

**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 Andrew Johnson Hotel

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number 912 S. Gay Street not for publication

city, town Knoxville vicinity of congressional district Second

state Tennessee code 047 county Knox code 093

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Sam Urman

street & number 912 S. Gay Street

city, town Knoxville vicinity of state Tennessee 37902

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Knox County Courthouse Registry of Deeds

street & number Hill Avenue, City County Building

city, town Knoxville state Tennessee

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Inventory of Knoxville-Knox has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date August 1979 federal state county local

depository for survey records Knoxville Heritage, Inc.

city, town P.O. Box 1746 Knoxville state Tennessee 37901

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Andrew Johnson Hotel, located in downtown Knoxville, was designated in a somewhat simplified Second Renaissance Revival style and contains a basement, fifteen floors, mezzanine, and a two story penthouse. Located at the NE corner of the intersection of Gay Street and Hill Avenue, the Hotel has an impressive site due to the bluff formed on the South by the Tennessee River and the deep valley on the East formed by First Creek.

The main facade faces West onto Gay Street and has nine bays. The building is essentially rectangular in shape; however, the ground floor extends out from the main mass of the building, forming a base for a second floor central pavilion of one story and five bays; the pavilion is framed by a one bay deep recess formed by projecting ends, each of two bays. This recess runs from the pavilion to the top of the building where the two story penthouse is at the same depth as the recess; the penthouse is seven bays in width and overlaps the projecting ends one bay. At the rear of the main building (East) three story service wings extend four bays.

The ground floor is faced on the street facade with east concrete in the appearance of rusticated stone; simple rectangular windows and door openings are irregularly spaced along this floor. Cast quoins at the corners extend to a banded cornice immediately above the third floor windows.

The ground floor forms a base that originally included terraces flanking each side of the pavilion. A balustrade surrounded each terrace; this balustrade continued across the facade of the pavilion as a paneled band. In the 1960's, small one story additions to the ballrooms were placed on these terraces, with the former balustrades replaced by paneled bands matching that on the pavilion.

The arcaded pavilion is sheathed in concrete and stucco, Ionic pilasters define the five bays, with each bay containing a large multi-light arched window; an unadorned frieze with simple cornice bands the pavilion; a balustrade sits atop the cornice; this balustrade originally included finials above each pilaster; these finials are missing. The remainder of the second floor is sheathed in a red brick, including the additions, as are the remaining floors of the building. The additions covered arched windows on the main facade that matched those on the pavilion; the windows in the addition are multi-light rectangular double hung sash windows with plain stone surrounds; brick quoins carry to a simple unadorned belt course. At the second floor level on the other facades, smaller rectangular windows with keystones indicate the smaller height below the mezzanine, which has slightly smaller unframed rectangular windows adorned with a keystone. A simple belt course divides the mezzanine from the third floor, which has paired six over six double hung sash windows with plain stone surrounds. A very small brick room has been constructed on top of the pavilion at the third floor level; this addition was recessed from the balustrade.

From the fourth to the thirteenth floors, unframed window pairs are organized according to the bays established on the lower floors; these windows are one over one double sash; the floors have no exterior ornament. At the fourteenth floor, rectangular windows, each with a heavy broken pediment, occur; a double belt course, simulating a balustrade, winds the building at the base of those windows. Brick quoins at the

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corners run from this "balustrade" to the entablature on top of the fifteenth floor. Fifteenth floor windows are unadorned except for keystones.

A heavy entablature caps the fifteenth floor with a Doric frieze and heavily dentilled cornice. The penthouse has brick pilasters with cast Ionic capitals, capped by an entablature with frieze and dentilled cornice; a brick balustrade rings the penthouse. First floor windows of the penthouse are heavily framed rectangular windows with keystone and a projecting rectangular cornice hood. Second floor penthouse windows are now simple single light rectangular windows that have replaced the original oval shaped framed windows. A large neon sign, spelling Hotel Andrew Johnson, has been on top of the building since at least 1936.

The East, or rear facade is unadorned except for a painted sign.

On the North side of the building, a small swimming pool was added in the 1960's; a one story glass addition to the restaurant, along with a terrace on the elevator shaft, was added at the same time.

The interior of the hotel originally contained an unusual second floor lobby; the desk-check-in has since been moved to the first floor; however, the original lobby has been maintained; this includes marble floors in a checkerboard pattern; paneled marble wainscotings, rectangular columns and pilasters with Corinthian capitals; and a heavy plaster entablature. The extra height of the second floor accommodates a mezzanine with balconies overlooking the lobby; the original metal scrolled railings are still extant.

The ballrooms have been altered but still retain a few decorative elements. A small marble stair with a circular newel post formed by the rail connects the first floor to the second floor lobby.

Elevator doors contain grained wood inset panels with heavily "wood-grained" metal frames. The remainder of the building is undistinguished except for an unusually designed wall mounted radio speaker still extant in some of the rooms; the grill of the speakers was designed with an AJ logo.

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

Specific dates 1926–1930 **Builder/Architect** Baumann and Baumann, Knoxville

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Located on Gay Street, the main business thoroughfare of downtown Knoxville, the Andrew Johnson Hotel is a landmark building that has given an appropriate symbolic end to the downtown's southern boundary at the Tennessee River. Not only was the Andrew Johnson the downtown's tallest structure from 1930–1978, but, in addition, its height was emphasized by it being the only high rise structure in that quadrant of the downtown. With the construction of a new office building nearby in 1979, the Andrew Johnson is no longer the tallest structure; however, its highly visible location near the river bluff enables it to continue its role as a visual landmark.

Planning for the hotel began in 1918 by the Adair Corporation of Atlanta; designed by Baumann and Baumann Architects of Knoxville, the hotel was originally to be called the Tennessee Terrace Hotel. However, by 1927, only seven stories of the proposed 18 story structure were completed, and construction was suspended due to financial problems. A financing campaign led by J. Basil Ramsey, President of the Holston Union Bank, was successful, and the building was completed and opened in early 1930.

Even though the Hotel was the largest and most prestigious in Knoxville the hotel has never been successful financially. During the 1930's, the hotel was the subject of lengthy court battles over first and second mortgages.

In the early 1940's the hotel was bought by Mr. R.J. Reynolds (Reynolds Tobacco Company) and Mr. Atton Bland of Charlotte, North Carolina. Several years later Mr. Reynolds bought out Mr. Bland's interest. In 1964, Mr. Reynolds sold the hotel to Mr. Geraldo Mojohhny of Switzerland; Mr. Reynolds repurchased the hotel that same year, just before he died. Mr. Reynolds wife inherited the hotel upon his death and maintained ownership until 1973, when it was sold to S.R. Ozier and H. T. Vance of Nashville, Tennessee. On January 3, 1974, Ozier and Vance declared bankruptcy and the hotel was sold at auction for \$405,000 to Mr. H.C. Tarver of Corryton, Tennessee.

In 1975, plans were announced to convert the hotel into elderly housing; however, these plans were dropped. On August 8, 1976, the hotel was bought by Mr. Boyd Cloud, Knoxville business leader. Mr. Cloud took actions to revive the hotel's business, including the re-establishment of a restaurant. However, on August 22, 1979, the hotel was bought by Mr. Sam Urman of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, who has announced plans to rehabilitate the hotel as an office block.

In spite of the financial difficulties, the Andrew Johnson was the city's leading hotel from its original opening until the opening of the Hyatt Regency Hotel in the early 1970's. As the leading hotel, the Andrew Johnson hosted many national celebrities and dignitaries; in addition, many international leaders and royalty stayed at the hotel, as there was considerable interest in the Tennessee Valley Authority by foreign countries during this period.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Knoxville News Sentinel
 Knoxville Journal

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 0.35 **UTM NOT VERIFIED**
 Quadrangle name Knoxville **ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED** Quadrangle scale 1:24000
 UMT References

A	1 7	2 3 7 0 5 0	3 9 8 3 3 9 0	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

The area nominated includes only the building pad area, approximately 126' x 125'.
 See area outlined in red on attached map.

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 Ronald E. Childress
 organization Childress and Associates, Architects date March 1980
 street & number 524a S. Gay Street, Box 2641 telephone 615/523-1917
 city or town Knoxville state Tennessee 37901

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 Robert S. Hays
 title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission date 6/2/80

For HCRS use only
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Jack W. Ray date 7/9/80
 Keeper of the National Register

Attest: Kristin O'Connell date 7/8/80
 Chief of Registration

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The hotel was also the site of many grand dances and balls, as well as being the meeting place for local civic groups and visiting conventions. In addition, being across the street from the County Court House, many government related activities occurred in the hotel.

Architecturally, the Andrew Johnson was designed in the second Renaissance Revival style, similar to other hotels built in the same period in other communities. Although the Andrew Johnson's exterior is a somewhat simplified version of this style, the unique character of the unusual second floor lobby, the prominence of the penthouse terraces, and the fact that the building is the most visible example of this style in Knoxville gives it architectural significance to the community.

Although no longer considered a prestigious hotel, the Andrew Johnson has had a considerable impression on the cultural life of Knoxville due to its forty year reign as the prime hotel; the memory of this role, along with its continued landmark status due to its size, architecture, and location, makes the Andrew Johnson a most significant building in Knoxville.