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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

SEP 17 1990

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Swinford Townhouses and Apartments
other names/site number The Swinford

2. Location

street & number 1213-1221, 1225 Hawthorne Ave.
city, town Minneapolis
state Minnesota code MN county Hennepin code 053 zip code 55403

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private (checked), public-local, public-State, public-Federal
Category of Property: building(s) (checked), district, site, structure, object
Number of Resources within Property: Contributing (3), Noncontributing (0), Total (3)

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 (checked) does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of certifying official: Ian R. Stewart, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Minnesota Historical Society
Date: 9/9/90

In my opinion, the property meets (checked) does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official:
Date:
State or Federal agency and bureau:

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
entered in the National Register. (checked) See continuation sheet.
determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
determined not eligible for the National Register.
removed from the National Register.
other, (explain:)
Signature of the Keeper: Beth Boland
Date of Action: 10/25/90

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Multiple dwellingDOMESTIC/Secondary Structure

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Multiple dwellingDOMESTIC/Vacant**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN/RenaissanceLATE VICTORIAN/Renaissance Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE/Limestonewalls BRICKTERRA COTTAroof ASPHALT

other \_\_\_\_\_

**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

This registration form consists of three separate buildings and one structure (all contributing elements) located at the corner of Hawthorne Ave. and 13th St. N. near downtown Minneapolis. Two complementary, late-1800s buildings erected eleven years apart which share common construction materials, design purpose, and a cobbled courtyard form the nucleus of the site. Built in 1886, the three-story, red brick, Renaissance style Swinford Townhouses face northwest and are separated by an alley to the southwest from the 1897 Swinford Apartments, a four-story, brick and stone Renaissance Revival building with Richardsonian Romanesque characteristics. In the courtyard behind these buildings is a one-story brick structure that originally served as a heating plant for the townhouses and apartments; attached to the plant is a 70-foot high brick smokestack. A chain link fence surrounds the property to the east and northeast.

Located at 1213-1221 Hawthorne Ave., the Swinford Townhouses are set back about thirty feet on a slight incline that slopes down to the street. They were built in rowhouse fashion based on the design of Minneapolis architects Hodgson and Son as five, identical, three-story brick, stone and terra-cotta units in the Renaissance style.

The Townhouses are set upon a rough, red limestone block foundation and have rusticated stone jointing with quoins along the first level. Each unit is accessed by two sets of concrete steps that lead up to an aluminum and glass transomed entry (altered in ca.1975) defined by a smooth stone lintel. The first level has two types of window treatment: the two fixed, three-light end windows are trimmed with a rough stone surround, while the innermost windows are capped by a guilloched lintel. A rough stone beltcourse marks the beginning of the second story. This floor is unified by the symmetrical treatment of double hung windows of alternating size and corresponding trim. Each opening is flanked by richly decorated terra-cotta voluted pilasters that form a row of double engaged piers, and support a heavy cornice with twining stem molding. As originally constructed, an ornamental iron balcony extended above each entry, but these were removed at an undetermined date. The top level is applied to the shingled mansard roof, and is the most decorative portion of the building. In concert with the first two floors, there are arched dormer windows with fanlights, flanked by voluted pilasters, and capped by alternating round and triangular florally detailed pediments. Each townhouse has a decorative and massive brick chimney that rises about ten feet above the roof line and delineates each unit. The northeast and southwest sides are unbroken. The

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rear elevation has two second story, 1/1 double hung windows, one on the first floor, and a door to an attached wood frame porch with turned posts and open railing. Two porches have smaller shed roofs, and the remaining three are hipped.

Just as the exterior of each townhouse is identical, the interior of every unit was originally the same. The floor plan consisted of an entry hall preceded by a double door vestibule. In the hall was a three-storied open staircase lit by a large skylight. To the right of the hall were two parlors, a dining room with fireplace, "L"-shaped butler's pantry, and kitchen. Directly behind the hall was a small library. The second floor had bedrooms and a sitting room off the hallway, with a second staircase rising from the butler's pantry. The third level was occupied by a nursery and maid's quarters. Although the townhouses have been subdivided into smaller private apartments, the room arrangements and most historic fabric have remained intact.

Erected in 1897 in a "C" plan, the four-story, 80' x 153' Swinford Apartments represent an eclectic style of architecture typical of its designer, Harry Wild Jones. In contrast to the smaller and richly-decorated Swinford Townhouses, the Apartment complex combines the massiveness of Richardsonian style with Classical and Renaissance elements. The building stands upon a coursed, red limestone block foundation with its facades orientated toward both streets, and has a full height, round corner bay, double hung windows, and distinctive limestone belt-courses. Rusticated brick encircles the primary facades of the entire first floor, while the terra-cotta window trim is treated in such a manner that the textural ornamentation of the facades decreases with each story. Large, two-story entrances on Hawthorne Ave. and 13th St. N. are decorated with iron grillwork, an architrave with "THE SWINFORD" carved inside, six diminutive open-mouth lion heads, and a bulls-eye, all supported by polished marble, engaged Ionic columns crowned by a semicircular crest-embellished pediment. A two-story bay is located at the northeast corner, and a fully extended bay with four large arched balconies, Palladian windows, and chimney flutes faces 13th St. N. A prominent cornice caps the building with terra-cotta dentils, egg and dart molding, heavy brackets, and small, open mouth lions heads identical to those along the entrances. Most of the Swinford Apartments Classical and Renaissance terra-cotta elements were obtained from catalogues as Jones was known to rely on this source for his architectural detailing.

Buff-colored brick is used in the northeast wall, which features two oriels and double hung windows with segmental brick lintels, and rough-faced limestone sills. A large double door with an 18-light transom (partially infilled with a single door at an undetermined date) faces the service courtyard, above which is a three-tiered fire escape. The rear elevation has four rows of double hung sash on each floor. All windows on the Townhouse and Apartments are the original 1/1 with aluminum storm additions.

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The interior of the Swinford Apartments reveals its elegant past with the use of quality materials upon a design of gracious proportions and grand scale. The entrance foyer has a tile floor with the design of a flowering letter "S" for Swinford, granite, dark wood, and terra-cotta wainscoting carved with Greek fret and egg and dart motifs, four sets of stained glass windows above the door, and a dark wooden beam ceiling inset with leaded glass and delicate classical details in plaster. The foyer adjoins the upper floors by an open walled circular staircase which rolls upward in one continuous and graceful curve, its entire path lit by original glass skylights above the fourth floor.

The apartments were originally designed as eight to twelve room units, four apartments to each floor, with the caretaker's flat in the courtyard powerhouse. The largest units had four bedrooms, a bath, butler's pantry, kitchen, dining room, drawing room, reception room and hall, and servant's quarters. Smaller apartments were arranged for "bachelors." The units have fewer rooms today due to alterations dividing the building into forty-nine apartments, yet the rooms themselves have been largely unaltered. They evoke a sense of time from the quality of materials and spacious proportions. There are wooden floors and built-ins, tall ceilings, arched openings with balconies, and large windows which lend spectacular vistas of downtown Minneapolis.

Built in 1897, the former heating plant and caretaker's residence is a small, one-story, rectangular-shaped brick building with a flat roof and canted corners. It is symmetrically arranged with a door and four tiny 1/1 double hung windows along the facade, and three window openings along the back. The northeast side wall is unbroken, while the southwest elevation has two double hung windows. All windows are 1/1 sash with segmental brick lintels and stone sills. Slight corbeling and raised headers highlight the simple cornice. Extending from the north side of the heating plant is the original, octagonally-shaped brick smokestack.

**8. Statement of Significance**

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

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

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

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

1886  
1897  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

1886  
1897  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder

Hodgson and Son, architects, townhouses  
Jones, Harry W., architect, apartments  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

The Swinford Townhouses and Apartments are significant as outstanding illustrations of the French Renaissance and Renaissance Revival architectural styles, and as early examples of inner-city residences for the well-to-do, a type of housing that did not gain favor in Minneapolis until the early 1900s, and of which few extant buildings remain today.

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Minneapolis grew at a dramatic rate and experienced considerable commercial and residential construction in and around the downtown area. As the city expanded, land surrounding the business district became increasingly popular for the wealthy to build sprawling Victorian period mansions. The area south of the city center around Hawthorn Park soon established a reputation as an exclusive and comfortable neighborhood for the city's elite. Numerous churches, the city library, and a new YMCA all were located along fashionable Hennepin Ave. within a few blocks of Hawthorn Park. A short distance to the south was Loring (formerly Central) Park, which had two ponds and formed the eastern edge of what would become an extensive urban parkway system beginning in the Kenwood Addition, one of the city's first lake developments platted in 1880.

When they were constructed in 1886 and 1897, the Swinford Townhouses and Apartments were considered the vanguard of contemporary luxury living in Minneapolis. The buildings faced directly onto picturesque Hawthorne Park and occupied prime land immediately south of the city center. Prior to their erection, prominent Minneapolitans expressed a lifestyle of wealth and leisure through massive and ornate single family dwellings. But by the late 1800s the nation had embraced the technological advances and efficient organization of domestic chores common to apartment house living. The Townhouses featured a fireplace - considered to be a classic symbol of domesticity - in the dining room, while each unit isolated the family from household drudgery, locating the maid's quarters on the top floor, and the butler's pantry at the rear of the building adjacent to the kitchen. In this way, Townhouse dwellers could devote more time to the pleasures of home, as a higher percentage of floor space was given over to rooms for entertaining. Residents in the Swinford Apartments similarly utilized numerous rooms in which to socialize with

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selected neighbors and friends.

Both buildings relied on architectural elegance and luxurious decors to make a statement about the tenants and their homes, although aesthetic propriety was not limited to interior decoration. The Townhouses were executed in the French Renaissance style, a design noted for textural richness. The architecture of the Renaissance illustrated by the Townhouses emphasized distinctive horizontal divisions, rusticated masonry on lower floors, an abundance of richly detailed ornamentation, and wall and roof dormers. While the Renaissance was a common style for American residential construction in the late 1800s, few examples exist in Minneapolis, and certainly no other town house in the state exemplifies this design with more exuberant terra-cotta detailing than the Swinford. The Swinford Apartment building combines Richardson's emphasis on solidity and massiveness (seen in the heavy limestone foundation, large corner bay, arched openings, and stone beltcourses) with Classical and Renaissance features such as external and internal ornamentation, elaborate entrances and porch-support columns, rusticated surfaces, double hung windows, and a dentiled cornice.

Historical sources reveal little about Edgar J. Hodgson (ca.1854-1916), an architect who practiced in St. Paul for two years with the firm of Hodgson, Wallingford and Stem, and from 1886-1890 as Hodgson and Stem. Hodgson was associated with W.T. Welter from Helena, Montana between ca.1885-90, at which time Hodgson designed the Lewis and Clark County Courthouse (1885-86) and the Original Governor's Mansion (1888, NRHP). In Minneapolis he engaged in private practice during the first decade of the twentieth century, although the extent of his designs remains obscure.

Harry Wild Jones was a well known turn-of-the-century Minneapolis architect who gained respect for designs which combined a variety of popular architectural styles. He practiced in the Twin Cities from 1884-1918 and taught architecture at the University of Minnesota between 1891-93. Among Jones' more notable works are the Minnesota Yacht Club Clubhouse (destroyed by fire in ca.1940), the Washburn Water Tower, and the Butler Brothers Warehouse (1906, NRHP). The Lakewood Cemetery Chapel (1908, NRHP) is considered by many to be his magnum opus. Jones also designed numerous private residences in Minneapolis during the late 1800s and early 1900s including 325 and 411 Clifton Ave. (1904, 1896) and 2112 Kenwood Pkwy. (1892), as well as the Oakland Flats (1888) and Colonial Apartments (1895).

Despite minor alterations, both the Swinford Townhouses and Apartments represent a distinctive type of turn-of-the-century multi-family housing uncommon in Minneapolis. While other examples of upper class urban apartments remain in the city, all have lost their architectural integrity by alterations or recent additions. Owners of the Swinford buildings plan to rehabilitate the Townhouses and Apartments in 1988 to reflect their original opulence and appeal.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

- Atwater, Isaac. History of Minneapolis. Vol. 2. New York: Munsell and Co., 1893.
- Hudson, Horace B. Half Century of Minneapolis. Minneapolis: The Hudson Publishing Co., 1908.
- Wright, Gwendolyn. Building the Dream. New York: Pantheon Books, 1981.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property Less than one

UTM References

A 1,5 4,7,7,7,8,0 4,9,8,0,0,2,0  
 Zone Easting Northing

B           
 Zone Easting Northing

C         

D         

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is the northwest 153 feet of City Lots 3, 4 and 5 of Block 11 of Harmon's Addition.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes those portions of the city lots that have historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Michael Koop

organization N/A date 27 January 1988

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city or town Minneapolis state MN zip code 55413