

**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 HOTEL WASHINGTON

and/or common WASHINGTON TOWER

**2. Location**

street & number 32 East Washington Street \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Indianapolis \_\_\_ vicinity of congressional district Eleventh

state Indiana code Q18 county Marion code Q97

**3. Classification**

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

**4. Owner of Property**

name Washington Tower Investment Group

street & number 32 East Washington Street

city, town Indianapolis \_\_\_ vicinity of state Indiana

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Marion County, Center Township Tax Assessor's Office

street & number City-County Building, Room 1360

city, town Indianapolis state Indiana

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title None Union Station Historic District  
has this property been determined eligible?  yes \_\_\_ no

date \_\_\_ federal \_\_\_ state \_\_\_ county \_\_\_ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

# 7. Description

See Continuation Sheet 1

|                                          |                                       |                                             |                                                   |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Condition</b>                         |                                       | <b>Check one</b>                            | <b>Check one</b>                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent       | <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed    |                                             |                                                   |

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

### EXTERIOR GENERAL:

The Washington Tower is a seventeen (17) story, masonry and steel structure located on Washington Street (National Road) just east of Meridian Street. Although the Tower has had several uses, the exterior of this Classical Beaux Arts "Skyscraper" has not been altered significantly (see photo I). The rectangular site is bounded to the east and north by Court and Scioto Streets.

The Washington Street facade (see photo II) of the structure is a three-bay tower with three distinct segments. The base (see photo III) is a three story limestone facade with a central main entry. Two commercial spaces are located on either side. The canopy is not original and the street level facade has been altered significantly. On the second level are large, "Chicago style" window openings, the two outer bays being slightly wider. The inscription "Hotel Washington" is flanked by two projecting flag standards. The window openings of the next level, three pairs of double-hung sash, are repeated upward, but on this level are framed with a decorated band of carved limestone that wraps around the east side. The fourth level has the stone lintels used on upper levels as well as "paired piers" of stone between the bays. From the fifth to the thirteenth level, the shaft has repetitive window openings and decorative treatment with the suggestion of piers between. The third segment (see photo IV) caps the tower with a three story Classical Pavilion that is more decorated than the lower segment. The fourteenth level has the window openings of the lower floors with the lintel and "piers" of the fourth level. Also, the outer windows are flanked by plaques that form the podium or base, along with string courses on the east and west sides, for the two story paired columns that rise to the projecting cornice. This design is repeated in one bay of both the east and west sides. The windows of the seventeenth level have arched openings. A circle-enclosed "W" is located on either side within each of the entablatures.

### INTERIOR GENERAL:

The interior of the Washington Tower has been altered several times. Originally intended to be an office building, the structure was renamed the Hotel Washington and opened for business in December of 1912 with three hundred guest rooms. The Lobby level had walls of Rookwood tile and contained the Hotel Desk, a cigar stand, two elevators, the Hotel Buffet and the London Rain Coat Company. A Mezzanine level contained the Lounges, a Barber Shop with manicurist, public stenographers and telephones, and three connecting parlours. The third to the fifteenth level continued the guest suites of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 rooms and "sample" rooms with hide-away beds for salespersons. Each suite had its own bath. The sixteenth level had a large assembly hall for conventions, meetings, and dances. The basement level had the "Cafe George" that was decorated in "Dutch" style with Flemish furniture. One side was exclusively for men.

The structure was "fireproof", being constructed of steel, concrete and brick. A vacuum cleaning system and a ventilating system, promising an air change every five minutes, were featured. The Tower was opened as a First Class Hotel. Ownership changed in 1938 and new elevators and furnishings were installed. In 1939 the Bronze Room (35' leather bar) opened with a \$150,000 remodeling of the front desk, entrance facade (marble), and a majority of the rooms. A Coffee Shop was also added. In 1940, The Sapphire Room was put in the space formerly occupied by the Cafe George with white leather furniture, ivory and gold pillars,

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Continuation sheet

Item number 7

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"brilliant draperies and patterned carpets", and a mirrored ceiling with an eight foot circular sapphire illuminated by neon. The Tower was again remodeled in 1958 and finally was closed in 1963. In 1965, the structure was reopened as the Washington Tower Apartments. In 1980, the structure is being rehabilitated with office space being the intended use.

# 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/<br>humanitarian             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799        | <input type="checkbox"/> art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> theater                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899        | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy             | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation                      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)<br>Hotel |
|                                           |                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> invention              |                                                 |                                                              |

**Specific dates** 1912 **Builder/Architect** R. P. Daggett and Company

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Hotel Washington is significant as one of the early first-class hotels of Indianapolis, and as a well-recognized landmark.

Hotel Washington competed for the patronage of visitors with such luxury hostelries as the Claypool, Hotel Lincoln, and Hotel Severin. Today, only the Washington and Severin (now Atkinson Hotel) remain. Until the construction of the modern-day Hyatt and Hilton hotels, the Washington was the tallest hotel structure in Indiana. A look from the top still commands a central view of downtown Indianapolis and Monument Circle. With its "sample rooms" equipped with hide-away beds, the Washington was a popular stop for salesmen. Notable guests included Ernie Ford, Nat King Cole, Xavier Cugat, Mary Martin, Vaughn Monroe, Dick Conino, Ray Charles, and Sebastian Cabot.

The building was constructed for J. Edward Krause, and was purchased and remodeled in 1938 by E. W. Benson. Benson died in 1963, and the Hotel Washington was closed on October 31, 1963. It was reopened in 1965 as an apartment building. Plans are now under way to reuse the Washington as an office building.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property less than one acre

**ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

Quadrangle name Indianapolis West

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**

A 

|      |         |             |
|------|---------|-------------|
| 116  | 5722110 | 41401201410 |
| Zone | Easting | Northing    |

B 

|      |         |          |
|------|---------|----------|
|      |         |          |
| Zone | Easting | Northing |

C 

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**Verbal boundary description and justification** Beginning at the southwest corner of the intersection of East Court and North Scioto Streets, thence south 115 feet, thence west 45 feet, thence north 115 feet, thence east 45 feet, to the place of beginning.

**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 Larry B. Justice, Vice President

organization Restoration Preservation Architecture date 1980

street & number 51 South Ritter Avenue telephone 353-9808

city or town Indianapolis state Indiana

# 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 

title Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer date 5-12-80

For HCRS use only

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

*Act* Keeper of the National Register Sally A Oldb date 7/17/80

Attest: W. Ray Luce date 7/16/80

Chief of Registration

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|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| <u>Construction News,</u>                  | v21 no37 p8                                                                                                                                                                               |        |
| <u>Indiana Biographical Series,</u>        | v45 p67 c3                                                                                                                                                                                |        |
| <u>Indiana Biographical Series,</u>        | v62 p3 c3                                                                                                                                                                                 |        |
| <u>Indiana Lives,</u>                      | p193                                                                                                                                                                                      |        |
| <u>Indianapolis Architecture,</u>          | 1975, Indiana Architectural Foundation.                                                                                                                                                   |        |
| <u>Indianapolis Men of Affairs,</u>        | 1923, p143                                                                                                                                                                                |        |
| <u>Indianapolis News,</u>                  | 28 December 1912, p15-18, c1<br>19 November 1958, p43, c1<br>31 October 1963, p1, c1<br>23 September 1965, p30 c3                                                                         |        |
| <u>Indianapolis Star,</u>                  | 23 December 1938, p2, c6<br>14 May 1939, s1, p3, c4<br>1 May 1940, p15, c3<br>1 February 1952, p23, c5<br>14 July 1964, p1, c1<br>23 September 1965, p37, c3<br>31 March 1968, s3, p1, c4 |        |
| <u>Indianapolis Times,</u>                 | 26 October 1958, p12, c6<br>19 September 1963, p1, c7<br>14 February 1965, p36, c6                                                                                                        |        |
| <u>Representative Citizens of Indiana,</u> | 1912, Dunn.                                                                                                                                                                               |        |
| <u>Who Was Who,</u>                        | v3, p204                                                                                                                                                                                  |        |
| <u>Who's Who In Midwest,</u>               | V*, P73                                                                                                                                                                                   |        |

