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

historic Hotel Adolphus  
and/or common The Adolphus Hotel  

2. Location

street & number 1315 Commerce St.  
city, town Dallas  
state Texas  

classification

Category: building(s)  
Ownership: private  
Status: occupied  
Present Use: commercial  

3. Classification

4. Owner of Property

name Westgroup, Inc.  
street & number 6777 Hollywood Blvd, Suite 700  
city, town Hollywood  
state California  

date June 14, 1983

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Dallas County Courthouse  
street & number 600 Commerce Street  
city, town Dallas  
state Texas  

date May 1978  

depository for survey records Texas Historical Commission  

city, town Austin  
state Texas
7. Description

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Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Adolphus Hotel is a 19-story structure whose steel frame is clad with tapestry brick and gray granite. Located on a prominent corner in downtown Dallas, the hotel is noteworthy for the high quality of its Beaux Arts style ornamentation, which is carried out in bronze as well as granite. The hotel is topped by a monumental Mansard roof, long a noted feature of the Dallas skyline.

Located at the northwest corner of Commerce and Akard streets in downtown Dallas, the Adolphus Hotel is a 19-story, steel-framed structure whose exterior walls are faced with tapestry brick and gray granite. The elaborate architectural ornament of the hotel serves to divide the exterior elevations into four distinct sections. The base course of the hotel is of red granite, with the first three stories faced with gray granite. The main entrance to the hotel was placed in the central bay of the seven-bay Akard Street elevation. The ground-floor street fronts were leased to commercial tenants. The Akard Street entrance is marked by the large, segmentally arched opening on the second floor which is capped by a granite sculptural group representing Mercury and Ceres. The opening is flanked by panels of relief sculpture depicting Apollo and Terpsichore. This collection of architectural ornament sets the tone for the detailing to be found throughout the hotel's exterior. Described as being in the Louis XIV style by writers of that period, the building's ornament is characteristic of the work of architects who had studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. That institution's influence upon American architecture was perhaps at its height at the time the Adolphus was under construction, with buildings of similar elaboration in most of the large cities of the U.S. at the turn-of-the-century. The three-window bays to each side of the prominent central opening are alternately capped by segmental arches or triangular pediments supported by scroll brackets. The floor-length casement doors in these openings are screened by wrought bronze grilles whose central element is a cartouche containing the letter "A," the hotel's monogram. The seven windows of the third floor on Akard Street are set in simple frames, but feature the wrought bronze grillwork used on the second floor. A beltcourse carved with a scroll motif separates the second and third floors.

The Commerce Street facade is far more ornately detailed on the second and third floor levels. While it is technically seven bays in width, the Commerce Street elevation is considerably longer than the Akard side, with the extra space taken up by the oversized openings which overlook Commerce Street. There are five of these large, round-arch openings, which rise up through the second and third floors. These round arches actually frame two distinct types of fenestration. The large upper sections of these openings contain fixed panes of glass organized around a circular muntin frame at the top of the arch. Below this, set apart by a large and highly detailed classical enframement, are a pair of very tall casement doors which open onto the granite balcony facing Commerce Street. The doors are set behind a pair of Tuscan columns which support
an elaborate entablature. These entablatures are alternately topped with boldly sculpted Baroque cartouches or groups of putti. The tall, round-arch openings are flanked by vertical panels of carved stone, each of which is capped by vaguely classical male and female busts. The center of each arch is highlighted by a scroll bracket which supports a large, stylized anthemion. The southeast and northeast corners of the building are further decorated by substantial and highly ornate cartouches set on top of the belt-course that marks the second-floor line.

The fourth- through 12-floor street fronts are identical in terms of their fenestration and finish. The exterior walls are clad in tapestry brick, with granite beltcourses marking the floor lines. Two window types are used, the larger of which consists of casement doors for maximum ventilation. The openings are screened at the lower section by wrought bronze grilles identical to those noted on the windows of the second and third floors. Smaller openings with four-over-four lights in each sash are grouped to both sides of the central window bay on both street fronts. Presumably these lesser windows serve the individual bedrooms or other subsidiary spaces.

The 13th floor continues the fenestration of the lower floors, but its exterior is faced with granite laid in a regular pattern of square blocks. Both the Commerce and Akard Street facades feature eight enormous scroll brackets that support the granite balcony of the 14th floor. Each of these brackets extends the full height of the floor and is, as noted, the granite balcony which wraps around both street facades as well as the north elevation. It is largely obscured by the adjacent office building. A massive balustrade of granite, with pier blocks set above the great brackets, conceals one's view of this floor from street level. The 14th through 16th floors are faced with tapestry brick. At the 15th- and 16-floor levels, centered on both street fronts, are vertical panels of sculptural decoration in the form of military trophies of the 18th century. Filled with shields and emblems, these panels are topped by colossal male heads wearing rather antique helments.

Reaching the 17th floor, one encounters the greatest concentration of ornament on the Adolphus. Faced entirely in granite, this floor is divided into three sections by the massing of openings and detailing. The central window is flanked by massive halves of a broken segmental pediment and topped by a triangular pediment born on brackets. Set on both halves of the segmental pediment are colossal figures representing Night and Morning. Cast in verde antique bronze, they are the work of Chicago sculptor Leon Hermant. The positioning of these statues is derivative from Michelangelo's work on the tomb of Pope Julius II, and appears to be precariously balanced on the outer edge of the architectural molding.
Toward each end of the street fronts of the 17th floor, set under a slightly concave round arch frame, is a square-headed opening with casement doors. Above the opening is a carved, pulvinated frieze topped by a rather simple cornice. Resting on this cornice is a cartouche which serves as the point of origin for two sections of foliate carving which curve upward to cradle round windows with horizontal center pivots. The northeast and southwest corners of the 17th floor are capped by massive bronze spheres supported by bronze scroll brackets. The southeast corner is formed by the most distinctive feature of the upper section of the hotel, the cylindrical tower that has been known affectionately by Dallasites for years as the "beer bottle," appropriate in that Busch Brewery money paid for the building. The tower is capped by a bronze dome and lantern.

The final two stories of the hotel are contained within the gigantic Mansard roof, which is clad in variegated slate and trimmed at the top with a spectacular cresting of bronze. The Commerce Street side of the roof is broken by three huge rectangular openings which, when opened, turned the banqueting and ballroom facilities into open-air spaces high above the city. These oversized openings are not used on the Akard Street side, where three small dormers with steeply pitched hipped roofs are located. The final fenestration of the hotel comes in the form of four round windows in bronze frames high up on the face of the Mansard roof. The corners of the roof are capped by bronze scroll brackets, which terminate in scalloped moldings.

The west facade of the original hotel building is virtually undecorated, with the 14th-floor balcony terminating shortly after it rounds the corner. A majority of the windows on this side are not floor length, although some long casement openings can be found. The north facade, while it was substantially decorated in the manner of the street fronts, is now nearly totally obscured by the Adolphus Tower office building which rises only about 20 feet from the north wall of the hotel. The Adolphus expanded its facilities several times during the 20th century, although none of the newer sections are included in the nomination. The only additions that actually touch the original building are the three-story section facing Commerce that connects the original hotel with the 1918 extension, and the 24-story addition recessed back from Commerce Street, both of which were constructed in 1926. The 1918 annex was partially demolished in 1980 and rebuilt on a smaller scale. It was resurfaced as part of the overall rehabilitation of the hotel complex.

The hotel's interiors have, in the course of time, been subject to cosmetic remodelings. The main lobby on the second floor, and the adjacent "French Room" (the original restaurant space), are still inact. The lobby features a large chandelier embellished with eagles and hops, alluding to the Busch Brewery emblem. The French Room was originally painted white, and has been redecorated using a more vivid color scheme with marbelized columns and wall and ceiling murals. The only alterations to
the original exterior are the removal of the bronze canopy over the Akard Street entrance, and the refacing of the ground-floor street fronts and the installation there of large plate-glass windows in aluminum frames. These changes are minor when one considers the large percentage of intact detailing present on the exterior as a whole, and do not compromise the integrity of the building.

Only the original hotel structure, located on Lot 15 of Block 70, is included in the present nomination. The 1918 annex and the extensions made in 1926 are excluded. The 24-story addition built in 1926 does not directly abut the older building of 1911-12, and can easily be excluded from the nomination. The 1918 annex, substantially rebuilt in 1980, only attaches to the older building by means of a small hyphen on Commerce, and is also a separate structure. Thus the hotel building of 1911-12 is isolated, and stands on its own merit.
The Adolphus Hotel represents a substantial investment on the part of St. Louis brewery magnate Adolphus Busch in the development of Dallas during the years before World War I. For several years the tallest structure in the city, the Adolphus is an outstanding example of the influence of the Ecole des Beaux Arts upon American architecture. The high quality of the architectural decoration, executed in granite and bronze, is unusual for Texas buildings of the period, and contributes to the hotel's status as one of the city's most admired works of architecture.

The design of large scale public buildings in the United State in the early years of the 20th century was heavily influenced by the architectural classicism promulgated by the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, the foremost architectural school in Europe. The Adolphus Hotel stands as perhaps the premier Texas example of this style, heavily embellished with French Renaissance and Baroque details such as massive scroll brackets and bronze grillwork and statuary. The execution of the detailing, in both stone and metal, is of the highest quality, equal to that found on similar designs in the Northeastern United States.

The hotel was designed by the St. Louis architect Tom P. Barnett, a partner in the firm of Barnett, Haynes, and Barnett. Barnett left the firm in 1912, completing the work on the Adolphus as the head of his own firm, Tom P. Barnett & Company. The firm of Barnett, Haynes and Barnett was responsible for the design of prominent structures in St. Louis, among the most notable of which is the Catholic Cathedral, dating 1907 to 1914. The firm also designed a number of hotels, including the New Southern Hotel in Chicago, and the 1,500-room Hotel Jefferson (1909) in St. Louis. Tom P. Barnett & Company were responsible for the design of the Arcade Building and the Busch Chapel in St. Louis, evidence that Barnett and Busch had a good architect/client relationship. The design of the Adolphus clearly indicates a familiarity on the part of Barnett with the design of such famous New York hotels as the Astor, which was also faced with a combination of stone and brick, and capped by a splendid Mansard roof.

The history of the building of the Adolphus is of some interest. In 1910, a delegation of leading Dallas businessmen approached Adolphus Busch, owner of the Oriental Hotel (formerly located on the southeast corner of Commerce and Akard), to discuss the need for a first-class hotel in the city. In agreement, Busch responded by acquiring a site for $240,000 and by holding a subscription party that resulted in local investors purchasing...
9. Major Bibliographical References


(See Continuation Sheet)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property: less than 1 acre
Quadrangle name: Dallas, Texas
Quadrangle scale: 1:24000

UTM References

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Nominated property consists of the 1912 tower structure only, located on the southeast corner of Block 70, Lot (parcel) 15, and measures 90.0' on Akard and 98.5' on Commerce.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Linda C. Flory, Historian, and John C. Ferguson, Architectural Historian
organization: Texas Historical Commission
date: February 1983
street & number: P.O. Box 12276
telephone: (512) 475-3094
city or town: Austin
state: Texas

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national _ state _ 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: [Signature]
date: 19 April 1983

For NPS use only
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
Keeper of the National Register: [Signature] date: 7/4/83
Attest: [Signature] date: [Date]
Chief of Registration:
10 percent of the hotel stock. A corporation was formed to underwrite the construction of the building, and Busch engaged the St. Louis firm of Barnett, Haynes and Barnett to design the new facility with the local assistance of Alfred Bosser and C.D. Hill. After first traveling to examine other luxury hotels of the day, architect Tom P. Barnett designed the 22-story tower, distinguished for its architectural merits ever since completion. As plans developed, the name was changed from the New Oriental Hotel to Hotel Adolphus in honor of its builder. Construction began in 1911 on the site of the 1880s City Hall, by the Gilsomite Construction Company.

Several hundred distinguished guests, including a group of St. Louis businessmen who made the trip down in a private railroad car, participated in the grand opening held on October 6, 1912. Tours of the opulent new hostelry were led by bellhops, and that evening stockholders, officers, and others were entertained in the elegant main dining room. Outstanding achievement was not limited to the lavishly detailed exterior, but was reflected in the equally luxurious interior and extensive service. Interior public spaces fitted with wainscoting, vaulted ceilings, sculptured panels in bas relief, and fixtures of brass, ormolu, and alabaster were decorated with silk and velvet draperies, period French furnishings, and works of art from Busch's private collection. Guest rooms offered the most modern conveniences available. The 18th floor was devoted to entertainment facilities, and the hotel became a center for social, cultural and professional gatherings in Dallas and throughout the Southwest.

Adolphus Busch died in 1913, but members of the family continued to operate the hotel, and annually hosted a party for leading Dallas citizens. In 1917, the Busch heirs elected to enlarge the hotel with the West Annex, which brought the total number of rooms to 482 when the new section opened in January 1918. A third addition was made in 1926. The Busch family continued to operate the hotel until 1949 when Dallas investor Leo F. Corrigan purchased the property. Under Corrigan's ownership the facility was again expanded to include an additional hotel tower, adjoining office tower, and parking garage. Early in 1980 the Adolphus was sold to a California investment group and on February 3 of that year, after 68 years of continuous service, it was closed for restoration and refinishing.

In late 1981, the Adolphus reopened after undergoing a major remodeling. The work on the original structure was largely confined to restoration of existing elements on the exterior, with a major redecorating campaign on the interior. The most dramatic changes took place on the later additions to the hotel, particularly the Commerce Street section, which was actually partially demolished and refaced so as to allow the hotel tower to stand as the dominant element of the complex. This work was carried out according to plans prepared by the Jerde Partnership, and Beran & Shelmire, Architects. These alterations re-emphasize the character of the original hotel tower, allowing it to retain its identity in a section of Dallas that is the site of a number of much taller office buildings.


**Dallas Morning News:**
- October 1, 1935
- October 15, 1944
- June 27, 1945
- August 30, 1946
- July 9, 1957
- August 8, 1966

**Dallas Times Herald:**
- October 15, 1944
- September 26, 1945
- August 29, 1946
- June 20, 1950
- April 20, 1956
- March 6, 1977
Adolphus Hotel
Dallas County
TEXAS

Working No.  JUN 14 1983
Fed. Reg. Date: 6-7-84
Date Due: 7/14/83 - 7/24/83

Action:  □ ACCEPT  □ RETURN  □ REJECT

Entered in the  National Register

Federal Agency:

Substantive Review:  □ sample  □ request  □ appeal  □ NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria
Reviewer
Discipline
Date

see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for:  □ technical corrections cited below

□ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category  Ownership  Status  Present Use
Public Acquisition  Accessible

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible?  □ yes  □ no

7. Description

Condition  Existant  Original Site  Check one
□ excellent  □ unaltered  □ moved
good  □ altered  □ moved  □ moved
fair  □ altered  □ moved

Describes the present and original (if known) physical appearance

□ summary paragraph
□ completeness
□ clarity
□ alterations/integrity
□ dates
□ boundary, selection
8. Significance

Period

Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- applicable criteria
- justification of areas checked
- relating significance to the resource
- context
- relationship of integrity to significance
- justification of exception
- other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

- national  state  local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title  date

13. Other

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

Signed  Date  Phone: 202 272-3504

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet
Adolphus Hotel
1315 Commerce St., Dallas, Dallas County, Texas
Photo: ca. 1919, photographer unknown; on file, Dallas County Historical Commission
Oblique view of east facade, looking northwest
Photo 1 of 7
Adolphus Hotel
1315 Commerce St., Dallas, Dallas County, Texas
Photo: May 1978, by Daniel Hardy; on file,
Texas Historical Commission, Austin
Photo 2 of 7
Adolphus Hotel
1315 Commerce St., Dallas, Dallas County, Texas
Photo: May 1978, by Daniel Hardy; on file, Texas Historical Commission, Austin
Oblique view of southeast corner, street level, looking northwest
Photo 3 of 7
Adolphus Hotel
1315 Commerce St., Dallas, Dallas County, Texas
Photo: May 1978, by Daniel Hardy; on file, Texas Historical Commission, Austin
Oblique view of southeast corner, detail of upper stories, looking northwest
Photo 4 of 7
Adolphus Hotel
1315 Commerce St., Dallas, Dallas County, Texas
Photo: May 1978, by Daniel Hardy; on file, Texas Historical Commission, Austin
Oblique view of south facade, showing addition, looking northeast
Photo 5 of 7
Adolphus Hotel
1315 Commerce St., Dallas, Dallas County, Texas
Photo: March 1982, by Peter F. Maxson; neg. on file, Texas Historical Commission, Austin
Oblique view of south facade, showing remodeled additions, looking northwest
Photo 6 of 7
Adolphus Hotel
1315 Commerce St., Dallas, Dallas County, Texas
Photo: March 1982, by Peter F. Maxson; neg. on file, Texas Historical Commission, Austin
Oblique view of south facade, showing remodeled additions, looking northeast
Photo 7 of 7