

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

JUN 1 1988

**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**

**NATIONAL  
REGISTER**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Newport Apartments  
other names/site number same / 32RY682

**2. Location**

street & number 601 Seventh Street N/A  not for publication  
city, town Devils Lake N/A  vicinity  
state North Dakota code ND county Ramsey code 071 zip code 58301

**3. Classification**

<b>Ownership of Property</b>	<b>Category of Property</b>	<b>Number of Resources within Property</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<b>Contributing</b>	<b>Noncontributing</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>      </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> objects
			<b>Total</b>

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register none

**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.  See continuation sheet.

James E. Sperry  
Signature of certifying official James E. Sperry, State Historic Preservation Officer, North Dakota Date 5/23/88

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

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

**5. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. Beth Boland 7/11/88  
 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:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: multiple dwelling  

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: multiple dwelling  

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other: commercial style; Craftsman  

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concretewalls brick  

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roof other: unknownother   

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

See continuation sheet.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   7   Page   7:1  

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The Newport Apartments nomination is for a single standing structure. It is located on a corner site on the northeast corner of Seventh Street and Sixth Avenue in a residential area of single family houses northeast of the Central Business District in Devils Lake, North Dakota. The building faces south.

The structure is rectangular and has three floors. It is approximately 50 feet wide by 140 feet deep. From the outside, the building is two-and-a-half stories tall, the raised basement accounting for the first floor with window sills approximately a foot above grade. The roof is flat. The building is set back from the west and south property line by about 20 feet of lawn with a few bushes and evergreens. The main facade and entrance faces south. At the rear of the building is a dirt off-street parking area.

Internal lay-out is linear with a central hallway on each floor. As originally built, the building contained 17 apartments. The building is masonry fire-proof construction. Architectural integrity is excellent. The only alteration to the exterior is the addition of aluminum storm windows, and the newer wood open fire escape exit at the back of the building. The building still sports the original metal entrance canopy.

This 1929 building is an excellent example of the Craftsman style of architecture popular in North Dakota during the 'teens and twenties. The front facade is symmetrical. Wall surfaces are flat and the design of the structure comes from massing and use of decorative brickwork. The building sits on a plain concrete foundation up to the window sill line on the first floor. Walls are sheathed in yellow and brown wire-cut brick. Windows are of two sizes with the smaller windows in bathrooms. The larger windows are 6-over-1 and the bathroom windows are 5-over-1 with vertical muntins in the upper lights. Windows are generally in pairs except for the smaller bathroom windows. Floors are defined by bricks laid in soldier courses between each floor. The soldier coursing runs in continuous horizontal bands at the top of window lintels on each floor. On the south facade, the central stairway windows between the second and third floor has another soldier course on the window lintels. Immediately below is the central front entrance with double glass and wood doors and a slightly battered and gabled limestone surround. The metal canopy is original and hangs from chains below the entrance transom. This transom is green and yellow stained glass and spells out "Newport." There is a subtle diamond pattern to the way the contrasting-colored brick is laid in the frieze area above the third story and below the parapet. A horizontal band of brick separates the parapet, which has raised corner piers and a slightly gabled raised center portion topped by brick coping.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Community Planning and Development  
Architecture

Period of Significance  
1929-1938

Significant Dates  
1929

Cultural Affiliation  
N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

(a) John Marshall

(b) Fjelseth and Johnson

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheets.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

See continuation sheet.

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

State historic preservation office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other

Specify repository:  
State Historical Society of North Dakota

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A 14 511670 5328880  
Zone Easting Northing  
C \_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing  
D \_\_\_\_\_

N/A  See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 1, 2, 3, and 4, Block 5, Ruger's Addition to the City of Devils Lake

N/A  See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes all city lots which have been historically associated with the property.

N/A  See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Dr. Norene A. Roberts, President  
organization Historical Research, Inc. date April 6, 1988  
street & number 7800 Tessman Drive telephone (612) 560-4348  
city or town Minneapolis state Minnesota zip code 55445-2734

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 8:1

The Newport Apartments is locally significant in Devils Lake for community planning and development and, secondarily, for architecture. The Newport Apartments was built during the mini-boom of the 1920s as a private response to a felt need among local businessmen for additional housing in the city. This was at a time when business was booming and Devils Lake was increasingly becoming the major retail area for the region. The Devils Lake Civic and Commerce Association was actively pursuing a cooperative scheme to construct 50 new homes. One of its members, Herman Shark, began construction of the Newport Apartments within months of initial discussions on how to provide more housing in the city. It is the only older apartment building built solely as such in Devils Lake, although major commercial buildings in the heart of the city contain apartments on the floors above retail establishments. Designed in the Craftsman style, it represents the only known private commission by Devils Lake local architect, John Marshall, and is an excellent representative of the style.

In 1986-87, Devils Lake was the subject of an intensive National Register survey of the downtown with a reconnaissance survey in the outlying areas within the city limits. The findings of this survey are detailed in the Final Report on the 1986-87 National Register Reconnaissance and Intensive Survey of Devils Lake, North Dakota. Although, Devils Lake has built many new apartment buildings near the city limits in the past ten or fifteen years, it was noted in this report that among the building stock over 30 years old, multi-family dwellings are very rare in the city. The report states that "the only structure designed from the outset solely as apartments is the Newport Apartment building at 601 7th Street (32RY682)."<sup>1</sup> This made the structure a locally rare property type and suggested that it warranted further study. This nomination is the result of that research.

The first major building boom in Devils Lake occurred in the period 1879-1886 when the territory was first opened for settlement. This was the period when Devils Lake was first settled. The second boom occurred between the years 1898-1917. This was a period of consolidation when early frame buildings were replaced by more substantial masonry structures and the rail system was completed. During the second boom, the only multi-family building, excepting a very few duplexes, was four rowhouses at 802 4th Avenue (32RY526). The Newport Apartments was built during a small mini-boom which occurred in the 1920s after World War I and just before the stock market crash of 1929. This small boom was felt throughout most of the larger cities on major rail lines in North Dakota and ended quickly with the onset of the Great Depression. Interestingly, it is also during this small economic boom that buildings in the Craftsman style were constructed. The style, in North Dakota, is closely associated with the economic good times of this brief period.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 8:2

According to the Devils Lake Daily Journal, business activity in the northwest began to pick up during the first quarter of 1929 as measured both by the railroads and postal receipts in Devils Lake. Greater business volume was also reflected in greater borrowing according to the Ninth Federal Reserve District statistics on both business and agriculture.<sup>2</sup> By February, 1929, the Civic and Commerce Club was planning a new airport for Devils Lake, encouraging poultry production and other deversified farming schemes, clean and paint up campaigns in the city, and an "own your own home" campaign. The most ambitious of these was the latter. Working from the analogy of Henry Ford's mass production assembly line techniques to turn out cheap cars at the rate of 7,000 per day, the civic and commercial leaders sought to apply Ford's principles to home building to gain economies of scale and provide good houses at lower prices. The Civic and Commerce Association held a "new business and building banquet" in March as a kick-off for the housing scheme.<sup>4</sup> The civic member who took the lead with newspaper announcements asking what people wanted for plans and requesting information from those who had vacant lots in the city for sale was E. W. Gilbertson, the funeral director in town. The plan was to erect at least 50 homes in Devils Lake at one time for between \$1,900-\$3,500 apiece. The cooperative effort would allow an interested individual to built a \$3,000 home for only \$1,900.<sup>5</sup>

The newspaper hints at why an effort for mass housing was so appealing. Devils Lake was experiencing a building boom--some \$400,000 was planned for new construction of business buildings in 1929. An editorial opined: "one might naturally ask why something is not done towards erecting more homes in the city to accommodate the gradually growing population made possible by the growth in business."<sup>6</sup> Another April 30, 1929 editorial noted:

While the city has been spending \$400,000 on business structures, comparatively little has been spent in the same period on residences. There is, apparently, a great demand in the city for modern homes and apartments. . . . No city can grow faster than its tendency to build. . . . People who have the financial backing usually are somewhat reluctant to invest their money in residential buildings unless they are assured at the outset of a fair return on the investment. It is, evidently, more profitable to invest money in business structures than it is in homes. . . .

On the announcement of plans to build the Newport Apartments, this editorial continues:

The story in today's Journal about a new apartment building in the city should be accepted by the readers of the paper as good news. The

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 8:3

expenditure of \$70,000 in a residential structure bespeaks for the builder great faith in the future of the city. He is to be congratulated. For the first time since the business building boom has hit the city, someone has realized the necessity of erecting places in which people may live.<sup>7</sup>

The reference in the above editorial is, of course, to the Newport Apartments. The original owner was Herman Shark. Shark was a retail merchant of men's clothing and proprietor of the Hub Clothing store. He began his business in Devils Lake around 1909. Mr. Shark was a member of the original board of directors of the Commercial Club, forerunner of the Civic and Commercial Association.

It seems clear that in the expanding business climate of the late 1920s in Devils Lake and armed with the knowledge that the city needed and was planning ways to develop new housing, Shark decided to build the Newport Apartment building during civic discussions about the housing shortage in the city. Like most of the boosters at the time, his faith in the future of Devils Lake knew no bounds. But, unlike most of his colleagues, he was willing to privately finance additional housing in the city. This seems to explain the reason for Devils Lake's only older apartment building. Although the cooperative home building plan fell through, a victim of the Crash of 1929, Shark moved quickly on a piece of land that he obtained for a reasonable price at a Sheriff's sale and engaged John Marshall, a local architect, to design the Newport Apartments. Shark owned the building until his death in 1944 at the age of 69, although he almost lost it after the Crash just as it was being completed in the fall of 1929. Financing through the RFC, Reconstruction Finance Corporation, ultimately saved his investment.<sup>8</sup>

The Newport was named at the suggestion of one of Herman Shark's sons, Saul, who had gone east to New York for school. According to Myer Shark, the youngest son, the Newport Apartments was one of several buildings owned by his father, who grew up in Lithuania where Jews were not allowed to own property. On the advice of an uncle in St. Paul, Herman Shark bought property as his finances allowed after arriving in Devils Lake. Among the notable features when the building was erected was that it was fireproof; had built-in bathtubs, sizable apartments of from three to four rooms, some of which, besides the regular bedrooms, had built-in Murphy beds for additional sleeping accommodations; and built-in breakfast nooks with all electric kitchens. It was equipped with oil heat and had a full-time janitor, a position son Myer filled during the first year. The building also had its own well and pressure tank for potable water because the water supply in Devils Lake was bad. Herman Shark noted that the building contained "features in use in larger apartment houses in the principal cities of the country."<sup>9</sup>

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8:4

John Marshall designed the building and it was erected by the local contract firm of Gus Fjelseth and Ed Johnson. The contracting firm was also noted for its work on the Salvation Army headquarters at 312 5th Avenue (32RY240) and for the Memorial Building and Armory in 1934 at 510 4th Avenue (32RY523). Other local contractors included Lake Electric for the electrical work, Garritty and Casper for the plumbing, and Ole Holbeck who dug the well.<sup>10</sup>

The Newport Apartments is an excellent local example of the Craftsman style of architecture, a style that while popular in North Dakota as a whole, is not particularly well-represented in Devils Lake because the largest building boom occurred during the 1898-1917 period in the city's history when the bulk of the downtown area was completed. It was between 1919 and 1929 that the style was most popular in the state. Buildings constructed before the first World War in Devils Lake represent the Classical Revival style and other earlier fashionable styles. Only a few buildings are Craftsman style in the city. Existing buildings are very plain examples of Craftsman style. They include: Lake Chevrolet (32RY330), the C and L Apartments and car dealership building (32RY271), the Montgomery Wards store (32RY310, now Uptown-Downtown and completely covered in applied material), and the Goldberg (Traynor and Traynor) building on 4th Avenue (32RY227) which is now entirely covered in applied material so that its original style is unknown. The C and L Apartments and car dealership building is architecturally in the same league as the Newport Apartments. But the Newport Apartments is the best local example of the style built solely as an apartment block and has virtually intact integrity.

At this time, it is the only known example of a Craftsman style design by John Marshall, a local architect. According to the Final Report of the 1986-87 Devils Lake survey, Marshall's first known work in the city was 20 unidentified cottages for railroad workers which were built in 1907. In 1908, it was the firm of Marshall and Sarles who designed the new parsonage for St. Joseph's Catholic Church (32RY248). Except for the Newport Apartments, built in 1929, Marshall's work is not known again until the 1930s when, as Marshall and Fisher, the firm designed the Memorial Building and Armory (32RY523) in 1934. This was followed two years later by the 1936 design for Central High School, a building which has lost most of its integrity through window changes, additions, and alterations. His 1930s work was done in Art Moderne style.<sup>11</sup>

Herman Shark's own explanation for the Craftsman style of the building is short and simple and sums up the thinking of the time:

"The front of the building will be decidedly artistic, Mr. Shark says, conforming to the present tendency in architecture. A permanent canopy will be erected over the entrance, and this will be enhanced in beauty by shrubs on each side of the door."<sup>12</sup>

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 8:5

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Endnotes

1. Norene A. Roberts. Final Report on the 1986-1987 National Register Reconnaissance and Intensive Survey of Devils Lake, North Dakota. On file: Division of Archeology and Historic Preservation, State Historical Society of North Dakota, September, 1987.
2. Devils Lake Daily Journal, January 9, p. 1; January 18, p. 4; January 29, 1929, p. 1.
3. Devils Lake Daily Journal, February 26, 1929, p. 1.
4. Devils Lake Daily Journal, February 27, p. 4; March 1, p. 4; and April 9, 1929, p. 1.
5. Devils Lake Daily Journal, March 27, p. 1, 4; April 8, 1929, p. 5.
6. Devils Lake Daily Journal, February 27, p. 4; April 16, 1929, p. 1.
7. Devils Lake Daily Journal, March 11, 1929, p. 1.
8. Devils Lake Daily Journal, March 11, 1929, p. 7; Myer Shark interview, February 6, 1988.
9. Devils Lake Daily Journal, April 30, 1929, p. 1; Myer Shark interview.
10. Devils Lake Daily Journal, May 15, 1929, p. 1.
11. Roberts, p. 43.
12. Devils Lake Daily Journal, April 30, 1929, p. 1.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 9:1

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Devils Lake Daily Journal, January 1, 1929-September 30, 1929.

Roberts, Norene A. Final Report on the 1986-1987 National Register  
Reconnaissance and Intensive Survey of Devils Lake, North Dakota. On  
file: Division of Archeology and Historic Preservation, State Historical  
Society of North Dakota. September, 1987.

Shark, Myer. Interview. February 6, 1988.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 88000985

Date Listed: 7/11/88

Newport Apartments  
Property Name

Ramsey  
County

ND  
State

Multiple Name \_\_\_\_\_

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Beth Boland  
Signature of the Keeper

7/11/88  
Date of Action

=====  
Amended Items in Nomination:

Period of significance is 1929. It does not extend to 1938.

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DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file  
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)