



decorative flat arch brick surrounds with radiating voussoirs of brick. The top story windows have a label surround of header brick. A metal projecting cornice with modillions is at the upper edges of the building. It is in poor condition, and has fallen off in several sections.

On the north elevation, the three west bays extend further to the north than the original portion of the Royal, meeting the sidewalk. This section also is five stories tall, rather than four. At the roofline, brick post and metal rails enclose a portion of the roof as a terrace. On the roof, set a short distance back from the street, is a large square tower with red tile mansard roof. This has walls of stucco, and several fenestrations have been closed. The remaining windows on the tower are 1/1, double-hung. At the ground level of this section of the Royal are small commercial shops. The storefronts feature display windows with bulkheads below, and transoms of prism glass above. The storefronts are separated by square brick piers.

The windows on the south have arched lintels (original). A few windows on the rear have been enclosed. A rear entry door is on the basement level, and there is a metal fire escape on this side as well. Another rear two-story addition to the southwest has simple 2/1 windows.

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#### 20. Description of environment and outbuildings.

The Royal Hotel is on the southwest corner of South Street and S. Marietta, and occupies nearly half a city block. It is among a group of historic hotels. The elevation drops off from South Street down to River Street. To the southwest across River Street are trees lining the Dry Fork of the East Fork of Fishing River.

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#### 21. History and significance

The east portion of the Royal Hotel was constructed in 1898, and first known as Wholf's Tavern. It was purchased shortly thereafter by James Snapp, who came to Excelsior Springs in 1881 and opened the first hardware store in town. He decided to enter the hostelry business, and renamed this building "Snapp's Tavern." Snapp became more ambitious and wanted a larger hotel. He sold this structure to Lena G. Hill before 1905. She renamed it the Hotel Royal, and more than doubled the size of the hotel with additions to the west. At the same time, the north and east facades of the original structure were refaced with brick matching the new addition, the wrap-around porch was altered, and the windows replaced. On the southwest of the original structure, Mrs. Hill also constructed a small kitchen addition. The west additions had room for commercial ventures on the 1st floor. Doctor's offices, the Royal Hotel Beauty Parlor and Barber, the Royal Hotel Billiard Parlor, the Little Royal Cafe, a jeweler, cigar shop, were among the various enterprises which conducted business out of these storefronts.

The Royal Hotel had its own source of mineral water, the "Royal" Salt Sulphur water, served hot or cold in the lobby, free of charge to guests. The Royal Salt Sulphur water was recommended for the treatment of stomach and bowel trouble, liver diseases, jaundice, gall stones, catarrhal conditions of the intestines, and "diseases peculiar to women". The Royal Hotel Bath House operated separate departments for both men and women with masseuse and masseurs, advertising "all white attendants." The types of baths available were: Salt Sulphurs, Vapor, Turkish, Russian, Pack Douche, and artificial Nauheim baths for heart disease. As mentioned above, a physician had offices in the Royal, so that guests could receive prescriptions for the waters and bath treatments.

As one of the four examples of the property type "Hotel - 1st Class", the Royal Hotel is significant to the history of Excelsior Springs. The tremendous pressure for accommodations for the thousands of guests who flocked to the town resulted in the construction of these large hotels. The Royal is located among a group of hotels, both large and small, and is a key visual element in a potential historic district. Only two of the four 1st class hotels still operate as hotels; the other, the Elms, is under bankruptcy. The Royal retains a high degree of architectural integrity from its period of remodeling and additions. For its association with the mineral water history of Excelsior Springs, and as an excellent representation of its property type, it would be individually eligible for the National Register. It is worthy of preservation, and would also be a contributing building in a local or national historic district.

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#### 22. Sources of information.

Sanborn maps. City Directories. "Royal Hotel" file, Excelsior Springs Historical Museum.

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23. Prepared by

Deon Wolfenbarger

Three Gables Preservation

9550 NE Cookingham Drive

Kansas City, MO 64157

24. Date of survey

July, 1991

25. On National Register

Eligible for listing

Individual

District

Local designation

Eligible for local designation