

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

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

1. Name

historic Roberts Hotel

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number 420 South High Street N/A not for publication

city, town Muncie N/A vicinity of ~~Congressional district~~

state Indiana code 018 county Delaware code 035

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 type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Roberts Hotel, Ltd.

street & number 420 South High Street

city, town Muncie N/A vicinity of state Indiana

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Delaware County Building

street & number 100 West Main Street

city, town Muncie state Indiana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town state

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Roberts Hotel is a freestanding steel and reinforced concrete structure faced with red brick and with details picked out in Indiana limestone. The style can be described as Colonial Revival. The basement, first, and mezzanine floors are nearly square, being 120' on the High Street (west) side, and 125' on the Howard Street (south) side. The second through the sixth floors are in the form of an ell, aligned north and south along High, and east and west along Howard. These sides, with seven bays each on the ground floor and 12 on the upper stories, constitute the main, public-facing views of the hotel, and as such are decorated with dark clinker brick veneer and Indiana limestone. The elevations not facing the street are faced with common brick. The roof is flat and hidden by a parapet wall.

The major entrances to the building are recessed and located in the center bays of the two main facades. Presently, the entrances are sheltered with non-original fabric canopies. Each entrance currently has non-original, double, satin-finished, stock aluminum doors.

Windows above the first floor are original wooden double-hung sash, with the mezzanine level having four-over-eight lights and the remainder having eight-over-eight lights. The corner bays have narrower paired windows with three-over-six lights on the mezzanine level, and six-over-six above. On the mezzanine, second, and sixth floors the windows have heavy limestone frames. Shouldered architraves are seen on the frames of the second story windows. All sills are limestone.

The first floor windows on the south, or Howard Street, side have been covered with dark stained vertical planking. The original plans and old photographs indicate that these bays contained recessed plate glass shop fronts. This same planking treatment has been used on the two southern-most bays on the High Street side. The remaining four bays on the High Street side, as well as the two bays on the alley to the north of the hotel, have retained the original three-part wooden "Chicago Windows". Each has a large central plate flanked by narrow six-over-nine light, double-hung sash.

Decorative elements on the main elevations are worked in patterns of limestone against a background of brick. Paired limestone pilasters with paneled shafts and acanthus leaf capitals rise from about 18" above the street level to a full entablature, directly below the second story sill. In the area above the first floor windows and below the sill of the mezzanine windows are groups of three limestone-framed panels with brick infill. Above the mezzanine windows and at the same level as the pilaster capitals is a narrow band, with a wave scroll motif cut into the limestone. At the second story, directly on top of the entablature, are bas-relief urns which define the corner bays. The corner bays are further defined by brick quoins projected from the surface of the building.

Two limestone string courses run between the fifth and sixth floors of the hotel. The brick band between the belt courses is decorated with limestone medallions and festooning. Above the sixth floor is a dentiled limestone cornice topped with a parapet wall.

Generally, the exterior remains remarkably unchanged from the original design. The major areas of modification involve the insensitive covering of the first floor windows on the Howard Street side. Also, false iron balconies have been removed from the corner bays at the second story level.

CRD 10/17/84
EXP. 12/31/84

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ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION/INTERIOR

The significant contributing interior areas are the main lobby and the main dining room, or Georgian Room, both located on the first floor.

The lobby is a square area, roughly 50' to a side, located in the center of the hotel. The central lobby space rises to the top of the mezzanine level, unobstructed by any vertical supports. The mezzanine gallery overhangs the central space on the south side and is open, but not overhanging, on the west side.

Since the lobby is behind the guest room tower, natural light enters the space through nine skylights positioned within the grid pattern of the ceiling. The dynamically shifting play of light and shadow filtering through the skylights helps make the lobby one of the most pleasant indoor spaces in Muncie.

The front desk currently occupies about one-third of the length of the east wall of the lobby. Rising the full height of the first story, the desk projects about seven feet into the lobby. In form, the desk is a rectangular, flat-topped box open above counter level on the south and west sides. The southwest corner is supported by a large square column. The west opening is partially covered by an inappropriate circular pattern iron grill. The desk and its placement are not original and, as such, do not contribute to the historic character of the hotel.

Main entry to the lobby is gained through vestibules and corridors leading from the High Street and Howard Street entrances. Originally, another corridor opened onto the lobby from the center of the east wall, but this corridor has been removed in favor of a smaller doorway leading from the southeast corner of the east wall. This door serves as an entry to a lounge area. In a recessed section covering roughly two-thirds of the north wall, formerly the location of the front desk, a doorway leads to the kitchen. All doors are glass and satin finished aluminum and are not in character with the building.

Except for some cracks, the original, multicolored terrazzo flooring remains intact under the present covering of wall-to-wall carpeting. The pattern of the floor reflects the grid of the lobby ceiling.

The most significant feature of the lobby is the magnificent plasterwork still extant throughout. Paired Corinthian pilasters, corresponding to the structural grid of the building, articulate each of the walls into three bays. At the corners the pilasters are single. The pilasters carry a full entablature with festooned frieze and dentiled cornice.

Large roof beams resting on the pilaster of the north and south walls run across the lobby. These are encased in plaster and are decorated on the underside with recessed, moulded panels, while the sides echo the festooned and dentiled entablature of the side walls. The grid pattern is completed by shallow paneled beams running east and west.

On the south side two pairs of massive, scrolled cantilevers support the overhanging gallery. On the north and east walls of the mezzanine level, double sets of casement windows face into the lobby at each bay. Turned spindle railings in front of each set of casement windows form false balconies which carry out the balcony theme employed on the south and west walls of the mezzanine.

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The main dining room, or the Georgian Room, also remains largely intact and therefore contributes to the significance of the hotel. The dining room is rectangular, measuring 36' x 53'. It is located in the northwest corner of the first floor. In plan, the room is divided into six equal-sized squares about 18' to a side which correspond to the structural grid. Two large columns stand at the intersection points of the grid on the center axis of the room.

Entry into the dining room is gained through a doorway leading from a foyer located just inside the High Street entrance. This doorway was remodeled to resemble that of a Colonial house and is quite out of place in its present setting. The tri-part picture windows mentioned in the exterior description articulate the west and north exterior walls (three on the west and two on the north).

As in the main lobby, the real significance of the dining room is witnessed in the richness of the plaster detailing. The columns and pilasters defining the bays are paneled and carry a fine acanthus leaf capital. The ceiling of each bay is dominated by a plaster rosette medallion surrounded by plasterwork formed into an intricate circular pattern. Presently, hardware, lighting fixtures, and floor coverings are not original.

NOTES

¹Administration Building, Service Motor Truck Co., Wabash, Indiana. American Architect. V. 120, No. 2382, Dec. 7, 1921.

Woman's Art Building, Indianapolis, Ind. American Architect. V. 120, No. 2382, Dec. 7, 1921.

House of Marshall Haywood, Esq., Lafayette, Ind. American Architect. V. 121, No. 2382, Jan. 18, 1922.

The Greystone, A Hotel at Bedford, In. American Architect. V. 126, No. 2451, July 30, 1924.

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 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1921

Builder/Architect A. W. Stoolman/Charles W. Nicol

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Roberts Hotel is an important and finely crafted example of the Colonial Revival style. More important, however, is its former role as Muncie's most elegant and gracious hotel. The Roberts played host to Muncie's most important visitors during the prosperous period between the 1920's and 1960's. Today, it is the downtown's tallest building, and the city's only hotel.

The Roberts Hotel was the product of the financial resources of local entrepreneurs, A. C. Thornburg, George Roberts, and A. C. Lipsitz. Built as the luxury hotel in Muncie, the Roberts was designed by Charles W. Nicol, of Lafayette, and constructed by A. W. Stoolman, of Champaign, Illinois. The hotel opened on February 15, 1921, and its size and elegance have never been surpassed in Muncie.

The hotel closed in 1972, but reopened in 1976. A major rehabilitation is being planned.

9. Major Bibliographical References

American Architect. V. 120, No. 2382, Dec. 7, 1921
American Architect. V. 120, No. 2382, Dec. 7, 1921
American Architect. V. 121, No. 2385, Jan. 18, 1922
American Architect. V. 126, No. 2451, July 30, 1924

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .62
Quadrangle name Muncie, West

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	6	6	3	7	3	9	0	4	4	4	9	9	3	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots Numbered Forty-four (44), Forty-five (45), Forty-six (46), and Forty-seven (47) in Seitz's Addition to the City of Muncie, Indiana.

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Larry Snyder

organization N/A date Feb. 25, 1982

street & number 420 South High telephone 317/286-0900

city or town Muncie state Indiana

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer date June 7, 1982

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration