

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered 7/28/83

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

1. Name

historic Finch Hotel

and/or common Franklin Hotel (preferred)

2. Location

street & number 185 East Main Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Spartanburg

N/A vicinity of

state South Carolina

code 045

county Spartanburg

code 083

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Hotel

4. Owner of Property

name R.M. Caine

street & number P.O. Box 2287

city, town Greenville

N/A vicinity of

state South Carolina 29602

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Spartanburg County Courthouse

street & number 180 Magnolia Street

city, town Spartanburg

state South Carolina 29304

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Inventory of Historic Places  
in South Carolina

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1982

federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records South Carolina Department of Archives and History

city, town Columbia

state South Carolina 29211

## 7. Description

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

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

The Franklin Hotel is a six-story, masonry building located on Main Street in the central business district of Spartanburg, South Carolina. Built by W.T. Finch between 1919 and 1920, this building became a leading hotel of the community and shows the influence of both the commercial and neoclassic styles of the early twentieth century. Few alterations have been made to the building and it has retained its original architectural characteristics.

### Additional Information

The Franklin Hotel is a steel frame, high rise building of six stories with a masonry exterior. The building is rectangular in shape with a highly decorative facade on the north elevation. The remaining elevations of the building contain one-over-one sash windows with each story separated by a brick belt course. The building has a flat roof with simple brick corbelling at the roofline. A large sheet metal cornice was originally located at the north elevation but this was removed many years ago.

The north elevation, facing Main Street, is three bays in width and contains many decorative elements. This facade is dominated by a large two-story portico supported by Doric columns and features an entablature with triglyphs and metopes and a stepped parapet. The columns are fluted and sheathed with glazed terra-cotta tiles. The first floor has an original rounded arch entryway with double doors, sidelights and a fanlight. The arched entryway is composed of terra-cotta tiles with a keystone. The fanlight contains multi-colored stained glass with the letter "F" placed in the center of the glass arrangement. On either side of the entryway is a tri-part window also set within a rounded arch of terra-cotta tiles. These windows have a central one-over-one sash frame flanked by single pane frames. Above these windows are fanlights with stained glass similar in design to that at the entryway.

The second story features a central doorway which opens onto an exterior balcony with an iron railing. This entryway has a central doorway with sidelights and a tri-part transom. The flanking two bays each contain rectangular one-over-one sash windows with small terra-cotta lintels.

The upper four stories are symmetrical in their fenestration and decorative elements. The upper facade is also three bays in width with two windows on the central bay separated from three flanking windows by terra-cotta piers. On the third and fifth stories the central windows share a pedimented window head with windows on the adjacent bays containing window heads with alternating pediments and flat lintels of terra-cotta.

The fourth and sixth stories have central windows with rounded arch molding and keystones. Flanking windows on these stories have matching arched window heads with keystones; many of these have become deteriorated. All windows on the upper facade are one-over-one sash with sills supported by paired brackets.

Continued.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) local history
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1919-1920 **Builder/Architect** Willard, Boggs & Co./S.P. Tinsley

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Franklin Hotel, located on East Main Street in downtown Spartanburg, South Carolina, is significant both in local history and architecture. It was one of the leading hotels of the city during the early and mid-twentieth century and its architectural design and details are excellent representations of the period after World War I. Constructed between 1919 and 1920 for W.T. Finch, the hotel was built during a period of expansion and prosperity for Spartanburg. The luxuriousness of the hotel was well-known and it was the center for community social occasions.

### Additional Information

During the early twentieth century the lot on which the Franklin Hotel now stands was occupied by residential structures. In 1916 this property was bought by W.T. Finch for \$25,000.<sup>1</sup> Finch was a local businessman and meat market operator who felt that Spartanburg was in need of a new hotel. Spartanburg had entered a period of rapid growth after 1900 due to its prominence as a railroad center and its rising textile industry. By 1910 Spartanburg boasted nine textile mills with three major railroad lines intersecting at the city.<sup>2</sup> To respond to this increased commercial activity two high rise hotels began operation between 1910 and 1915, the seven-story Gresham Hotel (also known as the Morgan) built in 1910 and the six-story Cleveland Hotel built in 1915. These hotels were immediate successes, and by the end of the decade W.T. Finch bought the property on East Main Street with the intention of building a third luxury hotel for the city.

Finch began work on the six-story hotel in late 1919 with the hotel opening in 1920.<sup>3</sup> The building was designed with characteristics of the high rise commercial style with a large neoclassic portico on its Main Street facade. Finch expended large sums of money on the exterior terra-cotta detailing as well as on interior furnishings such as the elaborate plaster and marble lobby. The upper floors contained 200 rooms and boasted the most modern comforts such as steam heat, private baths and elegant furniture.<sup>4</sup> The Finch Hotel, as it was originally known, quickly became recognized as a leading hotel of the region and it attracted many guests. After the hotel opened Finch ran a bus line between his hotel and city train stations to attract business from traveling salesmen. This trade increased and the hotel grew in prominence in the community.

Possibly the expense involved in the construction of the hotel was beyond Finch's resources because, despite the hotel's popularity, he sold the building. In February of 1922 Finch sold the hotel to Frank Hodges for \$201,000.<sup>5</sup> Hodges, a local businessman, later renamed the building the Franklin and operated the hotel for over forty years.

Continued.

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Interior

The interior of the Franklin Hotel has not been altered significantly. The first floor lobby has retained its original stained glass windows, mosaic tile floor, and marble sheathing at the baseboard and front desk. The ceiling cornice contains decorative plaster featuring water-leaf molding and dentils. A large dining room which contains decorative plaster cornices is still extant on the first floor. The upper floors have numerous rooms with transomed doorways located on either side of a central hallway. Original features such as plumbing fixtures and decorative plasterwork also remain on these upper floors. On the sixth floor a large ballroom is still present although badly deteriorated.

Surroundings

The Franklin Hotel sits on a large lot between Main and Broad Streets. There are no outbuildings and the rear of the building is surrounded by a metal fence.

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Statement of Significance (cont'd.)

Between 1920 and 1960 the Franklin was a leading social center for the community. It contained a ballroom on both the first and sixth floors and was the scene for civic and school dances and celebrations. Nearby Converse College had a leading school of music in the Southeast, and noted symphony and opera companies who played at the college would stay at the Franklin. National, state and local political leaders also were guests at the Franklin during these years.

After 1960 the fortunes of the hotel declined with the lessening of railroad traffic and decreasing business activity on Main Street. The Franklin was sold to a Greenville company and it became used as a home for the elderly. During the 1970's both the Morgan and the Cleveland Hotels went out of business. Today, of Spartanburg's three great hotels, only the Franklin is still in operation with eighty rooms still utilized as guest rooms. Although not significantly altered, the Franklin suffers from overall deterioration and is in need of rehabilitation.

Architecture:

The Franklin Hotel is an architecturally significant landmark of downtown Spartanburg. Its rich exterior and interior details, including the terra-cotta sheathed columns and terra-cotta window and door surrounds, stained glass windows, mosaic tile floor, and decorative plasterwork, show the wealth and exuberance of the architecture of the early 1920's.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property approximately 0.3 acre

Quadrangle name Spartanburg

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UTM References

A 17 4152000 3867680  
Zone Easting Northing

B           
Zone Easting Northing

C         

D         

E         

F         

G         

H         

Verbal boundary description and justification The nominated property is shown bounded by the dotted red line on the accompanying Spartanburg County Tax Map 7-12-21, which is drawn at a scale of 50 feet to the inch. The boundary includes only the historic hotel building.

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

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Phil Thomason

organization Thomason and Associates

date November 16, 1982

street & number 1700 Hayes Street, Suite 202

telephone (615) 320-5732

city or town Nashville

state Tennessee 37203

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Charles E. Lee

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date June 2, 1983

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Continuation sheet 3

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Bibliography

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Racine, Philip. Spartanburg County; A Pictorial History. Virginia Beach, Virginia: Donning Company, 1980.

Spartanburg Chamber of Commerce. Spartanburg, South Carolina. Spartanburg, South Carolina: Band & White Printers, 1924.

Spartanburg Herald Journal, 2 September 1981, p. A-9.

Spartanburg, S.C. Spartanburg County Courthouse. Records of Mesne Conveyance. Deed Books 5-0 and 22-L.

Yeoman, Mrs. Charles. Spartanburg, South Carolina. Interview. 12 November 1982.

### Footnotes

1  
Deed Book 5-D, p. 267, Spartanburg County Records of Mesne Conveyance, Spartanburg County Courthouse, Spartanburg, South Carolina.

2  
Philip Racine, Spartanburg County: A Pictorial History. (Virginia Beach, Virginia: Downing Company, 1980), p. 38.

3  
Interview with Mrs. Charles Yeoman (daughter of owner Frank Hodges), Spartanburg, South Carolina, 12 November 1982.

4  
Spartanburg Chamber of Commerce, Spartanburg, South Carolina. (Spartanburg, South Carolina: Band & White Printers, 1924) p. 8.

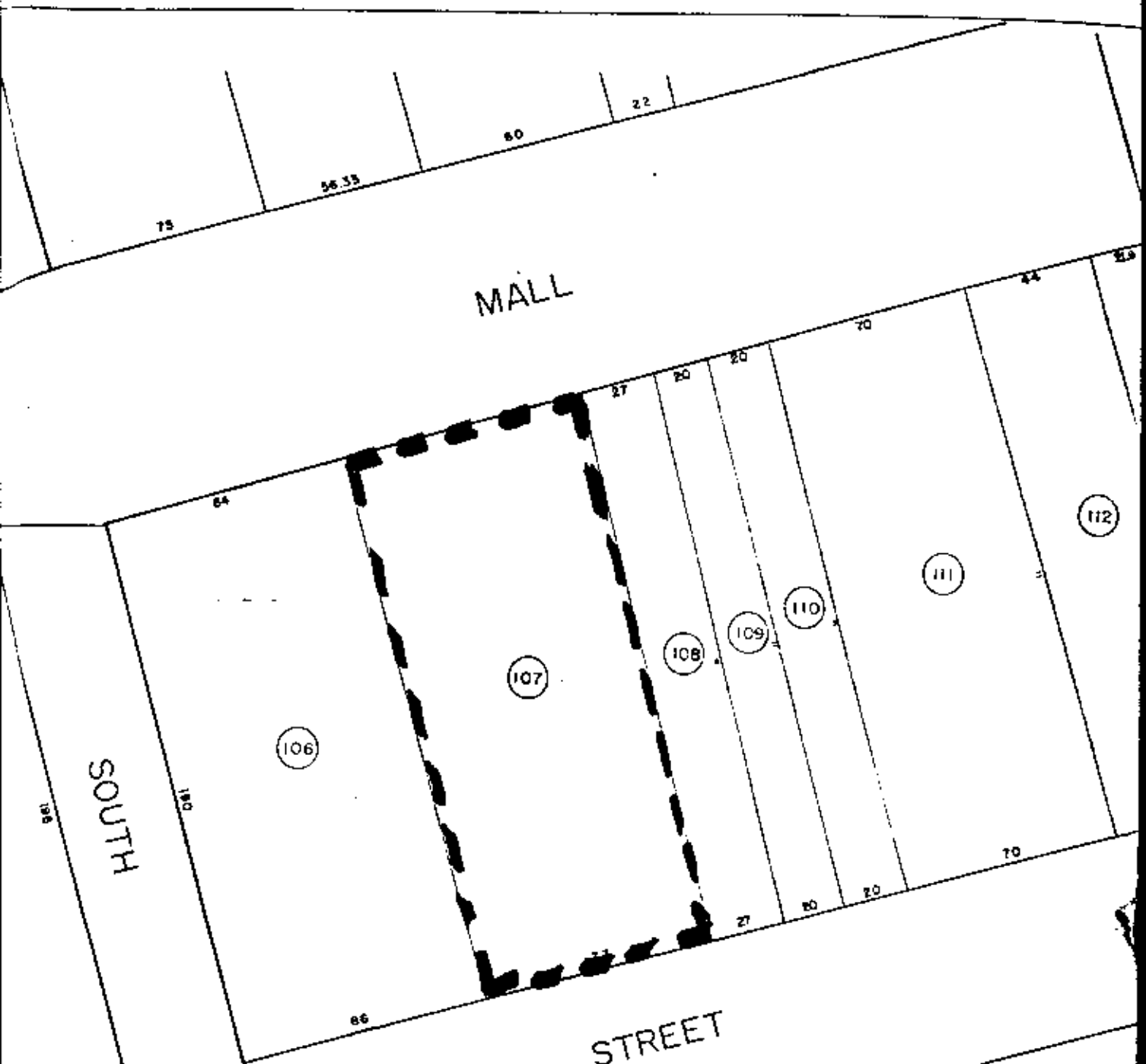
5  
Joseph McLaughlin, Spartanburg (St. Cloud, Florida: Double D Publishing Company, n.d.), p. 15.

6  
Deed Book 22-L, p. 376, Spartanburg County Records of Mesne Conveyance.

7  
Spartanburg Herald Journal, 2 September 1981, p. A-9.

8  
Interview, Mrs. Charles Yeoman.





Franklin Hotel  
Spartanburg

