

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

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

For HCERS use only

received APR 28 1980

date entered 10 900

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

**1. Name**

historic Drake Court Apartments and the Dartmore Apartments Historic District (D009:4-30)

and/or common Drake Court Apartments and the Drake Court Annex

**2. Location**

street & number 2005, 06, 11, 12, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 33, 34, 39, 40,  
45 and 46 Jones Street; 2201, 03, 05, 07, 09 & 11 Jones St not for publication

city, town Omaha vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district Second

state Nebraska code 031 county Douglas code 055

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> 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 type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: apartments

**4. Owner of Property**

name Dracor Inc.; Robert A. Rulis

street & number 701 South 22nd Street; 12815 Dewey Street

city, town Omaha, Nebraska vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state 68102; 68154

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Douglas County Courthouse

street & number 1819 Farnam

city, town Omaha state Nebraska

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Omaha City Architecture has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1977  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Landmarks, Inc.

city, town Omaha state Nebraska

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## 7. Description

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

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### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Constructed over a five year period, 1916 to 1921, the complex of nineteen apartment buildings which comprise the Drake Court and Dartmore Apartments constitutes the last consistent street architecture that Omaha has had. Designed, financed and constructed by William B. Drake's Drake Realty Construction Company at a total cost of \$810,000, the unified arrangement of these residential structures around landscaped pedestrian areas represents a total investigation of the popular domestic Georgian Revival style of architecture. The district's Georgian Revival plan is marked by regularity and exaggerated symmetry and successfully fulfills the developer's requirement to produce a cohesive and identifiable unit from the various facades.

Initial construction during 1916 and 1917 centered at 22nd and Jones Streets. There, six three-story over raised basement concrete apartment buildings were erected at a cost of \$150,000 and were arranged so that three structures aligned with the northern right-of-way of Jones Street and three with the southern. Between the red brick faced structures, a gateway filled with wrought iron and flanked by well-proportioned piers of brick allowed access to a small landscaped formal garden complete with two gazebos. The facades terminate in a well-designed white terra-cotta cornice and brick parapet which, in conjunction with the white flat-headed window frames, give pleasant relief to the red brickwork. The main central Georgian doorway is the special feature of the facade -- brick pilasters support a keystone, round arch opening above which is located a double arched window surrounded by a three-centered arched brick archivolt.

By mid 1917, the corporation had initiated the second phase of construction -- two facing four-story over raised basement apartment complexes located directly to the east of the original units. Erected at a cost of \$150,000, a large terraced formal garden separates the two continuous red brick facades. Terra-cotta embellishments are concentrated to the sun porches which encroach upon the gardens and break the smooth regularity of the facade. Again, the central doorways of the three-part facade is the major feature. Brick columns, capped with mildly Prairie Style terra-cotta, rise 1½ stories on either side of the entrance, above which is located a tripartite stained glass transom. Between the second and third stories, a Palladian terra-cotta window reflects the Georgian influence and on the fourth floor the tripartite stained glass transom is repeated in window form. The building terminates in a white terra-cotta cornice and brick parapet, which echoes the white tones of the flat-headed window frames.

During the early months of 1918, work had commenced on the construction of six additional structures to the east. Similar in arrangement and detailing to the apartments of the first phase, these structures were of four stories and contained a main central arched doorway supported by terra-cotta faced columns. Located directly above is a double arched window with a central terra-cotta column. Terraces and brick stairs occupy the public gardens between the apartments.

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In May of 1919, construction of the Dartmore Apartments began on Jones Street between 22nd and 23rd Streets. This location, west of the original complex but in line with the Drake Court structures, produced the opportunity to expand the Drake Court Complex in a westerly direction. The five four-story brick-faced structures (the Ames, Bedford, Colfax, Dupont and Emerson) employ a structural concrete floor supported by concrete block bearing walls. The main symmetrical facades contain a central vertical row of double-hung windows flanked on either side by pairs of vertical "slit" windows. The central rectangular entrance, unlike previous ones, is void of ornamentation but projecting arched canopies provide a repetitive focal point which enhances the streetscape.

One additional structure, not related to the development of Drake Court but located within the district boundaries, is a two story carriage house designed by John Latenser and constructed by McGowan and Jacobberger in 1907. The Shingle Style structure, originally part of the Fred Davis Estate at 20th and Jones Streets, is clad in a uniform covering of unpainted wood shingles from the Swedish gambrel roof to the brick first story walls. The eaves of the roof are close to the walls so as not to distract from the homogeneous and monochromatic shingle covering. The sash windows located on all facades are generally small and are grouped into twos and threes.

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ADDENDUM

Vacant land included in the nomination serves the following uses: the empty land north of the Dartmore Apartments (the five buildings at the western end) is used for parking and picnicking by apartment residents; north of the central buildings is an open green space; north of the easternmost buildings is a hard-surfaced parking lot; and to the east of the Drake Court Apartments is a formal entrance beyond which is a landscaped space meant to have six additional apartment buildings -- never erected due to lack of funds.

## 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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1916-1921

**Builder/Architect**

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The first of all apartment houses constructed in Omaha was the "Mengedoht" built in 1892 at 816 South 22nd Street, a four-story brick building of 34 units owned by Fred Mengedoht. He later built the Lorraine Apartments in 1894. Prior to the building of the Mengedoht, nearly all so-called apartments in Omaha were flats above stores, or St. Louis flats. The increasing demand for apartments produced the Sherman, Winona, Normandy and Clarinda prior to 1900 and the Colbert about 1905.

The Trans-Mississippi Exposition in Omaha in 1898 brought R. C. Strehlow who constructed a number of the exposition buildings. Mr. Strehlow later purchased a large tract of land between 16th and 18th Streets, north of Grace Street, and in 1907 started to construct a number of buildings on the beautiful grounds -- the Majestic of 28 units, the Strehlow in 1909, the Roland in 1910, the Margaret in 1916 and the Strehlow Annex in 1918, a total of 128 apartments.

Traver Brothers, contractors and real estate operators, erected a number of apartments starting with the St. Mary, 23 units in 1909; the Alsation, 12 units in 1910; the Nodway, 24 units in 1913; the Marley, 18 units in 1921; Bretner Court, 18 units in 1924; the Boulevard, 25 units in 1926; the Roycroft, 12 units in 1927; the Radcliff, 18 units in 1927; Tudor Arms, 22 units in 1929; and many smaller units. In all, nearly 200 apartment units were built by the Traver Brothers.

About 1910, V. P. Chiode built the Leone Apartments, and during the next few years the Carpathia, the Florentine and the Chiode (now renamed the Lancaster) for a total of 89 apartments in four buildings.

Hastings and Heyden built the Dewey, Idalia, Victoria, Milton, Harney, Fairview and Melrose, a total of 81 apartment units. Edward Johnson, an early builder, constructed the Chula Vista, Dwight and Knickerbocker of 12 apartments each.

While still a mechanical engineering student at Ames, Iowa, young William B. Drake dreamed of being the biggest apartment house king of the world. He and his brother George came to Omaha in about 1915 and built three houses on 28th and Farnam Streets and the Ekard Apartments on 29th and Jackson. With their profits, they organized the Drake Realty Construction Company in 1916 and purchased the S. S. Caldwell property located between 20th and 22nd Streets about 300 feet north of Leavenworth. Here they started construction in 1916 of the first building of their masterpiece, the Drake Court, and in the next three years finished the fourteen buildings which contained 216 apartment units. In late 1919, the company began construction of the Dartmore Apartments, now Drake Court Annex, on Jones Street between 22nd and 23rd Streets. Composed of five buildings, each structure contained 36 one room and bath apartments.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

# 10. Geographical Data **UTM NOT VERIFIED**

Acreeage of nominated property 5.5  
Quadrangle name Omaha North, Nebr.-Iowa **ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED** Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A	<u>1</u> <u>5</u>	<u>2</u> <u>5</u> <u>3</u> <u>3</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u> <u>8</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u>	B	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	D	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
E	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	F	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
G	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	H	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>

### Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet

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

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Robert Peters

organization Preservation Administrator date 1978

street & number 1819 Farnam telephone (402)444-5208

city or town Omaha 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 Marcin W. Knecht 10/20/80

title Director, Nebraska State Historical Society date

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

Kevin Lee Dwyer

date 11/10/80

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: William Steiner Rold

date 11/4/80

Chief of Registration

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In 1920, William Drake was the central figure in a tenant's war which attracted nationwide attention when occupants of Drake Court organized to combat a boost in the \$35 per month rent.

Employing the same plan, William Drake then built the Ainsworth, Beverly, and Windsor Arms, eleven buildings with a total 396 apartments. He next changed to the plan of a cross and built the Hanscom, four stories, and the Alhambra and Palmer, three stories, for a total of 149 apartments. Another plan built Terrace Court and Turner Court with 120 units and later a slightly larger plan produced the Austin and Carberry with 90 units. In 1922, the Drake Company was erecting apartments at the rate of one floor a week.

In addition, Drake also built for other owners the Coronado, the Elwood, Kingsborough, Ekard Court, the LaSalle and Brandon Apartments. During the ten years 1918 to 1928, this one company erected more than 1,100 apartment units of fireproof construction.

In 1925, Drake's holdings in Omaha were estimated as high as four million dollars, but in quickly erecting such a large number of apartments, he soon began to compete with himself. Financial trouble, brought on by this overbuilding, forced Drake to file for bankruptcy in 1925 and turn everything over to his creditors, including the Drake Court Apartments which he financed, built and named after the family. William B. Drake, who made and lost a fortune before he was 33 years old, died on July 27, 1935 after managing one of the smaller of his former apartments, the Brandon.

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ADDENDUM

The Drake Court and Dartmore Apartment Buildings are architecturally significant as being a chronicle of stylistic trends in the Midwest during their five-year period of construction. They exist as a fusion of restrained Georgian Revival\* and Prairie School features -- neither style prevailing -- and are linked visually by siting, materials, scale, and design.

William B. Rhoads writes: "In the Midwest the Colonial Revival became the dominant residential style by 1924 despite the efforts of Wright and a few others to institute a new architecture. The various phases of the revival came to the region from the East after a short time lag" (The Colonial Revival, Vol. I, p. 314). Colonial/Georgian Revival features, such as classical round-arched opening treatments, symmetry, and stone stringcourses, appear on the Drake Court buildings, but the products are by no means imitations of late-18th- and early-19th-century American architecture: strongly in the Prairie School vein are the entrance-flanking piers on the central complexes of Drake Court (see photo 7); the piers are akin to those same features on William Drummond's 1908 First Congregational Church in Austin, Illinois (illustrated in Western Architect in 1915); and the organic terra-cotta ornamentation in the piers' uppermost section virtually reproduces the pier ornamentation on Purcell, Feick, and Elmslie's 1912 Merchant Bank of Winona, Minnesota (also illustrated in Western Architect in 1915). Also, the pristine massing reveals a Prairie influence, especially in the later Dartmore Apartments, where ornamentation is limited to inserted stone blocks and shaped parapets with stone coping.

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\* Also called the Colonial Revival in an equally popular manner.

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Whiffen, Marcus. American Architecture Since 1780, A Guide to the Styles,  
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ADDENDUM

Rhoades, William B. The Colonial Revival. New York: Garland  
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Beginning at the northwest corner of Lot 7 of Clarkson Place Addition, an addition to the City of Omaha as surveyed, platted and recorded in Douglas County, Nebraska, thence easterly 310.59 feet along the north lines of Lots 7 through 12 of said Clarkson Place, thence southerly along the west right-of-way line of 20th Street a distance of 361.23 feet, thence west along a line 153.56 feet north of and parallel to the north line of Leavenworth Street to the east right-of-way line of 22nd Street, thence south along said right-of-way line a distance of 55.06 feet, thence west along a line 103.5 feet north of and parallel to the north line of Leavenworth Street a distance of 313.5 feet, thence north to the southeast corner of Lot 5 of Hillcrest Addition, an addition to the City of Omaha as surveyed, platted and recorded in Douglas County, Nebraska, thence east 247 feet to the west right-of-way line of 22nd Street, thence north 40.62 feet, thence east 367.85 feet, thence north to the point of beginning.