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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

JUL 25 1988

NATIONAL REGISTER

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 Hotel Russell-Lamson other names/site number

2. Location

street & number 201-15 West Fifth Street not for publication city, town Waterloo vicinity state IA code IA-19 county Black Hawk code 013 zip code 50703

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private (checked), public-local, public-State, public-Federal. Category of Property: building(s) (checked), district, site, structure, object. Number of Resources within Property: Contributing 1, Noncontributing 0 buildings, sites, structures, objects. Total 1.

Name of related multiple property listing: Multiple Properties Nomination, Waterloo, Iowa. 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 (checked) does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of certifying official: James E. Lamb, Chief, Bureau of Historic Preservation, State Historical Society of Iowa. Date: July 13, 1988.

In my opinion, the property meets (unchecked) 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 (unchecked), determined not eligible for the National Register (unchecked), removed from the National Register (unchecked), other (explain:). Signature of the Keeper: Beth Boland. Date of Action: 7/29/88.

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/hotel

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

apartments

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Colonial/Georgian Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation ? (concrete ?)
walls brick

roof composition
other ornamental stone

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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/Social History

Significant Person

Period of Significance

1914 - 1929

1919 - 1921

Significant Dates

1919

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

B. H. Marshall and C. E. Fox, Architects

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet 9.2

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A

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|------|---|---|---------|---|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 4 | 7 | 0 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 0 |
| Zone | | | Easting | | | | | Northing | | | | | | |

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C

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D

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| Zone | | | Easting | | | | | Northing | | | | | | |

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Original Plat, Waterloo West, Lots 4 and 5, Block 9.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

Contains only subject building.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By Research/writing by Barbara Beving Long, Midwest Research

name/title James E. Jacobsen, Chief
organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date July 13, 1988
street & number 600 E. Locust telephone 515-281-4137
city or town Des Moines state IA zip code 50309

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JUL 25 1988

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Hotel Russell-Lamson

Description

The eight-story Hotel Russell-Lamson is a major west side downtown landmark. It is particularly conspicuous for motorists crossing the Fifth Street bridge; the hotel is on the first corner beyond the bridge. The hotel is an excellent, relatively unaltered example of early twentieth century hotel design, exhibiting the base-shaft-capital configuration often seen for this building type. Ornamentation, especially keystones, dentils, arches, and light fixtures, uses the classical vocabulary and exhibits a Georgian Revival influence.

Smooth rusticated Bedford limestone, which continues upward to the mezzanine windows, forms a clear base for the composition. Ample semicircular openings for the first floor commercial space offer a pleasing configuration and contrast with the smaller mezzanine windows above. Original light fixtures (black metal with amber glass) remain at the corner and also flanking the two principal entrances.

Red brick veneer, termed "Blackstone brick" in 1914 because of its use for the Blackstone Hotel in Chicago, covers the upper six stories and contrasts with the limestone trim. A stone course which also forms the sill for the top floor windows and a relatively simple cornice consisting of moldings and a row of dentils form the capital for the composition. Windows are arranged in groups of two or three; the original 6/1 panes remain. Each has a flat keystone and a limestone sill.

The main entrance is off West Fifth Street, amid space for six shops (which originally had their own street entrances). The Commercial Street entry was known as the "ladies entrance." Both opened into the 55 x 100' lobby, termed at its opening "extremely handsome as well as home-like and restful." The original design included space for a bar, although Waterloo was officially "dry" in 1914. A cigar stand and mahogany and bronze registration desk (possibly extant and painted) were also in the lobby. One first floor room, most recently part of a florist's shop and now extra space for the restaurant, still displays ceiling beams and paneling, though both are now painted.

The lobby woodwork, a prominent feature, is circassian walnut. Dominating the open two-story space are wood-paneled columns which rise dramatically to the mezzanine floor. Plaster capitals and consoles were (and are) finished in "old ivory, high lighted (sic) in gold." The floor is covered with the original black and white tile squares and there is a dark green and white border design. Black and white marble is used for the floorboards; stairs are white Vermont marble.

The hotel was categorized as "fireproof" on Sanborn fire insurance maps. The frame is reinforced concrete, the floors concrete and tile. Brick curtain walls are twelve inches thick.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JUL 25 1980

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 8 Page 3 2

Exterior alterations are minor and reversible. Inappropriate wood panels and roofs have been added to the arched openings. The original iron and glass entry canopies were barrel-shaped, but the present ones, which are suspended in the original manner, are rectangular. They too are covered with dark brown wood paneling, which could be removed. In most cases the original street entrances to the shops have been removed or closed over. Storm windows cover the original 6/1 windows.

One side of the mezzanine has been enclosed. On the southwest end, a fireplace and an entry have been removed, although the fine decorative pilasters remain. Also intact is the ceiling with its skylights and massive beams; they have been painted a cream color. The registration desk has been moved and also painted cream. The original dining room is a restaurant, but it has been completely changed (dark brown rustic paneling dominates).

The original 250 hotel rooms have been pared down to seventy-five apartments, guest rooms on each floor, recreation rooms on three floors, and a laundry room. The hotel closed in the 1960's, and the present owners converted it to apartments. The shop spaces, with some alteration, continue their commercial use.

Significance

The Hotel Russell-Lamson calls attention to and illustrates the effect of industrialization upon Waterloo. The hotel is a good example of the Property Type, Industrial Era Buildings, Structures, and Districts, 1900-1929. As the home for the Greater Waterloo Association in 1919, the Hotel Russell-Lamson is the best property associated with this important group which was directly involved in industrialization (see pp. 2-6, 28-34, Multiple Properties Nomination). Built in 1912-1914, the heart of the industrial period, the hotel also embodies the distinctive physical characteristics of Waterloo's industrial era and illustrates responses to industrialization.

The Hotel Russell-Lamson carries multiple associations. As a \$300,000 eight-story hotel built in 1912-14, it remains a prominent landmark associated with the period of substantial, industry-related development of Waterloo. Designed by Chicago architects Marshall & Fox, it is a relatively unaltered, excellent example of hotel design from the period. In 1919 the hotel became home for the Greater Waterloo Association, a symbolic turning point in community relations. Where before rival booster organizations had competed to improve and develop the city, in 1919 four groups (Chamber of Commerce and Waterloo Club from the west side and Commercial Club and Board of Trade from the east) joined forces. The combined association moved to their own clubrooms at 23 Bridge Street (not extant) in 1921. No other facilities associated with the various organizations are known to be extant.

The key period of Waterloo's industrial development began in the 1890's when booster groups became active and an interurban rail line was constructed. Residents, especially members of the several booster organizations such as the Greater Waterloo Association,

JUL 25 1984

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 3

adopted the concept of financing-through-lot-sales and applied it to raise funds to lure industry to Waterloo. The concept worked well. At least eight important industrial employers--including Rath Packing and Litchfield Manufacturing--moved to Waterloo on the basis of the incentives offered them.

Competition among booster organizations fueled the industrialization of Waterloo. Businessmen on either side of the Cedar River, which bisects the city, worked hard to bring new industry, new plats, new construction to their side of town. By selling stock and lots for potential industrial sites, they raised the funds necessary to induce a factory owner to move to Waterloo. While the various groups--four in 1919--competed to foster economic development, by then they were also ready to join together and to acquire meeting rooms in the five-year-old Hotel Russell-Lamson, one of the city's most prominent edifices.

The Hotel Bulletin devoted its cover and much of the October 1914 issue to the Hotel Russell-Lamson. Operated by the Horton-Holden Hotel Company, it offered 250 rooms--all with outside windows. Of these, 150 rooms had private or connecting baths. All the latest amenities were present, including ten billiard tables, a private dining room seating one hundred, sample rooms for traveling salesmen, custom-made French wallpaper, Axminster carpets in the corridors, a barber shop, a hotel laundry, and an artesian well drilled on the premises.

Marshall & Fox, "...one of the leading architectural firms in Chicago in the early part of the century..." according to Withey, received the commission to design the hotel. Their practice was varied and successful, with designs for theatres (Blackstone Theatre in Chicago, Maxine Eliot Theatre in New York), hospitals (John B. Murphy Hospital), and office buildings (Northwestern Mutual Life Building in Milwaukee, Standard Oil Building in Chicago).

Benjamin H. Marshall and Charles E. Fox were also well known for "a number of Chicago's large and modern hotels built during the early 1900's." Before receiving the Hotel Russell-Lamson commission, the team had designed the Blackstone Hotel for which they received the A.I.A. Medal of Honor in 1910. Other commissions included the Morrison Hotel (1915), Drake Hotel (1919), and Edgewater Beach Hotel (1921). The managers of the Hotel Russell-Lamson, the Horton-Holden Hotel Company moved to Waterloo from Chicago. It is probable that they were aware of the fine award-winning reputation of Marshall & Fox and recommended them for the Waterloo hotel, the only Marshall & Fox design in Waterloo.

Construction began in 1912 but was delayed when the general contractors, Dunphy, Friedstein Construction Company of Milwaukee, went bankrupt. The principal investors, C.O. and Lillian Russell Lamson, then acted as contractors for the project. The hotel officially opened to the public on September 3, 1914. However, Waterloo residents celebrated its completion on September first by taking over the hotel and holding a "house

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

party." Four hundred celebrants were served such delicacies as Chicken Gumbo Louisiana and Neapolitan Ice Cream Melba at this inaugural banquet. Dancing followed, until two in the morning.

The hotel also calls attention to the role Clyde O. Lamson played in the industrial period--he was president of the Waterloo Club in 1909 and a real estate developer and investor in industry--and his wife Lillian Russell Lamson. Her father, Renssalaer Russell, was an extremely successful pioneer resident; as a 1914 article noted, his "fortune was largely instrumental in making the dreamed-of hotel a reality." The hotel's title was a combination of the family names.

The Hotel Russell-Lamson continued its relationship with the forward-looking approach among Waterloo boosters in the 1940s. It was directly associated with the development of the radio and television stations of Black Hawk Broadcasting Company and the role of Ralph J. "Mac" McElroy for whom McElroy Auditorium is named in honor of his work for the Dairy Cattle Congress facility. McElroy came to Waterloo in 1935 to work for radio station WMT. After World War II, he returned and set about establishing another radio station. He easily interested 31 local investors. On November 4, 1947 the first radio broadcast for station KWWL aired from studios at the Hotel Russell-Lamson. And in 1953--after considerable competition and legal squabbling with Joe Dumond's rival KXEL--KWVL-TV received federal approval to operate, bringing television to Waterloo. Black Hawk Broadcasting continued to use the hotel studios until 1958 when it combined the radio and television studios at a former automobile dealership building.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Jul 25

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 2

Sources

Hotel Russell-Lamson

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