

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

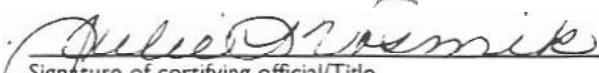
historic name **Hotel Roanoke**
other names/site number **VPHR File No. 128-25**

2. Location

street & number **110 Shenandoah Avenue** not for publication **N/A**
city or town **Roanoke** vicinity _____
state **Virginia** code **VA** county **Roanoke (city)** code **770** zip code **24016**

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination
_____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places
and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets
_____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _____ nationally statewide
_____ locally. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)


Signature of certifying official/Title
Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

11-8-95
Date

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

_____ entered in the National Register. _____ See continuation sheet	_____	_____
_____ determined eligible for the National Register. _____ See continuation sheet	_____	_____
_____ determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
_____ removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
_____ other (explain): _____	_____	_____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
1	2	structures
		objects
2	2	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

<i>Category</i>	<i>Subcategory</i>
DOMESTIC	hotel
COMMERCE/TRADE	restaurant
RECREATION AND CULTURE	auditorium

<i>Category</i>	<i>Subcategory</i>
DOMESTIC	hotel
COMMERCE/TRADE	restaurant
EDUCATION	education-related

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS:
Tudor Revival

foundation	STONE
walls	BRICK
	STUCCO
roof	SLATE
other	CONCRETE
	METAL

(see continuation sheets)

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- A: COMMERCE
- A: TRANSPORTATION
- A: SOCIAL HISTORY
- C: ARCHITECTURE

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past fifty years.

Period of Significance

1882 - 1946

Significant Dates

- 1882
- 1931
- 1938

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

POST, GEORGE B. AND SONS
SMALL, SMITH AND REEB

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

VPI & SU Special Collections, Blacksburg, VA

Hotel Roanoke

Name of Property

City of Roanoke, Virginia

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately 6.5 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing		Zone Easting Northing	
1	17 594000 4125600	3	_____
2	_____	4	_____

____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Leslie A. Giles, Architectural Historian and John R. Kern, Ph.D., Historian		
organization	DHR / Roanoke Regional Preservation Office	date	01 September 1995
street & number	1030 Penmar Avenue, SE	telephone	(540) 857-7585
city or town	Roanoke	state VA	zip code 24013

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name see attached list of property owners

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Hotel Roanoke
City of Roanoke, VA

7. DESCRIPTION (continued)

Materials

foundation	BRICK
walls	WOOD
roof	SYNTHETICS
other	STONE BRICK

Narrative Description

Summary Description and Integrity Statement

Hotel Roanoke, a veteran of multiple building campaigns since it was first begun in 1882, remains one of the Roanoke Valley's most prominent and familiar landmarks today. Sited on a landscaped hilltop immediately north of the Norfolk-Southern Corporation's east-west railroad line through the city, the Tudor Revival style hotel is one of several extant buildings and structures developed by and for the Norfolk and Western Railroad in Roanoke, Virginia, which served as the railway's headquarters from 1881 to 1982. In addition to its landscaped hilltop setting, portions of the hotel completed in 1931, 1938, 1946, and 1954 survive essentially unaltered when viewed from the exterior. Ranging in height from three-and-one-half to seven stories, Hotel Roanoke features public gathering, dining, meeting and entertaining spaces and currently houses over three hundred guest rooms. Architects historically associated with surviving portions of the hotel include Knut W. Lind, A.I.A., for George B. Post & Sons of New York City; and Small, Smith and Reeb of Cleveland, Ohio. Landscape architect A.A. Farnham, a professor at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, developed the 1938 design scheme for the hotel site.

Although Hotel Roanoke closed to guests in 1989, in April 1995 a major rehabilitation program was completed to return the building to its original use. Supported in part by public funds and private donations, the project included preservation and restoration of the hotel's exterior and most of its major public spaces; rehabilitation of the less-public guest rooms, circulation corridors, and service areas; and addition of a Conference Center wing and a new outdoor pool. The Conference Center's main entry, north of the Regency Dining Room and accessed from Wells Avenue, now serves as the hotel's secondary public entrance. One major historic element of the building, the 1938 Crystal Ballroom, was demolished; a concrete-paved courtyard with minimal landscaping now occupies its site. Fortunately, many of the ballroom's significant interior features and fixtures were salvaged and restored for use within the Conference Center. A few noncontributing structures, among them the 1960s

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Hotel Roanoke
City of Roanoke, VA

Description (continued)

swimming pool and its later enclosure, were also demolished during the rehabilitation project. Significant landscape features, including the circular pool and drive at the main lobby entrance, rusticated ashlar limestone fences and retaining walls, and mature deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs have for the most part been preserved, while driveways and parking areas have been expanded and resurfaced.

Exterior Description

Hotel Roanoke, in an almost constant state of growth and change since the 1880s, today retains wings from several construction periods, each with subtle variations in the use and placement of materials and ornamental details. In form, the hotel consists of three wings that correspond to four different construction phases undertaken after World War I yet prior to the recent rehabilitation. Structurally, the wings employ steel framing, reinforced concrete floors, and Pyrobar (concrete) roof panels. Shingles of gray slate sheathe the multiple roof planes, while exterior masonry walls incorporate veneers of off-white Indiana limestone, gray rockfaced local limestone, variegated red brick, off-white stucco, and dark brown wood alongside metal windows painted dark green. Indiana limestone is also used for window sills and some carved ornaments. Copper, now oxidized to a verdigris color, is employed sparingly on roofs for ornamental features, gutters, and flashing. Each of the hotel wings exhibits attributes of Tudor Revival architecture, a romantic style commonly adopted for domestic and institutional architecture in the United States during the 1920s-1930s. Hallmark features of the style, such as decorative half-timbering with patterned brickwork and whitewashed stucco, contrasting stonework, prominent gables with little or no roof overhang, ornamental verge boards, grouped multi-pane windows and numerous dormer windows, are evident throughout the hotel's exterior. The Conference Center addition, completed in 1995, utilizes structural steel framing to which precast concrete panels are attached as the primary exterior sheathing material. In coloration, the precast concrete approximates the off-white Indiana limestone used on earlier portions of the hotel.

Hotel Roanoke's 1938 West Wing, although not the earliest surviving section of the building, is the most prominent of the three wings. As built, the West Wing provided a new formal entry, lobby, dining room, large reception spaces, small meeting or dining rooms, a rooftop garden, 181 guest rooms--including a penthouse apartment--and 100 underground parking spaces. Service areas included a large kitchen, staff locker rooms and cafeteria, mechanical rooms, and offices. The wing was designed by hotel specialist Knut W. Lind, A.I.A., a partner with the New York city-based architectural firm of George B. Post & Sons. The firm had been established in 1860 and was known for, among other things, its role in "evolving the standard American hotel plan with a bath in every room." The firm's Roanoke project replaced the hotel's original 1882 lobby and west wing that had been extensively remodeled and reconstructed in 1890, damaged by fire in 1898, and rebuilt in 1899. The commission did not call for a total rebuilding, though; the hotel was to retain its two most modern sections--the 1916 East

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Hotel Roanoke
City of Roanoke, VA

Description (continued)

Wing and the 1931 Northeast Wing. These wings, which had continued the Tudor Revival tradition begun with earlier versions of the hotel, undoubtedly encouraged the architects of the West Wing to select the same design theme for the new project. The 1938 West Wing adopts the ubiquitous decorative false half-timbering, stucco, patterned brickwork, projecting bays and oriels, steep gables, and other medieval-inspired features that are hallmarks of the style. The architects did introduce large-scale use of Indiana limestone as the ground floor's primary exterior material: the ashlar masonry's smooth surface and narrow mortar joints provide an elegant contrast to the rugged texture of rusticated limestone seen in earlier portions of the hotel. The material is also especially suited to intricate sculptural decoration, which the architects selectively employed on the exterior.

In form, the multi-storied West Wing has a roughly Y-shaped footprint. An asymmetrically placed, seventh-story tower with slate-sheathed pyramidal roof and decorative copper-clad cupola highlights the hotel's six-story main block. The tower is situated so as to rise directly behind a six-and-one-half-story cross-gabled projection that is further articulated by a four-story oriel-like window bay. A one-story, five-bay limestone arcade at the base of the main block shelters the thirteen-foot-deep portico that marks the formal entry to the hotel lobby. The arcade and adjacent ground floor door and window openings employ four-centered arches with carefully crafted voisoirs and concentric carved archivolts. The spandrel panels between the arches are vertically divided by projecting moldings that terminate in carved bosses located at the same level as the impost blocks. The open arcade is embellished with sculptural soffit carvings within each of the bays, which are further accentuated by a freestanding parapet-like railing with panels and balusters of Indiana limestone. Beneath the shelter of the portico, rough-hewn beams support the flat ceiling. A projecting wood and glass vestibule is crowned with battlement-like crenellations, while the initials "HR" adorn a carved wooden shield directly above the double doors. Crab Orchard flagstones serve as flooring for the portico and front entry steps. Original copper and glass lanterns illuminate the portico's facade. Four-and-one-half-story flanking wings extend south and west from the main block, feature open-air terraces that adjoin the portico, and are punctuated by three-story brick and limestone polygonal towers with corner quoining. The parapet design of the main block continues along the flanking wings, but there it has been transformed from three dimensions to two, using veneers of limestone and herringbone-pattern brickwork. The only modern exterior alterations to the entry facade are a wheelchair-accessible ramp designed in concrete and rusticated limestone to match the adjacent foundation materials, a new canvas canopy at the front entry, and awnings over the arched windows.

Along the north elevation of the West Wing, an exedral projection encloses a portion of the Regency Dining Room, the hotel's full service restaurant. A tall base of rusticated coursed limestone supports the convex brick wall, which features multi-pane windows conforming to the same four-centered arches as do the windows used along the wing's entrance front. Formerly exposed to the elements, the semicircular bow is now encased by the building's secondary entrance lobby. A final portion of the West Wing extends northward from the main block.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Hotel Roanoke
City of Roanoke, VA

Description (continued)

Originally only four stories with a rooftop garden, the wing was altered in 1954 to include the addition of a fifth level, elimination of the roof garden, and a five-story addition to the north side. The additions, designed by Small, Smith and Reeb of Cleveland, Ohio, replicate the materials and detailing of the original wing, although a slight mismatch in brick color clearly distinguishes the new work from the old. The first floor level has a slightly larger footprint than the higher floor levels; five large windows along the north elevation indicate the location of the Shenandoah Room, one of the hotel's mid-size meeting rooms. Above the flat, parapeted roof of the expanded wing, a two-stage cubical-form feature, housing mechanical equipment, is accentuated with decorative half-timbering. In the 1995 rehabilitation, a minor one-story, brick-clad addition east of the wing and north of the inner court was built to provide needed service, utility, and security areas.

To the east of this wing, opposite a concrete-paved courtyard that formerly served as the location of the Crystal Ballroom, stands the 1931 Northeast Wing. The earliest surviving portion of the hotel, the rectangular-form wing provides guest rooms on each of its five above-ground levels. The wing was added to the northeast corner of the former three-story East Wing (1916-1946), which had been designed by architects Frye and Chesterman of Roanoke. Surviving architectural drawings of the 1931 construction show only the nameplate of the Office of the Chief Engineer of the Norfolk and Western Railway, but the high level of artistically detailed architectural features, combined with the company's traditional reliance upon architects rather than engineers for hotel designs, suggest that an as-yet unidentified architectural firm was responsible for the Northeast Wing's design. The wing, a 3-1/2-story rectangular block with a projecting central "oriel" bay and 4-1/2-story cross-gabled end pavilions, encloses about 40,000 square feet. Originally housing 65 guest rooms and a 60-car basement-level garage, the 133-foot-long wing now contains 48 guest rooms. Its garage has been converted to mechanical and storage spaces. Sheathed in coursed rusticated limestone on the basement level and dark red brick on the main levels, the wing features decorative half-timbering of Florida cypress stickwork that frames fields of brick and stucco. The half-timbering articulates the surfaces of the wing's upper floor levels and projecting bays with rectangular, X-patterned, and arched panels. Steel casement and double-hung windows light the interior spaces. Along the east elevation, the wing's most publicly visible facade, windows feature unusual eight-over-seven double-hung sash with a four-centered arch motif in the lower sash. A three-and-one-half-story oriel bay, featuring groups of four-over-four double-hung sash windows, carved stone moldings, and a polygonal copper roof, further highlights the east elevation. In contrast, the wing's west elevation, facing the less public inner courtyard, incorporates simple eight-over-eight double-hung sash windows and less elaborate detailing.

The wing's south side abuts the 1946 East Wing, a rectangular segment that connects the Northeast and West wings. Primarily dedicated to guest rooms, the East Wing--sometimes referred to as the South Wing--also defines the southern end of the inner courtyard. Built in 1946 according to the design of architects Small, Smith and Reeb of Cleveland, Ohio, the East Wing replaced its thirty-year-old, three-and-one-half-story predecessor with a larger

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

Hotel Roanoke
City of Roanoke, VA

Description (continued)

and longer guest wing. While portions of the 1916 construction, such as foundations and some other structural elements, may have been retained and reused in the 1946 work, the wing's exterior wholly reflects the 1946 period. The East Wing stands four-and-one-half stories above basement and mezzanine levels. Its proportions, materials, and detailing closely imitate those features of the 1938 West Wing, with Indiana limestone veneer along the basement and mezzanine levels, and two gabled projections that exactly copy the detailing of the West Wing's adjoining south-facing gable. An elevator added to the wing during renovations in 1994-1995 required the addition of a small rooftop appendage that projects above the gabled roof. It has been sheathed with false half-timbering and white stucco, and does not negatively impact the historic appearance of the wing. The East Wing originally housed 109 guest rooms on 5 levels, with a beauty parlor, conference rooms, and hotel offices on a lower mezzanine level. The rehabilitation of the East Wing, completed in 1995, developed 89 guest rooms on 6 levels, and incorporated modern needs such as a new elevator lobby, fitness center, sauna, and access to the outdoor pool.

The Conference Center, while technically under separate ownership than the hotel property, shares several facilities, entrances, and other functional systems with the hotel and so for the purposes of this nomination report is considered to be an addition to the historic hotel, rather than a separate building. Its planning and design were developed in consultation with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. This consultation process was undertaken because the hotel property was at that time considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places; since a significant portion of the project financing was derived from federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, the project developers were required to comply with the Section 106 environmental review process.

The Conference Center addition, enclosing some 82,262 square feet, nearly doubles the former footprint of the hotel. Fortunately, the addition averages only thirty feet high, and reads as a low-slung, appropriately scaled appendage to the hotel building. To enhance the addition's compatibility with the adjacent 1938 West Wing, the architects selected materials and detailing that, while not exactly duplicating the originals, approximate them to a close degree. Precast concrete panels similar in color to the Indiana limestone veneer incorporate four-centered windowed and blind arches like those of the portico; cast ornamental moldings simulate the carved sculptural elements of the hotel's entry facade; and a parapet of repeating X-patterned panels--derived from historic half-timbering patterns elsewhere on the hotel--crowns the addition. Along portions of the north and west elevations, the walls incorporate low, rusticated limestone veneers that recall the original stone fences that bordered the hotel property. The addition's exterior is further embellished with deep incising that suggests the pattern of mortar joints in true ashlar masonry, and features a derivative quatrefoil motif regularly repeated on the addition's four major elevations. A rotunda-like feature near the southeast corner of the addition, capped by a conical skylight, marks the location of a grand interior stair that connects the main "ballroom" level with a lower

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 6

Hotel Roanoke
City of Roanoke, VA

Description (continued)

"conference" level. Since the Conference Center's site slopes down from north to south, the addition's five-bay south elevation includes upper-level arched window openings as well as lower-level window and door openings that access a semicircular outdoor patio highlighted by tall piers and a monogrammed wrought iron gate original to the property. The connection of the Conference Center to the hotel is perhaps most formalized along the north side of the property. There, a recessed court eases the transition from a semicircular driveway and parking areas along Wells Avenue to the three-bay entry facade. Tall, four-centered arched openings with glazed doors line the west wall of the addition at the entry court, while the north elevation features a central arched window flanked by lower, rectangular openings with glazed doors.

Interior Description

Although the interior of Hotel Roanoke has been comprehensively rehabilitated, most of the major public spaces have retained their original character-defining features. Generally, these features include generously scaled rooms with geometrically derived floor plans, terrazzo flooring, high ceilings, paneled wall surfaces, original or period wall and ceiling murals, and elaborate light fixtures. Throughout the hotel's public areas--which include the Lobby, Oval Room, Pine Room, Peacock Alley, and Regency Dining Room--changes were primarily restricted to removal of asbestos, careful insertion of new mechanical systems and wheelchair-accessible facilities, and installation of new ceiling finishes. The interiors of most guest room floors, on the other hand, were gutted and rebuilt with new materials and configurations to meet current hospitality industry standards. Double-loaded corridors continue to provide primary circulation routes within the wings, while stairways have been rebuilt within existing walls to meet current fire and safety code requirements. Within the basement level, formerly open garage and service areas have been subdivided for mechanical systems, storage, and offices. Some original mosaic tile floors and structural clay tile wall sections remain intact in these non-public areas.

Hotel Roanoke's Main Lobby is entered through the central bay of the five-bay portico-sheltered facade. The Lobby actually consists of two spaces, a large rectangular reception area and a smaller elevator lobby/registration desk area directly opposite the front entry. Dark-stained walnut paneling covers the vertical wall surfaces around the reception area, while a molded plaster cornice, decoratively painted to resemble carved oak leaves in wood, provides a transition to the new ceiling. A grid of rectangular, concentrically recessed plaster fields adds dimension to the ceiling without distracting from the simple woodwork below. Recessed light fixtures, air vents and returns, and other mechanical features are inserted into the new ceiling, although the predominant ceiling features remain the three antiqued pewter and wood chandeliers that originally graced the main lobby. Matching sconces also remain upon the room's walls. Cleaned, polished, and fitted with new wiring, these light fixtures add significantly to the interior's historic character. A classically inspired limestone mantelpiece, inserted during the recent rehabilitation, dominates the reception room's northwest wall and provides a dramatic new focal point to

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 7

Hotel Roanoke
City of Roanoke, VA

Description (continued)

the room. The smaller registration area of the Lobby features the twenty-four-inch illuminated painted globe with a reflecting trough that originally lit the Palm Court (currently the Oval Room), and is further distinguished by original elevator doors, wall paneling, black marble pilasters with Corinthian capitals, large scrolled brackets, and an unusual frieze along the upper wall. This frieze, of painted canvas panels, depicts nine scenes from Virginia's colonial history framed by foliage panels, in a mural that measures three feet high and extends for sixty-six feet around three sides of the registration lobby. The mural scenes, researched and executed by artist Hugo Ohlms, include "The Landing at Jamestown 1607," "Baptism of Pocahontas," "Marriage of Pocahontas," "The First Representative Government in America 1619," "The Surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown 1781," "William and Mary College," "Patrick Henry's Address 1765," "Women arrive at Jamestown 1619," and "Virginia Hospitality."

The Regency Dining Room is reached by ascending a short flight of stairs to the northwest of the main Lobby. One of the largest of the hotel's original public spaces, the Regency Room's expansive scale is heightened by its apsidal north side and defined by classical detailing. Fluted Ionic pilasters flank four-centered arched window openings in the north and south walls, and adorn four prominent piers within the room. Original light fixtures, including brass and crystal chandeliers and dogwood-patterned wall sconces, still grace the room. Access to an outdoor dining terrace is provided through a set of French doors in the south wall. A buffet area, created in the 1995 renovations, adjoins the west wall of the main dining room and incorporates several panels of a mural frieze begun in the late 1940s for the Fountain Room, an informal basement level dining room. Artists A. Karoly and L.P. Szanto expanded the frieze in 1954 when the space was converted to the hotel coffee shop. The mural, which is painted on canvas in bright impressionistic colors, depicts well-known Virginia scenes, including famous buildings such as Westover, Gunston Hall, and Michie Tavern. The mural was removed and placed in storage when the Fountain Room/coffee shop space was subsequently altered for other uses. The recent rehabilitation project led to its rediscovery and reuse in the buffet area of the Regency Room. A small private dining room, the Virginia Room, is located just off the main dining room in a unique octagonal space defined by the southwest corner tower. The Virginia Room features floor-to-ceiling knotty pine paneling, a paneled plaster ceiling, and a dramatic brass and crystal chandelier and dogwood-pattern wall sconces.

Along the south side of the reception lobby, directly opposite the fireplace, fluted Doric columns and pilasters mark the location of the Oval Room, originally known as the Palm Court and later as the Colonial Room. Additional classical flavor is brought to the room's perimeter through the use of a Doric frieze with triglyphs. The large oval space serves as an important circulation route, as it links the Main Lobby with the Pine Room, Peacock Alley, and the East Wing; it also serves as a well-defined gathering space. In addition to its architectural features, the Oval Room features four prominent murals in large panels: "The Virginia Reel," "The Quadrille," "The Waltz," and "The Minuet." The set of four works, featuring historic Virginians of different periods, is signed "Irving and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 8

Hotel Roanoke
City of Roanoke, VA

Description (continued)

Co. Inc., A. Karoly and L.P. Szanto--artists," the same names found on murals dating from 1954 that now are located in the buffet area of the Regency Room. Other small murals, dating from the original 1938 decoration of the room, frame circular wrought iron grilles with painted palm fronds and drapery; pairs of wall sconces with alabaster-like plastic shades and gilded palm fronds adorn each of these smaller panels. The room's oval ceiling, originally painted dark blue with a gilded compass, constellations, and zodiacal signs, today retains a more recent blue-sky-and-clouds mural. The 1995 renovations included addition of a central plaster ceiling ornament from which a crystal chandelier hangs. A large modern fountain and basin directly below the chandelier are set off from the large oval carpet by a border of travertine marble tiles.

The Pine Room (originally called the Lounge) and the former Writing Room open directly off of the south side of the Oval Room. Collectively known now as the Pine Room Pub, the rooms feature V-grooved and recessed knotty pine paneling and wainscoting, and an Italian black-marble fireplace surround. Another of the hotel's original murals on canvas, this one a stylized birds-eye view of Roanoke dating from 1938, hangs framed above the mantelpiece. Scalloped wooden valances and other trim embellish window openings, while dentils adorn the upper wall surfaces adjoining the plastered ceiling. Alterations for the 1995 renovation included installation of kitchen and bar facilities, and replacement of the old light fixtures with Craftsman-style reproduction brass chandeliers and stained-glass wall sconces. The rooms also receive ample natural daylight from large arched window openings at the adjoining terrace.

Peacock Alley extends northward from the Oval Room towards the meeting rooms at the north end of the main building. The paneled walls and coved ceiling of the long corridor are highlighted by three triptych sets of hand blocked English wallpaper panels. Each of the panel groups, which are placed on the west wall, features a peacock perched amidst lush garden foliage. The east wall of Peacock Alley includes several sets of French doors that lead out into the Garden Court, an outdoor space formerly home to the Crystal Ballroom. In addition, the corridor features four classically-styled urn-form suspended ceiling light fixtures of brass and nickel, probably derived from examples of Roman oil lamps and in keeping with the classical features found throughout the hotel interior..

Within the hotel's guest room levels, original interior partition walls of structural clay tiles, finished with plaster on expanded metal lath, have been mostly replaced by metal-framed partition walls finished with textured vinyl wallpapers. The concrete floors in corridors and guest rooms have been softened with patterned wall-to-wall carpets on thick pads. Historic bathroom finishes included mosaic tile floors in a variety of intricate patterns and colors; marble shower partitions; and standard white porcelain and enameled cast iron fixtures with nickel-plated handles and faucets. Although no historic period fixtures or materials were salvaged for reuse, modern reproduction pedestal sinks, lever-type chrome-plated faucets, and mosaic tile floors in the bathrooms reference their original character. The seventh-floor Governor's Suite occupies tower rooms that formerly served as a

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 9

Hotel Roanoke
City of Roanoke, VA

Description (continued)

private apartment. The accommodation now includes a vestibule, rooftop terrace, two bedrooms, two baths, kitchen, dining room and living room. A reproduction Federal-style mantelpiece, original to the apartment, still serves as the living room's focal point, while an urn-shaped fixture like those hanging in Peacock Alley illuminates the dining room.

The Conference Center's interior, mostly modern with a traditional theme, features a few historically important appointments salvaged from the demolished 1938 Crystal Ballroom: Within the north lobby, adjacent to Wells Avenue, hang the three magnificent Czechoslovakian crystal chandeliers from which the former ballroom took its name. In addition, the Conference Center's small ballroom incorporates most of the arched window bays from the old Crystal Ballroom, including their Corinthian order pilasters, multi-pane mirrored windows, decorative cast iron spandrel grilles, and flanking rectangular murals on canvas. Original dogwood-pattern wall sconces are also employed in the new ballroom to supplement the automated ceiling light array, and other modern finishes were chosen to complement the historic paint colors of the old ballroom's salvaged features.

Landscape Features

The original plot for the Hotel Roanoke, which consisted of a 7-1/4--acre parcel, has survived remarkably complete and intact, considering the number of changes to the building on site over its 100-plus-year history. West of the main driveway (formerly Commonwealth Avenue) and main parking lot (owned by Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority), numerous early elements of the landscape survive to the present as feature points within the current site design. Rusticated limestone fences with grapevine mortar joints predate 1916; sections of the original fence, including one gatepost, survive along Jefferson Street and Shenandoah Avenue. In some other areas along the property boundaries, portions of the fence have been reconstructed where they had been altered or removed in the past; the new work can be distinguished from the old by differences in the finishing of mortar joints. While much of the landscape remains in grassy lawn, several spectacular specimen trees along the south and east slopes of the hill appear to survive from the early twentieth century. Two *Magnolia grandiflora* (Southern magnolia), a *Cedrus deodara* (Deodar cedar), and several *Acer rubrum* (red maple) constitute the major large trees on the property, while numerous *Cornus florida* (flowering dogwood) have achieved good size and longevity. Mature shrubs and small trees that survive as foundation plantings adjacent to the 1938 and 1946 wings of the hotel include several varieties of *Ilex* (holly), *Magnolia soulangiana* (saucer magnolia), and *Buxus sempervirens* (English boxwood).

Some of these plants might actually date from the 1938 landscape plan developed by A.A. Farnham, a Harvard-educated professor of landscape architecture at Virginia Polytechnic Institute in nearby Blacksburg, Virginia. Farnham's design, which he described as "a veritable oasis amidst business and industry,"² included a formal garden

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 10

Hotel Roanoke
City of Roanoke, VA

Description (continued)

north of the Regency Room, a surface parking lot occupying the northwest corner of the property, a paved walkway and steps leading from the train station to the hotel's front entry, and perimeter plantings of hedges and trees. Farnham's plant selections included pink and white dogwoods, redbuds, Japanese cherry, spring blooming shrubs, hypericum, periwinkle, spirea, Persian lilac, Japanese quince, crape myrtle, althea, and box trees.³ Except for a small proportion of the plant materials, these elements of the Farnham landscape do not survive. The Farnham plan also introduced three driveways into the property, leading automobile traffic from Jefferson Street and Wells and Commonwealth avenues to the hotel's main entrance, where they converged around one important component of Farnham's design that has survived--the circular reflecting pool. This feature, thirty-five feet in diameter, is set within a seventy-eight-foot-diameter plant island. The Wells Avenue and Jefferson Street access drives were eliminated with the addition of the Conference Center in 1995, but the driveway that led from Commonwealth Avenue remains in use. It has been relocated just south of its previous alignment, providing more open space adjacent to the building. The drive still connects with the former Commonwealth Avenue alignment, which links Shenandoah and Wells avenues today.

Historic post card views of the 1940s and 1950s show the reflecting pool without its current fountain, surrounded by a smooth border of grass. In later years, the hotel replaced the plain grass with flowering shrubs and herbaceous plants, a tradition that continues with the present landscape design for the island bed. Currently, mass plantings of herbaceous perennials *Lavandula angustifolia* (lavender), *Erica carnea* (heather), *Achillea millefolium* (yarrow), and *Hemerocallis* (daylily); along with bulbs *Iris xiphoides* (bearded iris) and *Daffodilis* (daffodils); and a few annuals (*Petunia* and others) form a six-pointed star pattern around the water feature. Hill Studio, P.C., of Roanoke (David Hill, A.S.L.A., landscape architect), prepared the 1995 landscape plan. Permanent plantings selected for the reflecting pool border and other areas of the property were derived in part from lists of perennials, annuals, shrubs, and trees historically used on the hotel grounds; and supplemented by other native and exotic plant materials suited to local conditions and climate.

The property's north courtyard, serving as the Conference Center's main entrance, employs rectangular flower beds that recall in their shapes the flower beds of Farnham's 1938 formal garden. Likewise, the finely-divided compound leaves of the courtyard's trees--*Gleditsia tiacanthos* var. *Inermis* 'Sunburst' recall the original *Mimosa* trees that formerly shaded walkways of the formal garden. Brick-like pavers, some of which memorialize gifts to the "Renew Roanoke" fundraising drive, serve as the courtyard's hard-surface floor. North of the nominated portion of the property, parking areas and circulation corridors fill the space between the hotel and the current alignment of Wells Avenue.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7.8 Page 11

Hotel Roanoke
City of Roanoke, VA

Description (continued)

Adjacent transportation-related structures

The property's irregularly shaped boundary along Shenandoah Avenue reflects the exclusion of a recently-developed pedestrian transportation corridor intended to link the area north of the Norfolk and Southern railroad tracks with the City Market Historic District, the core of Roanoke's revitalized downtown area. The transportation corridor incorporates two pedestrian walkways. The first, linking directly with the Conference Center, incorporates a canopied sidewalk that follows the southern curve of the hotel's circular entry court and references historic train station concourses through its use of cast metal supports and decorative detailing, a pressed-metal ceiling, and simple gabled form. An octagonal masonry tower, designed to approximate the scale and detailing of the hotel's southeast tower feature, links the covered sidewalk with a glass-encased pedestrian bridge that spans the railroad tracks at an angle, in an attempt to preserve views between the Hotel Roanoke and the City Market. The pedestrian bridge, designed to recall the metal trusses historically used for transportation structures in Virginia, is currently under construction. Sheathed with light-green glass panes arranged in a highly visible grid pattern, the bridge presents a modern contrast to the historic buildings and structures around it.

Leslie A. Giles

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary Statement of Significance and Justification of Criteria

Hotel Roanoke, prominently located in the City of Roanoke on a block overlooking the downtown business district and the Norfolk Southern railroad tracks, is a visual, cultural, social, and architectural landmark in Roanoke and southwestern Virginia. Hotel Roanoke, with a period of significance ranging from 1882-1946, qualifies for the National Register of Historic Places at the statewide level of significance according to Criterion A in the areas of Transportation, Commerce/Trade, and Social History. The first (1882) hotel building on the site was constructed and operated for the Norfolk & Western railroad by its development subsidiary, the Roanoke Land & Improvement Company. The Norfolk & Western railroad was a major steel rail era transportation system that contributed significantly to the enormous expansion of American industrial capacity from the 1880s to World War I. As the headquarters of Norfolk & Western from 1881 through 1982, Roanoke was a focal point of the southern urban Appalachian transportation network between 1890 and 1950. In turn, Hotel Roanoke--subjected to numerous alterations and rebuildings through the years--has been the site of choice for regional cultural events, business meetings, conventions, assemblies, and political gatherings, and has provided gracious lodging and dining for over one hundred years. Hotel Roanoke also played an important role in the city's social history as a meeting place for social organizations, a memorable destination for formal family outings, and a place of employment for

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 12

Hotel Roanoke
City of Roanoke, VA

Statement of Significance (continued)

an important sector of Roanoke residents, namely African-Americans from nearby neighborhoods. In addition, the hotel meets National Register Criterion C in the area of Architecture as the city's most prominent example of Tudor Revival architectural design. Although the earliest surviving portion of the hotel dates only to 1931, when the Tudor Revival style was elsewhere being supplanted by colonial revivals, the retention of a Tudor aspect for the 1931 and all subsequent additions and rebuildings (1938, 1946, 1954, 1995) underscores the continued influence of Queen Anne and Tudor Revival stylistic precedents established and popularized in the city by earlier versions of the hotel.

Leslie A. Giles and John R. Kern, Ph.D.

Historical Background

Philadelphia industrialists began to plan for construction of the original Hotel Roanoke in 1881 when they created the Norfolk & Western Railroad and decided to locate its headquarters at Big Lick, known thereafter as Roanoke. In February 1881 Clarence H. Clark of the E.W. Clark banking firm of Philadelphia purchased the Atlantic, Mississippi and Ohio Railroad (AM&O) and renamed the line the Norfolk & Western. The AM&O included the antebellum Virginia and Tennessee Railroad that ran through Big Lick on its east-west route from Lynchburg to Bristol. The E.W. Clark firm had already purchased the Shenandoah Valley Railroad in 1879, and charged Frederick J. Kimball as president of the Shenandoah Valley Construction company with building that line south to a connection with the AM&O. Clarence H. Clark and Frederick J. Kimball both attended the first Norfolk & Western board of directors meeting in May 1881. C.H. Clark and F.J. Kimball also served as charter members of the Roanoke Land & Improvement Company, an organization incorporated in September 1881 for the purpose of "acquisition of land at Roanoke, which is to be the point of connection between the Norfolk and Western and the Shenandoah Valley railroads, to improve the same by laying it out into streets, the erection of houses, and also to build and equip a hotel--capacity about 20."⁴

The Roanoke Land & Improvement Company charter authorized \$20,000 for "building and furnishing a hotel" and another \$46,000 for operation of gas and water works, land purchase, and house construction. Members of the Roanoke Land & Improvement Company expected and received profitable returns on lands acquired at agricultural prices, before others knew that Roanoke would be the head of a major railroad connection. Within a year of incorporation, Roanoke Land & Improvement Company officials had secured a town charter for Roanoke; had arranged for survey of town lots and construction of 85 dwellings that averaged \$1,250 in building value; had purchased and sold the Roanoke Machine Works on 94 acres of land with buildings valued at \$200,000;

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 13

Hotel Roanoke
City of Roanoke, VA

Statement of Significance (continued)

had purchased and sold the Crozer Steel and Iron Company on 38 acres, one mile northeast of the Machine Works with buildings valued at \$159,000; and had constructed Hotel Roanoke on 7¼ acres on the north side of the tracks just west of the Machine Works with buildings valued at \$35,000.⁵

Drafted in January 1882 by Philadelphia architect George T. Pearson, plans for the original Hotel Roanoke called for quarried stone footings, brick fireplaces and chimneys, wooden floors and porches, and a cypress-shingled roof. Tin work and shingles were to be painted medium dark red. Interior plans specified the use of select yellow pine for paneling and wainscoting; the main stairway was to be of higher grade oak. In May 1882 while the building was still under construction, hotel contractor Julius Holms received authorization from the Roanoke Land & Improvement Company to build a two-and-a-half story annex to the hotel for \$12,000 "agreeable to plans and specifications prepared by G.T. Pearson."⁶

When Hotel Roanoke first opened in October 1882, a reporter for the *Roanoke Leader* described the "splendid hotel" as a two-and-one-half-story structure with a main building 177 feet long by 73 feet wide and an annex 132 feet long by 48 feet wide. L-plan in design, the main building fronted Jefferson Street to the west, and the east wing annex fronted Shenandoah Avenue to the south. Pressed brick fireplaces "after the Queen Anne style" adorned the bar room and the main office, both of which were situated in the main building. North of the main office was a dining room capable of seating 200 guests. A grand stairway ascended in the main building to nineteen guest rooms on the second floor and to fifteen rooms on the third floor. The two-and-one-half-story east wing annex housed fourteen rooms each on the first and second floors and seven rooms on the third half-story. "The Queen Anne style. . . architecture of the entire building" featured spacious two-story wraparound verandas that provided magnificent views of the surrounding mountains. Early photographs of Hotel Roanoke show ivy-covered porch columns on the east wing annex, but only small plantings along a driveway that ascended diagonally from the corner of Shenandoah Avenue and Jefferson Street to the main entrance of the hotel.⁷

The Roanoke Land & Improvement Company continued to manage Hotel Roanoke for the remainder of the decade as evidenced by Roanoke Land & Improvement Company approval of a lease arrangement under which G.K. Mullin operated the establishment from 1882 to 1887, with the lease generally fixed at \$2,000 a year. When Roanoke Land & Improvement Company directors noted in their April 1883 minutes that the American Institute of Mining Engineers was to hold a meeting at the hotel that June, they authorized expenditure of \$500 for entertainment of the visiting engineers.⁸ Hotel Roanoke, under a for profit lease, was already in the convention business.

By 1890 the configuration of the Hotel Roanoke changed with construction of a brick and half-timbered three-and-

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 14

Hotel Roanoke
City of Roanoke, VA

Statement of Significance (continued)

one-half-story main wing that incorporated portions of the original main building but then extended almost 200 feet to the west. This new main wing housed a dining room, but the 1890 construction did not demolish the original 1882 dining room, kitchen, laundry, or ice house. Hotel Roanoke had a greenhouse by 1893, two fountains by 1898, and a gazebo by 1903. The west end of the 1890 main wing featured a two-story five-sided wraparound porch. The entire hotel then contained ninety-four rooms. Once completed, the principal, many faceted south facade paralleled the main Norfolk & Western tracks and faced the Norfolk & Western passenger station across Shenandoah Avenue. The square half-timbered pyramidal roof tower that accented the connection between the 1890 main wing and the east wing annex became a defining architectural element that was retained and eventually repeated in subsequent expansions of the hotel. With its half-timbered gable ends and irregular roof massing, Hotel Roanoke in 1890 resembled the first Norfolk & Western office building that stood on the northwest corner of Jefferson Street and Shenandoah Avenue and faced the hotel from 1884 until the office building burned in 1896.⁹

The expansion of Hotel Roanoke during the late nineteenth century reflected the economic success of the Norfolk & Western railroad and the boom town prosperity of the city that headquartered that major steel rail era line. By 1890 F.J. Kimball had served as president of Norfolk & Western for more than six years. During that time the railroad had doubled its miles of track; had completed its New River division line to the Pocahontas coalfields; and had built track to transport that coal to the industrial Middle West as well as to Tidewater Norfolk. Roanoke grew as Norfolk & Western prospered. By 1890 when Kimball was president *pro tem* of the Roanoke Land & Improvement Company and president of the Roanoke Machine Works, the city's population had grown to 16,000, an increase of 15,000 from the date of the initial town charter in 1882. Norfolk & Western and the city of Roanoke weathered the panic of 1893, as coal shipments and passenger traffic continued to increase, and Roanoke's population grew to 21,500 by 1900, making it Virginia's fourth largest city at the turn of the twentieth century.¹⁰

Roanoke boosters began to describe "Hotel Roanoke [as] an institution which ranks among the best in the land, and which has been identified with the progress of the city throughout its entire history." Thus there was little question that Hotel Roanoke would be rebuilt when the second and third stories of the 1890 main wing burned in July 1898. Reconstruction proceeded quickly on the same footings, and the hotel reopened for business within a year.¹¹

Norfolk & Western records preserved at Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University provide detailed information on the operation of Hotel Roanoke during the first two decades of the twentieth century and on a major phase of new construction in 1916. By 1903 Lucius E. Johnson had succeeded F.J. Kimball as President of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 15Hotel Roanoke
City of Roanoke, VA

Statement of Significance (continued)

Norfolk & Western and by 1910 the railroad had assumed full title to the Hotel as evidenced by a five year lease of the hotel from Norfolk & Western to Fred Foster for 11 percent of gross receipts or for an annual payment of not less than \$3,600. Roanoke's population had grown to 35,000 by 1910. In 1912, the Roanoke Chamber of Commerce asked Norfolk & Western president L.E. Johnson to expand the hotel to attract more commercial travelers and tourists. Johnson replied that he had architectural plans for enlarging Hotel Roanoke, but that Norfolk & Western was in the transportation business, not the hotel business. Passenger and freight traffic continued to increase over the next three years, and in March 1915 Norfolk & Western Vice President Nicholas D. Maher received plans and cost estimates from the Frye and Chesterman architectural office in Roanoke for a new brick three-story east wing 138' long by 45' wide. The three-story half-timbered gable ends of the new wing were "to conform to the present building" completed by 1890, and the original two-and-a-half story wooden east wing annex was to be "moved to the rear, thoroughly repaired, replastered, repainted, and provided with running water in each room." Late in 1915 Norfolk & Western president Johnson announced pending plans for construction and authorized expenditure of \$150,000 for the project. Construction proceeded in 1916 under the supervision of architects Frye and Chesterman and contractor Pettyjohn. By the end of 1916 Johnson objected to project cost overruns, "Something has been said about additional porches which I think are entirely unnecessary," and to project delays, "Cannot something be done to hurry up this work and get the new building in operation?" When construction was completed the following year for a total cost of \$250,000, Hotel Roanoke featured a new brick and half-timbered east wing starkly devoid of porches, a new banquet hall, a new private dining room, and a rebuilt kitchen. The 1882 two-and-a-half story wooden east wing annex had been moved to the northeast where it made a perpendicular connection with the northeast corner of the new east wing.¹² With its 1890 main or west wing, its relocated northeast wing annex, its new east wing and new banquet hall, the Hotel Roanoke plan constructed in 1916 established the basic plan that was retained in the hotel's 1930s reconstruction.

Norfolk & Western developed two of the principal wings of Hotel Roanoke that stand today during the decade of the Great Depression. Built in 1931, the Northeast Wing replaced the 1882 frame annex that had been moved to its site in 1916. Built by 1938, the West Wing replaced the 1890/1898 west or main wing. Construction of the Northeast Wing in 1931 probably reflected the fact that Norfolk & Western coal shipments had increased 60 per cent in tonnage from 1920 to 1930 and also represented a response to the general increase in automobile traffic experienced in Virginia and throughout the nation between World War I and the Depression. Construction of the major West Wing in 1937-1938 probably also reflected the relative prosperity of Norfolk & Western throughout the 1930s; annual coal tonnage shipments during the 1930s never fell below levels shipped in 1921, and increased 60 per cent between 1932 and 1936. The West Wing expansion may also have reflected the conscious decision of Norfolk & Western management to provide more lodging for the greater number of passengers carried by the railroad during the Depression.¹³ Norfolk & Western publicity described the 1931

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 16

Hotel Roanoke
City of Roanoke, VA

Statement of Significance (continued)

Northeast Wing simply as an architectural extension of the hotel. In marked contrast, Norfolk & Western launched a major marketing campaign to describe the 1938 West Wing as an architecturally significant modern version of an old English inn.

Norfolk & Western promotional literature on completion of the 1931 Northeast Wing stressed architectural continuity, civic pride, and interest in automobile tourism. The *Norfolk and Western Magazine* observed that the new wing commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of Hotel Roanoke and that the new wing's "gables, dormers and casement windows are entirely in keeping with the unique architectural beauty which has in the past set Hotel Roanoke apart." Roanoke, the Magic City, with a population of almost 70,000 by 1930, could be proud of the hotel which "marked Roanoke's growing popularity as a convention city." And the new wing's garage would attract "thousands of visitors that the Shenandoah and Great Smoky National Park projects and the historic shrines and beautiful scenery of Virginia will draw through Roanoke." Constructed entirely in 1931 for a total cost of \$225,000, the steel, brick and concrete four-story addition was apparently designed by the office of the Norfolk & Western Chief Engineer. The general contractor was J.P. Pettyjohn and Company of Lynchburg. Subcontractors from Roanoke included: excavation, W.W. Draper and Sons; structural steel, Virginia Bridge and Iron Company; heating and plumbing, R.H. Lowe and Company; electrical, Richardson-Wayland Electric Corporation; painting, Hesse and Hurt; paper hanging, Berry Paint and Wall Paper Company; hardware, Graves-Humphreys Hardware Company; stone, Grosso and Son; and glazed tile and terrazzo, Roanoke Marble and Granite Company. The new decoratively half-timbered Northeast Wing measured 133 feet in length and 55 feet in width with a basement garage that could accommodate 60 cars. The four stories above housed 65 guest rooms and brought the hotel's total room count to 250.¹⁴

Publicity for the opening of Hotel Roanoke's major new West Wing in 1938 also stressed the hotel's strategic location for tourists "between the magnificent Shenandoah National Park area and the Great Smoky region." But ambitious promotional literature for the hotel in 1938 placed new marketing emphasis on the national reputation of the West Wing's designer, the architectural firm of George B. Post & Sons, New York City, and on their mastery of the English architectural traditions that influenced their design for the new Hotel Roanoke. A November 1938 article in *Hotel Management* featured Hotel Roanoke as a "Modern Air Conditioned Version of an Old English Inn." The article identified George B. Post & Sons as the architects of "23 hotels from . . . Massachusetts to Washington State." The firm

designed and supervised the construction, decoration and installation of every detail of the new Hotel Roanoke. They awarded and passed on all contracts. They wrote and checked all specifications. Not even a spoon or fork was ordered without their approval on design. They

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 17

Hotel Roanoke
City of Roanoke, VA

Statement of Significance (continued)

were consultants on all furnishings and furniture. As a result of this coordination the owners of this magnificent hostelry have a harmonious, architecturally perfect, structurally sound landmark.

The article emphasized that the firm's design for the new West Wing of Hotel Roanoke was inspired by their thorough knowledge of English architectural tradition. Their execution of the new West Wing exterior was "English in design with half-timber treatment [and] Tudor entrance portico." Their Lobby was "English in character." They selected the "Georgian design" of the Main Dining room, now the Regency Dining Room; the Palm Court, now the Oval Room; and the Grand Ballroom. They chose the blocked English print with hand painted peacocks for Peacock Alley. George B. Post & Sons also selected consultants of national stature to furnish and decorate the interior public spaces of the hotel: furnishings by Marshal Field and Company of Chicago; decorating of special rooms by Rambusch Decorating Company of New York City. As an aside to Virginia's early history, artist Hugo Ohlms was selected to paint nine murals in the Lobby that depicted colonial era Tidewater scenes from the landing at Jamestown to the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown. The only reference to Roanoke history in the West Wing design appeared in the arrangement of stars painted on the ceiling of the Palm Court or Oval Room; "a constellation of stars dated November 1st, 1852, was selected, this being the date of the first train entering Roanoke." Despite an interior design concession to Roanoke history, and the murals of early Virginia Tidewater History, the advertising message for the West Wing in 1938 was clear. The new Hotel Roanoke was a high English style creation of nationally recognized architects and consultants, not the work of architects affiliated with Norfolk & Western and not the work of local contractors.¹⁵

Promotional literature for the 1938 addition to Hotel Roanoke also emphasized new technical advances provided in the West Wing. The West Wing was "one of the first in America scientifically designed for air conditioning," thanks to a subcontract with York Ice Machinery Corporation. Nathan Straus-Duparquet, Inc. of New York City provided state of the art kitchen equipment. U.S. Hoffman Machinery Corporation of New York City installed the washers, extractors and presses for the hotel's model laundry.¹⁶

Harvard-trained landscape architect A.A. Farnham designed the plantings that surrounded the major reconfiguration of Hotel Roanoke in 1938. Farnham's plan featured a reflecting pool in front of the Main West Wing entrance; a formal garden north of the hotel with beds of bulbs bordered by a hedge and evergreens; and front or south lawn plantings of pink and white dogwoods, redbuds, Japanese cherry, spring blooming shrubs, and low grown hypericum and periwinkle.¹⁷

Completed for a total cost of \$500,000 the West Wing measured about 200 feet in length and width. Hotel Roanoke's public rooms in 1938 provided seating for 2,500 conference attendants and banquet capacity for 1,800

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 18

Hotel Roanoke
City of Roanoke, VA

Statement of Significance (continued)

guests, making the new hotel the "largest convention area in Virginia." The hotel's basement garage provided parking space for 100 cars. The 4 and 5 stories and tower above contained 181 rooms and brought the hotel's total room count to 310.¹⁸

Hotel Roanoke construction during the 1930s marked the end of an era for the city's oldest hotel. Construction of the 1931 Northeast Wing led to demolition of the 1882 two-and-a-half story frame annex with its two-story wraparound veranda. Construction of the 1938 West Wing led to demolition of the 1890 west or main wing with its west end two-story wraparound porch. By 1938 Hotel Roanoke was an air conditioned hotel and conference center and, as always, a place for fine dining and lodging. But by 1938 the hotel no longer contained vestiges of its late nineteenth-century character as a resort destination where guests sat on shaded porches and viewed the surrounding mountains.

During the 1940s as World War II brought America out of the Great Depression, Norfolk & Western coal shipments increased 45 per cent over the previous decade; Norfolk & Western passenger traffic continued to grow;¹⁹ and Roanoke's population approached 90,000. The period immediately following World War II marked the peak of Roanoke's urban expansion and signaled the final stage of major construction for Hotel Roanoke when the new East Wing was completed in 1946 and expanded in 1954.

Designed in July 1945 by architects Small, Smith and Reeb of Cleveland, Ohio, the new East Wing replaced the east wing built in 1916. The new East Wing, like the 1938 West Wing, was not the work of Norfolk & Western engineers and local Roanoke area consultants. Small, Smith and Reeb relied on technical consultants of their own choosing: James I. Kuhn of Cleveland as consulting structural engineer; John Paul Jones, Cary and Millar of Cleveland as consulting mechanical engineers. Built at a cost of \$1,100,000, the new five-story South Wing measured 192 feet in length and 52 feet in width, contained hotel offices, a beauty parlor, several small conference rooms, and 109 guest rooms, bringing the total number of guest rooms to 365.²⁰

In 1946, with completion of the new East Wing, Striplin's official history of the Norfolk & Western railroad noted that, "this year the Hotel Roanoke was completely modernized to a 365-room, fire proof, air conditioned old style English hostelry." Three years later Norfolk & Western president Robert H. Smith commented with pride that the "Norfolk and Western. . . had become, in 1948, a railroad with the largest number of freight cars per mile of line, the highest density of freight traffic in tons per mile of line per day, and the highest average ton miles per freight train for any American railroad a thousand miles or longer." By 1950 Roanoke's population had increased to 92,000 and Hotel Roanoke stood in its expanded and modernized plan as the commercial centerpiece of the city that originated as the headquarters of the Norfolk & Western railroad.²¹

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 19

Hotel Roanoke
City of Roanoke, VA

Statement of Significance (continued)

In 1953 Small, Smith and Reeb designed another addition to Hotel Roanoke. Placed at the north end of the 1938 West Wing, the new six-story addition contained an exhibition hall and segregated dining facilities for hotel employees on the first floor; provided eleven new guest rooms on each of the second, third and fourth floors; and added twenty-two new guest rooms on the fifth floor. Completed in 1954 for \$1,000,000, the north wing addition gave Hotel Roanoke a total guest room count of 416.²²

If Hotel Roanoke expanded and changed with the fortunes of Norfolk & Western, the hotel always served as a focal point for the social life of Roanoke Valley residents. Donlan Piedmont's *Peanut Soup and Spoonbread: An Informal History of Hotel Roanoke*, captures the excitement of the hotel's hospitality from the first formal Christmas dinner in 1882, to meetings of the German Club from the 1880s, to masquerade balls in the 1930s, to his own wedding there in 1954. Throughout its history Hotel Roanoke hosted high school banquets, dances, receptions, business meetings, chamber of commerce gatherings, business conventions and reunions, and was remembered affectionately by western Virginians as a destination for family outings and formal dinners.²³

African-Americans could not stay at Hotel Roanoke until passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, but the hotel has provided gainful employment for Roanoke area African-Americans from the 1880s to the present. African-Americans have always comprised about 25 per cent of Roanoke's population; they have lived in residential neighborhoods near Hotel Roanoke since 1890; and they have always provided most of Hotel Roanoke's labor force as maids, waiters, porters, cooks, and launderers. J. Ed Brown lived on Centre Avenue one block west of Hotel Roanoke in 1900 and worked at the hotel as a waiter; he was listed as the hotel's assistant head waiter in 1938; and he retired in 1944 after 62 years of service at the hotel. William Campbell lived on Jefferson Street four blocks north of Hotel Roanoke when he began working there as a waiter in 1903, a job he held until 1948. In 1938 the Hotel Roanoke Superintendent of Service, A.L. Coleman, and headwaiter George R. Bailey were also African-Americans who lived within walking distance of the hotel in what is now known as the Gainsboro Neighborhood. Hotel Roanoke cook Fred R. Brown lived two blocks from the hotel on the corner of Gilmer Avenue and 1st Street in 1941, the year after he invented the hotel's famous peanut soup.²⁴

Hotel Roanoke continued to operate under the management of Norfolk and Western until the 1982 merger of Norfolk & Western with Southern Railway that formed the Norfolk Southern Corporation. Seven years after that merger, in July 1989, Norfolk Southern officials announced their donation of Hotel Roanoke to the Virginia Tech Real Estate Foundation, Inc., for use by the university for conferences and continuing education. VPI & SU president James McComas accepted the donation and accepted the challenge to "restore the Hotel and return it to its place as the grand dame of Roanoke's hotels." In 1912 Norfolk & Western president Lucius Johnson said his railroad was in the transportation business, not the hotel business, but three years later he authorized a major

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 20

Hotel Roanoke
City of Roanoke, VA

Statement of Significance (continued)

expansion of Hotel Roanoke. By the late 1980s the Norfolk Southern transportation system no longer carried passenger traffic, and post steel rail era industrial conglomerates no longer sponsored showplace hotels to demonstrate their economic strength. But the legacy of Hotel Roanoke survived as the architectural embodiment of hospitality and elegant service and as the symbol of Roanoke's railroad heritage and economic prosperity. That legacy enabled the Virginia Tech Real Estate Foundation, Roanoke city officials, and Roanoke area residents to raise sufficient funds by January 1993 to proceed with a \$28 million rehabilitation of the hotel and to construct its most recent addition of the \$13 million adjoining Conference Center. In April 1995 Hotel Roanoke reopened as western Virginia's principal hotel and conference center.²⁵

John R. Kern, Ph.D.

ENDNOTES (sections 7 and 8)

1. John Fleming, Hugh Honour, and Nikolaus Pevsner, "George Browne Post," *The Penguin Dictionary of Architecture*, third edition (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd., reprinted 1984), 251.
2. Donlan Piedmont, *Peanut Soup and Spoonbread: An Informal History of Hotel Roanoke* (Roanoke: Virginia Tech Real Estate Foundation, Inc., 1994), 35.
3. "A Modern Air Conditioned Version of an Old English Inn, Hotel Roanoke, Roanoke, Virginia," photocopy of 35-page-long article [identified with handwritten note as special insert section from *Hotel Management* (Nov. 1938)] in Hotel Roanoke file, Virginia Room, Roanoke Public Library, no page cited (hereafter cited as "Hotel Roanoke").
4. E.F. Pat Striplin, *The Norfolk and Western, A History* (Roanoke: Norfolk and Western Railway Company, 1981) chapters 3, 4. Norfolk and Western Railway Company Records, Special Collections Department of the University Libraries at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg (hereafter cited as N&W Records). Roanoke Land & Improvement Company Records, Roanoke Valley History Museum Archives, Roanoke (hereafter cited as RL&IC Records).
5. RL&IC Records. Roanoke County Land Books, 1883.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 21

Hotel Roanoke
City of Roanoke, VA

Statement of Significance (continued)

6. RL&IC Records.
7. *Roanoke Leader* 26 Oct. 1882. RL&IC Records.
8. RL&IC Records.
9. *Roanoke*, map (New York: Sanborn Map & Publishing Company, 1886, 1893, 1898, 1903). Photo Archives, Roanoke Valley History Museum Archives.
10. Striplin, Chapter 5. The Norfolk & Western Railroad Company went into receivership in 1895 and was reorganized as the Norfolk & Western Railway Company in 1896; Striplin, Chapter 7.
11. E.B. Jacobs, *History of Roanoke City and History of the Norfolk and Western Railway Company* (Roanoke: George S. Jack and E.B. Jacobs, 1912) 120. Donlan Piedmont, *Peanut Soup and Spoonbread: An Informal History of Hotel Roanoke* (Roanoke: Progress Press, Inc., 1994) 28-31. *Roanoke*, map (Sanborn, 1898, 1903).
12. N&W Records. *Roanoke*, map (Sanborn, 1919). In Oct. 1916 the Norfolk & Western Board of Directors rejected plans to rebuild the west end of the hotel that had been constructed in 1890.
13. Striplin, Chapter 9.
14. *Norfolk and Western Magazine*, 1931, 687-8. Norfolk & Western Railway Plans, Hotel Roanoke Addition, Northeast wing, 1931. N&W Records. *Roanoke Times* 19 November 1931. *Roanoke*, map (Sanborn, 1931, 1937).
15. "Hotel Roanoke," no page.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*
19. Striplin, Chapter 10.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 22

Hotel Roanoke
City of Roanoke, VA

Statement of Significance (continued)

20. Hotel Roanoke Plans, New East Wing, 1945; N&W Records.
21. Striplin, 189. Robert H. Smith, "A Short History of the Norfolk and Western Railway," *Norfolk and Western Magazine* (1950), 117.
22. Hotel Roanoke Alterations, 1953, N&W Records.
23. Piedmont, *passim*.
24. Piedmont, 45-49. Roanoke City Directories, 1890, 1906, 1938, 1941. Erin Baratta, *Gainsboro Historic Context*, Roanoke Regional Preservation Office, 1992. In 1938, 71% of Hotel Roanoke's employees were African Americans. "Hotel Roanoke," no page.
25. Piedmont, 93-115. Mode Johnson, Virginia Tech Real Estate Foundation, interview, 22 August 1995.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 23

Hotel Roanoke
City of Roanoke, VA

9. BIBLIOGRAPHY

"A Modern Air Conditioned Version of an Old English Inn, Hotel Roanoke, Roanoke, Virginia." Photocopy [handwritten notation indicates source as *Hotel Management* (November 1938)]. Hotel Roanoke file, Virginia Room, Roanoke Public Library, Roanoke, Virginia.

Baratta, Erin. *Gainsboro Historic Context*. Report on file at Roanoke Regional Preservation Office, Roanoke, Virginia.

Fleming, John, Hugh Honour and Nikolaus Pevsner. "George Browne Post." *The Penguin Dictionary of Architecture*, third edition. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1984 reprint, 251.

Jacobs, E.B. *History of Roanoke City and History of the Norfolk and Western Railway Company*. Roanoke: George S. Jack and E.B. Jacobs, 1912.

Johnson, Mode. Interview with John R. Kern, Ph.D., 22 August 1995. Roanoke, Virginia.

Norfolk and Western Magazine (1931), 687-688, 697. Photocopy. Hotel Roanoke file, Virginia Room, Roanoke Public Library, Roanoke, Virginia.

Norfolk & Western Railway Company Records. Special Collection Department of the University Libraries. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia.

Photo Archives. Roanoke Valley History Museum Archives, Roanoke, Virginia.

Piedmont, Donlan. *Peanut Soup and Spoonbread: An Informal History of Hotel Roanoke*. Roanoke: Virginia Tech Real Estate Foundation, Inc., 1994.

Post, Edward Everett. Telephone interview with Leslie A. Giles, 09 May 1995. Huntington, New York.

Roanoke. Map. New York: Sanborn Map and Publishing Company, 1886, 1893, 1898, 1903, 1907, 1919, 1931, 1937, 1949.

Roanoke City Directories. 1890, 1906, 1938, 1941. Roanoke Public Library, Roanoke, Virginia.

Roanoke County Land Books. 1883. Circuit Court, Salem, Virginia.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 24

Hotel Roanoke
City of Roanoke, VA

Bibliography (continued)

Roanoke Land & Improvement Company Records. Roanoke Valley History Museum Archives, Roanoke, Virginia.

Roanoke Leader. 07 September-26 October 1882. Microfilm. Virginia Room, Roanoke Public Library, Roanoke, Virginia.

Roanoke Times. 19 November 1931. Photocopy of article. Hotel Roanoke file, Virginia Room, Roanoke Public Library, Roanoke, Virginia.

Smith, Robert H. "A Short History of the Norfolk and Western Railway." *Norfolk and Western Magazine* (January-February 1950).

Striplin, E.F. Pat. *The Norfolk & Western, A History*. Roanoke: Norfolk and Western Railway Company, 1981.

Wells, John. Personal communication with Leslie A. Giles, August 1995. Richmond, Virginia.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 25

Hotel Roanoke
City of Roanoke, VA

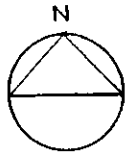
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the nominated property are indicated on the enclosed map, depicted at a scale of 1"=200' and derived from Roanoke City tax maps currently on file at the city engineer's office.

Boundary Justification

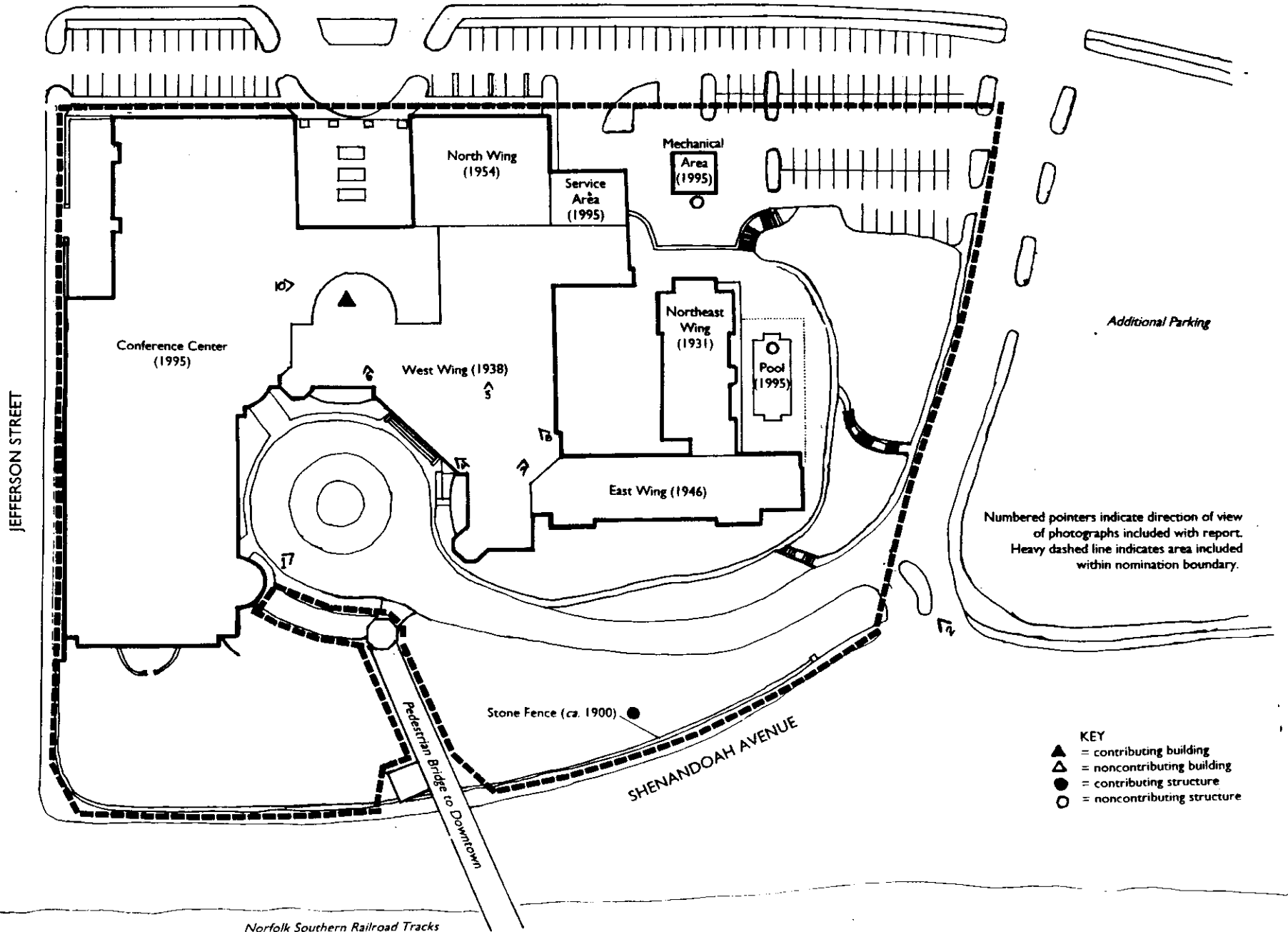
The boundaries of the nominated property include all that acreage originally and historically associated with the development and operation of Hotel Roanoke, excepting a small irregular portion along the south side of the boundary subdivided from the rest for a public pedestrian bridge crossing of the Norfolk Southern railroad tracks. Areas to the north and east of the nominated property, though currently in use for hotel and conference center parking lots, are excluded due to the fact that they have historically been under separate ownership and operation than the hotel. The parcel upon which the Conference Center addition was constructed is not owned by the hotel partnership, but the several physical connections between it and Hotel Roanoke, and their shared functions, dictate that it be included within the nominated area.

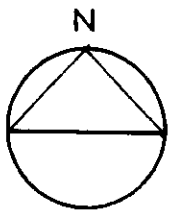


WELLS AVENUE

Hotel Roanoke City of Roanoke, Virginia

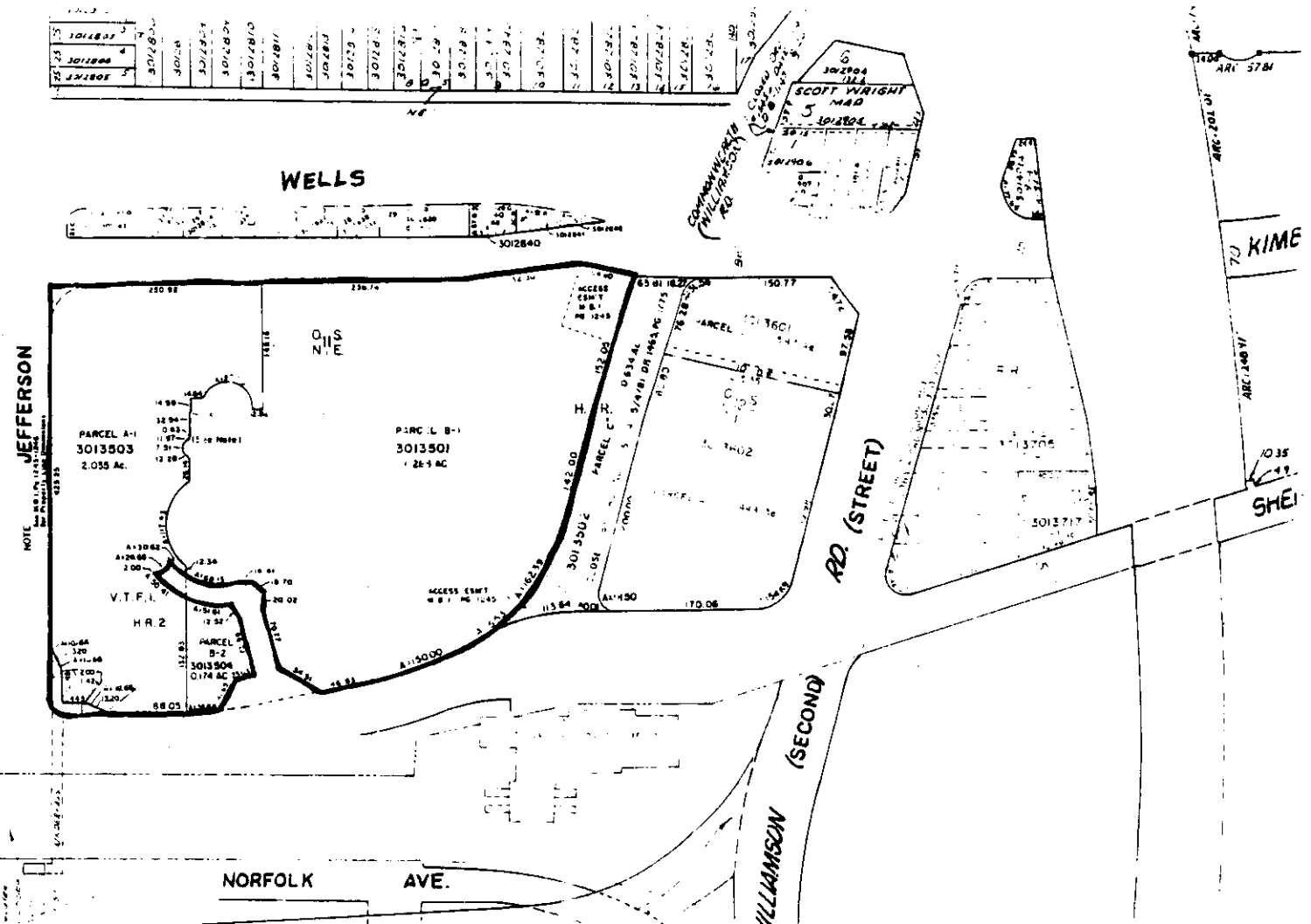
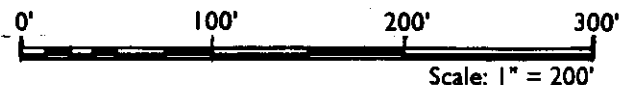
Sketch map of property (not drawn to scale)

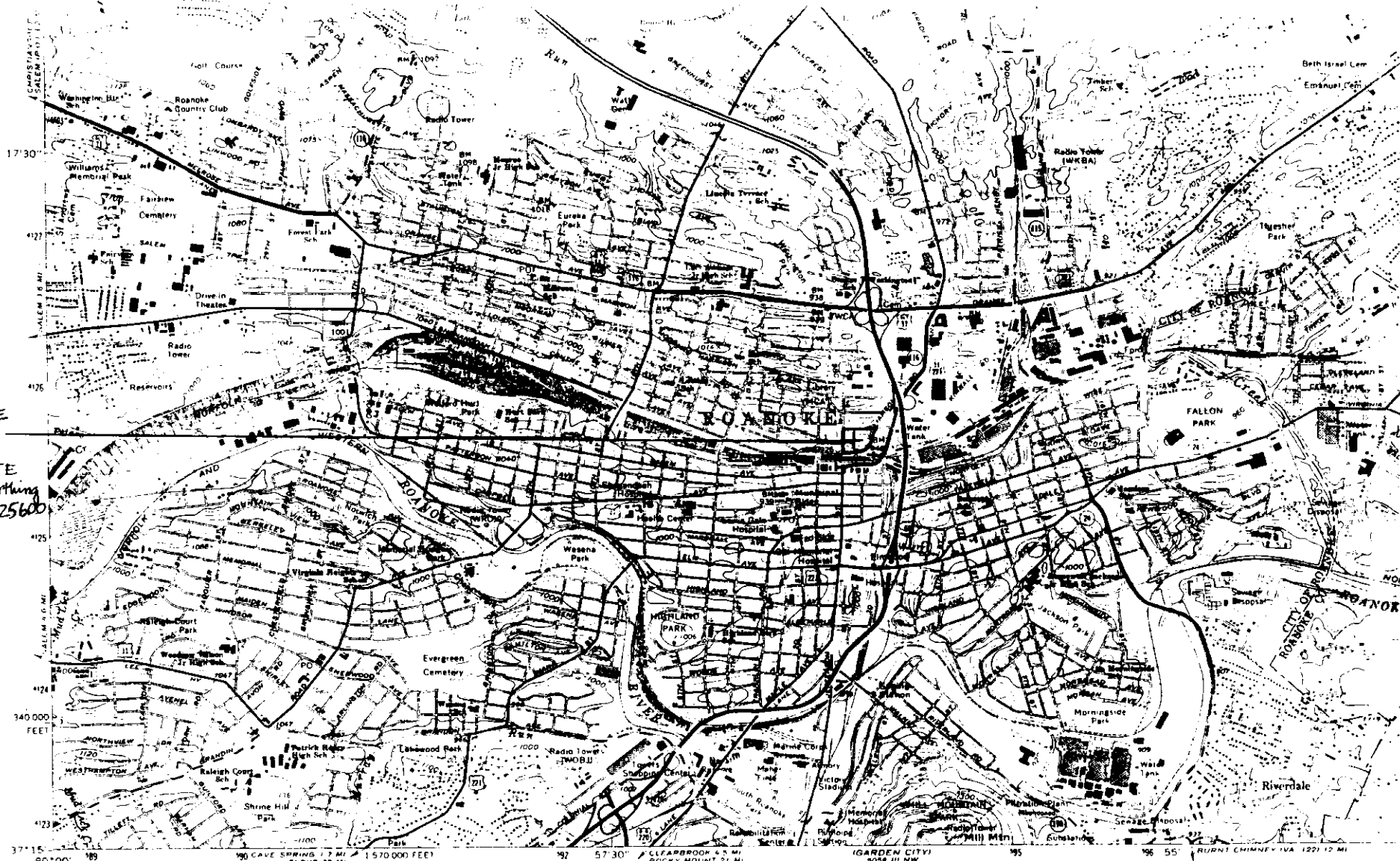




Hotel Roanoke City of Roanoke, Virginia

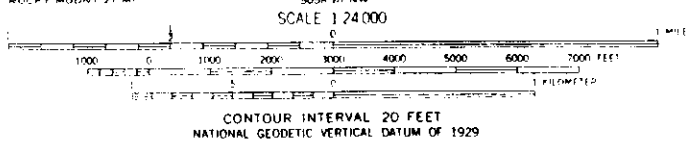
Property boundary map: parcels included in nominated area are indicated by heavy outline.
Source: Roanoke City Tax Maps, on file at City Engineer's Office.





128-0025
HOTEL ROANOKE
ROANOKE, VA
UTM COORDINATE
Zone Easting Northing
17 594000 4125600

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1960. Field checked 1963
Polyconic projection. 10,000-foot grid ticks based on Virginia
coordinate system, south zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 17, shown in blue
1927 North American Datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983
move the projection lines 111 meters south and
15 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks.
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is uncheckered
from color coding areas. It shows only landmarks, buildings, and other



THIS MAP COMPLETS WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U S GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND VIRGINIA DIVISION OF MINERAL RESOURCES, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA 22903
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

MALCOLM BLUM, PRINT
PO BOX 1000, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA
1221 12 MI
703-526-0100

BECK'S MOUNTAIN
DASHVILLE