

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections**1. Name**

historic Temple Block Building

and or common Produce Exchange Building

**2. Location**

street &amp; number 531 Walnut

\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Kansas City \_\_\_ vicinity of

state Missouri code 029 county Jackson code 095

**3. Classification**

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

**4. Owner of Property**

name Produce Exchange Association % R. B. Durning Assoc. Inc.

street &amp; number 126 East 36th Street

city, town New York \_\_\_ vicinity of state New York 10016

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. City Hall

street &amp; number 414 East 12th Street

city, town Kansas City state Missouri 64106

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**title Missouri State Historical Survey has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_ yes ☒ nodate 1985 \_\_\_ federal ☒ state \_\_\_ county \_\_\_ localMissouri Department of Natural Resources  
depository for survey records P. O. Box 176

city, town Jefferson City state Missouri 65102

# 7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	moved      date
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	unexposed		

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Produce Exchange Building, originally called the Temple Block Building was designed in 1892 by architect James Bannon (1829-1913) for Messrs. James H. Oglebay and George W. Jones of Kansas City, Missouri. Rising six stories, the structure which originally contained 125 small offices on the upper floors and six store fronts, is articulated with Richardsonian Romanesque forms constructed of red brick and trimmed with beige sandstone details. Construction of the ninety-two year old building is steel beam, iron column and wood joist.

Exterior

Measuring 88½ feet on the east, by 69 feet on the west, by 126 feet on the south and 153 feet on the north, the 1892 Building is divided into five bays on the north elevation, three bays on the west and six bays on the south, connected by rounded corner bays. Because the structure is located on a sloping site, the north and west elevations rest on a sill course of sandstone. Three arched portals, defined by contrasting sandstone and embellished with minimized extrados archivolt molding mark the entrances to the structure. Pilasters of brick with sandstone capitals dressed in a floral motif flank both corner bays. Sandstone is also employed as a string course above the first story, as sills on the second through sixth stories, as lintels above the fourth and fifth stories and as a lintel course above the sixth story fenestration. Wall surfaces of the south, west and north elevations are organized into a steady rhythm of vertical bays joined at the third story by an arcade of brick arches, broken only by the detailing of the west elevation's central bay. Here, the third story fenestration is articulated by relieving arches. Brick arches capped with arched sandstone molding frame the sixth story central bay on the west elevation.

A pattern that is repeated throughout the structure's exterior are the striations found on the corbels located below the string course at the corner bays and on the spandrels between the second and third stories and fifth and sixth stories. More decorative floral spandrels can be found on the west elevation's central upper floor windows. Below the flat roof line is a corbel table of sandstone which is broken by a brick, checkerboard patterned parapet on the west bay. The parapet frames the central bay.

On two occasions, the 45,000 square foot Produce Exchange Building was modified. In 1958, the structure was painted beige, the ground floor windows were "modernized" and mosaic tile was employed on the first floor wall surfaces. The more drastic change came in 1965 when eight foot sections of aluminum paneling in gold acrylic finish alternating with four foot high sections of turquoise aluminum were attached eighteen inches from the structure. Recently, this cladding was removed as part of an extensive renovation program.

Although, as a result of the 1965 project, there has been damage to the ground level elevation, including the floral motif capitals located on the west portal, the remaining five stories of the Produce Exchange Building are in good condition. Steel lintels are intact, but the original parapet has been broken off at the roof line. The architects are confident that the Produce Exchange Building is a good candidate for rehabilitation.

Interior

Originally, the upper floor offices were grouped around two atriums extending from the first and second floors up to the roof. The atriums were enclosed for additional office space and today the only reminder of their existence is the steel skylight superstructure protruding from the roof. The first floor storefronts were grouped around an elaborate Walnut Street lobby dominated by a double staircase. The lobby and the staircase were removed in 1920. During its ninety-two year history, the original interior design of the Produce Exchange Building has all but vanished.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below				
prehistoric	archeology-prehistoric	community planning	landscape architecture	religion	
1400-1499	archeology-historic	conservation	law	science	
1500-1599	agriculture	economics	literature	sculpture	
1600-1699	x architecture	education	military	social	
1700-1799	art	engineering	music	humanitarian	
x 1800-1899	x commerce	exploration settlement	philosophy	theater	
1900-	communications	industry	politics government	transportation	
		invention		other (specify)	

Specific dates 1892

Builder Architect James Bannon (1829-1913)

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Produce Exchange Building qualifies for listing in the National Register of Historic Places according to Criteria A and C and is eligible under the following areas of significance: ARCHITECTURE: The 1892 Produce Exchange Building is one of Kansas City's few surviving commercial structures designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque tradition. The building employs a sophisticated design including strong horizontal rhythms of brick arches changing cadences of fenestration and distinctive, cavernous portals in contrasting materials. COMMERCE: The Produce Exchange Building was the birthplace for Traders Bank, today the Bank of Kansas City, one of the largest financial institutions in Kansas City. The building also housed the Produce Exchange Bank which after merging with Merchants Bank, is today the number six bank in the city. In addition, Kansas City's fruit and produce industry and the Kansas City Mercantile Exchange kept their offices for over seventy years in the Produce Exchange Building.

Originally called the Temple Block, the Produce Exchange Building was erected in 1892 for James H. Oglebay and George W. Jones, men described in the City Directories of the day as "capitalists". The six story, red brick and sandstone building by architect James Bannon employed Romanesque Revival forms made fashionable by prominent Kansas City buildings of the day, including The Board of Trade Building (1888, Burnham and Root) and the David T. Be Residence (1885), which have both been demolished. Bannon, who was originally from Ireland moved to Leavenworth, Kansas with his family in 1860. He began his career as a carpenter and was listed as an architect in the 1865-66 Leavenworth City Directory and Business Mirror. In 1877, Bannon moved to Kansas City and opened an office at 525 Main. Apparently, he was responsible for the design of several late nineteenth century structures in Kansas City but sketchy records do not reveal the nature of his work.

It was not until 1893 that Oglebay and Jones moved into the Temple Block Building, operating a real estate firm.<sup>2</sup> A perusal of the business advertising section of the 1893 City Directory of Kansas City, Missouri finds six other tenants in the building, including a lawyer, a notary, an insurance agent, two doctors and another real estate company.

In 1894, the total number of tenants came to thirty-one, including what appears to be the first of the fruit wholesalers. This location became a popular office for the fruit and produce wholesale industry because of its proximity to the municipal market.

At the turn of the century, J. R. Dominick, a prominent member of the Kansas City financial community organized a new bank in the city. The name he chose, Traders Bank of Kansas City reflected the community's role as the "gateway to the West" for trade. On October 15, 1900 Traders Bank opened its doors at Missouri Avenue and Walnut.<sup>3</sup> The bank obtained a federal charter and became Traders National Bank in 1908,<sup>4</sup> the same year the Kansas City chapter of the American Institute of Banking was chartered. One of its pioneers was A. H. Elliot from Traders National Bank.

At the close of that year, Traders moved from the Temple Block Building and relocated in the former Bryant Building at 11th and Grand on the site of the current Bryant Building. In its place, the Dominick family started another financial institution, the Produce Exchange Bank.<sup>5</sup> In 1916, the name of the structure changed to the Produce Exchange Build

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to reflect both the banks occupance as well as the growing number of fruit and produce brokers and commission agents who had occupied the building.<sup>6</sup> The Produce Exchange bank continued to flourish, when in 1957 it merged with Merchants Bank of Kansas City, changing the name to Merchants-Produce Bank. Following this merger, the building was named the Merchants-Produce Bank Building.

Along with the newly formed bank, the structure continued to house several food and produce brokers well into the 1970's with the bank maintaining the building as its headquarters until October of 1977. That year the bank, then known as its original name -- Merchants Bank -- vacated the structure for its current headquarters at Ninth and Main Streets. Although the building has been vacant since that time, the street level of the parking structure to the east has continued to be occupied by a drive-in banking facility operated by Merchants Bank of Kansas City.

Today, both the Merchants Bank and the former Traders Bank are two of the oldest surviving financial institutions in Kansas City, Missouri. Merchants ranks number six with over \$413 million in assets and The Bank of Kansas City (formerly Traders) ranks number twenty-three.

Recent plans to revitalize 181 acres of Kansas City's riverfront area organized by the Market Area Development Corporation include the Produce Exchange Building. The project has received preliminary approval from the Old Town Redevelopment Corporation, a subsidiary of MADC. The project also has preliminary approval for up to \$5 million in industrial revenue bonds from the city's Planned Industrial Expansion Authority. This renovation project marks the beginning of the redevelopment in the Old Town Redevelopment Plan and gives back to Kansas City an architecturally and historically significant structure.

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<sup>1</sup>In Bannon's obituary, it was noted that he was the architect for several structures in Kansas City, Missouri, but the article did not list them. The only structure cited was the Temple Block. Kansas City Star, 28 February 1913, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>The first mention of occupancy in the Temple Block Building was found in the 1893 City Directory of Kansas City.

<sup>3</sup>James Donahue, Greater Kansas City Official Yearbook. (Kansas City: Tiernan-Dart Printing Company), p. 89.

<sup>4</sup>unpublished material, William Cannon, History of Kansas City Banks, 1959.

<sup>5</sup>Kansas City Star, 11 November, 1984, np.

<sup>6</sup>Kansas City Times, 1 September, 1957, np.

<sup>7</sup>Kansas City Times, 8 June, 1957, np.

Item #10 (Continued)

verbal boundary description, cont.

feet then west 153.8 feet then south 15 feet more or less then west 128.5 feet to east line Walnut then north along said east line to point of beginning.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached sheet.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name "KANSAS CITY, MO.-KANS."

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

Old Town land 25 part said tract beginning southeast corner Missouri Ave. and Walnut then northeast line 275.15 feet to ousthwest corner Missouri Ave. and Grand then southeast line along west line Grand 83.2 feet then south 52.3 (See continuation sheet)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title 1. Cydney Millstein Architectural Historian (See continuation sheet)

organization Architectural and Art Historical Research date 7 January 1985

street & number P. O. Box 22551 telephone 816-363-0567

city or town Kansas City state Missouri 64113

## 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

John Karel  
John Karel, Director & Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer  
title Division of Parks and Historic Preservation date 5/2/85

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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 Times, September 1, 1957, n.p.

Kansas City Star, October 31, 1965, n.p.

Kansas City Star, November 11, 1984, p. 14E.

Star Magazine, August 26, 1984, p. 20.

unpublished material:

William Cannon. History of Missouri Banks. 1959. (Missouri Valley Room,  
Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri).

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Leavenworth, Kansas.

Leavenworth City Directory and Business Mirror, 1859-1876.

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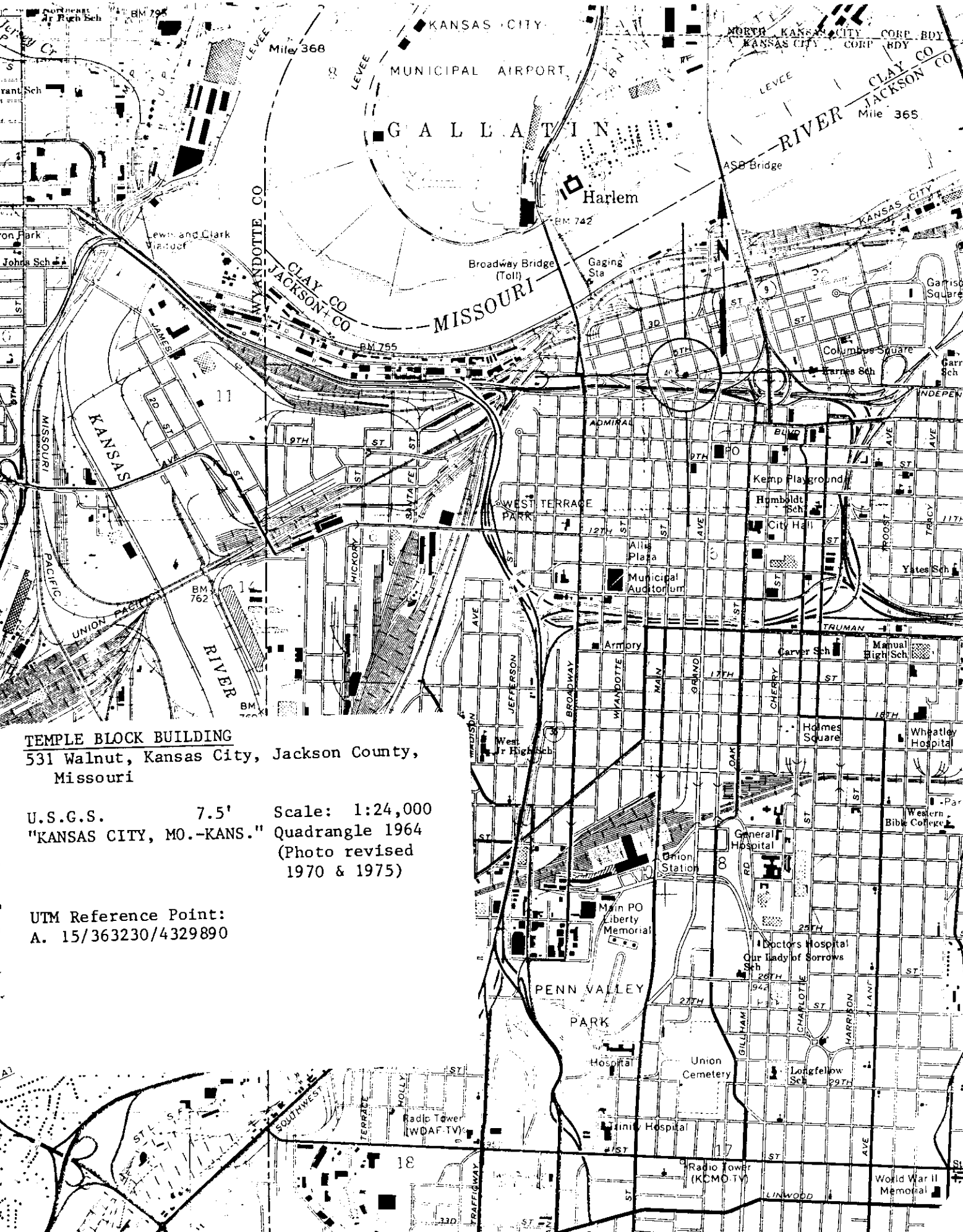
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2. James M. Denny  
Chief, Survey & Registration  
and State Contact Person  
Department of Natural Resources  
Historic Preservation Program  
P. O. Box 176  
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102

Date: April 22, 1985

Telephone: (314) 751-4096





TEMPLE BLOCK BUILDING  
531 Walnut, Kansas City, Jackson County,  
Missouri

U.S.G.S. 7.5' Scale: 1:24,000  
"KANSAS CITY, MO.-KANS." Quadrangle 1964  
(Photo revised  
1970 & 1975)

UTM Reference Point:  
A. 15/363230/4329890

**Photo Log:**

Name of Property: **Temple Block Building**

City or Vicinity: **Kansas City**

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

Photographer: **John Gutowski**

Date

Photographed: **Jan. 1985**

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

- 1 of 5. W and S facades, facing NE.
- 2 of 5. W facade of building, facing E.
- 3 of 5. E and N facades, facing SW.
- 4 of 5. W façade, facing E.
- 5 of 5. W and N facades, facing SE.



AL HUBER & SON  
GENERAL CONTRACTOR  
921-2700  
1018 Chicago Street, N.W., Reno, NV

GRW

35 70  
24  
←

← ONE WAY









