NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018 (Expires 5/31/2012)

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Commodore Apartment Hotel

other names/site number 173-5880-01162

2. Location

street & number 222 E. Elm Street; 601 N. Broadway Avenue ☐ not for publication

city or town Wichita ☐ vicinity

state Kansas code KS county Sedgwick code 173 zip code 67214

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this x 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 x meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide X local

Patrick Zollner — Signature of certifying official

3-7-13 — Date

DSHPO — Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

✓ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:)

per Edson H. Beall — Signature of the Keeper

5.1.13 — Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- [X] private
- [ ] public - Local
- [ ] public - State
- [ ] public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box)

- [X] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		district
		site
		structure
		object
1		**Total**

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

Residential Resources of Wichita

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: hotel/multiple dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY
REVIVALS: Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Concrete
walls: Brick/Cast Stone
roof: Asphalt
other: Terra Cotta

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Commodore Apartment Hotel is a nine-story reinforced concrete three-part vertical block with brick and terra cotta Spanish Colonial Revival details. The building is located on the north end of Wichita's downtown commercial business district, on the northwest corner of East Elm Street and North Broadway Avenue, a major north/south thoroughfare. There is a surface parking lot on the west end of the parcel. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this area was occupied by large single-family dwellings. During the 1920s and 1930s, many of the homes had been converted to rooming houses. Over time, many of these homes were replaced by flats, apartment buildings, and later free-standing professional office and commercial buildings. The Commodore Hotel is the tallest building in this part of downtown. The building is one block northeast of the old Sedgwick County Courthouse, and across the street from both the Twentieth Century Club (SR) and First Presbyterian Church (1912).

The building retains a high degree of architectural integrity, with historic features including original wood windows, terra cotta details, and an opulent lobby with original beamed ceilings, wrought-iron railings, and light fixtures. The building is identified by a prominent rooftop sign that reads "COMMODORE."

Narrative Description

Exterior – Front (South) Elevation

Although the building has a Broadway address, it faces south toward Elm Street. The building is a three-part vertical block, symmetrical on a north/south axis. On the south elevation, the first part, which encompasses the basement and first floor, is faced with glazed terra cotta laid in a regular ashlar pattern to convey the appearance of polished stone. The field terra cotta is the color of limestone. One course at the base is the color of sandstone. The building's main entrance is centered on the façade, in a recessed bay that spans the full height of the building. The entrance is a double door topped by a fan light flanked on each side by a double casement window topped by a fan light. A red hemispherical awning that reads "COMMODORE" protects the entrance. The arches at the entrance and windows are supported by terra-cotta corbels. Above all three are terra cotta details including crests, urns and floral patterns.

West of the entrance, there are five single window openings at the basement level and seven window openings – a double, two singles, a double, two singles and a double – on the first-floor level. The basement windows on this side light the mechanical and utility rooms. The windows on the first level light apartment units. The first-floor windows on the east side match those on the west. However, unlike those on the west side, the basement windows on the east side follow the fenestration pattern of the first level. The only difference is that the basement windows are casement windows versus double-hung.

A continuous terra-cotta sill separates the first part, the first two floors, from the second part, the third through eighth floors. The second part is faced with rough-faced multi-color bricks laid in a regular pattern. The fenestration pattern of the second part matches that of the second floor, with soldier-brick lintels and rowlock sills. Terra cotta quoining marks the third floor on the southwest, southeast and northeast corners and recessed center entrance. On each level of the entrance bay, there is a double window flanked on each side by a single window. Brick pilasters separate the centered double windows from the single windows that flank them. There are terra cotta panels between each level. There are seven window openings on each side – a double, two singles a double, two singles and a double. Third-floor windows have terra-cotta surrounds. Double windows on the third floor have shaped keystones.

The third part, which encompasses the ninth floor, is delineated by a continuous terra-cotta sill. All the windows at the third part have terra-cotta surrounds. Although the window openings are rectangular, terra cotta details create the appearance of arched windows. Double window openings have terra cotta mullions that are rope-type columns topped with Corinthian capitals. Terra cotta panels supported by terra cotta corbels create the appearance of balconies. There is terra cotta quoining on the southeast and southwest corners, as well as at the corners that wrap around to the recessed entrance bay. There are terra cotta quatrefoils above four of the ninth-floor windows. The parapet is capped with terra cotta. The building is crowned by an abundance of terra cotta detail on the ninth floor of the recessed entrance bay. Above the windows are arched details, including crests and floral patterns found elsewhere. Above the arches are panels that create

a basket-weave pattern. The centered basket-weave panel has a large crest. Above the panels at the parapet is an entablature with terra cotta capitals and urns at each of the four pilasters. The centered panel features an arched parapet.

Exterior – Rear (North) Elevation
The north elevation is a simplified reflection of the south elevation. The three parts of the vertical block are implied with the terra cotta facing on the first and second floors wrapping around part of the north side and terra cotta detailing at the continuous lintel and around ninth-floor windows. The fenestration is stacked to create fourteen window bays in the following pattern east to west: double, single, double, single, single, double, double, single single, double, single, double, single, single. Chimneys rise between the fourth and fifth bays and the thirteenth and fourteenth bays. The staggered windows on the eighth and ninth bays betray the location of an interior stair. A one-story brick addition projects from bays seven through nine.

Exterior – West Elevation
The west elevation is five bays wide. The terra cotta on the first part of the façade does not wrap to this elevation. The third part, at the ninth floor, is clearly identifiable by the terra cotta continuous lintel and window arches. The first and fifth bays have stacked double windows. The second and fourth bays have single windows. The third bay has a single window on the ninth floor and seven non-historic single-pane anodized aluminum windows below.

Exterior – East Elevation
Like the west elevation, the east elevation is five bays wide. The fenestration pattern matches that of the west elevation – with the exception that there are no anodized aluminum windows. The windows are stacked – double, three singles, double. The double windows at the basement level are casements. A secondary entrance that historically opened to a restaurant that occupied the building's east end occupies the center bay's lower level. A cast-iron plaque on the south end of the east elevation reads "THE COMMODORE."

Interior – Basement
The east side of the basement historically housed a kitchen, coffee shop, storage room, and laundry room. The coffee shop had exterior access through a centered entrance on the east elevation and interior access via a stair that descends from the southeast corner of the lobby. The entrance opens to stairs that descend to the space. In the late twentieth century, the coffee shop was converted to offices. This space was enclosed with a double-loaded corridor with contemporary wood trim and suspended acoustical tile ceilings.

The west side of the basement has changed little since its original construction. The floor level of this side is nine steps below that of the east side. The stairs from the east half of the basement run east to west and open to a narrow double-loaded corridor. A service elevator occupies the space just north of the stair. There is a boiler room in the northwest corner, locker rooms in the northeast corner, a linen room in the southwest corner, a "refrigeration and radio room" east of this, and a storage room in the southeast corner.

Interior - First Floor
The first floor houses a resplendent lobby, which occupies the full width of centered recessed entry bay, flanked on each side by apartment units.

Lobby - The lobby features many ornate architectural details, including beamed ceilings, terra cotta door and window trim, wrought-iron railings, and original light fixtures, said to be imported from Italy. The quarry tile on the lobby floor appears to be non-historic. The lobby is accessed via the main entrance, which opens to a sidewalk-grade vestibule. A stair on the east end of the vestibule descends to the basement coffee shop. A wide open stair with center wrought-iron railing on the north end of the vestibule rises to the main lobby space. The north end of the lobby houses a stair that rises south to north to a landing, then east to west to the second floor. The space to the west and under the stair is occupied by an office. The west wall of the lobby is dedicated to circulation. An arched opening on the north end of the west wall opens to the office. South of this is a passenger elevator, which was updated in the 1960s. South of the elevator door on the west wall is an archway that opens to a stair to the first-floor apartment units on the west side. An identical archway on the east opens to the units on the east side.

Apartments, General - The apartment units have changed little since the building's original construction. They are all studio units with a small living/bedroom, tiny bathroom, and small kitchenette. The doors to the apartments are original – although the upper panels, which were likely louvered, have been infilled with plywood for fire safety. The bathrooms have raised floor levels and feature encaustic subway tile on the walls and mosaic tiles on the floors. All units feature bed closets – French doors that hide folding Murphy beds. Some kitchenettes feature their original steel cabinets. Some have newer natural oak cabinets. Kitchens have newer linoleum floors. Living/bedrooms rooms are carpeted. Woodwork has

a dark cherry finish, which appears to be original. Walls range from textured to smooth plaster. Unique features include original light fixtures, glass door knobs, hat racks, and towel racks.

Apartments, East and West Sides – There are six apartments on the east side of the first floor, accessible via a double-loaded corridor that extends from the stairs rising from the east side of the lobby. On the north side, there are two studio units and a single apartment. On the south side, there are also two studios and one single apartment. There are five studio apartment units on the west side of the first floor, accessible via a double-loaded corridor that extends from the stairs rising from the west side of the lobby. One of these units, on the east end of the north side, has been converted to a mail room. The service elevator is accessible via an opening on the east end of the north corridor wall. A stair on the west end is accessible via a door on the west wall of the corridor.

Interior – Upper Floors

The floor plans of the upper floors are stacked. The apartment units are accessed via a double-loaded corridor that stretches nearly the full length of the building, terminating at the stair tower on the west and the kitchen of the southeast unit on the east. A stair rises east to west between the first and second floors. This opens to a stair tower from the second through ninth floors. There are six units north of the corridor and seven units south of the corridor.

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.
- [x] 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1929

Significant Dates

1929

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Nelle Elizabeth Peters

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance for the Commodore Apartment Hotel is 1929, the year it was constructed.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

Statement of Significance

Summary Paragraph (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

The Commodore Apartment Hotel is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C as an excellent example of the Apartment Hotel Building subtype of the Multi-Family Residence/Apartment Building property type identified in the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) entitled "Residential Resources of Wichita." The building was designed by Kansas City-based architect Nelle Elizabeth Peters, who specialized in the design of apartment buildings and hotels, and developed by American diplomat and Secretary of War Patrick J. Hurley.

Narrative Statement of Significance

A Brief History of Wichita

After Wichita was incorporated as a village in 1869, town boosters set out to secure its place as a regional trade center. Its future was threatened when the Atchison, Topeka, Santa Fe Rail line chose to bypass the new town, with its then-unclear Osage land titles, instead passing through the paper town of Newton. Town boosters' efforts to secure $200,000 in bonds to construct a spur line from Newton to Wichita in 1871, and the railroad's decision to extend the spur line south in 1877, both helped assure the city's future as a major industrial, milling, and wholesaling center.

Wichita experienced a clamorous boom in the 1880s, when the population peaked at over 31,000. An 1890s bust left the overdeveloped town in economic ruin. The stark outlook, coupled with the Oklahoma land rush caused the population to plummet. The economy did not begin to fully recover until the first decade of the twentieth century, during which the population doubled from 24,671 to 52,450. The city's population grew another 40% during the 1910s, reaching 72,717 in 1920.[1]

Wichita's extraordinary population and economic growth in the years following World War I owed to a number of factors. First, oil was discovered in the region in 1915. In 1918, one area field alone produced over six percent of the nation's domestic oil. In the years following World War I, the oil field contributed $65 million to the Wichita economy.[2]

By the 1920s, Wichita was the nation's 96th largest city and its fifth-largest milling market.[3] And its capitalists were reaping the rewards of investments in the region's productive oil fields and aircraft industries. Among the new businesses were the Derby oil refinery, Koch Industries, and the Beech, Stearman and Cessna Aircraft Companies. These industries, and the services required to support them, attracted many new residents. Between 1909 and 1919, the city limits had more than doubled.[4] Between 1920 and 1930, the city's population increased by 50,000.

Although many businesses closed their doors during the Great Depression, three of the city's aircraft companies survived, leaving them poised to tackle wartime military orders. The city's aircraft industry exploded during World War II, when its plants attracted $20 million in defense orders. Civilian workers flocked to the air capital during the war, nearly doubling the city's population between 1940 and 1945, when it reached 200,000.[5]

Today, Wichita is a thriving city of 360,000. Many of the city's buildings are being rehabilitated as the city's core is revitalized.

Apartment Hotels

The Apartment Hotel was one way to efficiently house the nation's growing urban population in the early twentieth century. Apartment hotels combined the luxury and service of a hotel with the permanency of apartment living. They were fully equipped with furniture (including the ubiquitous Murphy bed), fixtures and even dishes. Facilities and services often

[1] 1920 U. S. Census.
[2] Kathy Morgan and Barbara Hammond, "Residential Resources of Wichita, Sedgwick County, Kansas 1870–1957," Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2008.
[3] A. E. Janzen, "The Wichita Grain Market," *Kansas Studies in Business*, (Lawrence, Kansas: School of Business, no. 8, June 1928).
[4] Morgan and Hammond.
[5] *Wichita Beacon* 1 January 1922; *Wichita Beacon* 9 November 1921; James R. Shortridge, *Cities on the Plains: The Evolution of Urban Kansas.* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 247-254.

included kitchenettes, common dining areas, and maid and janitorial services. Apartment hotels were commonly built on major thoroughfares near downtown business districts, replacing former downtown mansions.

Apartment hotels were being built in large cities like Boston and New York by the 1870s and became more popular for investors with the increasing sophistication of construction loans. The property type reached its peak in the 1910s and 1920s for several reasons. First, the construction of single-family dwellings in the nation's rapidly growing cities could not keep up with the demand. Second, high-rise living was essential to accommodating a growing class of professionals who worked downtown, particularly before suburban shopping centers and a network of good roads made downtown living unnecessary. Third, as wages rose, many households could no longer afford domestic servants of their own. The first modern apartment hotel in the region was the 13-floor Manoir Frontenac in Kansas City, which opened in 1919. By 1929, the average apartment hotel housed 100 units. The Commodore Hotel is the only known apartment hotel in Wichita.

Apartment hotels reflected the luxury economy of the 1920s. A number of social and economic changes spelled the end for this unique property type. First, luxury accommodations were not feasible for many households during the Great Depression. Second, the increasing affordability of automobiles and expanding network of good road roads placed suburban living within reach of the expanding middle class. Third, American economic policy, beginning with Herbert Hoover's 1932 housing conference and continuing through the GI Bill, encouraged the construction of single-family homes. Eventually, apartment living was seen as less desirable than home ownership – and even as a threat to social and gender norms.[6]

The Commodore

When the Commodore Apartment Hotel opened its doors to the public on June 9, 1929, 5000 Wichitans delighted in its opulence. The building, with its $350,000 worth of Duncan-Phyfe-style furnishings and imported light fixtures, was proof that Wichita had arrived.

The rapid development of multiple-family housing in Wichita was essential in the 1920s, when the city's population nearly doubled. Local leaders, like Standish Hall, who had himself relocated to Wichita in the 1920s, understood that satisfying the dire need for housing would require significant outside investment. As the vice president of the Guarantee State Bank, a subsidiary of the Guarantee Title and Trust Company, Hall offered what investors needed to take a chance on Wichita.[7]

Hall managed to attract the attention of the Hurley-Park Investment Company of Tulsa, a partnership of Secretary of War Patrick J. Hurley and "prominent builder and realtor" Robert R. Park. Soon Hurley-Park, which was simultaneously developing Tulsa's Ambassador Hotel, was making plans to build the Commodore Apartment Hotel. For the site, the company chose the northwest corner of Elm and Lawrence, "an ideal location…within easy walking distance of the business district." Lawrence Avenue was soon to become Broadway, a major north/south thoroughfare on U. S. Highway 81, "the busiest highway in Kansas."[8]

A front-page spread in the November 16, 1928 edition of the *Wichita Beacon* announced that a building permit had been filed for the "City's Newest Skyscraper," a $750,000 building "to be built at once by the Hurley-Park Investment Company of Tulsa."[9] The Beacon's competitor, the *Wichita Eagle,* declared that the project's announcement would "be received with much interest by Wichita people who see in its promotion added proof that Wichita has reached that stage in its growth where apartments of this kind are necessary."[10] Within a few weeks, despite delays caused by Thanksgiving and bad weather, the imposing Queen Anne house that stood on the lot was removed and construction began on the nine-story reinforced-concrete Commodore Apartment Hotel. The Eagle's announcement coincided with Guarantee Title and Trust Company's issuance of $250,000 in bonds to help finance the project.[11]

It cannot be said that the construction went off without a hitch. In March 1929, when the reinforced concrete frame was nearing completion, workman H. B. Hill toppled off the sixth floor. Fortunately, a pile of cables broke his fall and he was

[6] Ruth Schwartz Cowan, *More Work for Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology from the Open Hearth to the Microwave* (Basic Books, 1983). Paul Erling Groth, *Living Downtown: The History of Residence Hotels in the United States in the United States* (University of California Press, 1994).
[7] "Start Work Monday," *Wichita Eagle*, 1 December 1928.
[8] *Wichita Eagle*, January 20, 1929.
[9] *Wichita Beacon*, 15 November 1928.
[10] *Wichita Eagle*, 15 November 1928.
[11] Ibid.

"spared more serious injury."[12] Hill walked away with only a dislocated arm. The nine-story Commodore Apartment Hotel was constructed in only eight months. Mr. Hill's luck would not extend to the Commodore Hotel's investors. On August 6, 1930, just days after the completion of the Allis Hotel, another project of Standish Hall's, the Guarantee State Bank "suspended business."[13] Standish Hall, who was named the bank's trustee, sued both Hurley and Park to force the sale of the Commodore "to satisfy creditors."[14] The corporation was finally refinanced in 1946. At that time, Hurley "withdrew with the cash holdings" and C. G. Garrett "controlled and actively managed the holdings."[15]

In 1948, Garrett sold the building to Tulsan Joe M. Meyers.[16] Meyers flipped the property in 1949, selling it to R. A. Vanier of Fort Worth.[17] Vanier owned the property until 1967 when he sold it to former Wichita Mayor James L. Gardner and his brother-in-law Forrest Weirick.[18] Gardner announced plans to restore the building to its original appearance, to install air conditioning, modernize kitchens, and replace the "operator-manned lifts" with "automatic elevators."[19] Gardner also announced an agreement with the Local Housing Authority to use about forty of the apartments "to provide downtown living for Wichita's low-income elderly."[20]

A group of local investors, Commodore LLC, purchased the building in 1997. The Paramount Management Company has managed the property since that time.

Nelle Elizabeth Peters (1884-1974)

Apartment living was part of a liberation for a growing number of professional women, who often lacked the means or time to operate a conventional single-family household. Among those challenging gender norms in the early twentieth century was pioneer architect Nelle Elizabeth Nichols Peters. During a prolific 60-year career, Peters designed nearly 1000 buildings, including a great number of hotels and apartment buildings.

Peters was born Nelle Elizabeth Nichols on December 11, 1884 in a sod house in Niagara, North Dakota. Although she attended Iowa's Buena Vista College from 1899 to 1903, she, like many of her contemporaries, gained professional skills through self-guided study and apprenticeship. While taking correspondence courses in architecture, Peters worked as a draftsperson for the Sioux City, Iowa firm of Eisentraut, Colby and Pottenger. In about 1907, Eisentraut, Colby and Pottenger sent Peters to its Kansas City branch office managed by fellow self-educated architect Ernest O. Bronstrom. The bustling city presented an opportunity for Peters, who by 1910 had obtained the skills necessary to establish her own firm.

Early on, Nelle Peters designed homes, churches and small office buildings. After joining forces with builder/developer Charles E. Phillips in 1913, Peters began to specialize in the design of apartment buildings, including residence hotels. Peters' most prolific period followed her 1923 divorce from husband William H. Peters, whom she had married in 1911. In 1924 alone, Nelle Peters designed twenty-nine buildings. Among them was her Spanish Colonial Revival design for Kansas City's Ambassador Hotel, developed by both Charles Phillips and developer Barry Goodman. When it opened in 1925, Kansas City's Ambassador was the city's largest.[21]

At the start of the Great Depression, Nelle Peters had three strikes against her. First, she was competing with men for work. Second, she was employed in the construction trade, which screeched to a halt. Third, her firm was not large enough to compete for government contracts for New Deal projects. During the 1930s, Peters was forced to make ends meet by working as a seamstress.

Although the construction industry rebounded in the post-war years, Nelle Peters never again designed buildings on the scale of those from the 1920s. She continued to work on small commissions until her retirement in 1967. She died on

[12] "Life is Saved Miraculously," *Wichita Beacon*, 3 March 1929.
[13] *Wichita Eagle*, 7 August 1930.
[14] "Wants Hotel Sold," *Wichita Eagle*, 3 March 1929.
[15] "Commodore to Tulsa Investor," *Wichita Eagle*, 8 May 1948.
[16] Ibid.
[17] *Wichita Eagle*, 8 November 1949.
[18] "Commodore Hotel Gets Local Owner," *Wichita Eagle*, 16 April 1967.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Peters' design for the Ambassador in Kansas City was very similar to her design for the Ambassador in Tulsa and Wichita's Commodore.

October 7, 1974.[22]

Patrick J. Hurley (1883-1963)

The Commodore was one of two apartment hotels developed by businessman and politician Patrick J. Hurley. Hurley was born January 8, 1883 in the Choctaw Nation, Indian Territory. Mr. Hurley led a long and celebrated career in the military, public, and business sectors. He was a veteran of two world wars, lawyer, oil operator, and successful businessman. After earning his law degree from the National University of Law in 1908 (with a subsequent law degree from George Washington University in 1913), he served as National Attorney for the Choctaw Nation and practiced private law in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

After serving in the Indian Territorial Volunteer Militia from 1902–1907, he joined the Oklahoma National Guard in 1914 and served for three years. He also served in the American Expeditionary Force during World War I, where he rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel. Under President Herbert Hoover, Mr. Hurley was appointed Assistant Secretary of War and assumed the leadership role of the War Department after the death of War Secretary James W. Good in 1929. Mr. Hurley served in President Hoover's cabinet as the United States Secretary of War until 1933. When the United States entered World War I, in 1941, Mr. Hurley was promoted to brigadier general.

While serving his country, Mr. Hurley remained active in the business sector. In the late 1920s, Hurley partnered with Robert R. Park to form the Hurley-Park Investment Company. The company built both Tulsa's Ambassador Hotel and Wichita's Commodore Hotel, both of which opened in 1929. It is said that Hurley made his fortune negotiating Mexican oil leases for the Sinclair Oil Company. What is known for certain is that Sinclair christened one of its steam tankers in his name. The Patrick J. Hurley, completed in 1941, was gunned down by a German U-boat on September 13, 1942.

After leaving the presidential cabinet, Mr. Hurley entered the field of international diplomacy. He served as the first United States minister to New Zealand (1942), as a personal representative of President Franklin D. Roosevelt to the Soviet Union and the Near and Middle East (1942–1943), and as the United States Ambassador to China (1944–1945). He left the public sector in 1945, having earned the rank of major general.

Mr. Hurley returned to the southwest, settling in Santa Fe, New Mexico. In 1946, 1948, and 1952 he launched unsuccessful campaigns for a Republican seat in the United States Senate. Mr. Hurley founded the United Western Minerals Corporation of Santa Fe, which was at the forefront of uranium mining in the state in the 1950s. Mr. Hurley died July 30, 1963 in Santa Fe, New Mexico.[23]

Mediterranean Revival Architecture

The Commodore is Mediterranean Revival Style, a subtype of Spanish Colonial Revival. Although the western states, particularly California, had long turned to their Spanish roots for architectural inspiration, the Spanish Colonial Revival Style, now ubiquitous as California's vernacular, did not enter the architectural lexicon until the 1910s. Ironically, it was New York architect Bertram Goodhue who developed and propagated the Spanish Colonial Revival Style. Goodhue was chosen as the architect for the 1915 Panama-California Exposition, organized to celebrate the opening of the Panama Canal. The exposition's buildings were inspired not only by California's mission architecture, already being reinterpreted by the likes of Fred Harvey, but also a unique brand of baroque detailing found in Spanish Colonial architecture, including that of Panama. Although the style was most common in California, it quickly spread to points east. The Spanish Colonial Revival Style had reached the nation's center by 1922 when Kansas City developer JC Nichols adopted it for his Country Club Plaza, the nation's first suburban shopping center. It seemed like a logical fit for Wichita, which at the time considered itself a part of "The Southwest." The year the Country Club Plaza was built, the style was employed for Wichita's Orpheum Theater and Office Building, where the Hurley-Park company had its Wichita offices. Spanish Colonial Revival was the style of choice for the Boller Brothers, the Kansas City-based firm which designed dozens of Kansas theaters, including the Granada Theater in Emporia (1929) and the Nomar Theater in Wichita (1929).

Goodhue was also instrumental in propagating the Mediterranean Revival subtype of Spanish Colonial Revival. Spanish Colonial Revival is distinguished from Mission Style architecture by its fanciful baroque detailing. Among the character-defining features of Spanish Colonial Revival Architecture are narrow arched windows; terra cotta detailing to imitate

[22] Lawrence O. Christensen, *et al*, eds., *Dictionary of Missouri Biography*, (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1999), 611-612; Dains, Mary K., ed. *Show Me Missouri Women: Selected Biographies*. 2 vols, (Kirksville, MO: Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1989), 1993, Vol. 1: 81–82; http://shs.umsystem.edu/famousmissourians/architects/peters/; http://www.umkc.edu/whmckc/collections/IKC0041.HTM; http://www.kclibrary.org/?q=blog/week-kansas-city-history/forgotten-not-gone.

[23] Don Lohbeck, *Patrick J. Hurley*, (H. Regency Co, 1956).

carved-stone baroque designs; wrought iron, often used for railings, faux balconies, and decorative light fixtures; clay tile roofs; and shaped parapets. Whereas Spanish Colonial Revival takes its cues form Spanish Colonial architecture, Mediterranean Revival added details from Italian Renaissance architecture. Common details include corbels, balconies, shield designs, Corinthian columns, urns and arched openings. Like Spanish Colonial Revival, the style was popular in California. However, it was most prolific in Miami, Florida, where it came to symbolize the booming 1920s.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

Connelley, William. *History of Kansas State and People*. New York/Chicago: The American Historical Society, Inc., 1928.

Cowan, Ruth Schwartz. *More Work for Mother: the Ironies of Household Technology from the Open Heart to the Microwave*. New York: Basic Books, 1999.

Groth, Paul. *Living Downtown: The History of Residential Hotels in the United States*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

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Lohbeck, Don. *Patrick J. Hurley*. H. Regency Co, 1956.

Miner, Craig. *Kansas: The History of the Sunflower State, 1854-2000*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002.

Sexton, Randolph Williams. *American Apartment Houses, Hotels, and Apartment Hotels of Today*. New York: Architectural Book Publishing Co., 1929.

Social Security Death Index.

Wichita City Directories.

Wichita Sanborn Maps, 1914, 1935, 1950

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

X 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 #_____

Primary location of additional data:

x State Historic Preservation Office
____Other State agency
____Federal agency
____Local government
____University
____Other
Name of repository: **Kansas Historical Society**

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than 1 acre
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	14	646760	4173080
2			
3			
4			

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The nominated property has the following legal description: LOTS 29-31 LAWRENCE AVE. MUNGERS ORIGINAL TOWN.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The nominated property includes the land historically associated with the Commodore Apartment Hotel.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Christy Davis
organization Davis Preservation, LLC date 3/1/2011
street & number 909 ½ Kansas Ave, Suite 7 telephone 785-234-5053
city or town Topeka state KS zip code 66612
e-mail cdavis@davispreservation.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: **Commodore Apartment Hotel**
City or Vicinity: **Wichita**
County/State: **Sedgwick County, Kansas**
Photographer: **Christy Davis**
Date: **2011**

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1 of 8 Exterior, Overall view of south and east elevations, looking northwest.
2 of 8 Exterior, Overall view of north and west elevations, looking southeast.
3 of 8 Exterior, Close-up of terra cotta at center bay.
4 of 8 Interior, First Floor, Lobby, looking northwest toward stair to second floor.
5 of 8 Interior, First Floor, Lobby, looking southeast toward main entrance, stair to first-floor apartment units and door to basement stair.

6 of 8 Interior, Typical stair and elevator towers on upper-floor corridors.
7 of 8 Interior, Typical upper-story corridor, showing corridor doors.
8 of 8 Interior, Typical unit, looking from living/bedroom toward bathroom (left), Murphy bed closet (middle) and kitchenette (right).

Property Owner:

(complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

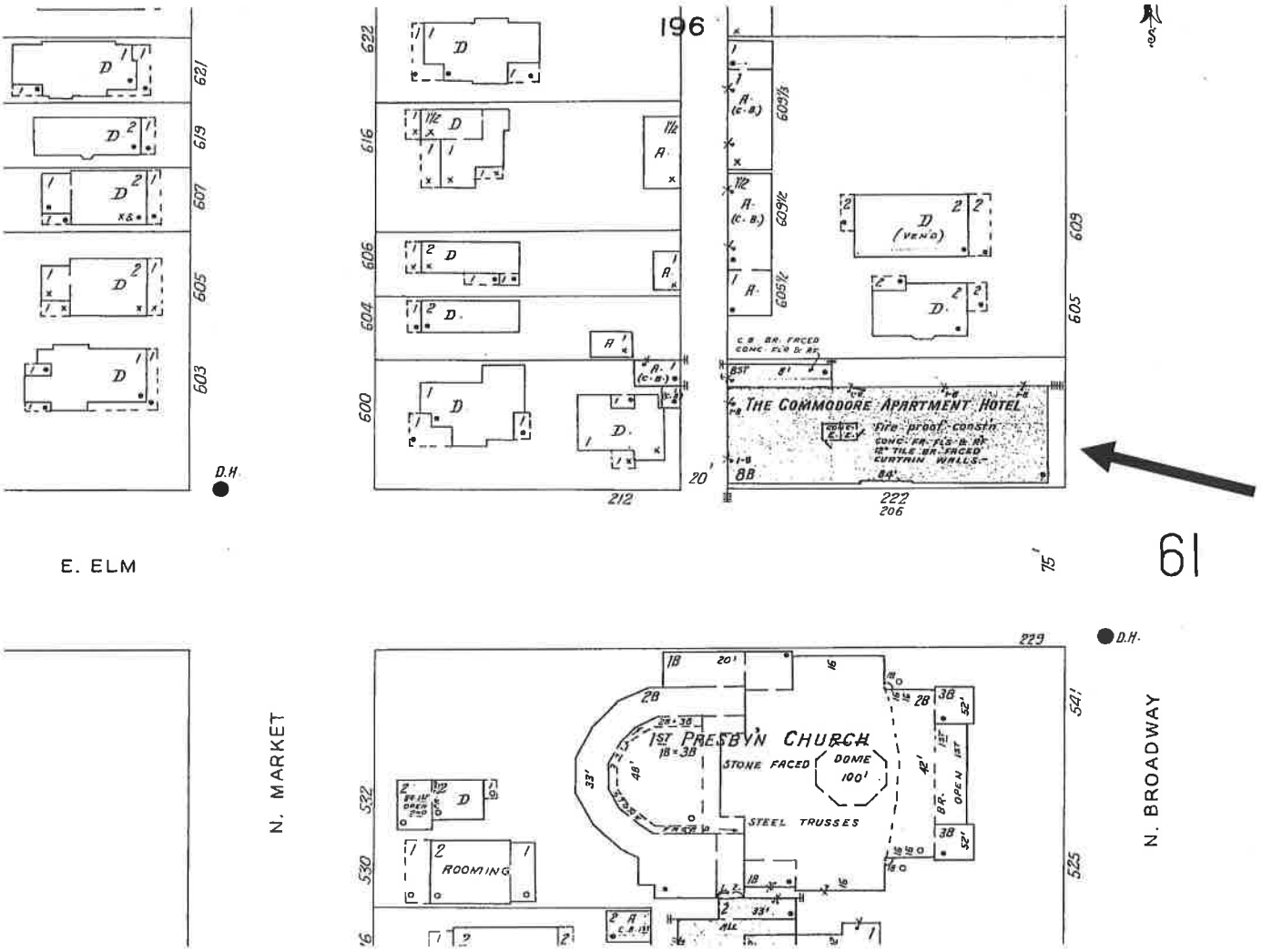
name **Commodore, LLC**

street & number **601 N. Broadway** telephone **(316) 269-4477**

city or town **Wichita** state **KS** zip code **67214**

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



1935 Sanborn Map

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

STATE OF KANSAS

WICHITA EAST QUADRANGLE
KANSAS—SEDGWICK CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

6559 IV SW (MAIZE)

6559 I SW (GREENWICH)

97°22'30" 37°45' 4179 000m N. 645 000m E. 20' 647 6559 IV SE (VALLEY CENTER) 649 650 17'30" 2 350 000 FEET 652 654 97°15' 37°45'

HUTCHINSON 51 MI.
MAIZE (VIA KANS. 96) 8 MI.
NEWTON 21 MI.
WICHITA HEIGHTS 2.2 MI.
NEWTON 22 MI.
0.9 MI. TO INTERSTATE 235
KECHI 3.2 MI.

SOUTH WICHITA INTERCHANGE 13 MI.
5 MI. TO U.S. 54

6559 II NW (WICHITA WEST)

6559 II NW (ANDOVER)

GODDARD 13 MI.
VALLEY CENTER 32 MI.

VIOLA 21 MI.
SCHULTE 6.9 MI.

LINWOOD ACRES 2.6 MI.
EL DORADO 32 MI.

EAST WICHITA INTERCHANGE 1.3 MI.
EL DORADO INTERCHANGE 22 MI.

13 MI. TO INTERSTATE 135
3.9 MI. TO U.S. 54

(BAYNEVILLE) 6559 III SW

(ROSE HILL) 6559 I NW

T. 26 S.
T. 27 S.
T. 28 S.
R. 1 W.
R. 1 E.
R. 2 E.

360 000 FEET
390 000 FEET

4178 4177 4176 4175 4174 4173 4172 4169 4168 4167 4166 000m N.

42'30" 40'

2 330 000 FEET

37°37'30" 97°22'30"

MIDLAND 0.8 MI.
WELLINGTON 27 MI.
SOUTH WICHITA INTERCHANGE 1.9 MI.
SOUTH WICHITA INTERCHANGE 1.7 MI.
(DERBY) 6559 III SE
SOUTH WICHITA INTERCHANGE 0.3 MI.
WELLINGTON INTERCHANGE 24 MI.
CONNELL 0.3 MI.
DERBY 5.5 MI.

INTERIOR—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA—1983

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
in cooperation with State of Kansas agencies

Control by USGS and USC&GS

Culture and drainage in part compiled from aerial photographs taken 1954. Topography by planetable surveys 1940–1941
Revised 1961 in cooperation with the City of Wichita

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Kansas coordinate system, south zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 14, shown in blue

Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 27 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map

MN
GN
1°02'
18 MILS
7½°
133 MILS

UTM GRID AND 1982 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

SCALE 1:24 000

1 0 1 MILE
1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET
1 .5 0 1 KILOMETER

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
DOTTED LINES REPRESENT 5-FOOT CONTOURS
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND STATE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, LAWRENCE, KANSAS 66044
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

KANSAS
QUADRANGLE LOCATION

Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs taken 1980 and other sources
This information not field checked. Map edited 1982

Purple tint indicates extension of urban area

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy-duty
Medium-duty
Light-duty
Unimproved dirt
Interstate Route
U. S. Route
State Route

WICHITA EAST, KANS.
N3737.5—W9715/7.5

1961

PHOTOREVISED 1982

DMA 6559 III NE—SERIES V878

ISBN 0-607-21588-7

Commodore Apartment Hotel
Sedgwick Co, KS
14 646760 4173080

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LEASING
514-5511

NO
PARKING

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