

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

FILE COPY

For NPS use only

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

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

## 1. Name

historic St. James Court

and or common

## 2. Location

street & number 2102-08 North Meridian Street N/A not for publication

city, town Indianapolis N/A vicinity of

state Indiana code 018 county Marion code 097

## 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name Mr. Carl J. Van Rooy

street & number 1245 E. Washington Ave., Suite 10

city, town Madison N/A vicinity of state Wisconsin 53703

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Marion County, Center Township Tax Assessor's Office

street & number City-County Building, 200 E. Washington Street

city, town Indianapolis state Indiana 46204

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title See continuation sheet has this property been determined eligible? yes  no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

This two-tower complex was begun in mid-1919. The three bay, three-and-one-half story detached towers, which are nearly identical, are finished with a thick, textured stucco coating applied directly to the clay tile wall infill (photo 1). The main elevations are accented with belt courses of red to ochre combed brick soldier courses at the ground line, the water table, and both below and above the third floor. A thin gray/white sealing skim coat has been applied to the entire building. The original color contrast of the brick trim and terra cotta is no longer obvious (photo 2). All windows of the first and second stories are finished with similarly detailed brick soldier course lintels and header course sills. Framed terra cotta panels which feature bas-relief subjects such as footed urns with swags and be-ribboned heraldic shields are inset between the first and second floors as spandrel panels (photo 3). Continuous bands of similarly cast panels with quatrefoils and shields extend around the buildings below the cove soffit line (photo 4). These panels are found on all but the west elevations of both buildings. Approximately nine percent of the panels have been removed or skim-coated due to deterioration from water infiltration. Vertical wood trellises with circular insets provide additional decorative accents at the ends of the north and south elevations. These and all wood trim are painted a dark green.

All windows are multi-paned, double-hung units. Most typical on the side elevations is an eight-over-eight light sash unit which is set alone or in pairs. On the main (east) elevations, the slightly projecting pavilions feature six-over-six light units flanked by four-over-four light units. Above the centered entrances, paired, six-over-six light units are topped with three-light transoms. All basement windows consist of three-over-three light sashes. The deeply recessed bathroom casement windows are fitted with three-over-three, glue-etched lights. All third floor apartments feature twelve-light French doors which open onto wrought iron balconies which are supported by open scrolled brackets (photo 4).

The east main entrances, centered on each tower, are sheltered by flat-roofed, rectangular porticoes which repeat the projections of the prominent, cantilevered eaves (photo 5). The porticoes are topped with wrought iron railings which are similar to those of the balconies. Free-standing wood columns which are detailed with molded base, necking and echinus, fluted collar and square abacus are paired with similarly detailed pilasters which flank the entrances (photo 6). The heavily molded, arched doorways are fitted with leaded Adamesque fanlights and five-panel sidelights. Single leaf doors, now filled with large, safety glass panels, are finished with brass push bars and kickplates. Originally, the doors were fitted with leaded, fifteen-light panels.

These entrances provide access to small vestibules which are finished with now painted terra cotta, colored tile wainscoting and flooring. Cast and painted bas-relief lunettes with urn motifs are set above the tile on the north and south elevations (photo 7). The interior glazed doors are set in fully glazed walls with multi-paned toplights and sidelights. These doors open to double-loaded halls which are finished with plaster walls and applied, molded chair rails (photo 8). Matching wood staircases are located at each hall end in well-lighted stairwells. Square newel posts mark the ends of runs which feature heavily molded and curved rails and square balusters (photo 9).

The apartment interiors consist of a living room (photos 10, 11), bedroom, and kitchen with built-in china cabinets which separate the work area from the eating area (photo 12). Most units retain the original walnut trim and single-panel doors. Each unit contains a large interior room which was designed as a storage area (see photo 11, far open door).

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

Specific dates 1919 Builder Architect Unknown FRANK B. HUNTER

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The St. James Court is significant because of its site, configuration, method of construction and exterior decoration. The two separate tower configurations, the documented finish and profusion of exterior decorative panels make the St. James Court a unique architectural statement in Indianapolis. The building has also retained an exceedingly high level of integrity.

The two separate units stand at a rise on North Meridian Street, a crest with a lower grade extending toward Fall Creek, seven blocks to the north (see photos 2 and 13). The prominent vertical elevations continue above the distinctive flat, projecting eaves to the parapet which extends approximately four feet above. The buildings appear more as towers marking the intersection, rather than three-and-one-half story apartment buildings. The siting nearly to the sidewalks, the vertical accents and grade elevation create a visual perception of mass, architectural prominence and height.

Between 1905 and 1929 Indianapolis, like any other northern industrial center, saw the residential growth of the city spread to the suburbs. Large residences which lined major streets were no longer viable, single family dwellings, but were converted to rooming/apartment houses or were replaced. In 1919, the widow of John S. Lazarus (1841-1918) a retired railroad executive, past president of the Indianapolis Board of Trade and real estate developer, demolished the family frame residence built in 1896, and began construction of the St. James Court.<sup>1</sup> On December 16, 1919, the St. James Realty Company was formed with the real estate having "improvements thereon consisting of a partially completed apartment building in two units..."<sup>2</sup> Directors for this company included Ella Lazarus, widow of John S.; George M. Lazarus, son; and C. Milton Kelly, officer of the City Trust Company.

Residents of the buildings first listed in the Indianapolis City Directory of 1921 included: Dwight A. Murphy, secretary, City Trust Company; Ella Lazarus; and Samuel E. Hackathorn, president of American Pozzolana Company, among 36 tenants who represented middle management in the city center and others related to the directors of the realty company.

The American Pozzolana Company, established in 1920 in Indianapolis, advertised in the City Directory of that year (Copy 1). "The Italian process stucco," as advertised, achieved a heavy, stippled surface as in roughcast or harling. The mortar was mixed with pebbles and Portland cement. The resulting mixture appears more like a cast aggregate, as seen on the St. James Court, and on Hackathorn's own home at 4702 Washington Boulevard. On February 14, 1921, while living at the St. James Court, Hackathorn purchased two lots at the above address. Retaining only the corner lot, Hackathorn applied for a building permit on June 28, 1921, for a two-story, frame, 24' x 37' stucco covered house valued at \$7,000. He listed himself as contractor. The American Four-Square house is finished similarly to the St. James Court, with an elevated base decoratively framed around the basement windows in prominently combed brick. Flat milled windows and trim are set into the textured stucco walls. Other details such as portico columns and eaves are finished with the same product. An examination of Hackathorn's house strongly suggests that the Pozzolana product was used on the St. James Court buildings. Hackathorn resided at this house from 1922 to 1924, when he left the city.<sup>3</sup>

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

City of Indianapolis Building Permits, Microfilm Division, City-County Building.  
Indiana Secretary of State Archives. Indiana State Library.  
Polk and Company, R. L. Indianapolis City Directories. Indianapolis: R. L. Polk and Company, 1918 to 1926, inclusive.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Less than one acre

Quadrangle name Indianapolis West

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 

1	6	5	7	2	1	3	0	4	4	0	5	1	5	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

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D 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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Verbal boundary description and justification Part of Lots 136, 137, 138, 139 of William H. Morrison's 3rd Addition: 130' of south ends of Lots 136, 137, 138, 139; 10' of east side of Lot 136.

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

state	code	county	code
<u>N/A</u>			

state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan R. Slade, Architectural Historian

organization Slade Associates date 24 June 1986

street & number 4560 N. Broadway telephone 317/283-6114

city or town Indianapolis state Indiana 46205

## 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 Richard Mantz for J. M. Redenon

title Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer date 11-26-86

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



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Continuation sheet St. James Court

Item number 6, 7

Page 1

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Office of the National Park Service made a preliminary determination of individual listing on February 12, 1986, in connection with a tax project.

NPS Project Number: 0338-85-IN

Item number 7

The St. James Court is prominently sited at the northwest corner of Twenty-first and North Meridian Streets (photo 13). These buildings with articulated parapets rising above the similarly profiled cantilevered eaves emphasize their slightly elevated site and corresponding rise on Meridian Street, the major north-south route to and from the center of Indianapolis (see photos 2, 14). A black metal security fence has been installed between the two buildings at the east elevations. A private, security-fenced parking lot is located immediately to the west of the buildings (photo 15).

A substantial rehabilitation is currently under way.

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Continuation sheet St. James Court

Item number 8

Page 2

In Indianapolis, other stucco-finished apartment buildings constructed between 1920 and 1930 do not have the stippled or dashed surface effect. The surfaces appear smooth and carefully trowelled and scoured, as if the material were applied to a more even surface of lath or brick, not the clay tile surface of the St. James Court. The most similar appearing building in the city to the St. James Court is the Del Prado, a 24 unit building at 4526-34 Washington Boulevard. This building was designed by J. F. Brubaker in 1921 for the Indianapolis Securities Company.<sup>4</sup> The flat, sanded stucco finish is banded decoratively with red common brick at the water table and entrance bays. No additional decorative panels are applied to or set in the stucco.

The variety of bas-relief panels which have a heavily molded, slightly projecting frame also distinguish the St. James Court from other apartment buildings. The finely cast terra cotta material appears to be unglazed with an original body color of light cream-ochre.<sup>5</sup> No other building in Indianapolis has the number of individual panels (180+) used singly, grouped, or in border designs.

The St. James Court stands as a unique example of apartment architecture. Upon its completion it was one of the most visually prominent buildings on the residential street (see photo 13). Today the mannered Renaissance Revival design of the two identical, unconnected units with profuse but subtle decoration and a documented finish process creates a similar visual perception.

<sup>1</sup>Building Permit index indicates that John S. Lazarus obtained two building permits. The actual permit records have been lost. Therefore, no architect or contractor has been found.

<sup>2</sup>"St. James Realty Company, Articles of Association."

<sup>3</sup>The American Pozzolana Company is listed in the City Directories from 1920 to 1925. Other officers were officers or employees of building supply companys, including A. E. Bradshaw, president of both Indianapolis Mortar and Fuel Company and Practical Cement Block Company; and Edward Kellie, secretary-treasurer of Plastic Marble Company and vice-president of American Cement Corporation.

<sup>4</sup>Full occupancy is recorded in the City Directory, 1923. The building permit issued in April, 1921, records the value of the 75' x 116', three story brick tenement house at \$80,000.

<sup>5</sup>One large panel on the north elevation of the south building has been removed for examination. Test patches will be done on the east elevation lunette panels to attempt to explain the color differentiation apparent in the historic photograph.



St. James Court  
 Indianapolis, Indiana  
 UTM Reference: 16/572130/4405150