

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

12/27/82

date entered

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

1. Name

historic Rudolf Hotel

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Central Ave. and 2nd St. SE not for publication

city, town Valley City vicinity of

state North Dakota code 38 county Barnes code 003

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Abandoned

4. Owner of Property

name Northwestern National Bank and Fidelity Savings and Loan Association

street & number 136 Central Ave. N. and 149 4th St. N.

city, town Valley City vicinity of state North Dakota

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Barnes County Courthouse

street & number N/A

city, town Valley City state North Dakota

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes  no

date N/A federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

## 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 Rudolf Hotel, built in a Classical Revival style in 1907, is a three-story brick structure, with a frontage of 100 feet on Central Avenue South on the west and 100 feet on Second Street Southeast on the south. Red pressed face brick was used on the two street facades with a soft, yellow brick on the two alley elevations. The exterior brick walls and interior brick light well act as bearing walls with additional interior framework of cast iron columns and steel beams on the main floor, which change to composite wood columns and beams on the upper two floors. Floors consist of wood floor joists with all interior walls of wood studs, lath, and plaster.

On the south and west facade the brick corbels between the first and second floors, with the corbelling capped with a stone ledge. Brick Doric pilasters extend vertically two stories from this stone band and are terminated by stone capitals which support a wide painted metal cornice. Fluting in the pilasters is accomplished through the use of rounded brick set in a stack bond. Double-hung wood windows penetrate the upper floors and window heads at the second story are a flat brick arch, and at the third story a band of stone continues above the windows between the pilasters. A line of brick dentils is located above the stone banding and the dentils are repeated at the top of the metal cornice. A parapet with recessed brick rectangular panels, square pilasters, and stone coping caps the hotel.

The east and north elevations consist of common brick full height. A one-story concrete block boiler plant was added in 1975 along the east side, effectively covering the first floor windows. The second and third floor east elevation window heads are brick arches. Minor brick repair of the parapet wall and chimney has occurred on the east with the north elevation relatively untouched.

The stone ledge and brick on the first floor of the south facade and west 50 feet of the west facade, which was originally left exposed, has been painted white. A storm sash and shutters have been added to the double-hung windows on the first floor of the south facade. The original hotel entrance, located near the center of the west facade, consisted of double wood and glass panel doors, double transom panes, and side lights, have since been replaced by an aluminum door frame with about one-third of the transom area infilled with a metal panel. The north 50 feet of the first floor on the west facade was originally retail space in which the original framing has been removed from the openings and replaced with a metal fascia approximately one-half the height of the opening with the lower half infilled with wood frame walls and reduced glazing.

Wrapping around the southwest corner of the hotel extended a 100 foot colonnade featuring a row of nine Tuscan columns, which was removed in 1967. The fascia at the roof of the colonnade appeared to be painted metal similar to that used at the cornice of the building. A rail along the top of the colonnade was constructed of wood square columns and balusters.

Circa 1928 the Rudolf Hotel expanded into the 1909 building immediately to the north. The exterior red brick walls, which match the original hotel, are load bearing in this building, along with a masonry wall down the center of the east-west axis at the basement and first floor level. At the second floor this central wall changes to a wood stud wall extending

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through to the roof truss. Floors in the building consist of wood floor joists and wood flooring. The first floor on the west elevation was originally glazed full height; however, this has since been covered by metal and wood store fronts similar to the original Rudolf Hotel building. The openings at these retail levels are spanned with steel beams which are supported by cast iron columns.

In the 1909 building, a stairway originally extended to the second floor at the center interior columns, but was removed during the hotel conversion. The second and third floor finishes are similar to the Rudolf Hotel; however some differences in the exterior do occur. The windows on the third floor and on the south half of the second floor are paired units and the parapet top is curved. Ionic square pilasters visually support a dentilled metal cornice. The north, east, and south walls of this building are constructed of common brick with three levels of windows, all of which have arched heads. The east wall has been stuccoed and is in need of repair.

The first floor interior of the Rudolf Hotel has been substantially remodeled from its original appearance, which includes some new partition walls and new room finishes. The building formerly featured a skylight space in the center light well, which once served as the hotel's main lobby. The southwest corner served as the main dining room and the kitchen was located at the south central portion of the building. Located along the southeast and center of the building was one of the hotel's two bars. The hotel still features an original central wood stair extending to the second and third floor sleeping rooms as well as down to the basement, where the second bar and dance parlor were located. In addition to the bar in the basement, it housed the laundry, boiler plant, workroom, and small sleeping rooms. The hotel rooms, with simple plaster finishes, have not been substantially altered. The first floor areas along the north half of the Rudolf Hotel and 1909 addition have housed various types of retail outlets over the years.

## 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 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** 1907 and 1909

**Builder/Architect**

John W. Ross

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Rudolf Hotel is significant for a number of reasons: 1.) For its association with Rudolph Giselius, who built the hotel and operated it for thirty-seven years, 2.) As an example of the work of John W. Ross, a prominent Grand Forks, North Dakota architect, who designed the hotel in a Classical Revival style, 3.) As the oldest hotel in Valley City, and 4.) For its role in Valley City's business and social community. Three stories high, the hotel firmly anchors the southern end of Valley City's business district, and although some alterations have occurred over the years, the hotel retains most of its architectural integrity.

When the Rudolf Hotel was built in 1907, Valley City was a small community of 5,000 people and featured over five hotels. Rudolph Giselius saw a future in the growing town and was determined to build a hotel that would be a credit to Valley City. Giselius commissioned architect John W. Ross to design what would become a first class hotel.

Giselius was a Swedish immigrant who worked as a lumber camp cook in Minnesota until 1896 when he moved to Valley City. Beginning as a cook at the City Restaurant he worked his way up to owner of the business by 1900. He then devoted the rest of his life to the hotel business and also to civic enterprises. He was such a driving force in the North Dakota Hotel Association, that he was referred to as the "Dean of North Dakota Hotel Men."<sup>1</sup> Giselius' community activities included membership in the Elks Lodge and the Knights of Pythias. One of his philanthropical interests was the promotion of college education; he would regularly employ local college men and in return pay their tuition.

Giselius' selection of John W. Ross as architect ensured that a finely detailed building would be designed. Ross, a well-known North Dakota architect, had designed numerous public and commercial structures in Grand Forks from 1880-1914. His designs included the Grand Forks City Hall (National Register 1982) and the Grand Forks Woolen Mill (National Register 1982). He also designed other North Dakota buildings including school houses, courthouses (Wells County Courthouse, Fessenden, National Register 1976), and city halls. One of his finest achievements was the striking St. Stanislaus Catholic Church in Warsaw, North Dakota (National Register 1979). In 1917, he was said to have been the "leading architect of the northwest."<sup>2</sup>

When construction began on the hotel, delays and other problems occurred. The cement mortar in the stone foundation crumbled to the touch, necessitating the removal and reconstruction of the entire basement. Although this problem was remedied, work could not begin on the superstructure because a freight blockade in February 1907 halted the shipment of materials. Common brick shipments stopped at Staples, Minnesota while pressed brick and structural iron stopped at St. Paul, Minnesota.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than 1 acre.

Quadrangle name Valley City West

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 

1	4	5	7	5	9	5	0	5	1	9	6	8	2	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing							

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing							

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing							

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing							

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing							

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing							

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 15, 16, 17, and 18 of Block 23 of the Original Townsite, Valley City, North Dakota.

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

state	N/A	code	N/A	county	N/A	code	N/A
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state		code		county		code	
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# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Bonnie J. Halda, Historical Architect		
	Norman E. Triebwasser, Architect		
organization	State Historical Society of North Dakota	date	December, 1982
	Norman E. Triebwasser & Associates	date	April, 1982
street & number	North Dakota Heritage Center	telephone	(701)224-2672
	Suite 416, Black Building	telephone	(701)232-3271
city or town	Bismarck	state	North Dakota
	Fargo	state	North Dakota

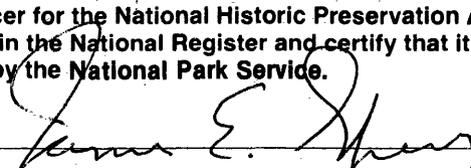
# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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 (North Dakota) date December 16, 1982

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



date 2/10/83

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: Patrick Andrews

date 2/10/83

Chief of Registration

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By March freight was once again moving and Valley City contractor M. Madson begun work in earnest. Giselius wished to finish the hotel in time for the Barnes County Fair in July, an event that drew a great number of people to Valley City. Utilizing double work crews, construction was rushed throughout the spring of 1907. In June of that year, Giselius purchased furniture in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota and four train carloads of furnishings arrived in Valley City the beginning of July, just in time to be installed before the fair.

The 85 room hotel was opened for business in July, 1907 while work remained to be done in the restaurant area. Hotel guests proclaimed it as the "peer of any hotel in the state."<sup>3</sup> When the hotel dining room was open for meals in August, each meal averaged 50-60 guests, proving the hotel was a welcome addition to the city.

A formal grand opening celebration was held in October, 1907. The Valley City Times-Record declared the Rudolf Hotel "one of the finest hotels in the state."<sup>4</sup> The good business to date proved Giselius was right in his belief that Valley City would support another hotel. At a cost of more than \$80,000.00, Giselius erected a hotel that had such features as 40 rooms with private baths, hot and cold water, a sophisticated telephone system that enabled guests to call long distance from their rooms, a barbership, billard and pool room, and four sample rooms for travelling salesmen.

After the hotel's initial opening in 1907, Giselius enjoyed a steady and profitable business. Giselius constructed an addition to the north in 1909 for retail, office, and hotel needs, and with an expanding business, in 1928 converted the annex's top two floors into hotel rooms connected to the original building.

The Rudolf Hotel provided needed meeting space for organizations over the years such as the Lions Club, Rotary Club, and Kiwanis. Businesses have also found a home at the hotel, including, at one time, the KOVC radio station with its large tower located on the roof. Liquor establishments (at one time the hotel featured two), a dance hall, recreation center, restaurant, and cafe were all located in the Rudolf Hotel, making it a hub of social activity throughout the years.

While other Valley City hotels were being razed, including the well-known Kindred Hotel, the Rudolf Hotel continued to prosper. Giselius was definitely the guiding force behind the hotel, and after his death in 1944 the business passed through several hands: Oscar Fode of Jamestown, North Dakota owned the hotel for a year, Howard Brier of Valley City then owned it from 1945-1966, John Lord and David Anderson of Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota from 1966-1970, Vincent Zacharias from 1970-1975, and finally Dan Sandbothe from 1975 until the business closed its doors in 1977.

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Abandoned since 1977, the hotel will now be rehabilitated for use as elderly housing. A major goal is to restore the viability of a commercial enterprise that played a role in downtown Valley City for seventy-five years.

- <sup>1</sup> Valley City Times-Record, December 26, 1944.
- <sup>2</sup> Lounsberry, North Dakota History, page 835.
- <sup>3</sup> Valley City Times-Record, July 11, 1907.
- <sup>4</sup> Valley City Times-Record, October 17, 1907.

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Hazel Gronbeck, daughter of Rudolph Giselius, personal interview, April 8, 1982.

Lounsberry, Clement, North Dakota History, Volume 3, Chicago, Illinois,  
S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1917, pp 834-835.

North Dakota Magazine, June 1907.

North Dakota Patriot, August 15, 1907.

Valley City Times-Record, April 20, 1905.  
February 14, 1907.  
March 7, 1907.  
March 14, 1907  
April 4, 1907.  
April 11, 1907.  
April 25, 1907.  
May 9, 1907.  
May 16, 1907.  
May 23, 1907.  
June 11, 1907.  
July 4, 1907.  
July 11, 1907.  
July 18, 1907  
July 25, 1907.  
August 8, 1907.  
August 15, 1907.  
October 17, 1907.  
December 26, 1944.  
July 14, 1976.