

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

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



082

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

1. Name

historic Hotel Claridge

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 109 N. Main St.
Southwest corner of Mid-America Mall and Adams Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town Memphis N/A vicinity of ~~congressional district~~ 8/10

state Tennessee code 047 county Shelby code 157

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 checked="" 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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<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
	<u>N/A</u> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Claridge House Apartments, Ltd.

street & number River Place, 100 N. Front Street

city, town Memphis N/A vicinity of state Tennessee 38103

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of the Shelby County Register, County Clerk

street & number 160 N. Main Street

city, town Memphis state Tennessee

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date N/A N/A federal state county local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

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 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

Situated on the southwest corner of Main Street (the Mid-America Mall) and Adams Avenue in downtown Memphis, Tennessee, the Hotel Claridge is a sixteen-story rectangular building of steel frame construction faced with blocks of smooth limestone on the first three stories and red brick on the remaining levels. It is topped by penthouse office space enclosed in glass panels. Although basically heir to the Commercial Style and its emphasis on verticality and regular fenestration, the structure's decorative ornamentation is based on Italian Renaissance details. Although the lobby of the hotel was remodeled in 1954 and a rooftop addition added in 1960, the exterior of the Claridge retains its essential architectural/historical integrity.

On its Main Street facade the building is five bays wide with arched openings spanning the first two floors. In the third through fifteenth floors, each bay contains two rectangular twelve-over-one sash windows with stone sills. The Adams Avenue facade repeats this fenestration pattern across seven bays, although the extreme western bay contains only a single window on all levels above the second story. Originally there were two entrances, one each on Adams Avenue and Main Street with the remainder of the lower half of the arched openings used for window space. However, four doors are now located in the Main Street facade. On the Adams Avenue facade an additional doorway providing access to a cocktail lounge has been added. Although several of the arched openings have been covered and stuccoed on the second story, most retain a tripartite division with the central portion consisting of small rectangular panes over a single pane. A cut stone radiating voussoir with a console keystone decorates the heads of the arches.

Decorative elements on the main facade are concentrated mainly at the third and fifteenth levels, although a small stone belt course separates the thirteenth and fourteenth floors. Stone cartouches are alternately placed between the third-story windows, which have an ornate cast iron grill across each lower sash. Above these windows is an arabesque design terra-cotta frieze and cornice. At the fifteenth level of the building, each window is decorated with a terra-cotta tympanum, sill, and pilasters. This level, which terminates the composition, is further accented by a wide stone belt course. The original balustrade which ran along the edge of the flat roof was removed in 1960 and an attic story of glass and metal was added.

Altered over the years, the interior of the Hotel Claridge is in deteriorated condition. The original lobby, large and ornate, was remodeled in 1954; a second level was added and the mezzanine enclosed. The northwest corner of the ground floor was later enclosed and is now rented by the National Bank of Commerce. An L-shaped lobby area to the left of the bank leads into a dining room on the south end of the Main Street facade. Originally a coffee shop when added in the 1940's, it retains the original dark wood paneling. Behind the dining room is kitchen space. The remaining floor space is occupied by a lounge that is entered from Adams Avenue. Except for the branch bank office, the building is completely vacant.

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 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 type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1924

Builder/Architect Barnett, Haynes, and Barnett (St. Louis);
Jones and Furbringer (Memphis)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Hotel Claridge is being nominated under criteria A and C.

The Hotel Claridge is representative of the grand hotel era in Memphis during the 1920's and 30's. The hotel was a major center for travelers and businessmen as well as for the social life of the city from the opening of the Claridge in 1924 through the 1950's. In addition to being the work of a leading Memphis architectural firm, Jones and Furbringer, the hotel was the last major building of the regionally important architectural office of Barnett, Haynes, and Barnett (St. Louis: 1892-1923).

During the 1920's and early 30's, five large hotels were constructed in downtown Memphis; the Claridge (1924), Peabody (1925), Tennessee (1927), Devoy (1927), and William Len (1930). Although the Claridge was the second largest of these buildings, it and the Tennessee were the most architecturally restrained. The Peabody and the Devoy were designed with lavish Italian Renaissance and Romanesque details respectively, and the William Len was built as the city's only Art Deco hotel. The Claridge and the other four hotels greatly added to the facilities available for travelers, businessmen, and social events, which before were limited to the old Peabody (1869), Gayoso (1902), Chisca (1910), and the small hotels on South Main Street. Although all of these buildings except for the old Peabody are still standing, only the Tennessee and the second Peabody are still functioning as hotels.

The Claridge was constructed for St. Louis businessmen, Charles Levy and Morris Corn, at a cost of \$1,500,000. Two teams of important architects were involved in the design of the building, Barnett, Haynes and Barnett of St. Louis and Jones and Furbringer of Memphis. From 1908 to 1935, the office of Jones and Furbringer was one of the leading architectural firms in Memphis, designing many distinguished buildings, including the Shrine Building (1923, NR 1979) and the Boyce-Gregg House (1921, NR 1979). The other group of architects involved in the design of the Claridge, Barnett, Haynes, and Barnett, was nationally known for its work at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition (1904), but its greatest fame was in the construction of hotels such as the Adolphus (1912) in Dallas, and the Marquette (1907) and the Jefferson (1904) in St. Louis. The Claridge illustrates the restrained Renaissance character of Barnett, Haynes, and Barnett's later work, which is in contrast to the more eclectic and elaborate earlier projects of the firm. The simplicity and understatement of the design also follows the architectural temperament of the local architects who were involved with the hotel, Jones and Furbringer.

The Claridge's prominent location at the corner of Main and Adams, combined with the practice of employing nationally known "big bands" and performers, attracted business people and travelers throughout the Mid-South area. Jimmy Dorsey, Tommy Dorsey, Clyde McCoy, and Vaughan Monroe were among the many prominent entertainers at the hotel's "Cascades Roof" and "Twentieth Century Room." Included in the hotel's guest list have been Helen Hayes, Lyndon Johnson, and Hubert Humphrey.

9. Major Bibliographical References

The Commercial Appeal, May 7, 1924; December 28, 1924; August 30, 1933; October 11, 1960; September 2, 1976.

Memphis Press Scimitar, June 8, 1933; November 3, 1933; June 10, 1953.

10. Geographical Data

NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Northwest Memphis, TN-AR

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 15 768600 3893230
 Zone Easting Northing

B
 Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

Situated on the northeast corner of Main Street (Mid-America Mall) and Adams Avenue, the hotel abutts Lowenstein Tower to the south, bounded by an alley to the west and fronts on Adams to the north and the Mid-America Mall to the east.

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

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lloyd Ostby and Kay Benton, Preservation Planners

organization Memphis Landmarks Commission

date December, 1981

street & number 22 N. Front Street

telephone (901) 528-2834

city or town Memphis

state Tennessee

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

 national state X 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.

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature Herbert E. Hays

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission

date 3/27/82

For HCRS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
<u>Alan Byers</u> Keeper of the National Register	Entered in the National Register date <u>4/29/82</u>
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED APR 29 1972

CONTINUATION SHEET Hotel Claridge ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

Until the late 1950's, the Claridge was continuously the scene of balls, banquets, proms, and class reunions. However, the economic decline of downtown Memphis in the early 1960's made the operation of the hotel impractical and it closed in 1968. Although the hotel was slated for demolition soon after it closed, it has remained standing and vacant for over ten years. The current owners want to convert the building into apartments and offices.

