building and major renovation work undertaken in the mid-1950's when a decision was made to keep the building instead of razing it for a new structure.

Constructed as the Trinity Seminary Building in 1885-86, the original building (presently Old Main's central section) was a symmetrical rectangular structure, four stories in height with a five story projecting entrance tower on the east front. The ground floor or raised basement of the building is of solid masonry construction while the upper stories are of frame construction with a brick veneer except for the top floor whose mansard walls are clad in shingles. Segmentally arched openings are featured on the first floor, stilted arched hoods on the second and third floors while pedimented hoods adorn the top floor windows. A decorative tile string course surrounds the building at the springlines of the second and third floor windows. Other notable details include the pressed metal cornice, the Palladian arched windows at the belfry level, lunettes on each side of the tower's mansard and the iron cresting atop the tower. The present cresting is a replication of the original which was removed after 1910.

Two wings were added to the building as enrollment grew and additional space was needed. In 1893 the north wing was built on to the northwest corner while the larger, south wing was added in 1905. Both wings match the original in materials and detailing with only minor variations in decorative motives evident due to the range of construction periods. The end result of this building program manifests a quite picturesque building--three receding rectangular blocks from the front, a U-shaped court at the rear--one which was rather plain at the walls but which was considerably enlivened above the cornice where the dormers, chimneys, cresting and tower provided adequate architectural interest.

Old Main appears today from the outside very much as it did upon the completion of the 1905 wing. The original iron cresting of the main roof of the central section has been removed as has the original, modest wooden stairway and porch on the east front. The stairway was removed for safety reasons in 1956. The existing door into the ground level then became the main entry. All original brick flues, formerly located above the outside walls, have also been removed. The interior, which is not a part of this nomination, has been extensively remodelled.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1885–86, 1893, 1905 Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Old Main is significant to Nebraska in the areas of architecture, education and religion, and culturally as an important Danish institution.

In 1884, Pastor A. M. Andersen, a Danish immigrant, began teaching theology and general academic subjects from his house in Blair at the direction of the newly formed Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church Association. These classes mark the beginning of Trinity Seminary and Dana College.¹ Dana became the only four-year liberal arts college in the United States to be established by Danish immigrants.² As such, Old Main stands today as an important symbol of the early theological and academic life of the Danish-American community.

Architecturally, Old Main exists as a fine, vernacular product of the French Second Empire Revival style, a style not well-represented by the extant nineteenth century academic architecture in Nebraska and one which was congenial to nineteenth century Danish tastes.³

1. A brief chronology: In 1886 an academy became part of Trinity Seminary; 1899 saw a merger with Elk Horn College, the first Danish folk high school in the United States (later a college), in Elk Horn, Iowa; in 1903 the name "Dana College and Trinity Seminary" was adopted; in 1956 Trinity Seminary moved to the Dubuque, Iowa campus of Wartburg Theological Seminary in preparation for the 1960 merger of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church, the American Lutheran Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church; with the merger, Dana became one of eleven senior colleges of the new American Lutheran Church.
2. Their successful efforts can be seen on campus today, almost 100 years later. Campus life is still enriched with classes in the Danish language and in literature, by the student-sponsored Danish Folk Dancers, by the 10,000 volume Scandinavian Collection in the library and archives and by frequent visits of performing groups and lecturers from Denmark including a recent (1976) visit by Queen Margrethe II of Denmark. Today, Dana's students come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, but many are of Danish descent. (James Cass and Max Birubaum. Comparative Guide to American Colleges, 8th Ed., New York: Harper and Row, 1977, p. 156).
3. Nineteenth century Danish architecture was characterized by many different stylistic currents but conservative tendencies remained strong. Danish tradition was carried forward through Free Historicism (Faber, n.d.: 121, 123) or Liberal Historicism (Millech, 1951: 353–54) movements during the second half of the century and later through National Romantic developments before and after the turn of the twentieth century (Hitchcock; 1958: 395). Characterized by a preference for simple brick construction, picturesque qualities were achieved above the cornice with steep roofs, a profusion of chimneys and dormers and liberal use of towers and turrets (Cervin, 1905: 91; Hitchcock, 1958: 395).

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 4.14 acres

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle name Blair, Nebr.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A	114	7	318	2	010	416	013	6	110
Zone	Easting					Northing			
C									
E									
G									

B									
Zone	Easting					Northing			
D									
F									
H									

Verbal boundary description and justification

Tax lot 76 in Section 10, T18N, R11E.

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

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title	D. Murphy, Survey Architect;	Ann George, Director Public Relations
		Dana College
organization	Nebraska State Historical Society	date March, 1980
street & number	1500 R Street (402/471-3270)	telephone College Drive (402/426-4101)
city or town	Lincoln, Nebraska	state Blair, 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Marvin A. Kinett

title	Director, Nebraska State Historical Society	date	5/12/80
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For HCRS use only

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

J.W. Ray Luce
keeper of the National Register

date 7/3/80

Attest: *William H. Graham*

Chief of Registration

date 6-23-80

**United States Department of the Interior
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Received MAY 28 1980
date entered JL 3

Continuation sheet Bibliography

Item number 9

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Books and Articles

Carr, Daniel M. (Ed.). Men and Women of Nebraska, Washington County Edition. Fremont, Nebr.: Progress Publishing Co., 1903.

Cervin, Olof Z. "Sweden Today." The American Architect and Building News 88 (Sept. 16, 1905), pp. 91-95.

Christiansen, William E. Saga of the Tower: A History of Dana College and Trinity Seminary. Blair, Nebr.: Lutheran Publishing House, 1959.

Christiansen, G. B. Recollections of Our Church Work. Blair, Nebr.: Danish Lutheran Publishing House, 1939.

Danske i Amerika. Minneapolis, Minn.: C. Rasmussen Publishing House, 1908.

Faber, Tobias. A History of Danish Architecture. translated by Frederick R. Stevenson. Copenhagen: Det Danske Selskab, [1963 ?]

Hitchcock, Henry Russell. Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. Baltimore, Md.: Penguin Books, 1958.

Millech, Knud. Danske arkitekturstrømninger 1850-1950: En arkitekturhistorisk undersøgelse. København: Østifternes Kreditforening, 1951.

Nielsen, H. Skov (Ed.). Dana College and Trinity Seminary: A Retrospect over Half a Century of Usefulness and Growth. Blair, Nebr.: Danish Lutheran Publishing House, 1936.

Unpublished Materials and Photographs

American Lutheran Church Archives, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa.

Dana College Archives, Dana College, Blair, Nebraska.