

Downtown Apartment Flats Thematic Resources  
Indianapolis, Indiana

CONTINUATION SHEET

Page 80

NAME: The Ambassador

MAP NUMBER: 31

LOCATION: 39 East 9th Street

OWNER: The Ambassador Apartment Company

ADDRESS: 423 Massachusetts Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

7. DESCRIPTION:

The Ambassador (Photo 34 of 42) is a six-story, tan cinder brick and architectural terra cotta commercial/apartment building whose main entrance facade faces north on East 9th (once Pratt) Street. This large impressive rectangular structure is divided into nine facade units marked by four wall plane projections. The north entrance facade is twenty-four window units in length; the east-west side facades are four windows deep. The semicircular entrance portal is decorated with jamb colonettes of assorted chevron, spiral, and star motifs. The multi-light wood frame storm door is a later addition. The original entrance is recessed inside the portal. Its door side lights and transoms survive. An ornate, classically detailed metal canopy (probably later) covers the portal. The ground floor street level is characterized by modern plate glass windows on the east facade and along 9th Street. Distinctive features are the pairs of strip pilasters with terra cotta bases and capitals. The capitals are similar to the designs of Louis Sullivan and Art Nouveau style ornament. West of the central apartment entrance are five separate business entrances. A few of the original glass transoms remain.

Ornamental terra cotta is used for the stringcourses on the upper floors where they form some of the window lintels and sills. The chevron pattern is repeated. A highly ornamented terra cotta stringcourse decorates the windows of the uppermost sixth story. The projecting wall planes extend above the roof line. Terra cotta is used for the coping. The Ambassador combines the functional simplicity of the

✓ Chicago School Commercial style with the ornamental detailing of Sullivan's and Art Nouveau.

8. SIGNIFICANCE:

Thomas A. Moynahan's (see 8. Significance, page 20) multi-level, commercial/flat Ambassador, significant to this nomination for its architecture and as part of the downtown real estate development, is the last of seven apartments built in a block-and-a-half stretch of North Pennsylvania Street. In the surviving 1923 Building Permit Index Moynahan's name is found repeatedly. It can be assumed one of these entries is for the Ambassador building permit as the building was ready for the installation of elevators on January 16, 1924 (Permit #1621) and the installation of a "heat boiler" (Permit #2169) in April, 1924. The building was ready for occupancy in the fall of 1924 and immediately became one of the most fashionable downtown addresses of the 1920's.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA:

Acreage: Less than one acre

Quadrangle Name: Indianapolis West

Quadrangle Scale: 1:24,000

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Page 81

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UTM REFERENCES:

16        572290        4403360  
Zone      Easting      Northing

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

Parcel 1-01-10499. Pratt's Subdivision, Lot Eleven, Outlot One Hundred Seventy-two and One Half, Vicinity Scioto Street. Key Code 81-010-024.