

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JAN 29 1980

DATE ENTERED

APR 2 1980

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Rodney Court

AND/OR COMMON

Rodney Court Co-operative

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

1100 Pennsylvania Avenue

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Wilmington

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

One

STATE

Delaware

__VICINITY OF

CODE

10

COUNTY

New Castle

CODE

003

3 CLASSIFICATION**CATEGORY**

DISTRICT
 BUILDING(S)
 STRUCTURE
 SITE
 OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC
 PRIVATE

 BOTH**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

IN PROCESS
 BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

OCCUPIED
 UNOCCUPIED
 WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
 YES: RESTRICTED
 YES: UNRESTRICTED
 NO

PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE
 COMMERCIAL
 EDUCATIONAL
 ENTERTAINMENT
 GOVERNMENT
 INDUSTRIAL
 MILITARY
 MUSEUM
 PARK
 PRIVATE RESIDENCE
 RELIGIOUS
 SCIENTIFIC
 TRANSPORTATION
 OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Rodney Court Co-operative, Inc.

STREET & NUMBER

1100 Pennsylvania Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Wilmington

__VICINITY OF

STATE

Delaware

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Recorder of Deeds

City/County Building

STREET & NUMBER

800 French St.

CITY, TOWN

Wilmington

STATE

Delaware 19801

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Delaware Cultural Resource Survey ; N-5267

DATE

August 1979

__FEDERAL STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Hall of Records

CITY, TOWN

Dover

STATE

Delaware 19901

7 DESCRIPTION

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

Rodney Court Cooperative, Inc., is a six-story L-shaped apartment building standing alone on a 150-foot square lot on the southwest corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and VanBuren Street. It is located two blocks from the Delaware Avenue Historic District, in a commercial-apartment area. The building contains a total of 7,500 square feet consisting of the six main floors, plus a social hall converted to penthouse apartment located on the flat roof. There are 44 units in the building.

A steel frame encased in cinder blocks forms the durable construction of the building. Light-colored tapestry bricks set in common bond face the cinder blocks. Fenestra steel casement multi-paned windows with sweeping J-curved handles accent the many windows.

Cast-stone trimmings highlight the central bay section above the marquise, featuring classical motifs between floors two and three, three and four, and four and five. The top of this bay features an elaborate cast-stone classically-styled parapet flanked by large cement urns.

Leading to the front door is a curved variegated marble walk. The front exterior and interior double wooden doors have beveled-glass panes. Classical fan-light windows rest above both sets of doors. The scalloped marquise with an amber-colored textured-glass awning repeats the curve of the fan-light windows of the main entrance.

On each side of the curved driveway cast-stone pillars are accented by large Tiffany-styled lighting fixtures. They are matched by similiar smaller fixtures on either side of the front doors and by the hanging light between the two front doors.

The entrance foyer and the lower half of the lobby walls are finished in tile and celio-travertine marble. Celio-travertine marble, with its many pits and crevices is by nature slip-resistant and a perfect surface for the six flights of the curved stairway and wainscoating. The marble's creamy buff color is light, pleasing, and restful, and hardened with time and use.

Flower and scroll designs of cast iron adorn the curved arches of the two adjoining sitting rooms off the lobby. A small curved open window with matching arch has a full grill of the same intricate cast-iron design.

In one of the sitting rooms hang two Tiffany-styled lights which were expressly made for Rodney Court. These Tiffany-styled lighting fixtures are smoked white glass and appear to have a hand painted gold design on them.

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 1928 BUILDER/ARCHITECT VanSant Brothers/Wallace E. Hance

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Rodney Court is significant as the last extant luxury apartment built in Wilmington before the Great Depression of the 1930's. It is also significant as the State's first high-rise apartment building to have elevators. The building represents a way of life not found in Wilmington again after the Depression. The structure is additionally significant to Wilmington since it was designed and built by local firms, many of which still exist in the City.

At the dedication of Rodney Court, in 1928, the Every Evening hailed the building as "ranking with the best of its kind to be found in any city of Wilmington's size." The craftsmanship and the attention to detail are unsurpassed in any apartment building of that period. The building's classical design, blending fine brick and cement-cast motifs, is representative of the work of this area's finest craftsmen of the late 1920's. Ninety-five percent of the labor on the building was done by Wilmington subcontractors and artisans, including such well-known firms as Ernest DiSabatino and Sons Company, Speakman Company, and W. D. Shellady, all of which still serve the area today.

The building was conceived and carried out largely through the efforts of three prominent Wilmingtonians: Judge Daniel O. Hastings, Carroll W. Griffith, and Philip J. Carpenter. These three men formed Modern Apartments, Inc., and hired Wallace E. Hance, a local architect, to design the structure. Mr. Hance also designed the former Warner Theater and Denbigh Hall, an apartment building just off the Delaware Avenue. The building contract was awarded to VanSant Brothers, a local contracting firm, which "had in Rodney Court its biggest commission, and one of the largest private contracts in this City in some time."

Although Rodney Court is located adjacent to an area which has many fine old apartment buildings, it surpasses all the others in terms of architectural detail. Even Denbigh Hall, which was designed by the same architect in 1932 lacks the classical ornamentation of Rodney Court. The attention to detail shown in the selection of lighting fixtures and hardware cannot be matched in newer apartment buildings.

When the building was constructed, it housed the amenities necessary to a luxury apartment house of the period. There was valet service located in the basement, where clothes could be cleaned and pressed. Maid service was also available and each apartment kitchen has its own separate entrance for the maid or caterer. A fully-equipped kitchen in the basement was available for

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Wilmington newspapers, (1928,1931)

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED UTM NOT VERIFIED

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.5 acres

Quadrangle Name: Wilmington North

Quadrangle Scale: 1"=24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,8	4,5,2	2,4,0	4,4	0,0	2,1,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING			
C						

B						
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING			
D						

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property occupies a city lot which measures approximately 150 feet by 150 feet.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Sara C. Ramsey (with Eileen Mallouk and Betty Collins)

November 19, 1979

ORGANIZATION

Wilmington Department of Planning

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

800 French St. 7th Floor

TELEPHONE

302-571-4172

CITY OR TOWN

Wilmington

STATE

Delaware 19801

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.

Deputy STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Daniel R. Hoffelt

TITLE

Chief, Bureau of Archaeology & Historic Preservation

DATE

1/21/80

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Bruce M. Dwyer
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

1/2/80

ATTEST: *Emma Jane Jaxo*
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

3-27-80

Regional Coordinator

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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APR 2

Rodney Court

CONTINUATION SHEET

1

ITEM NUMBER 7

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Throughout the apartments, the doors are walnut and their curved handles are made of pewter. The original brass knockers are largely still in place, though some have been replaced. All apartments have ceramic-tiled kitchen floors and tiled wainscoting. The kitchens also contain built-in wooden cabinets. Apartment bathrooms have ceramic-tiled floors and walls.

Virtually all of the original detailing of the Rodney Court Apartments remains intact. Although some windows have been filled in with air conditioners and the social hall is now a penthouse apartment, the character of the building remains, reminiscent of the prosperity of the late 1920's.

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Rodney Court

CONTINUATION SHEET

1

ITEM NUMBER

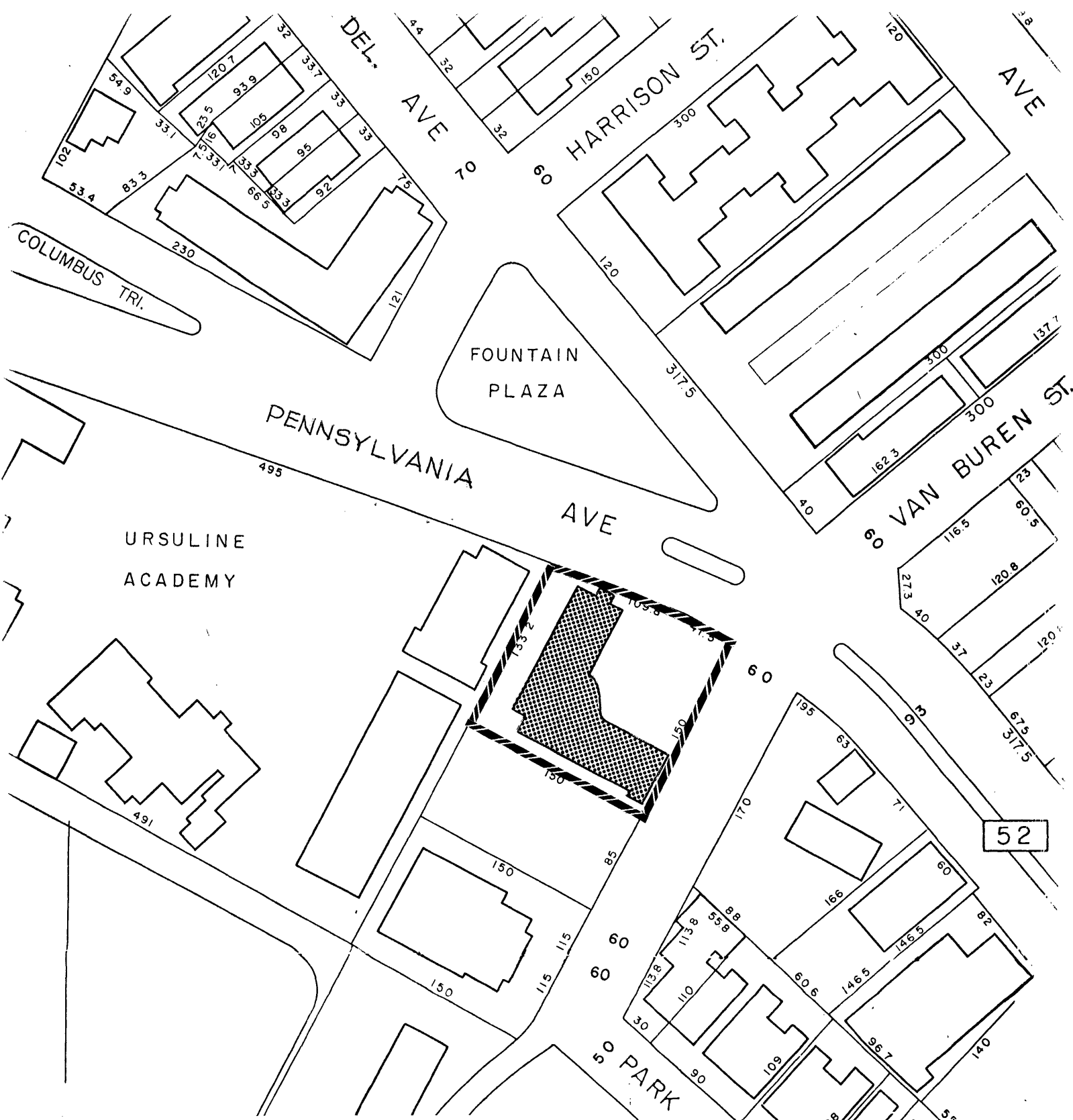
8

PAGE

1

special occasions. Located on the roof was a large social hall adjoining a roof-top dance floor and roof garden for the use of the tenants. A central switchboard operated from the lobby.

Even though the social hall has been converted to penthouse apartment and valet and maid service are no longer available, the building itself retains almost all of its original character. In the 51 years since its construction, it has changed owners several times. The area around it has deteriorated and has come back again. But Rodney Court remains, on a prominent corner at the entrance to Wilmington, representative of a time when design, material, labor, and wealth were combined to produce a show piece of the City.



CITY OF WILMINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

JAN 9 1980



TITLE Sketch Map SCALE 1"= 100'

DATE 11/79 FILE N- 5267 DRAWN BY SCR