

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED JUN 6 1978
DATE ENTERED NOV 14 1978

**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

Rossmore Apartment House

AND/OR COMMON

Berkeley Hotel

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

664 River City Mall

__ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Louisville

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

3 and 4

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Kentucky

CODE
021

COUNTY

Jefferson

CODE
111

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

__DISTRICT

__PUBLIC

X OCCUPIED

__AGRICULTURE

__MUSEUM

X BUILDING(S)

X PRIVATE

__UNOCCUPIED

X COMMERCIAL

__PARK

__STRUCTURE

__BOTH

__WORK IN PROGRESS

__EDUCATIONAL

__PRIVATE RESIDENCE

__SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

__ENTERTAINMENT

__RELIGIOUS

__OBJECT

__IN PROCESS

XX YES: RESTRICTED

__GOVERNMENT

__SCIENTIFIC

__BEING CONSIDERED

__YES: UNRESTRICTED

__INDUSTRIAL

__TRANSPORTATION

__NO

__MILITARY

__OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Gene Smith

STREET & NUMBER

c/o 664 River City Mall

CITY, TOWN

Louisville

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Kentucky

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Jefferson County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

6th and Jefferson Streets

CITY, TOWN

Louisville

STATE

Kentucky

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky

DATE

1972

__FEDERAL XX STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Kentucky Heritage Commission

CITY, TOWN

Frankfort

STATE

Kentucky

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" 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

The Berkeley Hotel is located on the River City Mall (formerly Fourth Street) in downtown Louisville. Two blocks east, at Third and Broadway, are the old Y.M.C.A. and the Weissinger-Gaulbert Apartments, Third Street Annex-- both placed on the National Register in December, 1977. When the Berkeley was built in 1894 as the Rossmore Apartment House, this part of Fourth Street just north of Broadway was still residential, but the business district on Fourth was beginning to expand southward to Broadway.

The Berkeley Hotel is a five-story structure of red brick with stone and rusticated brick trim. The simplicity of line and detail, the hard-edged arches of radiating bricks, and the row of oriels on the south wall are all typical of the Chicago style which distinguishes this building.

The first story has been remodeled with modern false fronts, glass brick, and large signs. The second story contains wide, double-hung windows separated by horizontal bands of plain brick alternating with bands of rusticated brick. A wide stone course divides the facade above this story. The third and fourth story windows are contained within large round arches of radiating bricks. The arches, with recessed spandrels, spring from the stone capitals of six brick pilasters which vertically separate the windows. A stone stringcourse divides the fifth story from the lower stories. This upper floor presents a very horizontal appearance with a rhythmic band of rectangular windows set beneath a bold, projecting cornice.

The interior of the building has been altered over the years and very few original details remain. The lobby has a marble floor, probably original, and the hallways on the upper stories still have some lincrusta wall-covering, which has been painted over. The original apartments each had a private hallway with the rooms opening into it. The private halls then opened onto a long, public hallway. Traces of this arrangement can still be seen.

There is some indication, from an 1894 newspaper article and an architect's brochure, that the Berkeley may have been built in two stages several years apart, with the present facade being a part of the second construction. This is discussed in Item 8.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
__1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION
__1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1893-99

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Kenneth McDonald

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Berkeley Hotel, located just north of Broadway on the River City Mall in downtown Louisville, was built in 1893-94, with an addition about 1899, as the Rossmore Apartment House. When it opened for tenants in 1894, it was heralded as Louisville's "first metropolitan apartment house." A portion of the structure, including the facade, can be attributed to one of the city's eminent architects, Kenneth McDonald. In addition, the building is a significant example of Chicago style architecture.

The Rossmore was built for Alonzo J. Ross, a prominent grocer who, in 1893, owned stores on Fourth and Floyd Streets. Ross acquired the apartment house site in 1893 when business houses were moving further south along Fourth Street toward Broadway. The Critic, in February, 1893, commented on the changing nature of Fourth Street:

In a few years the square between Chestnut and Broadway on Fourth will be given up to stores. Mr. Ross, the grocer, has purchased a lot next to W. H. McKnight's residence and will build a store there. He intends to erect a handsome building, the upper stories arranged in flats.

By December, 1894; the Rossmore was completed and, according to an article in the Louisville Evening Post, all the flats but one were occupied. The Post, in discussing the need for such accommodations in a growing city, said, "The apartment houses of Chicago are the most perfect houses of this kind that have been built, and these were visited and studied before any plans were drawn. The success that has crowned Mr. Ross' efforts is due in no small measure to this."

The Post described in detail the interior arrangement of the building --its ground-floor store (later occupied by Mr. Ross' grocery), the spacious lobby of tile and stone, and the positioning of apartments so that each had a private hallway opening into the main hall which extended the length of the building on the north side. Apartments consisted of four rooms, a kitchen and a bathroom, plus a linen closet and a pantry. Each floor had private rooms at the rear for servants and the fifth floor contained storage rooms, one for each apartment.

The exterior was not described by the Post, nor was the architect named. But the article stated that "In a short time an addition will be built on the north side and more flats will be added."

After comparing the present interior and the 1894 description, studying certain

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9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Jefferson County (Ky.) Deed Books
 Jefferson County (Ky.) Will Book 26, p. 376 (1905).

Metropolitan Preservation Plan. Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, Falls of the Ohio Metropolitan Council of Governments, 1973. Text by Walter E. Langsam. (continued)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1/4 acre approximately

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 6	6, 0, 8, 6, 2, 0	4, 2, 3, 3, 7, 6, 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

A rectangular lot 50 feet wide and 200 feet long. River City Mall on the east, alleys on south and west, the bank on the north.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Elizabeth F. Jones, Research Director; Mary Jean Kinsman, Research Asst., and Denise M. Whittaker, Research Asst.

ORGANIZATION Louisville Historic Landmarks Commission DATE 20 January 1978

STREET & NUMBER 727 West Main Street TELEPHONE 587-3501

CITY OR TOWN Louisville STATE Kentucky

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

E. W. Newton

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 5/25/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Charles H. ... for DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION DATE 11.14.78

ATTEST: *Marcella ...* for KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER DATE 11-13-78

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deeds and an architects' brochure, one can draw some conclusions about the Rossmore and its stages of construction. The Post article described the public hall which ran the length of the building on the northern side. Today there is a central hall. Traces of the private hallways for each apartment can still be seen on both the north and south sides of the central hall. The addition on the north side, referred to in the newspaper article, would have then made the hallway on the north side of the 1894 structure a central hall.

On August 15, 1899, A. J. Ross and the owner of the adjoining property on the north entered into a party wall agreement. As stated in the deed, Ross wanted to erect a building (the new addition) on his property, the north wall to rest on the property dividing line. The other property owner agreed, with the provision that he could utilize the party wall at any time. Two days later, on August 17, 1899, Ross mortgaged the Rossmore property for \$40,000, presumably to finance construction of the addition to the existing portion of the apartment house.

The firm of McDonald and Sheblessy, architects, published a brochure of architectural designs and photographs of buildings designed by them. The brochure, published about 1902-03, contains a photograph of the completed Rossmore Apartment House showing the facade as it is today and the main entrance in the center of the structure. The preface to the brochure credits the design of the Rossmore to Kenneth McDonald prior to his association with Sheblessy. (See xerox copies 1 and 2)

Kenneth McDonald (1852-1940) practiced with his older brother, Harry, from about 1878 to 1897 when the partnership was dissolved. For several years thereafter Kenneth McDonald practiced alone. During this period he executed the addition to the earlier portion of the Rossmore and its facade. In 1901 J. F. Sheblessy joined McDonald to form the firm of McDonald and Sheblessy which existed for a number of years. The firm, later in association with William J. Dodd (1862-1930), designed many important Louisville buildings, including the 1905-06 Temple Adath Israel (placed on the National Register in December, 1974), the 1908 Western Colored Branch, Louisville Free Public Library (placed on the National Register in December, 1975), the Y.M.C.A. in 1911-13, and the Weissinger-Gaulbert Apartments, Third Street Annex in 1912. (For a more complete account of McDonald's career, particularly in association with Dodd, see the National Register Form for the Western Colored Branch Library, Jefferson County, placed on the National Register December 6, 1975.)

It seems clear that Kenneth McDonald was responsible for the addition to the Rossmore and the facade, probably about 1899. This would coincide with Ross' party wall agreement and his mortgage on the property, both executed in 1899. Though the architect of the first portion of the Rossmore, finished in 1894,

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is unknown, it is possible that Kenneth McDonald designed it also while a member of the McDonald Bros. firm. The 1894 newspaper story indicated that the addition was being planned even as the building opened for its first tenants. It would seem logical that the architect of the first portion of the structure would also be retained to design the addition and the facade which joins the two.

Alonzo J. Ross owned the Rossmore (usually listed in city directories as the "Rossmore Flats") until 1901 when he sold it to Theophilus Conrad. Ross' grocery was located on the ground floor of the Rossmore until 1904. Conrad was a wealthy Louisvillian who was himself the builder-owner of another early Louisville apartment house-- the St. James Apartments, c. 1897, located in St. James Court.

The Rossmore was renamed the Raleigh Apartments for a brief time in the 1920s, but by 1923 it was listed as the Berkeley Hotel, its present name.

The Berkeley is important as one of the few nineteenth-century structures extant in the Fourth Street business district, and as an example of the influence of the Chicago school of architecture. In addition it is the work of one of Louisville's outstanding architects. Although no longer used as its builder intended, the Berkeley stands as a reminder of an era when a downtown apartment house was a new and novel idea in Louisville.

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Louisville City Directories, 1893-1923

McDonald and Sheblessy Brochure, n.d., The Filson Club, 118 West Breckinridge Street, Louisville, Ky.

"Rossmore." Louisville Evening Post, 10 December 1894, p. 5.

Berkeley Hotel
664 River City Mall
Louisville, Jefferson, Kentucky

Sanborn Map Co. JUN 6 1978

Copy of Sanborn map locating
the Berkeley Hotel site.

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