

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

For NPS use only

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

received APR 18 1984  
date entered

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

**1. Name**

historic Webster Building  
and or common Gunnison Hotel

**2. Location**

street & number 229 North Main Street n/a not for publication  
city, town Gunnison n/a vicinity of  
state Colorado code 08 county Gunnison code 051

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>n/a</u> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<u>n/a</u> being considered	<input 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 Gunnison Hotel Partnership  
street & number P.O.Box 209  
city, town Crested Butte n/a vicinity of state Colorado 81224

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Gunnison County Courthouse  
street & number 200 East Virginia Street  
city, town Gunnison state Colorado 80230

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Colorado Inventory of Historic Sites has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no  
date Ongoing  federal  state  county  local  
depository for survey records Colorado Office of Archaeology & Historic Preservation, 1300 Broadway  
city, town Denver state Colorado 80203

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## 7. Description

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**Condition** excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered**Check one** original site moved

date \_\_\_\_\_

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

The Webster Building (Gunnison Hotel) is one of Gunnison's most distinguished buildings. Being three stories tall, the structure is a dominant edifice along Gunnison's Main Street.

The building is located in the business district on a single 25' x 125' lot. The lot is oriented east and west and sits near the center of the block on the street's west side. It is abutted on the north by a single story commercial building and on the south by a low, two-story structure. Since the low horizontal form of these adjacent buildings extends to both ends of the block, the three story verticality of the Webster Building looms like a tower in the block's center.

The structure itself measures 25' X 80'. It is constructed of red brick, probably locally made,<sup>1</sup> laid in a stretcher bond pattern<sup>2</sup> on a foundation of coursed native sandstone and rubble. On the north, west, and south walls the brick is unadorned and broken with minimal, apparently utilitarian bays. The sides of the building are unremarkable, originally having been painted in bold black and white lettering, "Dry Goods & Carpets."

There were originally two chimney pots on each side opening upon a flat roof. Hidden from view by the building's height and by the vertical extension of the side walls and facade, is a skylight, located in the center of the roof. This prismatically shaped ceiling bay provided a light source for the interior portion of the third floor and, through a tempered glass floor insert, for the second floor as well.

The front (east) elevation has distinct Italianate characteristics so popular in the late nineteenth century for use in commercial buildings. The first floor has a central entrance flanked by two large, storefront window bays. These are divided by decorative piers which support a cast entablature. The second and third stories are characterized by eight windows within corner pilasters which are finished with stilted sandstone lintels. The lintels, which form a band across the surface, are polished and incised, giving the middle portion of the facade a simple, yet intricate, effect.<sup>4</sup> The brick used in the facade is glazed and a lighter shade of red than the simple brick which comprises the remainder of the structure.

The facade is finished with an ornate metal bracketed cornice, embracing the central bays between cast iron detailing at the bottom and top of the building's front. The metal cornice combined with the cast-iron elements of the streetfront, are the focal point of the facade.

The interior of the Webster Building saw different uses for each floor. The ground floor was a large open space with plank flooring and an ornate pressed tin ceiling. Just to the left of the main entrance is a wide staircase giving access to the upper floors. The second floor was a storeroom and living quarters for the proprietors. The third floor was open and used as a meeting hall. The original pressed metal ceilings still remain.

Since little of Gunnison's commercial architecture remains from the early years, the Italianate characteristics of the Webster Building are more distinct than if surrounded by similar features. The structure has been virtually unaltered exteriorally. All dominant interior features, ceilings, floor inset, and skylight remain.

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater		
<input 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** 1882 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

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

The Webster Building has been a Gunnison landmark since its construction in 1882. The three-story structure is the focal point of Gunnison's Main Street. It is one of three remaining commercial buildings in the downtown district which has retained its historical integrity. A center of commercial enterprise for one hundred years, the building has served as an important commercial establishment in the history of the town.

When built, the Webster Building was, by Gunnison's standards, elaborate and grand. Constructed by Milo Matteson for use as a retail store, the building was described in the Gunnison Daily Review Herald on August 22, 1882: "Matteson's three story brick building is ready for the galvanized iron cornice. It will be one of the finest looking buildings in town and the most substantially built." One of the first permanent masonry commercial structures built downtown, the store, operated under the name Shilling and Company, opened to a booming Gunnison ripe for retail sales. The town was recently served by the Barlow and Sanderson Stage and Freight Line and the opening of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad in August of 1881.<sup>1</sup>

Matteson came to Gunnison from Chicago. He operated another retail store in Gunnison from 1880. He contracted for the construction of the building in January of 1882 and occupied the finished structure August 18, 1882.<sup>2</sup> Located in one of Gunnison's highest buildings, Shilling and Company became Gunnison's most outstanding dry goods establishments. Matteson sold the building and business in 1889 to Herman Webster who ran the business in the building until his death in 1920. Webster had come to town from Vermont to run a rival dry goods store.<sup>3</sup> Successful in his new enterprise, soon the building and the entire block took on the "Webster" name. Webster was influential in local politics, was councilman, and mayor of Gunnison. He also served as a director of the First National Bank.<sup>4</sup>

The first floor of the Webster Building has been in continuous use as retail space since the building was constructed. The second floor, originally living space for the proprietors and a warehouse, has been converted to hotel rooms. The third floor was used originally as a social hall. Oddfellows and Masons met in the space and numerous theatrical events and specials were held on the premises.

In summation, the Webster Building finds its major significance in its architecture, early and unusual for Gunnison, and for the role it played in the commercial development of downtown Gunnison.

<sup>1</sup>Duane Vandenbusche, The Gunnison Country, Gunnison, Co.: (B&B Printers, 1980) p.68.

<sup>2</sup>The Gunnison Daily News Democrat, January 11, and August 18, 1882.

<sup>3</sup>Webster married May Smith, a native of Illinois in 1885. She was best known for her donation of a large sum of money to the city of Gunnison to be used for the construction and maintenance of a recreation and social hall. The building was constructed in 1935. Known as Webster Hall, the structure is still in use today.

<sup>4</sup>Carol Crowle, "The Gunnison Hotel", 1980.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

(see continuation sheet)

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .07

Quadrangle name Gunnison

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

1	3	3	3	2	1	0	0	4	2	6	7	9	4	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B 

Zone		Easting					Northing							

C 

Zone		Easting					Northing							

D 

Zone		Easting					Northing							

E 

Zone		Easting					Northing							

F 

Zone		Easting					Northing							

G 

Zone		Easting					Northing							

H 

Zone		Easting					Northing							

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 20, Block 12, City of Gunnison

### 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 Tracey, Thrasher Daily, Preservation Officer Howard Channell

organization City of Gunnison date December 17, 1983

street & number 515 North Boulevard Street telephone (303) 641-1951

city or town Gunnison state Colorado 81230

# 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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Barbara Sudler

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 4/10/84

### For NPS use only

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

Arlene Byers  
Keeper of the National Register

date 5/17/84

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_  
Chief of Registration

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EXISTING SURVEYS

Historical Architecture of the Gunnison, Gunnison County, Colorado.  
A Review and Evaluation, Martha Sullenberger and Steven Baker. (Montrose,  
Co.: Centuries Research, Inc., 1981.)

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<sup>1</sup>Duane Vandebusche, The Gunnison Country, Gunnison, Co.: (B&B Printers, 1980). p. 145.

<sup>2</sup>Robert Packard, ed. Ramsey/Sleeper Architectural Graphic Standards, The American Institute of Architects, 7th edition, New York. p. 223.

<sup>3</sup>Marcus Whiffen, American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles, Cambridge, Massachusetts (M.I.T. Press, 1969), p.97.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

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Books:

Packard, Robert, ed. Ramsey/Sleeper Architectural Graphic Standards, 7th ed.  
The American Institute of Architects: New York.

Stoehr, C. Eric, Bonanza Victorian: Architecture and Society in Colorado Mining  
Towns. Albuquerque, N.M.: UMN Press, 1975.

Sullenberger, Martha and Baker, Steven G. The Historical Architecture of Gunnison  
County, Co.: A Review and Evaluation, Montrose, Co.: Centuries Research, Inc.,  
1981.

Vandenbusche, Duane, The Gunnison Country. Gunnison, Co.: B & B Printers Gunnison,  
Inc., 1980.

Wiffen, Marcus, American Architecture Since 1780. Cambridge, Ma.: The MIT Press,  
1969.

Papers:

The Gunnison Daily News Democrat: Jan. 11, and Aug. 18, 1882.

The Gunnison Review: Aug. 25, 1882.

"The Gunnison Hotel", a research project by Carol Crowle, 1980.