

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

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

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

For NCRS use only

received by NCRS

date entered

1. Name

historic Colman House (JF02-4)

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 501 Lavelle Street N/A not for publication

city, town Diller N/A vicinity of congressional district First

state Nebraska code 31 county Jefferson code 095

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. and Mrs. John C. McKenna

street & number 501 Lavelle Street

city, town Diller N/A vicinity of state Nebraska

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Jefferson County Courthouse

street & number Southwest corner 5th and E Streets

city, town Fairbury state Nebraska

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date On-going federal state county local

depository for survey records Nebraska State Historical Society

city, town Lincoln state Nebraska

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent.	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date <u>N/A</u>

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Colman house is a one-and-one-half story frame dwelling, rectangular in shape and articulated by slight projections on each side. The roof is a steeply-pitch gable roof with flared eaves, as are the cross-gables over the projections. The front gable wall is highly decorated, featuring an architrave around the second story windows and a full front porch with paired columns. Stylistically the house is eclectic, with strong influences exerted by the German-American architect, W. F. Germandt. The interior is highly decorated as well with Art Nouveau paintings and stencilwork by immigrant artists Hansen and Willer.

The Colman house is an unusual one-and-one-half story frame dwelling, basically an articulated rectangle in plan with some influences of the Queen Anne in plan and form. Two slightly projecting pavilions form cross-gables in the steeply-pitched gable roof whose eaves are flared. The roof is covered with wood shingles. The walls of the house are sheathed with narrow beveled siding, except for the second story walls of the projecting pavilions, and the projecting portion of the front gable, which are covered with imbricated wood shingles.

Decorative emphasis is placed on the front (east) gable wall where a cornice returns from the flare of the eaves and is supported by a cartouche-like brackets. Small, round-arched and leaded glass windows flank the major element of the facade, a pedimented architrave supported by crocketed columns surrounding the central second story windows. A full-frontal porch supported by paired crocketed columns and featuring a modillion cornice completes the design of the front facade. Stylistically the features are eclectic, combining elements of the Neo-Classical Revival and Beaux-Arts Classicism, yet the effect is more reminiscent of the gable fronts of vernacular Renaissance derivation in the German countryside.

In plan the house is two-bays wide and rambling in its circulation pattern. Two chambers, a kitchen, dining room, living room and stairhall share the ground floor with service space which includes a bathroom, pantry and back stair. Three bedrooms, a bath and hall occupy the second floor where a small walkout is also provided in each gable end. The house is slightly smaller than would be expected for a house of this many rooms during this period.

The interior displays a foyer leading into the front parlor articulated by columns with crocketed capitals. The open staircase is adorned with a leaded glass window imported from Austria. The fireplace mantle in the parlor is also imported from Austria, and has winged griffins serving as mantle supports. Woodwork used in the interior is oak, maple and pine, some incised with classical designs including egg and dart, and bead and reel.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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The most striking feature of the house interior is the number of paintings and stencilwork found in the front parlor, dining room and library. In the front parlor, the ceiling is adorned with a central medallion of floral designs intertwined with ribbons, and a peripheral decorative band of linear ornamentation executed in soft colors of greens and apricots. Originally the walls in the parlor were painted with floral designs, ribbons and vases. Despite the layer of paint by previous owners, the outlines of these designs are visible. The present owners have made stencils of the forms and have plans to restore some of the motifs. The dining room has an intricate hand-grained parquet design on the ceiling, executed in soft wood tones, surrounded by pictorial scenes representing the four climatic seasons. Still-life scenes atop the plate rack encircle the entire room and are painted in muted colors of peach, green, and earth tones. The library ceiling (chamber) is adorned with a massive, central, symmetrical medallion with designs of ribbons, flowers and geometric shapes. The corners portray faces of women with long flowing hair, each symbolizing one of the four seasons. Colors of peach, blue, yellow and orange are used. Painted castle scenes, in the master bedroom on the second floor, are no longer extant due to water damage.

The property includes a one story frame carriage barn, now converted into a garage, with jerkinhead roof, two-over-two pane windows and shed addition (south facade). The carriage barn is located at the rear (west) of the house.

The Andrew Colman house was built by Mr. Colman in 1908-09, after his marriage to Lillie Osborne, for whom the house was built. Mr. Colman was forty years senior to his wife and chose to pamper her and make her happy in every way he could. The house was designed by architect, W. F. Gernandt, a German-American architect from Fairbury. In 1912, Charles Hansen and James Willer, from the firm of Hansen and Willer, Painters and Decorators, were hired to paint the interior of the Colman house.

The house has remained a single family dwelling throughout the years, and is in excellent condition, showing only minor alterations.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1908–09 **Builder/Architect** ~~Builder~~ W. F. Gernandt

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Colman house is significant in Nebraska architecture as a distinct and sophisticated turn of the century residence, displaying the strong influences of German-American architect W. F. Gernandt; significance in the area of art accrues as a result of the exceptionally fine stenciled and painted walls and ceilings of the house, executed by immigrant painters Hansen and Willer in the Art Nouveau style.

Andrew H. Colman was born in Noble County, Indiana in the year 1844. He came to Nebraska in 1859 and for several years was connected with a freighting company which made regular trips across the plains, including trips to Denver and Salt Lake City. Around 1865, Mr. Colman traveled to Montana to the region of Great Falls, where he was a placer miner. He then returned to Nebraska and to the present site of Diller, Jefferson County in the year 1878. Mr. Colman farmed near Diller until 1884, when he entered the lumber business. He helped to establish the Citizens State Bank in Diller in 1885 and served as its principal stockholder and president until 1932, when the bank voluntarily liquidated. At one time, Mr. Colman's land holdings grew to over 5,000 acres. His will provided for the establishment and maintenance of an orphanage for boys. In 1937–38 the Protestant Home for Boys was built as a living memorial to Andrew Colman.

The Colman house attains architectural significance as an example both typical and unique to the development of residential architecture in Nebraska during this period. Formally the house develops out of the late nineteenth century picturesque style, the Queen Anne, which was one of the most popular styles (one could say the first widely popular style) in nineteenth century Nebraska. Around the turn of the century, Classical influences reasserted themselves and with them, some tendency toward the revival of the pedimented front became evident, featuring the Beaux-arts and Neo-Classical styles. The Colman house shows influences from both, overlapping, developments.

What is unique is the manner in which architect W. F. Gernandt developed these ideas in the design of the Colman house. Emphasis on front facades is not unique but Gernandt fashioned an extremely unique and innovative facade on the Colman house. Nominally an eclectic mixture of Neo-Classical Revival and Beaux-Arts styles, the design might best be interpreted as a "free-Classical" rendition reminiscent in genre of countless symmetrically decorated gable fronts on larger houses of the Renaissance period in the German and central European countryside. The distinct character of this facade suggests that Colman gave German-American architect W. F. Gernandt considerable freedom in design decision-making.¹

9. Major Bibliographical References

UTM NOT VERIFIED
ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Diller, Nebraska

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	4	6	7	5	8	7	5	4	4	4	1	5	9	5
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

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D

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Verbal boundary description and justification

This property is located on lot 1, North 40 feet lot 2, block 12, Original Town, Diller, Nebraska; the extent of the historic property.

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

state	N/A	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Joni Gilkerson, Survey Associate; D. Murphy, Architect

organization Nebraska State Historical Society date March, 1982

street & number 1500 "R" Street telephone 471-3270

city or town Lincoln state Nebraska

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Marvin Bennett 5/13/82

title Director, Nebraska State Historical Society date

For HCPS use only

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

Delores Byers date 6/25/82

Keener of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration