1. Name of Property

historic name    Traver Brothers Row Houses Historic District
other names/site number Traverhurst Apartments

2. Location

street & number    2601-2607 Jones St and 651-672 South 26th Avenue
                      ______________________   not for publication
city or town       Omaha
state               Nebraska code NE county Douglas code 055 zip code 68105-1620

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

   __ national  __ statewide  x local

Signature of certifying official/Title __________________________ Date __________

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government ________________

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official __________________________ Date __________

Title __________________________ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government ________________

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

   ___ entered in the National Register ___ determined eligible for the National Register
   ___ determined not eligible for the National Register ___ removed from the National Register
   ___ other (explain): __________________________

Signature of the Keeper __________________________ Date of Action __________
Traver Brothers Row Houses Historic District
Douglas County, NE

5. Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ownership of Property</th>
<th>Category of Property</th>
<th>Number of Resources within Property</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>x private</td>
<td>building(s)</td>
<td>11 buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public - Local</td>
<td>district</td>
<td>site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public - Federal</td>
<td>structure</td>
<td>12 structure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Name of related multiple property listing
Name of property

6. Function or Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historic Functions</th>
<th>Current Functions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling</td>
<td>VACANT/NOT IN USE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRANSPORTATION: road related-vehicular</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Architectural Classification</th>
<th>Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY</td>
<td>foundation: CONCRETE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMERICAN MOVEMENTS</td>
<td>walls: BRICK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>roof: SYNTHETICS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>other: ASPHALT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Traver Brothers built 11 duplexes and mixed use commercial/residential building on a reconfigured block bound by Jones Street on the south, 26th Avenue on the west, St. Mary’s street on the north, and 26th Street on the east. Early Sanborn maps indicate that before 1916 this block was a standard urban block bound by four streets with a center alley. However, the Traver Brothers subdivided the block by extending an “L” shaped leg of Jones Street and connecting it with 26th Avenue to create a half block of houses that faced each other rather than facing out to the busy urban streets. The form of this neighborhood was defined by 1915 with the completion of four of the houses. The two southern most buildings formed the “L” shaped neighborhood plan prior to completion of the street. Eleven houses in all were built and sold or rented at various times throughout the construction process. A draft Multiple Property Document entitled Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska 1860-1962 has been prepared, and although not yet listed in the National Register, the context and property types identified in the MPD are used here. The Traver Brothers houses are considered semi-detached row houses with each individual house containing two separate two-story units with a full basement. All the buildings are brick construction with full-width projecting front porches. The “L” shaped streetscape configuration remains the same, with some remnants of the partial width brick street most likely laid when the block was subdivided by the Traver Brothers during their construction efforts in 1916.

The two buildings with Jones Street addresses face north, defining the “L” shaped neighborhood plan and differ in size from the remaining 9 buildings. These units are slightly larger and have second floor enclosed sunrooms above the porch roof that are original to the buildings. These sunrooms are causing structural integrity issues with the porch. One of these sunrooms has been removed and the opening covered with shingles. These buildings have also been painted white, while the remainder of the block remains red brick. A commercial unit is located in the building facing St. Mary’s, which currently houses a convenience store and an adjoining main level apartment with four upper level apartments.

Overall, the Traver Brothers Houses on Jones Street and 26th Avenue retain a high degree of historic integrity and represent a scarce example of a consistent, planned urban multiple dwelling neighborhood street.

The Traver Brothers houses located on an “L” shaped interior block bounded by 26th Avenue and Jones Street retain a high degree of historic integrity as a planned multi-unit neighborhood. Eleven buildings make up the development, which is somewhat isolated on its block providing a sense of community in a densely built urban environment. Unlike most urban residential neighborhoods of the time, when the Traver Brothers acquired this land to development around 1915, they reconfigured the block to construct their houses so the back side of the houses faced the outer borders of the block and the front porches faced toward the center of the block, as is illustrated in the aerial photo at figure 1.

The eleven buildings present on this half block were all constructed of brick, are two stories in height, have flat roofs, and projecting front porches about ¾ width of the entire facade. Each duplex was constructed with two mirror image two-story residential units. Eight of the duplexes are three bedrooms units, and two are two bedroom units. The building on the northeast corner of 26th Avenue and St. Mary’s has a unique floor plan because of a commercial bay on the street façade. The residential units are located behind the commercial space and on the second floor. Fenestration throughout the complex consists of individual one-over-one pane openings spaced evenly on the main façade. Each façade has two front doors on the first floor with one larger picture window adjacent to the door. Four openings punctuate the second story. Some ornamental leaded glass windows remain in living rooms and dining rooms; however, many of these have been damaged and replaced with unornamented openings. Grassy space between each building provides a neighborly residential feel not typical in the urban environment.

The front porches of each building project from just under the sill of the second story windows and all have a shallow shed roof supported by columns. The columns and floors of the porches are wood and are in varying degrees of deterioration from generally stable, to completely rotted or missing. Original columns that remain on some buildings are battered rectangular wood posts. Because of the grade of the street, the buildings on the west side of 26th Avenue have a higher elevation and more exterior stairs to reach each porch. Some porch columns extend directly to the floor while others rest
on brick bases. Despite these slight differences, the image of the buildings and their rhythm down the street has a unified appeal.

The brick exterior of each building is a dark red color with a hard-fired brick on the main façade, and a softer lighter colored brick at the sides and backs. The construction materials unify the block with small unique details applied to each building. Some of the houses have brick quoins defining the corners; some have detailed brickwork along the cornice line, while others have bands of stone or stucco above the second story windows and below the cornice. It appears that each of these individual detailed features was the custom work of contractors and not necessarily designed specifically for each building. They do not change the shape, style, massing, or continuity of the block, as they are details one must carefully observe to notice.

Two variants are present in the form of the Traver Brothers houses. The first is the building at the southeast corner of St. Mary’s and 26th Street, which has a commercial unit on the main floor and housing units behind and above. The second variant is the two houses at 2601-2607 Jones Street. These two buildings are slightly larger than the other houses and have enclosed sunrooms built on top of the front porch roofs. These sunrooms are original to the buildings and appear to have caused structural damage to the underbuilt porch roofs upon which they reside. One of these sunrooms has been removed and its hole infilled with what appears to be asphalt siding. These two buildings have also been painted white.

The interior spaces for the residential units remain largely intact. Each unit has a full-size, full-height basement, main floor, which includes living room, dining room, and kitchen, and a second floor housing mostly three bedrooms and one bathroom. Two buildings retain the same floor plan, but have two bedrooms upstairs rather than three. Most of the interiors have intact wood floors; some have been covered with carpeting and some are deteriorated. Each interior expresses itself as a freestanding bungalow style residence with nine-foot ceilings and some leaded glass windows. Interior decorative features also vary slightly from building to building. Some buildings have partial height battered columns between the living and dining rooms, some units have built in benches on the side of the stairs, and some have ornamental leaded glass windows in either the living or dining rooms. Except for decorative features and number of bedrooms, all the homes are the same. The majority of the interiors are simple with no columns and no benches. Each unit is accessed by its own front door and the entrances are centered on the façade. The doors open into the main foyer, with the stairs to the upper level immediately in front of the door. The stairs are simple and mostly walled in on both sides with a landing at the second floor with a simple balustrade and newel posts. The floor plans of each adjoining home are a mirror image of each other.

Overall, the Traver Brothers houses located on 26th Avenue and Jones Street retain a high degree of historic integrity as a collective, planned housing development. The projecting front porches, flat roofs, brick construction, and fenestration remains constant throughout the property, expressing a cohesive planned neighborhood block. The small portion of Jones Street running east west, and 26th Avenue running north south, provides access to the buildings. Previous utility work resulted in holes in the street in front of each property to access sewer, water, and gas. These holes were patched with concrete, and large washes of concrete are located over areas of the brick street that have deteriorated. The street has been widened slightly and new curbs added, but it is considered a contributing resource as part of this historic district.
Traver Brothers Row Houses Historic District
Douglas County, NE

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

[ ] A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

[ ] B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

[ ] C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

[ ] D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

[ ] A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

[ ] B removed from its original location.

[ ] C a birthplace or grave.

[ ] D a cemetery.

[ ] E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

[ ] F a commemorative property.

[ ] G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Period of Significance
1916 - 1962

Significant Dates
1916

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Traver Brothers

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance for the Traver Brothers Houses begins in 1916 when the buildings were constructed and extends through 1962, the established 50 year cut-off date. The complex was built in 1916 and was continuously occupied through the historic period. It represents significant broad patterns associated with the development of Omaha relating to the city’s need for housing. The neighborhoods in this area continue to evolve and are the subject of rehabilitation. Therefore, the property retained its significant contribution to area planning and housing needs throughout the historic period.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)
N/A
The Traver Brothers houses located at 26th Avenue and Jones Street in Omaha, Nebraska are significant under Criterion A for their contribution to the broad patterns of the development of Omaha relating to the city's need for housing. The buildings represent the boom of one of Omaha's population trends, and they form a critical cluster illustrating Omaha's development patterns. The Traver Brothers houses are significant at the local level, contributing as a physical manifestation of the development of Omaha's expanding urban neighborhoods prior to World War I. This property may also contribute under the historic context for multiple dwellings identified in the draft *Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska 1860-1962* Multiple Property Document, when it is listed.

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Traver Brothers Row Houses Historic District includes several row houses that were built by the Traver Brothers in the city of Omaha, Nebraska, from 1906 through 1911. These houses are significant for their architectural and historical value, representing the development of residential architecture in Omaha during the early 20th century. They are located at 26th Avenue and Jones Street in Omaha, and are part of the broader Traver Brothers Company's efforts to increase housing availability and quality in the city.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

Despite losing the capital, Omaha grew quickly as a transportation center, communications hub, and agricultural mecca. The city was the eastern terminus of the transcontinental railroad, and by 1861, Western Union Telegraph Company began stringing their telegraph lines until Omaha eventually linked the two coasts with communications systems as well. By the 1890s, Omaha cemented its presence as a major Midwestern commerce center and as a stronghold for the Union Stockyards, which eventually grew to be the biggest livestock center in the country.

Omaha maintained a strong dedication to sophisticated transportation systems throughout its history, with the presence of the railroad, streetcars, and highway and street systems. The early commuter system in Omaha included an extensive streetcar service that transitioned from horse drawn cars to a fully electrified system by the 1880s. Following rapid commercial growth and a significant population boom in the 1880s, the city as well as the nation experienced an economic slowdown. Although development paused during the early to mid 1890s because of this economic recession, it picked up again around the turn of the twentieth century. This era saw the need for and construction of large apartment complexes and new neighborhoods throughout the city. Sadly, Omaha suffered a devastating blow in 1913 when a severe tornado tore through the town destroying approximately 1800 homes and taking some 500 lives. The resulting clean-up and housing demand drove significant construction activity. It was during this period when the Traver Brothers were their most active with residential construction projects often built primarily along Omaha's street car lines, and in the neighborhoods just west of the downtown core. These projects helped retain a walkable and easily accessible home place to work place relationship meeting the demands of City planning efforts as well as housing needs. In 1922, the city saw its peak of residential construction with more houses built than any other year in Omaha history.

The Traver Brothers made a significant impact on housing development in Omaha through the number of units they built and managed. Not only did they construct apartment buildings, but they also built individual family houses and multiple dwellings. Charles Traver came to Omaha in 1906 and worked as a painter before changing careers and becoming a real estate agent. This proved successful for him, and by 1909, he added construction to his expanding enterprise. By 1911, his brother William and another relative named Nellie joined him to form the Traver Brothers Company, with their offices housed in the First National Bank Building at 15th and Farnam Streets in downtown Omaha. They worked together until 1932, and constructed properties in the neighborhoods roughly located between 20th and 40th Streets and Dodge to Leavenworth Streets. Property types under their ownership or management ranged from street court row houses such as this one, to a 25-unit apartment building and multiple single-family dwellings. They managed more than 200 units in this area and maintained a high standard for quality, workmanship, and materials in their properties.

---

2 Wakeley, Arthur C. *Omaha: The Gate City and Douglas County, Nebraska*, 1917.
4 Ibid.
Historic contexts have been developed in a draft Multiple Property Document *Attached Dwellings in Omaha, Nebraska 1860-1962*. Although the MPD is not listed in the National Register the context development identifies the Traver Brothers as developers who were considered community builders working between 1900 and 1932. The Traver Brothers were real estate entrepreneurs who used land to develop properties according to the city’s master plan. These properties served the identified housing needs of the time and focused in a concentrated area just west of the established downtown core. Although the Travers were not generally using large tracts of land for subdivision development, they did follow the planning movement to thoughtfully develop urban areas based upon timely needs and trends. This urban court row represents an example of a small planned neighborhood, and is a significant contributor to the expanding city of Omaha and how that growth was represented in the urban plans and neighborhoods. Although a comprehensive survey of properties built by the Traver Brothers is not available, the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office retains a working list of other properties in Omaha built by the Travers.

The Travers worked hard to build their business and invested well in their city. One newspaper article from 1916 describes their efforts as follows:

> ...Homes, not merely houses are the kind of residence Traver Brothers have erected for thinking people...One example is the tract of ground lying south of St Mary's Avenue and Jones Street on Twenty-sixth Street and Twenty-Sixth Avenue containing twelve lots, known as the Traver Hurst subdivision. Pay a visit to one of the homes erected by Traver Brothers and every one of your doubts regarding their popularity as home builders will be dispelled. Solidity, longevity, style of architecture, modern convenience and inherent beauty of design are emphasized in every feature of these houses both inside and out...For locations, Traver Brothers have picked out the choice residential spots of the entire city. They are recognized as specialists in this line, catering to the buyers of moderate priced homes, because of their being keen judges of values...The Travers have their own trained men with the exception of the electric wiring, the plumbing and the heating in these homes is work completed by Traver workmen. The Travers believed that paying rent is but a tribute to some other man's foresight. Traver Brothers are removing the rent hobbles from the ankles of business men who are made better citizens thereby. They are making Omaha a better city to live in. The eight brick flats which were completed last October at Twenty-sixth and Jones streets are all occupied. Traver Brothers are playing their part every day in the year in making Omaha a bigger, better, more prosperous city. They have a prior claim on the patronage of thinking people.

This may seem high praise for housing developers, but then as now, building a sound reputation, and providing for a needed housing market for the residents of Omaha established the Travers as trusted businessmen.

This urban street court group of semi-detached row houses is an excellent representation of the planning movements in Omaha at the time. The historical record indicates the Traver Brothers built these houses as a speculative enterprise, selling those they could and renting others. The Omaha World Herald newspaper documented that on June 13, 1916 Judge Reddick purchased four of the Traver's double houses for $28,000. These houses were situated on the new development at 26th Avenue and Jones Street. Judge William Reddick was the son of Judge John Reddick an important founder of Omaha. Judge William Reddick purchased the Traver Houses while he was serving as a district court Judge in Omaha. The following year on January 7, 1917, Myles Standish bought a triple house (not part of this development) and three double houses at 661-67 on South 26th Avenue built by the Travers for $35,000. Myles Standish was a wealthy businessman in Omaha who suffered the loss of his house at 144 N. 38th Avenue in the devastating tornado that struck Omaha in 1913. The Travers retained some of the buildings because later in the year of 1917 they had advertised the following, “Six rooms at 654 South 26th Avenue, east front all modern, porches and up to the minute, walking distance (from car line), $35.00 per month.”

In summary, the Traver Brothers Houses on 26th Avenue are locally significant under Criterion A as a representative example of the planned housing being built across the city at the time. These buildings retain a high degree of historic integrity and though vacant at this writing, plans are underway for their rehabilitation and continued occupancy as residential housing units.

---

Traver Brothers Row Houses Historic District
Douglas County, NE

Name of Property
County and State

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)
N/A

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)


Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission. A Comprehensive Program for Historic Preservation in Omaha. Omaha City Planning Department, Omaha, Nebraska: 1980.


Omaha World Herald various dates:
May 28, 1916, Traver Brothers Progressive Omaha Builders
June 13, 1916, Judge Reddick Buys 4 Houses of Traver
January 7, 1917, Building Notes
May 27, 1917, Classified Advertisements for Houses in Omaha.

Omaha Bee, December 5, 1915, Whose Who and Where in Real Estate.


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
recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other
Name of repository:

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DO 09:0207-028

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one (.685 acres)
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 15 252900 4570876 3 Zone Easting Northing
Zone Easting Northing

2 Zone Easting Northing
Zone Easting Northing

3 Zone Easting Northing
Zone Easting Northing
Traver Brothers Row Houses Historic District

Name of Property

County and State

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)
The boundaries of this property are defined by St. Mary’s Street on the north, 26th Street on the east, Jones Street on the south and the alley between 26th Avenue and 27th Street on the west. This area includes approximately one-half of this block and encompasses all eleven houses.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)
This boundary was chosen to include the site the buildings reside upon as well as the "L" shaped street on the inner portion of the block. Because the buildings create a double row in line facing each other with 26th Avenue and Jones Street providing the centerline, no additional land is needed to define the complex.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Melissa Dirr Gengler

organization Historic Resources Group, Inc.

date 7-30-2012

street & number 442 South 28th Street

telephone 402-770-5877

city or town Lincoln

state NE

zip code 68510

e-mail Melissa @hrg-nebraska.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- Maps: A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- Continuation Sheets
- Additional items: (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:
Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Traver Brothers Row Houses Historic District
City or Vicinity: Omaha
County: Douglas
State: Nebraska
Photographer: Melissa Dirr Gengler
Date Photographed: May 1, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number:
Photo 1 of 12. View of 2601-2603 Jones Street Houses, camera facing southwest
Photo 2 of 12. View of Houses on 26th Avenue, camera facing south
Photo 3 of 12. View Houses on 26th Avenue (east side), camera facing northeast
Photo 4 of 12. View of Traver Brothers Row Houses 662-668 26th Ave., camera facing northwest
Photo 5 of 12. View of individual house at 665-667 26th Avenue (east side), camera facing northeast.
Photo 6 of 12. View of individual house at 665-667 26th Avenue (east side), camera facing northeast.
Photo 7 of 12. View of interior second floor bedrooms, camera facing southwest.
Photo 8 of 12. View of Homes on east and west side of 26th Avenue, camera facing north.
Photo 9 of 12. View of interior living room into dining room, camera facing northwest.
Photo 10 of 12. View of interior living room toward front door, camera facing northeast.
Photo 11 of 12. View of houses on 26th Street, camera facing southeast.
Photo 12 of 12. View of alley behind buildings between 26th Avenue and 27th Street, camera facing north.
Traver Brothers Row Houses Historic District
Douglas County, NE

Property Owner: (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Travers Row LLC
street & number 2612 North 152nd Street
telephone

city or town Omaha
state NE
zip code 68116

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.
Traver Brothers Row Houses Historic District
Name of Property

Douglas County, NE
County and State

Photo 3 of 12

Photo 4 of 12

Photo 5 of 12
Traver Brothers Row Houses Historic District
Douglas County, NE
Name of Property
County and State

Photo 9 of 12

Photo 10 of 12

Photo 11 of 12
Traver Brothers Row Houses Historic District

County and State

Photo 12 of 12

Figure 1. Google image of Traver Brothers Houses outlined in white to illustrate their unusual configuration on the block.
Figure 2. Photo key for exterior photos.