

PH 8356425

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED JUN 6 1977
DATE ENTERED JUL 15 1977

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

~~XX~~ Morton Hotel

AND/OR COMMON

Morton Hotel

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

150 S. Virginia Avenue

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Atlantic City

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

2nd

STATE

New Jersey

CODE

34

COUNTY

Atlantic

CODE

001

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 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 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 type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

The 150 Virginia Partnership Ltd.

STREET & NUMBER

E-1912 Park Towne Place

CITY, TOWN

Philadelphia

VICINITY OF

STATE

Pennsylvania

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Guarantee Trust Building

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Atlantic City

STATE

New Jersey

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

New Jersey Historic Sites Inventory

DATE

1977

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

109 West State Street

CITY, TOWN

Trenton

STATE

New Jersey

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

MORTON HOTEL - ATLANTIC CITY

The Morton Hotel is an 8 story brick and limestone structure facing Virginia Avenue, with an 11 bay main section and a 5 bay eastern section. The hotel is entered in the center of the main section through a wide lobby with a marble stair at the rear leading to the second story piano nobile. This second story area has an essentially open plan with a large east and a large west lounge, together with a frontal sunporch gallery set within a colonnade which runs the entire length of both sections of the building. The east lounge has an essentially Georgian character in which the ceiling is criss-crossed by heavy structural members, decorated by Adamesque Doric friezes with superimposed urns and festoons. Structural pillars and walls are decorated with Corinthian pilasters. Walls have raised paneling and an Adams fireplace with double freestanding columns and an over-mantle. The west lounge has a heavy beam ceiling with sub-joists, both of which have elaborate plaster cast panels on the bottom faccia with ship's wheels and other nautical motifs. Circular plaster medallions adorn the frieze, each of which contains a rigged ship or a seagull, or other motif.

The frontal sun porch-archade, which pauses briefly between the two sections of the building, has a glass garage type door mounted in each arch. When the doors are retracted, the archade is completely open to the air.

Above the piano nobile is contained the bulk of the hotel's private rooms. At one time there was a rear wing with additional rooms, but this burned, taking with it some of the rear wall of the nominated building. The structure is, however, sound.

The main facade is articulated with classical motifs, sparingly used, with tile work garnishing. The 3rd, 4th and 5th floor rooms of the west section are formed in 3 sided bay window projections, which run the full 3 floors. This configuration rests upon a jutty which is supported by a series of half groin vaults incorporated into the sun porch-archade. The structural lines, the groins and the arches are picked out with colored tile fretwork. Each spandrel has a colored inscribed placque with the letter "M."

The bay window projections terminate in a heavy entablature which caps the entire 5th floor. The entablature breaks briefly over the middle 3 bays of the eastern portion.

A select 4 of the 6th floor windows of the large west portion are treated with aedicule motifs which feature Persian columns and tile work panels with sunburst motifs. The entire west portion is capped by a heavy medallion cornice with the 8th floor articulated as a parapet. Over on the east portion the 8th floor is detached from the west portion and articulated as a separate 3 bay pavilion with a central Palladian window motif, capped by a pediment. The Palladian window arch is filled in with carved foliage.

Most of the bays on the upper floors have double sash mounted windows, painted white.

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 checked="" 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 1923

BUILDER/ARCHITECT William Stanton

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

A fine example of early 20th century eclectic architecture, the Morton Hotel is chiefly notable for its elaborate exterior tile work and fine Georgian Revival interiors. It is one of approximately 15 of Atlantic City's old "swank" hotels and embodies much of the city's commercial history.

History

Due to a disastrous fire (ca.1973) which destroyed the main office, official records of the Morton Hotel are lost. Therefore, to reconstruct the hotel's history, it was necessary to consult various former owners and their relatives.

Mrs. Mamie B. Haines operated a guest house on the site from 1898 to 1918, which was named for John Morton, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. It is asserted that Mrs. Haines was a direct descendent. In 1918 her daughter Mary married Ezra Bell, and the guest house was taken over by a partnership which he apparently headed. An early decision of the partnership was to move the guest building to the rear of the property and erect the present brick structure. Although the structure appears to have been built in 2 sections at different times, it was in fact built as one piece, in 1923. The architect was William Macey Stanton. In 1927 a swimming pool was added. The partnership was quite active in the business and social life of Atlantic City. Ezra Bell helped organize the Miss America Pageant and served on the committee for a number of years.

Broadcasting on Atlantic City's first radio station WPG was done from the Morton Hotel. From time to time Bell acted as radio commentator for musical events. During World War II the hotel became a U.S. Coast Guard code training school as well as a local base of operations.

After the war a lecture hall used by the Coast Guard was converted into a theater in which pre-Broadway productions, such as "Life with Father" and "Tea and Sympathy", were presented.

Because of its proximity to the Steel Pier, the Morton provided accommodations for a number of celebrities who entertained there, notably Eddie Duchin, Count Basie, Duke Ellington, as well as the Beach Boys. It has also been used by many of the participants in the Miss America contests over the years.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Interview with Harry Bell and Mary Bell.
 Interview with Paul and David Cope, sons of Paul Cope, partner of Ezra Bell.
 Hotel Morton (brochure) 1899
 Several 1920's photographs and postcards.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 1

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 8	5, 4, 9, 9, 5, 0	4, 3, 5, 6, 6, 3, 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is approximately 100' by 200', and occurs on City lot No. 49, Block No. 14.

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

New Jersey Office of Historic Preservation

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Department of Environmental Protection

STREET & NUMBER

3/77

TELEPHONE

109 West State Street

CITY OR TOWN

(609) 292-2023

STATE

Trenton

New Jersey

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL XXX

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

TITLE

Assistant Commissioner

DATE

May 26, 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF

DATE

7-10-77

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

THE NATIONAL REGISTER
DATE