(Rev. 10-90)

### United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

DEC 23 pm

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 any item goes 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 Hotel St. Matthew other names/site number: Wisnom Hotel
2. Location
street & number215-229 Second Avenuenot for publication NA
state <u>California</u> code <u>CA</u> county <u>San Mateo</u> code <u>081</u> zip code <u>94401</u>
3. State/Federal Agency Certification
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. ( See centinuation sheet for additional comments.)  Signature of certifying official Date California Office of Historic Preservation  State or 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 commenting or other official Date
State or Federal agency and bureau
======================================
I, hereby certify that this 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):

ignature of Keeper

5. Classification 	a, ago, ago say, and ago saw the ago ago the first ago the saw			* <b></b>
	ory of Property (Check or	nly one) • Nur	nber of Resou	rces within Propert
public-local di public-State si	te ructure		Contributing1	Non contributing buildings sites structures objects Total
Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) NA		Number of contact listed in the Nat		
6. Function or Use	<i>8</i>			
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instru Cat: <u>Domestic</u> Sub: <u>Hotel</u>	ctions) Curre	nt Functions (Ente		
zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz	:2022222222222222	***********	*******	
Architectural Classification (Enter categories fro	om instructions)	Materials (Ente	r categories fr	om instructions)
Late Victorian		roof walls <u>brick</u>		1
Narrative Description (Describe the historic and	d current condition of the	e property on one	or more contir	nuation sheets.)

The building is located in San Mateo's Central Business District, within one block of the town's original center, along the transit corridor that was established in 1863. The area is characterized by its concentration of commercial structures, two to three stories tall, typically built without setbacks. The Hotel St. Matthew is a three story, unreinforced brick building. The entry or south facade of the hotel has four octagonal window bays projecting out over the ground floor. The bay windows are one over one, double-hung with geometric reliefs in the spandrel panels above and below. Additional fenestration includes one over one double-hung windows within the brick portions of the facade. These windows have brick rowlock lintels above and wood shutters to either side. Brick quoining frames the corners while a projecting cornice caps the brick parapet. The cornice detailing includes dentils (a band of small, square, toothlike block projections). Overall the south elevation is late Victorian in character, however some of the elements are Classically inspired.

The main entrance to the upper levels is through a center, rusticated arched doorway original to the structure. The street level of the hotel has retail space (including What's on 2nd Sports Cards and Kyoto Japanese Cuisine) that includes several modified store fronts. An awning reading "Hotel St. Matthew" projects from above the main entry. The awning is original to the building and is iron and glass. Several other signs for the retail spaces and restaurants are present on the building.

The north elevation consists of a lower story of masonry with cement plaster finish and upper stories of wood frame with cement plaster finish. This elevation has been altered numerous times. Three large exterior ducts are present that are not original to the structure. The trash area is present on the lower story and there are no significant decorative features. 14 double-hung one-over-one wood sash windows are present in the two upper stories. There are four lower story openings. The lower entry to the Kyoto Restaurant is the main service area for this business.

(see continuation sheet)

(see continuation sheet)

9. Major Bibliographical References
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)
City of San Mateo. Building Permit Files.
Cloud, Roy W. San Mateo County. Volumes I and II. S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., Chicago: 1928.
Environmental Impact Report. Ellsworth/Second Avenue Project. Prepared for the City of San Mateo by Lamphier & Associates. July, 1992.
Gebhard, David. Architecture in San Francisco and Northern California. Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith Books, 1985.
Groth, Paul. Living Downtown: The History of Residential Hotels in the United States. Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1994.
Hynding, Alan. From Frontier to Suburb: The Story of the San Mateo Peninsula. Belmont Ca: Star Publishing, 1982.
Longstreth, Richard. <i>The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture</i> . Washington, DC: The Preservation Press, 1987.
Kirker, Harold. California's Architectural Frontier: Style and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century. Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1973.
Olmstead, Roger, et. al. Here Today. Chronicle Books, San Francisco, 1969.
McGrew, Patrick. National Register Nomination for Crocker Bank Building San Mateo. August 9, 1996.
Postel, Mitchell P. San Mateo: A Centennial History. Scottwall Associates, San Francisco, 1994.
Sanborn Map Company. 1888, 1891, 1897, 1901, 1908, 1920, 1949.
San Mateo County Historical Association. Historic Photograph Collection.
Stanger, Frank M. South From San Francisco, San Mateo County, California: Its History and Heritage. San Mateo County Historical Association, San Mateo, 1963.
Valentine, Joan L. "The Wisnom Family of San Mateo." La Peninsula. (25) 3: December, 1989.
Wickert, Linda, for the San Mateo County Historical Association, City of San Mateo Historical Building Survey. September, 1989.
Wisnom, Evelyn Anne. <i>Robert Wisnom and his Family</i> . Student Paper from San Mateo Junior College, June, 1939, housed at the San Mateo County Historical Association.
Previous documentation on file (NPS)  X preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.  previously listed in the National Register  previously determined eligible by the National Register  designated a National Historic Landmark  recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #  recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #
Primary Location of Additional Data _X_State Historic Preservation Office (information center local survey records) Other State agency Federal agency Local government University Other

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_\_

#### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing 10\_560650\_4157900\_

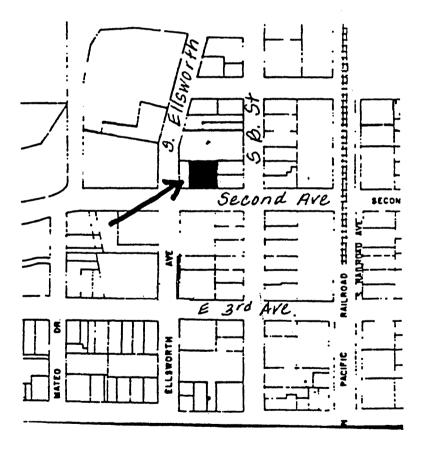
Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

The lot is approximately 85 feet by 90 feet and is bounded Second Avenue to the south, other structures to the east and west, and a small parking lot to the north.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected)

The boundary represents only the lot and building. This is the historic property.

Sketch map of lot and location.



======================================	in = = = = :			
name/title <u>Bridget Maley</u> , Architectural Historian				
organization Architectural Resources Group	date_April 23, 1997			
street & number <u>Pier 9, The Embarcadero</u> city or town <u>San Francisco</u>	state_		(415) 421- zip code	
======================================				
(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)				
name Mid-Peninsula Housing Coalition contact	:: Holl	y Babe Faust		
street & number658 Bair Island Road, Suite 300				
telephone(415)-299-8000				
city or town Redwood City	state	CA	zip code <u>9</u> 4	1063

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The east elevation of the Hotel St. Matthew abuts the adjacent structure and is not visible from the street. The elevation is composed of brick with several windows opening onto a light well. The north end of this elevation is visible from the back parking lot as the adjacent structure is only one story. There is a fire escape present. The west elevation of the hotel partially abuts the adjacent structure with only the third floor visible from Ellsworth street. A light well exists between these two structures that is approximately 60 feet in length from the north elevation. This light well services the rooms along the western end of the hotel.

The entire lot is approximately 85 by 90 feet.

The main entry into the hotel is off of street level and opens into a medium sized lobby. The lobby has a sitting area and a small office tucked under the stairway. An open stairwell leads to the upper floors of the hotel. The lobby has an entrance vestibule, a non-historic display case, several sofas, a front desk with mail slots and swing door, an elevator, the main stair and a metal radiator. There are two skylights to the lobby level within the light well. These skylights do not service and are not visible from public spaces. They are likely original features. Few historic finishes remain in the lobby.

Other areas of the first floor of the building include an empty retail space on the west side of the building and the Kyoto Japanese Cuisine which occupies the space between the hotel lobby and the empty retail area. At the eastern side of the street level is a second retail area, What's on 2nd Sports Cards. Each of these interior spaces has been altered over time. Each has a toilet room. The Kyoto Restaurant occupies most of the area of the first floor. This restaurant wraps around the lobby although there is no access into the hotel lobby from the restaurant.

The central, open stair from the lobby accesses the second floor of the hotel. The second floor consists of twenty six hotel rooms ranging in size from 100 square feet to larger rooms of 200 square feet, two public restrooms, one with showers, hallways of 6 feet in width, a janitor's closet, light well and skylight. Thirteen existing rooms have only a small sink, not a full bath. These rooms are all approximately 100 square feet. Each room has a small radiator and a window.

Many of the rooms have their own bathrooms or they have a sink and are serviced by the community use bathrooms. These bathrooms are along the north wall of this level. The six foot wide hallways are carpeted and have a wainscot cap or molding at waist level along each side. The plumbing finishes have been replaced and upgraded, apparently piecemeal, over the years as have the light fixtures in the hallways and many of the rooms. In fact, many of the interior finishes appear to have been replaced.

Few historic plumbing or light fixtures remain as they have been replaced over the years. Six rooms across the south front of the building have full bathrooms. The seventh room across the front of the building forms part of a suite. Each has a small radiator. No historic light fixtures remain in the hallways.

The third floor has basically the same floor plan, finishes and overall character as the second floor of the hotel. There is a large light well, measuring approximately 20 feet by 18 feet, at the center of the building. The exterior walls in the light well are covered with panels of pressed sheet metal with an imprinted brick pattern. There is a large skylight, measuring approximately 12 feet by ten feet, at the center of the well.

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The basement of the Hotel St. Matthew is divided into two sections. The west side is approximately 29 feet by 77 feet with four structural piers present. The east side is approximately 48 feet by 77 feet with eight structural piers present. There is a stair present in the northeast corner of the west side of the basement. The basement of the Hotel St. Matthew is accessed via several sets of stairs and an elevator. Few historic finishes remain. There are eleven structural piers and a number of partition walls present.

Known changes to the building have been documented by searching city records. Building permits dating to the late 1940s have been found at the Building Division of the City of San Mateo Department of Community Development. Many changes have been made to the building over time and several interesting facts were learned from the building permits. A partition wall seven feet in height was constructed in one of the storefronts (229 Second Avenue) during 1947. Beginning in the early 1950s and continuing into the mid 1960s there are a number of permits that describe work to the Shadows Restaurant at 213 Second Avenue. These permits included alterations to the kitchen, electrical work, alterations and repairs to the restaurant, alterations to the store. One of the last in this series of permits was dated July 2, 1968. This permit was for stripping plaster, treating the redwood finish, exposing brick at the east wall, air conditioning pipes, new carpets and opening the archway to eleven feet. The canvas canopy at the hotel entrance was first added in October, 1967. In July of 1978 fifteen sprinkler heads were placed in the basement. A permit dated March 1982 allowed for the remodeling of the restaurant. In November of 1986 a permit allowed for stair repair. A permit from February of 1987 indicated the splitting of one premise into three separate premises. Also in 1987 a phone booth was installed at 213 Second Street. In 1989 a permit was issued to the owner of Kyoto Restaurant to install a sushi bar and remodel the toilet room. A 1992 permit described a \$25,000 seismic upgrade. In June of 1993 a permit was issued for the repair of water damage to ceiling of the St. Matthew's Hotel.

In general, the Hotel St. Matthew is in good condition. The interior of the building has under gone numerous changes over the years. The building has been somewhat neglected in recent years and shows signs of superficial wear and tear. However, the structure is a significant contributor to the overall architectural character of the downtown area.

- end Section 7 -

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#### Statement of Significance

The Hotel St. Matthew is a significant architectural contributor to the overall character of downtown San Mateo and embodies the distinctive characteristics of a building type, specifically those of the early twentieth-century hotel. The hotel has high artistic value within the context of the remaining historic structures in downtown San Mateo as it is the only hotel surviving from the first decade of this century. The Hotel St. Matthew has long been associated with the community and with the Wisnom family, an important early San Mateo family. Constructed some time between 1901 and 1906, the hotel does not appear on the 1901 Sanborn Map but was photographed showing damage from the 1906 earthquake.

The Hotel St. Matthew is the best example of an early twentieth-century hotel remaining in San Mateo. The 1897, 1901 and 1908 Sanborn maps show a much smaller hotel several blocks away from site of the Hotel St. Matthew. This older hotel structure is not extant. The Benjamin Franklin Hotel of 1926 at 36 East Third Street and the Hotel St. James of 1863 at 273 Railroad Avenue are both extant hotel structures in San Mateo. However, neither hotel is of comparable date, architectural style or quality nor do they retain the same level of integrity held by the Hotel St. Matthew.

The City of San Mateo Historic Buildings Survey of 1989 identified the original downtown area of San Mateo as possessing one of the most important and visually-impressive collections of historically and architecturally significant structures within the city. The Hotel St. Matthew among those structures within this collection. The area bounded by First Avenue, Third Avenue, Ellsworth Avenue and Claremont Avenue is identifiable as the traditional, commercial center of the City of San Mateo and is organized in a visually coherent, unified, urban pattern typical of early twentieth century "Main Street" configurations. The overall character of the Hotel St. Matthew is late Victorian, however some of the elements are Classically inspired. The south elevation is the primary architectural feature of the structure. This elevation houses the main entry into the lobby and several street level storefronts. The storefronts have always been a part of the overall character of downtown San Mateo contribute to the historic townscape of the surrounding area and the pedestrian scale of this commercial neighborhood. The Hotel St. Matthew is just one of a few buildings in the area that has associated street level storefronts. The original Hotel storefronts appear to have always been four in number. The 1908 Sanborn map does not indicate their function or name.

There are several characteristics that make the Hotel St. Matthew singular in the downtown vicinity. First, it is one of the only structures in the area with projecting bay windows. Secondly, the Hotel St. Matthew is the only three story structure within several blocks. Most of the surrounding structures dating to the period 1900 to 1940 are two stories in height such as the United States Post Office (200 South Ellsworth), the Crocker Bank Building (164 South B Street), the Wisnom Building (100 South B Street), 116 South B Street, 130-144 South B Street, and the Merkel Building (201 South B Street). Although, the Merkel Building has a central tower of three stories the remaining structures within this area are only two stories in height. Lastly, the Hotel St. Matthew has retained a high level of integrity and significant design qualities which convey the original architectural character of the structure along the streetscape. Few alterations have been made to the exterior of the structure to impair its significance and contribution to downtown San Mateo. Several other structures in the area have been altered extensively making it difficult to imagine the original intent of their designs.

The Hotel St. Matthew is one of the key elements representative of San Mateo's downtown pattern of growth and development as it related to the railroad. Although the architect of the structure is unknown, the high quality of the design indicates that an architect was involved. In plan, the building is representative of numerous hotels of its day. Clusters of rooms surround a main stair and light courts with several shared bathrooms. Though the original lobby finishes have been lost, we can conjecture that they reflected the detail present on the exterior of the building.

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Originally designed to meet the needs of travelers and short-term guests, the hotel has in recent years, has converted to residential, single room occupancy, low-income housing. Residential hotels have long been part of downtown populations and streetscapes as discussed in recent scholarship by historian Paul Groth.

Although, the Hotel St. Matthew is an unreinforced masonry structure, it has survived several large magnitude earthquakes. The 1906 earthquake appears to have damaged the west elevation of the structure. The brick veneer of this elevation tumbled into the structure to the west of the Hotel St. Matthew damaging that structure significantly. However, the Hotel building appears to have suffered no structural damage and was quickly repaired. The 1989 earthquake caused minor damage to the building and there appears to have been some seismic work executed in the early 1990s. None of the earthquake damage or repairs have impaired the integrity of the structure.

In addition to its architectural significance, the hotel played a role in the social and commercial development of the City of San Mateo. At first, the Hotel St. Matthew primarily served individuals traveling through San Mateo via train. Located only two short blocks from the train station, the hotel was in an ideal location to service travelers to and from the area. The hotel contributed to the overall economic success of San Mateo's financial and commercial district located adjacent to the train station and later as a stop along the major north south motor road from San Francisco. Identified on a 1908 Sanborn Map as the Wisnom Hotel, it was originally named after its builder and owner, Robert Wisnom. The Wisnom family owned the structure into the 1950s. However, the hotel was renamed the Hotel St. Matthew sometime between 1908 and 1920. The new name reflected the name given to the nearby creek during the first Spanish expedition in 1776: San Mateo. These words translate to St. Matthew in English. Both the nearby historic Episcopal and Catholic churches were also given the name St. Matthew.

Train service to San Mateo began on October 17, 1863. The debut run was a 37 minute trip from 19th and Valencia Avenues in San Francisco to San Mateo. As rail service expanded, it became clear that San Mateo would be a likely stop for travelers. San Mateo was ideally situated as the mid-point on the bayside of the Peninsula, where roads and rail lines between San Francisco and San Jose connected with the main cross country route to the coast. From the first decade after the introduction of rail lines, hotels were constructed a short distance from the station to accommodate the many travelers passing through the area. These hotels included the San Mateo Hotel constructed in 1871 and which burned 1883. The Vendome Hotel was built in 1896, the Union Hotel constructed in 1883 and then the Wisnom Hotel, later Hotel St. Matthew, of circa 1901. When constructed, the Hotel St. Matthew was the largest hotel in San Mateo. The three story structure included retail space on the first floor adjacent to the lobby. The hotel has been a significant contributor to the overall success of the commercial downtown in San Mateo.

The history of the development of the City of San Mateo may be seen as typical of the growth of small towns along major rail lines in California. The recorded history of the city begins with Mexican rule, when Rancho San Mateo was established under the stewardship of Cayetano Arenas. In the 1850s, well into the American occupation, Arenas sold the property to developer William Howard. In 1863, with the arrival of the San Francisco/San Jose railroad, a small business district was established. The incorporation of San Mateo as a city occurred in 1894, Robert Wisnom was on the first Board of Trustees for the newly formed town. The railroad station was the center of town and businesses spread to the surrounding areas. A plat was established around the depot which covered sixteen blocks. This area became San Mateo's downtown area which includes the Hotel St. Matthew and other Wisnom developed properties.

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In the 1890s, significant changes occurred in San Mateo. The city passed Redwood City in population and became, in 1894, San Mateo County's second incorporated city. During this decade, a new generation of business and civic leaders emerged. Unlike the areas first European-American inhabitants who were wealthy land owners and had benefited from the Gold Rush of 1849, this new group of San Mateo's leaders had less wealth and were more civic-minded than their predecessors. Typical of this group was Robert Wisnom, an immigrant Irish carpenter who had worked as a foreman for one of the above mentioned wealthy land owners, John Parrott. Robert Wisnom was an Irish immigrant, builder, carpenter and contractor who was one of the founders of San Mateo. Having arrived in California in 1866, Wisnom was in San Mateo by 1868. He quickly established himself as carpenter working on the large Peninsula estate of Baywood.

Wisnom purchased his first real estate investment on B Street between Third and Fourth Avenues in 1869. Experiencing great financial success through his business and real estate ventures, Wisnom became an important figure within local social and economic circles. Among his many investments was a profitable lumber yard in addition to his organization of the Bank of San Mateo. Wisnom served as the bank organization's Vice President in 1905. The Bank of San Mateo moved to the building located next to the Hotel St. Matthew on Second Avenue in 1925 and was designed by the well known architect, William Weeks. In addition, Hotel St. Matthew was located directly next to the first site of the Wisnom Hardware Store at Second and Ellsworth Avenues. The store moved to B Street and then later to First and Delaware Streets. The Hotel St. Matthew is located on the former site of the Wisnom barn and stable.

Robert Wisnom was one of the men credited with the establishment of the original small town surrounding the San Mateo train station. Indeed, it appears he was responsible for the construction of many of the town's most important historic structures. He developed the entire block bounded by Baldwin Avenue, B Street, First Avenue and Ellsworth Avenue. In addition, he developed other properties within San Mateo.

Financially successful from his building ventures, Wisnom invested much of his money in stocks. A financial crash in the late nineteenth century wiped out much of his wealth. Undaunted, the Irishman rebuilt his fortune, but made sure he never again invested in risky stocks. Wisnom invested heavily in real estate until his retirement in 1904. At the time of his retirement he consolidated all his interests together to form the Wisnom company.

The San Mateo area was heavily damaged in the earthquake of 1906. Several historical photographs show that the downtown area was extensively damaged. One of the photographs reveals that the western brick wall of the Hotel St. Matthew fell during the earthquake damaging Wisnom's hardware store.

At the time of his death, Robert Wisnom, who had come to San Mateo in the 1860s as a poor Irish immigrant, was the principle land holder in the city. He had great foresight and purchased land in all directions surrounding the railroad station. He built stores, houses and other buildings to rent making all the land he purchased profitable. Wisnom died at his home on Second Avenue in 1918 at the age of seventy-three having greatly contributed to the development of the City of San Mateo.

Today the Hotel St. Matthew is the only hotel surviving from the first decade of this century. The Hotel St. Matthew is a prominent facade along Second Avenue in San Mateo's old financial district. The building has long been associated with the community and with the Wisnom family, an important early San Mateo family. The structure is one of three buildings that have been identified in a city-sponsored survey as part of a local downtown historic district.

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#### Photographs:

- 1. Hotel St. Matthew, San Mateo County, California, South Elevation looking west down Second Street, Photographer Bridget Maley, August, 1996, Negatives held by Architectural Resources Group, Pier 9, The Embarcadero, San Francisco, CA 94111
- 2. Hotel St. Matthew, San Mateo County, California, South Elevation looking east down Second Street, Photographer Bridget Maley, August, 1996, Negatives held by Architectural Resources Group, Pier 9, The Embarcadero, San Francisco, CA 94111