

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

REFNUM 800046111

10-17-88

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Portage Hotel
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 10 North Main Street N/A not for publication
city, town Akron N/A vicinity
state Ohio code OH county Summit code 153 zip code 44308

3. Classification

| | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Ownership of Property | Category of Property | Number of Resources within Property | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | Contributing | Noncontributing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-local | <input type="checkbox"/> district | <u>1</u> | <u> </u> buildings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-State | <input type="checkbox"/> site | <u> </u> | <u> </u> sites |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal | <input type="checkbox"/> structure | <u> </u> | <u> </u> structures |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> object | <u> </u> | <u> </u> objects |
| | | <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> Total |

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official W. Ray Force Date 9/17/88
SHAPO

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. 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:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Hotel

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/Not in Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Georgian Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls brick

limestone

roof asphalt

other limestone

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Hotel Portage stands as the only Georgian Revival building in downtown Akron. Designed in 1911 by the Buffalo, New York firm of Esenwein & Johnson, the rectangular, eight story flat roofed building dominates the important intersection of Market and South Main Streets. Dark red, Flemish bond brick with limestone trim covers structural steel and reinforced concrete construction.

The building's tripartite arrangement begins with a smooth limestone first floor base articulated by a series of round-arched storefront windows and entrances which combine to create an arcade-like effect. Five floors of brick surmount the base, delineating the middle section. The top of this section is punctuated with brickwork and limestone tiles forming diamond patterns between single windows and window pairs. A projecting limestone beltcourse separates the middle and top sections. The two floor top section is distinguished by limestone Ionic pilasters between windows or window pairs (facade and south elevation), and is topped with a heavy projecting metal cornice featuring egg and dart molding and dentils.

The facade is also a three part composition horizontally, with each section articulated by smooth, white quoins. The center entry bay projects slightly with massive metal supports for the once canopied central entrance. Above the first floor, the 1/1 double hung sash windows are arranged symmetrically with paired windows in the center and single windows on either side. The bays on either side of the center section reverse the window patterns with paired 1/1, two single 1/1, and a single 1/1 flanked by two narrow 1/1 windows under a round arch. The window pattern extends to the top two floors where it is separated by limestone pilasters finished with Ionic capitals to form eleven sections. Second floor windows are round-arched, with a double row of brick headers punctuated with limestone keystones framing the blind (limestone) arch. Windows on floors three through six feature limestone lintels also with keystones in the center and on ends; windows on floors seven and eight have taller flat arches with limestone voussoirs and central keystones. All windows have limestone sills.

While the south elevation repeats the facade ornament, the north elevation is unadorned; a new painted advertisement occupies 2/3 of the seventh and eighth floor space. The facade and south elevation design wraps nearly half way around the west (rear) elevation to the 1926 addition, but the ornament is more subtle with only simple limestone lintels above windows and no projecting beltcourse or cornice at the top two floors. A fire escape occupies the second right bay. Remnants of painted advertisement for the hotel remain at the cornice level reading "Cocktail Bar PORTAGE HOTEL Excellent Food."

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

The Portage Hotel, Summit County , Ohio

Section number 7 Page 2

The interior, while deteriorated, retains significant features. Two rows of massive Ionic columns dominate the central grand lobby. Retail space occupied the areas south of the lobby and a ballroom filled the northwest corner of the first floor. Originally a bar operated in the northeast corner, remodeled into the Rubber Room in 1933, and remade into a coffee shop in 1963. The guest rooms on the floors above form a horseshoe around a center light court.

The Portage was constructed at a cost of \$700,000.00, with furnishings totaling an additional \$125,000.00. Of the 250 rooms available, 150 had full baths, with the remaining 100 having hot and cold water. Seating capacities ranged from 275 in the Banquet Room to 125 in the restaurant and 50 in the grill room. With interior partitions of gypsum tile, the reinforced concrete brick-faced Portage was among the earlier Akron examples of buildings classified as "fire-proof." The Portage occupies the site of two previous hotels: The Ohio Exchange and The Empire Hotel.

The exterior has seen few changes over the years. In 1926, Esenwein and Johnson also designed an addition (Noah and Frank, Associated Architects were the local associates for the addition), enclosing the light court to expand the number of rooms. Built on top of the ballroom in the northwest corner, the addition is only visible from the back of the building. More recently, the first floor windows, still intact, have been covered and the light fixtures between the arches were removed. Adjoining buildings on Main Street still maintain a sense of continuity on the primary elevation. The buildings behind the hotel have been razed, giving the hotel added prominence on the Akron skyline.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Other: Labor Movement
Architecture

Period of Significance

1912-1937

Significant Dates

June 11, 1912
Sept. 13, 1936

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Esenwein & Johnson

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Portage Hotel, serving as the premier hotel for Akron during the rubber boom of the first third of the twentieth century, is significant as a key site in the formation and development of the United Rubber Workers of America. The Hotel is additionally significant as a fine example of Georgian Revival architecture in Akron, representing the city's only example of the style in commercial architecture.

Rubber made Akron, and rubber created the Portage Hotel and helped it prosper. By 1910, Akron boomed because of the rubber industry, but the city was without a decent hotel to host salesmen and executives traveling to town. A group of prominent businessmen, including three rubber company executives, formed a corporation to finance the Portage Hotel. Named for the nearby Indian portage trail, the hotel opened July 11, 1912 attracting Akron's most prominent citizens. It served as the city's premier hotel hosting major social, industrial, and political events until the Art Deco Mayflower Hotel, 259 S. Main St. at the corner of State, opened in 1931.

Of greatest significance is the hotel's role in the labor relations with rubber workers. As early as 1913, the hotel hosted the Ohio State Senate hearings on the International Workers of the World (I.W.W.) strike of rubber factories in the late winter of that year. The prolonged hearings investigating the causes of the strike were headed by Senator William Green, who would become a national labor leader. During the tumultuous rubber labor struggles in the 1930's, the Portage Hotel was known as the "labor hotel." The remodeled bar, titled the Rubber Room, served informally as the clearinghouse for strategy planning, where deals were struck for the union men. The Rubber Room embodied the spirit of Akron, fitted with rubber flooring, rubber tables, rubber booths, and rubber tractor tires for chandeliers. The rubber walls were covered with rubber mosaic murals depicting the rubber industry from rubber plantations to cars with rubber tires. In all, four tons of rubber were used. The room was dismantled in 1963 and replaced by a coffee shop. The room itself still exists within the plan of the hotel.

In 1935, the "council of unions" met in the Portage Hotel to begin the process of creating an international union specifically for rubber workers. The next year, during the first convention of rubber workers, the American Federation of Labor reluctantly gave them their

See continuation sheet

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

The Portage Hotel, Summit County, Ohio

Section number 8 Page 2

own charter. On September 13, 1936, in the Portage Hotel ballroom, William Green, who had become the president of the A.F. of L., presented the charter creating the United Rubber Workers of America. A major strike the following year tested the strength of the fledgling URWA. During the tense negotiations through January and February, the union set up rooms in the Portage Hotel, while Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company officials occupied suites at the more elegant Mayflower Hotel. Local and national labor leaders such as John L. Lewis (CIO), Powers Haggood (UMW), and Rose Pesotta (ILGWU) met with company officials in the smoked-filled rooms at the Portage where deals were hammered out.

Finally, the Portage Hotel is an attractive example of commercial Georgian Revival architecture and the only one to be found in Akron. The building features such Georgian Revival elements as a rectangular plan, a symmetrical facade with slightly projecting entrance central section, Flemish bond brick facing with limestone details, and large, multi-paned round-arched windows creating an arcade-like effect. The Georgian Revival details include limestone quoins, limestone Ionic pilasters, and a large metal cornice featuring dentils and egg and dart molding. The building's architects, Esenwein and Johnson, were prolific at the turn of the century in Buffalo, New York. Their choice of Georgian Revival for the Portage is not surprising given James Johnson's prior associations with McKim, Mead and White, a firm prominent in the popularization of the style.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Akron Beacon Journal, 1911-1935.

Burge, Alan R. Adaptive Reuse: An Analysis of the Rehabilitation Development Process. Masters Thesis, Kent State University, 1986.

Buffalo Architecture: A Guide. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1981.

Grismer, Karl. Akron and Summit County. Akron: Summit County Historical Society, 1952.

Historic Conservation in Akron: A Plan for Managing Resources. Prepared by Preservation Urban Design Incorporated for the City of Akron Department of Planning and Urban Development, 1978.

Nelson, Daniel. American Rubber Workers and Organized Labor, 1900-1941. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- 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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

The University of Akron Archival Services

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property 0.4132 acres

UTM References

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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The Portage Hotel covers lots 3, 4, 5, and 6 in Block 2 in the Town Plat of Akron.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the city lots historically associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kris Runberg Smith, consultant

organization N/A date June 22, 1988

street & number 1359 Delia Avenue telephone (216) 867-8074

city or town Akron state Ohio zip code 44320

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Portage Hotel, Akron, Summit Co., OH

Section number photos Page 1

PHOTOGRAPH LABEL INFORMATION

Portage Hotel
10 North Main Street
Akron, OH 44308
Photographer: Kris Runberg Smith
June 1988
Negatives on file at University of Akron Archives
12 photographs

- 1 Portage Hotel
Front and South Facade looking North
- 2 Portage Hotel
Front Facade looking West
- 3 Portage Hotel
Front and north Facade looking South
- 4 Portage Hotel
Rear and South Facade looking East
- 5 Portage Hotel
Rear and North Facade looking East
- 6 Portage Hotel
Rear looking East up Market Street
- 7 Portage Hotel
Detail of center projecting bay cornice
- 8 Portage Hotel
Detail of limestone tile work and center bay quoins
- 9 Portage Hotel
Detail of porte cochere and second floor windows
- 10 Portage Hotel
Detail of second floor windows
- 11 Portage Hotel
Detail of lobby window
- 12 Portage Hotel
Detail of lobby



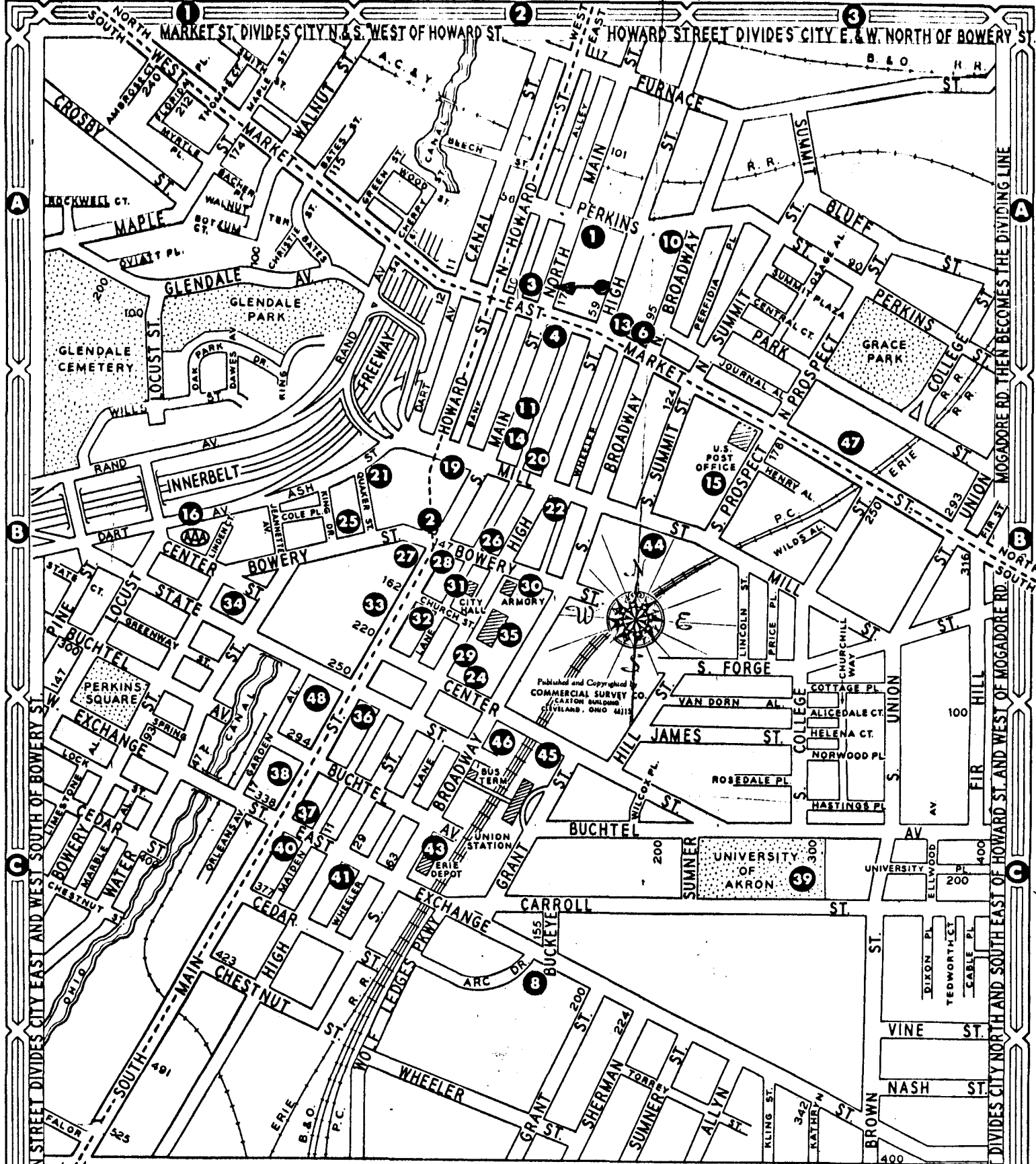
(AKRON EAST) 1 4346
4766 III SW 2 N
YOUNGSTOWN 40 MI.

NORTH CANTON 16 MI.

10 NORTH MAIN ST.
Akron, Summit Co.,
Ohio

POSTAGE HOTEL
17/456680/4548130

DOWNTOWN MAP



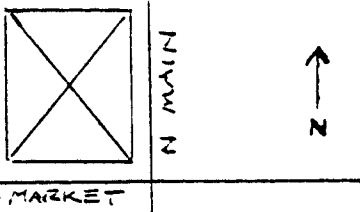
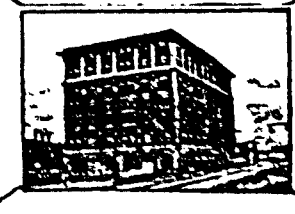
DOWNTOWN AKRON

| | | | | | |
|---|----------|--|----------|---|----------|
| A.A.A. of Akron, 111 W. Center St. | (16) B-1 | Erie Railroad Station, 333 S. Broadway | (43) C-2 | Police Station, 217 S. High St. | (29) B-2 |
| A.C. & Y. Building, 12 E. Exchange St. | (40) C-1 | Evans Building, 336 S. Main St. | (37) C-1 | Portage Hotel, 10 N. Main St. | (3) A-2 |
| Akron Armory, 181 S. High St. | (30) B-2 | First National Tower, 108 S. Main at Mill St. | (19) B-2 | Post Office (Main), E. Market & S. Prospect. | (16) B-3 |
| Akron Art Institute, 69 E. Market St. | (13) A-2 | Grayhound Bus Terminal, 268 S. Broadway. | (46) C-2 | Public Library, 55 S. Main St. | (14) B-2 |
| Akron Board of Education, 70 N. Broadway. | (10) A-2 | Holiday Inn, 200 E. Exchange St. | (8) C-2 | REA Express, 130 E. Mill St. | (21) B-2 |
| Akron Center Building, 1 Cascade Plaza | (2) B-2 | Masonic Temple, E. Mill & S. High Sts. | (22) B-2 | Ruhlin Building, 3 Cascade Plaza | (24) B-2 |
| Akron Civic Theater, 182 S. Main St. | (33) B-2 | Meyflower Hotel, 266 S. Main St. | (36) C-2 | Safety Building, 53 E. Center St. | (24) B-2 |
| Akron Savings & Loan Bldg., S. Main & W. Bowers | (27) B-2 | Metropolitan Building, 39 S. Main St. | (11) B-2 | Second National Bldg., 118 S. Main St. | (28) B-2 |
| Akron Tower Motor Inn, 60 W. State St. | (48) B-1 | Mul-Town Motel, 219 E. Market St. | (47) B-3 | Union Depot, 720 Grant St. | (46) C-2 |
| Anthony Wayne Hotel, 314 S. Main St. | (38) C-1 | Ohio Bell Telephone Co., 60 W. Bowers St. | (26) B-1 | United Building, S. Main & E. Market Sts. | (4) A-1 |
| Beacon Journal, S. High & E. Exchange Sts. | (41) C-1 | Ohio Building, 175 S. Main St. | (32) B-2 | University of Akron, 302 E. Buchtel Ave. | (39) C-1 |
| City Hall, 166 S. Main St. | (31) B-2 | Ohio Edison Co. (Gen. Office), 47 N. Main St. | (1) A-2 | W.C.A., 80 W. Center St. | (4) B-1 |
| Court House, 209 S. High St. | (5) B-2 | Ohio Edison Co. (Bus. Office), Cascade Plaza | (7) B-2 | W.C.A., 140 S. High St. | (2) B-2 |
| East Ohio Gas Co., 1 Cascade Plaza | (2) B-2 | Permanent National Savings & Loan | (7) B-2 | | |
| Edison Building, 47 N. Main St. | (1) A-2 | | | | |

MARKET STREET DIVIDES CITY NORTH AND SOUTH EAST OF HOWARD ST. AND WEST OF MCGADORE RD. THEN BECOMES THE DIVIDING LINE

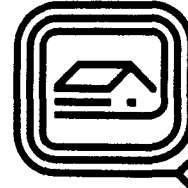
OHIO HISTORIC INVENTORY

Ohio Historic Preservation Office
Ohio Historical Center
Columbus, Ohio 43211

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|----------|--|--|--|---|--|
| <p>1. No. SUM-434-12</p> <p>2. County Summit</p> <p>3. Location of Negatives</p> | <p>4. Present Name(s) Portage Hotel</p> <p>5. Other Name(s)</p> | <p>1. No. SUM-434-12</p> <p>2. County Summit</p> <p>4. Present Name(s) Portage Hotel</p> <p>5. Other Name(s)</p> | | | | | | |
| <p>6. Specific Location 10 N. Main Street (at E. Market Street)</p> <p>7. City or Town If Rural, Township & Vicinity Akron</p> <p>8. Site Plan with North Arrow</p>  | <p>16. Thematic Category D</p> <p>17. Date(s) or Period 1911-1912</p> <p>18. Style or Design Georgian Revival</p> <p>19. Architect or Engineer Esenwein & Johnson</p> <p>20. Contractor or Builder George Baker Long</p> <p>21. Original Use, if apparent Hotel</p> <p>22. Present Use Vacant</p> <p>23. Ownership Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>24. Owner's Name & Address, if known</p> | <p>28. No. of Stories 8</p> <p>29. Basement? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>30. Foundation Material Concrete</p> <p>31. Wall Construction Steel</p> <p>32. Roof Type & Material Flat, built-up</p> <p>33. No. of Bays Front 11 Side 4</p> <p>34. Wall Treatment Coursed ashlar; Flemish bond</p> <p>35. Plan Shape Rect.</p> <p>36. Changes (Explain in #42) Addition <input type="checkbox"/> Altered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moved <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>37. Condition Interior Fair Exterior Fair</p> <p>38. Preservation Underway? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>39. Endangered? By What? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Neglect</p> <p>40. Visible from Public Road? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>41. Distance from and Frontage on Road 20' x 250'</p> | | | | | | |
| <p>9. Coordinates</p> <p>Lat. _____ Long. _____</p> <p>U.T.M. Reference</p> <table border="1" style="width:100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td style="width:10%;">Zone</td> <td style="width:40%;">Easting</td> <td style="width:50%;">Northing</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>10. Site <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>11. On National Register? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>12. Is it Eligible? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>13. Part of Estab. Hist. Dist.? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>14. District Potent'l? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>15. Name of Established District</p> | Zone | Easting | Northing | | | | <p>25. Open to Public? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>26. Local Contact Person or Organization</p> <p>27. Other Surveys in Which Included</p> | <p>42. Further Description of Important Features Ground floor is an arcade of 15 round arches. It is limestone (coursed ashlar), as is the structure's trim. Principal facade contains projecting pavilion distinguished, like the building's corners, by rusticated quoins up to the sixth story. Segmented lentils and geometric panels create a strong contrast with the structure's dark brown tapestry brick. Two upper floors have pilasters from string course to cornice.</p>  |
| Zone | Easting | Northing | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| <p>43. History and Significance Cornice. The Portage was a product of Akron's rubber industry boom years. Built by a group of business executives and civic leaders at a cost of \$600,000, it became at once the city's premier hotel and held that position until the opening of the Mayflower in 1931.</p> | | | | | | | | |
| <p>44. Description of Environment and Outbuildings The 170-room vacant structure occupies the site of Akron's first hotel, the Empire House, and is situated in an area that was for years a prime business district. This section, while still active, has deteriorated and is in need of rehabilitation.</p> | | | | | | | | |
| <p>45. Sources of Information Karl H. Grismer, Akron and Summit County, 1952, pp. 363-364.</p> | <p>46. Prepared by Mike Adams</p> <p>47. Organization City of Akron DPUD</p> <p>48. Date 7-78 49. Revision Date(s)</p> | | | | | | | |

Ohio Historic Preservation Office

1985 Velma Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43211
614/297-2470



**OHIO
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**
SINCE 1885

December 7, 1988

Anthony M. Rodrigues, President
Portage Place Partnership Limited
An Ohio Limited Partnership
146 S. High Street, Suite 1000
Akron, Ohio 44308

Dear Mr. Rodrigues:

Re: Portage Hotel, 10 N. Main Street, Summit County, Akron, Ohio

We are pleased to inform you that the Portage Hotel has been entered into the National Register of Historic Places by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior (NR listed 07/29/88).

The nomination was made in connection with a state plan to identify and document prehistoric and historic places in Ohio which qualify for National Register status under provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended. All nominations are approved by the Ohio Historic Site Preservation Advisory Board.

Enclosed is information explaining the purposes and goals of the National Register of Historic Places.

Sincerely,

W. Ray Luce
State Historic Preservation Officer

WRL/BAP:dh
Enclosure

x.c. Jeff Brown, Regional Coordinator
Mayor of Akron
NEFCO
Eric Johannesen, Western Reserve Historical Society
Kris Runberg Smith, form preparer
State Senator Roy L. Ray
State Representative Vernon L. Sykes

Ohio Historic Preservation Office

National Register of Historic Places File Checklist

The following materials are contained in this file of the National Register form for:

Name: Portage Hotel

County: Summit

Original National Register of Historic Places nomination form

Multiple Property Nomination form

Photograph(s)

Photograph(s) (copies)

USGS map(s)

USGS map(s) (copies)

Sketch map(s)/figure(s)/exhibit(s)

Correspondence

Other OH copy, large map & plans

