

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

1278

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions 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, materials, 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 New Southern Hotel  
other names/site number New Southern Senior Center

2. Location

street & number 112-120 East Baltimore Street NA  not for publication  
city or town Jackson NA  vicinity  
state Tennessee code TN county Madison code 113 zip code 38301

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Herbert L. Hays 10/4/02  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission  
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:)

Edson H. Beall 11/21/02  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

New Southern Hotel  
Name of Property

Jackson County, Tennessee  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in count)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
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1	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
1	0	Total

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

**Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: hotel  
DOMESTIC: specialty store

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling  
DOMESTIC: specialty store  
GOVERNMENT: government office

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Renaissance Revival

**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.)

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 who's components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

1927-1952

Significant Dates

NA

Significant Person

(complete if Criterion B is marked)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

Heavner, Reuben A.;

B. E. Buffaloe Construction Company ( gen. contractor)

Criteria Considerations N/A

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C moved from its original location.
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.)

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): N/A

- 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:

New Southern Hotel  
Name of Property

Madison County, Tennessee  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than one acre Jackson South 438 SE

### UTM References

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>16</u> Zone	<u>335300</u> Easting	<u>3942460</u> Northing	3	<u>          </u> Zone	<u>          </u> Easting	<u>          </u> Northing
2	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	4	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title John Linn Hopkins and Marsha Oates  
organization Hopkins and Associates date February 2002  
street & number 974 Philadelphia telephone 901/278-5186  
city or town Memphis state TN zip code 38104

## Additional Documentation

submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 Or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO) or FPO for any additional items

## Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name New Southern Senior Center LP, c/o Mr. Hal Crocker  
street & number 320 Sterling Street telephone 731/427-9220  
city or town Jackson state TN zip code 38303

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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New Southern Hotel  
Madison County, Tennessee

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## NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The New Southern Hotel is an well-preserved example of mid-twentieth century hotel, designed with an exterior in the Renaissance Revival style, eight stories tall, twenty bays wide, and constructed of reinforced-concrete masonry. Its façade is detailed with fields of dark brown brick veneer divided by areas of monochromatic and polychromatic terra cotta used to delineate key architectural components, including its archetypal organization of the façade into base, shaft and cornice. The scale and formality of the hotel, completed in 1928 to the designs of local architect Reuben A. Heavner, made the building a landmark in downtown Jackson when it was built, as it remains today.

The New Southern Hotel is located at 112-120 East Baltimore Street at its intersection with Liberty Street on the southeastern corner of the Courthouse Square in Jackson, Madison County, Tennessee. The building occupies one half of a half-block sized lot bounded by East Baltimore Street on the north, Liberty Street on the east, Chester Street on the south, and an unnamed alley on the west. The area contained within the effective boundary of this nomination is approximately one acre.

The Courthouse Square of Jackson is composed of a mixture of publicly- and privately-developed structures facing streets that surround the grassy lawn of the Madison County Courthouse (NR 3/30/95). The buildings facing the Square are two- and three-story, load-bearing masonry structures that date from the 1870s through 1940s, designed in architectural styles that range from the Italianate to Neo-Classical adaptations of the Art Moderne. An exception is the Jackson City Hall, which was developed in the mid-1990s on a corner site at Main and Highland streets, opposite the New Southern Hotel.

The design of the New Southern Hotel was expertly shaped to fit the particular needs of its highly visible corner site. The front (north) and side (east) façades were equally developed in their degree of architectural detail, as expected in the design of a building for a corner site. However, the scale of the new hotel building presented a challenge for the architect of the building, since the side (west, alley) façade would extend four stories above the neighboring building to the west. In order to prevent the new hotel from having a blank face visible from the western half of the Courthouse Square, Heavner extended the building's terra cotta cornice across the entire depth of the western façade. The lower areas of this façade adjacent to the alley were less visible, and so they were finished with brick instead of the more expensive terra cotta veneer of the front and opposite side façades. The rear façade is unadorned and utilitarian, since it was not visible from the Courthouse Square.

The hotel has a flat roof with an elevator penthouse and two fire stair penthouses located behind a parapet; both the main roof and the flat roofed penthouses are covered with a built-up asphalt material.

The parapet of the principal (north) facade is composed of three panel designs: plain brick panels, terra cotta panels with blind balustrades, and polychrome panels decorated with swag motifs. The parapet originally featured urns above the swag-motif panels, but these elements have been lost. Below the parapet is a cornice treatment that encompasses the eighth floor level. The cornice features a prominent terra cotta cornice and

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frieze above its windows; a lesser cornice of terra cotta and brick bands extends as a continuous sill across the façade beneath the windows of the eighth floor. The lower cornice is broken in places by projecting balconettes decorated with swag motifs.

The areas of the principal façade above the second floor and below the eighth floor are clad with brick veneer, undecorated and unbroken in texture save for simple terra cotta sills for each window. The windows above the second floor, including the eighth, are 1/1 double-hung, double-glazed metal frame sashes, installed in 1976-78 to replace the original 1/1 double-hung wood sashes.

The first and second floors of the principal façade are clad with rusticated, glazed terra cotta blocks, capped by a band cornice and frieze set at the sill level of the third floor windows. The band cornice is decorated with panels of brick flanking single- and double-width panels of terra cotta, decorated with a bull's-eyes surrounded by C-scroll acanthus motifs. The second floor or mezzanine level has large, semi-circular arched window reveals capped by radiating voussoirs; and with a lion's head medallion above a plaque with stylized foliage and urn shapes set between each window. Each of these windows contains original 1/1 double-hung wood sashes flanked by narrow, single-light sidelights, topped with semi-circular arched transoms with radiating mullions.

The street level of the front façade is composed of three storefront bays that flank the central entrance to the hotel's lobby. The entrance is defined by a suspended flat metal canopy, altered from the original appearance of the canopy circa 1955. The original canopy featured acroteria at the roofline above a decorated metal band cornice and a suspended decorative metal and glass frieze. The alterations removed the acroteria and frieze and replaced them with a simple stainless steel band cornice with a backlit sign panel above the roofline. The entrance beneath the canopy also was altered circa 1955. The original treatment featured wood-frame, single-light double-doors flanked by wide single-light sidelights and spanned by a single-light transom. These elements were replaced circa 1955 with similar treatment using metal-frame door and glazing frames.

Each of the storefront bays flanking the entrance is framed by a polychrome terra cotta architrave with a cornice and frieze with acroteria set at center and at the outside corners. The three bays to the east of the hotel entrance originally housed the hotel's coffee shop, with its entrance at the outside corner with Liberty Street. The inner two bays were display windows. The original entrance treatment and display windows on the front façade were altered circa 1955 with a variegated green-black marble panel set at the transom level, a single-light display window below and a granite bulkhead at the sidewalk level. A shielded light strip separates the display windows from the marble panel above. A sense of the original treatment of these bays is visible in the storefront bays opposite the entrance. These storefronts, which have always been used for leased retail space, retain most all of their original elements, including narrow display windows with terra cotta bulkheads flanking a canted, recessed center-door entrance with a single-light, wood-frame door topped with a single-light transom. Leaded, multi-light transom strips set with ribbed pattern glass are above the entrances.

The side (east, Liberty Street) facade of the building mirrors the appearance of the principal facade, save for

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the treatment of the ground floor level. The ground floor has window arrangements along the entire facade which reflect the same divisional pattern as the semi-circular arched windows of the mezzanine level above, and contain wood frame 1/1 double-hung sashes flanked by single-light sidelights set in rectangular reveals. Beneath the windows of the ground floor is a wainscot of plain green-gray terra cotta blocks.

The side (west, alley) facade of the building is less decorated than the Liberty Street facade, as was noted previously. The parapet and cornice treatment of the upper floors was continued from the front facade, since this portion of the building would be clearly visible above the shorter, three-story buildings standing on adjacent lots to the west. The mezzanine and ground floor levels were far less visible, and therefore finished without terra cotta decoration. Nevertheless, the same wood-frame, semi-circular arched windows seen on the front facade were employed on the mezzanine level of the alley facade to maintain continuity in the rooms of the building's interior; and, the same wood-frame, rectangular window configuration seen on the ground floor of the Liberty Street facade were employed on the alley facade as well. All are set in simple brick reveals.

The rear (south) facade of the building is treated with very utilitarian finishes, since this facade was largely invisible before the demolition of adjacent buildings to the south. The rear facade reveals the original L-shaped footprint of the structure, the recumbent angle of which is filled at the ground and mezzanine levels by a portion of the lobby space. An original fire stair core juts from the facade near its southwestern corner; a second fire stair core was added to the building near the southeastern corner in 1976-78. The windows of the rear facade are single and paired sashes: the windows of the southeastern portion of the facade are paired 1/1 metal frame replacement sashes; the windows of the balance of the facade are original wood-frame 2/2 double-hung sashes, most with their original clear or pebble-finished wire mesh safety glazing. The mezzanine and ground floor levels of the rear facade at the southeastern corner have two bays containing the same semi-circular arched and rectangular arched wood frame window treatments seen on the Liberty Street and alley facades, set in simple brick reveals. The southwestern portion of the facade was altered in 1976-78 with the addition of a covered entranceway to serve the parking area on the southern portion of the property.

The interior of the hotel is organized around its lobby area, which is placed at the rear (south) of the building. The lobby is located behind the two small retail spaces to the west of the entrance; the third retail space at the western corner with the alley extends far into the building and runs along the western side of the lobby on the first floor. The elevator core is located to the east of the lobby and separates the lobby from the former coffee shop, which occupied the eastern three bays. The entrance to the lobby is at its northeastern corner, rather than at center. A corridor surrounds the lobby on three sides on both the first and second floor, or mezzanine level. Access to the mezzanine is provided by the elevators on the east, or by a stairway located off the corridor in the northwest corner. On the mezzanine level, the spaces above the first floor retail spaces and coffee shop were developed for the hotel's formal, public rooms, including its ballroom, parlors, and dining room.

The entrance foyer is notable for its strapwork ceiling of interlocking square and circular elements, and for its original Colonial Revival entrance doorway divided by fluted pilasters with urns above its cornice and frieze

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and multi-light transom. The multi-light, double-doors of the foyer open to the corridors on the first floor and mezzanine levels; these spaces are separated from the lobby by massive monumental piers paneled in oak with rope-turned moldings at the corners. The piers are embellished with acanthus leaf, cyma/cyma reversa brackets at the ceiling which frame the openings between them; the pattern thus created is used in the cyma/cyma reversa arches which define most door openings on the first floor and mezzanine level.

The height and width of the lobby space inside the piers form a nearly cubical volume. The wall surfaces below the mezzanine are covered with a grid of square, quarter-sawn oak veneer panels, but walls above have plain plaster finishes. An oak belt course decorated with a bezant molding which separates the plaster surfaces from the oak paneling below. The lobby ceiling was once covered with plaster strapwork, but this ceiling had water damage and was covered with a dropped ceiling. The ceiling of the first floor corridor outside of the lobby's piers retains its original strapwork, which matches that of the entrance foyer. The lobby floor is terrazzo in an Art Moderne diaper pattern with black, green and red diamonds; the red diamonds contain disks of green terrazzo.

The original reception desk is located on the south wall of the lobby opposite the foyer entrance, set within an arched opening divided by a pier, and finished with a wainscot of black marble. The desk alcove openings have been filled with plywood covers, but many of the original fixtures remain in place behind this reversible covering. A canted glass and frame wing wall was installed in 1976 to separate the lobby from the circulation space leading from the entrance foyer to the lobby stair. The stairs are laid in Tennessee marble and green terrazzo, with twisted wrought iron balusters and turned newels. To the west and north of the stair, doorways lead to the retail spaces facing East Baltimore Street. The elevator lobby is separated from the lobby by a partition wall on the east side of the lobby and is paneled with the same square panels of quarter-sawn oak veneer. The two elevators still have their manually operated cars.

On the mezzanine level, the openings overlooking the lobby are filled with glass and metal framing systems installed in 1976-78, though the original railings for these openings remain in place. Behind these glazed partitions, the ceilings of the mezzanine/second floor corridors have been lowered with acoustical ceilings, and some of the original walls and covered in 1976-78 with paneling on furring strips installed over the original plaster walls. In spite of these later improvements, the lobby and mezzanine retain much of their original sense of mass, scale and organization, and an upcoming rehabilitation of these spaces is intended to revive their original qualities further.

The second floor/mezzanine level originally featured several major public room arranged in a U-shape plan on the perimeter of the building, including the "Gold Ballroom," the dining room, and the men's and ladies parlors. Each of these rooms was altered in the 1970s with the addition of dropped acoustical ceilings and walls furred-in from their original plane in order to create modern office space. In spite of this, a recent inspection of the building has shown that most of these rooms, their organization, and much of their original detailing remain intact behind these later changes.

The upper floors of the New Southern Hotel retain their double-loaded L-shaped corridor plan, and the

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pattern of doorways within the hallways remains intact even though ceilings have been lowered in these passageways. The original ceilings and transoms above the doors are believed to be intact above the suspended ceilings in the hallways. The individual rooms of the building were rehabilitated for residential occupancy in 1976-78; in the process, the number of original rooms was reduced from 125 to 84 residential apartments by combining some of the smaller hotel rooms together and by dividing larger suites into smaller units. In spite of these changes, most rooms retain elements of original trim, doors, door hardware and other finishes. Many, if not most of the bathrooms in the residential units have original hexagonal tile finishes and their cast porcelain bathtubs; some retain original or earlier lavatories and medicine cabinets as well.

In spite of these alterations to the building, the property retains sufficient integrity of design, plan, detail and workmanship to reflect its original use as a hotel building. While the alterations have diminished the building's ability for listing under National Register criteria in the area of architecture, its retained integrity is sufficient to justify its listing for its significant contributions to the commercial development of Jackson during its period of significance of 1927-28 to circa 1952.

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New Southern Hotel  
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## NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The New Southern Hotel, located at 112-120 East Baltimore Street on the Courthouse Square in Jackson (population 50,406, 1996 figures), Madison County, Tennessee, is nominated under Criterion A in the area of commerce for its significant role in the emergence of Jackson as a regional trade center, a process which began in the first decade of the twentieth century and reached maturity in the 1920s. Designed by local architect Reuben A. Heavner, Sr., the large mass and quality in the design of the building gave the Courthouse Square a sense of urban scale and progressive sophistication that the city had not enjoyed before. The New Southern Hotel immediately became a critical hub for business and social activity in the Jackson area, and it retained this role for more than a half century.

The origins of the New Southern Hotel are attributed in local history to the occupation of the city during the Civil War, at which time a house on the Courthouse Square was occupied by Colonel Marsh of the 11th Illinois Regiment as his headquarters from 1862 until the conclusion of the war. The house was used as a hotel by W. D. Robinson in 1870 and eventually renamed "The Trimmer House" by Mrs. Mary L. Trimmer in 1874 (New Southern Hotel Company 1928: 2). Two years later, James E. Bright purchased the property, and he began a long series of alterations and modifications to the structure.

In 1884, Mrs. J. H. Day purchased the property from Bright and renamed the establishment "The Southern Hotel." Circa 1890, Day was responsible for transforming the former residence into an expanded three-story, Italianate and Queen Anne-styled hotel, which included the construction of a new three-story wing to the rear. The Southern Hotel was only one of perhaps five or six boarding houses and hotels in Jackson at the time, but its scale and location on the Courthouse Square made it the city's premier hotel. Mrs. Day continued to operate the hotel until her death in 1914. The property was leased to other hostlers until 1924, when it was purchased by the firm of A. D. Noe and Son of Hopkinsville, Kentucky (New Southern Hotel Company 1928: 3).

The firm of A. D. Noe and Son was well established in the hotel business by the time it acquired the Southern Hotel property in Jackson. A. D. Noe, Sr. started the family business in 1907 when he operated the Sebree Springs Hotel in Sebree, Kentucky. In 1908, Noe moved to Hopkinsville, Kentucky to operate the Hotel Latham, which he purchased outright in 1913. A. D. Noe, Jr. joined his father in business after completing his studies at South Kentucky College in Hopkinsville. The younger Noe gained experience in the hotel business by operating the Hotel Madison in Madison, Kentucky under a lease agreement until 1912, when the opportunity arose to acquire a 99-year lease on the Alta Vista Hotel in Miami, Florida, at the time when the Florida coast was just becoming a popular vacation resort area. A. D. Noe and Son developed the Alta Vista into one of the prime hotels in the Miami area over the next decade, and sold the lease on the property for a substantial profit in 1923 (Jackson *Sun*, January 4, 1928: 3).

The reason is unknown for A. D. Noe and Sons selling their Florida lease and returning to the Mid-South region to resume developing hotels in smaller city markets, but they did so with the acquisition of the Southern Hotel

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in 1924. After investing \$75,000 in the renovation of the old building, the Noes formed a partnership with investor Ira Krupnick and hotel developers Albert Pick & Co. to purchase and redevelop the Hotel Owensboro in Owensboro, Kentucky in 1926 (*Jackson Sun*, January 4, 1928, Supplement: 3). The same partnership worked with the Noes to create the New Southern Hotel, for which construction began in the summer of 1927.

The demand for a new, high-quality hotel in Jackson was created from several sources. During the first quarter of the twentieth century Jackson had grown into a notable regional trade center with a population of 20,000. This growth was caused by the city's location at the crossing of three major railroads: the Illinois Central; the Mobile & Ohio; and, the Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis lines ("Transportation-Related Properties of Jackson, Tennessee" MPS, NR 2/22/93). The railroads were attracted to Jackson by the surrounding region's agricultural base, which in turn had attracted companies like the Bemis Bag Company (a.k.a. "Jackson Fibre Company") to develop its huge cotton spinning and weaving mills just to the south of the city in 1900 (NR 12/16/91).

The city also became a major center for lumber produced from the dense hardwood forests surrounding the bottoms of the Forked Deer River. Sawmills such as the Five Points Lumber Company and the Enoch-Smith Lumber Co. milled the logs into lumber for shipment to other markets, including the furniture-manufacturing centers of Memphis, Chicago and Grand Rapids. The availability of a ready supply of high-quality lumber also attracted companies to mill the lumber into new products: the Southern Seating & Cabinet Company, makers of church, school and office furniture; the Coleman Heading Company, manufacturers of barrels and related products; the Budde-Weiss Manufacturing Company, the makers of wheel spokes; and the Piggly-Wiggly Factory, which only produced counters and other store fixtures for all the stores in the Piggly-Wiggly grocery store chain (*Jackson Sun*, January 4, 1928, Supplement: 1).

The demand for new, high-quality hotel accommodations was created in effect by three distinctly different factors. The development of Jackson as a regional trade and manufacturing center created the demand for quality accommodations to serve the business traveler to Jackson, and conversely, a place for the Jackson businessman to entertain prospective clients or customers. The growth of the local business environment also created a local demand among the burgeoning middle class for a place to be entertained, to enjoy a fine meal on a special occasion in a luxurious setting, and to gather with peers for business, social, and civic functions. Finally, the dawn of the casual automobile traveler arrived in the 1920s with the establishment of the U. S. Highway system, the first network of interstate roadways developed for automotive travel; Jackson's location at the crossing of U.S. Highways 45 and 70 at the Courthouse Square made it a particularly important destination for the traveler. At the time of the beginning of construction for the New Southern Hotel, Jackson effectively possessed no place that could meet these demands in the marketplace for a modern, multi-use hotel facility. Apart from the Southern Hotel, the competition for lodging places during the early decades of the twentieth century was being served by only a handful of small hotels or boarding houses. In general terms, these facilities contained perhaps 30 rooms or less and, like the New Arlington House, were located either along streets within a block or two of the Courthouse Square, or, like the Neely House Hotel, were located near the railroad depots

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well-removed from the Square to the south and east ("Transportation-Related Properties of Jackson, Tennessee" MPS, NR 2/11/93).

The Noes were astute businessmen, and they recognized the opportunities in Jackson that the facilities of their existing hotel and its competitors could not provide. They began active planning for a new facility to replace the Southern Hotel soon after completing work on the Hotel Owensboro. Unfortunately, copies of the newspapers published in Jackson between 1926 and 1928 are lost, and thus, a sense of the progression of events that led to the new hotel's construction cannot be thoroughly documented. However, a "Souvenir Edition" of the *Jackson Sun* for January 4, 1928 was published specifically to celebrate the opening of the New Southern Hotel on January 5, 1928.

The information in the "Souvenir Edition" notes that the Noes retained the services of Jackson-based architect Reuben A. Heavner ((1/19/1875 - 8/22/1940), in the latter months of 1926 to begin preparing plans and specifications for the new hotel building. Heavner was born in Paris, Tennessee, but moved to Jackson as a child where his father, Uriah R. Heavner, established a design and construction firm in 1878 (*Jackson Sun*, August 21, 1940: 1). The younger Heavner attended Jackson public schools and studied at Union University and the Practical Business College of Jackson before joining his father's firm as an apprentice around 1894 (*Ibid.*; and Herndon 1975: 91,127). Reuben Heavner established an architectural practice separate from his father's business circa 1904, and for a few years around 1906 he maintained a partnership in Jackson with Hubert T. McGee (1864-1946), a former apprentice in Heavner's fathers' firm (Herndon 1975: 127). Works by Heavner prior to the commission for the New Southern Hotel included the Jackson High School and the Corinth, Mississippi High School, and the Christian Church at Union City in 1912, among many other commissions for residential, public, religious, and institutional buildings (Herndon 1975: 91). Heavner also designed all of the company housing for the Bemis Bag Company in its "West Bemis" residential area, developed in 1926 (Bemis Historic District NR 12/16/91). He continued an active architectural practice in partnership with John F. Parish (born 1875) as the firm of Heavner and Parish of Jackson until his death in 1940 (*Jackson Sun*, August 21, 1940: 1).

Heavner's design for the Noes was perhaps his largest and most prestigious commission, at least based on the information currently known about Heavner's career. The north portion of the old hotel building was demolished in the spring of 1927, leaving the new hotel to be connected to the older rear wing built circa 1890. Construction started on the new hotel in the early summer months of 1927 (New Southern Hotel 1928: 4), with the B. E. Buffaloe Construction Company as the general contractor for the project. Though the Buffaloe firm had been in business only since 1924, by 1927 it had an impressive résumé with experience on large projects including the New Tennessee Hotel, the Medical Arts Building (a.k.a. Hickman Building, NR 8/19/19), and the award-winning Idlewild Presbyterian Church, all built in Memphis between 1926 and 1928 (*Jackson Sun*, Supplement January 4, 1928: 1).

The New Southern Hotel, completed at a cost of about \$750,000, was officially opened on January 5, 1928, and

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Madison County, Tennessee

it instantly became a landmark. Built in the Renaissance Revival style on the exterior and with the interior having some Mediterranean styling, the eight-story hotel provided Jackson with an air of urban sophistication that it had not experienced before; one would have to travel to Memphis or Nashville to enjoy a similar experience of such luxury. The new section of the hotel contained 125 rooms, each with a private bath; the project also included the renovation of the older southern addition of circa 1890, which contained an additional 100 rooms with shared bathrooms. The leather-brown grid oak paneling of the new lobby, combined with its complex plaster strapwork ceilings and cyma/cyma-reversa archways of the major doorways and other openings, all gave an exotic feel to its spaces, enhanced by Moorish furnishings, light fixtures and carpets installed under the direction of O. William Nordstrom, lead interior designer for Albert Pick & Company (Jackson *Sun*, Supplement January 4, 1928: 1). The mezzanine's "Gold Ballroom," main dining room, and men's and ladies parlors were equally exotic in their architectural detail and finishes. The hotel employed its own "Big Band" led by Charlie McMillan to perform for evening dances and a special brunch program on Sundays (Williams 1988: 98). The hotel's coffee shop served breakfast and lunch in a less formal setting than the dining room and soon became a hub of casual social and business interaction on Courthouse Square.

From 1928 until the hotel closed in 1970, the New Southern Hotel was the favored place for social and business events, hosting regional sales meetings, weekly meetings of local service organizations, educational conferences, fraternal conventions, and probably every high school prom, too. Its ballrooms were the backdrop for local political rallies and party caucuses, as well as weddings, anniversaries and retirement parties. Overnight guests were not the only occupants of the New Southern, as the hotel also was the residence of several families, particularly in the 1950s (Rubye Mann Scrapbook Collection n. d.: n. p.).

The increasing popularity of the "automobile culture" of the 1950s and 1960s caused a decline in the New Southern Hotel's business, with roadside motels replacing urban hotels as the traveling public's preferred lodgings. The New Southern was purchased by the Crocker family of Jackson in 1964, who attempted to keep the hotel viable for the next several years, without success. In 1970, the hotel was finally closed and converted to office uses; many of the original hotel furnishings and fixtures were removed from the building and sold at this time. This office conversion of the building proved unsuccessful as well, due to the general decline in the office and retail base of downtown Jackson that began in the early 1970s. In 1976-78, the building underwent a major renovation for conversion as a residential center for senior citizens on the upper floors, with office space on the first floor and mezzanine (Crocker 2001). The circa 1890 wing of the hotel to the south was demolished at this time and replaced with a parking area for the office and residential tenants. While the conversion of the hotel to residential and office uses resulted in lowering the height of many ceilings (in some cases to conceal damage to plaster ceilings and other finishes that had occurred during the preceding decade), the organizational pattern of the original floor plans remains intact, and most of its original finishes in secondary spaces are preserved behind the later additions, waiting for future restoration.

The New Southern Hotel is an enduring landmark of the development of Jackson, Tennessee as a major commercial trade center in West Tennessee during the first few decades of the twentieth century. Many in the

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Jackson community retain cherished memories of special events and activities that took place in the building during the time that it serviced as a focal point for business and social interaction in the Jackson. The renovation of the building in 1976-78 served as an important commitment to the revitalization of the downtown area of Jackson while others were moving their businesses and offices to suburban locations; it is still an important component of the on-going revitalization of downtown Jackson to this day.

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New Southern Hotel

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## **GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

### **Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundaries for the New Southern Hotel nomination are confined to the half-block lot on which the building stands, bound on the north by East Baltimore Street, on the east by Liberty Street, on the south by Chester Street, and on the west by South Court Alley, as delineated in heavy black line on the attached portion of Madison County Tax Map 78-PC, block B, parcel 11.

### **Boundary Justification**

The property in nomination contains all land associated with the development of the New Southern Hotel since its construction in 1927-28.

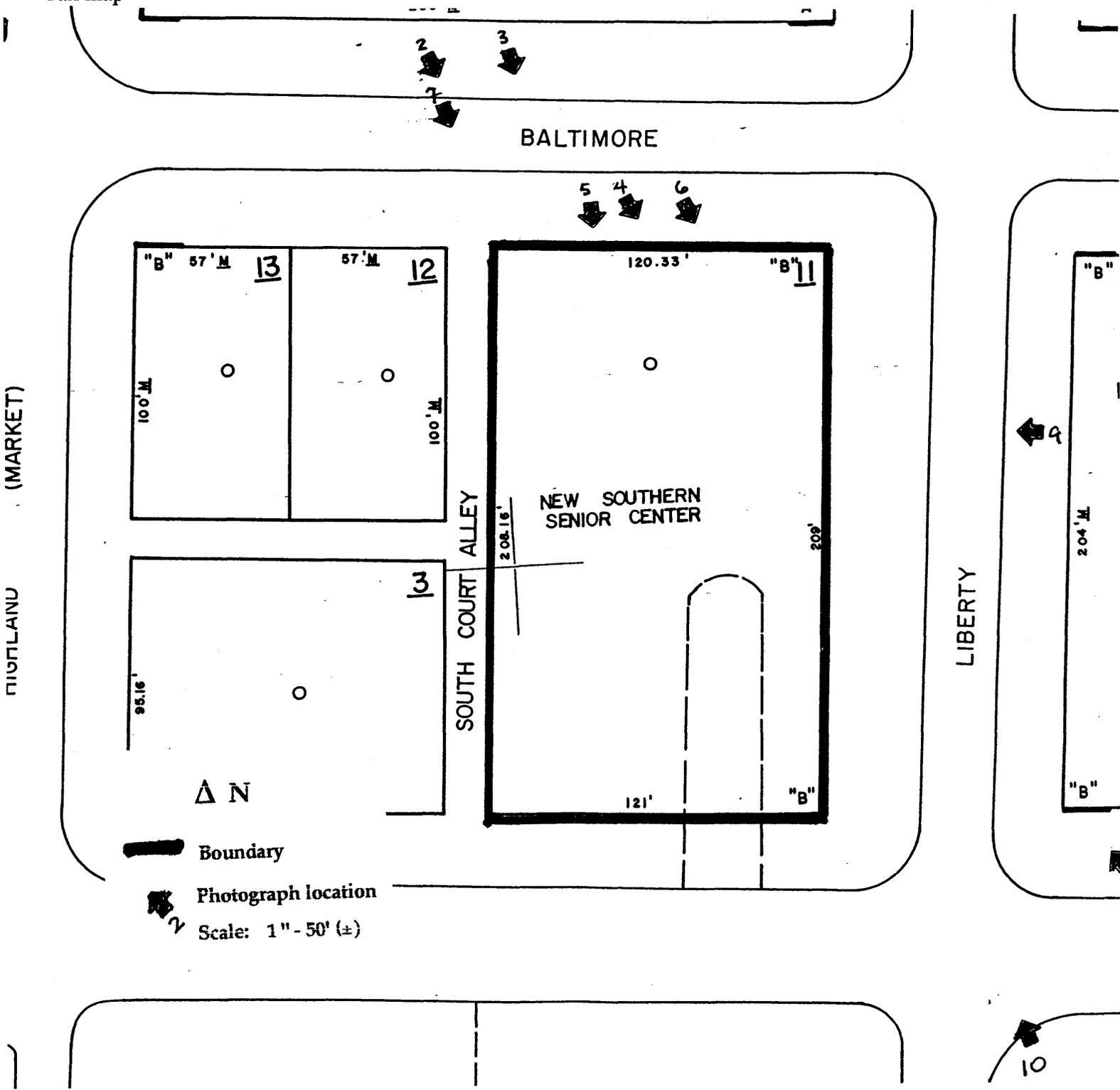
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Tax map



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### **PHOTOGRAPHS**

New Southern Hotel  
112-120 East Baltimore Street  
Jackson, Madison County, Tennessee

Photos by: Bob Arnold and John L. Hopkins  
Date: May, 2002  
Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission

Photo 1 of 29

View of the south side of East Baltimore Street, looking southeast towards the New Southern Hotel.

Photo 2 of 29

View of the East Baltimore Street (front) facade of the New Southern Hotel, looking southeast.

Photo 3 of 29

View of the storefront and mezzanine levels of the East Baltimore Street (front) facade, looking southeast.

Photo 4 of 29

View of the front entrance of the New Southern Hotel, looking southeast.

Photo 5 of 29

View of one of three original storefronts on East Baltimore Street.

Photo 6 of 29

View of the storefronts for the former coffee shop of the hotel to the east of the front entrance, looking southeast to Liberty Street.

Photo 7 of 29

View of the side (alley) facade, looking generally south.

Photo 8 of 29

View of the Liberty Street (side) facade, looking generally northwest.

Photo 9 of 29

View of the street and mezzanine level of the Liberty Street (side) facade, looking west.

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Photo 10 of 29

View of the rear (south) facade, looking northwest.

Photo 11 of 29

View of the entrance foyer inside the front doors of the hotel.

Photo 12 of 29

View from the lobby corridor to the south wall of the lobby; at center is the location of the former registration desk (opening filled).

Photo 13 of 29

View of the first floor elevator lobby, located to the east of the main lobby.

Photo 14 of 29

View from the lobby corridor to the west, toward the small shore repair shop installed in the corridor circa 1976-78. Note the terrazzo floor pattern and the strapwork pattern of the ceiling.

Photo 15 of 29

View from the lobby corridor looking southwest toward the stair to the mezzanine.

Photo 16 of 29

View from the lobby to the mezzanine stair; the glazed partition wall was installed for the use of a tenant circa 1976-78.

Photo 17 of 29

View of the lobby stair to the mezzanine, showing the run to the basement level at center right.

Photo 18 of 29

View of the basement area with the stair to the lobby in the background. The spaces in this area were originally used for a tavern space, a beauty shop and other services.

Photo 19 of 29

View from the middle landing of the lobby stair, looking towards the offices on the mezzanine level.

Photo 20 of 29

View from the upper landing of the lobby stair, looking through the archway to the former housekeeping area located in the southwest corner of the building.

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Photo 21 of 29

View of the corridor surrounding along the north side of the mezzanine. The glazed partitions were installed circa 1976-78.

Photo 22 of 29

View into the lobby from the mezzanine level.

Photo 23 of 29

View of the mezzanine level elevator lobby, looking to the doorway for the hotel kitchen.

Photo 24 of 29

View of the interior of the office developed in the former coffee shop area on the first floor.

Photo 25 of 29

View of a typical office space developed in the place of the former ballroom and dining room of the building. Note the small area of original terrazzo floor visible beneath the carpeting.

Photo 26 of 29

View of a typical corridor on the upper floors of the building.

Photo 27 of 29

View of a corridor on another floor of the building; the elevator lobby for the floor is located out of view at left.

Photo 28 of 29

View of a typical apartment unit in the building, looking out to the corridor. Note the original transom over the door, the original single-panel door to the bathroom, and original door trim.

Photo 29 of 29

View of a typical bathroom in the apartments of the building. Note the original medicine cabinet, hexagonal floor tiles, cast porcelain tub, original porcelain tub faucet set, and "subway" tile wainscot.