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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Druid Hall

Other names/site number Prince Hall Lodge; DO09:0233-003

Name of related multiple property listing N/A

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

2. Location

Street & Number 2412 Ames Avenue

City or town Omaha State Nebraska County Douglas

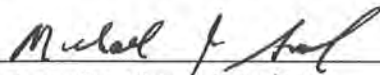
Not for publication Vicinity

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance: national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C D

	SHPO/Director	05-18-2015
Signature of certifying official/Title:		Date
Nebraska State Historical Society		
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government		


In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting Official	Date
Title	State of Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
- determined eligible for the National Register.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain):

	7-7-2015
Signature of Keeper	Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- Private
- Public-local
- Public-state
- Public-federal

Category of Property (Check only **one** box)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	Sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	Structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	Objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL: Meeting Hall

COMMERCE: Restaurant

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL: Meeting Hall

COMMERCE: Restaurant

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Commercial Style

Materials (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: brick
 Walls: brick
 Roof: asphalt/built-up
 Other: concrete

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Description

Summary Paragraph (Briefly describe the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity).

Druid Hall is a brick, two-part commercial block located near the northwest corner of N. 24th Street & Ames Avenue in Omaha, NE. The 7,000 sq. ft. two-story brick building was designed by German-born Architect Joseph P. Guth and built 1914-1915.¹ Druid Hall is approximately 100' in length by 70' wide. "Druid Hall" appears prominently under the central arch in applied metal letters, stemming from the Woodmen of the World Fraternal organization camp that funded the construction of the building. Significant changes to the building include the replacement of the storefronts sometime in the 1980s, and an interior renovation sometime in the 1960s-1970s which covered and preserved interior historic features.

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable.)

Site

The Druid Hall building is located near a historic commercial node in a predominantly residential neighborhood. The façade of the building above the storefronts features a central pavilion flanked by smaller pavilions articulated by brick piers, arched windows, and stone elements. This building is on the threshold of Minne Lusa neighborhood (NRHP 2014), which was infill development as a result of the Trans-Mississippi World Expo of 1898.² Druid Hall is located proximate to a major street car node where two routes intersected at Ames and 24th Street. The Omaha and Council Bluffs Street Railway also operated a large car barn at the intersection. The Ames line still exists as a local Metro Bus route. Few of the commercial buildings that clustered around the streetcar intersection remain, with Druid Hall as the largest and most prominent historic building remaining (figure 1). Surrounding landmarks include Eppley Airfield to the east, Highway 75 to the west, the Missouri River to the far south east, Carter Lake, IA to the near south east and Lake Street, another significant major intersection directly to the south along North 24th Street. The next major intersection from this site is N. 30th Street and Ames Avenue to the West. Ames Avenue runs east to west and the numbered streets run north to south. This site is about a mile and a half north from downtown Omaha.

Druid Hall

Exterior

Druid Hall is a brick, two-part commercial block designed by Joseph P. Guth and constructed between 1914 and 1915. The building has three levels: a basement, a ground floor with three commercial bays, and a tall second story that houses fraternal meeting spaces.

The front façade faces south onto Ames Avenue and features a complex design that symmetrically organized and adorned with detailed stonework (photo 1,2). The ground floor consists of three storefronts under a common steel lintel. None of the current storefronts are original; they date to approximately 1980's and are constructed out of plywood; however, they do preserve the historic use of transom windows. An awning stretches across the facade. The second story is an elaborate composition in brick and stone. It is symmetrically organized, and consists of a large central pavilion flanked by two smaller pavilions. The central pavilion is as wide as the central storefront below and projects out from the façade on a small cornice supported by widely-spaced modillions. The pavilion consists of a central section, with a large, square window opening under a flat arched recess, surmounted by a complex arched and stepped parapet capped in stone. The window opening is currently covered in plywood panel painted to match the brick façade. A round date stone with 1915 inscribed on it is located under the parapet arch. "Druid Hall" is applied in metal letters under the flat arch in a sign space filled by light colored brick and separated from the window opening by a header string course in light brick. The central section is flanked by brick piers and a variety of rectangular and arched recesses highlighted by contrasting lighter-shade brick. The projecting end pavilions are similar in design to the central pavilion, consisting of a tall and narrow arched window opening, prominent brick piers on either side, a complex stepped and arched parapet capped in stone, and a round stone medallion

¹ *Omaha World Herald*, Oct 11, 1914; *Omaha: the Gate city, and Douglas County, Nebraska*; (Volume 2) Arthur Cooper Wakeley.

² Application for eligibility completed by Dan Worth of the City of Omaha Planning Department in 1984

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above the window. The rectangular spaces between the end pavilions and the central pavilion feature paired tall rectangular window openings with small attic window openings above. The attic windows have stone sills and lintels. The composition is tied together by contrasting bands of light colored brick, which are arched over the window openings and have stone keystones and springing stones.

The primary entrance is under the east pavilion. Two doors lead to the interior. The western door provides access to the 357 Club, a local bar, while the east door provides access to a staircase leading to the fraternal spaces on the second floor.

The east elevation consists of common brick and features an irregular fenestration pattern corresponding to the interior division of space (photo 2,3). All eleven of the window openings are arched, have stone lintels, and have been covered in plywood and painted to match the brick. Out of the four entrances at ground level, all but one has been paneled over. These entrances probably provided access to the social spaces at the rear of the ground floor. The parapet steps down to the rear following the slope of the flat roof.

The rear elevation consists of common brick covered in a layer of concrete stucco and consists of six bays with an arched window or door opening in each bay, except on the ground floor where the westernmost two bays lack a window (photo 4). All of the window opening have been covered in wood panel and painted grey to match the concrete. A historic fire escape leads from a central doorway on the second floor to ground level. A new door was cut into the ground floor between the two east windows. A historic entrance at west end of the elevation has been filled in and a new metal door installed. A brick chimney rises over the roof over the 2nd bay from the east.

The west elevation consists of common brick and features an irregular fenestration pattern consisting of full height and half-height arched windows (photo 5). A fire escape leads from a new door opening cut through the second window opening from the south end on the second floor. A door opening is located half-way down the elevation and leads into the westernmost storefront space. All of the window openings have been covered in wood panel painted to match the existing brick.

Interior

Three storefronts are located on the ground level. The westernmost and central stores retain moderate levels of historic materials, including the historic pressed metal ceilings and crown molding. The central store retains its historic floor, while the westernmost store retains historic wood trim around windows on the west wall (photo 11). Both spaces are currently used as offices by the Prince Hall Lodge. The easternmost storefront is currently the 357 club, a bar, and lacks historic integrity. A social hall is located to the rear of the building is accessed via the 357 Club (photo 12). The space retains its original wood flooring and metal structural posts. It is unclear if the stage, restrooms, a kitchen, and bar space are original or later alterations to the space. A hydraulic lift is also located in the space and can be accessed from the rear parking lot.

The basement is access via the ground floor social hall. The basement extends across the rear half of Druid Hall and retains extensive historic materials, but many of these are in poor condition due to water damage and lack of maintenance (photo 14). The ceiling was originally clad in pressed metal tiles, many of which remain in place in various stages of disrepair. The brick walls are partially plastered, speaking to the space's use for social events. The remains of a two-lane bowling alley are located in a long, rectangular space at the west end of the space that extends under the western storefront (photo 13). The central and eastern storefronts had separate basement spaces. Near the stairwell entrance to the basement are the remains of bathrooms with possible shower stalls.

The fraternal spaces are located on the second floor and are accessed via a stair hall from the entrance at the east end of the front façade. The stairs are original to the building, and the hall retains some of its pressed metal ceiling. However, most of the upper floor's historic materials were covered over during a renovation of the space dating to approximately the 1970s. Changes due to the renovation include extensive wood paneling of interior walls and the installation of a drop ceiling. However, historic materials remain, such as pressed metal ceiling tiles hidden behind the ceiling, and transom windows over interior doors (photo 9, 10). In addition, many of the doors retain their historic hardware.

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The interior features a complex set of rooms centered around two major meeting spaces (figure 2, 3). At the top of the stairs there is a set of doors leading into the hallway of the second level. To the left is the biggest room (64' x 50') on the second level; this is where the Prince Hall fraternal ceremonial activities take place and was most likely the primary ceremonial and social space for the Druid Camp as well (photo 6, 7). This room has original wood floors. The original window openings are closed off with plywood in order to save on energy and are hidden behind non-historic wood paneling. Also this room has a sealed original fire escape door in the west wall. At one time the Omaha World herald stated this was the "finest ballroom in Omaha".³ Just off and to the left of this space are small rooms that share a threshold wall with this large room that make up a storage closet and an office. To the right of the fraternal ceremony room is a short stairway that leads to the 'music balcony' room, which is original to the building and has ornate pressed steel in the ceiling. The balcony opens into the main hall. Below the balcony room is the men's restroom.

Down the hall and adjacent restrooms is an office, followed by a locker room. This locker room has a set of doors that lead back around to the fraternal activity ceremonial room. On the other side of this hallway there is a room that measures 33' x 44' that houses the sorority activities of the Eastern Star members of the Prince Hall Lodge (photo 8). This too has original wood floors and an original fire escape opening to the right with a door leading to the fire escape. The opening to this room is off of another short hallway to the east that intersects with the main central hallway. Off of this short hallway to the right is the office of the 'mother' of the Eastern Star members. At the end of this short hallway just before entering the Eastern Star room is an accessible elevator dating to c 2000. Both the fraternal and sorority rooms have four structural steel beams weighing 5.5 tons each.⁴ Pressed steel and a ventilating system exist in the ceiling as well. It is now covered up with ceiling tiles.

Summary

This is a structurally sound building and is still in operation. The building retains high exterior and interior integrity of design, materials, workmanship, association and feeling. The building's location is unchanged since construction, and despite extensive changes to the surrounding site, it still speaks to the commercial nature of the streetcar node at Ames and 24th street. Druid Hall's iconic presence throughout time is still a staple in the community to those who use it as members of the fraternity or as a landmark on a major public transportation route. It is a point of familiarity in a major locale.

³ *Omaha World Herald*. April 1915.

⁴ "Now in a Home of its Own," *Omaha Daily Bee*, April 25, 1915

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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.
A reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- E** A commemorative property.
- G** Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Social History

Period of Significance

1914-1935

Significant Dates

October 31, 1914 – initial construction

1935 –VFW acquires Druid Hall

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Joseph P. Guth

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Druid Hall is eligible under Criterion A: Social History, and Criterion C: Architecture at the local level of significance. Druid Hall was a part of a major commercial hub in North Omaha located at the intersection of two major streetcar lines. This part of town, N. 24th & Ames Streets was a major transportation node in North Omaha and right on the cusp of the Minne Lusa housing development which was infill from the Trans-Mississippi Exposition. The Druid Hall building was the local neighborhood 'hangout' for social events ever since its construction between 1914 and 1915. In addition, Druid Hall is among the finer examples of fraternal hall architecture remaining in Omaha, and is one of Joseph P. Guth's most elaborate designs. The building influenced Guth's later commercial work, as similar design elements which first appear in this building

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are present in later commissions. The period of significance extends from 1914, when construction commenced on the property, to 1935, the year the Druid Camp sold the hall to the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

Introduction

Established in 1854, Omaha experienced its greatest period of growth between 1880 and 1920, when the population tripled and the city expanded to absorb several neighboring communities including the villages of Dundee, Benson, and Florence. The city's extensive growth was fueled by a strong agricultural economy, the development of manufacturing, and the expansion of mass transportation in the form of horse and electric streetcars. The area surrounding Druid Hall and the intersection of Ames Ave and N. 24th Street was a locus of development following the turn of the century. The city platted the area in the 1880s, but widespread development only began after the Trans-Mississippi Exposition of 1898, which brought North Omaha to the attention of real estate and business developers.⁵ The former site of the exposition was developed as an upper and upper-middle class neighborhood by Herman Kountze (who had donated land for the exhibition), while neighborhoods to the north and west developed as middle class and worker housing due to the extension of the 24th St. streetcar line.⁶ By the 1910s, the future location of Druid Hall was in the center of extensive residential and commercial development spurred by the expansion of industry along the Omaha Belt Line Railroad, the presence of Fort Omaha a short distance to the northwest, and the completion of streetcar lines as far north as Florence. Charles Gruenig swathe potential of the empty lots corner lots at N. 24th & Ames Streets and invested in this corner, setting the stage for the construction of Druid Hall.

When Druid Hall was constructed in 1915, North Omaha south of Ames Avenue was entering a period of economic and demographic transition. The area, an early center for German and Scandinavian immigrants, became a focus of African-American settlement due to the proximity of industrial and railroad jobs along the Union Pacific and Belt Line railroads.⁷ However, settlement that was initially driven by economic opportunity developed into settlement driven by segregation. Redlining contributed to keeping African-Americans concentrated in this area. Redlining is when real estate agents refuse to rent or sell property to a certain group of people in order to keep them segregated in one area. Minorities and other "undesirables" were refused access to other neighborhoods in terms of residences.

Criterion A: Social History

Woodmen of the World

Fraternal organizations were central to social life in the late 19th and early 20th century. These organizations, associated with a variety of orders and rules, provided a sense of community to individuals with shared social, ethnic, or economic backgrounds. The Woodmen of the World fraternal organization was among the most prominent in Omaha at the turn of the century. The original Woodmen of the World originally called Modern Woodmen of America, was founded by Joseph Cullen Root, who was a mason. Root was originally born in Chester, Massachusetts on December 3, 1844. Later his family moved to Lyons, Iowa, where he founded the 'Modern Woodmen of America' on January 5, 1883. Root believed that free masons and other fraternal orders could change the human welfare of their communities. He belonged to many other orders. His new order, the Modern Woodmen of America would not be another social organization, but would also provide services such as insurance. Root chose to use the word 'Modern' because using the popular term 'Ancient' as many fraternal orders did at that time, in the name of his fraternity was outdated and he wanted to focus on being with the times.⁸

Root's Modern Woodmen of America had problems, and many accused Root of false beneficiary claims. As a result, Root resigned from that order, moved to Omaha and started the Woodmen of the World on June 6, 1890 at the Paxton Hotel. On January 1, 1891 the Woodmen of the World was officially incorporated in Omaha, Nebraska and quickly expanded

⁵ Omaha Planning Department, *Patterns on the Landscape: Heritage Conservation in North Omaha* (Omaha: City of Omaha, 1984), 10.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 10-19.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁸ G.H. Schleh, *Life and Addresses of Joseph Cullen Root, The Founder of the Woodcraft*, (Omaha: Henry F. Kieser, 1914).

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across the United States. By 1913, the Woodmen of the World fraternity had 700,000 members and over 10,800 camps.⁹ Among these, Alpha Camp 1 Woodmen of the World of Omaha was probably the first camp established following the establishment of the organization. Chartered in 1892, Druid Camp 24 is believed to be the second camp of the Woodmen of the World formed in Omaha.¹⁰ The word Druid may have been taken from the Druid rituals studied by Root or the Druid Hill area where the Woodmen met in Omaha at the time. Druid Camp #24 had 52 charter members, and reached a peak of over 600 members by the 1910s. However, demographic changes in North Omaha led to declining membership, leading the camp to divest itself of Druid Hall by the 1930s. They consolidated with the Alpha Chapter #16 in 1944.¹¹ Only two of the founding members of the Druid Camp 24, Michael Enders and Edward Foster remained when the consolidation took place. This transition also reflected the changing nature of the Woodmen organization, which increasingly focused on the provision of insurance and financial services. They remain headquartered in Omaha, where the Woodmen Tower (1969) stands as a symbol of their success.

Druid Hall

By 1913, Druid Camp 24 had grown substantially to over 600 members and was seeking a new location for their meetings.¹² Camp members needed a place that fit their order's requirements and which also provided space for events open to the wives of members and other women. Their existing location, Frenzer Hall at N 24th and Parker St. was too small for the growing camp and its associated women's auxiliary, and it also lacked support spaces for meetings, such as separate restrooms for men and women.¹³ Members of the Camp established the Druid Real Estate Company to obtain a new site and construct a hall that met the Camp's requirements (figure 4).

The Druid Real Estate Company approached Charles Gruenig, a successful Omaha businessman who owned significant tracts of land along Ames Avenue, with a proposal for a new hall. Gruenig agreed to provide additional capital and to lease the property at 2416, 18, 20, 22 Ames Ave to the Druids, which had raised approximately \$27,000 through sales of company stock to members (figure 2). However, the stock was liquidated to pay for repairs to damage caused by the 1913 Easter Sunday Tornado that destroyed significant portions of North Omaha in 1913.¹⁴ The Druid Real Estate Company then arranged for additional 300 pledges towards the construction of the building, which was then leveraged to cover the \$40,000 total cost of the building.¹⁵ The Druid Real Estate Company then contracted with Omaha architect J. P. Guth to design a hall. Construction broke ground in 1914, and the building was completed in 1915. The land and the building were owned by Gruenig, who then leased it to the Druids with the option to purchase the building and the land at a later date. The grand opening of the hall was a week-long affair in April, 1915, which included the initiation of 100 new members into the camp as part of the celebrations (figure 5).¹⁶

The Hall quickly became a center for social life in North Omaha. The *Omaha World Herald* wrote that the Druid Hall was the "finest ballroom in Omaha."¹⁷ The *Omaha Daily Bee* commented on its extensive amenities, including a library, gymnasium, and billiard rooms on the ground floor behind the retail stores, and a two lane bowling alley in the basement, along with three showers.¹⁸ The hall was used by other Woodmen camps from across the city, and was often rented out for meetings and social events.¹⁹ According to Karen Clopton, the Camp established a "Friday night Dancing Club" which had "80 dancing couples for their opening night in September 1916."²⁰ In addition to dances, the hall was host to multiple clubs and

⁹ Robert L. Uzzel, "Ill. Joseph Cullen Rood, 33^o," *Scottish Rite Journal*, (Sept, 1998) Accessed Feb 20 2015, available online <http://srjarchives.tripod.com/199809/UZZEL.HTM..>

¹⁰ *Omaha World Herald*. 3 Jul 1892

¹¹ *Woodmen of the World Consolidated Charter Form*, 1944.

¹² Karen Clopton, "A history of North Omaha's Druid Hall" *Adam Fletcher Sasse's North Omaha History Blog* (November 2014) Accessed April 15, 2015., available online http://northomaha.blogspot.com/2014_11_01_archive.html.

¹³ "Now in a Home of Its Own" *Omaha Daily Bee*, April 25, 1915.

¹⁴ "Now in a Home of Its Own" *Omaha Daily Bee*, April 25, 1915.

¹⁵ *Omaha Bee*. April 25, 1915

¹⁶ Clopton.

¹⁷ Clopton; *Omaha World Herald*, April 18, 1915

¹⁸ "Now in a Home of Its Own" *Omaha Daily Bee*, April 25, 1915.

¹⁹ Clopton; *Omaha Daily Bee*, Oct 17, 1915.

²⁰ Clopton.

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organizations, including the Junior League and the Progressive Club, which held regular card parties on Fridays.²¹ Religious organizations also used the hall for social events, services, or Sunday school classes.²² The Third Church of Christ Scientist was organized at the Hall in 1916 and met regularly there until they were able to construct their own building.²³ In 1922 a bowling alley was installed in the basement of the building by Harold Harris, and a bowling league was established which included members from multiple social organizations including the Danish Brotherhood.²⁴

Six years after the construction of the building, the lease of the property was transferred from the Druid Real Estate Company to the Ames Realty company, which held the lease until the 1930s.²⁵ The costs of maintaining such a large building may have driven this transfer; the 1934 Omaha Sanborn Map shows the rear ground floor space was leased out to a rug cleaning company, indicating a need for additional funds by renting space that had originally served as recreation space for club members (see figure 1). In 1935, the lease was transferred to the D. Louis Black Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The VFW post was organized at Druid Hall in August of 1935 and began meeting there in November.²⁶ In 1947, the VFW purchased Druid Hall from the Gruening estate. They continued holding events and subletting the building through 1967.

In 1967 The Prince Hall Mason members started meeting at Druid Hall.²⁷ In May 1965 The Prince Hall Masons were meeting N. 26th & Blondo Streets and were looking for a new building. Walter Jones & Hugh Embrey of Prince Hall found this building and on November 18, 1967 The Prince Hall Masons moved into the building. George Randall the building committee chairmen bought the building for \$35,000. At the time, the Lodge had 500 members. The Nebraska Prince Hall Grand Master at the time was Wendell Thomas, of the local Thomas Funeral Home, who thought it would help the North Omaha community to locate here.²⁸

The Prince Hall Masons were founded in 1775 when Prince Hall, an African-American, was initiated into Masonry by British Freemasons after Hall's initiation petition was rejected by the colonial masons.²⁹ Hall and fourteen others organized a separate, black Masonic order, which was named after Hall following his death in 1807.³⁰ The Prince Hall Masons arrived in Nebraska in 1875, and by 1919 they established the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Nebraska.³¹

Criterion C: Architecture

Druid Hall is also significant under Criterion C: Architecture for its highly articulated façade, which is among the best preserved examples of Joseph P. Guth's commercial-style architecture in Omaha. The tripartite division of the façade into distinct pavilions, stone accents, and complex profiles is the most elaborate of Guth's existing commercial architecture, and served as model for later commercial projects across Omaha. Elements of the Druid Hall façade first appear in 1911 in his building at 723 South 27th Street in Omaha (figure 6). The building has a similar tripartite division, and incorporates an alternating pattern of arched and rectangular fenestrations on the second story that are similar to those on Druid Hall. Additional similarities are the use of stone as an accent material, and contrasting colors of brick to highlight piers and arches via contrast with a dark brick background. However, this building lacks the distinctive parapet of the Druid Hall building. Instead, brick piers on stone corbels support two prominent stone cornices over the north and south bays. Currently used as a Parish Hall by the adjacent St. Peter's Catholic Church, the building foreshadows the complex composition of Druid Hall.

²¹ "Society" *Omaha Daily Bee*, November 14, 1915

²² Clopton; *Omaha Daily Bee*, October 31, 1915.

²³ Arthur Cooper Wakeley, Ed., *Omaha: The Gate City, and Douglas County, Nebraska, Vol. 1* (Omaha: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1917), 393.

²⁴ Clopton.

²⁵ *Druid Hall Abstract Of the Title No 46 Book 46 Page 548 April 2 1920*

²⁶ Clopton.

²⁷ *Druid Hall Abstract of Title Book 1333 Page 597 Warranty Deed Dated Oct 25, 1967*

²⁸ *Omaha World Herald* June 9, 1968

²⁹ Dennis N. Mihelich, "A Socioeconomic Portrait of Prince Hall Masonry in Nebraska, 1900-1920" *Great Plains Quarterly* (Winter 1997): 35.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

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Guth's later buildings incorporate Druid Hall's design elements. For example, the Eggers-O'Flying Building at 1425 Leavenworth St. features a small office addition to the main building which probably dates to Guth's 1918 addition to the warehouse that features the same arched and stepped parapet as Druid Hall.³² The B. H. Post commercial block at 6214 Maple St. also features Druid Hall's brick pavilion elements, which accent the primary entrances to the building. Constructed in 1918, the Post Block also incorporates stone as an accent material, which is combined with elaborate brickwork along the parapets and which stands out amongst the Flemish bond walls (figure 7). Finally, The Elk Lodge at 2420 Lake St., approximately a one and quarter miles to the south of Ames Avenue is a stripped down version of the Druid Hall design (figure 8). Constructed in 1919, the blond brick two story building features a stepped parapet on the façade with a large name block in the center. Header courses outline piers on the façade, and stone is used to accent the window lintels, as a belt course linking the window sills, and along the parapet. The design clearly echoes that of Druid Hall, but is here adapted for a smaller fraternal organization.

The building's complex design, as well as its overall scale, spoke to the importance of the Woodmen fraternal organization in Omaha in the first decades of the 20th Century and to its prominent role in the local community. The building met the programmatic requirements of the Druids, providing multiple social halls that accommodated varying activities of different levels of formality, from the secret rituals of the fraternal organization to community dances. The hall's location on a streetcar line allowed members of the Druid Camp to easily attend activities and assured customers for the businesses located on the ground floor, which helped fund the Camp.

Overall, Druid Hall was a significant example of the highest caliber of Guth's work. While many of Guth's buildings survive, the majority of those properties are residential structures. Of Guth's commercial work, Druid Hall is among the best preserved, and it is also among the best examples of his unique architectural style.

Architect

Joseph P. Guth was born in Germany in 1860 and immigrated to the United States in 1884.³³ Guth arrived in Omaha Nebraska in 1884 from Cleveland, Ohio, and entered into a partnership with architect J. E. Dietrick.³⁴ Guth was a prolific architect, especially after 1891 when his partnership with Dietrick dissolved and started his own practice. The Omaha World Herald recognized Guth for his civic work including firehouses and the city's first high school, but he also designed apartments, commercial blocks, and industrial buildings.³⁵ Many of his buildings incorporate combinations of Renaissance Revival and late 19th century commercial styles. Six of his buildings are currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places: the Eggers-O'Flying building (NRHP 1991), the Prague Hotel (NRHP 1987), St. John's German Evangelical Lutheran Church in Burt County (NRHP 1982), Schuyler City Hall in Colfax County (NRHP 1981) and the Steiner Row Houses in Nebraska (NRHP 1991).

³² Lynn Meyer, Eggers-O'Flying Building National Register Nomination (1991)

³³ Jennifer Honnebrink, *Apartments, Flats and Tenements in Omaha Nebraska from 1860-1962*, National Register Multiple Property Document, 33.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ "Joseph P. Guth Dies," Omaha World Herald, April 25, 1928

Druid Hall
Name of Property

Douglas County, Nebraska
County and State

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (Insert bibliography here – cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Newspapers:

Omaha World Herald, 1892, 1914-1915, 1928

Omaha Daily Bee, 1915

Maps:

Omaha Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps: 1901, 1934, 1960.

Other Sources:

Clopton, Karen. "A history of North Omaha's Druid Hall" *Adam Fletcher Sasse's North Omaha History Blog*. November 2014. Accessed April 15, 2015. Available online http://northomaha.blogspot.com/2014_11_01_archive.html.

Clopton, Karen and Fred. Interview, March 2014. Prince Hall and Eastern Star (Karen) Members and providers of research on history of the Omaha Prince Hall Lodge.

Druid Hall Abstract Of Title, No 46 Book 46 Page 548 April 2 1920

Druid Hall Abstract of Title Book 1333 Page 597 Warranty Deed Dated Oct 25, 1967

Honnebrink, Jennifer. *Apartments, Flats, and Tenements in Omaha, Nebraska from 1880-1962*. National Register Multiple Property Documentation, 2009.

Meyer, Lynn. *Egger's-O'Flyng Building National Register Nomination (1991)*

Mihelich, Dennis N. "A Socioeconomic Portrait of Prince Hall Masonry in Nebraska, 1900-1920" *Great Plains Quarterly* (Winter 1997): 35-47.

Omaha Planning Department, *Patterns on the Landscape: Heritage Conservation in North Omaha*. Omaha: City of Omaha, 1984.

Schleh, G. H. *Life and Addresses of Joseph Cullen Root, the Founder of the Woodcraft*. Omaha: Henry F. Kieser, 1914.

Uzzel, Robert L. "Ill. Joseph Cullen Rood, 33" *Scottish Rite Journal*. Accessed Feb 20 2015. Available online <http://srjarchives.tripod.com/199809/UZZEL.HTM..>

Wakeley, Arthur Cooper, Ed.. *Omaha: the Gate city, and Douglas County, Nebraska, Volume 1*. Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1917.

_____. *Omaha: the Gate city, and Douglas County, Nebraska, Volume 2*. Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1917.

Woodmen of the World Consolidated Charter Form, 1944.

Worth, Dan. Druid Hall Application for eligibility completed by Dan Worth of the City of Omaha Planning Department. 1984.

Druid Hall
Name of Property

Douglas County, Nebraska
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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 #
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other (Name of repository)

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DO09:0233-003

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one USGS Quadrangle Omaha North

(Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates. Delete the other.)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

- | | | | | |
|----|----------|------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| 1. | Latitude | <u>41.299823</u> | Longitude | <u>-95.947759</u> |
| 2. | Latitude | _____ | Longitude | _____ |
| 3. | Latitude | _____ | Longitude | _____ |
| 4. | Latitude | _____ | Longitude | _____ |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

GRUENIG ADD LOT 17 BLOCK 3 W 68 S 106 FT & W 7.5 N 103 FT LT 1 & ALL LTS 2 & 3 & E 2.3 FT LOT 17 PARTIALLY EXEMPT

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary encloses all the property historically associated with the building.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Linda Williams; Ruben Acosta, NR and CLG coordinator
 organization ShotgunHaus Designers; Nebraska State Historical Society date April 15, 2015
 street & number 2715 S. 20th Street, #1; 1500 R St. telephone 402-415-6633; 402-471-4775
 city or town Omaha; Lincoln state NE zip code 68108; 68501
 email lindawilliams@shotgunhaus.com; ruben.acosta@nebraska.gov

Druid Hall

Douglas County, Nebraska

Name of Property

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO for any additional items.)

Druid Hall
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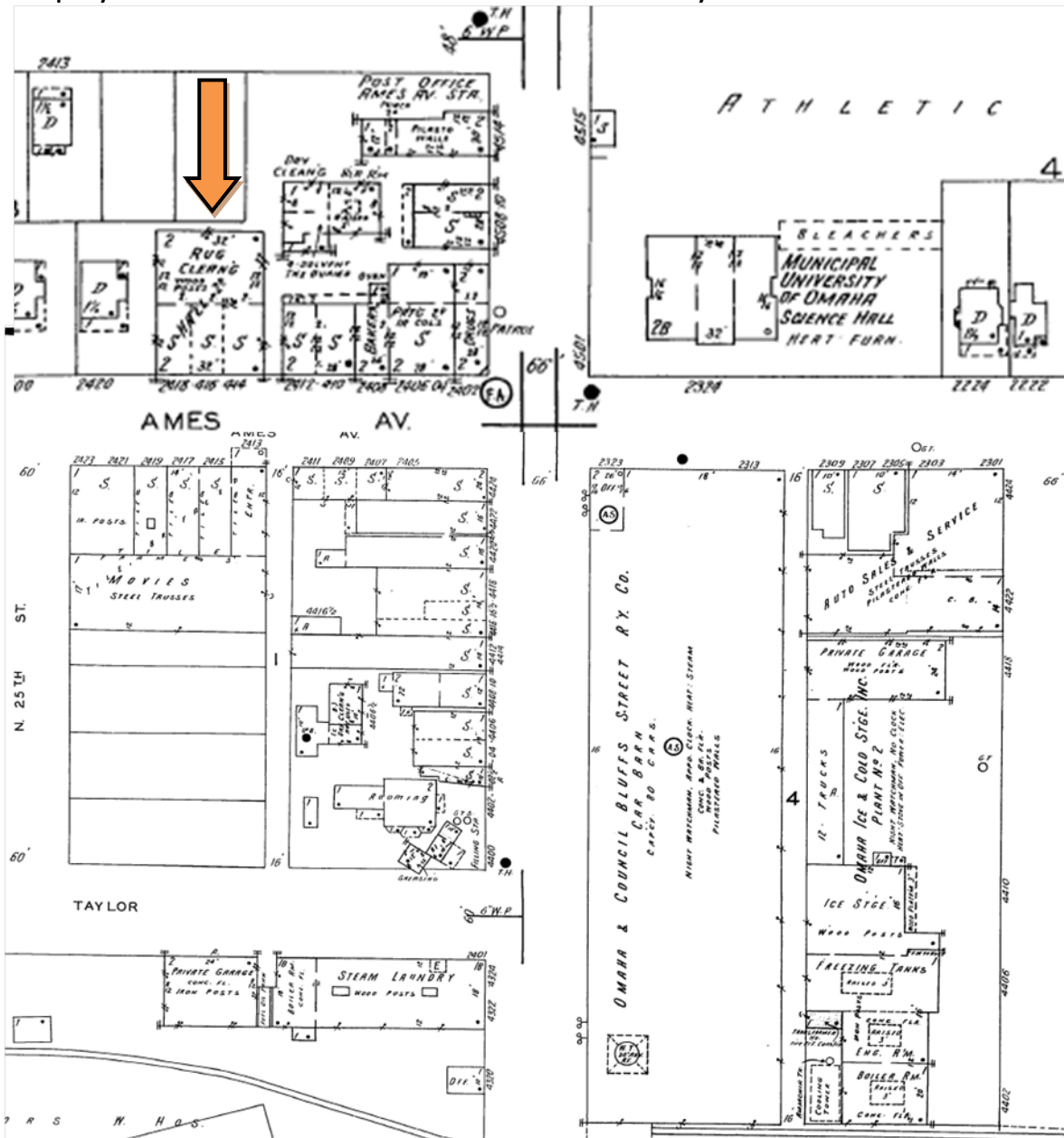
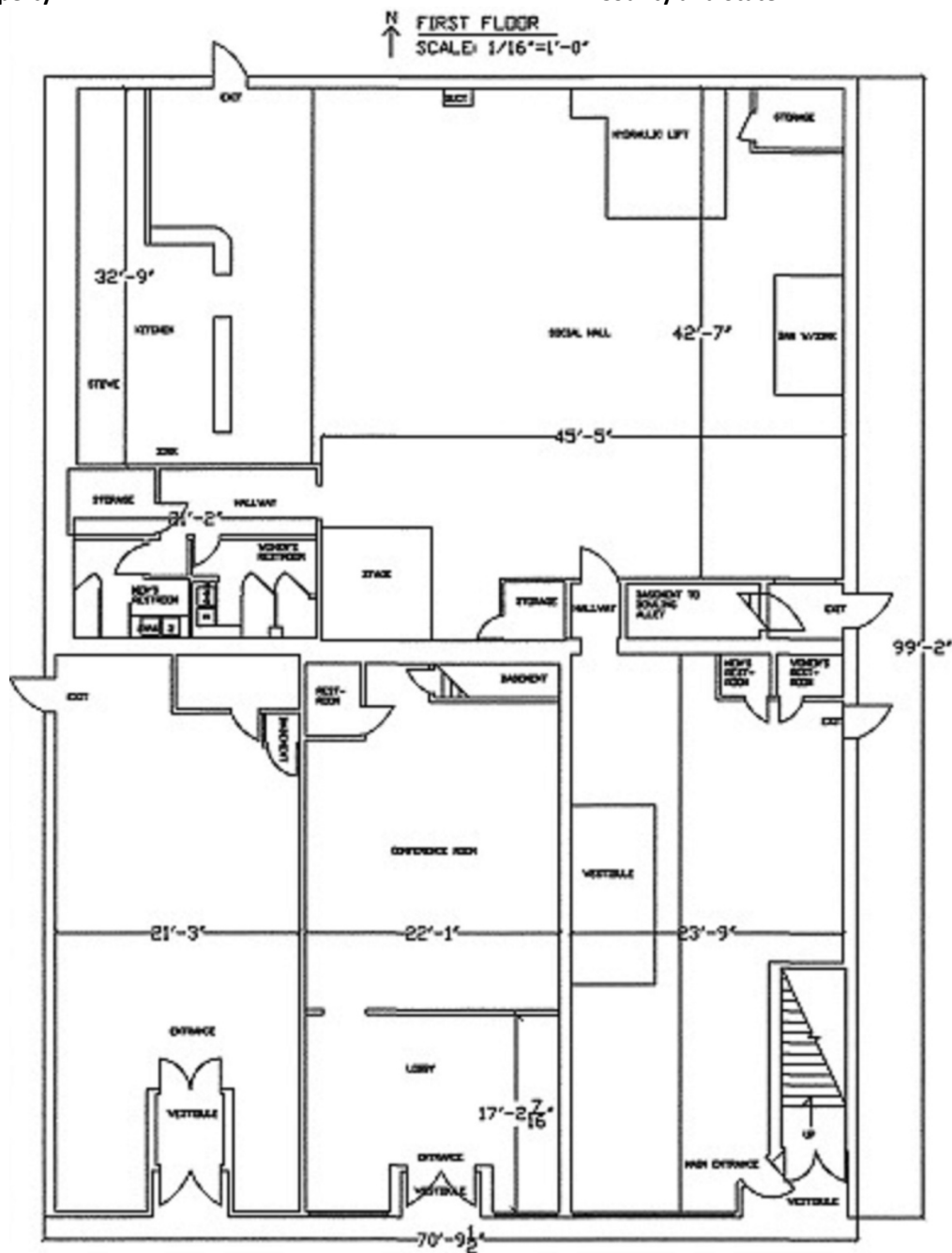


Figure 1: Ames Avenue commercial node, located at the intersection of two streetcar lines, one along N. 24th Street and one along Ames Avenue. Most of the commercial, industrial, and transportation buildings have been demolished, leaving Druid Hall as one of the last remaining buildings of this commercial area. (1934 Omaha Sanborn Map, Volume 2, Sheets 263 and 268)

Druid Hall
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PRINCE HALL BUILDING
2412 AMES AVENUE
OMAHA, NE

Figure 2: Ground floor plan. (Linda Williams, Autodesk Autocad)

Druid Hall
 Name of Property

Douglas County, Nebraska
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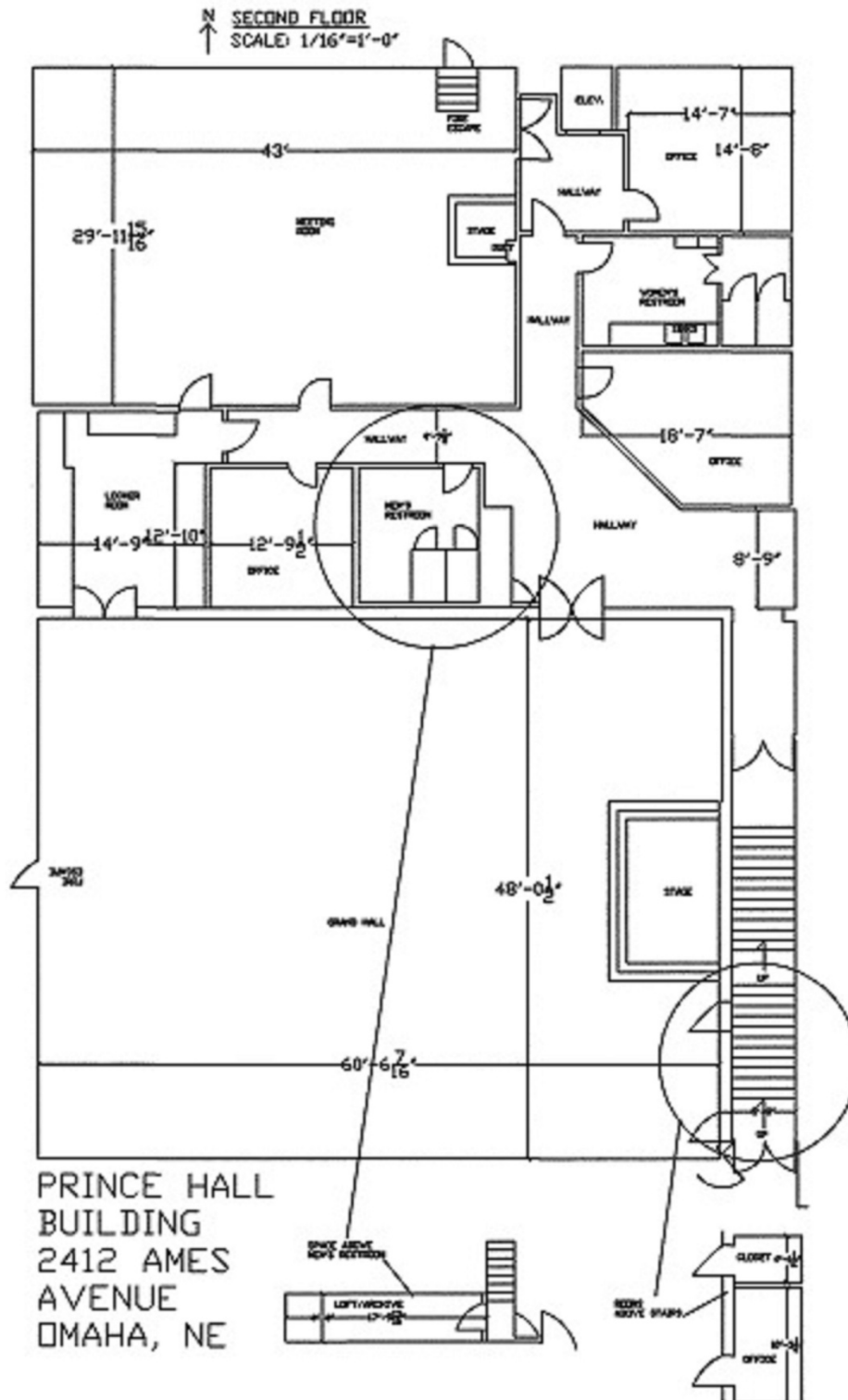


Figure 3: Upper floor plan. (Linda Williams, Autodesk Autocad)

Druid Hall
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Douglas County, Nebraska
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Figure 4: Druid Hall building committee and founding members of Druid Real Estate Company: P. H. Steger, M. L. Endres, H. H. Bower, E. J. Foster, and O. E. Davis. (Omaha Daily Bee, April 25, 1915)

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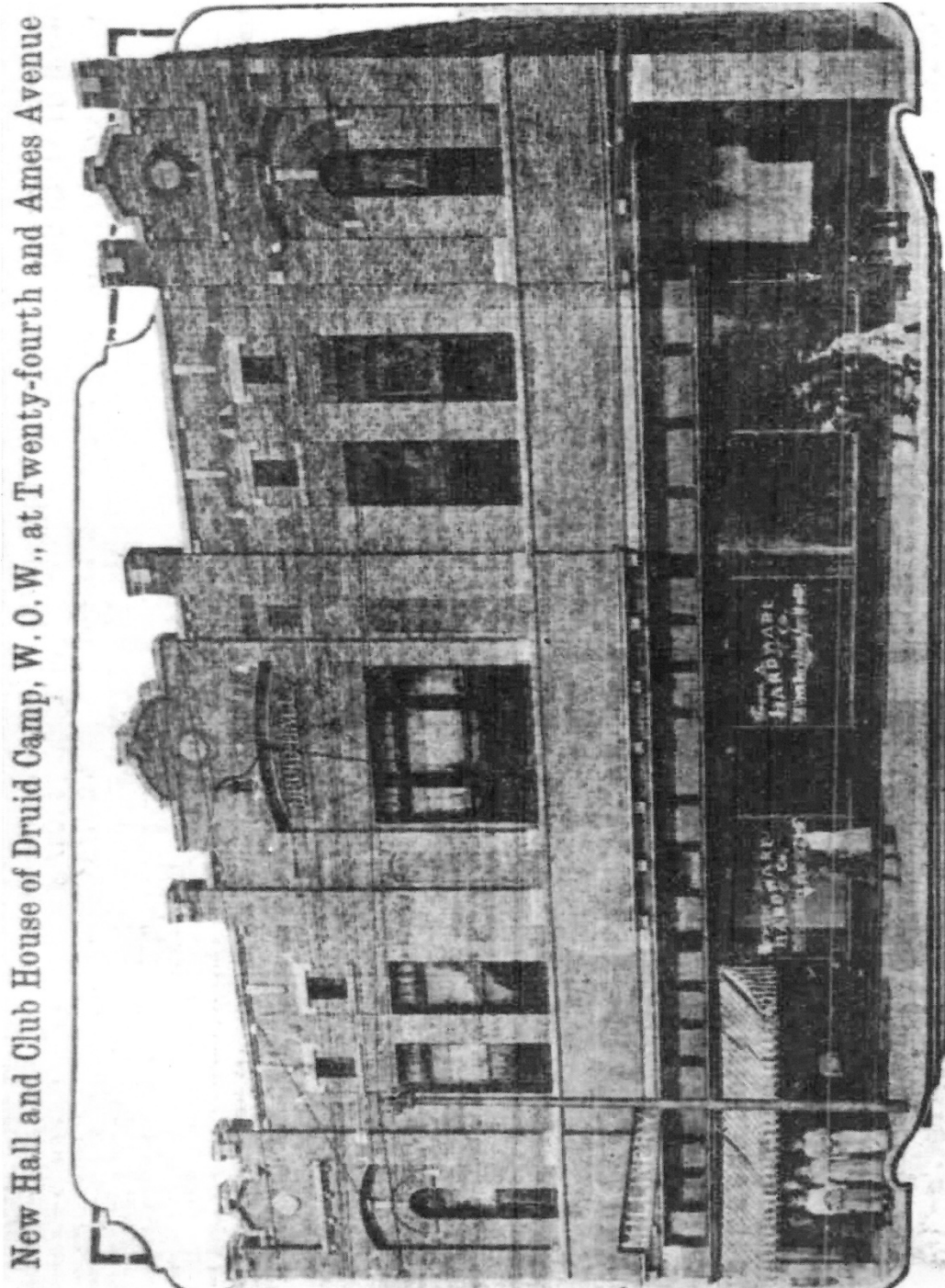


Figure 5: Druid hall as built, 1915. (Omaha Daily Bee, April 25, 1915).

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Figure 6: 723 South 27th Street, Omaha. J. P. Guth, 1911. (Google Street View, 2014)



Figure 7: B. H. Post Block, 6214 Maple St., Omaha. J. P. Guth, 1918. (Google Street View, 2014)

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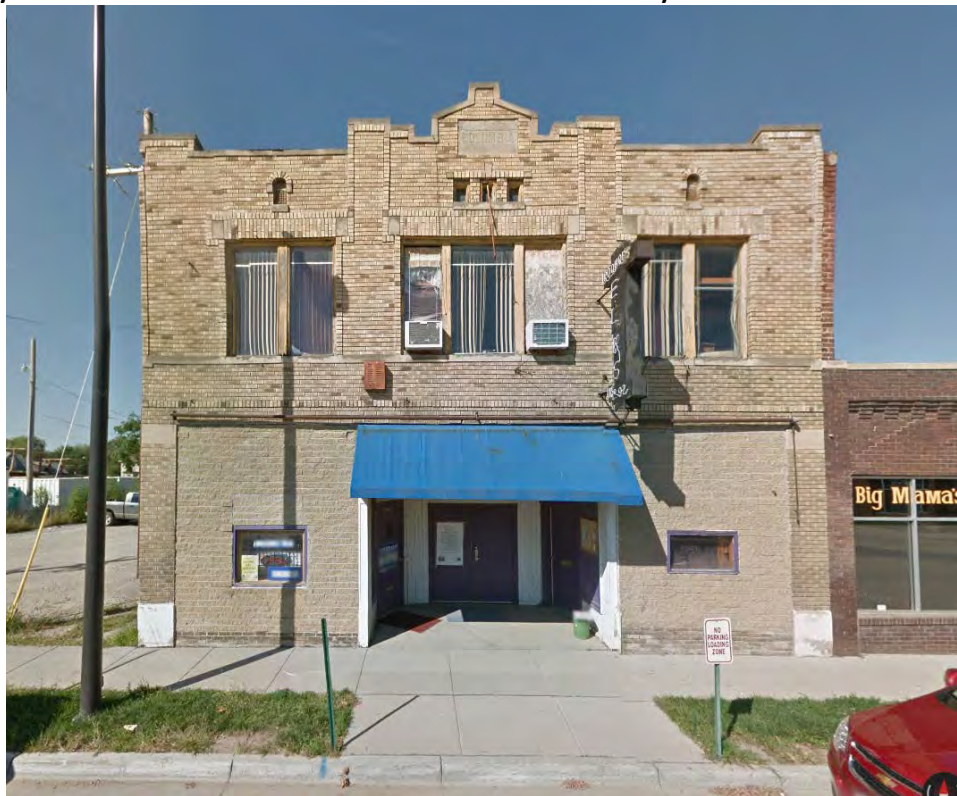


Figure 8: Elk Lodge at 2420 Lake St, Omaha. J. P. Guth, 1919. (Google Street View, 2014)

Druid Hall

2412 Ames Avenue
Omaha, Douglas Co.,
Nebraska

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates:

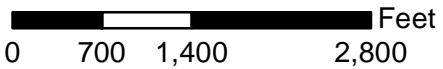
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Datum: WGS84

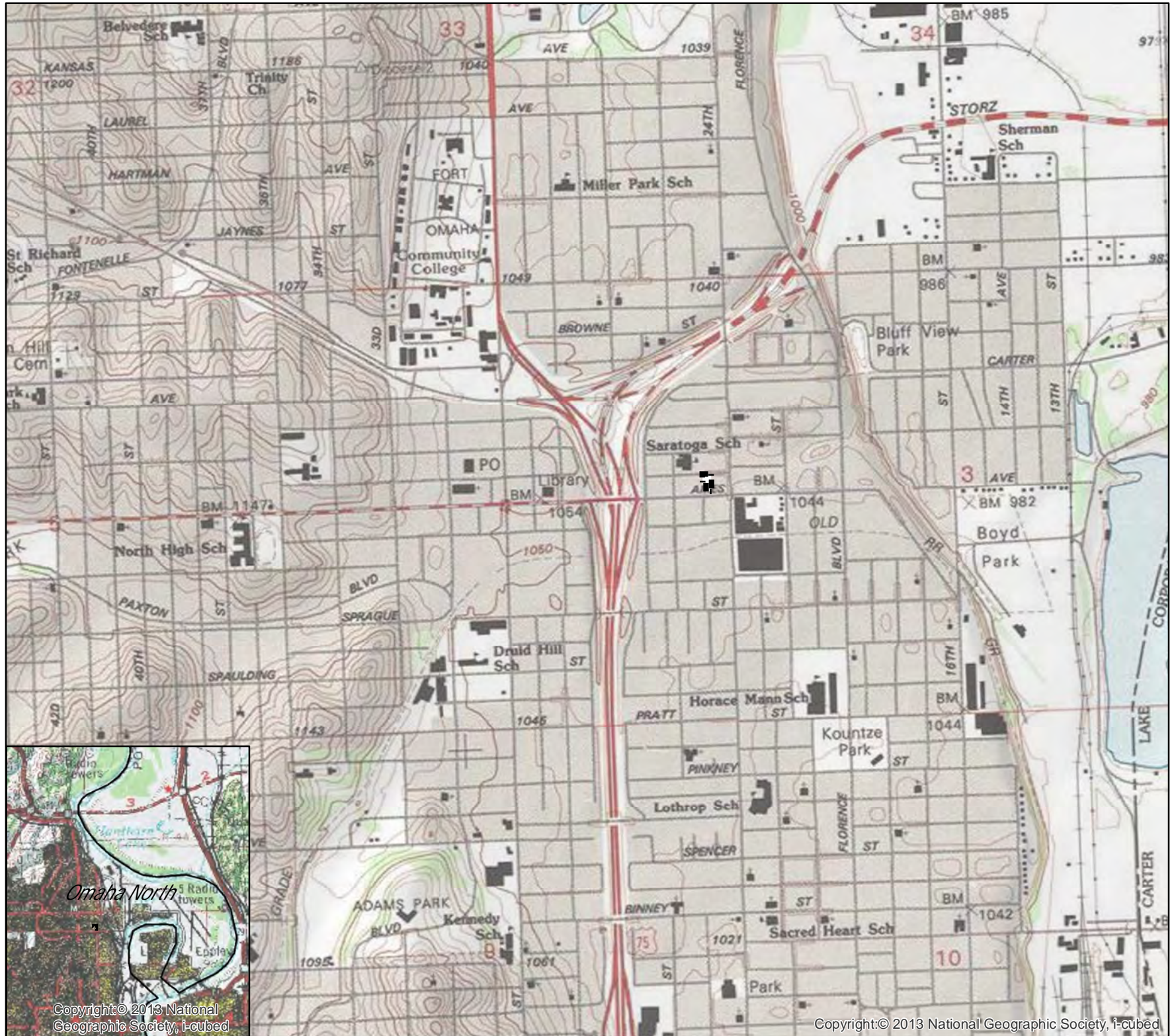
Legend

 Property Boundary



 Feet

1:18,000



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Copyright © 2013 National Geographic Society, i-cubed

Druid Hall

**2412 Ames Avenue
Omaha, Douglas Co.,
Nebraska**

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates:

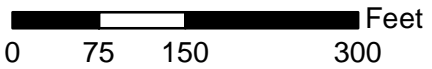
41.299816, -95.947745

Datum: WGS84

Legend

 Property Boundary



 Feet

1:2,000



Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), swisstopo, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, i-cubed, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community, Esri, HERE, DeLorme, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors

Druid Hall
Name of Property

Douglas County, Nebraska
County and State

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property Druid Hall

City or Vicinity Omaha County Douglas State Nebraska

Photographer Ruben Acosta Date Photographed March 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera.

1. Front façade. View to N.
2. ¾ view, façade and east elevation. View to NW.
3. ¾ view, rear and east elevation. View to SW.
4. Rear elevation. View to S.
5. ¾ view, rear and west elevation. View to SE.
6. Main meeting hall, interior, second floor. View to SE.
7. Music balcony detail, interior, second floor. View to NE.
8. Sorority meeting hall, interior, second floor. View to NW.
9. Doorway detail showing historic transom and wood trim, interior, second floor. View to NE.
10. Metal ceiling detail, interior, second floor. View to SW.
11. West store detail, interior, first floor. View to S.
12. Dance hall, interior, first floor. View to W.
13. Basement bowling alley. View to S.
14. Basement. View to W.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine 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 (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



DRUID-HALL

1915

Handwritten graffiti on the blue awning, including the words "DRUID HALL" and "357 CLUB".

357 CLUB

OPEN

DRUID HALL BLDG. 357 CLUB
DRUID HALL
357 CLUB

DRUID HALL BLDG.
357 CLUB

2416

2416





DRUID HALL

MASONIC
TEMPLE
P.H.A.
O.E.S.

357 CLUB

SPEED
LIMIT
30

PARK
IN
REAR











STOP!
NO ENTRY
UNLESS AUTHORIZED BY THE SUPERVISOR
OR THE APPRENTICE







BE INFORMED
READ THE
BULLETIN BOARD

WALK UP

Culligan











UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Druid Hall

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEBRASKA, Douglas

DATE RECEIVED: 5/22/15 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 6/12/15
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9/27/15 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 7/07/15
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000393

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 7-7-2015 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept A+C

REVIEWER J. Gilbert DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



RECEIVED 2280

MAY 22 2015

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

May 19, 2015

J. Paul Loether
National Register–National Historic Landmarks Programs
National Park Service
1201 "I" Street NW, 8th Floor
Washington, DC 20005

RE: Druid Hall
2412 Ames Avenue, Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska

Dear Mr. Loether:

The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the above referenced property to the National Register of Historic Places. This form has met all notification and other requirements as established in 36 CFR 60.

If you have any questions concerning this nomination, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ruben A. Acosta". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ruben A. Acosta
National Register and CLG Coordinator
Nebraska State Historical Society

Enclosure

1500 R Street
PO Box 82554
Lincoln, NE 68501-2554
p: (800) 833-6747
(402) 471-3270
f: (402) 471-3100
www.nebraskahistory.org