



**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Montrose Court Apartments

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number Montrose <sup>Ct</sup> Court  not for publication

city, town Johnson City  vicinity of Washington congressional district First

state Tennessee code 047 county Washington code 179

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

**4. Owner of Property**

name Multiple Ownership

street & number

city, town  vicinity of  state

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Washington County Courthouse

street & number Main Street

city, town Jonesboro state Tennessee 37659

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title  has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town  state

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Montrose Court Apartments is situated in an older residential section of Johnson City known as the Southwest Addition. Bounded by three streets, Southwest Avenue, Virginia Street and Locust Street, the Montrose Apartments offered luxury apartment living to its residents.

Completed in 1922, the three story brick building is constructed in a Tudor style of architecture. The dominate feature of the facade (east elevation) is the recessed "courtyard" type front entrance. A marble sidewalk leads to the main entrance. The classic Tudor styled door has a stone hoodmould. Lancet windows with leaded diamond shaped glass panels flank the main door. A pair of casement windows with leaded diamond shaped glass panels and transom are located on either side of the front entrance. The brick on the front floor of the entrance is laid in English bond and the remaining windows are either double hung sash 20 over 1 window or 12 over 1 windows.

The second story of the facade is dominated by a large oriel window that rests directly above the main entrance. Two casement windows which are lancet shaped with leaded rectangular shaped glass panels flank the oriel window. The brick work on the second floor of the facade is laid in a mosaic pattern that help to accentuate the oriel window. The third story is simulated half timber and stucco with three lancet shaped casement windows. The facade is capped by three gable dormers with louvered air vents.

The side entrance (southwest elevation) opens onto Southwest Avenue and contains a pair of doors with leaded diamond shaped glass panels, an elliptical arched sky light, and a Tudor styled hoodmould. The rear entrance (west elevation) follows in the Tudor style and includes colored diamond shaped glass in the sky light. The protruding rear entrance is half octogon in shape and the brick laid in common bond, while the remaining west elevation is laid in English bond.

In overall form, the building is roughly a half hexagon, giving a frontage in three directions. The outer walls of the lower floor and some parts of second floors are built of red rough textured brick. The third floor is half timber and stucco. The bricks are layed in English cross bond. At a distance the joints of the brick form diagonal lines. Following the English style of architecture, the roof slopes steep from the eaves for 10-12 feet and then forms an invisible flat roof in the center. The colored slate roof is mottled with flecks of purple, gray, and green which blend into an unusual affect. Concrete walkways surround the entire building, giving access to six entrances.

Inside the apartment building the floors are made of oak and the doors of mahogany. There are 28 apartments; eight on the first floor, ten on the second and third. Two of these, one on the second and one on the third are one room and bath, two are two room apartments and the remainder contain three, four and five rooms. No two are connected in any way except through the halls and corridors which transverse the length of the building. Each apartment has two entrances: the principal entrance into the living room or hallway, with a similar one into the kitchen. Included on the first floor was a tea room. Semi-circular in shape, this room was at the disposal of the tenants for afternoon or evening entertainment and receptions.

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Every apartment has outside windows in each room, a screened porch and a private balcony. On the service porch is a drain pipe which was used for the refrigerator. The kitchens are equipped with gas and electric connections, a ventilating hood over the stove, and access to a dumb waiter which leads to the delivery station in the basement. A private garbage chute runs from each apartment to the basement. They are constructed of large galvanized pipes with hinged openings fitting flush with the walls. A spraying water connection is made with these chutes in order that they may be sterilized with boiling water at any time. Bedrooms in the Montrose Apartments were installed with Murphy beds. These were double hinged to the closet door with heavy springs.

Each apartment was equipped with a centralized vacuuming system. Called the TUEC Stationary Vacuum Sweeper, this system was advertized to "keep apartment clear and free of bugs and vermin." Each bathroom was furnished in white tile with built-in tubs, shelves, and medicine chests.

All deliveries of food and supplies was made through the basement. A driveway lead to an entrance near the freight elevator and the dumb waiters so that deliveries could be made to one central point. Coal for the furnace was similarly delivered. The bins by the side of the furnace had a capacity of two carloads. Additionally, there were several large storage areas in the basement from the benefit of the tenants, plus apartments for the building superintendent and servants quarters. The basement also featured a dining room or cafeteria with a large kitchen adjoining. Meals were served here at all times by a concessionaire.

The accident proof passenger elevator was the most modern of its day. The completely automatic elevator was a topic of conversation among the tenants due to its ability to stop at each floor at exactly the proper level.

Originally, the Montrose Apartments was served by a 20 car garage near the rear of the building. Arranged in a crescent shape, these brick buildings had a concrete floor and corrugated metal roof and were fire proof. These garages were removed a number of years ago.

Currently, Montrose Apartment stands vacant. Structurally very sound, the interior has lapsed into a state of deterioration. A movement is presently underway within the Johnson City area to rehabilitate the structure and return it to its once stately appearance.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1922 **Builder/Architect** Southwest Apartment Co./D.R. Beeson, Jr.

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The significance of the Montrose Court Apartments is seen by the use of the older style of Tudor architecture that is incorporated into the most modern ideas of construction and the luxury apartment concept. With accessories such as built in bath tubs, instant hot water, individual parking garage, Murphy bed, dumb waiter, and garbage chute, the Montrose Court Apartments appealed to a select group of people who sought all the modern conveniences in the confines of an apartment situation.

Montrose Court Apartments is located in the Southwest Addition of Johnson City. Established in 1909 by Dr. John Nolen of Cambridge, Mass., the Southwest Addition is strategically located between the Johnson City business district and the rapidly expanding area southwest of the city. Hailed as the ultimate in luxury apartment living, the Montrose Court Apartments proudly announced its opening with a large edition to the Sunday newspaper on May 28, 1922.

Situated on the land owned by George L. Carter, a man of considerable wealth and strong ties with the railroad interests in the area, the Montrose Court Apartments was financed by a group of men that formed the Southwest Apartment Company. The seven member group was headed by S.R. Jennings, who served as president; James A. Summers was vice president; W.W. Miller was secretary-treasury. The remaining members consisted of George T. Wofford, J.W. Ring, H.G. Morison, and R.W. Dickerson.

Designed by D.R. Beeson, Jr., the 28 apartments were built at a cost of \$200,000. This cost figure, extremely high for its time, represents the high degree of quality both in terms of construction materials and workmanship that was used throughout the building. There are six five room apartments, eleven four room, five three room, four two room, and two one room apartments.

Added significance to the building involves the manner in which the apartments were constructed. The seven member board in addition to supplying the financial backing, also served as general contractors for the project coordinating all construction activities. Work and materials came almost exclusively from the Johnson City area. The brick work was supplied and laid by Johnson City Shale Brick Corporation. All the wood products came from the Miller Brothers Lumber Yards. Hardware, paint and cement was supplied by Summers Hardware Company. Wiring was done by Bishop Electrical Company. The slate roof was put on by S.M. White Company. Plumbing work was handled by A.H. Abernathy, decorative work by Watauga Cement Products Corporation, and gas service to the 29 individual gas meters was handled by the Washington County Gas Company. Landscaping for the apartments was planned by the wives of the board members.

While Montrose Court Apartments was a well planned and carefully executed luxury complex, its untimely decline from grandeur began during the 1930's. At that time luxury living was not affordable and there developed a demand towards ground floor housing. The apartments were continually occupied until recently when violation of municipal building codes forced its closing.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Johnson City Press Chronicle, Montrose Court Edition, May 28, 1922

Johnson City Press Chronicle, January 5, 1978

# 10. Geographical Data **UTM NOT VERIFIED**

Acreage of nominated property 1/2 acre

**ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

Quadrangle name Johnson City

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 

1	7	3	7	8	1	4	0	4	0	1	8	5	8	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

## Verbal boundary description and justification

The property nominated is a single tract of land. The boundary of the property is shown as a red line on the accompanying map which is located at the State Board of Equalization in Nashville, Tennessee and is drawn on a scale of 100 feet/inch.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Stephen T. Rogers, Cultural Resource Surveyor

organization Tennessee Historical Commission

date February, 1980

street & number 4721 Trousdale Drive

telephone 615/741-2371

city or town Nashville,

state Tennessee 37219

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Herbert L. Higer

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission

date 2/7/80

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

W. Ray Luce  
Keeper of the National Register

date 4/21/80

Attest: Kristin O'Connell  
Chief of Registration

date 4/17/80

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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Johnson City, Tennessee 37601

Dwight Leonard  
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Wyatt Coleman  
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