

PH 0507211

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

NOV 16 1977

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

DEC 23 1977

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME
HISTORIC *
Hotel Gross

AND/OR COMMON
Palace Hotel (preferred)

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
488 Willamette St.

CITY, TOWN
Eugene

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
4th

STATE
Oregon

___ VICINITY OF
CODE
41

COUNTY
Lane

CODE
039

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Elderly housing

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Sorgenfri, Inc.

STREET & NUMBER
3400 Hawthorne

CITY, TOWN
Eugene

___ VICINITY OF

STATE
Oregon 97402

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Lane County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER
125 E. 8th Street

CITY, TOWN
Eugene

STATE
Oregon 97401

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Eugene Historic Review Board: H Historic Zoning Designation

DATE
January 22, 1976

___ FEDERAL ___ STATE ___ COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS
City Planning Department, City of Eugene

CITY, TOWN
Eugene

STATE
Oregon 97401

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Palace Hotel as it appears today would be immediately recognizable to anyone who knew the Hotel Gross in 1903. No major structural alterations have taken place, and the interior has undergone only cosmetic, and rectifiable changes. The street orientation of the Palace, and its relationship to public transportation and commercial centers, are as they were in 1903. The hotel continues to function in a residential capacity.

Exterior

The three-story frame Hotel Gross was constructed in 1903 in a style similar to hotels built in the 1880s elsewhere in the Pacific Northwest. It is especially reminiscent of the Mt. Hood Hotel, a resort establishment built at Hood River in the 1880s, in its detailing and proximity to the railroad depot. Rectangular in plan, and with bracketed overhanging eaves, the Hotel Gross might best be described as a western commercial adaptation of the Italianate. The name "Palace Hotel" was chosen by its new owners in 1974 because it evoked the image of a "classic old western hotel."² The building was not architect-designed, but it was highly representative of a speculative hotel venture in a burgeoning western timber town.

A most prominent feature of the hotel was its veranda with balustraded deck which wrapped around south, east and north faces. This eight-foot-deep porch was set off from the board sidewalk by a band of three steps, and was accessible at any point. The deck was supported by slender Tuscan columns, with simple cushion blocks and plinths. The porch balustrade was constructed of turned vertical spindles. A small central porch with deck superimposed on the veranda at the second level of the east face.

The hotel's hipped roof apparently was never surmounted by a belvedere. The windows were of a simple design: one-over-one double-hung sashes with a plain surrounds. The siding on the first level was of 3 1/4" tongue-and-groove, while the second and third stories were clad with seven inch shiplap.

Exterior Alterations

The exterior of the Palace Hotel has retained its basic integrity and relationship to the surrounding area, except for alterations to the veranda and balcony which took place in the early 1930s.

The Hotel Gross was sold to a Mr. M.F. Griggs in 1908, who soon afterward extended both wings of the hotel to the west, adding fifteen rooms. The detailing of these additions is identical to that found in the second and third stories of the original building.

A fountain which has originally stood to the north of the hotel was removed to make way for another building sometime in the 1920s.

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In 1929, the Griggs Hotel became the Hotel Lane, and the facade took its present form: The following alterations took place during the period of 1929-1934:

- second story balcony with deck was removed
- veranda balustrade was removed
- veranda steps were also removed, and the ground between the porch columns (now supported by concrete footings) was landscaped.
- ground story windows were enlarged.

In the late 1930s, asbestos siding and a neon light were installed, but were removed as part of the careful restoration which took place in 1974. Although considerable restoration and clean-up work was done, the costs involved in bringing the building up to fire and safety code were prohibitive, and the Palace Hotel was sold to its present owners, Sorgenfri, Inc., in 1975.

In sum, the Palace Hotel has retained the majority of its original features over a seventy-five year period. What was done in the 1970s compensated for alterations which took place after the late 1930s, so that the Palace now appears much as it did in 1936.

The Original Interior

The interior design and impression of the Hotel Gross closely parallels that of the exterior. The hotel lobby and dining room were detailed to attract customers from the trains and streetcars, whereas the sleeping rooms were quite simple. Throughout the building, Douglas fir has been used for both flooring and woodwork. Walls and ceilings were of plaster, with the notable exception of a coffered, metal lobby ceiling.

The floor plan and dimensions were aptly described in a 1903 article announcing the Gross' construction:³

"The new hotel, which is to be a frame structure, will cost about \$6,000.

There are to be three stories instead of but two as has been published. The Willamette street site is to have about a 60 foot front and the Fifth street side 66 feet. There is to be an eight-foot porch extending on the outside of the two front sides. Two main entrances will be placed, one on the corner and one half way down the Willamette street front entering the hall. The office is to be 26x28 feet, the dining room 24x39 and the average size of the bedrooms will be 12x14 feet. A total of 45 rooms, exclusive of baths and lavatories, will be included. The modern improvements in hot air furnace heating, basement conveniences, etc., will be installed."

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The lobby was integrally related to the street life outside, with transomed double doors opening to the veranda, and large elongated windows. Brass hardware was installed on the ground level. The lobby desk curved around the northwest corner of the room, encircling an original safe marked "Hotel Gross", and an American Reminder clock with an 1888 patent. A substantial brick fireplace occupied most of the western wall. Global light fixtures were hung with chain from the ceiling.

The dining room, with its rouge wall paint, floral wall paintings intertwined with a white leafy pattern, and stenciling, was similarly designed to bring people in off the streets. The doors and windows, with their simple entablatures and transoms, matched those of the lobby. Varnished fir wainscoting and picture-hanging molding surrounded the room. Slow-turning fans hung from the plastered ceiling. To the north of the dining room was the functional kitchen and pantry area.

The Douglas fir stairway leading to the rooms above was simply designed with a bannister of turned spindles. Brass triangular dust-catchers were found in the corners of each stair. The second and third floors were functional with little adornment. The halls were fairly narrow, and to the entrance of each room was a modestly-molded door frame, enclosing a paneled door and transom. The original room numbers and finish hardware are still present. The rooms themselves share the simplicity of the hallways, decorated only with a dresser, sink, functional rugs and floral wallpaper. The rooms added in 1909 were identical to the originals, except that they had full bathroom facilities.

Interior Alterations

In 1974 the Palace was purchased as a nostalgic commercial venture. Wayne Allen, a partner in the enterprise, had this to say concerning the building's integrity.⁴

"It's such a rare building. I'd like to be able to look around Eugene and see ten more like it but I can't. It's nevery really been raped-- the ceilings have never been lowered. It's really surprising when you start looking at it; you realize it's just not changed that much."

Upstairs, the Palace is virtually unchanged. The fir flooring, the millwork, the finish hardware, the cast iron radiators, and much of the original furniture remain. Even the wallpaper, though of a later origin, is of a floral design which has an original appearance. According to a Eugene Register-Guard article:⁵

Upstairs the Palace looks much the same as it must have sixty years ago. Wooden doors with glass overhead transoms line narrow, dimly lit halls. Behind the doors are clean though austere rooms. A bed, a dresser, a closet, a straight-backed chair, a wash basin in the corner. Only a few rooms have toilets and baths--the restroom at the end of the hallways offer those conveniences."

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In a few instances, alcoves have been enclosed and smaller doorways installed. This work took place in the late 1940s or early 1950s.

The lobby and dining area underwent some cosmetic changes, but have remained structurally intact. The lobby furniture is no longer there, and the light fixtures have been removed. Otherwise, the room is still as it was 73 years ago. The reception desk, the safe, the Reminder clock, the woodwork, the fireplace, the original transomed doors with their brass hardware, and the exposed coffered ceiling evidence this fact.

The dining room became Fenwick's Cafe in the 1920s, and by the early 1950s its former swankiness had been replaced with a sort of cafe functionalism. However, all of the original decor--the picture-hanging moulding, the wall paintings, the stenciling--is being replaced or carefully redone. It is fortunate that everything that was removed from the dining room was stored in the basement. Only the ceiling fans are missing.

Sorgenfri, Inc. has remodeled the unused kitchen and pantry area, installed a sprinkler system, piped to the city's hot water supply, and has otherwise brought the Palace up to City Code as a residence for the elderly.

- 1 See Oregon Historical Society, Space, Style & Structure (1974), Volume II, pp. 373-374.
- 2 See Eugene Register-Guard article entitled "Palace Hotel", April 20, 1975.
- 3 See Eugene Weekly Guard article entitled "George Gross' New Hotel", January 3, 1903.
- 4 See Eugene Register-Guard article entitled "Palace Hotel", April 20, 1975.
- 5 Ibid.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1903

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

C. McFarland (contractor)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the Palace Hotel lies more in its association with Western commerce and development, and its representative architectural style, than with any particular architectural merit, historical event, or notable personages. A recent Eugene Register Guard article opened with these lines:¹

"Once she was the hostess of Willamette Street, a swank three-story lady standing ready to greet the city's visitors as they funneled out of the busy Southern Pacific Depot only a few yards away.

Then she fell on hard times and a succession of owners who tried--usually with too little too late--to stave off age and keep her in pace with the 20th century.

Now, at age 72, she's taken a new name and she's capitalizing on her age rather than denying it."

The Palace Hotel was developed in 1903 by George G. Gross, realtor and founder of the Willamette Valley Land Company, and constructed by Mr. C. McFarland. Although the automobile was to reach Eugene a year after the hotel's completion, the Hotel Gross was located at the hub of public transportation. The Southern Pacific Railroad Depot, rebuilt in 1908, is located to the northeast and continues to operate; the Oregon Electric Depot, built in 1912, is across the street to the east (now Southwestern Oregon Museum of Science and Industry); and the electric street car line, completed in 1907, terminated at Fourth and Willamette Streets, almost at the Gross's front door. It has been reported that from twelve to twenty trains stopped daily at Eugene during the period of 1912-1920.²

George Gross was a Missouri wagon maker's son who traveled west with his family in 1875. As a young man, George Gross managed a hotel one year, and, in Gross's words:³

"...finding that the confinement was injuring my health, I quit the hotel business. I resolved not to work for wages any more, and went into farming on my own account... We lived on the farm until 1901, when we sold out and moved to Eugene. We bought two lots near the depot. I opened up a real estate business and have done a large business ever since then.

In 1903 I built the Hotel Gross on the corner of Sixth [sic] and Willamette Streets. It is a three story building, and visitors to Eugene will find it a good place to stop while they are looking around."

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1/4-acre (10,133 sq. ft.)

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 0	4 9, 2 6, 3, 8	4, 8 7, 7 7, 5, 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Tax Lot 3 in Lots 5 and 6 of Block 4, Skinner's Addition, City of Eugene.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Gregory Winterowd, Planner

ORGANIZATION

Pederson & Associates, Inc.

DATE

October 29, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

1851 Garden Avenue

TELEPHONE

503/343-2507

CITY OR TOWN

Eugene

STATE

Oregon 97403

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 State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE October 31, 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
ATTEST:	DATE 12/22/77
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	DATE 12-22-77

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A Eugene Weekly Guard article of 1903⁴ indicated that the "construction and various details to be of first class quality" and that the "building is to be an elegant affair." Another article of the same year,⁵ called the Hotel Gross "one of the finest frame hotels in the state, and a good paying investment." Gross leased the building to a Mr. Condon of Portland for \$100 per month upon its completion, and proceeded to take an extended vacation in California.

It is clear that Hotel Gross was built as a speculative venture by a man intent on making his fortune in real estate, and the design and construction reflect this fact. The hotel did, however, serve businessmen and travelers who passed through Eugene in the early 1900s. Immigrants also used the hotel as temporary accommodation before permanent settlement.

The Palace was designed to be closely related to Eugene's commercial and transportation centers, and to life on Willamette and Fifth Streets. The wrap-around veranda with its park benches and continuous steps beckoned passers-by and encouraged interaction. There was no strict dividing line between the street and the hotel, but a gradual, comfortable transition. Herein lies the most significant design feature of the Palace--a feature noticeably lacking in more recent hotels. This street orientation remains as part of the Palace as it stands today. It is hoped that funding will become available to completely restore the frame porches on all three floors, to fully recreate this important interface between the street and the hotel.

Although the Palace appears to have been a fashionable and popular establishment in its early years, in the post-depression years it was used largely by railroad men, and lower-budget travelers. The Fenwick Cafe, which leased the dining room, served a similar clientele from the 1930s through to the early 1950s, when it went out of business. The dining facility, which is now being restored, has not been used since. By the end of World War II, as the railroad district north of Sixth Street declined, the Palace became one of a number of older hotels used by a transient population. Since the advent of urban renewal in the 1960s, it is the only remaining older hotel in residential use in Eugene (The Smeede Hotel, a brick building constructed in 1885, has been converted to commercial use.).

Thus, the Palace Hotel was built coincidentally with, and complementary to, Eugene's railroad and public transportation systems, and as such is integral to Eugene's commercial development. It was not Eugene's most elegant hotel; the earlier Smeede, and the Osborne built a few years later, had that status. Rather, the Palace served the everyday needs of those who could not afford to go "first class." The Palace grew old with its neighborhood, but continued to accommodate a large portion of Eugene's transient and elderly populations inexpensively.

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A commercial appraiser's report written a few years ago called the Palace "an obsolete old hotel."⁶ There is no doubt that the Palace's original role has expired, but it continues to serve more than adequately as housing for low-income elderly persons. The railroad district itself has undergone substantial renovation in the last several years. Nearby warehouses have, in three instances, been converted into commercial and eating establishments. Across Fifth Street there is a good example of WPA post office construction. To the south, the City of Eugene has recently undergone considerable urban renewal. The contrast between the new and old Eugenes, both of which are vibrant and economically healthy, is enhanced by the presence of Eugene's oldest residential hotel.

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- 1 See the Eugene Register-Guard article entitled "Palace Hotel", April 20, 1975.
 - 2 See the Eugene Register-Guard article of May 16, 1974, in which Frank Dayton, a previous manager and owner of the hotel, discusses its history.
 - 3 See 1904 Eugene Weekly Guard article entitled "George G. Gross".
 - 4 See Eugene Weekly Guard article entitled "George Gross' New Hotel", January 3, 1903.
 - 5 See Eugene Weekly Guard article entitled "George Gross Makes Two Big Deals", July 9, 1903.
 - 6 The appraisal took place in 1970.

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Newspaper Articles, Chronologically Ordered

1. "George Gross' New Hotel", Eugene Weekly Guard, January 3, 1903.
2. "George Gross Makes Two Big Deals", Eugene Weekly Guard, July 9, 1903.
3. "George Gross", Eugene Weekly Guard, 1904. A personal profile written by George Gross.
4. "Centennial Edition", Eugene Register-Guard, May 16, 1974.
5. "Palace Hotel", Eugene Register-Guard, April 20, 1975. A special in the Sunday "Oregon Life" section by Mike Theole and photographed by B. Lanker.
6. "Housing Official Wants Old Hotel Used to Shelter Elderly", Eugene Register-Guard, November 21, 1975. An article by Don Floyd.

Local References

1. Eugene Building Department Records
2. Lane County Deeds and Records
3. Lane County Pioneer Museum archives.
4. City of Eugene Planning Department, "Staff notes", January 22, 1976, "Request for Consideration as Historic Landmarks". The Eugene Historic Review Board recommended and was granted Historic Landmark status for the Palace Hotel.

Interviews, Chronologically Ordered

1. October 4, 15, 1976, with Judy Reese, City of Eugene, Planning Department staff person in charge of historic preservation.
2. October 13, 1976, with Glenn Mason, Chairman of the Eugene Historic Review Board, and curator of the Lane County Pioneer Museum.
3. October 6, 1976, with Marion Ross, Head of the Department of Art History, University of Oregon.
4. October 15 and November 1, 1976, with Philip Dole, Professor of Architecture, University of Oregon.
5. October 29, 1976, with Will Robertson, a long-time Eugene resident who worked for Mr. M.F. Griggs, the second owner of the Palace Hotel.
6. November 1, 1976, with Wilbur Jessen, son of the Palace's owner from 1942-1946, and who lived in the hotel during this period.