

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

1. Name

historic Newbern Hotel

and/or common Newbern Apartments

2. Location

street & number 525 East Armour Boulevard _____ not for publication

city, town Kansas City _____ vicinity of congressional district #5

state Missouri code 29 county Jackson code 095

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
___ district	___ public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	___ agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational
___ site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	___ entertainment
___ object	___ in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	___ government
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial
		___ no	___ military
			___ other:

4. Owner of Property

name Newbern Corporation c/o J. Nelson Happy

Happy, House & Cooling, P.C.
street & number 1100 Main, 2400 City Center Square

city, town Kansas City _____ vicinity of state Missouri 64105

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of Recorder of Deeds

Jackson County Courthouse
street & number 415 East 12th Street

city, town Kansas City _____ state Missouri 64106

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

1. Landmarks Commission of Kansas

title City, Missouri Survey has this property been determined eligible? ☒ yes ___ no

date ongoing _____ federal ☒ state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records Landmarks Commission of Kansas City, Missouri

city, town City Hall, 26th Floor East
414 East 12th Street state Missouri 64106
Kansas City

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2. Kansas City a Place in Time, Landmarks Commission of Kansas City, Missouri, 1976.
3. Kansas City, Kansas City Chapter/AIA, 1979.
4. Kansas City Register, Case #0005-D, designated as a local landmark by the Landmarks Commission of Kansas City, Missouri.
5. Historic Kansas City Foundation Survey, 20 West 9th Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64105.

7. Description

Condition

☒ excellent
☐ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Newbern Apartments, 525 East Armour Boulevard, Kansas City, Missouri, consists of two nine-story towers constructed by reinforced concrete, brick and terra cotta designed in the Sullivanesque style. The primary facade faces north onto Armour Boulevard and a second decorated facade faces east onto Cherry. The south and west facades are undecorated.

EXTERIOR

Over-All Dimensions

The two structures are basically rectangular in plan, the east tower having a curved corner on the north east at the intersection of Armour Boulevard and Cherry. The two towers are connected by a one-story barrel vaulted hall forming a U-shaped over-all plan.

Construction Materials and Colors

The buildings are constructed of reinforced concrete clad in common bond pressed red brick on stories two through nine. The first story is clad in smooth, dressed limestone. Buff-colored terra cotta is used on the cornice, ninth story, and above the first story as well as at the main entrance.

Openings

Windows on stories two through nine are rectangular double-hung sash, eight-over-one, with decorative terra cotta sills. Windows on the first story are rectangular double-hung sash, one-over-one, with limestone lintels and sills.

The main entrance faces north onto Armour Boulevard. There is a new glass central double door flanked by two new glass doors. This entrance is articulated by a triumphal arch design in terra cotta, the most elaborate element of the building's design. There are two other entrance doors. One in the center of the west tower: a new double glass door with decorative terra cotta side molding and a limestone lintel above. Another new double glass door is located in the east tower on the northeast curved corner. It is also flanked by decorative terra cotta molding and surmounted by a limestone lintel.

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Decorative Details

The Newbern Apartments were executed in the Sullivanesque style.¹
Evidence of this style is found in the following:

1. The structure is articulated by three definite "zones": ground story, intermediate floors, and attic or roof level.
2. Intermediate floors are arranged in vertical strips by means of projecting brick pilasters running from stories two through eight.
3. Intricate wearing of linear and geometric forms with stylized foliage in a symmetrical pattern which is the most unique element of the Sullivanesque style.

Decorative surface ornamentation consists of the following:

1. Detailed terra cotta arch surrounding the door of the main entrance.
2. Eight-over-one sash windows with decorative terra cotta sills.
3. Cut and dressed limestone first story.
4. Terra cotta decoration along the parapet of roofline.
5. Terra cotta decoration along cornice.
6. Wrought iron and glass light fixtures on either side of the entrances.
7. Leaded art glass transom over main entrance.
8. Brick pilasters with terra cotta decoration at top (on ninth floor) and bottom (on second floor).
9. Curvilinear design of the northeast corner of the main facade.
10. Terra cotta decoration on either side of secondary entrances.

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INTERIOR

Access to the apartments was unobtainable. There are 132 three- and five-room units.

Lobby

The lobby has been remodeled, but retains much of its original character. Dark stained wood is used in ceiling beams, at corners, and for trim. Wood pilasters are surmounted by geometric capitals in the Prairie School style. Light fixtures in the ceiling consisting of three hanging globes are also reminiscent of that style. Particularly interesting is the portion of the lobby that is curved on the northeast corner of the east tower.

The entrance hall is covered by a ribbed barrel vault which is richly decorated with plaster in the Sullivanesque style. There are leaded glass transoms at either end of the barrel vault.

There is low buff-colored marble wainscoting throughout the lobby. Floors are of terazzo.

ALTERATIONS

Exterior

There were originally two separate towers with no connection at the lobby when the apartments were built in 1921. The entrances which are now side entrances were the main doors in each building. Above each door was a large multi-colored peacock measuring 6 feet in height. In 1925 the ground floor of the two structures was extended across the 36-foot interval which separated them by means of the barrel vaulted hall. The terra cotta arched main entrance was added at that time. The peacocks were removed and replaced with plain lintels. The original entrance doors (now auxiliary entrances) were of leaded glass. These have been replaced by modern plate glass doors.

Interior

Access to the apartments was unobtainable. The lobby has had some remodeling, but most of the original appearance has been maintained.

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CONDITION

The Newbern is in very good condition. It has remained in a good state of repair and has recently been rehabilitated.

SITE

The apartments occupy a prominent position at the corner of Armour Boulevard and Cherry. The building is set back approximately six feet from the sidewalk and is surrounded by a strip of grass and some small shrubs.

1. John J.-G. Blumenson, Identifying American Architecture, Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1977.

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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1921-23, 1925

Builder/Architect Ernest O. Brostrom

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Newbern Apartments are architecturally significant as one of the few buildings constructed in Kansas City in the Sullivanesque style. The quality of its design and craftsmanship of ornamentation are exceptional.

In the 1920's Armour Boulevard was developed into a street lined with luxury high-rise apartments and hotels. The Newbern is an integral part of this streetscape and is representative of this phase of architectural development which commenced in Kansas City in the 1920's. It's unusual design with the curving facade and rich terra cotta ornament make it singularly significant as an architectural artefact embodying the distinctive characteristics of the Sullivanesque style.

The Newbern has been recognized as a fine example of a particular type and style of architecture in Kansas City by being cited as a local landmark by the Landmarks Commission of Kansas City, Missouri. It is significant singularly because of its design and skilled execution; It is significant as part of the streetscape of luxury high-rise apartments; And it is significant nationally as an exeptional example of the Sullivanesque style.

HISTORICAL DATA

The apartment-hotel at 525 East Armour Boulevard was constructed in 1921-23 by the Armour Building Company, controlled by C.O. Jones. It was to be called "Le Pavonien" meaning "iridescent or resembling a peacock's train" after the two 6-foot terra cotta peacocks surmounting the two entrances, but was actually named the Peacock Hotel. It retained this name for only a short period, however. In 1925 Biene H. Hopkins, an Iowa landowner, bought the Peacock and renamed it the Newbern. The terra cotta peacocks, which were referred to as "unfortunate 6-foot birds" in a news article of 1925, were said to have offended some hotel guests to the point of turning them away.²

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Ernest O. Brostrom of the firm of Brostrom and Drotts designed the Peacock Hotel in 1921. He also designed the terra cotta ornamentation which was executed by the old Kansas City Terra Cotta Company in the Blue Valley district.

When the two buildings were joined in 1925, Brostrom was again the architect for the one-story barrell vaulted connecting hall and its terra cotta ornamentation. One of the peacocks which were removed from the building at that time was taken by Mr. Brostrom for his garden.³

Original plans and detailed drawings by Ernest Brostrom for the design of the Newbern are existing and are in the possession of the building's current owner.

ARCHITECT

Ernest Olaf Brostrom, a native of Sweden, came to Kansas City in 1907 from Sioux City, Iowa to manage a branch office of the Eisentraut-Colby-Pottenger Company, architects.⁴ Although he had no formal training in architecture he developed into a talented and prolific architect designing numerous residences, commercial buildings, and churches. Two well recognized examples of his work are the Jensen-Salsbery Laboratories at 520 W. 21st Street built in 1918 and the Rushton Bakery at 814 Southwest Boulevard, Kansas City, Kansas completed in 1920. In 1920 he formed a partnership with Phillip T. Drotts called Brostrom & Drotts.⁵ In the 1920's this firm designed many apartment-hotels like the Newbern. Brostrom wrote an article on apartments which appeared in the Kansas City Star on July 20, 1930. He also wrote a book entitled Churches in which he published his thoughts on church design and used examples of the many churches he designed in the Kansas City area.

SIGNIFICANCE

The Newbern apartment is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places because of its particular architectural significance. The style, integrity of design, location, setting, materials and workmanship reflect an important development in Kansas City's architectural heritage. The Newbern embodies distinctive characteristics of a type: the luxury high-rise apartment hotel; a period: the 1920's when the high rise structure was being developed along side tree-lined boulevards such as Armour Boulevard; and a style: the Sullivanesque, which is important nationally and locally with only a few examples in Kansas City. And it was designed by a prominent and prolific Kansas City architect, Ernest O. Brostrom.

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FOOTNOTES

1. Kansas City Star, April 16, 1922.
2. Kansas City Star, September 20, 1925.
3. Kansas City Times, November 7, 1925.
4. Kansas City Times, December 8, 1964.
5. Western Contractor, February 11, 1920, p. 14.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Kansas City, Kansas City Chapter/AIA, 1979, p. 110

Kansas City a Place in Time, Landmarks Commission of Kansas City, Missouri
p. 215.

Kansas City Journal, January 11, 1925.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name "Kansas City, Mo.-Kans."

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

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4	3	2	4	7	1	5
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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification Kenwood, Lots 22-24 Exc. that part of Lot 24 in Armour Blvd., Blk. 2, Jackson County, Missouri. The property fronts 135 feet on Armour Blvd., and 135 feet on Cherry.

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 ¹Joan L. Michalak, Architectural Historian

organization Historic Kansas City Foundation date 1 April 1980

street & number 20 West 9th Street telephone (816) 471-3391

city or town Kansas City state Missouri

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Director, Department of Natural Resources and
title State Historic Preservation Officer

date

For HCRS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Kansas City Star, October 23, 1921.

Kansas City Star, April 16, 1922, p. 150.

Kansas City Star, September 20, 1925.

Kansas City Times, November 7, 1925.

Kansas City Times, December 8, 1964.

Western Architect, February, 1924.

Western Contractor, May 17, 1922, p. 40.

Ehrlich, George, Kansas City, Missouri, An Architectural History, 1826-1976, Kansas City:
Historic Kansas City Foundation, 1979,
pp. 70, 89, 95, figs. 74, 75.

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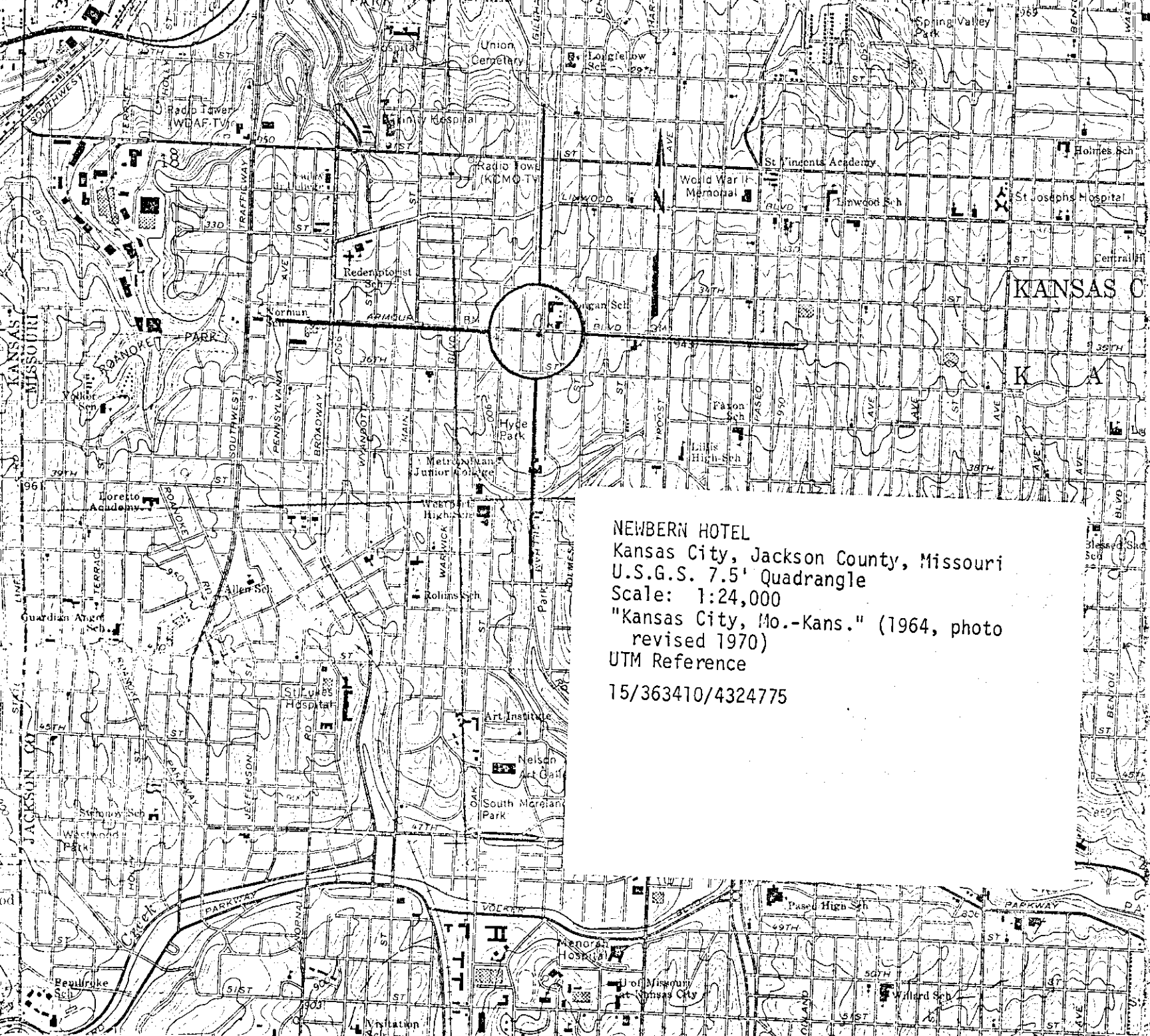
1

2. James M. Denny, Section Chief, Nominations-Survey
and State Contact Person
Department of Natural Resources
Historic Preservation Program
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City

April 10, 1980

314/751-4096

Missouri 65102



NEWBERN HOTEL

Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri

U.S.G.S. 7.5' Quadrangle

Scale: 1:24,000

"Kansas City, Mo.-Kans." (1964, photo
revised 1970)

UTM Reference

15/363410/4324775

Photo Log:

Name of Property: **Newbern Apartments**

City or Vicinity: **Kansas City**

County: **Jackson County** State: **MO**

Photographer: **Joan Michalak**

Date

Photographed: **Mar. 1980**

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 23. View from N. General view.
- 2 of 23. Photo missing.
- 3 of 23. View from N. Main Entrance.
- 4 of 23. View from N. Detail of Main Entrance.
- 5 of 23. View from N. Detail of transom window, Main Entrance.
- 6 of 23. View from N. Detail of lamp flanking Main Entrance.
- 7 of 23. View from N. Detail of terra cotta ornament, arch over Main Entrance.
- 8 of 23. View from E. Auxilliary Entrance to W Tower.
- 9 of 23. View from N. Detail of terra cotta ornament on window jamb, first story.
- 10 of 23. View from N. Detail of window, second story.
- 11 of 23. View from N. Detail of terra cotta ornament between first and second stories.
- 12 of 23. View from N. Detail of cornice and ninth story, E Tower.
- 13 of 23. View from N. Detail of cornice and ninth story, E Tower.
- 14 of 23. View of interior. Lobby of E Tower.
- 15 of 23. View of interior. Lobby of W Tower.
- 16 of 23. View of interior. Detail of wooden capital.
- 17 of 23. View of interior. Barrel vaulted ceiling of entrance hall looking N.
- 18 of 23. View of interior. Barrel vaulted ceiling of entrance hall looking S.
- 19 of 23. View of interior. Detail of barrel vaulted ceiling of entrance hall.
- 20 of 23. View of original exterior from Western Architect, Feb. 1924.
- 21 of 23. View of original exterior and floor plan from Western Architect, Feb. 1924.
- 22 of 23. View of original entrance with terra cotta peacock from Western Architect, Feb. 1924.
- 23 of 23. View of original interior from Western Architect, Feb. 1924.



THE NEWBERN





































