

**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 ^g ~~The~~ Bryson Apartment Hotel

and/or common The Bryson Apartment Hotel

2. Location

street & number 2710 Wilshire Blvd. N/A not for publication

city, town Los Angeles N/A vicinity of congressional district 24

state California code 06 county Los Angeles code 037

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence (s)
<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
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name THE BRYSON, A Limited Partnership

street & number 8648 Wilshire Blvd.

city, town Beverly Hills N/A vicinity of state California

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Los Angeles County Recorder's Office

street & number 227 N. Broadway

city, town Los Angeles state California

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Los Angeles Historic Resource Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1981 federal state county local

depository for survey records Engineering Department, City Hall

city, town Los Angeles state California

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" 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
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date <u>N/A</u>

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Bryson Apartment Hotel is a "U" shaped 10 story reinforced concrete high-rise designed with Beaux Arts, Classical Revival and Mediterranean elements. The design is formal and luxurious with 30 feet of lawn and garden in front of the structure which is 113 feet by 110 feet deep. The recessed entry is 27 feet wide by 57 feet deep. Described over the years as the finest apartment building in Los Angeles, the Bryson remains an architectural statement of elegant design and functional construction.

This high-rise adaptation of Beaux Arts design keeps the horizontal definition of the palazzo form. Vertical definition is provided by the fenestration and balconies. Horizontal banding divides the structure. The first string course defines the first and below grade floors and is in line with the entablature of the entry columns. The second, a simple squared course, bands the structure one floor above the first, defining the base of the composition. Above the base 6 residential stories terminate in a simple cornice. The design culminates in the ornamented attic story, capped by projecting cornice with an elaborate frieze. Originally terra-cotta lion heads were part of the cornice extending into the skyline. The cornice projection was reduced and some sculpture removed after 1925, possibly in response to seismic considerations.

The ornamentation of the Bryson is elegant and rich, created primarily of terra-cotta. The entrance, recessed in the central court, is guarded by lion sculptures, standing on their rear legs and holding a cartouche encribed with "The Bryson". These animals are in pairs and stand atop entablatures supported by paired columns and pilasters of a decorated Tuscan style, on a raised base. Flanking each is a bronze lamp post with a sphere globe. The original design showed an arch spanning the opening with a single cartouche at the keystone. The arch was deleted prior to construction. The lions and cartouche became a theme used throughout the structure.

Balconies are found on three sides, only the rear is unadorned. Occurring on floors 2 through 8, the facade balconies are paired with a decorative metal fire escape landing between. Squared with a moulded edge, the balconies appear to rest on heavy consoles. Balconies on the west side are only of the metal design. Entry to the balconies is through sets of double doors, wood frame screen and pane.

The entry doors to the lobby are elevated by 9 steps. Planting areas occur on each side of the entry walk with marble boxes and decorative urns bringing the foliage to the entry level. A decorative metal frame canopy with wired glass panes is hung from chains protecting the entry from rain while allowing light to enter the large panes on each side of the full pane double doors. Transoms complete the entry arrangement. At the east side entrance, a stairway arches to the raised entry level where double doors allow admittance. The stairway is protected by an arched metal frame canopy covered with glass. The ornamentation replicates the designs found in the facade entryway including a central cartouche at the keystone. Metal brackets replicating the moulding designs and containing a small lion cartouche connect the canopy to the entry wall and porch railing. Spiral post lamps sit atop the newels. This side of the building is also set back with planting area to set off the structure. The side entrance is a prominent yet secondary feature which reflects the importance of the streets and the reason for the orientation of the building.

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The fenestration is primarily paired double pane windows aligned and identical for 9 floors. Single, double pane and very small fixed pane openings are also regularly placed and define the interior uses of bath and closet.

The tenth floor is ornamented with a band of rinceau above the windows on all sides of the building. Drop ornaments adorn the corners with a cartouche and foliage pattern which extends down to the ninth floor. This terra-cotta relief is described in news articles to be of brightly colored glazes, however it is currently painted white. The entire structure is painted white.

The interior features a large lobby area with sitting rooms on each side. The lobby ornamentation continues the architectural theme with mouldings and cartouches. The square concrete piers, pilasters and beams are accentuated with heavy mouldings. The piers are decorated on all four sides with a baroque cartouche. These are connected around the corners by a sway (festoon). The pilasters are also decorated with the same cartouche. The recessed sections of the ceiling are outlined in a deep cornice moulding of a palmette pattern. Soffits of the beams are outlined in a double fan moulding which joins with the freeze moulding to create a coffered effect. This space demonstrates the integration of classic detailing with the modern concrete pier and beam construction. A large rounded mahogany reception counter with a marble base is to the left of the elevator. Bronze sconces, torch style, original to the building, adorn many of the piers; an inverted 4-torch chandelier hangs in front of the elevator. All are ornamented with spiral shafts and foliage. Openings not framed by a pilaster have ornate consoles in the upper corners.

Apartments off the lobby are elevated nine steps providing an "entry way". The stairs, possibly the entire lobby floor, and the wainscoting are Italian marble. The lobby and most floors are carpeted.

The elevator doors and cage are a focal point of the lobby. Framed in brass moulding, the elevator doors are vertical brass gates backed by glass with an inset panel at the bottom. The door opens by sliding two sections to stack, one panel wide. The cage, all in brass, is divided into three horizontal sections. The lower quarter is a solid panel with roll moulding, the front contains the operating box. Above the base is a geometric open grill where medallions adorned with lions carryout the stylistic theme. This section is framed by a Vitruvian scroll. The ceiling, a "hipped" design, is unadorned except for a roll moulding and light. This is the original elevator installed by Elevator Maintenance Company of Los Angeles in 1912. The grille doors are repeated on each floor.

The residential floors are less ornate than the lobby. There was limited use of mouldings to compliment the structural necessities of piers and beams. Some of the mouldings and ornamentation may have been removed during a "modernization" in 1971. The tenth floor has been completely stripped of interior partitions and finishes.

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 1912-13

Builder/Architect Noonan & Kysor, Architects

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

F. O. Engstrum, Building Contractor

The Bryson Apartment Hotel is a locally significant example of Beaux Arts midrise design; displays the use of an innovative process of concrete construction; is the work of respected local architects F. Noonan and C. H. Kysor and is directly associated with an important local developer Hugh Bryson and the F. O. Engstrum Construction Company, respected for their progressive construction methods.

The Bryson was built in record time, utilizing modern building techniques and innovations. It was designed to provide all the luxuries of living in a mansion without the inconveniences of its maintenance. The entire top floor was given over to recreation purposes - consisting of a spacious ballroom with a stage for private theatricals, a music room, ladies reception room, card room, reading rooms, a large dressing room, billiard room, and a gentlemen's club room. In addition, it contained three large loggias from which one could easily view the Pacific Ocean and often on a clear day, Catalina Island.

The design of the Bryson was in the elegant Beaux Arts style. Consideration in the design was given to the location and the lifestyle possible in temperate southern California. The design was punctuated with balconies and stretched to a full ten stories.

The Bryson Apartment Hotel conveyed an image of luxury and status desired by many people involved in the film industry. Construction began June 1, 1912, and on January 10, 1913, the ten-story, monolithic Bryson Apartment Hotel, one of the first fire-proof apartment structures of the time, was formally opened. A mere two days later, the Bryson was fully occupied, and declared by experts to be "the finest of its kind in the country, not even excepting famous structures of similar character on Riverside Drive in New York City".

The owner, Hugh W. Bryson, was one of the best known men in Los Angeles, a pioneer in many lines of investment, owning the only other comparable apartment structure in the Los Angeles area, the Rampart Apartments (demolished). He was also the general manager and one of the directors of the F. O. Engstrum Company (builders of the Bryson).

F. O. Engstrum was recognized as a man of authority in modern apartment house construction, and his company, the largest construction firm west of Chicago, was widely known to be a world pioneer in the use of modern gravity flow concrete distribution in high-rise construction.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Continuation sheet: item #9, page 1

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property .526 acre

Quadrangle name Hollywood

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	1	3	8	1	7	4	0	3	7	6	9	4	8	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D

Zone				Easting				Northing						

E

Zone				Easting				Northing						

F

Zone				Easting				Northing						

G

Zone				Easting				Northing						

H

Zone				Easting				Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification The Bryson Apartment Hotel, a single structure with landscaped street frontage is located on the N.W. corner of Rampart and Wilshire Blvds. Beginning at the N.W. corner of the intersection, the boundary extends west 153.36 feet, then north 150.05 ft east 153.36 ft. and south 150 ft. to point of beginning. Boundaries are drawn on the historic lot

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries lines of the property.

state N/A code county N/A code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Bonnie Bamburg

organization Bonnie L. Bamburg Associates date July 15, 1982

street & number 1017 Meridian Avenue telephone 408/ 267-2780

city or town San Jose state California 95125

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 [Signature]

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 3/3/83

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register Entered in the National Register

[Signature]
Keeper of the National Register

date 4/7/83

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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The architects, Frederick Noonan and Charles H. Kysor, noteworthy for their progressive architectural styles, originally designed a six-story structure for the property. But when public protest requested that the building be moved back from the sidewalk, the architects altered their plan by vertically increasing the structure four stories. Improvements were made with the addition of the elaborate entertainment facilities on the top floor, yet still maintaining all modern safety requirements (i.e. fire proofing). Charles H. Kysor, son of noted architect Ezra F. Kysor, studied at Columbia University and for two years in Paris and Rome, beginning practice in Los Angeles in 1911. The Bryson exhibits his involvement with European Architectural education.

Although many skeptics mocked the architect's revised plan, Mr. Bryson's conviction proved highly profitable. On November 28, 1913, he sold the complex, in one of the largest reality transactions of the year, to a local millionaire, Orin S. Weston, for \$950,000. Weston retained the Bryson until December 1915 when he sold it to F. W. Braun, one of the largest property owners in Los Angeles, for \$1,250,000. Through consolidations and trade/sales the ownership eventually transferred to Mr. Fred MacMurray, noted film personality, who retained ownership through the 1970's.

The Bryson Apartments contributed to the growing affluence and prosperity of the Westlake area. Its extensive leisure facilities, large fully furnished rooms, and proximity to both the park and exclusive residential districts near Wilshire Boulevard, made the Bryson particularly attractive to theatrical people and those involved with the emerging motion picture industry. The Bryson itself was shown in several films, and used expressly by name in "Lady of the Lake".

The Bryson Apartment Hotel is a monument of historic architectural elegance reinforced with modern innovative practicality. The structure has been associated with innovators and leaders in Los Angeles, especially in its architects, builders and management, Historically and architecturally, the Bryson has been a valued element on Wilshire Boulevard.

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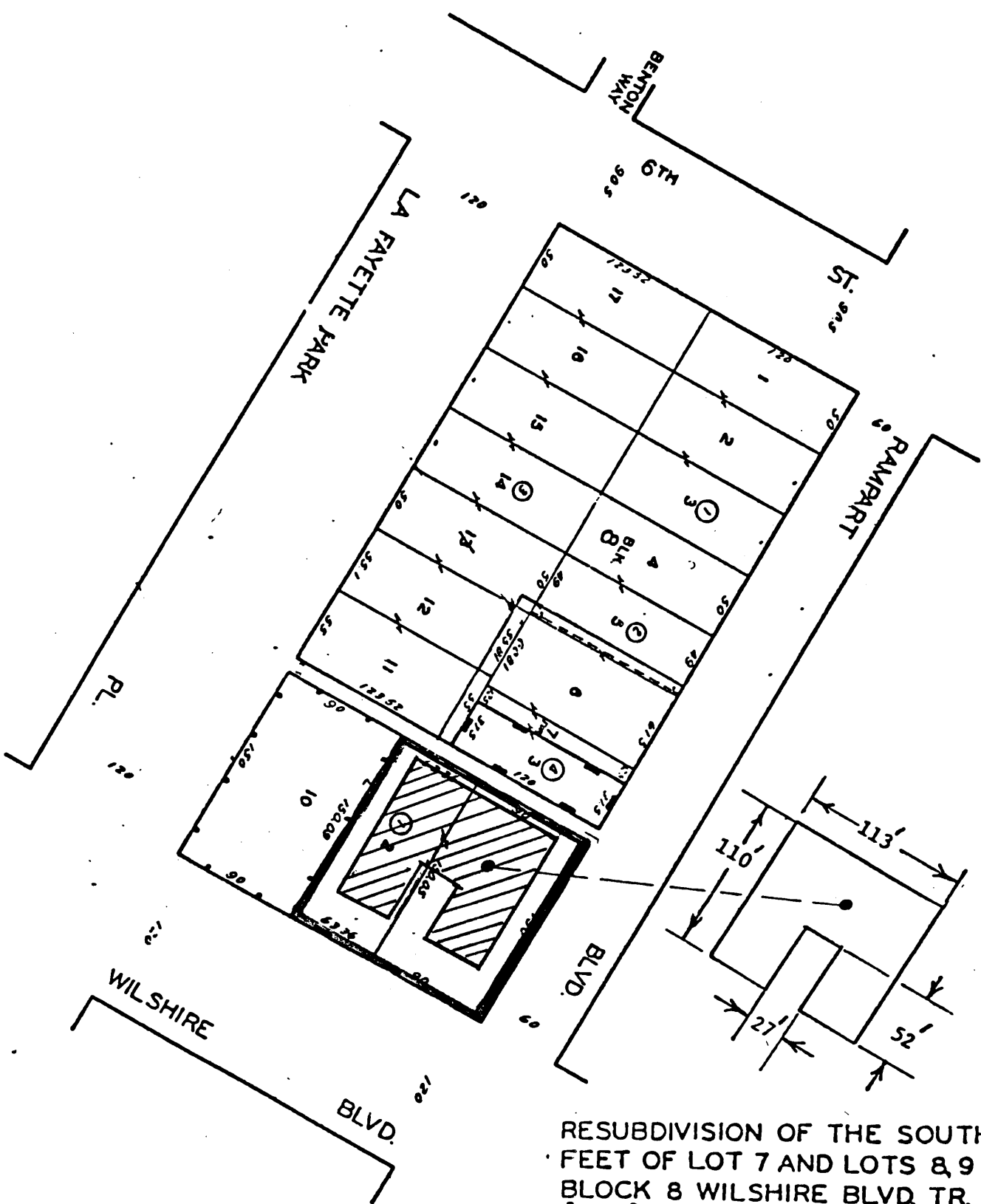
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WILSHIRE BOULEVARD TRACT
M.R 66-5

TRACT NO. 1751
M.B. 21-130-131

RESUBDIVISION OF THE SOUTHERLY 3
FEET OF LOT 7 AND LOTS 8, 9 AND 10
BLOCK 8 WILSHIRE BLVD. TR.
M.R. 70-15

THIS IS NOT A SURVEY OF THE LAND BUT IS COMPILED FOR INFORMATION ONLY FROM DATA SHOWN BY OFFICIAL RECORDS.

First American Title Company of Los Angeles