

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED NATIONAL REGISTER/GEORGIA REGISTER NOMINATION

Name: Ralston Hotel

Location: 211 12th Street, Columbus, Muscogee County

Description: The Ralston Hotel in downtown Columbus is a historic hotel building with five major construction phases spanning 60 years and displaying stylistic features of different eras. All phases are clad in brick and have flat roofs with parapets. The first (and largest) phase is a nine-story Classical Revival-style building with an ornate terra cotta cornice, terra cotta shield-and-swag decoration, French doors with arched transoms, and balconettes at the ninth story. In 1919, an eight-story addition was constructed to the north of the original building, and in 1925, two more stories were added to this addition. Detailing similar to the original building extends to this addition, including terra cotta banding, stone windowsills, and decorative brickwork at the lower levels. A two-story, rear Civic Room addition was constructed in 1939-1941 and provided a large space for social activities. A short time later in 1941, a nine-story Art Moderne-style addition was constructed to the east of the original building with geometric stone banding and chevron detailing. The final addition, constructed in 1976, is an eleven-story utilitarian wing with minimal detailing and is connected to the 1919 addition via a hyphen. Public spaces on the lower floors include a lobby, dining room, former ballroom, former hotel bar, and mezzanine, while the upper floors retain double-loaded corridors, which lead to guest rooms. The building, now housing 271 residential units, was rehabilitated between 2022 and 2024, preserving its historic features while updating finishes and systems.

Acreeage & Boundary Explanation: less than 1 acre, following the legal boundary for the property

Period of Significance: 1915-1975

NR Criterion & Area of Significance: Criteria A and C, Architecture, Social History, and Commerce

Statement of Significance: The Ralston Hotel is significant in the areas of architecture, social history, and commerce. Opening in 1915, the nine-story hotel expanded over time, evolving to reflect current architectural and stylistic trends, from Classical Revival and Art Moderne, and continue to attract visitors with an up-to-date facility. It served as premier venue for social and business events in early-to-mid twentieth-century Columbus, hosting numerous conferences, balls, and other social functions. Throughout its life, the hotel was a preeminent example of a thriving hospitality business within the commercial core of Columbus.

Suggested Level of Significance: Local

Sponsor: The nomination is sponsored by Ralston Towers MF II LLC, and nomination materials were prepared by Rosin Preservation.

