

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received MAY 15 1987
date entered JUN 12 1987

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

1. Name

historic Beverly Wilshire Hotel

and/or common Beverly Wilshire Hotel

2. Location

street & number 9528 Wilshire Boulevard N/A not for publication

city, town Beverly Hills 90212 N/A vicinity of

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 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
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" 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 Beverly Wilshire Hotel Co., a California Limited Partnership,
c/o Kristina E. Harrigan, Farella, Braun & Martel

street & number 235 Montgomery St., 30th Floor

city, town San Francisco N/A vicinity of state California 94104

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Los Angeles County Hall of Records

street & number 515 North Temple

city, town Los Angeles state California

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Beverly Hills Historic Resources Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date November, 1986 federal state county local

depository for survey records Planning Department, City of Beverly Hills

city, town Beverly Hills state California, 90210

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	date <u> N/A </u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Beverly Wilshire Hotel occupies an entire block on the south side of Wilshire Boulevard, between Rodeo and El Camino Drives in Beverly Hills. It is a nine story plus two basements, E-shaped building in the Second Renaissance Revival style. Of steel-reinforced concrete construction, the structure is finished with brick and terra cotta. With its gracious proportions, dignified styling, and the embellished classicism of the street level arcade and topmost floors, the architecture successfully conveys an image of the building's function, urbanity, and refinement. This fact remains, despite some alterations, most notably, the 1969-1971 addition of a second building and pedestrian bridges in the rear and the modification of a few street level openings. These changes, however, are outweighed by the integrity of the overall design and its potent evocation of the hotel's role as one of the cornerstones of the legend of Beverly Hills.

A correct, Second Renaissance Revival, three part composition organizes the three public elevations of the Beverly Wilshire Hotel. The first floor "base" is the most elaborate, and contains a continuous arcade of round-headed arches which are either entrances or display windows. Thirteen bays are defined on the principal (north) facade, while seven bays, the south three of which are divided by fluted pilasters, appear on both of the side elevations. Engaged columns, whose capitals incorporate the heads of mythological beasts, flank the openings, and themselves frame smaller arches. These interim arches were originally glazed and now have marble interiors. Each arch has a corbel-like keystone. The columns carry a frieze broken by the larger arches, above which the spandrels are embellished with relief work. Shields, medallions, heads, and swirling foliage are integrated into a design that covers the exposed surface. Above an entablature punctuated by leaf corbels, a panelled balustrade, also extensively decorated, tops the street floor and borders a roof garden on the north. The grand entrance, also on the north elevation, is centered and announced by a broken pediment with an urn set above ornate pilasters. Free-standing, fluted columns flank the arch, which leads to a barrel-vaulted vestibule and a bronze-framed, glazed entry.

The "shaft" of the three part composition encompasses the second through seventh stories. Above the base, the "E" configuration takes shape with its three wings oriented to the north and the spine stretching east to west across the rear. The central leg of the "E" does not project to the same extent as the east and west wings, which have 150-foot frontages. Terra cotta quoining emphasizes the corners of each wing. Multi-hued brick, which has been painted a buff tone, sheathes these floors. Plainly detailed windows, grouped in one's, two's, and three's, are regularly spaced across each elevation. Dark metal casements have replaced the original wood-framed, double-hung sash. On the north facades of the east and west wings, each of which contains five bays, the central and end windows are enhanced by segmental arches and triangular pediments. Firescapes rise from balconies up the central bays of these two wings and occupy a similar position in raised five-bay sections at the south ends of both side elevations.

Above a frieze created by stringcourses and balustraded balconets, the eighth story, or "capital" of the three-part composition is clad in terra cotta. In all but the central wing of the "E," the eighth floor windows are round-headed, double-hung sash accented by lion keystones and detailed by impost moldings and archivolt. A leaf-patterned frieze, studded with medallions, enhances the denticulated entablature (see continuation sheet)

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7. Description (continued):

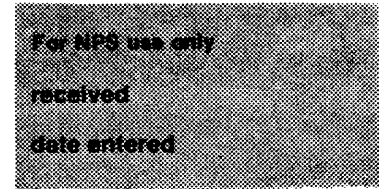
which wraps the building above the windows. Above it, a bracketed cornice overhangs the structure. The central wing contains flat-headed casement windows with rusticated surrounds and keystones in the eighth floor. It culminates with a ninth floor penthouse with cantoned corners and tall, arched openings separated by panelled pilasters. Another intensely decorated frieze and the bracketed cornice tops this story.

Unlike the north, east, and west facades, the south elevation is plainly detailed and spans the block in a single plane. The three part organization is merely suggested on this elevation. An addition has been made across the first floor, altering what historic photographs indicate was mostly a utilitarian expanse. Above it, the original hues of the brick exterior have been preserved on the upper floors. Terra cotta quoining and a frieze above the seventh floor articulate the regularly fenestrated elevation. A central focal point is provided by the ninth floor, which contains three arched windows. The new building, known as the Beverly Wing, is located across a decoratively paved private street and connected by two bridges to the roof of the first floor addition. The twelve story Beverly Wing is excluded from the nomination. It is physically separate and is an intrusive addition. Other exterior alterations, some of which were noted above, include some changes to the street level openings, most notably the re-faced and enclosed Tiffany's facade on the northeast corner; re-glazed windows; the replacement of the original canvas awning at the entrance with a metal and glass suspended canopy; the addition of awnings to the arcade; and the construction of covered patios on either side of the second floor roof garden.

In contrast to the exterior, the interior has been remodelled numerous times. However, a number of original spaces, materials, and details remains. While the configuration of the lobby and the various retail, restaurant, and service facilities on the ground floor and mezzanine has changed in many respects, the central core is still a two story space dotted with marble columns and overlooked by balconies and archways. The decoration of the balconies has been changed and the capitals of the columns covered. The coffered ceiling is mostly intact, although repainted like the murals in the frieze, and the Tennessee marble floor remains beneath the carpeting. Handsome bronze elevator doors are located on both the lobby and mezzanine levels, with circular floor markers in the arched pediments over the lobby level doors. Some fragments also survive, such as a hugh marble fireplace, now used as a frame for a display case, and segments of carved woodwork in the mezzanine ceiling. Even a few furnishings, including the chandeliers and four metal settees are original. One of the public rooms, in particular, is substantially as it was on opening day. Now called the Petit Trianon, the mezzanine level space was originally the Venetian Room.

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It was intended for smaller gatherings than the ballroom, and its more intimate decor featured delicately panelled walls of Italian, pink-tinted mirrors. The majority of the mirrors are still in place, as are some original moldings, relief work, and hardware.

The upper floors, whose floor plans are varied from level to level, are characterized by the same combination of old and new. Some original panelled mahogany doors and three open, iron-railed staircases characterize the corridors. The individual rooms have been re-decorated, the kitchens of the apartment units have been converted to bathrooms, and some larger suites have been broken up. However, some details, such as panelled wall treatments, some bathroom tile, and some bathroom fixtures are still in situ. The most remarkable survival is one of two original ten-room apartments on the eighth floor. These lavish spaces, intended to accommodate the gracious life-style of long-term residents, featured hallways punctuated by Corinthian columns and illuminated by glass mosaic skylights, panelled libraries, fireplaces, three bedroom suites, servants' quarters, and a private roof garden.

Substantially intact, the Beverly Wilshire Hotel continues to be a dominant physical presence on Wilshire Boulevard in Beverly Hills. It marks the border between the commercial and residential districts and is the focal point for Rodeo Drive, one of the most well-known shopping streets in the world. Current plans for the hotel involve some restoration, which would add to the luster of an already beautifully maintained historic monument.

Resource Count: 1 contributing building.

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"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
			<input type="checkbox"/> science
			<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
			<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
			<input type="checkbox"/> theater
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1928

Builder/Architect Walker and Eisen

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

As the first major hotel to be constructed in the rapidly growing community of Beverly Hills since 1912, the Beverly Wilshire Hotel is representative of the quality of commercial architecture built in the city during its prime period of development. Associated with one of the city's most influential citizens, the hotel was constructed in 1927 for Walter G. McCarty, a real estate developer who once owned a quarter of the city, and was designed by the eminent Southern California architectural firm of Walker and Eisen in the Second Renaissance Revival style. The structure is the most prominent example of this noted firm's work in Beverly Hills. It was one of the first major buildings to be constructed on Wilshire Boulevard, and acted as an anchor for that street's commercial development. From its inception, the hotel has catered to many notables, including film stars, wealthy business and social luminaries, and visiting royalty.

Walter G. McCarty, the founder of the establishment, was instrumental in the development of the southern half of Beverly Hills. To draw attention to the tracts of residential homesites he controlled and to demonstrate his faith in the community's potential for growth and as a desirable destination, he commissioned the firm of Walker and Eisen to create a nine story hostelry on Wilshire Boulevard in the center of the city. Percy Eisen and Albert Walker were among the premier architectural firms in the area. Particularly renowned for their traditional Second Renaissance Revival designs, the pair had been in partnership for eight years when the hotel was commissioned, and would continue until 1941, during that time providing to Los Angeles and its environs buildings of exceptional merit. The Beverly Wilshire is the most famous of their work in hotel design; others in the area are the Hollywood Plaza, the Gaylord Apartment Hotel, and the El Cortez Hotel in San Diego. Significant examples of their commercial work include the California Lutheran Hospital; the Taft Building in Hollywood; Security Title Insurance, Fine Arts/Signal Oil, and California Fruit Growers Exchange in Los Angeles; Bay Cities Guaranty in Santa Monica; and the City Hall, Civic Auditorium, Public Library, and Police Station in Torrance, California. Both Walker and Eisen were natives of California. Percy Eisen gained his training in the office of his father, Theodore; Albert Walker trained at Brown University in Rhode Island before working in the offices of prominent Southern California architects Parkinson and Bergstrum, A.F. Rosenheim, and Hunt and Grey. By 1924, the firm of Walker and Eisen were obtaining a large percentage of the contracts for height-limit buildings in the Los Angeles area, employing over fifty draftsmen. The Beverly Wilshire is a prime example of their work in the area of housing for the tourist trade, an apartment-hotel which provided for all the amenities wealthy travellers had come to expect from a resort facility, yet also contained provisions for extended stays and the privacy of a residence. The conservative design represented a combination of traditional styles, yet a continuity was achieved through the architects' use of well-proportioned spaces and the judicious use of decorative elements. The Beaux Arts tradition appealed to owner McCarty, who imported the finest materials from Europe, including Carrara marble, for use in the execution of Walker and Eisen's (see continuation sheet)

9. Major Bibliographical References

City of Beverly Hills Building Permit Files

Architectural Digest, Volume VII, Number 3, 1929.
(see continuation sheet)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .91

Quadrangle name Beverly Hills

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 11 371840 3770240
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

Tract 6649 ^{lot} 18 to 22, inclusive.

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

state N/A code county N/A code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Christy McAvoy & Leslie Heumann

organization Johnson Heumann Research Associates date December 4, 1986

street & number 3103 Lindo Street telephone (213) 851-8854

city or town Los Angeles state California, 90068

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 Kathryn Quattrini

title date 5/8/87

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

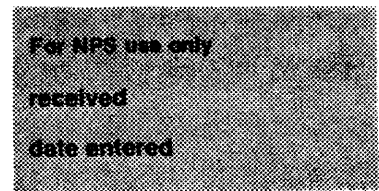
James M. McPherson 6/12/87
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

Chief of Registration

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8. Significance Statement (continued):

design. The design of the hotel exhibits a number of the characteristics associated with the style, including the tripartite composition of the facade, its street level arcade, classical embellishment, and use of terra cotta. The construction was supervised by the William Simpson Company. Interior decoration was done by noted muralist and designer Anthony B. Heinsbergen. Furnishings were from Barker Brothers, a Southern California furniture dealer who dominated the market in the 1920s.

Construction began in 1927, and McCarty's \$2,000,000 investment received close scrutiny. It was part of the biggest year for building in the city to date. The decor of the hotel's lobby, ballrooms, and suites was carefully chronicled in the local press and in architectural periodicals, including Architectural Digest. The press extolled the virtues of the handpainted ceilings and the use of marble in the lobby, the opulence of the function rooms, the roof garden, and the elegance of the ninety suites, which ranged in size from two rooms to two ten-room penthouses with panelled libraries, gold fixtures, fireplaces, and tilework. Decor was primarily French, and every need of the guest was anticipated. The hotel had its own complete kitchens with bakery, grocery, and meat departments, a laundry and cleaning facility, electrical shops, and shopping facilities. Said one article, "Every modern hostelry convenience has been planned for tenants, every beauty and comfort of the finest mansion, augmented by every service and luxury that a metropolitan hotel provides." (Beverly Hills Citizen, 8-25-27) This level of service has been maintained since the opening, with the hotel staff adapting to the needs of permanent residents as well as transient clientele.

The hotel opened on New Year's Eve, 1928, with a gala attended by many film celebrities who lived in Beverly Hills. Over four hundred were in attendance for dinner and dancing. Among its guests over the years have been notables from all walks of life, including film stars, United States presidents, California governors, socialites, members of the British royal family, and others. The hotel has played a significant role in the commerce of the city as well, housing exclusive establishments like Oviatt's Menswear, Bullock's Department Store, Tiffany and Co. jewelers, and Kreiss Drugstore, whose restaurant was a major meeting place for the community. In the 1930s, the barbershop area briefly served as the office of the Austrian Consul.

The hotel was acquired by financier Arnold Kirkeby in the 1940s, and sold in 1958 to Evelyn Sharp, owner of several New York hotels. In 1961, it was briefly owned by William Zeckendorf, who sold it to Hernando Courtright, previous owner of the Beverly Hills Hotel. During Courtright's tenure, the garden, tennis courts, and pool were converted to a private street known as the El Camino Real, and an addition (the Beverly Wing), designed by Welton Becket and Associates, was constructed in 1971. This addition is excluded from the nomination. The hotel is currently owned by Regent International Hotels. It has continued to maintain its status as one of the nation's luxury hotels, and was the first American hotel to be granted the Grand Luxe Hallmark in 1971. As one of the most prominent structures in Beverly Hills, both in size and architectural quality, the Beverly Wilshire Hotel is significant for its association with a prominent resident active in the city's growth and development, as one of the most noted projects of a notable Southern California architectural firm, as a social center of the community, and for its place in the tourist industry in California.

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9. Bibliography (continued):

Basten, Fred. Beverly Hills: Portrait of a Fabled City. Los Angeles: Douglas West, 1974.

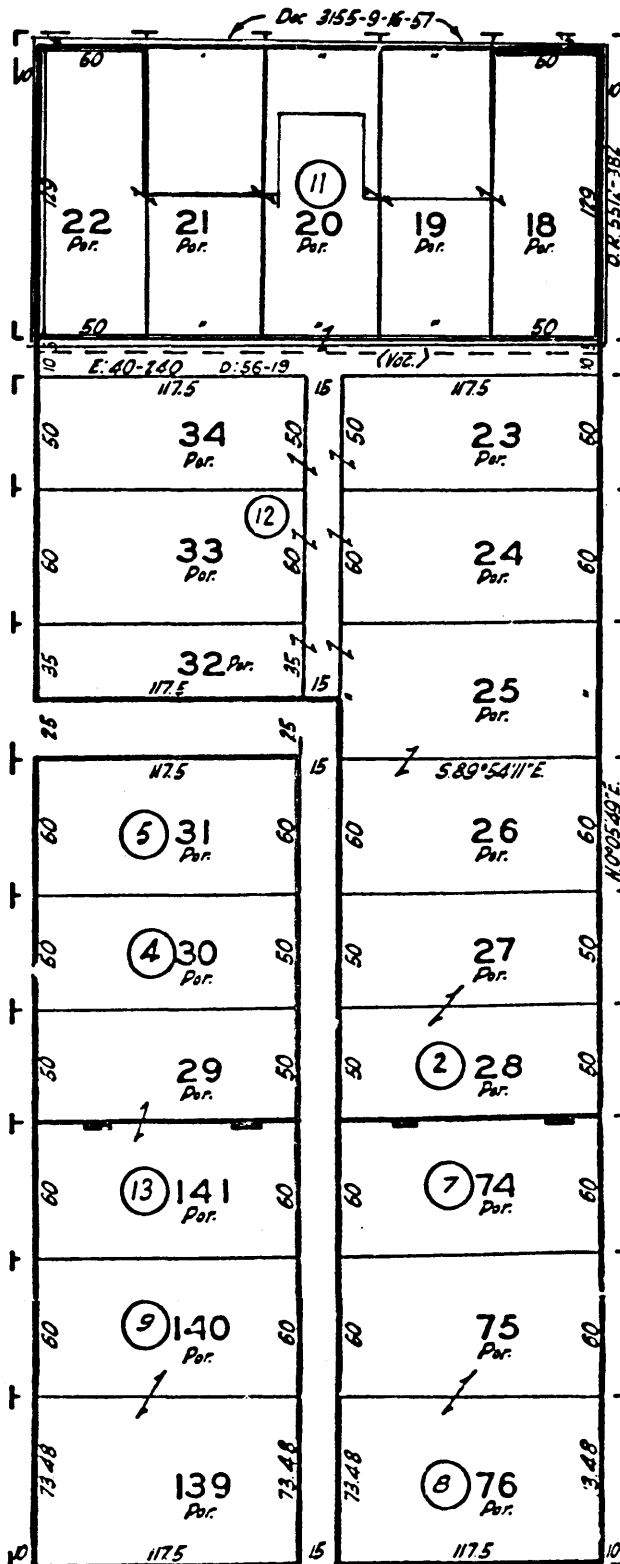
Benedict, Pierce. History of Beverly Hills. Los Angeles: Cawston-Meyer, 1934.

Beverly Hills Citizen, August 25, 1927.

Schippers, Donald J. "Walker and Eisen: Twenty Years of Los Angeles Architecture, 1920 - 1940." Historical Society of Southern California Journal.

WILSHIRE BLVD.

DR.



EL CAMINO

LOT NO. 6649
A.B. 70-54

LOT NO. 7710
3.83-94-95

RODEO

CHARLEVILLE BLVD.

MAY 15 1987

701-319