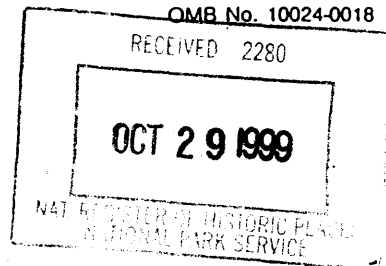


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

1461



### National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

#### 1. Name of Property

historic name Marcus Whitman Hotel

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2. Location

street & number 107 North Second Avenue  not for publication

city or town Walla Walla  vicinity

state Washington code WA county Walla Walla code 071 zip code 99362

#### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Allyson Probst SHPO 10/15/99  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  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): \_\_\_\_\_

Edson H. Beall 11/30/99  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Marcus Whitman Hotel

Name of Property

Walla Walla, Washington

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/hotel

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling  
WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Italian Renaissance

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Concrete

Brick

roof Asphalt

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheet

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

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### Description

The Marcus Whitman Hotel in Walla Walla, Washington, constructed in 1928, is a fine and intact example of a modern building incorporating some elements of the Italian Renaissance style, one of several period styles popular in the twenties and thirties. The building was described by architect Sherwood Ford as "perpendicular modern," perhaps pertaining to its overall shape and vertical emphasis. Details incorporated into the building relating to the Italian Renaissance style suggest a particular era. Some of the elements as listed in Architecture Oregon Style include (1) flat roof with richly embellished cornice, (2) simple rectangular volumes, (3) abundant terra cotta (in this case cast stone) ornamentation, (4) brick facing, (5) Italian Renaissance details: belt courses, columns, and pilasters and use of tile for the roof. While the use of urns was not specifically Italian, they were commonly used in many period styles of that era.

### Setting

The Marcus Whitman Hotel is situated near the north end of the downtown business district in the city of Walla Walla, Walla Walla County, Washington. Completed in 1928, the hotel faces east on the NW corner of Second Avenue and Rose Street. The Hotel occupies the SE quarter of the block and is flush with the right of way. Nineteen sixty-nine additions to the north and northwest sides of the building housed a restaurant and a three-story motel complex. The remainder of the block is parking. East of the north part of the property is the historic Walla Walla Post Office, a service station is directly east of the hotel, and a modern one-story commercial building is directly to the south.

### Current Appearance

The Marcus Whitman Hotel occupies a rectangular area 140' by 107' 6", the longer axis running north and south. The building is constructed of reinforced concrete faced with a buff-colored tapestry brick; cast stone ornamentation consisting of urns and decorated cornices is primarily confined to the top of the building. The building has a flat roof. Its eleven stories are divided into four distinct parts: (1) a seven-story base, (2) a tower, floors eight through eleven, occupying a portion of the building footprint, (3) a smaller two-story penthouse structure with pyramidal roof which crowns the tower and (4) a one-story wing in the west side housing two dining rooms. The main entrance was originally located on the east side on Second Avenue with a minor entrance located on Rose Street on the south side.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

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### Exterior

#### Base

The street-level facade of the hotel remains much as built. The east elevation consists of seven bays including the centrally located main entrance which is flanked by storefronts. Looking from south to north, three of the bays are storefronts with original diagonally-set display windows above a tile base (now painted), the original oak doors with a single light, transoms, and original brass door hardware, and a transom (now painted) across the top of each bay. The original main entrance, another original storefront and two modernized storefronts with step up (this was originally the coffee shop) occupy the remainder of this elevation. The storefronts are divided by brick pilasters rising to the parapet at the top of the building giving it a strong vertical emphasis. Decorative cast stone forms the entrance surrounds. A pair of oak doors with a single large light (door pulls have been removed from these outer doors) flanked by another set of doors opens into a small vestibule. Marble aggregate slabs to a height of about six feet emphasize each side of the entrance doors. A set of identical doors with elaborate brass escutcheons and door pulls is located approximately six feet from the outer doors; these doors open directly into the lobby. The original canopy above the outer entrance doors has been removed, however the decorative circular anchors which held it are still in place. The surround has "THE MARCUS WHITMAN" in raised letters above two windows with cast stone surrounds. A cast stone belt course with dentil trim marks the mezzanine level, another more elaborate cast stone ribbon and dentil trim on the belt course indicates the second floor; a third belt course indicates the top of the base. A single cast stone urn placed on the northwest corner of the one-story extension is one of three such decorative elements at this level. The 1969 addition with stone exterior is on the north end of the original building.

Added to the north end of the building in 1969 was one-story restaurant addition, and to the east the three-story motel addition over a parking structure. The west elevation at ground level is a one-story stuccoed extension from the main block of the building housing two dining rooms.

The south elevation features a hotel entrance with double doors flanked by another set of doors all with single lights and elaborate brass hardware. Beginning at the west end of the building, this elevation is composed of seven bays. There are three remodeled storefronts, a hotel entrance with two sets of double doors, the condominium entrance, and an office space. A multiple beltcourse, as on the east elevation, indicates the streetside facade. The west end of the south wall boasts two decorative urns at the top of the one-story extension. The formal base is completed by a third minor cast stone belt course above the

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

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second-story windows on south and east elevations. A large lighted sign with "MARCUS WHITMAN" (with some missing letters) is positioned at the second floor level on the southeast corner of the hotel; it is visible from Second Avenue and Rose Street. A long canopy ran the full length of this elevation.

### Floors two through eleven

The southeast corner of the hotel rises to eleven stories and is stepped down to a seven story section on the north end. Four bays of paired lights are separated by pilasters. The seven-story north portion of the east facade has two bays of paired lights. The north elevation (seven stories) features one vertical row of windows, a wide pilaster, a fire escape with fire doors, and another set of paired lights. A large chimney is situated at the northwest corner of the main building block. On this elevation the tower is set back; it features, from the east, a single bay of windows and a slight projection with two bays of paired windows separated by a pilaster. At the top of the seventh floor large neon letters spell out "WHITMAN INN". The west elevation, from north to south has two bays of paired windows in the seven-story section plus another paired bay in the eleven-story section. A large seven-story extension of the building on this elevation features a single row of windows flanking the fire escape and fire doors; at the tower level, the windows continue only on the south side. The southernmost extension has a single vertical row of windows on each end and a fire escape with fire doors in the center. The south elevation has two bays of paired windows in the seven-story section and three bays of paired lights in the eleven-story section. Fenestration is simple; all windows are slightly recessed with cast stone sills. At the tenth floor level, cast stone rosettes between each wide and narrow pilaster begin the rooftop decoration.

### Roofline and Parapet

The top floors of the hotel, the seventh or eleventh, are composed of a highly decorated cornice with cast stone ornamentation consisting of a cornice, a rosette below another cornice and a variety of urns. Between the urns the curved, ribbon-like cornice forms a swag-like base for a circular medallion alternating with the urns. The roofline on the eleventh floor of the south and east sides expresses the alternating wide and narrow pilasters with large urns on a large scalloped pedestal above the wide pilasters and smaller urns on a simple plinth above the narrow pilasters. Corners feature larger urns on a large scalloped pedestal base. Urns on the seventh floor parapet feature a smaller version of the pedestal-based urn above the wide pilasters and a small urn on a plinth above the narrow pilasters. All these urns are square with slightly sloping sides and have a low pyramidal top.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

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The penthouse of the Marcus Whitman Hotel is a square two-story structure situated on the eleven-story block of the hotel; it originally housed the elevator shaft and mechanical equipment. The top floor of the tower features a large cast stone oculus on each side with a curved decorative brace marking each quarter. Large cast stone urns resting on a scalloped pedestal base and topped with a ball finial mark each corner. A cast stone cornice with dentilated trim, a pyramidal tile roof, and metal cresting complete the penthouse embellishment. The cast stone ornamentation at the top of the building is virtually intact and in good condition. Access to the penthouse is by stairway only. The first level of the penthouse has been encompassed by a plywood addition.

### Interior

#### Lobby

The main entrance to the lobby is through the Second Avenue doors and vestibule; the vestibule is formed by a second set of doors identical to those entering from the street. Just inside the lobby to the north of the vestibule doors, a stairway leads to a small mezzanine. The mezzanine is accessed only by this stairway and houses four small office rooms with virtually no original fabric remaining. The check in desk where guests could retrieve their keys is located just to the north of the Second Avenue vestibule. It has two large openings with counter space and a curved corner support. The original key box structure featuring a large section of boxes and outlined with cable molding, has been moved from its original location, but is in good condition. Three telephone booths with two panel doors with one light are directly adjacent to the desk on the north wall. A wide entrance hall to the dining room was added to the north wall just east of the telephone booths. About halfway down the north wall a mirror composed of rectangular sections of mirror and flanked by a longer rectangular mirror enliven this section of the lobby. An arched top and finials on each side accent the ensemble.

To the south of the main entrance is a storefront/office with replacement door and original glass surround. Another door opens into an adjacent storefront. On the south side of the room two elevators with simply decorated brass doors open into the corner of the lobby. Another lobby entrance from Rose Street also opens on this wall. The women's restroom is located at the west end of this wall.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

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All decoration in the lobby itself (42' by 77') follows an urn and plant theme. The room has no windows and is lighted by three large original chandeliers. A large medallion on the raised ceiling anchors each chandelier. The medallions are decorated with an organic interpretation of urn and plant elements. From the center out, the design consists of a wreath of brass leaves, a section of gilt urns and leaves on a dark green background, and the outer circle edged with a gilt serpentine floral scroll alternating with a slender urn design on a red background. The wrought iron and brass chandeliers hang from a heavy brass and iron chain. Each chandelier consists of three lights on each of six curved arms which are draped with large brass leaves and a large iron and brass ball with floral decoration and brass drops. Brass cable molding, leaves, egg and dart trim further embellish each chandelier. The chandeliers are in excellent condition.

The ceiling trim consists of a decorative cornice using the same gilt urn and plant elements with a red background accented by a section with a green background above each pilaster; a row of dentil trim at ceiling height completes the cornice. The ceiling itself is bordered with a ribbon of relief carving with a leaf motif; small rectangular panels are painted and are separated by a band of trim featuring a gilt rosette and leaf element motif. A low relief ribbon of fruits and leaves and a row of egg and dart trim completes the ceiling decoration. Corners have a quarter circle element with a gilt urn and leaves on a red background.

Four pairs of two foot square fluted dark oak columns dominate the lobby; carved urn and floral elements decorate the capitals. The side aisles have a lower ceiling; matching fluted oak pilasters 21 inches wide with carved capitals punctuate the side walls. The border above the pilasters is a gilt floral decoration on a green background; the remaining frieze features gilt decoration with a red background. Replacement hanging lamps illuminate the side aisles.

In the west wall and centered directly opposite the main entrance a large round oak arch with a dark finish accents that end of the lobby. The arch is outlined with cable molding and a floral relief pattern and originally opened into the Georgian Room. This opening has been filled with a large mirror and wainscoting. The arched space directly above the mirror has been painted with a central urn on a pedestal flanked by a fanciful horse's head with serpentine tongue. Flowers and leaves fill in the remaining background. Wrought iron and brass wall sconces matching the chandeliers are attached to the flanking oak pilasters. Two metal bases of indeterminate use extend slightly from the base of the arch.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 6

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On each side of the arch, a large double pocket door with a well-defined pediment opens into the Georgian Room on the south and the Ballroom (referred to as the banquet room on the drawings) on the north. These three panel doors have paintings in the upper two panels. The lower, or center panel, painting depicts a shield encompassed by an intertwined serpentine floral design, and the small upper panel shows a small urn-type figure with the same floral motif. The paintings are in dark green and dark red. A wooden plaque in the pediment shows the name of each room in gilt letters. These doors have the original brass hardware.

The original terrazzo floor in the lobby, consisting of alternating tan and brown squares in a diamond pattern, is in good condition. The sections of the room are subtly marked by rectangles and squares between the lengthwise run of the square oak columns. The lobby walls are paneled with wallpaper in the panels. The lobby is in remarkably good condition with its integrity intact.

Quoting a special hotel edition of the Walla Walla Daily Bulletin, September 5, 1928, "The lobby, which is richly yet tastefully ornamented, has walls mottled in antique and tan color. Cornices and ceilings are in a mottled green tone while the ornamentation of the cornices is in reds and greens, small amounts of these higher colors appearing in pleasing effect. Pilasters of the big lobby are in Flemish oak and the entire effect is one of quiet, harmonious and pleasing finish".

### Georgian Room

With its main entrance from the lobby, the Georgian Room (29' by 40') was the main reception room. Decoration in this room is based on a shell motif. The Georgian Room has two original chandeliers, with matching wall sconces flanking the fireplace at the south end of the room. A small rosette anchors the chandelier to the ceiling; a metal chain supports a wheel-shaped, filigreed base which has ten candelabra-type holders with two bulbs each. Some light metal ornamental wirework enhances the center chain and a shell-shaped opaque glass bowl with shell elements and appears to be original is fastened by a decorative metal cap at the bottom. The chandeliers are painted. The ceiling has been covered with acoustical tile. The crown molding has a shell design and extends upwards to a foliated cornice. The fireplace at the south end of the room has a simple surround with fluted columns and a shell motif plaque in the center. The mirror above the fireplace, made up of rectangular sections, has a wood frame with ogee trim and centered volutes; shell motif relief carvings accent the wall above the upper corners of the mirror. Simple paneled pilasters with a shell motif capital flank the fireplace and extend around the room.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 7

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The walls of the Georgian Room are paneled and painted in the panels. A large panel with arched top on the east wall marks the closed entrance to the lobby. Paneling and woodwork in this room was originally painted, and remains so. Fenestration consists of two large 8/12 windows on the west wall; there is also an exterior door on the west wall. The floor is covered with replacement composition tiles. A large center portion of the dividing wall between the Georgian Room and the Banquet Room to the north has been removed to a height of approximately ten feet.

To quote the Walla Walla Daily Bulletin: "The Georgian Room, (is finished) with walls antiqued in warm putty tones, the ceiling cream, and the floor in oak finished in two tones".

### Ballroom

Entrance to the Ballroom (29' by 68') is through the double doors in the lobby. As in the lobby, decoration in this room is based on the urn and flower theme. Three original chandeliers, slightly different from the fixtures in the Georgian Room, illuminate the room. A large medallion with metal chain secures the fixture which has a metal filigree ornament. The filigreed wheel shaped base has ten candelabra-type holder with two bulbs each and a lower glass bowl which appears to be a replacement. The chandeliers are painted. Acoustical tile covers the ceiling. The ceiling features a crown molding atop the fluted pilasters with urn-decorated capitals, which extend around the room at regular intervals including two pilasters flanking the two north wall windows. A narrow molding with floral relief and a wider molding also with floral relief and urn design mark the ceiling. The walls of the Banquet Room are paneled; paneling and woodwork were originally painted, as they are now. Fenestration consists of three 8/12 windows on the west wall and two on the north wall; there is also an exterior door on the west wall. Replacement flooring covers the original floor. The center portion of the wall dividing the Georgian Room to the south and the Banquet Room has been removed to a height of approximately ten feet; the remaining sections of two pilasters in this area are visible above the opening.

Again quoting the Walla Walla Daily Bulletin: The Ballroom "has mottled walls in apple green and ceilings in Ivory".

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 8

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### Dining Room

The Dining Room (25'6" by 46'3") is located to the north of the lobby and is accessed by double doors on the east end from the lobby and the west end from the Ballroom. A large skylight, which is now painted over, consists of four identical rectangles with a rectangle and diamond pattern and provides light to the windowless room. New chandeliers with large soft-watt bulbs illuminate the space. The walls are paneled with plain pilasters. A swinging double door opens to the kitchen on the north wall where a temporary ten foot high wall partitions off a small section of the room. Replacement flooring covers the floor.

From the Walla Walla Daily Bulletin: "The main dining room is papered with an imported Bruges' Chinese garden scene. The ceilings are of light Ivory, with a large skylight in the center which sheds a rich amber light over the room. Panels in the ceiling of a delicate rose tint add a warmth to this room's whole effect and Ivory woodwork is used. The Chinese garden scene paper is in large panels. The floor is richly carpeted with a design that harmonizes with the panel effect".

### Kitchen

The kitchen, enlarged from the original floorplan, has modern kitchen equipment, a high ceiling and a tile floor.

### Basement

The basement is reinforced concrete with approximately nine feet to the underside of the structure. A portion of the basement on the east side has a lower floor, thus giving a height of approximately twelve feet. The basement extends a short distance under the sidewalk on the east side. The basement originally housed a large laundry area, kitchen storage and mechanical equipment. It appears to be dry and usable for the entire space.

### Floors Two Through Eleven

All hotel rooms on the upper floors of the Whitman Hotel were reconfigured in 1970 through 1972. The second and third floors were remodeled for use as traditional hotel rooms; the fourth floor was remodeled with new hotel rooms and business offices. The remaining floors, five through eleven, were remodeled as apartments. The original two panel oak doors with their original brass hardware are present. Hallway floors are parquet squares with shallow indentations to accommodate carpet runners.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 9

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### Penthouse

The two-story penthouse atop the hotel originally measured 27'10" by 35'8" with an additional 12' by 18' room; these spaces housed two bedrooms and a fan room on one level. Elevator shafts and mechanical equipment occupied the remainder of the space.

### Alterations

Exterior alterations include the modernization of three storefronts on the east elevation, a plywood structure housing an apartment on the first floor of the penthouse area, and replacement single light windows. The present windows were probably installed during a major remodel of the building in the early 1970s. This change in the fenestration affects with building's appearance less than in many buildings because the windows are slightly recessed, and the emphasis is on the pilaster effect of the strong vertical members on each side of the fairly narrow windows.

On the ground floor, the kitchen has been enlarged with the enclosure of some of the former coffee shop, the coffee shop area also provided space for a new corridor to the north restaurant expansion. In the lobby area the check-in desk has been glassed in, however the original marble counters and curved corner remain. The Rose Street entrance has a partition separating it from the lobby with access by one door; a men's restroom was added off this entrance area. A toilet has been added off the barber shop.

In the Georgian Room a window on the west wall has been replaced with an exterior door. In the Ballroom an exterior single door replaces an original double door. A partial partition on the north side of the Dining Room was added to provide a serving area.

On floors two through eleven almost all the original hotel rooms no longer exist; a few original bathrooms remain. The location of the hallways are unchanged, however the doorways have been moved and it appears that a wainscoting was added. Original partitions in the hotel were clay tile/ new walls were constructed using metal studs and plaster board.

While there have been changes in the building i.e. the windows, the general character of the structure retains its exterior integrity. The interior integrity is maintained in the public rooms in the street level of the building where the original arrangement and handsome decoration are so well-preserved that they form a step back in time to a more formal, subdued era of living.

Marcus Whitman Hotel

Name of Property

Walla Walla, Washington

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- X A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
X C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

History/social

Architecture

Period of Significance

1928-1949

Significant Dates

1928

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Sherwood D. Ford

Western Construction Company

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
X University
Other

Name of repository: Whitman College, University of Washington

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

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### Significance

The Marcus Whitman Hotel in Walla Walla, Washington is significant under Criterion A. As the major hotel in the city, it was for many years the center of business/ political/social activity in Walla Walla County. Its community-driven financing was an outstanding example of innovative fund-raising near the end of a decade of prosperity. The Marcus Whitman Hotel is also significant under Criterion C as an intact example of a modern building incorporating some elements of the Italian Renaissance style, one of several period styles popular in the twenties and thirties. The building is the major hotel in Walla Walla with its location defining the north end of the downtown business district and is by far the largest and most impressive building in Walla Walla. It was one of three major buildings designed by Seattle architect Sherwood Ford and along with his other two large structures, shows his creativity in successfully combining Classical details with a modern structure.

### Context

As early as 1899 the citizens of Walla Walla were interested in having "a first-class hotel" according to an article in the Walla Walla Daily Bulletin. The article gives the example of Tacoma, a city with such a building "that has show remarkable growth and prosperity, and must surely attribute that prosperity to having a good, reliable hotel". Not until 1927 did Walla Walla's dreams of such a building start to become a reality.

On March 29, 1927 W.W. Baker, a prominent Walla Walla banker, met with local citizens to announce a plan in conjunction with a Seattle firm, the Real Estate Improvement Co., that could lead to "a first-class hotel." The plan involved an investment of \$150,000 by citizens of Walla Walla, to buy stock in the company which would guarantee the construction of a quality hotel. The money had to be raised in 90 days. Mr. Baker had recently spent 10 days in Seattle conferring with the Real Estate Improvement Company and had studied the plan carefully. The Real Estate Improvement Company would provide the remainder of the money needed to construct the hotel, up to half a million dollars, furnish the plans for the building, and even provide the management to run the hotel upon its completion. On his return to Walla Walla, Baker presented the plan and a list of local citizens to head up various committees. An Advisory Committee, headed by John Langdon, met with interested people to study the proposition. By April 6, the advisory committee had decided to move ahead with the plan, the first investors were W.W. Baker, investing \$10,000 and Dr. R.H. Keylor investing \$5,000.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

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The construction of the Marcus Whitman Hotel was the result of a continually ongoing entrepreneurship that had marked the development of Walla Walla from its beginnings as a Hudson's Bay post in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. At that time the settlement was referred to as Fort Walla Walla, however it was not one of the company's major posts. In 1836 the American Board of Missions sponsored Dr. Marcus and Narcissa Whitman and Rev. Henry and Eliza Spalding to journey to the west in answer to a journey east by four Nez Perce and Flathead Indians in 1831. The Indians has traveled east to find out more about the "white man's religion". The Spaldings settled near Lapwai, Idaho among the Nez Perce and the Whitmans continued west to settle near Walla Walla among the Cayuse Indians in an area called Waiilatpu on the Walla Walla River 22 miles from its confluence with the Columbia. The Whitmans built a substantial collection of buildings, establishing a school, a grist mill, a blacksmith shop, and and a sawmill which was located on upper Mill Creek in the Blue Mountains. The Whitman's mission was to minister to the Indians both physically and spiritually.

The year 1843 saw the first major westward migration along the Oregon Trail, which in its earlier years passed through the Walla Walla area and often stopped at the Whitman mission. In later years, westward-bound settlers usually took a more southern route through the Umatilla area.

In 1847, as a result of antagonisms among the Cayuse over white settlers and an outbreak of measles, among other things, the Whitman Mission was attacked by five Cayuse Indians. Fourteen people were killed, including the Whitmans. This event brought about a much more cautious atmosphere which for a time slowed settlement in the area.

When the Territory of Washington was officially created by the United States Congress in 1853, Walla Walla County extended from the crest of the Cascade Mountains east beyond western Montana. It remained this size until 1858 and was gradually eroded in size to its present much more modest area. In 1855 a major treaty-signing gathering was held at the present site of Walla Walla. Governor Isaac Stevens representing the Territory of Washington and General Joel Palmer representing the Territory of Oregon were present and signed treaties with the Nez Perce, the Yakima, the Cayuse, the Walla Wallas, and the Umatillas. Soon after the treaties were signed, battles erupted, one casualty being Chief of

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

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the Walla Walla, Peu-Peu-Mox-Mox. In 1859 the buildings at Fort Walla Walla were rebuilt at a different location (the present site of the Veterans Administration Hospital). Also in that year the name of the settlement, which had been called Steptoeville or Wailatpu, was officially named Walla Walla.

Walla Walla prospered in the 1860s as a way station and supply point for a gold rush in Idaho and Montana when gold was discovered in 1861 and an estimated 20,000 to 25,000 gold seekers passed through the area. A later discovery of gold in Montana in 1865 brought even more miners and pack animals. Historian H.H. Bancroft wrote of Walla Walla, "Its early history was marked by scenes of disorder."

Dry land farming was first tried in the Walla Walla area in 1864 with good results and soon there was wheat for export. Shipping was a problem, partially solved by the first rail line in the Inland Empire, a 32-mile track from Walla Walla to Wallula on the Columbia River, completed in 1875. The railroad was a marvel of ingenuity with fir rails spiked to mortised ties. Dr. Dorsey Baker, one of Walla Walla's leading businessmen, financed the railroad and in 1878 sold it to the Oregon Steam Navigation Company for \$321,132. Dr. Baker and his brother-in-law John F. Boyer established the first bank in Washington state in Walla Walla, the Baker-Boyer National Bank in 1869.

At about the same time, the first building on what was to become the Whitman College campus, the Whitman Seminary, was built under the guidance of Rev. Cushing Eells. In 1882 the Whitman Board of Trustees took steps to change the seminary into a college; this was officially approved in 1883 with Dr. Alexander Jay Anderson as the first president.

In 1883 Walla Walla celebrated the "last spike" of the long awaited Northern Pacific Railroad from coast to coast although some routes over the Cascades were not completed until 1887. Also in 1887 a prison was established in Walla Walla with 97 inmates. When Washington became a state in 1889 Walla Walla was a thriving small city of 4,500 people with an economy based on agriculture, mainly wheat, although many fruits and vegetables were also grown in the Walla Walla Valley. The year 1891 saw the establishment of Walla Walla College, an Adventist school. A Carnegie Library was built in 1905.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

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By 1900 Walla Walla's population had grown to approximately 10,000. Two, three, and four-story brick and stone buildings replaced the wooden buildings destroyed in an earlier fire. With a population of 25,000 in 1920, Walla Walla was "a progressive little city" with some downtown buildings of seven or eight stories.

In April of 1927 a decision was made to move ahead with the hotel construction. Oscar Drumheller, as chairman of the finance committee and working through the Chamber of Commerce, including "the flower of Walla Walla's businessmen" began the campaign to raise the necessary \$150,000. Teams were formed, pledge cards handed out, and local citizens contacted. Contributions came in all amounts, from \$10,000 to \$100. Less than three weeks later, on April 26<sup>th</sup>, the campaign was over the top; over 500 people had contributed to the fund. The Walla Walla Daily Bulletin showed a drawing of the hotel with the caption "Our New Hotel."

Since all funds were not collected at the end of the pledge drive, construction start-up was postponed until after the entire \$150,000 was collected. In June W.W. Baker reported, after a trip to Seattle, that the architects were working on the interior and had decided to decorate the lobby in the Italian Renaissance style, the Georgian room and banquet room in the Georgian style, and the dining room in an English interpretation of the Georgian style. More land was purchased at the rear (west) side of the building so the structure could be enlarged from previous plans; the final dimensions of the hotel were 140' by 127 and 1/2'. A total of 175 rooms were planned, with dining accommodations for 450 to 500 people.

Even though the population of Walla Walla dropped to an estimated 22,330 in 1928, there was an upsurge in building including two apartment houses, a service station, and several private houses.

Actual ground preparation for the construction of the hotel began in mid-September, 1927. In early October, it was announced that the hotel would be called the Marcus Whitman Hotel. Work on the hotel progressed rapidly with the reinforced concrete building up to the third floor when cold weather and snow halted work on December 11. Work resumed on February 24, 1928 when the weather had moderated somewhat; floors were poured at the rate of one a week and the forms were removed by mid-May. Bricklayers were already at work laying the veneer of brick, hollow clay tile partitions



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

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were going up, and plasterers were at work on the wall finishing. Western Construction Company of Seattle was the general contractor for the Marcus Whitman Hotel. Some of the sub-contractors and local suppliers were the Olympian Stone Company, cast stone, of Seattle; Seattle Hardwood Flooring Company, Seattle; Whitehouse-Crawford Company, millwork, Walla Walla; Isaacson Iron Works, Seattle; W.P. Fuller, glass and mirrors, Walla Walla; Rattan Furniture Manufacturing, Seattle; Luxry Upholstered Furniture; General Furniture, Seattle; Davis-Kaser Company; and decorator Alfred H. Richter, Seattle.

The hotel was finished in time for the planned grand opening on September 6, 1928 when a gala evening of dinner, dancing and entertainment for 400 guests. W.W. Baker was the first to sign the guest book. Over 1,000 meals were served in the first two days the hotel was open and 113 guests in 100 rooms were booked for the first two nights.

Walla Walla continued to support the hotel for many years, throughout the depression when the population reached a low of approximately 16,000 in 1932. A major breakthrough in 1932 in the canning industry opened another door of opportunity for the area with a new process that speeded production. Walla Walla continued to produce large amounts of wheat, prunes, apples, asparagus, spinach, peas, and onions. It was not until 1960 that Walla Walla's population again reach 25,000.

The hotel also served as guest quarters for visiting dignitaries; in 1954 President Dwight D. Eisenhower stayed there when he was in the area to dedicate the completion of McNary Dam on the Columbia River. Vice-president Lyndon B. Johnson was a guest at the hotel in 1962 when he was present for the dedication of the Ice Harbor Dam.

The Marcus Whitman Hotel continued as a viable part of the community into the 1960s. In 1968 it was announced that the hotel would close due to financial difficulties. Whitman College purchased the hotel and then leased it to the city for \$1.00 a year. It was closed for a year, although the permanent tenants, about 15 in all, were allowed to stay. In 1969 William Brenner and Eddie Mays, restaurant owner, formed the Walla Walla Development Co., and assumed operation of the hotel. A loan totaling almost \$1 million was arranged and Brenner and Mays proceeded with development which included the construction of a restaurant and three-story motel at the north end of the hotel. About this time a decision was made to convert the tower into apartments; subsequently May's Enterprises sold out its interest leaving the hotel under Brenner's management. More hotel rooms were turned

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

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into apartments leaving only two floors of hotel rooms. When apartment rentals did not come up to expectations, some were converted into condominiums, however, this was not as financially successful as hoped for. In 1989 another \$500,000 was spent on renovations when almost all the tower units were occupied. During recent years the hotel was opened and closed sporadically, until July 1999 when the present owner stepped forward with a plan to restore the hotel that would utilize its spaces more efficiently.

### Sherwood D. Ford

Sherwood Ford was born in England in 1872 and came to North America in the mid-1890s. He worked in Montreal, Canada and in Boston for the Hartwell, Richardson & Driver firm. In 1907 Ford arrived in Seattle and was employed by John Graham, Sr. He was with that firm until 1914 during which time he and James E. Webster took over Graham's Northwest projects when Graham was in Detroit. In 1914 he formed a partnership with James Graham and in 1917 began an independent practice. In 1929 Ford was elected president of the Washington State Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. He died in 1948. Of Sherwood Ford's buildings, the Marcus Whitman Hotel remains as an example of his innovative approach to the period styles which were so popular in the twenties and thirties.

Sherwood Ford designed three notable buildings in the late 1920s: the Music Hall Theatre, Seattle, 1927-28; the Marcus Whitman Hotel, Walla Walla, 1927-28; and the Washington Athletic Club, Seattle, 1929-30. The three buildings have much in common and show Ford's interest in the period styles of that era. The Music Hall Theatre (now destroyed) is described as an "exotic Moorish-Spanish Renaissance Revival design" and illustrates that designation with its ticket booth with Moorish stylings including arched windows and decorative iron grillwork. The main facade is encrusted with cast stone ornamentation including four large columns crowned by round urns projecting approximately ten feet above the roofline. Large stained and leaded windows are located between each column. On another facade the top section of each stained glass window is bordered by arched, richly detailed cast stone grillworks of voluted design; the capitals and entablature of the columns have the same design. Another facade is enlivened by two three-sided balconies. Cast stone ornamentation clads the parapets on the roofline. This building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

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The Washington Athletic Club is of a much more restrained design also utilizing cast stone ornamentation including rosettes, an organic swag element, and a decorated parapet. All three of Ford's major buildings share a strong vertical emphasis, setbacks with different roof heights, and a highly-decorated cornice.

### Historic Buildings in Downtown Walla Walla

Within the context of other buildings in Walla Walla, the Marcus Whitman marks the end of a period of relatively slow, but constant construction. While not the most elaborate of downtown buildings, as the largest building, its size imparts a presence visible from many part of the city and looms over the other structures. It is definitely an "urban" building incorporating commercial spaces, large, handsomely-decorated meeting rooms, and guest accommodations.

Other historic buildings in downtown Walla Walla embrace a variety of styles and sizes indicating the development of the city over a period of over a century. The Baumeister Building, built in 1889 and recently restored, exhibits details of the Italianate style in its second story bay windows, ornamental brackets and elaborately-decorated cornice. Another early structure is the Dacres Hotel built in 1899 in the Romanesque style. Classic half-columns and a series of arched windows form the Main Street facade. The Dacres Hotel is on the National Register of Historic Places.

One of the taller buildings in Walla Walla is the Baker Building, 1910, in a traditional Classical style with firmly delineated base, shaft, and crown. The former First National Bank Building, 1921, is another example in the Classical mode with ornate Corinthian columns, dentil trim and relief carvings, and strong cornice.

A later example of a period style is the Liberty Theater, constructed in 1917 and extensively remodeled in 1926. At that time the terra cotta facade with Federalist eagles and stained glass windows with masks were added. It exhibits a somewhat storybook atmosphere which greatly enlivens the immediate area.

Walla Walla has a fine collection of historic buildings in good condition and in use at the present time. The care and utilization of these structures is a reflection of the strong historic precedents in Walla Walla. Its downtown is busy and thriving, built upon a sustained economy that has provided a stable base for gradual development.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

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- Walla Walla Union-Bulletin, July 18, 1999
- Walla Walla Business Monthly, August 1999

### Other Sources:

Walla Walla County Tax Assessor's Office  
Washington State Historic Preservation Office, National Register files  
University of Washington Library

Marcus Whitman Hotel

Walla Walla, Washington

Name of Property

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	11	39636	5102425
Zone:	Easting	Northing	
2			

3			
Zone	Easting	Northing	
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Marianne Kadas

organization Marianne Kadas Consulting date 8/15/99

street & number 3602 SE Alder telephone 503 238-9859

city or town Portland state Oregon zip code 97214

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Real Estate Improvement Company, LLC

street & number 1520 Kelly Place, Suite 202 telephone 509 525-2200

city or town Walla Walla, state WA zip code 99362

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of

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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

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### Verbal Boundary Description

The Marcus Whitman Hotel is located in the SW  $\frac{1}{4}$  of SW  $\frac{1}{4}$  Section 20, Township 7 N, Range 36 in the Walla Walla Quadrangle, Walla Walla County, Washington and is legally described as Lots 2 & 3, Block 1, in Schawble's, Phil Addition in the City of Walla Walla, Washington

### Boundary Justification

The boundary is the legally recorded boundary line for the building for which the National Register status is being requested