1. **Name**
   - **Common:** Tires Inc. Warehouse
   - **And/or Historic:** Christian Specht Building

2. **Location**
   - **Street and Number:** 1110 Douglas Street
   - **City or Town:** Omaha
   - **State:** Nebraska

3. **Classification**
   - **Category (Check One):**
     - District
     - Site
     - Structure
     - Object
   - **Ownership:**
     - Public
     - Private
     - Both
   - **Public Acquisition:**
     - In Process
     - Being Considered
   - **Status:** Occupied
   - **Accessible to the Public:** Yes
     - Restricted
     - Unrestricted
     - No
   - **Present Use (Check One or More as Appropriate):**
     - Agricultural
     - Commercial
     - Educational
     - Military
     - Entertainment
     - Government
     - Industrial
     - Museum
     - Park
     - Private Residence
     - Religious
     - Other (Specify)

4. **Owner of Property**
   - **Owner's Name:** Tires Inc.
   - **Street and Number:** 1102 Douglas Street
   - **City or Town:** Omaha
   - **State:** Nebraska

5. **Location of Legal Description**
   - **Courtthouse, Registry of Deeds, Etc.:** Register of Deeds, Douglas County Courthouse
   - **Street and Number:** 18th and Farnam Streets
   - **City or Town:** Omaha
   - **State:** Nebraska
   - **Code:** 31

6. **Representation in Existing Surveys**
   - **Title of Survey:** Historic Preservation in Nebraska
   - **Date of Survey:** 1971
     - Federal
     - State
     - County
     - Local
   - **Depository for Survey Records:** Nebraska State Historical Society
   - **Street and Number:** 1500 "R" Street
   - **City or Town:** Lincoln
   - **State:** Nebraska
   - **Code:** 31
The Christian Specht Building was erected in 1884 by Christian Specht, owner of Western Cornice Works and manufacturer of metallic and galvanized iron cornices. The iron front was designed by Dufrene & Mendelssohn, the most noted Omaha architects of the time. It was then manufactured in Mr. Specht's foundry with galvanized iron.

The building has a frontage of twenty-two feet facing south on Douglas Street. It has a total of three stories with the staircase in the back part. Erected as a commercial warehouse type building, it has a completely open plan in all three floors. Besides the galvanized-iron store front, the structure is brick and the wood panel floors are supported on wood joists. The architectural style is the north Italian mode of Renaissance Revival. There are three bays of arched windows alternated by Corinthian columns on all levels. The two corners of the facade are defined by more massive iron pilasters. Belt courses separate each story and ornamental elements of slightly differing patterns are used in each story. A cornice crowns the building effecting a strong contrast of light and shade. Above the cornice there was an ornate balustraded parapet which has been removed.

The interior has not gone through much remodeling and is in good condition. A freight elevator was installed at the back for warehouse use. The iron front has been painted over many times and the paint is peeling. Some wood-panel soffits under the architraves are deteriorating. The iron fronts on upper levels are tilting slightly to the west.
With the coming of the Industrial Revolution, use of cast-iron was introduced into the field of architecture. The high strength, light weight, and minimal size of cast-iron structural members gained high popularity in the building industry. Esthetically, ornamental elements of the time could be cast with iron to the utmost detail with sharp outline and a high degree of accuracy. Duplication of the ornament was also fast and economical by simply using the same mould again. Cast-iron store front was a product combining traditionalism in ornament with radical innovation in structure. The whole iron front could be prefabricated in the foundry and assembled on site, thus speeding up the time of construction of the building. The slim size of the columns and large span of iron beams enabled maximum glass area for display of merchandise and the glass industry is thus stimulated.

It was not in America but in Europe that the greatest masterpieces of iron construction of the 1850's were built. Yet Great Britain and Europe saw few all-iron building facades. This was in large part due to the danger of iron member's collapse at exposure to the extreme heat of urban conflagrations. This hazard, however, was only made real to America by the fires in Boston and Chicago in the 1870's.

The cast-iron front made its debut in a building at Pottsville, Pennsylvania, designed by John Haviland in 1830. From 1850-1880, the so-
Significance (cont'd)
called "cast-iron age", commercial buildings with cast-iron fronts were constructed throughout the United States. These early cast-iron fronts were very fresh and straightforward in their design, showing a direct grasp of the functions that had to be fulfilled. They were logical and expressive in the way the attenuated Grecian Doric columns and flat entablatures were used to form an external frame. Often they were erected by the foundries which produced their parts, with no architects taking a share in the work. Later the facade designs were handled by architects. The design became richer and heavier, generally with Renaissance or Baroque arcading. A bristling profusion of engaged columns, panels, arch mouldings and keystones, knobby pedestal and entablature blocks, statues and powerful consoles gave it an excessively agitated appearance. Something of this restlessness, which perhaps reflects a struggle of the picturesque taste against confining rectangularity, continued to characterize iron-fronted buildings well into the 1880's.

By the time steel-frame and concrete buildings were developed, iron-fronts were obsolete. The Christian Specht Building is a rare specimen still in use today.
Files; Nebraska State Historical Society
Giedion, S. Space, Time and Architecture.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

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APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1/16 acres

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

STATE: CODE COUNTY: CODE
STATE: CODE COUNTY: CODE
STATE: CODE COUNTY: CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Persis Kolberg, Curator of Historic Sites
ORGANIZATION: Nebraska State Historical Society
STREET AND NUMBER: 1500 "R" Street
CITY OR TOWN: Lincoln
STATE: Nebraska CODE: 31

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 [x] Local [ ]

Name ___________________________
Title Director, Nebraska State Historical Society
Date ___________________________
South façade, looking north. Date: 1971 (NSHS H673.5-3387)
Detail of south façade, looking north. Date: 1971 (NSHS H673-5:3392)

South & west facades, looking northeast. Date: 1971 (NSHS H673-5:3392)