073

code

### **United States Department of the Interior National Park Service**

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

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

#### 1 Name

Apartment/hotels in Birmingham, Alabama historic

and/or common

## Location

01

code

see individual inventory sheets  $\underline{N}\underline{A}\underline{-}$  not for publication street & number

e

1900-1930

Jefferson

TR

city, town **Birmingham**  NA vicinity of

Alabama state

#### Classification 3.

	• · · ·	<b>••</b>	-	
Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
district	public private	<u> </u>	agriculture	museum
<u>X</u> building(s)	<u> </u>	unoccupied	commercial	park
structure	both	work in progress	educational	private residence
site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	entertainment	religious
object	in process	yes: restricted	government	scientific
	<u>NA</u> being considered	X yes: unrestricted	industrial	transportation
and the	NA	no	military	<u>_x_other</u> : apartments

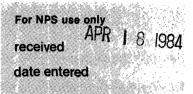
county

#### 4. **Owner of Property**

see individual inventory sheets name

street & number

city, t	lown	vicinity of	state	
5.	Location of	Legal Description		
court	house, registry of deeds, et	c. Jefferson County Courthouse		
street	t <b>&amp; numbe</b> r City Ha	11		
city, t	own Birmingham,		state	Alabama 35203
6.	Representa	tion in Existing Surve	eys	
title	Alabama Inventory	has this property beer	n determined e	ligible?yes <sup>X</sup> no
date	1970 - present	fe	ederal <u>X</u> sta	nte county local
depos	sitory for survey records	Alabama Historical Commission		
city, t	own Montgomery		state	Alabama



# 7. Description

#### Condition

\_\_\_\_ fair

\_\_\_\_ excellent \_\_\_\_ deteriorated

\_\_\_\_ ruins \_\_\_\_ altered

Check one \_\_\_\_\_ original site

\_\_\_\_ moved date \_

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Check one

\_\_\_\_ unaltered

see individual forms

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—C	heck and justify below		<i>,</i>
prehistoric 1400–1499	0,1	community planning conservation	—— landscape architectur —— law	re religion science
1600–1699	agriculture _X_ architecture	economics education	Iliterature Iliterature Ilitary	sculpture social/
1700–1799 1800–1899 _X 1900–	art commerce communications	engineering     exploration/settlemen     industry	<pre> music t philosophy politics/government</pre>	humanitarian theater transportation
		invention		other (specify)

Specific dates see individual forms Builder/Architect see individual forms

#### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Apartment Hotels of Birmingham (1900-1930) Thematic Group Nomination consists of the only four apartment hotels built during that period. The earliest--the Ridgely-was built in 1914 and the remaining three were constructed a decade later, around 1924-25.

The apartment hotel represented a uniquely urban phenomenon which arose as an attempt to market to an increasingly mobile and transient society as well as to an increasingly affluent and urbane populace. Such city dwellers desired convenient and luxurious accommodations as well as what was considered a more wholesome environment for children. The apartment hotel was unique in that not only could the permanent resident enjoy the luxury and services of a hotel within the privacy of a homelike atmosphere, but the traveling businessman could also find such accommodations and could, in addition, bring his family with him. The buildings' architecture reflected this new living concept with one eye toward luxury, convenience and the prevention of undesirable tenants and spectators, and the other eye toward privacy and a homelike atmosphere.

#### ARCHITECTURE: Criterion C

\*

The four buildings included in this nomination are good local examples of apartment hotels and exhibit the common features associated with such structures--public lounges built close to the elevators to prevent loungers, large common lobbies and common dining areas, accommodations for maids/valets/butlers or for live-in servants, firstfloor shops, courtyards, long narrow corridors easily accessible by each apartment and to elevators, formal and elegant dining rooms, laundry service, switchboards, courtyard/play areas for children, and a mixture of efficiency and full-sized apartments.

Each of the buildings has retained use of the common lobby; the retention of other determinant features varies from building to building. In two cases (The Altamont -NRHP - Five Points South Historic District - 1983; and the Ridgely) first-floor shops remain. In addition, the Claridge Manor and the Highland Plaza continue to rent to short-term residents. All four are on original lot locations and have retained use of their courtyards (except in the case of the Claridge which had instead a landscaped lawn, still in use).

\* \* \* \* \* \* \*

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

N/A

# **10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of nominated p Quadrangle name <u>Bir</u>	moperty <u>See individ</u>	tual forms	Quadrangle scale	1:24000
UTM References See			Quadrangle scale	,
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		□ <u>                                     </u>		
Verbal boundary des	cription and justification	· ·		,
See individual 1	forms			
	ounties for properties overla	-	y boundaries	
state NA	code	county		code
state	code	county	(	code
11. Form	Prepared By			
name/title Pamela	Sterne King, Historic P	reservationist, a	nd Ellen Mertins	<u> </u>
organization Alabar	na Historical Commission	n date	6-13-83	
street & number 725	Monroe Street	teleph	one 205-261-3184	<u>L</u>
city or town Mon <sup>r</sup>	tgomery	state	Alabama	
12. State	<b>Historic Prese</b>	rvation Of	ficer Cert	ification
The evaluated significat	nce of this property within the st	ate is: X_ local		
665), I hereby nominate	Historic Preservation Officer for this property for inclusion in the and procedures set forth by the ion Officer signature	e National Register and	certify that it has been	
title State Hi	storic Preservation Off	icer	date 4–12	-84
For NPS use only I hereby certify th	at this property is included in thi	e National Register	e A	
Keeper of the Natio	nal Register		date	
Attest: Chief of Registration			date	
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#### HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

As a phenomenon the construction of apartment/hotels began around 1905 and its initial showpieces were in such cities as Detroit and Chicago. Their financiers and builders sought to tap into the apartment building market, but with a twist. They hoped to attract the more affluent classes--both native residents and visiting businessmen-who desired luxury, comfort, privacy, a "wholesome" environment for their children, and accessibility to the city's commercial district. These desires as well as the interaction of a building boom, new-found prosperity, the soaring cost of land, and a revolution in household technology coalesced into the creation of the apartment/hotel. There would be none of the stigma--albeit a waning one-- frequently attached to apartment and boarding houses; in fact, the apartment/hotel was considered a fashionable address.

Exclusiveness was guarded by a host of additional features. Small lounges were built close to elevators to prevent the common hotel lounger or spectator. Rent was kept high. Leases were pre-arranged to prevent off-the-street transients, and they were such that a tenant could be removed quickly. In addition, tenants usually submitted to a series of rules and regulations which were strictly enforced and which prohibited the slightest hint of inappropriate or unbecoming behavior.

The building of apartment/hotels in the city of Birmingham differed little from the nation-wide trend. They tended to be luxurious, modern, private, and convenient to transportation lines and to the business and commercial areas. They arose during a time of prosperity and a massive growth in urbanization. They catered to the affluent, whether they were permanent Birmingham residents or the relatively new traveling businessman, who sought the comforts of home and the convenience of a luxury hotel either for himself or for his family who was increasingly likely to accompany him.

Birmingham's debut apartment/hotel would also remain perhaps its most luxurious. Built in 1914 by the prominent Tutwiler family, the Ridgely was constructed just four blocks from the city's core commercial district during a time of industrial and community prosperity. The city, it was believed, desperately needed exclusive accommodations not only for her permanent residents but for traveling industrialists and business leaders. For some reason, however, it was not immediately utilized as an apartment/ hotel for which it was built; it was not until 1925 that it was reconverted to its original use. The Tutwiler family still owns the Ridgely which remains occupied by retired people from relatively affluent backgrounds.

In 1924-25, the Altamont (NRHP-Five Points South Historic District-1983), the Claridge Manor, and the Highland Plaza were all built in the thriving and fashionable Five Points South area. During the 1920s, the city saw a general construction boom and in Five Points there was a plethora of apartment houses of all types and geared to all classes of people. To attract the more affluent classes who sought an escape from the old downtown residential areas, G. L. Miller and Company of Atlanta contracted to finance these three apartment/hotels. All were luxurious and exclusive and all also offered temporary residence to the traveling businessman who was more and more of a professional class. These three buildings are today occupied partially by professional people of various groups, as well as by students, members of artistic communities, and aspiring middle classes. FHR-8-300A (11/78) UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

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DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE

Apartment-hotels in Birmingham, Alabama 1900-1930.

1. Ann Burkhardt, Town Within a City: The Five Points South Neighborhood. 1880 - 1930, BHS, 1982.

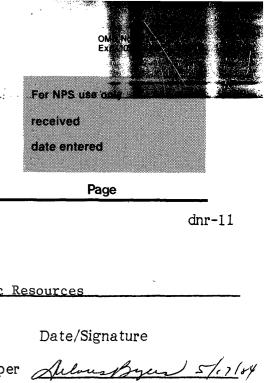
- 2. Birmingham Age-Herald 3-10-24, 8-3-24, 7-2-47
- 3. Birmingham Historical Society files
- 4. Birmingham News 1-1-24, 8-1-24, 8-23-25, 11-1-45, 6-1-67
- 5. Birmingham Public Library Archives
- 6. Carolyn Green, Historical Sites of Jefferson County, Alabama, 1976
- 7. Interview with Altamont Apartments' resident manager 5-23-83
- 8. Interview with Elizabeth Certain, Claridge Manor resident manager 5-26-83
- 9. Interview with Highland Plaza Apartments resident manager, 5-20-83
- 10. Marjorie Longenecker White, <u>Downtown Birmingham</u>: <u>Architectural and Historical</u> <u>Walking Tour Guide</u>, BHS, 1980
- 11. Southside Highlands Survey Report, BHS, 1981.
- 12. Birmingham Post Herald 8-2-24, 3-3-65
- 13. National Real Estate Journal, Vol. XXVII #2, January 25, 1926, pages 22-24 "An Apartment Hotel"

Fł C **Continuation sheet** 

### **United States Department of the Interior**

National Park Service

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



State Jefferson County, ALAB			
Nomination/Type of Review			Date/Signature
1. Claridge Manor Apartments	Roberod in the National Registe	Keeper	Autouspyer 5/1.
2. Highland Plaza Apartments	Solution in the	Attest Keeper	Delous Byen sto
	declarat Rosister	Attest	
3. Ridgely Apartments	la Constitución Protecto de Constitución	fKeeper	Alun Sym 5/17
	the state of the same	Attest	
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Item number

Multiple Resource Area

Thematic Group