

NORTH DAKOTA CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY

Base Data Form

1. County Grand Forks, North Dakota 2. Site Number CK 564
3. Site Name (s) Viets Hotel (Richardson House) -common name: Hall Apartments
4. Type of Resource: A. Archaeological Historical Architectural Paleontological
B. District Site Building Structure Object
5. Map Reference: USGS Quad. Grand Forks, N. Dak-Minn, 7.5' 1963 (photorevs'd 1979)
6. Location: 309-311 Third Street South Sec. 3 T 151 N / R 50 W
Plat: Viets Addition Block 1 Lots 3 and 4
UTMG: A. 14. 647 540. 5309 380. B. _____
C. _____ D. _____
7. Access: visible
Location: the east side of south Third Street between Gertrude and Division
Avenues approximately 400' west of the Red River of the North
Acreage: less than one acre
Verbal boundary: above city lots 100 x 400 feet
8. A. General description of site: The Viet's Hotel (Richardson House) is a two-story frame building located on the east side of South Third Street between Gertrude and Division Avenues. Its back yard overlooks the Red River of the North. Built in 1876 by Frank Viets, the hotel was altered shortly after construction and had achieved its present U shape by 1880.¹ Now a rooming house, its exterior has been moderately well maintained and the front elevation, in particular, remains in nearly original condition. Its interior has been substantially altered, and is now subdivided into apartments. (continued)
- B. Condition of site: fair
9. Owner's name/address: Alice J. Quale c/o Mrs. Roy Bachellor, c/ o Postmaster
Perham, Minnesota 56573
10. Occupant's name/address: tenants
11. Historic Register value: Nat. State Untd. None On Reg. In District District
Multiple Resource
12. Open to public: Yes No 13. Preservation Underway: Yes No
14. Endangered by: Nothing
15. Survey Project: Title Hist. and Arch. Survey of G.F., ND Director Norene and Joe
Other surveys in which included none Roberts
16. Recommendations: being nominated to NRHP in MRN: Historic Resources of downtown
Grand Forks, North Dakota (Partial Inventory: Historic and ARchitectural Properties
17. Environment: Elevation _____ Nearest Water: Type _____
Name _____ Distance _____ Direction _____
Soil conditions: _____
Soil Texture: _____

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17. Environment, Cont.

Ground Cover: _____

Terrain: _____

18. Local contact person or organization: _____

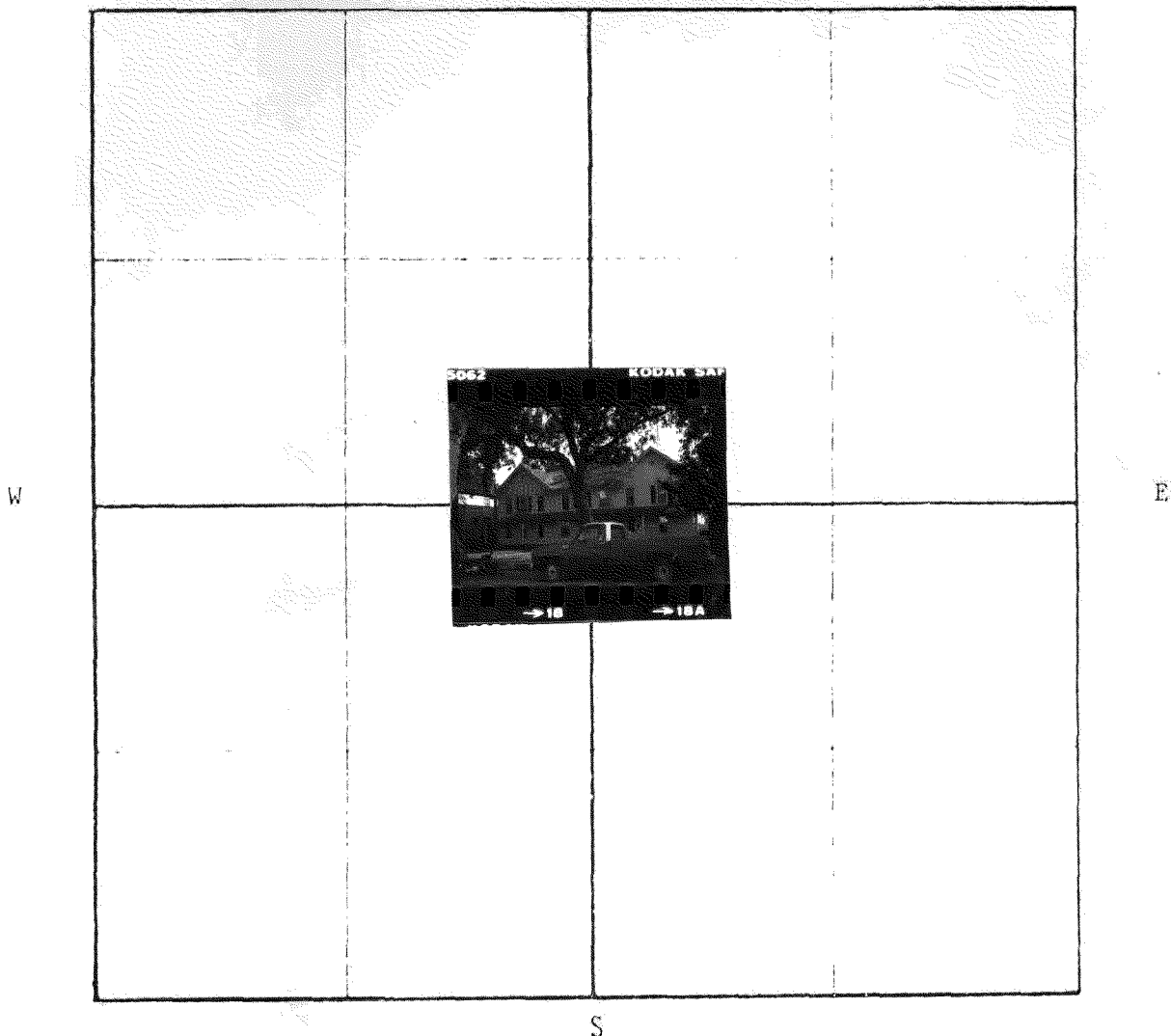
19. Photos: No B/W x Color Prints Slides Comments/ID code _____contact print (attached): Roll 21 Frame 208 x 10 glossies (attached): Roll 50 Frames 15,17,18,19Negatives stored at: Division of Archaeology and Historic PreservationState Historical Society of North Dakota

In space below attach and identify a picture or contact print of the site.

20. Sketch Map of Site:

Scale: _____

N

Recorded by: C. Kudzia Date 7/81Revised by: Norene and Joe Roberts and Gary Henrickson Date 9/81Historical Research, Inc. 5406 Penn Avenue S.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55419

27. Thematic category settlement/architecture 28. Date or period 1876
29. Structures: Number standing _____ Number collapsed _____
 Number of foundations only _____ Number of earthworks _____
 Number of basement depressions _____ No structural remains observed _____
30. Architectural/Structural Detail:
- A. Style or design Vernacular Greek Revival
- B. Architect/engineer _____
- C. Contractor/builder _____
- D. Original use hotel
- E. Present use apartments
- F. Number of stories 2 G. Basement: Yes ___ No ___ Partial ___
- H. Foundation Material _____
- I. Wall Construction frame
- J. Wall Treatment lap
- K. Roof type and material shingle
- L. Number of bays: Front ___ Side ___ M. Plan shape U-shaped
31. Frontage 75 feet 32. Distance from road 30 feet
33. Number of outbuildings none 34. Description of outbuildings _____

35. Changes **Part of north wing is said by owner to be original. Birdseye view of 1880 shows hotel to be substantially unchanged over last 100 years. Sanborn maps show a shed addition to south wing removed ca. 1901-06 and a one-story addition added to interior court of north wing ca. 1912-16.**

36. Information sources/References

The Viets Hotel was built in 1876 by Col. Frank Viets, pioneer businessman of Grand Forks, who settled in the city in 1872.³ Viets built the first flour mill in North Dakota in 1877 not far upstream from the hotel.⁴ Originally from Ohio, Viets first moved to Georgetown, Minnesota, in 1870 where he and his wife ran a hotel and stage stop. (Cont.)

37. Reason for significance:

Viets Hotel is easily the best representative of early settlement in Grand Forks. It was built by Frank Viets, a prominent business and political leader in the early town. It is one of a handful of surviving pioneer frame buildings, and it is substantially original. It is the oldest surviving hotel in town. It is an excellent example of vernacular Greek Revival architecture, which was a common, if short-lived, style in the town's earliest days. This site is unique in Grand Forks in its power to suggest the historic character and architecture of first settlement.

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The two-story frame hotel is roughly U shaped. The front elevation is formed by the end gables of the U's wings and a connecting gable roof between. Beneath the paired end gables the fenestration of the front facade is symmetrical: the north wing and connecting wings have three windows above three windows or three windows above a door and two windows. The south wing has two windows above a door and a window.

The hotel roof is wood-shingled; its eaves overhang the exterior walls only slightly. The cornices of the gable ends are returned. There is a wide frieze board just below the cornice. The exterior walls are three inch lap wood siding finished with pilaster strips at the corners. The short eaves, returned cornices, frieze board, and pilaster strips are all characteristic of the Greek Revival style.

The windows are 2/2, double-hung with cornice moldings. Some of the moldings have been removed on the side windows, many of the windows have aluminum storms and screens, and the rear windows appear to be of more recent manufacture than the front windows.

An open porch with Tuscan columns and a rolled asphalt roof ties the three wings together at the front of the building. The south wing entrance features a trabeated doorway with double sidelights.

The rear of the hotel is less symmetrical than the front. The rear south wing of the hotel is substantially larger than the north wing despite the removal of an end shed between 1901 and 1906. Between 1912 and 1916 a one-story addition with a cat-slide roof was added to the north wing. Since then, the building exterior has not been substantially altered.²

36. Information sources/References (Cont.)

In 1872, they settled in Grand Forks and took charge of the new Hudson Bay Company's Northwestern Hotel.⁵ Viets bought both the Hudson Bay Company store and hotel in 1875 when the Company ended its activities in Grand Forks. The following year Viets erected the Viets Hotel.⁶

Although Viets continued in the hotel business for many years, his association with the Viets Hotel was short lived. By 1879, the Viets Hotel, one of the three largest hotels in Grand Forks, was managed by Col. Viets' in-law W.B. Dow.⁷ By 1884, Viets had sold the property. It was renamed the "Richardson House," with W.H. Topping, proprietor.⁸ Viets and J.J. Dow became the owners and managers of the first-class Hotel Dacotah, erected in 1888.⁹ Viets was elected to the State Senate and served during the 1893-95 sessions.¹⁰ (Cont.)

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36. Information sources/References (Cont.)

The Richardson House continued to be operated as a hotel and boarding house until sometime between 1892 and 1897; it was then subdivided into three dwellings until around 1906 when it became the "Hall Hotel," a name it carries to this day.¹¹

The clientele at the Viets Hotel/Richardson House appears to have been genteel. According to one account, the hotel catered mainly to the steamboat trade before the railroad era began in 1880 because of its proximity to the steamboat landing at the Red River.¹² According to an account of a recent arrival to Grand Forks in the fall of 1887:

We followed Third Street that morning till we reached the Richardson House, now Hotel Hall, then the most popular family hotel, owned by Colonel Topping, with Bert Wells as clerk. Here lodged most of the unmarried younger set, and here stayed the then so well-known multi-millionaire lumber man, Mr. T.B. Walker and Mrs. Walker, when he was here to look after his saw-mill.¹³

Notes

¹ Bird's Eye View of Grand Forks, 1880.

² Sanborn Insurance map, 1884, 1888, 1892, 1897, 1901, 1906, 1912, 1916.

³ Bladow, 1974, p.14; Lounsberry, Vol.I, 1917, p. 508; The Record magazine, Fargo, N.D. 1 (1):22.

⁴ "Saw Mill First Business," Grand Forks Herald, June 20, 1954.

⁵ Dudley, 1897, p.44; The Record magazine, Fargo, N.D. 2 (4) October 1896, p.8.

⁶ Fred Goodman, "Little Old Grand Forks," Typescript on file at Myra Museum, Grand Forks, n.d., p.7.

⁷ "Hotels and Boarding Houses," Grand Forks Herald, 1(1):1.

⁸ Sanborn Insurance map, 1884; Manual and Directory for the City of Grand Forks, North Dakota, 1885, The Plaindealer Co., p.126.

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⁹Dudley, 1897, p.63.

¹⁰The Record, 1(1):22.

¹¹Sanborn Insurance maps, 1892, 1897, 1901, 1906, 1912, 1916, 1927
updated to 1960.

¹²"Saw Mill First Business," Grand Forks Herald, June 20, 1954.

¹³Mrs. J. E. Engstad, "The White Kid Glove Era (in Grand Forks)," paper
presented before the Franklin Club, December, 1941. Typescript on file
with Myra Museum, Grand Forks, pp.5-6.