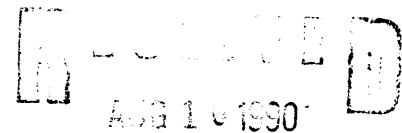


Form 10-900  
(Rev. 8/86)  
Wisconsin Word Processor Format (1331D)  
(Approved 3/87)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

**NATIONAL  
REGISTER**

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. Use letter quality printer in 12 pitch, using an 85 space line and a 10 space left margin. Use only 25% or greater cotton content bond paper.

1. Name of Property

historic name HOTEL WHITING

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 1408 Strong's Avenue

N/A not for publication

city, town Stevens Point

N/A vicinity

state Wisconsin

code WI

county Portage

code 097

zip code 54481

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	1	
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		
		1	0
			Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

No. 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 X 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 X meets      does not meet the National Register criteria.      See continuation sheet.

*[Signature]*  
Signature of certifying official

7/31/90  
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer- WI

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

*Beth Boland*

9/13/90

     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

6. Functions or Use

Historic Functions  
(enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions  
(enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Hotel

DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling

COMMERCE/Restaurant

---

## 7. Description

---

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Materials  
(enter categories from instructions)

Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival

---

---

foundation concrete

walls limestone

brick

roof asphalt

other limestone

iron

---

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Hotel Whiting is located on the southwest corner of Strongs Avenue and Clark Street, one block south of the Matthias Mitchell Public Square - Main Street Historic District (NRHP 1986), and one block north of the Portage County Courthouse. The immediate environment of the hotel is a mix of commercial, light industrial, and residential usages approximately 1,000 feet east of the Wisconsin River. A five-story Mediterranean Revival building, the Hotel Whiting was built of masonry in 1923. It is one of the tallest buildings in Stevens Point and faces the four-story Hardware Insurance Companies Building on Strongs Avenue.

The plan configuration is rectangular on the first floor with four L-shaped upper stories oriented along the south and east elevations. The foundations and superstructure are reinforced concrete. A freight elevator shaft and exterior chimney are located at the southwest corner of the building. A one-story masonry entrance of contemporary construction is located on the west facade near the southwest corner, and another of similar construction is located on the south facade near the southeast corner. All roofs are flat. The character defining elevations face north and east. These are surfaced with dressed limestone on the first floor and buff face brick on the upper four floors. The west facade, utility features, and contemporary entries are common brick. The south facade is common brick infilling the reinforced concrete superstructure. The fenestration on the first floor is functional. On the principal east facade historic copper kickpanels, large plate glass windows, and multipaned transoms illuminate five retail units. At the northwest corner of the building eight stilted arch windows with multipaned casements, fanlights, and wrought iron railings light the dining room. The fenestration on the upper floors is formal with tripartite window groups over the main entrance on the east facade. Flat arch windows with double-hung, single-paned sash are located on the second through fourth floors; stilted arch windows with multi-paned casements and fanlights are located on the fifth floor. The fifth floor windows are fitted with wrought iron railings and unified by limestone belt courses, keystones, and medallions. Here the tripartite window group suggests a balcony. Above the fifth floor is a denticulated copper cornice and brick parapet wall. There are two principal entrances. The main entrance on Strongs Avenue is two-stories and recessed behind a large round arch with flanking corinthian columns, pilasters, and a frieze ornamented with wreaths and swags. The historic doorway features have been replaced by aluminum and glass door systems. The secondary entrance is located on Clark Street beneath a copper canopy with classical crestings. The historic doorway features of this entrance have also been replaced by contemporary systems similar to those at the main entrance. Entries to the five retail units on the east facade are recessed and glazed.

X See continuation sheet

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Stevens Point, Portage Co., WI

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The main floor interior is arranged around an L-shaped lobby connecting the principal entries at Strongs Avenue and Clark Street. At the southwest corner of the lobby, near the center of the building, is the elevator and main staircase. The staircase is marble to the first landing, steel and concrete thereafter. The lobby provides access to the main dining room and private dining room on the west, and the ladies' writing room and the clubroom on the south. The walls in the lobby are finished in grey marble wainscoting and raised plaster panels, accenting the massive elements of the building superstructure and providing a classical motif. Monochromatic floral stencils boarder the principal plaster panels. A leaded glass skylight with floral motifs is located at the southwest corner of the lobby and originally lit the registration desk which is no longer extant. Contemporary brass ceiling lanterns and wall sconces replicate the historic light fixtures documented by photograph. Leaded french doors provide access to the vestibules and public rooms. The largest of these is the main dining room. This area repeats the same wall treatment as the lobby with wood panelled wainscoting. A central leaded glass skylight with floral motifs lights the dance floor. Three leaded glass french doors with fan lights connect the main dining room with the wood-panelled private dining room, which also features a red tile floor and wood beams stenciled in polychromatic floral motifs. South of the lobby the ladies' writing room is also wood panelled and similarly distinguished by plaster ceiling tracery. Opening onto this room is the clubroom commonly known as the Mural Bar, so called for the murals painted by Stevens Point artist John Pfiffner in 1946, depicting scenes of logging and local social history.

Above the first floor were approximately 120 guest rooms. These were recently converted into twenty-one luxury apartments as part of a comprehensive building renovation approved by the National Park Service. Originally each floor consisted of thirty guest rooms, opening onto an L-shaped corridor with central access to the elevator and staircase. The floors were carpeted, the walls plastered and finished with simple wood trim and unpaneled doors. The floors, walls, and woodwork of each room were finished in the same manner as the corridors, differentiated from each other by either a small private bathroom or a corner lavatory sink. The approved rehabilitation retained the historic fabric of the corridors and removed the guest room partitions to create one-bedroom and two-bedroom apartments. The plan of these apartments vary to conform with the corridor plan and the exterior fenestration, but each retains or replicates the simple historic floor, wall and woodwork treatments, complimenting the historic features of the corridors and sustaining the integrity of the entire building.

### 8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:        nationally        statewide   X   locally

Applicable National Register Criteria   X   A        B   X   C        D

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

#### Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

Commerce

Period of Significance

1921-1940 (1)

Significant Dates

1921-1923 (2)

Architecture

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Clas, Alfred C., architect (3)

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

The Hotel Whiting is nominated to the National Register for its local significance under criterion A and criterion C. Financed by public stock subscription, the Hotel Whiting is historically significant for its association with the commercial development of Stevens Point in the early 20th century. It also embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Mediterranean Revival period of construction and is reflective of a period of significant growth and achievement in Stevens Point.

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Stevens Point incorporated as a city in 1853, developing in the 19th century as an important lumbering, commercial, and transportation center serving the Wisconsin River pineries and the surrounding farmland of Portage County. In 1870 Stevens Point became the county seat, and in 1871 the Wisconsin Central Railroad established its division repair shops there. A state normal school was located at Stevens Point in 1892.

By the turn of the century Stevens Point had a population of 9,524. (4) Lumbering had exhausted local resources of white pine, and the economy was gradually shifting to the manufacture of finished wood products. At this time the area also began to develop as a center of paper and pulp manufacture with the construction of the Whiting-Plover Paper Company mills in 1893. These significant industries were joined in 1914 by the Hardware Insurance Companies, which evolved into Sentry Insurance, one of the largest insurance companies in the nation. (5)

  X   See continuation sheet

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Rapid industrialization and commercial growth during the early 20th century led to the formation of the Stevens Point Chamber of Commerce, which helped to implement an aggressive program of community development and promotion. The chamber program resulted in a period of significant achievement that included the construction of the Hotel Whiting, the development of public waterworks, and the adoption of the city manager system of government. (6)

COMMERCE

The Cultural Resource Management Plan does not yet include a study unit on commerce, and no other statewide overview of hotels as a resource type currently exists. Nevertheless, hotels and other forms of public lodgings were an important element of Wisconsin's historic commercial development. Examples of this resource type can be found in even the smallest settlements and are reflective of various periods of commercial growth. Hotels were usually among the earliest commercial buildings in a village, often hastily constructed. They were quickly replaced or joined by more substantial facilities as the forces of settlement, railroad construction and industrialization generated an increasing demand for overnight accommodations. Hotels in the late nineteenth century were typically constructed in close proximity to railroad depots, central business districts, or natural features offering recreational or therapeutic opportunities. After the turn of the century, construction of a "first class" hotel in smaller cities was often viewed as a solution to declining commercial growth. These early 20th century hotels were sometimes ambitious, the product of community pride and public stock subscription. Very often unprofitable after the Depression, one or more wealthy citizens would ultimately keep these hotels in operation as a community service until after World War II, when the prestige of downtown hotels generally declined.

The Hotel Whiting in Stevens Point is reflective of this early 20th century period of hotel construction as community enterprise. In 1920 the Stevens Point Chamber of Commerce was organized with Fred Copps, H. A. Vetter, P. J. Jacobs, and E. A. Oberwieser elected to the board. Copps and Vetter were officers of successful family businesses and held public office. Jacobs was secretary and treasurer of the Hardware Insurance Companies. Oberwieser was an officer of the Whiting-Plover Paper Company and was president of the Citizens Bank. (8) The board adopted and executed a five-point program promoting hotel construction, road improvements, public waterworks, street lighting, and telephone service. Its first priority was the construction of a first class hotel. To facilitate this project the chamber incorporated a management and real estate company and commenced an aggressive stock subscription campaign with the largest number of shares subscribed by Oberweiser, Vetter, Jacobs, and Copps. When the campaign fell short of its goal, George Whiting of Menasha, president of Whiting-Plover Paper Company, subscribed the shortage

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and the hotel was named in his honor. (9)

The Hotel Whiting played a significant role in local commerce during the early 20th century. With its completion, six other hotels in Stevens Point closed their doors, giving the 120-room Whiting a fifty per cent share of available accommodations in the city. (10) The Whiting was also the most modern and luxurious hotel in Stevens Point. Modeled after first class hotels found in major cities, the Hotel Whiting had smart shops, public rooms with marble appointments, and guest rooms with private baths. Situated across the street from the impressive headquarters of Hardware Insurance Companies, the Whiting played host to all insurance executives and sales trainees brought to Stevens Point for conferences and meetings, many of which were held at the Whiting. The public rooms at the Hotel Whiting provided Stevens Point with more sophisticated facilities for social events that had previously been held in fraternal halls or private residences. The main dining room, private dining room and club room were the first of their kind in Stevens Point, and very quickly utilized for stylish weddings, card parties, and service club luncheons. Formal dinner dances organized by the Whiting Dancing Club were for many years a significant social event in Stevens Point. (11)

Its gala opening was attended by more than 300 people and the building was cited in the local press as "the finest hotel north of Chicago." (12) The Whiting was an impressive visual landmark and the object of significant civic pride. It also lent considerable credibility to the Chamber of Commerce program of community improvement. Following the completion of the hotel, the chamber easily gained support for public acquisition of private water works, bonding for better roads, the installation of streetlights, and the city manager form of municipal government, all of which were accomplished before the close of the decade. Yet in spite of these accomplishments and community support, the hotel languished financially. The League of Wisconsin Municipalities, the State Historical Society, and several other state conventions were procured by the Chamber of Commerce to increase revenues, but efforts to promote the Whiting as the premiere resort hotel of the Wisconsin River pineries were less successful. (13) Losses continued through the Depression until World War II, when the Hotel Whiting housed officers training Air Force cadets at UW - Stevens Point, and fed draftees on their way to physicals in Milwaukee. Portions of the hotel were subsequently used as a university dormitory for women and temporary housing for Soo Line crews. (14) With the relocation of Sentry Insurance offices and the construction of hotels on the city's north side, the Hotel Whiting went into a decline and closed in 1986. At its closing the Whiting was still owned by many of the descendants of the principal shareholders, operating it at a loss as a community service. (15)

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Section number 8 Page 3 Hotel Whiting  
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In 1989 the hotel was carefully remodeled and now functions as an apartment building with a restaurant and bar on the first floor.

ARCHITECTURE

Located just south of the Matthias Mitchell Public Square - Main Street Historic District, the Hotel Whiting is of local architectural significance as a fine example of the Mediterranean Revival period of construction in Stevens Point. It was designed by the prominent Milwaukee architect Alfred C. Clas whose hotel work in Wisconsin included the Marinette Hotel, the Park Hotel in Madison, and the Plankinton House, Republican House, and St. Charles Hotel in Milwaukee. (16) The distinguishing stylistic features of the Hotel Whiting are the flat roof, dentiled cornice, and symmetrical facade. Another important feature is the use of stone, brick, and window variations to suggest the story differentiation of its European antecedents. The design of the Hotel Whiting is further enriched by the two-story colonnaded entry and the period revival public rooms which reflect a broad eclectism common to the period of construction. These features include stenciled beams and Gothic ceiling tracery.

The architectural context of the Hotel Whiting strengthens its significance. The adjacent downtown historic district is a distinctly separate entity, comprised largely of two-story, late nineteenth and early 20th century commercial party wall buildings. It includes fine examples of the Neoclassic Revival and the Queen Anne period of construction, but it does not include examples of Mediterranean Revival design. The immediate neighbor of the hotel is the four-story Neoclassic Revival Hardware Insurance Companies building. Similar in size and drawing from related precedents, the Hardware Insurance Companies building and the Hotel Whiting present an imposing juxtaposition of concurrent revival styles.

While the architectural study unit of the CRM Plan is not complete, it does identify that the Mediterranean Revival style is relatively rare and sometimes confused with Spanish Colonial Revival. While the Whiting Hotel cannot be established as the only example of the Mediterranean style ever built in Stevens Point, it is the only example known to be extant.

The Hotel Whiting also contains a series of murals painted by local artist John Pfiffner in 1946 depicting the logging and social history of Stevens Point.



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- (1) While the historic use of the Hotel Whiting continued until 1986, the period of significance begins in 1921 with the completion of the building and ends in 1940, to conform with the 50-year rule mandated by the National Park Service.
- (2) Stevens Point Daily Journal; 10/24/21, 5:2 and 1/16/23, 1:4.
- (3) Ibid.; 4/19/21, 5:2.
- (4) McGlachlin, 80.
- (5) A History of the City of Stevens Point, 11.
- (6) Rosholt, 436.
- (7) Stevens Point Daily Journal; 1/2/86, 1:1.
- (8) Stevens Point Daily Journal; 8/26/20, 1:5.
- (9) Ibid.; 4/8/22, 1:1.
- (10) Ibid.; 2/26/21, 1:7.
- (11) Ibid.; 1/31/86, 1:1.
- (12) Ibid.; 8/17/23, 2:2.
- (13) Ibid.; 7/7/23, 7:1.
- (14) Ibid.; 5/7/80, 1:1.
- (15) Ibid.; 1/2/86, 1:1.
- (16) Ibid.; 4/19/21, 1:5.

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### 9. Major Bibliographical References

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McGlachlin, Edward. A Standard History of Portage County. Louis Publishing Co., 1919. Chicago, Illinois.

Rosholt, Malcolm. Our County, Our Story. Worzalla Publishing Co., 1959. Stevens Point, Wisc.

\_\_\_\_\_. A History of the City of Stevens Point. Private, 1958. Stevens Point, Wisc.

Stevens Point Daily Journal: 10/24/21; 1/16/23; 4/19/21; 8/26/20; 4/8/22; 2/26/21; 5/7/80.

Wyatt, Barbara. Cultural Resource Management Plan. State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986. Madison, Wisconsin.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet

☒ preliminary determination of  
individual listing (36 CFR 67)  
has been requested

\_\_\_\_ previously listed in the National  
Register

\_\_\_\_ previously determined eligible by  
the National Register

\_\_\_\_ designated a National Historic  
Landmark

\_\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American  
Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American  
Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

\_\_\_\_ Other State agency

\_\_\_\_ Federal agency

\_\_\_\_ Local government

\_\_\_\_ University

\_\_\_\_ Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

---

### 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of property Less than one acre

#### UTM References

A	<u>1/6</u>	<u>2/9/4/8/0/0</u>	<u>4/9/3/2/9/0/0</u>	B	<u>1/6</u>	<u>2/9/4/8/0/0</u>	<u>4/9/3/2/8/7/0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

C	<u>1/6</u>	<u>2/9/4/7/5/0</u>	<u>4/9/3/2/8/7/0</u>	D	<u>1/6</u>	<u>2/9/4/7/5/0</u>	<u>4/9/3/2/9/0/0</u>
____ See continuation sheet							

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#### Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is described by Certified Survey Map No. 3527 recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds for Portage County, Wisconsin in Volume 12, page 185 as Document No. 392722 being a part of Outlot 5, Strongs, Ellis & Others, Section 32, Township 24 North, Range 8 East, City of Stevens Point, Portage County, Wisconsin.

\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet

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#### Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire parcel of land historically associated with the hotel. No other principal or secondary building is located within the boundaries as described.

\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet

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### 11. Form Prepared By

---

name/title Peter J. Adams

organization \_\_\_\_\_

street & number 537 East Wisconsin Avenue

city or town Neenah

date January 20, 1990

telephone 414/722-1422

state Wisconsin zip code 54956

NPS Form 10-900a  
(Rev. 8-86)  
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Approved 2/87

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				Stevens Point, Portage Co., WI

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Heritage Investment  
c/o John Seramur  
1408 Strong's Avenue, Apt. 501  
Stevens Point, Wisconsin 54481  
715/345-4200

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Photographic Materials - Identification

Hotel Whiting  
Stevens Point, Portage County, Wisconsin  
Photos by Peter Adams, June 1989.  
Negatives at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin

Photo #1 of 10: View from northeast.

Photo #2 of 10: View from west.

Photo #3 of 10: View from south.

Photo #4 of 10: View from southeast.

Photo #5 of 10: Interior, view of main staircase.

Photo #6 of 10: Interior, view of Clark Street lobby entrance.

Photo #7 of 10: Interior, view of dining room.

Photo #8 of 10: Interior, view of private dining room.

Photo #9 of 10: Interior, view of Ladies' Writing Room with plaster tracery ceiling.

Photo #10 of 10: Interior, view of Mural Bar and two murals.