

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

AUG 13 1990

NATIONAL REGISTER

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name The Oroville Inn  
other names/site number none

### 2. Location

street & number 2066 Bird Street  not for publication  
city, town Oroville  vicinity  
state California code CA county Butte code 007 zip code 95965

### 3. Classification

<b>Ownership of Property</b>	<b>Category of Property</b>	<b>Number of Resources within Property</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<b>Contributing</b>	<b>Noncontributing</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>None</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site		_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: NA Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Kathryn Gualtieri 8-8-90  
Signature of certifying official Date

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

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I hereby, certify that this property is:

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

*Entered in the National Register*

Melora Byer 9/13/90  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

BusinessDomestic: Hotel

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

BusinessResidential Hotel

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th & Early 20th CenturySpanish Colonial Revival

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concretewalls Reinforced concrete

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roof Asphalt on woodother StuccoTerra Cotta

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Oroville Inn is a five-story building (including interior mezzanine) with two attached one-story retail shop wings, all located on a large corner lot in the downtown business district of Oroville, California. Its exterior design follows the late 19th and early 20th century Spanish Colonial Revival style popular in California during that period. The hotel was dedicated on June 1, 1930. Because of its impressive dimensions and modern conveniences, the Oroville Inn immediately became the entertainment and social center of the area. Still in use and recently restored with meticulous attention to detail, the Inn survives today as the tallest hotel in California north of Sacramento. There have been no alterations, additions, or other changes that have affected the historic integrity of the property.

In 1989, the owners embarked on an ambitious refurbishment project that included new ceramic tile floors in the lobby, a new elevator that meets contemporary safety codes, carpeting throughout the hallways, insulated windows in all guest rooms, plus fresh paint inside and out. The original 92 guest rooms have been integrated into two-room apartments with kitchenettes for permanent guests. All the original woodwork has been carefully retained and restored.

The main part of the hotel is set back from the street, approached by a carriage driveway with plantings of avocado and banana trees. The entrance to the drive is framed by an ornate wrought-iron arch. The exterior facade of the hotel features an impressive double-door entrance with stucco columns and capital; a balcony, terra cotta trim, and large arched windows with columnar wood frames. The rear wall of the hotel fronts on an alley, while the west wall adjoins a commercial building which is separate but complements the hotel's own architectural style, making it appear as part of the original complex.

The lobby of the hotel features high-beamed ceilings and imposing stucco columns which hold up the mezzanine level and its delicate wood railing system. The large chandeliers are original, including massive wood-framed arched windows which rise from the floor nearly to the ceiling. At one end of the lobby is a stately fireplace. At the opposite side, the lobby makes an L turn to the south, off of which are located the ballroom, bar, restaurant, and arcade shops. The wood-framed doorways to these rooms complement the lobby woodwork and are original.

Facing the street are several retail shops which have experienced little, if any, structural changes over the years. The two shops adjacent to the driveway entrance still feature the original wood doorways and stucco design work.

## 8. Statement of Significance

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

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Entertainment/Recreation

1930-1940

1930

Architecture

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Significant Person

NA

Architect/Builder

Applegarth, George A.

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

The Oroville Inn is significant in the Entertainment/Recreation history of Oroville under Criterion A as a social and entertainment center for the community and adjoining environs from the time it was built in 1930. The building is also significant in the architectural development of Oroville under Criterion C as one of three remaining examples of Spanish Colonial Revival design in the community.

From the day the Oroville Inn was dedicated in 1930, its impressive architectural dimensions and modern conveniences made it the immediate social and entertainment center of the community and adjoining environs. The old Union Hotel located around the corner was henceforth relegated to use primarily for overflow guests during times of large conventions and holiday events. It burned in 1944.

Although the Great Depression descended across the nation just as the Inn was completed, Oroville continued to be a prosperous and busy place because the gold dredging industry here was at its height, and construction of the new Feather River Highway from Oroville to Reno was just getting underway and was not abated. Wealthy investors in the hotel like entrepreneur Walter Higgins and Wendell P. Hammon, developer of the first successful bucket-elevator gold dredger in the world, made sure the quality of service was never allowed to diminish. Considered the finest hotel along the highway between Marysville and Reno, with private bath in every room, the Inn was patronized by most visitors to the region, including famous movie stars, politicians, engineers, and even military personalities.

Eventually, the Inn was acquired by the Handlery hotel chain, which enhanced the hotel's occupancy and professional management. Although the 1950s and 60s brought the advent of convenient motels at the edge of the city, the Oroville Inn continued to serve as the social and business hub of the city as the Oroville Area Chamber of Commerce located its offices there and sponsored weekly luncheons for area businessmen in the ballroom. Particularly memorable during this time were the numerous meetings and banquets held at the hotel in support of the ambitious Oroville Dam project. Numerous personalities identified with the success of one of the nation's greatest engineering triumphs appeared at these functions as honored guests.

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Oroville Mercury-Register, May 31, June 1, 1930 - Numerous articles and photos about the hotel and dedication.  
Weber, Dickinson, EARLY TALL BUILDINGS from the Agricultural Valley Towns of Central and Northern California. Sandscape Press, Concord, CA, 1988.  
Oroville Mercury-Register, February 25, 1988, "Oroville Inn Beautiful Despite Passing of 57 Years".

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property Approximately one acre

UTM References

A 

1	0
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6	2	4	4	0	0
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4	3	7	4	5	0	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

C 

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B 

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 Zone Easting Northing

D 

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is located on Lots 5, 8, 9, and a portion of Lot 4, Block 1, Official Map of the City of Oroville, Butte County, California, a portion of which is attached. The property is located in T19N, R4E, MDR&M, U.S. Geodetic Map Quad titled Oroville, California. The hotel faces Bird Street, with east frontage on Downer Street and north frontage along Miners Alley. It is bounded on the west by another building constructed at the same time and in the same general exterior style.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated property is all the property that has been associated with the Oroville Inn since its association with this site from 1930 to the present.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title James W. Lenhoff, President date April 8, 1990  
 organization Oroville Heritage Council telephone (916) 533-1849  
 street & number 1084 Montgomery Street state California zip code 95965  
 city or town Oroville

**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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With completion of the attractive new residential apartments, plus operation of one of the city's finest gourmet restaurants, the Oroville Inn continues to serve as an anchor for the downtown business district.

When the Oroville Inn was opened for business in 1930, the structure was the tallest and grandest ever built in the city and still holds that status today despite construction of numerous shopping centers and government buildings. When the old Oaks Hotel in Chico was demolished several years ago, the Oroville Inn became and still is the tallest hotel in continuous operation between Sacramento and the Oregon border. Architecturally, the building was designed as a tasteful blend of contemporary and Spanish Colonial Revival styles that continue to be popular today. The Inn compared favorably with other ambitious hotel projects undertaken in much larger cities like Bakersfield, Marysville, and Chico, and was considered a remarkable achievement for a town the size of Oroville.

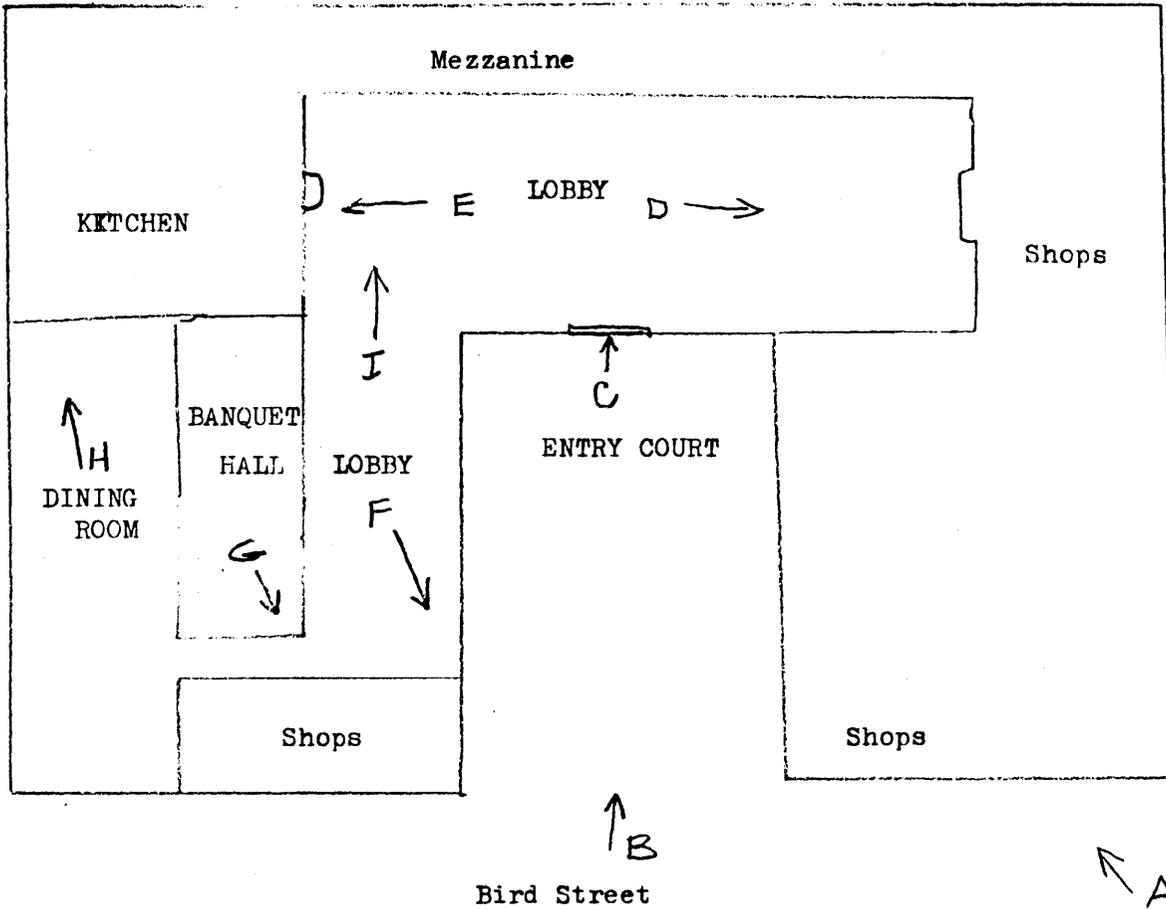
The set-back from the street and the carriage driveway to the main entrance were grand touches departing from the customary designs of other hotels of the period. The hotel also featured an effective "water-fall" air-conditioning system fed by a 125-foot well sunk 20 feet into the bedrock beneath the basement of the building. The latest central heating system was installed, along with the first passenger elevator in the city.

In addition to the Oroville Inn, a large new theatre, plus a spacious Montgomery Ward store were erected on adjacent blocks, also in the same style. The three structures still complement one another as reminders of a major change from the earlier Victorian structures that had previously dominated the downtown area. Construction of the Inn represented a major transition from one era to another.

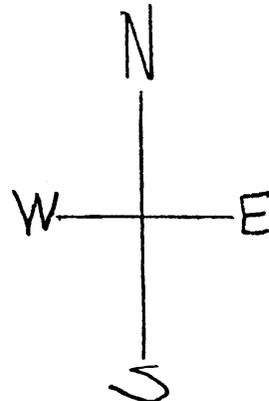
The fact that the hotel is still in use, while many other hotels of the period have been torn down or abandoned, attests to the excellent design, placement, and viability of this major local landmark, one which still dominates the skyline for miles around.

OROVILLE INN, OROVILLE, CALIFORNIA

SCHEMATIC SKETCH

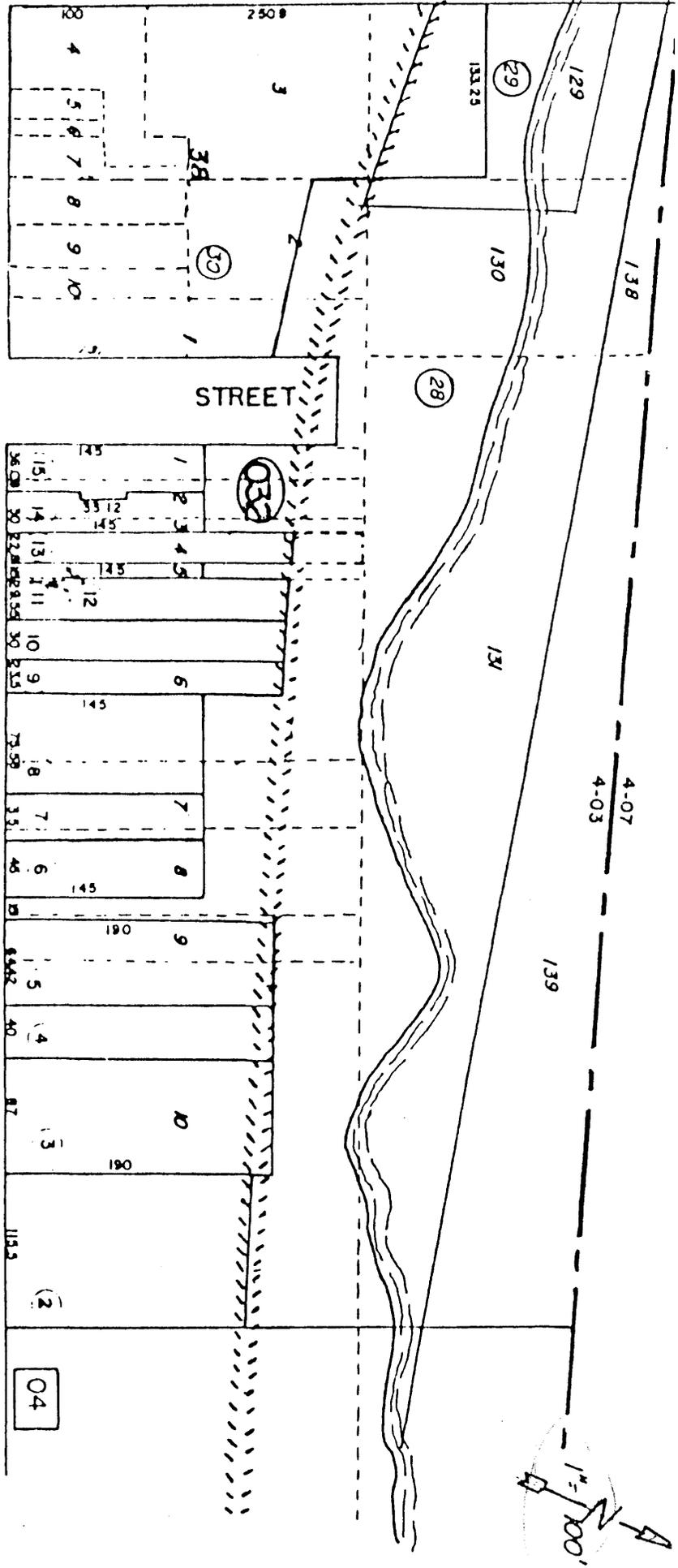


Letters and arrows indicate direction photos were taken.

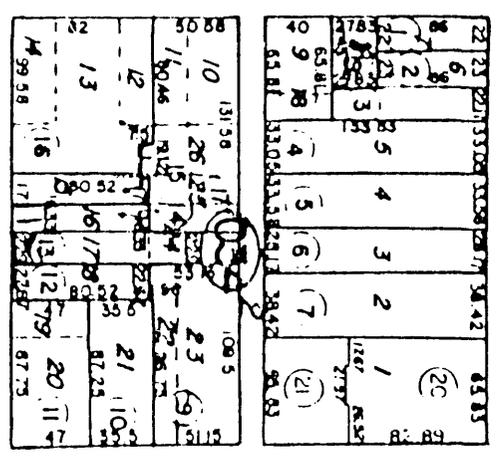


The Oroville Inn  
2066 Bird St.  
Orville, CA  
Butte County

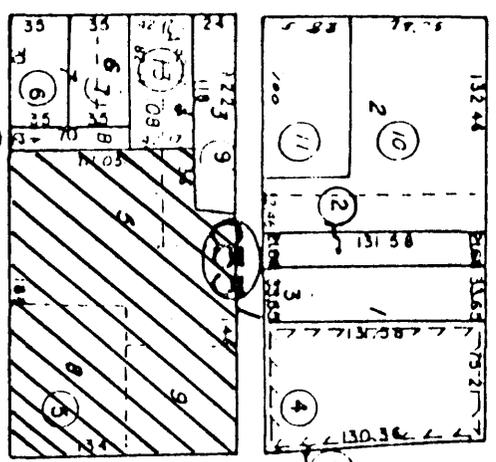
STREET



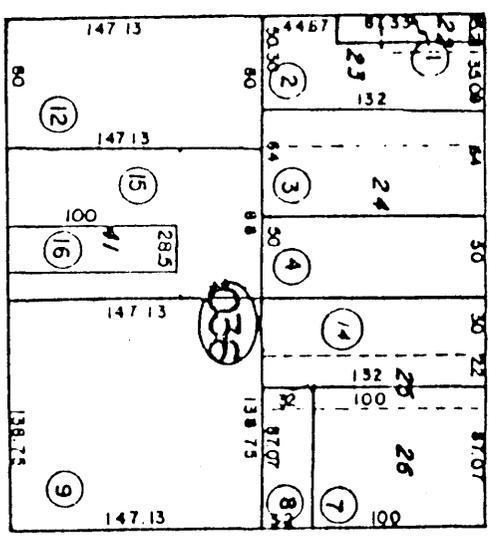
HUNTOON



MEYERS



DOWNER



OLIVER

The Oroville Inn  
 2066 Bird St.  
 Oroville, CA  
 Butte County

09 02 PM/02-83

STREET

Assessor's Map No. 12-03

Official Map of the City of Butte, California

MARCH 1952