

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

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

1. Name

historic France Hotel

and or common France Motor Inn

2. Location

street & number 118 East Court Street not for publication

city, town Paris vicinity of

state Illinois code 012 county Edgar code 045

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Vacant

4. Owner of Property

name Kensington Residential Hotels Limited Partnership

street & number 1660 South Highway 100

city, town St. Louis Park vicinity of state Minnesota

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Edgar County Courthouse

street & number Public Square

city, town Paris state Illinois

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title RP3 for Paris, Illinois has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date November, 1982 federal state county local

depository for survey records University of Illinois, Dept. of Urban Planning

city, town Urbana state Illinois

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The four story neo-classical France Hotel constructed in 1924 is located at 118 East Court Street in downtown Paris, one half block from the courthouse square. It is surrounded by a parking lot to the east, an alley to the west, and a three story Elks Lodge to the South. Commercial buildings are located across the street and beyond both the parking lot and the alley on Court Street. The building remains in substantially unaltered condition since the time of its construction.

The red brick structure is roughly an ell shape and has a deep setback from the street (approximately 30 feet) which is greater than that of the surrounding buildings. The front or north leg of the ell is about sixty feet wide and 45 feet deep; the other leg is 75 X 45 feet forming a continuous wall on the west or alley side of the property.

The hotel is characterized by a flat roof with an elaborate parapet, red bricks set in common bond with white mortar, and a considerable amount of smooth Bedford limestone ornament and trim. A brick chimney is barely visible above the northeast corner of the parapet. The walls are poured concrete reinforced with steel rods and wire webbing, and are faced with brick and stone.

The Court Street facade is divided by a decorative stone belt course at the second story window sill level and a simple stone architrave above the fourth story window heads. Above the architrave is a brick frieze with stone rondelles surmounted by a stone cornice and parapet with decorative brick panel insets. The facade is six bays of double hung eight over eight windows with the center two projecting out slightly and decorated with vertical stonework accenting the central third section. Carved stone spandrels are located above the second floor windows of this projection. The third story windows are capped by stone pediments with decorative urn motifs. Classical stone urns on plinths accent the corners and projecting central bays of the roof.

The front entrance is outlined by smooth coursed stone with a carved stone arch, reminiscent of a fan light, directly above the iron awning. The three entry doors each contain ten lights and are flanked by wooden pilasters with a wooden transom above. Two ornamental wrought iron light standards remain in place on the carved stone entry stoop.

The French doors with sidelights on each side of the entrance are capped with wooden pediments which are topped by large stone arches. Iron rails located in front of the french doors outline two stone stairwells which lead to the basement.

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 type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1924 Builder/Architect Ewing Miller, Sr.

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The France Hotel is significant as a well preserved example of a 1920's hotel in East Central Illinois, and an important physical reminder of community spirit and social centers in the small towns of Illinois (Criteria A and C).

Architecture

The ideals of classical culture and architecture, which were important to Americans of the early Twentieth Century, are apparent in the design chosen by the citizens of Paris for the France Hotel. The neo-classical revival is recognized by architectural historians as a strictly American phenomenon. The rigid rules of the classical styles were not adhered to since Americans attempted only to maintain the overall effect of classicism. Modifications of the classic style apparent in the France Hotel include the free use of ornament, brick rather than stone masonry, and the roof line statuary. The citizens of Paris combined the feeling of prominence and permanence of the classical designs with contemporary marketing demands needed to promote the concept of a luxury hotel in a small town.

The France Hotel represents a distinguishable style and size of structure relative to other hotels constructed in East Central Illinois during the 1920's. Although Paris had a population of only 7,985 (in 1925) it made the remarkable community-wide investment in a 100 room, architect-designed luxury hotel. Hotel buildings of architectural merit and size even comparable to the France Hotel in 1925 were found only in such larger metropolitan centers as Decatur (pop. 43,818), Danville (pop. 33,776), Champaign-Urbana (pop. 26,117), and Mattoon (pop. 13,552).

The Official Hotel Red Book and Directory which lists members of the American Hotel and Motel Association shows only ten hotels of a size comparable to the France Hotel in East Central Illinois in 1925. These included the Kraft and St. James in Decatur; the Aetna, Lincoln, Saratoga, and Savoy in Danville, the Urbana-Lincoln, Beardsley, and Inman in Champaign-Urbana, and the Byers Hotel in Mattoon. The only hotels in this list which have not been demolished are the Kraft Hotel in Decatur, the english-tudor Urbana-Lincoln (now Jumer's Castle Lodge), and the simple commercial style Inman Hotel in Champaign. The Kraft Hotel is a plain commercial building in use as a tavern with the upper floors boarded over, Jumer's has had an addition in recent years, and the Inman has been remodelled for use as an Academy of the Arts. The architectural styles and current

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condition of these buildings are in clear contrast to the neo-classical details and original integrity of the France Hotel.

The France Hotel exemplifies a representative example of the work of the Johnson, Miller, and Miller architectural firm of Terre Haute, Indiana. The firm concentrated primarily on elementary school and hotel designs including many buildings in both Illinois and Indiana. Ewing Miller, designer of the France Hotel, was the chief designer of the firm until his death in 1924. Two of his most significant buildings were the Woodrow Wilson Junior High School, and the award winning Rey Park Building in Terre Haute. Later evolutions of this firm won national acclaim for the design of the Statesman and Sycamore Towers, high-rise student residence halls at Indiana State University.

Commerce

The France Hotel exemplifies the uniting of a small community to capitalize upon its resources and boost its economy in order to ensure its future well-being. The France has played a prominent role in the social life and development of the community and region.

Unlike most hotels built by private speculative enterprises, the France Hotel in Paris was a seven year community-based effort led by its Chamber of Commerce and sponsored entirely by popular subscription. On February 18, 1918 Paris experienced the biggest fire of its history which destroyed an entire block of the downtown area including the old Paris Hotel. In reaction to this fire and in recognition of the need for a "modern up-to-date" and "absolutely fireproof" hotel, the Paris Chamber of Commerce in August 1918 organized a huge community-wide campaign to raise money to build a new hotel. Subscriptions to hotel stock were sold with a goal of \$150,000 to be raised within the community.

In 1921 a nine-man board was elected by the subscribers to stock in the Paris Building Corporation to guide the new hotel effort. By 1922 the site of the old Paris Hotel was purchased by the Chamber hotel corporation and an architect was selected to design the building. Seemingly insurmountable delays in receiving the architects plans, incorporating the hotel company, and continuing to raise funds, put off the initial construction work by a local contractor until March 1923. By September of 1923 the Chamber fund was severely diminished and the contractor threatened to file a lien on the property. The community called several mass meetings to

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solicit funds since it was the general feeling that "everyone determined to work to the last ditch to secure the funds needed to keep the enterprise in the hands of the men who worked and dared to put Paris on the map."¹ Similarly, it was felt that "if the new hotel project is allowed to fail the town will receive a black eye, and the name of Paris will become a term of derision and reproach."² The "great body of common people" in Paris rallied to support the project donating \$4,664 in one evening and resulting in a final project fund of \$191,000.³

Paris was a thriving community during the 1920's largely due to the fact that it was one of the busiest railroad centers of its size in the state. Three major railroads connected the community to St. Louis, Terre Haute, Indianapolis, Decatur, Chicago, and Atlanta. It served as the transfer point for traffic from the E-W to the N-S and vice versa. Similarly, interurban lines connected Paris to Terre Haute and Danville. Because Paris was also the county seat it served as the focus of county activity including the largest share of businesses and industries, the courthouse, and the county fairgrounds. The France hotel, therefore, has served an important role as the social center for Edgar County residents, for salesmen, and for travellers. It was preferred above all other local hotels because of its modern facilities (including an elevator, "circulating ice water", private baths, and hot and cold running water), as well as the air of luxury created by its architectural details.⁴ Similarly, the excellent banquet hall, private dining rooms, coffee shop, beauty parlor, barber shop, and bar facilities made it a popular community and regional meeting place.

1 The Paris Daily Beacon, October 9, 1923, p. 1, Paris, Illinois.

2 The Paris Daily Beacon, September 21, 1923, p. 1, Paris, Illinois.

3 The Paris Daily Beacon, September 22, 1923, p. 1, Paris, Illinois.

4 Paris City Directory, 1924, p. 45.

9. Major Bibliographical References

The Official Hotel Red Book and Directory, Official Hotel Directory Co., New York, 1925.
The Chamber of Commerce Bulletin, Paris, Illinois, July and August 1921.
The Beacon Daily News, Paris, Illinois, 1918-1927

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than one

Quadrangle name Paris South, IL

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	16	4	410	4	710	4	3	814	6	110
Zone	Easting			Northing						

B

Zone	Easting			Northing						

C

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D

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E

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots Nos. 51 and 52 in the Original Town, now City, of Paris, except the East 42 feet 3 inches of even width of said Lot No. 52, situated in Edgar County, Illinois.

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

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lachlan F. Blair/ Dana L. Pratt

organization The URBANA Group, Incorporated date May 6, 1987

street & number 110 South Race Street P.O.Box 1028 telephone 217/344-7526

city or town Urbana 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

title

Director

date

June 19, 1987

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

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

P.O. BOX 37127

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20013-7127

IN REPLY REFER TO:

AUG 14 1987

The Director of the National Park Service is pleased to inform you that the following properties have been entered in the National Register of Historic Places beginning August 2, 1987 and ending August 8, 1987. For further information call (202) 343-9552.

STATE, County, Vicinity, Property, Address, (Date Listed)

- ARIZONA, Coconino County, Flagstaff, South Beaver School, 506 S. Beaver St. (08/06/87)
ARIZONA, Gila County, Globe, Elks Building (Globe Commercial and Civic MRA), 155 W. Mesquite (08/06/87)
ARIZONA, Gila County, Globe, Gila Valley Bank and Trust Building (Globe Commercial and Civic MRA), 292 N. Broad St. (08/06/87)
ARIZONA, Maricopa County, Wickenburg Wisdom House (Wickenburg MRA), 48 Kerkes (08/06/87)
ARIZONA, Santa Cruz County, Nogales, US Custom House (Nogales MRA), Jct. of International & Terrace Sts. (08/06/87)
- ARKANSAS, Mississippi County, Osceola, Bank of Osceola (Osceola MRA), 207 E. Hale St. (08/06/87)
ARKANSAS, Mississippi County, Osceola, City Hall (Osceola MRA), 316 W. Hale (08/06/87)
ARKANSAS, Mississippi County, Osceola, Florida Brothers Building (Osceola MRA), 319 W. Hale St. (08/06/87)
ARKANSAS, Mississippi County, Osceola, Mississippi County Jail (Osceola MRA), 300 S. Poplar St. (08/06/87)
ARKANSAS, Mississippi County, Osceola, Old Bell Telephone Building (Osceola MRA), 100 Blk. Ash St. (08/06/87)
ARKANSAS, Mississippi County, Osceola, Osceola Times Building (Osceola MRA), 112 N. Poplar St. (08/06/87)
ARKANSAS, Mississippi County, Osceola, Planters Bank Building (Osceola MRA), 200 E. Hale St. (08/06/87)
- CONNECTICUT, Hartford County, West Hartford, Whiting Homestead, 291 N. Main St. (08/03/87)
CONNECTICUT, New London County, Sprague, Baltic Historic District, Roughly bounded by Fifth Ave., River, High, Main, W. Main, & Shetucket River (08/03/87)
- FLORIDA, Santa Rose County, Arcadia Sawmill and Arcadia Cotton Mill (08/03/87)
- GEORGIA, Long County, Walthourville, Walthourville Presbyterian Church, Allenhurst Antioch Rd. (08/06/87)
GEORGIA, Walker County, Kensington, Miller Brothers Farm, GA 912 (08/06/87)
GEORGIA, Washington County, Sandersville, City Cemetery, W. Church, Cemetery, & Haynes Sts. (08/03/87)
- ILLINOIS, Cook County, Evanston, Roycemore School, 640 Lincoln St. (08/03/87)
ILLINOIS, Edgar County, Paris, France Hotel, 118 E. Court St. (08/03/87)
ILLINOIS, Edgar County, Paris, Paris Elks Lodge No. 812 Building, 111 E. Washington St. (08/06/87)
ILLINOIS, Fulton County, Table Grove, Carithers Store Building, Table Grove Village Sq., W of US 136 (08/03/87)