

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Nebraska	
COUNTY: Lancaster	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 69-1026-0010	DATE 10/15/69

1. NAME

COMMON:
City Hall

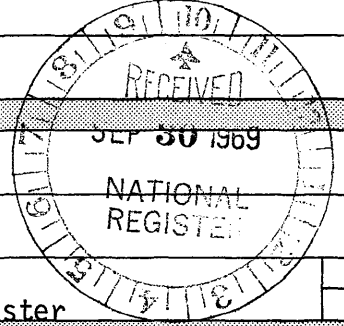
AND/OR HISTORIC:
U.S. Post Office and Court House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
920 "O" Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Lincoln

STATE: Nebraska CODE: 26 COUNTY: Lancaster CODE: 109



3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes: Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/>	Private <input type="checkbox"/>	Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/>	Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/>
Object <input type="checkbox"/>	Both <input type="checkbox"/>	Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/>	Government <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Park <input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Comments <input type="checkbox"/>
Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	Industrial <input type="checkbox"/>	Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/>
Educational <input type="checkbox"/>	Military <input type="checkbox"/>	Religious <input type="checkbox"/>	
Entertainment <input type="checkbox"/>	Museum <input type="checkbox"/>	Scientific <input type="checkbox"/>	

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNERS NAME:
City of Lincoln

STREET AND NUMBER:
920 "O" Street

CITY OR TOWN: Lincoln STATE: Nebraska CODE: 26

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
County Clerk, County-City Building

STREET AND NUMBER:
555 South 10th Street

CITY OR TOWN: Lincoln STATE: Nebraska CODE: 26

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: one acre

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Nebraska
COUNTY: Lancaster
ENTRY NUMBER
DATE

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Fair <input type="checkbox"/>	Deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/>	Ruins <input type="checkbox"/>	Unexposed <input type="checkbox"/>
INTEGRITY	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	Altered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unaltered <input type="checkbox"/>		Moved <input type="checkbox"/>	Original Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

City Hall was originally built by the federal government as Lincoln's U.S. Post Office and Court House on the south half of Block 43. The building's principal (south) elevation faces Lincoln's main street, "O" Street. While excavation work began in May, 1874, construction evidently did not begin until early 1876. Although the exterior was substantially finished in 1877, the building was not entirely completed until early 1879. The north half of Block 43 served as a park until the early 1900's. In 1906 Lincoln's second (and present) U.S. Post Office and Court House was completed on the northeast quarter of Block 43. Extended to the west in 1915 and again in 1941, this second building is to be replaced in the early 1970's by a third post office now under construction on another site. The first post office has served as Lincoln's City Hall since 1906, when the south half of Block 43 was sold to the city for \$50,000.

A landmark in Nebraska's capital city since the 1970's, City Hall now faces an uncertain future. In March, 1969, all municipal offices moved out of City Hall and into Lincoln's newly completed County-City Building at 555 S. Tenth Street. Lincoln's Probation Department has since moved into City Hall. However, the City of Lincoln has adopted no long-range plans concerning the building's use, and, although it is still structurally sound, City Hall remains under the threat of demolition. Under the provisions of a 1906 deed, the City Hall property will revert to federal ownership unless the building and its site continue to be used for municipal purposes.

City Hall is built of brick and faced with Nebraska limestone. Excluding the basement, it is a four story, rectangular structure, measuring 60 by 90 feet. Many interior alterations have been made since 1879, although still intact are the ornamental cast iron stairways and much of the fine original "Gothic" woodwork, mostly formed of Indiana ash. Relatively few exterior changes have been made. These include the conversion of several door openings into windows (using compatible materials), the installation of new roofing material, and the removal of some iron cresting and some stone cornice brackets.

Although the building incorporates some Second Empire elements, City Hall is primarily High Victorian (or "Ruskinian") Gothic in style. The design avoids the excessive polychromatic exuberance often associated with this latter style. A polytextural quality is substituted for polychromy, with rough quarry-faced ashlar body stone of various sizes juxtaposed against smooth-faced stone arches and stringcourses.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

X

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Pre-Columbian 16th Century 18th Century 20th Century
 15th Century 17th Century 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

1874-1879

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Aboriginal <input type="checkbox"/>	Education <input type="checkbox"/>	Political <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Urban Planning <input type="checkbox"/>
Prehistoric <input type="checkbox"/>	Engineering <input type="checkbox"/>	Religion/Philosophy <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Historic <input type="checkbox"/>	Industry <input type="checkbox"/>	Science <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Land settlement and development</u>
Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/>	Invention <input type="checkbox"/>	Sculpture <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Art <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Landscape <input type="checkbox"/>	Social/Humanitarian <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Commerce <input type="checkbox"/>	Architecture <input type="checkbox"/>	Theater <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Communications <input type="checkbox"/>	Literature <input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Conservation <input type="checkbox"/>	Military <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Music <input type="checkbox"/>		

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)

Built from 1874-79, City Hall is a fine example of High Victorian Gothic architecture, and its importance is enhanced by the rarity of such examples on the Great Plains. One of downtown Lincoln's oldest buildings, City Hall is perhaps Lincoln's finest remaining example of nineteenth century architecture. It was begun only seven years after the 1867 establishment of Nebraska as a state and Lincoln as its capital. The completed structure cost about \$200,000, a large federal expenditure on a town with 1875 population of only 7,000. With much truth, A. T. Andreas' 1882 History of Nebraska boasts that "instead of the borrowed cabin of the pioneer, we have the most imposing post office west of the Mississippi River, with the exception of St. Louis and San Francisco... an eloquent monument to the present and prospective character of the State." A U.S. Land Office was located in the building from 1878 to 1906. Here some five million acres in southern Nebraska were claimed under the Homestead Act.

City Hall's distinction also derives from the fact that two of the most influential American architects of the late nineteenth century supervised its design: Alfred B. Mullett (1834-1890) and William Appleton Potter (1842-1909). Initial plans for the building were prepared under the direction of Mullett as Supervising Architect of the U.S. Treasury Department from 1865-1874. Among Mullett's most famous designs is the 1871-75 Executive Office Building in Washington, D.C. In May, 1874, Mullett visited Lincoln to supervise initial work on City Hall. In January, 1875, he was succeeded as Supervising Architect of the Treasury by W. A. Potter, who served in this post for only twelve months. Early Lincoln newspaper references suggest that Potter, not Mullett, was responsible for the final City Hall designs. The extent of Potter's involvement is uncertain. Possibly the mansard roof and the building's overall box-like massing and symmetrical articulation stem from the Mullett plan. However, very likely the Gothic ornamentation derives entirely from Potter's revisions, as suggested both by an 1874 "Birds Eye View" of Lincoln, which shows the "Proposed U.S. Post Office" without Gothic detailing, and by the close similarity of the City Hall exterior to the Gothicized treatment of Potter's post offices at Nashville (Tennessee), Evansville (Indiana), and Covington (Kentucky). While Mullett favored the mansarded French Second Empire style as Supervising Architect, Potter emphasized Gothic forms in his official designs in 1875. Indeed, during the 1870's, Potter was one of America's foremost exponents of the

(CONTINUED)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

②
X
X
X

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

A. T. Andreas (publisher), History of the State of Nebraska, 1882.
 Montgomery Schuyler, "The Work of William Appleton Potter," Architectura Record, vol. XXVI, September, 1909.
State Journal (Lincoln), 1874-79.
 Files, Nebraska State Historical Society.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN ONE ACRE		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		40° 48' 50"	96° 42' 27"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
 John Q. Magie, Curator of History

ORGANIZATION: Nebraska State Historical Society

DATE: August 22, 1969

STREET AND NUMBER:
 1500 "R" Street

CITY OR TOWN: Lincoln

STATE: Nebraska

CODE: 26

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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 National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name Marcus D. Knell

Title Director, Nebraska State Hist Soc

Date Sept. 22, 1969

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Ernest Allen Connally
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

OCT 15 1969

Date _____

ATTEST:
William J. Sawley
 Keeper of The National Register

Date OCT 6 1969

NO
 UTM
 CD

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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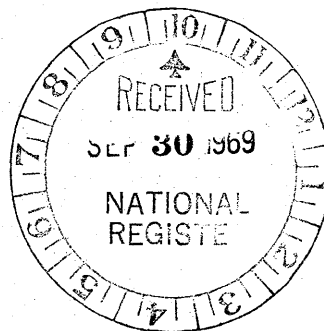
(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Nebraska	
COUNTY Lancaster	
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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
69-10-26-0010	10/15/69

(Number all entries)

CITY HALL

8. High Victorian Gothic style, purportedly introduced to America from England in the late 1850's by his brother, architect Edward T. Potter. Today, W. A. Potter is perhaps best known for his late nineteenth century churches, including several in the New York City area.



Form 10-301
(Dec. 1968)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM**

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

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AND/OR HISTORIC:		U.S. Post Office and Court House	
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
920 0 Street			
CITY OR TOWN:			
Lincoln			
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Nebraska	26	Lancaster	109
3. MAP REFERENCE			
SOURCE:			
U.S.G.S. 7½', quadrangle Lincoln			
SCALE:			
1: 24,000			
DATE:			
1964			
4. REQUIREMENTS			
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS			
1. Property boundaries where required.			
2. North arrow.			
3. Latitude and longitude reference.			

