United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JUN 9 1987

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name	Old People's Home
other names/site number	Leo Vaughan Senior Manor; D009:0338-003

2. Location

street & number	3325 Fontenelle Boulevard		N/A	not for publication
city, town	Omaha		N/A	vicinity
state	Nebr.	code NE	county Douglas	code 055	zip code 68104

3. Classification

Ownership of Property
- [x] private
- [ ] public-local
- [ ] public-State
- [ ] public-Federal

Category of Property
- [x] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
      N/A

Number of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register ____0____

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this [x] 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 [x] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official   Date May 29, 1986

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

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official   Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
- [x] 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:) _____

Beth Grosvenor Boland   10/21/87

Signature of the Keeper   Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
   Health Care/Sanitarium

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
   Work in progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

   Colonial Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation   Brick

walls   Brick

roof   Asphalt

other   Wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Encompassing an area of approximately 10,600 square feet on a 2.3-acre site, the Old People's Home is a two-story brick building, Colonial Revival in style, with a raised basement, finished attic and hipped roof. The Home was built in 1917 as a group housing facility for the elderly containing about 60 private rooms, large common spaces and service areas. An expanded "H" in plan, the building employs a technical system of exterior masonry walls with reinforced concrete floors supported by reinforced concrete columns. Very little of the original interior remains intact; the building's exterior has also been altered through window replacement and the removal of porches. However, a certified historic rehabilitation of the property is currently underway. The Old People's Home is located about three miles from Omaha's central business district on Fontenelle Boulevard near Fontenelle Park, the northwestern component of the city's historic park and boulevard system. Although the area is composed primarily of one- and two-story frame and brick houses, there are several clusters of large-scale institutional buildings nearby, including the Nebraska School for the Deaf and the Holy Name Parish Complex.

* *

Located about three miles northwest of Omaha's central business district, the Old People's Home occupies a 2.3-acre site that comprises the major portion of the city block bounded by Fontenelle Boulevard and 45th Streets on the east and west, and Pinkney and Bedford Streets on the north and south. The block slopes steeply to the east and south. Lots along the block's eastern perimeter contain frame houses; four large brick apartment buildings (ca. 1960) and a cluster of older houses are situated on the block's southern edge.

The building — covering an area of approximately 10,600 square feet — was constructed on the northwest corner of the property in 1917. Asphalt driveways and parking lots abut the structure on the north and south; another large parking lot lies to the east of the building. A high chain-link fence encloses the property on the north, south and east. Material evidence of the Home's extensive gardens, mentioned in written accounts, no longer remains.

Platted and developed primarily in the Teens and 1920s, the area around the Home is comprised primarily of one- and two-story frame and brick houses, although several clusters of large-scale institutional buildings — the Nebraska School for the Deaf and the Holy Name Parish Complex — are also nearby. The property's location is enhanced by its frontage on Fontenelle Boulevard, a wide tree-lined street that terminates in Fontenelle Park, one block to the north. Fontenelle Park and Boulevard together form the northwestern edge of the city's historic park and boulevard system, initially designed in the early 1890s by H.W.S. Cleveland.

X See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number ___7___   Page ___1___

Oriented to the south, the Old People's Home is a two-story masonry building with a raised basement, finished attic and hipped roof. The building's ground plan is a varient of a front-facing "H" plan: two primary rectangular units (each measuring 106 by 32 feet) are linked laterally to a central rectangular block (70 by 36 feet). Red face brick in a running bond composes the structure's walls. A soldier course at the first floor level creates a belt around the building; rows of projecting bricks delineate the second story.

Technically, the building employs a structural system of exterior masonry walls with reinforced concrete floors supported by reinforced concrete columns. Dimensioned lumber frames the roof which is interrupted by a series of 26 hipped-roof dormers. Although the slate roof covering has recently been removed, the wood cornice enriched with block modillions survives intact.

Access to the building is provided by doors centered on the east and west elevations and on the north end of the central wing. The primary entrance is on the south wall of the central wing; service doors enter the structure at the basement level. Interior circulation is furnished by two staircases located in the lateral corridor that links the wings, and by a service stairway placed in the northern end of the central block.

The Home's principal (south) elevation features three forward-facing, projecting wings: a wider central wing is gable-fronted and set back from the two hipped-roof end units. The rear (north) elevation is similar in form to the principal facade while the side elevations (west and east) are considerably less complex — each consisting of a single wall plane.

Rectangular window openings, generally uniform in size, are symmetrically ranked on all elevations. Several years ago, original window sashes were replaced with metal casement-type sashes. For the most part, original windows were double-hung, sliding sash, with 12 panes in the upper sash and a single pane in the lower. Slight variations on this sash configuration occurred in the smaller dormer and basement windows as well as in several triple-windows which filled larger wall openings. In addition, a round multi-paned window was originally centered in the gable end of the south elevation's central wing; it has also been replaced with a modern rectangular casement window. Other elements of the original window design no longer remaining are wooden shutters which are attached to all first- and second-story casings. The building's jack-arched window heads are formed by bricks stacked on edge.

Other important architectural details which have been removed or altered include large covered porches on the south and west. On the secondary (west) facade, a wide one-story portico is supported by paired classical columns. Over the years, balustrades on the portico's base and roof have been removed and the Ionic column capitals simplified. A similarly detailed but somewhat smaller version of the west porch originally covered the central entrance on the principal facade. That porch has been completely dismantled. Paneled doors with eliptical fanlights and side lights also have been replaced on the south and west; however, the original door and surround including sidelights, a fan light, pilasters and arched crown survive intact on the east elevation.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number ___7___   Page ___2___

Architectural drawings for the Old People's Home show that the building contained about 60 rooms for residents in addition to a large kitchen; dining room and lounge areas; living quarters and offices for the staff; and service rooms. On the first, second and attic floors, residents' rooms were aligned along a central corridor which ran the length of the large end wings. The central wing contained offices and the kitchen on the first floor, and on the second level, a solarium and additional rooms for residents. The dining area was located in the northeast corner of the first floor, and the lateral corridor between the wings served as additional lounge space. In its current state, virtually all interior walls and fixtures have been removed: existing original elements are limited to staircase newel posts, parts of balustrades and also several pairs of multi-paned, wood doors which hang in the corridors.

In its architectural style, the Old People's Home is a product of the Colonial Revival movement, exemplifying the Georgian Revival subtype that became popular in Omaha generally after 1910. Primary characteristics of the style are seen in the building's symmetrical arrangement of formal elements enriched with classical details, including the cornice with modillions; centered doors with porticos; window sashes with multi-pane glazing; and the central wing's pedimented gable end. As outlined above, distinctive components of the building's decorative detail (such as the paneled doors with sidelights and the columned porches) have been altered; however, the building's form has not been modified. A certified historic rehabilitation is planned to replace important missing elements of the building's original design.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally   ☐ statewide   ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria   ☒ A   ☐ B   ☐ C   ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)   ☐ A   ☐ B   ☐ C   ☐ D   ☐ E   ☐ F   ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
Social History

Period of Significance
1917-1935

Significant Dates
1917

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
McDonald, John
McDonald, Alan

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Associated with the history of efforts promoting the welfare of the aged, the Old People's Home represents the role of private benevolent organizations in establishing institutional housing for the elderly. The property is therefore significant under Criterion A. of the National Register Criteria. Built by the Women's Christian Aid Society in 1917 as one of the city's first facilities expressly designed to house the elderly, the Old People's Home reflects the history of private philanthropy on behalf of the aged in Omaha from 1880-1935. The property achieves local importance in the area of social history as an early representative of its property type — one which has retained a greater degree of historic integrity in comparison with other surviving properties of similar type.

* *

The proportion of the aged within the population of the United States grew increasingly larger after 1865. Persons over 65 years of age constituted only 2.9 percent of the population in 1870, while 30 years later in 1900, the figure had risen to 4 percent (Achenbaum: p. 60). The family was the principal source of assistance for the growing numbers of the dependent aged; hospitals also offered care and local communities assumed some responsibility, providing places of last resort in poorfarms and asylums. In "Old Age in the New Land", W. Andrew Achenbaum describes the development of the private old age home:

> Fortunately, an increasing number of alternatives to the poorhouse did appear over time. Philanthropists, for example, had recognized the need for private old-age homes since colonial times. Yet compared to the number of groups devoted to caring for the blind, the deaf, the mentally ill, and the orphan, there were relatively few benevolent societies directly assisting the aged. . .Hence, charitable agencies actually did not relieve very many elderly men and women before 1860. The number and variety of private institutions for the aged, however, exploded after the Civil War: nearly two-thirds of the 1,200 benevolent homes operating in 1939 were founded between 1875 and 1919. (Achenbaum: p. 82).

Omaha's earliest program of organized assistance for the elderly by a private group was initiated by the Women's Christian Aid Society, one of the city's first charities. Founded in 1883 by a group of prominent Omaha women, the organization was established to "maintain and conduct one or more homes for old people in or near the City of Omaha" (Wakeley: p. 361).

☒ See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

☒ See continuation sheet

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 of additional data:
☐ State historic preservation office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☒ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other
Specify repository:
Omaha City Planning Department

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property __2.3__

UTM References
A |1,5| |4,5,6|0,3,0| |2,0,5,0|2,7,0| B |__| |__,__,__,__,__| |__,__,__,__,__|
  Zone   Easting   Northing   Zone   Easting   Northing
C |__| |__,__,__,__,__| |__,__,__,__,__| D |__| |__,__,__,__,__| |__,__,__,__,__|

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description
That part of Tax Lot No. 3 in the NW ¼ of Sec. 8, T15N, R13E of the 6th P.M., Douglas County, NE. More particularly described as follows: Beginning at the intersection of the south right-of-way line of Pinkney St. and the E. right-of-way line of Fontenelle Blvd. thence E., along said R.O.W. of Pinkney St., a distance 418.25 ft.; thence So. 0-29-27 E. a distance of 240.96 ft.: thence S. 89-59-41 W. a distance of 418.57 ft. to a point on the E. R.O.W. line of Fontenelle Blvd.; thence N. 0-24-55 W. along said R.O.W. a distance of 241.00 ft. to the point of beginning.   ☐ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the parcel that has historically been associated with the property.

☐ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title _____ Lynn Bjorkman, City Planner _____
organization _____ Omaha City Planning Department _____ date _____ 30 March 1987 _____
street & number _____ Omaha/Douglas Civic Center, 1819 Farnam _____ telephone _(402) 444-4927_
city or town _____ Omaha _____ state _____ NE _____ zip code _68183_

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

JUN 9 1987

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number ___8___ Page ___1___

Three rented rooms in the Old City Hall initially housed the Association's programs. A few years later the organization moved to larger quarters in a building at 2718 Burt Street. In addition to providing long-term care for the elderly, the Association also offered temporary housing for displaced women and children and operated a separate facility for young working women. It appears that the group's efforts became focused exclusively on housing for the elderly around the turn of the century when the Association moved into a house at 2214 Wirt Street, known as the Old People's Home (Savage and Bell: p. 203).

A longstanding goal of the Aid Association (later reorganized as the Old People's Home Board of Trustees) had been to design and build a new facility expressly for the purpose of housing the elderly. In 1914 the group moved closer to its plan, when George and Sarah Joslyn donated land on Fontenelle Boulevard for a new building (Savage and Bell: p. 361). A building campaign fund was initiated and John and Alan McDonald were selected as the project's architects. John McDonald had produced plans for the Joslyn's residence built in 1903 and later, in collaboration with his son Alan, would receive the commission for the Joslyn Art Museum, completed in 1931 (Omaha Architects File).

An additional monetary contribution from George and Sarah Joslyn enabled work on the project to being in June of 1916. One year leater, residents of the Wirt Street home moved into the new building (Fourth Decennial Report: p. 11).

Renamed the Fontenelle Home in 1927, the building continued to be used as a non-profit residence for the elderly until 1977. At that time, the Jeremiah Home, Inc., purchased the property for use as a residential rehabilitation center for delinquent boys. The Jeremiah Home gave up the property in 1986 and the building was sold to the Holy Name Housing Corporation, a non-profit organization that rehabilitates homes in the Holy Name Catholic Parish neighborhood. The Housing Corporation intends to remodel the building as a residential retirement center. A certified historic rehabilitation is planned.

The period of time in which the property achieved significance extends from the date of the building's construction in 1917 to 1935, the end limit of the property's related historic context. In 1935, the U.S. Congress passed the Social Security Act, the legislation which created a national program of financial assistance and insurance for older Americans. The social security system greatly changed the social conditions which initially gave rise to private benevolent groups' efforts to care for the elderly. Within the period of significance, 1917 is noted for the date of the building's construction.

Within the historic context — private philanthropy on behalf of the aged in Omaha, 1880 to 1935 — two property types can be identified: large private residences converted to institutional housing and facilities designed as old-age homes. The Old People's Home was evaluated on a local level against other buildings of its property type based on the 1984 Omaha/Douglas County Building Survey. The other property identified in the survey, the Florence Home (D009:0250-002) located at 7915 North 30th Street was erected in 1916 by a non-sectarian group to the designs of Omaha architect Harry Lawrie. The original building, however, has been eclipsed by a series of additions, in 1928, 1929, 1936 and 1976. Of the facilities designed as old age homes, the Old People's Home exhibits a greater degree of historical and architectural integrity with respect to its location, design, setting, feeling and association.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number ___9___   Page ___1___

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