UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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AND/OR COMMON	land Hotel		OHP	
LOCATION	N			
STREET & NUMBER				
CITY, TOWN	- 13th Street		NOT FOR PUBLICATION CONGRESSIONAL DISTR	107
	land	VICINITY OF	#8	
STATE		CODE	COUNTY	CODE
Cal	ifornia	06	Alameda	001
CLASSIFIC	CATION			
CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRES	ENTUSE
DISTRICT	PUBLIC	OCCUPIED	AGRICULTURE	MUSEUM
X_BUILDING(S)	X_PRIVATE		COMMERCIAL	PARK
STRUCTURE	вотн		EDUCATIONAL	PRIVATE RESIDE
SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	ENTERTAINMENT	RELIGIOUS
OBJECT	IN PROCESS	X_YES: RESTRICTED	GOVERNMENT	SCIENTIFIC
	BEING CONSIDERED	YES: UNRESTRICTED	INDUSTRIAL	TRANSPORTATIO
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NAME	F PROPERTY			
STREET & NUMBER				··•••
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COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS	^{,ETC.} Alameda County Cou	urthouse		
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TÎTLE Oakland Centra DATE August 1963 DEPOSITORY FOR		sign Resources Sur FEDERAL _	_STATECOUNTY X_LOCAL	

7 DESCRIPTION

	CONDITION	CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
EXCELLENT	DETERIORATED	UNALTERED	_XORIGINAL SITE
XGOOD	RUINS	X_ALTERED	MOVED DATE
FAIR	UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Exterior

The Oakland Hotel is a massive eight story(with mezzanine)Italian Renainsance Revival Motel occupying a full city block. The U-shaped plan has its open end facing 13th Street (south) forming an elegant entrance with a semi-circular drive and mediterranian landscaping (now somewhat overgrown). This central court measures 90' x 155'. The east and west wings of the building have ground level arcades with round arches supported by Doric columns facing the central court. The lower portions of the arcades have been enclosed with wood walls dating from when the building was used as a hospital. The large windows with medallions between the bays and volutes surmounting each arch. The balustrades extending around the roof of each arcade were originally crowned with a series of light poles, but these have been removed.

The building is a steel frame structure with reinforced concrete and masonry floors and walls. The exterior is faced with what an early publicity brochure describes as "Carnegie Pressed Brick" of a cream beige color, with light brown painted trim. The effect is a uniform warm tan surface for the entire building. The second through sixth stories consist of paired two-paned rectangular double-hung windows seperated by rows of string courses. A reinforced concrete cornice projects above the sixth story. On the two wings and the 14th Street elevation a seventh story with attic is uppermost. The central section of the building facing the entrance court and 13th Street has eight stories, the top two of which (i.e. those above the cornice) are enclosed by a covered loggia containing ten concrete Doric columns and a balustrade. Reference #1 describes the loggia as being "almost a replica of the loggia of the Cancellaria Place in Rome." A terracotta tile slanted roof covers the loggia, the two side wings and the 14th Street facade. Rising at both ends of the loggia are two four-story square towers, each with a smaller intermediate foursided brick story and a domed wood circular peristyle with Doric columns. A balustrade with corner ball ornaments surrounds the rectangular intermediate story of each tower, which is adorned with brick pilasters, a cornice and another balustrade around the base of the peristyle. Four square piers stand outside peristyle, and a continuous cornice juts out to include these piers in a curious and highly sculptural treatment. The dome is covered with a fish scale pattern and topped with a ball and flagpole. The balustrades and domed pavilion are painted gray. The towers add a distinctive though secondary feature to the Oakland skyline.

The elevations facing Harrison, 14th and Alice Streets are composed with an under-stated central spatial emphasis. The central bay of each of these three facades is wider than the others and a bracketed reinforced concrete balcony projects from the second floor above the three central bays facing Harrison and Alice Streets.

Decorative wrought and cast iron balconies with wood railings extend out from the fifth story at various locations on all four elevations. The balconies are also used at the sixth story of the central section facing the entrace court.

Ornamented metal marquees, now removed, originally extended over the side entrance on Harrison, 14th and Alice Streets. A large neon rooftop sign reading "Hotel Oakland" mounted on the southwest corner of the building has also been removed.

Interior

The public rooms of the ground floor are of significant architectural note and will be described in detail.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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PERIOD	AR	EAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CH	IECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW	
-PREHISTORIC			LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	RELIGION
1400-1499 1500-1599	ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC AGRICULTURE	CONSERVATION ECONOMICS	LAW LITERATURE	SCIENCE SCULPTURE
1600-1699	XARCHITECTURE		MILITARY	SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1799 1800-1899	ART _XCOMMERCE	ENGINEERING EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	MUSIC PHILOSOPHY	THEATER TRANSPORTATION
X_1900-	COMMUNICATIONS	INDUSTRY INVENTION	POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<u>Xother (Specify)</u> (Local History)

SPECIFIC DATES 1912

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Bliss and Faville, San Francisco

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Oakland Hotel is significant for its architecture and its role in local history and commerce. The public rooms on the ground floor are lavishly decorated in the grand hotel tradition (See Section 7). They are the only examples of such hotel rooms in Oakland and are among the city's finest interior spaces. The building was designed by Bliss and Faville, a prominant San Francisco firm responsible for numerous major downtown San Francisco buildings, including the St. Francis Hotel and the Bank of California. The building is unusual among the major downtown hotels of its period in that all of its rooms are open to the street insuring ample light. This feature was made possible due to the building occupying a full city block in conjunction with its U-shaped floor plan.

From 1912-1943, the hotel was Oakland's finest hostelry and among the finest in the San Francisco Bay Area. Its opening provided an important commercial stimulus and constituted a major step in the city's development.

The hotel was first proposed in 1906. The earthquake and fire of that year which devastated San Francisco caused much of that city's commerce to be drawn to Oakland. Oakland's business community sought to capitalize on the situation, sensing the possibility that Oakland might become a serious rival to San Francisco as the Bay Area's leading city. A major first class hotel was considered essential to accomplish this objective. The business community was trying to attract out-of-town firms and needed suitably impressive quarters to entertain and accomodate important visitors. They also wanted the hotel to be large enough and sufficiently appointed to attract big conventions.

The Oakland Hotel Company was organized in September, 1906. Construction was to be financed through subscription to \$750,000 in stock and \$750,000 bonds. The amount of stock was later increased to \$3,000,000. Major subscribers included a number of leading business figures, including F.M. "Borax" Smith, who took one-fifth of the total subscription, and Edson Adams, and W.W. Garthwaite, both important bankers. Garthwaite later became President of the hotel company. Because of such sponsorship, the project became known as the "banker's hotel". Major retail subscribers included H.C. Capwell Co., Kahn Brothers, Taft and Pennoyer and Charlie Jurgens.

Henry Janeway Hardenburgh was selected as the architect. He is known for such famous hotels as New York's Plaza and Old Waldorf-Astoria and Boston's Copley-Plaza.

The panic of 1907 forced several of the major sponsors to drop out, temporarily halting the project. When new financing was secured, Hardenburgh's difficulties traveling coast to coast caused him to be replaced by Bliss and Faville. Purdy and Henderson of Seattle, Washington were selected as consulting engineers. Architect Walter Bliss also designed the furniture, tapestries, hangings and rugs. The construction contract was awarded in August, 1910 to the firm of P.J. Walker and the doors opened on December 23, 1912. The opening was celebrated by a dinner and ball involving 1,150 invited guests, including the Mayor and most of the East Bay's social, financial and industrial elite.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet

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10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA				
ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY	38 acres	.		
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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION				
see continuation sheet				
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ORGANIZATION			DATE	<u><u> </u></u>
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As the designated State Historic Preservation hereby nominate this property for inclusion criteria and procedures set forth by the Nation	n in the National Re			
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGN		Im ms	Ella	
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FOR NPS USE ONLY I HEREBY CERTIFY THAP THIS PROPER	TY IS INCLUDED I	N THE NATIONAL REGI	ISTER	
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The main <u>Entrance Lobby</u> or "lounging room" is a rectangular space with a remarkable longitudinal elliptical barrel vault ceiling pierced by five circular cross vaults along its north and south edges. Along the south edge, the cross vaults correspond to the main entrance and four of the arched windows which with the arcades encircle the entire ground floor and mezzanine. Along the north edge, the cross vaults correspond with five more arched openings with French doors leading to the main corridor connecting the Alice and Harrison Street entrances, and the dining room beyond. A musician's balcony of cream colored marble, called "Hoptonwood marble" in Reference #1, extends over the central door, a cartouche lying immediately above the door. The arches above the flanking doors are fully occupied by mirrors, thereby increasing the apparent size of the room.

A large fireplace also of "Hoptonwood marble" is the central feature of the east wall. The panel above it, now containing a portrait of the flag raising on Iwo Jima, was originally unadorned. The fireplace has applied plaster ornamentation of Italian Rennaissance design, lion heads on each of the side panels, urns, and acanthus leaves.

The wall treatment is described in Reference #1 and the architectural plans as "Imitation Caen Stone", which is one way of describing textured and painted plaster. A light cream color and a smooth texture were originally used to simulate stone. This has subsequently been changed to a paint scheme of three shades of grey in a patchwork pattern.

The ceiling is in very good condition; there are a few minor cracks, but no missing pieces of ornament or other serious damage is evident. Plaster ornaments cover the ceiling in relief: grape vine borders outline the vault intersections, the arched openings, and the wall edges; winged female figures arranged with urns, rosettes, medallions, and roping cover the vaulted surfaces, from three of which are hung chandeliers (the originals have been removed, although their hanging chains appear intact). The surface is finished in a golden brown tone, seemingly to approximate tooled leather, with the exception of the grape leaf borders, which have a delicate blue background. The floor is pink and grey marble interspersed with beige quarry tile.

In the southwest corner of the ground floor is the Club Room (known as the Oak Tavern"), a men's bar with entrances both from within the hotel and the street. This room is entirely finished in nearly square quartered dark oak panels in an English Renaissance style. Two panelled piers with two Corinthian pilasters containing Bacchantic heads on the capitals stand in the center of the room. The plaster ceiling is richly decorated with octagonal ornamented coffers. It was originally "dull gold bronze," but appears to have been repainted. Elements of the ornamentation include detailed grape vines with grapes, acanthus leaves, beading, rosettes, and faces crowned with flowers. The room was originally fitted with interior stained glass windows, but all but one of these as well as the bar were removed sometime after 1966. The one remaining stained glass panel over the exterior door contains a central fleur de lys flanked by a chicken and a duck.

Reference #1 states that \$5,600 was added to the cost of this room "in order to make it surpass anything of its kind on the Pacific Coast."

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At the northwest corner of the building is the <u>Cafe</u> (known as the "Renaissance Grill Room"). Like the Club Room, it is finished in quartered oak panelling, and it has an even more richly decorated plaster ceiling. This 40' high ceiling makes use of strictly classical ornament: the Greek Key border, egg and dart borders, rosettes, acanthus leaves, and grape vines. An elaborate cornice decorates the upper walls, employing a row of brackets, dentils and a rich moulding of palm, acanthus and vine. Six of the ground floo's large arched windows bring light into this large (45' x 72') room. Over the doors there is a molding of tied spears, rosettes, acanthus, egg and dart and palm in plaster relief. The two original brass chandeliers (described as "Dutch" in Reference #1) have been removed. The floor is finished in two sizes of tile. The room could seat 275 people at any one time.

The <u>Dining Room</u> (known as the tan and gold "Crystal Room") occupies a central portion of the 14th Street frontage, opposite the main entrance. It is a very gracefully proportioned 50' x 60' room with 40' ceiling, finished in French Louis XVI style, with all details in excellent condition. There are three arched bays separated by paired pilasters on each wall. The south and east walls open directly onto main corridors, the north wall contains large arched windows overlooking 14th Street, and the bays on the west wall contain mirrors. Materials are "Imitation Caen Stone" with marble trim throughout, and the floor is wood with an inlaid border design.

The pilasters are fluted, with gilded spears filling the flutes to half their height. Capitals are Corinthian with deep acanthus and rosette ornament. Arrangements of seraphim and urns in relief adorn the wall surfaces. The ceiling of this room is decorated in plaster relief in a series of borders encircling the five chandeliers. This ceiling is somewhat more delicate in treatment, employing a Greek key/rosette and roping border, a vine/urn and female head border, and a fleur de lys border. A very large central bronze, brass and crystal chandelier is matched by four smaller corner chandeliers, and eight large wall sconces. The original beige color scheme with gilded ornaments (capitals, brackets, etc.) is still intact.

A vaulted entry hall from 14th Street separates the Dining Room from the <u>Ballroom</u> with arched openings on each side. A brass chandelier is still hanging at the center of this corridor.

The Ballroom is a very large (60' x 108') and elegant space with a 40' ceiling occupying the northeast corner of the building. A very impressive feature is a row of freestanding fluted Corinthian columns placed on square and rectangular bases at each end of the room, intened to separate spectators from the dance floor. The west end of the room, has six columns (the middle four being paired) while the east end has only four. Two of the east end columns were apparently removed sometime after 1927, since a photograph from that year shows six columns. The walls are divided into bays, with three on the short side and five on the long side, separated by fluted Corinthian pilasters. An Italian Renaissance cornice and ceiling ornamentation of plaster relief is similar but larger in scale than the others in the Hotel. Grape vine roping with rosettes forms one border, there is an acanthus cherub, and urn border, and a Greek Key and rosette border. A huge gold bronze and crystal central chandelier and four corner chandeliers have unfortunately been removed. The central chandelier is reported to have measured eight feet in diameter, held 60 lamps and contained 15,000 pieces of cut crystal. The "chandeliers" currently in

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place are crepe paper mock-ups of florescent lights. Lintel relief ornaments of acanthus leaves, urns, and cherubs are placed over each wall opening. The floor of the Ballroom is wood, with dark contrastin inlay. Like the Dining Room this room is in excellent condition. The original color scheme of the room is variously described as "two tones of ivory with gilded ornaments", "ivory and rose" and "ivory and apricot." The room is currently painted white, bright rose and sky blue.

Beyond the Ballroom is a <u>Reception Room</u> and separate entrance from Alice Street for Ballroom functions. These areas are also richly decorated with plaster relief ornaments on walls and piers. A more classical Greek motif is employed for the entry and reception room, showing robed figures, urns, bell flowers, vines, horned gods' heads, and winged angels holding cherubs in smaller, more delicate relief than is seen elsewhere on the ground floor. This room is presently partitioned into two sections.

The main corridor extending from the Harrison to Alice Street entrances at the center of the ground story has plaster ornament of acanthus leaves with an egg and dart border on the ceiling. Grey marble is used around the edges of all doors and openings. Rosettes on the ceiling hold light fixtures. Within this corridor is an interesting wallpositioned drinking fountain bearing the inscription "They drink of water that are wise/ The only drink that satisfies" in keeping with the spirit of Prohibition. This fountain has gilded plaster ornament of oak leaves and acorns surmounted by a crown. The "imitation Caen Stone" walls have been painted a grey blue and have lost their stone-like texture.

Another room on the ground floor, the <u>Tea Room</u>, lying immediately behind the east wall of the Entrance Lobby, appears to have been architecturally interesting, but is now partitioned into smaller rooms. Until the partitions are taken down, the condition of the room cannot be determined. The room originally had a fireplace, but it has been removed.

At the mezzanine level over the central corridor are semicircular openings overlooking the Entrance Lobby, the Cafe and the Dining Room. These were used by musical groups providing entertainment which could be heard in all three rooms.

The mezzanine also contained three banquet rooms, two of which could seat 150 and 400 people. These have been partitioned and do not appear to have been architectually notable.

The only other room in the hotel that is of note is a prive banquet/conference room at the and of the east wing on the seventh floor. It has an elliptical arched ceiling and quartered oak panels similar to the Club Room and Cafe.

The total number of the hotel's guest rooms has been put at 410 to 500. All of these seem to have been decorated uniformally with plaster walls, single panel doors, base boards and picture mouldings. The woodwork was cedar stained mahogany but has since been painted. None of the rooms appear to have been architectually distinguished.

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Some of the features characterizing the evening were an acorn-shaped menu and a playing of the "Hotel Oakland March" written by the hotel's orchestra director, Gustave Schultheis.

At the time of the opening, the sixth, seventh and eighth floors were still unfinished due to the insufficiency of construction funds.

During its years of operation, the hotel was an important social center of the East Bay, particularly among people in their '20's and '30's. The largest gathering was a ball held in 1919, which drew approximately 4,000 people. The hotel was very successful in its aim of attracting conventions, hosting such groups as the California Republican Assembly and the American Legion. Guests included Presidents Wilson, Coolidge and Hoover, Charles Lindbergh, Amelia Earhardt, Sarah Bernhardt and Jean Harlow. Mary Pickford sold Liberty Bonds at the hotel in 1918.

During the '30's, the hotel went bankrupt several times due to management problems and the Depression. Although recovery followed, the hotel was taken over by the Army through condemnation in February, 1943 for use as a regional hospital. The conversion was accomplished very quickly, all of the furnishings being auctioned off.

After the war, a city-backed attempt was made to reopen the hotel, but the Veterans Administration gained control and continued operating the hospital until August 1963. Since then, the building has remained vacant.

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- O<u>akland Tribune</u>, "Old Hotel Oakland May Rise in New Guise", January 30, 1966, p. 23. "Hotel Oakland Opens Mid Blaze of Glory", December 24, 1912, p. 27. "Christmas 1912 A Dawn of Triumph in Oalkand", December 24, 1912, p. 27
- San Francisco Examiner, "Hotel is Opened in Maze of Splendor", Tuesday December 24, 1912, n.p.
- Times Star, "Alamedans Dine and Dance at Gala Mardi Gras Ball", February 26, 1966, p. 5.

FHR-8-300A (11/78) UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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ITEM NUMBER 10

PAGE one

Verbal Boundary Description:

BEGINNING at the intersection of the Northeastern line of 13th Street with the Southeastern line of Harrison Street; running thence along said Southeastern line of Harrison Street, North 26° 15' East (the bearing of North 26° 15' East being taken for the purpose of making this description) 200 feet to the Southwestern line of 14th Street; thence along the last mentioned line, south 63° 45' East 300 feet to the Northwestern line of Alice Street; thence along the last mentioned line, South 26° 15' West 200 feet to said Northeastern line of 13th Street thence along the last mentioned line, North 63° 45' West 300 feet to the point of beginning.

OAKLAND HOTEL NARRATIVE ON BUILDING REHABILITATION

Exterior:

Brick will be steam cleaned, windows are being refurbished and painted their original color. Main entrance court plantings are being redesigned as well as driveway to allow commercial/residential segregation. Existing vegetation is so overgrown its roots are damaging the foundation (and must be removed). Solar collectors will cover the flat portion of roof visible from a distance (HUD solar grant of \$224,000), which will provide more than 50% of the domestic hot water.

Interior:

There are five significant spaces on the interior: The Club Room, The Cafe, Main Dining Room, Ballroom, Lounge. All but the lounge will be used as commercial space (financial institutions - multi-million dollar restruant chain). The lounge will be used as a formal lounge and main entrance for the senior citizens living on above floors. It shall be written into the commercial tenant lease that COHP has design review over said spaces.

Floors, mezzanine thru 8 were hotel rooms with no significance. All interior partions are terra cotta block, which does not pass siesmic requirements. We therefore will be doing a gutt rehab on the above floors, allowing us to strap and pin the fascade from the back to the steel frame of the building with no affect on exterior appearence. The reason for this siesmic basketing our engineers have developed, is in the 1906 earthquake it was found that steel frame buildings didn't collapse, they lost their fascade. The rehab on floors above will be all new construction to meet HUD minimum property standards.

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Webster St Harrison St 12th St ्

Oakland Hotel



Jackson St Alice St

