

*Let to Shidlington*  
*4/17/89*

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**

CLICK HERE for Multiple Property Listing,  
"Fraternity and Sorority Houses at the Urbana-  
Champaign Campus of the University of Illinois  
Multiple Property Submission"

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 Alpha Xi Delta Sorority Chapter House  
other names/site number Matthew W. Busey Mansion

**2. Location**

street & number 715 West Michigan Avenue (Building S18 on key map)  not for publication  
city, town Urbana  vicinity  
state Illinois code IL county Champaign code 019 zip code 61801

**3. Classification**

<p><b>Ownership of Property</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private <input type="checkbox"/> public-local <input type="checkbox"/> public-State <input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal</p>	<p><b>Category of Property</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) <input type="checkbox"/> district <input type="checkbox"/> site <input type="checkbox"/> structure <input type="checkbox"/> object</p>	<p><b>Number of Resources within Property:</b></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td><b>Contributing</b></td> <td><b>Noncontributing</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><u>1</u></td> <td><u>0</u> buildings</td> </tr> <tr> <td><u>0</u></td> <td><u>0</u> sites</td> </tr> <tr> <td><u>0</u></td> <td><u>0</u> structures</td> </tr> <tr> <td><u>0</u></td> <td><u>0</u> objects</td> </tr> <tr> <td><u>1</u></td> <td><u>0</u> Total</td> </tr> </table>	<b>Contributing</b>	<b>Noncontributing</b>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total
<b>Contributing</b>	<b>Noncontributing</b>													
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings													
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites													
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures													
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects													
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total													

Name of related multiple property listing:  
Fraternity & Sorority Houses at the U of Illinois

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  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

*[Signature]*  
Signature of certifying official Date 6-26-89

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  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.  
 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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/education-related housing  
 DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/education-related housing

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY  
 REVIVALS/Tudor Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick  
 walls Brick  
 Stucco  
 roof Stone/slate  
 other N/A

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Alpha Xi Delta sorority house is a two and one-half story structure of the Tudor Revival style constructed in brick, stucco and timber. It is situated in a residential neighborhood of similar sized dwellings. Except for sympathetic additions to the rear and east wings as well as interior changes to meet building code standards, the historic and structural integrity of the Alpha Xi Delta sorority house has been retained. The nomination consists of one contributing building, which is an example of a private residence in adaptive use as a sorority house.

Exterior

The Alpha Xi Delta sorority house faces north onto West Michigan Avenue at the southeast corner of Busey Avenue. The main or north facade of the original building has three bays in a symmetrical arrangement. The outer bays each have a ground story casemented bay window, surmounted by a half-timbered projection with four casements at the second story and a broad half-timbered gable above with deep overhang and carved verge boards. Between the gables, the central bay has a red-gray slate roof interrupted by three small equally spaced dormers, each with a single casement and steeply-pitched slate gable roof. Except for the dormers, the roof pitches appear to be about 12 on 12.

The first story brickwork is in common bond for the lower half and English bond in the upper half, with an alternating soldier course of three vertical and three horizontal bricks separating the two halves. The gabled east and west ends are dominated by large twin-pot brick chimneys constructed in an overlapping diamond shape in plan. The second story of the building is stucco and half-timbering.

The structure's windows are multi-pane, wood casement, three lights wide in most cases. The main windows on the first floor are primarily 18 lights, while those on the second floor are 15 lights. The main entrance to the structure is a Tudor arch with multi-pane, side-by-side doors. A brick patio runs the length and width of the structure on the north and west sides, and is enclosed by a knee-high brick wall. A secondary entrance on the west side is an ordinary rectangular multi-pane door.

 See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 2 Alpha Xi Delta Sorority Chapter House

One of the two original arched driveway entrances still remains adjacent to the far southeast corner of the new addition at the rear of the structure. The two arches, which formed a covered passageway between the house and the original garage, have been bricked in, enclosing an extension to the new addition.

The plan of the original structure was L-shaped with a three bay facade and a three bay depth. Sometime after 1928, a garage in the rear of the structure was converted and expanded and the original carriageway enclosed to provide extra study room. The resulting plan is S-shaped. The addition has a hipped slate roof and hipped dormers, which are visible only from the rear.

Other alterations to the structure include the enclosure of the rear first floor patio area and carriage shed. These areas were located underneath the second story rear porch and were enclosed unobtrusively using similar brick and multi-paned casement windows. Since the area was originally under the roofed structure, it is difficult to distinguish it as a later alteration without inspecting the original blueprints. The area now serves as an informal television/sitting area. To the east end of the dining room, a two-story addition was constructed to provide a larger dining area. The first story continues the detailed brick patterning as well as use of multi-pane windows. The second story stucco and half-timber portion is a glass-enclosed sun room with 15-light windows running the perimeter of the three exposed sides.

Interior

The interior of the structure is dominated by the use of dark mahogany. The first floor living room walls are covered with three-quarter height carved mahogany wainscoting. Although the large ceiling beams remain unaltered, the smaller cross beams have been covered individually with dry wall and painted. Thus, the beam effect remains, but not in the original dark beam appearance. The central fireplace in the living room has been sealed off and the chimney removed as a result of excessive structural deterioration.

The entry hall area is dominated by a mahogany staircase leading to the second floor. Three arched entryways leading from the living room are framed in mahogany. The original multi-pane doors to the dining room are still intact.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 3 Alpha Xi Delta Sorority Chapter House

---

Wainscoting, which originally extended out away from the dining room walls and served as waiter storage cabinets, has been removed to allow more seating. A dumb waiter running to the second floor hallway has also been removed.

The master bedroom on the second floor has a fireplace with an inlaid ceramic tile front and original beam mantle. A small, circular safe remains unopened in the side of the chimney. Off the master bedroom is an adjoining dressing room and bathroom. The dressing room retains its original floor-to-ceiling built-in wardrobe closets in mahogany. The doors on the wardrobe have the original crystal handles as well as beveled, leaded-glass mirror panels. The bathroom, like others in the house, has been modernized with porcelain fixtures and ceramic tile.

The large second story rear porch is accessible by two entrances. One of the entry doors is off the master bedroom dressing room and the other entry is from the small bedroom adjacent to the master bedroom.

The two other original bedrooms have their own bathrooms, which have been modernized. The bedroom in the northeast corner has the adjacent sun room addition above the dining room.

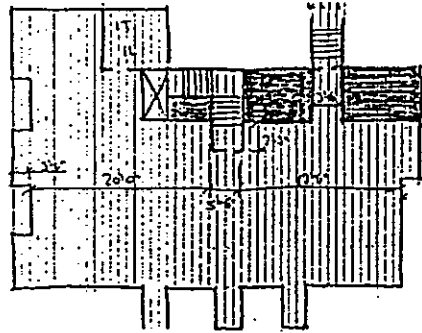
The garage addition at the rear of the house provides additional kitchen storage and study rooms on the first floor. The area which originally served as a second floor sitting room at the rear of the house is now a hallway from the original structure to the addition. The second floor of the addition includes student rooms and living facilities for the house mother.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

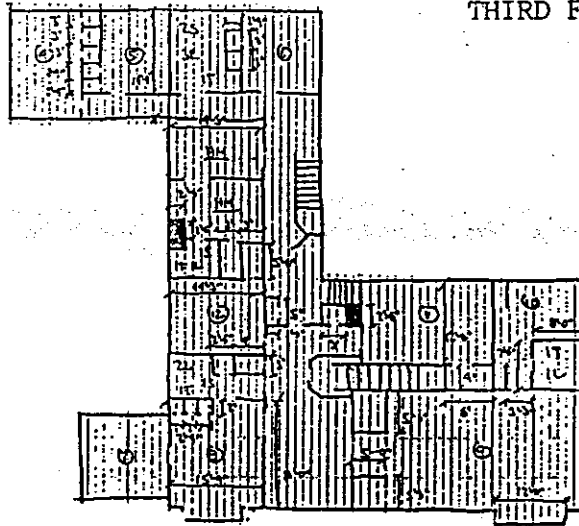
National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4 Alpha Xi Delta Sorority Chapter House

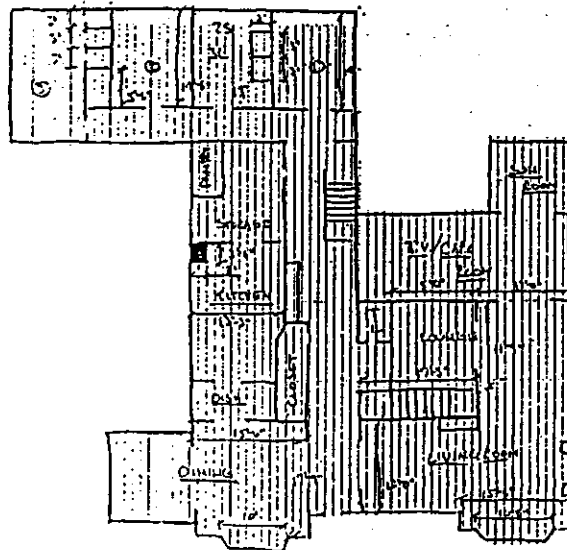
Floor Plan Sketches -- Building S18  
ALPHA XI DELTA SORORITY HOUSE  
715 West Michigan Avenue  
Urbana, IL 61801



THIRD FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR

Source:  
Certified Housing Inventory  
University of Illinois  
Housing Division

**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)

Education  
Architecture

Period of Significance

1928-1939  
1915

Significant Dates

1915  
1928

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Royer, Joseph W.

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

The Alpha Xi Delta Sorority House is significant as one of the facilities exemplifying the Greek Letter Society movement which contributed much to the broader patterns of higher education on the Urbana-Champaign campus of the University of Illinois (Criterion A). Constructed in 1915 as a private residence for the Matthew W. Busey family, the dwelling was adapted for use as the Alpha Xi Delta sorority chapter house in 1928. Integrity of design has been maintained with sympathetic additions and modifications made to accommodate new building codes and life/safety requirements as well as to house additional members. The Alpha Xi Delta house is also significant in two additional ways: it is architecturally significant as representative of the Tudor Revival style as designed by a prominent local architect (Criterion C). As the home of an active sorority on the University of Illinois campus, the significance of the Alpha Xi Delta sorority chapter house continued until 1939, the arbitrary 50-year cut-off date.

Kappa Chapter of Alpha Xi Delta

Alpha Xi Delta was founded as a national fraternal organization on April 17, 1893 at Lombard College (now Knox College) in Galesburg, Illinois. The Kappa Chapter, with a membership of twelve, was established at the University of Illinois on December 15, 1905, the sixth social sorority on the Urbana-Champaign campus. Kappa is the only Alpha Xi Delta chapter remaining in the founding state. 1

Kappa Chapter was originally located in two rooms at 405 East Green Street which were used for chapter meetings, informal gatherings, etc. They moved to a rented house which provided living facilities in 1906. As the chapter grew, additional space became necessary. Because of the

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 2 Alpha Xi Delta Sorority Chapter House

youth of the chapter, they were unable to acquire sufficient funds to build or buy a house of their own. In 1908, Kappa Chapter moved into a rented house at 312 East Daniel in Champaign, a house built for them by Mr. and Mrs. Riley, members of the Busey family with whom Alpha Xi Delta had begun to develop close ties. Around this time, the alumni began a house fund so that Kappa Chapter could build a house of their own rather than continue renting.<sup>2</sup> The Daniel Street house proved inadequate to serve the growing chapter. Alpha Xi Delta purchased the property at 715 West Michigan Avenue from Paul Busey in 1928 after plans to build on lots purchased in what had become the fraternity district around Washington Park fell through. The Busey property was quite close to a sorority "district" which was being developed on the east side of campus.

The women of Alpha Xi Delta have traditionally been active in sports and dramatics. During the twenties, Alpha Xi Delta was continually represented on the basketball, track and tennis teams as well as in the hockey club. Alpha Xi Delta was also involved in philanthropy, with many volunteers and officers of the Y.W.C.A. The thirties saw an expansion of Alpha Xi Delta activities into many areas of university life, including positions held with the Daily Illini and the Illio, senior sports manager of the Women's Athletic Association, and involvement in the Terrapin swimming organization and the Orcheis dance group. Community involvement included activities in the League of Women Voters.<sup>3</sup>

#### Architecture

The Alpha Xi Delta house was designed in 1914 by Joseph William Royer for the Matthew W. Busey family. Royer, who graduated from the University of Illinois with a degree in architectural engineering in 1895, was city engineer for the City of Urbana from 1898 to 1906. Royer is responsible for several Tudor Revival structures in Champaign-Urbana, including the Urbana Lincoln Hotel (now Jumer's Castle Lodge), Lincoln Lodge, the Alpha Rho Chi professional/social fraternity house and his own residence now used by the Omega Tau Sigma professional veterinary fraternity.

The Alpha Xi Delta sorority house is a good example of Royer's Tudor Revival projects and is an excellent example of the Tudor Revival style. Its brick first story walls with elaborate decorative patterns are contrasted with half-timber and stucco cladding on the upper stories as is typical of the Tudor Revival style. Other typical Tudor Revival features present in the Alpha Xi Delta house include the two steeply-pitched front facade cross gables; tall, narrow windows in multiple groups with multi-pane glazing; and tall chimneys constructed of patterned brickwork.<sup>4</sup> Only minor alterations with respect to building

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 3 Alpha Xi Delta Sorority Chapter House

code changes have occurred over time. Alpha Xi Delta has gone to great lengths to avoid integrity-threatening alterations and has maintained the original appearance of the dwelling.

Matthew W. Busey, original owner and occupant of 715 West Michigan Avenue, was for 44 years president of Busey State Bank, a prominent Urbana financial institution to this day.

The son of Simeon and Artimesia Busey, who were among Urbana's first settlers, Matthew Busey was born on December 7, 1854. He was educated in Urbana schools and began work as an employee of the Busey Brothers Bank in 1875. Busey became bank president in 1888. During his financial career, he was also president of Ogden Bank, Ogden, Illinois; The Exchange Bank, St. Joseph, Illinois; and the Commercial Bank of Champaign. Throughout his life, Busey was influential in promoting agricultural prosperity, purchasing extensive interests in Champaign County farms. He was appointed treasurer of the University of Illinois in 1905.<sup>5</sup> Matthew Busey lived in the house at 715 West Michigan Avenue for thirteen years.

The Busey family has been an important and prominent force in the development of the city of Urbana. Their financial institution continues to be a mainstay of Urbana and central Illinois commercial life. The Busey family has lent its name to parks, schools and avenues. Of several former Busey family homes, the Alpha Xi Delta sorority house/Matthew Busey Mansion is the only one of three remaining structures which retains substantial integrity.

<sup>1</sup>Colleen Sehy, History of Kappa Chapter of Alpha Xi Delta (Unpublished manuscript, November 1988).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Virginia and Lee McAlester, A Field Guide to American Houses (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), p. 355, 357.

<sup>5</sup>Craig R. Milkint, "Matthew W. Busey Mansion" (Unpublished manuscript, April 1985).



**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Milkint, Craig. "Matthew W. Busey Mansion." Unpublished manuscript, April 1985.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. A Field Guide to American Houses. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984.

The Quill of Alpha Xi Delta. Menasha, Wisconsin: George Banta. Volume XI, Number 3, September 1914; Volume XXII, Number 4, November 1925; Volume XXIII, Number 1, January 1926; Volume XXIII, Number 3, May 1926; Volume XXVI, Number 1, January 1929.

Sehy, Colleen. "History of Kappa Chapter of Alpha Xi Delta." Unpublished manuscript, November 1988.

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:**

University of Illinois Archives

**10. Geographical Data**

Acres of property Less than one

**UTM References**

A 

1	6
---	---

3	9	6	2	5	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	4	3	9	5	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

  
 Zone Easting Northing

B 

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

  
 Zone Easting Northing

C 

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

D 

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The property is described as: Lots 5 and 6 in the University Heights Addition in the City of Urbana, Illinois.

See continuation sheet

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary includes the entire town lots that have historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Linda Bastyr, Laclan F. Blair  
 organization The URBANA Group date 9 May 1989  
 street & number 10 S. Race St., P.O. Box 1028 telephone 217-344-7526  
 city or town Urbana state Illinois zip code 61801