

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 10-900-a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name St. Helens Hotel
other names/site number St. Helens Inn

2. Location

street & number 440 North Market Boulevard not for publication
city, town Chehalis vicinity
state Washington code WA county Lewis code 041 zip code 98532

3. Classification

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

Name of related multiple property listing:
Historic Resources of Chehalis

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.

Jacob E. Johnson
Signature of certifying official 8/5/91
Date

Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Washington State
State of 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. Autumn 1991 10/18/91
 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:)

h Signature of the Keeper _____
Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: hotel
Commerce/Trade: restaurant
Commerce/Trade: specialty stores

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: multiple dwelling
Commerce/Trade: restaurant
Commerce/Trade: specialty stores

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation poured concrete
walls brick
roof tar/built-up
other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The St. Helens Hotel is a six-story brick commercial building constructed in a simplified Neoclassical style between 1917 and 1921. It is the tallest building in Chehalis and an imposing landmark on the cityscape. While the interior design was modified substantially in the 1970's to convert hotel rooms into residential apartments, the exterior appearance of the structure remains largely unaltered. The hotel is situated in downtown Chehalis at the "point," a triangular parcel of land created by the intersection of Market Boulevard and Cascade Avenue. It is named for Mt. St. Helens, fifty miles to the southeast, a familiar source of civic pride.

The present building replaced the first St. Helens Hotel which opened at the site in 1894. The original hotel was a three-story wooden structure constructed by the Chehalis Land and Timber Company. It was erected between 1890 and 1894, following a design by the Tacoma architectural firm of Bullard & Bullard. This structure served as the hotel for almost twenty-five years, until it was replaced with the present building. In an unusual twist of fate for an unwanted structure, much of the old hotel survived the wrecking ball. In 1917, with porch and tower removed, it was moved three blocks north and converted into an apartment building. The Sticklin Apartments, as they were known, provided lodging for another sixty years, until condemned in 1978 following a fire. The structure was torn down in 1982.

The present building was constructed in several stages between 1917 and 1921. Evidently, architect C.E. Troutman anticipated that construction would proceed in phases over several years. Even before the old wooden hotel was moved from the site, the first unit (a four-story brick building) was erected immediately adjacent on the northwest in 1917. This section is today referred to as the annex. A second unit (a matching brick structure) was attached in 1918, replacing the old hotel at the point and producing an impressive four-story brick facade extending for half a block along Market Boulevard. A third unit (the fifth and sixth stories) was added in 1920, creating a hotel of about 150 rooms. It was opened formally in 1921.

In terms of exterior appearance, the St. Helens Hotel is remarkably unchanged from its form in 1920. Essentially it is a triangular-shaped building that conforms to the irregular dimensions of its lot. The hotel is a flat-roofed structure built of gray brick, capped by cornice and dentils. Market Boulevard Elevation: Two patterns of fenestration can be seen on the ground floor. In the facade of the annex, the oldest section of the hotel, are rectangular window openings surmounted by transom lights. In the newer section toward the point are round-arched window openings set in a rusticated facade. For several decades now, a flat metal awning has bisected both sets of ground floor windows. Fenestration on the upper five floors consists predominately of ten-over-one double-hung sash windows set in rectangular

8. Statement of Significance

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

 nationally statewide locallyApplicable National Register Criteria A B C DCriteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce
Architecture

Period of Significance

1917-1941

Significant Dates

1917-1921

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

C. E. Troutman

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

The St. Helens Hotel is today the most prominent building in downtown Chehalis and a structure with important associations in the history of the community. A hotel has been located on the site for a century, and the present structure has been a Chehalis landmark for over seventy years and the finest example of 20th century commercial architecture in the city. The original hotel played a pivotal role in establishing Market Boulevard as the city's commercial center at the turn of the century. The present structure was constructed in the late 1910's by William Francis West, son of pioneer booster William West. For the purposes of this multiple-property nomination, the associated historic context is "The Urban Growth of Chehalis, 1850-1950." The associated property type is "Commercial Properties of Chehalis."

The original St. Helens Hotel was erected in the early 1890's as part of a general strategy of civic promotion designed to shift the commercial heart of Chehalis to North Market Boulevard. It was built by the Chehalis Land & Timber Company, a real estate development firm that emerged as a powerful force in early town planning, with financing from the First National Bank of Chehalis, a regional bank whose stockholders and directors included some of the same prominent families who controlled the Chehalis Land & Timber Company. The St. Helens was one of several important commercial buildings constructed by local real estate and banking interests seeking to promote the Market Boulevard business corridor in the years prior to the national depression known as the Panic of 1893. Others included a bank and three office buildings: the First National Bank (1889), the Improvement Block (1891), the Columbus Block (1892), and the Commercial Block (1893). Construction of the original St. Helens Hotel, begun in 1890 and completed in 1894, contributed to the emergence of Market Boulevard as the city's turn-of-the-century business district, a development that established the urban form of modern Chehalis.

The decision to replace the original wooden hotel with the present brick building resulted from the municipal success of Market Boulevard by the 1910's. The remodeling and expansion of the St. Helens between 1917 and 1921 followed in the wake of two civic improvement projects earlier in the decade that had affirmed the significance of Market Boulevard: construction of a city hall and public library at the southern edge of the business district and the building of a new railroad depot along its northern edge. Squarely between these seats of civic and economic influence rose the refurbished St. Helens Hotel. Events beyond Chehalis also shaped the prosperity of Market Boulevard and the fortunes of the hotel. Beginning in the 1910's, the growing popularity of the automobile began to link the "main streets" of many small cities into a nascent national network of highways. As part of the Pacific Highway, a major

 See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Chehalis Department of Community Services, Historic Property Inventory Form and supporting documents.

Lewis County Historical Museum: historical photographs and newspaper clippings files.

"St. Helens Hotel and Improvement Block," Chehalis Nugget, 20 February 1891.

"30,000 Dollar Brick Will Be Added to the St. Helens," Chehalis Bee-Nugget, November 17, 1916.

"New St. Helens Luncheon Talk; Plans of New Structure Explained," Chehalis Bee-Nugget, February 2, 1917.

"Much Building is Being Done," Chehalis Bee-Nugget, April 27, 1917.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Acreage of property less than one

UTM References

A 10 502500 5167700
Zone Easting Northing

B Zone Easting Northing

C Zone Easting Northing

D Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lot 11 less north 8.5" and lots 12, 13, 14; Block 6; Chehalis Land & Timber Company Addition.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the city lot historically associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title Dr. Robert R. Weyeneth
organization Past Perfect Consulting
street & number P.O. Box 5288
city or town Bellingham

date 19 April 1991
telephone (604) 736-4236
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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Section number 7 Page 2

openings, framed by cream-colored lintels and sills. In the four-story structure completed in 1918, horizontal molding separated the third and fourth stories. A similar molding was used between the fourth and fifth stories, when the top two floors were added in 1920. Cascade Avenue Elevation: While the cornice and gray brick facing continue around the point at the southeastern tip of the structure, this ornamentation is absent on most of the Cascade Avenue elevation, marking it unmistakably as the backside of the hotel. Northwestern Elevation: This solid brick elevation towers over the adjacent two-story buildings of Market Boulevard, conveying a sense of the hotel's massiveness, even from this direction. Formerly, a painted sign on this elevation proclaimed "St. Helens Hotel" to travelers arriving from the nearby railroad depot.

The division of interior space has changed somewhat over the years. The building is an example of a two-part commercial block, in which retail shops occupy the street-level and upper stories provide accommodations. While the ground floor has continued to be used as retail space, the upper five stories have been remodeled from hotel rooms for overnight guests into kitchen-apartments for residential tenants. Ground Floor: Today the street-level contains a small lobby for the tenants of the upstairs apartments, a restaurant and bar, an insurance agency, a real estate office, a hair styling parlor, and a health food store. The present restaurant and coffee shop occupy the lobby of the former hotel. Floors 2 to 6: The upper five floors now consist of 52 apartments. A handful of hotel rooms were converted into apartments in 1965; the entire structure was remodeled into an apartment building in 1977. At that time, the main entrance was relocated, the ground-floor retail space was remodeled, and the building was renamed the St. Helens Inn.

Despite alterations in its interior design, the St. Helens Hotel retains considerable integrity both in its exterior appearance and in the continuing usage of interior space.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Section number 8 Page 2

north-south artery later called Highway 99, Market Boulevard routed increasing numbers of business travelers and "motor tourists" through Chehalis and past the doors of the St. Helens. (Eventually, with construction of the interstate freeway system in the late 1950's, Market Boulevard lost some of its former convenience for travelers, a factor that contributed to the decision to convert the hotel into an apartment building in the 1970's.)

Remarkably, ownership and management of the hotel has been associated with one pioneer family for over eighty years, from the 1890's through the 1970's. In the early years, management of the hotel was in the hands of John Abbe, who had arrived in Chehalis in the 1860's with his brother-in-law William West. Abbe was an investor in both the First National Bank and the Chehalis Land and Timber Company; West was an indefatigable civic booster and real estate promoter. West's youngest son, William Francis West, acquired control of the hotel about 1904, apparently through a generous loan arranged by Abbe, his banker uncle. It was under the management of the younger West (1875-1963) that the present building replaced the original hotel. After he assumed control, West inaugurated the construction program of 1917-1921 that erected the Neoclassical structure that still dominates the Chehalis cityscape. West maintained a controlling interest in the hotel for almost sixty years, until his death in 1963. During that time, he earned a reputation as a local philanthropist. He and his wife donated the land on which a public high school was built, and the William F. West Foundation continues to award scholarships to college-bound Chehalis students. Ownership of the St. Helens Hotel remained with the William F. West Foundation until 1976, when the hotel passed out of the hands of the Dobson-West family for the first time in over eight decades.

Construction and afterwards:

When West decided to expand the hotel in 1916, he proceeded in phases, first removing the three story frame "annex" to the historic corner hotel. Plans for a four story brick annex were announced in the local newspaper in November, 1916, with construction beginning the following spring. The new annex measured 90 feet along Market Street, and was faced in pressed grey brick with terra cotta trim. Each of the 40 rooms featured an outside view and most had private baths. Beneath the upper floor rooms were four street level retail spaces, one of which was leased to the Twin City Automobile Company. Meanwhile, West sold the old annex to Pat Manning, who moved the structure to Main Street and converted it to apartments.

In February 1917, at a Citizens' Club meeting, Aberdeen architect Charles E. Troutman unveiled drawings for the expanded hotel, and noted that the original frame hotel at the corner of Market and Chehalis would also be replaced in 1918 as a second phase in the expansion. Both new sections reflected the Neoclassical commercial style of the period, together creating the most dramatic structure in the downtown business district. Although little is currently known about Troutman, he practiced in Aberdeen

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Section number 8 Page 3

through the early 20th century (for a while in partnership with Charles A. Haynes) and designed other business blocks in Pacific and Grays Harbor counties including the Lumber Exchange Building in South Bend, built in 1907 and listed in the National Register in 1988.

Once completed in 1918, the new St. Helens hotel had 100 rooms, an expanded dining room, lobby, and mezzanine level. By 1921 two additional stories were added to the complex, increasing the number of rooms. Through the mid-20th century, the hotel was the largest hostelry in the city and a major venue for civic activities. Although the interior retains little integrity, the exterior still maintains its historic character.