

Honorable City Planning Commission
Cincinnati, Ohio

April 22, 2022

SUBJECT: A report and recommendation on a proposed Local Historic Landmark designation of the Terrace Plaza Hotel at 15 West 6th Street in the Central Business District.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Location: 15 West 6th Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202
Applicant: Cincinnati Preservation Association
Applicant's Address: 430 Reading Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202
Owner: JNY Capital, Ezra Unger
Owner's Address: 4013 13th Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11218

EXHIBITS:

Exhibit A - Location Map
Exhibit B - Historic Designation Report (2/4/19)
Exhibit C - Historic Conservation Guidelines
Exhibit D - Correspondence
Exhibit E - Historic Conservation Board Recommendation
Exhibit F - Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Memo

BACKGROUND:

In February of 2019, then Councilmember David Mann submitted a complete Local Historic Landmark designation application for the property located at 15 West 6th Street, commonly known as the Terrace Plaza Hotel. The building is located between Race and Vine streets in the Central Business District.

The property was recommended for approval for Local Historic Landmark designation by the Historic Conservation Board on February 25, 2019, with a vote of five to one. At the request of the applicant, the application was held and did not proceed through the next steps in the City review process. Councilmember Mann's term ended on December 31, 2021; the application sunset at that time.

On February 14, 2022, a complete Local Historic Landmark designation application was received from the Cincinnati Preservation Association (CPA). The applicant requested a Local Historic Landmark designation for the former Terrace Plaza Hotel located at 15 West 6th Street. The Designation Report and Historic Conservation Guidelines are the same submissions that were reviewed and recommended for approval by the Historic Conservation Board in February of 2019. On March 28, 2022, the Historic Conservation Board (HCB) reviewed the proposed designation and again voted five to one in favor of the designation. The dissenting vote was due to concerns raised by a prospective purchaser of the property that a landmark designation and the associated guidelines would make it more difficult to return the building to productive use. The HCB recommendation was transmitted to staff on April 7, 2022. Per Section 1435-07-2-B-c of the Zoning Code, the City Planning Commission must consider the proposal within 30 days of the transmittal.

The Terrace Plaza Hotel has been closed since 2008. The building sits predominantly vacant aside from a couple of retail tenants on the first floor. The owners, JNY Capital, have been foreclosed on, and the

property is now in bankruptcy court. The owner is not participating in this landmarking process. Any dates for an auction are tentatively scheduled for late May to early June.

The building has since been stripped of the majority of its interior features including internal equipment and historic finishes. In 2013, the roof started leaking causing ceiling collapse and mold. As of today, the roof has not been repaired and the building continues to deteriorate (see Exhibit F).

A potential interested buyer, who has been pursuing redevelopment of the property for some years, is opposed to the Local Historic Landmark designation as proposed. The buyer has asserted that any historic guidelines need to be more flexible for future renovations. The flexibility in the guidelines desired by this potential buyer would include the following:

- Altering the seven-story brick wall along 6th Street to include several new window openings, especially on the 6th and 7th floors. The style of those new windows has not been determined.
- Altering the size of all the original window openings above the seventh floor to be full height window openings with new replacement windows.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

A joint public staff conference with the Historic Conservation Office and the Department of City Planning and Engagement was held on March 17, 2022. The applicant, the Cincinnati Preservation Association, was in attendance along with numerous Cincinnati Preservation Association Board members and preservationists that were supportive. The owners of the property were not in attendance and have provided no comment regarding the proposed designation.

Doug Moorman with Development Strategies Group, a representative of the potential buyer referenced above, was in attendance and does not support the proposed designation as presented because he has concerns with that the proposed historic guidelines are too restrictive. Mr. Moorman would like more flexibility with alterations to the brick elevation along 6th Street and all the window openings above the seventh floor in the tower area. He requested additional time to work with the applicant on possible revisions, however the applicant wished to proceed moving forward with the designation process (see exhibit D for correspondence regarding this designation proposal).

ANALYSIS:

The City Planning Commission has the duty to decide whether to approve or disapprove the designation and forward its decision, whether favorable or not, along with the conservation guidelines, to City Council. In reaching this determination, the City Planning Commission should consider the historic significance of the candidate property for landmarking, the planning considerations outlined in Chapter 1435 of the Cincinnati Municipal Code, and the appropriateness of the guidelines proposed to accompany the landmarking.

A. Historic Significance

To qualify for Local Historic Landmark status, a building must have "Historic Significance," as defined by Cincinnati Zoning Code § 1435-07-1(a). That section specifies that a structure or group of structures may be deemed as having Historic Significance if it has at least one of the following attributes:

1. Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
2. Association with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
4. That has yielded or may be likely to yield information important in history or prehistory.

The Terrace Plaza Hotel is nominated under Criterion 3 for being architecturally significant, as defined by Chapter 1435 of the Cincinnati Zoning Code. The Designation Report (Exhibit B) details the historic and architectural significance of the building, which includes the following:

The property was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on August 21, 2017, under Section 1435-07-(a)(3): A building that embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction. The Terrace Plaza Hotel is significant for its architecture as an early example of an International-Style, Modernist, mixed-use skyscraper in the heart of downtown Cincinnati. It was designed by the noted architectural firm of Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill (SOM) in 1945-1946 and completed in 1948. The lead designer was Natalie de Blois. It was extremely rare for a woman to be a lead designer in the 1940s. This structure was an early example of a mixed-use building comprised of a hotel, department stores, restaurants, office space and apartments. While the Designation Report details the specifics and history of the significance, it should be noted that there are important “firsts” of the Terrace Plaza Hotel.

1. The Terrace Plaza Hotel was America’s first International Style Hotel.
2. The Terrace Plaza was the first hotel designed by Skidmore, Owens, & Merrill (SOM), a firm that helped to define the International Style in the United States.
3. The lead designer of the Terrace Plaza Hotel was Natalie De Blois. In the 1940s, to have a woman as a lead designer on a building was extremely rare. She is considered a pioneer in her industry.
4. The Terrace Plaza Hotel is considered the most important Modernist Building in the City of Cincinnati by many architectural historians.
5. The Terrace Plaza Hotel had the first fully-automated elevator system in the nation, as well as the first dual-heating system that would run on gas and fuel oil or coal.
6. When designed, the fire safety sprinkler systems designed for the Terrace Plaza department stores were considered the most technologically advanced in the world.
7. The Terrace Plaza Hotel rooms were the first to offer guests a television in every room, and had the first user-controlled air conditioning systems in each room.

The building's bold massing reflects a complex mixed-use program comprising a 7-story commercial base, originally occupied by two department stores, Bond and J. C. Penney, and office space, that spans the block-long site, topped by a set-back 12-story hotel block and terrace, for which the hotel is named. On top is a tall penthouse occupied by what was once the Gourmet Restaurant and mechanical space. The structure is steel with brick curtain walls. The street level is defined by a band of storefronts, and the façade above is clad in thin terra-cotta-colored brick veneer in a stacked bond pattern. Above the storefronts, the base is windowless, while the hotel block is characterized by a continuous window wall at the eighth floor and a regular grid of wide horizontal windows above. Facing north on West 6th Street and spanning between Vine and Race streets, the building stands amid mostly low- and mid-rise buildings making it very visible in its urban setting. Despite minor alterations, mostly to the canopy over West 6th Street, the integrity of Terrace Plaza remains high, with its signature cubic massing, masonry skin, and interior spatial organization.

Staff finds that, based on the attributes and architectural integrity as set forth in the Designation Report, which is based off a successful National Register nomination, the Terrace Plaza Hotel is a building with "Historic Significance" as described in §1435-07-1(a)(3). The building is architecturally significant as it embodies the distinctive and defining elements of modernist architecture, and thus it qualifies for Local Historic Landmark status.

While staff understands that the modernist style is not a preferred aesthetic to every individual, significance is not determined based on what an individual would consider aesthetically pleasing, it is based on if it meets the criteria set forth within the City's zoning code.

B. Planning Considerations

Chapter 1435 of the Cincinnati Municipal Code informs the City Planning Commission's review of the proposal to landmark the Terrace Plaza Hotel and its consideration of the Historic Conservation Board's recommendation (§1435-07-2-B-C). In conducting this assessment and making its recommendation to the Council, the City Planning Commission considers the following planning considerations:

1. The relationship of the proposed designation to the comprehensive plans of the city and of the community in which the proposed Historic Landmark is located; and
2. The effect of the proposed designation on the surrounding areas and economic development plans of the city; and
3. Such other planning and historic preservation considerations as may be relevant to the proposed designation.

Each of these factors is addressed below:

- (1) The relationship of the proposed designation to the comprehensive plans of the city and of the community in which the proposed Historic Landmark, Historic District or Historic Site is located.

The designation of the Terrace Plaza Hotel in the Central Business District is consistent with Plan Cincinnati (2012) in the Sustain Initiative Area, with the Goal to "preserve our natural and built environment" and "preserve our built history with new development incentives and regulatory measures" (pages 193-194).

If the building were landmarked and a developer was able to reuse the building while meeting the historic guidelines, a historic and architecturally significant building would be preserved.

However, the proposed designation is not consistent with Plan Cincinnati (2012) in the Compete Initiative Area, with the Goal to “Foster a climate conducive to growth, investment, stability, and opportunity” (page 103).

The designation of the Terrace Plaza Hotel is ultimately not fully consistent with Plan Cincinnati (2012) (see “Consistency with Plan Cincinnati”). Any reuse of the building will likely require more windows and additional natural light. Additionally, the building’s vacant and blighted condition detracts from the growth and stability of the Central Business District. Landmarking this building in this condition by attaching the proposed guidelines would inhibit its adaptive reuse by, among other things, restricting the creation of new window openings along the brick elevation on 6th Street and preventing the enlargement and replacement of windows in the tower.

(2) The effect of the proposed designation on the surrounding areas and economic plans of the city.

Designating the Terrace Plaza Hotel as a Local Historic Landmark could protect this architecturally significant structure from demolition. However, if the building is never rehabilitated and left vacant, this scenario does not assist in the revitalization of the area and will have a negative impact on the community and economic development plans of the city.

The Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) submitted a memo shown in Exhibit F in which they explained that they have considered several development scenarios over the years and each one would require extensive City subsidy potentially rendering each scenario economically infeasible. Also, many of the scenarios require Federal and State Historic Tax Credits which would require following the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. Many of the proposals would not meet those guidelines. In addition, proposals that meet those guidelines would likely prove prohibitively expensive (see Exhibit F).

(3) Such other planning and historic preservation considerations as may be relevant to the proposed designation.

The Cincinnati 2000 Plan: A Comprehensive Development Plan for Downtown (1986) identifies the block where the Terrace Plaza is located (Sixth Street between Vine Street and Race Street) as part of the Office-Retail-Hotel Core. Sixth Street is a critical link between the Entertainment uses between Vine Street and Walnut Street and the Convention super-block between Elm Street and Central Avenue. Sixth Street from Race Street to Main Street was also identified as an important pedestrian connection. At the time of the adoption of that plan, the Terrace Plaza was noted as a building in good condition but in need of upgrading of the hotel rooms. Since that time, the building’s condition has deteriorated. Although this plan is over 35 years old, the critical role this block plays in this section of the Central Business District has not changed. This designation if

approved with the current proposed guidelines, may make it difficult to reuse this building which could hinder the revitalization of this area of the Central Business District.

C. Proposed Guidelines

According to 1435-07-2-C. - *Adoption of Conservation Guidelines* of the Zoning Code, when a historic designation is proposed, City Council must adopt conservation guidelines for the proposed Landmark. Those guidelines shall promote the conservation, redevelopment, and use of the building. The guidelines should consider the effect of the designation on the economic and social characteristics of the affected area, and the projected impact of the designation on the budget of the city. This section also explains that conservation guidelines shall take into account the impact of the designation of a Historic Landmark, on the residents of the affected area, the effect of the designation on the economic and social characteristics of the affected area, the projected impact of the designation on the budget of the city, as well as all of the factors listed in 1435-07-2-B(c).

As addressed in the Planning Considerations section above, the proposed Conservation Guidelines would inhibit its adaptive reuse by, among other things, restricting the creation of new window openings along the brick elevation on 6th Street and preventing the enlargement and replacement of windows in the tower. As a result, the proposed conservation guidelines would not promote the redevelopment and use of the building, leaving the building in its current state of distress and disrepair and negatively impacting the safety and welfare of the surrounding area.

CONSISTENCY WITH PLAN CINCINNATI:

The designation of the Terrace Plaza Hotel in the Central Business District is consistent with *Plan Cincinnati* (2012) in the Sustain Initiative Area, with the Goal to “preserve our natural and built environment” and “preserve our built history with new development incentives and regulatory measures” (pages 193-194).

The landmarking of the building, would make it more difficult to demolish the building and, based on the guidelines proposed, would largely preserve its current appearance.

However, the proposed designation is not consistent with *Plan Cincinnati* (2012) in the Compete Initiative Area, with the Goal to “Foster a climate conducive to growth, investment, stability, and opportunity” (page 103).

If the building is designated with the proposed historic guidelines, it could inhibit the adaptive reuse of the building in an economically feasible manner. Several development proposals over the years have required altering the brick wall along 6th Street, whether it is all seven stories or just a few stories. Also, the windows in the upper tower are small and may need to be enlarged as well. These alterations would not meet the proposed guidelines and alter those architectural features that make the building significant as an example of International-style architecture. If this blighted building were to sit vacant, this would not create a stable environment for the immediately surrounding area and downtown Cincinnati.

CONCLUSIONS:

Consideration of the proposed Local Historic Designation of this building presents a conundrum. It is undoubtedly a significant historic resource in light of its distinctive architecture. The building remains

relatively unaltered on the exterior and still retains its Modernist architectural features which make it architecturally significant.

It is a goal of the City to see this building preserved, revitalized, and brought back into productive use. It is also important to the City not only as a building, but as a critical structure on Sixth Street between Vine Street and Race Street, an area that connects the Entertainment district and the Convention district. However, having the ability to create new window openings along the brick elevation on 6th Street and enlarging and replacing windows in the tower are crucial to the redevelopment of this property. It would be a challenge to make adaptive reuse of this vacant and blighted building without creating more windows which bring in more natural light and views of the city. Further challenging, if the building is designated using the guidelines as proposed, there is concern that such revitalization would be significantly delayed or denied, causing the building to fall into further disrepair.

Therefore, due to the overwhelming desire of the City to retain and revitalize the structure, staff does not recommend Landmark designation.

RECOMMENDATION:

The staff of the Department of City Planning and Engagement recommends that the City Planning Commission take the following action:

DISAPPROVE the Local Historic Landmark designation of the Terrace Plaza Hotel at 15 West 6th Street in the Central Business District.

Respectfully submitted:



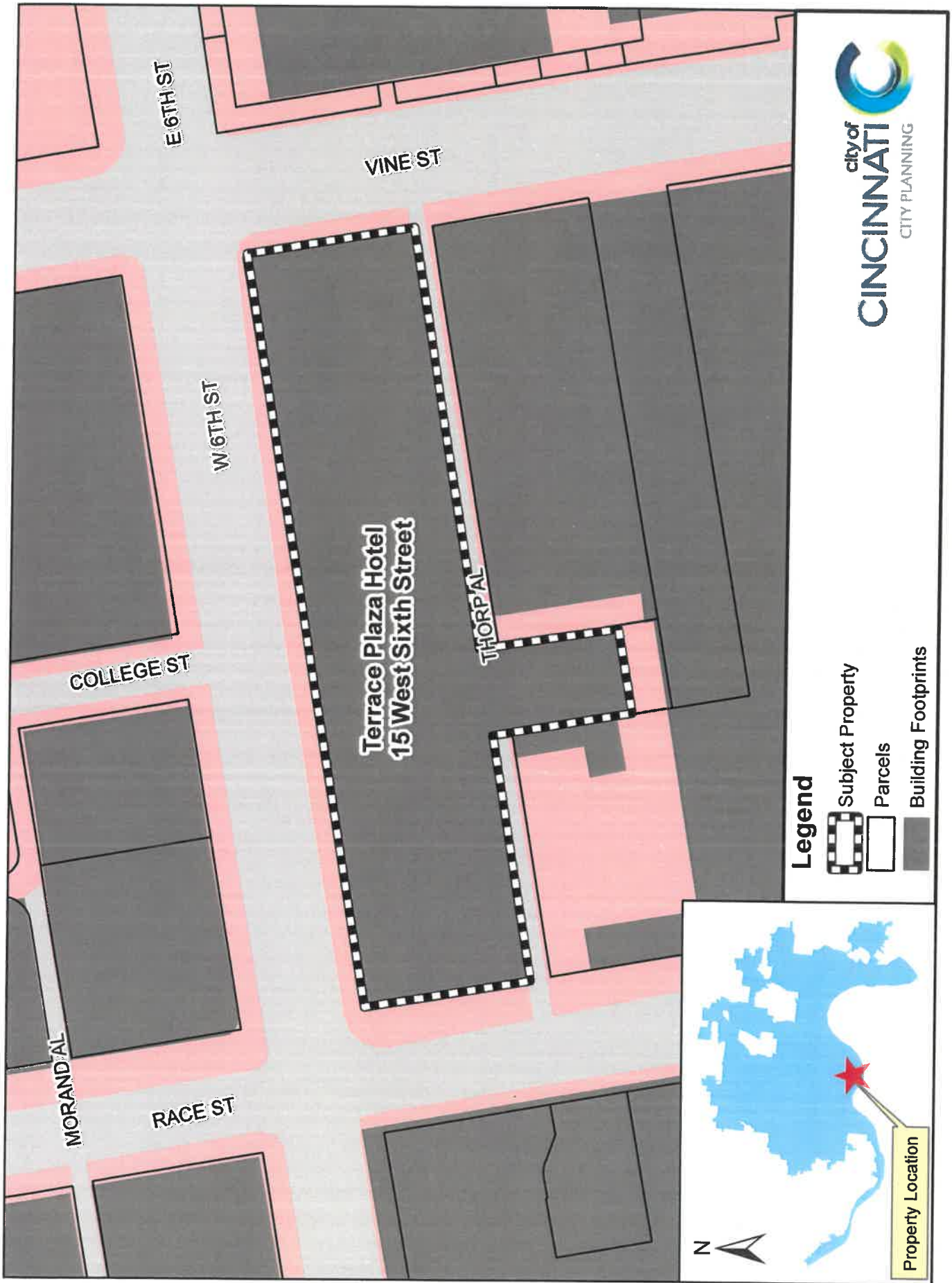
Caroline Hardy Kellam, Senior City Planner
Department of City Planning and Engagement

Approved:



Katherine Keough-Jurs, FAICP, Director
Department of City Planning and Engagement

Proposed Local Historic Landmark in Downtown



HISTORIC DESIGNATION REPORT

TERRACE PLAZA HOTEL

15 West Sixth Street

Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

February 4, 2019



HCB Recommendation February 25, 2019
CPC Recommendation
City Council Approval

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This report is adapted from the National Register Nomination for the Terrace Plaza written by Sean Patrick Tubb and Beth Sullebarger. The Terrace Plaza Hotel was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on August 21, 2017.

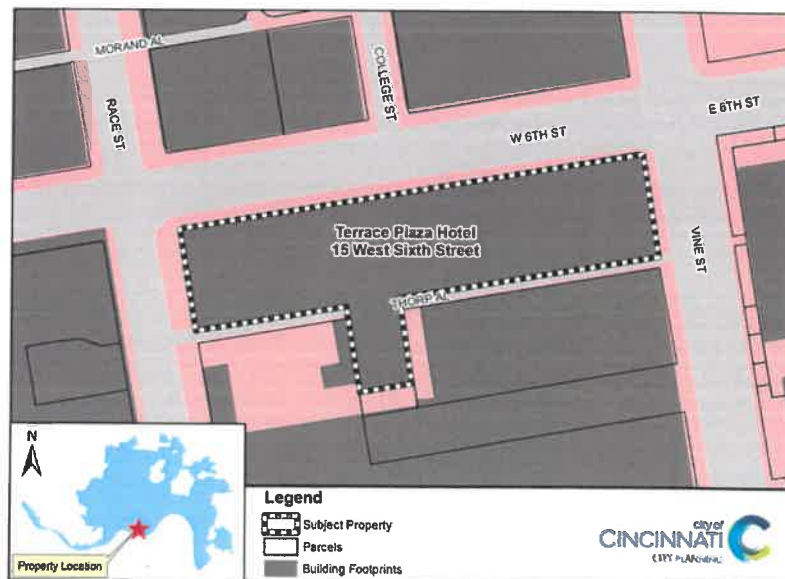
Summary Statement

The Terrace Plaza Hotel is an International-Style mixed-use skyscraper in the heart of downtown Cincinnati. Designed in 1945-1946 and completed in 1948 by the firm of Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill (SOM), the building was developed by John J. Emery, Jr. The building's bold massing reflects a complex mixed-use program comprising a 7-story commercial base, originally occupied by two department stores, Bond and J. C. Penney, and office space, that spans the block-long site, topped by a set-back 12-story hotel block and terrace, for which the hotel is named. On top is a tall penthouse occupied by what was once the Gourmet Restaurant and mechanical space. The structure is steel with brick curtain walls. The street level is defined by a band of storefronts, and the façade above is clad in thin terra-cotta-colored brick veneer in a stacked bond pattern. Above the storefronts, the base is windowless, while the hotel block is characterized by a continuous window wall at the eighth floor and a regular grid of wide windows above. Facing north on Sixth Street and spanning between Vine and Race streets, the building stands amid mostly low- and mid-rise buildings, making it very visible in its urban setting. Despite alterations, the integrity of Terrace Plaza remains high, with its signature cubic massing, masonry skin, and interior spatial organization.

Boundary Description

The boundary comprises a T-shaped property at 15 West Sixth Street, beginning at the southeast corner of Race and Sixth Street, running east 400.29 feet along the south side of Sixth Street, thence 90.05 feet along Vine Street, thence west approximately 223 feet along the north boundary of Thorpe Alley, thence 83.26 feet south; thence 47.18 feet west; thence 83.32 feet north; thence 128 feet west; thence 90.065 feet north to the place of beginning. The boundary includes four condo parcels listed as 00770002050, 00770002051, 00770002052, 00770002CD01.

Map of Landmark



Justification of Boundary Description

The boundary consists of all property historically and currently associated with the building.

Statement of Significance

Description of how the landmark meets the Criteria of CZC 1435-07

Summary Paragraph

Completed in 1948 to national acclaim, the Terrace Plaza Hotel is eligible for the City of Cincinnati Landmark Designation under Criterion 3 (CZC 1435-07-1(a)(3)) as it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction. This building is significant at both a local and national level. It is significant for its development by John J. Emery, Jr., of Thomas J. Emery's Sons, who built many important buildings in Cincinnati, including Carew Tower/Netherland Plaza Hotel, a National Historic Landmark, and numerous apartment buildings that are National Register-listed. It was an innovative mixed-use building that combined two department stores, office space, hotel, apartments and restaurants in a new way—particularly in locating the hotel lobby eight floors up. The Terrace Plaza is the most important Modernist building in Cincinnati; it is the first International-style hotel built in America; and the first commission of Skidmore Owings and Merrill (SOM) to be widely published and receive national attention. It was also a pivotal project for SOM because it used an interdisciplinary design team, which the firm became known for. Its chief designer, Natalie DeBlois, was a pioneering woman architect, and member of a team of other designers who conceived of every detail of the building—interiors, furniture, textiles, uniforms, tableware, graphics—and even ashtrays and matchbook covers. Morris Lapidus, a sensational architect who became famous for his extravagant hotels (such as Miami's Fontainebleau Hotel) designed the Bond's department store interiors on the lower level.

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Terrace Plaza Hotel complex is significant for its development by John J. Emery, president of Thomas Emery's Sons Inc., with the assistance of his vice president, Ellsworth F. Ireland. Emery was a third-generation Cincinnati businessman and real estate investor who had overhauled the family companies—and become one of the most powerful, wealthy, and respected men in the region in the process. His success in completing the magnificent Carew Tower/Netherland Plaza Hotel (NR #82003578) in Cincinnati in 1931, had earned him a reputation for vision and skill at completing complex projects. For more than 100 years, the Emery family had a profound impact on the city's built environment as well as its civic, cultural, and economic institutions.

Thomas Emery's Sons Inc.

Thomas Emery, his wife, and their son Thomas Josephus immigrated to Cincinnati from England in 1832. They soon had another son, John Josiah, and two daughters, Kezia and Julia. Thomas began investing in real estate – mostly large plots of land and cottages in the country surrounding Cincinnati. In

1840, he began a small lard oil and candle-making factory on Water Street. Business was already flourishing by 1845. Thomas died in an accident in 1851, and his sons began working with the trustees to run the business. They created Thomas Emery's Sons Inc. and were soon expanding the candle and lard oil business and investing heavily in real estate ventures throughout the city, becoming one of the most powerful and wealthy families in Cincinnati. They built the Hotel Emery and Arcade (demolished) in 1877 and the city's first apartment building with private kitchens and bathrooms, the Lombardy (NR# 80003062), in 1881. Subsequently they built dozens of apartment buildings – including the Brittany (NR #80003037), Saxony (NR #80003083), and Normandy – and expanded their operations to cities as far away as New York and San Francisco. In 1881-82, they built the French Second Empire style Palace Hotel (NR #80003071), now known as The Cincinnati Hotel, at the northwest corner of Vine and Sixth streets, directly across from the Terrace Plaza.

Thomas J. Emery married Mary Hopkins in 1866, and they had two sons, who both died young. After Thomas died of pneumonia while on a trip to Egypt in 1906, Mary Hopkins Emery used her substantial inheritance to create the Thomas J. Emery Memorial. She drew upon this fund to finance construction of the Ohio Mechanics Institute and Emery Auditorium (now the Emery Apartments and Theatre) at Central Parkway and Walnut, as well as a major expansion of the Cincinnati Art Museum. She also gave large endowments to numerous other arts and social service agencies.

Mary Emery's internationally recognized accomplishment was her vision for Mariemont, a planned, model community that would provide equitable and affordable housing and amenities in a bucolic setting, very different from the pollution and overcrowding that plagued downtown Cincinnati. Between 1913 and 1925, she developed the village of Mariemont (NR #79001862), now a National Historic Landmark. Located about seven miles to the east of downtown Cincinnati, Mariemont was one of the first communities in the United States to have underground utility lines. In addition to single-family houses, the suburb had townhouses and apartment buildings, plus its own school, hospital, inn, church, and theater—all designed in the Tudor Revival style by select local and national architects and built to a John Nolen plan reminiscent of an English garden city. The neighborhood is largely preserved and still vibrant today, although rising property values have made the single-family houses less affordable than Emery intended.

John J. Emery preferred to live in the East, where he continued to help manage the brothers' property and investments. After Thomas' death, John ran Thomas Emery's Sons Inc. until his own death in 1908. John had married Lela Alexander in 1892, and the couple had five children. He commissioned grand houses in Manhattan and Maine, where the couple entertained frequently. In Bar Harbor, Maine, the family had a magnificent granite "cottage" set in a seaside garden. The Turrets, designed by the nationally known architect Bruce Price, was completed in 1895. (It was renovated in the 1970s by the College of the Atlantic.) The following year, the Emery family moved into a New York City house at 5 East 68th Street, near Central Park. The opulent townhouse was designed for them by Boston architects Peabody & Stearns. Since 1965, it has been maintained by the Consulate of the Republic of Indonesia.

John J. Emery Jr.

John Josiah "Jack" Emery Jr. was born in 1898 in New York, where he grew up in the family's architecturally significant homes in the city and in Bar Harbor. After his father's death, his mother

maintained elegant houses in Palm Beach and in France. He was educated at the Groton School, Harvard University, and Oxford. He served in the Navy in World War I. In 1924, Emery came to Cincinnati to handle some issues at Thomas Emery's Sons Inc. The company was not doing well, so Jack decided to stay in Cincinnati temporarily to get the family business back in order. Fortunately for the community, he never left, but he kept up with his business and social contacts in the East.

In 1927, Jack Emery married Irene Langhorne Gibson, daughter of artist Charles Dana Gibson. In Cincinnati, they acquired a large estate in Montgomery, bordering Indian Hill, where the prestigious New York firm of Delano & Aldrich designed their handsome Georgian-style house, Peterloon. It was completed in 1929, so construction was simultaneous to the Carew Tower. The family spent summers at the Gibson family house in Dark Harbor, Maine, which Irene's father had begun building in 1904. Charles Dana Gibson was the editor as well as an owner of Fortune Magazine, so the young John Emery family was privy to all the latest business news, including trends in art, architecture, and design.

In Cincinnati, Emery began diversifying Thomas Emery's Sons Inc., reviving the nostalgic candle business by repackaging and remarketing the product, expanding the lard oil business to include chemicals and other products used for plastics, and buying a shipping container company in Chicago. He also began investing in real estate again and formed plans to utilize the company's prime parcels in downtown Cincinnati. Charles Livingood was president of Emery Candle Company when John Jr. arrived in town. But by 1929, the young heir had assumed the chair, changed the name to Emery Industries Inc., and moved the office from the St. Bernard factory to the Fountain Square Building at 500 Walnut Street. And by 1948, Emery was president of not only his family's three businesses (Emery Industries Inc., Thomas Emery's Sons Inc. and Emery Carpenter Container Co.), but also of the Dayton and Michigan Railroad and director of the Cincinnati Equitable Fire Insurance Co.

When Jack Emery arrived in Cincinnati in the mid-1920s, the city was in political turmoil. A coalition of reform-minded citizens united to oust bossism, streamline government, and introduce modern efficiencies in city planning and operations. Jack Emery took a leadership role in the movement. He joined the Charter Committee, which won the vote for a new City Charter and fielded candidates for City Council. Emery was a leading supporter of the group and its president for several critical years. A visionary and sophisticated young man, Emery saw many areas in which his adopted city could be improved. He was keenly interested in how the city, especially the Central Business District, looked, how it worked, and how it brought joy to people. In 1929, he built the dramatic 48-story Carew Tower (the city's tallest building until 2010) and 800-room Netherland Plaza Hotel, designed by New York City architect W.W. Ahlschlager with Delano & Aldrich. It was a mixed-use project to replace the Hotel Emery and its popular shopping Arcade, which his father and uncle had built in 1877.

Emery quickly assumed a leadership role in cultural affairs. He served as president of the Cincinnati Institute of Fine Arts and the Cincinnati Art Museum.¹⁰ His family was largely responsible for developing the physical plant and the collections of the art museum. Indeed, John Jr. succeeded Mary Emery's right-hand man, Charles Livingood, as president of the museum. Jack Emery recruited Philip Adams as director, and the two began a long adventure in collection and institution building.

Cincinnati weathered the Depression better than many American cities. It had a diversified economic base and many of its industries were busy with large government contracts. Local legend has it that Jack Emery was unable to obtain financing quickly enough to move ahead on the Carew Tower, so in early 1929 he sold personal securities to fund construction, thereby averting losses in the stock

market crash. The Depression and World War II halted most construction projects but planning and building of the Terrace Plaza Hotel began before the war's end in September 1945.

In 1944, Emery and a group of friends had founded the Citizen's Planning Association, largely due to criticism they had of the city's management of downtown's infrastructure and development. Later renamed the Citizen's Development Committee (CDC), the group created its own comprehensive master plan for the revitalization of the downtown core, which was introduced in 1945. The CDC remained active in implementing the plan, and the group evolved into the Cincinnati Business Committee, which remains a powerful force for progressive thinking and action.

Development of the Terrace Plaza

In the Terrace Plaza, the developer and designers created an innovative mixed-use building that combined two department stores, office space, hotel, apartments and restaurants in a new way. Jack Emery signed a contract with the J.C. Penney Company in 1943, agreeing that once his company finished any new building in downtown Cincinnati, J.C. Penney would receive 200,000 square feet of floor space.¹¹ Presumably Penney's was attracted to the Emery development potential because the Carew Tower Arcade, which housed the H & S Pogue's and Mabley & Carew department stores, had been so successful. In 1945, Bond Clothing signed a contract for a 56,000-square-foot store. Both stores signed 30-year leases, which were based on a volume percentage, with a fixed guarantee.

Emery had been acquiring property with the intention of creating a new development on West Sixth Street, between Vine and Race. By 1945, he had amassed the entire half-block and was ready to proceed with development proposals. Later that year, Thomas Emery's Sons held a competition among six leading architectural firms, which had been invited to participate. The competition was to design a schematic proposal for the two department stores on the 90 foot by 400-foot site and then make recommendations for what else to do with the site and the air rights above.

Thomas Emery's Sons Inc. knew it needed to build two department stores on the site to fulfill obligations to the J.C. Penney Company and Bond Clothing. The Cincinnati developers thought they might use the rest of the site for a parking garage, an office building, or a hotel. The parking garage concept was "quickly discarded." Emery asked the six architecture firms he invited to submit proposals to provide data on the best use for the site. After careful research, SOM found that an office building could provide greater returns, but that the office market was not stable enough to guarantee long-term profits. It found that a hotel would provide less profit in some years, but far more in others, making the average somewhat higher and thus a better investment for the site.¹² A hotel had the added benefit of providing additional rooms for the popular, and often overcrowded, 800-room Netherland Plaza Hotel a block away. At the time, downtown Cincinnati had only 2,500 first- and second-class hotel rooms.¹³ The strategic location in the heart of Downtown was a decided advantage when marketing to prospective hotel guests, diners, and shoppers.

Jack Emery and Ellsworth Ireland chose the relatively new firm of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (now known as SOM) to be the architect largely because of its proposal that a hotel would be the best use for the air rights above the department stores. They also favored SOM because it was designing in the Modern style and had no experience in hotels—something that attracted Emery, who "wanted a layout that contained nothing conventional for convention's sake." Though not necessarily an advocate of the International Style, Emery believed a public building should "reflect the spirit of the age and

contain examples of the best contemporary art." He had espoused that principle in the Carew Tower in 1929, when Art Deco was a fashionable style. And in the postwar period, he introduced Modernism to downtown Cincinnati. Like the Carew Tower, the Terrace Plaza was a mixed-use concept, albeit on a smaller scale.

SOM created a hotel and commercial building that defied comparison, though it had its roots in other mixed-use projects such as the Carew Tower. It was lauded as a "design prototype of the mid-century hotel" being a "triumphant marriage of art and economics." The Terrace project included 324 guest rooms and 14 apartments, 4 restaurants, 2 department stores, 3 retail spaces, some offices, and the appropriate back-of-house areas. These all fit within the "base and slab" part of a seven-story, windowless commercial block topped by a twelve-story hotel block, set back to create terraces and to fit within the allowed zoning envelope. Zoning regulations allowed the base height to be twice the width of the surrounding streets (or seven stories) and then required one foot of setback for every four feet of elevation. To avoid complicated floor plans by multiple setbacks, SOM designed a 50-by-300-foot penthouse-like slab rising from the base with one setback which was pushed westward to create a terrace above Vine Street. Zoning allowed for a 6,341,000 cubic feet volume to rest on the site and the proposed massing filled 6,388,000 cubic feet. A nine-story service annex was included, using a narrow strip of property to the south to create a "T-shape" straddling Thorpe Alley. The initial programming and schematic designs were created by Louis Skidmore and Bill Brown, possibly with assistance from Jack Selz of the Chicago office. After the scheme was approved by the client and SOM received the commission in early 1945, Bill Brown was named partner-in-charge of the project and a team was assembled to begin design development.

Design Development

In the spring of 1945, Louis Skidmore asked 24-year-old Natalie de Blois to move her desk up to his floor and just outside the office of Bill Brown. Brown and Skidmore had completed the schematic design for the hotel and department stores and brought de Blois on as senior designer. She said: "Had Mr. Skidmore any other senior designers available in the office, I'm sure he would not have selected me. The office was very small, and the staff limited. There were few jobs."¹⁸ In spite of her lack of experience working on large projects, de Blois did the space planning, designed the structure and interiors, and finished the sections and elevations. Meetings with consultants, including structural, elevator, kitchen, mechanical, electrical, lighting, and landscape, were held in New York. De Blois recalls her first day working on the Terrace Plaza project: "A meeting of all the food service people was being held. Walt Severinghaus oversaw the meeting. When it was time to break for lunch he said, 'Natalie, please be back here at two o'clock. We're going out to lunch.'" Many of the lunch meetings were held in men's clubs, where de Blois was not allowed.

Ben Baldwin was hired as an interior designer in 1946 to design the eighth-floor Terrace Garden.²⁰ William Hartmann began working at SOM in 1945. In his oral history, he describes the Terrace Plaza project as "staggering" and said it was "worth an hour's tape all of its own." Hartmann states that Bill Brown had already largely finished the schematic design before he began working for SOM.

Jack Emery was wide open for innovation and design of all the hotel, so we assembled a team of people to do interiors of all types. We designed everything from china and glassware to uniforms and menus and, of course, all the fabrics and the hotel rooms and all elements. It was a chance to really bring modern design or new ideas about design into a major American

project. I don't believe that had ever been done before. I don't know that it's been done since in practically the same way.

He goes on to talk about how SOM identified the shift in traditional handcrafted techniques to new technologies and decided that putting modern art within a space created of industrial parts could replace the artisan of yesterday. He added: "I assembled what I think was the greatest team of designers ever. Of course, Natalie de Blois, who was an extremely competent architect and designer, was [already] there. John Johansen came to join us. Bill Lyman, Vincent Kling, and Charlie Hughes. ... We built the finest groups of architects, I believe, that ever existed."

In September 1945, SOM released the schematic design for the Terrace Plaza to the Cincinnati press. The scheme would change only slightly by the time it was constructed. The 1945 sketch shows almost identical massing, the two stories of glass at the Vine Street side, the canopy on Sixth Street, and the terraces at the eighth floor and roof levels. The shadow of an additional penthouse is shown, as is a larger and singular mechanical grill on the lower box. The most obvious difference is that the Gourmet Room did not exist in this initial scheme.

The design was revolutionary in its treatment of the hotel lobby, which was located seven stories above the ground level. The entrance was located about one-third of the way along the Sixth Street elevation from Vine Street. Its narrow 28-foot width was necessitated by the department stores, two retail shops, and recommendations from hotel experts and accountants who were trying to make the building as efficient as possible. Multiple elevator banks served various parts of the buildings, and some were used solely for service. Only four public elevators went to the guest room floors, and only one public elevator reached the Gourmet Room restaurant.

The sophistication of vertical circulation included the first fully-automated elevators and a freight elevator that took trucks bringing goods to the restaurants, hotel, or Bond store to the basement for unloading. Trucks delivering goods for J. C. Penney unloaded at street level and used a freight elevator that went directly to Penney's storage areas on the sixth and seventh floors. Original plans called for an automobile elevator, which would take guests to the eighth floor to unload and then deliver their cars to a parking garage on the sixth and seventh floors, but the idea was abandoned after realizing the significant cost involved would not justify the convenience or novelty.

In addition to the team at SOM, which included de Blois, Brown, Hartmann, Baldwin, Phyllis Hoffseimer, and other staff, the hotel's interior layout and program were worked on by consultants who were experts in kitchen and hotel design. Walter J. Smith was the kitchen consultant, and Harris, Kerr & Forster were the accountants and hotel consultants for the project.

In addition to the eighth-floor hotel lobby served with express elevators, the team's hotel design included several other innovations: ice skating on the terrace; four distinct and independent kitchens; guest rooms with electric, motorized beds and multipurpose furniture; user-controlled air conditioning in every room; Formica laminate in baths, guest rooms, and public areas; and Modern art integrated into the architecture.

Custom-designed furniture was fabricated by a Cincinnati firm, Backus Brothers Furniture Company. Founded as Central Supply Co. by Henry W. Backus just after World War I when he returned from service, the company expanded and changed its name when Henry's three sons joined. It was

Located at Third and Sycamore streets, with a workshop in Covington. The Terrace Plaza order was the furniture company's largest endeavor to date. Once SOM gave Backus Brothers the design, full-scale mockups of each piece were created and placed into the hotel for the approval by the developer. The final design was then mass-produced, using the newest technologies in bent steel and plywood. According to Hotel Monthly, Thonet Brothers, the Ficks-Reed Co. of Cincinnati, and the Widdicomb Furniture Co. also contributed to the manufacture of the furniture for the guest rooms.

Carpeting was made by Mohawk Mills, and fabrics were manufactured by Goodall and Royale.²³ China for the restaurants was designed by SOM and contracted to Shenango Pottery Co. in New Castle, Pennsylvania. Plates for the Skyline Restaurant featured a colored band around the edge and the TP logo in the middle on white. The Gourmet Room plate was black with a gold rooster logo in the center and gold trim. SOM and its team of designers also designed the tableware, silver, key tags, soap wrappers, menus, towel monograms, logos, match covers, laundry boxes, drapery print, textiles, uniforms, furniture, carpet, rugs, linens, and lighting fixtures.

Hallways of the hotel floors featured mirrored walls near the elevators with a display case for each floor. The displays, which changed a few times per day, featured events and hotel services. The multicolored carpeting had irregular, woven stripes going across the hallway. Recessed doors were paired and had darker carpeting. Fluorescent light troughs were located above the door recesses, and the stainless-steel cut-out room numbers were back-lit. Doors were finished in a wood veneer. Locks were a new push-button style by the Schlage Lock Company. The doors did not rattle or move when the lock was activated.

The guest rooms were all designed with flexibility of use, durability of materials, and user comfort in mind. Mockups were made in New York inside a hotel room of the Savoy Plaza Hotel, located near SOM's office. The mockups were tested by guests, and reactions were recorded so that revisions could be made to the design. Furniture was designed to serve multiple functions. A typical guest room gave the appearance of a living room, with built-in couches, bent plywood chairs, and end tables surrounding an open, carpeted area. At night, the push of a button would make the couch become a bed by sliding out from the wall on hidden steel beams, cantilevered about one inch above the carpet. The electric, motorized beds had reportedly been used just once before, at the Statler Hotel in Washington, D.C., of 1943. The beds could be made up by the guest or a maid by removing the slipcover and taking the pillows out of the built-in cabinet behind. The beds could also be moved out farther from the wall by the maid for ease of cleaning and preparation by using a special key. This allowed the relatively small (13-by-14 foot) hotel room to feel more open and to be used for social functions by day and sleeping by night.

In addition, a custom-designed furniture piece served simultaneously as a screen between the room and the door, a bar, a serving area for room service, a dresser, luggage storage, and a desk. From the hall side, the top could be lifted up to expose a bar area and drawers, and a shelf provided storage. On the room side, a pull-down door became a desktop, and the stationery (also custom-designed) was in a pocket within. As the desk opened, a fluorescent built-in task light would automatically turn on. The dresser drawers and the top bar/luggage rack were lined with stainless steel. A built-in wall panel contained a radio and telephone and was wired for television; though these were not included at the hotel's opening. Radios were made by the Langevin Company, and speakers were by General Electric. The rooms had ten-foot-wide windows, which were mostly fixed but did have a small casement window

at one end. Guests were encouraged not to open the window except in case of emergency. The openings were covered with Venetian blinds and fabric curtains. The windows had built-in air conditioning units beneath them.

To extend the idea of flexibility to the plan, SOM created optional suites by placing a removable partition between rooms on every other floor (9, 11, 14, 16, and 18). Counterweighted two-inch-thick wall panels, made of plywood on steel frames, and operated by two 1/50 horsepower motors, could be raised into a pocket in the wall directly above – thereby opening the room to become a larger suite. The wall was raised electrically with a switch in the wardrobe closet but had to be activated first by a maid from a panel located on each of the floors with this feature. It was made by the Peele Door Company.

To respond to climatic and psychological differences in the two sides of the building, rooms on the north were outfitted in fabric in warm colors and walls painted terra cotta, gray, and white. Rooms on the south side used cooler colors for the fabric and had their walls painted deep green, gray, and white. The walls had no hanging art, but rather a variety of stenciled paintings of free-form, futuristic shapes, which the Cincinnati Post called “meaningless,” but said they were bound to start up conversation, questions, and guesses. All the fabrics of the furniture and the curtains were designed by Marianne Strengell and were intended to be durable, yet comfortable.

Invented in 1912, Formica was produced in Cincinnati beginning the following year and became widely used in the 1930s and during World War II. When Cunard used it for cabins and public rooms in the Queen Mary, launched in 1934, it became a fashionable as well as serviceable material. The Formica Company manufactured numerous patterns and colors, and SOM designers adopted a varied palette. All horizontal hard surfaces in the guest rooms were clad in Beauty Bonded Formica, which was touted as burn-proof, stain-proof, and waterproof. The air conditioning units were covered by a “window seat” and dado made of grey Formica. Built-in furniture was covered in Realwood, and tables were clad in black Formica. The combination bar/dresser/desk was Realwood with a yellow Formica drop-down door and blue-grey Formica desktop.

No floor or table lamps were used in another attempt to reduce maintenance and replacement costs. Directional can lights were used to direct light toward the chairs and couches for reading. A recessed fluorescent band near the hallway and a long, fluorescent wall fixture provided light to the room. There were separate closets for men and women, with a full-length mirror on the middle sliding door of the closet. Wastebaskets had rubber on the bottom and top edges to prevent damage to furniture, carpet, and walls.

The bathrooms were the first to use full-length, wall-width mirrors and built-in, Formica-topped counters. The counters, in an orange-red linen pattern, were a combined dressing table and wash basin, and hid all plumbing within a cabinet. Walls and floors were covered with standard-sized blue tile. Chrome-plated faucets were built into the wall on a stainless cabinet. The special lavatory fixtures were built by Standard Sanitary Company. The medicine cabinets were built into the walls with sliding doors and a bottle opener. The toilet paper holders were recessed into the side of the cabinets. Fluorescent sidelights provided ideal lighting for dressing and makeup. The ceilings of the bathrooms were lower than the rooms. A track was installed along the ceiling above each bathtub for a shower curtain, and a special, retractable cord was included for drying clothing.

The guest rooms cost an estimated \$15,000 apiece for design, materials, and systems. The standard hotel rate of \$1 per \$1,000 in expense would have created a very high rate, so Thomas Emery's Sons lowered the price to \$7 for a single and \$10 for a double room – justifying the difference by saying that they had not spent as much on the public areas as in other hotels and that the finishes in the rooms, which made them cost so much more, were going to pay off by requiring such low maintenance – an estimated 75% reduction.

The nineteenth floor was designed with 14 apartment-style units with two to four rooms each. They were created for “permanent residents,” who wanted to live downtown, desired restaurants in their building, and required minimal housekeeping. The small kitchens were surfaced with Formica and were made fully-functional, though the clients assumed the residents would eat most meals in one of the four restaurants.

The Gourmet Room

Natalie de Blois was in charge of the architectural and interior plans for the twentieth-floor Gourmet Room restaurant and its support spaces, which were not part of the original proposal or program. She recalls being asked to design several schemes for a small dining room on top of the building at some point in the design process. “I came up with six or eight different schemes. Mr. Skidmore took them all down to Cincinnati, and they decided they liked the one with the circular plan. Mr. Skidmore called me up and said, ‘Natalie, they like the round one. Go ahead.’ ... It wasn’t my favorite. [My favorite] was rectangular. It wasn’t cantilevered like that. It really went out like the rest of the building.”

The narrow space leading from the elevator to the Gourmet Room created drama by compressing the visitor and then suddenly allowing them to experience the views from the circular restaurant after ascending the short stair. The wall along the wide hallway was covered with a curving, sculptural partition. At the end, just before the turn to go up the stairs, was a small, four-seat bar. Some seating was located along the wall. Powder rooms were located to the west of the elevator. Ward Bennett designed sculptural sconces for the lounge spaces, including the “intimate” lounge leading from the elevator to the Gourmet Room on the twentieth floor. Here he designed four brass sconces using a simple, Chinese-inspired design.

The circular room had slanted glass walls to direct views and to improve the acoustic qualities of the space (figures 10,11). The glass, specially created by the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company, was an early example of both insulated glass and safety glass. The roof was supported on small post columns around the perimeter to avoid obstructions of the view. The white ceiling had a large air grill in the center and small recessed lights in a circular pattern. A large, round stainless-steel column anchored the round room onto the mechanical penthouse and partially obscured the Miró mural. Banquette seating ran along the mural wall. Tubular metal tables and chairs with cream-colored upholstery filled the space. A narrow, but efficient kitchen was designed at the south side of the floor, accessed from the Gourmet Room, the bar, and the elevator area. This kitchen had its own service elevator.

Engineering

The Terrace Plaza employed many technological advances, such as the first fully automated elevators; first use of a dual heating system that would run on gas and fuel oil or coal; and first user-controlled air conditioning in every hotel room. Other innovations in the hotel included a photronic smoke detection system in the ventilating ducts; motion-activated automatic door openers in the dining room for tray-laden wait staff; built-in control panels for radio, telephone; motorized beds that could be converted to sofas; and movable partitions. Innovative lighting included spotlights for reading, makeup lights for bathrooms, and filtered floodlights to enhance colors and textures.

Structural Engineering

Erecting the innovative building on a tight, urban site was a challenge met by capable professionals. The foundation was engineered by Moran, Proctor, Freeman & Mueser, who also worked on the Delaware Memorial Bridge, the Bronx-Whitestone Bridge, and the United Nations. The structural engineers were Weiskopf & Pickworth of New York, who later worked with SOM on the Union Carbide building. The design team chose a steel frame for the structure, using semi-regular column spacing, with the majority being 28 feet on center. The plan evolved from a study of eight alternatives by engineers and architects working closely together. The great challenge was designing the structural system and column grid to address the competing needs of the department stores (few columns) and those of the hotel block (columns at a regular grid conducive to room layouts).

The floors are concrete slab and joist, with a clear distance between joists of 20 inches. The slab is 2½ inches thick; and in the hotel floors, the joists range from 7.5 inches to 10.5 inches deep with a width of 5 inches. On the store floors, the joists are 14.5 inches deep, but maintain the 20-inch spacing and 5-inch width. Floor framing consists of steel beams – except in the larger panels, where it consists of centrally located distributing joists. T-flange girders, patented by the structural engineers, were used at the column transfers. Consisting of web plates and heavyweight, wide-flanged beams cut in half to form the flanges, with or without cover plates, this type of member permitted more web-to-flange rivets than conventional plate-and-angle girders. Many decisions were made to lower the total building height, add floor to floor heights where needed, and create better column spacings for circulation, mechanical chases, and room layouts. “Throughout the development of the design, architects and engineers cooperated closely to obtain a satisfactory final solution because of the widespread effect on each decision.”

The structure of the Gourmet Room presented special difficulties because it was nearly surrounded by glass and cantilevered off one corner of the mechanical penthouse. The roof was a flat, reinforced concrete dome spanning 38 feet, 7 inches with a rise of 4 feet at the center. The roof slab and the short, curved canopy that extended around the perimeter were 4 inches thick. The dome was designed to rest on 12-inch wide-flange, 27-pound curved spandrel beams supported by posts consisting of two 4-inch channels. These posts were supported by the tapered ends of 24-inch, wide-flange, 76-pound radial floor beams. Curved 8-inch, 11.5-pound channels joined the outer ends of these beams. At the center of the room, the radial beams were connected to angles welded at regular intervals around the circumference of a 24-inch round, 3/8-inch thick pipe and were made continuous by 5/8-inch thick plates.

Mechanical and Electrical Engineering

Mechanical engineering was done by the New York City firm Jaros, Baum & Bolles. The Terrace Plaza was one of the firm's first commissions; it went on to do engineering for Lever House, the Pan Am Building, One Chase Manhattan, and the TWA Terminal at John F. Kennedy International Airport. Electrical engineers were Clyde R. Place and Guy Panero. The electrical contractor was a Cincinnati family firm, Bertke Electric Co. Inc. Arthur Bertke was so impressed with the futuristic quality of the project that he wrote a monograph on the state-of-the-art electrical systems.

Over \$1 million was spent on the development of a new air conditioning unit for the Terrace Plaza. Called "Conduit Weathermaster Units," they were designed by the Carrier Corporation, under the supervision of project manager H. C. Hoffman. The units, located under the windows of each room, allowed guests to control their own temperature for the first time. Fresh air and water (chilled in summer, hot in winter) were pumped to the guest rooms, where the air was cooled or heated depending on the temperature settings and thermostat and then filtered into the room. The air exhausted from the building through vents in the bathrooms. The vertical conduit system for air supply and elimination of all horizontal ducts in the hotel section made it possible to build ten full floors of guest rooms because there was no need for soffits or dropped ceilings.³⁶ Windows were assumed to be non-operable except for cleaning and emergency use in order to reduce dirt and noise.

The cafeteria and each department store had its own system, as did the hotel public spaces and hotel block. The air for the main units was cleaned by electrostatic filters and cooled by new spray-type coils to clean and/or humidify the air. The mechanical engineers had determined that, despite the programmatic division of the project, one central plant could provide the necessary coolant for the entire building. Located in the boiler room below the sub-basement, three centrifugal compressors with a total capacity of 1,500 tons of refrigeration pumped chilled water to six mechanical rooms located at strategic points throughout the Terrace Plaza to minimize disruption to floor usage. The mechanical rooms with air conditioning fan units were located in the sub-basement, the second, sixth, seventh, and eighth floors, and the penthouse. The air conditioning equipment circulated 4,500 gallons of water per minute to the cooling tower. The cooling tower was located in the rooftop penthouse, and large grills on the north and south elevation provided air intake and exhaust respectively. The system used the "energy equivalent to 11,200 100-watt light bulbs." Total air circulation was approximately 1.2 million cubic feet per minute. Odor exhausts (kitchen and bathroom ventilation) were placed on the roof of the penthouse. The locations of the different vents greatly reduced the danger of exhausted air being "short-circuited" back into the building.

The boiler room also included the first use of a dual system, which would normally run on gas but could be immediately switched to fuel oil or coal to provide uninterrupted service in an emergency. The system was overbuilt to be able to provide heat to neighboring buildings so as to reduce the coal smoke they were creating by using their own boilers. At opening, the Terrace Plaza was already providing heat to the Woolworth's store.

Control panels near the beds included a built-in, six-station radio, a telephone, and connection for televisions, which were not yet included in the rooms. The speakers of the radio also served as an emergency announcement system, and they were connected to the hotel's state-of-the-art "photronic smoke detection system installed in the ventilating ducts." This system used light beams projected across the ducts to detect smoke or fire entering the system from any guest room or public area and

actuated an alarm in the hotel engineer's headquarters, automatically shut off the air conditioning system and sent a telegraph to the local dispatcher to send fire engines. Another even newer and more sophisticated fire safety technology was used in the J.C. Penney store to guard against fire and smoke spreading through the open escalator shafts.

A combination of sprinklers with a new negative air pressure and suction system would have prevented smoke from traveling from floor to floor. Sensors would have detected smoke entering the opening and would have activated an exhaust system to pull the smoke up and out an exhaust on the south side of the building, while creating negative pressure so that it would not enter other areas of the building. Another sensor would have detected heat from flames and activated a "wall of water" surrounding the escalator opening to prevent fire from spreading to other floors through that route. Meanwhile, the escalators heading toward the affected area would have automatically shut off, while those heading away would continue operating.

In addition to new electrical systems and technologies, the Terrace Plaza had many that had become conventional by the mid-1940s – including burglar alarm, time clock system, telephone, and intercom systems for both hotel and store spaces – and "behind it all a formidable electrical distribution and control system."⁴⁰ Two widely separated underground utility transformer vaults serviced the entire building—each served by a separate feeder and including four 600 kilo-volt ampere transformers. One vault was for the air conditioning switchboard, the other served the 57-foot-long main power and lighting switchboard. Provisions were made for expansion of the electrical system, and an additional underground transformer vault was placed near Bond in case of future needs. More than 142 miles of wire and cable, seven miles of conduit, and 2,500 feet of underfloor duct was used for the electrical distribution. All this electricity and lighting located on 3,459 circuits and controlled from 162 lighting and power panels throughout the Terrace Plaza. To reduce maintenance costs of ice and snow removal from the auto and pedestrian entry, designers heated the 84-by-19-foot concrete slab in an area of the sidewalk under the entry canopy. A domestic hot water heater pumped 140-degree water through 1,200 feet of ¾-inch heavy steel pipe into hot-water pipes, which were set into the concrete slab.

Lighting Design

For the Terrace Plaza, lighting designer Abe Feder created the most advanced lighting of the day, seeing it as way to help market the hotel. He compared his approach at the Terrace Plaza to theatrical lighting, designed to surprise and entertain. "The Terrace Plaza Hotel in Cincinnati proved the value of coordinated planning in which lighting is given its rightful stature and authority," he wrote. "Thomas Emery's Sons Inc. spent \$450,000 to light that hotel—and in so doing they took a novel and progressive step by making lighting an integral part of the earliest plans for the project."

Feder designed lighting for the entire building, including Bond and Penney's, creating 88 different types of custom-built fixtures. Rows of recessed PAR 150-watt incandescent lamps in specially designed housings illuminated the underside of the white canopy and continued into the hotel elevator lobby (extant). The Bond street-level space featured a ceiling completely covered with a lighting installation of cold cathode lamps behind frosted glass. Similarly, the light installation over the registration desk was a sloping Albalite glass ceiling, illuminated from above with slimline fluorescent tubes. The lobby, lounges, and restaurants at the eighth-floor level had rows of recessed can lights identical to those used at the street level lobby and canopy (extant). Elevator areas on each floor were illuminated with continuous rows of recessed slimline units with louvers and diffusing glass shields.

Corridor lighting was provided by custom designed metal units above each grouping of two guest room doors and included translucent room numbers that were back-lit with special slimline fixtures (extant).

Guest rooms had three types of lighting: long horizontal wall sconces with 96-inch slimlines for general illumination; recessed, glass ceiling units near the door; and a louvered, recessed 75-watt, R-30 incandescent spot light mounted in various places. The last type was referred to as an “eye-ball spot” and was used for directing light toward the chair and couch for reading. This was reportedly the first use of recessed fluorescent lighting in a hotel room. The amount spent on lighting each guest room averaged \$17.40, whereas a typical hotel room lighting scheme of single ceiling light and table lamps cost \$1.50. (No original lighting remains in the hotel rooms.)

One of the most novel designs Feder completed was the system for lighting the outdoor eighth floor terrace. Thirty 3,000-watt, theatrical-type flood lights lined the nineteenth-floor parapet 150 feet above the terrace. Ninety kilowatts of floodlighting was reflected off a mirrored door, which directed the light downward—providing “moonlight” for summer night dining and “sunlight” for winter evening ice skating. The color and quality of the light was modified by remote-controlled filters.⁴³ Feder also employed theatrical lighting in the meeting rooms on the mezzanine level, installing gold and white fluorescent fixtures above the stage, sidewall floodlighting, and floor lights in louvers.

Construction

Demolition of the buildings on the site began in early fall of 1945 and was completed on January 1, 1946. Demolition of the existing buildings to street level was performed by the Cleveland Wrecking Company.⁴⁴ SOM’s field representatives were Edwin M. Pratt as field manager and W.C. Fisher as construction superintendent. A local firm, Frank Messer & Sons Inc. (now known as Messer Construction), was the general contractor for the building. Founded in 1932, the firm had recently completed the then-largest government contract in the nation – the Wright Aeronautical plant in Evendale, a suburb of Cincinnati. Messer’s president then was Earl J. Wheeler. W.A. Forshee was project manager, and William Raidt was field superintendent.

Foundation work was completed by summer 1946. Steel construction began on September 16, 1946, and was completed by late 1947, though most steel framing was completed within five months. All structural steel—about 6,200 tons—was provided by and erected by Bethlehem Steel Company. Cladding of the building was completed by the beginning of 1948.⁴⁵ The project’s total cost was around \$16 million, nearly twice the original estimate. According to *Business Week*, many features were added to the project during construction. Ellsworth Ireland said it was better to spend money then on “features that will keep down maintenance costs later.” The project also ran eight months behind schedule, blamed largely on postwar shortages of building materials and strikes.

Bond Clothing and J.C. Penney moved into their spaces before the hotel was finished. Bond opened in early November 1947, and J.C. Penney in early March 1948. The 20,000 square feet of office space located on the sixth and seventh floors above Bond was unfinished until the summer of 1948. The space was leased by Lever Bros., SwissAir, Ford Motor Co., and American Cyanamid, among others.

The Opening

The night before its opening, the building was illuminated by several spotlights which moved irregularly over its brick curtain walls creating an otherworldly look. The circular glass restaurant glowed

like a UFO perched on the roof twenty stories above. The buzz had been growing for months before the opening of the Terrace Plaza Hotel – it promised to be one of the most technologically advanced and modern hotels in the world.

The next day on Friday, July 16, 1948, more than 1,000 people stood on Sixth Street to witness the simple key and ribbon-cutting ceremonies. Ohio Governor Thomas J. Herbert and Pulitzer Prize-winning author Louis Bromfield were among those in attendance at a preview opening of the Terrace Plaza Hotel. Herbert said: "In this magnificent structure, Mr. Emery has given us a beautiful insight into the future." Presiding at the 4:00 p.m. event were Mayor Albert D. Cash, architect Louis Skidmore, developers John J. Emery & Ellsworth F. Ireland, contractor Earl J. Wheeler, and Jack Friedman, president of the Sixth Street Business Men's Association. Ireland handed the scissors to Emery, who cut the ribbon. Wheeler handed the key to Emery, who opened the street lobby doors and then threw away the key, exclaiming that the hotel would never again be closed to the public. Another preview on Saturday, July 17, was attended by 200 hotel executives who came from all over the U.S. and abroad to see the Terrace Plaza. Amazed with the revolutionary new hotel, some of their comments included, "peerless," "magnificent," and "the last word in perfection."

When the hotel officially opened on Monday, July 19, 1948, the city and the nation hailed it as an instant icon of Modern art and architectural design. It was one of the first new hotels constructed in the United States after World War II. More than 10,000 people walked through the building the first day it was open. The first guest was Charles P. Lenhart, a designer for the Selby Shoe Co., of Portsmouth, Ohio.⁴⁸ The Cincinnati Post reported that the Terrace Plaza included hundreds of features never before seen in a hotel—and that guests concluded the hotel made good on "even the most fanciful claims." Resident manager Ray Kroger was concerned that many members of the public would assume the Terrace Plaza was out of their price range because of its look and the buzz surrounding it, so he mentioned to the press that rooms were still available for the first day of operations, starting at \$5.00 for a small single or \$7.00 for a standard room, and that the prices in the restaurants were similarly moderate. "Food prices will definitely not be sky-high. And that goes even for the Gourmet restaurant." Max Schulman was general manager, Richard Elsner was catering manager, and Georgia Vogt was administrative housekeeper for the Terrace Plaza – all also serving in those same positions for the Netherland Plaza Hotel.

The Terrace Garden began service at 4:30 p.m., the Plaza Cafeteria opened at 4:45 p.m., and the Skyline Restaurant opened at 6:00 p.m. It had already been booked solid for opening day. The Gourmet Room restaurant was not ready for the hotel opening, but instead opened the following week on July 29, 1948. Its "patron" or maître d' was Andre Ballestra, of Monte Carlo, who had previously presided over Michel's French café and the Rainbow Room at Rockefeller Center.⁵⁰ He greeted each guest entering the restaurant by saying, "Bonjour, gourmet."

In addition to the local ceremonies, the hotel opened in a national "blaze of public relations." It was featured in dozens of newspapers, magazines, and trade journals. Architectural Forum called it "a radically new solution, both in design and financing."⁵² Life magazine said the Terrace Plaza "provides a new and handsome answer to old hotel problems," noting the Gourmet Room resembled the "bridge of an ocean liner."⁵³ Harper's Bazaar did a feature on the Miró mural a month before the hotel's opening and called the complex "a striking modern building." The writers spent most of the short article analyzing the mural's meaning and content, assigning objects and creatures to the various shapes and

predicting that a guest of the Gourmet Room might view the mural “through a happy cocktail haze [and] suddenly see the animation take place and these fantastic animals come to life.” Comparing it to the new (but traditional) hotels on the East Coast, Harper’s Magazine said it best: “If you want to discover what your grandchildren will think of as the elegance of this postwar era, you will have to go to Cincinnati.”

Not all publicity was completely positive for the city. Time magazine complimented the Terrace Plaza as being the “city’s most revolutionary modern building,” though only as a contrast to “dowdy, old-fashioned Cincinnati.” Jack Emery, Time reported, had an “old ambition” to build a hotel like the Terrace Plaza, which he had gotten from his days at “Groton, Harvard, and Oxford.” Time overlooked that Emery had already built Carew Tower (then the city’s tallest building) and the Netherland Plaza Hotel, that Cincinnati already had a tradition of modern art and architecture, and that the Terrace Plaza building’s importance transcended Cincinnati. The local reaction to the Time article was swift and strong. Several newspapers and public officials made rebuttals, and J. S. Turner, vice president of the Cincinnati Convention and Visitors Bureau, sent a telegram to Time’s editor writing: “Dowdy, old-fashioned Cincinnati is proud of its new hotel, but this doesn’t quite represent the introduction of plumbing to the Queen City.” He cited a list of local virtues, including other modern hotels, arts, industry, and education. And he invited Time to visit Cincinnati if it could “stand the fresh air and tempo of the ‘city closest to America.’ ”

Hotel operations

Eight years after the Terrace Plaza opened, Architectural Forum published a follow-up article in 1956, assessing the performance of many of the unique features of the hotel. The article described the Terrace Plaza, as “one of the most unusual buildings in all the U.S.,” proclaiming “It has been a wonder of the Ohio Valley, and its art and strikingly modern interiors have made it a name to be dropped by travelers from coast to coast.” The magazine wanted to “see specifically how the Terrace had worked out, both as a design and as a business proposition. On the whole, what it found stacked up favorably – with some important qualifications.”

Emery stated that the hotel was profitable and was renting rooms at an average rate of 80%, down from the first year’s average of 85%. Analysts said that the hotel’s three rates (\$8.50 for small singles, \$10.50 for standard rooms, and \$16.00 for corner rooms) were not diverse enough to make a profitable venture and achieve a higher occupancy rate. The food service operations had been highly successful, particularly the Gourmet Room, the Plaza Cafeteria, and room service. The Plaza Cafeteria was surprisingly busy, serving 3,500 to 4,000 meals a day, though its kitchen had been designed to serve only 2,500. The hotel’s staff was close to 500, largely due to the food service demands.

The materials used for the hotel were considered a good investment and had held up quite well, though eight years is a bit short to make an assessment. One of the only major replacements was of the elevators, which were converted to self-service cabs in early 1956.⁶⁰ General Manager John G. Horsman felt that the additional expense on materials such as marble, Formica, and heavy-duty fabric was worth it because maintenance had been easy and replacement “practically nil.” However, another employee noted that some of the special features were requiring replacement as a direct result of their novelty, saying, “People play with the motor-driven beds, for instance – run them in and out. It’s a small motor, and we’ve had to replace some parts. Then, too, the seals broke on two of the double-pane windows in the Gourmet [Room] but they’re also something special; they’re curved. We’ve had no trouble with glass

any other place. The color-changing mechanism for the lights that play on the plastic planes behind the Terrace Garden bar went on the fritz, and cost about \$500 to replace. But you have to expect things like that, and anyway, the features are worth it. They give the place its tone.”

Architectural Forum declared the modern art to be fully justified, saying that the public and critics alike still loved the Miró and Steinberg murals. The magazine critiqued the “purity and restraint” of SOM’s overall design as being too austere for the public’s taste but commended the management for maintaining the hotel’s integrity. The article noted that some of the bright colors of the fabric had begun to fade and that certain materials were failing, such as the marble table tops in the terrace Garden, which were chipped and stained. Also, the leather on the bar rail had split and discolored, and the carpet in the hallways was looking worn. *Architectural Forum* said that overall the hotel is “still decidedly trim, and the guest rooms look almost as unmarred and comfortable as they did in the beginning.”

J. C. Penney and Bond weren’t quite as pleased with their spaces, neither designed by SOM. Their main complaints stemmed from high heating and lighting costs. Penney was said to be initiating a study to determine why its expenses were so high. Both stores used new lighting technologies but were finding maintenance to be a problem. The hanging fixtures were a dust trap, but very difficult to reach for cleaning. Bond wished it had not created built-in light panels on its ceiling, presumably because of difficulty accessing them. Bond stated that “the two-story windows are handicaps in display, and that the interior light and daylight fight each other.” Penney complained of “a needless waste of space in the envelope allotted to the store, footage that can’t be used at all for selling.” And the consensus was that the freight elevator to take trucks to the sub-basement loading dock was made far too small for efficiency.

Some in the hotel wished there were more public rooms for meetings and conferences. Though the Terrace Plaza was intended to be a “dormitory annex” to the Netherland Plaza, which already had plenty of public rooms, the prestige and novelty of the Terrace Plaza made many want to hold their business meetings and lunches in the hotel. Since the building had only two small meeting rooms, the management had been using suites, corner rooms, the “quiet” lobby lounge and areas within the restaurants to offer space to these groups, “something less than ideal.” Nonetheless, *Architectural Forum* ended by saying: “To an aging downtown, it has been a breath of freshness; to tired travelers, a delightful respite. Even if it hadn’t earned its keep, that would have counted for a great deal, indeed.”⁶³ Sale to Hilton Hotels Corporation Hilton Hotels Corporation purchased the Terrace Plaza Hotel from Thomas Emery’s Sons Inc. on November 1, 1956, as part of a \$25 million package, which included a 25-year lease on the Netherland Plaza Hotel. Real estate investors estimated that the Terrace Plaza’s portion of that deal was \$12.5 million and that its appraised value would have been between \$11.5 million and \$12 million, noting that the building had depreciated significantly. Emery said that the main reason for selling was to free up capital in order “to consider seriously other major improvements in the downtown field.”⁶⁴ The buyers renamed it the Terrace Hilton, replacing “Plaza” with “Hilton” on the penthouse sign, the canopy and elsewhere. Local arts advocates watched in pain as both properties suffered interior design rebranding under Hilton management. In the 1960s, there was little appreciation for, or interest in, preserving America’s classic Art Deco and Modernist hotels.

In 1965 Jack Emery negotiated the donation of the Miró, Calder, and Steinberg works to the Cincinnati Art Museum, ensuring their survival and residence in Cincinnati. Hilton had apparently not

cared much for the artwork during the nine years it was caretaker. When the Cincinnati Art Museum came to pick up the pieces, the Calder mobile had been painted various colors (from its original black and red). Fourteen feet of the Steinberg mural had mysteriously disappeared, and the Jim Davis sculpture was missing as well. The Calder was restored and repainted after arriving at the Cincinnati Art Museum. In 2007, the museum completed restoration of the 75-foot-long Steinberg mural and held an exhibition called “A New Yorker’s View of Cincinnati: Steinberg’s Mural for the Terrace Plaza Hotel.” The exhibition ran from June 23 to September 23, 2007, and drew more than 16,000 visitors, many of whom left comments about fond memories of the Terrace Plaza.

Probably just after the artwork was removed, Hilton renovated the Terrace Plaza, creating a French Baroque interior for the Gourmet Room restaurant and adding wood paneling and antique sconces where the Miró had once hung. According to Hilton, the Gourmet Room was redecorated in “keeping with the many International Awards received for excellence in food” and included a 6-by-6 foot golden bronze chandelier from the Army and Navy Club in London, which had supposedly been given to Hilton by Queen Victoria; two gilded wall sconces from the Chateau Vistaero in southern France; and an 18th century terra cotta bust of Marie Antoinette from Versailles. A cove in the ceiling was created to accept the ornate chandelier. Hilton removed the original lounge area, with its solid wall and undulating wooden screen, creating a new window wall at the north edge of the terrace to add seating and a larger bar. Other renovations occurred over time. The banquettes were removed from all three restaurants, the built-in furniture was removed from the guest rooms, and the lobby was reconfigured and renovated. In the early 1980s, the street lobby and retail spaces were removed to create an open-air valet parking area within the building.

Recent history

Throughout the 1960s to the 2000s, the hotel began to look tired and had lost much of its original Modern luster. Downtown Cincinnati had fallen on hard times. Many of the theaters and department stores that previously attracted visitors had closed due to changing demographics and the exodus of residents to new suburbs. J.C. Penney closed in 1968, saying it planned to build a new, more modern store downtown – but it never returned. Bond closed in 1977. AT&T moved into the former office space circa 1979 and renovated the former department store spaces for its Long Lines division during the 1980s, before and after it purchased the building from Hilton Corp. in July 1983. AT&T began trying to sell the building in 1990 – but the firm was not successful until October 1994, when it was sold to Crowne Plaza.

In October 1995, the Crowne Plaza opened after completing additional renovations and in 1997 the hotel announced it expected to open a Palomino Bistro in one of the restaurant spaces of the former Terrace Plaza. The deal fell through, and Palomino ended up opening above Macy’s in the adjacent Fountain Place project in 1998. The Crowne Plaza closed on October 31, 2004 and sold the property to New York investors Angelo Slabakis and Stefan Wiederkehr. They purchased the building in December 2005 for \$26 million. The Downtown hotel market had become stagnant by the 1990s, and it was not until recently that reinvestment in real estate, residential units, restaurants, and entertainment began attracting more residents and visitors to Downtown.

In 2004, a team of developers proposed converting the Terrace Plaza into a condominium and boutique hotel concept called NEXT, hoping to profit from the emerging trend of Downtown revitalization and repopulation. The plans called for removing large sections of the brick curtain wall to place condominiums in the retail box as well. Although the model units were efficient and glamorous, the project fell flat when only one of the 78 proposed units sold.

In January 2010, the complex was purchased for \$7 million by New York real-estate investor World Properties LLC. Plans for a hotel and other tenants fell through in the 2008 recession. In August 2016, the building was transferred to a new ownership entity, Cincinnati Terrace Plaza, LLC, after going through a law suit and court-appointed receiver sale process. In 2018, the building was transferred to JNY, a partnership based in Brooklyn, NY.

The International Style

The Terrace Plaza is significant in the Area of Architecture as the first International-style hotel built in America and the most important Modernist building in Cincinnati. The International Style originated in Europe as architects strove to respond to the chaos of World War I with a clean, rational system of thought. It developed primarily within the Bauhaus School, an artists' collective and school of art and architecture in Germany. Founded at Weimar in 1919, the Bauhaus was headed by Walter Gropius, who conceived of it as a way to combine beauty and simplicity, utility and mass production.

The school's innovative design curriculum focused on functional craftsmanship, with an emphasis on the industrial problems of mechanical mass production. Underpinning the school's approach was the idea that design did not merely reflect society but could help to improve it. The Bauhaus style was typified by economy of method, a severe geometry of form, and design that considered the nature of the materials employed. The school's revolutionary concepts aroused vigorous opposition from right-wing politicians and academicians, resulting in the loss of its local financial backing.

While the 1932 International Style exhibition represents the first major exposure of Bauhaus ideas in the United States, the Museum of Modern Art, founded in 1929, was itself organized according to Bauhaus departmental structure, with a wide variety of media, and followed Bauhaus principles in its approach to design. There were antecedents, however. The first was through entries by Walter Gropius and Adolf Meyer in the 1922 design competition for the Chicago Tribune tower. In the 1920s, "a new modern aesthetic was pursued by a few largely independent American architects such as Irving Gill, George Howe, Albert Kahn, and in the 1930s, George Fred Keck and Harwell Hamilton Harris."

These artists and architects also contributed to a greater receptiveness to the Bauhaus in the U.S. For that matter, so did earlier emigres from Europe, especially those who came from Austria in the 1910s and 1920s, such as Joseph Urban, Rudolf Schindler, Richard Neutra, and Frederick Kiesler. "Both Schindler and Neutra shared Gropius's and Mies's profound admiration for Frank Lloyd Wright's work. Both abandoned ornament in architecture in favor of a plain, rational style, thus becoming the first Europeans to introduce to the United States, through their realized works, the aesthetics of a style that in 1932 would be dubbed international."

The first International-style skyscraper in the United States was the 36-story Philadelphia Savings Fund Society (PSFS) bank building in Philadelphia, completed in 1932. Designed by George Howe and William Lescaze, the building is characterized by its T-shaped massing, smooth surfaces and horizontal bands of ribbon windows.

Construction slowed during the Depression and war years, but the 1950s saw a new wave of skyscraper construction in the International Style, which remained dominant until the 1980s when the monotony of glass boxes gave rise to Post-Modernism. Characterized by the glass curtain wall, steel or concrete structure, and often rectilinear volumes, the International style was adapted to uses as diverse as offices, institutions, hotels, government functions, high-rise housing, and warehouses. Examples that followed are the United Nations Secretariat Building (1947-50) by Harrison & Abramowitz; the Equitable Building in Portland, Oregon (1948) by Pietro Belluschi; Lever House (1950-52) by Gordon Bunshaft of SOM; the Seagram Building (1958) by Mies van de Rohe and Philip Johnson; the World Trade Center (1970), and Sears (now Willis) Tower (1973).

The Terrace Plaza was the first International-style hotel in the United States and expresses the style's principles in its own unique way—with its geometric massing, regularity vs. symmetry, and expression of its materials with no applied ornament. It differs from the skyscrapers listed above, which were mostly clad in glass, in that its transparency was limited to the ground level and part of the second floor. This made the solid-appearing department store block of the Terrace Plaza appear to levitate above the ground, communicating that the brick masonry above was merely a thin skin on a frame. In some ways, it resembles the PSFS building, in its use of masonry, its form consisting of a slab set back on a base, and its multi-story sign on the top.

The cladding of the commercial block with a brick curtain wall was quite new for Modern buildings and very contextual for Cincinnati. Because the building was being air-conditioned and windows hampered the display of merchandise in department stores, everyone agreed to make the commercial box largely windowless. J.C. Penney wanted a simple, straightforward street presence, based on its principles of merchandising, so SOM put a one-story glass wall at street level and added simple signage just above the windows. Bond had built its merchandising reputation on flashy architecture, interiors, and signage, and requested two stories of glass for its entry to stimulate sales.

As previously mentioned, the stacked joints accentuated both the building's verticality and conveyed that the brick was non-structural. The decision to use locally produced brick as the cladding was made between the client, the architect, and the contractor, who all agreed it was the best choice for purpose, economy, and color. The large size of the bricks was selected to "give better scale and an attractively different appearance." The brick curtain wall serves as a bridge between the traditional masonry hotels built before World War II and the glass-and-steel or concrete ones built just after the Terrace Plaza. The only known example of this stacked bond prior to the Terrace Plaza was the Fresno City Hall of 1939-41, by Franklin & Kump, Architects. This low-rise, International Style administrative building was named one of the most significant modern structures built in the United States between 1932 and 1944 by the Museum of Modern Art in New York. (It is not currently listed on the National Register.)

The International Style in Cincinnati

Modernist buildings began to appear in Cincinnati almost immediately after the MOMA exhibition was shown at the Cincinnati Art Museum in 1933. The initial examples were single-family homes. The first, completed in 1935, was the Gale and Agnes Lowrie House (NR #SG100006666), at 20 Rawson Woods Circle designed by architect G. Marshall Martin of the firm Potter Tyler & Martin. The Frederick and Harriet Rauh House was built in 1938 in the northern Cincinnati suburb of Woodlawn (NR# 16000597). Designed by John Becker of the firm Garriott and Becker, the Rauh House is considered to be the first fully developed International-Style house in Greater Cincinnati. Becker built a few other elegant Modernist homes in the late 1930s, including his own residence. During the 1940s, a few more Modernist homes appeared, including the International Style Hopkins House, 803 Floral Avenue in Terrace Park, completed in 1941 by an unknown architect.”

Completed in 1948, the Terrace Plaza Hotel was Cincinnati’s first International Style skyscraper and remains its most important specimen of the style. It was also the city’s first major post-war construction project. A few years earlier, in 1943, Woodward “Woodie” Garber, one of Cincinnati’s two leading Modernists, had conceived of a new office tower intended to attract Schenley Distillers to relocate its headquarters to Cincinnati from New York. “With a concrete-clad steel frame, it would have been the first fully modular, prefabricated, curtain-glass-wall skyscraper in America. It also would have been the first office tower without fixed interior partitions and the first fully sealed climate-controlled building in the U.S.⁷³ However, it was never built.

“Beginning in the 1950s, Cincinnati business leaders adopted Modernism for their headquarters and industrial buildings. Soaring steel and glass office towers added to the city skyline in the 1950s and 1960s include the Kroger Company headquarters at 1014 Vine Street, Provident Bank Tower at Fourth and Vine, and the DuBois Tower, home of Fifth Third Bank, on Fountain Square.” However, none of them employed the masonry skin, bold setbacks or extent of mixed uses employed at the Terrace Plaza. The closest examples were public single-use buildings such as Garber’s public library (1955), a block-long mid-rise building with planar brick walls, ribbon windows, *piloti*, canted glass storefronts, roof terraces, and Harry Bertoia sculpture. “By the early 1970s, a shrinking economy and a more complete standardization of building systems seemed to drain later Modernism of the adventurous and creative qualities exhibited in the earlier examples.” With all of its innovations, however, the Terrace Plaza remains Cincinnati’s most important icon of Modernism.

Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM), architects

The Terrace Plaza Hotel was the first commission of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (now known as SOM) to be widely published and receive national attention. “The Terrace Plaza was a critical project in the development of SOM in that it used an interdisciplinary design team, which the firm subsequently became known for. The complexion of the current firm was shaped by the history of Modernism as represented by the Terrace Plaza.”

The firm was founded in 1936 by Louis Skidmore and Nathaniel Owings, who were joined by engineer John O. Merrill in 1939. The firm opened their first branch in New York City in 1937, and took an interdisciplinary approach combining architecture, urban planning, engineering and interior design. Gordon Bunshaft, William S. Brown, and J. Walter Severinghaus helped to define their design approach. SOM’s first major commission, in 1942, was a secretive job from the U.S. government to design the town plan, housing, and public buildings for a new village called Oak Ridge, Tennessee. The new town was being created for workers developing the atomic bomb.

The Terrace Plaza was the firm's first major commercial commission and its first project to garner widespread publicity. It was written about in glowing terms by *Life*, *Time*, *Fortune*, *Business Week*, and *Harpers*, popular publications with a national audience, as well as trade magazines—*Architectural Forum*, *Engineering News-Record*, *Electrical Construction and Maintenance*, *The Magazine of Light*, *Hotel Monthly*, and others. Several designers on the Terrace Plaza team at SOM, as well as those who came to the project as consultants, went on to become important figures in American architectural history.

Many of SOM's post-war designs have become icons of American modern architecture, including the Manhattan House (1950) and the Lever House (1952) in New York City; the Air Force Academy Chapel (1958) in Colorado Springs, Colorado; and the John Hancock Center (1969) and Sears Tower (1973), both in Chicago. Their primary expertise is in high-end commercial buildings, as it was SOM that led the way to the widespread use of the modern International-style or "glass box" skyscraper. Of all these, the most influenced by the Terrace Plaza was Lever House, which shared its asymmetrical cubic massing, an off-center slab tower on a base, and a roof terrace, but with a fully glass curtain wall, which was a radical departure.

The Designers

The Terrace Plaza Hotel resulted from the collaboration of a team of talented and daring designers, headed by SOM, who conceived of every aspect of the building and its operations. Several SOM designers participated, including Natalie de Blois, William Brown, William Hartmann, Phyllis Hoffseimer, and Ben Baldwin, but most of the work was done by de Blois. The larger design team included outside talents—Marianne Strengell (hotel textiles), Abe Feder (hotel lighting), and Henry Fletcher Kenney (terrace landscape design). For the retail component, the flamboyant designer Morris Lapidus designed the interiors of the Bond store, while J.C. Penney used in-house designers.

Natalie de Blois, Designer

The Terrace Plaza is significant for the role of its designer, Natalie de Blois, a pioneering woman architect. Born in 1921, in Paterson, New Jersey, she was just 24 when she was given the assignment. After one year at Western College for Women (now part of Miami University) in Oxford, Ohio, she transferred to Columbia University with a scholarship, and began as one of five women in a class of eighteen. De Blois graduated in January 1944, receiving a New York state exam award for her understanding of structures. She began at Skidmore, Owings & Merrill in the fall of that year, and worked on a renovation of the New York State Building—for which she was featured on the front page of the *New York Herald Tribune*. Her first major project at SOM, and the first as senior designer, was the Terrace Plaza Hotel, which she worked on in the mid-1940s under Bill Brown and William Hartmann.

In 1951, de Blois won a Fulbright Fellowship to study at the *École des Beaux-Arts* in Paris, taking her husband and young son with her. While in Europe, SOM asked her to work on the U.S. Consular projects throughout Germany, under the supervision of Gordon Bunshaft. De Blois nearly always served as senior designer (or senior architect as SOM often called the position) on the projects to which she was assigned. As such, she was responsible for all phases of a project, under the supervision of the designer-in-charge (usually Bunshaft, who called her his best designer when introducing her to clients).

Her responsibilities included: programming, design, presentation, working drawings, and interior layout, as well as interaction with structural and mechanical engineers. While she was one of SOM's star designers, she was almost never credited and often treated differently because of being a woman. While she was the primary designer of the Terrace Plaza, she never saw the site in Cincinnati or met the client while she was working on the project.

She went on to design many projects at SOM, including several abroad—the U.S. Consulate in Düsseldorf, Germany (1954); the U.S. Consulate Housing in Bremen, Germany (1954); the Istanbul Hilton in Turkey (1955)—the first International Style hotel in Europe built from the ground up—and later the Boots Pure Drug Co. headquarters in Nottingham, England (1968). In the U.S, she had a major role in the Connecticut General Life Insurance Co. headquarters in Bloomfield, Conn. (1957); headquarters for Pepsi-Cola (1958-60) and Union Carbide Corp. (1960), both in New York; the Emhart Corporation headquarters (1963), also in Bloomfield, Conn; and Equibank in Pittsburgh (1976). De Blois divorced, and her ex-husband moved to Chicago. In 1965, she and her four sons moved to Chicago so they could be closer to their father. Bruce Graham asked her to transfer to SOM's Chicago office, where she worked for nearly ten years. Throughout this long career at SOM, in which Natalie helped shape the design aesthetic of the firm and architectural history, she was never promoted to partner.

In his 1973 autobiography, Nathaniel Owings said of de Blois' position in the firm, "The 'People' chart [of design associates] with 75 rings, included just one woman: Natalie de Blois. Long, lean, quizzical, she seemed fit to handle all comers. Handsome, her dark straight eyes invited no nonsense. Her mind and hands worked marvels in design—and only she and God would ever know just how many great solutions, with the imprimatur of one of the male heroes of SOM, owed much more to her than was attributed by either SOM or the client."

Though she had rarely, if ever, questioned her treatment or lack of advancement during her years at SOM, in 1973 de Blois helped found Chicago Women in Architecture and later joined the American Institute of Architects' (AIA) Task Force on Women, helping write a landmark report detailing the prejudices faced by women architects. De Blois left SOM in 1974, the same year she became a fellow of the AIA. After spending a year bicycling through Europe, she sought employment in Houston, which was building heavily at that point. She worked for Neuhaus & Taylor (later called 3-D International) in Houston as a senior project designer, but left after only four years. Just after moving to Austin, Hal Box, the Dean of Architecture at the University of Texas at Austin, asked de Blois to teach. She began teaching part time in 1980, while also working as a consultant to David Graeber. Natalie de Blois retired from the University of Texas in 1993, moved back to Chicago, and died in 2013.

Marianne Strengell, Textile Designer

Finnish-born Marianne Strengell immigrated to the United States in 1936 to teach at Cranbrook Academy, where she served as department head of textiles until 1961, when she retired. Her first major U.S. commission was to design all the woven and printed fabrics and rugs for the Terrace Plaza Hotel. Strengell recalled the project as unique because of the "triangular relationship" between the architects, the fabric designer, and the textile manufacturer. The team began working together early on to plan all the woven fabrics from table mats to rugs and curtains.⁸¹ This type of collaboration would become a key component of Strengell's work on industrial design and cottage industry. Because of material shortages just after the war, Strengell and the team had to be creative. It took them a while to find a manufacturer who was willing to cooperate. "George Royle met the limitations and we wove the power-

loomed materials on a common warp, using yarn dye or piece dye for radical changes in the looks and the hand of the fabrics.”

Strengell’s work for the Terrace Plaza incorporated SOM’s Modern aesthetic with popular tastes at the time, along with the client’s desire for long-lasting and low-maintenance fabrics. Curtains in the guest rooms had the free-form shapes woven into them and coordinated with the brightly colored and heavy-duty fabrics on the custom furniture. Rugs in the eighth-floor hotel lobby were designed to provide comfortable, colorful, and inviting spaces for the seating and “quiet lounge” areas. Fabrics for the chairs in the restaurants were heavy-duty, similar to that of the guest rooms, but were in subdued colors to highlight the contemporary art on the walls and the clothing of the guests sitting in them.

Abe Feder, Lighting Designer

Abraham H. Feder, the lighting designer for the Terrace Plaza, was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. After two years at the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh, he dropped out and moved to Chicago, where he did lighting for the Goodman Theater. In 1930, he moved to New York and quickly earned a reputation as a “genius with light.” The Terrace Plaza Hotel was one of his first commissions that involved the lighting scheme for an entire building. He would go on to light dozens of buildings and artworks, including the RCA Building and the Prometheus Fountain at Rockefeller Center, the United Nations, Buckminster Fuller’s first geodesic dome, the 1964 World’s Fair, the main altar of St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York City, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., and the Israel National Museum in Jerusalem.

Morris Lapidus, Retail Designer

The sensational architect Morris Lapidus was responsible for the interiors of the Bond Department Store on the lower level of the Terrace Plaza. As a child in New York, he was awestruck by the electric lights of Coney Island’s Luna Park and sought to integrate that theatricality into his life’s work. A 1927 graduate of Columbia University, Lapidus revolutionized the American storefront and developed his own signature style of retail design using chevrons, bean poles, woggles, amoebas, and cheese holes. In 1945, Lapidus was hired to design the interiors for a Bond Men’s and Women’s clothing store on Fifth Avenue in an office building designed by SOM. Given the chance to experiment with a larger retail project, Lapidus used techniques such as limiting the street level to only accessories and placing clothing on the upper floors; wrapping columns in faux marble or scagliola and having them disappear into down-lit ceiling recesses; and using free-flowing patterns in curved walls, display cases, seating, and ceilings throughout the store.

In 1946 Bond contracted Lapidus to design the interiors for a five-story store in the Terrace Plaza. According to newspapers, the Bond store was finished before the hotel, and opened in November 1947. However, in his autobiography, Lapidus wrote that the project was delayed by three years and not completed until 1949. Barney Rubin, CEO of Bond, tried to cancel the project after learning that the cost had doubled due to rising construction and material costs, but eventually chose to go ahead with construction. Though little was written about it and only a few photographs exist of the Bond interiors at the Terrace Plaza, it seems typical of the height of Lapidus’ retail work and is important because it served as a transition from his smaller retail spaces to the flamboyant hotels—the Fontainebleau (1954), the Eden Roc (1955), and the Americana (1956)—he later became famous for. The Bond interiors were

removed in the early 1980s when the commercial block of the Terrace Plaza was renovated for AT&T offices.

Henry Fletcher Kenney, Landscape Architect

Henry Fletcher Kenney, a well-known Cincinnati landscape architect, was chosen to design the landscape for the two terraces. Kenney, who had previously designed landscapes for many homes in the Cincinnati region, worked in both traditional and modern styles. He went on to design dozens of landscapes for corporate headquarters, estates, suburban shopping malls, and parks.⁸⁴ His design for the twentieth-floor terrace included geometric raised beds that included herbs for use in the Gourmet Room.

Synthesis of Art and Architecture

The Terrace Plaza Hotel is considered to be the most successful collaboration of art and architecture in a Modernist building. The incorporation of art in the building also reflects the trend toward the use of art by corporations to project an image of their companies to the public. As president of the Cincinnati Art Museum, Jack Emery was exceptionally active assisting director Philip Adams in purchasing works to expand the collections. He had a keen understanding of the market conditions for traditional and modern art. Emery's intent was that his commercial developments be unified works of art, from the architectural design to the linens and ashtrays. He had integrated many fine frescoes, custom Rookwood tile, and other decorative arts into the Netherland Plaza and Carew Tower project.

Emery decided early on in the development of the Terrace Plaza that modern art should be an important component of its design. The development team believed that art was not only desirable in its own right but was also a marketing investment. Ellsworth Ireland reportedly said: "Good art brings prestige—helpful to all hotels, essential to new ones." Early in the process, two artists were considered to paint large murals for the Terrace—Raoul Dufy and Joan Miró. Both were internationally known. By 1947, the weighty decisions about art had been made: Joan Miró was chosen to paint the Gourmet Room mural, Alexander Calder was commissioned to create a large mobile for the eighth-floor lobby, Saul Steinberg was selected to paint the Skyline Restaurant wall, and Jim Davis was asked to create a wall sculpture for the bar of the Terrace Garden.

Joan Miró

Miró was a young Spanish painter whose work in Paris was admired by the Surrealist group. Oliver Wick, in the Calder | Miró exhibition catalog, refers to Miró's Cincinnati mural as "his most ambitious work ever" and says it "was destined to remain the most monumental mural Miró ever painted on canvas." The Cincinnati Art Museum has enshrined the mural appropriately in a fine-dining setting. It occupies a light-filled corridor at the entry to the museum's elegant Terrace Cafe.

Alexander Calder, Sculptor

Calder was widely known in the United States by the time Emery hired him in late 1946. In May 1947, Calder submitted a sketch of his concept, which was based on a design for a mobile he created for the Ogunquit Theater in Maine. However, he didn't refer to the sketch during production and instead worked intuitively. Titled "Twenty Leaves and an Apple," the 4-by-12-foot mobile was made of piano

wire and painted sheet metal cut-outs. Calder's original sketch indicates he planned the lower, large leaf shapes to be colored red, yellow, blue, and white. In the end, all the free-form "leaves" ended up being black with one circular "apple" painted bright red.

The mobile was installed in the eighth-floor hotel lobby, just opposite the elevators and above a seating area. Positioned with a spotlight so that it created shadows on a white wall, the mobile was also placed under a ventilation grill so that the powerful air conditioning would put it constantly in motion. The local press largely disregarded the mobile, one reporter dismissing it as a "ceiling job." At some point between 1956 when Conrad Hilton purchased the hotel from Emery and 1965 when the artwork was donated to the Cincinnati Art Museum, the hotel management painted the Calder mobile, despite the fact that it was merely on loan and not being included in the sale. The mobile was restored after its transfer to the Art Museum.

Saul Steinberg, Artist

Saul Steinberg's Skyline Restaurant mural was the best-known and most popular artwork in the hotel. Steinberg came to Cincinnati in 1947 to see the Terrace Plaza and Skyline Restaurant while still under construction. He stayed for several weeks, researching and exploring the city.⁸⁸ Upon returning to New York, he rented a large studio and created ten 10-foot sections of canvas, which would later be connected. Steinberg then created scale mock-ups of his work and created slides from them to project images onto the canvas. He also used postcards and photographs to work from. His 16-by-100-foot mural on canvas depicted Cincinnati landmarks along with real and imagined scenes of Cincinnati life. He used mostly black ink on a white background, typical of his illustration style, but added some tones of brown, gray and yellow. Steinberg recalled finishing the mural just as the building's construction was completed. Once it was completed in early March of 1948, he rolled up the canvases and had them shipped to Cincinnati, following behind with his friend Costantino Nivola, who assisted him in the installation. The canvas was glued to the wall and Steinberg then "joined lines, retouched and added a few things," creating a cohesive mural.

Steinberg later said he would have preferred to have worked directly on the wall with "no blueprint" and under less rushed conditions, saying he had been "a little tired and depressed" and still hadn't recovered a while after finishing, though he later admitted he was pleased with the overall result. Just after the opening, he received additional offers for mural commissions, but refused, assuming that they would be under similar circumstances and because the Terrace Plaza project had been so exhausting. Brown said: "The people love his mural. Wherever you sit in this long room, you can see an element of the design. Aside from its decorative value, it has real humorous value. It is big but unobtrusive."

Jim Davis, Sculptor

Almost nothing has been published about Davis's life. It appears that he created plastic light sculptures only for a short period of his career because by 1946, he had begun making experimental films to capture his "symphonic, color abstractions." Very little is known about Davis' Terrace Plaza commission, though it seems he could have received the job through an acquaintance with the late Charles Dana Gibson, Emery's father-in-law. Because Davis never reached the stature of the other three artists and because this commission occurred just as he was changing over to film media, few have remembered his contribution to the Terrace Plaza – though it was published in Eleanor Bittermann's

book and mentioned in a few publications at the time (perhaps because Ezra Stoller had taken some excellent photos of it). The sculpture is mentioned in a *Hotel Monthly* article on the Terrace Plaza in August 1948. "A changing flow of light, color and pattern is one of the features of the bar. It is achieved thru [sic] use of three curved light and space modulators of Plexiglas, a plastic manufactured by the Rohm & Haas Company. These modulators, in three primary colors, are installed with the white-walled back bar as a stage and are targeted by a battery of spotlights, each of which successively builds up to a full intensity and then fades out."

Davis articulated a philosophical shift from static objects to the freedom of the moving image in designing the Terrace Garden piece:

For me, the important problem in contemporary art is motion... For this purpose, the traditional media – the tools and materials of painting and sculpture of the past – are obsolete because they are static, not dynamic, tools. The visual artist must adopt new tools and materials which modern science and industry provide. As the modern architect uses modern materials, so the artist who wishes to decorate this modern architecture must also adopt new materials. Transparent plastics and artificial illumination are two tools which have great potentialities for this new sculpture of movement.

Davis' statement indicates that this work for the Terrace Plaza was a turning point in his career and in the art world, one in which he would make a leap from this illusionary motion created with transparency, form, and light through static objects to one of film where he could create a constantly shifting kaleidoscopic array of color, light, and motion.

The collective art works John Emery commissioned for the Terrace Plaza had a lasting influence, not only on the building itself, but on the art world, SOM's culture, Modern architecture, and on corporate America. After World War II largely ended the trend of government-subsidized public art, the new American corporation became both benefactor and beneficiary of art by displaying it in public spaces and plazas. Art became a tool to attract customer loyalty and enhance a corporation's public image.

SOM was integral to the beginning of the shift toward corporate art collections in new Modernist buildings, and many consider the Terrace Plaza Hotel a defining moment in the firm's evolution – one that influenced the firm to include art in nearly all its buildings. Brown talked about SOM's philosophy to Eleanor Bittermann for her book called *Art in Modern Architecture*. He said: "We think of ornament in architecture as the use of materials rather than applied ornament. There should be an over-all decorative value in the materials and the finishes, and the way they are used. Any applied decoration should be concentrated rather than spread out over the architecture – the architecture should be the frame for it."

In his 1961 monograph documenting the work of SOM, Henry-Russell Hitchcock speaks highly of the lasting influence of the Terrace Plaza commission. He notes that "especially notable in [SOM's] more luxurious interiors has been the incorporation of works of painting and sculpture." He credited Jack Emery, along with Lehigh Block of Inland Steel, Jack Heinz of Heinz Research Center, and David Rockefeller of Chase Manhattan, as keen art collectors who were ready to embrace the synthesis of art and architecture and who set the pace for other clients in that area. About the Miró mural, Hitchcock adds, "one may properly feel, not only that Miró is a better painter than Le Corbusier, but that the Miró

mural in the circular penthouse restaurant of the Terrace Plaza Hotel in Cincinnati, the first notable instance of SOM's use of commissioned works of art, is a happier instance of collaboration between architect and artist than Le Corbusier's own mural in the Swiss Hostel of 1930-32 in Paris or his painted windows and enameled door in the Ronchamp church of 1950-55."

Summary

The Terrace Plaza meets Local Landmark Designation under Criterion 3 (CZC 1435-07-1(a)(3)) as it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction. It is significant for its development by John J. Emery, Jr., of Thomas J. Emery's Sons, who built many important buildings in Cincinnati, including Carew Tower/Netherland Plaza Hotel, a National Historic Landmark, and numerous apartment buildings that are National Register-listed. It was an innovative mixed-use building that combined two department stores, office space, hotel, apartments and restaurants in a new way—particularly in locating the hotel lobby eight floors up. The Terrace Plaza is the most important Modernist building in Cincinnati, it is the first International-style hotel built in America, and the first commission of Skidmore Owings and Merrill (SOM) to be widely published and receive national attention. It was also a pivotal project for SOM because it used an interdisciplinary design team, which the firm became known for. It is significant for the role played by Natalie De Blois, a pioneering woman architect in its design, along with a team of other designers who conceived of every detail of the building—interiors, furniture, textiles, uniforms, tableware, graphics—and even ashtrays and matchbook covers. Although his department store interior is no longer intact, the Terrace Plaza building is associated during its period of significance with Morris Lapidus, a sensational architect who became famous for his flamboyant hotels. The period of significance for the building is 1948 to 1964, which covers the time from its completion up until when the Hilton Hotels Corporation began substantial renovations, including the removal of the artworks. Despite alterations and removal of the artworks to the Cincinnati Art Museum, it retains a high degree of integrity of setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Period of Significance

The period of significance for the building is 1948 to 1964, which covers the time from its completion up until its renovation in 1965. Despite alterations and removal of the art works to the Cincinnati Art Museum, the building retains a high degree of integrity of setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

Landmark of Site Historic and Architectural Overview/Narrative Description Setting

Architectural Description

Site

The Terrace Plaza Hotel is located at 15 West Sixth Street, near the center of Downtown Cincinnati. It occupies the north half of a block spanning Sixth Street between Vine and Race. Surrounded by low- to high-rise buildings, including office towers and department stores to the south and west, an office building and hotel to the north, and office building to the east, the Terrace is very

visually prominent from the east and west. Thorpe Alley runs along the rear of the building and passes through a narrow windowless seven-story perpendicular wing with a loading dock. This rear wing connects at second-floor to the department store to the south, as part of a downtown pedestrian skywalk program initiated in 1971 and completed in 1997.

Exterior

The cubic massing of the 20-story Terrace Plaza Hotel building comprises a 7-story commercial base that spans the block-long site, topped by a 12-story hotel block, which is set back, creating a terrace at the eighth floor. Above that is a further setback at the top floor with a penthouse. The street level is characterized by continuous 1970s-era storefronts consisting of large display windows and sign boards above, all framed by pilasters clad in polished brown granite veneer. The main entrance on Sixth Street consists of a retrofitted burgundy vinyl “waterfall” marquee and recessed open-air valet parking area with concrete driveways and walkways dating from a 1970s alteration. The soffit of the marquee and parking area, which is white plaster with recessed can lights, is original. A set of four angled flagpoles is located on both sides of the marquee, and green vinyl dome awnings are mounted above storefronts on the front.

The exterior above the ground floor is clad in a long, Norman brick (2-by-4-by-12 inches) in a terra cotta color and set like tile, in a stacked bond. The vertical joints accentuate the building’s verticality and convey the masonry’s non-structural nature. The 7-story base is windowless on all four elevations, reflecting the needs of the department stores for display surfaces. The first floor of the hotel has a height of 22 feet and a continuous band of tall plate-glass windows on the front and east; it is windowless on the west (photo 5). The hotel block above is characterized by 10-foot-high floors and a regular grid of wide windows, ten bays on the front, two bays on the sides, and eight bays on the rear, where the wall space behind the elevator core is blank.

The penthouse, which is 51-feet-high, is distinguished at the east end by a curved projection with continuous canted glazing. This signature space, historically known as the Gourmet Room, is equipped with a small outdoor viewing platform and stairway to a terrace, which retains built-in concrete planters. A lounge connected with the Gourmet Room has a continuous window wall. The rest of the penthouse is occupied by a small kitchen and mechanical space clad in windowless brick walls. The cooling tower at the west end of the penthouse, originally enclosed, has lost the masonry cladding from its steel frame. The rear of the building is also windowless at the base but has a perpendicular seven-story wing with a loading dock at the ground floor.

Interior

The ground floor interior appears to date mostly from a 1970s renovation. The entrance from the valet parking area is through an aluminum-and-glass storefront with two pairs of revolving doors leading to two separate small elevator lobbies—one to access the subbasement through eighth floors and the other for express access to the eighth floor and above (photos 10 and 11). (Multiple elevator banks serve various parts of the buildings, and some were used solely for service.) In the lobbies, the plaster ceiling with can lights, terrazzo floor and stainless-steel elevator doors with the “TP” logo are all

original. The walls of the elevator banks have been covered with fabric wall covering in the east lobby and recent marble tile in the west.

The ground floor circulation includes an unheated passageway, created circa 1970, running longitudinally through the building. The concrete-paved passageway is lined with painted brick walls punctuated by metal-and-glass storefronts of the retail spaces, which are accessed from the passageway as well as the street. The building was originally occupied by Bond's department store on the east end on floors 1 through 5, two floors of office space above Bond's on floors 6 and 7, and J. C. Penney on floors 1 through 7 on the west end. The current configuration dates from a 1980s renovation after both stores had closed and floors 2 through 7 were converted to offices with carpeted floors, gypsum board walls and hung acoustic-tile ceilings, and no original fabric remains except for the perimeter walls and floor structure.

The basement was originally occupied by a 362-seat cafeteria and kitchen on the east side and bargain sales and loading dock areas on the west side. The cafeteria has been converted to a print shop and the kitchen to a fitness center with hung acoustic-tile ceilings, but the glazed block walls remain. The bargain basement area has similar finishes. The loading dock area remains, with a mix of plaster and glazed block walls, concrete floor and exposed plastered concrete slab ceilings with exposed beams and piping. A freight elevator, still intact, at the loading dock was used to take trucks to the basement where they could drive in and unload goods for the hotel, restaurants, and Bond's. Trucks delivering goods for J.C. Penney unloaded at street level, and a freight elevator took them directly to Penney's storage areas on floors 6 and 7.

The west bank of elevators goes directly from the ground-floor lobby to the airy eighth-floor, which includes a 16-foot-tall lobby (photo 13) and spaces originally devoted to the Skyline restaurant, bar, and lounge areas, as well as support spaces such as a kitchen, offices, and storage. All the public spaces have continuous full-height windows, plaster ceilings with recessed can lights, and a combination of marble tiles and adhesive residue over original black terrazzo. The two-foot-square columns in the lobby retain their original stainless-steel wrapping, and the wall of elevator banks on the south side of the lobby retains its polished gray marble cladding and stainless-steel elevator doors with the "TP" logo. A mobile by Alexander Calder once hung above a small seating area opposite the elevators.

The west side of the lobby was the location of the reception desk, related small offices and three banks of safe-deposit boxes. The custom-designed reception desk, covered in Formica Realwood, has been removed. The wall behind the counter, also clad in Realwood, had a Modernistic metal clock embedded in it. The reception area had a dropped ceiling made of fluorescent-lit Corning Albalite glass panels. Pneumatic tubes connected the front desk to all the hotel's restaurants to speed "last-minute" charges to the desk before checkout. Of these elements, only the offices and safe deposit boxes remain.

Two spacious rooms on the east side of the lobby, formerly a bar and lounge, open onto the L-shaped terrace. The room in the southeast corner retains an angled plaster canopy where the bar was originally located. A light sculpture by Jim Davis (removed in 1965) was affixed to the wall under the canopy behind the bar. The famous terrace beyond provided outdoor seating during the warm months. The original terra cotta tile paving is covered with roofing material and all-weather carpet. Original built-in terrazzo planters line the parapet but are now covered with wood. The planters included flag poles spaced every 12 feet to fly white flags with the "TP" logo. These have been replaced with lanterns on

short poles. Refrigerating coils laid in a 40-by-70-foot area of the terrace, used to create an ice-skating rink in winter, may remain but are out of sight.

On the west side of the lobby, the narrow Skyline lounge area connects with the spacious former Skyline Restaurant. A false floor in the lounge area lifts it two feet to improve the view and dramatize the entrance to the larger restaurant space, which appears sunken. Both these spaces retain their original volumes and rows of steel-clad columns; the floors are obscured by carpet adhesive. Like the elevator bank, the south wall of the lounge is lined with gray polished marble. The Skyline Restaurant, which seats 265, has a wall of windows on the north. The south wall, originally enlivened by a whimsical mural of Cincinnati scenes by Saul Steinberg above raised banquette seating, is currently covered with fabric, and the banquette is gone. The large main kitchen, located in the southwest quadrant of the eighth floor, and all the service areas, including employee locker rooms, retain terra cotta-tile floors, glazed block walls, and plaster ceilings. Stainless steel built-in shelving, counters, and appliances remain in the kitchen.

The double height of the eighth floor enabled a mezzanine above the back-of-house office areas. The mezzanine accessed from the Skyline Lounge includes two private meeting rooms (15-seat, and 60-seat). It also houses the hotel's control board for all the radio transmissions, speakers, elevators, and lights. It includes a master connection panel for six radio stations, plus an emergency broadcast channel and two turntables to play records over the system. The control room and much of the equipment remain, along with the two meeting rooms.

Floors 9 through 18 retain the original layout and have double-loaded corridors with 40 modestly sized guest rooms. The entrances to guest rooms are grouped in opposing pairs in recesses along the corridors (photo 17). Original fluorescent light troughs still exist above the doorway recesses, and original wood doors with wood veneer are now painted. The rooms have ten-foot-wide painted steel windows; originals consisting of a single fixed pane flanked by narrow casements, remain on floors 9 through 12 (photo 18). The floors above have similar bronze-colored replacement windows. Below the windows, boxy cabinets/window seats enclose heat and air conditioning units. They retain their original gray Formica veneer under an additional painted veneer. The finishes throughout the guest-room floors are smooth white plaster walls and ceilings and concrete floors, which were originally carpeted. Each hotel room retains an en-suite bathroom and closets with original tubular metal shelving. The nineteenth floor is organized in a similar way but with larger suites for long-term residents.

Some original elements are missing, such as built-in wall panels with telephones and radio and television controls, though these were not in place at the hotel's opening. Gone are removable partitions between rooms on every other floor, which allowed suites to be created on demand. Made by the Peele Door Company, the partitions were counterweighted two-inch-thick wall panels, made of plywood on steel frames. With just two 1/50 horsepower motors, each partition could be raised into a wall pocket above.⁴ Built-in furniture covered with Realwood Formica has been removed. Bathrooms have been renovated but a few original Formica sink counters remain. Directional can lights used to point light toward seating for reading are gone.

The nineteenth floor was designed with 28 apartment-style units with two to four rooms each. They were created for "permanent residents," who wanted to live downtown, eat in restaurants, and have minimal housekeeping provided. They had small kitchens surfaced with Formica, though it was assumed that residents would eat most meals in one of the four restaurants in the hotel. Finishes on this

floor are like the floors below. A few bathrooms on this floor retain original heavy glass bathtub enclosures.

Gourmet Room

A single elevator provides access to the twentieth floor, the locus of the legendary Gourmet Room, with adjoining lounge and terrace. A futuristic circular projection breaking out of the building's rectilinear box, the Gourmet Room was an iconic restaurant. The glass, specially created by the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company, is an early example of both insulated glass and safety glass. The roof is supported on slender square steel columns around the perimeter to avoid obstruction of the view. The room is elevated on a pedestal about six feet above the twentieth-floor terrace, further enhancing vistas, to and from.

The Gourmet Room was originally dramatized by a Joan Miró mural painting on the curved back wall. The mural was removed in 1965, when the restaurant was remodeled in the French Baroque style and replaced with the existing wood paneling (photo 21). A large, round stainless-steel column that anchors the round room to the mechanical penthouse is now covered with wall board. The white ceiling has a circular cove in the center, which was created to receive a large golden bronze chandelier from the Army and Navy Club in London. The chandelier has since been removed, and banquette seating along the mural wall is also gone.

West of the Gourmet Room, between it and the elevator, is a lounge at the terrace level. This area was originally a narrow space divided by an undulating wooden screen into an intimate lounge and a hallway to the Gourmet Room. Originally without windows, the compressive effect of the passage exaggerated the drama of encountering the views upon entering the circular restaurant after ascending two short flights of stairs. A narrow, curved mezzanine at the top of the first flight has a small bar at the south end. In the 1980s, the undulating wooden screen was removed, and a new window wall was created at the northern edge of the twentieth-floor terrace to add more seating. This space is finished with hung acoustic tile ceilings, carpeted floor, and columns and walls covered with fabric and wood trim. A narrow kitchen on the south side of the floor has its own service elevator.

A doorway on the east side of the Gourmet Room opens to a small outdoor viewing platform with flagstone paving and metal railing. An open stairway connects this platform to a small terrace below, with original built-in concrete planters. The roof on the west side of this level is covered with gravel and has a small brick bulkhead enclosing a stairway. The cooling tower enclosure is missing its original brick cladding, leaving its steel frame exposed.

Statement of Alterations and Integrity

Since its completion in 1948, the Terrace Plaza has been renovated several times. Early on, the J. C. Penney and Bond stores experienced high heating and lighting costs in their retail spaces. Both wanted more wall space for merchandise, and the volume of daylight through the two-story windows in the Bond Store fought with the interior light and interfered with display. The windows at the second floor in the Bond space on Vine Street were removed and filled in with matching brick masonry (figure 3, photo 5) circa 1959. Following the building's 1956 sale to Hilton Hotels Corporation, the hotel was

rebranded as the Terrace Hilton; "Plaza" was replaced with "Hilton" on the penthouse sign, the canopy and elsewhere.

As downtown Cincinnati declined during the 1960s through the 1990s, with outward migration to the suburbs, many of the theaters and department stores that previously attracted visitors shut down. J.C. Penney closed in 1968, and Bond closed in 1977. Plans by architect Robert Springer from 1968-69 show these retail spaces were subdivided into smaller shops and the current storefronts with large aluminum-framed display windows and polished granite-faced pilasters (photo 8). The shops also had storefronts opening onto a through-block "arcade," installed at this time. Reconfiguration of Bond's space was labeled as a future phase, which occurred sometime later. It was also circa 1970 that the original glass entrance doors and vestibule (figures 5,6, photo 10), including a stairway to the basement cafeteria, were removed to create an open-air valet parking area within the building.

The original entrance was recessed about five feet and fronted with six glass doors with custom-designed abstractly-shaped handles with the "TP" logo embossed on them. The original marquee swept upward over the sidewalk. The ceiling of the street lobby— white with recessed can lights in a grid pattern—continued in the soffit of the marquee, which was modified. The soffit and lobby ceiling are still intact. The flagpoles flanking the marquee are additions as are the dome awnings above the storefronts. The street-level lobby included a bank of eight elevators set in a polished black marble wall. The elevator lobby has been divided into two smaller lobbies, each with four elevators (photo 11). The marble wall cladding has been replaced, but the original terrazzo floor remains under carpet underlayment, and the ceiling is original. The elevators retain their stainless-steel doors with the "TP" logo, but their interiors, originally paneled with Formica Realwood, have been resurfaced. Under Hilton's ownership, the hotel's interior design was redone in 1965 with little appreciation for its Modernist aesthetic. This renovation led to the removal of the art works by Miró, Calder, and Steinberg (figures 7,8,10) and their donation to the Cincinnati Art Museum in 1965. A light sculpture by Jim Davis in the Terrace Garden lounge (figure 9), also removed, went missing. The eighth-floor lobby was reconfigured and renovated. Nevertheless, the eighth floor still retains most of its significant spaces, particularly the Skyline Lounge and Restaurant and the terrace, as well as original materials such as marble walls, stainless-steel wrapped columns, and plaster ceilings with recessed lighting. The angled canopy above the bar where the Jim Davis sculpture was located is also intact. On the twentieth floor, the Gourmet Room was renovated in a French Baroque mode, as described, and the adjoining lounge area was enlarged and opened to views with a new window wall. An undulating wood screen and four Chinese-inspired brass wall sconces designed by Ward Bennett were removed from the lounge.⁵ However, the Gourmet Room is still intact on the exterior and retains significant interior character-defining features of continuous canted glazing and slender steel columns. The adjoining exterior platform, stairs, and terrace with its geometric planters are still intact. The windowless west side of the penthouse enclosed two cooling towers. The enclosure has lost its original brick cladding, leaving its steel frame exposed. The basement originally held the 362-seat Plaza Cafeteria below the Bond store, which was accessed by a staircase in the hotel lobby. J.C. Penney had its "bargain basement" at this level. The cafeteria featured stainless steel signage about its entry, a coatroom, and a fluorescent ceiling that continued from the entry through the glass doors and into the dining area. The cafeteria was converted to a print shop while retaining the terrazzo floor and glazed block. The cafeteria kitchen in the southeast corner of the basement, has been converted into a fitness center. The freight and truck elevators are still intact. The first-ever dual heating system remains, with 5 Russell McCormick, "Custom

Built Terrace Hotel Opens," Cincinnati Post (July 19, 1948), new boilers and oil tanks and original fuel pumps; it could be functional if repaired. Naturally, other systems have been updated, including sprinklers, but numerous control panels remain. By 1979, AT&T moved its Long Lines division into the former department store and office interiors of the 7-story box and began renovations, starting with the fifth floor, which continued during the 1980s, before and after the company purchased the building from Hilton in 1983. In October 1994, AT&T sold the building to the Crowne Plaza hotel chain, which reopened the hotel a year later, after further renovations. The large exterior sign was removed from the penthouse. The banquettes were removed from all restaurants, built-in and moveable furniture and most lighting were removed from the guest rooms (figure 12), and bathrooms were renovated. The Crowne Plaza closed on October 31, 2004 and sold the property to New York investors Angelo Slabakis and Stefan Wiederkehr in 2005. The downtown hotel market had stagnated by the 1990s, and it wasn't until recently that reinvestment in real estate, residential units, restaurants, and entertainment began drawing more residents and visitors downtown. The storefronts have been renovated, but otherwise the exterior remains very much intact in volume, massing and materials. In summary, despite the alterations described, the Terrace Plaza retains most of its significant character-defining spaces and materials. On the exterior, it retains its cubic massing, signature brick skin with stack bonding, fenestration pattern, iconic circular restaurant at the penthouse, and terraces. On the interior, except for the ground floor, it retains its original circulation and layout. The elevators, with their stainless-steel doors with "TP" logo, still whisk visitors to the hotel's unique eighth-floor, where the lobby, Skyline lounge and restaurant remain, along with marble walls, stainless steel columns and terrazzo floors. The hotel floor plans and guest rooms are essentially the same, except for lighting and built-in furniture. The building is still easily identifiable as an important mid-twentieth-century International Style hotel.

Findings

Planning Considerations- Compatibility with Plan Cincinnati

The designation of the Terrace Plaza is consistent with the City of Cincinnati Comprehensive Plan

Sustain Goal 2b: "Preserve our built history... Cincinnati's rich history is best exemplified through our historic buildings and by the built environment that help define a neighborhood's character...."

Landmark designation allows for historic rehabilitation of the First National Bank Building, which will preserve the building's historic character and facilitate revitalization and reuse.

Consistency with CZC Chapter 1435

According to Chapter 1435 of the Cincinnati Zoning Code (Historic Preservation) certain findings must be made before a historic structure can be designated by City Council. The structure must be found to have historic significance. Historic significance means that the attributes of a district, site or structure that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

1. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
2. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or

3. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
4. That has yielded, or may be likely to yield information important in history or prehistory.

The First Terrace Plaza Hotel has historic significance according to Chapter 1435 as defined under Criterion 3. The Terrace Plaza is the most important Modernist building in Cincinnati, it is the first International-style hotel built in America, and the first commission of Skidmore Owings and Merrill (SOM) to be widely published and receive national attention. It was also a pivotal project for SOM because it used an interdisciplinary design team, which the firm became known for. It is significant for the role played by Natalie De Blois, a pioneering woman architect in its design, along with a team of other designers who conceived of every detail of the building.

The designation of the Terrace Plaza Hotel meets the requirements of Chapter 1435 of the Cincinnati Zoning Code (Historic Preservation). The documentation in this designation report provides conclusive evidence that all required findings may be made for the proposed designation.

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Picture by Phil Armstrong



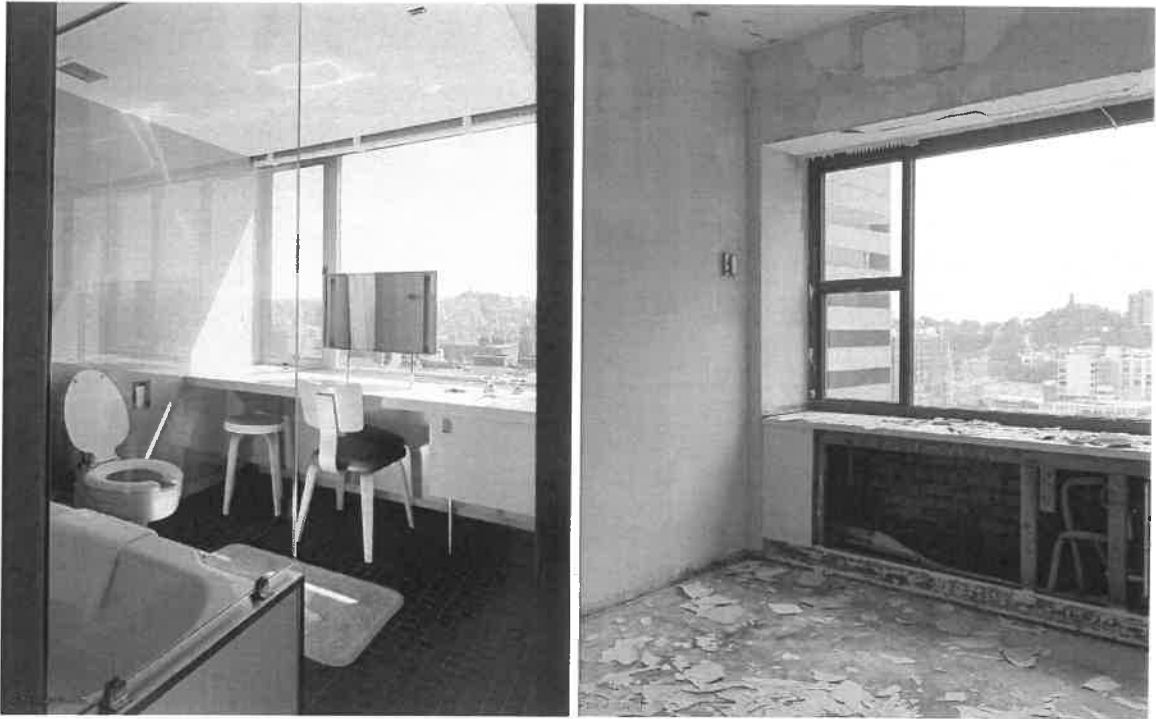
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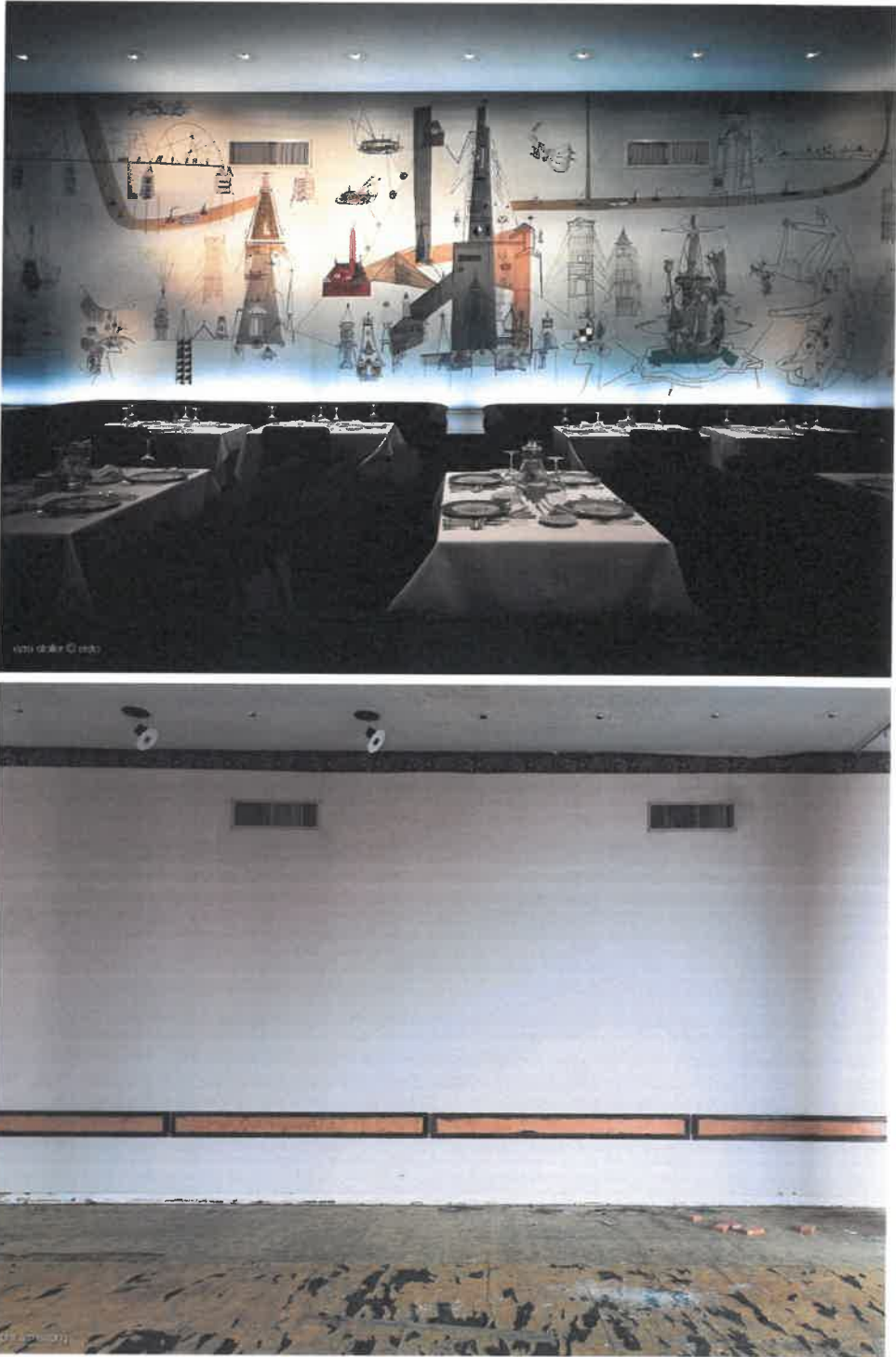
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Exterior view, looking southwest, 1948, courtesy of Esto





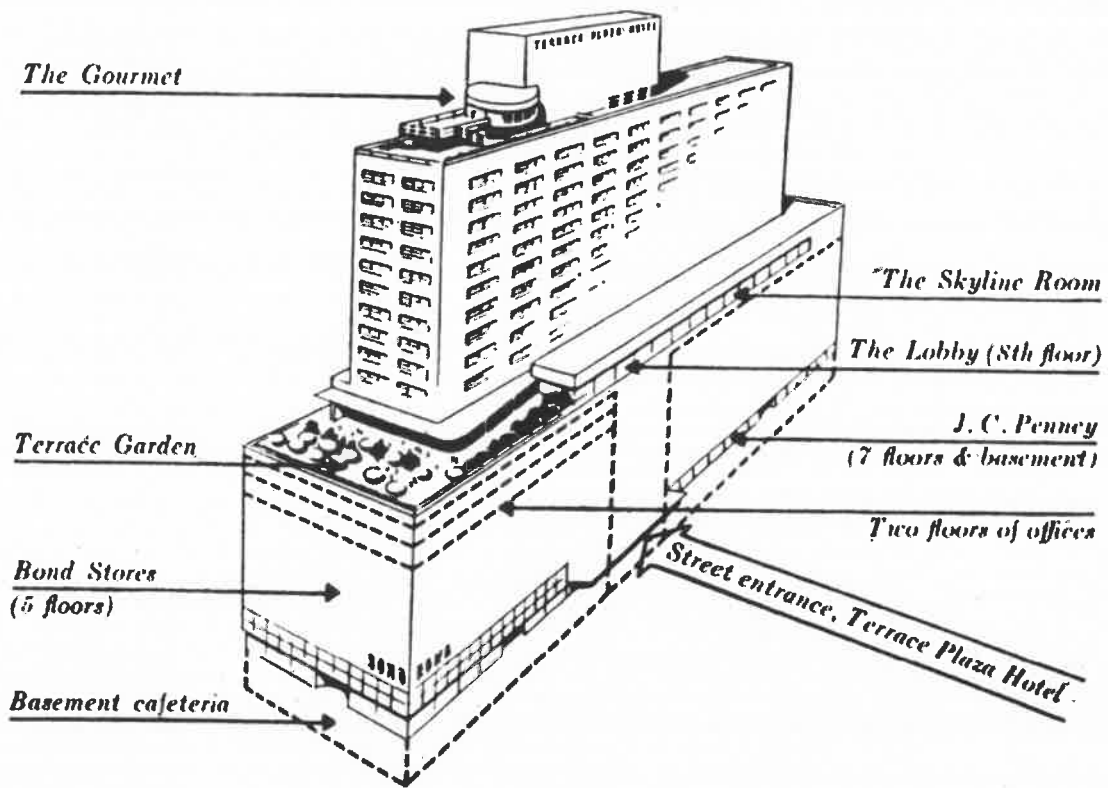


Illustration showing major programmatic functions. Photo by SOM ©.



View of entrance, looking southwest, 1948, courtesy of Esto



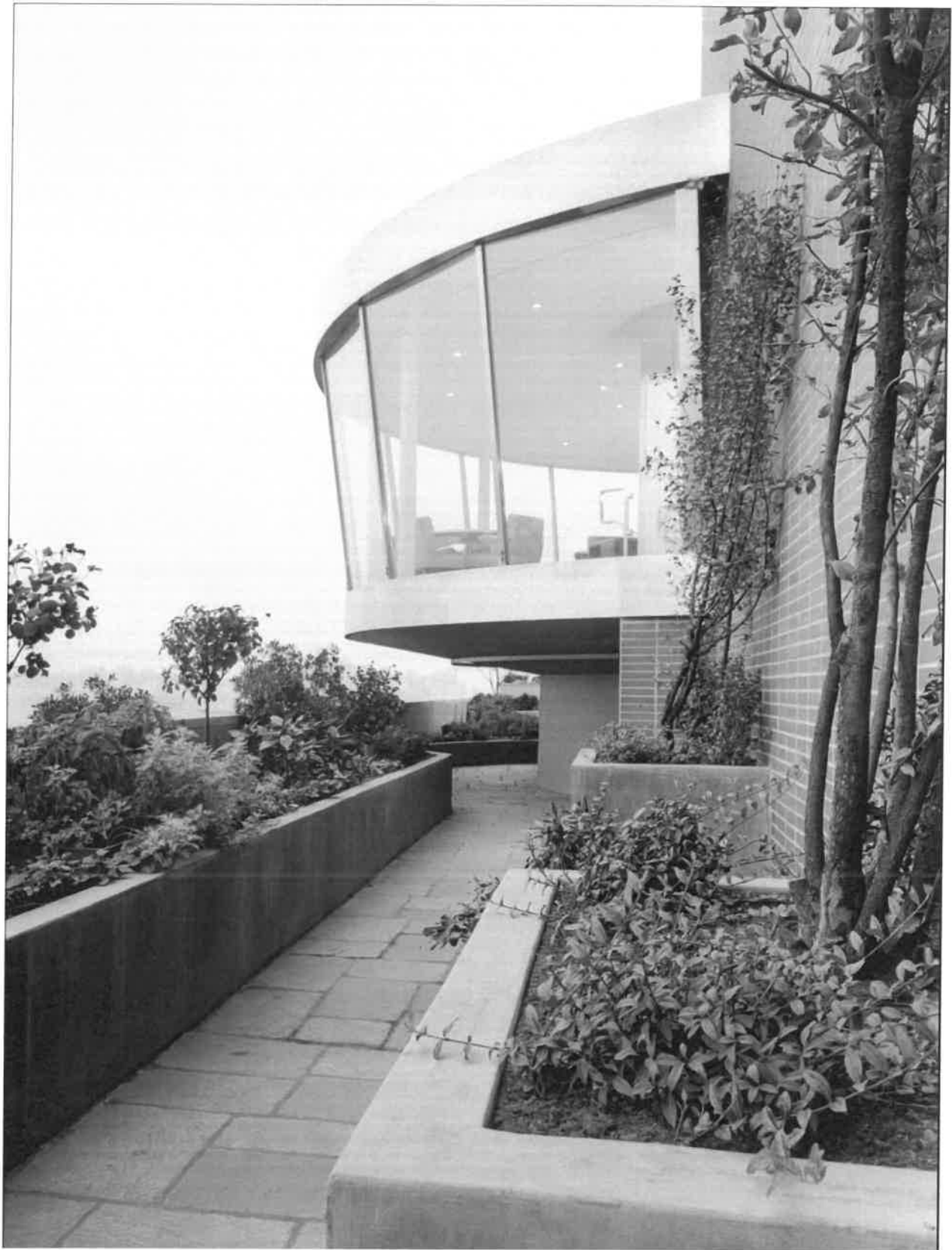
View of entrance, looking south, 1948, courtesy of Esto



Hotel lobby, looking west, showing Calder mobile, 1948, courtesy of Esto



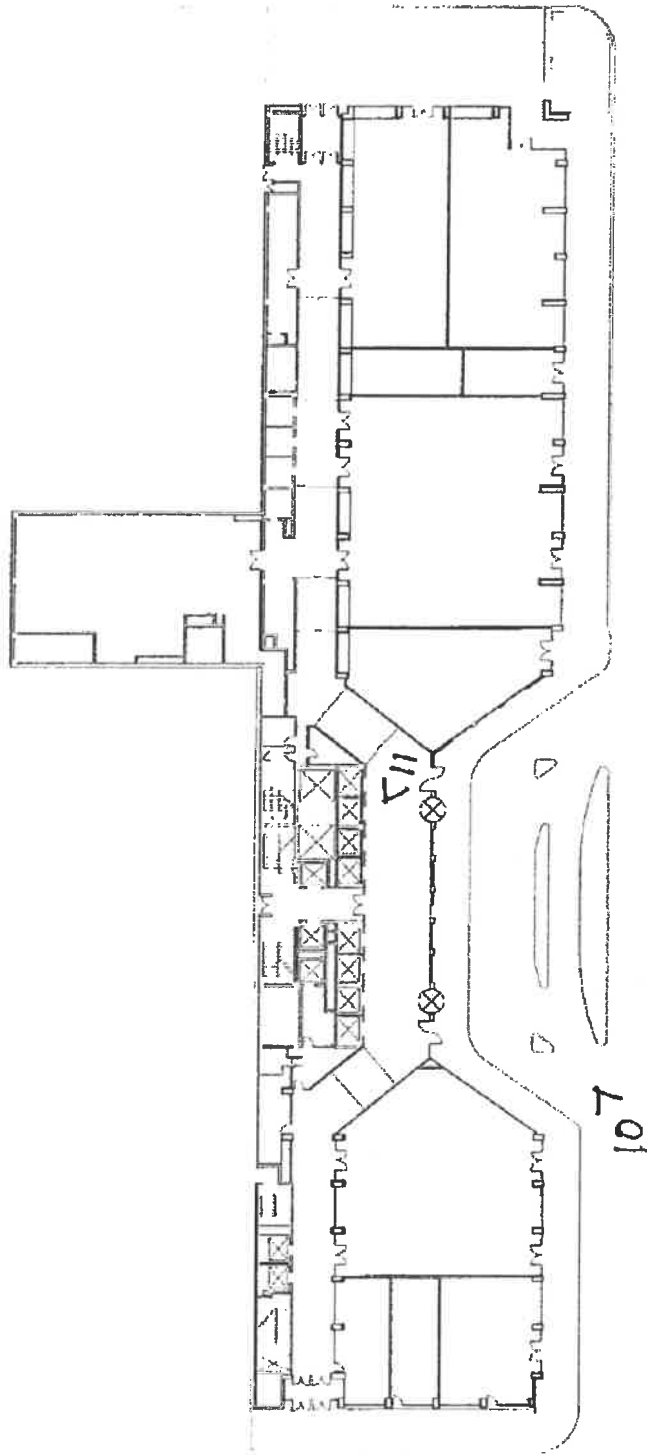
Skyline restaurant, with Steinberg mural, 1948, courtesy of Esto



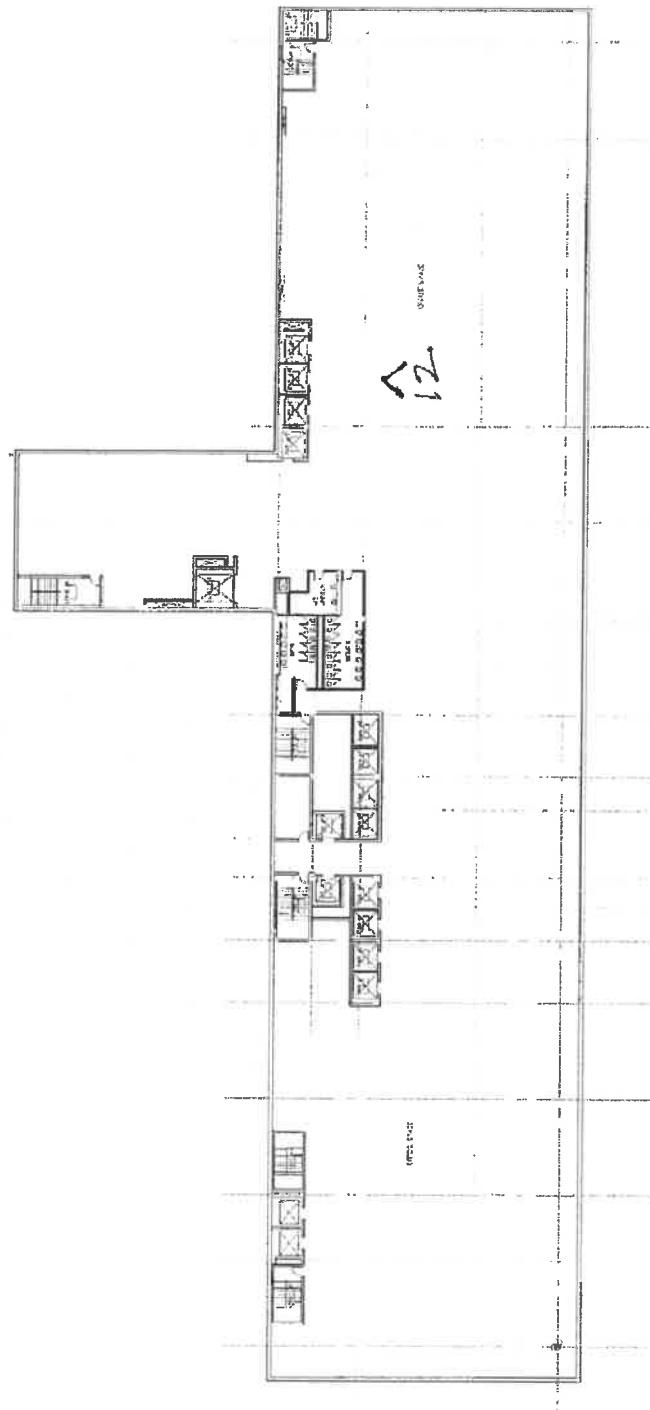
Gourmet Room with terrace, looking east, 1948, courtesy of Esto



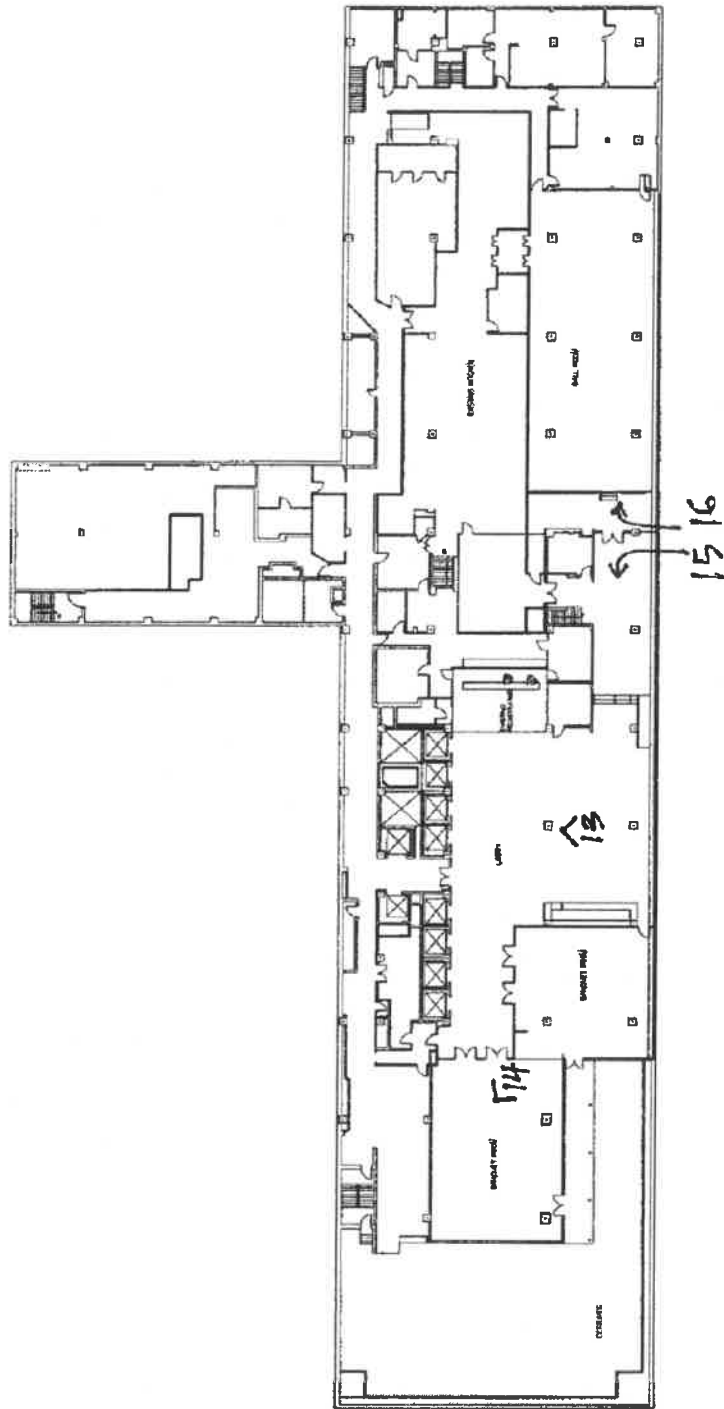
View of hotel room, 1948, courtesy of Esto



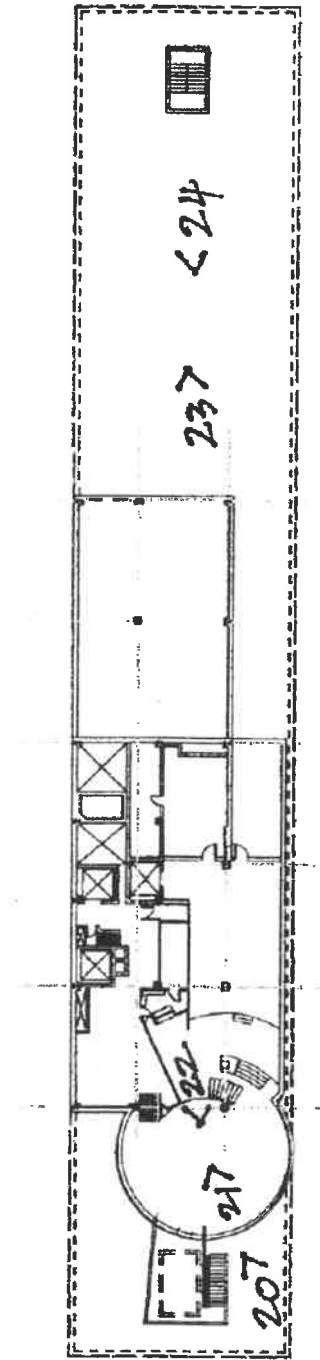
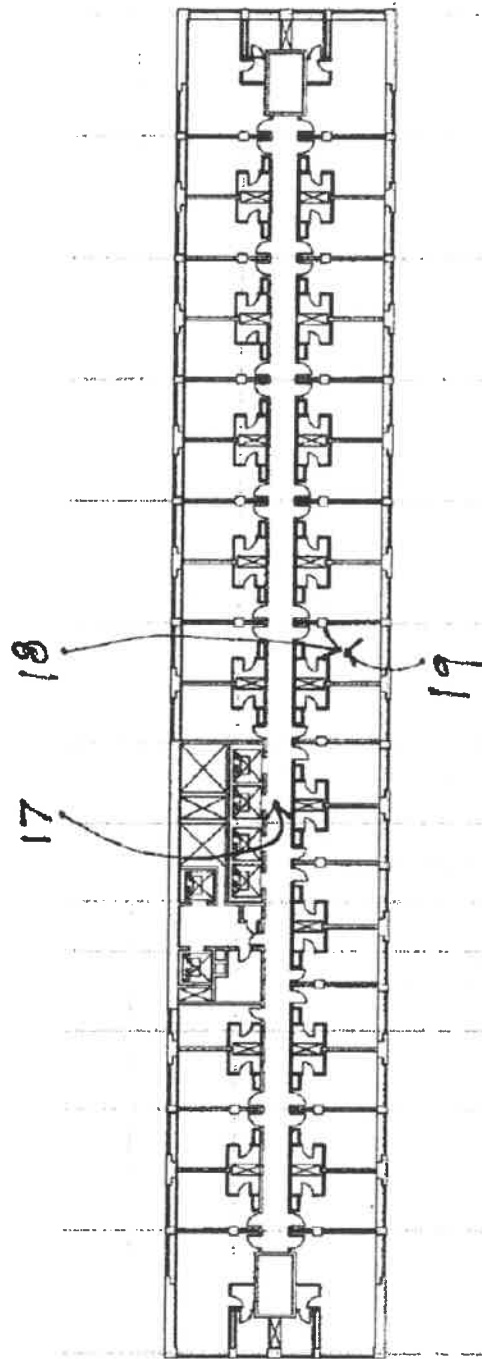
Existing 1st Floor Plan.



Existing 5th Floor Plan.



Existing 8th Floor Plan.



Existing typical hotel floor plan and twentieth floor plan.

**TERRACE PLAZA HOTEL
HISTORIC CONSERVATION GUIDELINES
15 West Sixth Street
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202**

Building Context

Within the context of these historic conservation guidelines, "Terrace Plaza Hotel" refers the building located at 15 West Sixth Street. The Terrace Plaza Hotel is an International-style mixed-use skyscraper in the heart of downtown Cincinnati. Designed in 1945-1946 and completed in 1948 by the firm of Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill (SOM), the building was developed by John J. Emery, Jr. The building's bold massing reflects a complex mixed-use program comprising a 7-story commercial base, originally occupied by two department stores, Bond and J.C. Penney, and office space, that spans the block-long site, topped by a set-back 12 story hotel block and terrace, for which the hotel is named. On top is a tall penthouse occupied by what was once the Gourmet Restaurant and mechanical space. The structure is steel with brick curtain walls. The street level is defined by a band of storefronts, and the façade above is clad in thin terra-cotta-colored brick veneer in a stacked bond pattern. Above the storefronts, the base is windowless, while the hotel block is characterized by a continuous window wall at the eighth floor and a regular grid of wide windows above. Facing north on Sixth Street and spanning between Vine and Race streets, the building stands amid mostly low- and mid-rise buildings, making it very visible in its urban setting. Despite alterations, the integrity of Terrace Plaza remains high, with its signature cubic massing, masonry skin, and interior spatial organization.

Rehabilitation

Intent and General Guidelines

These guidelines are intended to ensure that rehabilitation will maintain significant features of the Terrace Plaza Hotel. Guidelines are used by the Historic Conservation Board as a guide to assess the compatibility and appropriateness of proposed rehabilitation changes. Reviews by the Board are limited to exterior changes proposed for the buildings. Repair and maintenance not changing significant features and clearly complying with the intent of these guidelines does not require review by the Board. Alterations made to the interior are not purview of the Board, and are not subject to their review.

The following guidelines are compatible with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. If a change or alteration to the building is not addressed in the below guidelines, The Secretary of the Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation and any National Park Service documents supporting the Standards, such as but not limited to Interpreting the Standards and Preservation Briefs shall be consulted for guidance when preserving, rehabilitating, and restoring the building.

The following overarching approaches are recommended:

1. **Repair and Maintenance.** Ordinary repair and maintenance of like and kind to match the original construction, where visible and which does not change the appearance of the building, is acceptable under these guidelines. Rehabilitation may include preservation, restoration, reconstruction, or a combination of these, as appropriate and reasonable for the building.
2. **Maintenance.** Existing visible features that contribute to the overall character of the building on good condition should be maintained and where possible, preserved or conserved. Damaged visible features that can be repaired should be repaired rather than replaced wherever possible.
3. **Replacements.** Replacements of significant features badly damaged, deteriorated beyond reasonable repair, or missing shall sensitively harmonize with characteristics, including design, color, texture, material, and visual quality, of the original feature. Replication based on historic documentation is appropriate, but not required.
4. **New Additions, Alterations, and New Construction.** New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

Specific Guidelines

The following specific approaches to elements, features, and visible components are recommended:

1. **Materials:** Materials for visible features that are badly damaged, deteriorated beyond reasonable repair, or missing shall be replaced with materials or components that match as closely as possible the style, shape, color, treatments, and texture of elements replaced. Composition, type of joint, size of units, visible measures, placement, and detailing shall be appropriate for the buildings. Because of ongoing technological innovations, synthetic materials that closely match existing characteristics may be utilized.
2. **Door and Window Openings floor 2-7:** One of the defining characteristics of the Terrace Plaza Hotel is brick curtain wall on floors 2-7 with limited openings at the second floor. Among the important features of the Terrace Plaza Hotel are their door and window openings and the lack of window openings on floors 2-7. Any original openings that have been bricked in may be brought back to their original design. New window openings that are incompatible with the design intentions of the original design are inappropriate.
3. **Door and Window Openings floor 8-20 (historic hotel levels):** Among the important features of the Terrace Plaza Hotel levels are their door and window openings. The size and location and of openings are an essential part of the overall design. Original wall openings shall not be significantly altered or filled in on primary facades. On secondary facades, original wall openings should not be significantly altered without consideration of their impact to the overall character of the original design.
4. **Doors and Window Sash:** Original doors and window sashes shall be repaired rather than replaced where feasible and where appropriate access and security can be achieved in compliance with building codes. If replacement of doors or windows becomes necessary due to deterioration or to replace missing or nonconforming units, new doors and windows on primary facades shall fill the original openings and be compatible with the building in scale, materials, size, type, kind, style, color, and finish as closely as possible. If reuse of historic windows is not feasible due to deterioration, new windows shall match originals as closely as possible in

materials, scale, configuration, mullion style, size, and color. Minor variations in mullion and sash frame dimensions of replacement windows may be considered. Vinyl replacement windows or glass block windows shall not be used.

5. **Storefronts:** Nonconforming storefront features including doors, display windows, infill panels and canopies/awnings may be removed or replaced with new materials compatible with the building's original design. Entrance locations to the storefronts may diverge from the original design as long as they are in the storefront system.
6. **Awnings:** Fabric/Canvas Awnings are acceptable for seasonal use, provided they adhere to National Park Service Preservation Brief 44 for the use of awnings and historic buildings. The building historically had open traditional fabric awnings on the east and west storefronts. Internally illuminated awnings are not acceptable.
7. **Canopies:** A distinguishing feature of the Terrace Plaza Hotel is the canopy along 6th Street. As the existing design configuration is not original, any changes to the awning should be in keeping with the original design intent of the building. A restoration or recreation of the original canopy would be an appropriate treatment.
8. **Ornamentation:** Significant architectural features of the Terrace Plaza Hotel shall be preserved or conserved. Do not make replacements or substitutions of different scale, size, design, or incompatible materials. Replace ornamentation to match originals in character, scale, configuration, style, size texture, and color. Some synthetic materials including fiberglass castings or composite materials may be considered.
9. **Roofs:** Parapets and other architectural features that define the roofline of the buildings shall be preserved. On the primary facades, vents, skylights, rooftop utilities, equipment, and other roof elements shall be inconspicuously placed or screened where necessary.
10. **Painting:** Repaint building elements that have been historically painted. Stone and masonry that has not been painted in the past shall not be painted. Use colors that are appropriate to the building's age, history, and style.
11. **Outside Attachments:** Exterior light fixtures should be appropriate to the style of the building, or simple and contemporary. Mercury vapor, high-pressure sodium, and other light sources that impart distortions of color when illuminated are not appropriate to primary facades. Exterior light fixtures shall be mounted or constructed so as not to cast undue glare onto neighboring buildings or damage the building on which they are mounted.
12. **Signs.** Signs should be designed for clarity, legibility, and compatibility with structures on the site. Their design should be simple and contemporary or shall match historic documented designs. A signage package that matches the historic design, placement and types of signs may be considered with any relevant zoning relief. Billboards and roof top signs are not appropriate.
13. **Additions:** Additions shall follow all current codes and regulations and shall be limited to the non-primary façades. Any addition shall be compatible in character with the original building, with sensitivity to existing materials, massing and scale, site, and appearance within the context of the original buildings. Additions shall be sympathetic, may be complementary, but should not be imitative in design. Additions should be designed to relate architecturally, not overwhelming the original building and shall be designed in a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form, and integrity of the property and its environment would be unimpaired.
14. **Parking and Paving:** If a parking garage is included in a proposal, any new openings for an interior garage entrance shall be on the south facade of the building and may be considered on the west façade. Additional opening required for garage ventilation may be considered on the south façade is discreetly placed and not highly visible from the street.

15. **Landscaping:** An important feature of the Terrace Plaza Hotel was the landscaped outdoor spaces at both the 8th and 20th levels. Landscaping at these levels that is visible from the street is an appropriate part of the design of the building.
16. **Noncontributing buildings:** There are no noncontributing structures covered by this designation.
17. **Demolition:** Any demolition, alterations, or modifications to the Terrace Plaza Hotel, and minimum maintenance requirements, are governed by Section 1435-09: Alterations and Demolitions; Certificates of Appropriateness; Minimum Maintenance, of the Cincinnati Zoning Code, ordained by Ordinance No. 217-2012, §1, effective July 20, 2012.

Exhibit D



March 18, 2022

Historic Conservation Board and City Planning Commission
c/o Caroline Kellam, City Planning and Emily Ahouse, Office of Urban Conservator
City of Cincinnati
Via email

Re: Support for the Landmark Designation of the Terrace Plaza

I write in support of the Landmark designation of Terrace Plaza Hotel. The site is listed in the National Register of Historic Places at the national level of significance. Built 1943 to 1948, it is a landmark of the early Modern movement in Cincinnati

The Terrace Plaza is the building that introduced the nation to modern architecture, modern art and a new way of life made possible by the technological innovations that helped us win WW II. Cincinnati played a large role in innovations of the war effort and in the transition of those advances to the post war prosperity. It is fitting that the first major building to emerge in the post war years was in Cincinnati.

At the opening of the Terrace Plaza the governor of Ohio said, "Here in Cincinnati I have seen the future and it is beautiful." When the Terrace Plaza opened it was widely acclaimed as a Modernist masterpiece. The first International Style hotel and one of the first post war hotels built in America, the building is a superb and innovative synthesis of modern art, architecture and urban planning.

It was the first major building by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill (SOM) architects and the first of their works to be published widely in architectural journals and popular magazines. The Terrace was designed by Natalie de Blois, a pioneering woman architect. De Blois was the primary designer and did space planning, structure and interiors and finished sections and elevations.

The Terrace is significant in urban planning and development as an innovative and forward-looking mixed-use complex combining hotel, offices and retail space under one roof. Its mixed-use program included retail at street level, two department stores, a hotel lobby on the 8th floor, and a slender hotel tower. The building has a prominent role in the Cincinnati skyline due to the cantilevered circular restaurant perched daringly over the north wall.

All hotel furnishings were custom-designed, and the hotel was filled with modern art commissioned for the building, including works of major modern artists--Miro, Calder and Saul Steinberg--in the public spaces. The masonry skin is an early use of stacked bond, indicating that the brick was not structural. The building's futuristic design included the first fully automated elevators and user-controlled air conditioning in every room.

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Finally, with its combination of modern architecture, modern art, furnishings and electronic innovations the Terrace Plaza introduced post war America to the wonders of modern, technology driven future. Cincinnati led the country into this new era where the infrastructure of America's mighty military industrial production pivoted to usher in an unprecedented increase in the population's standard of living. The Terrace Plaza is an important part of Cincinnati's story and deserves the protection of Landmark designation.

This building was considered for designation in 2019. At that time the Historic Conservation Board recommended approval. The staff report included the following finding:

"The First Terrace Plaza Hotel has historic significance according to Chapter 1435 as defined under Criterion 3. The Terrace Plaza is the most important Modernist building in Cincinnati, it is the first International-style hotel built in America, and the first commission of Skidmore Owings and Merrill (SOM) to be widely published and receive national attention. It was also a pivotal project for SOM because it used an interdisciplinary design team, which the firm became known for. It is significant for the role played by Natalie De Blois, a pioneering woman architect in its design, along with a team of other designers who conceived of every detail of the building. "

"The designation of the Terrace Plaza Hotel meets the requirements of Chapter 1435 of the Cincinnati Zoning Code (Historic Preservation). The documentation in this designation report provides conclusive evidence that all required findings may be made for the proposed designation."

Since that time the National Trust for Historic Preservation named the Terrace Plaza to its highly selective list of "America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places." Docomomo-US, an international organization that advocates for preservation of modernist architecture, recognized the advocacy efforts on behalf of the terrace Plaza with a 2019 award.

Cincinnati clearly has a nation treasure in the Terrace Plaza. Its redevelopment will benefit from review by the Historic Conservation Board. **The Cincinnati Preservation Association respectfully requests the approval of our application for Landmark Designation of the Terrace Plaza Hotel.**

Sincerely,



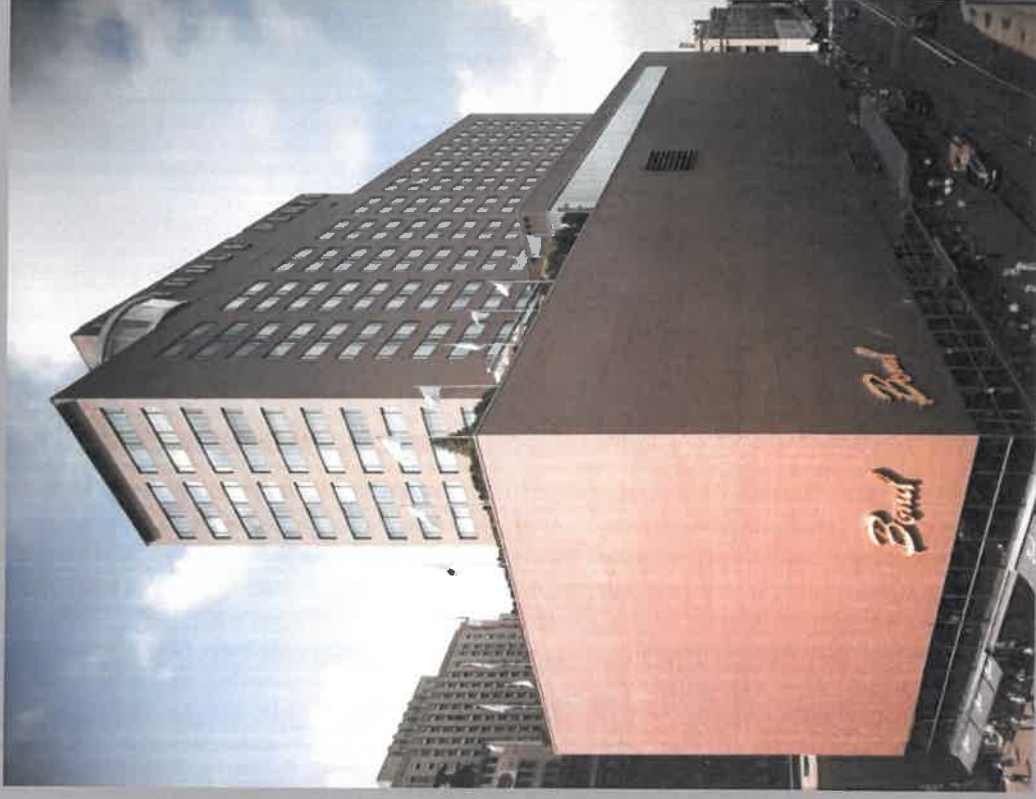
Paul Muller, AIA
Executive Director

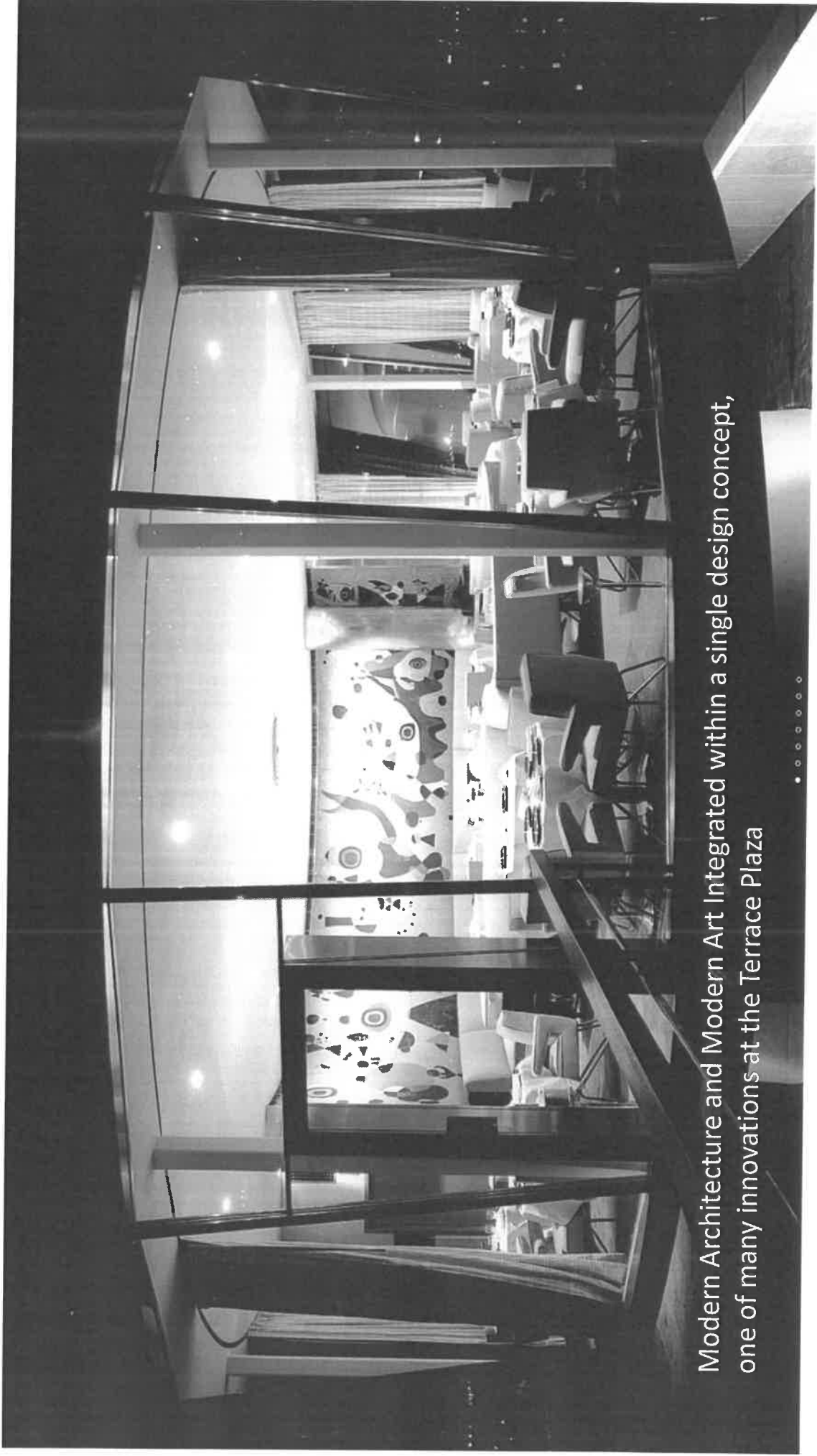
Terrace Plaza Hotel Landmark Designation

March 2022

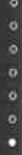


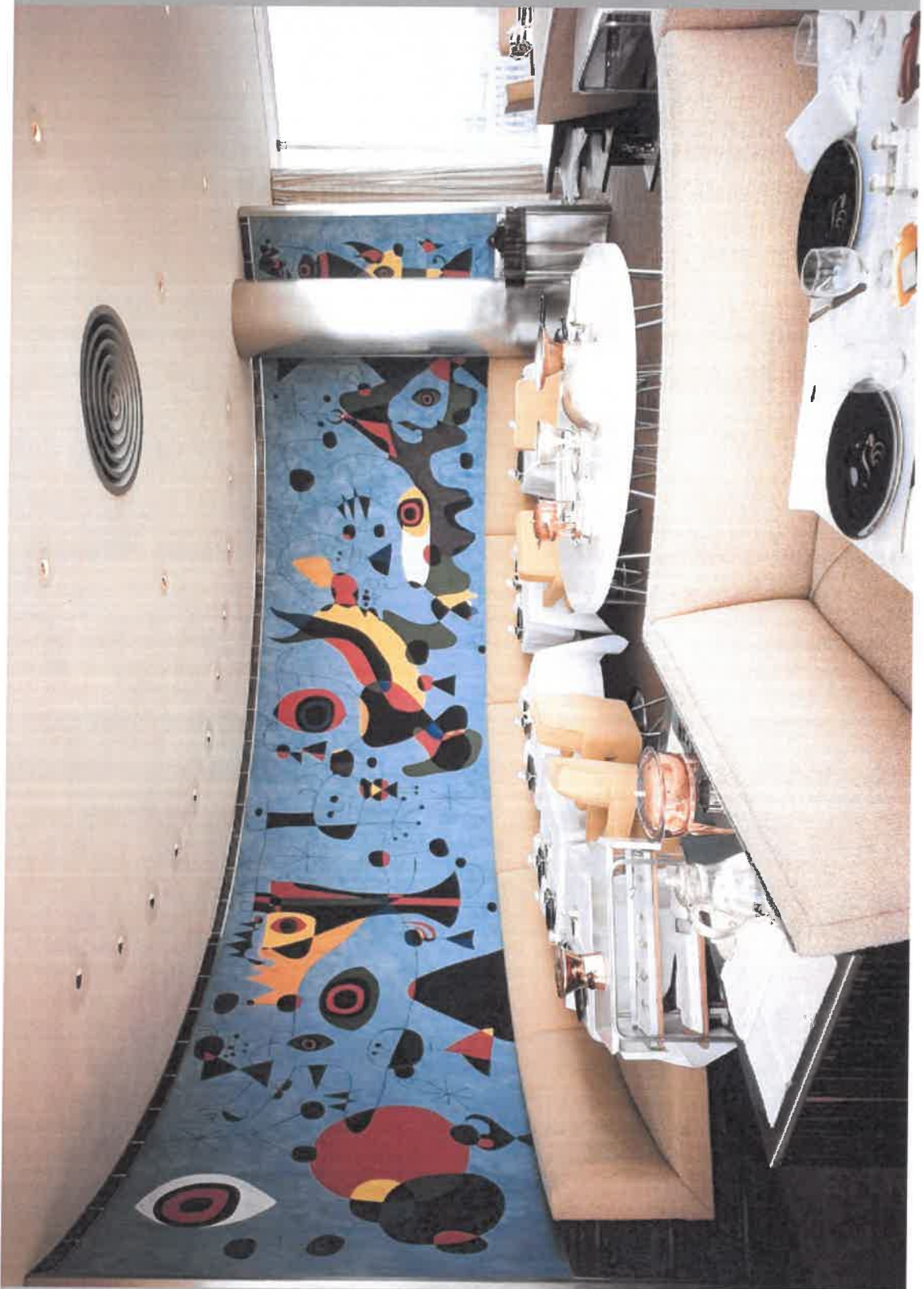
1948
A moment when
Cincinnati led the
nation into an era
of prosperity and
provided a vision
of the post war
future.





Modern Architecture and Modern Art Integrated within a single design concept,
one of many innovations at the Terrace Plaza







CINCINNATI'S TERRACE PLAZA HOTEL
AN ICON OF AMERICAN MODERNISM



SHAWN PATRICK TUBB
Foreword by Aaron Betsky

Cincinnati's Terrace Plaza Hotel An Icon of American Modernism

By Shawn Patrick Tubb

Published in 2013, reprinted 2020

This book brought the importance of the Terrace Plaza to the attention of the public and initiated a nationwide interest in preserving its groundbreaking architecture.

Natalie de Blois, architect at SOM, was responsible for much of the Terrace Plaza's design



Natalie Blois was also Senior Designer of SOM's National Historic Landmark Level House in NYC.



Ms. de Blois, a senior designer at the architectural firm Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, was the hidden hand behind a number of modernist buildings in New York.
Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

The New York Times

BUILDING BLOCKS

An Architect Whose Work Stood Out, Even if She Did Not

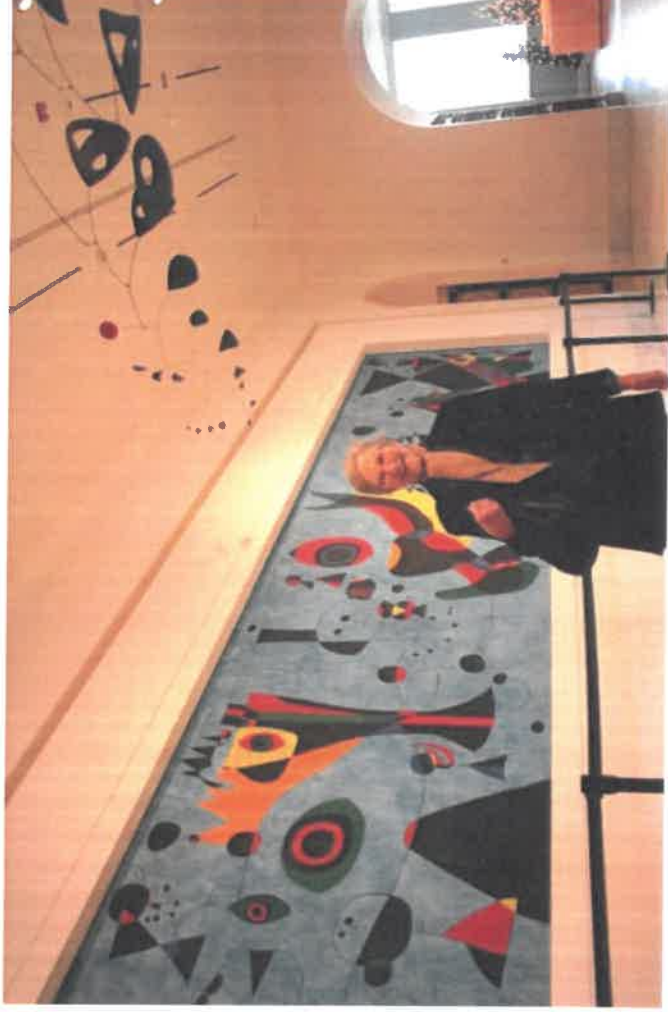


Natalie de Blois helped guide the design of buildings like the Lever House, whose unique steel-and-glass facade still retains the cool confidence of postwar Park Avenue.

By David W. Dunlap
July 31, 2013

In architecture's "Mad Men" era, there was a woman. Almost invisibly in her own day, Natalie de Blois, of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, helped guide the design of three of the most important corporate landmarks of the 1950s and '60s — the headquarters of Lever Brothers, Pepsi-Cola and Union Carbide — whose suave steel-and-glass facades still exude the cool confidence of postwar Park Avenue.

Although her contributions to were not celebrated while she practiced, de Blois is now acknowledged to be a leading pioneer of modern architecture.



Natalie de Blois was able to visit the Terrace Plaza and its artwork at CAM for the first time in a 2008. The visit was hosted by CPA and author Shawn Patrick Tubb. Although she led the design team, de Blois was not permitted to be at the site in 1948.

2019 Landmark Application by Vice Mayor David Mann



**Recommended for approval by HCB
Was not Advanced to City Planning Commission**

Do.co.mo.mo-US Award for Advocacy of the Terrace Plaza, 2019



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Overview

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2019 Award Winners

2018 Award Winners



Gateway Arch National Park

Design Award of Excellence | Civic | 2019



Terrace Plaza Hotel

Advocacy Award of Excellence | Commercial | 2019



Silvertop

Design Award of Excellence | Residential | 2019



Pond House

Design Award of Excellence | Residential | 2019



**Schlumberger Research Center
Administration Building**

Advocacy Award of Excellence | Commercial | 2019



Isami Enomoto Labor Murals

Advocacy Award of Excellence | Civic | 2019

December 10, 2020

Discover America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places for 2020

11

NO. 11
11 Most Endangered Historic Places

By
National Trust for Historic Preservation



Ezra Stoller

Terrace Plaza Hotel

Cincinnati, Ohio

Completed in 1948, the Terrace Plaza Hotel was one of the first post-war hotels in America, and the first hotel by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill (SOM). Pioneering female architect Natalie de Blois played a major role in the hotel's design.

Mostly vacant since 2008, the hotel is deteriorating. Local landmark designation passed the Historic Conservation Board in 2019. Local advocates believe that rehabilitating the Terrace Plaza will not only preserve a key early modern landmark but will provide economic benefits for downtown Cincinnati.

THE CINCINNATI ENQUIRER

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USA TODAY, BY

Once a landmark, now among most endangered

Randy Tucker
Cincinnati Enquirer

In the late 1940s, Downtown's Terrace Plaza Hotel was celebrated worldwide as an emblem of modernism and a model for urban redevelopment following World War II.

More than 70 years later, the mostly

abandoned and deteriorating high-rise on Sixth Street, between Vine and Race streets, is in danger of becoming an obsolete footnote in American history.

This week, the National Trust for Historic Preservation named the Terrace Plaza building to its 2020 list of the "11 Most Endangered Historic Places" in the country.

The annual list from the Washington,



Opened in 1948, the Terrace Plaza was one of the first post-World War II hotels constructed in the U.S. [USA TODAY/PT](#)

See **TERRACE PLAZA**, Page 1A

Terrace Plaza

Continued from Page 1A

The Terrace Plaza was added to this year's list after years of neglect and being targeted for redevelopment that would strip the building of important historic elements, according to Paul Muller, executive director of the Cincinnati Preservation Association (CPA).

The CPA submitted the Terrace Plaza to the National Trust for consideration. "The '11 Most Endangered' listing is an important moment in efforts to save the Terrace Plaza," Muller said. "The building has national significance and, like many of our other historic treasures, has the potential to add to the richness of Cincinnati's story."

CPA has been joined in its conservation efforts over the years by several city leaders, including Councilman David

Mann, who led an effort to get the Cincinnati Historic Conservation Board to recommend local landmark designation for the former hotel.

The building — developed by John J. Emery Jr., who also developed Downtown's Greer Tower-Netherland Plaza Hotel complex — was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2017.

Still, none of those distinctions offers the building legal protection from developers that may want to significantly alter the building's historic architecture to fit their needs.

"We know some alterations are going to be inevitable," Muller said. "What we're advocating for is that they're done with some sense of its history, rather than just completely ignoring it."

The Terrace Plaza building has stood mostly vacant and unattended since the last guests checked out in 2008. The only remaining tenants are the Batsanes Flat Shop and Wendler's clothing store

on the main floor. In recent years, developers have floated plans for the building that call for modern upgrades, including stripping the terra cotta-colored brick veneer that surrounds most of the building and replacing it with glass.

The fate of the building has been in limbo while real-estate investment firms Anderson Birkda Investment Partners of Indianapolis and JNY Capital of New York City fight for control of the property in court.

Opened in 1948, the Terrace Plaza was one of the first post-war hotels constructed in the United States and the first major project from renowned Chicago-based design firm Skidmore, Owings & Merrill.

Over the years, it has gone by such names as Terrace Hilton Hotel, Terrace Hotel and Crownie Plaza Hotel, according to its listing in the National Register of Historic Places maintained by the

U.S. Department of the Interior's National Park Service.

Every room had air-conditioning and what were then considered space-age features, including beds that slid out of the wall at the push of a button.

The windows, black facade surrounding the first seven floors of the building housed the Bond's and J.C. Penney department stores, making the Terrace Plaza one of the first multi-use Downtown developments.

The internationally acclaimed Courmet room circular restaurant sat atop the building. 20 floors up from street level, offering patrons a panoramic view of the city.

Modern art was used throughout the hotel, including an abstract mural by Spanish artist Joan Miró in the Courmet Room, and a mural of Cincinnati landmarks by American cartoonist and illustrator Saul Steinberg. The art is now owned by the Cincinnati Art Museum.

Listed by National Trust for Historic Places:

America's 11 Most

Endangered Historic Sites

2020

Architectural Digest PRO

Need to Know

7 Hotels With Remarkably Influential Interior Design

You can still book a room at most of them

BY SARA HILL/ARCHITECTURE
MAY 17, 2021

There are plenty of hotels around the world with beautiful, eye-catching designs, but far fewer with interiors so thought-out that they actually changed the design conversation. We wanted to go beyond surface-level looks and dig deeper into the legacies of the hotels that represent bold thinking and visionary design. Many of them have been refreshed over the years, and a couple have closed for good, but most are still bookable. Here are seven hotels with interiors that broke the mold.

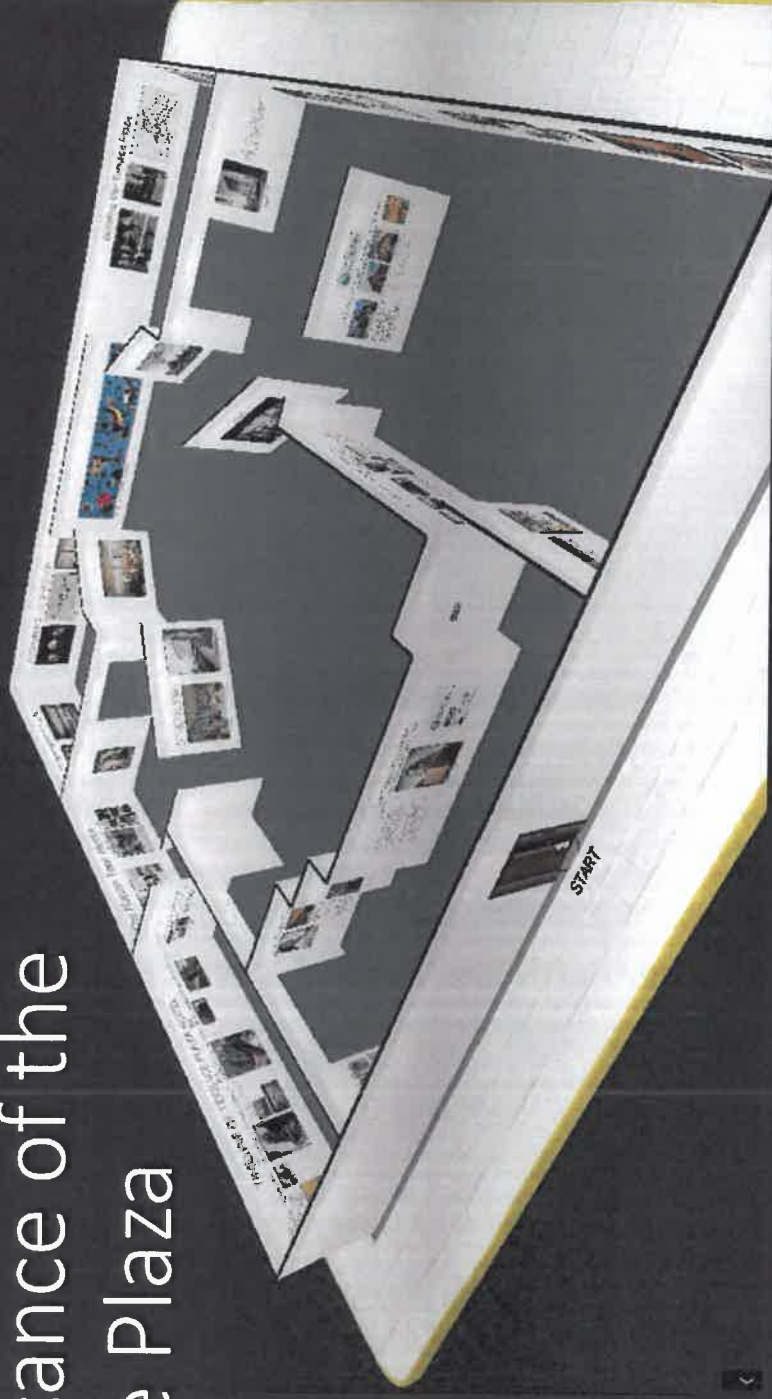
The Terrace Plaza Hotel by SOM

In 1948, the emerging firm of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill was commissioned to create the Terrace Plaza Hotel in Cincinnati—America's first new hotel to be built after World War II. Natalie DeBlois was the lead designer and used the hotel as a way to introduce modernism to the U.S., creating a landmark in the International Style and decorating the interiors with modern art by Joan Miró, Alexander Calder, Saul Steinberg, and Jim Davis. It was the first hotel in the U.S. to have elevators without operators, rooms with individual heating and cooling controls, and sofas that could convert to a bed at the push of a button. Despite setting the standard for modern amenities, the hotel fell into disrepair and was all but abandoned. It's on the National Trust for Historic Preservation's list of the U.S.'s Most Endangered Places for 2020.



The dining room of the Terrace Plaza Hotel in Cincinnati, decorated with a mural by Saul Steinberg. Photo: FPH/Blackburn

Online Exhibition on the History and Significance of the Terrace Plaza



Tour the exhibition at this link: <https://www.artsteps.com/view/5f6603b2e2af813585673323>



High Victorian Gothic Music Hall was built to support and celebrate the musical and performing arts.

1880s



Bozart Arts Memorial Hall honors the Great Army of the Republic & Spanish-American War veterans.

1910s



Carew Tower paved the way for mixed use urban projects such as Rockefeller Center.

1920s



With Union Terminal, considered one of the most significant examples of Art Deco design, Cincinnati set a high standard for civic architecture.

1930s



Terrace Plaza is a pioneering work of Modern Architecture that set the course for much that followed.

1940s

CINCINNATI LANDMARKS BY THE DECADES

Each is part of our story, let's preserve them all for future generations.

Landmark the Terrace Plaza!

HCB Staff Report and HCB Recommendation
at 2019 Landmark Approval:

“The designation of the Terrace Plaza Hotel meets the requirements of Chapter 1435 of the Cincinnati Zoning Code (Historic Preservation). The documentation in this designation report provides conclusive evidence that all required findings may be made for the proposed designation.”



Gabrielle Esperdy, Ph.D., Professor of Architecture, Hillier College of Architecture & Design, New Jersey Institute of Technology – and the CPA Fall Forum Keynote Speaker in 2019
[Link to 90 Second Review of the Significance of the Terrace Plaza](#)

The Terrace Plaza is
an important part of
Cincinnati's legacy.
It deserves to be
protected alongside
our other historic
treasures.

Thank You





700 Walnut Street
Suite 450
Cincinnati, OH 45202
T: 513.651.4100
F: 513.651.4101
www.devstrategiesgroup.com

March 18, 2022

Ms. Emily Ahouse
Planning and Zoning
City of Cincinnati
805 Central Ave. 7th Floor
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Ms. Ahouse:

I am writing regarding the pending application for historic designation of the Terrace Plaza. I ask that you please include this correspondence in the record for the Historic Conservation Board meeting scheduled for March 28.

I offer this letter as an interested party in the city's consideration of the historic designation application.

Development Strategies Group represents Birkla Investment Group (Birkla). As many people are aware, Birkla has been trying to acquire the Terrace Plaza for more than 5-years. Their acquisition efforts have been undermined by litigation and now, a bankruptcy action by the current owner. We anticipate that the building will be discharged from bankruptcy proceeding soon and BIG will have an opportunity to acquire the Terrace Plaza. The City Administration is aware of Birkla's continuing in this property despite the legal obstacles. I also believe city administration would agree that Birkla is the only developer interested in taking on this massive project and save the Terrace Plaza building and bringing a city block back to life.

Following the February 11, 2022, historic designation application submission, our team has reviewed the historic conservation guidelines recommended by the Cincinnati Preservation Association. Our conclusion is that the proposed guidelines are not compatible with an adaptive re-use of the building.

In an effort to remedy this situation and achieve a "win-win" resolution, Birkla has engaged with Skidmore, Owings and Merrill (SOM), the original architects for the Terrace Plaza, to serve as both the architects for the adaptive reuse and to enlist their assistance in crafting historic conservation guidelines recognizing the historic nature of the building while allowing the flexibility required for an economically viable adaptive re-use of the building.

Since development of alternative guidelines will take some time to craft, I reached out to the Cincinnati Preservation Association and asked that they please hold the application, pausing the city's consideration process. Mr. Muller is presenting this request to his Board for their consideration and a decision.

We are hopeful we can reach a compromise that balances the historic nature of the building while preventing the imposition of guidelines that preclude a financially viable re-use of the building for Birkla and likely any other developer who wishes to reuse the building.

Turning to the application itself, we found the historic designation report, prepared in 2019, out of date and not reflective of current building conditions. The vacant, neglected building has continued to deteriorate. Attached to this letter are photos take two weeks ago when representatives of Birkla were permitted to tour the building with construction experts from Turner Construction. The photos document that building deterioration is accelerating. Add a couple of details.

The application also fails to recognize the numerous building code citations and nuisance filings by the city including (add a couple examples). Without attention, the Terrace Plaza in well on a path toward condemnation soon, at which point a developer would be permitted to demolish the entire building.

Birkla has remained committed to renovating the Terrace Plaza and saving the building through years of frustration and litigation. Birkla is working with the original architecture firm to re-use the building and literally bring a city block back to life. The Birkla Investment Group plan will save the Terrace Plaza building. We are deeply concerned that the adoption of the guidelines recommended by the Historic Preservation Association may preserve the idea of the Terrace Plaza, but not the building. The Terrace Plaza will remain vacant and deteriorating until the only value is in the land, not the building. Without a viable re-use plan the Terrace Plaza will be lost.

Thank you for your consideration.



Douglas Moormann
Vice President
Development Strategies Group











March 21, 2022

Beth Johnson
Doug Owen
Historic Conservation Board Members
City of Cincinnati

RE: Terrace Plaza Historic Landmark Designation

Dear Historic Conservation Board Members:

We understand that an application has been filed to designate the Terrace Plaza as a historic landmark. We are writing you today to express our opposition to the building receiving such designation.

The Terrace Plaza has long been a troubled, mostly vacant asset that has been a net-negative in the heart of our urban core. Like many stakeholders invested in the revitalization and improvement of Downtown Cincinnati, 3CDC is hopeful that the property can be redeveloped and add to the vibrancy that has been building in the center city over the past two decades.

Any redevelopment of the structure will already be difficult and pose significant challenges, due to the building's current condition. Adding a historic designation to the building will place additional rules around the development, placing yet another barrier on potential redevelopment.

The building has deteriorated to the point where we believe there is a legitimate threat of losing the structure completely if an investment is not made in the relatively near future.

Denying the building's status as a historic landmark will provide any future developer with more flexible options for redeveloping the structure. While we understand the desire to acknowledge the building's history by providing the historic landmark designation, we believe the benefits of this flexibility, which makes redevelopment more likely, should outweigh any inclination to provide historic status.

Based on our experience and expertise in this area, which includes the restoration of 198 historic buildings through the utilization of diverse and often complicated capital stacks, we believe we are able to provide a unique perspective in this area and hope you will take our comments under consideration.

Sincerely,



Lann Field
Vice President, Development

Caroline Hardy Kellam, Senior City Planner
Dept. of City Planning and Engagement
805 Central Ave.
Suite 720
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Dear Ms. Kellam:

Thank you for your notification RE: the property at 15 W. 6TH St. (Terrace Plaza Hotel). My wife and I reside at 26 E. 6th St. My "vote" is to not designate the property as a historical landmark. It is my understanding that a property designated as such cannot be altered or changed but only to a very small degree.

The property (Terrace Plaza Hotel) occupies a third of the footprint of one of the major major blocks in the city's downtown business district. To designate the Terrace Hotel as a national historic landmark, in my opinion, would not be in the city's or the business community's best interest. If it were to be given historic landmark designation, I imagine it would likely remain empty and a shell.

I cannot imagine a developer wanting to manage such a property with that current enormous brick façade. Seemingly, the structure would need significant renovation in order to attract hospitality, residential or business (service or retail) clientele. The building should be razed or sold/leased to a developer with carte blanche control. The potential developer should be in no way, manner or form be constrained by the rules or restrictions that may accompany property designated as a national historical landmark.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Barry and Judy Robertson

CC: Beth Johnson, Urban Conservator
Dept. of City Planning and Engagement
805 Central Ave.
Suite 720
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Kellam, Caroline

From: Margo Warminski <margo@cincinnatiapreservation.org>
Sent: Friday, March 18, 2022 12:30 PM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Cc: director@cincinnatiapreservation.org
Subject: [External Email] Save the Terrace Plaza Hotel

External Email Communication

One of Cincinnati's greatest treasures is the Terrace Plaza Hotel. This great building is highly significant for many reasons. It is a landmark of the early Modern movement. It was the first hotel in America to open its doors since World War II; it was designed by celebrated woman architect Natalie du Bois; and it is listed in the National Register of Historic Places at the local and national levels of significance, the highest honor available to a historic property.

Moreover, the Terrace also was honored with a "Modernism in America" award from DOCOMOMO-US in 2019 for its forward-looking design. The following year, the Terrace also made the National Trust for Historic Preservation's list of "11 Most Endangered" historic buildings. The Terrace also was the subject of a CPA Fall Forum lecture on Natalie du Bois, the building's designer.

We hope the Board will see fit to recognize the significance of this remarkable historic property and Modernist treasure. Thank you for your consideration.

--

Margo Warminski
Preservation Director
Cincinnati Preservation Association
430 Reading Road, Suite 300
Cincinnati, OH 45202
Phone 513-721-4506
Direct line 513-246-2047
www.cincinnatiapreservation.org
margo@cincinnatiapreservation.org

"[T]he things that make a place worth loving go far beyond the balance sheet. We should never forget that."--Charles Marohn

Kellam, Caroline

From: Marilyn Hyland <marilynhyland@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 21, 2022 1:37 PM
To: Kellam, Caroline; Johnson, Beth
Subject: [External Email] Letter of Support, Local Historic Designation of Terrace Plaza Hotel

External Email Communication

Caroline Kellam, Senior City Planner
Beth Johnson, Urban Conservator

This is a Letter of Support for the proposed designation of a Local Historic Landmark of the Terrace Plaza Hotel, 15 West 6th Street, Downtown Cincinnati.

As Architectural Digest said on February 3, 2021, "The hotel that introduced Modernism to the U.S. is on the National Trust for Historic Preservation list of the most endangered places in America."

Completed in 1948, the Terrace Plaza introduced Modernism to the U.S. both with modern architecture and modern art. Beth Sullebarger, of Beth Sullebarger Associates, observes "The Terrace Plaza demonstrated in a concrete way that Cincinnati could be modern, progressive and innovative."

Originally owned by local real estate developer John J. Emery (Netherland Plaza Hotel, Carew Tower), the Terrace Plaza is one of the first hotels designed by a woman, Natalie de Blois. She commissioned artworks by Joan Miro, Saul Sternberg and Alexander Calder to complement the architecture, combining art and corporate design.

The Terrace Plaza is an architecturally significant structure to downtown Cincinnati, Greater Cincinnati and the U.S.

I urge you to vote to conserve this landmark building and support the stabilization and improvement of this property's value.

Thank you.

Kellam, Caroline

From: Sandy Eichert <eichertsandy@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 20, 2022 11:22 AM
To: Kellam, Caroline; Johnson, Beth
Subject: [External Email] Terrace Plaza Hotel

External Email Communication

Caroline Kellam, Senior City Planner
Beth Johnson, Urban Conservator

Please pass along to the Historic Review Board, Planning Commission, and City Council my support of the Terrace Plaza Hotel. The hotel was and is Masterpiece of the Modern Movement. Celebrated as the most modern hotel in the nation when it opened in 1948.

Thank you for taking the steps to ensure the Terrace Plaza is once again celebrated.

Sincerely,
Sandy Eichert

Board of Directors

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Liz Waytkus
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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March 22, 2022

City of Cincinnati
City Council
801 Plum St.
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Dear Members of the Cincinnati City Council:

Docomomo US, the nation's leading advocate for buildings of the Modern Movement, remains focused on the development of the historic Terrace Plaza Hotel. Five years after we first became aware of this issue, preservation of the Terrace Plaza Hotel remains a national priority for our organization. We enthusiastically support local designation of the Terrace Plaza and believe this is the best means to protect the building for future generations and allow the building to serve as a beacon for economic development in the downtown area.

In 2019, Docomomo US gave the Cincinnati Preservation Association and the coalition of local advocates, including City Councilmember David Mann, a Modernism in America Advocacy Award for Excellence for their efforts to save Cincinnati's Terrace Plaza Hotel. We believe now as we did then that the importance of the Terrace Plaza has the capacity to be a cultural attraction for decades to come and a modern tourist attraction if restored with such an opportunity in mind. If you need examples of how this has been achieved in other cities take a look at the [Valley Ho Hotel](#) in Phoenix, the [Dallas Statler Hotel](#) and the [Loew's Philadelphia Hotel](#). Loew's will be a featured site and conference hotel for the upcoming Docomomo US National Symposium in Philadelphia with an expect attendance of three hundred attendees. We want nothing more than to be able to come to Cincinnati in the future and put on what we know would be an amazing conference. We believe the Terrace Plaza is a tremendous opportunity for Cincinnati and we stand ready to assist those involved with the redevelopment to realize these types of positive benefits.

We also understand the material issues and life/safety concerns of the building. While the issues are serious, we believe they are not insurmountable and there are many examples (see above) where such buildings have been sensitively rehabilitated, brought up to code and reengaged as an active and exciting participant in a city's downtown area.

Local historic protection is the key to unlocking the potential of the Terrace Plaza and the ability for residents and visitors to Cincinnati alike to enjoy and celebrate this architectural beacon. We encourage you to take measures to protect the Terrace Plaza for these reasons.

Sincerely,



Liz Waytkus
Executive Director

Johnson, Beth

From: PETER HAMES <otrpeter@icloud.com>
Sent: Friday, March 18, 2022 3:21 PM
To: Johnson, Beth; caroline.kellam@cincinnati-oh.gov
Cc: jdfayotr@gmail.com
Subject: [External Email] Terrace Plaza Historic Designation Skupport

External Email Communication

Good afternoon,

Because of my vision disability, I will leave to others to state all the reasons why the building is historic and, thus, should be named a landmark,

I first visited the building in 2002 and was delighted with its design and innovations. I have followed its sad history from a distance but ask that you count me among those who believe it should be saved. It's another landmark in Cincinnati's history that helps to keep the city on the map.

Respectfully,

Peter Hames

Peter Hames
otrpeter@icloud.com
(513) 684-9988

March 18, 2022

Caroline Hardy Kellam, Senior City Planner
Department of City Planning & Engagement
805 Central Avenue, Suite 720
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Re: Terrace Plaza Hotel local landmark designation

Dear Ms. Hardy Kellam,

As someone who works in downtown Cincinnati, I strongly support local landmark designation for the historic Terrace Plaza Hotel. The Terrace Plaza Hotel is architecturally significant as one of Ohio's most important modernist buildings. It is also important as it was designed by Natalie de Blois, a female architect, which was a rarity at the time. She was ahead of her time in the design of this project which is inspiring to me as a feminist preservationist advocate.

I had the opportunity to edit [Cincinnati's Terrace Plaza Hotel: An Icon of American Modernism](#) by Shawn Patrick Tubb and was able to tour the building both of which made me aware of the impact this building has and increased my interest in preserving its history. I could imagine what the hotel looked like as I toured including the murals that are now in the Cincinnati Art Museum.

Local landmark designation will protect the historic structure from improper development and will preserve the architectural heritage of Cincinnati. I request that the landmark designation be approved for the Terrace Plaza Hotel.

Sincerely,

Shannon M. Tubb

Cc: Paul Muller, Cincinnati Preservation Association
Shawn Patrick Tubb



Dear Historic Conservation Board (HCB),

As an architectural historian who has worked in various regions throughout the U.S. (including the West Coast and Midwest), I have never been as moved by a modern building as I am with the 1948 Terrace Plaza Hotel. It set a precedent for modernist architectural design and modern art by designing this international style with brick cladding and incorporating murals by popular artists like Alexander Calder, Joan Miró, Saul Steinberg, and Jim Davis. Although my position with Cincinnati Preservation Association primarily focuses on sites of African American history, as a woman I would be remiss to not to urge the Historic Conservation Board to acknowledge the incredible contributions of female architect Natalie de Blois and the great impact the building had in not only Cincinnati's downtown landscape but in engendering the modernist movement nationally.

Because modern movements transcended the mid-20th century, earlier modern architectural styles, like the International style, have become more imperative to preserve. The Terrace Plaza Hotel was, and continues to be, seen as more than just an aesthetically pleasing piece of architecture. Lauded for its unique ability to combine function and form, it was specifically constructed to accommodate a variety of uses and amenities suitable for the time period. This mixed-use building features a seven-story commercial space that used to be occupied by department stores, and a 12-story hotel that used to house not just the hotel but residences, offices, and a restaurant at the penthouse level. In addition to the restaurant space being a notable location for visitors and the location of an infamous Joan Miro mural, the inclusion of landscape design was carefully crafted to enhance open spaces and provide a natural feel to a downtown skyscraper.

When it comes to the historic preservation of a mid-century downtown building like the Terrace Plaza Hotel, there are myriad opportunities for rehabilitation that would enable this currently vacant building to be repurposed and reoccupied. The benefits of a Local Landmark designation for this building go beyond simply preventing demolition – historic conservation guidelines will ensure that future work will not strip the Terrace Plaza Hotel from its place in history. It is for these reasons that I urge the HCB to approve this Local Landmark designation..

Sincerely,

Deqah Hussein-Wetzel

Deqah Hussein-Wetzel
CPA Black Sites Researcher

Kellam, Caroline

From: J Fay <jdfayotr@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 18, 2022 1:24 PM
To: Kellam, Caroline; Johnson, Beth
Subject: [External Email] Letter of Support, local historic designation of Terrace Plaza Hotel

External Email Communication

Caroline Kellam, Senior City Planner
Beth Johnson, Urban Conservator

Please pass along to the Historic Review Board, Planning Commission, and City Council my letter of support for the proposed designation of a Local Historic Landmark of the Terrace Plaza Hotel, 15 West 6th Street, Downtown Cincinnati.

The Terrace Plaza hotel complex was developed over several years by John J Emery, Jr, a third generation Cincinnati businessman. His success in building the Carew tower and Netherland Plaza Hotel earned him a reputation for vision and skill at completing complex projects. It embodied a unique collaboration between the hotel developer, architects, designers, engineers, retailers, artists, and corporations. The result was a Masterpiece of the Modern Movement. It housed the upper floor lobby, ice skating rink, Gourmet Room, and contemporary artworks of its tie, which are now favorites at the Cincinnati Art Museum.

A quote from Aaron Betsky, Director, Cincinnati Art Museum, (2006-2014): "The Terrace Plaza was a destination that anchored Downtown, representing everything that was progressive about this City...a new kind of urban condition that would be more free, more open, more rational, and more defined by technology."

Celebrated as the most modern hotel in the nation when it opened in 1948, (it closed in 2008,) there is an adaptive reuse for this sturdy historic structure that will once again bring glory to West 6th Street. It will take creativity and vision but will re-emerge as a major Downtown asset, revered by all who cherish mid-century design and historic preservation, as well as everyday citizens who will also enjoy its future uses.

Thank you for taking the steps to insure the Terrace Plaza is once again celebrated.

Sincerely,
Julie Fay,
Imperial 280 LLC
513-260-8434
jdfayotr@gmail.com

Kellam, Caroline

From: Maya Drozdz <mayadrozdz@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 18, 2022 1:04 PM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] former Terrace Plaza Hotel

External Email Communication

Hello, I am writing to you regarding the local landmark application for the former Terrace Plaza Hotel.

I'll admit it: the design of the building is polarizing, as are many cultural contributions whose value is nonetheless unquestioned. But this is not *just* a building.

This structure signals the point of arrival, circa 1948, of a bright, shiny, Modern post-war future. It is a ground-breaking, technologically advanced work by SOM and the lead architect on this project, Natalie de Blois. It is a building that put both SOM and the city of Cincinnati on the map, as it were, when it came to the then-fledgling International Style of architecture.

As an architectural commission, it essentially launched de Blois' professional career. As a complex site for retail and hospitality, it gave us all a holistic work to study now, to better understand the potential of the cataclysmic effect that diverse disciplines can have together. As a pioneering work of Modernism, it exists in conversation with other mid-20th century works and designers in Cincinnati.

It behooves us to use our time, energy and power to act as responsible stewards of the past and shepherd it into a future with as strong a foundation as possible. That needs to be the overriding attitude of anyone with a voice concerning the fate of this important building and the multitude of lessons it contains.

Even after more than 70 years, the building cuts a striking figure in the cityscape of the Central Business District. It is still unabashedly fresh and Modern, and absolutely worthy of the local landmark designation.

Maya Drozdz
maker | thinker | doer
<http://www.mayadrozdz.com>



March 16, 2022

The Honorable Aftab Pureval
Mayor of Cincinnati
801 Plum St. Suite 150
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Dear Mayor Pureval,

Over four years ago, I wrote a letter to then-Mayor Cranley expressing my office's support for the preservation of the Terrace Plaza Hotel. I cited the Terrace Plaza's distinction as the most significant Modernist building in Cincinnati and the first international-style hotel built in the United States. I also noted that the chief designer on the project was young, pioneering woman architect Natalie DeBlois, who worked at the time for the influential architecture firm Skidmore Owings and Merrill (SOM). The Terrace Plaza Hotel was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2017 at the state and national levels of significance. National-level significance is a rare distinction among historic properties and speaks to the Terrace Plaza as a remarkable work of 20th century architecture.

Four years later, I am writing again to express support for the current efforts underway to preserve the Terrace Plaza Hotel. Over these years, the significance of the Terrace Plaza has not changed, but with each passing year, it becomes clearer how important it is to revitalize this architectural gem that sits in a prominent location. Many forward-thinking preservationists have been working to save the Terrace Plaza and supporters are anxious to see this work get underway.

Cincinnati has buzzed with revitalization for the last decade or more, thanks in large part to projects supported by the Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit and the federal Historic Tax Credit. These have been critical tools in the revitalization toolkit. To access these programs, a building's architecturally significant features must be identified and maintained as much as possible. Local landmark protection of the Terrace Plaza will help ensure the architecturally significant features of the hotel will be maintained and therefore keep the building eligible for these beneficial tax incentives—up to a combined 45% of rehabilitation costs between both the state and federal programs.

You may know that the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC) will be holding its biennial conference in Cincinnati in July. One of the primary reasons that NAPC chose your city as its site is the strong preservation and revitalization activity that has made Cincinnati a national example. Preservationists and community development specialists recognize the great work of Cincinnati in these areas to date. It will be terrific to be able to hold the Terrace Plaza Hotel up as another shining example of Cincinnati's progress.

My staff and I stand ready to assist in these efforts. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Amanda S. Terrell".

Amanda S. Terrell
Director, State Historic Preservation Office and
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Cc: Beth Johnson, Urban Conservator



**National Trust for
Historic Preservation**
Save the past. Enrich the future.

March 16, 2022

Caroline Hardy Kellam, Senior City Planner
Department of City Planning & Engagement
805 Central Avenue, Suite 720
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Dear Ms. Hardy Kellam,

The National Trust for Historic Preservation protects significant places representing our diverse cultural experience by taking direct action and inspiring broad public support. We strongly support local landmark designation for the historic Terrace Plaza Hotel.

The Terrace Plaza Hotel is significant not just for its groundbreaking International Style design, but for the pioneering architect responsible for much of the design – Natalie de Blois, who served as lead designer of an interdisciplinary team and was one of few female Modernist architects of her era.

For these reasons, in 2020, the National Trust included the Terrace Plaza in our annual list of “America’s 11 Most Endangered Historic Places.” With the right development partner, the Terrace Plaza Hotel could be rehabilitated in a preservation-sensitive manner, adding to downtown Cincinnati’s vibrant scene while standing out with its unique design. Local landmark designation and oversight by the City’s Historic Conservation Board will be critical to ensure that any development plan is respectful of the Terrace Plaza’s significant and groundbreaking Modern design.

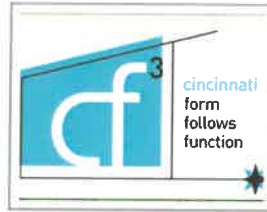
Please do not hesitate to contact me if the National Trust can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Sandy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "S".

Jennifer Sandy
Field Director

Cc: Paul Muller, Cincinnati Preservation Association
Joyce Barrett, Heritage Ohio



March 15, 2022

City of Cincinnati
City Council
801 Plum Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Dear Members of Cincinnati City Council,

cf3 is a non-profit modern design membership group whose mission is to promote, preserve, educate, document and raise awareness of modern design in and around Cincinnati.

As part of our mission and as a member of Docomomo US, cf3 supports the preservation of modern architecture structures. We encourage you to vote and approve landmark designation for the Terrace Plaza Hotel. Such a designation provides a layer of protection and oversight for the future of this important building now and for future generations as well. There is a rich and vibrant architectural aesthetic in our city and it is our aim to show it off and protect these special buildings.

Sincerely yours,

Lauren Young

Lauren Young

cf3 Board, President

Find us on Facebook: [cf3.org](https://www.facebook.com/cf3.org)

Instagram: cf3modern

Shawn Patrick Tubb, AIA

323.620.3087 shawnpatrick.tubb@gmail.com 335 Milton Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

March 12, 2022

City of Cincinnati
City Council
801 Plum Street
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Dear Members of Cincinnati City Council,

I am writing to ask you to consider the legacy of your council and that of our city when voting to approve landmark designation for the Terrace Plaza Hotel. I strongly support creating landmark protections for this incomparable historic treasure.

As the first International Style hotel in the United States and a groundbreaking project in many more ways, the Terrace Plaza embodies the promise and vision of Cincinnati during the post-WWII era. This critical piece of our city's history needs to be preserved for future generations to exemplify a turning point in Cincinnati's story.

As a local resident, licensed architect, Cincinnati Preservation Association board member, co-author of the Terrace Plaza's National Register nomination, and the author of the book *Cincinnati's Terrace Plaza Hotel: An Icon of American Modernism*, I have a long attachment to the building and am certain that the right developer will be found to use the hotel's fascinating history to help bring vitality back to this invaluable asset to our city.

If you vote to list the Terrace Plaza Hotel as a local historic landmark, you will be pioneers in your own right as you would be the Council who designated the first modernist building to the local register and the very first local historic landmark by a woman architect!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shawn P. Tubb". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.

Shawn Patrick Tubb



Krutarth Jain, AIA, ACHA, EDAC, LEED AP
Champlin Architecture
President

Angela Mazzi, FAIA, FACHA, EDAC
GBBN
Vice President/President Elect

Jeffrey Raser, AIA, NCARB
CUDA Studio
Treasurer

Douglas E. Burkey, AIA, LEED AP
RWA Architects
Secretary

Ross Battoclette, AIA
Champlin Architecture
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Zoe Gizara, AIA
Gizara Architecture
Director

Kenneth Workman, AIA, LEED AP
Architecture DesignWorks Studio
Director

Stephanie Crockett, Assoc. AIA
Associate Director

Chris Patek, AIA
MSA Design
Past President

Michael Mauch, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP
RWA Architects
AIA Ohio Representative

Cori Cassidy, AIA
A359 Partners in Architecture
Alternate AIA Ohio Representative

March 9, 2022

Mayor Pureval, City Council, Historic Conservation Board, and City
Planning Commission
City of Cincinnati
801 Plum Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Dear Mayor Pureval, Members of City Council, Historic Conservation Board,
and City Planning Commission,

The Cincinnati Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA Cincinnati) serves as the voice of the architectural community and represents the most dedicated and trained professionals in the region. On behalf of AIA Cincinnati, I would like to recognize the importance of the Terrace Plaza as a groundbreaking International Style, mixed-use building and fully support all efforts to recognize it as a local landmark and to redevelop this structure in a way that preserves the original design.

In 2017, the building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places, acknowledging the significance of this innovative design and the contributions it made to the forward-thinking modern design movement. It was a pioneering effort to reinvent mixed-use buildings in the context of post-war America and pushed the boundaries of typical convention. The architecture firm that designed the Terrace Plaza, SOM, was honored with multiple awards for the project and received widespread recognition for the groundbreaking achievements the building represents. Lead architect Natalie De Blois is considered a pioneer for women in architecture.

It is important that every effort be made to preserve the integrity of this landmark building so that its legacy is preserved. For this reason, AIA Cincinnati fully endorses the local historic landmark designation of the Terrace Plaza so that it remains a testament to the architectural history in our city.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Krutarth Jain".

Krutarth Jain, AIA, ACHA, EDAC, LEED AP
President, AIA Cincinnati

Julie Carpenter
Executive Director

1114 Race Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202
T 513.421.4661
M 513.609.2757
info@aiacincinnati.org
www.aiacincinnati.org

Kellam, Caroline

From: Ashleigh Finke <baggettan@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 13, 2022 3:41 PM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Terrace Plaza Landmark Designation Support

External Email Communication

Dear Mrs. Kellam,

I am writing to express my support for the Landmark designation of the Terrace Plaza Hotel. The Terrace Plaza Hotel is Cincinnati's most significant modernist landmark of its scale and was named to the National Trust for Historic Preservation's "America's 11 Most Endangered List" in 2020 due to its national significance. I believe landmark designation will improve the building's chances of being revitalized and would not harm future development plans because the Historic Conservation Board has flexibility to review and approve needed alterations. This designation is very timely as the Convention Center expansion plans move forward and closer to the Terrace Plaza making the site more feasible for development but also more at risk. I hope the planning commission will vote to move forward with the landmark designation for this nationally acclaimed building.

Sincerely,

Ashleigh Finke

baggettan@gmail.com

Vice President, Board of Trustees

Cincinnati Preservation Association

937-545-6998

Kellam, Caroline

From: Debora Del Valle <tvdeb1955@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 13, 2022 3:40 PM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Terrace Plaza Landmark Designation

External Email Communication

Hello, I would like to lend my support for granting landmark designation to the Terrace Plaza Hotel in downtown Cincinnati. This building is a significant modernist landmark which put Cincinnati on the map for innovation. Additionally, the Terrace Plaza was designed by a young woman architect who is now recognized as a pioneer of the modern movement.

With the landmark designation the redevelopment can still be flexible and may also qualify for the use of historic tax credits.

Please vote to designate this Queen City gem as a local historic landmark.

Thank you.
Debora Del Valle
[\(513\) 304-3250](tel:5133043250)

Kellam, Caroline

From: mmckillip@fuse.net
Sent: Wednesday, April 13, 2022 4:33 PM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Terrace Plaza Hotel Local Historic Designation

External Email Communication

Caroline, I hope that you are doing well holding down the fort at City Planning these days.

I am e-mailing you to advise you of my strong support of the local historic designation for the Terrace Plaza Hotel.

As an architect, and one involved with both new and renovation projects in the downtown area in past years, I know that it is possible to renovate the hotel under the flexibility allowed by local historic design guidelines with out compromising the economic feasibility of such a challenging project. The building will no doubt require some modifications but these can be permitted under the guidelines.

I am a member of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the historic significance of this exceptional modernist building was duly recognized by the National Trust by its recent inclusion in the 11 most threatened buildings across the country. Cincinnati's downtown, and indeed the nation, would be tragically diminished if the building is not adequately protected by a local designation.

Please pass my brief letter of support on to City Planning staff and commission members with my thank you for considering my request.

Mark McKillip
Retired Architect and Economic Development professional

Kellam, Caroline

From: Drew Gores <dgores@outlook.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 13, 2022 6:09 PM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Terrace Plaza Landmark Designation

External Email Communication

Dear Ms. Kellam:

I am writing in support of the Local Landmark designation for the Terrace Plaza Hotel (15 W. 6th Street) that is going to be discussed and potentially acted on by the Planning Commission at its meeting on April 22, 2022. Here are a few reasons why I believe the Local Landmark designation should be approved.

- (1) The building is the most important modernist style building in Cincinnati.
- (2) It was the first International Style Hotel in America (1948).
- (3) It was put on the 2020 America's 11 Most Endangered List by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. This listing confirms the historic significance of the Terrace Plaza.
- (4) The main architect was Natalie de Blois, a female architect (when there weren't many), now recognized as a pioneer in the modernist architecture movement.
- (5) The approval of the Landmark Designation would not prevent development of the property – it is my understanding that the Historic Conservation Board would have the flexibility to review/approve appropriate alterations.
- (6) A developer would be able to access historic tax credits for appropriate renovation.

Thank you for taking my thoughts into consideration.

Drew Gores
East Walnut Hills resident

Kellam, Caroline

From: Jean Donaldson <jeanzdonaldson@icloud.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 9:44 AM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Support for the Terrace Hilton

External Email Communication

I am strongly in favor of keeping the Terrace Hilton as part of the Cincinnati landscape. If it is torn down, it will probably be replaced by an ugly building that is designed to fall down in 20 years. Keep the Terrace! Jean Donaldson

Kellam, Caroline

From: Megan Selnick <meganselnick@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 9:46 AM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Terrace Plaza Landmark

External Email Communication

Hi Caroline,

I hope this email finds you well.

I am sending this email in regarding to the proposal that the Terrace Plaza be given a landmark designation.

I feel it should be, as it is a piece of Cincinnati history.

Let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks,
Megan

MEGAN SELNICK HUBBELL
/513.515.3120/

Kellam, Caroline

From: Kenneth Pizzuco <kpizzuco@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 9:53 AM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Landmark designation for Terrace Plaza

External Email Communication

Hi Caroline

I would like to lend my support for landmark designation for the Terrace Plaza Hotel. This building is historically significant as it was the first hotel designed by the world renowned architecture firm of Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill. It represents a modernist design that is one of a kind and presents a great opportunity for Cincinnati to launch a creative reuse project that would bring prestige to the city. Having spent many years in Buffalo NY, I witnessed a city that was able to take their landmark buildings and rehabilitate them for new uses, breathing new life into the city. They also have a nationally significant architectural tourism sector that is thriving as a result.

I urge you to vote for landmark designation for this architectural treasure!

Thanks,

Ken Pizzuco

--

Thanks,

Ken Pizzuco

Kellam, Caroline

From: Fred Orth <forth3rd@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 9:55 AM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Terrace Plaza

External Email Communication

A nationally significant work of modern architecture, Terrace Plaza needs Landmark designation by the Planning Commission.

Kellam, Caroline

From: Margo Warminski <margo@cincinnati-preservation.org>
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 10:00 AM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Landmark the Terrace Plaza

External Email Communication

Dear Ms. Kellam:

Cincinnati's Terrace Plaza Hotel is a nationally significant work of modern architecture. It was built in 1948, designed by the leading Modernist firm of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill Architects, led by noted woman architect Natalie du Bois. Landmark designation of this great building, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places at both the local and national levels--the highest honor available for a historic property--does not stop redevelopment. Our historic buildings are assets and benefit from review by the Historic Conservation Board.

Thank you for your consideration of this great building.

--

Margo Warminski
Preservation Director
Cincinnati Preservation Association
430 Reading Road, Suite 300
Cincinnati, OH 45202
Phone 513-721-4506
Direct line 513-246-2047
www.cincinnati-preservation.org
margo@cincinnati-preservation.org

"[T]he things that make a place worth loving go far beyond the balance sheet. We should never forget that."--Charles Marohn

Kellam, Caroline

From: Pat Dworkin <patdworkin@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 10:28 AM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Terrace Plaza Hotel

External Email Communication

Not being from Cinn. I remember staying at the Terrace Plaza when visiting. Although not beautiful architecture now, it is a downtown symbol of an era. Please preserve it

Sent from my iPad

Kellam, Caroline

From: Steven Bloomfield <steve@bloomfieldschon.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 10:30 AM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Terrace Plaza

External Email Communication

Please add our name to the list of people hoping to keep this important landmark.

Our company has completed the repurposing and rehabilitation of several difficult historic sites. We have made a preliminary assessment of the Terrace Plaza building and believe that it can be viably put back to use under Federal, State and City historic guidelines. This would allow for significant Historic Tax Credit investments. This is a one of a kind building landmark that should be saved in such a way to contribute to the vitality of our CBD. Breathing new life into this building would be recognized as something special accomplished by Cincinnati.

If the building is protected we stand ready to make an offer to the bankruptcy court or other appropriate entity. We have almost twenty years of experience in the revitalization of projects like this.

Thank you,
Steven Bloomfield

Steven F. Bloomfield
Bloomfield/Schon
1527 Madison Road
Suite B
Cincinnati, Ohio 45206

O: 513.241.6363 x: 105
M: 513.543.6749

Kellam, Caroline

From: AMY WEST <aswest1@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 10:33 AM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Terrace Plaza

External Email Communication

I remember being inside this beautiful building years ago and hope to be so again. Everyone should have the chance to appreciate how distinctive it is and how it enhances our city. Please help protect it. Thank you.

Kellam, Caroline

From: Fred Martens <fredmartensart@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 10:35 AM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Can You Support Designation of the Terrace Plaza Hotel as a Landmark?

External Email Communication

Good day!
I am asking for your commission's support for two reasons.

A personal reason: (my dad was an architect, and this style was of his time, and is architecturally significant)..

And a business reason: I travel frequently to Palm Springs, CA. *Mid Century Modern* architecture has finally been "discovered" as unique and rare, and a reason to travel.

I hope your commission can recognize our RARE TREASURE and add one more great reason for people to visit, as well as stay in, Cincinnati.

Thanks!!!!!!



Fred Martens | Martensart.com
2334 Upland Place • Cincinnati, OH 45206 • @fredmartensart • m: 513.559.9987
fine artist • reed doubler • **historic home restorer**

Kellam, Caroline

From: jcrofles@zoomtown.com
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 10:40 AM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Terrace Plaza Hotel

External Email Communication

I support the Landmark Designation of the Terrade Plaza Hotel. Thank ou!

Jeanne C. Rolfes, CPA Volunteer

Kellam, Caroline

From: Amy Hauck-Kalti <amy.hauck-kalti@kzf.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 11:22 AM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Cincinnati Terrace Plaza

External Email Communication

Hello Caroline,

I'd like to weigh in and note my support for saving the Terrace Plaza, a really important architectural landmark and needs to be protected. Landmark Designation would be fabulous. Nationally significant modern architecture, and a beautiful historic building contributing to Cincinnati's diverse heritage. Please help keep this one intact! (And yes, I remember going to the Gourmet Restaurant as a kid, it was wonderful!)

A Long-time architectural preservation person (and family),
Amy Hauck-Kalti

Amy Hauck-Kalti, RA, LEED AP
Senior Architect



amy.hauck-kalti@kzf.com
main 513.621.6211 • direct 513.864.8628
kzf.com

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Kellam, Caroline

From: Lynn Jacobs <lynnpjacobs3@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 11:25 AM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Landmark Designation for Terrace Plaza

External Email Communication

I support the landmark designation of the Terrace Plaza Hotel. I recognize this building's unique position in our city as an important example of Modernism. With a landmark designation, new owners will receive guidance in restoring the building in a manner that is sensitive to that Modernism design.

Sincerely,
Lynn Jacobs
400 Pike St
Cincinnati 45202

Sent from my iPad

Kellam, Caroline

From: Margo Warminski <margo@cincinnati-preservation.org>
Sent: Wednesday, April 13, 2022 9:17 AM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Save the Terrace Plaza

External Email Communication

April 12, 2022

City Planning Commission c/o Caroline Kellam, Senior Planner
Department of Planning and Engagement
805 Central Avenue
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Dear Ms. Kellam:

One of Cincinnati's greatest historic treasures is a building right under our feet: the Terrace Plaza hotel. The Cincinnati Preservation Association strongly supports local landmark designation for this exceptional building.

The Terrace is highly significant for many reasons. This remarkable building is noteworthy for its groundbreaking Modernist design, the first of its kind in the City. The Terrace was the first hotel to open following World War II, the first significant Modernist building in Cincinnati, the first International-style hotel to be built in the United States, and the first design in America to integrate modern art into the design of a building. The chief designer on the project was pioneering Woman architect Natalie DeBois, lead designer of an interdisciplinary design team for the well-known Modernist firm of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill.

Historic landmark designation would not harm development plans because the Historic Conservation Board has the ability to review and approve needed alterations, and proposed design guidelines are flexible. Moreover, the building has redevelopment potential as new Convention Center plans move forward.

Moreover, the Terrace is Cincinnati's most significant Modernist landmark, embodying our City's spirit of innovation in art, architecture, urban planning and technology. It was the first International Style hotel built in America, in 1948. It also was the first major building to be completed in the postwar era. The Terrace's design team was led by Natalie de Blois, pioneering young woman architect in the office of Modernist architects Skidmore, Owings and Merrill.

The Terrace is listed in the National Register of Historic Places at the state and national levels of significance. While such a distinction is rare among historic properties, it does not protect them from inappropriate alterations or even demolition, and was named by the National Trust for Historic Preservation name to the 11 Most Endangered historic properties in America. For this reason, it is urgent to give the Terrace the protection it needs to preserve its historic character.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Margo Warminski
Preservation Director

Cincinnati Preservation Association
430 Reading Road, Suite 300
Cincinnati, OH 45202
Phone 513-721-4506
Direct line 513-246-2047
www.cincinnati-preservation.org
margo@cincinnati-preservation.org

cc: Paul Muller

Kellam, Caroline

From: arch terra <arch_terra@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 11:59 AM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Support Terrace Hotel designation

External Email Communication

Dear Caroline,
Cincinnati, and downtown in particular lost already a good number of world class architecture structures. The TP Hotel is one and we have an opportunity to preserve it.

Thank you

Diego Jordan

Cincinnati resident.

Get [Outlook for Android](#)

Kellam, Caroline

From: Bryan Lightfield <Bryan.Lightfield@kzf.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 12:27 PM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Terrace Plaza Landmark Designation

External Email Communication

Hello Caroline,

I support the landmark designation of the Terrace Plaza Hotel.

This is an iconic, modernist building that brings cultural value for this city. This building should be protected.

Thank you,
Bryan Lightfield

Bryan Lightfield
Interior Designer



Bryan.Lightfield@kzf.com
main 513.621.6211 • direct 513.864.8637
kzf.com

Follow us!



Kellam, Caroline

From: Nick Niehoff <n.niehoff@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 12:33 PM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Landmark Designation of the Terrace Plaza Hotel building in downtown Cincinnati, OH

External Email Communication

I support designating the Terrace Plaza Hotel building located in downtown Cincinnati, Ohio to Landmark status.

Regards,

Richard Niehoff
Cincinnati, OH 45208

Kellam, Caroline

From: arthur sturbaum <asturbs@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 2:13 PM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Cc: director@cincinnatiapreservation.org
Subject: [External Email] Terrace Plaza Landmark Designation

External Email Communication

Dear Ms. Kellam-

As the former Board president of Cincinnati Preservation Association, I am writing to add my support to the designation of the Terrace Hotel (Terrace Plaza) as a local landmark. CPA has long documented the history of the Terrace, as the first "modern" hotel emerging post- world war II, as a nationally acclaimed structure at the time of its completion, as being completely designed by one woman (Natalie Dublois), who, although she was not allowed to visit the site during construction, oversaw every detail of its construction.

The Landmark designation will allow sympathetic re-development of the site, preserving the historic nature of its architecture, and will allow historic tax credits to be used in the redevelopment. It does not preclude modifications or changes to the structure but requires that the historic fabric be respected.

Arthur Sturbaum

Kellam, Caroline

From: Richard & Sarajane King <kingrmax@earthlink.net>
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 2:30 PM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Terrace Plaza

External Email Communication

We are writing in support of Landmark recognition for the Terrace Plaza. It is an exceptional example of mid century modern architecture. Recognition of this historic building will enhance the renowned downtown architecture examples in Cincinnati now and for the future.

Please vote in support of Landmark status for the Terrace Plaza.

Thank you,

Richard and Sarajane King
Amberley Village

Kellam, Caroline

From: Joe Pessell <Joe.Pessell@kzf.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 3:27 PM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Terrace Plaza

External Email Communication

I support Landmark Designation for the Terrace Plaza.

Joe Pessell, RA
Senior Architect



Joe.Pessell@kzf.com
main 513.621.6211 • direct 513.864.8656
kzf.com

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Kellam, Caroline

From: Jim Habig <jim_hab@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 3:31 PM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Terrace Plaza Hotel Building

External Email Communication

Please vote to designate the Terrace Plaza Hotel Building Landmark Status. This historic structure adds another great piece of architecture to the fabric of the city and should live on for future generations. The proximity to the Convention Center along with Landmark status can make this a jewel to be enjoyed by visitors and natives as it's beauty is preserved, while making the downtown experience even better. I've lived most of my life in this great city, I studied design at U.C. and would be heartbroken to see yet another significant building disappear.

Thank you,
Jim Habig

Kellam, Caroline

From: Thea Tjepkema <tjepruss@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 4:11 PM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] I SUPPORT landmark designation of the Terrace Plaza

External Email Communication

Dear Cincinnati City Planning Commission,

I support the Terrace Plaza Hotel becoming a designated landmark in Cincinnati. This designation brings international, national, and regional notoriety to our city and its reverence for the vitality of historic structures and creates a destination for business, tourism, and a beautiful location in which to live. Historic designation stimulates growth, and this building showcases Cincinnati's progressive role in bringing Modernism to the U.S. Few cities embrace their historic architectural resources, but those that do, flourish. The adaptive reuse of this historic landmark will revitalize our downtown. This building is the only 1940s representation of commercial modernist architecture downtown and one of only two downtown buildings designed by famous women architects. Natalie De Blois was before her time leading design at Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill and Zaha Hadid's 2003 Contemporary Arts Center, also a first in the country. The Terrace Plaza was the first post-World War II hotel constructed in the U.S. and the first in the International Style — Cincinnati should celebrate and protect its legacy. Natalie De Blois's later buildings from the 50s and 60s stand in New York City and Chicago, but we, Cincinnati, have one of her firsts! Our historic buildings are assets and benefit from review by the Historic Conservation Board to preserve their integrity and role in our forward-thinking representation of our outstanding history.

Thank you,
Thea Tjepkema
Historic Preservationist

Kellam, Caroline

From: Couper Gardiner <cgardiner@cinci.rr.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 4:59 PM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Terrace Plaza Landmark Designation

External Email Communication

Dear Planning Commissioners,

This is to support you in designating the Terrace Plaza Hotel, in important recognition of this unique asset, as a Cincinnati landmark.

Sincerely,

Couper Gardiner AIA, LEED AP BD+C
3547 Mooney Ave
Cincinnati, OH 45208

Kellam, Caroline

From: Margaret Richards <mmakr2013@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 6:04 PM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Terrace Plaza

External Email Communication

This historic building is such a great part of our heritage! Please provide it all the protection possible. Thank you!
Margaret Richards

Kellam, Caroline

From: Alleen <alleen.art@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 6:07 PM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Please support landmark designation for the Terrace Plaza Hotel

External Email Communication

This beautiful, iconic building needs to be preserved for future generations. Every time we visit Chicago I am reminded of how essential these precious architectural jewels are to the very soul and vibrancy of every city. Please support this fine building. Don't turn our historic, stylish city into a plethora of "the Banks" kind of generic architecture.

"Cincinnati leads the nation in finding creative ways to rescue historic resources. We can and should do that with the Terrace Plaza Hotel. It is considered a nationally significant icon of Modernism and when opened in 1948 was acclaimed throughout the nation press as introducing America to the post-war future that would bring unprecedented prosperity to the weary population".

Sincerely,
Alleen Manning, born and raised in Cincinnati.

Kellam, Caroline

From: Sydney Rich <srich@esri.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 7:24 PM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] You are Invited to the Planning for Equity and Inclusion Webinar!

External Email Communication

Hi Caroline,

How can we make sure land use and zoning interventions are contributing to a more equitable future?

I would like to personally invite you to our webinar on 4/20/2022 from 9am-10am (PT), to explore web-based solutions that can help planners better address the social, cultural, and economic needs of their communities through a GIS framework.

Visit <https://lnkd.in/dh8p-pW9> to register for the free webinar today.

Hope to see you there!

Sydney

Sydney Rich | Account Executive | Smart Cities
Esri | 380 New York St. Redlands, CA 92373
T: 909 793 2853 x5042
srich@esri.com | www.esri.com

Kellam, Caroline

From: Louise Watts <louisewatts77@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 9:56 PM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Terrace Hilton

External Email Communication

Please save this nationally renowned architectural gem. It was first of its kind in modern architecture, different from Cincinnati's Art Deco and Victorian styles. Historic designation allows for repurposing.

This unique building adds to Cincinnati's interesting complexion.

Thank you.

Louise Watts
1546 Pullan Ave, Cincinnati, OH 45223

Kellam, Caroline

From: jane garvey <garveyjane@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 15, 2022 6:39 AM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Terrace Hilton

External Email Communication

Cincinnati benefits by being a distinctive, architecturally interesting city. Our downtown needs visitors! I think the terrace Hilton enhances our urban environment and uses can be found for this unique treasure. Please preserve it.

Regards,
Jane garvey
--
Jane Garvey

513-910-5503 (cell)

Kellam, Caroline

From: Kelley, Michael <Michael.Kelley@kzf.com>
Sent: Friday, April 15, 2022 7:50 AM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Cc: Kelley, Michael
Subject: [External Email] Landmark Designation of the Terrace Plaza

External Email Communication

Good morning Caroline,

The Terrace Plaza is and should be considered a piece of Cincinnati's historic architectural fabric. So many great Cincinnati Families have left us monumental structures that need to be preserved and cherished.

I would ask you and others to consider Landmark designation for the Terrace Plaza.....20 to 30 years from now, we will all be happy that another significant building in our town was save and hopefully preserved.

Michael Kelley, IIDA, CID, PMP, LEED AP BD+C
Vice President, Director of Interior Design



Michael.Kelley@kzf.com
main 513.621.6211
kzf.com

Follow us!



Kellam, Caroline

From: Robert Powell <rapassoc@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, April 15, 2022 9:21 AM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Cc: r.powell@cr-architects.com
Subject: [External Email] Terrace Hotel Landmark Designation

External Email Communication

Good morning Caroline,
Hope all is well with you and your family. I wish to voice my support of Landmark Designation for the Terrace Hotel. With sensitive and creative redevelopment, this mid century jewel will be one more architectural asset for the City, reflecting continuity in the City's long history of progressive growth and national cultural significance.

Respectfully,
Robert Powell, AIA

Sent from my iPhone

Kellam, Caroline

From: John Russell <maestrojmr@me.com>
Sent: Friday, April 15, 2022 10:04 AM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Terrace Plaza

External Email Communication

Cincinnati is unique amongst its Midwestern peers in that we have managed to maintain and sustain our cultural heritage in the arts and architecture, that has been forever lost in so many of our sister "flyover" cities. Our orchestra, pops, opera, May Festival, ballet, museums are world-class, and some of the most striking and original architectural treasures like Union Terminal, Music Hall and the Roebling Suspension Bridge define American cultural history.

The Terrace Plaza is one of those incredibly important buildings, that was designed by an extraordinary woman and executed by one of the world's most notable mid-century architecture firms. Creative reuse of this building while maintaining its architectural integrity is paramount in sustaining Cincinnati's hard earned status as the Midwest's architectural Mecca.

It also sustains our burgeoning creative community, central to the world's new economy, and attracts the kinds of businesses and entrepreneurs that continues Cincinnati's legacy of greatness.

Thank you.

JMR

Sent from my iPhone

Kellam, Caroline

From: Teri Campbell <teri@teristudios.com>
Sent: Friday, April 15, 2022 10:49 AM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Support of Landmark Designation for the Terrace Plaza

External Email Communication

I just wanted to voice my support for a Landmark Designation for the Terrace Plaza. I believe that this important piece of modern architecture should be preserved, and redeveloped in a way that celebrates its rich history.

Thanks!
TERI

Teri Campbell
Creative Lead at Teri Studios



We create images and films that help Brands share their story.
Follow us on Instagram @teristudios

TERI STUDIOS
3344 Central Parkway
Cincinnati OH 45225
513) 784.9696 Studio
513) 382.0669 Mobile
teristudios.com

Kellam, Caroline

From: William Baumann <wbaumann2@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 15, 2022 10:54 AM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Terrace Plaza Hotel

External Email Communication

To: City Planning Commission (Attention Caroline Kellam):

I am writing in support of the Historic Designation of the Terrace Plaza Hotel. Here below are reasons that this designation is appropriate for the Terrace Plaza building:

- It is Cincinnati's most significant modernist landmark, embodying our spirit of innovation in architecture, art, technology, and urban planning.
- The National Trust for Historic Preservation named it to their "America's 11 Most Endangered List" in 2020 in recognition of its significant to the nation's history.
- First International Style Hotel in American in 1948
- Designed team led by Natalie de Blois, a young architect in the office of SOM. De Blois is now recognized as an important pioneer of the modern architecture movement.
- First major building to be completed in the nation in the Post-War era.
- Integrated mixed uses in a single mega-structure: department stores, hotels, and rooftop restaurant. Was the first design in American to integrate modern art into the design of a building.
- Embodies and commemorates Cincinnati's spirit of innovation.

Additionally, here are redevelopment considerations supporting the Designation:

- Landmark designation by Cincinnati would not harm development plans because the Historic Conservation Board has flexibility to review and approve needed alterations.
- Proposed design guidelines are flexible and can accommodate changes needed for redevelopment.
- The proposed guidelines are compatible with the Secretary of Interior Standards and make it easier to use historic tax credits, both the 20% federal and 25% Ohio credits.
- Developers can utilize historic tax credits for potentially \$22 million of project costs.
- Ohio historic tax credits cap of \$5 million is being raised for an increase to \$10 million.
- The building has new redevelopment potential as the Convention Center expansion plans move forward (and a block closer to the Terrace Plaza).

Respectfully submitted,

William Baumann

--

William Baumann

wbaumann2@gmail.com

513-641-8980

2842 Grandin Hollow Lane

Cincinnati, Ohio 45208

Kellam, Caroline

From: Me <jruzsa@fuse.net>
Sent: Friday, April 15, 2022 11:19 AM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Support for the historic designation of Terrace plaza...

External Email Communication

Our town loses historic landmarks constantly, as a Cincinnati native and craftsman in historic conservation of architecture and objects I applaud saving another building. Thanks

Sent from my iPhone

Kellam, Caroline

From: Baird, Erin <Erin.Baird@kzf.com>
Sent: Friday, April 15, 2022 11:31 AM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Terrace Plaza

External Email Communication

I support the LANDMARK DESIGNATION of the Terrace Plaza.

Erin Baird, RA, LEED AP BD+C
Project Manager



Erin.Baird@kzf.com
main 513.621.6211 • direct 513.864.8662
kzf.com

Follow us!



Kellam, Caroline

From: Clark Sole <vcsole_71@fioptics.com>
Sent: Friday, April 15, 2022 12:28 PM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Terrace Plaza Landmark Designation

External Email Communication

To: City Planning Commission via Caroline Kellam

I am writing in support of the landmark designation for the Terrace Plaza.

I stayed at the Terrace Plaza numerous times, starting in 1971 when I first got transferred to Cincinnati. I occasionally stayed for a week or more at a time and recognized it as a unique, comfortable, wonderful hotel and mixed-use property. However, I did not understand its historic significance and importance to Cincinnati and the US until much later. As I have learned more, I feel very strongly that it needs to be protected and preserved.

Designed by Natalie de Blois at Skidmore, Owings and Merrill in New York, it was the first International Style hotel in America and the first major building completed in the US after WWII. It is Cincinnati's most significant modernist building and was a marvel of innovation in architecture, art, technology and importance for the city that I had the pleasure of experiencing firsthand. Its 2020 inclusion on "America's 11 Most Endangered List" by the National Trust for Historic Preservation is a major recognition of its significance not just to Cincinnati, but also to the US.

The landmark designation will not harm redevelopment plans because the proposed guidelines provide the Historic Conservation Board sizable flexibility to review and approve necessary alterations. Importantly, the proposed guidelines are compatible with the Secretary of Interior's standards, making it easier for developers to utilize historic tax credits from both the federal and state levels. This will help them use these tax credits to cover much of the project costs. Finally, the proximity of the Terrace Plaza to the new convention center expansion just gives it that much more development potential and importance to the city.

Thank you for your consideration, and I urge you to approve the landmark designation for the Terrace Plaza.

Sincerely,

Clark Sole
President of the Board of Trustees
Cincinnati Preservation Association

Kellam, Caroline

From: Rosalie van Nuis <rvannuis@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 15, 2022 3:33 PM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Terrace Hilton Landmark Designation

External Email Communication

As a member of The Historic Preservation Association of Cincinnati, I support the long overdue designation of the Terrace Hilton as an historic landmark worthy of bringing it back to life with public funds.

I first moved to Cincinnati when the Hotel was in its heyday. I loved going to dinner on the rooftop restaurant which was rated by all the top travel magazines as one of the three top-rated restaurants in Cincinnati (along with the original Pigall's and the Maisonette). Besides the food and service, what made its restaurant unique was its cosmopolitan elegance, roof top garden, and original artwork.

Subsequently, I have attended programs on Modernism and learned that the architect mainly responsible for the hotel was a female, the first in the U.S. to design such a building with all of its accretions.

The building has been an eyesore because it is vacant. Wouldn't it be wonderful to restore it to its former glory, especially now that Cincinnati has become a world-class city with an international soccer league? It certainly would attract worldwide attention and customers.

Please vote in favor of designation.

Rosalie P. van Nuis, Esq.
1 Burton Woods Lane
Cincinnati, OH 45229

Kellam, Caroline

From: Brian Yangyuen <brian.yangyuen@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 15, 2022 3:43 PM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Making the Terrace Plaza a Local Landmark

External Email Communication

To members of the City Planning Commission,

My name is Brian Yangyuen and I am a resident of Mt. Auburn and I work in real estate development for a downtown firm. I am writing to you in support of approving local landmark designation for the Terrace Plaza Hotel.

It is my belief that unique and historic assets such as the Terrace Plaza are the things that imbue a city such as ours with character and serve as a magnet for people to live, work, and visit the downtown core. With the right development team and creative vision, I feel strongly that this building can become a centerpiece of the city's ongoing revitalization while telling the story of Cincinnati's leadership from the mid-20th century to the present.

Thank you,

Brian Yangyuen

Shawn Patrick Tubb, AIA

323.620.3087 shawnpatrick.tubb@gmail.com 335 Milton Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

April 15, 2022

City of Cincinnati
City Planning Commission
801 Plum Street
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Dear Members of Cincinnati City Planning Commission,

I am writing to ask you to consider the legacy of your council and that of our city when voting to approve landmark designation for the Terrace Plaza Hotel. I strongly support creating landmark protections for this incomparable historic treasure.

The Terrace Plaza Hotel is as important to Cincinnati's cultural heritage as any of the other buildings that the City has landmarked over the years -- perhaps more so than most since it is of national importance. Its architectural significance has been recognized for its special place in our shared history by the U.S. government, the state of Ohio, the National Trust, Docomomo US, and many other organizations. If listed, it would become the City's first modernist landmark - a fitting tribute as the building turns 75 next year.

Designed in the International Style, the Terrace Plaza was a rational solution to the program for two department stores and a hotel - filling the allowable zoning envelope with the retail in a seven-story base and stepping back the hotel slab asymmetrically to create the namesake terraces. Fortune Magazine called it a "design prototype of the mid-century hotel" and a "triumphant marriage of art and economics."

The base was clad in a 4x12 terra cotta colored brick in a stacked bond to accentuate the fact it was non-structural. Floors three through seven were without windows at the request of the department stores. "The decision to use locally-produced brick as the cladding was made jointly by the client, the architect, and the contractor, who all agreed it was the best choice for purpose, economy, and color. According to Architectural Forum, the large size of the bricks was selected to 'give better scale and an attractively different appearance.' The brick curtain wall serves as a bridge between the traditional masonry" buildings of Cincinnati and the glass curtain walls to come a few years later at the United Nations Secretariat building.

Though some developers have felt concerned about the viability of the lower all-brick portions of the Terrace Plaza, there are many creative and forward-thinking uses that prefer window-free spaces. Some examples are included below.

To place the Terrace Plaza in its context as the first high-rise commission for the architecture firm SOM, it's helpful to remember the international landmarks which are the Terrace Plaza's descendants. These include Lever House and One World Trade Center in New York, John Hancock Center and Willis Tower in Chicago, Jin Mao Tower in Shanghai, and Burj Khalifa in Dubai.

The Terrace Plaza was also the first project on which Natalie de Blois served as senior designer. Though largely unrecognized during her long and prolific career, she is now seen as one of the most important architects in the development of the mid-century skyscraper.

As the first International Style hotel in the United States and a groundbreaking project in many more ways, the Terrace Plaza embodies the promise and vision of Cincinnati during the post-WWII era. This critical piece of our city's history needs to be preserved for future generations to exemplify a turning point in Cincinnati's story.

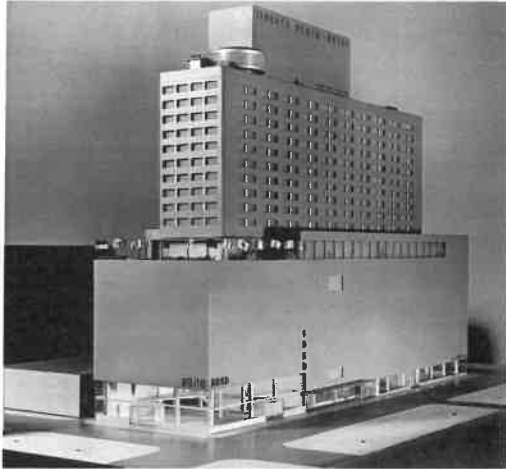
As a local resident, licensed architect, Cincinnati Preservation Association board member, co-author of the Terrace Plaza's National Register nomination, and the author of the book *Cincinnati's Terrace Plaza Hotel: An Icon of American Modernism*, I have a long attachment to the building and am certain that the right developer will be found to use the hotel's fascinating history to help bring vitality back to this invaluable asset to our city.

If you vote to list the Terrace Plaza Hotel as a local historic landmark, you will be pioneers in your own right as you would be the Council who designated the first modernist building to the local register and the very first local historic landmark by a woman architect!

Sincerely,



Shawn Patrick Tubb



Original architectural model by SOM, circa 1946

The Terrace Plaza Hotel was designed to be largely window-free on the lower levels because of the department stores' needs. At some point the second story of glazing at Vine and Sixth Streets was filled in, but a redevelopment would give the opportunity to open up the corner again.



Entrance canopy along Sixth Street, 1948

The street entry for the Terrace Plaza Hotel was an elegant canopy over the sidewalk, leading guests to the elevator lobby, cafeteria, shoe store, drug store, barber shop, and jewelry store. A carport was created later by removing most of this area, but could be modified or restored in a redevelopment.



Hotel elevator lobby entrance on Sixth Street, 1948

The Terrace Plaza Hotel had a beautiful pedestrian entrance along Sixth Street and guests took the elevators to the 8th floor hotel lobby and reception desk.



Two Bit Circus

Micro amusement parks like Two Bit Circus combine escape rooms, carnival games, virtual reality experiences, and arcade games to create immersive entertainment for all ages.



Immersive Van Gogh

Immersive art installations have popped up throughout the country and draw large numbers of visitors .



Meow Wolf

Recently expanded to Denver, Meow Wolf creates "immersive and interactive experiences that transport audiences of all ages into fantastic realms of story and exploration."



Chicago Architecture Center

Immersive museums that highlight the history and future plans of a city are great ways to entertain and educate both locals and tourists.

Sleep No More



For over 11 years, the New York production of Sleep No More has been enchanting guests who step into another world within an old warehouse transformed into the richly-detailed set of interactive theatre where patrons roam freely among the five floors over the course of three hours.

Infinity Mirror Room



Temporary art installations such as Yayoi Kusama's Infinity Rooms would work great as would more permanent galleries like an annex for the Cincinnati Art Museum's 20th century or contemporary collections or the possibility for the CAC to begin a permanent collection with a nearby space.

The Void VR



Technology-driven experiences like the site-specific, immersive virtual reality of The Void or the rise of popularity of e-sports and gaming in community hubs such as OS NYC are a sign of the future of entertainment.

Living Room Theaters



Living Room Theaters is a boutique chain known for its intimate screening rooms and amenities.

Kellam, Caroline

From: Kathy Ciafardini <kciafardini@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 16, 2022 7:32 PM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Terrace plaza hotel

External Email Communication

I sure hope Cincinnati is going to save the Terrace Plaza Hotel. We need to preserve our history and uniqueness.

Thank you
Kathy ciafardini

Sent from my iPhone

Kellam, Caroline

From: Scotty P <scottyp25@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 15, 2022 1:22 PM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] I Support making Terrace Hotel an historical landmark

External Email Communication

Hello Ms. Kellam,

I support making the Terrace Hotel a national historical landmark. It's architectural significance through the years and currently cannot be ignored and must be preserved.

Just because a building is old doesn't warrant this designation.

This building does warrant the designation in so many ways, including the primary architect / designer was a woman (Natalie DeBlois).

Thank you for your consideration!

Scott Proctor
Northside

Kellam, Caroline

From: m.architect11@gmail.com
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 3:58 PM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Terrace Plaza - Landmark Designation

External Email Communication

Dear Ms. Kellum,

I am writing in absolute support of a Landmark designation for the Terrace Plaza. The Terrace Plaza, with its many architectural firsts, represents the innovative culture of Cincinnati. Not only important architecturally, it is a testament to the visionary developer, businessman, and great Cincinnati, John J. Emery. If more developers exhibited his vision of integrating architecture, urban design, interior design, and art into building projects, this city would be an even more beautiful place to live. The Terrace Plaza needs to be restored and celebrated for its history as an icon of mid-century American Modernism.

I urge the Planning Commission to vote yes to give local Landmark status to this extremely important building.

Thank you,
Murray Monroe, AIA
3551 Paxton Ave,
Cincinnati, Ohio 45208

Kellam, Caroline

From: Frank Quinn <fquinn@heritageohio.org>
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 3:25 PM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Cc: Joyce Barrett
Subject: [External Email] Heritage Ohio support for the landmark designation of Terrace Plaza

External Email Communication

Good afternoon Caroline,

Heritage Ohio recently learned that the planning commission is considering landmark designation of the Terrace Plaza. Heritage Ohio enthusiastically supports the efforts of the City of Cincinnati to provide protection to this unique, National Register-listed, downtown landmark. We believe that Terrace Plaza has a rightful place in downtown Cincinnati's future as one of its many thriving, vibrant historic resources. Please ensure Terrace Plaza's continued preservation and future use with landmark designation.

With best regards,

Frank

--

Frank Quinn

fquinn@heritageohio.org <mailto:fquinn@heritageohio.org>



HERITAGE OHIO

Vital Places | Vibrant Communities

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Kellam, Caroline

From: s. bradley gillaugh <bradgillaugh@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 12:17 PM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Terrace Plaza Hotel

External Email Communication

Please support Landmark status for the Terrace Plaza Hotel. This is a significant part of Cincinnati and national architecture that must be saved. It's iconic presence downtown can be converted to a variety of purposes to be enjoyed by future generations.

Cordially,

S. Bradley Gillaugh

Kellam, Caroline

From: jim grawe <jim.grawe@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 12:11 PM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Terrace Plaza

External Email Communication

Please know that I support Landmark Designation for the Terrace Plaza for all the reasons previously discussed.

Jim Grawe
513-482-1157

Kellam, Caroline

From: Susan Haas <susan@khhrealtors.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 10:43 AM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Terrace Hilton

External Email Communication

Caroline,

I want to encourage the Planning Commission to vote to give Landmark Designate the Terrace Hilton. It is a significant building in downtown Cincinnati and should be protected.

Susan Haas

Susan Haas

Kopf Hunter Haas Realtors

3414 Erie Avenue

Cincinnati, OH 45208

Ofc: (513) 871-4040

Cell: (513) 604-4000

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<https://www.logosurfer.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/equal-housing-opportunity-logo_0.png>

Kellam, Caroline

From: Elizabeth Jones <eliz.penny.jones@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 9:28 AM
To: Kellam, Caroline
Subject: [External Email] Terrace Plaza

External Email Communication

Please make the Terrace Plaza a Landmark. It is an important modern building and should be saved. It is part of our heritage.

Thank you.

Elizabeth F. Jones

April 7, 2022

Cincinnati City Planning Commission
11 Centennial Plaza
805 Central Avenue, 7th Floor
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Honorable Members of the City Planning Commission:

The Historic Conservation Board (“Board”) transmits herewith the following items for your consideration concerning the proposed Terrace Plaza Hotel Historic Landmark Designation Application:

1. Local Historic Landmark Designation Report.
2. Proposed Historic Landmark Conservation Guidelines.
3. Historic Conservation Office Staff Report dated March 18, 2022.

Summary:

The Cincinnati Preservation Association has applied to designate the Terrace Plaza Hotel located at 15 W. 6th Street in the Central Business District (the “Building”) as a Local Historic Landmark pursuant to Cincinnati Municipal Code (“CMC”) Section 1435-07-2-A.

Upon her review of the designation application pursuant to CMC Sections 1435-07-1(a)(3), the Zoning Administrator, acting as the Urban Conservator, prepared a report recommending approval of the landmark designation and the associated conservation guidelines. The Board then, at its regular meeting on March 28, 2022, held a public hearing on the proposed designation at which it heard from the Zoning Administrator, proponents, and an opponent of the designation whether the Building qualifies for landmark designation. Upon considering the designation application (including the designation report and conservation guidelines), the Zoning Administrator’s report, and comments received at its public hearing, a majority of the Board’s members present throughout the hearing and constituting a quorum voted to recommend designation of the Building as a Local Historic Landmark finding that the Building embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, and method of construction or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction and thus satisfies CMC Sections 1435-07-1(a)(3) and further resolved to recommend approval of the associated conservation guidelines.

Aye

Mr. Weiss

Mr. Voss

Mr. Zielasko

Mrs. McKenzie

Mrs. Smith-Dobbins

Nay

Mr. Sundermann

Absent

The Historic Conservation Board

/s/Tim Voss
Tim Voss
Historic Conservation Board Chair

/s/Abigail Horn
Abigail Horn, Staff Attorney
Historic Conservation Board

ITEM 2

March 28, 2022

**APPLICATION FOR
LANDMARK DESIGNATION
HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD PUBLIC HEARING
STAFF REPORT**

APPLICATION #: NA
APPLICANT: Cincinnati Preservation Association
OWNER: CINCINNATI TERRACE ASSOCIATES LLC
ADDRESS: 15 W 6th Street, Cincinnati Ohio
PARCELS: 0077-0002-0252, 0077-0002-0250, 00770002-0251
ZONING: DD
OVERLAYS: N/A
COMMUNITY: Downtown
REPORT DATE: February 13, 2019, updated March 18, 2022
STAFF REVIEW: Emily S. Ahouse, Zoning Administrator

Nature of Request:

The applicant is requesting a Local Historic Landmark Designation for the property generally located 15 W 6th Street known as the Terrace Plaza Hotel. The landmark designation is sought for the entire property within the boundaries of the tax parcels 0077-0002-0252, 0077-0002-0250, 00770002-0251 as the property has been divided into air lots by previous owners. The lots are generally the first floor, floors 2-7 and floors 8 and up.

The property was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) on August 21, 2017 under Criterion C: (A Building) That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

The property was also recommended for approval for Landmark Designation by the Historic Conservation Board on February 25, 2019, with a vote of five to one. The previous Landmark Designation application was brought forward by Councilman David Mann. As Councilman Mann's term ended on December 31, 2021, the application was sunset. The new application was put forth by the Cincinnati Preservation Association. The Designation Report and Historic Conservation Guidelines are the same submissions that were reviewed and recommended for approval by the Historic Conservation Board on February 25, 2019. At the request of the applicant, the application was held and did not proceed through the next steps in the City review process.

1435-07-2-A: Application for the consideration of the designation of a Historic District, Historic Landmark or a Historic Site may be made by the filing of a designation application, in such form as the Historic Conservation Board may prescribe, by the owner of the subject property or by the owner of a property within the area proposed to be designated, by Council or a member of Council, by the City Manager, by the

Urban Conservator, by the City Planning Commission, or by a local community organization, including, but not limited to, preservation associations and community councils. No Historic Structure or Historic Site may be demolished or excavated during the pendency of a designation application, which commences upon the filing of a complete designation application.

Summary and Background:

The Terrace Plaza Hotel is an International-Style mixed-use skyscraper in the heart of downtown Cincinnati. Designed in 1945-1946 and completed in 1948 by the firm of Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill (SOM), the building was developed by John J. Emery, Jr. The building's bold massing reflects a complex mixed-use program comprising a 7-story commercial base, originally occupied by two department stores, Bond and J. C. Penney, and office space, that spans the block-long site, topped by a set-back 12-story hotel block and terrace, for which the hotel is named. On top is a tall penthouse occupied by what was once the Gourmet Restaurant and mechanical space. The structure is steel with brick curtain walls. The street level is defined by a band of storefronts, and the façade above is clad in thin terra-cotta-colored brick veneer in a stacked bond pattern. Above the storefronts, the base is windowless, while the hotel block is characterized by a continuous window wall at the eighth floor and a regular grid of wide horizontal windows above. Facing north on Sixth Street and spanning between Vine and Race streets, the building stands amid mostly low- and mid-rise buildings making it very visible in its urban setting. Despite minor alterations, mostly to the canopy over 6th Street, the integrity of Terrace Plaza remains high, with its signature cubic massing, masonry skin, and interior spatial organization. Significant portions of the public interior areas are also still intact.

The building is historically significant for its association under Criterion 3, as it embodies the distinctive and defining elements of modernist architecture. The Designation Report in Attachment C details the historic and architectural significance of the building.

Attached to this Staff report are:

- Attachment A. Location Map
- Attachment B: Historic Conservation Guidelines
- Attachment C: Historic Designation Report

Applicable Zoning Code Sections:

Zoning District: Section 1411- Downtown Development
Landmark Designation: Section 1435-07

Review Process

The procedure for consideration of an application for designation is detailed in 1435-07-2-B of the Zoning Code. It includes reviews by the Historic Conservation Board, City Planning Commission, and City Council. The complete process and review criteria are included below.

§ 1435-07-2-B. - Report, Public Hearing and Decision.

The procedure for the consideration of an application for the designation of a Historic Landmark, Historic District or Historic Site is as follows:

- a) *Report.* Within sixty (60) days of the receipt of a completed designation application, the Urban Conservator has the duty to prepare and send to the Historic Conservation Board a report and proposed conservation guidelines for the Historic Landmark, Historic District or Historic Site and a proposed boundary map for any Historic District. For a proposed Historic District, the Urban Conservator shall prepare and send to the Historic Conservation Board a list of all structures within the proposed Historic District that the Urban Conservator considers to be Non-Contributing Structures. Not later than thirty (30) days after receipt of the Urban Conservator's report and proposed conservation guidelines, the Historic Conservation Board shall schedule a public hearing on the proposed designation.
- b) *Historic Conservation Board.* After a public hearing on the proposed designation, the Historic Conservation Board has the duty to decide whether to recommend designation of the proposed Historic Landmark, Historic District or Historic Site and forward its decision, whether favorable or not, along with the proposed conservation guidelines to the City Planning Commission.
- c) *City Planning Commission.* Within thirty (30) days of the transmittal of the decision and recommendation of the Historic Conservation Board, the City Planning Commission shall hold a public hearing to determine whether to follow the recommendation of the Historic Conservation Board. In making such determination, the City Planning Commission shall consider all of the following factors:
 - a. The relationship of the proposed designation to the comprehensive plans of the city and of the community in which the proposed Historic Landmark, Historic District or Historic Site is located; and
 - b. The effect of the proposed designation on the surrounding areas and economic development plans of the city; and
 - c. Such other planning and historic preservation considerations as may be relevant to the proposed designation.

After a public hearing on the proposed designation and conservation guidelines, the City Planning Commission has the duty to decide whether to approve or disapprove the designation and forward its decision, whether favorable or not, along with the conservation guidelines to Council.

- d) *Council.* Upon receipt of the decision of the City Planning Commission, Council shall vote to ordain or overrule the City Planning Commission's decision. A simple majority of the members elected to Council is required to ordain a designation; provided, however, if the City Planning Commission disapproves the designation, a two-thirds majority vote of Council is required to overrule the City Planning Commission's decision.

Designation Review

Historic Significance

Staff finds that, based on the attributes and architectural integrity outlined in the Designation Report, which is based off of the successful National Register nomination, that the application for the nomination for the Terrace Plaza Hotel meets the requirements prescribed in Chapter 1435, specifically §1435-07-1, "Becoming a Historic Structure; Determination of Historic Significance".

The Cincinnati Zoning Code (CZC) § 1435-07-1(a), specifies that a structure or group of structures may be deemed as having Historic Significance if it has at least one of the following attributes:

1. *Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or*
2. *Association with the lives of persons significant in our past; or*
3. *Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or*
4. *That has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.*

The Criteria in Chapter 1435-07-1 is based off the criteria for the National Register and in fact models the language exactly. While staff understands that the modernist style is not a preferred aesthetic to every individual, significance is not determined based on what an individual would consider aesthetically pleasing, it is based on if it meets the criteria set forth within the National Register and the local ordinance based upon it.

The Historic Conservation Board is tasked with determining if it meets one of the Criteria set forth in Chapter 1435-07-1 of the Cincinnati Zoning Code and making a recommendation to the Cincinnati Planning Commission and City Council based on its significance.

The applicant is nominating the Terrace Plaza Hotel under Criterion 3 -*Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.*

The building has already been determined to be significant by its previous listing in the National Register as well as by the Historic Conservation Board on February 25, 2019. As the City of Cincinnati's criteria is based on the same criteria as the National Register and the criteria has not changed since it was first reviewed on February 25, 2019, the significance is clear and obvious. While the Designation Report details the specifics and history of the significance, staff wants to highlight the following important "firsts" of the Terrace Plaza Hotel:

- The Terrace Plaza Hotel was America's **first** International Style Hotel.
- The Terrace Plaza was the **first** hotel designed by Skidmore Owens and Merrill (SOM), a firm that helped to define the International Style in the United States.
- The lead designer of the Terrace Plaza Hotel was Natalie de Blois. In the 1940s, to have a woman as a lead designer on a building was extremely rare. She is considered a pioneer.

- The Terrace Plaza Hotel is considered **the most** important Modernist Building in the City of Cincinnati by architectural historians.
- The Terrace Plaza Hotel had the **first** fully-automated elevator system in the nation, as well as the first dual-heating system that would run on gas and fuel oil or coal.
- When designed, the fire safety sprinkler systems designed for the Terrace Plaza department stores were considered **the most** technologically advanced in the world.
- The Terrace Plaza hotel rooms were **the first** to offer guests a television in every room, and had the first user-controlled air conditioning systems in each room.

Conservation Guidelines

The Cincinnati Zoning Code (CZC) § 1435-07-2-C. - Adoption of Conservation Guidelines.

“Conservation guidelines shall promote the conservation, development and use of the Historic Landmark, Historic District or Historic Site and its special historic, architectural, community or aesthetic interest or value. Insofar as practicable, conservation guidelines shall promote redevelopment and revitalization of Historic Structures and compatible new development within the Historic District. The guidelines shall not limit new construction within a Historic District to a single period or architectural style but may seek to preserve the integrity of existing Historic Structures. Conservation guidelines shall take into account the impact of the designation of a Historic Landmark, Historic District or Historic Site on the residents of the affected area, the effect of the designation on the economic and social characteristics of the affected area, the projected impact of the designation on the budget of the city, as well as all of the factors listed in paragraph 1435-07-2-B(c) above. Conservation guidelines shall address Non-Contributing Structures. Approved conservation guidelines shall be published on the City’s website and be made available for public inspection in the office of the Urban Conservator.

Staff finds that the proposed Terrace Plaza Hotel Conservation Guidelines present best practice approaches in seeking to preserve the integrity of the exterior of Terrace Plaza Hotel while allowing a compatible reuse and redevelopment of the building. Staff has taken into consideration changes needed to the exterior to allow for things such as a garage entrance or signage schemes. The proposed Conservation Guidelines cover changes to the exterior of the building. The interior is not proposed to be subject to local review.

The proposed guidelines are also compatible with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.

The guidelines are the same guidelines which were recommended for approval in 2019. In 2019, Historic Conservation and City Planning Staff revised the guidelines to the version being presented to the Historic Conservation Board. The Law Department also reviewed and commented on the guidelines in 2019.

Other Considerations:

Prehearing Results from the first time the application went before the Historic Conservation Board:

- February 7, 2019 - A Joint Staff Conference was held with the Department of City Planning. Sixteen people signed in for the meeting representatives of Councilmember David Mann's Office were present as the applicants.
 - 8 People spoke in favor of the designation at this staff conference
 - Representatives of the owner spoke against the designation

Comments Provided to Staff in 2019:

15 letters of support were submitted the first time this application was reviewed, with 3 entities having 2 letters. These are not included in the packet, as they are not part of the record for this application, but are being noted in this report for project background. This includes:

- 1) Skidmore Owens and Merrill (2 letters, one for the designation and one specifically on its significance)
- 2) Docomomo International, a modernist preservation organization (2 letters of support)
- 3) National Trust for Historic Preservation
- 4) Ohio Historic Preservation Office
- 5) Heritage Ohio (2 letters of support)
- 6) AIA Cincinnati
- 7) Cincinnati Preservation Association
- 8) CF3, a local modernist preservation organization
- 9) Brian Yangyuen
- 10) Sean Patrick Tubbs
- 11) Patrick Snadon
- 12) Andy Scott, along with his Statement Mr. Scott submitted a presentation from SOM on the building, a Statement of Significance from SOM historian Nick Adams, and an article on the significance of the building from the SOM Journal No 5.

Prehearing Results for the Current Application:

- March 17, 2022 – A Joint Staff Conference was held with the Department of City Planning. Fourteen people attended the meeting including the applicant and City staff.
 - Two members of the applicant team spoke in favor of the designation.
 - Doug Moormann of Development Strategies Group, representing Birkla Investment Group, expressed concerns that the proposed design guidelines are not compatible with a financially viable adaptive reuse. He noted that they have informed the applicant of their efforts to engage SOM in the adaptive reuse project, and have requested that the designation hearing be held for additional time to work on revisions to the proposed design guidelines.

- The applicant, Cincinnati Preservation Association, is considering the request to hold the designation. At the time this report was prepared, no request to hold the designation has been received from the applicant.

Comments Provided to Staff for the Current Application:

Ten letters of support were received, with one entity having two letters, and two letters of opposition.

The letters of opposition are from:

- 1) Barry and Judy Robertson
- 2) Development Strategies Group

The letters of support are from:

- 1) National Trust for Historic Preservation
- 2) Cincinnati Form Follows Function, cf3
- 3) Shawn Patrick Tubb
- 4) Ohio Historic Preservation Office
- 5) Peter Hames
- 6) Shannon M. Tubb
- 7) Cincinnati Preservation Association (2 letters of support)
- 8) Maya Drozdz
- 9) Julie Fay

Proposed Work

A development plan has not been presented to the Historic Conservation Office for this building.

Consistency with Plan Cincinnati (2012): This designation is consistent with the Plan Cincinnati goal embodied in the Sustain Initiative, specifically goal #2, preserving our built history as outlined in pages 197-198 of the plan.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends the Historic Conservation Board take the following actions:

1. **RECOMMEND** to the Cincinnati City Planning Commission (CPC) and to the Cincinnati City Council (CC) for the designation of the entire Tax Parcels # 0077-0002-0252, 0077-0002-0250, 00770002-0251 also referred to as 15 West 6th Street and known as the Terrace Plaza Hotel as a Historic Landmark and the adoption of the related Terrace Plaza Hotel Historic Conservation Guidelines subject to the following conditions:
 - a. Any construction proposed upon the proposed Historic Landmark shall comply with the proposed Historic Conservation Guidelines (Attachment B).
2. **FINDING:** The Board makes this determination per Section 1435-07-1:

- (a) That it has been demonstrated that the Terrace Plaza Hotel meets the conditions of §1435-07-1(a)(1) as the building maintains integrity and *“Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.”*
- (b) The Terrace Plaza Hotel is considered the most important modernist building in Cincinnati.
- (c) The Terrace Plaza Hotel has local and national significance for being the first International Style hotel, one of the first hotels built after WWII, for its association with SOM, and its association with a pioneering woman architect, Natalie de Blois.
- (d) The Historic Conservation Board previously recommended approval for Historic Landmark Status on February 25, 2019.
- (e) That the proposed Terrace Plaza Hotel Historic Conservation Guidelines are compatible with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.

April 12, 2022

To: Katherine Keough-Jurs, Director, Department of City Planning & Engagement

From: Markiea L. Carter, Director, Department of Community & Economic Development

Subject: Impact of possible Terrace Plaza historic designation

The historic Terrace Plaza hotel in the Central Business District is currently being considered for a possible local historic preservation designation. This report outlines the implications if such a designation is granted.

The Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) believes historic preservation has served as a vital community development tool by improving our social and physical urban fabric. Historic preservation has played a significant role in attracting and retaining new businesses to our City by emphasizing our past and highlighting Cincinnati's unique story as a mid-sized midwestern City.

DCED is a vocal supporter of the State Historic Tax Credit program. For every large and headline-grabbing historic redevelopment project, the department deals with a dozen smaller projects, equally as difficult, and many are complicated historic renovation projects made possible only through a combination of City property tax abatements paired with Historic Tax Credits. Further, because Cincinnati's urban fabric is significantly older than our peer cities in Ohio (Columbus, Cleveland), our City has received an outsized benefit from the availability of State Historic Tax Credits. This financing tool is a crucial part of Cincinnati's continued revitalization.

The purpose of this memo is not to address those intangible benefits, but instead to serve as a statement of facts and perspectives related to redevelopment efforts of the Terrace Plaza since it became vacant more than 10 years ago. This memo also hopes to provide a snapshot of the economic vitality of the building and some of the possible effects a local historic designation may have on its redevelopment potential.

Background

In 2008, the Terrace Hilton Hotel closed for business. Since then, the building has sat primarily vacant except for a few ground-floor retailers. In 2013, the building was purchased with the intent of redevelopment. Unfortunately, that ownership group had an internal dispute, precipitating a complicated legal battle.

As the legal battle ensued, the owners removed many of the internal equipment and finishes inside the building. All removable value was stripped including all accessible copper, historic or original fixtures, and HVAC and electrical system components. Shortly after, the roof began to leak causing a partial ceiling collapse, plaster damage, and the growth of mold throughout the top several floors. The building's internal integrity was severely diminished.

In 2015, the ownership group filed for bankruptcy and the building was placed into receivership. Since then, no work has been done to stabilize the building. The roof still has not been repaired and every time it rains, the top floors serve as the de facto roof. Subsequently, the conditions of the building continue to worsen. For some context, when Cincinnati experienced heavy rain in 2019, Batsakes Hat Shop -- a long-time ground floor retailer -- experienced significant water damage. Efforts to force action in the building continue under the direction of Art Dalhberg, Director of the City's Department of Buildings and Inspections.

Redevelopment Efforts

Since the closing of the Terrace Hilton Hotel, the building has deteriorated, and redevelopment attempts have failed. Below is a brief outline of the redevelopment efforts that have passed through DCED during the past several years. DCED has removed company identifying information from these scenarios to ensure that any disclosures do not threaten future redevelopment opportunities.

A. Scenario "A" Redevelopment Program Proposal (2016):

- Parking 468 spaces
- Residential 170 units
- Retail 43,000 SF
- Restaurant 7,700 SF
- Total project cost \$80 million
- Post construction value estimation \$35-40 million

Ask of the City:

- (a) \$9 million cash grant
- (b) 30-year tax abatement (bonding capacity of \$21 million)
- (c) City ownership of garage
- (d) City issuance of 40-year revenue bonds
- (e) \$15 million in Federal Historic Tax Credits
- (f) \$5 maximum State Historic Tax Credits
- (g) \$12 million additional State Historic Tax Credits (The cap is \$5 million. The intent was to lobby to raise the cap, which would require new State legislation)

Scenario A Notes:

- The size of the cash grant requested from the City is significant and would be equal to cash grants for the much larger Court and Walnut project.
- This project was a planned, fully historic renovation adhering to the State Historic Preservation Office guidelines
- Development A was proposed by an international development firm with significant experience acquiring and/or redeveloping thousands of properties around the world.
- The total project cost far exceeds the projected ending "value" of the building.

- While the Development group asked for issuance of garage revenue bonds, the specific ask for 40 years would have been without precedent in the City’s experience.
- The process of requesting and receiving special State legislation raising the cap of the State Historic Tax Credit award adds uncertainty to the incentive stack.

B. Scenario “B” Redevelopment Program Proposal (2017):

- Project scope was not defined

Ask of the City:

- (a) Development B did not make it past the due diligence phase. Therefore, a formal submission was never made to the City.

Scenario B Notes:

- A second experienced and capable developer with a record of successful historic renovations approached the City in 2017 while in diligence for purchasing the Terrace building.
- The Developer planned to utilize Historic Tax Credits to redevelop the property.
- The principal redevelopment challenge communicated to City staff related to how to use the windowless lower “brick box” area of Terrace Plaza in a manner that might generate revenue.
- The Developer engaged movie theater operators, bowling alleys and self-storage operators, among other similar users.
- Despite best efforts, the Developer failed to put together a financially feasible project.

C. Scenario “C” Redevelopment Program Proposal (2018):

- Parking 448 spaces
- Residential 188 units
- Retail 23,000 SF
- Restaurant 5,300 SF
- Storage 40,000 SF
- Total project cost \$90 million

Unofficial ask of the City

- (a) \$7 million grant
- (b) 30-year tax abatement (bonding capacity of \$21 million)
- (c) City ownership of garage with 40-year revenue bonds
- (d) \$15 million in Federal Historic Tax Credits
- (h) \$17 million in State Historic Tax Credits (The cap is \$5 million. The intent was to lobby to raise the cap, which would require new State legislation)

Scenario C Notes:

- Development C was very conceptual, and a formal submission was never made to the City.

D. Scenario “D” Redevelopment Program Proposal (2018):

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------|
| • Parking | 292 spaces |
| • Residential | 224 units |
| • Retail | 30,000 SF |
| • Total project cost | \$61 million |

Ask of the City

- (a) \$3 million grant
- (b) 15-year, net 75% CRA tax abatement. Note the 2020 update to the CPS-City Tax Incentive Agreement provides a cap of 67% for new CRA tax abatements.

Scenario D Notes:

- Development D included plans to remove the brick portion of the box and replace it with glass.
- Of all the redevelopments proposals DCED has worked with during the past decade, this was the most likely to occur.
- The project was financially feasible if the City incentives were provided and did not require state legislation to modify the State HTC program.

Possible Revenue Generation

The initiative to give a local historic designation to Terrace Plaza may be considered an understandable pursuit; however, there are potential negative economic impacts that should be considered. Generally, it is possible that a local designation made without careful consideration for economically feasible renovation scenarios makes the Terrace Plaza financially infeasible to redevelop without significant public subsidy beyond that which the City can provide. As previously noted above, DCED’s experience has been that a historic renovation of the Terrace Plaza would require significant public investment. With limited resources that continue to shrink, if public funds are not available to boost a historic redevelopment to certain mandated standards, Terrace Plaza may remain vacant and continue to deteriorate.

There are two major cost drivers associated with historic renovation: 1) increased regulatory costs; and 2) impeded realization of a building’s highest and best use by limiting the maximum development of a property, which results in a proportionally deflated property value.

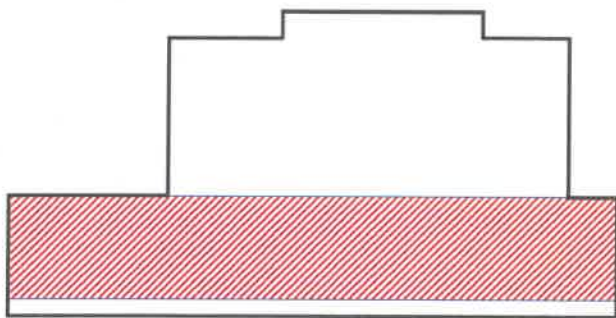
Typically, historic renovations are considered some of the most difficult, time-consuming, and often most expensive types of redevelopments. They are a specialty that not every developer is willing to pursue due to their complexity and the additional economic disincentive that exists due to the increased regulatory expenses. A local historic designation may further thin the limited pool of redevelopers interested in the renovation challenge that Terrace Plaza presents. Development interest is already limited; moreover, mandating a stringent historic renovation through a traditional local designation may further narrow this list of developers. This may inevitably result in a delayed rehabilitation as the building continues to deteriorate.

Inherently, historic designations limit the potential use of a property. In many instances, this can be considered an asset to redevelopment strategies. For example, the historic nature

of the built environment in Over-the-Rhine can be seen collectively as an asset that attracts people to the neighborhood and inevitably raises property value. A historic building in Over-the-Rhine achieves its highest and best use not despite its historic significance and the historic significance of the neighborhood but because of it.

Comparatively, a historic designation of Terrace Plaza may have the opposite effect, limiting the development potential of the site. There are two key differences: 1) the land value of the Terrace Plaza property is already significantly higher. This is because the highest and best use of a property in the Central Business District is more profitable than its surrounding neighborhoods; and 2) The architectural significance of the Terrace Plaza that would need to be preserved inherently makes it difficult for a redevelopment to achieve the property's highest and best use. Specifically, the biggest impediment to development of the Terrace Plaza as it currently stands is the middle portion of the building known as the "brick box", as shown in **Figure 1, Terrace Plaza Diagram**. The development options for this portion of the building are limited and extremely costly. Moreover, the cost to do a historic rehab of the brick box significantly exceeds the future value the box portion can generate. From a development standpoint, strict preservation of the architectural significance of the Terrace Plaza may lead to decreased development potential that is prohibitively costly.

Figure 1, Terrace Plaza Diagram:



Source: Department of Community and Economic Development

The Terrace Plaza is already nationally designated; therefore, it is eligible for some of the benefits that come with a local historic designation such as Federal and State Historic Tax Credits. A local designation would not increase the available funds to redevelop the project, but it would make redevelopment significantly more challenging if the requirements of the local designation are not thoughtfully crafted with acceptable and economically feasible renovation scenarios in mind. Although DCED encourages a historic renovation at the site, our experience indicates the project would need to be heavily subsidized. It is worth noting the allotment of State Historic Tax Credits to this project would likely prevent other historic projects in Cincinnati seeking HTCs from being awarded due to the nature of the State's selection process.

Conclusion

Many of the historic aspects of the Terrace Plaza are not specific to architectural style. For example, there were many internal, technological features that were "firsts" at the time,

which have since been gutted and presumably would not be protected by a historic designation.

Additionally, many of the other historic aspects of the Terrace Plaza, although important, are intangible. For example: The building was designed by a female architect, which was unprecedented in the 1940s. SOM, the architecture firm that designed the building, has since designed some of the most significant buildings across America. When first built, the Terrace Plaza reimagined how a multi-use building could function. However, a local historic designation does not preserve those ingenuities, it would only preserve external features that make it extremely difficult to redevelop.

DCED recognizes the importance of historic preservation to community building and economic development. The Terrace Plaza's history in Cincinnati makes it a beloved treasure; however, a historic designation that impedes the fruition of the building's highest and best use may disincentivize its redevelopment and cause further deterioration.

Recommendation

Given the financial observations DCED has observed during the past decade, the department recommends a flexible approach to preserving the Terrace Plaza. The approach should not only preserve the Terrace Plaza but also enhance it to allow more options for increasing the likelihood for redevelopment.

This careful approach may be "rigid" with what features it preserves while being "flexible" with some of the most challenging design aspects of the property. The approach could include preservation of the rotunda and upper tower, restoring the commercial level to its original form, preserving a portion of the brick box while also allowing for some flexibility on modifications to it. One possible concept would involve having any brick removed from the structure to be incorporated elsewhere on the site. Design proposals can be vetted and analyzed by the Urban Design Review board or whatever entity deemed appropriate.

This more flexible approach will allow for and encourage a historic renovation while removing some of the obstacles a historic designation would cause.

Copy: John P. Curp, Interim City Manager