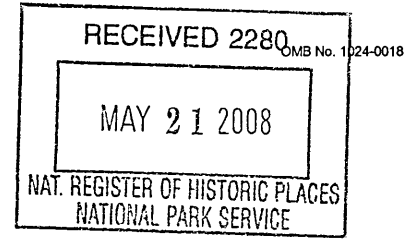


United States Department of the Interior
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605

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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 any 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 Barker Building
Other names/site number DO09:0123-078

2. Location

Street & number 306 South 15th Street Not for publication
City or town Omaha Vicinity
State Nebraska Code NE County Douglas Code 055 Zip code 68102

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 forth 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.)

Michael J. ...
Signature of certifying official
Director, Nebraska State Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

May 15, 2008
Date

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

Signature of certifying official/Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

Date

4. National Park Service Certification

- I, hereby, certify that this 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 7-2-08

for
Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

Barker Building

Name of Property

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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 include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	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.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Commerce/Trade: Office building

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Vacant/Not in Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late 19th and Early 20th Century Revivals: Late Gothic Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Foundation Concrete

Walls Brick with Terra Cotta Detailing

Roof EPDM

Other _____

Narrative Description

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

Barker Building

Name of Property

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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 a 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.)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1929

Significant Dates

1929

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Allan and Wallace

Kiewit Construction

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 for additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Barker Building

Name of Property

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one acre

UTM References (place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet).

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	15	254041	4571237	3.			
2.				4.			

[] 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 Jennifer Honebrink, AIA

organization Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture P.C.

date Feb 2008

street & number 1213 Jones Street

telephone 402-341-1544

city or town Omaha

state Nebraska zip code 68102

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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name/title Barker Lofts LLC; Attn: Royce Maynard, President; Dicon General Contractors

street & number 11506 Nicholas St, Suite #200

telephone (402) 934-2900

city or town Omaha

state Nebraska zip code 68154

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determined eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, (15 USC 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Site:

The Barker Building is in heart of Omaha's downtown area. As a corner building on Farnam Street, the building occupies a prominent site on one of Omaha's busiest thoroughfares. It is surrounded by a variety of commercial and public buildings, including the main public library and the Redick Tower (NRHP listed 1984). These buildings range from three to nine stories tall and vary in age from the early nineteen-hundreds to 1984.

This rectangular building stands seven stories tall and consists of a base, body and crown in Neo-Gothic style. The short end of the building fronts Farnam Street to the North and the long side of the building addresses South 15th Street to the East. The base of the building fills the entire lot. Floors two through seven however, step in at the rear of the building to create a fat "L" shape, leaving a light well at the back of the building.

Exterior:

The primary facades of the building are finished in a tan and cream color scheme of brick and terra cotta. The base of the building consists of flat terra cotta pieces set on a grey granite base which keeps the terra cotta up and protected somewhat from the weathering effects of snow and salt. The storefront openings are in a variety of conditions. All have recessed entrance doors. At the south end of the East façade, the storefront opening has been in-filled with a combination of red marble and steel storefront. The next storefront opening has been modified with butt glazing in the storefront system. The two storefront openings flanking the office entrance contain the original painted steel display windows; however, the transoms have been covered in steel paneling in one opening and replaced by aluminum windows in the other. The storefronts in the North east corner of the building consist of modern aluminum display windows painted to match the remaining original trim pieces. The transom on the western storefront on the North façade has been in-filled with pigmented structural glass and the display windows below have been in-filled with butt-glazed display windows. In the center of the East face, a Tudor Arch provides the main office entrance to the building. A dentil belt course separates the base from the body above.

The body of each primary facade is divided into center and corner sections. At the corners of these façades, the brick are laid in running bond sections that are wider and slightly taller than those in the center of the building, creating the impression of corner towers. Spandrels in these areas are of undecorated, cream-colored terra cotta. In the center of each primary façade, narrow bands of brick are laid in a running bond in pilasters up the sides of the building, and broken at intervals with flat, cream-colored terra cotta pieces, giving these sections the illusion of flattened flying buttresses. The spacing of these elements and the subtle high-lighting of the buttresses by lining the jambs with cream-colored terra cotta also emphasizes the height of the building. Spandrels in these areas are constructed of tan terra cotta with simplified tracery. Windows in these elevations are steel center folding casement units. Mullions in each window are laid out in a cross-pattern, further enhancing the Neo-Gothic appearance of the building. The composition is completed by a crown of quatrefoils and blank lancet windows.

The decorative finishes of the primary facades wrap around the corners of the alley and side facades for approximately 15 feet. The remainder of the rear facades of the building is finished in red common brick in a common bond with sixth course headers. Punched window openings create a regular rhythm across these facades. Steel center folding casement windows on this façade are three lites by three lites. Each window opening has a limestone sill.

Interior:

The first floor is divided into six retail bays. Two face North towards Farnam Street, and four face East towards South 15th Street. The main entrance to the upper office floors is also centered on the East façade. Retail bay number one in the Northwest corner was designed as a shoe store. Its two-story space has a mezzanine around the perimeter for access to shoe box slots which line the walls from floor to ceiling. Columns in this bay are wrapped in wood paneling and pendent light fixtures are art-deco in style. Retail bays two through six along the East side of the building from North to South have interior finishes from the 1980s, including carpet, vinyl tile, and lay-in ceilings. The elaborate main office entrance carries

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in the Neo-Gothic style of the exterior. The floor is covered with terrazzo in four colors, laid out in a field with multiple borders. The walls are covered in travertine. In the vestibule the travertine is offset by green marble panels which flank the doors. In the main lobby space, the travertine is recessed at regular intervals in a Moorish style blank door. At the far end of the lobby, decorative brass elevator doors are recessed in two such travertine openings. The ceiling of this lobby space is divided into two groin vaults by floral plaster bands which rest on decorative impostes. The bands and impostes are colored to coordinate with the terrazzo floor.

On floors two through seven, a utility core consisting of two elevators, an exit stair, restrooms, a mechanical room and a janitor's closet are located on the west side of the South leg of the "L". The restrooms are finished in grey terrazzo floors, colored tile walls and contain grey marble toilet partitions. The East face of the core has maintained its original finishes, including a high white marble wainscot, and wood paneled doors. On some floors, a truncated hallway still exists, while on others the hallway has been removed entirely. Where the hallway has been removed, the checkered terrazzo floor has been covered with carpeting. On those floors where a hallway exists, the East side has been modernized with a variety of office entrance treatments. In all cases the ceiling has been lowered.

The seventh floor is finished in the same manner as the other office floors, despite being the top floor. Each office bay was originally laid out at 8'-0" wide and 21'-0" long. Multiple bays were often combined into one office space. "It is said that every conceivable office layout is possible by using this size unit as a basis."¹

The basement and penthouse spaces are rough and unfinished, with the exception of the break room in the basement, which is finished in drywall and vinyl tile.

Integrity:

Overall the building has maintained a good level of integrity. The building has undergone two renovations, in 1954 and in 1979. The first renovation was designed by James Allan and the second was likely done directly through a contractor.

Like many other downtown retail buildings, the storefronts have been modified over the years, and vandals have removed the historic light fixtures and grill work at the main office entrance. However, all of the decorative terra cotta and brick work is in good condition and the original bronze main entrance doors are in storage to protect them from vandals. Some of the storefront modifications likely come from the two renovations.

On the interior, at the first floor level the Neo-Gothic office entrance lobby is in fair condition. There is minor damage to the plaster impostes, the elevator floor indicators have been removed as has the office building directory. On the upper floors, vandals have removed copper wiring on floors two through four, and a roof leak has caused ceiling damage on the seventh floor. The terrazzo floor of the public hallway remains in fair condition, even under the carpet in many locations. Additionally, the white marble wainscot and wood doors and trim on the core spaces at the west side of the original hallway remain in good condition. Previously described changes to the hallway configuration, office entrances, and office partitions as well as radiator covers were the result of the two renovations.

¹ C.E. Heaney, "Barker Building One of Omaha's Most Distinctive," *Omaha Chamber of Commerce Journal*, Aug 10 1929, p. 11.

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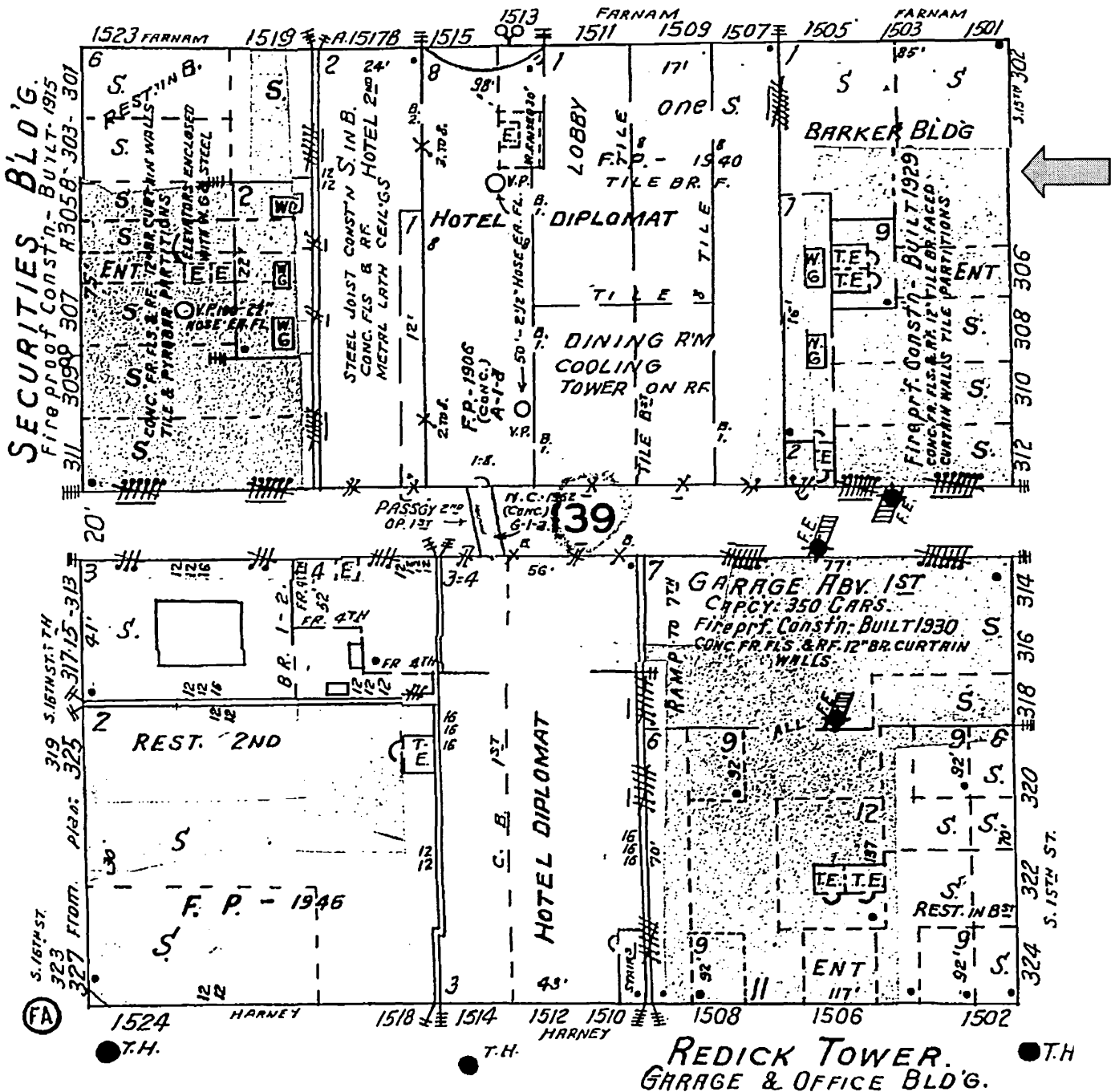
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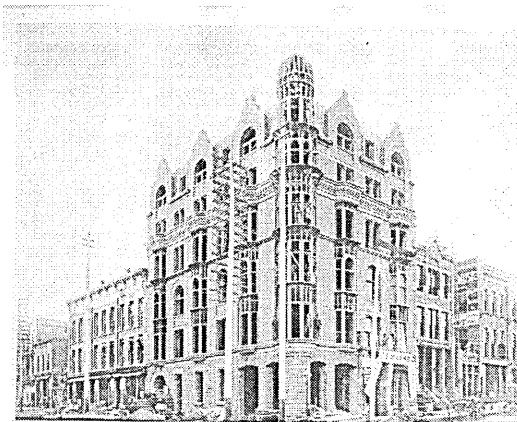
Section 8 Page 4

Synopsis

The Barker Building is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C in multiple ways. It is representative of the distinctive characteristics of the period of architecture known as Traditional Modernism which was prevalent in this country from 1900-1940. Additionally, it possesses high artistic value and is a wonderful local example of Neo-Gothic Revival. Finally, the building represents the work of local master architects, James Allan and Noel Wallace, and master contractor Kiewit Construction, which has developed into a nationally recognized construction firm.

Site History:

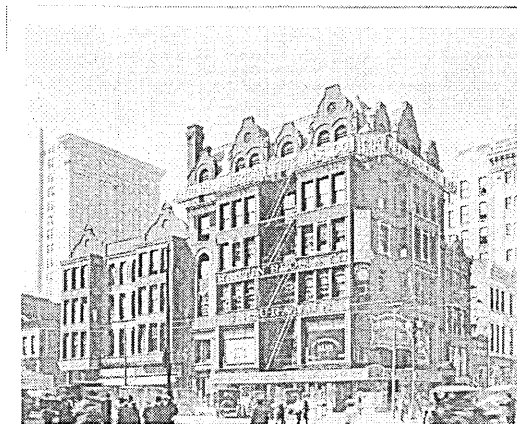
The current Barker Building is the third building owned by the Barker family to stand on this site. The family originally purchased the site in 1856 with an eye toward development, but left Omaha for England soon after purchase to settle a family estate. After returning to America in 1871, brothers George and Joseph Barker hired the local firm of Mendelsohn and Fisher to design a six story structure here. Some in town commented that this was a poor location for an office building as it was on the far edge of the downtown area.



2 First Barker Building 1886

The first building was nearing completion when it burned on the 6th of November 1886. After the wooden interior structure was consumed, the exterior walls could no longer stand and the building collapsed. Investigation into the cause of the fire led to a vagrant who had snuck into the building to sleep for the night. When he awoke late in the night to have a smoke, a spark from his match lit some nearby tinder and set the building ablaze.

The site was cleared and a second building was constructed and completed in 1889. This second Barker Building was also set ablaze. On the 21st of March in 1928, a cigar was dropped down the elevator shaft which lit the greased wooden elevator guides on fire. Again the decision was quickly made to rebuild. As Omaha had grown, this became an ideal place for an office building, close to a majority of other office buildings and only a short distance from the city hall.



3 Second Barker Building

In the intervening years, George Barker had become prominent in local real estate and financial dealings, accumulating a great deal of wealth and local influence. He helped to found the local gas works, the stockyards, several local banks, and a number of residential additions to the city. However, he passed away one year before the fire took the second building. Before he died, he founded a corporation for his wife and children to inherit and run the financial empire he had established. His estate was still being settled when the fire took place. Led by George's son-in-law, Frank T.B. Martin, the corporation selected the best talent their money could hire for the third building, including architects James Allan and Noel Wallace, and Kiewit Construction as the contractor. To ensure that the building would meet modern business needs, the company hired the National Building Owner's and Manager's Association to consultant on modern office planning standards. The building was completed for just over \$1 million at the end of August 1929, shortly before the stock market crash of Black Thursday which started the Great Depression.

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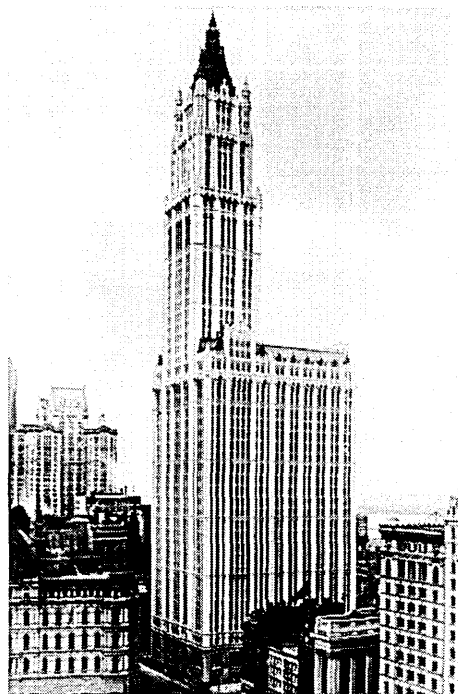
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The current building has now survived almost 80 years with-out major mishap.

Characteristics of the Traditional Modernism Period

At the beginning of the 1900s architects nation-wide were debating the continued relevance of history as a basis of design. The new materials and methods of construction being developed seemed to call for a new approach to architecture. Ties to the past however, were difficult to part with and until World War II, "the bulk of early twentieth-century architecture, particularly of a monumental, official, or commercial character, took the form of what can be called Traditionalism, which accommodated new building types with-in old-fashioned covers."² As concrete and steel framed buildings were erected, they were most often concealed behind French Second Empire, Second Renaissance, and other revival styled facades.



4 Woolworth Building

Included in these styles was the Neo-Gothic Revival whose emphasis on the vertical lent itself easily to tall commercial buildings and early skyscrapers. Perhaps the best known of these is Cass Gilbert's Woolworth building. Completed in 1913, Neo-Gothic styling disguised a steel frame. The building was dubbed the "Cathedral of Commerce." In describing his design effort, Gilbert explained that taking advantage of Neo-Gothic styling allowed the building to become ever more spiritual.

Similar to Gilbert's Woolworth building, the Barker Building is a concrete structure clad in a Neo-Gothic skin. A tall office building, the Barker Building was in its own local race for height. Originally designed as a six-story office building, it and a second building were changed to seven stories when it was announced that a third building currently beginning constructed would be seven stories tall.³

High Artistic Value and the Neo-Gothic Revival Style

Nebraska has only two metropolitan areas which have ever been large enough to support sizable office buildings. With-in Lincoln and Omaha, the number of extant, large office buildings constructed prior to 1940 is limited. Furthermore, those of Neo-Gothic Revival style can be counted on one hand, adding to the distinction of the Barker Building.

Neo-Gothic Revival architecture was popular from 1900-1930. It reflects a simpler and more architecturally correct interpretation of the original Gothic style than the High Victorian Gothic of the late 1800s. It is characterized by monochrome brick or limestone walls with terra cotta and stone trim, early Gothic elements (especially finials and stone buttresses), quatrefoils, restrained use of detail, and a vertical emphasis. Most often used on ecclesiastical, educational and commercial buildings, it became so popular on college campuses that it is sometimes referred to as Collegiate Gothic.

To produce a Neo-Gothic aesthetic, James Allan and Noel Wallace used window grouping and proportions to create the impression of corner towers and flattened buttresses. Wider, unbroken bricked areas and brighter spandrel panels create the impression of corner towers, while narrower brick pilasters broken by flat terra cotta pieces imply flattened buttresses across the body of the building. The spacing of the pilasters between the window elements and the subtle high-lighting of the "buttresses" by lining the jambs with shiny terra cotta also emphasizes the height of the building. Further enhancing

² Marvin Trachtenberg and Isabelle Hyman, "Architecture from Prehistory to Post-Modernism," the Netherlands, Harry N Abrams, B.V., 1986, p. 553.

³ "Three New Office Buildings will all be Seven Stories," *Omaha Chamber of Commerce Journal*, July 14, 1928, p. 5.

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the Neo-Gothic appearance are such details as window millions in a cross-like pattern, simplified tracery on the spandrel panels, a Tudor opening for the building's main entrance, and Tudor arches on the windows of the top floor. The composition is completed by a crown of interlaced quatrefoils, shields and blank lancet windows. The result is a beautiful local example of the Neo-Gothic Revival style of architecture.

Additionally, its high artistic value is carried into the lobby and public spaces of the building. The main lobby contains a wonderful combination of rich materials. The terrazzo floor is laid out in cream, green, dark and light grey. The colors form a series of square fields surrounded by multiple borders. Green marble base separates the floor from dark gold travertine walls. In the vestibule, the travertine walls are inset with a green marble panel, while in the main lobby, Moorish styled insets and set under each groin vaults. Three of these are blanked off, while a fourth leads to the main public stair and the fifth and sixth surround the bronze elevator doors. Each groin vault is separated by a decorative plaster beams resting on imposts. Finishes of the public spaces on floors two through seven included checkered and bordered terrazzo floors, white marble paneled walls, and walnut trim. Upon completion the building was declared to be "an architectural gem."⁴



4 Barker Building circa 1939

⁴ C.E. Heaney, "Barker Building, One of Omaha's Most Distinctive," *Omaha Chamber of Commerce Journal*, Aug 10 1929, p. 11.

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Master Architects James Allan and Noel Wallace

James Allan began independent practice in 1914 and worked on a wide variety of project types, including single family residential, apartment buildings, small offices, automotive repair garages, theaters and building alterations. He formed a partnership with Noel Wallace in 1928. The two worked together until sometime between 1933 and 1936. Overall their projects continued the range of work Allan established earlier, including a bus garage, cold storage building, and single family residential buildings. After dissolution of the partnership, Allan continued as a sole proprietor until 1945.

The Barker Buildings represents one of Allan and Wallace's first contracts together. Other notable buildings they designed as a firm include the Ambassador Apartments and the Fisk Warehouse. Hallmarks of their designs include well-organized space planning, use of modern space planning principals and materials, well thought details, and a disciplined use of architectural styles.

Master Contractor Kiewit Construction

Kiewit Construction began operation in 1884 and in its early years was a family owned and operated business. Peter and Andrew Kiewit were brothers of a brick maker who saw an opportunity to move into construction in the fast growing city of Omaha. In 1889 the brothers dissolved the partnership and Peter continued the company as sole proprietor, taking his own sons as partners in 1912. When Peter Kiewit Sr died in 1914, the sons continued to develop the company, landing their first \$1 million contract in 1924, the Stockyards Exchange Building. In 1931 Ralph decided to leave the company and Peter Kiewit Jr began his own period of sole proprietorship. Shortly thereafter Peter Jr began selling shares of stock to key employees to conserve cash and motivate them. Today Kiewit is one of the largest employee-owned firms in the nation and is consistently ranked in the top 10 contractors by *Engineering News Record*.

The late 1920s were a remarkable time for the company in which they constructed some of Nebraska's most notable landmarks, including the Nebraska State Capitol Tower, the Joslyn Art Museum, and Union Station. These large commissions did not keep the company completely busy however, and they spread their labor force into other areas at the same time. The Barker Building is representative of their bread and butter commissions during this same period, which were smaller commercial buildings. These buildings found the contractors working for a wide variety of owners and architects in the Omaha area. In addition to the Barker Building, in the late 1920s they completed St. Joe's Hospital, Benson High School, Kilpatrick Store, Westminster High School, and the 46th and Izard Telephone Exchange Building, all in Omaha.

In conclusion, the Barker Building is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C as a beautiful local high-style example of the Neo-Gothic style of architecture, one of the many styles common in America during the Traditional Modernism period at the beginning of the 20th century. Designed by James Allan and Noel Wallace, and constructed by Kiewit Construction, the building also represents the work of well known Master Architects and Contractors.

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Continuation Sheet**

Barker Building

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Bibliography

Omaha Public Library

Clipping Files: Mr and Mrs George Barker Biography; Barker Family; Barker Building
Card Catalogue: Barker Building; Barker Hotel; Barker, George E.

Douglas County Historical Society

Clipping Files: Barker Building; Barker Family

Articles Used (organized by date)

Heaney, C.E. "Barker Building One of Omaha's Most Distinctive." *Omaha Chamber of Commerce Journal*. (Aug 10, 1929): 11.

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Continuation Sheet**

Barker Building

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Section 9, 10, Photos Page 9

Omaha City Directory 1928

Trachtenberg, Marvin and Isabelle Hyman. *Architecture from Prehistory to Post-Modernsim*. The Netherlands: Harry N Abrams, B.V., 1986.

Maps

Sanborn Maps, Omaha 1962, vol 1 page 9

Interviews

Wrieth, Don, Kiewit Company Historian. Interview by author, Jan 15, 2008, Omaha.

Online Sites

Wrieth, Don. "Historical Eras." Jan 15 2008. <<http://www.Kiewit.com/about/history.html>>.

Verbal Boundary Description

City Lots, Block 139, Lot 1.

(See Sanborn Map, Continuation Sheet Section 7, Page 4)

Boundary Justification

This includes all of the property historically associated with Barker Building.

Photos

All photographs were taken by Jennifer Honebrink in January 2008. Negatives were retained by Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture P.C. at 1213 Jones Street Omaha NE 68102.

- 1) North Elevation
- 2) East Elevation
- 3) Southeast corner showing South elevation and detail of primary facades
- 4) North half of Rear Elevations
- 5) South half of Rear Elevations
- 6) Main Office Lobby
- 7) Typical Office Elevator Lobby