
NAME: ~~The~~ McKay
LOCATION: 611 ~~North~~ Pennsylvania Street
OWNER: The McKay Apartment Company
ADDRESS: 423 Massachusetts Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

MAP NUMBER: 30

7. DESCRIPTION:

The McKay (Photo 33 of 42) is an unusual Art Deco style trapezoid-shaped apartment located on a triangular city block between North Pennsylvania Street and Fort Wayne Avenue. This three-story on a raised basement, brown cinder brick and poured concrete building is one of several significant apartments in this downtown Indianapolis area and the only Art Deco style apartment in this thematic nomination. The one-story entrance foyer may have been built soon after the completion of the adjacent three-story block to the north. A damaged pediment on scroll consols survives on the staircase projection of the south wall above the roof of the entrance foyer. The brown cinder bricks of both units match in color and texture. The North Pennsylvania Street entrance doorway, which is flanked by two small vertical metal casement windows, resembles a Romanesque portal. The archivolt and tympanum contain Art Deco bas-relief carvings. The jambs and the archivolt are framed by stylized rope molding. The lintel is inscribed with the name MCKAY and the address 611 in Art Deco script resembling Oriental character writing. The three-story street facade appear less formal than other apartments in this nomination due to the asymmetrical placement of the entrance to the south. The raised basement and the first story are constructed (or perhaps only faced) with cinder block (now painted maroon red) with three concrete belt courses (in gray). The upper stories are constructed of brown cinder brick of common bond. The raised basement has four one-over-one sash windows; the upper three stories contain six windows each in an A-B-B-B-B-A rhythm. All the windows have concrete sills. The second and third windows have flat brick arches with concrete keystones. A pressed metal frieze cornice along the uppermost edge of the building contains rectangular panels with alternating diamond and round medallions. Stone and terra cotta coping is used to finish the edge of the vertical wall.

8. SIGNIFICANCE:

The McKay is significant for its Art Deco style, its unusual trapezoid shape, its reinforced poured concrete construction, and its historical association with Martha Nicholson McKay and her husband Horace McKay of Indianapolis. The McKay makes its first appearance in the City Directory of 1924 indicating construction sometime during the previous year. The surviving Fee Book Index for 1923 lists Martha N. McKay as purchaser of three building permits in that year. A check of the preceding and following years did not reveal additional purchases on the part of Mrs. McKay suggesting that this modified "Eastern" flat was an isolated investment on her part. The McKay is significant also for its role in the real estate development of Indianapolis.

Martha Nicholson McKay, born in Ohio in 1843, resided in Indianapolis for sixty-eight years of her life. The wife of businessman Horace McKay, she and her husband were instrumental in founding the Unity Church in 1868. This church survives as All Soul's Unitarian Church. Its second church building is significant

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to the Old Northside (National Register). A leader in Indianapolis society, Mrs. McKay was also one of the founders of the Indianapolis Woman's Club and at the request of Indiana's education director for the 1892 World's Fair, she wrote a history of Indiana's literary clubs. Her writing career continued with the 1929 publication of a book on the Civil War. An active campaigner for women's suffrage, Mrs. McKay was active in state politics. She died at her long-time family home in the nearby fashionable Old Northside.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA:

Acreage: Less than one acre

Quadrangle Name: Indianapolis West

Quadrangle Scale: 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES:

16 572310 4403000

Zone Easting Northing

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

Parcel 1-01-76280. Adamson Subdivision, Lot Two, Thirty Feet North End Lot One, Outlot Four. Key Code 18-012-008.