

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections



**1. Name**

historic Alonzo Ward Hotel

and/or common The Ward

**2. Location**

street & number 104 S. Main

N/A not for publication

city, town Aberdeen

N/A vicinity of

congressional district First

state South Dakota

code 46

county Brown

code 013

**3. Classification**

| Category  | Ownership                                   | Status  | Present Use                                    |  |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> district               | <input type="checkbox"/> public             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied          | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture           | <input type="checkbox"/> museum            |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial | <input type="checkbox"/> park              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure              | <input type="checkbox"/> both               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress  | <input type="checkbox"/> educational           | <input type="checkbox"/> private residence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site                   | <b>Public Acquisition</b>                   | <b>Accessible</b>                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment         | <input type="checkbox"/> religious         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object                 | <input type="checkbox"/> in process         | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted              | <input type="checkbox"/> government            | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific        |
|   | <u>N/A</u> being considered                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial            | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation    |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> no                           | <input type="checkbox"/> military              | <input type="checkbox"/> other:            |

**4. Owner of Property**

name The Exchange Ltd.

street & number 104 S. Main

city, town Aberdeen

N/A vicinity of

state South Dakota 57401

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Brown County Courthouse

street & number 20 S.E. First Avenue

city, town Aberdeen

state South Dakota 57401

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title N/A

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

## 7. Description

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

This six story hotel is sited at the intersection of Main and First Streets in downtown Aberdeen, one of the state's five major cities. Constructed of steel reinforced concrete, faced in brick, this commercial building draws its stylistic features from English architecture; and particularly the English versions of 19th century classical revival styles. The building is a curious, yet harmonious blend of periods, including the startling art deco cornice.

Erected in 1928, the Alonzo Ward Hotel is composed in three units. The first and second floors create the bottom, "base" unit. On the first floor, the bays are composed of large plate glass, commercial window openings, except to the west of the north, side entrance, where the bays have semi-circular, arched, floor-to-ceiling, Georgian Revival windows. In the bay openings of the second floor are six-over-six rectangular windows. Decorative details, such as the vertically laid brick of the belt course and the banded pilasters are allusions to the Renaissance Revival and Beaux-Arts Styles. The Main Street entrance is enclosed in a two-story arch, which has Tudor or Jacobean details, including a cartouche over the door. These styles were extremely popular in English vernacular revival buildings such as 20th century college buildings and suburban houses. The brick is used in the manner of Georgian architecture and the recessed bays are filled in header bricks and rimmed with stretchers. On the north facade is another two-story opening. However, rather than a door, this unit is a two-story Georgian window with sidelights. Classical revival swags, placed between second story windows, complete the decoration of this floor.

The second unit, or "shaft" of the facade composition consists of the middle four floors. Here windows are grouped in several bays. The front, Main Street, facade is composed in four bays and the side facade is grouped in five bays. Virtually no decoration marks this unit. It has six-over-six windows, and the slight hint of quoins on the northeast corner.

The "capitol" or cornice is brick laid in diagonals, which creates large triangles across both facades. This geometric design is art deco and creates a surprising, but handsome, finish to this simple, but rather elegant facade.

The interior of the building, especially the lobby area, remains in its original condition. English vernacular revival details such as leaded glass windows are mixed with heavy, dark varnished trim work in acanthus leaf motifs. The L-shaped lobby survives in excellent condition.

The only changes to the structure are the covered over or altered first-story windows. Although they change the appearance they are not a garish distraction.

# 8. Significance

| Period                                    | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below    |   |   |  |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric      | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric  | <input type="checkbox"/> community planning     | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> religion        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499        | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic     | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation           | <input type="checkbox"/> law                    | <input type="checkbox"/> science         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599        | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> economics              | <input type="checkbox"/> literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> education              | <input type="checkbox"/> military               | <input type="checkbox"/> social/         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799        | <input type="checkbox"/> art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce     | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy             | <input type="checkbox"/> theater         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government    | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation  |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> invention              |   | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |

**Specific dates** 15 May 1928      **Builder/Architect** Ellerbe and Associates, St. Paul, MN.

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Alonzo Ward Hotel is significant in the areas of architecture and commerce and is one of the oldest and most elegantly designed hotels in the state. Along with the Alex Johnson Hotel (listed in the Rapid City Commercial Historic District), the Ward represents a period of hotel design which used exotic, folk or vernacular motifs in a striking and bold manner. The Ward combines highly refined classical details with over scaled English vernacular revival elements. As a social center for Aberdeen, the Ward is the last elegant survivor of the hotel - railroad boom era in the city.

The St. Paul, Minnesota architectural firm of Ellerbe and Associates designed the Ward in 1927. Founded in 1909 by Franklin Ellerbe, the firm was headed by his son, Thomas, after 1921. The firm reached international prominence for its medical structures, including those at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, and, at one time, was the ninth largest architecture-engineering company in the United States. Other South Dakota commissions included Science Hall and Gymnasium and Power House at Dakota Wesleyan College and the Auditorium and Arena of the Aberdeen High School.

Alonzo Ward, the owner-proprietor of the Ward Hotel, came to Aberdeen from Iowa in 1884, after a brief stay in Huron. Ward began his business activities in the city with a lunch room. In 1889 he opened a larger restaurant, The Star, and converted the lunch room into a bakery, which supplied bread to the surrounding area. This facility later expanded into a candy factory. Ward decided to build a hotel and in 1894 he contracted Sioux Falls architect, Joseph Schwartz, to build the first Ward Hotel. This structure burned in 1926. Two years later the present structure opened.

Ward had become a prominent businessman by this time and was described by the September 1909 edition of The Hotel Monthly as "the big man of Aberdeen, public spirited, financially interested in most enterprises, promoter, booster, a live wire generally."

The original hotel was only one of a dozen or more hotels in Aberdeen during its railroad heyday. However, in the 1920s the present Alonzo Ward hotel achieved the leading position among the first class hotels. Among the guests which stayed in the 120 room hotel were President William Taft, Senator Robert Taft, Chief Justice Earl Warren, singer, Marion Anderson, pilot, Colonel Billy Mitchell, baseball manager Billy Martin, and opera singer, Kirsten Flagstad.

In 1935 the first area radio station began broadcasting from the sixth floor. Throughout its history, the Ward has been the home of local service clubs including: Cosmopolitan, Toastmasters and mistresses, Sertoma, Lions, Rotary, Kiwanis and the Exchange Club. It was also the headquarters for the area Republican Party, as Governor Leslie Jenson was Ward's son-in-law. Many local celebrations have been held here including the congratulations ceremony for the Fischer Quintuplets on September 14, 1963.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

See continuation sheet.

UTM NOT VERIFIED

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name Aberdeen East

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A 

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|------|---|---|---|---------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1    | 4 | 5 | 4 | 0       | 0 | 2 | 0 | 5        | 0 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Zone |   |   |   | Easting |   |   |   | Northing |   |   |   |   |   |   |

B 

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C 

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| Zone |  |  |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

H 

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| Zone |  |  |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Verbal boundary description and justification** The lot lines of the property form the boundary of the site which is located in Lots 1 and 2, North 20.9 feet and west 42 feet of the South 4.1 feet of Lot 3 and west 42 feet of the north 19 feet of Lot 4, Block 10 of the Original Plat to the City of Aberdeen.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mae Zemlicka, Chairperson technical editing: Carolyn Torma  
Historical Preservation Center  
USD, Vermillion, SD 57069  
organization Landmarks Commission date 29 Sep 81 (605-677-5313)  
street & number Dakota Prairie Museum, 21 S. Main telephone 605-299-1981  
city or town Aberdeen state South Dakota 57401

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Jimmie R. Fishburne*

title Director, Office of Cultural Preservation

date May 3, 1982

For HCERS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

**Entered in the National Register**

date 6/17/82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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DATE ENTERED

Alonzo Ward Hotel

Brown County, SD

CONTINUATION SHEET

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The Alonzo Ward dates from the hotel era of the automobile, although its history extends back into the railroad era. Of the many commercial buildings which used the popular Georgian and classical revival motifs, the Ward is one of the more successful designs, combining a sense of proportion and simplified, well executed details. The hotel is eclectic, yet blends its variety of design sources into a pleasing whole.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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Alonzo Ward Hotel

Brown County, SD

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Aberdeen American News, 75th Anniversary Edition, Aberdeen, SD, June 17, 1956; Centennial Edition, June 28, 1981.