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

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

**NATIONAL
REGISTER**

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 18). 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 nixie Walesbilt Hotel
other names/site number Grand Hotel/ 8Po 1049

2. Location

street & number 115 N. First Street n/a not for publication
city, town Lake Wales n/a vicinity
state Florida code FL county Polk code 105 zip code 33854

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>0</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>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
Lake Wales Multiple Property Group

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.

George W. Stoney
Signature of certifying official
Florida State Historic Preservation Officer
State or Federal agency and bureau

Date 7/16/90

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): _____

Alvina Byers
Signature of the Keeper

8/31/90
Date of Action

Entered in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: Hotel
Commerce/Trade: Specialty Store
Business

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: Hotel
Commerce/Trade: Specialty Store

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Other: Masonry Vernacular

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
walls Stucco
roof Other: Tar & Gravel
other Wood, Glass, Terra Cotta

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

PLEASE SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS

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)

Architecture
Commerce

Period of Significance

1926-1928

Significant Dates

1926

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Significant Person

n/a

Architect/Builder

Bishop, Fred/Phipps, D.J.

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

PLEASE SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Conservation and Historic Resources, Division of Historic Landmarks, National Register Nominations: "Byrd Theatres," "Washington Street Methodist Episcopal Church".

Historic Property Associates, "National Register Nomination for the Highlands County Courthouse," 1987.

The Lake Wales Highlander, March 16, September 23, October 3, 1925 and January 5, 1927.

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

Acres of property Less than 1 acre

UTM References

A

1	7
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4	4	1	9	4	0
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3	0	8	6	3	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

All that property contained in Heckschers First Addition Block 1, Lots 1-5 and East 25 feet of Lot 6 and portion of vacated street.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses all of the city lots that have historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Stephen Olausen, Barbara E. Mattick/Historic Sites Specialist
 organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date July 1990
 street & number R.A. Gray Blq., 500 S. Bronough Street telephone (904) 487-2333
 city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

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National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1 Dixie Walesbilt Hotel, Lake Wales Multiple Property
Group**SUMMARY:**

The Dixie Walesbilt, or Grand Hotel as it is now called, at 115 North First Street contributes to the Lake Wales Multiple Property Group under associated property type F.1: **Commercial Buildings of Lake Wales, 1911-1928.** Constructed in 1926, the Dixie Walesbilt Hotel is a ten-story masonry vernacular skyscraper with Mediterranean Revival style influences. Notable architectural features include its flat roof with urn finials, multi-paned, arched casement windows, first story arcade, seven bay mezzanine porch, and stucco exterior wall fabric.

PRESENT AND ORIGINAL PHYSICAL APPEARANCE:

The Dixie Walesbilt Hotel was constructed on a half-block lot in the center of the downtown commercial area of Lake Wales. It has a vernacular design with Mediterranean Revival style influences. The ten-story building dominates the Lake Wales skyline, and is entirely out of scale with the surrounding built environment, which is made up of mostly one- and two-story buildings.

The building's three-part design consists of a first-story arcaded base, an eight-story shaft, and a one-story cap (photo 1). The crowning one-story cap is the most ornate of the three parts (photo 2). It has a flat, parapeted roof with urn finials. Concrete coping defines the parapet. The windows of the cap are paired round-arch, double-hung sash with 1/1 lights. They are set in large round-arch openings with decorative ceramic tile inlays. The windows are divided by decorative pilasters. The cap is visually separated from the shaft of the building by an elaborate classical entablature with carved acanthus leaf designs.

The shaft of the building consists of repeating sets of paired double-hung sash windows with 1/1 lights. Each floor has a south side doorway that leads to a metal fire escape. A balcony with a flat roof supported by round columns extends from the main (east) facade on the second story (photo 3).

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The base, or first story, extends around the shaft and covers one-half of a city block. It contains an arcade, which houses a number of small retail businesses. The base has a cornice with drop-point designs and medallions. A series of round-arches with central rectangular entrances, fanlights, and sidelights surrounds the building. Other notable exterior features include a rectangular elevator shaft extension on the rear (west) elevation and a second floor swimming pool on the roof of the arcaded block (photo 4).

The most significant interior features are the arched hallways of the arcade block and the lobby area of the hotel. The arched hallways consist of repeating round-arches with molded floral designs. The arches divide the bays of the interior shops (photo 6). The shops display features commonly found on exterior storefronts such as large plate-glass display windows, kick panels, and transom lights over the entrances (photo 5).

The lobby extends two stories in the center of the building. It features coffered ceiling with egg and dart molding, square composite columns with molded capitals, and the original staircase and wrought iron rails (photos 6 and 7). Also of note, are the original oak lobby desk and a second story lobby balcony.

The Dixie Walesbilt retains its architectural integrity to an unusually high degree. The only significant alterations to the original appearance has been the enclosure or replacement of several of the arcade window bays.

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SUMMARY

The Dixie Walesbilt, or Grand Hotel, located at 115 North First Street, is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Commerce because of its association with commercial development of Lake Wales during the land boom years of the mid-1920s. The hotel is also significant under Criterion C as one of the few historic skyscrapers in Florida and as the work of the prominent Richmond architect, Fred Bishop. The building contributes to the Lake Wales Multiple Property Group under Associated Context: **Boomtime Development, 1919-1928** and Associated Property Type F.1: **Commercial Buildings 1915-1928**.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The construction of the Dixie Walesbilt, completed in 1926, was the result of a community effort. During the early Florida Boom years, Lake Wales was faced with a shortage of hotel rooms. Optimism about the new tourist industry spurred plans for a new 100-room hotel to be built at a projected cost of \$500,000. Since no local developer had plans for such a project, a campaign committee, which included B.H. Alexander, J.B. Briggs, and J.T. Rhodes, among others, was organized to raise the necessary funds. In less than a year, \$455,000 in stock had been purchased by the people of Lake Wales. The committee hired Fred Bishop, an architect from Richmond, Virginia, to draw the plans for the hotel, and D.J. Phipps, a contractor from Roanoke, Virginia, to construct the building. An agreement was made with Griner Hotels, Inc. to operate the hotel as part of its growing chain after the building debt was cleared.

The new hotel opened its doors to the public on January 14, 1927. The ground floor of the building covered an area with frontage of 187 feet and depth of 125 feet. Between nineteen and twenty stores and offices were located at street level. Located on the second floor were a mezzanine, magazine promenade and writing rooms, private dining room, ladies' parlor, and eight guest rooms. The upper eight floors consisted entirely of guest rooms.

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Because of the collapse of the land boom, which occurred at about the same time the building was completed, the hotel never realized its potential. It now stands as the major hotel in downtown Lake Wales and as a symbol of the dreams of those members of the community who expected the prosperity of the land boom years to continue indefinitely.

The Dixie Walesbilt Hotel is architecturally significant as the work of Fred Bishop, a Richmond, Virginia architect who was a prominent in the Southeast during the 1920s and early 1930s. His commissions included at least three buildings currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places: a two-wing addition to the Washington Street Methodist Episcopal Church, completed in 1922-1923; the Neoclassical style Highlands County Courthouse, built in Sebring, Florida, in 1926; and Richmond's Byrd Theatre, completed in 1928.

The ten-story Dixie Walesbilt is also significant as the only skyscraper in Lake Wales, and one of only a small number of historic skyscrapers in Florida. It is a three-part structure composed of base, shaft, and cap elements. The earliest experimentations with this type of design were made in the 1850s as rising land values in the nation's large cities created the need to build vertically instead of horizontally. Early skyscraper architects wrestled with the problem of creating harmonious designs for structures that were totally out of scale with the surrounding built environment.

The first three-part vertical blocks were awkward. They took on a boxy, stacked appearance, as if three one-part blocks were placed on top of each other with little thought given to the appearance of the whole. By the 1890s, however, the design had been fully developed, especially in those cases where Richardsonian precedents were used. In these examples, the first story was most often taken up by traditional storefront architecture, while the middle and upper stories contained the most interesting architectural elements. Richardsonian three-part blocks had tall, vertical arched window bays divided by pilasters in the middle stories and smaller arched or rectangular windows in

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the upper story. The three-part design remained popular through the 1920s and was applied, often with dramatic effect, to numerous Art Deco structures.

In addition to its significance as a building type, the Dixie Walesbilt still displays most of the fine craftsmanship employed in its construction. Of particular note are the cornice and frieze at the cap of the building, and the molded and coffered finishes on the interior.

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Section number _____ Photographs 1 Dixie Walesbilt Hotel, Lake Wales Multiple Property
Page _____ Group

- 1 1) Dixie Walesbilt/Hotel Grand, 115 N. First Avenue,
 Lake Wales Multiple Property Group
 2) Lake Wales, Polk County, Florida
 3) Stephen Olausen
 4) 1989
 5) Historic Property Associates, St. Augustine, FL
 6) Main (E) facade and S elevation, camera facing NW
 7) 1 of 7

Items 1-5 are the same for the remaining photographs.

- 2 6) Building cap, showing urns and decorative cornice
 7) 2 of 7
- 3 6) S elevation, camera facing N
 7) 3 of 7
- 4 6) Rear (W) elevation, camera facing E
 7) 4 of 7
- 5 6) Interior, showing arcade with shop fronts and
 molding
 7) 5 of 7
- 6 6) Interior lobby, showing coffered ceiling and
 original light fixtures
 7) 6 of 7
- 7 6) Interior, showing original staircase
 7) 7 of 7

DIXIE WALES BILT HOTEL

KEY:

BOUNDARY - - - - -

CONTRIBUTING
PROPERTY 

SCALE: 1" = 70'

W. STUART AVE.

W. PARKE AVENUE

N. FIRST STREET



LAKE WALES, FL



DIXIE WALESBILT/HOTEL GRAND

LAKE WALES

LAKE WALES, FLA.
N2752.5-W8130/7.5

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PHOTOREVISD 1972
AMS 4639 I NE-SERIES V847

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