

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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received
date entered WASHINGTON
FINAL

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

1. Name

historic Pere Marquette Hotel

and/or common (last known as Peoria Hilton)

2. Location

street & number 501 Main Street n/a not for publication

city, town Peoria, n/a vicinity of congressional district

state Illinois code 012 county Peoria code 143

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<u>n/a</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Hotel

4. Owner of Property

name Pere Marquette Hotel Associates

street & number 8080 East Central, P. O. Box 18403

city, town Wichita n/a vicinity of Kansas state 67218

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of Peoria County Recorder

street & number Peoria County Courthouse

city, town Peoria state Illinois

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Survey
title City of Peoria Downtown Historic Site has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1980 federal state county local

depository for survey records City of Peoria, 419 Fulton Street

city, town Peoria state Illinois

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" 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 <u>N/A</u>

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Hotel Pere Marquette, a 14-story hotel designed by Horace Trumbauer, of Philadelphia, PA, is a dominant, landmark element of Peoria's center city skyline. A notable surviving representative of the architectural expression of its day, the building presents a bold statement of brick and stone with strong symmetrical lines. This effect is subtly balanced by horizontal stone treatment contrasting with the brick at the second level and by stone at the top floor which highlights a cornice and the interesting stone trapping around the top floor windows. The intricate stone detail of Indian and animal faces add a softening, decorative contrast to the imposing physical impact of the building's mass.

The exterior of the building in all respects remains in remarkably sound condition, and from the second floor upward, has survived any damage from exterior remodeling or alteration. Originally, the ground floor had windows and entrances, notably a grand entrance on the Main Street side, which was covered with limestone in 1972; however, this stone can be removed and the original level restored. Thus, the original impact of the building will not be lost nor will the architectural integrity be compromised.

The interior spaces of the lobby level present perhaps the most exciting and compelling opportunity for restoration and preservation. On this level are: a grand lobby and entrance, the LaSalle Room, the Cheminee Lounge and Cotillion Room.

The grand lobby was originally a dramatic and elegant space with exceeding high domed decorated ceilings with bold columns featuring Gothic capital design and elaborate plaster cornice and entablature with a marble staircase and an overlooking mezzanine level with fancy wrought iron railings accented with brass.

Much of this effect was concealed in 1954 with a renovation which enclosed the mezzanine and dropped the lobby ceiling. However, our investigation revealed that the original ceiling is relatively unharmed and so the ceilings, mezzanine and architectural detail will be restored. The staircase which has elegant detail remains in good condition and the grand entrance will be restored.

The wall over the elevator bank was originally covered by a George Harding mural (one of two in the hotel) depicting Pere Marquette landing at the Pimiteoui (Peoria) Indian village in 1673. We are searching for this work which we hope to locate through the Lakeview Museum in Peoria.

The LaSalle Room and the Cheminee Lounge located immediately off the lobby are both substantial rooms each capable of seating 200-250 people. High ceilings are set off with original pewter crystal chandeliers in the LaSalle Room; however, in 1966 the crystal work was removed from the chandeliers in the Cheminee Lounge and Cotillion room. However, the elaborate plaster ceiling mountings remain and we expect to replicate the lost crystal. The walls in each room present elaborate plaster detail cornices (bordering the rooms) all in excellent condition, and they will be preserved. A large marble fireplace, with ornate decoration, and the original "Hotel Pere Marquette" bronze mantel plate all remain in the Cheminee Lounge.

The Cotillion Room (original ballroom) is a spectacular room. The high domed ceiling was never dropped. Symmetrical decorated columns enclose French window mirrors. Above an architrave on two parallel walls, a symmetrical arches enclose elaborate plaster festoon; alternating with the arches are intricate plaster emblems. Several levels of plaster cornices work border the room. The west end of the ballroom highlights another Harding mural depicting the departure of LaSalle from Rockport, France, on July 27, 1684, for his second trip to the New World. The crystal in the chandelier must be restored but the room is otherwise in exceptional physical condition.

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CONTINUATION SHEET - 7. DESCRIPTION

On the 12th floor is the owner's apartment, a magnificent suite with cherry paneling and exquisite wood finish and border. A fireplace includes a secret panel where original owners concealed their beverages during prohibition. The original plaster ornament in the ceilings remains in excellent condition.

In 1961, a large additional ballroom was added on the south side of the hotel building. In 1966, more remodeling was completed on the street level and second floor, new furniture and carpeting was provided, central air-conditioning was installed, the Peoria Room restaurant was remodeled, and 27 parlouettes and 10 new suites were created. In 1972 the lobby was remodeled and the exterior entrance moved, as mentioned earlier when the hotel became part of the Hilton chain.

In summary, the previous renovations have made the exquisite interior spaces of the hotel awkward and ugly but have not altered the original structural integrity of the building; the elegance of the public spaces can be returned and preserved. The exterior can also be returned to its original lines by removing the limestone facade so that the original architectural impact of the Pere Marquette is not compromised.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Civic life

Specific dates	Built - 1926	Builder/Architect	Horace Trumbauer, Herbert Hewitt and Frank Emerson
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Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The property is significant because the Pere Marquette is an authentic surviving representative of the grand architectural style and ornate public spaces which characterized the leading Eastern hotels of the Roaring 20's era, nearly all of which have either been demolished or altered beyond recognition. The Pere Marquette, which contains a George M. Harding mural and intricate original plaster festoon, cornice, and finish, is a Downstate Illinois landmark around which Peoria's cultural, civic, and commercial life has revolved over the past 56 years.

With the burning of Peoria's civic coliseum in 1900, Emmet C. May, president of Peoria Life Insurance Company and other prominent business leaders resolved, during the summer of 1924, that a first class hotel was needed to accommodate local social and civic life as well as become a local showplace for an increasing commercial emergence.

This group contacted Horace Leland Wiggins (of the Leland hotel family in Springfield) who had once managed the Jefferson Hotel, then Peoria's finest, but who had moved on to Philadelphia where he was managing director of the new Benjamin Franklin Hotel and was prominent in the East as Vice President of the United Hotels Company.

Wiggins and the new Pere Marquette Building Corporation, founded by May in October 1925, to undertake the project, turned to a nationally prominent Philadelphia architect, Horace Trumbauer to design the project.

Trumbauer had previously designed the Ritz Carleton, the Benjamin Franklin, Adelphia, and Chateau Crillion hotels, all in Philadelphia as well as in Boston and New York. He also did the Philadelphia Museum of Art and dozens of other leading hospitals, banks and prominent buildings. Trumbauer was especially acclaimed at the time for the 17-building school for men at Duke University and for the Widener Memorial Library and the school of geographical research at Harvard University, where he received an honorary degree. Trumbauer had built numerous homes for the Dukes, Vanderbilts, and dozens of other prominent families in Newport, New York, and throughout the East.

In view of Trumbauer's experience and of the similarities in floor plan between the Pere Marquette and the Waldorf in New York, it is probable that the Pere Marquette grand entrance and elaborate lobby level lounges and ballrooms were emulating the then epitome of hotel grandeur and elegance—the Waldorf Astoria in New York. Trumbauer and Wiggins also turned to George M. Harding, a Philadelphian, head of the murals department of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, and whose works are included in the permanent collection of the Smithsonian Institution. Harding made an early reputation in the 1900's as an Illustrator for Harper's Weekly, the Saturday Evening Post, the National Geographic and many others. He was commissioned for dozens of murals throughout the East in banks, hotels, and public buildings including the U.S. Post Office Building in Washington, D.C., Philadelphia City Hall, Philadelphia Municipal Court Building and many others.

Harding reportedly spent eight weeks researching before deciding on the two murals for the Pere Marquette. One mural located today in the Cotillion Room depicts LaSalle departing Rockport, France in 1684. The second, once located over the lobby elevator, portrayed Pere Marquette landing at the site of Peoria, a Pimiteoui Indian village in 1673. (We are searching for that mural to return it to the lobby.)

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Emmet May purchased the murals and transferred them to the corporation. Herbert Hewitt, founder of Hewitt and Emerson, was the Peorian architect who collaborated with Trumbauer. Hewitt did virtually all of the leading Peoria buildings of his day, many of which remain. Hewitt had earlier done Peoria's Jefferson Hotel, a trendsetter in its day and a rival of the Pere Marquette for years until the Jefferson fell into disrepair and was demolished. Indeed, we believe the Pere Marquette is the only property of its kind in Downstate Illinois which either survives or which can be returned to its original elegance and roaring 20's grandeur.

The Pere Marquette Building Corporation included May, President; E. N. Woodruff, Vice President; A. E. Streitmatter, Secretary; G. A. Clark, Treasurer; and trustees Walter S. May, Dr. George Parker, S. B. Wolfenbarger and G. P. Pattison. Woodruff served numerous two-year terms as Mayor of Peoria and was one of Peoria's most controversial and colorful figures of this century. He was famous for his toleration (advocacy) of policies which brought Peoria its wide open, rivertown reputation as a city where gambling, prostitution and corruption flourished.

As the hotel was being constructed, Pere Marquette Hotel Co. was created to furnish and operate the hotel; Wiggins was president and selected furnishings from throughout the East which were then acquired through Peoria firms. However, ultimately, Wiggins's pressing business in his Eastern properties caused him to hire E. Edgar Gregory, a Detroit associate, to manage the Pere Marquette. Pere Marquette Hotel Co. managed the property until 1933, when the building corporation took back operating responsibility and managed it until 1951 when it was sold to the Boss Hotel chain of Des Moines.

Boss manager, Ferdinand Sperl, a Swiss native, built the hotel into the premier convention property of Downstate Illinois and oversaw the 1961 ballroom addition. Sperl managed the property until general decline and new competition brought changes in 1972 which resulted in management by a Hilton franchise firm.

As the hotel neared completion, pressure mounted to find an appropriate name. With a contest-fever characteristic of the Roaring 20's, a sweepstakes was launched attracting over 21,000 names in 3,898 letters. Mrs. H. M. Kipp, 218 North Street, was the first to suggest "Pere Marquette" and was awarded the \$50 cash prize. V. Jobst & Sons, still a leading local contracting firm, submitted the low bid of \$2 million; construction took almost all of 1926.

Press accounts record opening night, January 5, 1927, as one of the biggest gala events in Peoria history. French Chef M. Jean Fontagneres prepared a feast attended by over 700 including U.S. District Judge George T. Page, of Chicago, who presided, M. Henri Didot, Consul of France, Rt. Rev. Edmund M. Dunne, Bishop of Peoria, and many other dignitaries. Over 16,000 people toured the property during public open house. In 1930, another wing with 125 rooms was added to the existing 350 rooms.

The hotel had 14 conventions in 1927, increasing to 46 by 1935. During the 1950's and 60's the hotel was the largest convention property outside of Chicago; the Pere Marquette is a meaningful landmark to residents throughout the Midwest. Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Ford have all been guests and Presidents Carter and Reagan have spoken there. Other guests have included Lady Bird Johnson, Eunice Shriver, Pat O'Brien, Van Cliburn, Charles Boyer, Robert F. Kennedy, Helen Hoyer, Raymond Massey, Eddie Cantor, Sir Edmund Hillary, Senator Howard Baker, Liberace, Victor Borge, George Jessel, Lawrence Welk, Fibber McGee and Molley, Gene Autry, and dozens of others. Senator Everett Dirksen spoke there frequently. The hotel's history is completely interwoven with Peoria and Downstate's social, cultural, and political history and identity.

9. Major Bibliographical References

- a) Peoria Journal Transcript; January 16, 1927.
- b) Peoria Journal Star, August 19, 1951, May 25, 1957, December 30, 1961, December 31, 1961, July 16, 1972, June 26, 1977.
- c) Penny Press; August 10, 1972.
- d) Accents; January 23, 1947

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property One acre

Quadrangle name Peoria East Quad

Quadrangle scale 1:24 000

UMT References

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Verbal boundary description and justification

(See continuation for legal description)

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

state Not Applicable code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David R. Leitch

organization Commercial National Bank of Peoria date April 2, 1982

street & number 301 S. W. Adams telephone (309) 655-5449

city or town Peoria state Illinois

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature David Leitch

title District date 6/24/82

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
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CONTINUATION SHEET - 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- e) WPA Project 6100 (a history of Peoria hotels)
- f) Harry L. Spooner Collection; Library of Peoria Historical Society

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CONTINUATION SHEET - 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Parcel 1:

A strip of land 54 feet wide of even width by full depth of Lot off of the Southwesterly side of Lot 8, adjoining Lot 7, and a strip of land 14 feet wide of even width by full depth of Lot off of the Northeasterly side of Lot 7, adjoining Lot 8, all in Block 17 in the ORIGINAL TOWN, now City of Peoria, situated in the County of Peoria and State of Illinois; ALSO

Parcel 2:

18 feet of even width by full depth of Lot off of the Northeasterly side of Lot 8 and 30 feet of even width by full depth of Lot off of the Southwesterly side of Lot 9, all in Block 17 in the ORIGINAL TOWN, now City of Peoria, situated in the County of Peoria and State of Illinois; ALSO

Parcel 3:

LEASEHOLD ESTATE created by certain indenture of lease made by Walter L. Spurck and Anna L. Spurck, his wife, to Emmet C. May, and by the latter assigned to Pere Marquette Building Corporation, (now known as Peoria Hotel Corporation), an Illinois Corporation, said original lease being dated February 21, 1925, and recorded April 18, 1925, in Book 374, Page 412 in the Office of the Recorder of Peoria County, Illinois, demising and leasing for a term of years beginning March 1, 1925, and ending February 29, 2024, the following described premises, to-wit: A part of Lots 9 and 10, in Block 17, in the ORIGINAL TOWN, now City of Peoria, being a strip of land having a frontage of 66 feet on Main Street and extending back of even width along Madison Avenue, 114 feet off of the Southeasterly ends of said Lots 9 and 10 more particularly bounded and described as follows, to-wit: Beginning at the Easterly corner of said Lot 10 in said Block, the same being the point and place of intersection of the Southwesterly line of Main Street with the Northwesterly boundary line of South Madison Avenue, extending thence in a Northwesterly direction along and with the Southwesterly boundary line of Main Street and the Northeasterly boundary line of said Lot 10, a distance of 66 feet to a point; thence in a Southwesterly direction and parallel to the Northwesterly boundary line of South Madison Avenue, a distance of 114 feet to a point; thence in a Southeasterly direction and parallel to the Southwestern boundary line of Main Street a distance of 66 feet to the Northwestern boundary line of South Madison Avenue; thence in a Northeasterly direction along and with said Northwestern boundary line of South Madison Avenue a distance of 114 feet to the point and place of beginning; situated in the City of Peoria, County of Peoria and State of Illinois; ALSO

Parcel 4:

Part of Lots 9 and 10, in Block 17, in the ORIGINAL TOWN, now City of Peoria, more particularly bounded and described as follows, to-wit: Commencing at a point on the line of said Lot 10 on Main Street, 66 feet Northwesterly from the South corner of said Lot at the intersection of Main and Madison Streets; running thence Northwesterly along the line of said Lot on Main Street, 105 feet to the Southeasterly line of the alley in said Block; thence Southwesterly along said alley line 114 feet; thence Southeasterly parallel with Main Street, 105 feet; thence Northeasterly parallel with Madison Avenue, 114 feet to the place of beginning; situated in the County of Peoria and State of Illinois.

Resolved,

That WHEREAS, the Pere Marquette Hotel is a landmark around which our community's cultural, civic, and commercial life has revolved over the past 56 years; and

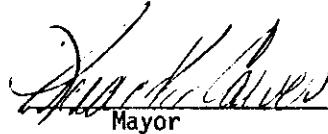
WHEREAS, the Pere Marquette Hotel is an institution which is significant and meaningful to residents of Peoria and Downstate Illinois as a fixture of our history and our community identity; and

WHEREAS, the Pere Marquette Hotel is a notable surviving representative of architectural expression of its day and contains intricately crafted stone, wood, and plaster finishes which are in danger of becoming irreparably lost to our community but for the currently proposed restoration project; and

WHEREAS, the Pere Marquette Hotel has been officially identified by the City of Peoria Downtown Historic Site Survey as a building of historic, cultural, and architectural significance which in the best interest of our citizens should be preserved and restored;

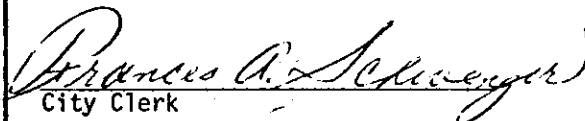
BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Peoria hereby declares and recommends all appropriate authorities that the Pere Marquette Hotel be designated and placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

APPROVED:



Mayor

ATTEST:



City Clerk

EXAMINED AND APPROVED:



Corporation Counsel