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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 The Miller Hotel
other names/site number Luerhs Rooming House; BW04-001

2. Location

street & number 197 West Third Street
city, town Long Pine
state Nebraska code NE county Brown code 017 zip code 69127

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private (checked)
Category of Property: building(s) (checked)
Number of Resources within Property: Contributing 1, Noncontributing 1, Total 2
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.
Signature of certifying official: James A. Hanson
Date: October 13, 1989
Director, Nebraska State 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. (checked)
determined eligible for the National Register.
determined not eligible for the National Register.
removed from the National Register.
other, (explain:)
Signature of the Keeper: Melvina Byers
Date of Action: 11/27/89

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Hotel

Domestic/Single Dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture/Museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Queen Anne

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete Block

walls Wood

roof Asphalt

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Miller Hotel is located at the corner of Elm and Third Streets, one block west of Main Street in Long Pine, a small town in north-central Nebraska. The two-story frame building was originally constructed as a dwelling in 1895; a ten-room wing was added in 1914 which converted the house into a hotel. The building is a distinctive variation of the Longitudinal Block Hotel type; the original dwelling exhibits characteristics of the Queen Anne architectural style. Interior and exterior integrity are excellent. The nomination consists of one contributing building, the hotel, and one non-contributing building, a small shed.

The Miller Hotel is located at the southeast corner of the intersection of Elm and Third Streets in Long Pine, a north-central Nebraska community (population 521; 1980 census). Originally constructed as a single family dwelling, by 1895 the two-story frame building was converted into a hotel when a ten-room two-story wing was added in 1914. At the time, Long Pine was the major terminus for the railroad line in the Lower Niobrara Region of Nebraska; by 1916 the community had the most extensive stockyards outside Omaha and at least ten hotels and rooming houses (Skinner, 1980). A two-story frame depot, depot grounds, livestock and freight yards, roundhouse, and a large frame hotel were located along the railroad tracks, one block south--none of these structures are extant.

The Miller Hotel is the best remaining building associated with Long Pine's historic significance as a major railroad terminus and livestock shipment point, and its only extant hotel. Further, it represents a unique variation of the Longitudinal Block Hotel which exhibits outstanding interior and exterior integrity.

The original house, which exhibits simple Queen Anne architectural details, is roughly square in massing, approximately 30 feet on each side. The main, or north, facade features

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an open first floor front porch, and an eight-sided, two-story tower, with a multi-sided roof at the northwest corner of the building. The porch has a low-hipped roof with three simple wooden posts. The tower and the front porch lend an asymmetrical appearance to the main facade, typical of the Queen Anne architectural style.

The original dwelling portion of the hotel has a low-hipped roof; individual attic story dormer windows are located on the east and west facades. The two-story, gable-roofed addition which extends from the south side of the original building is easily distinguished by a difference in massing and roof. Also, the addition does not match the width of the original house; a difference of approximately two feet is visible on the east and west facades. The ten-room wing, which was completed in 1914, forms a rectangular shape, measuring 36 by 26 feet. A one-story shed addition, which may have been an enclosed porch or wash room, is located at the southwest corner of the building.

The conversion of the house into a hotel in 1914 represents a response to the need for additional lodging for numerous railroad workers employed at Long Pine's roundhouse, freight, or stockyards. The 1914 conversion, which utilized an existing dwelling conveniently located near the railroad, also represents a unique variation of the Longitudinal Block Hotel type. As identified in the NESHPO Property Type Analysis, "Hotels" (Murphy, 1989), the type is characterized by multiple story, rectangular or predominantly rectangular buildings with rooms located above first-floor public or commercial space.

The Longitudinal designation refers to the relationship between the main entrance and the corridors. Longitudinal Block hotels have a main entrance location on the arrow facade of the building's rectangular shape. The corridors, with rooms located on each side--hence the name "double-loaded corridors"--extend from the main entrance to the back of the lot, perpendicular to the street. The Longitudinal Block Hotel type represents the most efficient use of urban land area while providing the greatest number of rooms possible with necessary light, ventilation, and access and was one of two common types associated with the first generation of hotel construction across the state.

The Miller Hotel, converted from an existing single family dwelling, represents a unique variation of the Longitudinal Block

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Hotel type. The first floor of the hotel provided rooms for lodgers, public areas, kitchen, dining and family living quarters. The main staircase, immediately visible through the building's main entrance, was an unusual combination of horizontal and vertical balustrades. The hallway, which extends the length of the building, separates the family living area/parlors of the main floor from the sleeping rooms. The original owner's living quarters and rooms are located on the west side of the hallway. Two parlors extend from the front of the building toward the kitchen and living quarters; these rooms may have also been used by lodgers.

On the east side of the main floor, five rooms extend from the front to the rear of the building. The two front rooms, located in the original house portion of the building, are slightly larger and have a minimum of two windows each. The remaining three rooms, located in the 1914 addition, are the most basic of accommodations; no sink or phones, and only one window per room. On the second floor, the Longitudinal Block Hotel type is even more strongly conveyed by the long corridor which extends from the front to the rear of the building. The doors to each of the ten sleeping rooms are intact, including frames and wooden transoms. A full attic floor is accessible from a door located near the main staircase.

Interior and exterior alterations to the building have been minimal through time, making the Miller Hotel an unusual property type variation which has retained a remarkable degree of integrity. Throughout the building most of the original fabric is intact; spaces, woodwork, cabinets, wallpaper and linoleum. When originally constructed as a dwelling in the 1890s, the front porch was open and featured wooden posts. Based on available documents and historic photographs, it appears that some time after the house became a hotel the front porch was enclosed. Due to deterioration, the porch was rebuilt by the current owners in 1988; replacement posts closely match the originals.

Today there is no exterior evidence of gardens or structures associated with the day-to-day operation of the hotel. A small shed, however, is located on the southeast corner of the lot; due to alterations and the lack of available verification concerning its historic use, it has been determined to be non-contributing.

The Miller Hotel remained open until the early 1980s when the last proprietor, Mrs. Alma Luehrs, decided to find a buyer.

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In 1984 the building was purchased by the Long Pine Heritage Society, a local organization which formed to preserve the hotel for use as a local history museum.

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

Architecture

Period of Significance

1895 - 1939

Significant Dates

1895

1914

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Significant Person

NA

Architect/Builder

unknown

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

The Miller Hotel in Long Pine has been compared to similar properties on a statewide basis and was found to be significant on a regional level under Criterion A. It has been evaluated within the Retail Commerce context for the Lower Niobrara Region and found to be significant for its association with the commercial development of Long Pine and with the building boom of second generation hotels that occurred on a statewide basis during the first quarter of the twentieth century. The Miller Hotel has statewide significance under Criterion C as an extraordinarily well preserved relict example of the Longitudinal Block hotel property type. Unlike most "modern" hotels built during this period, the Miller Hotel was not constructed of brick nor could it boast of typical conveniences such as private phones or hot and cold water in individual rooms. Rather, the Miller typifies, in form and materials, hotels characteristic of the first generation of hotel construction in the state, but unique in that it is an expansion and conversion from a single family dwelling. Despite these differences, its function was the same as other hotels built during this time; to provide lodging for businessmen travelling on the railroad and, especially for rooms for the railroad workers themselves. While some communities went to great lengths and expense to acquire a "modern" hotel, Long Pine's response to its need for more lodging space was diverse. Among the many hotels extant during this period, the Miller was converted from an existing house into a hotel by the addition of a large rear wing. The former dwelling was further remodeled to accommodate hotel functions on the main floor. The Miller is the only extant hotel in Long Pine; from at least ten that are known to have existed. The period of significance begins in 1895, when

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the original house was built and ends in 1939, the last year in which the hotel's continued significance in the commercial development of Long Pine meets the 50-year minimum age criterion.

The Miller Hotel was established in 1914 when an existing house was converted into a hotel by the addition of a ten-room wing. The Miller was built in response to an urgent need for additional lodging during Long Pine's boom years as a major northern Nebraska passenger and freight railroad terminus. By the mid-1920's the community's population was over 1,000; the number would gradually, but steadily decline to the present-day population of less than 500.

In addition to a 40 acre stockyard, large frame depot and depot grounds, Long Pine was site of a Chicago & Northwestern roundhouse. From the time of the town's platting in 1881 through the 1920's, the railroad employed many local men. The importance of the railroad in the community's history and economy is further evidenced by the 10 to 16 hotels and rooming houses that were operating at the time. The creation of the Miller Hotel in response to an urgent need for more lodging, coincides with the significant hotel building boom that was occurring on a state-wide basis at the same time. Today, the Miller Hotel is the last extant hotel in Long Pine, and represents a very significant aspect of state and local commercial development.

The Miller Hotel was originally built as a house for Mr. H. W. Learn about 1895. It is unclear whether Mr. Learn rented rooms in the house; but if this was the case, it certainly was not out of the ordinary. Like many communities in Nebraska during this period, Long Pine relied on the railroad to bring businessmen into the area. And like other towns, it was necessary to provide an adequate number of sleeping rooms if the people of Long Pine expected the businessmen to continue coming to their community. Compounding the room rental problem was the fact that many railroad employees also stayed in Long Pine. It was not unusual, therefore, to see advertisements in the local newspaper placed by individuals announcing rooms for rent in private homes.

Regardless of whether paying guests stayed at Mr. Learn's house, the entire complexion of the building soon changed. In

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1910, Mrs. Nellie Agler bought the house from Mrs. Nellie Sheer (who had purchased it from Mr. Learn in 1902). Realizing the need for additional hotel space in March, 1914, Mrs. Agler let a contract for the erection of a ten-room addition to her house making it "a rooming house with something like twenty-two rooms" (Long Pine Journal, March 20, 1914).

Although Mrs. Agler's rooming house was not typical of the "modern" hotels being built throughout the state during this period, it continued to provide the same necessary services. In July, 1919, the local newspaper reported that there was still an urgent need for more sleeping accommodations. It continued to explain that because all the rooming houses were full, people had to sit up all night in hotel lobbies and in the waiting rooms at the depot (Long Pine Journal, July 31, 1919).

In the same issue, a short article indicated that Mr. U. S. Miller, who had been living at the Agler rooming house for over a year, bought the establishment from Mrs. Agler. He promptly renamed it the Miller Hotel. Although the hotel changed hands several times after Mr. Miller's period of ownership, the historic name remained the Miller Hotel and it was in continuous operation as a hotel house until the early 1980's, when its doors finally closed.

Based on this information it is evident that the Miller Hotel clearly contributes to the significance of the Retail Commerce context under Criterion A in that it provided much-needed services for travelling business people and especially railroad employees. Rather than exemplifying the new, "modern" construction that was occurring in other towns during the first quarter of the twentieth century, the Agler-Miller response to the need for more hotels was to convert and rebuild an existing house. Of the many hotels known to have been operative in Long Pine during this period, the Miller is the only extant example. The Hotel has been compared to similar properties on a statewide basis and found to be an exceptionally well-preserved variation of the Longitudinal Block Hotel property type; on a statewide basis the type is more typically associated with the first generation of hotel construction.

To date, the on-going Nebraska Historic Building Survey (NEHBS) has identified numerous Longitudinal Block hotels, all from the settlement period of construction in their respective

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locales, none however, were built in the first quarter of the twentieth century. The Miller Hotel is the only known example of the property type which has been converted from an existing house, and its exceptional integrity allows it to clearly display the characteristic features of its type. Within the Lower Niobrara region, five extant hotels including the Miller, have been identified. Of these hotels, only the Verdigre (KX14-6) and the Miller retain sufficient integrity to be considered for inclusion on the National Register. Two of the other hotels in the region, the Elkhorn (HT09-13) and one in Burton (KP02-7) are abandoned and lack integrity. The other regional hotel in Ainsworth (BW01-119) has been remodelled.

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Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey (NEHBS). "Reconnaissance Survey Final Reports": Blaine, Brown, Keya Paha, Loup, and Rock Counties. Lincoln, NE: Nebraska State Historical Society, July 1989.

Skinner, Shirley (ED.) Pioneer Stories of Brown, Keya Paha, and Rock Counties in Nebraska. Ainsworth, NE: Star-Journal, Inc., 1980.

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Latitude: 99° 42' 05"

Longitude: 42° 32' 02"