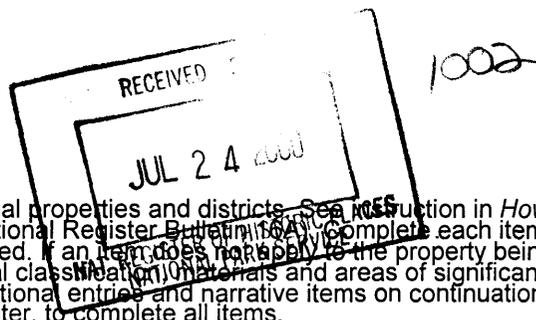


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Armstrong Hotel

other names/site number Mountain Empire Hotel; 5LR1997

## 2. Location

street & number 249-261 S. College Ave. [N/A] not for publication

city or town Fort Collins [N/A] vicinity

state Colorado code CO county Larimer code 069 zip code 80521

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] 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 [X] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [ ] nationally [ ] statewide [X] locally. ([ ] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Marjanna Cortez State Historic Preservation Officer June 14, 2000  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State Historic Preservation Office, Colorado Historical Society  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria.  
([ ] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

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

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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 [ ] See continuation sheet.

for  
Elson H. Beall Signature of the Keeper 8/31/00 Date of Action

Armstrong Hotel  
Name of Property

Larimer County, Colorado  
County/State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not count previously listed resources.)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing.**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Function**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Hotel  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Hotel  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century  
American Movements/  
Commercial Style  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete  
walls Brick  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof Asphalt  
other Terra Cotta  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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**DESCRIPTION**

The Armstrong Hotel is located at 249 S. College Avenue in Fort Collins Colorado. Built in 1923, the hotel was constructed in response to the booming tourism industry; which was spurred by the invention of the automobile. Designed in the early twentieth century commercial style, this red brick three-story structure is an excellent representative example of the style. It is the only hotel in Fort Collins to be constructed during the 1920s and it was the last hotel to be built in downtown Fort Collins. It is one of two historic hotels located along College Avenue (U. S. Highway 287) which served as the main route from Denver to Cheyenne or Laramie, Wyoming until the 1950s, when the interstate was completed. During the 1950s and later, motels were constructed east of town near Interstate 25.

Originally conceived as a two-story building, the hotel design was modified to include another story to accommodate the increasing number of travelers passing through Fort Collins. When completed, the hotel offered 40 guest rooms and two large dining rooms capable of seating 182 guests. The local chapter of the AAA occupied an office in the building. Three stories in height, the Armstrong Hotel was one of the tallest buildings in early twentieth century Fort Collins. Except for a short period during World War II, the building has functioned as a hotel and residential hotel without interruption throughout its operational life.

**SETTING**

The Armstrong Hotel is located in the historic downtown area of Fort Collins. Situated on the northwest corner of College Avenue and Olive Streets, the building is located in the earliest developed portions of the old Highway 287 (College Avenue). Many buildings in this three block area date from 1890-1910. Many of these have recently been rehabilitated. The Armstrong Hotel is one of few buildings in the area to date from the 1920s. On the same block as the hotel is the historic Fort Collins Post Office dating from 1911. A more recent building sits between the Post Office and the Armstrong Hotel. Large street trees along College Avenue tend to obscure the building.

**EXTERIOR**

The Armstrong Hotel is a three story red brick building. Constructed in an E shape, with a flat roof and a full basement, the College Avenue and Olive Street elevations are the primary elevations. The early commercial style building has a terra cotta coping at the parapet. The College Avenue facade features a broad central raked parapet with flat shoulders at each end. The brick is laid in a modified Flemish bond, consisting of five courses of stretchers followed by a course of alternating stretchers and headers, with the headers being of contrasting black brick. This contrasting black brick is also used for the window sills and lintels. Sills are black brick laid in a sloping header course. A belt course of dark brick extends across both east and south elevations above the third story windows. T- shaped glazed terra cotta plaques are affixed on the shoulders at each corner of the east and south elevations, each containing a cartouche with an organic motif.

Fenestration is symmetrical on the second and third floors. On the College Avenue elevation, the upper floor windows are of two types; the larger windows are ten over one single hung wood sash flanked by twelve-light fixed sidelights. The three smaller windows, lighting the bathrooms, are four-over-one double-hung wood sash. The 11 bays containing the upper floor windows of the Olive Street elevation are also of two types; the larger windows are eight-over-one double-hung wood sash alternating with smaller four over one double-hung wood

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sash. This same window grouping is on the west (rear) and north elevation. All windows have exterior storm windows.

On the College Avenue elevation, the three retail spaces and the hotel entrance have aluminum storefronts. Piers between the retail spaces are covered with a horizontal synthetic brick dating from the 1950s-60s. This faux stone was applied over the original brick. The original entrance was located at the corner of the building recessed behind the corner brick pier. The original storefront transoms consisted of three panels per bay of small panes of glass (see historic photo #1). In the center of each panel was a pivot window. All of the original transoms have been removed over the years and are filled in with various materials such as wood and metal.

The first floor of the Olive Street elevation has also been altered. Storefront materials vary on this elevation; aluminum, ceramic tile, synthetic brick. A metal pipe rail encloses a staircase leading to the basement. This basement access, though not original, was installed shortly after construction (see historic photo #5). The south elevation was originally designed with no door openings (see historic photo #3); however in 1927 a glass storefront was installed in the third bay from College Avenue (see historic photo #5). In the 1930s, a new corner entrance was installed which had a conical roof (see historic photo #5-7). This entrance was removed at an unknown date. Many other changes have occurred on the first floor of the south elevation. Exact dates are unknown as permit information is scant. Two additional storefronts were eventually installed totaling three storefronts on Olive Street. The current materials appear to be from the 1950s.

The rear elevation has door and window openings being filled in or opened up over the years. Exact dates are unknown. The rear and north elevations are composed of ordinary orange brick laid in common bond. A cast iron fire escape is affixed to the rear of the building. The north elevation has had little alteration. It consists of three floors with two light courts at the second and third floors. Most first floor windows are blocked in with plywood. Windows in the light courts are one over one double-hung wood sash. The space between the hotel and the neighboring building is approximately four to six feet wide. The two light courts at the second and third floors were part of the original design as a way to provide air and light to the center hotel rooms. The walls of the light courts are sheathed with a 'brick' patterned painted pressed metal.

## **INTERIOR**

The existing hotel lobby is accessed by entrances off of both College Avenue and Olive Street. The main entrance is from College Avenue. The aluminum framed entrance leads into a lobby sitting area. Behind this space to the west are the check-in desk, elevator, basement stairs, and open stairway to the upper floors. At the end of this space is the opening to the north/south hall which serves as the secondary entrance from Olive Street. The lobby configuration was altered in the 1950s. Originally, the entrance was on the corner of College and Olive and opened directly into the lobby space. Remaining original finishes in the lobby are: the pressed tin ceiling, portions of the terrazzo floor, and the circular stair with iron railing and stepped handrail. In some areas the floor has been covered with linoleum. The elevator is in its original location, however the cab has been resurfaced with imitation wood paneling. None of the check-in desk is original. A newer partition divides the lobby from the florist shop.

The lobby stairs are curved with a curved iron balustrade and a stepped wood railing. Above the first floor level, the stairs are enclosed and the railing changes to a wood rail with square balusters and newel posts.

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Currently there are five retail spaces in the building. All of these spaces have been remodeled many times to suit the individual tenants' needs. The remaining original feature in these spaces is the pressed tin ceiling. The tin ceiling is concealed under dropped acoustical panels in the two retail spaces on College Avenue. It is exposed in the easternmost retail space on the south elevation, the corner florist shop and at the very back of the westernmost retail space on the south elevation.

The second and third floors house the guest rooms. Both floors are arranged with the same corridor configuration. The basic plan is an E-shaped corridor system with its arms branching off to the north. Two open ended light courts provide light to the interior rooms off these corridors. Most of the rooms are very small. Some rooms have private baths. Shared bathroom facilities are located at the south end of the central corridor. Two rooms have been converted to apartments with the removal of a partition wall. These units have two rooms including a kitchenette and a bathroom. A large apartment/meeting room, referred to as the "empire room", was created on the second floor at the northeast corner. Features such as door and window trim are intact within the guest rooms, however the guest room doors have been replaced. The transoms above the doors remain only in selected areas. All lighting is non-historic.

The basement plan consists of two main corridors, one running east/west and another running north/south at the rear of the building. Off of these corridors are miscellaneous rooms, mostly storage space for the various retail spaces. Bearing masonry walls running east/west define the retail spaces and lobby above.

The building is currently undergoing rehabilitation as a Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives project. The rehabilitation is expected to be completed by September 2000.

Armstrong Hotel  
Name of Property

Larimer County, Colorado  
County/State

## 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation

Entertainment/Recreation

Architecture

### Periods of Significance

1923-1950

### Significant Dates

1923

### Significant Person(s)

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above).

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Jones, Lester L.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### 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

Name of repository:

Colorado Historical Society

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**SIGNIFICANCE**

The 1923 Armstrong Hotel is eligible for National Register listing under Criterion A for its association with the growth of the automobile and tourism industries which resulted in the road building movement of the 1920s. The development of statewide and interstate road systems to accommodate increasing automobile traffic and the improvement of road-building technology in the 1920s ushered in an era of unprecedented public mobility. The year 1924 saw more miles of road built in Colorado than ever before. Whether for pleasure or business, Americans traveled the country equipped with road maps and pamphlets listing the location of auto camps, roadside rest areas, and reliable hotels. "Good roads everywhere" was a slogan of the times. As increasing numbers of tourists passed through Fort Collins, investor Charles Mantz perceived a business opportunity and constructed the Armstrong Hotel. Located along U.S. Highway 287 (S. College Avenue), the forty-one room hotel provided a comfortable respite for the traveler able to pay for more than the local free auto tourist camp. Local papers of the day regularly reported the guests arriving and departing from the hotel.

The Armstrong Hotel is also eligible for listing under criterion C as a good representative example of the early twentieth century commercial style. The three-story red brick building is a simple yet handsome design. With its gabled parapet and contrasting black brick headers, sills and lintels, the design is typical of many early commercial buildings found in small towns throughout the western United States. It is, however, the only hotel in Fort Collins to date from the 1920s. The extant Northern Hotel, located two blocks north of the Armstrong Hotel, on College Avenue, was remodeled in 1925 into an Art Deco style building.

According to a 1996 cultural resources survey report prepared by Retrospect, "the Armstrong Hotel is judged to embody both architectural and historical significance, and qualifies as individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Under Criteria A, the Armstrong Hotel is historically significant for its direct association with the boom in the automobile tourism that reached its zenith in the early 1920s, as well as for its role in the development of the College Avenue (or New Town) commercial district of Fort Collins. Under Criteria C, the Armstrong Hotel is an outstanding local example of early 20<sup>th</sup> century hotel architecture, and it retains much of its original physical integrity". In 1999, a determination of eligibility was given by the National Register as part of the Federal Investment Tax Credit process. The building is currently being rehabilitated under this program.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The town of Fort Collins developed around a military post that was established in 1864 near the banks of the Cache la Poudre River. Jack Dow and Norman Meldrum platted a town of Fort Collins near the fort site in 1866 (currently known as Old Town) in anticipation of the military post being officially vacated in 1867. In 1868, the town of Fort Collins was chosen to replace Laporte as the new county seat of Larimer County.

After it was vacated in 1872, the old military reservation was replatted. The new plat established the current street patterns and defined the location of the State Agricultural College, founded in 1879. The new area encompassed three thousand acres and was located adjacent to the original plat of Fort Collins. Many merchants who had established businesses in the Old Town area moved their stores to the new town site, which included College Avenue.

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The real impetus for Fort Collins's growth into a regionally significant town was the completion of the Colorado Central Railroad (C&S) in the fall of 1877, which connected Longmont via Fort Collins to the Union Pacific mainline near Cheyenne, Wyoming. The Greeley, Salt Lake, and Pacific Railroad (GSL&P) connected Fort Collins to Greeley in 1882 further stimulating development of the town. The railroads facilitated immigration and expanded the ability to export local products; Fort Collins became a regional shipping and supply center. The State Agricultural College also brought people into the community and enhanced the stature of Fort Collins. By 1900, the town boasted of a population over 3,000.

Fort Collins experienced another period of rapid growth in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: the development of sugar beet farming and the sheep raising industry, construction of an extensive trolley system in 1907-1909, and the completion of a new Union Pacific Railroad line from the southwest. During this period several major public and commercial buildings were constructed, inspired by the City Beautiful movement. Another major factor that contributing to the town's rapid growth was the introduction of the automobile. The commercial district in Fort Collins expanded in both the Old Town district and south along College Avenue. By 1910, Fort Collins' population had climbed to 8,210; the sixth largest community in Colorado.

In addition to being an important agricultural hub, Fort Collins was a popular stopping point for tourists heading for the famous Rocky Mountains. As early as 1873, Isabella Bird passed through on her way to climb Longs Peak. She reported her stay was less than satisfactory as she found her hotel swarming with locusts. In 1874, there were four hotels in Fort Collins; the Agricultural Hotel, the Collins House, the National and the Blake House. By the 1880s, five new hotels had been constructed: the Linden Hotel, the Antlers Hotel, the Tedmon House, the Blaine Hotel and the LaCourt Hotel. The Linden, the Antlers, the Blaine and La Court Hotel are extant though no longer functioning as hotels. In 1905, by far the most elegant hotel, the Northern Hotel was completed. It was extensively remodeled in 1925 with the addition of a fourth floor. It is currently undergoing rehabilitation into elderly housing.

Before the advent of the automobile, tourists traveled by stage to various destinations in the mountains. By 1909, twelve passenger Rapid cars were carrying passengers to mountain dude ranches and resort hotels in one half to one third the time of the stage. The earliest road into the mountains from Fort Collins was the route up Rist Canyon. A second route was farther north by way of Livermore and Red Feather Lakes. In 1914, a highway was begun following the main branch of the Poudre River. In October of that year, the road had reached Hewlett's Gulch and a public picnic was held. One hundred Fort Collins auto owners provided rides to six hundred people.

The 'automobile era' began in the east coast cities of the United States as the Good Roads Movement gained momentum. Bicyclists, who pushed for better road systems for their sport, originated the movement, and after the advent of the Ford Model T in 1908, automobilists joined bicyclists in their mission to improve roads. Promotion of the Good Roads Movement included "good road days" conventions, widespread literature distribution, letter writing campaigns, and legislative proposals. As the movement gained popularity and more people were able to afford automobiles, a state highway system was established. Primary roads were built and maintained by the state highway department. Secondary roads were maintained by the counties. By the late 1920s, cities around the country felt the impact of the automobile and the Good Roads Movement on their communities and Fort Collins was no exception.

The automobile altered the character of Fort Collins' built environment as auto dealerships, service garages, and gas stations slowly replaced barns and livery stables in the downtown area and along South College Avenue. By

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1917, there were a dozen automobile related businesses in town. Tourism blossomed in the teens and twenties bringing economic opportunities to communities along the highways spanning Colorado and the other western states. Tour routes were established and Fort Collins was located on several of these routes extending from Denver, to Cheyenne, Laramie, and Greeley. The major highways passing through Fort Collins included the Powder River Trail, the Wyoming State Highway, and the Denver, Lincoln, and Rocky-Mountain highways.

Fort Collins also had a "Tourist Free Camp Ground" which promoted auto-touring and longer stays in the community. Campgrounds such as this one could be found in many towns and cities throughout the country. The year 1924 showed a significant increase in auto touring as indicated by the statistics for the local tourist camp; 4,526 (18,016 people) cars used the camp in 1924 compared to 1,790 (6,843) cars in the previous year. The contiguous motel units evolved directly from these camps. These economical motel units and campgrounds were not for everybody and tourist hotels, such as the Armstrong, offered the wealthier tourist class an alternate source of lodging.

Charles Mantz, an investor and former resident of Fort Collins, being a shrewd businessman, responded to the tourism demands by building the Armstrong Hotel at the southern end of the "new" business district on College Avenue. The hotel became a popular destination place for visitors, business people and tourists traveling along the new highways. Tourists traveled in their own automobiles or in groups in touring cars. Early photographs of the Armstrong Hotel show these large touring cars parked in front of the hotel.

The 1925 Sanborn map shows a primary central business district along four blocks of College Avenue. The southernmost blocks between Olive and Oak Streets are sparsely developed. On the west side, the 1911 post office is at the north corner and the Armstrong Hotel is at the south corner. Between these buildings is a residence. Across the street is a mix of residences and small commercial buildings. The Hawthorne automobile garage which predates the hotel, is located directly across College Avenue from the Armstrong. Across the street to the south of the hotel is a gas station, a residence, and a telephone company building. The 300 block of South College Avenue marked the end of 'downtown' until the 1950s. After World War II, commercial development of South College Avenue continued to expand south. Today South College Avenue development stretches almost to Loveland. As the commercial district moved further south, the Old Town area and the original four blocks of the College Avenue commercial core deteriorated. By the 1960s and 1970s, this area was underutilized and buildings were in poor condition. Many buildings were dramatically altered or demolished. In the mid 1980s and early 1990s, interest in Old Town was sparked and many buildings were restored. Today the area is a lively popular place to shop and eat. The Northern Hotel is destined to be elderly housing. The Linden Hotel has been rehabilitated into offices. The Armstrong Hotel will soon be rehabilitated and will serve as Fort Collins' only downtown hotel.

### THE ARMSTRONG HOTEL

Construction of the Armstrong Hotel was started in July 1922 by investor Charles G. Mantz and his wife, Caroline. The hotel was named after Caroline Mantz's father, Andrew Armstrong, one of the pioneer builders of Fort Collins. According to the October 26, 1922, *Fort Collins Courier*, the original plans for the hotel "were changed considerably and the building was made a three-story one instead of two and consequently postponing the date of opening a few weeks". The building was touted in the same *Courier* issue as being the "largest and most expensive business block ever built in Fort Collins".

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The design for the E-shaped hotel was drawn by local architect Lester L. Jones; Arthur E. Pringle supervised the construction. Mantz hired local companies to construct the hotel which included: Ora E. Long, contractor; W.H. Althouse, heating; Frank P. Williams, electrical; and Lowell-Moore, hardware and plumbing.

The formal opening of the hotel took place on April 7, 1923, and the hotel was touted as the tallest building in Fort Collins. The April 5, 1923, *Fort Collins Courier* report that the hotel was a "three-story structure, the dimensions being 96 by 124 feet, the exterior constructed of Castle Rock striped brick, and the trimming of red brick of the same kind. The copings are of terra cotta. Throughout the interior the woodwork is of mahogany finish. The floor of the lobby is a composition of marble, granite and concrete, with highly polished surface. The lobby is commodious and the furniture consists of over-stuffed genuine leather chairs". A large neon sign stating "Armstrong Hotel" on the exterior of the building advertised the location of the hotel from blocks away.

The first floor consisted of dining and banquet rooms, kitchen, and several businesses which included Betty Jane Millinery, Milady's Beauty Shop, Smith's Sweet Shop, Piper & Jennings Barber Shop, Griffith & Wagner Billiard Room, J.A. Froid's Cigar and news stand, Alex Edie's Flower Store, and Mrs. E. M. Blaker's Hemstitching Store. The lobby of the hotel housed the ticket and station stop for the local bus line. The American Automobile Association also had their office in the hotel due to the visibility along South College Avenue; also known as Highway 217 connecting Fort Collins to Denver and Cheyenne (the two state capitals of Colorado and Wyoming).

Each of the upper two floors consisted of a large parlor, 40 guest rooms (half with connecting baths), two public bathrooms, and two toilet rooms. The hotel boasted of hot and cold running water, electricity, steam heat in each room, and telephone service. On-site parking was also provided for hotel patrons; a testimony to the importance of the automobile. The proprietors of the new hotel were Jess L. Dever and C.F. Benning who were both experienced business people in the region.

In December 1978, a fire in the hotel caused the owners to bring the building up to current fire codes. Modifications included replacing the doors with fire resistant doors, constructing an exterior fire escape, and reinforcing the floor joists in the basement. At that time (1979), the owners, Brunfield Properties, changed the name to the Mountain Empire Hotel. The property is currently owned by Old Town Hotels, LLC of Fort Collins. The current owners plan to return the building to hotel and retail use.

The 1930s saw little growth in Fort Collins due to the Great Depression. The development of downtown slowed to almost a standstill during this period. Fewer than 800 people moved to Fort Collins during this decade.

In 1942, at the beginning of World War II, the Armstrong Hotel was used as barracks by the United States' Army. After the war, the hotel returned to hotel use. In 1952, Caroline Armstrong Mantz sold the hotel to Ace Gillette, Claire Wolfer, and J.B. Cahill. Gillette bought out his partners in 1966 and owned the hotel until 1970 when the property was sold to Vernon Peterson. During Gillette's ownership, the hotel functioned as a combination hotel and apartments. This combined usage continued until recently.

It was not until after World War II that Fort Collins saw another substantial rate of growth. Between 1950 and 1960, the growth rate averaged 67% and between 1960 and 1970, the growth rate averaged 73%. It was during these years that major changes occurred along College Avenue. Many storefronts were remodeled and most of the remaining residences were demolished.

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**ANDREW ARMSTRONG**

Andrew Armstrong was a Fort Collins pioneer who settled in the area in 1873. Armstrong was born in County Armaugh in Northern Ireland near Belfast in January 1824. In 1841, at the age of 17, he traveled to New York City to work for his cousins' contracting business. After arriving in Fort Collins, Armstrong became active in the development of the small community. In 1880, he became the postmaster of the town. As a builder and contractor, he built several residences and commercial businesses in Fort Collins. At the age of 80, Armstrong died on September 4, 1904 in Denver at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Charles G. Mantz (Caroline Armstrong). In 1923, Charles Mantz, Armstrong's son-in-law, constructed a new hotel along South College Avenue in Fort Collins and named the hotel in honor of his father-in-law, Andrew Armstrong.

**CHARLES AND CAROLINE MANTZ**

Charles G. and Caroline (Armstrong) Mantz built the Armstrong Hotel in 1923 on the corner of South College Avenue and West Olive Street. Charles Gomer Mantz was born in Frederick, Maryland on July 19, 1853 to Charles and Mary Anne (Grove) Mantz. The Mantz lineage can be traced back to Switzerland before the family settled in the American colonies in 1741. Charles Mantz was born in the town his ancestor's founded; Frederick, Maryland.

Mantz prepared for college at Frederick College and then finished his studies at St. John's College at Annapolis, Maryland. He then moved to Omaha, Nebraska where he found work as a bookkeeper at a wholesale grocery. After working as a bookkeeper, Mantz traveled to Wyoming and worked in the cattle business for six years. In 1884, he moved to Fort Collins where he secured work in the investment and loan business. He built and helped finance many buildings in Fort Collins.

In April 1891, he married Caroline Armstrong, the daughter of Andrew Armstrong of Fort Collins. The couple had three children; Charles, Anna Ellene, and Florence Gertrude. Mantz had an intense interest in the arts and took part in the local theater productions. He also loved tennis, travel, reading, and riding. Before moving to Denver in 1891, Mantz became a junior warden in the St. Luke's Church.

After becoming a Denver resident, Mantz remained active in religious affairs and became involved in the St. John's Catholic Church. Mantz remained active investor in the development of Fort Collins even after he moved to Denver. In addition to constructing the Armstrong Hotel, he developed the residential Mantz Addition. The Armstrong Hotel project was one of his last as Mantz died on November 10, 1924 at the age of 71. The 1927, *History of Colorado* describes Mantz as a "refined, retiring disposition combined with strength and nobility of character" and was "attentive to the sick and needy, and generous in good works; a lover of home life, he found his greatest happiness in the companionship of his wife and children". Caroline Armstrong continued to reside in Denver after her husband's death.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Armstrong Hotel  
Larimer County, Colorado

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**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The Armstrong Hotel occupies Lots 1-4 of Block 112 in Fort Collins, Larimer County, Colorado.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The nominated area includes the original lots associated with the Armstrong Hotel.

**PHOTOGRAPH LOG**

The following information pertains to photograph numbers 1-21 except as noted:

Name of Property: Armstrong Hotel  
Location: Larimer County, Colorado  
Photographer: Kim Lakin  
Date of Photographs: January 2000  
Negatives: Heritage Consulting Group  
123 NW Second Ave., Suite 200  
Portland, OR 97209

Photo No.                      Photographic Information

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- 1 East and south elevations; view to the northwest.
- 2 East elevation; looking west.
- 3 South elevation; looking north.
- 4 West elevation; looking east.
- 5 North elevation; looking southwest.
- 6 Interior, hotel lobby; looking west.
- 7 Interior, stairwell; looking north.
- 8 Interior, tin ceiling detail.
- 9 Interior, second floor corridor; looking south.
- 10 Interior, second floor guest room; looking east.
- 11 East elevation, detail, touring cars in front.  
Photographer: unknown; Date of Photograph: ca.1920s  
Negatives: Fort Collins Public Library, 201 Peterson, Fort Collins, Colorado
- 12 East elevation, showing touring cars parked in front along College Avenue and the house next door to the north.  
Photographer: unknown; Date of Photograph: ca.1920s; Negatives: Fort Collins Public Library

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Armstrong Hotel  
Larimer County, Colorado

Section number \_\_\_ Page 11

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- 13 South and east elevations, promotional photograph with 'Armstrong Hotel' at the bottom.  
Photographer: unknown; Date of Photograph: ca.1920s; Negatives: Fort Collins Public Library
- 14 South and east elevations, showing altered corner entrance and canopy, and streetcar line.  
Photographer: unknown; Date of Photograph: ca.1930s; Negatives: Fort Collins Public Library
- 15 South and east elevations, showing altered corner entrance and canopy.  
Photographer: unknown; Date of Photograph: ca.1930s; Negatives: Fort Collins Public Library
- 16 South and east elevations, looking north down College Avenue, showing added corner canopy, gas station across the street.  
Photographer: unknown; Date of Photograph: ca.1930s; Negatives: Fort Collins Public Library
- 17 East elevation, showing altered corner entrance and canopy, looking southwest along College Avenue, cars in center parking.  
Photographer: unknown; Date of Photograph: ca.1930s; Negatives: Fort Collins Public Library
- 18 East elevation, view to the southwest.  
Photographer: Dale Heckendorn; Date of Photograph: May 6, 2000  
Negatives: Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society.
- 19 South elevation, view to the northeast.  
Photographer: Dale Heckendorn; Date of Photograph: May 6, 2000  
Negatives: Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society.
- 20 West elevation, view to the northeast.  
Photographer: Dale Heckendorn; Date of Photograph: May 6, 2000  
Negatives: Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society.
- 21 North elevation, view to the southeast.  
Photographer: Dale Heckendorn; Date of Photograph: May 6, 2000  
Negatives: Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society.

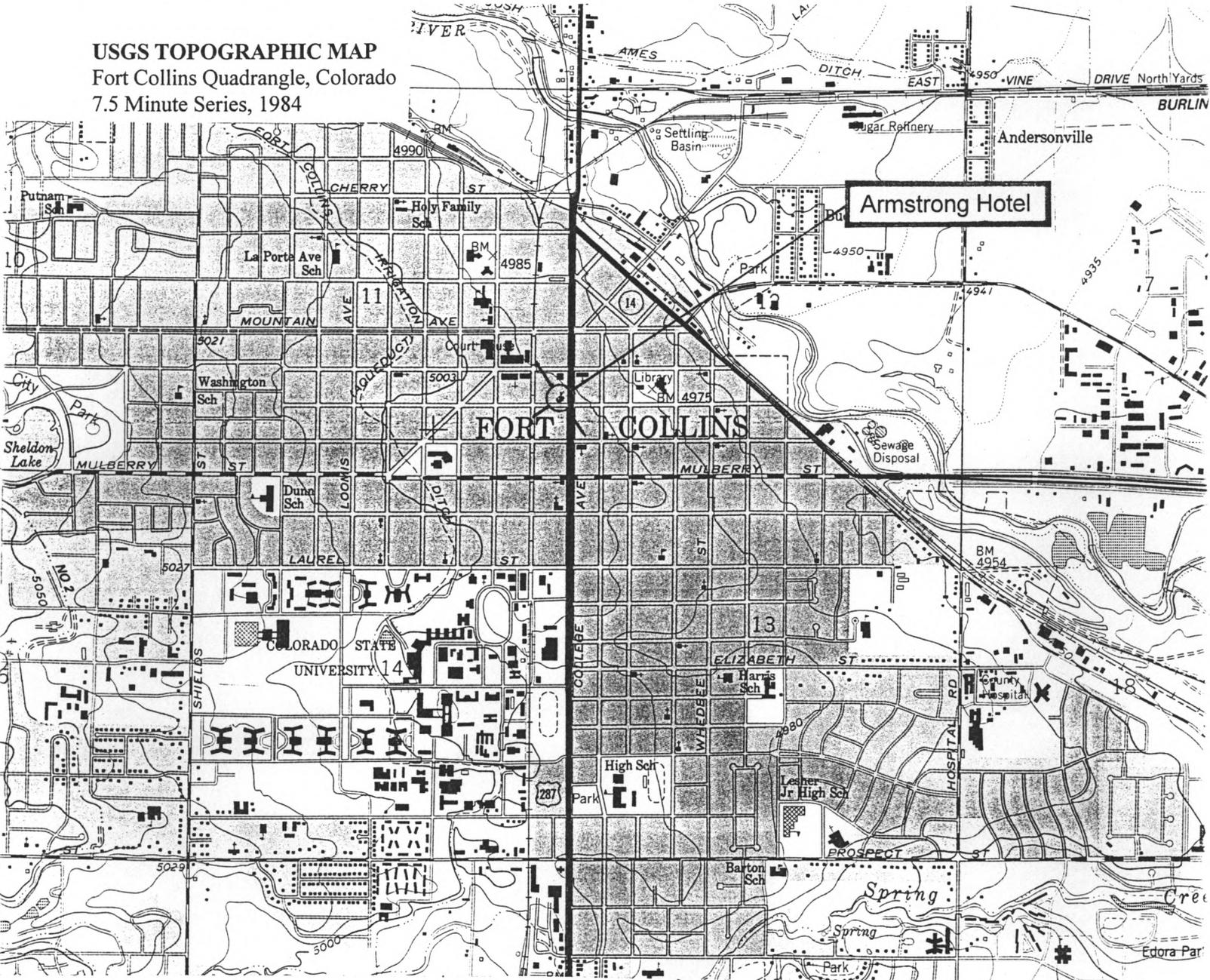
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

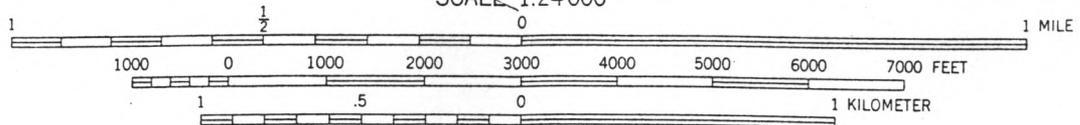
Section number \_\_\_ Page 12

Armstrong Hotel  
Larimer County, Colorado

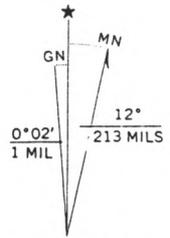
USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP  
Fort Collins Quadrangle, Colorado  
7.5 Minute Series, 1984



SCALE 1:24 000



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET  
DOTTED LINES REPRESENT 5 FOOT CONTOURS  
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929



UTM GRID AND 1984 MAGNETIC NORTH  
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



ARMSTRONG HOTEL  
Larimer County, Co  
# 11

Historic Photo  
Fort Collins Public Library  
201 Peterson  
Ft. Collins, Co. 80524



Armstrong Hotel  
Lovine County, Co  
#12

HISTORIC PHOTO CREDIT:  
Fort Collins Public Library  
201 Peterson  
Fort Collins, Co. 80524



ARMSTRONG HOTEL

Armstrong Hotel  
Lorimer County, Co  
#13

Historic Photo Credit:  
Fort Collins Public Library  
201 Peterson  
Fort Collins, Co 80524



ARMSTRONG HOTEL  
Larimer County, CO  
#14

Historic Photo Credit:  
Fort Collins Public Library  
201 Peterson  
Fort Collins, Co 80524



ARMSTRONG HOTEL FT. COLLINS COLO

MILLER

Armstrong Hotel  
Larimer County, CO  
#15

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Fort Collins Public Library  
201 Peterson  
Fort Collins, Co. 80524



Armstrong Hotel  
Larimer County, CO  
# 16

Historic Photo Credit:  
Fort Collins Public Library  
201 Peterson  
Fort Collins Co 80524



Armstrong Hotel  
Larimer County, CO  
#17

Historic Photo Credit:  
Fort Collins Public Library  
201 Peterson  
Fort Collins, Co 80524