

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JUN 7 1979

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Orcas Hotel

AND/OR COMMON

Same

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Orcas

VICINITY OF

2nd - Al Swift

STATE

Washington

CODE
53

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

COUNTY
San JuanCODE
055

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

N/A

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☒ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☐ YES: RESTRICTED☒ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☒ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☐ MUSEUM☐ PARK☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Orcas Hotel, Inc.

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 253

CITY, TOWN

Orcas

VICINITY OF

STATE
Washington

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

San Juan County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Friday Harbor

STATE

Washington 98250

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Washington State Inventory of Historic Places

DATE

October 1974

☐ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

CITY, TOWN

Olympia

STATE

Washington 98504

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

The Orcas Hotel is a prominent feature seen from ferries approaching and departing Orcas Island, one of the major islands in the San Juan archipelago located north of Puget Sound near the boundary with Canadian waters. The building sits on the side of a hill on a sloping site above the ferry landing. A road runs in front of the hotel between its spacious front yard and the shore. Cars line up along this road to wait for ferries, and the Orcas Hotel, because of its size and higher elevation, lends an appealingly dominant presence to this logical meeting place for residents of the island.

The road runs east-west, with the hotel to the north. The principal entrance to the building is on the south facade, which faces the road, the water and the other islands beyond. As originally conceived, the hotel was probably square with intersecting gables. In 1916, a major wing was added to the north facade, which is the rear of the building. This two-story wing, which contains the dining room, extends to the east. Other smaller additions have apparently also been made in the rear of the building. All these additions were made early in the hotel's history, and the building's present configuration has not changed significantly from that in historic post-1916 photographs.

The main part of the building has three stories with an attic and is capped by steeply-pitched intersecting gables. A large veranda extends out from the first floor and surrounds the building on the east, south, and west sides. A pair of turned columns on the south facade supports the roof over this veranda and frames the main entrance. A broad flight of stairs leads from the front yard to the veranda through these two columns. The other supports for the veranda roof are chamfered columns. On the roof of this veranda is another small veranda off the second floor. It is located directly above the main entrance and the turned columns.

The roof of the hotel is covered with mineral roll roofing which has a decorative edge over the main building and is plain over the wing. The cornice is boxed with returns.

The windows are mostly double-hung, except that those of the wing and one on the south facade have been replaced with modern plate glass with no surrounding embellishments. The double-hung windows have plain surrounds, except under the sills, where all have a delicate scalloped design proportionate to the size of the window. This restrained ornamentation is the principal decorative feature of the building.

The main building has drop siding, except for a small part of the south facade, which has clapboard siding. The wing also has clapboard siding. A chimney on the east facade appears to be constructed of brick-sized concrete blocks. The pane-glass front door in historic photographs has been replaced by one of modern design.

The integrity of the interior has been badly compromised. The walls are covered with ersatz wood panelling and the ceilings with a blown-on material with little sparkles in it. The present owners have expressed their eagerness to remove these features. The first floor also has a modern bar and other distractions from the historic nature of the structure, although the front parlor contains the original brick fireplace.

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The stairs and banister to the second floor appear original, as does the woodwork. Although the walls have been covered with modern panelling, the basic proportions of the upper floors appear original. The present owners hope to make offices of the former guest rooms on these floors. The second floor has eight bedrooms, three baths, a utility room and an apartment. The third floor has four guest rooms.

The building is of frame construction and contains approximately 7,000 square feet. The foundation is cedar post and pier.

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/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

1900 - 1904

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

W. E. Sutherland and
Edwin Von Bogart

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The issue of the significance of the Orcas Hotel was considered in a report of cultural resources reconnaissance conducted for the Washington State Department of Transportation under the auspices of the Washington Archaeological Research Center. The conclusion reached was that the Orcas Hotel might qualify for the State Register of Historic Places, but that it was not of sufficient historic or architectural importance to qualify for the National Register of Historic Places. The present owners dispute this conclusion.

Stratton and Lindeman, writing in the above mentioned report, summarize the early history of the community of Orcas and assess the historic importance of the hotel as follows:

The first permanent white settlement of Orcas Island came in 1859 when Hudson's Bay Company officials assigned a contingent of four hunters to the Deer Harbor vicinity to provide venison for company employees at Fort Victoria. Prior to that time, itinerant French-Canadian trappers and frontier miners on the way to the Fraser River gold camps had probably stayed there temporarily. Two of the HBC hunters settled down at Deer Harbor, although one was soon killed in an accident. During the 1860s, other settlers moved to the island, and some of them apparently were disappointed miners from nearby Canadian and American districts. By 1873 there were about forty white inhabitants on Orcas Island and today's Eastsound was beginning to take shape as the principal village.

Meanwhile, in the 1860s, Paul K. Grubbs had established a store at Grindstone Bay, so named because the store had the only grindstone on the island available to the settlers for sharpening their knives, axes, and tools. When the store burned down, Grubbs moved away and Captain Stephen Sweeney started another trading post a few hundred yards to the east at a place he called Sweeney Bay, but which as a post office became Orcas Island, and later plain Orcas. Captain Sweeney traded the store for a boat, and the new owner subsequently sold the trading post to W. E. Sutherland, a native of Canada. The year was 1885.

Sutherland became the leading businessman and promoter of Orcas. Besides operating the store, he built a wharf in 1885 and rebuilt it in 1899. He specialized in supplying water and wood to the tugs and steamboats which plied between the islands of the San Juan group. To expand this business, he acquired a sturdy six-horsepower launch, Irene of Orcas, which he used in towing large amounts of wood to his wharf. Sutherland also owned a ranch and a farm on the island.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	0
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5	0	4	1	6	0
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5	3	8	2	5	8	0
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ZONE

EASTING

NORTHING

B

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ZONE

EASTING

NORTHING

C

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

D

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ZONE

EASTING

NORTHING

See continuation sheet

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

n/a

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

n/a

11 FORM PREPARED BY (Edited and additions made by J. H. Vandermeer)

NAME / TITLE

Gretchen Gudge11

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Orcas Hotel, Inc.

November 1, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Orcas

Washington

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

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

TITLE

DATE

7/9/82

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

7/24/82

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

8-16-82

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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Like the island's other budding villages, Orcas was primarily a trading center for the surrounding farming and fruit-growing districts. The early 1900s brought additional economic opportunities with the scheduling of numerous Sunday excursion cruises from Seattle, Bellingham, and other mainland ports and the development of a limited resort business. To capitalize on this tourist activity W. E. Sutherland built the Orcas Hotel above his wharf and near his store in 1904. Only the hotel remains standing today.

. . . Because of its relatively long service and its importance to the local community, the Orcas Hotel might possibly be eligible for inclusion in the State Register. It seem highly unlikely that it would qualify for the National Register on the basis of historical significance alone. Some older hotels are still standing elsewhere on Orcas Island, including the Outlook Inn (1891) at Eastsound.

In the same report, the architectural significance of the building is assessed by Gordon B. Varey, who found "little evidence of intrinsic architectural quality" in the Orcas Hotel. He observed, however, that the hotel and other nearby buildings, when considered together, might bear further analysis, apparently as an historic district.

As was pointed out earlier, the present owners disagree with the conclusions of Stratton, Lindeman and Varey. The owners find significance in the associations which the hotel has. not only with its original owner, W.E. Sutherland, but with others as well. Ownership of the hotel was held by several persons held in high regard or interest on Orcas Island, and the hotel played a role in a bank robbery with international implications. These persons and events played a role in the area's twentieth-century history. The present owners of the hotel also point to the integrity of location and feeling which the building possesses. Mrs. Gretchen Gudgell, President of Orcas Hotel, Inc., states that there is strong local sentiment in favor of a National Register designation, observing that the hotel "has always been a landmark and a homing beacon to the people who love the island." Some of her comments on the twentieth-century history of the hotel are summarized as follows:

Construction of the hotel began in 1900 and was completed in 1904. The builder employed by W. E. Sutherland was Edwin Von Bogart. His brother was a Ferry Captain in the San Juans for many years.

The Van Moorhems bought the hotel in 1905. Octavia Van Moorhem ran the hotel as a summer resort for 36 years, while her husband Constant ran the store. The original site included a large area with kitchen, gardens and a small farm. They added the present dining room in 1916. In 1928 they attempted to build a tennis court with two horses and a lot of elbow grease, but they were unsuccessful. During prohibition there was a bank robbery in Canada, and a bullet hole in the front porch post of the hotel reminds islanders of how robbers fought it out with the Sheriff on the steps of the hotel.

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The hotel passed from the Van Moorhem family to Marjorie Jackson in July of 1945. After three years and three husbands she sold to Clyde and Dorothy Brown in 1948. During this three year period the Hotel had a highly unsavory reputation.

Clyde and Dorothy only ran the hotel for two years. They still live on Orcas and Clyde has been the Orcas Village Postmaster for many years. Both are held in high regard and affection. The old store burned down in July of 1949. The Van Moorhems sold their ferry dock holdings, including store and oil dock to Bob Schoen the following year.

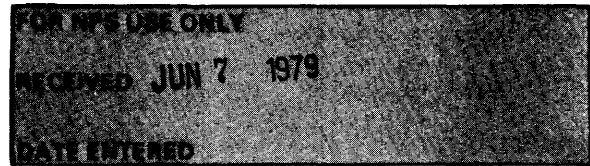
In September of 1950 the hotel was sold to Ralph Pinney and his wife who ran it for four years. They catered to loggers. A double room rented for \$2.50. They grossed less than \$5,000.00 per year in those days. Pinney sold to Thelma Cunningham for \$16,000 in 1954 and she sold to Dale and Mabel Becks in 1959. They in turn sold to the Jenkins in 1963 for \$29,000.

In 1968 the Cundys bought the hotel from the Jenkins. The Cundys ran the hotel for ten happily remembered years. It was a gathering place for music and refreshment on the Island. Dick Cundy will long be remembered for his artistic renditions on the spoons, bottles and wash tub string bass.

Last year when the Washington State Department of Transportation was forming its plans for the new holding lanes and a new ticket office at the ferry terminal, they decided to condemn the old hotel for additional parking area. The islanders united in a concerted effort to rescue the building site. Letters from everyone, including Dr. Myer Wolfe, chairman of Urban Planning at the University of Washington, were sent to the Department in an effort to impress upon them what a loss the hotel would be to the island. The Department was finally convinced, and as soon as they withdrew condemnation proceedings, a group was formed to buy the hotel and preserve it as it has always been - a landmark and a homing beacon to the people who love the island.

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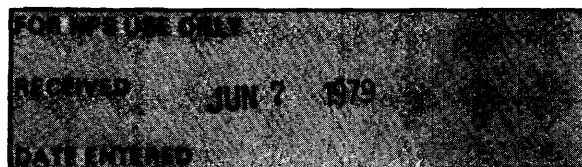
Dever, Shirley. "The interesting history of the Orcas Hotel".
The Island Sounder. November 1, 1978

Lorenz, Thomas; Stratton, David H., Lindeman, Glen W.: and Varey, Gordon B.
"A cultural resources reconnaissance of the proposed boundaries
of revisions to the Orcas Island ferry terminal at Orcas,
San Juan County, Washington". Project Report Number 63.
Washington Archaeological Research Center, Washington
State University. Pullman, Washington 1978

Splitstone, Fred J. Orcas: Gem of the San Juans. Sedro-Woolley, Washington:
The Courier-Times Press, 1946. (A later edition of this
book does not contain the historic photograph of the Orcas Hotel.)

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A portion of Government Lot 1, Section 21, and a portion of Government Lot 1, Section 22, all in Township 36 North, Range 2 West, W.M., in San Juan County, Washington, described as follows:

Commencing at a 3/4" iron pipe marking the meander corner between said Sections 21 and 22 as recorded in Auditor's File No. 101250, records of said county; thence North 93.0 feet; thence West 17.0 feet to the southwest corner of that parcel described in Auditor's File No. 103334, records of said county, and the true point of beginning; thence along the west boundary of said parcel North 18⁰⁰' West 160.14 feet; thence leaving said west boundary North 67⁰³³'24" East 205.47 feet to the east boundary of said parcel as described in Auditor's File No. 70083 of said records; thence along the boundary of said parcel South 74⁰¹⁰' West 40.0 feet; thence South 18⁰⁰⁰' East 50.0 feet; thence South 74⁰¹⁰' West 20.0 feet; thence South 18⁰⁰⁰' East 40.0 feet; thence leaving said boundary and along the south boundary of said parcel in Auditor's File No. 103334 South 74⁰¹⁰' West 145.0 feet to said true point of beginning.