

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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



FEB 19 1978

1. Name

historic The Durbin Hotel

and/or common The Durbin Hotel

2. Location

street & number 137 West 2nd Street not for publication

city, town Rushville vicinity of congressional district 10

state IN code 018 county Rush code 139

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 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 type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Durbin Athletic Club, Inc.

street & number 137 West 2nd Street

city, town Rushville vicinity of state Indiana 46173

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Rush County Courthouse

street & number Courthouse Square

city, town Rushville state Indiana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Durbin Hotel is located on a busy intersection in the central section of the city of Rushville. The painted brick building was constructed in two parts: the original three-story building was constructed c. 1855, and a two-story rear section was added to the south in 1885. The entire building measures 115 feet by 200 feet.

The main, north facade had an alternating window/door pattern on the first floor that has been altered by the closing of two of the three doorways, and the replacement of the windows. The surviving central doorway has sidelights and a transom. Above this is a wrought iron balcony that extends across the entire facade. The upper stories of the main facade are covered in a limestone veneer that was installed in the 1950's.

The second story has a central door with sidelights opening onto the balcony. The doorway is flanked by three doublehung windows on each side. This pattern is repeated on the third story, except that the wrought iron balcony is only as wide as the center bay, and has a fire stair going down to the second story balcony. An even smaller balcony is located on the fourth story level, which has only a doorway that is centered in the highest part of a stepped parapet. Stone string courses exist at the head and sill levels in the limestone veneer.

The west side of the original main building has six openings on each floor. On the ground floor, two of these are doorways, under a plain canopy. All openings in the original building are rectangular.

The west side of the later two-story addition has segmentally arched openings. On the ground floor towards the front are five windows, then an entrance that appears to have been added later. At the south end of this facade are two small arched openings, located a few feet above eye level. The second story of this facade has nine segmentally arched windows, irregularly spaced.

The rear south elevation has two windows and one door on the first floor, and five windows on the second. There are five windows on the third floor of the south elevation of the original structure.

The east elevation, which abuts other buildings along a portion of its length, contains one entrance for patrons and an entrance into the kitchen area.

A neon sign hangs at the northwest corner of the building.

The inside of the hotel is unpretentious, and contains banquet and meeting rooms in the newer rear portion. The Willkie Lounge contains memorabilia of the Willkie campaign.

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 type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates c. 1855 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (~~1/2 one-paragraph~~)

The Durbin Hotel is significant to the town of Rushville because of the important role it has played as a social and political center of community life for over 120 years. Prior to the construction of the interstate highway system, the Durbin prospered as a well-known stop-over on the highway between Indianapolis and Cincinnati. The primary significance of the hotel, however, lies in its role as the national campaign headquarters for Wendell Willkie during his 1940 race for the presidency. Additionally, two of the Durbin sons have gone on to become prominent in the hotel business.

The hotel has operated continuously since its construction in c. 1855 by W. Carr, undergoing several name changes along the way. Carr moved his family into the Carr House and held a Grand Opening in 1856. In 1878, the first gas lamp ever lighted on the Rushville streets stood at the Capp Hotel, then operated by Frazier and Joseph Johnson. In 1899, William and Harrie Jones, proprietors of the newly renamed Windsor Hotel, advertised that the hotel had been thoroughly overhauled, and boasted an office, parlor, dining room, washroom and three large sample rooms on the first floor, with fifty sleeping rooms.

In 1924, the hotel again underwent remodeling, this time at the hands of owner David Lollis. In April, 1926, the hotel was leased by Leo and Mary Durbin, a young couple who had moved to Rushville with their two small children, after losing their lease on a hotel in Celina, Ohio. They bought the building from Lollis in 1928.

The local Post Office rented the entire west half of the first floor for some time, until they moved into a new building in 1931. The room which extended from 2nd to 1st Street was then remodeled, and the north portion served as an insurance office and barber shop for many years. Rooms facing First Street were used by a creamery, a meat market, and later the hotel laundry. The Greyhound Bus station and the Western Union office were both located in the hotel with Mr. Durbin acting as agent.

The hotel became nationally known when Wendell Willkie, who had frequented the hotel in the 1930's, chose it as his national campaign headquarters during his 1940 candidacy against President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. One large banquet room was converted to accommodate the corps of news people who followed the tumultuous campaign. Much of the flavor of those hectic and exciting days is preserved in the Willkie Lounge in the hotel, which contains much of the memorabilia from the campaign and from Willkie's life.

9. Major Bibliographical References

The Promoter, published May 1899, Johnson & Campbell Editors, Rushville Public Library.
 "Sibling Rivals in a Hotel Clan," Newsweek, September 3, 1979, page 57.
 Rush County Sesquicentennial Edition History, 1822-1972, 1972, Rushville Public Library.
 "Rush County, Indiana, Tourism Brochure," 1976, Rush County Chamber of Commerce.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Rushville, Indiana

UTM NOT IDENTIFIED
 EASTING NOT IDENTIFIED
 Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 1 6 | 6 3 3 4 2 0 | 4 3 8 5 1 9 0
 Zone Easting Northing

B | |
 Zone Easting Northing

C | |

D | |

E | |

F | |

G | |

H | |

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 13 of the Original Plat of Rushville, bounded on the north by Second Street, on the west by Morgan Street, and on the south by First Street.

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

state	code	county	code
Not Applicable			

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Paul W. Barada, Executive Secretary
 organization Rush County Chamber of Commerce date March 17, 1978
 street & number Room 19, Rush County Courthouse telephone 317/932-2880
 city or town Rushville state Indiana 46173

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

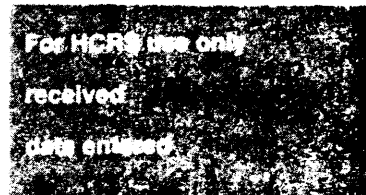
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *John T. Loeth*
 title Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer date 7-20-81

For HCRS use only
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
 Entered in the National Register date 2/19/82
John T. Loeth
 Keeper of the National Register
 Attest: _____ date _____
 Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet The Durbin Hotel

Item number 8

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The many rooms of the hotel served as a playground for the seven Durbin children reared there. Subsequently two of the children became leading administrators in major competitive hotel chains, others still help run the Durbin in Rushville today, and still others are employed in the hotel business elsewhere. James Durbin is the current president of Marriott Motor Hotels, Inc., and his brother Robert is executive vice president of the Sheraton Corporation. The family name appears occasionally, for instance, in a restaurant at an Indianapolis Marriott Inn that is named "Durbin Junction."