

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



966

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Hotel Texas (Boundary Increase)  
Other name/site number: Hotel Texas Annex  
Name of related multiple property listing: NA

2. Location

Street & number: 815 Main Street and 815 Commerce Street  
City or town: Fort Worth State: Texas County: Tarrant  
Not for publication:  Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:  
 national  statewide  local

Applicable National Register Criteria:  A  B  C  D

Mark Wolfe State Historic Preservation Officer 10/6/14  
Signature of certifying official / Title Date  
Texas Historical Commission  
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  
  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
  
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register
- other, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature] Signature of the Keeper 11/26/2014 Date of Action

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Private
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Federal

**Category of Property**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

**Number of Resources within Property**

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 1

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions:** DOMESTIC/hotel

**Current Functions:** VACANT/NOT IN USE

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification:** Modern Movement: International Style

**Principal Exterior Materials:** Concrete, Glass, Aluminum

**Narrative Description** (see continuation sheets 7 through 9)

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>A</b>	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>B</b>	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>C</b>	Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>D</b>	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations:** G

**Areas of Significance:** Community Planning and Development

**Period of Significance:** 1921-1970

**Significant Dates:** 1921, 1970

**Significant Person** (only if criterion b is marked): NA

**Cultural Affiliation** (only if criterion d is marked): NA

**Architect/Builder:** Geren, Preston, Architects and Engineers

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (see continuation sheets 10 through 14)

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

**Bibliography** (see continuation sheet 15)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission, Austin*)
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

**Historic Resources Survey Number** (if assigned): NA

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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreeage of Property:** less than 1 acre

### Coordinates

#### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

1. Latitude: 32.752869° -97.328633° Longitude: ° -97.328633°

**Verbal Boundary Description:** The Hotel Texas Annex is located on Lots 2 and 3 of Block 111 in the Fort Worth Original Town.

**Boundary Justification:** The boundary includes the entirety of the property historically associated with the Hotel Texas Annex building.

## 11. Form Prepared By (edited by THC staff)

Name/title: John M. Tess, President  
Organization: Heritage Consulting Group  
Street & number: 1120 NW Northrup Street  
City or Town: Portland State: OR Zip Code: 97209  
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Date: March 17, 2014

## Additional Documentation

**Maps** (see continuation sheet 16)  
**Additional items** (see continuation sheets 17-23)  
**Photographs** (see continuation sheets 6 through 7)



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**Photographs**

Hotel Texas Annex  
Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas  
Photographed by Jay Firsching, June 2014

Photograph Number 0001  
Hotel Texas and Annex, facing northwest on Commerce Street

Photograph Number 0002  
South elevation, camera facing north

Photograph Number 0003  
Southwest oblique, camera facing northeast

Photograph Number 0004  
Southwest entry, facing east

Photograph Number 0005  
Detail of southwest corner showing sky-bridge connection, facing southeast

Photograph Number 0006  
Detail of sky-bridge connection at Hotel Texas, facing south

Photograph Number 0007  
View of streetscape along Commerce Street, facing northwest

Photograph Number 0008  
Partial west elevation, facing southeast

Photograph Number 0009  
Northwest oblique with sky-bridge, camera facing southeast

Photograph Number 0010  
North elevation, upper floors from parking garage across 7<sup>th</sup> Street

Photograph Number 0011  
Partial north elevation, oblique view facing southwest

Photograph Number 0012  
Typical window assembly, north elevation, camera facing south

Photograph Number 0013  
Street-level oblique view, north elevation, facing southwest

Photograph Number 0014  
Northeast oblique with streetscape, camera facing southwest

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Photograph Number 0015

East Elevation, camera facing west

Photograph Number 0016

Partial west elevation from the pool deck, facing east

Photograph Number 0017

View of pool deck and adjoining storefront, facing southeast

Photograph Number 0018

First floor southwest entry lobby, facing west

Photograph Number 0019

First floor elevator lobby (typical), facing northwest

Photograph Number 0020

First floor parking garage facing north

Photograph Number 0021

Parking garage (typical), second floor facing south

Photograph Number 0022

Sky-bridge lobby with stairs to parking garage, second floor facing northeast

Photograph Number 0023

Sky-bridge from second floor lobby, facing west

Photograph Number 0024

Guest room (typical), third floor facing northeast

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington.

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## **Narrative Description**

The 1970 Hotel Texas Annex is a thirteen-story building across the street from (and to the east of) the 1921 Hotel Texas. The annex is faced on all four elevations with cast concrete panels, glass with concrete spandrel curtain walls, and granite bases at the street exposure. The 230-room, 250,000 square-foot annex is connected to original hotel via a pedestrian bridge on the second floor. The lower five floors are a parking garage, incorporated from an existing 1928 ramp parking garage, and adapted for hotel parking and automobile-oriented check-in services. Atop the parking garage, arranged in an open “U” configuration, are eight floors of guest rooms. These floors are nearly identical, with 29 rooms per floor. In the center of the “U” is a swimming pool for hotel complex. Room finishes were modernized in 1981; otherwise, the building has had few alterations and has a high degree of integrity. Since 2006, the annex has been vacant.

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The Hotel Texas and Hotel Texas Annex are located at the south end of downtown Fort Worth, one block north of the Fort Worth Convention Center. Specifically, the hotel is located on 8<sup>th</sup> Street between Main and Commerce Streets. The annex is east of the original hotel across Commerce Street. The annex was constructed as an expansion of Hotel Texas and is physically connected via a pedestrian bridge. As detailed in the original National Register nomination, the original 15-story, roughly 280,000 square-foot hotel was built as Fort Worth’s premier hotel in 1921 on a half-block parcel facing south onto 8<sup>th</sup> Street between Main and Commerce Streets. It is faced with red-brick and terra cotta trim, with Renaissance and Georgian features applied to a tripartite arrangement of base, shaft and capital. In 1963, a two-story addition was built at the north with a motor bank on the first floor (which was leased at the time to Fort Worth National Bank) and a 25,000 square-foot ballroom for the hotel on the second floor. In 1970, the hotel was modernized with a new lobby with the insertion of a mezzanine to connect to the pedestrian bridge. The mezzanine included additional meeting rooms. The upper floors were also modernized resulting in 289 guest rooms. It was at this time that the 230-room, 250,000 square-foot annex was constructed. Subsequently, in 1981, the entire hotel complex was renovated, in part with the benefit of federal historic tax credits. At that time, Hotel Texas with the associated ballroom and motor bank was listed in the National Register, but the annex was not included within the nomination boundaries. In 1987, the hotel complex, including the annex, was again modernized. In 2006, the ownership of Hotel Texas and annex was split, with Hotel Texas becoming a boutique historic hotel and the annex left vacant.

## Setting and Site

The Hotel Texas annex is centrally located in Fort Worth’s business and financial downtown district. The surrounding area is densely urban with primarily mixed-use commercial and residential buildings throughout. Buildings to the north and west are primarily high rises and buildings to the east and south are primarily low rise buildings and parking lots. The annex is adjacent to the east of the Hilton Fort Worth, one block north of the Fort Worth Convention Center, two blocks northwest of the Fort Worth Intermodal Transit Center and approximately one mile northwest of the Interstate 30 and 35W intersection. In the immediate vicinity of the annex, to the west is the original Hotel Texas building, which remains connected to the annex via the pedestrian bridge. At the south of that (cater-corner to the southwest) is General Worth Square, a plaza tribute to President John F. Kennedy. To the northwest, cater-corner, is the Carter + Burgess Plaza (also known as the 777 Main Building), a 40-story, 980,000 square-foot office building constructed in 1980. To the north, across 7<sup>th</sup> Street, is a half-block modern ramp parking garage. Diagonal to the northeast, east and southeast are full-block surface parking lots. To the south, across 8<sup>th</sup> Street, is a three-quarter block surface parking lot with a three-story brick structure built circa 1920 as a parking garage and adapted for office use in 1981.

The annex is located on Lots 2 and 3 of Block 111 in Fort Worth Original Town from the M. Baugh Survey, section A-106. It is situated on a rectilinear shaped lot, on the western-half of a standard city block, bounded by 7<sup>th</sup> Street to

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the north, 8<sup>th</sup> Street to the south, Commerce Street to the west and Calhoun Street to the east. All surrounding roads are one way with street parking. The lot is 20,000 square-feet, approximately 0.45 acres. It measures 200 feet north and south and 100 feet east and west. The remainder of the block contains a surface parking lot and the 1916-17 Binyon-O'Keefe Storage Building, located at the northeast corner of the block and fronts onto Calhoun Street to the east. It is a six-story structure, also designed by Sanguinet and Staats, the architects of Hotel Texas and was adapted for office use in 2008. At the southeast corner of the block is a small roughly 5,000 square-foot surface parking lot. The annex is built to the lot line and shares a party wall with the Binyon-O'Keefe Storage Building.

Exterior

The annex has three street facades: at the west, north and south. The fourth elevation is a party wall that rises above the adjacent six story building at the east. Materials are consistent on all four facades with cast concrete panels, glass with concrete spandrel curtain walls and granite bases at the street exposure.

The primary façade on the west elevation spans the 200 foot length of Commerce Street between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets. Visually, it reads as a tan cast concrete "U" set upon a gray one-story, slightly recessed granite base. The base is largely a gray granite wall. At the center of the elevation are four equal sized entrances for vehicles. At the south corner, are two recessed pedestrian entrances which each consist of glass in aluminum frame, organized in a stepped fashion and supported by a granite-clad column. The cast concrete "U" set atop the base is divided into three elements, with identical north and south legs of the "U", which are 75 feet across and 160 feet tall. The facade reads as a blank cast concrete wall, which is scored to create a rectilinear pattern of six horizontal blocks framed by concrete corner pilasters. Set into the façade at the south is the pedestrian bridge. At the center, the base of the "U" is roughly 50 feet across and is also a blank wall of cast concrete, but here the cast concrete is organized in a vertical fashion with five pilaster-like columns each capped with a rectilinear cast concrete-clad hood (which contained exterior light fixtures). These pilasters divide the façade below the plaza into four equal size bays. The north and south facades, facing onto 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Streets respectively, are mirror images. Both facades are 100 feet across and 160 feet tall. They are organized in a slightly rectilinear fashion. As with the west elevation, these facades consist of a slightly recessed base supporting a highly rectilinear element above. As with the west elevation, on the north and south facades, the base is a blank wall of gray granite block. At the westernmost bay on the south facade, the base is further recessed and features stepped aluminum framed storefront glass. To emphasize the transition from the base is a smooth cast concrete belt course which in turn supports eight equally spaced smooth cast concrete pilasters then framed by a similar sized cornice. The seven bays then are uniform. At the lower four floors, where the garage is located, the bays are open with each opening having eight slightly protruding concrete fins darker in color and separated by concrete spandrel of matching color. The eight floors above, where the hotel rooms are located, are similarly uniform with tripartite aluminum-framed, full-height windows each with a small hopper-style window at the bottom. These are separated by a narrower concrete spandrel, matching in color the concrete on the lower floors. The rear party wall at the east is reminiscent of the west elevation. It is a blank cast concrete wall scored horizontally into six horizontal blocks.

The building features a "U"-shaped west facing floor plate for floors eight and above. These interior-looking facades are similar to the upper portions of the north and south street elevations of glass with concrete spandrels. The north and south facades are mirror images, four bays across with the easternmost bay truncated. The west elevation is six bays across with the north and southernmost bays truncated.

The plaza deck and swimming pool are located at the sixth floor of the "U"-shaped hotel addition in the Annex. The pool is located in the center of the plaza deck and measures approximately seven feet wide and eleven feet long. The plaza deck was designed with 22 three-inch-by-three-inch concrete squares aligned in a column/row pattern around the pool. This open area of the annex looks to the west towards Hotel Texas.

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Interior

The annex is thirteen stories plus an underground basement. The first five floors, plus basement, are primarily used as a parking garage. These spaces are utilitarian divided only by mushroom-style concrete columns. At the ground level south are a reception area with offices and an elevator lobby with two full height elevators along the west wall. At the second floor, again at the south, are the hotel's executive offices, along with the hotel lobby and the lobby to the pedestrian bridge. The eight upper floors are nearly identical with 29 interconnected rooms on each floor organized around a "U"-shaped corridor. The east-west legs of the corridor are double loaded and feature one room per bay facing outward. The north-south corridor is located against the east blank wall and is single loaded to the west. Again, there is one room per bay. Rooms are rectilinear with a full height window spanning the width of the room. Guest room bathrooms are located at the interior side, adjacent to the corridor. Rooms on the interior of the "U" are larger and feature kitchenettes. Offices, corridors and guest rooms feature concrete flooring covered with wall-to-wall carpet, painted gypsum board walls and generally acoustical paneled ceilings.

Integrity

The annex underwent a renovation in conjunction with Hotel Texas modernization in 1981. That renovation inserted a small suite of hotel executive offices into the second floor parking area at the southwest. Otherwise, the building was left intact with only updated finishes. Over time, the ground-floor retail space at the southwest also has been modified to meet tenant needs. The exterior of the building is largely intact today; changes are limited to the ground floor and more specifically to the entrance and exits of the parking garage. The historic values of the interior are specifically found in the intact floor plan, parking garage, sky bridge and plaza deck area. While the property has experienced slight modifications over time, those changes are largely limited to interior upgrades. In applying the seven aspects of integrity to the Hotel Texas annex:

- Location is intact. The building is in its original location.
- Design, Materials and Workmanship may be assessed similarly and are largely present. As applied to the exterior of the building, these qualities are nearly intact to when the building first opened. Few changes have occurred on the building's elevation. Those changes are limited to the ground floor at the entrance and exit of the parking garage at the west elevation. Interior alterations have been slight, with updated finishes and executive offices carved out of the second-floor parking area. More importantly the floor plan has remained consistent, identical between floors and intact, including the plaza deck and pedestrian bridge.
- Setting is largely intact. At the time of construction, the Hotel Texas annex was located in the center of Fort Worth's financial and business downtown, surrounded by commercial buildings. Today, that setting is largely intact. The surrounding area remains the city's financial and business downtown.
- Feeling is intact. Feeling relates to the ability of the building to be an expression of its time period. With only slight modifications, the building's exterior reflects the era of its construction.
- Association is also intact. Association is defined as the direct link between the event and the property. The hotel and annex are important, among other reasons, for their contribution to the tourism industry in downtown Fort Worth in conjunction with the construction of the Tarrant County Convention Center; the focal point of Fort Worth's tourism. This direct link is as present today as it was in the 1960s.

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## Statement of Significance

The 1921 Hotel Texas in downtown Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas, was listed in the National Register in 1979 under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development and Criterion C in the area of Architecture. Beginning in the early 1960s, Fort Worth city leaders endeavored to establish a convention industry in the city with a new convention center, construction of which began in 1966. Integral to that plan was the transformation of Hotel Texas into a larger “headquarters hotel” for the convention center. Completed in 1970, the hotel modernization and expansion project included a freestanding 230-room, 250,000 square-foot annex to the east, connected to original hotel via a pedestrian bridge across Commerce Street. This nomination amendment extends the boundary of the Hotel Texas to include the annex, which meets Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development, for its role as a crucial component of the city’s convention center development. The period of significance for the combined hotel and annex is 1921 to 1970. The property meets Criterion Consideration G as an exceptionally-significant building that represents an important private-public partnership that served to transform a portion of downtown Fort Worth from a blighted neighborhood (known as “Hell’s Half Acre”) into a premier convention destination. In March 2014, the National Park Service approved Part 1 of a Federal Preservation Tax Incentives application, concurring that the building is eligible for listing under these criteria.

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The 1921 Hotel Texas was listed on the National Register in 1979. At the time of nomination, no specific period of significance was identified, and the nomination did not include the freestanding 1970 annex. The construction and operation of the annex continued the historic trend of Hotel Texas being fostered by city leaders as the premier hotel in the city. The 1921 hotel was conceived and developed by a group of civic leaders to ensure that the city had a first-class hotel.

For decades, the Hotel Texas served its original function as the city’s premier hotel in a thriving central business district, but by the early 1960s, Fort Worth’s downtown was facing disinvestment, as development and the city’s tax base shifted to the perimeter. The city core thrived during business hours Monday through Friday, but was desolate in the evenings and on weekends. Over time, the city’s jobs, restaurants and retail followed the residents to the suburbs, leaving a vacant and underutilized city center. Thus, while Fort Worth’s population grew by 28 percent in the 1950s, the surrounding county grew by twice as much. Suburban strip malls and perimeter office buildings “sprang like mushrooms,” while the downtown decayed.<sup>1</sup> While the downtown did experience some new construction – most notably the 1956 31-story Continental National Bank Building, “plywood gradually replaced many of the [shop] windows.” Prominent downtown hotels, including the Metropolitan, Westbrook and Blackstone were demolished or shuttered, a fate shared by Fort Worth’s opulent theaters, such as the Worth and Majestic, and a swath of lesser retail stores. As Ty Chasion describes in *The New Frontier*, “with the passing of so many landmarks, many Fort Worthians wondered aloud if the city’s best days were behind them.”<sup>2</sup>

Despite a dire outlook, Fort Worth’s business leadership remained resolute. In 1963, through the Chamber of Commerce, this leadership organized three town hall meetings at the Will Rogers Auditorium seeking input on how to revitalize downtown Fort Worth. Over 2,000 men and women turned out and offered hundreds of ideas. The idea that generated the most excitement was building a downtown convention center and market hall.<sup>3</sup> “A massive civic center... would not only bring business back to Fort Worth, but if situated downtown, it could help reverse the

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<sup>1</sup> Ty Chasion, *The New Frontier: A Contemporary History of Fort Worth and Tarrant County*, (San Antonio, TX: Historical Publishing Network, 2006): 96.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 96.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, 113.

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decline that marked the core business district.”<sup>4</sup> That strategy keyed on the construction of a new downtown convention center, but also required the creation of a headquarters hotel in association with the convention center.

City leaders visited Miami, Pittsburgh, Las Vegas and other successful convention destinations, looking to identify what made the best ones successful and what to avoid. Funding would be local bonds created by ballot initiative and land assembly would be achieved through urban renewal and eminent domain. The advisory board put the proposal to a public vote on April 25, 1964. “The vote was not even close.” The site selected was at the south end of the downtown, “Hell’s Half Acre,” historically predominated by bars, gambling parlors, flophouses and bordellos. The north edge of the neighborhood was at Seventh Street along Main Street. The convention center ground-breaking was on July 15, 1966. The complex would cover 14-blocks and was located just one block south of Hotel Texas.

City officials learned that one of the critical factors in the convention center’s success was the need for a headquarters hotel. The Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce’s Development Corporation (FWCDC) commissioned the Real Estate Research Corporation of Chicago to conduct a comprehensive hotel study of the city in 1965. This study identified two major necessary improvements: the need for 1000 sleeping rooms and a headquarters hotel of more than 500 rooms. The survey found “unequivocally that the new convention center will achieve disappointing levels of usage unless it is complemented by a modern hotel of more than 500 rooms with accompanying first class meeting and banquet space.” This research was further supported by the anecdotal evidence of the convention bureau, which was hampered in the early days of the new center by the lack of “modern, high-quality rooms convenient to the center.”

Chamber officials determined that an expansion of the existing Hotel Texas, located one block north of the convention center, offered the best opportunity as the headquarters hotel. The building was under the control of Amon Carter and Sid Richardson, two of Fort Worth’s most enthusiastic boosters. It was considered one of the finest hotels in the City, and was the closest hotel to the Convention Center’s arena entry. The FWCDC determined “the Hotel Texas offered the best answer to the headquarters hotel problem.” The existing hotel, however, only had 330 rooms; two-thirds of the 500-room minimum threshold. It occupied the entire city block and offered no opportunity to expand. And while the hotel had been renovated and expanded with a ballroom in the early 1960s, it still lacked modern essential amenities such as on-site parking, modern rooms, multiple suites and a swimming pool. Many of the rooms were substandard in modern marketplace. In an era of modern motor inns on the outskirts of cities, it was still an outdated downtown hotel. To remedy these shortcomings, city leaders opted to modernize and enlarge the hotel.

To transform the hotel from its current state into a headquarters hotel, the FWCDC took four steps:

1. The Citizen Hotel Company (99 percent owned by the Amon Carter Foundation and the Richardson Foundation) was persuaded to give the hotel to the FWCDC as an outright gift, subject only to a \$1.5 million second lien which would be subordinated to any improvement financing that might be secured for renovation of the hotel.
2. A contract was agreed upon between the FWCDC and the Sheraton Corporation of America (the largest hotel operator in the United States at the time) to lease the hotel for 20 years, provided that the FWCDC would make substantial improvements to the facility.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 113.

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3. A commitment was secured from Prudential Insurance Company of America to loan the FWCDC \$5.2 million to completely renovate Hotel Texas and construct a 230-room annex atop the existing Biltmore Garage, connecting the annex with the main building via an overhead passage across Commerce Street.
4. The FWCDC then went to the community and, in less than 30 days, secured pledges totaling \$1.3 million to finance the remaining portion of the total project.

Lewis Bond, President of the Chamber of Commerce, pitched the project by saying that “with the addition of the 230-room annex and the complete modernization of the existing rooms and lobby in Hotel Texas, Fort Worth will have a brand new, first-class top quality hotel of the necessary size adjacent to the convention center.”<sup>5</sup> During renovation, the hotel would remain open.

As described by the Chamber of Commerce’s *Fort Worth* magazine in June 1967, “The remodeled hotel and new annex will have a combined total of 560 of the most modern hotel rooms in the nation, thus providing Fort Worth with something that it lacks – a large completely modern hotel with superior meeting room and banquet facilities in the heart of the downtown area.” The expanded facility would have on-site “indoor” parking, drive-in registration, modern rooms, and deluxe-suites. The Chamber proclaimed that, the annex plaza level was the “skyrise outdoor swimming pool six floors closer to the sun.”<sup>6</sup> Architecturally, the annex would contrast the traditional appearance of Hotel Texas with style and design evocative of the increasingly popular motor inn. Connecting the hotel and the annex was a pedestrian bridge, deemed innovative and trendy with the success and growth of Minneapolis’s system.

On October 25, 1967, the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*’s banner headline read “Hotel Texas to be Expanded.” The joint owners, the Sid W. Richardson Foundation and the Amon G. Carter Foundation, donated the hotel to the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce Development Corporation, subject only to a \$330,000 mortgage. At the time, the hotel owed the two foundations \$1.3 million. The foundations also contributed another \$1.4 million owed by the hotel to others. Apart from the property transfer, the project also involved \$6.2 million in construction. This included complete modernization of the existing hotel and the construction of a 230-room annex to the east, connected by a pedestrian bridge. The enlarged complex would then be managed by the Boston-based Sheraton Hotel Corporation. At the time, Sheraton was the largest hotel chain in the United States and in stark contrast to auto-oriented chains such as Holiday Inn, actively focused property development in downtown areas. Project funding would be provided by the Prudential Insurance Company in the form of \$5.2 million loan. Additional financial support was secured in the form of charitable donations to the Fort Worth Chamber; within a month of the hotel’s announcement, nearly \$1 million was pledged. In the words of the President of the Chamber of Commerce, “For a relatively modest investment of \$1,700,000, Fort Worth will get the equivalent of a modern first-quality new hotel in a prime downtown location convenient to the Tarrant County Convention Center that would cost at least \$12 to \$15 million to build.” This analysis was supported by an independent analysis completed by the Sheraton Corporation. Integral to the Sheraton analysis was the need for a minimum of 500 rooms, convenient automobile access, and modern amenities such as a swimming pool.

Preston Geren, Jr., of the Fort Worth firm Preston M. Geren Architects and Engineers designed the annex. Construction began almost immediately following the announcement of the expansion, with the general contract awarded to McCord-Condron and McDonald, Inc. of Fort Worth.<sup>7</sup> The concept was to adapt the 1928 four-story Biltmore Ramp Garage located across Commerce Street. An eight story open “U” shaped addition would be built

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<sup>5</sup> *Fort Worth Star Telegram*, October 26, 1967.

<sup>6</sup> Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce, Vertical Files, *Fort Worth Magazine*, June 1967.

<sup>7</sup> *Fort Worth Star Telegram*, November 13, 1968.



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atop the garage, while the garage roof would be adapted into a plaza with a pool. The garage would be re-skinned such that the entire structure would appear as a single modern entity. Automobile check-in to the hotel would be located in the ground floor with a sky bridge connecting the annex with the mezzanine level of the hotel. The annex's floors would be nearly identical with 28 rooms each, generally single rooms, but interconnected so they could be organized according to guest needs.

The \$20 million convention center officially opened on November 21, 1968, and was immediately successful. Four months before opening, the center had 263 events scheduled with 228,000+ anticipated attendees. The first large conference was the Texas State Teachers Association, whose 3,500 attendees opened a three-day convention on October 31, 1968. The modernized hotel opened in May 1970, while the annex opened a few months later. In the words of the Chamber: "Fort Worth's New Sheraton: On Time, On the Money, A City's Pride Pays Off." One of the unexpected outcomes of the project was continued interest in the development of a series of sky bridge connections similar to Minneapolis. The updated (but not yet expanded) hotel offered a modern lobby, supplemental ballrooms and meeting rooms and 289 guest rooms.

Upon completion in 1970, the annex provided an additional 230 rooms, giving the hotel a total of 519 modern-style spacious rooms and baths, plus on-site parking, automobile check-in, and a swimming pool. To connect and integrate the two structures, a mezzanine was inserted into the Hotel Texas and a pedestrian bridge constructed. Management was provided by the Sheraton Corporation, then the largest hotel operator in the country. The expanded complex fulfilled the FWCDC's vision for a successful convention industry for downtown Fort Worth. The city had \$3 million in convention business within the first two years. The expanded Hotel Texas, promoted as "Fort Worth's largest and finest convention hotel and Sheraton's largest hotel in Texas," provided half of the 1,000 hotel rooms in downtown.

The impact of the renovation was immediate and substantial. Although Hotel Texas did not close during the renovation, with the opening of the annex in the spring of 1970, the hotel generated \$3 million in convention business over the next two years.<sup>8</sup> The hotel promoted itself as "Fort Worth's largest and finest convention hotel and Sheraton's largest hotel in Texas." As the Chamber boasted in its magazine, "Fort Worth's New Sheraton: On Time, On the Money, A City's Pride Pays Off."<sup>9</sup> In addition to Hotel Texas and its annex's reputation as the "headquarters hotel", the convention center was secondarily supported by the renovation and reopening of the Blackstone Hotel (as the 238-room World Inn), the modernization of the 224-room Worth Hotel, and the construction of the 122-room Downtowner Motor Inn. Collectively, these four hotels made up the requisite 1,000 hotel room pool. Hotel Texas represented just under half, of which the annex was half again.

By the end of the 1970s, however, survival in the competitive industry forced city leaders to begin planning for expanded facilities, both an expanded convention center with more parking and additional hotels. Unlike the first construction of Hotel Texas, and unlike the construction of the annex, in the late 1970s with a viable market, city leaders now looked to private developers to fill the convention center's hotel requirements. The FWCDC sold Hotel Texas to a Dallas development company while others looked to build new and larger convention hotels in the city. The hotel remained a Sheraton until 1979. That year, the hotel and annex closed and the Woodbine Development Company undertook a \$32 million renovation. The hotel and Annex then reopened as the Hyatt Regency Fort Worth. At this time, the second floor south of the garage section was adapted as the hotel's executive offices. The Woodbine renovation coincided with the expansion of the convention center. The hotel complex was divested in 1991 and under new ownership became a Radisson Hotel. The Radisson continued operation until

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<sup>8</sup> Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce, Vertical Files, *Fort Worth Magazine*, June 1970.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

Hotel Texas (Boundary Increase), Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

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2006. At that time, under new ownership, Hotel Texas was modernized into a Hilton Hotel, while the annex was closed.

### **Conclusion**

The Tarrant County Convention Center proved to be a wise investment. Since its opening in 1968, the Fort Worth Convention Center has been expanded three times. Tourism generates an economic impact of over \$1.345 billion with 5.5 million annual visitors and 17,000 tourism related jobs. There is an increasing average of 325 conventions and groups hosted annually with nearly 500,000 attendees. There are now 3,000 hotel rooms in downtown Fort Worth with 140 hotels and motels in the city providing over 13,000 rooms.<sup>10</sup>

The Hotel Texas was listed on the National Register in 1979 for local significance under Criteria A and C. At the time of listing, there was no specific or designated period of significance, and the nomination did not include the annex. The Hotel Texas represents a direct effort by city fathers in the 1920s to create a first-class hotel worthy of Fort Worth's aspirations. This trend continued in the 1940s when outside interests attempted to acquire the hotel, and again in the 1960s, when the city turned towards the convention industry as a strategy to revitalize the downtown area, resulting in the expansion of the Hotel Texas to serve as the "headquarters hotel" for the new center. The annex played an integral role in the significance of the Hotel Texas and justifies its inclusion in the National Register.

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<sup>10</sup> Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce presentation, 2013. [www.fortworthchamber.com](http://www.fortworthchamber.com), Accessed November, 2013.

Hotel Texas (Boundary Increase), Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

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Hotel Texas (Boundary Increase), Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

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Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

1. Latitude: 32.752869° -97.328633° Longitude: ° -97.328633°

**Verbal Boundary Description:** The Hotel Texas Annex is located on Lots 2 and 3 of Block 111 in the Fort Worth Original Town.

**Boundary Justification:** The boundary is both the original and legally recorded boundary lines for the property for which National Register status is being requested and includes the entirety of the property historically associated with the building.





Hotel Texas (Boundary Increase), Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

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**Figure 1:** Fort Worth Star-Telegram, October 25, 1967 - "Hotel Texas To Be Expanded"



Hotel Texas (Boundary Increase), Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Figure 2: Fort Worth Star-Telegram, November 12, 1968 – “Hotel Addition to Be Started Soon”





Hotel Texas (Boundary Increase), Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

**Figure 3:** Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce Magazine, November, 1968 – “Hotel Facilities Expand To Match Convention Needs”



## Hotel Facilities Expand To Match Convention Needs

Dirt is flying, steel and bricks and mortar are going up, paint is being applied in an all-out effort to provide hotel accommodations to match Tarrant County's new convention center.

A complete remodeling job on the Sheraton Texas, located about 200 feet from the front door of the convention center, has been underway for some time. Now work has begun on an annex that will add 230 rooms and deluxe suites, along with drive-in registration facilities and a swimming pool. When finished the remodeling and addition will result in a new, all first class hotel of 560 rooms. Cost of the work amounts to \$6.5 million.

Two blocks to the north finishing touches are being put on the remodeled World Inn Blackstone. Formerly known as the Blackstone, all its 268 rooms and suites have been reconditioned and refurbished.

Three and a half blocks away from the center the 224-room Worth Hotel also has undergone intensive remodeling and refurbishing.

And, located a block west of the convention facility is the new 122-room

Downtowner, complete with pool and club with nightly entertainment.

These four — the Sheraton Texas, Worth, Downtowner and World Inn Blackstone—form the keystone of the city's hotel accommodations for convention goers.

When the Sheraton-Texas annex is complete in about a year, said John Marshall, head of the Chamber of Commerce Convention and Visitors Bureau, “We will be able to deliver 1,015 first class hotel rooms within three and one half blocks of the convention center.”

Marshall explained the average occupancy per room for conventions is 1.5 persons, which means “we can house 1,500 people” within easy walking distance of the center.

For conventions requiring more housing than that available in the immediate area, several thousand more first class rooms are available in hotels located throughout the city and county.

In order to expedite housing of delegates, the Chamber's Convention and Visitors Bureau operates a central housing service. The service relieves convention officials of the tedium and prob-

lems involved in assuring housing for delegates and it also prevents overlapping or duplicate reservations and bookings, which often pose difficulties for the hotels.

Marshall explained how the central housing service works. Convention delegates, instead of writing to individual hotels for reservation, simply advise the Chamber's bureau of the accommodations they desire. The bureau then handles placement and reservations so as to make maximum use of rooms available, exercising care to see that in-so-far as possible each delegate gets the kind of accommodations he requests.

Finally, Marshall added, because of the new convention center, several individuals and firms are actively considering plans for constructing more new hotels in the immediate vicinity.

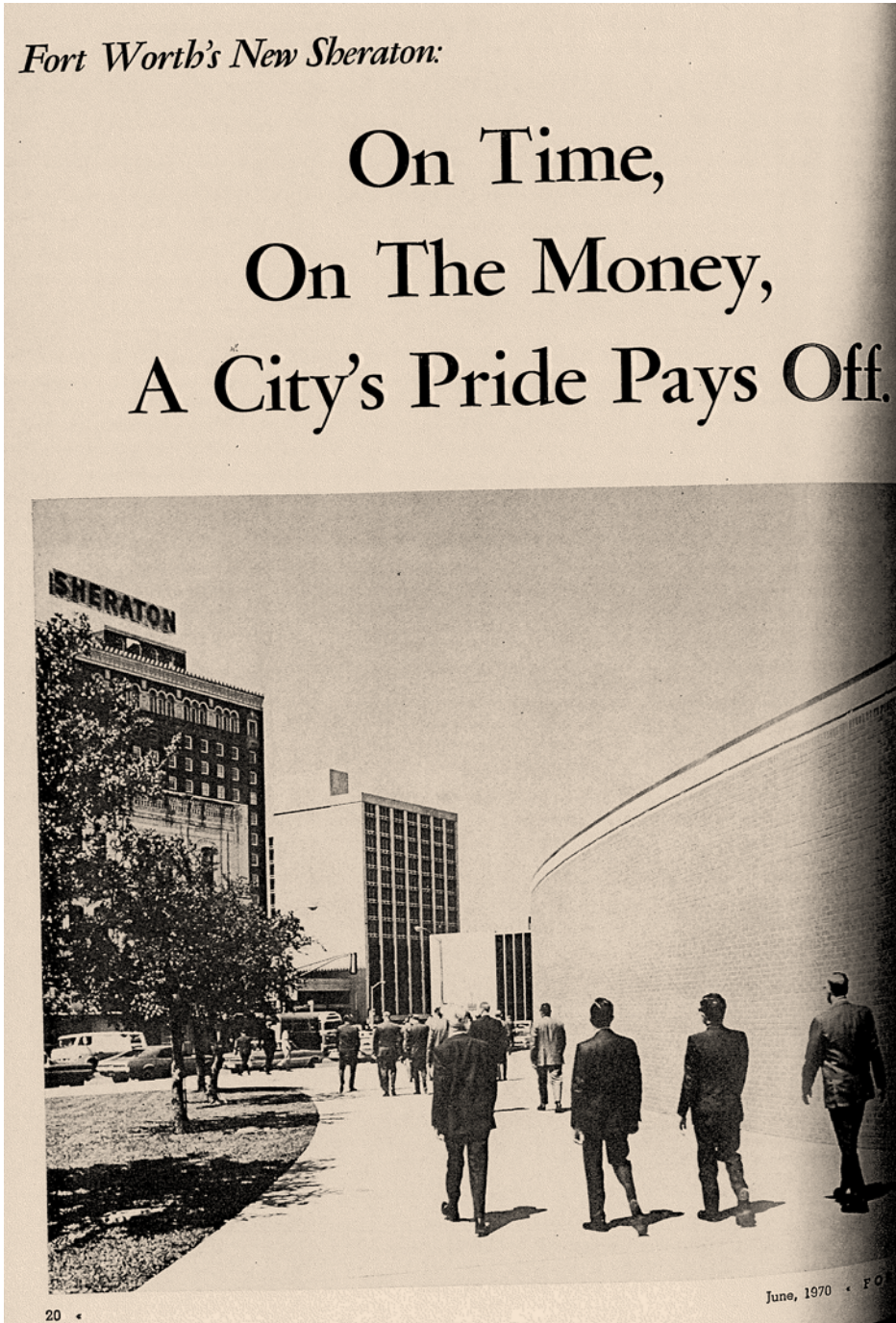
With interest generated by the new center, which for the first time gives Fort Worth and Tarrant County a complete facility for handling any size convention, officials are confident that soon they will be able to deliver even more than 1,015 first class rooms in the immediate vicinity.

60

November, 1968 • FORT WORTH

Hotel Texas (Boundary Increase), Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

**Figure 4:** Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce Magazine, June, 1970 – “One Time, On The Money, A City’s Pride Pays Off”





Hotel Texas (Boundary Increase), Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

**Figure 5:** Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce Magazine, June, 1970 – Sheraton-Fort Worth Hotel Advertisement



**This is the big one.**

Big on inner space, with 569 guest rooms. A mammoth grand ballroom and convention center. More than 26,000 square feet of public function facilities, all under one roof—unequaled anywhere else in Texas or the Southwest.

Big on fun, in a skysise outdoor swimming pool six floors nearer the sun. In the exclusive Town Club, or the less formal Falstaff Dining Room.

Big on convenience, less than a block from the Tarrant County Convention Center. Hardly farther from the city's glittering heart. Adjoined by parking areas and a new indoor garage.

The big one. Fort Worth's largest and finest convention hotel and Sheraton's largest hotel in Texas.



**Sheraton-Fort Worth Hotel**  
815 MAIN STREET  
SHERATON HOTELS AND MOTOR INNS. A WORLDWIDE SERVICE OF **ITT**

Fort Worth • June, 1970

Hotel Texas (Boundary Increase), Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

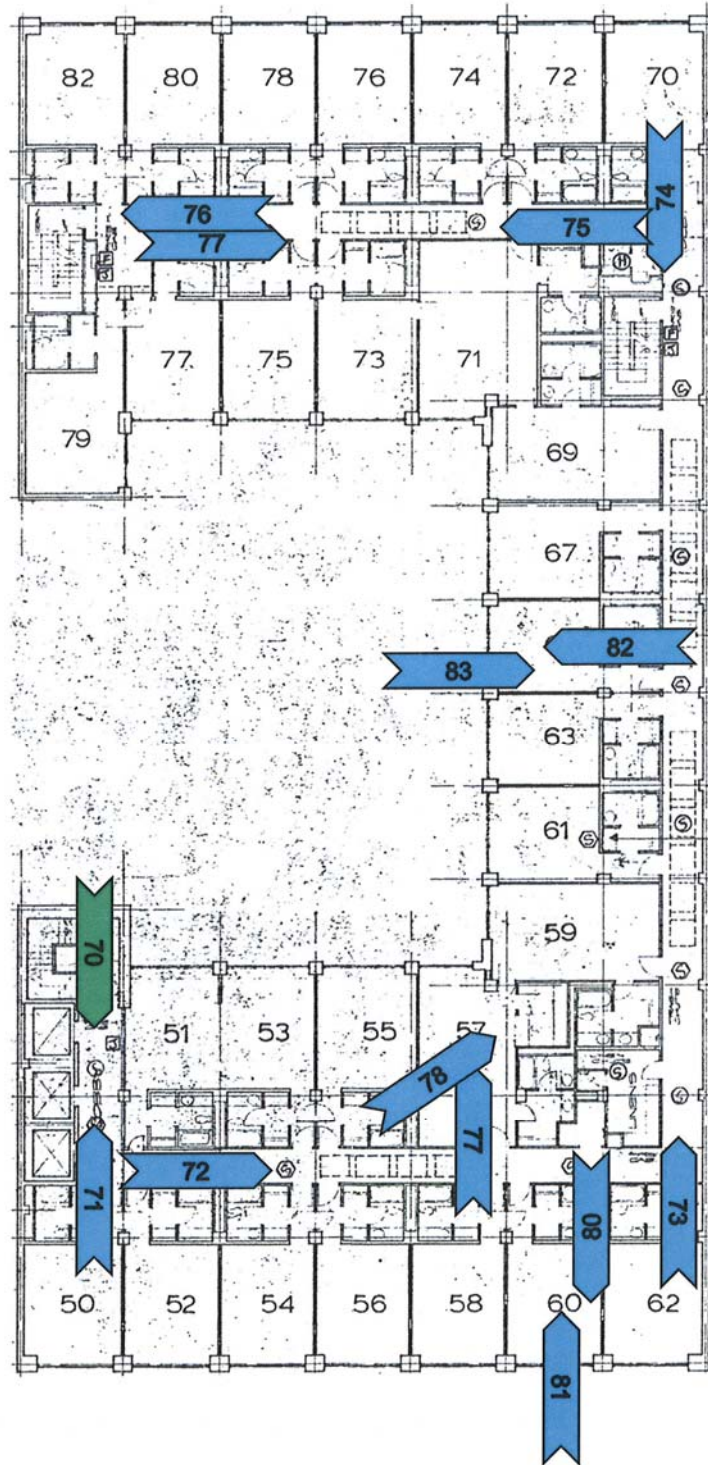
Figure 6: Sanborn Map, 1970





Hotel Texas (Boundary Increase), Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

Typical Floor Plan, from the Part 1 tax credit application. No scale.  
Numbered arrows correspond to photographs in the tax credit application.



- fin -





E 9th St

Rilton D. Fort Worth

GREEN PARKING  
↑





BILLY  
MINER'S  
RESTAURANT

Dillon @ Fort Worth

Dillon St





ONE WAY ←  
E 8th St  
← 100 200

P

Commerce  
ONE WAY ← 8th St





315

THESE DOORS ARE LOCKED  
FOR SECURITY PURPOSES



WINTEL PLACE

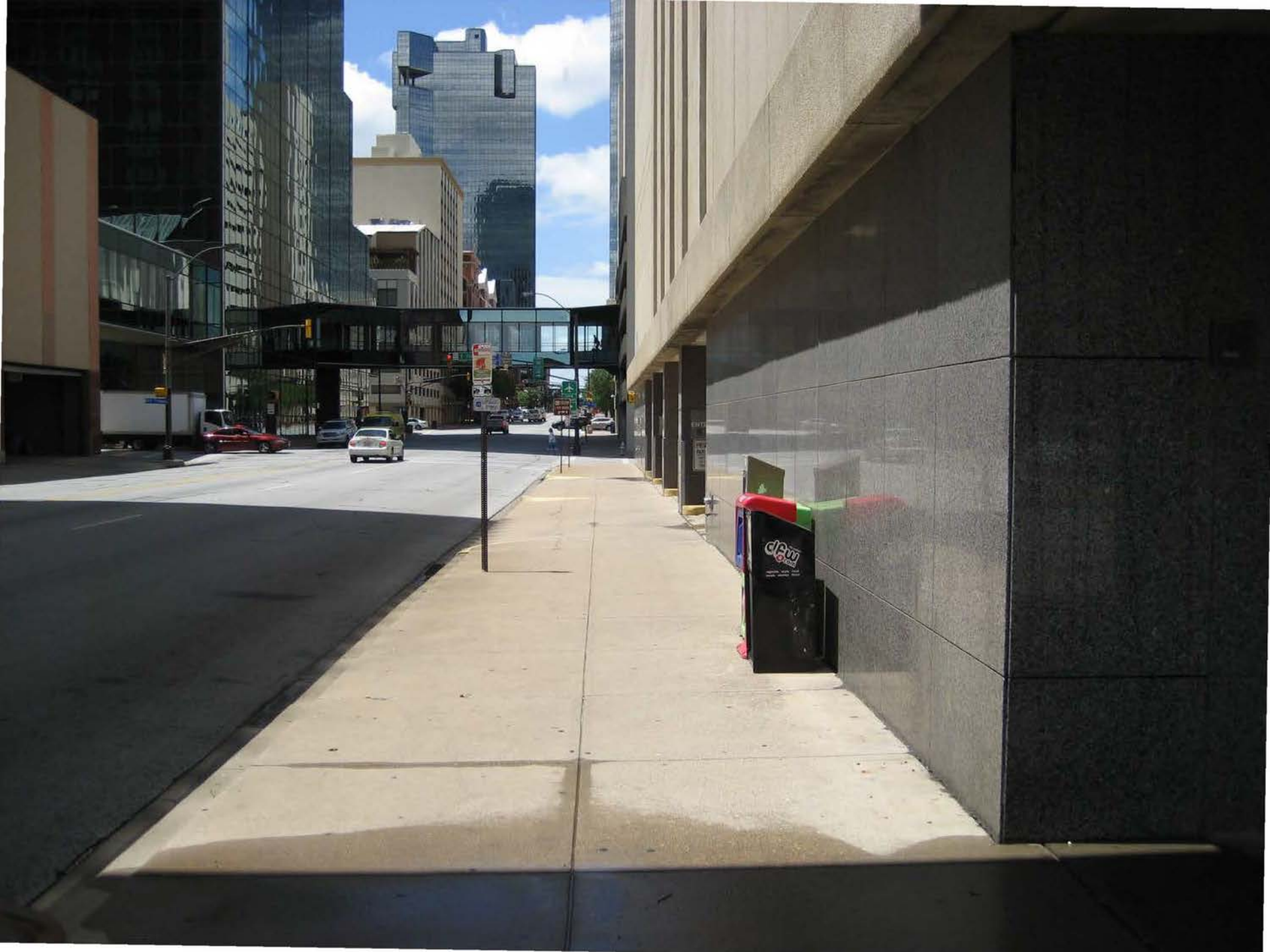


















MAIN VALET PARKING

WALK  
SAFE  
GREEN

E 7th St

















ED • E3351 BINYON • O'KEEFE ED • E3351

A person walking on the sidewalk on the left side of the image.

A white sedan driving on the street in the foreground.

A white SUV driving on the street in the foreground.

A glass and steel pedestrian bridge or skywalk structure extending from the building.



ED3351 BINYON-O'KEEFE STORAGE CO. ED-3351



















NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE  
OR DAMAGE TO VEHICLE OR CONTENTS

















UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Hotel Texas (Boundary Increase)  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TEXAS, Tarrant

DATE RECEIVED: 10/10/14 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 11/03/14  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 11/18/14 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 11/26/14  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 14000966

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: Y  
OTHER: N PDIL: Y PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: Y NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

\_\_\_ ACCEPT \_\_\_ RETURN \_\_\_ REJECT \_\_\_ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**The Hotel Texas (Boundary Increase) is accepted. The boundary is expanded to include the 1970 Hotel Annex, resulting in a property that meets National Register Criteria A in the area of Community Planning and Development and encompasses the full extent of the historic Hotel Texas property. To counter downtown Fort Worth's worsening economic decline in the early 1960s, civic leaders formulated major redevelopment plans centered on the creation of a new urban convention center. The Hotel Texas and its new, 13-story annex (fitted with the latest modern amenities and architectural stylings) were crucial components of the local redevelopment plan and served as the convention center's headquarters hotel. The 1970 renovation of the original hotel and the construction of the Annex provided the downtown with over half of the 1000 necessary rooms to serve the convention plans and represented an exceptional civic undertaking.**

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept Boundary Increase

REVIEWER Paul Lu Signan DISCIPLINE HISTORIAN

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE 11/26/2014

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

**TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

*real places telling real stories*



TO: Edson Beall  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 Eye Street, NW (2280)  
Washington, DC 20005

FROM: Gregory Smith  
National Register Coordinator  
Texas Historical Commission

RE: Hotel Texas (Boundary Increase), Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas

DATE: October 6, 2014

The following materials are submitted:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Original National Register of Historic Places form on disk.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the National Register of Historic Places nomination amendment for the Hotel Texas (Boundary Increase).
	Resubmitted nomination.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Original NRHP signature page signed by the Texas SHPO.
	Multiple Property Documentation form on disk.
	Resubmitted form.
	Original MPDF signature page signed by the Texas SHPO.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CD with TIFF photograph files, PDF, and KMZ file
	Correspondence

COMMENTS:

- SHPO requests substantive review (cover letter from SHPO attached)
- The enclosed owner objections (do\_\_\_) (do not\_\_\_) constitute a majority of property owners
- Other:



**RICK PERRY, GOVERNOR • MATTHEW F. KREISLE, III, CHAIRMAN • MARK WOLFE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**