

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Plano Hotel
other names/site number Plano House

2. Location

street & number 120 W. Main St. not for publication
city or town Plano vicinity
state Illinois code IL county Kendall code 093 zip code 60545

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
William L. Wheeler, SHPO 9-29-93
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Illinois Historic Preservation Agency
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____ Signature of the Keeper	_____ Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other. (explain:)	_____	_____

Plano Hotel
Name of Property

Kendall, IL
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

None

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Hotel

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Italianate

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls brick

roof rubber

other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Plano Hotel
Name of Property

Kendall, Illinois
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce

Period of Significance

1868-1943

Significant Dates

1868

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Plano Hotel
Name of Property

Kendall, Illinois
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 16 371850 4613220
Zone Easting Northing
2

3
Zone Easting Northing

4

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Vera Robertson

organization N/A date June 30, 1993

street & number 436 South Main Street telephone 708-554-3730

city or town Oswego state Illinois zip code 60543

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Harlan & Vera Robertson

street & number 436 South Main Street telephone 708-554-3730

city or town Oswego state Illinois zip code 60543

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Plano Hotel

Description

The Plano Hotel was built in 1868 by John W. Smith. The building has two stories plus a full basement. There are twenty-five rooms. It is constructed of brick and has a stone foundation. The architectural style is Italianate. It is located at the northeast corner of Main Street and West Street. The Hotel is located in the business section of downtown Plano and is one of the oldest buildings in the city. It has always operated as a hotel until the 1940s when it was converted into a hotel with apartments. Its historic integrity has been basically maintained with the exception of a rear screened porch being converted to a one-story addition, interior modernization of bathrooms, a heating system consisting of a boiler and radiators, the addition of some rooms in the central stair hall, and the remodeling of the front porch. Over the years, as proprietors changed, the name of the hotel changed also; however, the townspeople refer to it as the Plano Hotel.

Exterior

The hotel is two stories high with a full basement. The building shares a common wall with the adjacent building. There are arched windows on the front and side of the building. The windows have been covered over with plywood to protect them from vandalism, but the original windows still remain. The window sills are stone. The windows' shallow hood moldings are brick. All of the windows are double-hung except where noted. The arched front entry door is very large and contains twelve small glass panes. There is an arched transom over the entry door which allows light to flow freely into the hallway. A large stone serves as the threshold before entering the building. This stone is worn in the center from constant wear. The front porch is very wide and takes up approximately three quarters of the front of the building. It was remodeled in 1912.¹ There are stairs leading up to the front porch on the east side. They are composed of wood and are not the original stairs. There are also stairs leading down to the basement on the west side. These steps are of concrete. The front porch's roof forms a balcony for the second floor. There is

¹ Kendall County News. March 27, 1912.

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Plano Hotel

an aluminum door leading out to the balcony from upstairs. This door is not original. There are four wooden columns on the porch supporting the balcony. There are four cement posts underneath the porch for additional support. The porch has been changed many times, primarily the positioning of the outside stairways. Old pictures show stairs on the west side leading up to the first floor and also a center stairway. Research has not revealed the date of these changes. A wrought iron railing replaced the wooden balustrade within the last thirty years according to local citizens. The porch floor and steps are composed of wood. There is a tongue and groove wood ceiling on the porch.

The south facade has a central entry door and two, four-over-four windows on either side of the first story. The second story has five, four-over-four windows. There are three basement windows. They are wood and have four panes in each window and stone sills. The basement windows have stone pediments. They are original to the building. The two front entry doors in the basement are wood. The front door closest to the west side has twelve panes of glass. The front door closest to the east side has one large pane and a transom overhead.

The west elevation has four, four-over-four windows on both the first and second stories. Below are four, four-pane basement windows. There is also another window located between the third and fourth basement window to the north. It has no pediment and is smaller in size. At the rear of the building in the addition there are three small windows. The basement window below is wooden with four panes.

On the north elevation's second floor there are four, four-over-four windows; also a door which leads out over the roof. The first floor addition has eight windows with five small panes facing north. They are wooden. The back door leading out to the rear is wooden. There is also a grade entrance which leads to the basement on the north side. It is protected by wooden walls and a pitched roof. The door to this grade entrance is wooden. There are two basement windows on the north side. They are wooden with four panes.

There is a wooden trim around the building on the front and sides which separates the stone foundation from the brick. The stone

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Plano Hotel

foundation is approximately five feet above ground level. At the very top of the building there is a wide wooden cornice. At one time there were paired decorative brackets. They are no longer there. The roof is flat and there is a new rubber roof which was applied in 1991.

At the rear of the building the screened porch has been replaced by a one-story addition. There is a steel stairway on the outside adjacent to the next building which serves as a means of egress from the upstairs. There is no record of when this addition was added to the building; however, Owen Cooper, who owns the furniture store next door and whose great grandfather, Valentine Cooper, owned the hotel, believes it was done in the mid 1940s.

Interior

First Floor

As you enter the building on the first floor, you will see a staircase which leads to the second floor. The stairway is of mahogany wood. The flooring of the steps is constructed of small pieces of wood placed diagonally on the step. The stairway's woodwork and newel post are Italianate in style. The hallway goes the full length of the building. The ceiling is decorative metal. The front room on the west side also has a decorative metal ceiling. The parlor on the east side has a hardwood parquet floor. The hallway has decorative woodwork. The windows and woodwork are original throughout. Some rooms have been partitioned throughout the years when the building was converted to apartments. Basically the rooms are aligned along a central hall that runs north to south through the building. The bedroom behind the front staircase was added at a later time. All of the walls are plastered. The front doorway, some hallway doors, and windows have shouldered architraves with pedimented hoods. There are decorative panels located beneath the wood windows. The woodwork is wide and Italianate in style.

Second Floor

The stairway has been partitioned on the top of the stairs. Originally, the stairs had a balcony around them which allowed for

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an open view from upstairs to below. The large fireproof door at the top of the stairs separates the first floor from the second floor. There is a small room in the rear of the building with a door which leads to the outside marked by an exit sign. The upstairs hallway has decorative woodwork close to the ceiling and some wooden columns which go the full length from ceiling to floor. Each room has a radiator. The rooms of the second floor are aligned along a central hall that runs north to south through the building. The sitting room located to the north of stairs was added at a later date.

Basement

The basement has two doors in the front of the building which leads out to the cement hallway and up the stairs on the exterior. In the middle of the basement there are stairs leading to the first floor. There are metal ceilings in three of the rooms. There are two bathrooms in the basement. The building is heated by a boiler and there is a separate boiler room in the rear on the east side. There is a rear stairway which leads outside to ground level. The basement windows are recessed and have four small panes and wide window sills. The basement walls are constructed of stone and are very thick. The basement originally contained a dining room in the southwest corner, a bar in the southeast corner, and a kitchen to the northwest. It has been remodeled many times into businesses and apartments. The only visible fire damage from a recent fire is located in the area near the main staircase. Very little structural damage occurred.

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Plano Hotel

Statement of Significance

The Plano Hotel qualifies for Criterion A for commerce for its role in providing lodging and dining facilities for guests, travelers, businessmen, and the citizens of Plano from 1868, the year the Plano Hotel was built, to 1943, the fifty-year cutoff for the National Register of Historic Places. The Plano Hotel is significant in that it was built in a time when Kendall County was experiencing prosperity and growth due to the coming of the railroad in 1853.¹ It is the only surviving hotel in Plano. The Excelsior Hotel which was built in 1853, burned in 1880.² John Smith built the hotel on land which was owned by Cornelius Henning, John Hollister and Marcus Steward, proprietors of the plat of the original town of Plano. The land for the hotel was deeded to John Smith on February 5, 1868, the year the hotel was built.³

Commerce

Plano owes its existence to the railroad. When the engineers for the predecessor of the C. B. & Q. Railroad made their first survey for the railroad, they had considered a route through Little Rock, the largest trading center of the township. Lewis Steward talked to the railroad personnel and suggested that they build the railroad further south and if the railroad promised to use his route, he promised to set up a town.

In 1853, Lewis Steward laid out the town, planted trees, set up provisions for a waterworks and put up a grain elevator. Plano was incorporated as a village in 1864 and became a city in 1883. The

¹ Bateman, Newton & Selby, Paul. Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois and History of Kendall County. Chicago: Munsell Publishing Co., 1914, p. 877.

² Ferren, Kathy, editor. A Bicentennial History of Kendall County, Illinois. Compiled by the Kendall County Historical Society. Naperville, Illinois: Naperville Sun, 1976, p. 94.

³ Abstract of Title, Plano Hotel.

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Plano Hotel

railroad was completed in 1853 and was known as the Chicago and Aurora Railroad.⁴

The coming of the railroads made the manufacture of many items economically possible for the first time within the county. The first large manufacturing venture in the county was the Plano Harvester Works. In the summer of 1863 the manufacture of harvesters was begun at Plano. Plano was the manufacturing center of Kendall County during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Among the many companies in town were the Independent Harvester Company, Kelly Manufacturing Company, Otis Manufacturing Company, Gray Stamping and Manufacturing Company, and the Plano Molding Company. Kendall County was a farming community and the need for agricultural implements was in great demand. During this period many new inventions were made in the implement field.⁵ The reaper, a machine used to harvest grain, was invented and manufactured in Plano.⁶ The City of Plano has adopted the reaper as their logo. John Hollister, a founding father of Plano, was one of the inventors of the first successful automatic grain reapers.⁷

The first building that was called a hotel in America was the City Hotel in New York in 1794. The City Hotel was built by a stock company and was in reality an overgrown inn with 73 rooms.⁸ The first building in America designed to be a hotel was the 176-room Tremont House built in Boston in 1829. Among the Tremont House's firsts for hotels was its lobby presided over by a clerk, a trained professional staff, a separate baggage room, and the unheard of luxury of single and double bedrooms, each equipped with its own key. Hotels with private bedrooms were quite a contrast to

⁴ A Bicentennial History of Kendall County, Illinois. p. 93.

⁵ Kendall County News, "Plano, Illinois, USA." June 17, 1908.

⁶ A Bicentennial History of Kendall County, Illinois p. 93.

⁷ Ibid. p. 93.

⁸ Williamson, Jefferson. The American Hotel: An Annotated History. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Publishers, 1930, p. 9-10.

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stagecoach inns and taverns where guests often slept in lots of five, six, or more and the doors were always open.⁹

The Tremont House spurred a widespread development of similar hotels in American cities, where a fine, luxurious hotel was viewed as essential to the continued growth and success of a community. This initial hotel boom reached its peak between 1830 and 1850 in the east, and later in newly developing communities as settlement spread west.

From the mid-nineteenth century to World War I, the commercial hotel flourished. Aimed at the ever-increasing numbers of travelers, the central city hotel was developed in reaction to the heavy use of rail transportation that stopped in the town center, the increasing size of manufacturing concerns that had wide sales and service territories requiring overnight travel, and the dominance of central downtown business districts.¹⁰

Anthony Trollope's North America, 1862, described "that everybody travels in the States" and added that "the first sign of an incipient settlement is a hotel five stories high, with an office, a bar, a cloak room, three gentlemen's parlors, two ladies' parlors, a ladies' entrance, and two hundred bedrooms." By the early 1880s there were a quarter of a million salesmen hawking their wares across the country and needing overnight accommodations.¹¹

⁹ Dorsey, Leslie & Devine, Janice. Fare Thee Well: A Backward Look at Two Centuries of Historic American Hostelries, Fashionable Spas and Seaside Resorts. New York: Crown Publishers, 1964, p. 188.

¹⁰ Lattin, Gerald. Modern Hotel and Motel Management. San Francisco: W. H. Freeman & Company, 1977, p. 9-11.

¹¹ Dorsey, Leslie & Devine, Janice. Fare Thee Well; A Backward Look at Two Centuries of Historic American Hostelries, Fashionable Spas & Seaside Resorts. New York, Crown Publishers, 1964, p. 172.

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To meet this growing demand commercial hotels were increasingly built near railroad stations in central business districts. The building of the Plano Hotel was a part of this trend and was a progressive step in the formation and industrialization of a strong community. There was a real need for a hotel to serve the many people who came to Plano on business and pleasure. The Plano Hotel served an important function in providing overnight accommodations for travellers, salesmen, actors, and other transients. Highly visible in the downtown area across the street from the C. B. & Q. Depot, the hotel prospered until the increasing use of the automobile, the dispersion of industry and commercial activity, and the decline of Plano eliminated the need for transient housing. During the 1920s and 1930s the Plano Hotel became both a place for transient lodging as well as permanent residency. In 1946 after World War II the hotel was converted into apartments.

The Plano Hotel was typical of the time period and small town hotels in which most were two or three stories with a parlor, dining room, and rooms aligned along a central hall. The Plano Hotel graciously met the needs for good food and lodging. It housed a splendid dining room. The hotel was considered to be a very fashionable place in its day. Ruth Wildermuth, a local historian, relates how visitors coming to Plano via the train would stay at the hotel for the weekend. Many fine dances were held at the dance hall in the adjacent building. The hall could be entered through an adjoining door upstairs.¹² The old abstract states the hotel had "perpetual use" of the dance hall. The connection between the hotel and the dance hall has been closed for a number of years.

The Meramech Club was organized on January 22, 1900 in the dining hall of the Plano Hotel and served as a social club whose membership was exclusive and highly coveted. The Meramech Club provided members with intellectual discussions and gastronomic delicacies. Meetings were at various locations; however, its very beginning took place in the Plano Hotel 93 years ago.

The Meramech Club was named in honor of the historic Meramech Hill two miles south of Plano. There is a large granite boulder which

¹² Abstract of Title, Plano Hotel.

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Plano Hotel

marks the site of the last battle between the French and the Fox tribe of Indians, the Watagamies. The monument is inscribed with the following: "In this stockaded fort 300 Fox Warriors with women and children were besieged by 1,300 French and allies, August 17, 1730. Escaped September 9. Captured, tortured and killed."¹³

The hotel has had many owners over the years. In 1869 the hotel was purchased by Andrew and James Dixon and was called the "Dixon House." The dance hall in the next building was called Dixon Hall.¹⁴

The hotel served the community for many grand parties. By the 1880s the hotel was known as the Plano House. The Grand Army of the Republic had a dinner at the Plano House in July 1882 and it was said to have been a first class supper.¹⁵

Many out-of-town professionals came to Plano to offer their services. A professor from Paris, France, an optician, and a graduate of a French optical school came to town in 1882 to see people at the hotel and examine their eyes.

In 1882 a doctor and his wife were located at the hotel for free consultations to the public. The September 14, 1882 edition of the Kendall County News printed that the doctor treated all chronic diseases with electricity and magnetism.¹⁶

The hotel was owned by a number of owners until 1907 when Valentine Cooper bought the hotel. Cooper's Plano House was said to be a good hotel and it was said to be a comfortable and charming place of sojourn for the commercial man. Plano House was the leading landmark of the main street of Plano. Meals were served three times a day and it was said that people left there with memories of

¹³ Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois and History of Kendall County. p. 865.

¹⁴ Abstract of Title, Plano Hotel.

¹⁵ Kendall County News. July 27, 1882.

¹⁶ Kendall County News. Sept. 14, 1882.

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epicurean delights. Mr. Cooper resided over the bar himself and he tolerated no drunkenness and noise. Mr. Cooper was a British-American. He came to Plano from Chicago where he had been in business since the fire of '71. He was a congenial and well-known fellow, and an influential person in the City of Plano.¹⁷

Herbert A. Gage bought the building in 1909 and named it the Gage Hotel. The Loser and Garber Tavern was located in basement of the building during this time period. In 1912, William Dolder purchased the hotel and it became known as the Dolder Hotel. Dolder began extensive renovations of the hotel in 1912. The Kendall County Historical Society has the registration records from the Dolder Hotel. Guests from many states including New York, Ohio, and Indiana were registered at the hotel.

Plano's economy took a downturn in the 1920s and 1930s. Many of its manufacturing plants were relocated to Aurora and Chicago, Illinois. The 1921 Rand McNally Auto Trails Map listed Plano on two trails: the Cannon Ball Trail and the Starved Rock Trail. No list of accommodations or garages was provided for Plano on the map, unlike Aurora, fourteen miles east of Plano, which listed the Hotel Aurora. The map also listed Kelley's Hotel in Elgin, the Hotel Ottawa in Ottawa, and the Hotel Kaskaskia in LaSalle. In the early 1920s, Route 34 was constructed linking Kendall County to Chicago and in 1928 construction was began on Route 47 to the east of Plano. All of these hurt the hotel's business. For travelers and businessmen could easily return to Chicago or to more modern hotels in neighboring bigger cities for their lodging needs. The Plano Hotel's ownership went through a number of different hands during this time period. By the 1930s, the Plano Hotel was being used as a permanent residence for many citizens as well as a transient hotel. In 1946 right after World War II the building was converted into apartments by the owners, Herman and Myrtle Schade.

A fire occurred on November 8, 1990 in the front of the basement. The building has been inspected by a structural engineer licensed by the State of Illinois and it was deemed safe. At present the building is vacant and waiting to be restored. Plans are to

¹⁷ Silver Jubilee Prospectus of the Harvester City. Plano, IL, USA. Plano, Kendall County, IL. June 17, 1908.

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convert the building into small shops and offices. As a center of commercial activity associated with the railroad and the hotel industry, the Plano Hotel stands today as a reminder of the days when hotels dotted the downtowns of many cities.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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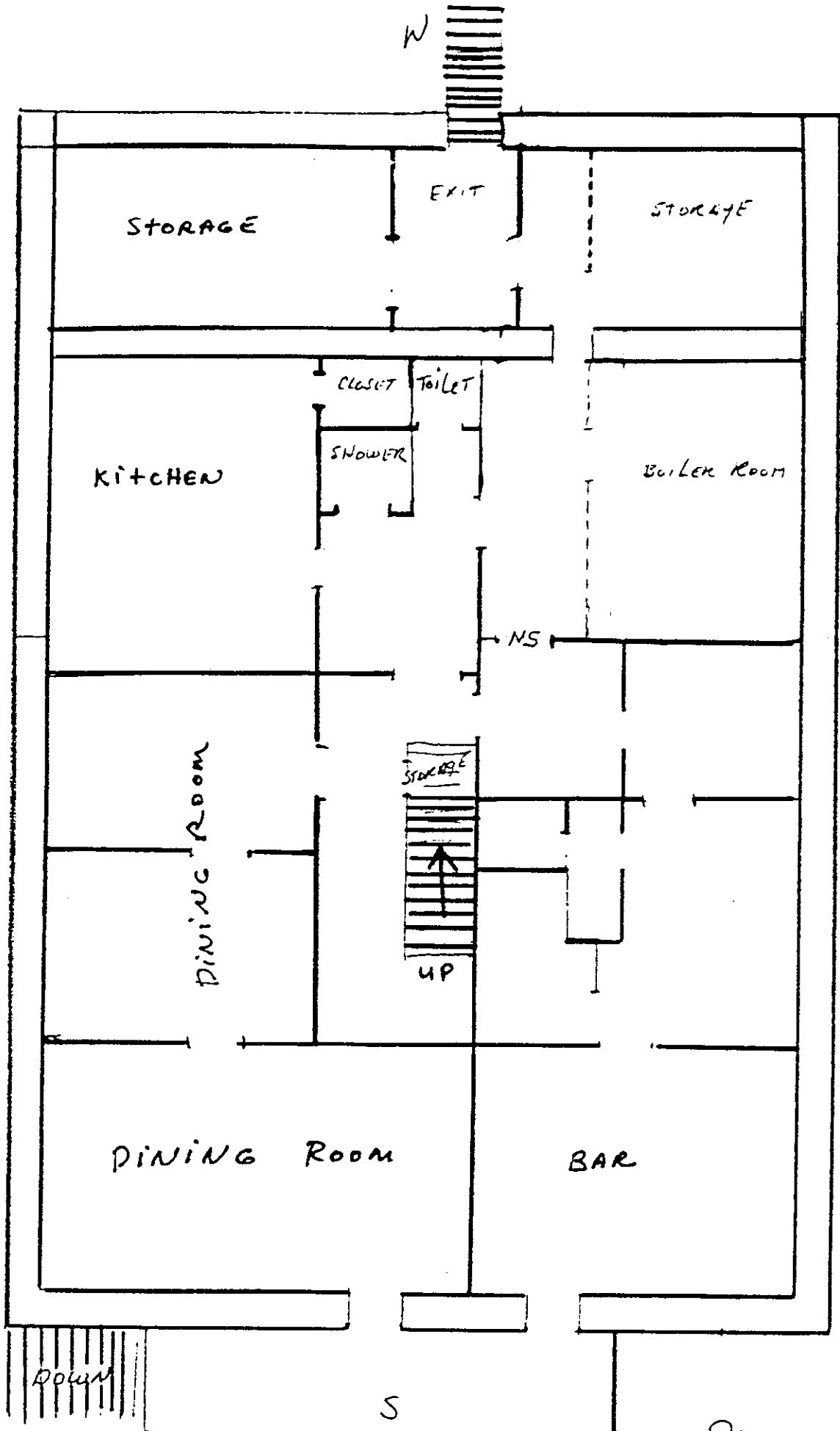
Verbal Boundary Description

Abstract of Title

To the West 46 feet of Lot 5 in Block 8 in the City of Plano, Kendall Co., IL, being that portion of the said Lot now occupied by the building known as the "Plano Hotel" together with the enclosed yard at the rear thereof, used in connection thereof, (being the West 46 x 120 feet of Lot 5, Blk 8, 46 feet on Main St. and 120 feet along West Street).

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the building historically associated with the Plano Hotel.

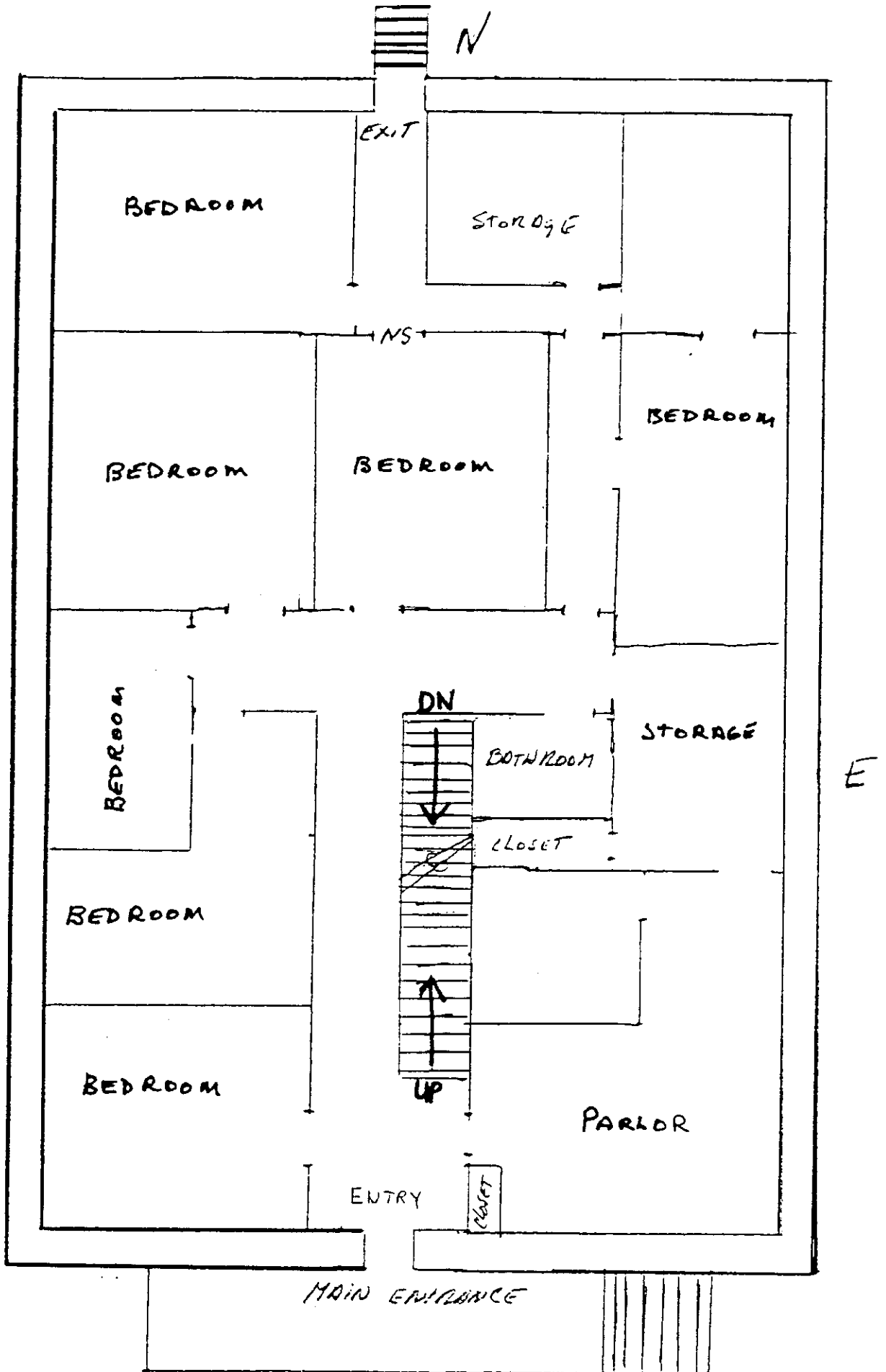


BRIGHT

120 WEST MAIN ST

PLANO HOTEL

NS = NEEDED SKAT



FIRST FLOOR

120 WEST MAIN ST

Plano Hotel

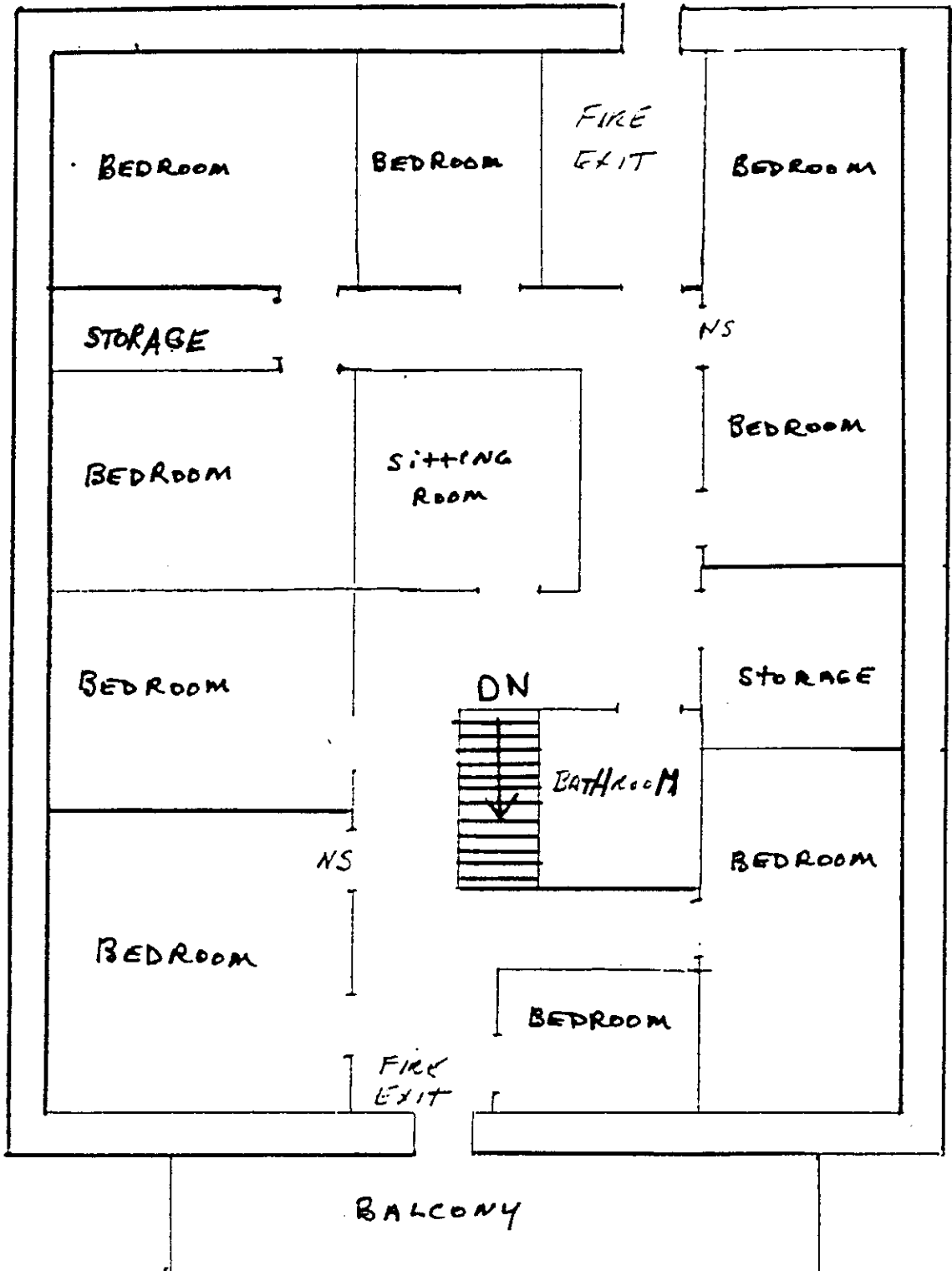
NS = NAILED SHUT

N



W

E



SECOND FLOOR

120 WEST MAIN ST

PLAWO, ILL
PLAWO HOTEL