

**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.

**1. Name of Property**

Historic name: Bross Hotel

Other names/site number: 5DT.534

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

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

**2. Location**

Street & number: 312 Onarga Avenue

City or town: Paonia State: CO County: Delta

Not For Publication:  N/A Vicinity:  N/A

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

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

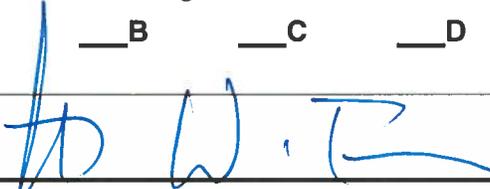
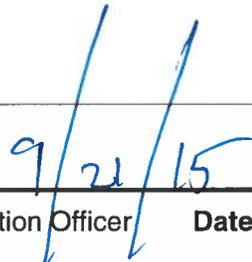
I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A  B  C  D

	
<b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b> Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer <b>Date</b>	
<u>History Colorado</u>	
<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>	

In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
<b>Signature of commenting official:</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Title :</b>	
<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>	

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**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:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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**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

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>          </u>	<u>1</u>	sites
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	structures
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic/hotel  
Commerce/restaurant  
            
            
            
          

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic/hotel

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late Victorian

### Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Foundation: sandstone, Exterior: brick,  
Roof: Asphalt shingle

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

The 1906 Bross Hotel is a two-and-one-half-story Late Victorian style brick building in downtown Paonia, Colorado. It has a rectangular footprint with a two-story full-width front porch facing Onarga Street, and a modest gambrel roof. Character-defining features of the Late Victorian style found on the hotel, in addition to the porch, include bay windows, fish-scale shingles in the gables, segmental arch window openings, stone lintels, and a transom above the front door. With many original features, the hotel retains a high degree of integrity and continues to provide Paonia visitors with accommodations.

### Setting

Paonia is a small town on the western slope of the Rocky Mountains of Colorado in the fertile North Fork Valley of the Gunnison River. The hotel is on a residential street just one block east of the town's main street, Grand Avenue. The neighborhood consists mostly of single-family dwellings constructed in the late-nineteenth to early-twentieth century with a few post-World War II infill residences. Being one block from the business district, several dwellings have been converted to businesses, including the one to the north of the Bross Hotel, from which a hair salon operates. The hotel parking lot is on the northwest corner of Ornaga Street, which runs north-south, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, which runs east-west, with the hotel north of the paved parking lot. The hotel faces east toward Ornaga Street. Directly west of the parking lot is a commercial business with a two-bay garage fronting 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. The east wall of the business, absent any fenestration, provides the west boundary of the parking lot.

The parking lot sits to the south and southeast of the hotel. Small raised garden beds, which contain small shrubs and a small tree, border the east and south sides of the parking lot. Two paved driveway entrances to the parking lot exist one on the south, off of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, and one on the east, off of Onarga, just south of the hotel. A manicured lawn exists on the east side of the

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parking lot with a concrete sidewalk separating the parking lot and lawn. A young maple tree is on the east side, south of the driveway.

At the front of the hotel, a historic concrete sidewalk extends approximately 15' east from the porch where it intersects with a main concrete sidewalk for the 300 block of Onarga, then it continues to a red brick paved area, that continues about 6' to the street curb. Two historic cottonwood trees, likely over 100 years old, flank the red brick area. In 2001 the concrete carriage step that was originally located next to the hotel porch step was relocated to the front sidewalk and surrounded by red brick pavers. A wood sign, supported by two wood posts, sits south of the trees. The sign reads: "Bross Hotel Bed & Breakfast" with a telephone number for reservations. Manicured lawns flank both sidewalks. The lawn next to the street extends south until reaching the driveway of the hotel parking lot. A second young maple tree is located just to the north of the parking lot driveway.

A small shrub and flower garden extends along the western edge of the lawn, directly east (in front) of the hotel's porch. A walkway leads from the porch south to the parking lot. Another young maple tree sits just east of the shrub and flower garden about 10' southeast of the hotel. A contemporary 8'-tall wood fence provides privacy to the backyard. A small non-contributing manufactured shed exists at the rear of the property.

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## **Narrative Description**

### **Hotel, 1906; 1912 addition; photos 1-37**

The two-and-one-half-story Bross Hotel has triple-brick construction set upon a cut sandstone foundation. It is mostly rectangular in plan, measuring approximately 30' wide x 50' long, has a full basement and a two-story, full-width front porch. A modest gambrel roof tops the building and fish-scale siding appears in the gable ends. Similar siding enhances the sides of the non-historic third-floor dormers. The brick was painted in 1947. All windows are wood one-over-one double-hung in segmental arch window openings with rough-faced stone sills and under a segmental arch double rowlock. The windows on the east and north-facing sides are original.

#### *East (main) façade*

The first-story open porch rises about 6" from the sidewalk and has a painted concrete porch floor measuring approximately 30' x 10' that extends the entire width of the hotel. Five equally-spaced wood columns support the first-story porch roof. The columns have a round base, slightly chamfered shafts, and Doric capitals. A wood sign that measures approximately 7'-6" x 12" extends between the second and third columns (from the north) reading "BROSS HOTEL" in white lettering. The main-entrance door is positioned slightly off-center, but directly in front of the sidewalk. The door is the original three-panel wood and glass door with the lower half consisting of two panels and the upper half with glass and the third panel. The lowest panel contains a vertical wood divider flanked by raised areas. Above this, a hand-carved floral relief exists on a raised panel. A cornice detailed with dentil molding is located above a square fixed window in the next section in the upper half. The uppermost wood panel is a simple raised panel. Above the door is a horizontal transom, which measures approximately 24" wide x 12"

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high and a segmental arch wood surround appears above the transom. As with nearly all of the windows, a segmental arch double rowlock appears above the segmental arch wood surround of the door.

To the south of the main floor entrance is a large window with a rough-cut stone sill that contains hatching to give the appearance of braiding. Around the rough-cut portion, the stone has been scored vertically on the top and bottom and horizontally on the sides, giving emphasis to the braided appearance.

The second-floor porch has five turned spindles directly above the first-floor porch columns across the front and two at the rear corners. The spindles support a shed roof with overhanging eaves. A square post-and-rail balustrade extends between each spindle. A centered supporting post exists at the top of the balustrade, which supports a non-historic additional rail situated about 12" above the balustrade. A smaller square post-and-rail balustrade is located between the spindles, just below the ceiling. Ornamental brackets appear in each corner, just below the top balustrade. Centered in the second-floor wall is a simple historic wood entrance door to the second-floor porch with a segmental arch wood surround above a horizontal transom mirroring the doorway in the first-floor entrance. Two windows in segmental arch window openings are equally spaced on each side of the entrance. A pair of windows exists in the gabled end, which has fish-scale shingles. A single lintel exists above the windows and extends the full width of the gable end.

#### *South-facing side*

Three-stacked bay windows are slightly off-center on the south-facing side, one on each floor, with a small shed roof separating each level. The first-floor bay window is unusual in that rather than having a window, the east side of the bay has a door facing Onarga Avenue topped by a horizontal transom. The bay in the attic area has wood shingles on the dormer wall. East of the bays, two windows with segmental arch openings appear on the first and second floors, one directly above the other, each with rough-cut stone sills. To the west of the bays, two windows are on both the first floor and second floor, all with segmental arch openings and rough-cut stone sills. Three equally spaced square, wood casement windows are at the basement level.

A 1912 frame addition appears at the western-most portion of the south-facing side. It has vertical wood siding and contains two windows, one on the first floor and one on the second floor. These windows are one-over-one wood windows; however, unlike the others in the hotel, they do not contain segmental arch openings or stone sills.

Two gable dormers are located on either side of the third-story bay. These were added to the attic area during a mid-1990s renovation. A ground-level wood deck with a square post-and-rail balustrade was added circa 2001 that extends from the south-facing side by about 12'. Access to the parking lot or the garden is afforded from the deck.

#### *West-facing (rear) side*

In 1912 a small rear addition, measuring approximately 12' (E-W) x 15' (N-S), was constructed that occupies the south half of the rear portion of the hotel. A non-historic solid metal door

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exists on the first floor of the addition, while a one-over-one double-hung wood window exists in both the second and third floors in line with the gable peak.

The original portion of the west end of the hotel exhibits a circa-1996 rear entrance door on the first floor and a window on the second floor. In the original gable end, of which only half is visible due to the addition, a one one-over-one wood window exists with fish-scale shingles in the gable end.

A wood pergola extends from the original rear portion of the hotel. A 2001 raised wood deck spans the width of the west-facing side on the first level, extending approximately 24' from the original building portion and about 12' from the addition. Square post-and-rail balustrades surround the deck, lattice work is beneath the deck floor. A wood staircase with six steps approaches the south side of the deck.

#### *North-facing side*

Several windows appear on the first floor of the north-facing side. From east to west (or looking left to right) there is a small window, a small square fixed wood window, a pair of larger windows (nearly center in the north wall) and a pair of smaller windows. The second floor has three windows nearly equally spaced and a small one-over-one double hung wood window with a rough-cut stone sill toward the west end, however, it is not in a segmental arch opening and does not exhibit the segmental arch double rowlock. Three equally spaced square, wood casement windows appear at the basement level.

Two equally-spaced gable dormers are on the roof from the attic level. These were added with the 1996 renovation. The dormers have one-over-one windows with a pediment in the gable end. Cut shingles appear on the sides of the dormers and in the gable end.

#### **Alterations**

The 1906 front door was of ornamental glass. However, it was replaced with the current wood door the same year, as one guest slammed the glass door too hard completely shattering the glass. In 1910 Otto Bross had the back porch and the rear balcony screened. Then, in 1912 he had an addition erected on the south half of the west-facing (rear) side of the building. This addition, measuring approximately 12' (E-W) x 15' (N-S) eventually became apartments. By the 1980s the apartments were deteriorating to a point that Mr. Bach, then owner, removed them and added an enclosed fire stair extending from the basement to the third floor to meet code. Egress from the fire stair was to a wood deck at the first floor level.

Lura Atkins, the hotel owner from 1944 to 1971, primarily made interior updates. She redecorated the rooms shortly after acquiring the hotel. In 1947 she made upgrades to the kitchen, added a first floor restroom, and had the exterior brick painted orange. In 1953 Atkins had a new furnace. The brick chimney, which was on the south side near the rear roof peak, may have also been removed at that time; however, the actual date is unknown. The exterior brick was painted red during the 1970s, to match the brick color more closely.

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The only major non-historic alteration in the last 100 years is the addition of the dormers. As originally built, the gambrel roof had two small dormers on the third level (on the south and north sides), just west of the bay window location. Those dormers were removed in 1996 and four large dormers (two on either side of the building) were added, one to the east and one to the west of the south-facing side bay windows, and mirroring the location on the north-facing side. This change provides more natural light and proper egress for the rooms on the third floor. The sides of the dormers have rough-cut shingles to complement the fish-scale shingles in the gable ends. New asphalt-composite shingles were added to the roof with the 1996 renovation.

Minor alterations include new one-over-one double-hung wood windows, matching the originals in material, size and configuration, replaced the original ones on the west-facing side and some on the south-facing side. The basement windows were also replaced in 1996, but matching the originals. All of the other windows are original one-over-one double-hung wood windows. The owner added dark screens to the west and south-facing side windows to reduce the amount of ultraviolet light coming in those windows.

A service station/automobile garage, unrelated to the hotel, originally occupied the space where the parking lot is now located. When the parcel became available circa 1995, the owner purchased it and converted it into the hotel parking lot and garden area. It added 57'-6" to the hotel property to the southeast.

In 2001 the owner began adding landscaping around the hotel. About the same time, an ADA-compliant wood walkway was built from the front porch to the adjoining parking lot and wood decks were added on the south-facing side. The concrete carriage step that was between the two cottonwood trees in front of the hotel was moved to the end of the walkway. The area between the trees was widened and paved with red-brick pavers. This preserved the carriage step and provided a safer entry to and from the street. A perennial rock garden was installed on the incline from the parking lot to the hotel. The deck on the rear side of the hotel was replaced due to its deteriorated condition and enlarged in 2007. A pergola was added at the same time to shade the kitchen, at the rear (north portion).

## **Interior**

In the mid-1990s the interior of the hotel was remodeled to serve as a bed and breakfast. The brick was exposed on all interior walls. All woodwork, doors, and transoms were restored to a natural wood appearance. Woodwork that had to be replaced was milled to match the original. The number of rooms was reduced from fourteen to ten while the number of bathrooms was increased from three to eleven. The open front stairway was extended from the second floor to the third floor. The coal furnace and coal bin in the basement were replaced with a large lounge and conference room. Two public restrooms were added for visitors to the hotel.

## **Noncontributing Shed, circa 2000**

A pre-fabricated (mass-produced) garden shed exists at the west boundary of the property. The front-gabled building is roughly 8' x 10' and is considered noncontributing due to its age and lack of significance.

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### **Noncontributing Parking Lot, circa 1995**

The asphalt-paved parking lot measures approximately 112' x 56' and is to the south and southeast of the hotel. A 1908 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map shows that only the very southeast corner of Lot 1, at the corner of Onarga Avenue and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, was occupied by a small frame building used for an office. The remainder of Lots 1, and all of Lots 2, 3, and 4 were vacant. Historic photographs reveal that the parcel on which the parking lot sits was vacant for parking buggies and tying horses while the owners shopped at a grocer at the corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> and Grand (one street to the west of Onarga) or visited area businesses, including the Bross Hotel.

The 1914 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map reflected that Lot 1 continued to have the small office, however, it was vacant. In the west portion of Lot 1, west of the office building, the map reads: "Gasol Tank 170 GAL Buried," which may have been the beginning of the service station.<sup>1</sup> The 1939 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map shows a service station situated diagonally on Lot 1. In 1995 when the service station parcel (Lots 1-4) became available, the Bross Hotel owner purchased the property and converted it to the hotel parking lot. It is considered noncontributing as historically it was not specifically associated with the hotel.

### ***Integrity***

The hotel maintains a high degree of integrity of location, feeling, association, materials, and workmanship. The hotel maintains a high level of historic physical integrity. It remains at its original location on Onarga Avenue (lots 5 and 6 of the original plat of the town) with a comparable setting - the original Bross house (rooming house) on lots 7 and 8, the brick house across the street, and the Methodist Church on the corner. Two automotive businesses built on the lots southeast of the hotel after the hotel's construction were demolished circa 1980s; the vacant lots became the Bross Hotel parking lot. The brick chimney was removed at an unknown date. Decks have been added to facilitate entry/exit to the hotel; however, these are small and do not detract from the overall integrity of the hotel. The cottonwood trees in front of the hotel predate the hostelry and additional trees and perennial gardens have been added to enhance the existing landscaping. Changes to the porches on the west (rear) side of the hotel occurred during the period of significance (1910 and 1912). The replacement of these hotel additions with the current enclosed fire stairs replicates the look of the building in 1912. The sole non-historic physical change to the exterior of the hotel is the addition of four third-floor dormers, which replaced two smaller dormers. The hotel has a good degree of integrity of association with the commercial past of Paonia and is the only surviving hotel from the town's heyday as the business center of the Valley. The hotel retains a high degree of integrity for feeling as the tallest building in Paonia and one of its finest edifices, and with most of the original windows and exterior doors, all of the original woodwork, interior doors, it continues to provide a sense of a turn-of-the-twentieth-century hotel. Additionally it continues to provide hospitality and convenient, reliable accommodations for guests.

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<sup>1</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map for Paonia, Colorado 1914, sheet 1.

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## 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.)

- 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



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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Bross Hotel is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Commerce for its long association of providing accommodations to Paonia visitors, investors, fruit brokers, and associates of the Westmoreland Coal Company among many others since 1906. It is the only extant Paonia hotel built in the early-twentieth century continuing to offer room accommodations. William T. Bross built the hotel in 1906 and it was declared by a local newspaper as Delta County's "only really first class hotel" when it opened.<sup>2</sup>

Additionally, the hotel is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Social History as the site of numerous social events and meetings for various civic organizations, including the Chamber of Commerce, which held its initial meeting at the hotel. The hotel hosted community events and meetings for nearly twenty-five years.

Finally, the Bross Hotel is locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a good example of a Late Victorian two-story hotel. It is the only two-story Late Victorian style hotel of its era remaining in Paonia.

The period of significance for Commerce begins in 1906, the year it opened, and ends in 1969, the year it closed as a hotel for a time. The period of significance for Social History begins in 1906, when the hotel opened, and ends circa 1934, after which dinners were no longer served and social events at the hotel decreased. The period of significance for Architecture begins in 1906 and ends in 1912, when the rear addition was constructed.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

### **Criterion A – Commerce**

The 1906 Bross Hotel is significant for Commerce as one of the town's early-twentieth century hotels providing accommodations for sixty-three continuous years. Although there were two other hotels in town competing with the Bross Hotel, the Bross set itself apart by opening a more modern hotel. With a population of 1000 residents by 1905, the bustling town of Paonia needed to accommodate the many newcomers, miners, fruit brokers, sales representatives and visitors.

By 1904 Paonia had two hotels and a number of rooming houses. The Unique Hotel on Second Street was a boarding house. It had a dining room and hosted special dinners on occasion. Its ownership changed frequently. In 1930 it was destroyed by fire. The Paonia Hotel on Grand Avenue was owned by the McNaughton siblings from 1899 until 1927 when it was sold to Otto Bross. Three years later Bross sold the Paonia Hotel. By 1982 the Paonia Hotel had

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<sup>2</sup> *The Newspaper*. [Paonia], April 6, 1906.

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deteriorated and was torn down to make way for Paonia's new Town Hall. When the Bross Hotel was built in the thriving town of Paonia, it became a competitor to the Unique and Paonia hotels. Being new, it had the modern conveniences that the other hotels lacked: indoor plumbing and electric lights. The Bross and the Paonia Hotels were the only locations in town that had a Bell Telephone connection, which provided long-distance calling service. Residents wishing to make a long-distance call visited the one of the hotels. The Bross Hotel catered to the first-class trade of the day; guests tended to be fruit brokers, white collar workers associated with the local coal mines, and people visiting the area. It also offered catering services to other events in town, including when the hotel catered a banquet at the Paonia Opera House on the occasion of the Rotary Club receiving its charter.

In 1930, when Otto Bross converted the hotel to a rooming house, it continued to be filled to capacity. Fruit brokers and wholesalers from Denver and larger cities and towns often rented the best rooms. Seasonal workers often shared less expensive rooms. Some of the seasonal workers arrived in box cars from Denver with the destinations of Palisade and Paonia in order to work during the fruit harvest season. The Westmoreland Coal workers also kept the hotel at capacity. One of the 1930s residents, Eulah Norris, recalled paying \$10 per month to rent a small, rear room on the third floor. Of all the hotels and rooming houses in operation in Paonia in the early- twentieth century, the Bross Hotel is the only one still serving as a hostelry today.

### **Criterion A – Social History**

The Bross Hotel is also significant for its Social History as a gathering place for many civic organizations and social events. As a first-class hotel the Bross had a dining room when it opened in May 1906. It served meals for guests and hosted many special events - business luncheons, dinners, teas, and showers. It was known for its Sunday dinners that were attended by townspeople as well as hotel guests. People were brought together over fine food and gracious hospitality in the dining room of the Bross Hotel. Shortly after opening, Mrs. Bross entertained the Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) and the Women's Relief Corps (W.R.C). Mrs. Bross helped organize and was a charter member of the W.R.C. *The Newspaper* reported:

A large crowd was in attendance and a delicious luncheon of berries, cake and ice cream was served. Among the many socials given by different members of the W.R.C., probably none were better attended or the guests shown a better time than the one last evening.<sup>3</sup>

Another time *The Newspaper* noted that Mrs. Martha Hammond entertained with a dinner at the Bross.<sup>4</sup> During the 1920s and early 1930s the local newspaper reported many social events at the hotel including: Rev. George Rice treating his nineteen Episcopal choir boys to a turkey dinner at the hotel; Mrs. A. S. Goodenow and Miss Alberta Goodenow hosting a party and shower for Mrs. H. L. Curtiss; and the Girl Reserves' blossom tea. Local resident Mayme Abseck remembered one of the last social events likely held at the hotel in 1934, when a

<sup>3</sup> *The Newspaper*. July 27, 1906, 2.

<sup>4</sup> *The Newspaper*. September 10, 1914, 1.

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wedding shower was given for her friend, Helen Donnelly - a resident of the hotel.<sup>5</sup> The Bross Hotel played a significant role in the social life of Paonia during the W. T. Bross years.

As the town grew and civic organizations formed the Bross Hotel served as a meeting place for many of these groups. The Bross Hotel played an important role in the community's social history for nearly twenty-five years. Its importance is attested to by the fact that what was happening at the Bross frequently was front page news of the local newspaper. In 1921 W. T. Bross died. Under the ownership of Otto Bross, W. T.'s youngest son, the basement was converted into a meeting room and the hotel began working closely with civic organizations. It was the meeting place for both the Rotary and Lions. The Paonia Chamber of Commerce was initiated at a meeting of retail merchants at the Bross hotel in 1927. In addition to the various meetings and events that the organizations held at the hotel, it also continued to host various social gatherings. In 1930 after the stock market crashed, Otto Bross converted the hotel into a rooming house where dinner was no longer served and the social gatherings mostly ceased.

### **Criterion C – Architecture**

The Bross Hotel displays the prominent features of a Late Victorian style building in its two stories, rectangular plan, two-story, full-width porch and modest gambrel roof. Additional character-defining features of the Late Victorian style found on the hotel include three-story bay windows, fish-scale shingles in the gables, segmental arch window openings, stone lintels, and transom above the front door. Late Victorian style details include turned spindles, ornamental brackets, and a square post-and-rail balustrade on second-story porch. William T. Bross built the hotel beginning in 1904, completing it in 1906. With a high-degree of integrity the hotel continues to exhibit the Late Victorian elements incorporated by Bross.

#### *Construction of the Bross Hotel*

In 1903 William T. Bross purchased lots 5 and 6, on which planned to construct a hotel. The following year William Bross arranged to make about 100,000 bricks on site using clay from the excavated cellar. Construction of the hotel began in June 1905 and was followed closely by *The Newspaper* including: on June 16 a note that "W.T. Bross will start the foundation for his new rooming house next Monday." In the October 13 issue, *The Newspaper* indicated that "W.T. Bross has a number of workmen putting up the brick work on his new lodging house" and in the November 17 issue the paper noted that, "The new Bross building is rapidly approaching completion. The walls will probably be finished this week." Further construction details were not provided by *The Newspaper* until the new year when on January 26, 1906, it reported: "W. T. Bross has finished the sidewalk in front of his hotel property." Finally, on April 6, the paper reported, "The new Bross house is very nearly completed. . . Mr. Bross says that it will be opened for the first class trade on or about May first." Reasoning for a delay in opening was not found in the local newspaper; however, on May 4, 1906 it reported "Mr. Bross expects to open his new hotel about the last of the month. Workmen are rapidly completing the inside work at this writing." No official opening date for the hotel has been found.

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<sup>5</sup> *Paonian*. December 22, 1921; March 1, 1928; May 7, 1931. *The Paonian Booster*. November 16, 1922 and December 15, 1922.

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## Historic Context

### *Paonia Settlement*

Paonia is located in the North Fork of the Gunnison River Valley. It is in the area of Colorado that was once home to the Uncompahgre (Tabeguache) Ute peoples after the Tabeguache Treaty was signed in 1868.<sup>6</sup> In the treaty, the Tabeguache agreed to relinquish all Ute lands east of the Continental Divide along with Middle Park. In return, the U.S. government was to give the Tabeguaches land between the Colorado and Roaring Fork Rivers, to the north, and the Gunnison and Uncompahgre Rivers, to the south, along with goods, equipment, livestock, and provisions for up to ten years. Following the 1879 Meeker Massacre in northwestern Colorado, the U.S. government removed the native people and forced them to relocate to small reservations in northeastern Utah and in southwestern Colorado. The former Tabeguache lands then opened up for settlement.<sup>7</sup>

The first Euro-American individuals known to arrive in the Paonia area for settlement were Samuel Wade and William Clark in 1881. They platted Paonia and in 1882 received approval for a U.S. Post Office. The Bross Hotel is on lots 5 and 6, block 9 of the original town plat. Clark named the street on which the hotel sits as "Onarga," after his hometown in Illinois, which in turn was purportedly named for a Native American Indian princess. The land claimed by Clark is now the residential section of Paonia.

Wade opened the first mercantile store in Paonia and within it he housed Paonia's first U. S. Post Office. Wade brought apple tree and peony shrub roots to the new town. He submitted "Paeonia," the Latin name for peony, as the official name for the local post office. The U.S. Post Office Department returned the application indicating that there were too many vowels in the name Paeonia, resulting in the town becoming Paonia. The fruit trees led to the establishment of many orchards in the fertile, irrigated North Fork Valley. The orchards were so successful Paonia peaches won awards at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. Fruit was the first agricultural product of the area, but coal was discovered in the mountains just north of the town before the 1880s ended. The mountains are still producing some of the country's best low-sulfur coal.<sup>8</sup>

The fertility of the land in the North Fork Valley and the coal discoveries attracted settlers. In 1902 Paonia incorporated. With the increased number of orchards and coal mines, a means to transport products to market and processing was necessary. The Denver & Rio Grande Railroad opened a line through Paonia to Somerset in 1902. With it came more settlers and by 1904 Paonia had a newspaper and a variety of stores, which served as the commercial center for the Valley. The *Colorado Business Directory* reflected the population increase with 400

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<sup>6</sup> The Treaty was formally known as the "Treaty With the Utah-Tabeguache Band". Although it was signed in 1863, it was not amended and confirmed by Congress until 1864 and therefore, it is also known as the Treaty of 1864.

<sup>7</sup> Virginia McConnell Simmons. *The Ute Indians of Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico*. University of Colorado Press, 2000. 117, 191.

<sup>8</sup> *North Fork Times*, June 30, 1976, Historical Supplement, p. 11.

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residents in 1902, 500 in 1903, and 1000 in 1905. The *Directory* referred to the Paonia area as the “best fruit growing belt of the West” and in 1905 the *Directory* noted that 400 railroad cars of “choice fruit” were shipped during the harvest.”<sup>9</sup>

A bustling town like Paonia needed to accommodate the many newcomers, miners, fruit brokers, sales representatives, and visitors. By 1904 Paonia had two hotels (the Unique and the Paonia) and a number of rooming houses. The Unique Hotel on Second Street was a boarding house. It had a dining room and served special dinners on occasion. Its ownership changed frequently and in 1930 it was destroyed by fire. Mrs. W. T. (Laurah) Bross owned and operated one of the boarding houses according to the 1902-1905 *Colorado Business Directories*. When the Bross Hotel was built in 1906 in the thriving town of Paonia, it became a competitor of the Unique and Paonia Hotels. However, the modern conveniences the Bross offered made it an attractive accommodation to a variety of guests. The 1907 *Colorado Business Directory* listed a new hostelry called Hotel Grande; however, it did not appear again in subsequent years and its exact location is unknown.

#### *The Bross Family*

William T. (W.T.) Bross and his wife Laurah (or sometimes referred to as Laura) H. Bross were both from the Durham, Illinois vicinity where they had four children: Edith (b. 1873), Bert (b.1875), Cleo (b. 1880), and Floyd (b.1883). By the late 1880s, the family moved to Nebraska where W. T. served as the Chase County sheriff for two terms. By 1891 the family moved to the McCook vicinity and homesteaded. There they welcomed their youngest son Otto Clyde (b. 1891). In 1900 the Bross family moved to Paonia.

By 1902 Laurah purchased a two-story, three-bedroom home located on lots 7 and 8, block 9, of the original plat of the town of Paonia. This home still stands just north of the Bross. There she ran a “Lodging and Eating House” providing “comfortable rooms, pleasant location and table always supplied with all that the market will furnish.”<sup>10</sup> Bert Bross, the eldest son, bought the neighboring lots next to the boarding house, numbers 5 and 6 in 1902, selling them in 1903 to his father for the construction of the Bross Hotel.

#### *Hotel Operation under William T. Bross*

In the early years W. T. Bross hired managers for the hotel. In November 1909, however, W. T. Bross auctioned some furniture and before the end of the year *The Newspaper* reported “he has repaired and renovated the building and reopened it for business.”<sup>11</sup> The local paper did not detail what the repairs and renovations were. With the reopening of the hotel, the Bross family oversaw daily operations. Descendants of the Brosses reported that Laurah, “Mother Bross,” was the manager who met guests at the door, collected their money, and laid down the rules of the house. W. T. Bross used his horse and dray to transport guests from the evening train to the hotel where they alighted upon a carriage step bearing his name directly in front of the hotel. He continued to make improvements to the hotel. In addition to his work at the hotel,

<sup>9</sup> *Colorado Business Directory*, 1902, 1904, and 1905.

<sup>10</sup> *The Newspaper*, August 12, 1904.

<sup>11</sup> *The Newspaper*, November 16, 1909.

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W.T. worked as the Paonia deputy sheriff. In 1910 he had carpenters screen in both the first and second-floor rear porches. Two years later he had an addition erected on the rear of the building to enlarge the dining room and add five sleeping rooms. The continued updating of the hotel attests to its popularity as the premier lodging and dining facility in Paonia. It was a popular place for first class entertaining.

### *The Otto Bross Era*

When W. T. Bross died in 1921, his youngest son, Otto, and Otto's wife Marie, managed the hotel. He then purchased it from the estate in 1923. Otto Bross maintained and upgraded the Bross Hotel to meet the needs of the growing town of Paonia. His first major remodeling effort included finishing the basement with a large room made as a dining room / meeting room for the Rotary Club. *The Paonian* reported of the improvements:

Adjacent to this is a reception and club room while still other parts of the basement will be used for a laundry and other departments of the growing business. An entrance will be placed leading from the lobby on the first floor. By the addition of sample rooms and other conveniences the program now underway will make the Bross a hotel of superior appointments.<sup>12</sup>

During Otto's tenure, the Bross Hotel continued to be a favorite location for holding special events. In the 1920s and early 1930s, the Bross Hotel played a prominent role in the civic life of Paonia. Otto was an astute businessman. He was involved in what was going on in the business community and worked to keep the Bross Hotel in the forefront of events. In 1922, when the Rotary Club was formed, the group chose Thursday for its weekly meetings to be held at the Bross Hotel. When the charter of the group was presented at a banquet held at the Opera House, the meal was prepared by the Bross Hotel. In 1923 a second civic organization was formed - the Lions Club - and Otto was a founding member. Like the Rotary, the Lions chose the Bross Hotel for their Wednesday dinner meetings. *The Paonian* newspaper hosted a dinner meeting of retail merchants at the Bross Hotel to discuss forming a Chamber of Commerce in January 1927. The purpose of the organization "would be the improvement of conditions in Paonia and the adjacent territory. It was agreed that there is need of a chamber of commerce and it was the unanimous opinion that such an organization can be of great service in the upbuilding of this territory."<sup>13</sup>

Otto converted the addition on the back of the hotel to apartments in about 1930 when he sold the Paonia Hotel and decided to operate the Bross Hotel as a rooming house. The decision to convert the Bross Hotel to a rooming house left the Paonia Hotel as the only hotel for visitors and business people seeking short term accommodations. The Paonia Hotel expanded its dining room and became the meeting place for the Rotary Club.

Although Otto and his family moved back to the Bross Hotel in 1930, he had managers run the hotel much of the time while he pursued other entrepreneurial interests. In 1938 Otto had an

<sup>12</sup> *The Paonian Booster* November 16, 1922 and December 15, 1922.

<sup>13</sup> *North Fork Times*, June 30, 1976, Historical Supplement, p. 11.

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automatic coal stoker installed in the hotel. Otto retained ownership of the Bross Hotel until 1944 when he sold to Lura Atkins.

### *The Post-Bross Era*

Lura Atkins operated the hotel as a boarding house. She made no structural changes to the building, but focused on maintaining the hotel as a quality living space. In her account book she noted that the kitchen was upgraded in 1947; it received a new stove, cabinets, and floor. The first-floor bathroom was added, a water heater was purchased and the hotel was painted. In 1951 a carport was built, however, it is no longer extant. It is unknown when it was demolished. A new furnace was bought in 1953 and a new coal stoker in 1954. To entertain guests and locals, Lura played a piano in the lobby. She closed the hotel in 1969 due to failing health. George and Grace Edwards purchased the hotel in 1971.

In announcing the reopening of the Bross Hotel, the *Delta County Independent* stated, "The George Edwardses come to their job with considerable experience in meeting the public. They owned and operated the Lost Lake Lodge, 32 miles up country, from 1948 to 1961."<sup>14</sup> The Edwards decided to continue to operate the hotel as a boarding house without a public dining room. The first floor was used for their personal living quarters. The main entry room was divided so that there was access to the stairs for lodgers and a corner room for family use. Behind this was the family living and dining rooms. At the back of the house was the kitchen, bath, and master bedroom. When the Edwards retired in 1979, they sold the Bross Hotel to Caleb and Claudia Bach.

Caleb Bach, a muralist, planned to develop a workshop at the Bross Hotel for young artists with living quarters for them on the third floor. He began exposing the brick walls on the first floor and removed the partition between the living and dining rooms. To meet fire regulations, and because the rear apartments were crumbling, he replaced the apartments with an enclosed fire stairway with an exit onto a deck. His plan for an artists' workshop was never realized and he sold the hotel to Randall and Elizabeth Taft in 1990. The Tafts were considering a move to Paonia, but after three years decided to retain their residency in California. During their ownership, the hotel was strictly their home.

Julie Andrew bought the Bross Hotel in 1994 and renovated it to serve as a bed and breakfast. The only exterior changes were the addition of four large dormers (two on either side of the roof). On the interior she exposed the brick walls on all floors, reduced the number of rooms to ten from fourteen, and increased the bathrooms to eleven from three (plus two half-baths). Heating and plumbing were modernized and brought up to code. The rehabilitations were in keeping with the Secretary of Interior's Standards. The Bross Hotel reopened in 1997 and is again Delta County's only first-class hotel.

Since Linda Lentz and her daughter, Susan Steinhardt, bought the hotel in 2000, extensive landscaping has been done including the addition of decks, a patio, trees, perennial gardens and a paved parking lot. The Bross Hotel is the showpiece of the town with visitors stopping by

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<sup>14</sup> *Delta County Independent*. March 8, 1971.

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just to see the facility; one writer referred to the Bross as the “Brown Palace of Paonia.”<sup>15</sup> It not only caters to numerous overnight guests, but is the site of many special social events. Thus, it is maintaining the function and reputation it had when operated by the Bross family.

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<sup>15</sup> Wendy Underhill. “Discovering Paonia.” *Nexus* (Sept/Oct, 2003): 17-18, 62.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### **Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Atkins, Lura, Unpublished Account Book in the possession of Linda Lentz, Paonia, CO.

Bach, Caleb, Former Property Owner. Telephone interview by Linda Lentz, February 2005, Paonia, CO, notes in the possession of Linda Lentz, Paonia, CO

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*Colorado Business Directory, 1902 – 1956*, "Paonia." Denver: The Gazetteer Publishing Co., 1912-1956.

Colorado Genealogical Society, Inc. *Colorado Families: A Territorial Heritage*. Denver, Colorado: 1981

*Delta County Independent*. March 8, 1971.

Delta County Recorder, Delta, CO.

*North Fork Times*, June 30, 1976, Historical Supplement.

#### *Paonian.*

July 4, 1912

February 17, 1921

December 22, 1921

January 25, 1923

March 1, 1928

May 7, 1931

#### *Paonian Newspaper*

May 20, 1910

Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Maps for Paonia, Colorado. 1908, 1914 and 1939.

Simmons, Virginia McConnell. *The Ute Indians of Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico*. University of Colorado Press, 2000. 117, 191.

"Southern Ute Nation", [www.southernute-nsn.gov/history/chronology](http://www.southernute-nsn.gov/history/chronology) accessed April 2015.

*The Newspaper*. [Paonia], various - 1904-1914.

*The Paonian Booster*. November 16, 1922 and December 15, 1922.

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Ron Soodalter and Matt Masich, "A Lonely Struggle," *Colorado Life Magazine* (Nov/Dec 2014): 45-49.

Underhill, Wendy. "Discovering Paonia." *Nexus* (September/October 2003): 17-18, 62.

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**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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: History Colorado

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** 5DT.534

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** .42

The UTM reference point was derived from heads up digitization on Digital Raster Graphic (DRG) maps provided to OAHF by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

1. Zone: 13 Easting: 274 707 Northing: 4305 430

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Lots 1 through 6, Block 9, Original Plat of the Town of Paonia, County of Delta, Colorado, also described as a portion in the northeast quarter of the southeastern quarter of the northwestern quarter of the northeaster quarter of section 6, township 14 south, range 91 west of the 6<sup>th</sup> principal meridian.

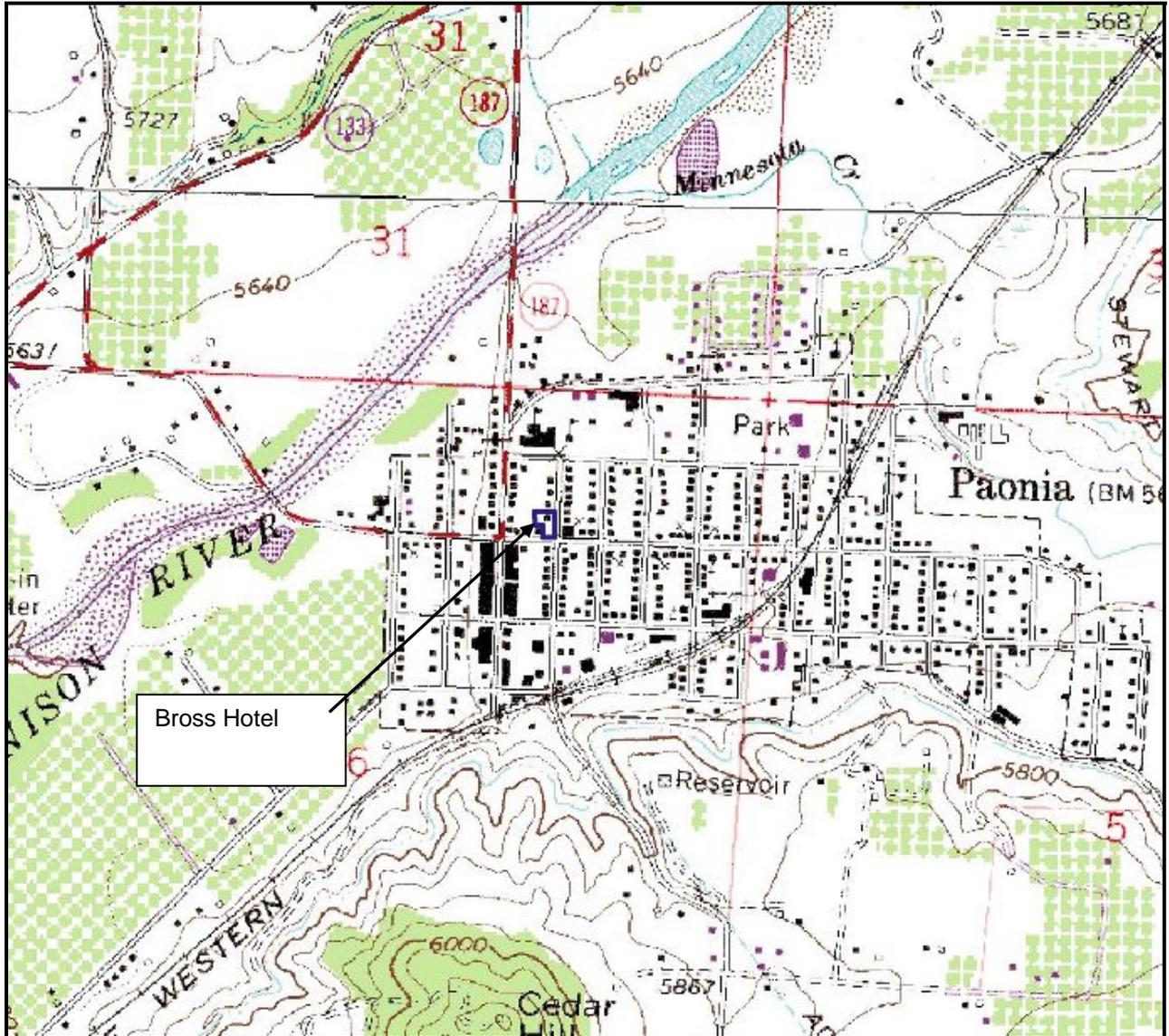
**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nomination boundary includes the property historically associated with the Bross Hotel along with the parking lot property acquired by the hotel in the mid-1900s.

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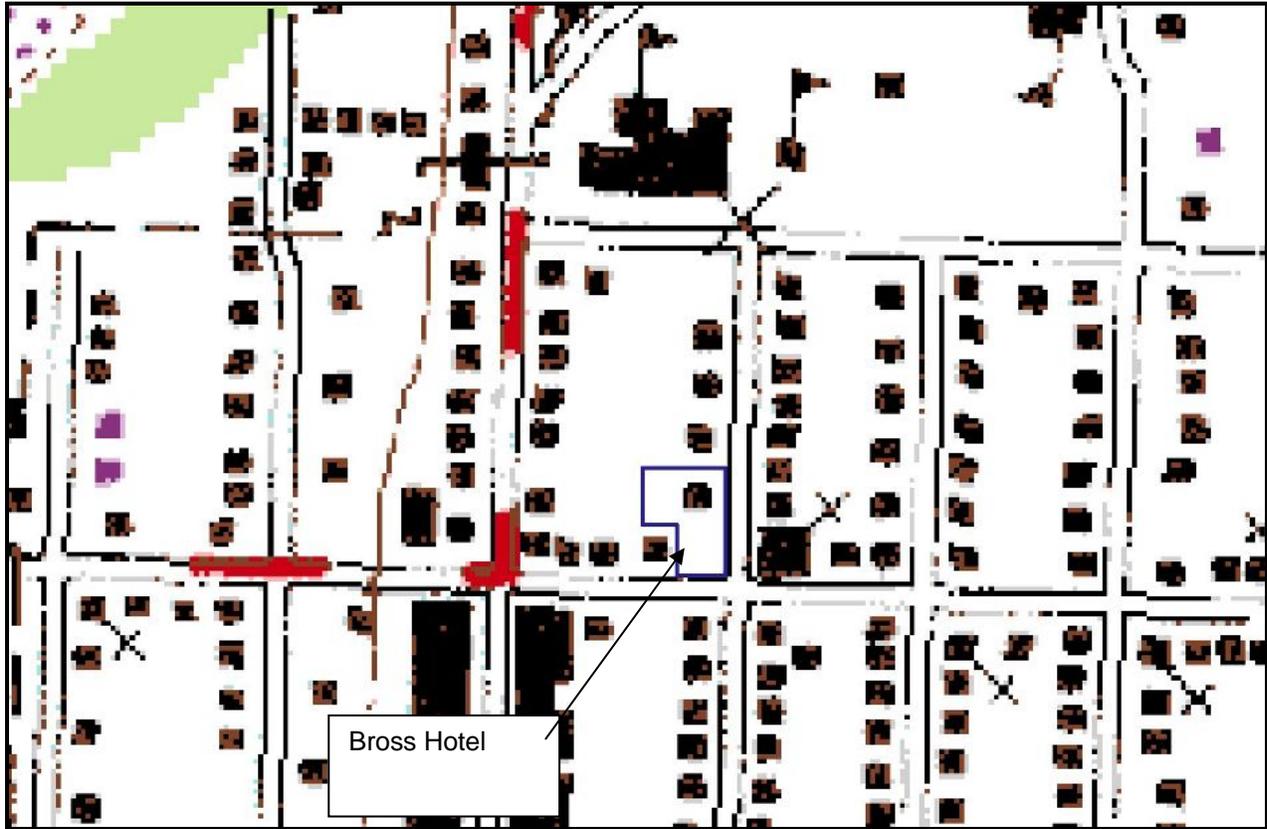
**UGSS – regional perspective**  
Paonia 7.5 minute topographic quadrangle



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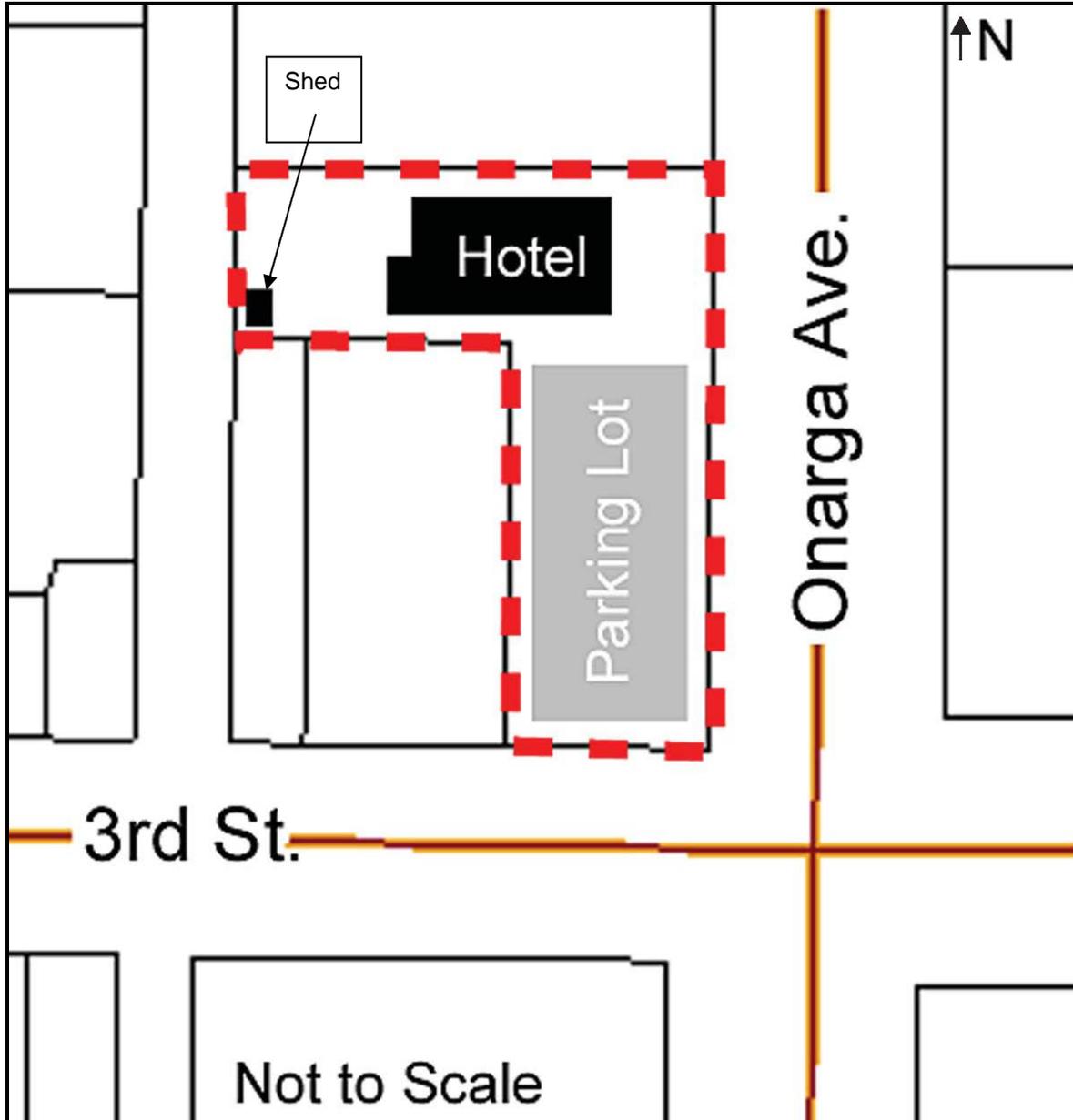
**USGS – close –up perspective**



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Sketch Map

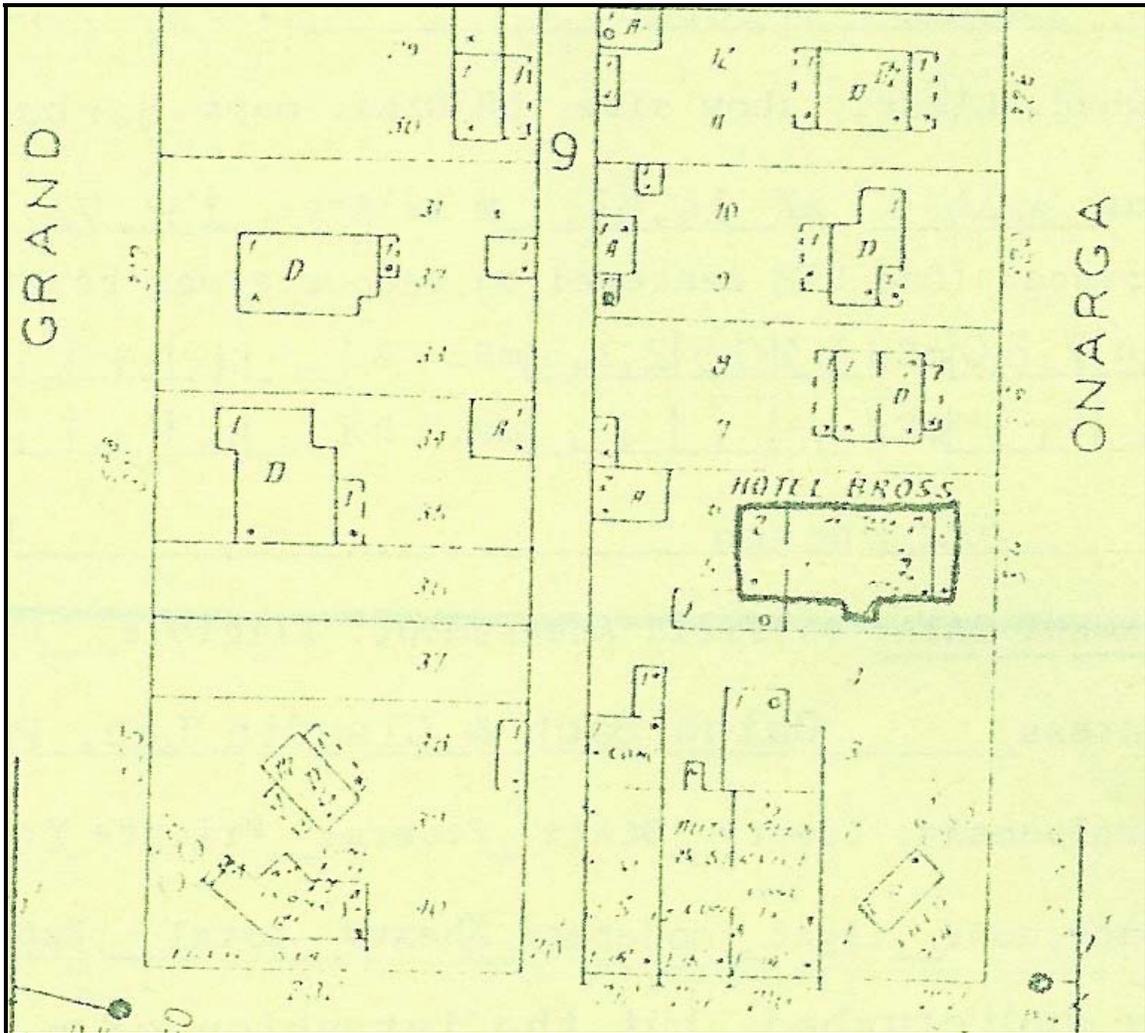


Dashed line marks nomination boundary. Sketch map by Heather Bailey, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Durango, Colorado. June, 2015.

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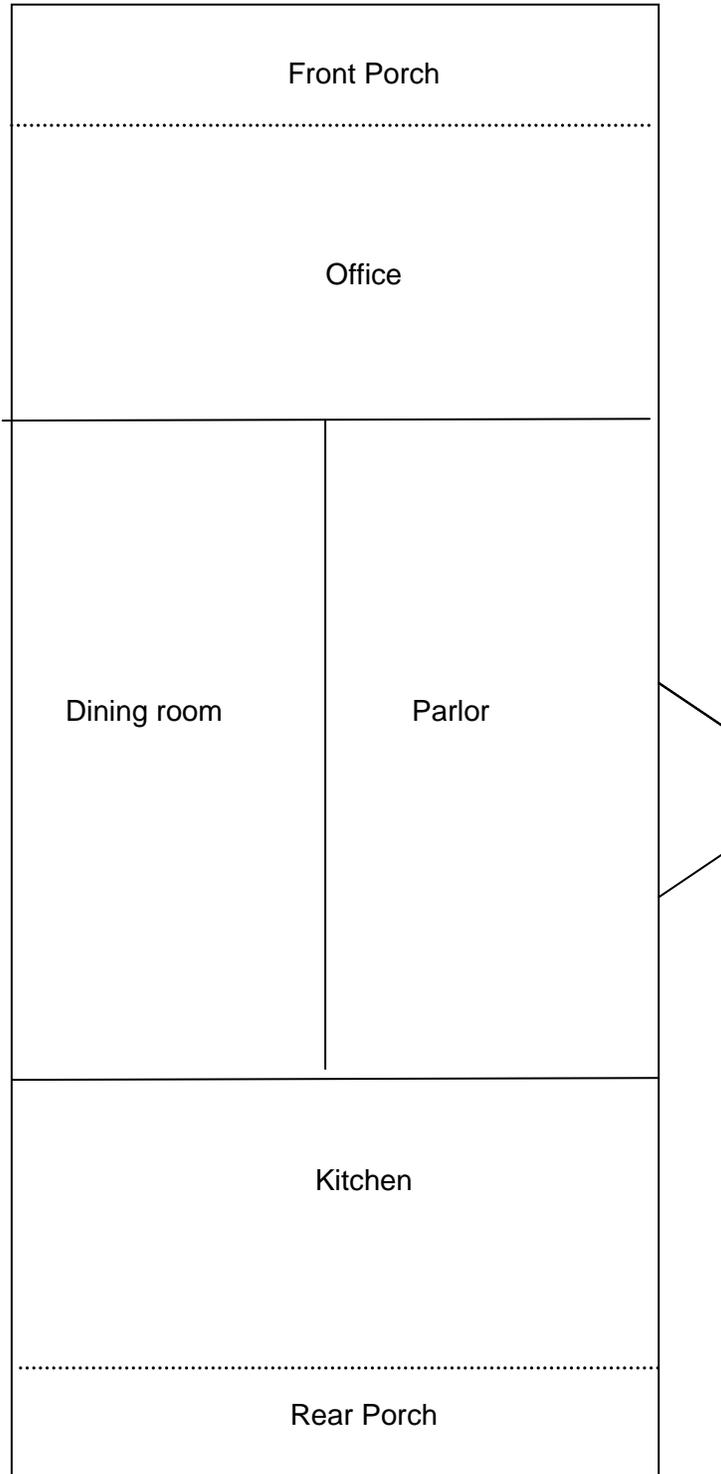
Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, 1939.

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Onarga Street

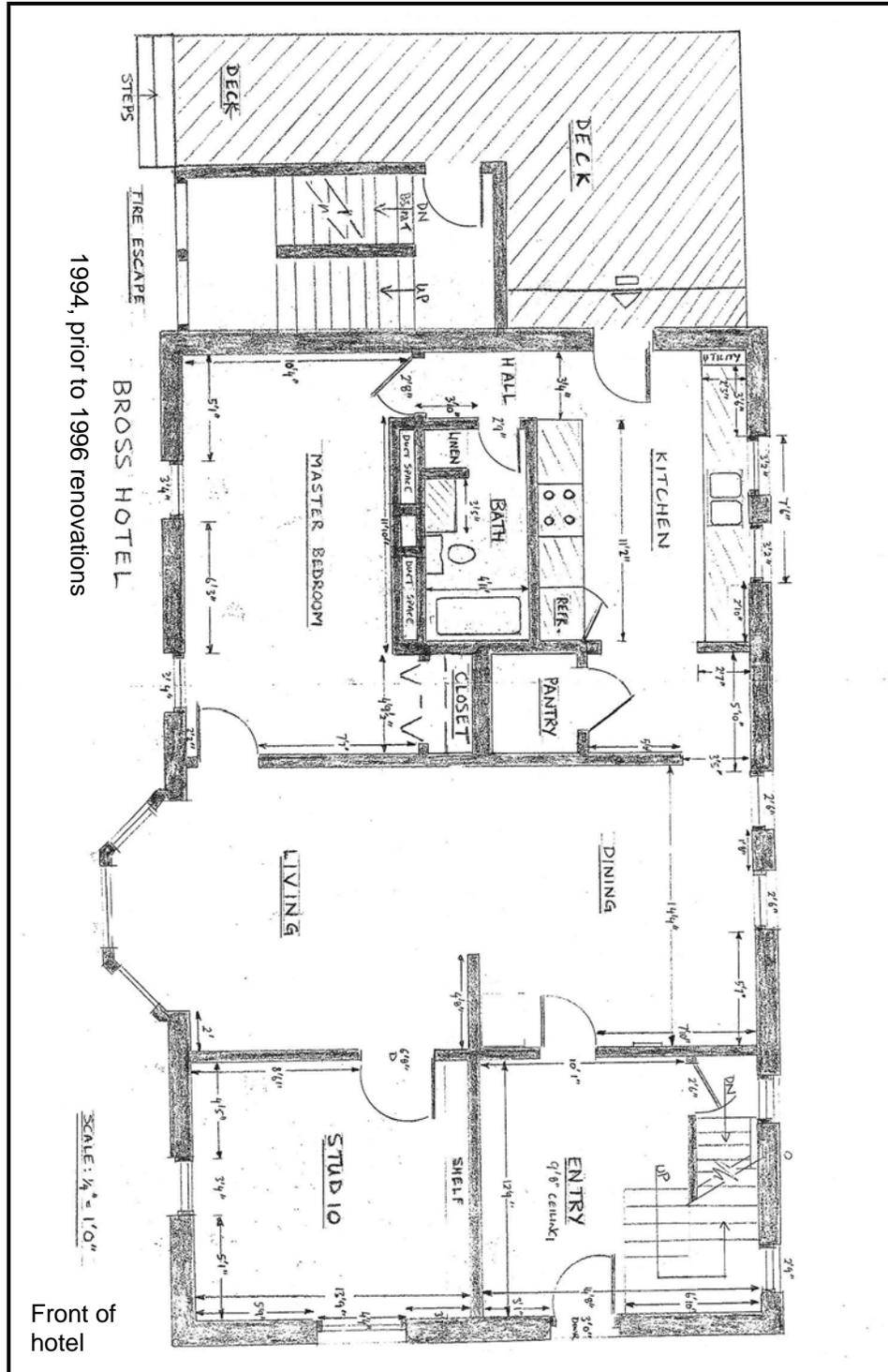


Historic first floor sketch map, based on  
Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map, 1908

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**Floor Plan – First floor, 1994, prior to 1996 renovations**

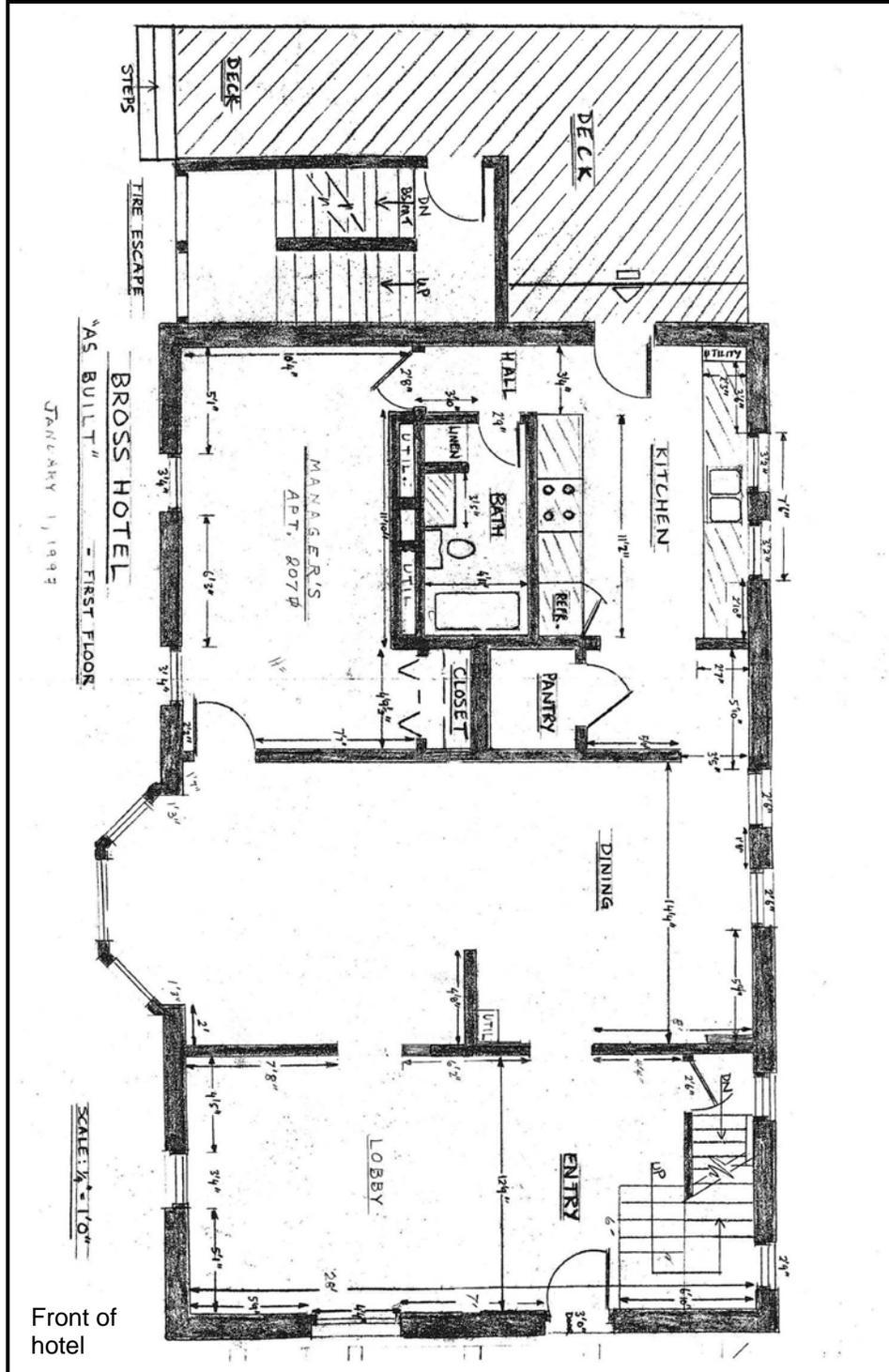


Architectural drawing by David F. Potter, architect, Boulder, CO, 1994.

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Floor Plan – First floor after 1996 renovations

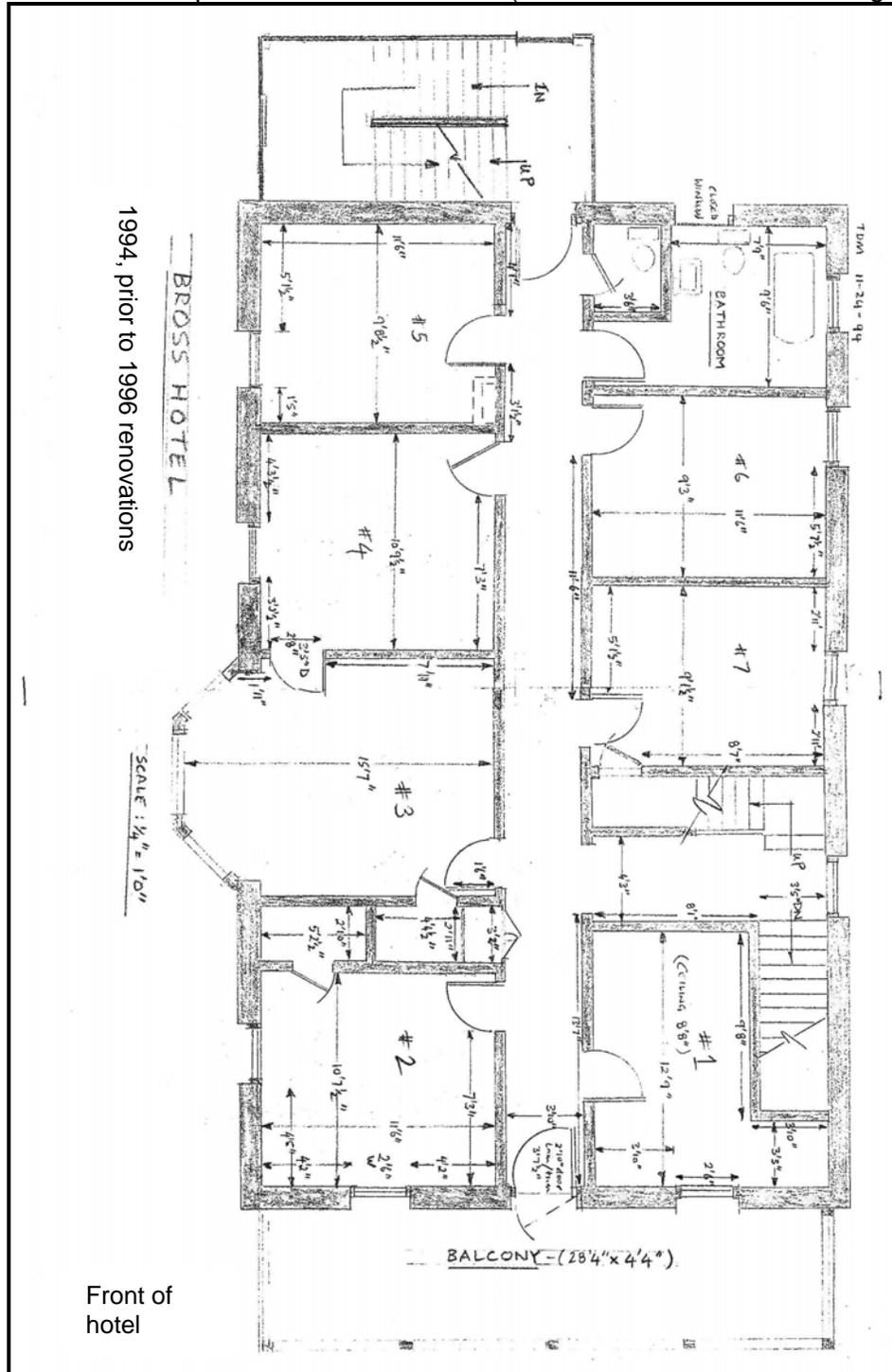


Architectural drawing by David F. Potter, architect, Boulder, CO, 1997.

Bross Hotel  
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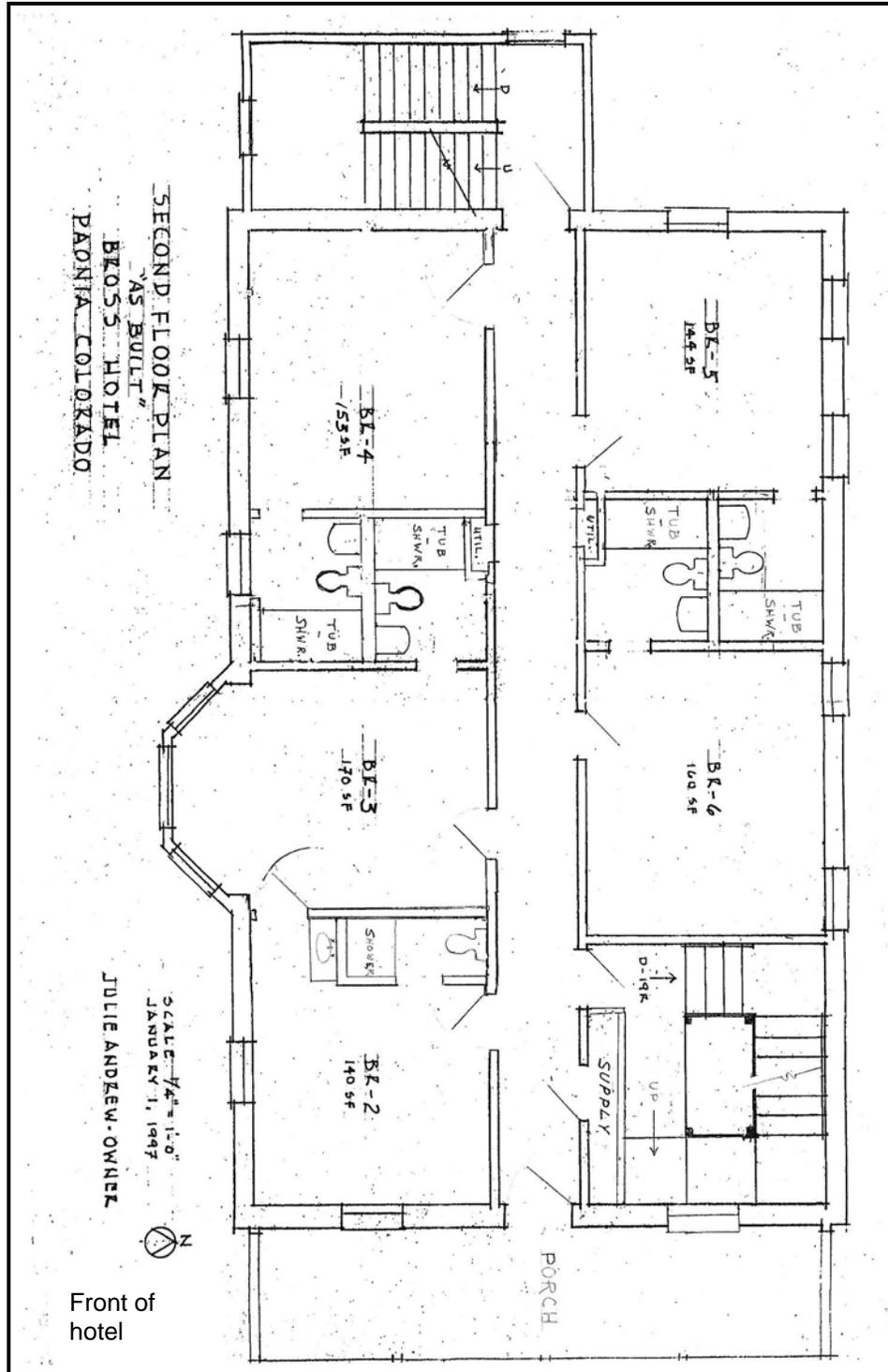
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Floor Plan – Second floor prior to 1996 renovations (shared bath for second floor guest rooms)



Architectural drawing by David F. Potter, architect, Boulder, CO, 1994.

Floor Plan – Second floor after 1996 renovations (private baths added for each guest room)

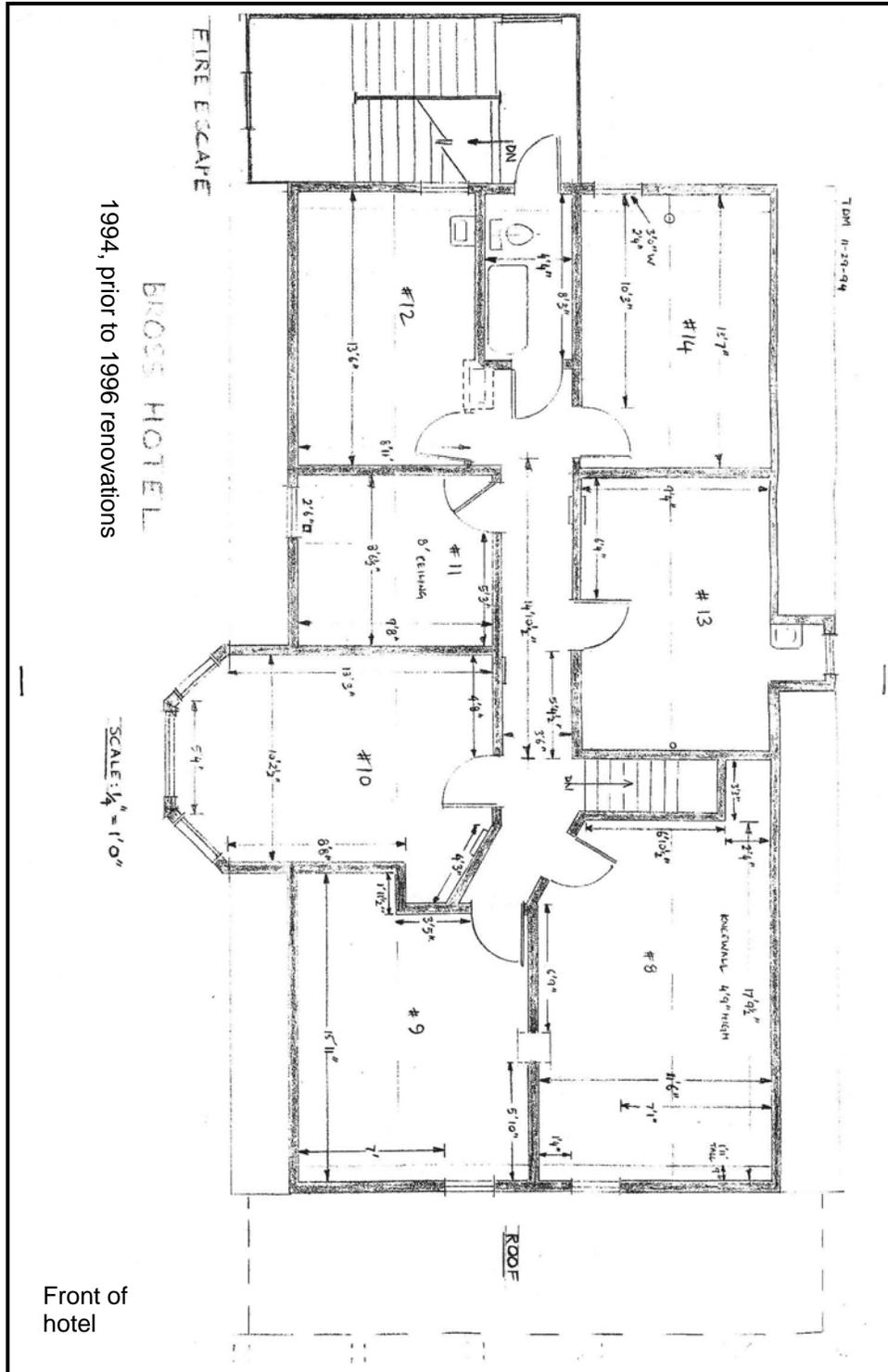


Architectural drawing by David F. Potter, architect, Boulder, CO, 1997.

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**Floor Plan** – Third floor prior to 1996 renovations (one shared bath for third-floor guest rooms)

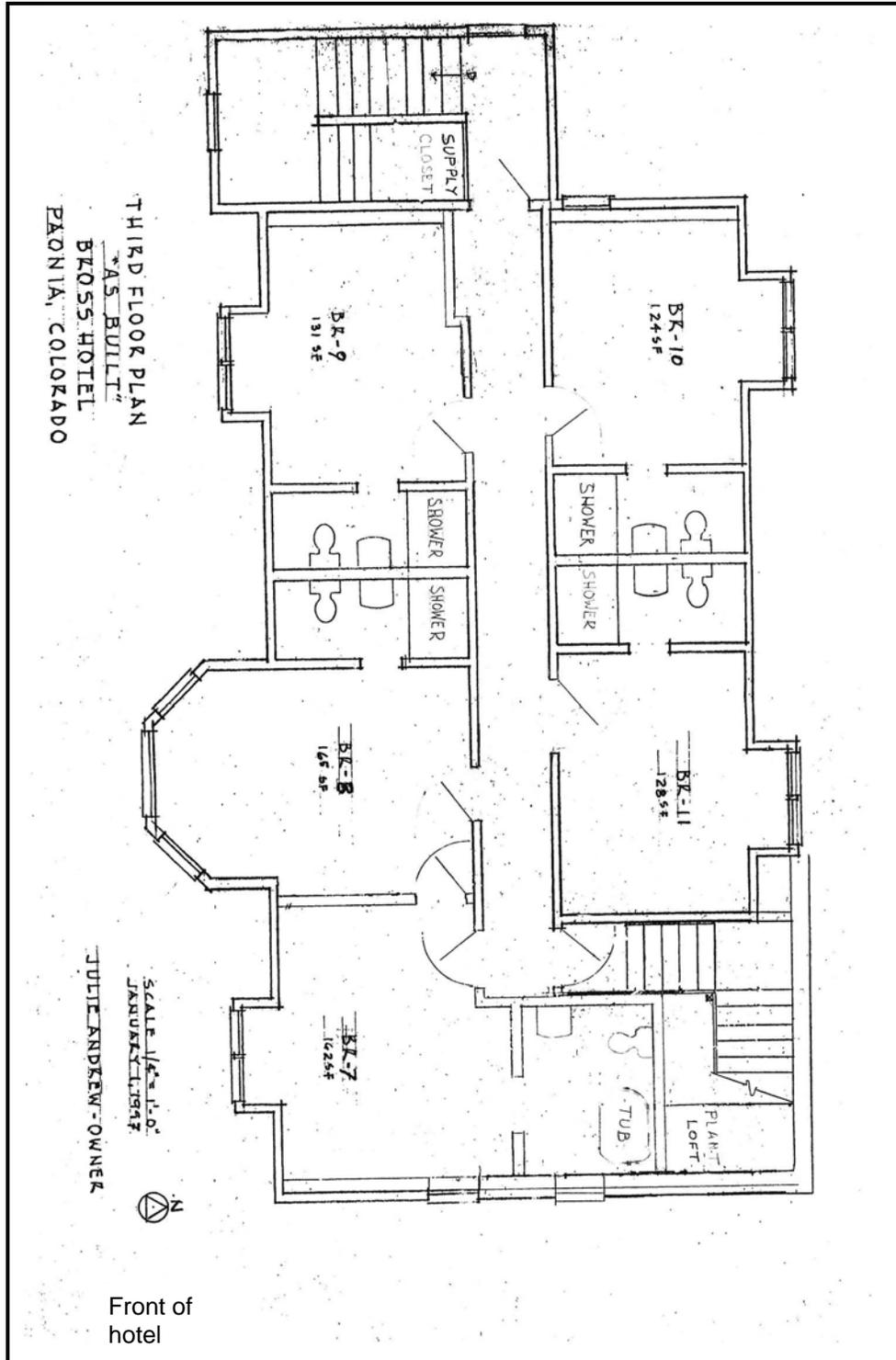


Architectural drawing by David F. Potter, architect, Boulder, CO, 1994.

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**Floor Plan – Third floor after 1996 renovations (private bath for each guest room)**

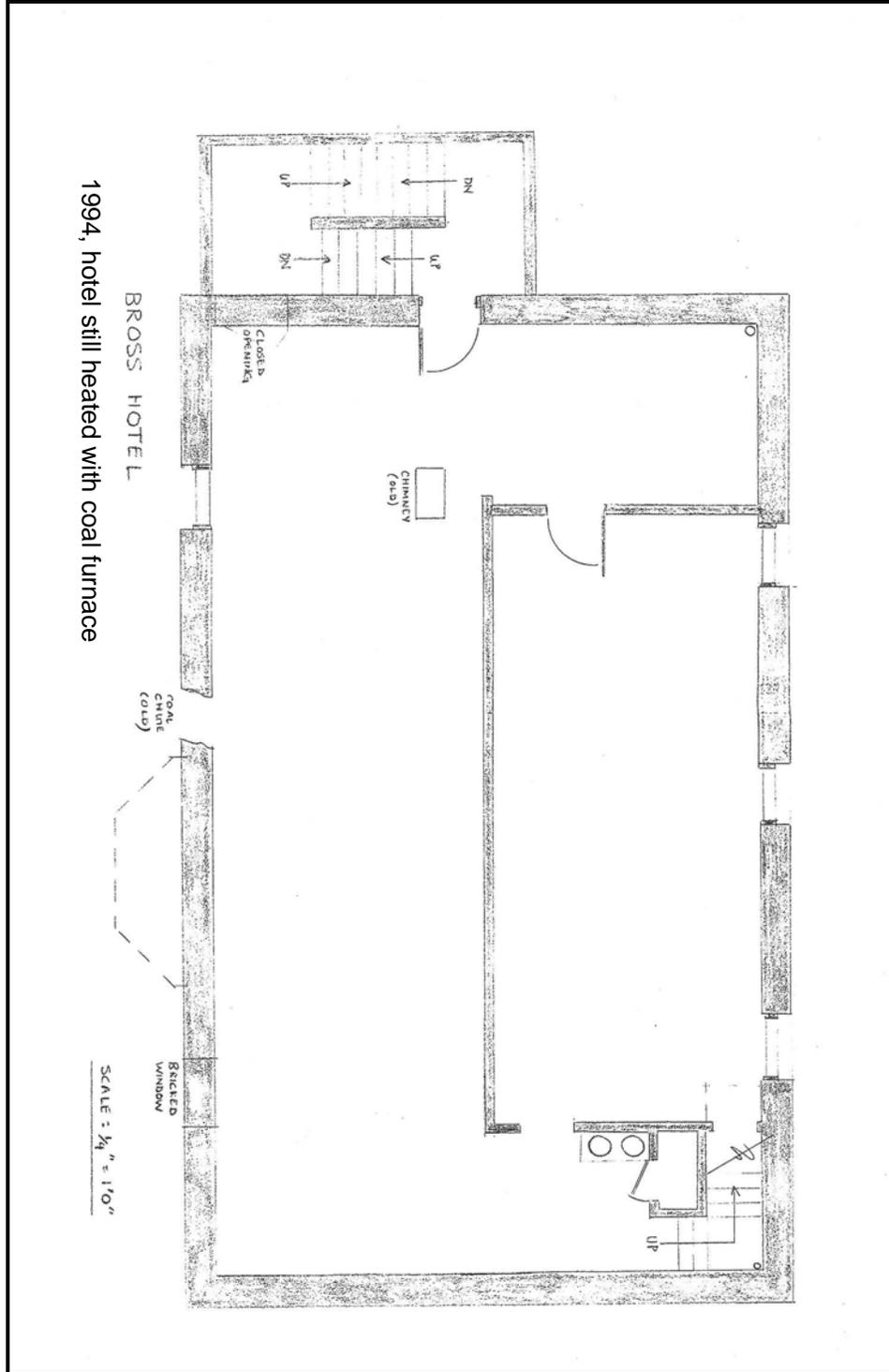


Architectural drawing by David F. Potter, architect, Boulder, CO, 1997.

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**Floor Plan – Basement floor plan 1994**



Architectural drawing by David F. Potter, architect, Boulder, CO, 1994.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Linda P. Lentz (for the property owner)  
organization: \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number: 312 Onarga Avenue  
city or town: Paonia state: CO zip code: 81428  
e-mail: brosshotel@paonia.com  
telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
date: September 2, 2014 | Revised April 2015

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

**Photographs**

**Photo Log**

Name of Property: Bross Hotel  
City or Vicinity: Paonia  
County: Delta State: CO  
Photographer: Tennille VanVleet (photos 1 - 4) and Heather Bailey (photos 5 - 15)  
Date Photographed: March 2014 (photos 1 and 2), September 2014, (photos 3 and 4)  
June 2015 (photos 5 - 15)  
Digital Images: CO\_Delta County\_BrossHotel\_0001 through \_0015  
TIFF images on file with the National Park Service, Washington, D.C.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

<b>Photo No.</b>	<b>Description of photograph</b>
1	East (front) façade, camera facing west.
2	South facing-side and partial east facing-side; camera facing northwest, side and partial front of building.
3	West (rear) facing-side; camera facing east.
4	North façade and partial east façade; camera facing southwest, side and partial front of building view.
5	Main entrance on east -facing side, detail of original front door and wood "Bross Hotel" sign, camera facing west.

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6	View of front porch, camera facing north
7	Detail of decorative sill with "braiding" on front porch picture window, east-facing side, camera facing west.
8	Carriage Step "W T Bross," formerly located in at the front of hotel sidewalk, now at base of ramp to patio, camera facing north.
9	Front lobby, first floor, camera facing northwest
10	Decorative floor grate in center of front lobby, camera facing south.
11	Dining area, first floor, camera facing southeast
12	Dining area, first floor, camera facing northwest
13	Guest room 5 entrance with original door, transom, and woodwork, camera facing south
14	East and south-facing sides of noncontributing shed at rear (west) of property, camera facing northwest.
15	Parking lot, view from Onarga Avenue, camera facing southwest

### Historic Photo Log

**Figure no.**      **Description of Photograph**

1	Bross Hotel looking at south-facing side; Post card reads: "A survey team leaves the Bross Hotel, circa 1913," from ColorCards.Com. Inc., 2001 on file at History Colorado.
2	Bross Hotel looking at south-facing side; unknown date, however, post dates the 1912 rear addition. From owner's collection.
3	Gentlemen in front of the Bross Hotel unknown date. From owner's collection.
4	1981 Bross Hotel east (main) façade and south-facing side; looking northwest. On file with the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Denver, Colorado.
5	1995 Bross Hotel east (main) façade and south-facing side; prior to renovation, looking northwest. On file with the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Denver, CO.
6	1995 Bross Hotel south-facing side; looking north, prior to renovation. On file with the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Denver, CO.
7	1995 Bross Hotel north and east-facing sides; prior to renovation, looking southwest. On file with the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Denver, CO.

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Figure 1 – Bross Hotel looking at south-facing side; Post card reads:  
“A survey team leaves the Bross Hotel, circa 1913.” (However, the 1912 rear addition has  
not been constructed) from ColorCards.Com. Inc., 2001 on file at History Colorado



Figure 2 – Bross Hotel looking south-facing side view;  
unknown date, however, post dates the 1912 rear addition.  
From owner's collection.

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Figure 3 – Gentlemen in front of the Bross Hotel unknown date.  
From owner's collection.



Figure 4 – 1981 Bross Hotel east (main) façade and south-facing side;  
looking northwest. On file with the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation,  
Denver, Colorado

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Figure 5 – 1995 Bross Hotel east (main) façade and south-facing side; prior to renovation looking northwest. On file with the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Denver, Colorado



Figure 6 – 1995 Bross Hotel south-facing side; looking north, prior to renovation. On file with the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Denver, CO.

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Figure 7 – 1995 Bross Hotel north and east-facing sides; prior to renovation, looking southwest.  
On file with the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Denver, CO.