

39. YARBROUGH HOTEL
127-129 North Washington Street

Carey Walker, Jr.
604 Madison Street
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

Lot 1, Block 4, Old Town; 70'6" (Washington) X 151'7" (Holmes)
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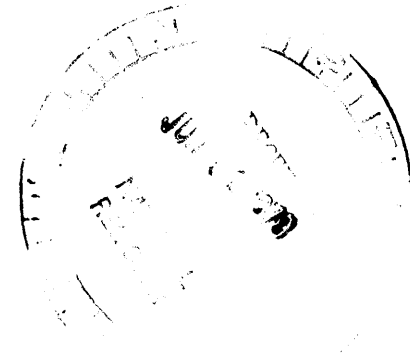
1922-24: D. Anderson Dickey, Huntsville, architect
Baxter Brothers, Huntsville, contractor

DESCRIPTION

The Yarbrough Hotel is a brick and concrete structure of approximately 80 rooms. Located at the southwest corner of Washington and Holmes streets, it faces 70 feet on Washington and 152 feet on Holmes and has four stories and a full basement. The Washington street facade is obviously the front of the building and has three stores on the ground floor, each with its own entrance. The Holmes avenue facade contains the entrance to the hotel lobby, but this side has a number of doorways that were placed by functional rather than aesthetic considerations which gives it a less cohesive appearance. The street level is separated from the floors above by a plain brick panel bordered by narrow stone stringcourses. On Washington street the facade is broken into three bays by flat brick pilasters which visually extend the brick piers of the street level; these pilasters are divided into horizontal bands by repeated rows of recessed brick. There is one store to each bay having a centered entrance and large display windows under a multipaned panel of opaque glass which is now covered with signs. The three floors of rooms above are identical; the windows are rectangular and topped by a row of vertical brick with a light-colored stone block at each corner. A massive pressed metal cornice with double brackets at the top of each pier and a continuous row of dentils caps the building; a brick parapet runs behind the cornice but is not visible from the street. The Holmes avenue facade is basically the same except the brick pilasters only form two, one-window bays at each end. The hotel entrance is marked by a metal canopy with a glass fringe along the bottom and small cresting along the top. A cornerstone reads, "Yarbrough Brothers 1923."

SIGNIFICANCE

Excavation for the foundation of the Yarbrough began in late 1922. Mr. Brogan of Fayetteville, Tennessee, had the contract for the footings and J. H. Goodwin was the concrete contractor.



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Continuation:

The Community Builder reported on March 29, 1923, that "Yarbrough Brothers on last Friday let the contract for the erection of a four-story hotel building...to be at a cost of \$150,000. The building will be of brick and reinforced concrete and will contain 75 rooms with baths. The basement will contain a large pool room and lavatories." The following month the same paper announced that "Architect D. Anderson Dickey is preparing plans for an additional story for the new Yarbrough Hotel which will make the building five stories above the sidewalk. The additional floor will contain 20 guest rooms and a large summer dining and banquet hall, the sides of which will be glass enclosed."¹ The manager of the Twickenham Hotel had stated the previous week that "plans are now underway for the addition of another story to this popular hotel...to provide a banquet hall or roof garden...(which) will be glass enclosed"² Apparently this was all one-up-manship because neither hotel added the proposed banquet floor.

Baxter Brothers received the contract for the general construction of the hotel. By May the paper reported that "the concrete of the superstructure has been showing good progress,"³ and the brick side walls reached above the level of the second floor in June.⁴ The hotel opened in early 1925.

The Russel Erskine Hotel undoubtedly hurt the business of both the Twickenham and the Yarbrough since it became "the" place to stay in the Tennessee Valley. However the Yarbrough continued to function as a residential hotel for several years prior to its closing in the late 1950's.

The Yarbrough Hotel is another example of the Commercial Brick style although the heavy applied cornice is about twenty years out of date. The intermediate floors are identical and decorated with the usual corner blocks. It is significant for its history as one of Huntsville's premier hotels during the 1920s and as being a major structure designed in the popular Commercial Brick style.

¹Community Builder, April 17, 1923, p.1

²Community Builder, April 5, 1923, p.1

³Community Builder, May 10, 1923, p.1

⁴Community Builder, June 7, 1923, p.5