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.

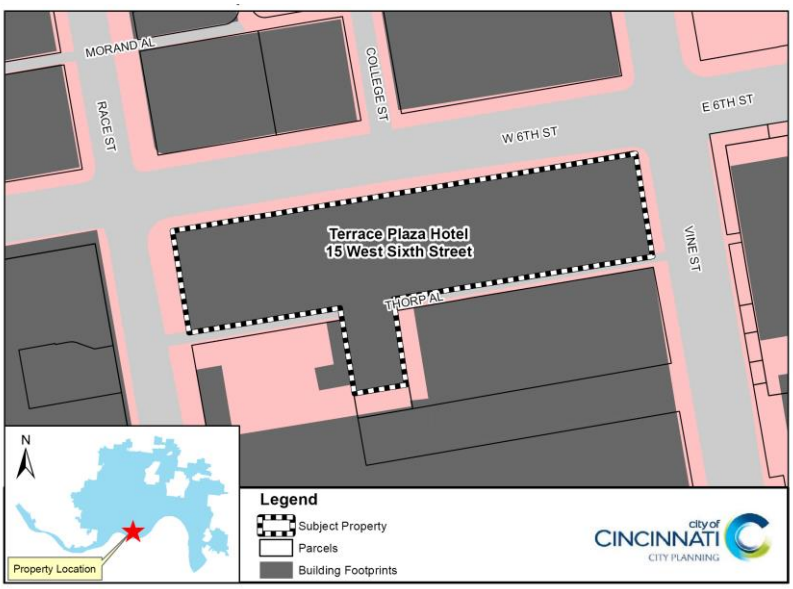
Summary Statement

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 Cincinnatian 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 top 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 #SG100000666), 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 re-opened 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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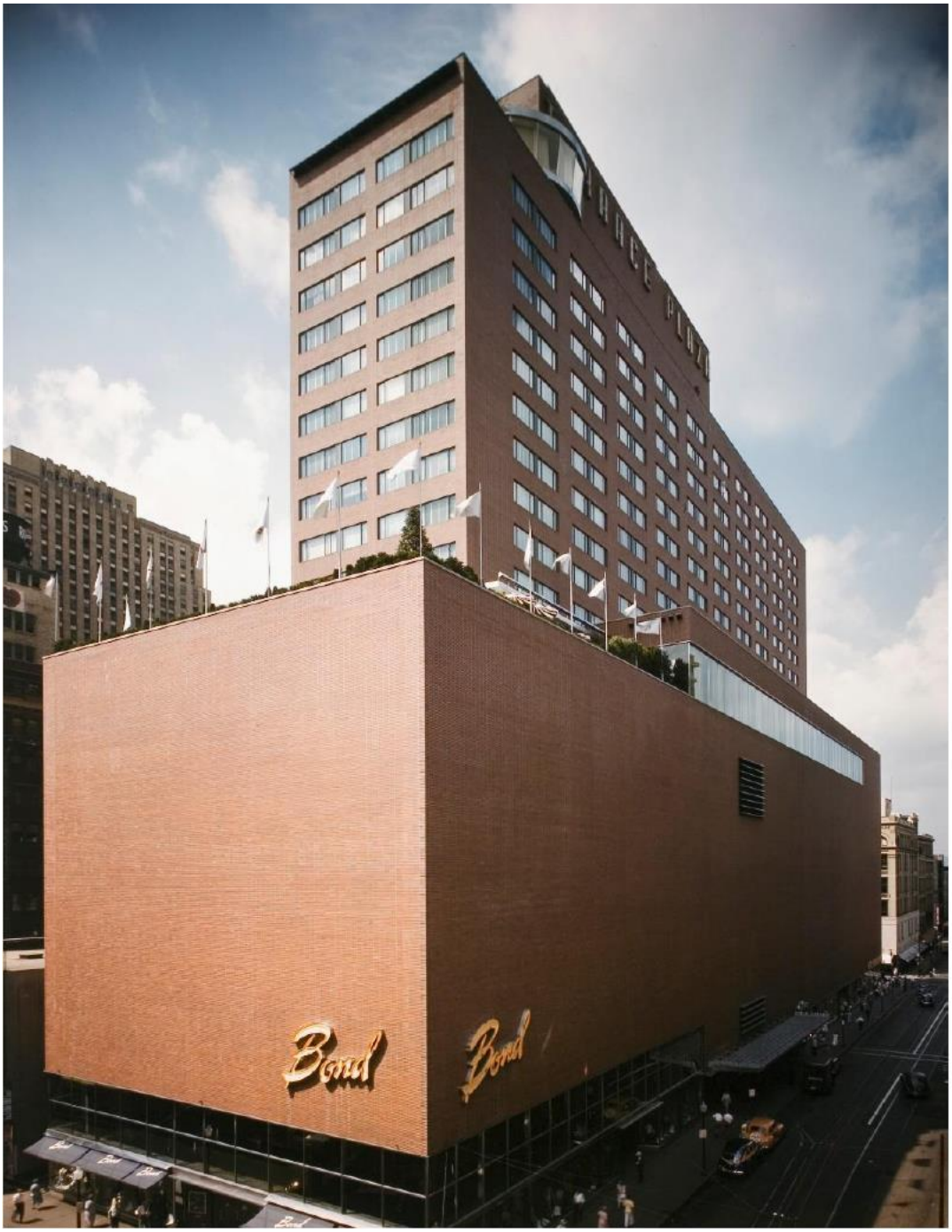

Exterior view, looking southwest, 1948, courtesy of Esto


J. C. PENNEY CO.


TERRACE PLAZA
BOZO
Thomas Emery's Sons, Inc., Cincinnati, O
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SKIDMORE, OWINGS & MERRILL, ARCHITECTS
FRANK MESSER & SONS, INC., GENERAL CONTRACTORS
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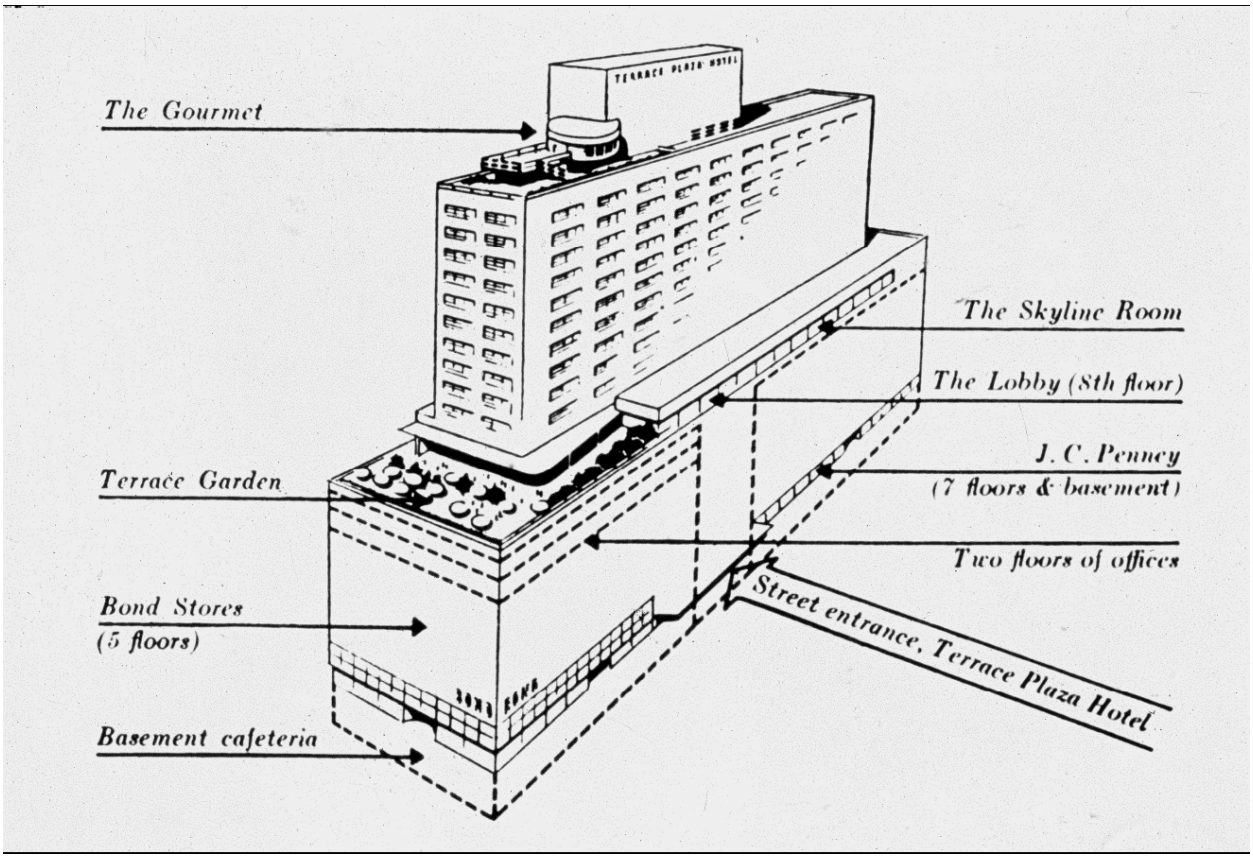


Illustration showing major programmatic functions. Photo by SOM ©.

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

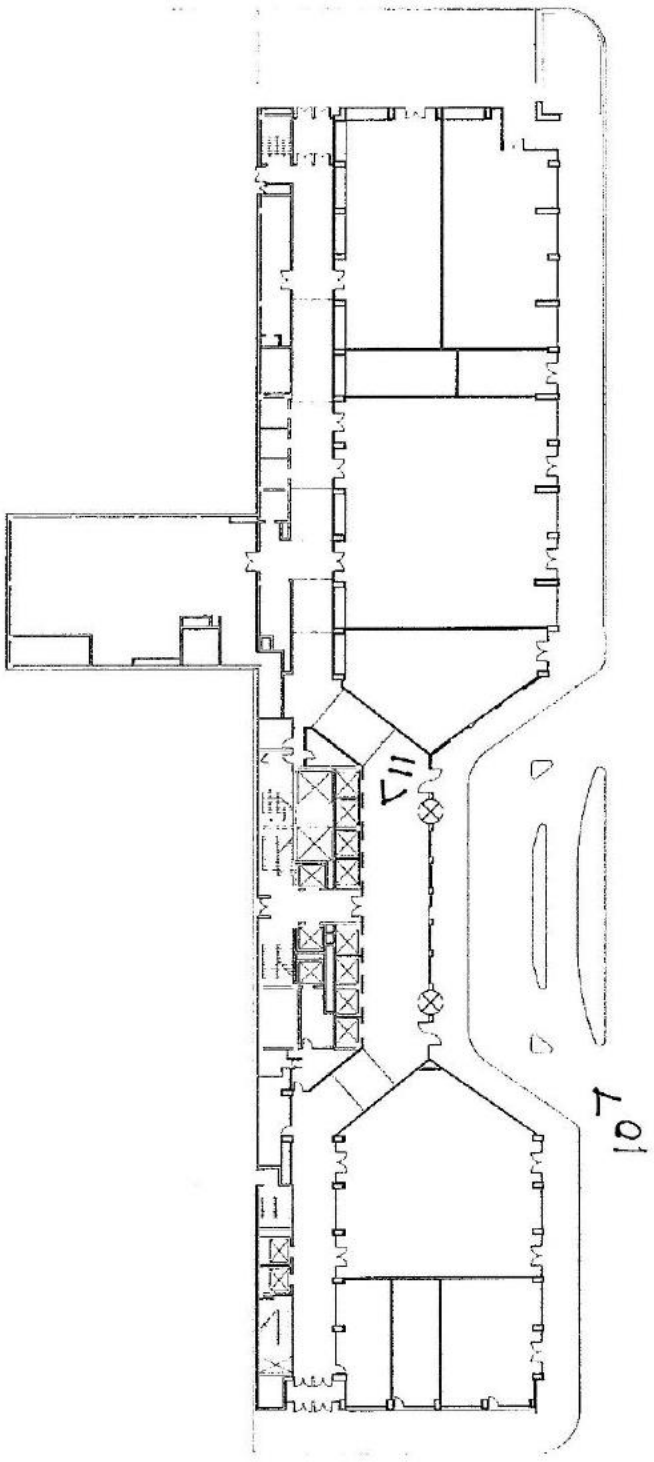
View of entrance, looking south, 1948, courtesy of Esto


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

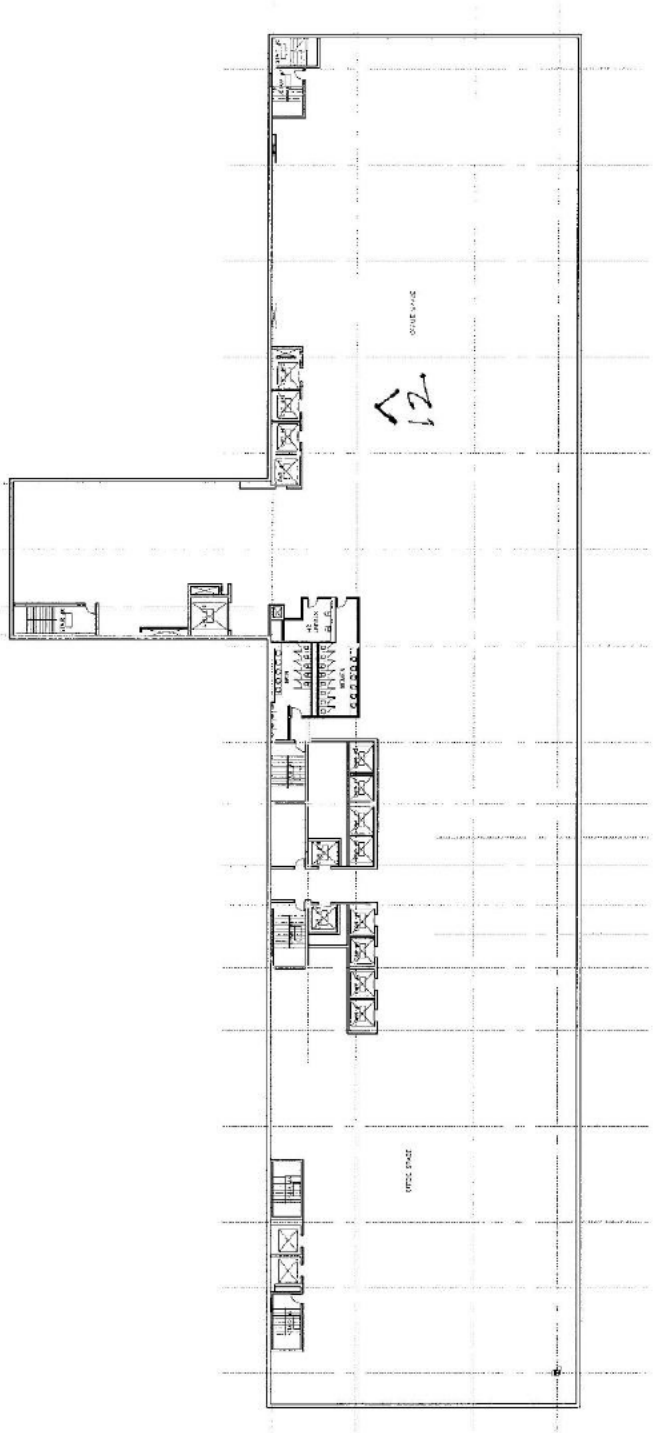
Skyline restaurant, with Steinberg mural, 1948, courtesy of Esto

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

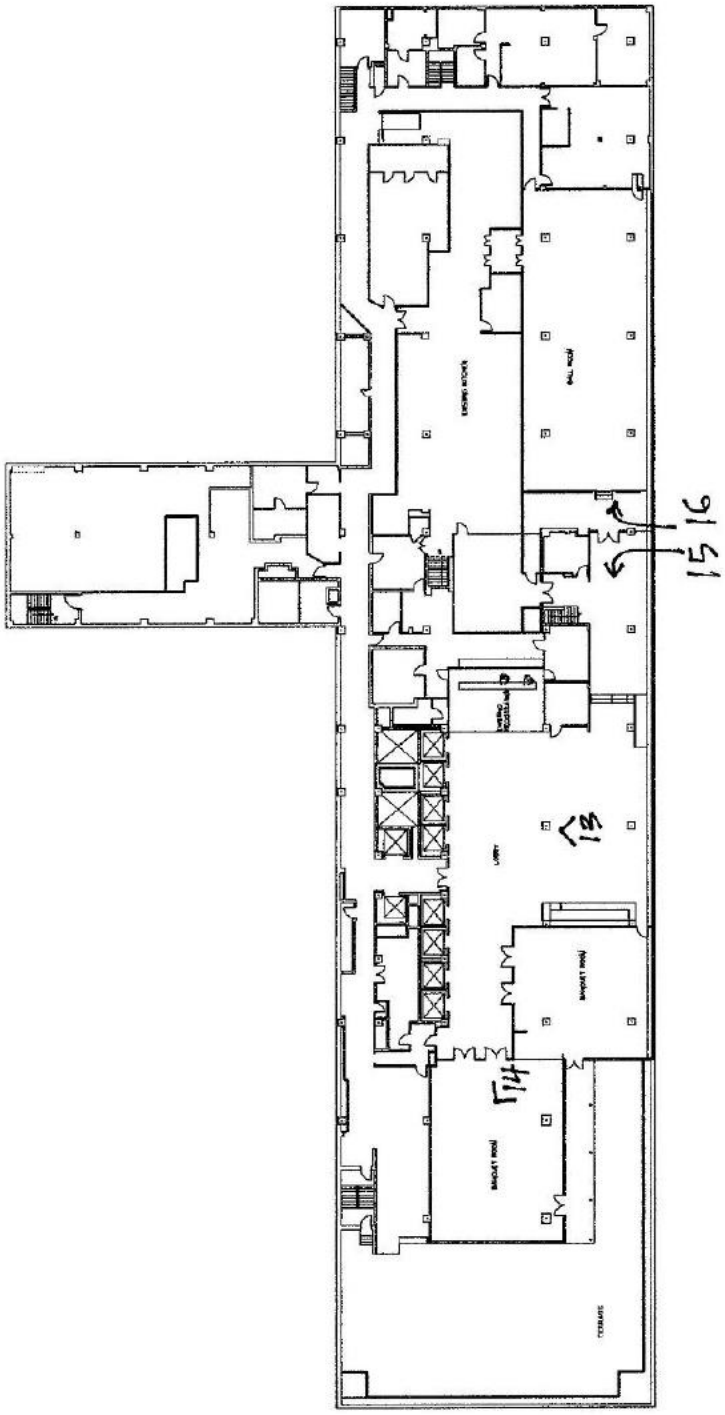
View of hotel room, 1948, courtesy of Esto



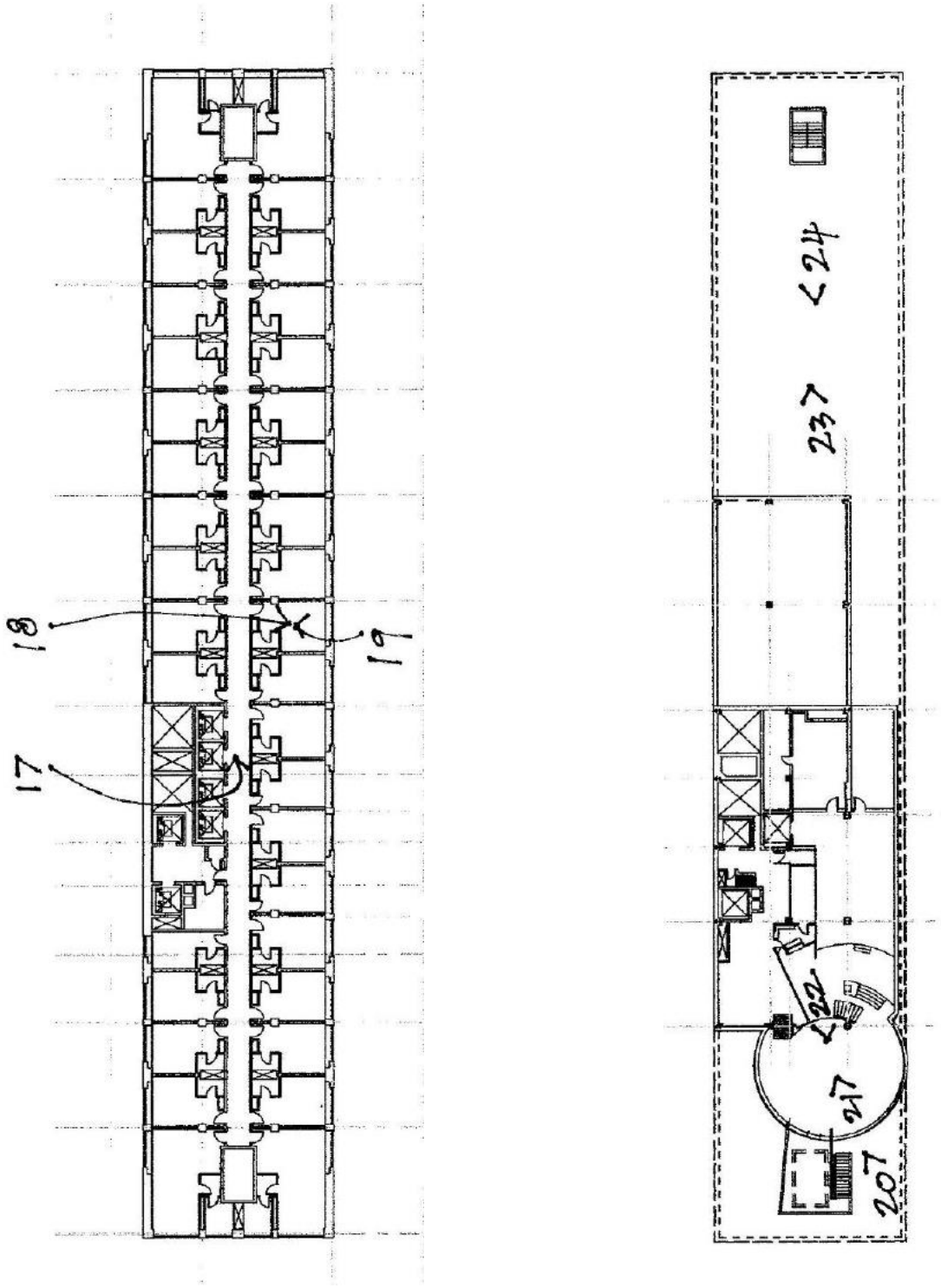
Existing 1st Floor Plan.



Existing 5th Floor Plan.



Existing 8th Floor Plan.



Existing typical hotel floor plan and twentieth floor plan.