

Conklin-Dern Mansion  
711 East South Temple Street  
Salt Lake City  
Salt Lake County  
Utah

HABS No. U-73

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UTAH,  
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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. U-73

## CONKLIN-DERN MANSION

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UTAH

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Location: 711 East South Temple Street, Salt Lake City,  
Salt Lake County, Utah  
Latitude: 40° 46' 12" N Longitude: 111° 52' 11" W

Present Owner: Elmer D. Tucker, Trustee

Present Occupant: Woodbury Corporation

Present Use: Realtor's Offices

Statement of  
Significance: This is the home of a former Governor of Utah and  
Secretary of War in Franklin D. Roosevelt's cabinet.  
It was the official Governor's mansion from 1925 to  
1932 and is one of the remaining large mansions on  
South Temple Street (Old Brigham Street).

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

## 1. Original and subsequent owners:

Brigham Young (February 12, 1857)  
Andrew Sprowl (August 5, 1871)  
Agatha I. Conklin (January 30, 1882)  
John Dern (May 1, 1897)  
George H. Dern (December 23, 1923)  
Lottie B. Dern (December 26, 1939)  
Woodbury Corporation and Nina Woodbury (1944)  
Ben Lomond Enterprises (1965)  
Elmer D. Tucker, Trustee (1966)

## 2. Date of erection: c. 1887

## 3. Architect: Not known.

## 4. Builder, suppliers, etc.: Not known.

5. Alterations and additions: Carriage house-stable  
removed and presented to Sons of Utah Pioneers, Pioneer  
Village, Salt Lake City, along with some fireplaces,  
light fixtures and furnishings. Third floor ballroom  
converted into billiard room by Dern Family.

Building divided into apartments during World War II.  
Present occupant, Woodbury Realtors, has added partitions,  
doors, panelling to convert the structure to office uses.

B. Historical Events and Persons Associated with the Building:

This fine Victorian mansion was built c. 1887 by Jeremiah C. Conklin, who acquired the land in 1882 and borrowed the money for the construction. Mr. Conklin was a realtor and property manager in Salt Lake City. In 1897 Conklin sold the home, for \$20,000, to John Dern, wealthy mining man, who founded and was President of the Consolidated Mercur Company. Mr. Dern and his family emigrated to Utah from Nebraska, where he had achieved considerable stature as a merchant during the years following his immigration from Germany. It was in Dodge County, Nebraska that son George was born in 1872.

George was first employed by the Mercur Gold Mining and Milling Company in Mercur, Utah, and later became its General Manager. He was elected to the Utah Senate and in 1924 became Governor of the State of Utah, a position he served in until appointed Secretary of War under the Roosevelt Administration in 1933. He died in office on August 27, 1936.

After the Derns purchased the home, they converted the third floor ballroom into a billiard room. The home once boasted exquisite chandeliers, fireplaces, stained glass windows and elegant woodwork, as well as a turned rose-wood fence surrounding the property and a fine stable-carriage house. Franklin D. Roosevelt, while Governor of New York, was entertained there by the Derns, and it served as Utah's Executive mansion from 1925 to 1932.

Soon after Governor Dern's death, the home was sold to the Woodbury Corporation, who converted it into office use for a realty company. The carriage house and many of the interior furnishings were presented to the Sons of Utah Pioneers and moved to their Pioneer Village at 3000 Connor Street, Salt Lake City. During World War II, the home was divided into apartments to alleviate the housing shortage.

The present tenants have installed modern wood paneling in the dining and kitchen spaces; doors have been added, stairs cut off, but still much of the original finish remains and the exterior is essentially unchanged.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Abstracts of Title, Salt Lake City, City and County Building, Salt Lake City, Utah.

2. Bibliography:

Ferguson, Melba M. "Last Look at a Landmark," Salt Lake Tribune, August 19, 1956, Salt Lake City.

Habbeshaw, Carolyn. "Salesmen in the Sitting Room,"  
Deseret News, August 8, 1963, Salt Lake City.

Mitchell, Robert. "Dern Home to Go?," Deseret News,  
November 1, 1967, Salt Lake City.

Utah State Gazetteer and Business Directory, R.L. Polk  
Company, Salt Lake City, Utah for years 1869, 1874,  
1884, 1890, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1900.

Prepared by John L. Giusti, AIA  
August 8, 1968

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural interest: Frame Victorian mansion used as gubernatorial mansion in Dern Administration.
2. Condition of fabric: Good, but interior much remodeled for office use. Exterior maintenance suspended anticipating proposed demolition.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: This three-story house of irregular shape is about 50 feet square.
2. Foundations: Stone
3. Wall construction, finish, and color: White clapboard.
4. Structural system, framing: Wood frame throughout.
5. Porches: One-story columned porch at front.
6. Chimneys: Five - correspond to original fireplace locations.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: Original entrance replaced with aluminum and glass storefront type entrance.
  - b. Windows: Double-hung one-over-one.
8. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: Hip and gables.
  - b. Cornice: Dentils at cornice.
  - c. Towers: Square tower with steep hip roof.

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C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. First floor: Entrance hall leads to open stairs. Large rooms on either side connected with open arches.
- b. Second floor: Large hall from which most of the rooms open.
- c. Third floor: Ballroom at top of stairs.

2. Stairways: Open from first to third floors with ornamental balusters of walnut and maple.

3. Flooring: Narrow oak. Tile on bathrooms and entries: buff, red and black colors.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster with wood wainscots

5. Doorways and doors: Five-panel doors with glass transoms

6. Decorative features and trim: Paneled wainscots contrast walnut and maple.

7. Notable hardware: Highly ornamented heavy brass catalog items.

8. Lighting, type of fixtures: All replaced with fluorescent fixtures.

9. Heating: Central heating. Fireplaces in many rooms removed and mantels stored on third floor. Some fireplaces remain on second floor. Some overmantels mirrored and framed with whatnot shelves.

D. Site and Surroundings:

1. Faces south to South Temple Street.

2. Outbuildings: Carriage house has been moved to Pioneer Village.

3. Landscaping and walks, enclosures: Sidewalk along front of property and to front entrance. Parking areas behind and to west of house.

Prepared by Paul Goeldner, AIA  
Supervisory Architect  
Utah Project 1968  
September 10, 1968

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

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This record is part of a Utah Survey conducted in the summers of 1967 and 1968 under joint sponsorship of the Historic American Buildings Survey of the Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation of the National Park Service and the Utah Heritage Foundation.

Field work, historic research and record drawings were done under the direction of Project Supervisor Paul Goeldner, AIA, (Texas Tech University) assisted by Project Historian John Giusti, AIA, (University of Utah). Photographs were made by P. Kent Fairbanks of Salt Lake City.

Student Assistant Architects on the 1967 team were Robert M. Swanson and Charles W. Barrow, (University of Texas) and Kenneth L. Lambert and Keith Sorenson, (University of Utah). 1968 Student Assistant Architects were Keith Sorenson, Charles D. Harker and Robert Schriever, (University of Utah) and Donald G. Prycer, (Texas A & M University).