

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HGRS use only
received JAN 20 1982
date entered FEB 19 1982

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

1. Name

historic Leopold Hotel

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 1224 Cornwall Avenue ___ not for publication

city, town Bellingham ___ vicinity of congressional district 2nd - Swift

state Washington code 50 county Whatcom code 073

3. Classification

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

name R. Wayne Benson (Ron)

street & number 1224 Cornwall Avenue, Suite 205 - c/o Leopold Hotel

city, town Bellingham ___ vicinity of state Washington 98225

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Whatcom County Courthouse

street & number 311 Grand Avenue

city, town Bellingham state Washington

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Washington State Cultural Survey:
title Whatcom County has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes no

date 1979 ___ federal ___ state county ___ local

depository for survey records Whatcom County Preservation Office, 2600 Sunset Drive

city, town Bellingham state Washington 98225

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Leopold Hotel tower is a nine-story mixed tone brown brick building constructed with little unnecessary ornamentation in the Mission style. The structure incorporates elements of other mid-twenties commercial architectural styles; however, the red tile roofing and round arches used for decoration give the otherwise plain multi-storied building a subtle California look.

The Leopold's ground floor is almost square in plan, and includes the lobby, two restaurants, bar, kitchen, and two banquet rooms, the largest of which is the Chandelier Room which has a raised stage and proscenium arch. Rising up from the ground floor, the tower is "L" shaped. The tower is constructed of locally unusual light brown bricks laid in stretcher bond beginning above the street level facade which is done in elegant hand painted high glaze tiles, glass plate windows and a recent sheet metal awning. The main entryway on street level is a recessed double glass opening beneath a large leaded art glass transome displaying the logo of the hotel in etched glass oval. Outside, the entry is shaded by a new metal awning but above it are recently uncovered triple arches in glazed brick with a curvilinear pediment below them, framing a relief plaque. The entry arches are then repeated across the second floor windows in front and decorative balconies and lintels are used on the pairs of windows nearest the far sides of the front facade. The hotel room windows on the rest of the building are rectangular double hung sash grouped irregularly on each side of the building.

Above the third floor windows is a belt course running along the front and southwest walls and dentilled in single brick widths along the underside. The tower then rises five stories to another belt course, above it the top floor and a corbeled frieze and dentilled narrow cornice around the roof. The rear extension of the building which forms the "L" is capped by a roofhouse housing the elevator and ventilation machinery. This little tenth floor is styled with arched windows and a low hipped mission tile roof. A tall chimney stack running up the northeast side of the hotel and an aged sign painted on the same wall are also exterior features. In 1967 a forty-eight room unit was constructed next to the tower and is today attached by a hallway to the lobby; however, it required little change to the tower itself.

During the recent efforts to restore the old tower perhaps the interior showed the greatest change and improvement. The lobby area and restroom facilities below had all the decorative tile work uncovered. Hand painted tile in many shapes and patterns now graces the floors, walls, interior fountain, and stairways as it did when the structure was first built. The main ballroom and chandelier dining room are illuminated by the original crystal chandeliers, and recent painting and wallpapering have been done with special attention to the original decor. One of the original two brass door elevators remains. Beside the elevators is a stairway which rises the entire way to the roofhouse.

Currently 107 rooms are utilized for guests of the hotel and another 19 suites are leased or owned as condominiums. The number of rooms on each floor varies between 10 and 16. The rooms and suites have been restored though the furnishings are modern. The hexagonal tile work and fixtures in the bathrooms show little hard wear and the woodwork both in the rooms and hallways still retains its earlier charm.

As work continues on the Leopold and attention to detail is paid to the restoration, the fine old building promises to become Bellingham's finest hotel once again.

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 checked="" 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 1913, 1929 **Builder/Architect** H. L. Stevens Co. of San Francisco
(1929 Portion)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Downtown Bellingham is graced with a quality hotel that has retained its charm and usefulness through several decades. The Leopold Hotel located on Cornwall Avenue (formerly Dock Street) since 1899, has served tourists, traveling business people, permanent guests and local patrons continuously and with impressive hospitality. The hotel was originally called the Byron House Hotel, built by Captain Josiah B. Byron and ably managed by Messers. Hadley and Griffith and later J. C. Callahan. One local newspaper described the Byron House Hotel as being "the best hotel in Whatcom County, possessing every qualification necessary to be a first-class hotel. There are fifty rooms elegantly furnished, tastily decorated and possess every modern convenience." Another 1899 newspaper account offers the following description of the Byron, "the hotel is centrally located, within easy access of all points of interest. The large homelike rooms on the second and third floors are comfortable and tastefully furnished. The main office is well arranged, supplies all the conveniences usually found in a first-class house, no expenses spared furnishing the hotel, tasty and elegant food, a popular resort to travelers. The Byron enjoys immense patronage."

At the time of construction and in the decade that followed New Whatcom (including much of the downtown district of the present City of Bellingham) experienced extensive growth and prosperity, due in large part to the development of the timber, fishing, and coal industries. It was thought that the Great Northern Railroad would choose Bellingham Bay as its Pacific Northwest terminus--history declared Tacoma the site instead. Nevertheless the growth in local industry and tourism was significant and required the construction of lodgings for the wealthy investor as well as the traveling shoe salesman. It should be noted also that quite typically unmarried professionals of the Victorian era retained residences in fine hotels choosing to both live and entertain guests within the hotel environment.

The Leopold was the favorite of travelers, providing them with splendid accommodations, dining facilities and comfortable reception areas. Throughout its lifespan, the Leopold has served as a popular facility for conventions, club meetings, school proms, banquets, and weddings. This landmark hotel has been associated with community events and social occasions for generations--truly an integral part of Bellingham's development history.

While all the hotel's clientele were valued, some illustrious individuals are remembered specifically. Among the Leopold Hotel's nationally known historic guests were: William H. Taft (U. S. President), Richard Byrd (explorer), Sarah Bernhardt (actress), William Jennings Byran (politican and orator), and Billy Sunday (evangelist). Persons associated with the management of the Leopold Hotel and of local distinction during their lifetime include Captain Josiah B. Byron--owner of the original hotel of 1899, Leopold Schmidt, second owner who purchased the hotel in 1910 and President of the Olympia and Bellingham Bay Brewing Companies, and his associate, Henry Schupp, who became manager/treasurer of the Leopold Hotel.

UTM NOT VERIFIED
AGREEMENT NOT VERIFIED

9. Major Bibliographical References

Selected articles from: Bellingham Bay Reveille 1889-1914; Bellingham Herald, Whatcom County Souvenir, 1929. Carhart, Edith Beebe. A History of Bellingham, Washington. 1926. Lee, Don M. (Manager of Communications, Olympia Brewing Company) provided film entitled The Olympia Brewery. Roth, Lottie Roeder. History of Whatcom County. Volume 2 1926. Spellman, Nancy. Assistant General Manager of the Leopold Hotel. Provided newspapers and photographs.

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Bellingham South

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A	<u>110</u>	<u>531831210</u>	<u>51391941810</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C			
E			
G			

B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D			
F			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification Lot A of Leopold Short Plat, portions of Lots 3, 4, 5, 6 Block 43 of New Whatcom. Lot B portions of Lots 3, 4, 5, known as Lot B of Leopold Short Plat Block 43 of New Whatcom. Lot C Leopold Short Plat SW $\frac{1}{2}$ of Lot 7 and all of Lot 8 Block 43 of New Whatcom, Bellingham, WA. From records in the Assessor's Office, Whatcom County Courthouse.

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

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Michael Sullivan, Preservation Planner

organization Whatcom County Park & Recreation Board date December 29, 1980

street & number 3373 Mount Baker Highway telephone 206-733-1231 or 733-2900

city or town Bellingham state Washington 98225

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

title *Michael E. Sullivan* date 1/4/82

For HCRS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	Entered in the
<u><i>Delores Byers</i></u>	National Register
Keeper of the National Register	date <u>2/19/82</u>
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

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

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

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received

date entered

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Josiah Byron settled on Bellingham Bay in 1899 and built the Byron House Hotel in that year. Shortly thereafter he turned the managership to Mr. Hadley and Mr. Griffith as their names appear in advertisements of May, 1900. Byron was involved with several enterprises and civic affairs projects until his death in 1908. He was instrumental in the funding of construction of downtown sidewalks and streets of the Town of Whatcom. He served two terms as councilman from the Fourth Ward.

Leopold Schmidt was an industrious brewmaster that traveled to the State of Washington in the early 1890's searching for a brewery site. At Tumwater, near Olympia, he discovered a running stream fed by pure artesian wells. He promptly constructed a brewery with the name of Schmidt Brewery in 1894. In 1902 the name was changed to Olympia Brewery and remains so today. Under Schmidt's management and the introduction of refrigerated railroad cars the business expanded to four additional brewery sites--Bellingham, Washington, Port Townsend, Washington, Salem, Oregon, and San Francisco, California. During Schmidt's travels to Bellingham to set up the Bellingham Bay Brewery, he decided to purchase the Byron House Hotel. He established the Bellingham Bay Brewery and bought the hotel in 1910. He was residing in the hotel when he died in 1914.

Henry Schupp served as manager during Schmidt's ownership. He is remembered for changing the hotel's name from the Byron House to the Leopold Hotel in honor of his employer and friend. Schupp was described in a biographical account as being an "aggressive, far-sighted businessman who has made Bellingham one of the enterprising cities in the state (1926). He was a native of Germany, raised in Ohio, sought his fortune in the mines of Montana, met and became associated with Leopold Schmidt's breweries in Tumwater and Bellingham." Under Schupp's able managership the hotel grew with vigor. In the biographical essay on Schupp one learns that he was a staunch Republican, "a citizen who loses no opportunity to exploit the many attractions and resources of his community and state. He was active in civic events and groups, among the organizations Schupp belonged were the Bellingham Chamber of Commerce, Board of Park Commissioners, Rotary, Elks, Eagles, Washington Hotelmen, and United Commercial Travelers."

In 1913 two hundred rooms, one hundred with private baths, a dining room seating one hundred and fifty people and twenty-five sample rooms were added to the hotel. The hotel, in keeping with the modern trends, supplied electric lights, hot and cold running water, elevators, a well-stocked bar, a cigar and newspaper stand for its turn-of-the-century guests. The gala opening of May, 1913, was described in this way, "the elegant Leopold addition opens a new era of metropolitanism for Bellingham society. The community at large turned out to launch the handsome hotel on its journey of usefulness to the community." In 1922 the Tulip Room (known today as the Crystal Ballroom) was added to accommodate two hundred and fifty banquet and dance guests. Another room addition was completed in the fall of 1929 boosting the number of rooms to five hundred. This addition was supervised by an architect of the H. L. Stevens Company from San Francisco. The twenties and thirties appears to have been an economic growth period in this locale as evidenced by the visible expansion of major edifices in downtown Bellingham.

Ownership of the building changed hands in the early 1930's to John C. Pierce. He owned the building for twenty odd years. Since 1950 the Leopold has undergone ownership transfers

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

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DATE ENTERED

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and some physical changes. In 1967 the oldest portion (built by Captain Josiah Byron) was razed to make way for a new forty-eight unit motor inn and swimming pool. In the summer of 1979 the building was sold to a corporation intent on the renovation of the Leopold. The owner/manager, R. Wayne Benson, espouses the need for restoring the elegance and appearance without departing from the hotel's architectural style and atmosphere. The work of restoration is being done with careful attention to old photographs and original blueprints. Workmen have peeled the false front in the lobby exposing a triple archway with intricate grillwork and decorative molding. Also uncovered were floral design ceramic tile in shades of emerald, gold and white. Additionally, sections of an old fountain in the lobby area have been uncovered.

The Leopold Hotel was considered the finest community hotel in the Pacific Northwest for many years. Its unchallenged success can be attributed to many factors including expert managership, updating with modern features, and spatial growth to meet the demands of guests and travelers. Many quality hotels did not survive the transition to modern times. Among those that have been lost in Bellingham were the Fairhaven, Baker, Grand, Central, Doric, Bellingham and Laube Hotels. Each has met its demise with the diminishing hotel trade. Only the Leopold has remained as a landmark and the location for community gatherings. The Leopold Hotel has been able to continue its long tradition of serving guests with style. It has met the public demands and adapted with the times to provide complete and modern hospitality.