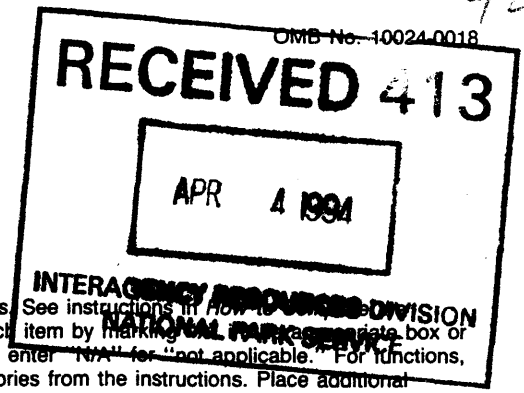


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Register a Property in the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking 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 The Walker Apartment Hotel

other names/site number The Hickey Apartment Hotel; The Walker Apartments

2. Location

street & number 405 Sixth Avenue not for publication

city or town Tacoma vicinity

state Washington code WA county Pierce code 053 zip code 98402

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.)
[Signature] 3/22/94
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): _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action
[Signature] 5-16-94

The Walker Apartment Hotel
Name of Property

Pierce WA
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

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

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.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register

N/A

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

foundation _____

walls Sandstone

roof _____

other _____

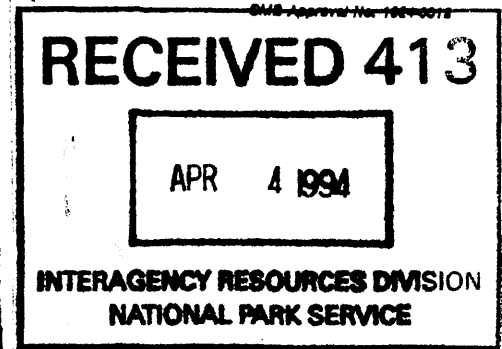
Narrative Description

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

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1



The Walker Apartment Hotel
Tacoma, Pierce County, WA

Description

The Walker Apartment Hotel is a an L-plan reinforced concrete frame building faced with sandstone, and occupying the northwest corner of Sixth and St. Helens Avenues in Tacoma, Washington. It is located several blocks north of the Old City Hall Historic District (National Register, 1974), the Rialto Theater (National Register, 1992), and the Pantages Theater (National Register, 1976); and south of the Stadium-Seminary Historic District (National Register, 1977). The building retains outstanding exterior and interior integrity.

Construction was completed in September, 1927, by J. E. Bonnell and Son. Owned by Robert Walker, president of the Walker Cut Stone Company, it was designed by Roland Bohrek, a noted Tacoma architect. The Walker housed 68 two and three room suites, providing apartment and hotel-style accommodations complete with telephone service in each unit for contacting the janitor and the entry.

The building rises seven stories above a monumentally-scaled ground floor on the St. Helens Avenue elevation; the Sixth Avenue elevation accommodates the sloping site and as a result, only six floors are visible at the southwest corner. The lower level includes a garage and four commercial shops. The buff-colored coursed ashlar sandstone facing is relieved by a simple cornice and parapet at the roof line and a string course between the second and third floors. The restrained and classically inspired ornament appears at the Walker Avenue entry and at the upper floor, marked by balconets. Slightly more embellished balconets are on the St. Helens elevation, above the ground floor openings. A strong and uniform pattern of window openings and sash details -- symmetrical on St. Helens and rhythmic at the long leg of the Sixth Avenue elevation -- penetrates the wall planes.

Although the 75'x100' building is L-shaped in plan, it appears rectangular from the principal facades; hidden in the hollow formed by the legs of the L is a small garden court. The court was a notable feature at the time of construction, represented by the architect as the "very latest idea for an apartment house" and "incorporated into all the finer such dwellings" then being built in eastern cities. Access is from the third floor hall and through mahogany door fitted with 15 lights. Several sandstone steps lead down to the garden, which is flanked on the right by a short sandstone wall

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

The Walker Apartment Hotel
Tacoma, Pierce County, WA

of random rubble-cut ashlar. At the end of the garden opposite the entry there is a small fountain portraying a lion's head bracketed by sandstone shelves above a small pool. The area is not formally landscaped but is marked by shrubs and a small cedar.

The entry lobby is detailed with black granite and gray terrazzo. The lobby walls are cement plaster, struck and finished to imitate stone blocks. A fireplace decorates one lobby wall, and sconces appear on other walls. Further detail includes modified egg and dart molding and carpets inlaid between bands of terrazzo. The apartments each have an entry foyer with guest closet, and the large main closets are fitted with Murphy beds, which at the time of the construction of the Walker were still an innovation. The ceilings of the wide hallways on the upper floors are divided by beams supported by modillions; interior woodwork is walnut stained mahogany.

The building is remarkably unchanged and its original character is readily apparent. Most apartments contain one or more original light fixtures as well as the internal wall phones, cut glass door knobs, mirrored french doors, tiled bathrooms, and hardwood floors. Ceiling heights and picture rails remain unaltered. In the 1950s, kitchen cabinets were replaced in about 30% of the apartments; original cabinets remain in the other units. The dumbwaiter openings have been converted to recessed bookshelves. In 1990, smoke detectors were installed in the units and corridors; they are wired in an unobtrusive manner. Center light fixtures, which had been removed altogether through the years, were replaced in 1990 with new fixtures which are compatible with the style of the building. The non-original hall lights were similarly replaced with compatible fixtures.

The original freight and passenger elevators are complete and still in use, the passenger cab fitted recently with an automatic self-closing gate. In 1984, the building was converted to electric heat; recently, the boiler was removed and a portion of the furnace room converted to a tenant laundry. All the windows were recently replaced with thermal pane set in wood sash; the replacements faithfully duplicate the originals in size, proportion, type, and function.

The most significant change occurred with the conversion of the former dining room to five additional apartments. The date of the alteration is not certain, but it is assumed to be between 1939 and 1945.

The Walker Apartment Hotel
Name of Property

Pierce, WA
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.)

- 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.
- 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.

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 Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1927

Significant Dates

1927

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Borhek, Roland E.

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

City of Tacoma, Planning and
Development Services

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

The Walker Apartment Hotel
Tacoma, Pierce County, WA

Statement of Significance

Built in 1927, the Walker Apartment Hotel is significantly associated with up-scale apartment living in the city of Tacoma. Its stone-faced eight-story facade presented an image of elegance, and its specialized appointments catered to a clientele of businessmen and their families, attracted to opportunities in the expanding city of Tacoma. It is also notable for its connection with its builder, Robert Walker, owner of the Walker Cut Stone Company in eastern Pierce County (National Register, 1978), and its designer, Roland Borhek. Little changed over the years, its handsome styling has remained intact.

Background: Apartment buildings of three or more stories appeared in the neighborhoods around the commercial core after the turn of the century, during Tacoma's second building boom era. Most of these structures were brick, although some were also frame construction. The Walker Apartment Hotel was built in the late 1920s, when the city enjoyed industrial and economic growth. The Walker accommodated the business traveler and his family, providing hotel services when needed as well as long-term residence. Meals could be prepared in the individual units, prepared in the first-floor kitchen and sent up on the dumbwaiter, or enjoyed in the dining room. An in-building beauty shop was an additional amenity, as were the druggist and dress shops occupying the commercial fronts on St. Helens Avenue.

The Walker was a desirable address and the locus of society events in the years before WWII. Garden weddings were held in the summer and holiday parties in the winter. Its opening was featured in the press, and details of its finish and construction were widely published. Women's clubs found it particularly appealing for their meetings. In 1928 and 1929, newspapers featured it in full page displays of beautiful homes.

Its most distinctive feature is its cladding of Wilkeson sandstone. There are numerous brick apartment buildings of the same size in the area, but only the Walker appears in its light colored facing. It may be the only apartment building so prepared in the city.

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National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 2The Walker Apartment Hotel
Tacoma, Pierce County, WA

The use of stone can be directly attributed to the builder, the owner of a quarry that was the source of building stone for many notable structures in Washington. Robert Walker was apprenticed to the stonecutting trade in Bristol, England, at the age of 14. When he was 23, he immigrated to Winnipeg, and then moved to Minneapolis two years later. After his own stonecutting shop was destroyed by fire, he became manager for C. W. Babcock and Company, a large stonecutting firm in Kasota, Minnesota.

Walker came to the Pacific Northwest in 1907, and formed a stonecutting business with Thomas S. Wilcox. He bought out his partner shortly thereafter, and in 1914 brought his sons into the business. In that same year, he leased the quarry at Wilkeson and established a thriving business. The Wilkeson quarry was one of three principle sources of building stone in the state. From it, Walker sent stone to complete the Temple of Justice, Insurance Building, and Legislative Building at the state capitol. Wilkeson stone went into the Tacoma Union Station (National Register, 1974), the Chester Thorne Mansion (National Register, 1982), Tacoma General and St. Joseph's hospitals, local schools and commercial buildings, post offices at Everett (National Register, 1976) and Aberdeen, and numerous other commissions.

Robert Walker announced his plan to build the apartment hotel that would carry his name in December, 1926. Immediately thereafter, the building was leased to Lloyd A. Harrison, a former Tacoma man and veteran of the Alaska gold fields. Harrison died in 1927 while working in the Walker during construction. Although his association with the building was brief, it is reasonable to assume that Harrison's involvement indicated that Walker had begun construction as a business venture for another party. Walker, then 68, needed a partner. His sons were both heavily involved in the Walker Cut Stone Company and they could not participate in the business venture.

J. Frank Hickey acquired the building in 1938. Hickey was prominently associated with the motor transport business and was also the vice president of the Tacoma Hotel Company, the operators of the city's best known landmark of years past. News articles of the day indicate that the building had just undergone a major renovation prior to Hickey's purchase. In 1940, he changed the name to Hickey Apartment Hotel, although the Walker name was restored by later owners.

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Section number 8 Page 3

The Walker Apartment Hotel
Tacoma, Pierce County, WA

Roland E. Borhek (1884 -1955) was born in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and worked for several architectural firms before joining A. Warren Gould of Boston. Borhek became head draftsman of Gould's Seattle office in 1905. He moved to Tacoma two years later and opened his own office in 1910. Borhek's practice seemed to fasten on large buildings -- churches, auto showrooms, theaters, schools -- and apparently did not include residential commissions. In 1925, he was selected to develop designs for an intermediate school in Tacoma, a new concept that would bring together the 7th, 8th, and 9th grades. The subsequent successful completion of the Jason Lee School won Borhek an Honor Award from the state chapter of the AIA in 1927.

Probably his most interesting undertaking was assisting the Young Men's Business Club in the relocation of the surviving Hudson's Bay structures from Fort Nisqually to Point Defiance Park in Tacoma. He was an advocate for the architecture community, serving as president of the Tacoma Society of Architects in the 1920s. He also served as committee chair, president, and vice-president of the state AIA chapter at various times until his retirement in 1942.

NPS Form 10-900-a
OMB No. 1024-0018
(8-86)

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1
Name of Property Walker Apartments
County and State Pierce County, WA

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NPS Form 10-900-a
OMB No. 1024-0018
(8-86)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 1
Name of Property Walker Apartments
County and State Pierce County, WA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Property boundaries are established by the legal description for the building: Lots 24, 25, 26 of Block 408 on the map of New Tacoma, Washington Territory (Plat of 1875).

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary is based upon the urban legal description that is historically associated with the property.