

Describe the present and original (known) physical appearance

The Heidelberg Hotel (1927) is a ten-story, vaguely Romanesque skyscraper which at one time was the centerpiece of downtown Baton Rouge. Despite the many alterations the building has undergone, it still conveys its associations as well as a goodly portion of its architectural significance.

The steel frame building is sheathed in painted brick. When it was originally built, the ground story had a central lobby, several ancillary spaces, and a bar. Most of the upper floors had central corridors flanked by rooms with groups of rooms set at the ends in projecting pavilions. The top story contained a large ballroom space

Like many eclectic skyscrapers of the 1920's, the ground story and the penthouse top story of the Heidelberg are richly ornamented, while the stories between feature course after course of unornamented windows. The ornamentation is mainly derived from the Romanesque style, although the round arches rest upon Persian columns. Overall, the building has a Mediterranean look. This is particularly true of the penthouse ballroom with its gable end pavilions, red tile roofs, heavy corbel table, and elaborate arcades. It is recessed slightly from the mass of the building, and gives the basic appearance of a rooftop Mediterranean villa. Most of the ornamentation is of terra cotta.

Since the Heidelberg was built, the following changes have been made:

1. The ground story has been completely remodeled for a restaurant. Only the bar area remains intact. This reworking included the replacement of the ground story front wall. (The side wall ornamentation remains intact.)
2. The construction of a massive modern addition on the north side.
3. The redecoration of most of the rooms, including the ballroom.

In spite of these changes, the building still conveys its historical associations. It still vividly presents the outward appearance of a 1920's eclectic skyscraper. The massive addition does not significantly impair this appearance because it reads as a separate building. The fact that the interiors have been remodeled should not be regarded as detrimental to the building's historical associations. Most of these associations encompass the entire building as a whole, without specific reference to any particular interior space. For example, Huey Long kept a suite of rooms at the Heidelberg, but they were different rooms at different times. The only specific interior space in the hotel which is universally acknowledged as a political focal point in its own right is the bar, and this area remains intact.

Despite the architectural losses, the hotel retains much of its original articulation and ornamentation. It still warrants a secondary designation of local architectural significance as one of only two major examples in Baton Rouge of the work of the noted Louisiana architect, Edward F. Neild. It should also be noted in this regard that the other major example, the Old Courthouse, has also been modified, although to a lesser extent.

Specific dates	1927
Builder/Architect	Architect: Edward F. Neild

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)  
Criteria A, B, & C

The Heidelberg Hotel is significant on the state level in the area of politics/ government because of its close associations with Huey P. Long and Louisiana politics during his gubernatorial term (1928-32).\* It is being nominated for significance at the state level because Governor Long during this period was a political figure of statewide prominence and political activity during his administration affected the entire state. In addition, the Heidelberg is significant to a lesser extent in the area of architecture at the local level. It is one of only two major examples in Baton Rouge of the work of the noted Louisiana architect, Edward F. Neild.

When Governor Long was in Baton Rouge (which was all of the time during a legislative session), he could be found either at the legislature or at the Heidelberg. As T. Harry Williams wrote in his Pulitzer Prize winning biography of Long: "He engaged a suite at the Heidelberg Hotel, the capital's largest, and another at the Roosevelt Hotel in New Orleans, and in these public houses he ate and slept and lived a public existence." As the unofficial Long headquarters, the Heidelberg quite naturally emerged as second only to the legislature as a focus for political activity during his administration.

A recent statement from Senator Russell Long so aptly capsulizes the Heidelberg's political significance that it deserves to be quoted at some length. Although he is evaluating the hotel's importance within a broader chronological framework, his comments are equally as true for the specific period under consideration (1928-32). The following is an excerpt:

The Capitol House, formerly known as the Heidelberg Hotel, has provided the setting for many of the momentous decisions affecting the future of the state of Louisiana. For many years, the "Hunt Room" (bar) served as a meeting place for Louisiana politicians including my Father, Huey P. Long, and my Uncle Earl Long during their tenures as Governor and U. S. Senator.

Prior to the days of legislative reform, committees held caucuses, political deals were finalized, and compromises on important pieces of legislation were hammered out in the privacy and comfort of the Heidelberg. Oftentimes, the vote on the floor of the Louisiana Senate and House merely confirmed a decision made earlier in an informal meeting in the "Hunt Room" (bar).

Innumerable examples could be given to graphically illustrate the Heidelberg's political associations with Long and Louisiana politics from 1928 to 1932. For instance, the Heidelberg figured quite prominently in the 1929 attempt to impeach Long, an event which is considered to have had a considerable impact upon Long's attitude toward his conservative opposition and the development of his "fight fire with fire" policy towards them.

Long writes the following account of the trying and tumultuous days before the formal impeachment proceedings began:

Few callers knocked on my doors. At last I had the peace of quiet and solitude for which I had so often longed.

I barricaded myself in my rooms in the Heidelberg Hotel overlooking the Mississippi River. It looked as if another flood might come. Maybe--surely--I would hear from some of the mighty ones who remembered what I had done for them. I pondered, I wondered and reflected.

Long would not have to wonder and reflect much longer. The powerful Times-Picayune in New Orleans editorialized against him. A rally of his opponents mobilized 6,000 people. His opposition even invaded his "home away from home"--the Heidelberg. The impeachers reserved an entire floor of the hotel and operated from their "command post" there while the impeachee did the same on another floor.

The Heidelberg again made the headlines in January 1932 when it was the focal point of "battle" for control between Governor Long and Paul Cyr, his lieutenant governor. Upon this occasion Long had to have Cyr evicted from the Heidelberg after Cyr had declared himself governor and had made the hotel the temporary state capitol.

Cyr was elected lieutenant governor with Long and had broken with him before either had served a year. When Huey campaigned and was elected to the U. S. Senate in 1930, he resisted taking the oath of office because he dreaded vacating the office and letting Cyr assume the governorship. Long's hand-picked successor, O. K. Allen, was elected to succeed Long in January, 1932, but he would not take office until May of that year.

However, Cyr impetuously declared that Long had vacated the office by his election to the Senate and announced that he would set up his "seat of government" in the Heidelberg, from which he would govern as the state's chief executive. Huey journeyed to Washington, D.C., took the oath of office as U. S. Senator, and immediately relayed the information to Baton Rouge, where the president pro tem of the Louisiana Senate, Alvin O. King, was waiting to take the oath of office as governor. King and Long maintained that Cyr, by taking the position he was governor of Louisiana, had vacated the office of lieutenant governor. King, next in line of succession, became governor of the state. Furthermore, Long telephoned the manager of the Heidelberg and suggested he evict Cyr from the establishment. The manager did so, depriving the hapless former lieutenant governor not only of his job, but also his seat of government.

These are but two of the better known political happenings at the Heidelberg. Countless other Long associations could be cited. For instance, most of the Kingfish's autobiography Everyman a King was written at his Heidelberg suite. Another example involves Long's well-known enthusiasm for LSU football. On one memorable occasion, he played banker from his suite at the Heidelberg, making loans to LSU students who could not afford the train fare to Nashville to see the Tigers play Vanderbilt.

Certainly the above discussion makes it abundantly clear that the history of the Heidelberg and the political history of the state from 1928 to 1932 are entwined. It should be noted in this regard that the Heidelberg was not associated with just any governor or just any period in Louisiana politics. Although Long is an extremely controversial figure with both admirers and detractors, surely no one can deny that the Long era was a watershed in Louisiana history. One could argue ad infinitum over whether Long's positive accomplishments outweigh his negative legacy, or vice versa. Do the ends justify the means? Did Long lose sight of his original purpose (i.e., helping the "people" of Louisiana) as he began to grasp power for power's sake? No matter what the answers to these questions may be, suffice it to say, concludes T. Harry Williams, that like other powerful men who have influenced the course of history, Huey P. Long certainly left a different world behind him.

As mentioned previously, the Heidelberg is being nominated for secondary significance at the local level in the area of architecture because it is one of two major examples in Baton Rouge of the work of the noted Louisiana architect, Edward F. Neild. Neild is remembered as a famous Shreveport architect, but his stature embraced the entire state and ultimately the nation.

Neild was born in Shreveport in 1884. He rose to prominence in the 1920's, '30's, and '40's designing many of Shreveport's most important buildings. These include the nine-story Henry C.

Beck Building, the Municipal Building, the Caddo Parish Courthouse, the massive exhibit center at the Shreveport fairgrounds, the Veterans Administration Hospital in Shreveport, and many of the Caddo Parish School buildings.

Neild's rise to national prominence began in 1928 when Judge Harry Truman visited Neild's recently completed Caddo Parish Courthouse. Truman was impressed and engaged Neild to design the Jackson County Courthouse in Missouri. This formed a lasting friendship between Truman and Neild which led to other commissions. Neild died in 1955 while working with a Kansas City colleague on the design for the Truman Memorial Library in that city. He also designed courthouses in Phoenix, Arizona; Ruston, Louisiana; and Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Stylistically Neild was an eclectic architect mainly rooted in the axial Beaux Arts tradition who gradually turned to modernism in the late-1920's. The Heidelberg represents Neild at the tail end of his enthusiasm for purely eclectic architecture. It is, therefore, of great interest in the scholarly study of his career.

\*The Heidelberg maintained its intimate association with Long until his death in 1935 and has been a focus for political activity from its construction on through the present. However, because of the federal regulation which makes it difficult to nominate properties which have achieved significance within the past fifty years, only the 1928-32 period can be taken into account in evaluating the Heidelberg's significance.

#### Major Bibliographical References

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Essay on the Heidelberg's history prepared by Ed Reed for the owner. Mr. Reed's sources included Long biographies, his autobiography, interviews, newspapers, etc. Copy located in Heidelberg National Register file, Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office.

#### **Heidelberg Hotel, Additional Documentation Baton Rouge, E. Baton Rouge Parish, LA**

The purpose of this submission is twofold: 1) to update the physical description of the Heidelberg Hotel nomination to include a second contributing element – the Hotel King located across the street from the Heidelberg -- and 2) to update the nomination's area of significance to include commerce. When the Heidelberg achieved National Register listing in 1982, the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office did not know that the nearby Hotel King was owned and operated by the same company as an adjunct to the Heidelberg, nor that the two buildings were connected by a service tunnel running beneath Lafayette Street during their periods of operation. This new information makes it clear that, despite the difference in names, both buildings should have been treated as contributing elements to the Heidelberg Hotel nomination. This additional documentation, generated by a proposed state and federal tax credit project, will correct that oversight.

The Heidelberg Hotel is important at the state level because of its close associations with Huey P. Long and Louisiana politics during his gubernatorial term (1928-1932). Governor Long, during this period, was a political figure of statewide prominence, and political activity during his administration affected the entire state. In addition, the Heidelberg is significant to a lesser extent in the area of architecture at the local level. It is considered one of only two major examples in Baton Rouge of the work of noted Louisiana architect, Edward F. Neild.

The Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office proposes to update the area of significance to include commerce because it has been determined that both hotels played a significant role in supporting the ever-expanding economy in Baton Rouge by providing much needed hotel rooms at that time.

Describe present and physical appearance.

The Hotel King (1932) is a seven-story masonry building in the Classical Revival style of architecture. The building is located near the river in an urban setting and is directly across the street from the Heidelberg Hotel. The building measures approximately 46,676 square feet. The exterior exhibits classical details that are slightly hard to discern from a distance, due to an all white brick surface. The building was painted in the 1970s when the State of Louisiana leased the building for office space. Despite the white color, the classical details on the building are still extant and very striking to behold when standing in front of the building.

The building that currently houses the Hotel King was actually constructed in two phases. The first three floors of the building were actually built in 1922 for the Standard Motor Car Company. Classical Revival features from this period are still extant on the current building. A photo of the Standard Motor Car Company building on Lafayette Street appeared in the Baton Rouge State-Times on March 10, 1922 (see attached). According to the photo, the researcher can determine that the building retains many of the same features as it displayed then. However, the window fenestration pattern has changed from three windows between each pair of pilasters to only two windows. This change occurred on the second and third floors to match the window fenestration pattern on the upper floors of the new four-story addition in 1932.

This nomination will focus on the 1932 (seven-story) building, which marked the beginning of the Hotel King. The hotel had 175 rooms, but they were not air-conditioned. The Hotel Heidelberg, across the street had 250 rooms that were air-conditioned. According to the 1923-1947 (reprinted in 1947) Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, an underground tunnel between the two hotels existed. The tunnel provided the working staff and guests of both hotels the opportunity to go to and from each hotel without the need of exiting the building at the street level. Several newspaper articles of that time described the tunnel as a "Peacock Alley", which referred to the colorful tile that adorned the walls of the tunnel that lead into the basement of each hotel.

On the exterior, the building's decorative horizontal coursing at the third floor and at the sixth floor are important to the massing and architectural presence of the building on the corner lot. The primary and secondary elevations are more highly styled than the other elevations due to its location on the block. The primary façade faces west on Lafayette Street and the secondary façade faces south on Convention Street. The details on both elevations are identical. Twelve-over-twelve wood windows are found on all floors of these two elevations. Each window is topped with a simple brick lintel and a protruding keystone.

The Classical Revival features on the building include the following. A band of roundels featuring a floral motif separates the first and second floors. A pair of pilasters with decorative capitals make their way up the building from the bottom of the second floor windows to just above the third floor windows. The pilaster capitals are a composite of Acanthus leaves met by a pair of volutes and crowned with an Abacus. Each capital has a decorative shield in the center. In addition to this detail, just above the decorative capitals, within the entablature, are a bas-relief design featuring an urn with acanthus leaves and flowers pouring out of each side of the urn. This detail is topped with a denticulated cornice that wraps both ornamented sides of the building. The details on floors four to six are less decorative. However, where the double pilasters end, a single pilaster works its way up the wall to the top floor. The sixth floor is separated from the seventh floor by a narrow horizontal band. At the seventh floor (south and west elevations), tympanums above the windows include a keystone at the top and a bull's-eye at the center of its space. The building's elevator tower is also well decorated and sits like a crown on the building. It displays a pediment with broken return cornice and an oculus that has keystones at four points. It is situated above the center two windows of the façade. The sidewalls of the elevator tower that face the facade meet the seventh floor with a sensual scroll detail that softens the transition from one floor to the other.

On the tertiary elevations (north and east), the window sashes vary in size and material. On the north side, there are no decorative elements on the wall. The windows vary from twelve-over-twelve wood windows on the second and third floors to three-over-three metal frame windows on the upper floors (with some twelve-over-twelve windows intermixed). On the rear or east elevation, the windows are three-over-three sashes.

Since its completion, the following changes have been made to the Hotel King:

1. The storefront window and door openings have been modified resulting from its windows being bricked-in and in the 1970s the exterior brick surface was painted white.
2. Four short projecting balustrades above the roofline have been removed. The details are noted on the attached historic photograph.
3. The interior lobby space, like the upper floors, was altered in the 1970s by the State of Louisiana. The upper floor plan was altered at that time to incorporate offices where the hotel rooms were. Most recently, it was discovered that much of the original ceiling molding is still extant in the elevator lobby space, though

- hidden by the dropped ceiling grid and tile.
4. The underground tunnel had been bricked-in to remove dual access between structures.

### Assessment of Integrity

Despite the changes noted above, the building still retains the essential features that establish its identity as a Classical Revival commercial structure. The exterior of the building is in exceptional condition, with little to no deterioration noted on the upper floor features. The building's scale and proportion to the Heidelberg remain original. If someone from that era were to return to the site, they would have no problem recognizing and associating both hotels.

Significant date:	1932
Architect/Builder Architects:	Edward F. Neild/Ashton Glassell
Criterion:	A

### Significance Statement

The Hotel King was directly tied to the Heidelberg Hotel by ownership and operational use and it played an integral role in the area of Commerce in the city of Baton Rouge during the 1930s. Considered an adjunct hotel to the larger Heidelberg hotel, it was built to support the ever-expanding economy in Baton Rouge at the time.

On June 14, 1931, the Baton Rouge Morning Advocate reported: "Work on New Hotel Begins within a Week". The article cited Edward F. Neild of Shreveport as the architect and the general contractor as Ashton Glassell, also of Shreveport. It should be noted that Neild is also the architect of the Heidelberg Hotel. The article also stated that Roy L. Heidelberg and Joe C. King would operate the hotel. Interestingly, the article goes on to say the hotel was being named for King due to Heidelberg's appreciation of the manner in which King handled the catering departments of the Hotel Heidelberg and Istrouma Hotel. Both hotels were actually owned by the Interstate Hotel Company, but managed by Roy L. Heidelberg. The Hotel King would be the third hotel in downtown Baton Rouge owned by the same company and managed by Mr. Heidelberg. The same article goes on to say:

When the Hotel King is completed, Baton Rouge will be as well equipped as many cities twice the size of Baton Rouge. It will be equipped to handle almost any size convention having a total of practically 900 hotel rooms to say nothing of a number of smaller hotels which can be used should a convention of unusual size meet in Baton Rouge.

The Hotel King had 175 rooms, but they were not air-conditioned. The Heidelberg

Hotel, across the street had 250 rooms that were air-conditioned. According to the 1923-1947 (reprinted in 1947) Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, an underground tunnel between the two hotels existed (see Sanborn Map attached). This tunnel would be an integral part of the logistical operations of both hotels. An article in the Baton Rouge Morning Advocate December 31, 1931) said it best:

Some of the unusual features look to extreme economy in the operation of the hotel [King]. Light, power, heat, hot water and cold water will all come from the boiler room of the Hotel Heidelberg, thereby eliminating the expense of operating a boiler room. The laundry, located in the basement of the Hotel Heidelberg, will do all laundering for Hotel King. Also, the valet shop, located in the basement of Hotel Heidelberg will do all valet service.

Room service will be supplied from the large kitchen in Hotel Heidelberg, this service coming through the underground walkway and transferred by the elevator leading to the underground walkway. Special service tables on wheels and special heat retaining aluminum utensils will assure room service equal to any in Louisiana.

Prior to the construction of the Heidelberg Hotel in 1927 and the Hotel King in 1932, there were only three hotels located in the downtown area. According to the 1916 Sanborn Fire Insurance map, the Istrouma Hotel, one of Roy L. Heidelberg's chain of hotels was located one block northeast of the candidate hotels on Third Street. In addition to the Istrouma Hotel, there were the Mayer Hotel three doors down Third Street and a row of commercial hotels located a number of blocks away on Main and Lafayette Street. During this time, the downtown area also advertised one apartment building and a number of Boarding Rooms. Louisiana State University was located just north of the downtown area, hence the need for boarding rooms, etc. The 1923-1947 Sanborn map reflects a substantial growth of the downtown area. During this time, the two candidate hotels were constructed. Although the first three floors of the Hotel King existed for the Standard Motor Car Company (1922), the actual Hotel did not appear until 1932. Additionally, two apartment buildings (in addition to the one existing apartment building) were constructed, and a bus depot with restaurant and waiting rooms was constructed. The researcher also notes that many of the houses in the downtown area were changed to commercial establishments during the period reflected above. The economy was ever-growing and changing and the downtown area tried to keep up.

Looking further into the history of Baton Rouge, the researcher notes that the population in 1900 was 11,269. Rapid growth occurred in the 1910s and '20s, with the population doubling between 1910 and 1930 (14,897 to 30,279). Among the most important players in the economy (if not the most) was Standard Oil Company of Louisiana. Incorporated in the state in 1907, Standard Oil soon built a large refinery and launched Baton Rouge as a major petro-chemical center. During this period, three new industries (in addition to Standard Oil) located in Baton Rouge; and one of Louisiana's most controversial governors, Huey Pierce Long, built a monumental new Art Deco State Capitol and formal gardens on the former grounds of Louisiana State University, after it



moved to its new location south of town. By 1940, a third of the city's population was supported by the petroleum industry. During World War II the Baton Rouge plants expanded to produce aviation fuel, synthetic rubber, and chemicals for the war. Defense and war production programs brought 125 million dollars in new industrial construction to Baton Rouge. Baton Rouge's petro-chemical driven economy remained prosperous through the mid-twentieth century.

With all of this activity in the downtown Baton Rouge area, the need for additional hotel space was a given, especially during the legislative sessions. However, Roy Heidelberg had decided to close the newly opened hotel after the legislative session ended. The hotel quickly took on a new purpose, for a short period of time. Heidelberg allowed the hotel to be used by Louisiana State University to house its female employees and students. With enrollment at the newly located University at an all time high, dormitory space was in high demand. Heidelberg offered the hotel space to the university at a rate of \$10 per month for each resident and they could enjoy all of the amenities that came along with the hotel. A bus would take the girls to and from classes. However, this was short lived, by June 1933, the Hotel King had announced that rooms were again available to the public.

The Hotel King continued to serve the downtown area for many years until it ceased operation as a hotel in the 1970s and was converted to office space. Since then, the City of Baton Rouge has lost many of the hotels that once catered to the political and ever changing economy during the 1930s and 40s. Today, the Hotel King and the Heidelberg Hotel are the only two hotel buildings still extant in the downtown area from that period of time.

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