

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED NATIONAL REGISTER/GEORGIA REGISTER NOMINATION

1. Name: Lookout Mountain Hotel

2. Location: 14049 Scenic Highway; Lookout Mountain, Dade County, Georgia

3a. Description: Lookout Mountain Hotel, built in 1927 and nicknamed the “Castle in the Clouds,” is a grand resort hotel building perched atop the western brow of Lookout Mountain in northwest Georgia, just south of Chattanooga, Tennessee. The five-story hotel is composed of a rectangular central mass with wings extending to the north, west, and south. The north wing extends at a slight angle to the east, and a ten-story, tower is located where this wing and the main mass intersect. The hotel has a cast-in-place, reinforced concrete frame with exterior walls clad in a rough textured stucco. The complex hip and gable roofs feature original and replacement Ludowici red terracotta tile. Windows throughout are paired, and during the recent rehabilitation, non-historic windows were replaced with replicas based on detailed historic drawings of originals. The hotel’s striking tower has chamfered corners, a crenellated balcony, and a smaller crenellated upper-tower featuring a 16-foot copper lantern. During a 1980s renovation, the lantern and tower crenellations were removed and much of the building was clad in an exterior insulation and finish system (EIFS). With the recent rehabilitation, the EIFS and modern alterations were removed and the crenellation and lantern were re-constructed from original drawings. Other original details include scallop texturing, scored stucco, parapeted gables, simulated half-timbering, natural stone randomly embedded in the stucco, and simulated solid rubble masonry. Elevated covered porches are found at the ends of the north and south wings, and the main entrance on the east elevation is marked by a porte-cochere and a wide loggia. From the loggia, four sets of double doors (three of which are now fixed-in-place) lead to the lobby and great hall, which retain historic features including stone fireplaces; heavy rusticated woodwork, such as boxed beams, brackets, and half-timbering; plaster walls and ceilings; and two altered reception desks. Wings and upper floors have double-loaded corridors, originally used as hotel rooms and now serving as college dorm rooms and offices. A swimming pool is located at the northwest corner, but it has been substantially altered making it, as well as a non-historic pool house, noncontributing resources. “The Overlook,” a contributing structure, is a two-level, circular stone terrace providing access to eastern views and was constructed directly across the main lawn from the hotel.

3b. Period of Significance: 1927- 1960

3c. Acreage: Approximately 3 acres

3d. Boundary Explanation: The proposed boundary includes remaining historic features of the Lookout Mountain Hotel property – the hotel, swimming pool, overlook, and lawn

4a. National Register Criteria: A and C

4b. National Register Areas of Significance: Entertainment/Recreation and Architecture

4c. Statement of Significance: Lookout Mountain Hotel is significant in the area of architecture as a representative example of the Tudor Revival style and the work of architect Reuben Harrison (R. H.) Hunt. Tudor Revival was a romanticized early-20th century architectural style and often features parapeted gables; ornamental false, half-timbering; stucco or masonry-veneered walls; and crenellated towers. At the hotel, the style is also reflected in the interior spaces with details such as oversized stone fireplaces, plaster coat-of-arms ornamentation, and rusticated woodwork seen in box beams, brackets, modillions, and half-timbering. R. H. Hunt, a prolific Georgia-born architect, based his practice in Chattanooga, Tennessee and reportedly designed between 400 and 500 buildings during his career. He was recognized as an outstanding craftsman in his field, and a 1980 thematic National Register nomination, notes his focus on public buildings and utilization of popular architectural styles of the time. Among many others, he is credited with design of the Tivoli Theatre, Carnegie Library, and Hamilton County Courthouse in Chattanooga, TN, and the Baptist Tabernacle (now a music venue) in Atlanta. The hotel is also significant in the area of entertainment/recreation, as the mountain experienced a boom in tourism in the 1920s and the hotel, along with other attractions, such as Fairyland Inn (1925), Rock City Gardens (1932), and Ruby Falls (1930) were built to support tourism, drawing visitors from great distances. The tourism boom was primarily due to the mountain’s proximity to the Dixie Highway and the 1927 paving of the mountain’s roads. This new wave of tourism also brought changes to hotel design, such as larger buildings and more amenities; Lookout Mountain Hotel offered a swimming pool, tennis courts, a miniature golf course, croquet courts, horseback riding, and “dancing under the stars,” weekly dances held at The Overlook, hosted by nationally-recognized band leaders supplemented with hired dance stars. Earlier hotels were designed to focus attention on the natural surroundings and offered guests privacy and solitude, rather than entertainment and social functions of the early 20th century hotels. This trend, of bringing amenities commonly associated with urban life to the country is noted in David Stradling’s *Making Mountains* for creating “an urban atmosphere in the mountains ... [that] did not center on the consumption of nature, let alone wilderness.” Lookout Mountain Hotel, though certainly capitalizing on the natural setting, focused much of their promotion on the ‘scene’ rather than the scenery. Period newspaper headlines frequently indicated the importance of society and socializing at the hotel.

4d. Suggested Level of Significance: Lookout Mountain Hotel is being nominated at the local level of significance as a good example of the Tudor Revival style by significant local architect R. H. Hunt in Dade County and as a representation of amenities developed to support the 1920s auto-tourism boom in the area and the trend of grand resort getaways for the wealthy.

4e. National Register Status: Lookout Mountain Hotel received final certification from the Historic Preservation Division for the state property tax abatement and state tax credit programs on November 21, 2017 and final certification from the National Park Service for the federal tax credit program on May 7, 2018.

5. Sponsor: The nomination is sponsored by Covenant College, the property owners. Nomination materials were prepared by consultants, Lord Aeck Sargent.