

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

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

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

For NPS use only
received **MAY 14 1986**
date entered **JUN 13 1986**

1. Name

historic Hotel Atwater

and/or common Atwater Inn

2. Location

street & number 322 Atlantic Avenue

N/A not for publication

city, town Atwater

N/A vicinity of

state Minnesota

code 22

county Kandiyohi

code 067

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple (see continuation sheet)

street & number N/A

city, town N/A

N/A vicinity of

state N/A

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kandiyohi County Courthouse

street & number Becker Avenue W.

city, town Willmar

state Minnesota 56201

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Minnesota Statewide Historic Sites Survey
title

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1984-85

federal state county local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office, Fort Snelling History Center

city, town St. Paul

state Minnesota 55111

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u> N/A </u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Hotel Atwater, built in 1904, is located at the northeast corner of Atlantic Avenue and 4th Street in Atwater, a community of 1,100 residents in Kandiyohi County. The hotel is situated at the west end of Atwater's main commercial street and, like the other commercial structures on Atlantic Avenue, faces the Burlington Northern tracks and a trackside park area.

The hotel, which is believed to have been designed and built by the Willmar firm of Olson and Skoolheim, is a handsome two story 73' by 77' brick structure resting on a stone foundation. The building is U-shaped with a ten bay main facade, six bay sidewalls, and a rear air and light corridor allowing windows in interior rooms. The principal (south and west) facades are faced with light brown stretcher bonded pressed brick which forms a striated pattern on the first story, while the east and rear walls are faced with light brown soft common brick. The main facade has a central three bay entrance area which is recessed behind three first story brick rounded arches with rockfaced yellow limestone keystones. The arches are supported by two short polished granite columns with brick bases and massive foliated yellow limestone capitals. Behind the arches are a main entrance and two large rectangular windows. Above the first story is a permanent sign reading "Hotel Atwater". West of the main entrance are two large rectangular windows, and east of the main entrance is an altered storefront. The hotel has rectangular window openings with dark brick keystones and 2/2 sash on the south and west facades, and segmental arched 2/2 sash elsewhere. The principal facades feature a simple metal cornice beneath a low parapet wall, a row of brick dentils above the first story, and dark brickwork simulating quoins at the corners of the building.

The first floor of the hotel was originally designed to include a dining room, kitchen, 19' x 30' storefront, office with a pressed metal ceiling, two sample rooms, proprietor's room, wash room with tile floor and marble furnishings, coat room, writing room, and two sleeping rooms for employees. The second floor was designed to house twenty-two guest rooms, two baths, and two toilet rooms. Boilers and storage rooms for produce and other supplies were located in the basement. The hotel originally featured steam heat, running water, gas light, maple flooring, and oak and birch woodwork.

The Hotel Atwater is largely intact and in good condition. The only major exterior alteration has been the installation of new brickwork and windows in the eastern storefront. The second story interior is basically intact, but the first story has been altered with slight changes in room arrangement and new wall and floor coverings. The present owners plan a restoration of the hotel interior.

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 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 1904 **Builder/Architect** Probably Olson and Skoolheim, Willmar

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Hotel Atwater, built in 1904, is historically and architecturally significant as one of west central Minnesota's finest extant railroad-era downtown hotels, as an excellent example of a building type which is becoming increasingly rare in rural Minnesota, as an architecturally distinguished example of Victorian era design, and as the product of an organized effort by residents of a small community to foster commercial growth by providing the town with a major hotel.

The construction of rail lines was essential to the founding and development of Atwater, as it was to over 80% of the communities in west central Minnesota. Atwater, located in eastern Kandiyohi County, was founded in 1869 when the St. Paul and Pacific rail company laid tracks through the area connecting the Twin Cities with Willmar, 12 miles to the west. Atwater was named after a St. Paul and Pacific official and platted by the company in 1871. Like many St. Paul and Pacific towns, Atwater was platted with a standard pattern of Atlantic and Pacific avenues flanking the tracks, a park area and depot site established along the tracks between these streets, and additional streets laid parallel and perpendicular with the trackbed. Atwater's business district developed along the north side of Atlantic Avenue with business facades facing the tracks and park area, and grain elevators located along the track line. A few small woodframe hotels were built in early Atwater, some of which were destroyed by a disastrous 1891 downtown fire.

Beginning at the turn of the century, the 600 residents of the developing community began to feel the need to a substantial downtown hotel, a structure which proved vital to the business climates of nearly all rural Minnesota railroad towns. In April of 1904 a stock company called the Atwater Hotel Company Incorporated was organized by a group of 27 local merchants who comprised nearly all of the businessmen in town. The company was headed by president G. A. Glader, a local farmer, businessman, and state senator. Construction of the hotel began within several weeks on a \$3,000 lot facing the tracks which had been the site of the former woodframe Wheeler House hotel. The \$15,000 building is believed to have been designed and built by the Willmar architectural and contracting firm of Olson and Skoolheim, which was reported in the May 11, 1904 issue of the Willmar Tribune to have submitted a bid for the job.

The Hotel Atwater opened during the late summer or fall of 1904 under the management of J. A. Dale and boasted "first class" accommodations in 22 steam heated guest rooms. Like downtown hotels which once stood in nearly every rural Minnesota community served by a rail line, the hotel became a center for commercial activity and community affairs. Its two large sample rooms were used by salesmen coming from the Twin Cities to serve local merchants and the hotel's guests included a wide range of rail passengers including salesmen, farmers, grain buyers, merchants, government officials, and travellers. Its kitchen and dining room served some of the fanciest meals in Atwater and were the site of many formal dinners and social activities. Interestingly, the hotel's saloon was not primary to its business since, although Atwater residents approved the sale of liquor in the town soon after the hotel was completed, Atwater remained a "dry town" from 1907-1964 and 1965-1975..

The Hotel Atwater remained Atwater's largest hotel and one of its most important businesses for many years. Like most rural Minnesota railroad hotels, however, its business decreased as rail passenger traffic began to decline and automobile-oriented motels rose

9. Major Bibliographical References

"Atwater's New Hotel." Willmar Tribune, May 11, 1904.
 Lawson, Victor E. Illustrated History and Descriptive and Biographical Review of Kandiyohi County. Willmar: 1905.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than 1 acre
 Quadrange name Atwater, Minn. Quadrange scale 1:24000

UTM References

A	<u>15</u>	<u>359870</u>	<u>4999460</u>	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

West 1/2 of Lot 11 and all of Lot 12, Block 003, Town of Atwater.

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

state	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>	county	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>
state	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>	county	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan Granger/Contract Historian
State Historic Preservation Office
 organization Minnesota Historical Society date May 1985
 street & number Fort Snelling History Center telephone (612) 726-1171
 city or town St. Paul state Minnesota 55111

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 Russell W. Fridley
 title Russell W. Fridley date 5/8/86
State Historic Preservation Officer

For NPS use only
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
for Allene Byers Entered in the National Register date 6-13-86
 Keeper of the National Register
 Attest: _____ date _____
 Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
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Hotel Atwater, Atwater, MN; Kandiyohi County

Continuation sheet

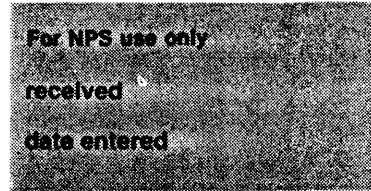
Owner of Property

Item number

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Page

1



Dennis Durand
c/o James and Patti Hadley
322 Atlantic Avenue
Atwater, Minnesota 56209

James and Patti Hadley
322 Atlantic Avenue
Atwater, Minnesota 56209

Walter and Leone Hedlund
Atwater, Minnesota 56209

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date entered

Continuation sheet Hotel Atwater Item number 8 Page 1

Item #8 (Significance) continued:

in popularity after World War II. The hotel was closed for several years during the 1950's-1970's and at times was operated only as a restaurant. Unlike many other railroad hotels, however, it has escaped demolition. James and Patti Hadley, its owners since 1979, plan a restoration of the hotel in the near future.

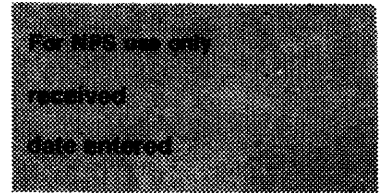
The Hotel Atwater was included in an eight month historic sites survey of Kandiyohi County conducted in 1984-85 by the State Historic Preservation Office. The survey staff determined that the hotel is the most architecturally significant building standing in Atwater and that it continues to hold a pivotal visual position in Atwater's business district. The hotel is one of only a handful of railroad hotels standing in the county, and is one of the most substantial and architecturally distinctive hotels standing in about ten surrounding counties studied during similar historic sites surveys. Furthermore, the building serves as a primary site illustrating the importance of rail lines to the development of townsites in Kandiyohi County and west central Minnesota as discussed in the State Historic Preservation Office's "Railroad Construction and Agricultural Development" unit of the Resource Protection Planning Process (RP3) study developed recently by the National Park Service and the Minnesota Historical Society to provide historic contexts in which to assess the significance of the state's historic sites.

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Hotel Atwater, Atwater, Kandiyohi County, Minnesota

Continuation sheet Resource Count Item number 8 Page 2



The Hotel Atwater Nomination contains
1 contributing building.