

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED	NOV 9 1976
DATE ENTERED	DEC 12 1976

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC The Lexington *W-*

AND/OR COMMON
Lexington Apartments

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
1721 Pleasant Street

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN
Des Moines

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Fourth

STATE
Iowa

___ VICINITY OF
CODE

COUNTY
Polk

CODE
1502

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"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: apartments

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Carl Mahnke

STREET & NUMBER
1721 Pleasant Street

CITY, TOWN
Des Moines

___ VICINITY OF

STATE
Iowa

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Polk County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
Des Moines

STATE
Iowa

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

___ FEDERAL ___ STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

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 DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Lexington is a five story apartment building, 45' x 110', on a raised basement. It is constructed of dark red flint paving brick, laid in a running bond, with stone trim. The symmetrical facade is broken by four, 5-story bays.

Windows are treated in a variety of shapes and sizes. Some are rectangular, others tripled within wide, segmental arches, still others set in Romanesque arches with keystones. There are three stone stringcourses, and a wide, Colonial Revival cornice.

The entrance is also Colonial Revival in style. The recessed door with arched fanlight is set within a compound, rounded arch with keystone. Flanking engaged columns support a pediment in a variation of the Roman Doric style. Above the entrance are two small balconies with wrought-iron railings.

The interior is divided into twelve apartments, two per floor. Few alterations have occurred in their basic plan, which included a living room, dining room, two bedrooms, a sleeping porch, bath, kitchen and servants' quarters. The main rooms have woodwork, flooring and trim of quarter-sawed oak; birch trim and flooring is featured in other rooms.

A very special feature of this building is the large, open-cage brass elevator which serves all tenants. The elaborate metal work exhibits a variety of detail, including egg-and-dart and bead-and-reel molding, Greek frets, fleurs-de-lis, and monograms.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input 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 1908

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Fred Weitz

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Lexington is particularly significant for its application of 18th-century domestic architectural style to a new (in 1908) building form. Not only was this the first "high-rise" apartment building in Des Moines, but it included a number of important innovations for the comfort of tenants. Most prominent was the open-cage, "boyless" elevator, its system of automatic operation without the traditional attendant a startling new feature in the city. Another pleasing element was the high-quality soundproofing, which ended the traditional problems of noise from neighbors. Servants' quarters were popular with the tenants, until live-in maids became a thing of the past, and their rooms converted to studies, extra bedrooms, or other uses.

The handsome facade and roomy, warm interior have contributed to the exceedingly low turnover in the apartments. The present owner, whose family built this and three other apartment buildings in Des Moines, has said that in one 20-year period, not a tenant was lost, unless it was because they had died or moved away from the city. Alterations have been made to the apartments over the years, to suit the pleasure and convenience of the individual tenants, but these have generally been minor, and the exterior remains unchanged.

The architect and builder, Fred Weitz (1868-1935) built many other buildings in Des Moines, as well as in other states. Among his Des Moines structures are the Des Moines City Hall, the Fort Des Moines Hotel, the Valley Bank, and the Drake University Field House and Stadium.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Des Moines Tribune, 16 June, 1976, p. 1.
Des Moines Register and Leader, 11 September, 1908.
Des Moines Evening Tribune, 27 March 1909.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre
UTM REFERENCES

A	1,5	4,4,6,6,1,0	4,6,0,4 ^{2,4} 2,6,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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	Carl Mahnke	Jack C. Porter, Foundation for Historic Cons.
ORGANIZATION		DATE
STREET & NUMBER	1721 Pleasant Street	216 Davidson Building
CITY OR TOWN	Des Moines	Des Moines Iowa

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE *Adrian A. Pedersen*

TITLE Director, Historic Preservation DATE 11/2/76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Wayne A. ... DATE 12/10/96

ATTEST: *...* DATE 12/8/76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER