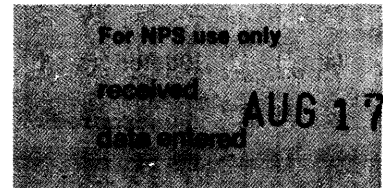


100-101-0118
EPA 12/31/04

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections



1. Name

historic Hotel Fort Des Moines

and/or common Hotel Fort Des Moines

2. Location

street & number 10th & Walnut Streets, not for publication

city, town Des Moines vicinity of congressional district 4

state Iowa code 19 county Polk code 153

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
☐ district	☐ public	☒ occupied	☐ agriculture
☒ building(s)	☒ private	☐ unoccupied	☒ commercial
☐ structure	☐ both	☐ work in progress	☐ educational
☐ site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	☐ entertainment
☐ object	☒ N.A. in process	☒ yes: restricted	☐ government
	☐ being considered	☐ yes: unrestricted	☐ industrial
		☐ no	☐ military
			☐ museum
			☐ park
			☐ private residence
			☐ religious
			☐ scientific
			☐ transportation
			☐ other:

4. Owner of Property

name John G. Graham, 811 Grand, John C. Hunter, 700 2nd Avenue, Edwin R. Hunter, 218 6th Avenue., all in Des Moines

street & number see above

city, town Des Moines vicinity of state Iowa

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Registry of Deeds Office

street & number Polk County Courthouse

city, town Des Moines state Iowa

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? ☒ yes ☐ no

date N.A. federal state county local

depository for survey records N. A.

city, town state

7. Description

Condition☐ excellent☒ good☐ fair☐ deteriorated☐ ruins☐ unexposed**Check one**☐ unaltered☒ altered**Check one**☒ original site☐ moved

date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The hotel is a fine, essentially unchanged example of early twentieth century hotel architecture. It illustrates that phase of American tall building design when many architects used the principle of the classical column (solid base, relatively undorned shaft and decorative capital) to grapple with the new shape, the tall building. The hotel is also an important example of the work of Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson, the leading architectural firm in Iowa during the early part of the century. The firm designed many Des Moines and Iowa landmarks, including the Equitable Building, Polk County Courthouse, East High School and more than fifty buildings on three state campuses.

The two-story base of the hotel is of granite and limestone with a smooth rusticated ashlar finish. Of special note are the series of massive round-arched windows, ornate keystones, low relief smooth pilasters and simple dentilled entablature. The base's stone contrasts with the darker brick of the remaining H-shaped floors. At part of the "H" the stonework continues upward and surrounds simple rectangular windows having bosses, modillions and molding. Large stone urns highlight the round-arched windows. Only smooth, flat stone sills mark the numerous guest room windows and therefore do not detract from the delicate detail of the upper entablature. Displayed are a restrained melange of urns, festoons and scrolls, topped with dentils, ovulo and modillions.

The hotel occupies a corner lot at the west end of Des Moines' central business district. Its location and size allow it to dominate yet not overwhelm this commercial area. The other corner structures are of similar proportion despite differences in age and/or materials. Both the Firestone store and the curving concrete parking garage are of newer materials, while the drugstore and commercial buildings adjacent to the hotel are roughly contemporary with it. The Firestone store is covered with large yellow tiles and would blend with few settings. The hotel shares the block with two smaller brick commercial structures dating from the twenties, and a parking lot fills out the block to the rear.

The architects' plans and several contemporary newspaper accounts date the hotel's construction at 1918-1919. Room arrangement and use are essentially unchanged. Most guest rooms are the same, except for larger suites (33 in all) that have been made out of smaller guest rooms and some conversion to apartments. Shops and a coffee shop once lined the Walnut Street side, and that space is being readied for return to use as shops and office space. There is now a bar on the corner spot where a drugstore originally was. The front desk has been moved from the west to the east side of the lobby. The former Walnut Street entrance is now a fire exit, while a new courtyard and rear entrance have been added to provide for guests arriving by car. The present owners have removed unsightly red glass from the ground floor windows and replaced it with clear glass and infill, probably concrete, that matches the original limestone. Ground floor pilasters create a regular module, and this remains unchanged. Perhaps the most significant change, one which dates from the 1950s or earlier, is the covering over of the lobby ceiling. Originally the lobby was open for two stories, but this space was filled in and used to provide more meeting rooms on the mezzanine.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
☐ prehistoric	☐ archeology-prehistoric	☐ community planning	☐ landscape architecture	☐ religion
☐ 1400–1499	☐ archeology-historic	☐ conservation	☐ law	☐ science
☐ 1500–1599	☐ agriculture	☐ economics	☐ literature	☐ sculpture
☐ 1600–1699	☒ architecture	☐ education	☐ military	☐ social/
☐ 1700–1799	☐ art	☐ engineering	☐ music	☐ humanitarian
☐ 1800–1899	☐ commerce	☐ exploration/settlement	☐ philosophy	☐ theater
☒ 1900–	☐ communications	☐ industry	☐ politics/government	☐ transportation
		☐ invention		☐ other (specify)

Specific dates 1918–19–present **Builder/Architect** Proudfoot, Bird, and Rawson

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Once the largest hotel in the state, the Hotel Fort Des Moines is a representative example of the work of one of Iowa's leading architectural firms, Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson. The firm dominated the state's architectural profession for 30 years, between 1900 and 1930. Though not groundbreakers or new architectural trends or avant-garde designers, the firm made a significant contribution to Iowa's architectural heritage, especially in Des Moines and on several college campuses. Full evaluation of the firm and the hotel's standing within their body of work requires a definitive study of Proudfoot, Bird and Rawson.

Around 1900 the firm, then known as Proudfoot and Bird, won a design competition for an Iowa State University building. Their performance earned them further commissions from the state, and they eventually designed thirty buildings for the Ames campus, eighteen for the University of Iowa and five for the University of Northern Iowa. Indianola born Willis T. Proudfoot received little formal architectural training. Active in Republican circles, he was the promoter who got the contracts. George W. Bird was educated in the Beaux-Arts tradition at a Philadelphia atelier, and it was chiefly from him that the designs emanated. The firm grew and changed over the years, although it remained loyal to Beaux-Arts traditions. In 1910 MIT graduate Harry Rawson joined the firm.

Some of the most influential promoters of Des Moines were responsible for the hotel's construction. Its arrival coincided with the progressive period of the city's physical development, the 1910s and 1920s. In 1919 alone, the Hotel Fort Des Moines, the Savery Hotel, and a large theater in the Iowa Building opened. This and other private building complemented new public buildings, such as the Municipal Building, General Hospital, Federal Building and the Municipal Courthouse and City Jail. In the 1920s 22 new schools were built and 8 new downtown buildings opened or were in the planning stages. The main backers of the Hotel Fort Des Moines were Richard R. Rollins who operated Des Moines Realty and Securities Company and had extensive business interests, Frederick C. Hubbell who worked closely with his father Frederick M. Hubbell in handling their many lucrative investments, Clyde Herring who owned an auto dealership and was active in Democratic politics, and Norman Wilchinski, who was president of Younker Brothers and active in Jewish charitable causes. Thus, the promoters of the hotel represented a wide spectrum of Des Moines society and exemplified the cooperation of the period.

9. Major Bibliographical References

see continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Des Moines SW Quadrangle

Quadrangle scale 1/24,000

UMT References

A

1	5	4	4	7	5	4	0	4	6	0	3	6	0	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

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D

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E

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F

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N.A.			

state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Barbara B. Long and Ralph J. Christian, Architectural Historians

organization Division of Historic Preservation

date July 1982

street & number East 12th and Grand Avenue

telephone 515/281-5111

city or town Des Moines

state Iowa

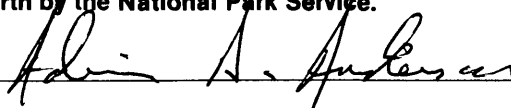
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title Director

date July 20, 1982

For NPS use only

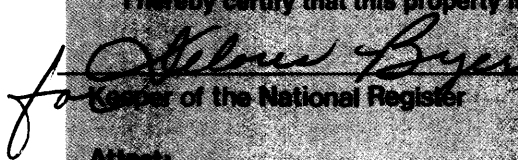
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the

National Register

date

9/16/82

for 
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service****National Register of Historic Places
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The hotel has been remodeled regularly, often in conjunction with the arrival of a new set of hotel operators, in 1936, 1945, the 1950's and the 1970's. The exterior is nearly as when the hotel opened in 1919, and there are some original interior elements, including marble floors and baseboards. The walnut paneling and columns of the first and mezzanine floors are both original and added (to match the original during the latest renovation). Of special note is the stairway having a curved brass railing and intricate wrought iron openwork. On a column by the stairs, the egg and dart molding of the original is visible. Also original is a two-bay and the stairway paneling.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 1

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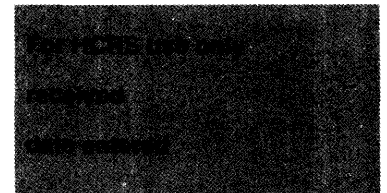
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Photographs in possession of: Graham Investment, 811 Grand
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Annals of Iowa

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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Continuation sheet

Item number 10

Page 1

LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Description of hotel boundaries, excluding the rear courtyard which is built on leased property:

Lot Two (2), except the south 14 feet thereof, in Block Twenty (20); Fractional Lot Three (3) in Block Twenty (20): and that strip of ground formerly used as an alley between Fractional Lot 3 and Lot 2 in said Block 20; all in H.M. Hoxie's Addition to the Two of Fort Des Moines; and Lots 3 and 4 in Block 3 in West Fort Des Moines; also Lots 7 and 8 in Block 20 in H.M. Moxie's Addition to the Town of Fort Des Moines; including vacated alleys, if any.

Description of leased property:

Lot Nine (9) of the Official Plat of a tract of ground comprising Lots Five (5) and Six (6) Block Twenty (20) Hoxie's Addition to the town of Fort Des Moines, and Lots Five (5) and Six (6) Block Three (3) West Fort Des Moines, and a small piece of ground not numbered in the northeast corner of Keene & Poindexter's Addition to Fort Des Moines, all of which is now included in and forming a part of the City of Des Moines, Iowa.