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NATIONAL REGISTER

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service 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 Commercial Hotel
other names/site number Hotel Wadena

2. Location

street & number Jefferson St. S. not for publication N/A
city, town Wadena vicinity N/A
state Minnesota code MN county Wadena code 159 zip code 56482

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> objects
			<u> </u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
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.

Nina M. Archabal 11/15/88
Signature of certifying official Nina M. Archabal Date
Minnesota State Historic Preservation Officer
State or Federal agency and bureau Minnesota Historical Society

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:) _____

Arlene Byers **Entered in the National Register** 12/22/88
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/hotel

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

VACANT

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN

other: Commercial Queen Anne

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE/sandstonewalls BRICKroof COMPOSITION

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Commercial Hotel is an intact, three-story, five-bay building located on the primary business street in downtown Wadena, Minnesota. Flanked by early 20th-century brick buildings, the Commercial Hotel is distinguished as the only main street structure that remains essentially the same as when it was in active use during the late-1800s through the mid-1900s.

A coursed stone foundation pierced by two windows that are covered with iron grills supports the ten inch-thick red brick walls of the building. The first floor facade has a recessed central entrance with five-light sidelights and a transom surmounted by a fanlight set in a wide brick arch with a stone keystone. A wooden marquee with neon lights is suspended over the entrance. Flanking the entry are full height brick pilasters and large, single-pane display windows with transoms, decorated panels below, and stone lintels. The second floor shows four 1/1 double hung sash windows, each with a stone sill and segmental brick arch with corbeling and a stringcourse. Fenestration on the third floor consists of five 1/1 double hung windows, each with a stone sill and flat brick lintel. Pilasters and panels above the windows are corbeled, as is the cornice. At the top of the central bay is a gable projection with "HOTEL" carved in stone set in a double band of semi-circular brick.

When it was built in ca.1885 the Commercial Hotel covered about one-half the depth of its lot. In ca.1925 a three story brick addition had been placed onto the rear of the building. The south wall today has ten double hung windows covered with plywood on the first floor. Eleven 1/1 double hung sash pierce the second story, and twelve light the upper floor. The back wall has three double hung windows on the first and second stories and four on the third. The north elevation has seven boarded windows, twelve 1/1 double hung sash on the second floor, and fourteen on the third story. All windows have triple segmental arches with sandstone sills on the original section and concrete sills on the addition.

Inside, the hotel had a parlor and office at the front, a large dining room in the center, and a kitchen in the back. Although it has been altered slightly over the years, the interior still contains the original pressed metal ceiling and some hardware.

Despite being abandoned for many years, the Commercial Hotel is in a good state of preservation and continues to retain excellent historic architectural integrity. The city of Wadena is in the process of purchasing the building to rehabilitate it for use as elderly housing.

 See continuation sheet

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Commercial Hotel, Wadena, Wadena Co., MN

Section number 8 Page 1

The large display windows and recessed entry, usually the first facade features to be altered or removed, are intact. All upper floor double hung sash windows in the facade are similarly unchanged. Unlike most commercial buildings in smaller Minnesota communities, the Commercial Hotel is a very well-preserved main street structure that clearly recalls its association with the early development and growth of Wadena.

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)

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

ca.1885-ca.1925

Significant Dates

ca.1885

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

King, William, builder

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

Built in ca.1885, the three-story brick Commercial Hotel is significant under the historic context Railroad Construction and Agricultural Development as an excellent example of the anticipated need for a permanent boarding facility based on the commercial growth in Wadena experienced during the late-1800s. The Victorian period hotel stands out among numerous turn-of-the-century brick buildings in Wadena, all of which have been drastically altered. Except for a ca.1925 compatible rear addition that matched the original scale and fenestration, the hotel remains virtually unchanged from the date it was constructed.

As an incorporated municipality in 1881, Wadena's estimated population was 1,000 yet the community had only one hotel, the Merchants, located directly across the railroad tracks from the Northern Pacific passenger depot. About four years later the Commercial Hotel opened in what was considered a less-than-ideal location three distant blocks south of the depot. The "thoroughly modern" Commercial, however, had a distinct advantage over the Merchants Hotel and other hostelries because it was built with "fireproof" brick. It survived Wadena's worst blaze in history that destroyed eighteen buildings in 1888.

In 1901 the hotel was purchased by Joseph Askew, an outspoken Englishman who served as a county commissioner in the early 1900s, and with whom the hotel is still associated today. After an accidental death in 1911, Askew's widow and two daughters belatedly fulfilled his plan to expand and improve the hotel. In ca.1925 a three-story, buff-colored brick addition was attached to the back. The addition doubled the hotel's size and greatly improved its reputation among clients, especially traveling salesmen, many of whom in later years became regular customers of the Commercial. As Wadena developed in the first decades of the twentieth century, the location of the Commercial Hotel became more favorable since it was centered among the city's business district and close to the major transportation routes.

Today, the Commercial Hotel remains almost exactly the same as when it was enlarged, primarily because it has been vacant for many years. While all other late-1800s and early-20th century commercial buildings in Wadena's business district have been modernized, the Commercial has retained its austere, Victorian period appearance.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Wadena County Pioneer 14 January 1886; 29 March 1888

Wadena Pioneer Journal 19 August 1909; 3 December 1910; 31 August 1911; 1 July 1981

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

Acreege of property Less than one

UTM References

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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property occupies:

The north 25' of Lot 8 and all of Lot 9 of Block 10 of the Original Townsite of Wadena

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire city lots that have historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Michael Koop
organization N/A date July 1987
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city or town Minneapolis state MN zip code 55413