

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

JUN 30 1975

DATE ENTERED

JUL 24 1975

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1** NAME

HISTORIC

Hermitage Hotel

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

231 6th Avenue North

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Nashville

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Fifth

STATE

Tennessee

— VICINITY OF

CODE

47

COUNTY

Davidson

CODE

037

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:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Alsonett Hotels

STREET & NUMBER

9 East Huron Street

CITY, TOWN

Chicago

— VICINITY OF

STATE

Illinois

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Register's Office

STREET & NUMBER

Davidson County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Nashville

STATE

Tennessee

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS | <input checked="" 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

The architectural style of the Hermitage Hotel is Beaux Arts Classicism. Exemplification of the style is found in the arched openings that are situated between coupled columns, the articulated five level composition and the extravagant use of detailing influenced by the French Renaissance style.

The brick and polychromed terra-cotta detailed structure has ten floors and 224 rooms. Above the lobby level, the floor plan is in the form of a "U." Oriented to the south, the open end of the "U" allowed the east, west (now obstructed by a larger structure), south elevations and the interior elevations to receive natural light. A stained glass skylight, exposed to the southern light, is situated in the lobby ceiling. Although not exposed to the sun, the north elevation faces the state Capitol of Tennessee across the recently completed Legislative Plaza (formerly Memorial Square).

The east (Sixth Avenue North) elevation is the premier elevation. Recessed into a base containing small shops, the entrance is flanked by rectangular pilasters and has a cable-supported canopy covering the sidewalk. The pilasters, constructed of stuccoed concrete and formed to resemble rusticated cut stone, are situated to serve as bases for the large coupled Ionic columns above.

Profuse detailing subordinates the base with the lobby level. Ionic voluted capitals with egg and tongue moulding and an abacus with leaf and tongue enrichment is set on large, fluteless, terra-cotta coupled columns. An entablature of terra-cotta string mouldings (adorned with leaf and tongue and egg and tongue enrichment and dentil moulding with fillets) and a festoon and acanthus leaf frieze is above the coupled Ionic columns. Smaller, polished granite coupled columns, with Corinthian capitals, support the architrave of the arched window openings. The architrave consists of leaf and tongue, bead and reel, egg and tongue and corona mouldings. A veneer of cut stone covers the face of the arched opening. Two plaques and egg and tongue, bead and reel mouldings and an acanthus leaf keystone adorn the face of the arched openings. The intrados of the arches contain recessed panels with bas-relief sculpted faces and the initial "H." Leaf and tongue moulding outlines the panels. French windows with operable arched transoms are recessed into the arched openings. A balustrade spans the width of the opening.

At the second floor level, the fenestration treatment changes to square headed windows. Six windows are of narrow proportions and have single lights of glass. The remaining six windows are nearly square and are of the two over two double-hung type. Situated in a brick inlaid panel, with a leaf treated moulding about its periphery, the narrow openings occur in pairs across the elevation. The remainder of the windows occur singly and are flanked with panels of relief sculpture consisting of urns and wreaths.

The third floor has French doors and a balcony with a cast iron railing. Acanthus leaf brackets adorn the balcony slab. The slab's edge moulding aligns with the string moulding that is about the east and north elevations only.

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The fourth through seventh floor windows and the ninth floor windows are nearly identical to the second floor windows. However, the eighth floor windows have columns with Ionic capitals, a simple entablature, a broken-bed pediment, a short balcony with a cast iron railing and a slab with acanthus leaf brackets.

The cornice consists of lion heads attached to the cyma-reversa moulding and leaf and tongue enrichment. The fascia is unadorned. Coffered panels with small ornamental carvings are situated between the modillions. Egg and tongue moulding, dentil moulding with fillets and a cyma-recta string moulding completes the cornice treatment.

Second in importance to the east elevation is the north (Union Street) elevation. The five level composition has been retained, but the amount of ornateness diminishes considerably and due to the sloping site, the base level also diminishes. Brick has replaced the cut stone, as the exterior wall material, at the lobby level.

There are seven large windows at the lobby level of the north elevation. The first window (nearest the corner of the structure where the east and north elevations intersect) is more elaborate than the remaining six windows. Terra-cotta pilasters, the ornate intrados (not as much adornment as those in the east elevation) and a balustrade, that spans the width of the opening (similar to those in the east elevation), adorn this window. The next four windows are round headed and have metal frames. Centered in one of these windows (also centered in the north elevation) is the Union Street entrance with a cable-supported canopy. The last two windows in the north elevation are flat headed windows with terra-cotta heads and jambs and have metal frames. Above the window heads, there are brick arches of the same dimensions as the other windows. The arches are infilled with patterned brickwork and have terra-cotta plaques centered within the arch.

At the third floor level, the first window (nearest the corner of the structure where the east and north elevations intersect) has French doors and a balcony with a cast iron railing. This window is similar to the east elevation third floor windows and is the only north elevation third floor window to be so treated. Although the lobby, second and third floor levels have been treated differently the remainder of the north elevation is similar in treatment to the east elevation.

The west elevation is practically devoid of ornamentation and brick alone has been employed as an exterior material. The round headed brick openings, the window sizes and patterns, and the shortened balconies at the ninth floor level are the only elements that tie the west elevation in with the east and north elevations. The only other details that relate this elevation to the rest of the structure are the cornice, friezes and string mouldings that turn the corner and abruptly end.

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Earlier it was noted that above the lobby level the structure is in the form of a "U." The south elevation and the interior elevations of the "U" are not readily seen from the street and therefore are rudimentally stark. Fenestration punctures the brick exterior wall in a functional order, but in varying sizes and without adornment. At the intersection of the east elevation and the south elevation the cornice, friezes and string mouldings turn the corner and ends abruptly.

Entrance into the Hotel is made through contemporary aluminum doors in the east elevation (off of Sixth Avenue North). Stairs of Tennessee marble and walls of Tennessee marble veneer lead to the 'piano mobile'.

The thirty foot high lobby ceiling consists of a large and recessed stained glass skylight with smaller stained glass skylight panels about its periphery. Separation between the skylights is made by plaster bound leaf mouldings that have sculpted bosses at the intersections. Egg and dart and dentil mouldings, cherubs seated on either side of a cartouche, and fruits and vegetables comprise the fascia which is formed by the recessed skylight. A guilloche motif band, with sculpted bosses situated at the column lines bounds the recessed skylight.

Structural elements for the lobby have been relegated to the periphery of the space and are in the form of rectilinear columns and pilasters faced with a marble veneer. Although the column capitals are square, the moulding details reflect exterior column capital treatment. Egg and dart, dentil and leaf enrichment adorn the capitals.

Vaulted ceilings have been utilized between the columns and in the bays that form the loggia. The ceilings are cross valuted. The groins of the barrel vaults and the cross vaults have been accentuated with a plaster moulding consisting of bound fruits and vegetables. Due to the barrel vault construction, the lobby ceiling is rounded at the corners. In the spaces between the barrel vaults and above the column capitals there is profuse plaster ornamentation. Rectangular, triangular and octagonal coffers with egg and dart enrichment, fleur-de-lis, a cartouche with the initial "H," and leaf enrichment embellish this space. The pendent light fixtures are Art Deco style and were added later.

In three of the barrel vaulted spaces off the lobby there are balconies with a balustrade. The intrados of the arches are adorned with ornamented coffers and plaques. Swags adorn the fascia of the balcony.

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Situated off the lobby is the Grand Ballroom. The Ballroom floor level is about eighteen inches above the lobby floor level. Circassian walnut is the principal material used but certain bosses and mouldings have been cast in metal. A profuse amount of detailing, similar to that employed on the exterior of the structure and in the lobby, ornaments the Ballroom. A typical ceiling panel cornice consists of string mouldings, modillions with a coffered panel between, dentil and egg and dart mouldings. Greek cross shaped coffers and smaller rectilinear coffers with ornate mouldings and metal flowers surround the larger recessed panels. The varying panels are separated by a band of fret ornamentation and metal bosses.

Decorative coupled wood columns with fluting and Ionic capitals adorn the walls of the Ballroom. Appropriate mouldings, to reflect the exterior columns, have been used in the design of the capitals. An ornamented architrave and frieze with triglyphs and metopes have been included. The elevator lobby has a marble veneer covering the walls, the columns and the pilasters. Brass frames were utilized around the elevator openings and on each door is an etching, in brass, of the Hermitage Hotel. Bank teller-type partitions and marble counter tops enclose the service desk area. The partitions are of brass and have either a cage opening or are glass infilled. Fluted columns with Ionic capitals, egg and dart and dentil enrichment, executed in brass, create an exterior and interior continuity of design.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION | | |

SPECIFIC DATES 1908-1910 BUILDER/ARCHITECT J. Edwin Carpenter

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

J. Edwin Carpenter, a native of Columbia, Tennessee, was commissioned to design the Hermitage Hotel in 1908. At the time of the commission, his architectural practice was in Norfolk, Virginia. Carpenter's formal architectural education was received at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Ecole des beaux-arts in Paris, France. The Hermitage Hotel, reflecting Carpenter's Beaux-Arts exposure, is the only commercial example of Beaux-Arts Classicism in Nashville today. Situated near the capitol building of the state of Tennessee, the Hermitage opened its doors for business in January 1910, and has since hosted many political and social events.

1920 was a significant year for women in the United States, for Tennessee and for the Hermitage Hotel. Tennessee, on August 24, 1920, was the final state to ratify the nineteenth amendment to the Constitution giving women the right to vote. Due to its close proximity to the capitol and its popularity with politicians, the Hermitage was the site of lobbying by local lobbyists and by lobbyists from those states where the issue had already been contested. Headquarters for ratification proponent and opponent organizations were strategically located at the Hermitage Hotel.

As the Hermitage was the center of many political activities, the ratification of the nineteenth amendment and political campaigns, it was also the focal point of social functions. "Among the notable early events at the Hermitage was a banquet November 1, 1911, to honor President William Howard Taft. The banquet was probably the largest in Nashville's history up to that time, and, for the first time, women were invited to attend." (Nashville: A Short History and Selected Buildings. Nashville, Tennessee, p. 73.) Other prestigious social events at the Hermitage included the annual Jackson Day Ball and the exclusive Capitol Club.

Today, urban renewal plans of the late sixties has Nashville undergoing a formidable change to wide avenues and to concrete, glass and steel of contemporary architecture. The Hermitage Hotel is the last of the prestigious hotels and is one of the few early twentieth century commercial structures remaining near the state Capitol.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Graham, Eleanor (ed.), Nashville: A Short History and Selected Buildings. Nashville, 1974.
- Waller, William, (ed.), Nashville, 1900 to 1910. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1972.
- Withey, Henry F. and L. C. Rathburn. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased). Los Angeles: Hennessey and Ingalls, 1970. (Reprint of 1956 edition)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .5
 UTM REFERENCES

*UTM OK
HL*

A

| | |
|------|---|
| 1 | 6 |
| ZONE | |

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|---------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 1 | 9 | 4 | 6 | 0 |
| EASTING | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 8 | 6 | 0 |
| NORTHING | | | | | | |

B

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|------|---------|--|--|--|--|----------|--|
| | | | | | | | |
| ZONE | EASTING | | | | | NORTHING | |

D

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|------|---------|--|--|--|--|----------|--|
| | | | | | | | |
| ZONE | EASTING | | | | | NORTHING | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| | | | |
| | | | |

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Leonard E. Marsh

ORGANIZATION

Metropolitan Historical Commission

DATE

6-24-75

STREET & NUMBER

329 Stahlman Building

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Nashville

STATE

Tennessee

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

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

Herbert P. Hays

TITLE

Acting Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission

DATE

6/24/75

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

A. B. Wooten

DATE

7/24/75

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

W. M. ...

DATE

JUL 2 1975

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER