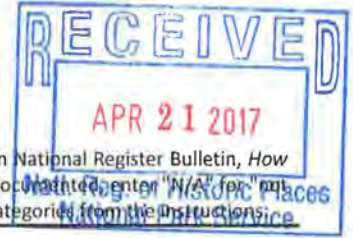


Resub

United States Department of the Interior  
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 National Indemnity Company Headquarters

Other names/site number DO09:0210-035

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

## 2. Location

Street & Number 3024 Harney Street

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Not for publication  Vicinity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

[Signature] SHPO/Director  
Signature of certifying official/Title:  
Nebraska State Historical Society  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4/5/17  
Date

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): \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature]  
Signature of Keeper  
Fu

5-18-2017  
Date of Action

National Indemnity Company Headquarters  
**Name of Property**

Douglas, Nebraska  
**County and State**

**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>          </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.)

COMMERCE/TRADE – Office Building  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions** (Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK, METAL, STONE, STUCCO

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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.)

The National Indemnity Company Headquarters is a six-story, rectangular-plan building designed in the Modern style. The simply detailed exterior is accentuated through the use of greenstone, buff brick laid in a running bond, stucco, aluminum panels, and black metal solar screens. The building was constructed in two phases, with the original two-story building completed in 1952 and the addition of the upper four floors completed in 1967. Two small non-historic, noncontributing additions were added to the east and north facades in c. 1978.

The building is located at the southwest end of a block bound by an alley at the north, Harney Street at the south, Turner Boulevard (S. 31st Street) at the west, and Park Avenue at the east. It is oriented towards the south, onto Harney Street, with the south, west and north serving as primary facades and the east serving as a secondary facade. Narrow landscaping strips are located between the building and the public sidewalk at the south and west ends. A narrow, paved alley at the east end divides this building from the building to the east. The north end of the site is covered with a paved parking lot, which abuts the paved public alley. The site slopes down from east to west, allowing for larger openings at the first story on the west end of the site. The building is located within an urban setting comprised of commercial buildings, multi-family residences, and two public parks to the northwest and southwest.

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

The National Indemnity building's south facade is clad in buff brick laid in a running bond beneath the first story windows. The remainder of this facade is clad in aluminum panels except for an architectural element of painted stucco rising the full height of the building at the west end. At the second story, expanded black metal solar screens extend across the facade, covering the windows. The main entry is located at the west end and consists of an aluminum storefront system with double-leaf entry doors leading into a vestibule and a single door leading into the south stair. An overhang clad in aluminum panels extends over the main entry. A non-historic box sign reading "National Indemnity Co." is attached to aluminum panels above this entry.

The west facade has a large panel of greenstone at the first story. At the second story, expanded black metal solar screens extend across the facade, covering the windows. The upper stories of this facade are clad in aluminum panels.

The east facade is clad in buff brick laid in a running bond. A non-historic, noncontributing wood clad elevated breezeway with an asphalt shingled gabled roof is attached to this facade at the center of the second story.

The north facade consists of buff brick laid in a running bond beneath the west two-thirds of the first story windows. Above this, the facade is clad in aluminum panels. At the east one-third of this facade, all six stories are clad in buff brick laid in a running bond. At the west side of the brick clad portion, a brick chimney clad in buff brick and laid in a running bond runs up and above the roof. Adjacent to the chimney at the first floor there is a single-leaf metal door with a large pane of safety glass at the top half that leads into the north stair tower. East of the door a non-historic canvas enclosure is attached to the wall. At the east corner on this facade, extending up to the second story, there is a non-historic, noncontributing flat roofed ribbed concrete block addition painted to match the adjacent buff brick. At the top portion of its west elevation, wide board siding and a fixed sash aluminum window are present.

National Indemnity Company HeadquartersDouglas, Nebraska**Name of Property****County and State**

Aluminum windows are arranged as continuous bands across all facades but differ in appearance and configuration between the lower two stories and the top four stories. At the lower two stories of the south, west and north facades, the window openings contain stacked horizontally-oriented rectangular fixed sashes interspersed with square casement sashes. The east facade does not have windows at the first and second stories. At the top four stories on all facades, window openings contain small vertically-oriented rectangular sashes arranged uniformly. Windows placed within metal panels on the second through fourth floors appear as ribbons, while windows placed within masonry on those same floors appear as punched openings.

**Interior**

At the interior, the building retains much of its historic office configuration. At the first through sixth floors most of the square footage is taken up by enclosed and open office space while the basement is reserved for utility and mechanical spaces. At the roof level there is a mechanical penthouse. A double set of elevators, along with two stair towers, service every floor. The south stair is located directly south of the elevators at the southwest end of the building while the north stair is located at the northeast side of the building. Both stair towers have terrazzo treads and risers at the basement, first and second stories and poured in place concrete treads and risers at the third through sixth stories. The northeast stair extends to the roof level allowing access to the mechanical penthouse.

The elevators are located within an L-shaped corridor at the southwest side on each floor. Directly east of the elevator shaft, there are men's and women's rest rooms and a small utility closet. This same corridor arrangement is stacked at the first through sixth floors. The finishes in the restrooms differ between the lower two floors and those above. The first and second floor restrooms have black and white tile floors laid in a woven pattern, Carrara glass tile wainscoting, and Carrara glass stall partitions. The third through sixth floor restrooms have small square ceramic tiles at their floors – alternating blue and white in the women's and grey and white in the men's; tile wainscoting - blue in the women's and grey in the men's, and metal stall partitions.

The first floor corridor has a terrazzo floor covered by carpet, plaster walls, modern solid-surface wainscoting and vinyl baseboards. The second floor corridor has terrazzo floors covered by carpet, plaster walls, and vinyl baseboards. The third through sixth floors have carpeted floors at their corridors that cover vinyl asbestos tile, gypsum board walls, and vinyl baseboards. All corridors have suspended acoustical tile ceilings. Lighting in corridors at the first and second floors consist of suspended fluorescent light fixtures while those at the floors above are recessed.

At the first floor the main entry is located at the southwest corner. There is an enclosed vestibule that then leads into a small rectangular lobby area through a set of double-leaf aluminum and glass doors. The vestibule and lobby both have terrazzo floors, although those in the lobby have been covered by carpet. Marble panels face the lobby's north wall and the greenstone wall from the west facade protrudes slightly into this space at the west wall, but is covered at the interior with plaster. This area has a textured plaster ceiling cloud with recessed can lights as well as cove lighting to highlight the north marble wall. At its east end the lobby opens to a corridor. North and east of the corridor, the remainder of the first floor is then taken up for office use. Enclosed offices are located at the northwest corner on this floor. At the northeast corner, a non-historic concrete stair with rubber treads, located within the noncontributing north addition, leads up to the second floor of the building to the east.

At floors two through six, the area off the southwest corridor is generally taken up for office uses, with the layout altering somewhat between each floor to accommodate a variety of enclosed and open office layouts. Enclosed offices are generally located along the west exterior wall and east of the corridor along the south wall. Other design differences specific to given floors include the presence of a dumbwaiter between the first and second floors adjacent to the north stair; a large non-historic opening in the east wall of the second floor that leads to the noncontributing breezeway linking this building to its neighbor at the east; and the presence of a large lunch room at the southeast corner of the fourth floor.

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The office areas at all floors have suspended acoustical tile ceilings and carpeted floors covering vinyl asbestos tile. Acoustical tile ceilings are composed of 12x12 tiles with concealed splines. The first and second floors generally have plaster walls with painted aluminum baseboards while the third through sixth floors have gypsum board walls with vinyl baseboards. The first and second floors have suspended fluorescent light fixtures while those at the floors above are recessed.

The basement has a corridor in the same location as those above but at this level the corridor extends further at the east end, running north-south and then further east. Storage rooms, a boiler room, restrooms, a maintenance shop and a maintenance office are located off of this corridor. The corridor and all of the rooms have vinyl tile floors; concrete block exterior and original interior walls, gypsum board partition walls with vinyl base; and finished plaster ceilings with either hanging fluorescent lights or can lights.

The mechanical penthouse / elevator machine room is accessed from the north stair. The room has painted concrete floors, painted concrete block walls, and painted concrete ceilings. Large mechanical equipment, piping and vents are located within this room. Single lead metal doors at the east, south and north exterior walls of the penthouse lead out to the roof.

*Future Plans*

The National Indemnity building's new owner is currently rehabilitating the building into apartments.

*Integrity*

Located at the site where it was originally constructed, surrounded by buildings of a size, scale and function similar to its historic setting, and with much of its historic fabric intact, the National Indemnity Company Headquarters retains sufficient integrity in terms of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Additionally, it stands as the only building constructed expressly for the National Indemnity Company and it still remains possible to discern the historic office function when looking at the building from the exterior today.

*Alterations*

The most dramatic alteration to the National Indemnity building, the four-story contributing addition to the top, occurred during the period of significance and reflects the National Indemnity's clever approach to dealing with space constraints as the company grew and thrived during the mid-twentieth century. Two less prominent, and non-historic, additions to the exterior are those at the east and north elevations. Both additions occurred in c.1978 and are noncontributing. They were done by the National Indemnity Company to connect the headquarters building with the one-story brick building to the east, which the company purchased to accommodate additional space needs.

Other exterior changes include adding a single leaf door at the east end of the main entry on the south elevation sometime between 1967 and 1972 and stuccoing over of the architectural element at the south elevation sometime in the early 1970s. When the two-story building was built, this element was clad in Kasota Stone. During the construction of the four-story addition, the element was extended up to the new floors and faced with troweled marble chips throughout. At an unknown date in the early 1970s this system failed and was replaced with the painted stucco that is seen today

The interior has experienced upgrades and remodeling over the years to accommodate more employees and shifting needs but historic elements from the original 1952 construction and subsequent 1967 addition do remain. The most intact, and decorative, interior features can be found in the vestibule and lobby at the first floor.

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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.
- F** Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE

**Period of Significance**

1952-1967

**Significant Dates**

1952, 1967

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Leo A. Daly

Peter Kiewit Co.

Lueder Construction Co.

**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.)

The National Indemnity Company Headquarters at 3024 Harney Street is significant from 1952 to 1967 under Criterion A as the headquarters for the National Indemnity Company, an insurance company that made its mark providing financial protection for unusual risk situations. The company built the mid-rise Modern style office building in two phases from 1951 to 1952 and 1966 to 1967. National Indemnity remained in this building until 2015, when it moved to a location in downtown Omaha.

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

*Criterion A: Commerce*

The National Indemnity Company was founded in Omaha in 1940 by Jack D. Ringwalt with just three employees and capital of \$100,000.<sup>1</sup> An *Omaha World Herald* article from 1952 noted that “the company was formed to handle unusual insurance risks, such as truck and taxicab fleets.”<sup>2</sup> In Ringwalt’s memoir *Tales of National Indemnity Company and Its Founder*, he recalls how a fellow insurance agent planted the seed for his involvement, and eventual success, in this particular type of insurance coverage. That man gave Ringwalt “an entirely new concept of the insurance business whereby it seemed smarter to find markets for coverage people had trouble obtaining rather than to try to sell people business which the insurance companies felt to be extremely desirable... As a result, I slowly acquired a reputation of being able to place difficult problems, which at the time included workmen’s compensation and [the] trucking business.”<sup>3</sup>

Ringwalt’s willingness to provide insurance to Omaha taxicabs, through a partnership with Lloyd’s of London in England and its corresponding Bowes and Company in the United States, was the impetus for National Indemnity’s founding. In his memoir, Ringwalt explains how, beginning in the mid-1930s, he worked with Lloyd’s to secure insurance for Omaha’s independent cab companies. The uneasiness of the partnership with Lloyd’s spurred Ringwalt to found National Indemnity in 1940 so that he could purchase a 90% quota share reinsurance in Lloyd’s, an action that would put him on easier footing with the larger insurance agency. To secure the capital necessary to found National Indemnity, he borrowed money from three of his brothers, one of whom became a stockholder in the company. He also acquired a loan from U.S. National Bank.<sup>4</sup> This loan allowed him to assemble \$125,000, the minimum amount required by the Nebraska Insurance Department to write insurance in the state at the time.<sup>5</sup> Writing in 1967 on the early beginnings of National Indemnity, journalist Robert Dorr noted that at the time of its founding, “no other company would write insurance on cabs, which were considered a high risk.”<sup>6</sup> In taxicabs and other “hard to place business,” as Ringwalt termed his primary customer base, National Indemnity committed to a niche market and found success.<sup>7</sup>

In the coming decades, National Indemnity would continue to prosper, primarily due to its founder’s willingness to insure a variety of items and situations other, more conservative, companies would not consider such as firework displays, cabs, public transportation buses, and construction.<sup>8</sup> Early on two of the more notorious endeavors covered by the company were insuring radio station contests where listeners were given clues that promised to lead them to buried treasure, if solved, and insuring the inheritance money of a deceased bootlegger whose heirs feared may show up alive and attempt to reclaim his money. In the case of the radio station contest, in an effort to guarantee the safety of his investment, Ringwalt himself actually hid the money and wrote the clues that the radio stations provided to listeners. Of the 40 to 50 radio contests insured by National Indemnity, there was only one instance where a listener discovered the buried prize – a \$50,000 loss to the company. The deceased bootlegger, on the other hand, never materialized to reclaim his money. In both cases, Ringwalt’s willingness to

<sup>1</sup> *Omaha World Herald*, “New Building Stresses Color,” January 1, 1952; John Taylor, “In the Beginning, He Planted Money Here and There – and, Boy, Did It Grow!” *Omaha World Herald*, October 22, 1978.

<sup>2</sup> *Omaha World Herald*, “New Building Stresses Color,” January 1, 1952.

<sup>3</sup> Jack Ringwalt, *Tales of National Indemnity Company and Its Founder* (Republished by National Indemnity Company, 1990), 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-3.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 11-14.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Dorr, “‘Unusual Risk’ Ringwalt Specialty,” *Omaha World Herald*, March 12, 1967.

<sup>7</sup> Jack Ringwalt, *Tales of National Indemnity Company and Its Founder*, 13.

<sup>8</sup> “Gala Entertainment to Precede Fireworks,” *Palladium-Item* (Richmond, Indiana), Jul. 2, 1964. Newspapers.com. Accessed Jan 12, 2017; “Five trials scheduled in federal court here,” *Great Falls Tribune* (Great Falls, Montana). Feb. 13, 1975. Newspapers.com. Accessed Jan. 17, 2017; Jana Miner, “City bus firm insured until at least June,” *Argus-Leader* (Sioix Falls, South Dakota), Jan. 12, 1979. Newspapers.com. Accessed Jan. 24, 2017.



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take calculated risks paid off and it was situations like these that allowed his company to make a profit and continue growing.<sup>9</sup>

By the 1950s, National Indemnity was thriving and was considered one of Omaha's major insurance companies.<sup>10</sup> The firm operated in 35 states, had 50 employees, and assets of \$3,750,000.<sup>11</sup> The company's focus had expanded to include underwriting on general liability, burglary and workmen's compensation but unusual risk insurance coverage remained its bread and butter.<sup>12</sup> Jack Ringwalt had also founded two offshoot companies by this point, the National Fire & Marine Insurance Company, which handled fire insurance risks in Nebraska, and the J.D. Ringwalt Insurance Agency, Inc. National Indemnity and the National Fire & Marine Insurance Company were both stock companies.<sup>13</sup>



**Figure 1:** Jack Ringwalt outside the completed National Indemnity building. Date unknown. Courtesy of National Indemnity Company.

The company's success and growth spurred Ringwalt to pursue the construction of a headquarters building. In October of 1950, news broke that National Indemnity had filed building permits for a \$175,000, two-story modern office building at the northeast corner of Harney Street and Turner Boulevard. Newspaper articles speculated that Ringwalt, an active tennis player with six state doubles championships under his belt by that time, chose the site because of its proximity to the tennis courts at Dewey Park. Commenting on this Ringwalt said, "Friends have been kidding me about it but actually it is one of the few decent building sites left in town."<sup>14</sup>

Leo A. Daly Architects was hired as the architect and Peter Kiewit Sons Company as the contractor. Anticipating that the company would likely one day outgrow this space, Ringwalt had the Daly firm include plans for an addition when they developed the initial design. The original building plans from 1950 show how certain design elements were included as part of the construction, including a stronger than necessary foundation, columns two feet above the roof line, and space for an elevator shaft.<sup>15</sup> The floor plans for the basement, first and second floors detailed a rectangular space at the southwest end of the main corridor that would eventually accommodate an elevator while the elevation sheet for the stairs faintly outlined the location of

future steps above those that would be built during the initial phase.<sup>16</sup> In a newspaper article describing the project, Ringwalt noted that "the building will have a foundation strong enough to support seven stories if expansion is necessary."<sup>17</sup>

The building was complete by January 1952 and the company moved there from its former offices in the Brandeis Theater Building downtown. Ringwalt's two subsidiary companies also moved into the building. A newspaper

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 3; Robert Dorr, "'Unusual Risk' Ringwalt Specialty," *Omaha World Herald*, March 12, 1967.

<sup>10</sup> *Omaha World Herald*, "Insurance Gain Here Above '54", September 4, 1956.

<sup>11</sup> See footnote 8 and bibliography for national presence. There are newspaper articles from Indiana, Nebraska, Minnesota, South Dakota, and Montana.

<sup>12</sup> *Omaha World Herald*, "New Building Stresses Color," January 1, 1952.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.; *Omaha World Herald*, "Site of Office is Convenient," October 14, 1950.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> National Indemnity Company, Office Building for the National Indemnity Co., architectural plans by Leo A. Daly Co. Architects, 1950; *Omaha World Herald*, "Site of Office is Convenient," October 14, 1950; *Omaha World Herald*, "New Building Stresses Color," January 1, 1952; *Omaha World Herald*, "National Indemnity is Expanding Upward," June 24, 1966.

<sup>16</sup> National Indemnity Company, Office Building for the National Indemnity Co., architectural plans by Leo A. Daly Co. Architects, 1950.

<sup>17</sup> *Omaha World Herald*, "Site of Office is Convenient," October 14, 1950.



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article describing the finished building praised it for its “pleasing modern lines.” As a low-lying structure, the building emphasized horizontality with large expanses of green tinted windows at the first and second stories. Other exterior materials included buff brick, pink Mankato stone, clear finished aluminum and a large panel of greenstone at the west elevation. In addition to offices, the new headquarters boasted a two-story recreation room containing a basketball hoop, table tennis and pool tables, along with a snack bar area. Within the office space, movable metal walls allowed the company to easily readjust the work environment as needed. Two rooms were set aside for business machines and, although the building did not yet have an elevator, it did have a 250-pound capacity dumb waiter that serviced all three floors, including the basement.<sup>18</sup>

National Indemnity’s business continued to prosper, in step with insurance companies in Omaha, and throughout Nebraska generally. By 1960, Nebraska boasted 114 insurance companies with home offices in the state. Thirty-eight of these, including National Indemnity, were located in Omaha. While National Indemnity was not the largest of Omaha’s insurance companies – Mutual of Omaha and Woodmen of the World garnered that distinction – it was

nevertheless singled out as one of seven nationally rated companies within the city.<sup>19</sup> National Indemnity may not have been the largest, but it kept up with Mutual of Omaha and Woodmen. When both started building structures and offices of their own, National Indemnity was building and growing, as well surviving and thriving into the twenty-first century right alongside the larger companies.



Figure 2: National Indemnity building after completion in 1952. Date unknown. Courtesy of National Indemnity Company.

An *Omaha World Herald* article from 1960 noted that Nebraska was “known nationally as a center of the insurance industry,” a fairly audacious boast given the importance of the insurance industry in Hartford, Connecticut. Still, insurance companies in Omaha did experience success, and industry leaders quoted in the article speculated on the reasons for the state’s success in this particular market. One attributed it to Nebraska’s location in the Midwest, an area perceived to be stable and conservative. Another linked it to the state’s “progressive” insurance laws.<sup>20</sup> In Lawrence H. Larsen and Barbara J. Cottrell’s study of the history of Omaha, *The Gate City*, first published in 1982, the authors also assert that the strong insurance industry in Omaha and throughout Nebraska at the mid-twentieth century was linked to the state’s incredibly lenient insurance laws and pro-business regulatory agencies. Additionally, they found that insurance, like banking, was a complex industry and concentrating so many similar companies in one city had long proven practical and efficient for both the companies and their users.<sup>21</sup>

National Indemnity’s foresight that it might one day outgrow its two-story office headquarters proved correct by the latter half of the 1960s. By this point, the company had 180 employees, \$26 million in assets, and operated in 44 states. Its focus upon unusual risk insurance coverage, which made up approximately 80% of its business by this point, had earned it a reputation as the Lloyd’s of London in America, or the Midwest, depending upon who

<sup>18</sup> *Omaha World Herald*, “New Building Stresses Color,” January 1, 1952.

<sup>19</sup> *Omaha World Herald*, “114 Insurance Firms Call Nebraska ‘Home,’” January 3, 1960.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Lawrence H. Larsen and Barbara J. Cottrell, *The Gate City: A History of Omaha* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 214-215.

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was reporting on the company.<sup>22</sup> The company's continued success meant that it was no longer able to accommodate all of its employees at its headquarters. Indeed, space had become so tight that the recreation room had given way to offices at the first and second floors years before and by this point the company was also using space in two nearby buildings. In June 1966, construction began on a four-story, \$635,000 addition that would add 28,150 square feet to the top of the existing two-story building.<sup>23</sup>

The thoughtful integration of structural and design features 17 years earlier so that the building could one day accommodate an addition allowed construction to proceed without too much disruption to employees working daily in the building. At the roof, concrete was removed from the exposed columns so that new steel could be tied to them. On the interior, part of the corridor floor was chipped away to reveal the pre-framed elevator opening, and in the basement wall sections were removed to accommodate an additional boiler.<sup>24</sup> At the exterior, the new addition was designed to complement the existing building while not outright mimicking it. In contrast to the lower two stories, which favored a green and white scheme, the top four stories were given a strong black and white pattern through the use of clear finished aluminum panels and tinted dark gray windows. To tie the two parts of the building together, a solar screen of black expanded metal was added at the second floor, replacing green Venetian window blinds. The pink Mankato stone that had once graced the exterior was covered over with troweled marble and this architectural element was extended up to the top four stories. Additionally, the building went from having a low-lying horizontal appearance to a strong vertical emphasis.<sup>25</sup>

In October 1967, the completed building was one of ten throughout Omaha to receive a City Beautification Award from the Chamber of Commerce, Women's Division. A newspaper article describing the awards noted that National Indemnity and nine other buildings were "selected because of their outstanding design and the improvement to their neighborhoods."<sup>26</sup>

In the midst of National Indemnity's expansion, the company received a purchase offer from Warren Buffett. The official offer was made by Berkshire Hathaway Inc., a New England textile company controlled by Warren Buffett's Buffett Partnership Ltd. but Buffett himself proposed the purchase during a private meeting with Ringwalt in January of 1967.<sup>27</sup> In late February of 1967, the *Omaha World Herald* reported that Berkshire Hathaway Inc. had made "an \$8,500,000 offer to purchase all stock of the National Indemnity Company and its companion firm, National Fire & Marine Insurance Company."<sup>28</sup> Initially Ringwalt planned to leave the company shortly after the sale went through but, he notes in his memoir, "I found Mr. Buffett to be a very considerate Chairman of the Board" and so he ended up staying with the company for many years thereafter.<sup>29</sup> Ringwalt viewed the sale as the best way to keep the company intact and in Omaha, even after his death. As he explained to a newspaper reporter, the purpose of the sale was "long term investment and not quick resale or liquidation."<sup>30</sup>

By early March 1967, the sale to Berkshire Hathaway Inc. was complete and National Indemnity became the first Omaha company invested in by a Buffett firm.<sup>31 32</sup> Under the new ownership structure, National Indemnity

<sup>22</sup> Richard Dorr, "'Unusual Risk' Ringwalt Specialty," *Omaha World Herald*, March 12, 1967; *Omaha World Herald*, "Buffett Offers \$8,500,000 for 2 Firms," February 23, 1967.

<sup>23</sup> *Omaha World Herald*, "National Indemnity is Expanding Upward," June 24, 1966.

<sup>24</sup> *Omaha World Herald*, "National Indemnity is Expanding Upward," June 24, 1966.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> *Omaha World Herald*, "Ten Buildings are Official Beauties," October 8, 1967.

<sup>27</sup> Jack Ringwalt, *Tales of National Indemnity Company and Its Founder*, 46; *Omaha World Herald*, "Buffett Offers \$8,500,000 for 2 Firms," February 23, 1967.

<sup>28</sup> *Omaha World Herald*, "Buffett Offers \$8,500,000 for 2 Firms," February 23, 1967.

<sup>29</sup> Jack Ringwalt, *Tales of National Indemnity Company and Its Founder*, 48.

<sup>30</sup> *Omaha World Herald*, "Buffett Offers \$8,500,000 for 2 Firms," February 23, 1967.

<sup>31</sup> Richard Dorr, "'Unusual Risk' Ringwalt Specialty," *Omaha World Herald*, March 12, 1967.

National Indemnity Company Headquarters

Douglas, Nebraska

**Name of Property****County and State**

continued to thrive. On July 1, 1973, Ringwalt stepped down as president and on August 31 of that same year he resigned as Director of National Indemnity, but he remained active as an insurance agent for the company until sometime before his death in 1984.<sup>33</sup> Philip Liesche, a 30-year employee of National Indemnity, succeeded Ringwalt as president.

By the late 1970s, National Indemnity had 400 employees, \$272.4 million in assets, and was licensed in 46 states. Nearly 40 years old, the company had become more conservative, no longer taking on as many risky ventures as it had during its burgeoning years or, when it did choose to do so, typically quoting a high premium. Nevertheless, National Indemnity continued to provide unusual risk insurance for certain situations where it assessed the chances of pay out to be low enough to be worth the gamble. For example, the company would insure rock concerts, so long as they took place indoors. They also insured amusement parks, traveling carnivals, and certain types of prize contests. But for the most part, the company dealt with less colorful situations by this period, including continuing to provide coverage to trucks, buses, and cars.<sup>34</sup>

The company's steady growth by the late 1970s meant that all employees were again unable to fit in the headquarters building. Instead, National Indemnity had a claims office at 4016 Farnam Street, an office for its main frame and associated programmers in a building at 2962 Harney Street, and a branch office in Los Angeles. They had also recently purchased a building directly east of the headquarters, at 3016 Harney, to gain additional space.<sup>35</sup> The company connected the main building to 3016 Harney by constructing a new breezeway at the east façade and a small one-story addition at the rear.

Today National Indemnity remains an active company and continues to be known as a provider of unusual risk insurance. The company's longevity in an uncertain industry would not have been possible without smart, bold leadership at the helm. For over three decades, Jack Ringwalt grew the company through a willingness to cover individuals and companies others would not, and through his astute ability to assess whether providing insurance to those particular people was worth the risk to his company's financial stability and longevity. His philosophy has continued to shape the company in the succeeding years, even after National Indemnity's sale to Berkshire Hathaway Inc. in 1967 and Ringwalt's own retirement from a leadership role in 1973. In 2015, National Indemnity moved its headquarters out of the building at 3024 Harney Street and into the Omaha World-Herald Building at 1314 Douglas Street. Now devoid of the activity that filled its walls for over six decades, the former National Indemnity Company Headquarters at the corner of Turner Boulevard and Harney Street nevertheless stands as an important physical reminder of the National Indemnity Company and what it accomplished during its first 75 years as a business.

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## 9. Major Bibliographic References

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

Berkshire Hathaway Inc., "Links to Berkshire Subsidiary Companies,"

<http://www.berkshirehathaway.com/subs/sublinks.html>.

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<sup>32</sup> In the coming decades, Berkshire Hathaway would go on to invest in more Omaha-based companies, including Nebraska Furniture Mart, Borsheims Fine Jewelry, Oriental Trading Company, and the Omaha World Herald. Berkshire Hathaway Inc., "Links to Berkshire Subsidiary Companies," <http://www.berkshirehathaway.com/subs/sublinks.html>.

<sup>33</sup> John Taylor, "In the Beginning, He Planted Money Here and There – and, Boy, Did It Grow!" *Omaha World Herald*, October 22, 1978; *Omaha World Herald*, "Jack Ringwalt Services Set for Tuesday," May 21, 1984.

<sup>34</sup> John Taylor, "In the Beginning, He Planted Money Here and There – and, Boy, Did It Grow!" *Omaha World Herald*, October 22, 1978.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

National Indemnity Company Headquarters

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*Omaha World Herald*, articles from 1930-2015.

Ringwalt, Jack. *Tales of National Indemnity Company and Its Founder* (Republished by National Indemnity Company, 1990).

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

**Primary location of additional data:**

- 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 #

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

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DO09:0210-035

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property Less than 1 acre USGS Quadrangle \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

- |    |          |                  |           |                   |
|----|----------|------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| 1. | Latitude | <u>41.256880</u> | Longitude | <u>-95.957476</u> |
| 2. | Latitude | _____            | Longitude | _____             |
| 3. | Latitude | _____            | Longitude | _____             |
| 4. | Latitude | _____            | Longitude | _____             |

**OR**

**UTM References**

National Indemnity Company Headquarters Douglas, Nebraska  
**Name of Property** **County and State**

Datum (indicated on USGS map): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ NAD 1927 or \_\_\_ NAD 1983

1.	Zone	_____	Easting	_____	Northing	_____
2.	Zone	_____	Easting	_____	Northing	_____
3.	Zone	_____	Easting	_____	Northing	_____
4.	Zone	_____	Easting	_____	Northing	_____

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

LANDS SEC-TWN-RGE 21-15-13 SUB LTS 6 & 8 TX LT 16 SE 1/4 NW 1/4 150 X 132

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary of the property follows the legally recorded boundary lines, which includes the building and the noncontributing additions at the east and north facades.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Caitlin Kolb  
organization Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture date October 7, 2016  
street & number 1516 Cuming Street telephone 402-341-1544  
city or town Omaha state NE zip code 68104  
email ckolb@alleypoyner.com

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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.)

**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 National Indemnity Company Headquarters  
City or Vicinity Omaha County Douglas State Nebraska  
Photographer Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture Date Photographed August 25, 2016

National Indemnity Company Headquarters

Douglas, Nebraska

**Name of Property**

**County and State**

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

1. Photograph 001: South facade. Looking northeast.
2. Photograph 002: West and South facades. Looking northeast.
3. Photograph 003: South and East facades. Looking northwest.
4. Photograph 004: North façade. Looking west.
5. Photograph 005: 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Main entry vestibule. Looking south.
6. Photograph 006: 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Lobby. Looking east.
7. Photograph 007: South stair at 1<sup>st</sup> Floor. Looking southeast.
8. Photograph 008: 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Corridor. Looking east.
9. Photograph 009: 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Enclosed office at west end. Looking west.
10. Photograph 010: 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Cafeteria. Looking east.
11. Photograph 011: 6<sup>th</sup> Floor Open office area at east end. Looking north.

**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.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

National Indemnity Company Headquarters
Name of Property Douglas County, Nebraska
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation

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Figure 3: National Indemnity Company Headquarters Vicinity Map. Building is located between Farnam Street, Park Ave., Dewey Ave. and Turner Boulevard (S. 31st Street). Source: MapQuest, 2016.





United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
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Figure 4: National Indemnity Company Headquarters Legal Boundary Map. Building is located between Farnam Street, Park Ave., Dewey Ave. and Turner Boulevard (S. 31st Street). Dashed line indicates property location. Source: Douglas County DOGIS website. <http://www.dogis.org>. Accessed October 6, 2016.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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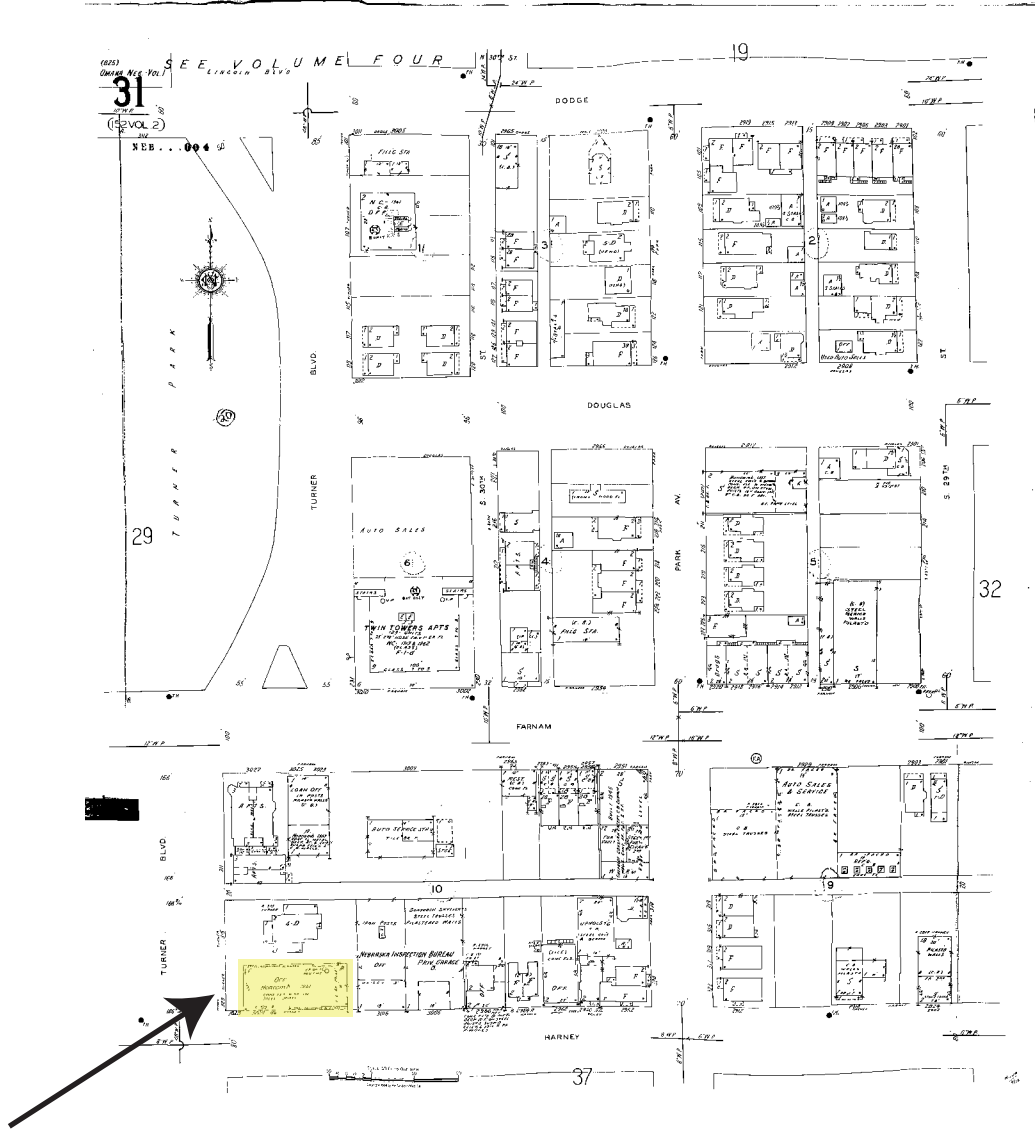



Figure 5: Sanborn Map Company. Insurance Maps for Omaha, Nebraska. 1962, Volume 1. Shaded area indicates location of National Indemnity Company Headquarters. Source: Digital, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Library. Lincoln, NE.





 National Indemnity Co.

3024  
HARNEY ST





National Indemnity Co.

3024 HARNEY ST.

Turner Blvd

31st St

ONE WAY

ONE WAY

ONE WAY

NO TURN ON RED

DO NOT ENTER





National Identity Company

NATIONAL IDENTITY  
COMPANY  
RESTRICTED  
PARKING

Handicapped  
ONLY





PRIVATE  
PARKING  
UNAUTHORIZED  
CARS WILL BE  
TOWED AWAY  
AT OWNERS  
EXPENSE

WMA  
480-221-8124





ST. HARNEY  
TAMARACK INVESTMENT CORPORATION

TO AN OFFICE FOR HELP  
→

FIRE



Harney St



























National Register of Historic Places  
Memo to File

# Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received:  Date of Pending List:  Date of 16th Day:  Date of 45th Day:  Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal                  | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL            | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request            | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape       | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver                  | <input type="checkbox"/> National        | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other                   | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP             | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG             |   |

Accept  Return  Reject  Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria:

Reviewer  Discipline

Telephone  Date

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



January 26, 2017

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

RE: National Indemnity Company Headquarters  
3024 Harney Street, Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska

Dear Mr. Loether:

The enclosed disks contain 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,

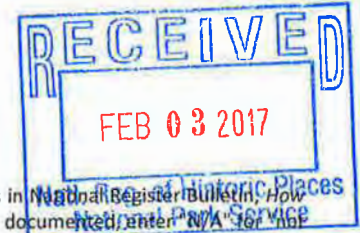
A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jessica Fortney".

Jessica Fortney  
National Register and Historic Marker 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](http://www.nebraskahistory.org)

56-765



# 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 National Indemnity Company Headquarters

Other names/site number DO09:0210-035

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

## 2. Location

Street & Number 3024 Harney Street

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

1/25/17

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): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

National Indemnity Company Headquarters  
**Name of Property**

Douglas, Nebraska  
**County and State**

**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	
1		Buildings
		Sites
		Structures
		Objects
1	0	Total

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register** 0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions** (Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE – Office Building

**Current Functions** (Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT

**Materials** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK, METAL, STONE, STUCCO

National Indemnity Company Headquarters  
**Name of Property**

Douglas, Nebraska  
**County and State**

## 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.)

The National Indemnity Company Headquarters is a six-story, rectangular-plan building designed in the Modern style. The simply detailed exterior is accentuated through the use of greenstone, buff brick laid in a running bond, stucco, aluminum panels, and black metal solar screens. The building was constructed in two phases, with the original two-story building completed in 1952 and the addition of the upper four floors completed in 1967. It is located at the southwest end of a block bound by an alley at the north, Harney Street at the south, Turner Boulevard (S. 31st Street) at the west, and Park Avenue at the east. The building is oriented towards the south, onto Harney Street, with the south, west and north serving as primary facades and the east serving as a secondary facade. Narrow landscaping strips are located between the building and the public sidewalk at the south and west ends. A narrow paved alley at the east end divides this building from the building to the east. The north end of the site is covered with a paved parking lot, which abuts the paved public alley. The site slopes down from east to west, allowing for larger openings at the first story on the west end of the site. The building is located within an urban setting comprised of commercial buildings, multi-family residences, and two public parks to the northwest and southwest.

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

The National Indemnity building's south facade is clad in buff brick laid in a running bond beneath the first story windows. The remainder of this facade is clad in aluminum panels except for an architectural element of painted stucco rising the full height of the building at the west end. At the second story, expanded black metal solar screens extend across the facade, covering the windows. The main entry is located at the west end and consists of an aluminum storefront system with double-leaf entry doors leading into a vestibule and a single door leading into the south stair. An overhang clad in aluminum panels extends over the main entry. A non-historic box sign reading "National Indemnity Co." is attached to aluminum panels above this entry.

The west facade has a large panel of greenstone at the first story. At the second story, expanded black metal solar screens extend across the facade, covering the windows. The upper stories of this facade are clad in aluminum panels.

The east facade is clad in buff brick laid in a running bond. A non-historic wood clad elevated breezeway with an asphalt shingled gabled roof is attached to this facade at the center of the second story.

The north facade consists of buff brick laid in a running bond beneath the west two-thirds of the first story windows. Above this, the facade is clad in aluminum panels. At the east one-third of this facade, all six stories are clad in buff brick laid in a running bond. At the west side of the brick clad portion, a brick chimney clad in buff brick and laid in a running bond runs up and above the roof. Adjacent to the chimney at the first floor there is a single-leaf metal door with a large pane of safety glass at the top half that leads into the north stair tower. East of the door a non-historic canvas enclosure is attached to the wall. At the east corner on this facade, extending up to the second story, there is a non-historic flat roofed ribbed concrete block addition painted to match the adjacent buff brick. At the top portion of its west elevation, wide board siding and a fixed sash aluminum window are present.

Aluminum windows are arranged as continuous bands across all facades but differ in appearance and configuration between the lower two stories and the top four stories. At the lower two stories of the south, west

National Indemnity Company Headquarters

Douglas, Nebraska

**Name of Property**

**County and State**

and north facades, the window openings contain stacked horizontally-oriented rectangular fixed sashes interspersed with square casement sashes. The east facade does not have windows at the first and second stories. At the top four stories on all facades, window openings contain small vertically-oriented rectangular sashes arranged uniformly. Windows placed within metal panels on the second through fourth floors appear as ribbons, while windows placed within masonry on those same floors appear as punched openings.

**Interior**

At the interior, the building retains much of its historic office configuration. At the first through sixth floors the majority of the square footage is taken up by enclosed and open office space while the basement is reserved for utility and mechanical spaces. At the roof level there is a mechanical penthouse. A double set of elevators, along with two stair towers, service every floor. The south stair is located directly south of the elevators at the southwest end of the building while the north stair is located at the northeast side of the building. Both stair towers have terrazzo treads and risers at the basement, first and second stories and poured in place concrete treads and risers at the third through sixth stories. The northeast stair extends to the roof level allowing access to the mechanical penthouse.

The elevators are located within an L-shaped corridor at the southwest side on each floor. Directly east of the elevator shaft, there are men's and women's rest rooms and a small utility closet. This same corridor arrangement is stacked at the first through sixth floors. The finishes in the restrooms differ between the lower two floors and those above. The first and second floor restrooms have black and white tile floors laid in a woven pattern, Carrara glass tile wainscoting, and Carrara glass stall partitions. The third through sixth floor restrooms have small square ceramic tiles at their floors - alternating blue and white in the women's and grey and white in the men's; tile wainscoting - blue in the women's and grey in the men's and metal stall partitions.

The first floor corridor has a terrazzo floor covered by carpet, plaster walls, modern solid-surface wainscoting and vinyl baseboards. The second floor corridor has terrazzo floor covered by carpet, plaster walls, and vinyl baseboards. The third through sixth floors have carpeted floors at their corridors that cover vinyl asbestos tile, gypsum board walls, and vinyl baseboards. All corridors have suspended acoustical tile ceilings. Lighting in corridors at the first and second floors consist of suspended fluorescent light fixtures while those at the floors above are recessed.

At the first floor the main entry is located at the southwest corner. There is an enclosed vestibule that then leads into a small rectangular lobby area through a set of double-leaf aluminum and glass doors. The vestibule and lobby both have terrazzo floors, although those in the lobby have been covered by carpet. Marble panels face the lobby's north wall and the greenstone wall from the west facade protrudes slightly into this space at the west wall, but is covered at the interior with plaster. This area has a textured plaster ceiling cloud with recessed can lights as well as cove lighting to highlight the north marble wall. At its east end the lobby opens to a corridor. North and east of the corridor, the remainder of the first floor is then taken up for office use. Enclosed offices are located at the northwest corner on this floor. At the northeast corner, a non-historic concrete stair with rubber treads, located within the non-historic north addition, leads up to the second floor of the building to the east.

At floors two through six, the area off of the southwest corridor is generally taken up for office uses, with the layout altering somewhat between each floor to accommodate a variety of enclosed and open office layouts. Enclosed offices are generally located along the west exterior wall and east of the corridor along the south wall. Other design differences specific to given floors include the presence of a dumbwaiter between the first and second floors adjacent to the north stair; a large non-historic opening in the east wall of the second floor that leads to the breezeway linking this building to its neighbor at the east; and the presence of a large lunch room at the southeast corner of the fourth floor.

The office areas at all floors have suspended acoustical tile ceilings and carpeted floors covering vinyl asbestos tile. Acoustical tile ceilings are composed of 12x12 tiles with concealed splines. The first and second floors

National Indemnity Company Headquarters

Douglas, Nebraska

**Name of Property**

**County and State**

generally have plaster walls with painted aluminum baseboards while the third through sixth floors have gypsum board walls with vinyl baseboards. The first and second floors have suspended fluorescent light fixtures while those at the floors above are recessed.

The basement has a corridor in the same location as those above but at this level the corridor extends further at the east end, running north-south and then further east. Storage rooms, a boiler room, restrooms, a maintenance shop and a maintenance office are located off of this corridor. The corridor and all of the rooms have vinyl tile floors; concrete block exterior and original interior walls, gypsum board partition walls with vinyl base; and finished plaster ceilings with either hanging fluorescent lights or can lights.

The mechanical penthouse / elevator machine room is accessed from the north stair. The room has painted concrete floors, painted concrete block walls, and painted concrete ceilings. Large mechanical equipment, piping and vents are located within this room. Single lead metal doors at the east, south and north exterior walls of the penthouse lead out to the roof.

*Future Plans*

The National Indemnity building's new owner is currently rehabilitating the building into apartments.

*Integrity*

Located at the site where it was originally constructed, surrounded by buildings of a size, scale and function similar to its historic setting, and with much of its historic fabric intact, the National Indemnity Company Headquarters retains sufficient integrity in terms of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Additionally, it stands as the only building constructed expressly for the National Indemnity Company and it still remains possible to discern the historic office function when looking at the building from the exterior today.

*Alterations*

The most dramatic alteration to the National Indemnity building, the four-story addition to the top, occurred during the period of significance and reflects the National Indemnity's clever approach to dealing with space constraints as the company grew and thrived during the mid-twentieth century. Two less prominent, and non-historic, additions to the exterior are those at the east and north elevations. Both of these additions occurred sometime after 1978. They were done by the National Indemnity Company to connect the headquarters building with the one-story brick building to the east, which the company purchased to accommodate additional space needs.

Other exterior changes include adding a single leaf door at the east end of the main entry on the south elevation sometime between 1967 and 1972 and stuccoing over of the architectural element at the south elevation sometime in the early 1970s. When the two-story building was built, this element was clad in Kasota Stone. During the construction of the four-story addition, the element was extended up to the new floors and faced with troweled marble chips throughout. At an unknown date in the early 1970s this system failed and was replaced with the painted stucco that is seen today.

The interior has experienced upgrades and remodeling over the years to accommodate more employees and shifting needs but historic elements from the original 1952 construction and subsequent 1967 addition do remain. The most intact, and decorative, interior features can be found in the vestibule and lobby at the first floor.



National Indemnity Company Headquarters  
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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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE

**Period of Significance**

1952-1967

**Significant Dates**

1952, 1967

**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.
- F** Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Leo A. Daly

Peter Kiewit Co.

Lueder Construction Co.

**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.)

The National Indemnity Company Headquarters at 3024 Harney Street is significant from 1952 to 1967 under Criterion A as the headquarters for the National Indemnity Company, an insurance company that made its mark providing financial protection for unusual risk situations. The company built the mid-rise Modern style office building in two phases from 1951 to 1952 and 1966 to 1967. National Indemnity remained in this building until 2015, when it moved to a location in downtown Omaha.

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

*Criterion A: Commerce*

The National Indemnity Company was founded in Omaha in 1940 by Jack D. Ringwalt with just three employees and capital of \$100,000.<sup>1</sup> An *Omaha World Herald* article from 1952 noted that “the company was formed to handle unusual insurance risks, such as truck and taxicab fleets.”<sup>2</sup> In Ringwalt’s memoir *Tales of National Indemnity Company and Its Founder*, he recalls how a fellow insurance agent planted the seed for his involvement, and eventual success, in this particular type of insurance coverage. That man gave Ringwalt “an entirely new concept of the insurance business whereby it seemed smarter to find markets for coverage people had trouble obtaining rather than to try to sell people business which the insurance companies felt to be extremely desirable...As a result, I slowly acquired a reputation of being able to place difficult problems, which at the time included workmen’s compensation and [the] trucking business.”<sup>3</sup>

Ringwalt’s willingness to provide insurance to Omaha taxicabs, through a partnership with Lloyd’s of London in England and its corresponding Bowes and Company in the United States, was the impetus for National Indemnity’s founding. In his memoir, Ringwalt explains how, beginning in the mid-1930s, he worked with Lloyd’s to secure insurance for Omaha’s independent cab companies. The uneasiness of the partnership with Lloyd’s spurred Ringwalt to found National Indemnity in 1940 so that he could purchase a 90% quota share reinsurance in Lloyd’s, an action that would put him on easier footing with the larger insurance agency. To secure the capital necessary to found National Indemnity, he borrowed money from three of his brothers, one of whom became a stockholder in the company. He also acquired a loan from U.S. National Bank.<sup>4</sup> This loan allowed him to assemble \$125,000, the minimum amount required by the Nebraska Insurance Department to write insurance in the state at the time.<sup>5</sup> Writing in 1967 on the early beginnings of National Indemnity, journalist Robert Dorr noted that at the time of its founding, “no other company would write insurance on cabs, which were considered a high risk.”<sup>6</sup> In taxicabs and other “hard to place business,” as Ringwalt termed his primary customer base, National Indemnity committed to a niche market and found success.<sup>7</sup>

In the coming decades, National Indemnity would continue to prosper, primarily due to its founder’s willingness to insure a variety of items and situations other, more conservative, companies would not consider such as firework displays, cabs, public transportation buses, and construction.<sup>8</sup> Early on two of the more notorious endeavors covered by the company were insuring radio station contests where listeners were given clues that promised to lead them to buried treasure, if solved, and insuring the inheritance money of a deceased bootlegger whose heirs feared may show up alive and attempt to reclaim his money. In the case of the radio station contest, in an effort to guarantee the safety of his investment, Ringwalt himself actually hid the money and wrote the clues that the radio stations provided to listeners. Of the 40 to 50 radio contests insured by National Indemnity, there was only one instance where a listener discovered the buried prize – a \$50,000 loss to the company. The deceased bootlegger, on the other hand, never materialized to reclaim his money. In both cases, Ringwalt’s willingness to

<sup>1</sup> *Omaha World Herald*, “New Building Stresses Color,” January 1, 1952; John Taylor, “In the Beginning, He Planted Money Here and There – and, Boy, Did It Grow!” *Omaha World Herald*, October 22, 1978.

<sup>2</sup> *Omaha World Herald*, “New Building Stresses Color,” January 1, 1952.

<sup>3</sup> Jack Ringwalt, *Tales of National Indemnity Company and Its Founder* (Republished by National Indemnity Company, 1990), 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-3.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 11-14.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Dorr, “‘Unusual Risk’ Ringwalt Specialty,” *Omaha World Herald*, March 12, 1967.

<sup>7</sup> Jack Ringwalt, *Tales of National Indemnity Company and Its Founder*, 13.

<sup>8</sup> “Gala Entertainment to Precede Fireworks,” *Palladium-Item* (Richmond, Indiana), Jul. 2, 1964. Newspapers.com. Accessed Jan 12, 2017; “Five trials scheduled in federal court here,” *Great Falls Tribune* (Great Falls, Montana). Feb. 13, 1975. Newspapers.com. Accessed Jan. 17, 2017; Jana Miner, “City bus firm insured until at least June,” *Argus-Leader* (Sioioux Falls, South Dakota), Jan. 12, 1979. Newspapers.com. Accessed Jan. 24, 2017.

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take calculated risks paid off and it was situations like these that allowed his company to make a profit and continue growing.<sup>9</sup>

By the 1950s, National Indemnity was thriving and was considered one of Omaha's major insurance companies.<sup>10</sup> The firm operated in 35 states, had 50 employees, and assets of \$3,750,000.<sup>11</sup> The company's focus had expanded to include underwriting on general liability, burglary and workmen's compensation but unusual risk insurance coverage remained its bread and butter.<sup>12</sup> Jack Ringwalt had also founded two offshoot companies by this point, the National Fire & Marine Insurance Company, which handled fire insurance risks in Nebraska, and the J.D. Ringwalt Insurance Agency, Inc. National Indemnity and the National Fire & Marine Insurance Company were both stock companies.<sup>13</sup>



**Figure 1:** Jack Ringwalt outside the completed National Indemnity building. Date unknown. Courtesy of National Indemnity Company.

The company's success and growth spurred Ringwalt to pursue the construction of a headquarters building. In October of 1950, news broke that National Indemnity had filed building permits for a \$175,000, two-story modern office building at the northeast corner of Harney Street and Turner Boulevard. Newspaper articles speculated that Ringwalt, an active tennis player with six state doubles championships under his belt by that time, chose the site because of its proximity to the tennis courts at Dewey Park. Commenting on this Ringwalt said, "Friends have been kidding me about it but actually it is one of the few decent building sites left in town."<sup>14</sup>

Leo A. Daly Architects was hired as the architect and Peter Kiewit Sons Company as the contractor. Anticipating that the company would likely one day outgrow this space, Ringwalt had the Daly firm include plans for an addition when they developed the initial design. The original building plans from 1950 show how certain design elements were included as part of the construction, including a stronger than necessary foundation, columns two feet above the roof line, and space for an elevator shaft.<sup>15</sup> The floor plans for the basement, first and second floors detailed a rectangular space at the southwest end of the main corridor that would eventually accommodate an elevator while the elevation sheet for the stairs faintly outlined the location of

future steps above those that would be built during the initial phase.<sup>16</sup> In a newspaper article describing the project, Ringwalt noted that "the building will have a foundation strong enough to support seven stories if expansion is necessary."<sup>17</sup>

The building was complete by January 1952 and the company moved there from its former offices in the Brandeis Theater Building downtown. Ringwalt's two subsidiary companies also moved into the building. A newspaper

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 3; Robert Dorr, "'Unusual Risk' Ringwalt Specialty," *Omaha World Herald*, March 12, 1967.

<sup>10</sup> *Omaha World Herald*, "Insurance Gain Here Above '54", September 4, 1956.

<sup>11</sup> See footnote 8 and bibliography for national presence. There are newspaper articles from Indiana, Nebraska, Minnesota, South Dakota, and Montana.

<sup>12</sup> *Omaha World Herald*, "New Building Stresses Color," January 1, 1952.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.; *Omaha World Herald*, "Site of Office is Convenient," October 14, 1950.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> National Indemnity Company, Office Building for the National Indemnity Co., architectural plans by Leo A. Daly Co. Architects, 1950; *Omaha World Herald*, "Site of Office is Convenient," October 14, 1950; *Omaha World Herald*, "New Building Stresses Color," January 1, 1952; *Omaha World Herald*, "National Indemnity is Expanding Upward," June 24, 1966.

<sup>16</sup> National Indemnity Company, Office Building for the National Indemnity Co., architectural plans by Leo A. Daly Co. Architects, 1950.

<sup>17</sup> *Omaha World Herald*, "Site of Office is Convenient," October 14, 1950.

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article describing the finished building praised it for its “pleasing modern lines.” As a low-lying structure, the building emphasized horizontality with large expanses of green tinted windows at the first and second stories. Other exterior materials included buff brick, pink Mankato stone, clear finished aluminum and a large panel of greenstone at the west elevation. In addition to offices, the new headquarters boasted a two-story recreation room containing a basketball hoop, table tennis and pool tables, along with a snack bar area. Within the office space, movable metal walls allowed the company to easily readjust the work environment as needed. Two rooms were set aside for business machines and, although the building did not yet have an elevator, it did have a 250-pound capacity dumb waiter that serviced all three floors, including the basement.<sup>18</sup>

National Indemnity’s business continued to prosper, in step with insurance companies in Omaha, and throughout Nebraska generally. By 1960, Nebraska boasted 114 insurance companies with home offices in the state. Thirty-eight of these, including National Indemnity, were located in Omaha. While National Indemnity was not the largest of Omaha’s insurance companies – Mutual of Omaha and Woodmen of the World garnered that distinction – it was nevertheless singled out as one of seven nationally rated companies within the city.<sup>19</sup>



Figure 2: National Indemnity building after completion in 1952. Date unknown. Courtesy of National Indemnity Company.

National Indemnity may not have been the largest, but it kept up with Mutual of Omaha and Woodmen. When both started building structures and offices of their own, National Indemnity was building and growing, as well surviving and thriving into the twenty-first century right alongside the larger companies.

An *Omaha World Herald* article from 1960 noted that Nebraska was “known nationally as a center of the insurance industry,” a fairly audacious boast given the importance of the insurance industry in Hartford, Connecticut. Still, insurance companies in Omaha did experience success, and industry leaders quoted in the article speculated on the reasons for the state’s success in this particular market. One attributed it to Nebraska’s location in the Midwest, an area perceived to be stable and conservative. Another linked it to the state’s “progressive” insurance laws.<sup>20</sup> In Lawrence H. Larsen and Barbara J. Cottrell’s study of the history of Omaha, *The Gate City*, first published in 1982, the authors also assert that the strong insurance industry in Omaha and throughout Nebraska at the mid-twentieth century was linked to the state’s incredibly lenient insurance laws and pro-business regulatory agencies. Additionally, they found that insurance, like banking, was a complex industry and concentrating so many similar companies in one city had long proven practical and efficient for both the companies and their users.<sup>21</sup>

National Indemnity’s foresight that it might one day outgrow its two-story office headquarters proved correct by the latter half of the 1960s. By this point, the company had 180 employees, \$26 million in assets, and operated in 44 states. Its focus upon unusual risk insurance coverage, which made up approximately 80% of its business by this point, had earned it a reputation as the Lloyd’s of London in America, or the Midwest, depending upon who

<sup>18</sup> *Omaha World Herald*, “New Building Stresses Color,” January 1, 1952.

<sup>19</sup> *Omaha World Herald*, “114 Insurance Firms Call Nebraska ‘Home,’” January 3, 1960.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Lawrence H. Larsen and Barbara J. Cottrell, *The Gate City: A History of Omaha* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 214-215.

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was reporting on the company.<sup>22</sup> The company's continued success meant that it was no longer able to accommodate all of its employees at its headquarters. Indeed, space had become so tight that the recreation room had given way to offices at the first and second floors years before and by this point the company was also using space in two nearby buildings. In June 1966, construction began on a four-story, \$635,000 addition that would add 28,150 square feet to the top of the existing two-story building.<sup>23</sup>

The thoughtful integration of structural and design features 17 years earlier so that the building could one day accommodate an addition allowed construction to proceed without too much disruption to employees working daily in the building. At the roof, concrete was removed from the exposed columns so that new steel could be tied to them. On the interior, part of the corridor floor was chipped away to reveal the pre-framed elevator opening, and in the basement wall sections were removed to accommodate an additional boiler.<sup>24</sup> At the exterior, the new addition was designed to complement the existing building while not outright mimicking it. In contrast to the lower two stories, which favored a green and white scheme, the top four stories were given a strong black and white pattern through the use of clear finished aluminum panels and tinted dark gray windows. To tie the two parts of the building together, a solar screen of black expanded metal was added at the second floor, replacing green Venetian window blinds. The pink Mankato stone that had once graced the exterior was covered over with troweled marble and this architectural element was extended up to the top four stories. Additionally, the building went from having a low-lying horizontal appearance to a strong vertical emphasis.<sup>25</sup>

In October 1967, the completed building was one of ten throughout Omaha to receive a City Beautification Award from the Chamber of Commerce, Women's Division. A newspaper article describing the awards noted that National Indemnity and nine other buildings were selected because of their outstanding design and the improvement to their neighborhoods.<sup>26</sup>

In the midst of National Indemnity's expansion, the company received a purchase offer from Warren Buffett. The official offer was made by Berkshire Hathaway Inc., a New England textile company controlled by Warren Buffett's Buffett Partnership Ltd. but Buffett himself proposed the purchase during a private meeting with Ringwalt in January of 1967.<sup>27</sup> In late February of 1967, the *Omaha World Herald* reported that Berkshire Hathaway Inc. had made "an \$8,500,000 offer to purchase all stock of the National Indemnity Company and its companion firm, National Fire & Marine Insurance Company."<sup>28</sup> Initially Ringwalt planned to leave the company shortly after the sale went through but, he notes in his memoir, "I found Mr. Buffett to be a very considerate Chairman of the Board" and so he ended up staying with the company for many years thereafter.<sup>29</sup> Ringwalt viewed the sale as the best way to keep the company intact and in Omaha, even after his death. As he explained to a newspaper reporter, the purpose of the sale was "long term investment and not quick resale or liquidation."<sup>30</sup>

By early March 1967, the sale to Berkshire Hathaway Inc. was complete and National Indemnity became the first Omaha company invested in by a Buffett firm.<sup>31 32</sup> Under the new ownership structure, National Indemnity

<sup>22</sup> Richard Dorr, "'Unusual Risk' Ringwalt Specialty," *Omaha World Herald*, March 12, 1967; *Omaha World Herald*, "Buffett Offers \$8,500,000 for 2 Firms," February 23, 1967.

<sup>23</sup> *Omaha World Herald*, "National Indemnity is Expanding Upward," June 24, 1966.

<sup>24</sup> *Omaha World Herald*, "National Indemnity is Expanding Upward," June 24, 1966.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> *Omaha World Herald*, "Ten Buildings are Official Beauties," October 8, 1967.

<sup>27</sup> Jack Ringwalt, *Tales of National Indemnity Company and Its Founder*, 46; *Omaha World Herald*, "Buffett Offers \$8,500,000 for 2 Firms," February 23, 1967.

<sup>28</sup> *Omaha World Herald*, "Buffett Offers \$8,500,000 for 2 Firms," February 23, 1967.

<sup>29</sup> Jack Ringwalt, *Tales of National Indemnity Company and Its Founder*, 48.

<sup>30</sup> *Omaha World Herald*, "Buffett Offers \$8,500,000 for 2 Firms," February 23, 1967.

<sup>31</sup> Richard Dorr, "'Unusual Risk' Ringwalt Specialty," *Omaha World Herald*, March 12, 1967.

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continued to thrive. On July 1, 1973, Ringwalt stepped down as president and on August 31 of that same year he resigned as Director of National Indemnity, but he remained active as an insurance agent for the company until sometime before his death in 1984.<sup>33</sup> Philip Liesche, a 30-year employee of National Indemnity, succeeded Ringwalt as president.

By the late 1970s, National Indemnity had 400 employees, \$272.4 million in assets, and was licensed in 46 states. Nearly 40 years old, the company had become more conservative, no longer taking on as many risky ventures as it had during its burgeoning years or, when it did choose to do so, typically quoting a high premium. Nevertheless, National Indemnity continued to provide unusual risk insurance for certain situations where it assessed the chances of pay out to be low enough to be worth the gamble. For example, the company would insure rock concerts, so long as they took place indoors. They also insured amusement parks, traveling carnivals, and certain types of prize contests. But for the most part, the company dealt with less colorful situations by this period, including continuing to provide coverage to trucks, buses, and cars.<sup>34</sup>

The company's steady growth by the late 1970s meant that all employees were again unable to fit in the headquarters building. Instead, National Indemnity had a claims office at 4016 Farnam Street, an office for its main frame and associated programmers in a building at 2962 Harney Street, and a branch office in Los Angeles. They had also recently purchased a building directly east of the headquarters, at 3016 Harney, to gain additional space.<sup>35</sup> The company connected the main building to 3016 Harney via a breezeway at the east façade and a small one-story addition at the rear.

Today National Indemnity remains an active company and continues to be known as a provider of unusual risk insurance. The company's longevity in an uncertain industry would not have been possible without smart, bold leadership at the helm. For over three decades, Jack Ringwalt grew the company through a willingness to cover individuals and companies others would not, and through his astute ability to assess whether providing insurance to those particular people was worth the risk to his company's financial stability and longevity. His philosophy has continued to shape the company in the succeeding years, even after National Indemnity's sale to Berkshire Hathaway Inc. in 1967 and Ringwalt's own retirement from a leadership role in 1973. In 2015, National Indemnity moved its headquarters out of the building at 3024 Harney Street and into the Omaha World-Herald Building at 1314 Douglas Street. Now devoid of the activity that filled its walls for over six decades, the former National Indemnity Company Headquarters at the corner of Turner Boulevard and Harney Street nevertheless stands as an important physical reminder of the National Indemnity Company and what it accomplished during its first 75 years as a business.

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## 9. Major Bibliographic References

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

Berkshire Hathaway Inc., "Links to Berkshire Subsidiary Companies,"

<http://www.berkshirehathaway.com/subs/sublinks.html>.

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<sup>32</sup> In the coming decades, Berkshire Hathaway would go on to invest in more Omaha-based companies, including Nebraska Furniture Mart, Borsheims Fine Jewelry, Oriental Trading Company, and the Omaha World Herald. Berkshire Hathaway Inc., "Links to Berkshire Subsidiary Companies," <http://www.berkshirehathaway.com/subs/sublinks.html>.

<sup>33</sup> John Taylor, "In the Beginning, He Planted Money Here and There – and, Boy, Did It Grow!" *Omaha World Herald*, October 22, 1978; *Omaha World Herald*, "Jack Ringwalt Services Set for Tuesday," May 21, 1984.

<sup>34</sup> John Taylor, "In the Beginning, He Planted Money Here and There – and, Boy, Did It Grow!" *Omaha World Herald*, October 22, 1978.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*



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“Gala Entertainment to Precede Fireworks,” *Palladium-Item* (Richmond, Indiana), Jul. 2, 1964. Newspapers.com. Accessed Jan 12, 2017.

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*Omaha World Herald*, articles from 1930-2015.

Ringwalt, Jack. *Tales of National Indemnity Company and Its Founder* (Republished by National Indemnity Company, 1990).

Returned

**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): DO09:0210-035

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property Less than 1 acre USGS Quadrangle \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

- |    |          |                  |           |                   |
|----|----------|------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| 1. | Latitude | <u>41.256880</u> | Longitude | <u>-95.957476</u> |
| 2. | Latitude | _____            | Longitude | _____             |
| 3. | Latitude | _____            | Longitude | _____             |
| 4. | Latitude | _____            | Longitude | _____             |

OR

**UTM References**



National Indemnity Company Headquarters Douglas, Nebraska  
**Name of Property** **County and State**

Datum (indicated on USGS map): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ NAD 1927 or \_\_\_ NAD 1983

- |    |      |       |         |       |          |       |
|----|------|-------|---------|-------|----------|-------|
| 1. | Zone | _____ | Easting | _____ | Northing | _____ |
| 2. | Zone | _____ | Easting | _____ | Northing | _____ |
| 3. | Zone | _____ | Easting | _____ | Northing | _____ |
| 4. | Zone | _____ | Easting | _____ | Northing | _____ |

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

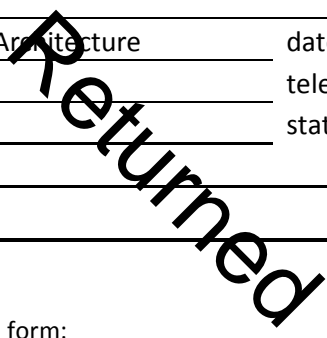
LANDS SEC-TWN-RGE 21-15-13 SUB LTS 6 & 8 TX LT 16 SE 1/4 NW 1/4 150 X 132

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary of the property follows the legally recorded boundary lines.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Caitlin Kolb  
organization Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture date October 7, 2016  
street & number 1516 Cuming Street telephone 402-341-1544  
city or town Omaha state NE zip code 68104  
email ckolb@alleypoyner.com



**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.)

**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 National Indemnity Company Headquarters  
City or Vicinity Omaha County Douglas State Nebraska  
Photographer Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture Date Photographed August 25, 2016

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

National Indemnity Company Headquarters

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1. Photograph 001: South facade. Looking northeast.
2. Photograph 002: West and South facades. Looking northeast.
3. Photograph 003: South and East facades. Looking northwest.
4. Photograph 004: North façade. Looking west.
5. Photograph 005: 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Main entry vestibule. Looking south.
6. Photograph 006: 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Lobby. Looking east.
7. Photograph 007: South stair at 1<sup>st</sup> Floor. Looking southeast.
8. Photograph 008: 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Corridor. Looking east.
9. Photograph 009: 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Enclosed office at west end. Looking west.
10. Photograph 010: 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Cafeteria. Looking east.
11. Photograph 011: 6<sup>th</sup> Floor Open office area at east end. Looking north.

**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.

Returned

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

National Indemnity Company Headquarters
Name of Property Douglas County, Nebraska
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation

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Figure 4: National Indemnity Company Headquarters Legal Boundary Map. Building is located between Farnam Street, Park Ave., Dewey Ave. and Turner Boulevard (S. 31st Street). Dashed line indicates property location. Source: Douglas County DOGIS website. <http://www.dogis.org>. Accessed October 6, 2016.

Figure 5: National Indemnity Company Headquarters Vicinity Map. Building is located between Farnam Street, Park Ave., Dewey Ave. and Turner Boulevard (S. 31st Street). Shaded area indicates location of National Indemnity Company Headquarters. Source: Digital, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Library. Lincoln, NE. 2016.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

National Indemnity Company Headquarters
Name of Property Douglas County, Nebraska
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation

Page 16



Figure 4: National Indemnity Company Headquarters Legal Boundary Map. Building is located between Farnam Street, Park Ave., Dewey Ave. and Turner Boulevard (S. 31st Street). Dashed line indicates property location. Source: Douglas County DOGIS website. <http://www.dogis.org>. Accessed October 6, 2016.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

National Indemnity Company Headquarters
Name of Property Douglas County, Nebraska
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation

Page 17

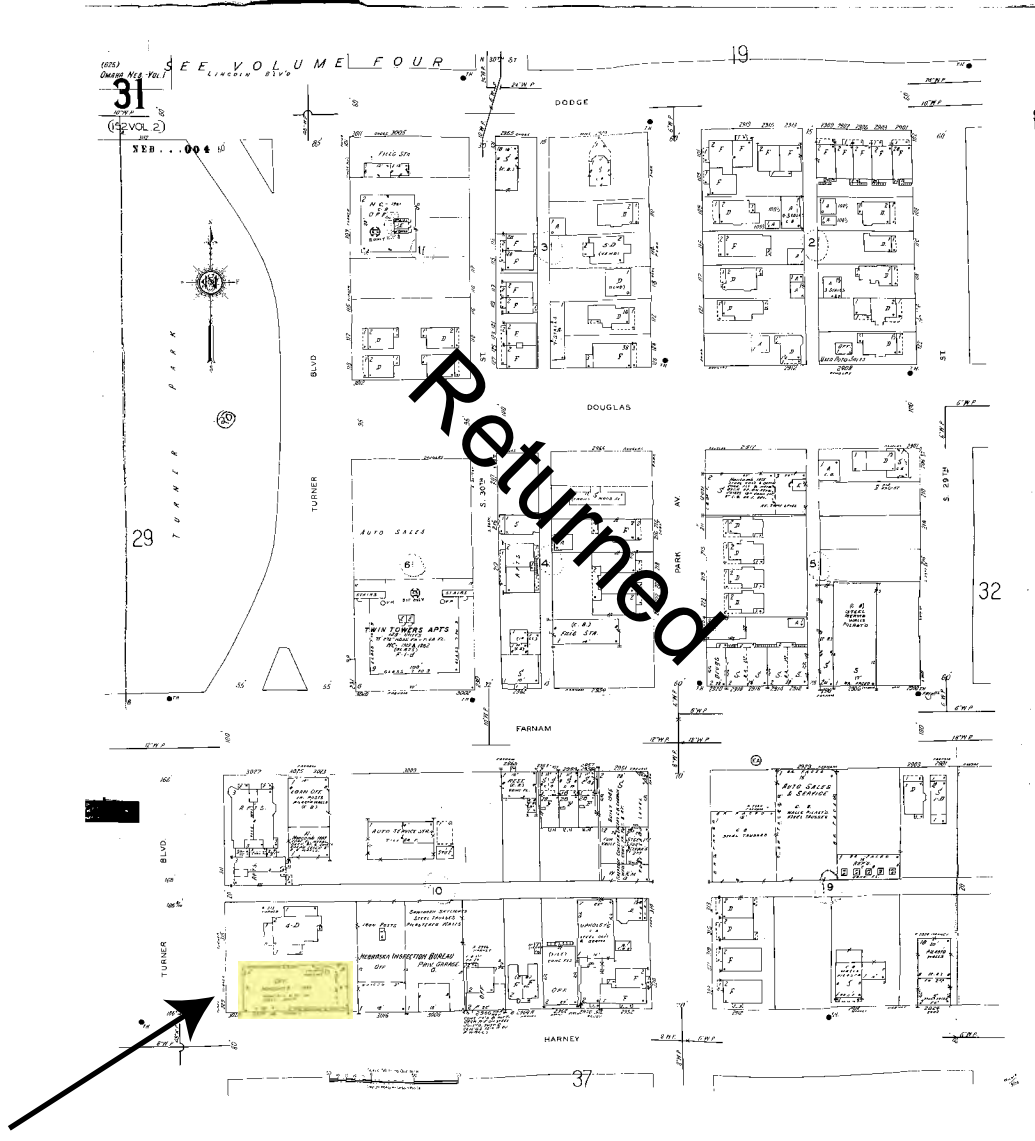


Figure 5: Sanborn Map Company. Insurance Maps for Omaha, Nebraska. 1962, Volume 1. Shaded area indicates location of National Indemnity Company Headquarters. Source: Digital, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Library. Lincoln, NE.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: National Indemnity Company Headquarters

Multiple Name: \_\_\_\_\_

State & County: NEBRASKA, Douglas

Date Received: 2/3/2017      Date of Pending List: \_\_\_\_\_      Date of 16th Day: \_\_\_\_\_      Date of 45th Day: 3/20/2017      Date of Weekly List: \_\_\_\_\_

Reference number: SG100000765

Nominator: State

Reason For Review: \_\_\_\_\_

Accept       Return       Reject      3/16/2017 Date

Abstract/Summary Return - Boundary issues  
Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Recommendation/  
Criteria Return - see comments

 3-16-2017

Reviewer Jim Gabbert      Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275      Date \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION:    see attached comments : No    see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20240

## The United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

### National Register of Historic Places Evaluation/Return Sheet

Property Name: National Indemnity Company Headquarters  
Douglas County, NE

Reference Number: 100000765

#### Reason for Return

This nomination is being returned for substantive revision. The nomination seems to indicate that there is an alley that separates the nominated building and the building to the east. Page 3 of the description notes "a non-historic elevated breezeway" that attaches both buildings. It does not note, however, the other, more substantial attachment at the rear of the alley.

It appears that the nominated building and the building to the east are functionally connected. What is the historic relationship between the two buildings? When were the attachments made? I note that the building to the east currently has a National Indemnity Company sign on the front door. Was this building historically associated with the nominated building?

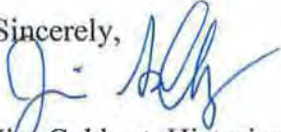
The boundaries for the nomination cannot be drawn through parts of buildings – this includes the attachments. And, if the buildings have a historic, functional association, they need to be included together. Please provide information on the building to the east, its relationship to the nominated building, and a revision of the boundaries. This would necessitate re-notification of property owners and resubmission to the state review board.

Section 3 was not checked. When resubmitted, please make sure that all appropriate boxes are checked.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this nomination and hope that you find these comments useful. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I can be reached at (202) 354-2275 or email at [James\\_Gabbert@nps.gov](mailto:James_Gabbert@nps.gov).



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jim Gabbert". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping tail.

Jim Gabbert, Historian  
National Register of Historic Places  
3/16/2017



April 17, 2017

Jim Gabbert  
NPS-National Register of Historic Places  
1849 C St. NW  
Washington D.C. 20240

Re: National Indemnity Company Headquarters

Dear Mr. Gabbert

Please accept our resubmission of the National Indemnity Company Headquarters nomination. Enclosed is a PDF copy of the revised and corrected version of the nomination.

If you have any questions regarding the submitted materials, feel free to contact me at the phone number or email address below.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jessica Fortney".

Jessica Fortney  
National Register and Historic Marker Coordinator  
Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office

Phone: 402-471-4775  
Fax: 402-471-3100  
jessica.fortney@nebraska.gov

Enclosures (1): PDF copy of the revised National Indemnity Company Headquarters nomination

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