

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED 11 SEP 1979

DATE ENTERED

NOV 15 1979

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

Bentley Hotel

AND/OR COMMON

Same

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

801 Third Street

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Alexandria

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

8th-Gillis Long

STATE

Louisiana

— VICINITY OF

CODE

022

COUNTY

Rapides

CODE

079

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: None**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Joe E. Fryar

STREET & NUMBER

801 Third Street

CITY, TOWN

Alexandria

STATE

Louisiana 71301

— VICINITY OF

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Rapides Parish Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Alexandria

STATE

Louisiana

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Louisiana Historic Sites Survey

DATE

1979

 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

State Historic Preservation Office

CITY, TOWN

Baton Rouge,

STATE

Louisiana

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

The Bentley Hotel is set in downtown Alexandria one block back from the Red River levee. Because the Bentley is almost completely surrounded by other downtown buildings, there is no open view in which the grand facade can present itself to any great effect.

The hotel was built in 1907 as a five-story brick building, with a monumental, colossal colonnaded entrance and an English basement. In 1936 an eight-story rear wing was added. The seven-bay Ionic, colossal entrance colonnade runs along the main block of the building, between a pair of massive end wings.

The main interior spaces are characterized by Beaux Arts axial planning. The main lobby is a seven-bay, two-story domed cortile with massive marble faced Ionic pillars and pilasters on all four sides. At the rear of the cortile is an open columned passageway which runs practically from end to end of the building. Set on axis with the front entrance, the imperial main staircase passes between a pair of false marble columns, and leads from the lower level of the cortile to the mezzanine level.

West of the cortile is a large, one-story hypostyle ballroom with an elaborate coffered ceiling. A drop ceiling has been installed and the room has been redecorated. However, the old ceiling is intact and could be exposed with the removal of lower fiberboard ceiling.

Most of the rooms, like the restaurants and bars on the basement level, have been variously modified and remodeled over the years. The cortile was recently treated with red velvet panels. However, these have had minimal visual impact because they are overpowered by heavy, gold painted ceiling panels, bay leaf garlands, volutes, consoles, modillions and the elaborately tiled floor. The overall effect is that of a jewel box of grey marble, gold colored ornament, crystal chandeliers, and tile.

The building has a grey brick exterior with terra cotta ornamentation in the turn-of-the-century Renaissance Revival style. The eight-story rear wing has touches of art moderne ornamentation.

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

1907

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

George R. Mann, Architect

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Bentley Hotel stands as probably the only major commercial example of the turn-of-the-century Renaissance Revival architecture and of Beaux Arts axial spatial planning in central Louisiana. It shows a remarkable degree of high style sophistication for the area and for a time when commercial architecture was largely a matter of applying conventional detail to a conventional shell.

The Bentley Hotel was built in 1907-1908 by Joseph A. Bentley, a prominent citizen of Alexandria who in the course of his life was a banker, lumberman, and philanthropist as well as hotel owner. The building's architect was George R. Mann and his assistant was J.L. Howard. Their firm was based in Little Rock, Arkansas. The contractor was Hull Construction Company of Jackson, Mississippi, and the construction crew was under the supervision of D.H. Shenk. The cost of construction was \$750,000, including the furnishings.

In addition to its association with Bentley, who is almost a legendary figure in Alexandria history, the hotel also has associations with some important figures of World War II. During the war there were several military installations in the area, and according to the reminiscences of a longtime employee, among the famous soldiers who stayed at the hotel were General Omar Bradley and Colonel Dwight Eisenhower. Other guests were Huey Long, Cary Grant, and John Wayne.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Alexandria Daily Town Talk, 10 August 1908.
 Derr, Helen, "Former Owner Reminisces About Hotel," Alexandria Daily Town Talk, 24 September 1972.
 Grant, Ron, "48 Years Contain a Lot of Memories," Alexandria Daily Town Talk, 24 September 1972.
 Research Report on Bentley Hotel located in National Register File on Bentley Hotel, State Historic Preservation Office, Baton Rouge.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

UTM NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. 1 acre

QUADRANGLE NAME _____

QUADRANGLE SCALE _____

UTM REFERENCES

A 15 | 552800 | 3464130
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B _____ | _____ | _____
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C _____ | _____ | _____

D _____ | _____ | _____

E _____ | _____ | _____

F _____ | _____ | _____

G _____ | _____ | _____

H _____ | _____ | _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Boundaries were drawn to encompass the hotel building and exclude garages which have been built to the rear.
 (See attached sketch map)

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Mrs. Peg Bolton

ORGANIZATION

DATE

June 1979

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

3200 Parkway Drive

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Alexandria,

Louisiana 71301

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

[Signature]

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

8/16/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

[Signature]
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

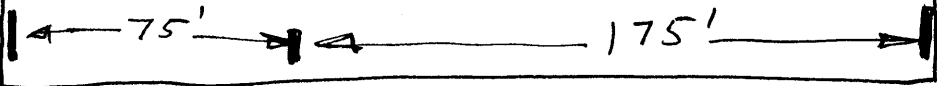
DATE 11-15-79

ATTEST: *[Signature]*
 CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE 11/15/79

BENTLEY
HOTEL

SKETCH MAP (NOT TO SCALE)



JACKSON ST

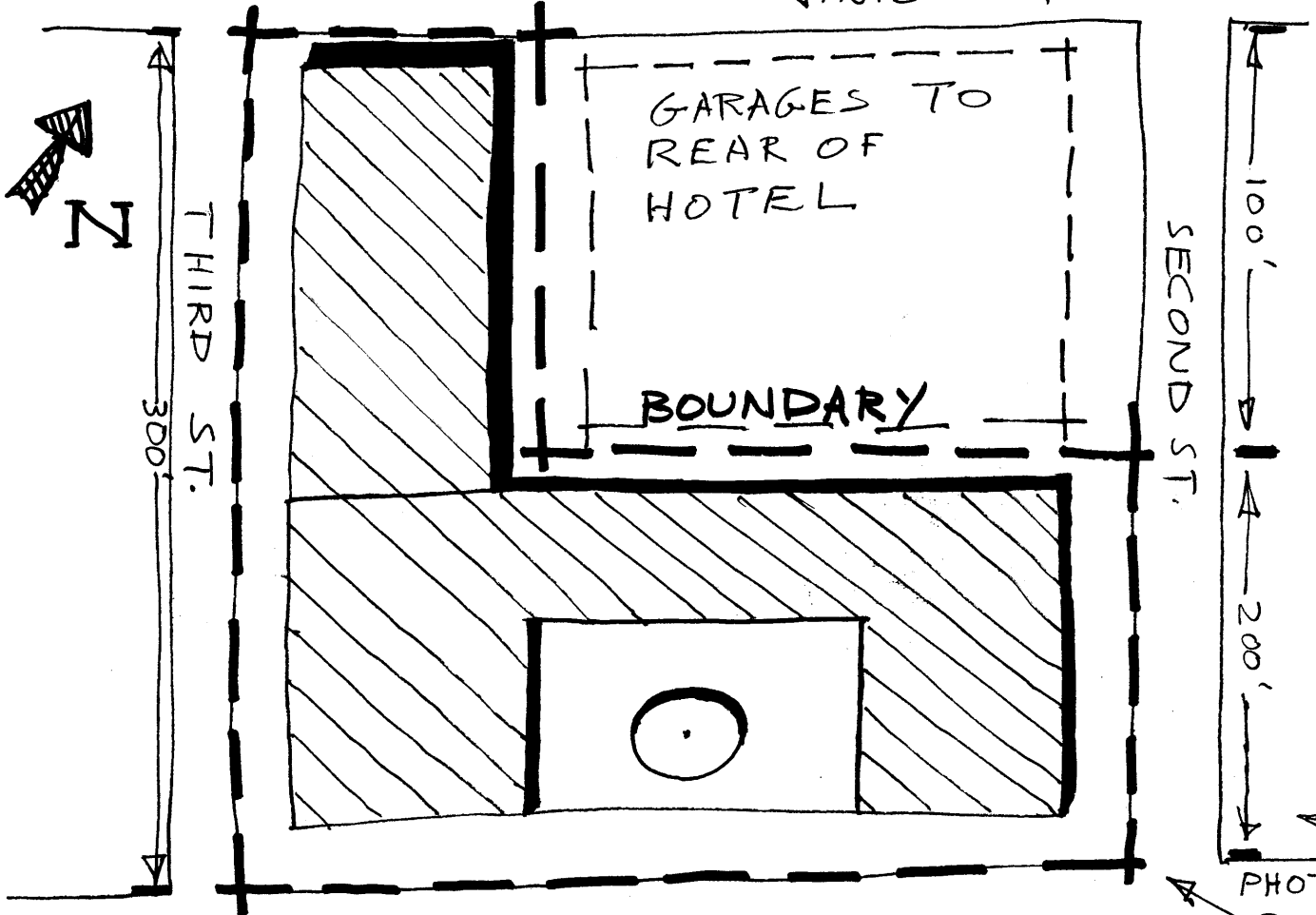


PHOTO (2)