

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

ENTERED
9-20-91

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Robinson, Byron W., Residence
other names/site number Robinson Mansion, Steinway Hall, Lone Star Fraternity, SUM-347-13

2. Location

street & number 715 East Buchtel Avenue N/A not for publication
city, town Akron N/A vicinity
state Ohio code OH county Summit code 153 zip code 44224

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>2</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Barbara Paver 8-13-91
Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

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

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register. _____
- See continuation sheet. _____
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet. _____
- determined not eligible for the National Register. _____
- removed from the National Register. _____
- other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Tudor Revival (Jacobethan Revival)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls brick

roof tile

other stone

wood, glass

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Byron W. Robinson Residence is a massive 2½ storey building, completed in 1906 and located on the east side of Akron in an area that has subsequently become largely commercialized. However, the house still retains its original setting on 2.3 acres of land.

Basically rectangular in plan, the Robinson house was built on a raised brick foundation with a full basement. It has a stone watertable and the walls are constructed of red brick laid in a Flemish bond pattern. Finely tooled sandstone trim is incorporated in the sills, lintels cornices, and parapets. Most of the windows are 1/1 double hung wood sash. The central entry porch is supported by Ionic brick corner piers with stone Ionic columns in antis. A low parapet is crowned by a stone capping with large ornamental finials at the corners.* Flanking the porch are two 2-storey squared bays, which exhibit windows grouped in strings of three, and projecting stone cornices. Three large wall dormers rise above these bays and the front entry, each with paired, flattened arch windows. A two-storey flat-roofed wing on the west and a one-storey hipped roof wing on the east, flank the main block of the house. Dominating the rear facade is a large porte-cochere which echoes the front portico in its design. A central wall dormer on this facade separates two pairs of gabled roof dormers, each of which displays a prominent shaped vergeboard. The tiled roof is set off by stone capped parapets, two massive fluted chimneys on the east end, and a similar chimney set in from the west end of the house.

The interior of the Robinson Residence is largely intact. Most of the woodwork is oak, although the dining room was finished in mahogany. The front entry has leaded and beveled glass sidelights, with a mosaic tile floor in the foyer. Fluted pilasters with Corinthian capitals, wainscoting, pocket and round-arch doors with carved surrounds and original hardware, window seats, fireplaces, crown moldings, and molded plaster ceilings and ornamentations are among the distinctive interior features of the house. A large built-in sideboard and a heavily beamed ceiling with dentils are found in the dining room; unlike the rest of the house, this room also displays Ionic rather than Corinthian capitals on its fluted pilasters. The ornately carved open staircase is set off by three large stained glass windows over the middle landing. The third-floor ballroom, formerly subdivided into smaller rooms (sometime after 1936), has recently been completely restored.

To the rear of the Robinson house is located a large carriage house designed in a style to match the residence. It is also constructed of red brick, although in a running bond pattern, and is side-gabled with parapets capped by stone. A lower, parapet front gable rises over the carriage entrance, which has a stone lintel above the original doors. Two gabled dormers with vergeboards copy the design of the dormers on the rear facade of the house. The roof, with a central cupola, was probably tile when built, but is now shingled. A brick wall at the rear of the estate dates to the construction of the residence and carriage house.

* A low portico extends across the entire front facade of the house.

See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

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

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

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

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
Architecture

Period of Significance
1906

Significant Dates
1906

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
Hopkinson, Charles W.

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

The Byron W. Robinson Residence is significant under Criterion C, for architecture, as an outstanding example of the Tudor Revival's Jacobethan subtype. This house exhibits many of the elements that distinguish this style, it still retains a high degree of integrity in its architecture and setting, and it is the only example of the Jacobethan type recorded thus far in the Akron inventory.

The Tudor Revival style was "loosely based on a variety of late Medieval English prototypes," and reached its height of popularity in the 1920s and '30s. The earliest houses in this style date from around the turn of the century, and many of them were patterned after styles popular in the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods of English history (McAlester & McAlester 1984). "Jacobethan" houses are especially distinguished by parapeted gables, and this subtype is generally uncommon compared to the later examples of the various Tudor designs. Parapeted gables with ridge tablets are a prominent feature of the Robinson Residence's design, found not only on the side-gable tile roof, but also on the lower gabled wall dormers, portico, and porte-cochere, as well as on the carriage house. The gabled dormers with vergeboards, on the rear facade and on the carriage house, are also typically found on Jacobethan houses. The varied fenestration, with strings of three and five windows, paired windows in the dormers, and tall windows with multipane glazing in the west wing, are additional distinguishing elements of the style. The overall design is further heightened by the use of elaborate massive chimneys, stone trim, and by the magnificent interior of the house, notably the distinctive oak and mahogany woodwork which reflects Renaissance influence in the arched doors, fluted Corinthian and Ionic pilasters, mosaic tile work, and open staircase with large stained glass windows.

Jacobethan houses are generally rare, and in Akron especially so; to date, the Byron W. Robinson Residence is the only house of this style recorded in the Ohio Historic Inventory. In contrast, large numbers of later Tudor houses are documented, nearly all of which are located on the west side of Akron, reflecting the fact that this house was one of the last two large industrialist residences constructed on the east side. Encroaching commercialization produced a shift to Akron's west side as the preferred area for establishing such grand homes and mansions. The "other" Robinson mansion (SUM-326, built 1930), Stan Hywet (N.R. 1975), and most of the other architecturally distinctive houses of this era were built after the Byron Robinson house, in a variety of English and Colonial Revival styles.

Byron Robinson was born in 1860 and started work at age 17 as a bookkeeper in Whitmore, Robinsons & Co., a clay products company

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founded by the Robinson family in 1856. Robinson was named secretary of the firm when it was incorporated in 1887, but soon thereafter resigned and worked in the local cereals industry until 1899, when he returned to Whitman, Robinsons & Co. This and several other companies were combined in 1902 to form Robinson Clay Products Company, one of the nation's largest manufacturers of vitrified clay sewer pipe and other clay products. Byron Robinson was again named secretary, and in 1906, the same year he moved into this house, was designated to succeed his uncle, Henry Robinson, as president of the company. He continued in this position until his death two years later. Mrs. Robinson died in 1936, after which the house served as a maternity home until 1973. It then became the Lone Star Fraternity House, followed by office use in 1981, and has now been saved from demolition and restored for use as Akron's Steinway Hall.

In summary, the Byron W. Robinson Residence is significant as an outstanding example of Jacobethan style architecture, embodying most of the elements that distinguish this type of design. Sitting on its original acreage, the house retains a high degree of exterior and interior integrity, and is apparently the only noteworthy example of this style within the City of Akron. While Robinson was a prominent local businessman, active not only in the clay products industry, but also as a bank president, president of the Chamber of Commerce, and as a director of the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co., he did not move into this house until two years before his death; it thus has little direct association with the majority of his productive life.

The large carriage house located in the rear portion of the lot also contributes to the architectural significance of the nominated property. The parapeted gables capped with stone and the gabled dormers with vergeboard echo major design elements in the house. As with many high style residential structures of this time period, the carriage house is designed in the same style as the main house. Both the carriage house and the brick wall built at the same time and located at the rear of the estate contribute to the historic integrity of the nominated property.