

Hotel Schroeder

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

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: Hotel Schroeder

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing: \_\_\_\_\_

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

### 2. Location

Street & number: 509 W Wisconsin

City or town: Milwaukee State: WI County: Milwaukee

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

### 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>	<b>Date</b>
Daina Penkiunas, Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Officer	
<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:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

##### Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the county)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	_____	Buildings
_____	_____	Sites
_____	<u>1</u>	Structures
_____	_____	Objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/hotel

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/hotel

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT/Art Deco

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

Principal exterior materials of the property: Granite, Brick, Limestone

**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.)

**Summary Paragraph**

The Hotel Schroeder is a twenty-five-story Art Deco hotel designed by Holabird & Roche and completed in 1928 in downtown Milwaukee. The building is constructed of a steel frame and clad in brick with a granite and limestone base. Typical of the Art Deco style, Holabird & Roche's design emphasizes verticality through columns of fluting and an uninterrupted cornice with simple bands of ornament. Ornament throughout is low-relief and of a contrasting stone, and it generally depicts floral patterns, human figures, and shields. The basement and floors one through five are rectangular in plan and hold the public spaces of the hotel, including the main lobby, meeting rooms, event spaces, and restaurants. The primary entrance is on 5<sup>th</sup> Street and the ground story contains commercial space along the north and east elevations. The mid-level

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and upper floors primarily house guest rooms. The sixth through nineteenth floors feature an H-shaped plan with central corridors, and floors twenty through twenty-five have a narrower rectangular plan with a central corridor. The changes in interior layout are the result of the buildings tiered design, complete with setbacks at the middle and upper segments and a tower at the apex. This results in an overall building design that is divided into three sections, evoking a restrained base, shaft, capital composition. A sympathetic fourteen-story addition, known as the West Wing, was constructed in 2000 and designed by Kahler Slater. The non-contributing West Wing is clad with brick and contrasting limestone and features a compatible but simplified ornamental program. Also on site are an interior courtyard with a manicured lawn and a non-contributing six-story parking structure.

## Narrative Description

Setting: The subject building is situated in Milwaukee's downtown district, near public, civic, and commercial buildings. It is located on the west side of downtown, five blocks west of the Milwaukee River. It is a couple blocks northeast of a major highway interchange where I-94, WI-794, and I-43 meet. The surrounding buildings mostly date to the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The Hotel Schroeder is located across the street from the Wisconsin Center, a convention center built in 1998, and thus, many of the surrounding buildings are also hotels, offices, or mixed-use buildings constructed around the same time to service the convention center. Since it is downtown, there are some historic landmarks in the general area, such as Milwaukee City Hall, which is located half-a-mile east. Generally, the buildings directly surrounding the Hotel Schroeder are mid- or high-rise.

Site: The subject site spans the city block that is bounded by Wisconsin Avenue to the north, 5<sup>th</sup> Street to the east, Michigan Street to the south, and 6<sup>th</sup> Street to the west. The 1928 hotel building is located on the northeast corner of the block and fronts 5<sup>th</sup> Street, and the West Wing is located on the northwest corner of the site and does not have a primary entrance since it is mainly accessed from the hotel building. The hotel building measures roughly 138 feet east to west at its widest point and 195 feet north to south at its widest point. The West Wing measures 155 feet east to west and 62 feet north to south. The elevations of the hotel and the West Wing are constructed to the sidewalk, which is lined with lampposts and a handful of street trees. At the south end of the site is a six-story concrete parking structure constructed in the early 2000s. Between the West Wing and the parking structure there is a rectangular outdoor courtyard that was added in the early 2000s. The area is enclosed by the building and metal fencing and contains landscape features such as trees, bushes, and a manicured lawn with an octagonal vinyl gazebo.

## Exterior

The 1928 hotel features brick exteriors with contrasting stone ornamentation set within a restrained base, shaft, capital composition. Fenestration throughout the 1928 hotel building consists of one-over-one modern aluminum-framed windows with simple stone sills unless otherwise noted.

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*1928 Hotel Building*

East Elevation: The base of the east elevation, the first through fifth stories, is sixteen window bays wide and clad in granite on the first floor and limestone on stories two through five. The shaft, stories six through nineteen, is sixteen window bays wide and clad in brick with stone ornamentation. The middle ten bays of this section are set back four window bays from the building plane, which results in the interior's H-shaped plan at those floor levels. The capital section of the hotel building, stories twenty through twenty-five, is fourteen bays wide and, like the shaft portion below it, is set back four bays from the building plane. At the north and south ends of the tower are mechanical penthouses. The twentieth through twenty-fifth stories and the mechanical penthouses are clad in brick with stone ornamentation (Photo 1).

At the base segment of the building, the east elevation's first story level is clad in granite, while the second through fifth floors are clad in limestone. The first story contains the primary entrance with aluminum-framed storefront systems to both the north and south (Photo 2). The primary entrance is located at center of the elevation and consists of a metal-framed, glazed revolving door and double-leaf, aluminum-framed glazed doors to the north. The two entrances are slightly recessed and separated by the granite exterior cladding. On either side of the revolving door are metal signs that read "Hilton Milwaukee City Center" and plaques for the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Historic Hotels of America program. This entrance is covered by a rectilinear hanging marquee with gilded decoration. Flanking the central entrance are storefront systems lining the remainder of the elevation. Three additional entrances are located within the storefronts at the east elevation. There is a single-leaf aluminum-framed glazed door in the second bay from the south. This entrance is set within the south end of the storefront and features a transom window above. There are two other single-leaf aluminum-framed glazed doors, located in the northernmost bay. These entrances are similar to the one located at the south end of the elevation. All storefronts contain awnings that were installed c. 2014. The second through fifth stories highlight the building's Art Deco design, incorporating Art Deco motifs into the limestone exterior. The second and third stories feature five central aluminum-framed fixed windows that span both levels and are slightly recessed within the elevation. Above these windows on the fourth floor level are aluminum-framed fixed windows with panels of low-relief ornament in between that depict floral arrangements in bowls. The windows and ornament are flanked by fluting. The three bays that flank these five windows to the north and south feature aluminum-framed fixed windows with fluting around the center windows in each trio. The north trio has one window in each bay, spanning the second and third stories, while the south trio has three windows in each bay, one on each of stories two through four. The north three bays feature floral patera above and below each of the fixed windows, except the center window, which has a panel of low-relief ornament depicting two birds surrounded by florals above it. The center window bay of the south trio features a horizontal band of ornament between the windows on the third and fourth stories that depicts circular flowers surrounded by vines and leaves. The fifth floor features sixteen one-over-one aluminum-framed windows, between which are panels of ornament that depict floral arrangements surrounded by a horse-shoe shaped carving. Below each of the windows are frieze panels, each with circular flowers surrounded by vines and leaves. There is cornice above the ten central window bays on the fifth floor, capping the base of the building before the first setback. It features a stepped limestone cornice and a central panel of

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ornament that depicts a grand floral arrangement in a bowl. The cornice visually continues on the three bays of the north and south protruding segments of the H with limestone banding and floral frieze panels between the fifth and sixth floor windows.

The shaft portion of the building is divided into three vertical sections: the central setback sixteen window bays and the three window bays on either side. The protruding segments at the north and south are identical and feature a center column of windows are surrounded by stone fluting that runs from the sixth through eighteenth stories. There are also square brick spandrel panels with a decorative stone perimeter separating the windows in this center column. The windows on the nineteenth story are surrounded by carved low-relief ornament that depicts human figures and shields. The cornice above the three east and west window bays is stone and features a pattern of floral ornament. The central setback ten window bays all feature square brick spandrel panels with a decorative stone perimeter between the windows. Each of these window bays are slightly recessed in the elevation, creating vertical piers between the bays that run from stories six through twenty-two.

At the capital section, the central ten bays on stories twenty through twenty-two feature the same square brick spandrel panel with a decorative stone perimeter as the levels below. The twenty-third through twenty-fifth stories are surrounded by stone fluting with ornamental stone panels above the twenty-fifth story windows. There are an additional two window bays on either side of the central ten bays. The two directly adjacent to the center bays protrude slightly from the remainder of the section. In these bays, the windows at the twenty-fifth are topped with decorative stone panels. The roofline is stepped and the three bays on the north and south ends of comprise mechanical penthouses. The hotel building features a simple stone cornice. Below the cornice are ten decorative stone shields. There is additional decorative stone in an abstracted semi-circular pattern above each of the six bays on the mechanical penthouses.

North Elevation: The north elevation is twelve window bays wide and largely continues the design of the east elevation (Photo 3). The first story is clad in granite and has aluminum-framed storefront systems with a centralized pedestrian entrance. The entrance consists of two double-leaf aluminum-framed glazed doors that lead to the hotel. At the south corner is a single-leaf aluminum-framed glazed door that provides access to the commercial space. West of the central entrance, there is a recessed, double-leaf aluminum-framed glazed door and a single-leaf aluminum-framed glazed door, and both provide access to the other leasable tenant spaces. The central entrance and eastern storefronts feature similar awnings to those located on the east elevation. Stories two through five feature limestone cladding that highlights the building's Art Deco design. The second through fourth stories have seven six-light aluminum-framed fixed windows, above which are panels of ornament depicting two birds surrounded by florals, except for the east and westmost windows which have floral patera above them. The center five windows and their corresponding ornamental panels are slightly recessed and surrounded by decorative fluting. The windows, ornament, and fluting span stories two through four. The fifth story features twelve windows, some of which are arranged in pairs, and between which are panels of ornament with floral arrangements surrounded by vines and leaves. Below each of the windows are frieze panels, each with circular flowers surrounded by vines and leaves.

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The windows in the shaft portion of the building feature square brick spandrel panels with a decorative stone perimeter separating the windows and floor levels. These features exist throughout the majority of the elevation, except for the easternmost and westernmost columns of windows. The windows on the nineteenth story are surrounded by carved low-relief stone ornament that depicts human figures and shields, and below them is a stone string course. The cornice is stone and features a pattern of floral ornament.

The capital section of the building is four window bays wide. The easternmost and westernmost bays on stories twenty through twenty-five protrude slightly from the central portion of the elevation. The central two window bays feature square brick spandrel panels with a stone perimeter. Above the twenty-fifth story windows are decorative stone panels and shields. There is a simple stone cornice which features abstracted stone decoration above each of the windows on the mechanical penthouse.

West Elevation: The west elevation essentially mirrors the east elevation in form but features a simpler ornamental program as the west is a secondary elevation (Photo 4). It is twenty window bays wide and divided into three sections with setbacks. The northern section of the base abuts the west wing, so only the southern section of the building is visible, including three window bays. The rest of the base is utilitarian and fenestration-less with limited ornamentation.

The shaft portion of the building is divided into three vertical sections: the central setback twelve window bays and the four protruding window bays on either side. The protruding segment at the north is not visible because it abuts the West Wing. The windows on the nineteenth story of the south protruding segment have stone surrounds and two stringcourses below. At the north and south end of this protruding segment is low-relief decorative stone ornament that depicts human figures and shields. The center six window bays of the twelve setback feature square brick spandrels with a decorative stone perimeter. Each of these six window bays are also slightly recessed in the elevation, creating vertical piers between the bays that run from stories six through twenty-five.

At the capital section, the six window bays in the middle of the tower have the same square brick spandrel panels with a stone perimeter as the levels below. At the twenty-fifth story these six windows are topped with decorative stone panels. The two bays directly adjacent to the twelve middle bays protrude slightly. The south protruding bay features a decorative stone panel but no window. The elevation features a simple stone cornice. Below the cornice are six decorative stone shields. The roofline is stepped, and between the mechanical penthouses is a large metal "HILTON" sign that was installed c. 1995 when Hilton purchased the subject building (Photo 5). The sign is approximately ten feet in height. There is additional abstracted decorative stone above the six bays on the mechanical penthouses.

South Elevation: The secondary south elevation is twelve bays wide (Photo 6). The base of the building is primarily utilitarian, and some of the windows have been infilled with metal louvers, covered with plywood, or feature mechanical equipment at the upper sash. The southernmost bay of the base features limestone cladding, continuing the design of the primary, east, elevation. This bay also features two low-relief ornamental panels that depict floral arrangements

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surrounded by a horse-shoe shaped carving and frieze panels with floral patterns, further continuation of the ornamental program on the east elevation.

The shaft portion of the elevation features little to no ornamentation and primarily consists of a simple red brick exterior. At the easternmost bay of the sixth story, the window features a similar stone surround with stone frieze above as the windows at that level on the east elevation. Throughout the shaft portion of the elevation (stories six through eighteen), the window openings in the third bay from the west feature brick infill recessed within the opening. The windows on the nineteenth story are outlined with stone and feature square brick spandrel panels with a stone perimeter, in some instances the spandrel panels feature a metal louvre at center. The ornamental program of the primary elevation continues on the eastmost bay of the nineteenth floor, which has carved low-relief stone ornament that depicts human figures and shields. The cornice is stone with a pattern of stone floral ornament.

The capital section of the building is simple in comparison to the building's other elevations, with only two windows on the southern mechanical penthouse. There is a stone string course below these windows and two slightly recessed circular stone shields. Below the shields are two rectangular panels of floral ornament flanked by additional decorative stone panels with floral ornament that recall window openings. The cornice is simple, and below it is additional abstracted decorative stone.

Roof: There are multiple roof levels due to the setback nature of the design. All are flat with synthetic roofing membrane and brick and stone parapets. There is some mechanical equipment on the roof above the twenty-fifth story and an antenna that measures approximately 350 feet (Photo 5).

#### *West Wing (2000)*

The West Wing is a fourteen-story addition that features brick exteriors with contrasting limestone ornamentation. Fenestration throughout consists of aluminum-framed fixed windows flanked by aluminum-framed one-over-one windows with simple stone sills unless otherwise noted. It is built in a compatible style with the 1928 hotel building and continues some Art Deco motifs in a simplified fashion. There is no east elevation as the West Wing abuts the 1928 hotel building.

North Elevation: The north elevation is eleven window bays wide. Like the 1928 hotel building, the first story is clad in granite, floors two through five are clad in limestone, and the upper levels are clad in brick with limestone ornamentation (Photo 7). At the base, the second through fourth stories feature four aluminum-frame fixed windows that span the three levels. They are surrounded by decorative limestone fluting. Between the windows are metal light sconces. There are simple geometric decorative stone carvings on the west corner. The fifth story features paired aluminum-framed one-over-one windows. There are stone string courses below the sixth-story windows and above the twelfth-story windows. There are simple decorative stone panels above the fourteenth-story windows, as well as below the eastmost and westmost windows at this level. The addition features a simple stone cornice.



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The 1928 hotel building and the West Wing are visually connected at this elevation by a column of stone that runs the height of the elevation and rises above the fourteenth story. At the ground floor of this column is an entrance, recessed in the elevation, that consists of a double-leaf aluminum-framed glazed door.

At the third story, the north elevation is connected via skywalk to the Wisconsin Center across Wisconsin Ave. Below the skywalk is a multi-lite fixed window.

West Elevation: There are two sections of the west elevation: a fourteen-story section, at north, and a four-story section, to the south (Photo 8). The fourteen-story section is four window bays wide, and, like the north elevation, the first floor features a granite-clad base with limestone above, and the upper levels are clad in brick with stone ornamentation. There is a single aluminum-framed fixed window that spans floors two through four which is surrounded by decorative stone fluting. It is flanked by metal sconces and simple geometric decorative stone carvings. The fifth story features paired aluminum-framed one-over-one windows. The upper levels only feature two columns of windows with no fenestration between them. There are simple stone panels above and below the two fourteenth floor windows. The roofline is stepped, and the center section rises above the two side sections. The three sections feature simple stone cornices.

The four-story section of the west elevation is utilitarian and clad in limestone. It is four bays wide and features metal louvers with simple piers between them. The southmost bay protrudes slightly and contains a double-leaf, aluminum-framed glazed door with aluminum-framed glazed sidelights. Above the doors is an aluminum-framed fixed window and a metal louver that span floors two through four. The doors, window, and louver are surrounded by decorative stone fluting and metal light sconces. This section features poster signage in each bay.

South Elevation: The south elevation is divided into two sections: a fourteen-story section at north and a four-story section to the south (Photo 9). The fourteen story section essentially mirrors the north elevation, with the exception of the lower levels which are covered by the four-story south section. It is eleven window bays wide. The fifth story is clad in limestone and features paired aluminum-framed one-over-one windows. There are stone string courses above the twelfth-story windows and below the fourteenth-story windows. There are simple stone panels above the fourteenth-story windows, as well as below the easternmost and westernmost windows at this level. The building features a simple stone cornice.

The four-story section is utilitarian and finished with limestone and painted concrete block. There are two double-leaf painted metal doors at this elevation.

## **Interior**

The 1928 hotel building and the West Wing addition are interconnected at floors one through fourteen, where the east elevation of the West Wing abuts the west side of the north leg of the H shape of the 1928 hotel building.

### *1928 Hotel Building*

First Floor: The first floor primarily houses the first floor of the three-story lobby at the center of the plan and leasable commercial and restaurant space and back of house spaces, which are located around the perimeter. Circulation on the first floor is provided by T-shaped primary corridors that intersect at the center of the plan, where the first floor of the lobby, called the rotunda, is located. The east-west corridor leads to the primary entrance on the east elevation and the corresponding entrance vestibule. The finishes in the entrance vestibule include marble tile floors, marble and wood wall paneling and metal ornamental grates (Photo 10). The ceilings are barrel-vaulted plaster with ornate crown molding that features floral decoration. The north end of the north-south corridor leads to the entrance on the north elevation. Finishes in this entrance vestibule include carpeting, plaster or gypsum board walls with aluminum-framed glazing, and metal ornamental grates. The ceilings are barrel-vaulted plaster with ornate crown molding that features floral decoration. In the first floor rotunda, two carpeted staircases with ornate metal railings lead to the second floor of the lobby (Photo 11). The finishes in this area include marble tile and marble wall paneling and plaster walls as well as highly decorative metal grates, behind which are service spaces and commercial spaces (Photo 12). All of the commercial spaces can be accessed from the interior; street access to select tenant spaces are provided on the north and east elevations, as described above. Finishes in the commercial spaces have been updated and include carpeting, luxury vinyl plank (LVP) and luxury vinyl tile (LVT), and tile flooring, gypsum board walls, and acoustic drop tile ceilings. In some tenant spaces, the ceilings incorporate plaster and gypsum board wrapped beams, with the acoustic ceiling tile (ACT) lain inboard.

Second Floor: The second floor contains the hotel's lobby at the center of the plan and lounges, dining room, and administrative spaces around the perimeter. Circulation is primarily provided by a central north-west corridor that intersects the lobby. There is no central east-west circulation because of the atrium on the east side of the lobby that looks below to the first floor (Photo 13). The ceilings are double height in the lobby space and are plaster with geometric patterns and gilded floral molding and decoration (Photo 14). The walls in the lobby feature marble paneling at the base with wallpapered plaster above it. There are twelve columns, ten around the perimeter of the lobby and two in the center. At the base of the columns is marble, and the capital has decorative gilded floral molding. The north and south sides of the columns feature gilded reeding, and the east and west sides have wood paneling, some with gilded decorative metal grilles. The floors are patterned marble tile. At the west edge of the perimeter is the reception desk, which is clad with marble and has some metal grilles. At the south end of the reception desk is the connection to the West Wing. There is a metal railing with floral motifs around the central atrium.

The elevator lobby is located at the south end of the lobby (Photo 15). The elevator doors are gold-plated and feature floral patterns. The surrounding walls are marble. The ceiling is plaster and features decorative crown molding with a gilded floral pattern. The floor is patterned marble tile. South of the elevator lobby are double-leaf wooden doors with glazing that lead to a private lounge. Finishes in the lounge include gypsum board walls with wooden wainscoting and crown molding, carpeting or marble tile floors, and wooden coffered ceilings.

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At the north end of the atrium is the dining room, which is double-height (Photo 16). It is accessed by marble stairs with carpeted treads and risers and double-leaf doors with mirrored glass. Finishes in the dining room include carpeting, wallpaped plaster walls, and plaster ceilings with decorative gilded crown molding with floral motifs. The base of the chandeliers is highly decorative with gilded floral motifs. The walls feature ornate gilded decoration with floral motifs and metal sconces. There are eight columns that run east-west in the event space and feature decorative gilded ornament and grilles.

At the east end of the atrium is an open lounge, which is also double-height (Photo 17). The east perimeter wall has wood paneling and metal grilles around the windows, as well as mirrored glass and metal sconces between the windows. The floor is carpeted, and the ceiling is plaster with a geometric pattern around the perimeter and acoustic drop tile infill at the center. On the north and south walls, the wooden paneling has decorative metal panels that depict cherubs, festoons, and shields.

Third Floor: The third floor comprises only the southern and western portions of the floor plan because of the double-height lobby, dining room, and lounge on the second floor. The floor houses offices and utilitarian spaces like a kitchen which are primarily accessed from an east-west corridor on the south portion of the plan. A kitchen and break room are located south of this east-west corridor. Offices and administrative spaces are situated north of the east-west corridor. Finishes in the kitchen and break room include vinyl flooring, and plaster or gypsum board walls and ceilings. Finishes in the offices include carpeting and plaster walls and ceilings, as well as some historic marble and glazed tile.

Fourth Floor: The fourth floor consists of meeting rooms located around the primary north-south double-wide corridor with a marble imperial stair that leads to the fifth floor at the north end and the elevator lobby at the south. At the south, the primary corridor is bisected, providing access to a secondary north-south running corridor at the east end of the floorplan and an east-west running corridor to the south of the elevator lobby. Individual meeting rooms are accessed via the secondary corridors. Finishes in the primary and secondary corridors include carpeting and plaster walls and ceilings. Finishes in the meeting rooms include carpeting, gypsum board walls, and acoustic drop tile ceilings.

Fifth Floor: The fifth floor consists of event spaces, including the ballroom and the banquet room. These are accessed via a central foyer with the imperial stair at the north end and the elevator lobby at the south. At the south, the primary corridor is bisected, providing access to a secondary east-west running corridor north of the elevator lobby. This east-west corridor connects to a secondary north-south running corridor at the east end of the floorplan. This north-south corridor connects to another secondary east-west corridor north of the imperial stair. The ballroom is accessed from the central foyer, and the banquet room and meeting rooms are accessed from the secondary corridors. Finishes in the foyer and corridors include carpeting and plaster or gypsum board wall and ceilings. The marble imperial staircase features cast metal railings with decorative faces (Photo 18). The walls are wallpaped plaster and feature fluted marble pilasters with marble bases and gilded Doric capitals. In between the pilasters are

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medallions with low-relief marble cherubs. Above the pilasters is ornate gilded crown molding. The elevator lobby features carpeting, wallpapered plaster walls, and plaster ceilings with decorative crown molding with gilded floral motifs.

Finishes in the banquet room east of the central foyer include carpeting, wallpapered plaster walls, and acoustic drop tile ceiling (Photo 19). The chandelier bases feature ornate gilded festoons and other motifs. The walls have decorative gold-plated medallions that depict fountains. West of the central foyer is the ballroom (Photo 20). Finishes include carpeting, wallpapered plaster walls, and plaster ceilings. Around the perimeter of the ceilings is decorative crown molding, a pattern of metal medallions, and a geometric plaster pattern. At the center of the ceiling are a series of three decorative metal medallion arrangements. The walls feature various bands of decorative metal ornamental panels, bands, and grilles. Some feature floral motifs, others depict fruits, human figures, and geometric patterns. There are Pegasi above the windows. Finishes in the private meeting rooms along the north perimeter of the plan include carpeting, wood paneled walls, and plaster ceilings with gilded decorative crown molding.

Floors 6-19: The sixth through nineteenth floors are generally identical in finish and plan and consist of guest rooms organized around an H-shaped plan. At each floor, a centrally located north-south, double-loaded corridor connects each leg of the H (Photo 21), which both have east-west running corridors. The elevator lobby is located at the intersection of the south arm and the central portion of the H. Finishes in the elevator lobbies are consistent throughout the individual levels and include carpet flooring, wallpapered plaster walls, and gypsum board and plaster ceilings (Photo 22). Finishes in the corridors are consistent throughout levels and include carpet flooring, wallpapered plaster walls, and plaster ceilings. Finishes in the guest rooms are consistent throughout levels and include carpet flooring in the rooms and stone tile in the bathrooms and plaster or gypsum board walls and ceilings (Photos 23-24). Specific to individual floors:

The seventh floor has a fitness center, located north of the elevator lobby on the west side of the corridor. Finishes in the fitness center include LVP flooring and plaster or gypsum board walls and ceilings.

The nineteenth floor contains Suite 1932, a multi-room suite, in the east corner of the H's north leg (Photo 25). Finishes in the suite include historic wood and marble tile floors, as well as carpeting and stone tile floors, wood paneling, and gypsum board and plaster walls and ceilings.

Floors 20-24: The twentieth through twenty-fourth floors comprise the uppermost portion of the building and consist of guest rooms that are arranged around a rectangular plan. Rooms are accessed via the central double-loaded corridor with the elevator lobby at the south end of the corridor. Finishes in the elevator lobbies are consistent throughout levels and include carpet flooring, wallpapered plaster walls, and gypsum board and plaster ceilings. Finishes in the corridors are consistent throughout levels and include carpeting, wallpapered plaster walls, and plaster ceilings (Photo 26). Finishes in the guest rooms are consistent throughout levels and include carpet flooring in the rooms with stone tile in the bathrooms and wallpapered plaster or gypsum board walls, and plaster or gypsum board ceilings (Photos 27-28).

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The twenty-fourth floor also contains Suite 2432, which was the historic residence where hotel owner Walter Schroeder lived until the 1960s (Photos 29-30). The suite is located at the north end of the plan and contains a reception hall, a bedroom, a living room, a dining room, and service kitchen. The reception hall is east-west oriented and provides access to the bedroom at the west end and the living room and dining room at the east end. The bathroom is located north of the reception hall, and the service kitchen is south of the dining room. Finishes in the suite include historic parquet wood floors, historic wood wall paneling, and historic plaster ceilings with decorative molding and gilding in the living and dining rooms. Other historic finishes include marble tile floors and plaster walls with decorative trim in the reception hall. The service kitchen finishes include historic glazed and ceramic tile and plaster ceilings. Some finishes have been updated in the bedroom and bathroom, and they include carpeting and stone tile floors, and gypsum board and plaster walls and ceilings. The walls in the bedroom feature decorative plaster trim, including broken pediments over the windows.

Floor 25: The twenty-fifth floor houses offices, service areas, and storage which are located around a central north-south corridor. At the south end of the corridor is the elevator lobby, which is separated from the corridor by double-leaf aluminum framed glazed doors. South of the elevator lobby is a staircase that leads to the southern mechanical penthouse. Finishes in the corridor include carpeting, plaster or gypsum board walls, and acoustic drop tile ceilings. Finishes in the elevator lobby include vinyl tile flooring, gypsum board walls, and acoustic drop tile ceilings. Finishes in the offices include carpeting, gypsum board walls, and dropped acoustic tile ceilings (Photo 31). Finishes in the service and storage areas include carpeting or LVT flooring, plaster walls, and plaster or exposed ceilings.

Mechanical Penthouse: The penthouse contains mechanical spaces and equipment and provides access to the roof. Finishes include concrete floors, plaster or gypsum board walls, and exposed concrete ceiling structure.

Basement: The basement houses some offices, workshops, storage space, and mechanical equipment. These are generally located around a central north-south corridor which connects to two east-west corridors at either end (Photo 32). The elevator lobby is located centrally located at the south end of the plan. The offices are located west of the elevator lobby, and the workshops, storage spaces, and mechanical rooms comprise the rest of the floor. Finishes in the elevator lobby include vinyl floors, plaster walls, and exposed ceilings. Finishes in the corridors include vinyl or concrete floors, plaster or gypsum board walls, and exposed ceilings. Finishes in the offices include LVP flooring, gypsum board walls, and acoustic drop tile ceilings. Finishes in the workshops, storage spaces, and mechanical equipment include vinyl or concrete floors, plaster or gypsum board walls, and exposed ceilings.

Vertical Access: Vertical access throughout the hotel building is provided by two main elevator banks on either side of the primary elevator lobby. Each bank contains three elevators. Additionally, there is a service elevator bank with three elevators directly west of the primary elevator lobby. Finishes in the service elevator lobby include LVT flooring and plaster walls and ceilings.

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There are three stairwells that provide access throughout the hotel. There are two in the west leg of the H – one on the north side of the service elevators and one south of the elevator lobby. The third stairwell is located at the intersection of the east arm and the central portion of the H. Finishes in the stairwells include metal stairs, concrete floors, and plaster walls or carpet floors and wallpapered plaster walls.

#### *West Wing (2000)*

Floors 1-3: The first through third floors primarily contain the family fun center, which is no longer in use (Photo 33). The fun center is primarily accessed on the second floor, which has corridors along the north and east perimeters that connect to the 1928 hotel building. The north corridor is large and also includes lobby space. The east corridor on the second floor also provides access to the outdoor courtyard. Finishes in the corridors include carpet flooring, gypsum board walls and columns with marble paneling, and gypsum board or acoustic drop tile ceilings. The family fun center has water features, including a variety of climbing areas, plastic slides and vinyl-lined pools. The space features concrete floors, concrete load-bearing columns, and a cloud ceiling system. On the second floor, there is a mezzanine in the family fun center, which contains the concessions area. Finishes in the concession area include concrete floors, painted gypsum board walls and metal and rope fencing, and exposed ceiling.

Floor 4: The fourth floor contains offices and public meeting rooms. The offices are located on the west half of the plan and the meeting rooms on the east half, with a north-south running corridor between them. A large corridor and lobby space is located at the north end of the plan, which contains an elevator bank, stairs, and escalators. At the northeast corner of the plan, the fourth floor features a connection to the convention center across the street via skywalk. Finishes in the elevator lobby and corridors include carpeting, wallpapered gypsum board walls, and gypsum board ceilings. Finishes in the meeting rooms include carpet flooring, wallpapered gypsum board walls, and gypsum board (Photo 34). Finishes in the offices are consistent with modern office buildings and include carpet flooring, gypsum board walls, and acoustic drop tile ceilings.

Floors 5-14: The fifth through fourteenth floors are rectangular in plan and contain guest rooms. There is a centrally located double-loaded corridor that runs east-west and provides access to the guest rooms (Photo 35). There is a stairwell and an elevator lobby at the east end of the corridor. Finishes in the elevator lobbies are consistent throughout levels and include carpet flooring, wallpapered gypsum board walls, and gypsum board ceilings. Finishes in the corridors are consistent throughout levels and include carpet flooring, wallpapered gypsum board walls, and gypsum board ceilings. Finishes in the guest rooms are consistent throughout levels and include carpet flooring in the rooms with stone tile in the bathrooms, wallpapered gypsum board walls, and gypsum board ceilings (Photo 36).

Vertical Access: Vertical access throughout the building is provided by an elevator bank at the east end of the plan with two elevators and two stairwells, one at the east and one at the west end of the plan. In addition, there is an escalator that provides access between floors the second

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through fifth floors in the large north corridor and lobby space. Finishes in the elevator lobby include carpeting, wallpaped gypsum board walls, and gypsum board ceilings. Finishes in the stairwells are consistent throughout levels and include painted concrete treads and risers, metal railings, vinyl flooring at the landings, and painted cinder block walls (Photo 37).

## Integrity

National Register Bulletin 15 describes integrity as the capability of a resource to convey its significance, and evaluates integrity based on a set of seven aspects detailing a property's physical features and how they relate to its significance.

Specific to the seven aspects of integrity:

Location: The Hotel Schroeder is in its original location. As such, it retains integrity of location.

Setting: The Hotel Schroeder was built in Milwaukee's downtown in the early twentieth century. As such, the area has always been urban with buildings of various heights and ages. Even though the downtown has been further developed and new buildings have been constructed, the Hotel Schroeder remains situated within Milwaukee's central commercial and business district, which is still an urban setting with buildings of varying heights and ages. When the hotel was first built, it was near other smaller hotels, and it is still located amongst other smaller hotels, albeit in newer buildings, that were built to accommodate the changing businesses. Additionally, the Hotel Schroeder is located one block west of the West Side Commercial Historic District (period of significance: 1891-1930), and thus many contributing resources from the hotel's construction era are still in existence. As such, the Hotel Schroeder retains integrity of setting.

Design: The Hotel Schroeder remains recognizable as an Art Deco building of Holabird & Roche design, with elements of Holabird & Root's influence since the hotel was designed and built during the firm's transitional years. The exterior of the 1928 building has not been significantly altered and retains the majority of the original materials, features, and scale. It remains a brick building with stone ornamentation and setbacks at the mid and upper levels to accommodate height restrictions in the 1920s, as was common of high-rise Art Deco buildings. The storefronts at the first floor have been updated with modern glazed panels, but the original storefront designs, locations, and openings remain. Entrances have also been introduced at the storefronts, though they remain simple in design and conform with the overall design of storefronts. The low-relief ornamental program remains intact, with stone panels that depict floral patterns, figures, and shields. The Art Deco elements that emphasize the building's verticality, such as the fluting, vertical piers, spandrel panels, and uninterrupted cornice, are still highly visible. The West Wing is connected at the secondary west elevation, so parts of the utilitarian base were covered, which did not affect any ornament. The four protruding north bays were also covered by the addition, but these had limited ornamentation, and the decorative stone ornament and cornice at the nineteenth story is still visible.

At the interior, the guest rooms and event spaces have been updated and rearranged as the needs and standards of the hotel changed, but the original circulation patterns and vertical access points

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are intact. In addition, the original residence layout on the twenty-fourth floor remains. The public spaces on the lower levels, such as the entrance vestibule, three-story lobby, ballrooms, and meeting rooms are in their original locations and retain their volumes. These public spaces also retain much of their Art Deco ornamentation, including gilded crown molding, cast metal grilles with geometric designs, and metal ornamental panels that depict animals and figures. The public spaces also retain original materials such as marble tiles, marble panels, and some decorative plaster ceilings. Interior connections to the west wing are located at the west end of the original corridors, merely extending them, and do not affect original circulation patterns. As such, the Hotel Schroeder retains a high degree of integrity of design.

Materials: The exterior of the Hotel Schroeder retains a high degree of original materials. Though doors and windows have been updated with modern replacements, the fenestration pattern and window and door openings remain the same. The original exterior brick, limestone, and granite cladding remain. In addition, the original stone ornament, such as the fluting around the windows at the base and mid-levels, panels with floral patterns at the lower levels, spandrel panels and the mid-levels, low-relief figural carvings and shields at the top levels, and cornices with floral patterns are intact and highly visible. The hanging metal marquee with gilded decoration is still above the primary entrance. The red metal "HILTON" sign at roof on the west elevation was added in the mid-1990s and has become an important part of the Milwaukee skyline.

At the interior, finishes have been updated, but the public spaces at the lower levels retain historic materials like marble paneling and marble tile floors. Highly decorative Art Deco ornament remains intact such as metal grilles, gold-plated elevator doors, low-relief metal panels, and gilded crown molding. Some walls in these public spaces have been wallpapered, and some floors have updated carpet. Many of the ceilings retain the original plaster with decorative elements, but some have been infilled with acoustic drop tiles. The original corridor and elevator lobby walls have been wallpapered, and carpets in those circulation areas have been updated. On the guest room floors, some rooms retain plaster walls and ceilings, while others have been rearranged with gypsum board walls. Carpets and bathroom tiles in guest rooms have been updated. Many of the updates to the guest rooms date to the mid-1990s, when the hotel underwent the most recent ownership change and thus the most recent renovation campaign. In the residence on the twenty-fourth floor, historic materials such as the hardwood floors, marble and ceramic tiles, wood wall paneling, glazed tile wall finishes, and plaster ceilings with molding. The elevator cabs retain wood paneling and gilded crown molding with acanthus leaf patterns. As such, the Hotel Schroeder retains integrity of materials.

Workmanship: The Hotel Schroeder retains the construction methods that enabled the building, one of Milwaukee's earliest skyscrapers, to be twenty-five-stories tall. It remains a steel-frame building clad in masonry: brick, limestone, and granite. Exterior ornament on Art Deco buildings was generally low-relief, an abstracted version of Classical ornamentation, which was typically more high-relief. The Hotel Schroeder retains its low-relief stone ornament throughout the elevations, depicting floral arrangements, birds, human figures, and shields at the base and the cornices, all of which are still clearly recognizable. In addition, Art Deco ornament was often metal, since at the time technology was advancing and architects could experiment with new



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allows for decoration. The Hotel Schroeder retains this then-new kind of workmanship in the metal ornament at the interior, including geometric cast metal grilles, metal railings with cast figures, and metal panels which depict figures and animals in the lobby and event spaces. As such, the Hotel Schroeder retains integrity of workmanship.

Feeling: The Hotel Schroeder retains character defining features in its design, materials, and workmanship that continue to make it recognizable as an Art Deco skyscraper in Milwaukee. Therefore, it retains the feeling of a 1928 building since the style has not been a popular style in the United States since before mid-century. In addition, the building retains features that distinguish it as a hotel, including the original circulation patterns designed to make vertical and horizontal movements clear for guests as they traveled between public spaces and their private rooms. As such, the Hotel Schroeder retains integrity of feeling.

Association: The Hotel Schroeder has been in active use as a hotel since its opening in 1928, except for brief closures for renovations. The building has changed owners, and finishes have been updated but it retains the characteristic features of hotel, such as the public lobby, restaurants ballrooms, and meeting rooms that provide services for guests and the upper levels that have hundreds of guest rooms. Just as when it opened in 1928, the hotel provides lodging and accommodation for those traveling through Milwaukee for business or leisure. As such, the Hotel Schroeder retains integrity of association.

Overall, the Hotel Schroeder retains integrity and continues to convey its historic use as a hotel and significance as an example of Art Deco architecture designed by the renowned firm of Holabird and Roche with influence from the younger Holabird and Root.

**END OF DESCRIPTION, DO NOT DELETE**

## 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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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMERCE

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is checked.)

**Period of Significance**

1928

1928 - 1965

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Significant Dates**

1928

**Architect/Builder**

Holabird & Roche (1928 building)

Kahler Slater (2000 addition)

**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 Hotel Schroeder is a 25-story Art Deco building designed by Holabird & Roche in Milwaukee in 1928. It was the flagship of Milwaukee-native Walter Schroeder's hotel chain, which owned and operated hotels in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan. The Hotel Schroeder is locally significant under Criterion A in the category of COMMERCE, as the center of Schroeder's successful business and as a prominent hotel in Milwaukee. Schroeder was a shrewd businessman, and in the 1910s and 1920s he built a chain of hotels known for their luxurious and comfortable amenities. Schroeder recognized the need for additional hotel rooms throughout Wisconsin since many out-of-state visitors were passing through instead of staying the night and bolstering the local economies. He constructed new hotels in strategic locations across the state so that no matter where visitors were, or if they were traveling for business or pleasure, they could find premium lodging at a Schroeder hotel. The Hotel Schroeder was the premiere example of the company's portfolio, representing Walter Schroeder's goal to bring a modern hotel to Milwaukee as a symbol of the thriving community and to put the city on par with other large American cities in terms of the hospitality industry. In the first year of operation, Hotel Schroeder hosted a wide variety of local, state-wide, and national conventions; served more than

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1,200,000 meals in its restaurants; and became the second most valuable downtown property in the city. The hotel survived the economic downturn of the Great Depression, and during the 1940s it reached 90% occupancy and often had as many as 1,200 or 1,300 guests at any given time. In the 1950s and early 1960s, the hotel continued to serve as the premiere hotel in the city, updating its facilities to attract a modern customer base. During this time, the hotel continued to attract conventions, like the Wisconsin State Democratic Convention, and numerous visitors. The Hotel Schroeder remains one of the city's premiere hotels.

In addition, the Hotel Schroeder is locally significant under Criterion C in the category of ARCHITECTURE as a distinctly transitional work as the architects' firm changed from Holabird & Roche to Holabird & Root. Founded in the 1880s, Holabird & Roche was a renowned Chicago-based firm, known for their mastery of the Chicago Style and their use of classical architectural styles. In the 1920s, they began to transfer control of their firm to Holabird's son and John Wellborn Root Jr. before the firm was officially reorganized as Holabird & Root in 1928. The firm's designs during the period of transition showed elements of Holabird & Roche's preferred classical/Beaux Arts styles and Holabird & Root's interest in experimenting with modern styles as they honed their skills in the increasingly popular mode. Hotel Schroeder was designed and completed during these transitional years, and thus features both Holabird & Roche and Holabird & Root's architectural tendencies. It features blocky forms and a tripartite design, typical elements of Holabird & Roche's work, and forward-looking characteristics of the Art Deco, common in Holabird & Root's designs. Additionally, the building is also significant as an excellent example of the Art Deco style. The character defining features of the style include an emphasis on verticality present in the fluting, uninterrupted cornices, and setbacks. The Art Deco style is also acutely present in the interior and exterior ornament. The exterior features low-relief stone ornament with common Art Deco motifs such as fluting, floral designs, and other figures. The interior, notably the public spaces on the lower levels, is highly ornate with gilded and metal-plated elements. As such, the Hotel Schroeder is both an evolved Holabird & Roche design and an early Holabird & Root work from a distinct time period in the firm's history. Further, it is a major skyscraper in downtown Milwaukee, prominently displaying its Art Deco architecture within the city and providing accommodations to travelers and locals alike.

### **Period of Significance and Justification**

The Period of Significance for Criteria A is 1928 – 1965, the year that Walter Schroeder sold the Hotel. The period of significance under Criteria C is 1928, the year that construction was completed, and that the hotel opened to the public.

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

### **Developmental History**

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Walter Schroeder, president of the Schroeder Hotel Company, began planning for a new hotel in downtown Milwaukee in 1925, and he intended it to be the largest in the city with 800 rooms.<sup>1</sup> The lot at the southwest corner of Fifth Street and Grand Avenue was officially purchased in August 1926 for over \$1 million, and initial plans estimated construction would cost \$5.5 million.<sup>2</sup> Schroeder purchased the site from Joseph E Uihlein, president of the Second Ward Savings Bank. After the purchase was formalized, the Schroeder Hotel Company was incorporated to operate the building and lease, construct, and manage other hotels.<sup>3</sup>

Construction faced many obstacles, beginning with building restrictions in the city's downtown. At the time, Milwaukee had a 125-foot building height limit. Some saw this as a hindrance to the growth of the city, while defenders argued that it kept sunlight in buildings.<sup>4</sup> The height restriction directly affected plans for the proposed Hotel Schroeder, which was designed to be twenty-two stories tall. Eventually, the city approved Schroeder's plans, deciding that since the design featured setbacks and lightwells, some portions of the hotel would only be a few stories tall. Therefore, the space sacrificed by the setbacks and lightwells could be added to the top stories, since the total area would be approximately the same as that if the building mass was entirely 125 feet tall.<sup>5</sup> As a result of the litigation and Schroeder's push for a large, modern hotel in Milwaukee, the city instituted a new height restriction of 250 feet in 1926.<sup>6</sup> As such, the construction of the Hotel Schroeder paved the way for a new era of architecture in Milwaukee, one which included Art Deco skyscrapers like the Milwaukee Gas Light Company Building and the Mariner Tower, further discussed below in the Comparative Analysis section of this nomination.

Construction for the Hotel Schroeder started on November 1, 1926 with a planned timeline of eighteen months for completion. At the time construction started, the hotel was estimated to cost \$6.5 million, including furnishings. The first 18 stories were to be built first and then four stories added later.<sup>7</sup> Later plans showed that the building would have foundations for an additional three stories, totaling twenty-five floors.<sup>8</sup> The bottom five floors were designated for general public use, and included storefronts, offices, lobbies, dining rooms, and the kitchen.<sup>9</sup> Guest rooms were located on floors 6 and above and were accessible via six guest and three service elevators. The lobby was on the second floor, and hotel offices occupied the entire twenty-fifth floor, which was accessible via with six guest and three service elevators.<sup>10</sup> The architects were noted Chicago firm Holabird & Roche, who had experience designing downtown skyscrapers and modern hotels, including the Hotel Wisconsin (constructed 1913) and the Hotel Wausau (constructed 1925) both part of Schroeder's chain.

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<sup>1</sup> "Register Deed for Hotel Site," *Milwaukee Journal*, October 3, 1926.

<sup>2</sup> "Prepare Plans for New Hotel," *Milwaukee Journal*, August 8, 1926.

<sup>3</sup> "Prepare Plans for New Hotel," *Milwaukee Journal*, August 8, 1926.

<sup>4</sup> "Citizens Debate Building Height," *Milwaukee Journal*, December 5, 1925.

<sup>5</sup> "Building Height Compromise to Bring Biggest Hotel Here," *Milwaukee Journal*, February 25, 1926.

<sup>6</sup> "250-Foot Height Plan Wins in Committee," *Milwaukee Journal*, April 8, 1926.

<sup>7</sup> "Vote to Permit 22-Story Hotel," *Milwaukee Journal*, April 9, 1926.

<sup>8</sup> "Schroeder Hotel Co Buys Grand Ave Corner," *Milwaukee Journal*, August 9, 1926.

<sup>9</sup> "Hotels Adding 1,000 Rooms," *Milwaukee Journal*, May 22, 1927.

<sup>10</sup> "25-Story Hotel Opens Tonight," *Milwaukee Journal*, January 25, 1928.

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The Hotel Schroeder opened for business at 6 p.m. on January 25, 1928.<sup>11</sup> The formal opening followed a couple of weeks later on February 17, 1928, with city, county, state, and national officers in attendance.<sup>12</sup> For the formal opening, dinner and dancing were planned in the convention room, and entertainment was provided by three orchestras and a vaudeville performance. Another night of dinner and dancing was held the next day on the second night of the formal opening, with 1,200 guests in attendance, including prominent hotel figures from Milwaukee and Chicago.<sup>13</sup> Stores inside the hotel included a clothing shop, a Krygier Drugstore, a barber shop, a café, a beauty salon. Schroeder lived in a residence suite on the twenty-fourth floor of the hotel, which elaborately decorated in a French style and featured his extensive art collection.<sup>14</sup>

On the first anniversary of the Hotel Schroeder's opening in 1929, Schroeder announced that the top four floors would be completed, since they had not been in use during the hotel's first year.<sup>15</sup> Ultimately, though, these final rooms were not completed until the end of the Second World War.<sup>16</sup>

In 1930, the Wisconsin Archeological Society placed a historical marker near the Wisconsin Avenue entrance to the hotel to honor the site as a former Potawatomi village ruled by Chief Kenozhaykum or Little Pickerel between 1833 to 1838.<sup>17</sup>

To address the need for more rooms and to avoid losing further business to Chicago hotels, in 1954, Schroeder toyed with the idea of a building an adjacent twenty-five-story addition to provide another 450 rooms on top of the existing 800.<sup>18</sup> Ultimately this addition never materialized, and instead, there was a series of updates to the hotel between the late 1950s and 1962 that cost approximately \$2 million.<sup>19</sup> These improvements included converting storage on the twenty-fifth floor to occupiable rooms and improved air conditioning throughout the building, as well as a new cocktail bar, high speed elevators, and redecorated rooms.<sup>20</sup>

In 1965, the Hotel Schroeder was sold to Hotel Investments, Inc., a subsidiary of Towne Realty Inc. A couple of months later, the hotel became the Sheraton-Schroeder when the international hotel chain Sheraton Corporation of America agreed to operate the hotel under a long-term lease and keep the staff.<sup>21</sup> It became the 100<sup>th</sup> hotel in the Sheraton network. The new owners remodeled the hotel, including the expansion of the ballroom to seat 1,200, remodeling and

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<sup>11</sup> "Opening Is Set for Schroeder," *Milwaukee Journal*, January 8, 1928.

<sup>12</sup> "Hotel Schroeder Will Open Formally Friday Night," *Milwaukee Journal*, February 17, 1928.

<sup>13</sup> "1,200 Guests at New Hotel," *Milwaukee Journal*, February 19, 1928.

<sup>14</sup> "Schroeder's Hideaway," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, November 28, 1968.

<sup>15</sup> "Green Bay Hotel to Be Enlarged," *Milwaukee Journal*, January 25, 1929.

<sup>16</sup> "Schroeder Hotel to Expand with a 25 Story Addition," *Milwaukee Journal*, June 6, 1954.

<sup>17</sup> Louis Phelps Kellogg, "The Society and the State," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* (vol. 13, no. 3, March 1930), 318-319.

<sup>18</sup> "Schroeder Hotel to Expand with a 25 Story Addition," *Milwaukee Journal*, June 6, 1954.

<sup>19</sup> *Milwaukee Journal*, March 25, 1962.

<sup>20</sup> Doyle K. Getter, "Area Business Grows, but Room Total Drops," *Milwaukee Journal*, March 20, 1957.

<sup>21</sup> "Hotel Chain Takes Over at Schroeder," *Milwaukee Journal*, April 7, 1965.

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redecorating of rooms, updating air conditioning, and a new restaurant.<sup>22</sup> At the same time, twenty-five guest rooms on the upper levels were eliminated because they did not have dedicated bathrooms, and these were instead added to adjoined rooms to form suites.<sup>23</sup> Unnecessary doors were removed. They also planned for a 400-room addition, which was ultimately not built. The refurbishing was done in two phases. First, the guest rooms on floors six and above were redecorated, and once that finished, the ballroom and restaurants on the first five floors were remodeled. Sheraton chose to renovate the building to keep up with modern hotel standards rather than rebuild because, “older buildings have some definite advantages—such as bigger closets and higher ceilings.”<sup>24</sup> In December 1966, the hotel was officially sold to the Sheraton Corporation of America, and the remodeling was finished in late 1967.<sup>25</sup>

Walter Schroeder died on May 19, 1967 at the age of 89. After his death, the hotel management moved to change the name from Sheraton-Schroeder to simply The Sheraton Milwaukee in an effort to simplify the name and in accordance with national Sheraton policies.<sup>26</sup> The name was not officially changed until 1972, when the Marc Plaza Corporation purchased the Sheraton-Schroeder, and the hotel became the Marc Plaza Hotel.<sup>27</sup> The hotel was operated by the Marcus Hotel Corporation under a management contract. During the years as the Marc Plaza, many rooms were enlarged, decreasing the total number of guest rooms to about 500.<sup>28</sup> The Marcus Corporation purchased the hotel from the Marc Plaza Corporation in 1983 and continued to manage it.

On June 1, 1995, the Marc Plaza Hotel reopened as the Milwaukee Hilton under the ownership of the Marcus Corporation. Before the reopening, the building underwent a six-month restoration project in which the guest rooms and some public spaces were remodeled.<sup>29</sup> Construction of an addition with 250 more guest rooms and meeting rooms was planned to coincide with the opening of a new downtown convention center, now known as the Wisconsin Center, in mid-1997, which would be adjacent the hotel. The expansion required the demolition of some buildings at the corner of 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Wisconsin Avenue. There were some delays, so construction of the addition to the Hilton did not begin until October 5, 1998, with an estimated cost of \$40 million and finish date of July 2000.<sup>30</sup> At the same time, fifty offices in the 1928 building were converted into guest rooms, raising the total number of rooms in both the 1928 building and the addition to 700.<sup>31</sup> The West Wing addition was fourteen stories and built in a sympathetic style. The architect of the expansion was Kahler Slater and the general contractor was M.A. Mortenson CO. A parking structure was constructed south of the hotel and West Wing c. 2005. The 1928 building and subsequent 2000 addition remain an active hotel and still operate as the Milwaukee Hilton. The hotel was designated an Historic Hotel of America, the official

<sup>22</sup> “Hotel Chain Takes Over at Schroeder,” *Milwaukee Journal*, April 7, 1965.

<sup>23</sup> “Reception for Secretaries,” *Milwaukee Journal*, March 1, 1966.

<sup>24</sup> “Reception for Secretaries,” *Milwaukee Journal*, March 1, 1966.

<sup>25</sup> “Reception for Secretaries,” *Milwaukee Journal*, March 1, 1966.

<sup>26</sup> “Hotel May Evict Umlaut,” *Milwaukee Journal*, April 15, 1968.

<sup>27</sup> “Marc Plaza Hotel to Reopen as Hilton,” *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, April 22, 1995.

<sup>28</sup> “Marc Plaza Sold to Corporation,” *Milwaukee Sentinel*, July 13, 1983.

<sup>29</sup> “Marc Plaza Hotel to Reopen as Hilton,” *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, April 22, 1995.

<sup>30</sup> “Marcus Adding 200 Rooms to Hilton,” *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, September 17, 1998.

<sup>31</sup> “Marcus Adding 200 Rooms to Hilton,” *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, September 17, 1998.

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program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation that recognizes and celebrates the country's finest historic hotels.<sup>32</sup>

### Criterion A: Commerce

Walter Schroeder, a Milwaukee-native born in 1878, started working at 14 and took jobs with the Milwaukee Register of Deeds and the Milwaukee Daily Reporter.<sup>33</sup> In 1899, he began working in real estate, insurance, and mortgages when he took over Chris Schroeder & Son Co., which his father founded in 1888. Schroeder first became involved in the hotel business in 1913 with the Hotel Wisconsin (NR 2000, #78003462) in downtown Milwaukee, which was the sixth hotel in the country to have 500 rooms and the largest hotel in the state at the time.<sup>34</sup> Soon after its opening, the hotel was facing financial difficulties, and after Schroeder helped successfully refinance it, he was put on the board as a trustee.<sup>35</sup> With Schroeder's guidance, the Hotel Wisconsin recovered, no simple feat for one of the state and country's largest hotels. Following this achievement, he began taking over other hotels as well as constructing new ones, founding the Schroeder Hotel Company. He also remained president of his father's insurance agency.

The holdings of the Schroeder Hotel Company exploded in the late 1910s and the 1920s, as Schroeder constructed, acquired, and operated a portfolio of hotels located at strategic sites throughout the state. Period advertisements for the Schroeder Hotels promoted the hotel chain as the perfect lodging for those touring the state because they offered convenient and luxurious accommodations across Wisconsin.<sup>36</sup> The hotels were furnished to provide maximum comfort and the best service, and local newspapers stated, "Nothing is lacking to make the guest feel at home."<sup>37</sup> The hotels also included garages and parking accommodations, which were important during the early era of the automobile, and well-regarded restaurants. Additionally, the Schroeder hotels were safe since they featured fireproof construction.

Schroeder first began expanding his business in Milwaukee. The Hotel Astor (NR 1984, #84003715) was constructed in 1918 on the east side of the city, across the river from the Hotel Wisconsin and within walking distance from downtown. It was designed to be a luxury hotel with rooms for both short-term and long-term residential guests. The Astor boasted a prestigious residential address because of its proximity to and uninterrupted views of Lake Michigan, and it was also known as Astor on the Lake.<sup>38</sup> Early tenants of the commercial ground floor included Rolls Royce and Lincoln automobiles, underscoring the hotel's upper-class clientele.<sup>39</sup> The Hotel Astor was popular, and Schroeder predicted that these kinds of combination apartment-hotel would continue to be in high demand as desire increased for more luxurious living quarters.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>32</sup> "Hilton Milwaukee City Center," Historic Hotels of America. <https://www.historichotels.org/us/hotels-resorts/hilton-milwaukee-city-center/history.php>. Accessed September 15, 2023.

<sup>33</sup> "A Busy Man is Schroeder," *Milwaukee Journal*, May 17, 1953.

<sup>34</sup> "Schroeder Co Books Studied," *Milwaukee Journal*, January 18, 1934.

<sup>35</sup> "Schroeder Co Books Studied," *Milwaukee Journal*, January 18, 1934.

<sup>36</sup> *Wausau Daily Herald* (Wausau, WI), July 18, 1925.

<sup>37</sup> "Seven Hotels in Schroeder Chain," *Wausau Daily Herald* (Wausau, WI), July 18, 1925.

<sup>38</sup> "Astor on the Lake," National Register Nomination, 1984.

<sup>39</sup> "Astor on the Lake," National Register Nomination, 1984.

<sup>40</sup> "See Apartment Hotels Gaining in Popularity," *Milwaukee Journal*, March 28, 1926.



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Next in the Schroeder chain was the Hotel Retlaw (NR 1984, #84003673), Walter spelled backwards, which was constructed in Fond du Lac in 1922-23 and cost \$600,000 to build.<sup>41</sup> The Retlaw was located on Lake Winnebago, the largest freshwater lake in the country, sixty miles north of Milwaukee and an excellent choice for a weekend away from the city. At the same time, it could function as a business hotel, and when it opened, Schroeder said, "Bring on your conventions."<sup>42</sup> He called the Hotel Retlaw's success "instantaneous," and noted that the experience at Fond du Lac emphasized that larger, centrally located Wisconsin cities could support new modern hotels.<sup>43</sup> Consequently, Schroeder continued to build his hotel empire throughout the state, in a variety of larger, central Wisconsin cities.

In 1924, Schroeder expanded with hotels in the state's second and third largest cities. The Hotel Loraine (NR 2002, #02001125) opened in Madison, to serve both leisure and business travelers in the state's capital. The hotel was named Loraine in honor of Schroeder's late niece.<sup>44</sup> The Loraine was prominent in Madison's commercial and social life and was the city's leading hotel until the late 1960s, when it was converted into an office building.<sup>45</sup> That same year the Hotel Northland at Green Bay opened with 250 rooms near the business section of the city.<sup>46</sup> At the time, it was the largest Wisconsin hotel north of Milwaukee and the ballroom could accommodate between 500 and 600 guests.<sup>47</sup>

Schroeder continued to move his business north in 1925 with a new hotel in Wausau. The Hotel Wausau (NR 2001, #100006405) like the Hotel Schroeder, was designed by Holabird & Roche. At the time, state authorities' records showed that the number of out-of-state cars that passed through Wausau far outnumbered the available hotel rooms, meaning many people who could stop and enjoy the city, move farther to have accommodations for the night.<sup>48</sup> As he had in other cities, Schroeder recognized the economic potential of opening hotels to offer these travelers the option to stay in Wisconsin for the night. Also in 1925, he constructed his first out-of-state hotel in Duluth, Minnesota, right along the state border with Wisconsin. The hotel contained 500 rooms and cost almost \$2 million.<sup>49</sup> The building is still extant and operates as affordable housing with rentable event space in the common areas.

By the end of 1925, there were nine hotels in the Schroeder chain. While Schroeder constructed most of them, he had also acquired two hotels: Hotel Calumet in Fond du Lac, WI in 1922 and Hotel Vincent in Benton Harbor, Michigan in 1923.<sup>50</sup> Schroeder had a shrewd business acumen

<sup>41</sup> "Revitalized Retlaw Hotel capitalizes on its traditions," *The Reporter* (Fond du Lac, WI), November 19, 1978.

<sup>42</sup> "Revitalized Retlaw Hotel capitalizes on its traditions," *The Reporter* (Fond du Lac, WI), November 19, 1978.

<sup>43</sup> "Lorraine to Be Name of Madison's New Hotel; Honor Niece of Owner," *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), May 10, 1923.

<sup>44</sup> "Lorraine to Be Name of Madison's New Hotel; Honor Niece of Owner," *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), May 10, 1923.

<sup>45</sup> "Hotel Loraine," National Register Nomination, 2002.

<sup>46</sup> "Seven Hotels in Schroeder Chain," *Wausau Daily Herald* (Wausau, WI), July 18, 1925.

<sup>47</sup> "Green Bay to Open \$1,000,000 Hostelry," *The Journal Times* (Racine, WI), March 19, 1924.

<sup>48</sup> "Boost for a Greater Wausau and the Million Dollar Hotel,"

<sup>49</sup> "Start Building of New Duluth Hotel," *Minneapolis Star*, December 29, 1923.

<sup>50</sup> "Schroeder May Sell Hotel," *Milwaukee Journal*, November 4, 1964.

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and, in just over a decade, he had become a hotel magnate with operations in three states. It was at this time that he began planning for the flagship of the Schroeder hotel chain, an 800 room, Art Deco skyscraper which would become known as the Hotel Schroeder. The Hotel Schroeder would be the culmination of his empire, the largest of the Schroeder chain and, at the time, in Milwaukee. The hotel would bear his name and provide extravagant living quarters for Schroeder on the twenty-fourth floor. It became Schroeder's home base, an architectural marvel from which he operated his hotel empire.

Schroeder understood the need for more modern hotel rooms in Milwaukee. Because there was not enough available lodging, many travelers who would have stopped and spent the night just continued onto Chicago. Downtown hotels could be extremely economically valuable by bringing people to the area, generating profits for nearby businesses and communities, creating new jobs, increasing tax revenue, and providing investment opportunities.<sup>51</sup> In Milwaukee, the number of building permits hit a record high in 1926, with the Hotel Schroeder as a significant factor because it was such a large project.<sup>52</sup> Even before construction was completed, Alderman Louis Weiss declared the project a success for Milwaukee's downtown and that the property value had more than doubled.<sup>53</sup> Upon its completion in 1928, the Hotel Schroeder successfully alleviated the need for rooms, attracted a wide variety of events, and also fulfilled Schroeder's dream of honoring Milwaukee with a world-class hotel. At the time of Hotel Schroeder's opening, more than 30 conventions were already scheduled for the year.<sup>54</sup> Just one night of the opening weekend celebration saw 1,200 guests, including representatives from within the hotel industry, as well as city and state officials.<sup>55</sup> At the hotel's formal opening in February 1928, Schroeder said, "The Hotel Schroeder materializes a vision I have entertained for years ... [to] build a hotel for my home city which would symbolize the importance of our thriving community and place it on a par with the larger cities of the country as regards hotel facilities."<sup>56</sup>

As the largest hotel in Milwaukee, Hotel Schroeder could accommodate individual guests and bigger events like conventions, which encouraged many more people to visit Milwaukee and to spend their money in the city as they shopped, dined, and enjoyed the scenery. In 1928, the hotel hosted both local conventions, like those of the Wisconsin Press Association and Wisconsin League of Women Voters, and national conventions, like those of the National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies and the American Engineering Council. Public officials like New York Governor Alfred E. Smith, the 1928 Democratic presidential candidate, stayed at the hotel on their official tours of the country. In addition, many weddings and debutante balls were held at the hotel. The first dinner dance held was on February 4, 1928, hosted by the Ozaukee Country Club with more than 450 guests in attendance.<sup>57</sup> The first concert was held at the hotel was on February 2, 1928 of Scottish singer Cameron McLean.<sup>58</sup> The Hotel Schroeder was attracting new

<sup>51</sup> Bill Ryan, "Evaluating Lodging Opportunities," University of Wisconsin-Madison (March 2022)

<https://economicdevelopment.extension.wisc.edu/articles/evaluating-lodging-opportunities/>.

<sup>52</sup> "Permits Lead 1925 Record," *Milwaukee Journal*, April 18, 1926.

<sup>53</sup> "Hotel Is Allowed Projection Right," *Milwaukee Journal*, July 2, 1927.

<sup>54</sup> "Hotel Schroeder Gets First Guests," *Milwaukee Journal*, January 26, 1928.

<sup>55</sup> "Schroeder Celebrates Second Night of Formal Opening," *Milwaukee Journal*, February 19, 1928.

<sup>56</sup> *Milwaukee Journal*, February 19, 1928.

<sup>57</sup> *Milwaukee Journal*, February 4, 1928.

<sup>58</sup> "Plan for McLean Concert for Hotel Schroeder," *Milwaukee Journal*, January 23, 1928.

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visitors and business, and it also provided employment for up to 500 people in Milwaukee, becoming a major commercial employer in the heart of the city.<sup>59</sup> The hotel elevated Milwaukee's status as a city for national events since its new Hotel Schroeder provided premium lodging and services for large conventions and important leaders as well as local weddings and concerts.

The hotel had a successful first year, fulfilling Schroeder's vision to place Milwaukee on par with larger American cities in regard to hotel facilities and quashing fears that people were just passing through to spend the night in Chicago. Hotel Schroeder had significant commercial impact on Milwaukee, and in just the first year of operation, the hotel accommodated more than 200,000 guests and served more than 1,200,000 meals.<sup>60</sup> A year after its opening, the Hotel Schroeder was the second most valuable downtown property in the city, at a valuation of \$3,535,000 - \$935,00 for the land and \$2,600,000 for the building.<sup>61</sup> The local periodical called the Hotel Schroeder "the crowning masterpiece, a gigantic monument to the Schroeder faith in Milwaukee."<sup>62</sup> Businesses located in and around the hotel understood its draw, and used that to their advantage by emphasizing the Hotel Schroeder in their advertisements; Hixon's offered sales at "Hotel Schroeder Only," Boston Store emphasized that it was across from the hotel, and Nigbor advertised that it was right next to the Hotel Schroeder. The city was prospering in the late 1920s, and overall, the Hotel Schroeder was a great contribution to a year that the 1928 Industrial Milwaukee Trade Review declared "a year of prosperity," with over \$1 billion in revenue.<sup>63</sup>

Despite its success in the late 1920s, the Hotel Schroeder struggled during the 1930s since the Great Depression had a profound effect on the service industry and hotels. During the Depression years, limited income resulted in defaults. Schroeder owed more than \$10 million, and holders of Hotel Schroeder mortgage bonds demanded hotel seizure.<sup>64</sup> The hotels' financing was reorganized, and the Hotel Schroeder survived, but as part of the deal, Schroeder had to hand over other assets, including the Wisconsin Hotel, to creditors, slightly downsizing his Wisconsin hotel empire, but allowing Schroeder to maintain ownership of the hotel that bore his name.<sup>65</sup> By 1935, the hotel's profits were increasing again.<sup>66</sup>

By 1945, bonds on Milwaukee buildings that had suffered during the Great Depression were on the rise, and "one of the most remarkable rallies was made by the securities of the Schroeder Hotel."<sup>67</sup> This rise was attributed to greater occupancy of buildings and higher rents due to the economic boom of the wartime period.<sup>68</sup> While the hotel's first mortgage bonds were selling at

<sup>59</sup> "25-Story Hotel Opens Tonight," *Milwaukee Journal*, January 25, 1928.

<sup>60</sup> "Green Bay Hotel to Be Enlarged," *Milwaukee Journal*, January 25, 1929.

<sup>61</sup> "Arcade Bldg Most Valuable," *Milwaukee Journal*, August 21, 1929.

<sup>62</sup> "Faith in Wisconsin Wins Fortunes," *Milwaukee Journal*, July 3, 1927.

<sup>63</sup> *Industrial Milwaukee: A Trade Review of 1928*, First National Bank (1928), 5.

<https://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/collection/tp/id/29548>

<sup>64</sup> "Hotel Seizure Is Demanded," *Milwaukee Journal*, September 20, 1934.

<sup>65</sup> "A Busy Man is Schroeder," *Milwaukee Journal*, May 17, 1953.

<sup>66</sup> "Hotel Profits Are \$304,000," *Milwaukee Journal*, December 23, 1935.

<sup>67</sup> "Building Bonds, Once Selling for a Song, Recover Sharply," *Milwaukee Journal*, December 2, 1945.

<sup>68</sup> "Building Bonds, Once Selling for a Song, Recover Sharply," *Milwaukee Journal*, December 2, 1945.

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\$20 in 1935, by 1945 the bonds were worth over \$100.<sup>69</sup> During the Second World War, the Hotel Schroeder, like many hotels across the country, was filled with guests, and it reached 90% occupancy.<sup>70</sup> The hotel often had as many as 1,200 or 1,300 guests staying in the 850 rooms.

The Hotel Schroeder's success in the 1940s led its owner to consider building an adjacent 25-story addition to increase the hotel's capacity to between 1,300 and 1,550 rooms.<sup>71</sup> At this point, no new hotels had been constructed in Milwaukee since 1928 when the Hotel Schroeder opened. Because of the lack hotel rooms, larger national conventions and conferences had been overlooking Milwaukee.<sup>72</sup> Milwaukee's then-mayor celebrated the announcement, saying the addition would help relieve the lack of space for visitors.<sup>73</sup> In addition, the convention manager of the Association of Commerce called Schroeder's plan "the best sort of news for Milwaukee."<sup>74</sup> Schroeder himself said of the proposed addition, "I'm putting my faith in Milwaukee's future," and he argued for constructing more hotel rooms in anticipation of more peak periods.<sup>75</sup> Though the twenty-five-story addition was ultimately never constructed, the reaction to Schroeder's proposal exemplifies how central hotels were to Milwaukee's economy, specifically the Hotel Schroeder since it was the most recently built hotel at mid-century. Attractive, modern hotel rooms meant that visitors in town for an event might stay overnight, spending more time and money in Milwaukee.

Around the mid-century point, Milwaukee grew both in population and commercially. Despite this, the city's hotel industry remained stagnant. Since the twenty-five-story addition was not built, hotel rooms were still needed in Milwaukee. In the period between 1940 and 1956, the local population had increased 32.6 percent. In the same period, retail sales increased 291 percent and personal income increased 347 percent.<sup>76</sup> Local newspapers stressed that even though new construction may not be possible, existing hotel rooms, including public spaces and amenities, were needed to serve the growing population and increased spending. Similarly, the rooms need to be updated to make Milwaukee hotels competitive.<sup>77</sup> Hotel Schroeder's management responded quickly, announcing a multi-million dollar remodeling project in 1959. Plans included adding air conditioning to every guest room, creating a new coffee shop, and remodeling the primary dining room.<sup>78</sup> When remodeling was completed, the hotel advertised the updated facilities, saying, "We of the Hotel Schroeder Co. salute Milwaukee, its past growth as well as future progress plans. We are proud to have been part of the great leap forward."<sup>79</sup> With the \$2 million renovations complete by 1962, the Hotel Schroeder once again asserted itself as Milwaukee's premiere hotel and committed to growing and progressing with the city's future, just as it had since 1928. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the hotel continued to host a variety

<sup>69</sup> "Building Bonds, Once Selling for a Song, Recover Sharply," *Milwaukee Journal*, December 2, 1945.

<sup>70</sup> "Schroeder Hotel to Expand with a 25-Story Addition," *Milwaukee Journal*, June 6, 1954.

<sup>71</sup> "Schroeder Hotel to Expand with a 25-Story Addition," *Milwaukee Journal*, June 6, 1954.

<sup>72</sup> "Schroeder Hotel to Expand with a 25-Story Addition," *Milwaukee Journal*, June 6, 1954.

<sup>73</sup> "Mayor Hails Hotel Plans," *Milwaukee Journal*, June 7, 1954.

<sup>74</sup> "Mayor Hails Hotel Plans," *Milwaukee Journal*, June 7, 1954.

<sup>75</sup> "Schroeder Hotel to Expand with a 25-Story Addition," *Milwaukee Journal*, June 6, 1954.

<sup>76</sup> "Area Business Grows, but Room Total Drops," *Milwaukee Journal*, March 20, 1957.

<sup>77</sup> "Area Business Grows, but Room Total Drops," *Milwaukee Journal*, March 20, 1957.

<sup>78</sup> Doyle K. Getter, "Hotel to Get New Look," *Milwaukee Journal*, September 13, 1959.

<sup>79</sup> *Milwaukee Journal*, March 25, 1962.

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of guests, from those in town to catch a baseball game to state-wide conventions for groups like the Wisconsin Democratic Party and the Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association.

The Hotel Schroeder continued to be successful under the Schroeder name until it was sold to Sheraton in the 1960s. Walter Schroeder brought to Milwaukee and to Wisconsin his understanding of the hotel business and fulfilled the need for more rooms throughout the state. He built a recognizable brand, where guests could enjoy the comforts and luxuries of the hotel with everything they needed and more, whether they were in town for business or pleasure, or even if they were locals. Walter Shroeder was known across the country as one of the most successful hoteliers in the Midwest, and before he sold it, he owned 90% of the Hotel Schroeder outright.<sup>80</sup> The Schroeder hotel chain was prominent for much of the twentieth century under Schroeder, until his death in the 1967. Afterwards, the hotels were sold and some converted. All of the hotels constructed by Schroeder are still extant, and many are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

### Criterion C: Architecture

#### *Holabird & Roche/Holabird & Root Firm History*

Holabird & Roche was a Chicago-based company founded by William Holabird and Martin Roche in 1881 after they met at the office of William Le Baron Jenney, a pioneer of skeletal construction. Neither was formally trained outside of their time in Le Baron Jenney's office. Inspired by their mentor, Holabird & Roche went on to design large, modern buildings with steel skeletons and classically inspired ornament in the Midwest. Their firm grew quickly, and by the early 1890s, they employed as many as 40 draftsmen and more than 100 by 1910.<sup>81</sup> During the early twentieth century, Holabird & Roche was perhaps the most well-known and prestigious architecture firm in Chicago.<sup>82</sup> They are particularly known for their mastery of the Commercial Style (also known as the Chicago style), which was primarily developed in Chicago in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Typical Commercial Style buildings were metal-framed and between 5 and 16 stories tall with flat roofs, regular fenestration patterns, little to no ornament, balance between horizontal and vertical elements, a slightly projecting cornice, and a flat roof.<sup>83</sup>

By the early 1920s, however, Holabird & Roche had begun transferring control of the firm to the next generation: Holabird's son John A. Holabird & John Wellborn Root Jr., son of Burnham & Root's John Wellborn Root. Both the younger Holabird and Root studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in the early 1910s before returning to Chicago to work for Holabird & Roche.<sup>84</sup> They then left to fight in the First World War and returned to Chicago in 1919. After the war, the elder Holabird and Roche, then in their sixties, were ready to pass the practice to the younger architects. Robert Brueggemann, an architectural historian specialized in the history of the Chicago

<sup>80</sup> "Schroeder Hotel to Expand with a 25-Story Addition," *Milwaukee Journal*, June 6, 1954.

<sup>81</sup> Vol. 1 xiii.

<sup>82</sup> "333 North Michigan Building," Commission on Chicago Landmarks (1986)

<sup>83</sup> Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780*, 183-186.

<sup>84</sup> Robert Brueggemann, *The Architects and the City: Holabird & Roche of Chicago 1880-1918* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 500.

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School of Architecture, argued that this marked the end of an era for Holabird & Roche.<sup>85</sup> With the passing of William Holabird in 1923 and Martin Roche taking a back seat, a transitional era between the elder and the younger designers commenced.<sup>86</sup> This era continued until the firm was officially reorganized as Holabird & Root in 1928, following the death of Martin Roche died in 1927.<sup>87</sup>

The reigns began informally changing hands in the late 1910s, but Holabird & Root did not officially take charge of the firm until 1928. In that interim period, the firm produced numerous transitional designs, with some traditional aesthetic elements typical of Holabird & Roche and some more modern tendency from Holabird & Root.<sup>88</sup> Much of the firm's work in the 1900s and 1910s, especially hotels, offices, and commercial buildings, was designed in a "restrained, classical style, often with delicate details," according to Bruegmann.<sup>89</sup> The historian further explained that "Neither William Holabird nor Martin Roche ever deliberately set himself against accepted notions of how buildings should look for the sake of experiment. There is no evidence that either was interested in overturning traditions unless they stood in the way of business necessity."<sup>90</sup> Bruegmann argues that since Holabird & Roche did not have formal architectural training, they were more preoccupied with day-to-day concerns rather than the future of architecture and its aesthetics.<sup>91</sup>

Though the firm was not disinterested in new technologies, the aesthetics of their designs were more conservative. Holabird and Root, on the other hand, had traveled and studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, and were, therefore, more open to changes in architectural taste and the modern movement. Their later designs, which were less influenced by the older generation, embraced the language of Modern Movement styles, including Art Deco and Art Moderne. Holabird & Root's 1920s designs, many of which were still officially attributed to Holabird & Roche, exhibit both elements of the founders' architectural conservatism and the younger generation's experimentation with modern aesthetics. The Hotel Schroeder is an excellent example of this transitional period in the mid- to late-1920s.

Bruegmann writes that the change in partners came "just as the firm was entering the most brilliant period in its history."<sup>92</sup> It was an exciting time for the firm as leadership changed hands, and they experienced a boom in commissions in the late 1920s. The Great Depression put a halt to Holabird & Root's success, though some of the designs commissioned before the stock market crashed were later completed in the early 1930s.<sup>93</sup> The firm never reached the same level of commissions as during the golden age of the late 1920s under John A. Holabird & John

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<sup>85</sup> Bruegmann, *The Architects and the City*, 310-311.

<sup>86</sup> Robert Bruegmann, *Holabird & Roche/Holabird & Root, Catalog of Work 1910-1940*, vol. 1 (New York: Garland Publishing Co, 1991) xiii.

<sup>87</sup> Robert Bruegmann, *Holabird & Roche/Holabird & Root, Catalog of Work 1910-1940*, vol. 1 (New York: Garland Publishing Co, 1991) xiii.

<sup>88</sup> Bruegmann, *Holabird & Roche/Holabird & Root*, vol. 1, xv.

<sup>89</sup> Bruegmann, *Holabird & Roche/Holabird & Root*, vol. 1, xv.

<sup>90</sup> Bruegmann, *The Architects and the City*, 441.

<sup>91</sup> Bruegmann, *The Architects and the City* 178.

<sup>92</sup> Bruegmann, *Holabird & Roche/Holabird & Root*, vol. 1, xiii.

<sup>93</sup> Bruegmann, *Holabird & Roche/Holabird & Root*, vol. 1, xiii.

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Wellborn Root Jr.<sup>94</sup> Holabird died in 1945 and Root in 1963, but the firm is still in operation under the name Holabird & Root.

### *Art Deco Architecture in the United States*

The term Art Deco is derived from the French *Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes*, the 1925 exhibition that is generally acknowledged as the birthplace of the style. The style was incredibly popular from 1925 until 1940 in the United States, although construction of Art Deco buildings and otherwise slowed immensely during the Great Depression. Architectural Cervin Robinson states that the Art Deco style “was intended to be both accessible to the general public and comprehensible to it,” and as such it was a common style for business corporations, financial institutions, department stores, theaters, and luxury hotels.<sup>95</sup>

Marcus Whiffen, an architectural historian specializing in British and American architecture, writes that Art Deco is a style of ornament, primarily rectilinear with some geometric curves and mostly low-relief.<sup>96</sup> The most common ornamental motifs are fluting and reeding, which often flank doors or windows or form horizontal bands above them. Art Deco buildings also commonly used figurative sculpture of humans, animals, birds, and plant forms.<sup>97</sup> Architects experimented with new materials for ornament, particularly metal alloys.<sup>98</sup>

David Gebhard, an architectural historian known for his research on California architecture and architects, writes that Art Deco style represented a “modernization” of past architectural traditions and involved the abstraction of classical architectural elements.<sup>99</sup> The style emphasized verticality, and setbacks were common because of height and zoning regulations in all major American cities in the mid-1920s.<sup>100</sup> Tall buildings often accentuated their verticality with vertical ornaments or vertical bands alternating with windows and spandrels.<sup>101</sup> Also common was the lack of cornice or simple bands of ornament instead of an intricate cornice.<sup>102</sup>

In the late 1920s, ornate Art Deco interiors were also common, particularly with gilded and silvered decoration.<sup>103</sup> Generally, interior walls were very flat and applied metal ornament was generally low-relief. This lavish and opulent style reflected the optimistic American spirit in the

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<sup>94</sup> Brueggmann, *Holabird & Roche/Holabird & Root*, vol. 1, xvii.

<sup>95</sup> “333 North Michigan Building,” Commission on Chicago Landmarks (1986).

<sup>96</sup> Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1999) 235.

<sup>97</sup> Gebhard, *Art Deco in America*, 7.

<sup>98</sup> Gebhard, *Art Deco in America*, 6.

<sup>99</sup> David Gebhard, *Art Deco in America*, 4-5.

<sup>100</sup> Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780*, 235.

<sup>101</sup> Gebhard, *Art Deco in America*, 5.

<sup>102</sup> Gebhard, *Art Deco in America*, 5.

<sup>103</sup> “West Side Commercial Historic District,” National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form, 1986.

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1920s as industry and science advanced, and architects could play with new materials and manufacturing technology for both ornament and construction.<sup>104</sup>

### *The Art Deco Architecture of the Hotel Schroeder*

The Hotel Schroeder displays characteristic features of the Art Deco on both the interior and the exterior. Holabird & Roche designed Milwaukee's first inhabitable skyscraper over 125 feet and this verticality is emphasized in typical Art Deco ways, notably in the vertical ornament on the primary elevation. The stone fluting around the vertical fixed windows on the base of the building emphasizes their height. In addition, the stone fluting around the column of windows on the two ends of the H draws further attention to the verticality, as do the spandrel panels, vertical piers between the windows, and fluting around the top story windows. Further, fluting is a common Classical motif, and Gebhard writes that the Art Deco style modernizes past architectural traditions, and by applying the fluting to flat surfaces rather than curved columns, Holabird & Roche abstracted this Classical element. Other ornament on the east elevation includes panels of floral ornament at the base of the building and of figures at the upper levels. These are also abstracted since they are common Classical ornamental programs, but on the Hotel Schroeder they are low-relief, typical of the Art Deco. Additionally, the building features simple cornices, and without this endcap the building seems as if it could continue higher. Instead, the cornices are simply marked by bands of stone low-relief ornament, that feature floral patterns and bands of stone with shields, further emphasizing the verticality.

The Hotel Schroeder features notable setbacks at the seventh level, where the plan becomes H-shaped, and at the twentieth floor, where the rectangular tower rises above the lower levels. Setbacks were a common feature amongst American Art Deco buildings of the mid- to late-1920s, which Whiffen attributes to the building height restrictions in major American cities in the early twentieth century. This was also the case for Holabird & Roche's design in Milwaukee.

The defining Art Deco features continue at the interior of the Hotel Schroeder, most noticeably in the public spaces at the lower floors. The three-story lobby and the event spaces are ornately decorated with gilded and silvered elements and marble panels and patterned marble floors. The large columns in the lobby feature reeding, which was common on Classical columns, but these columns are gilded in the style of the 1920s. Further, there is gilded crown molding with floral patterns throughout the public spaces. The elevator cabs feature paneling and gilded crown molding with acanthus leaf patterns, another Classical motif. In addition, the historic residence emphasizes the opulent style of the era in Schroeder's crowning achievement, with fluted wood panels and elaborate plaster ceilings. There are various geometric applied metal grilles on the lobby walls, which was very typical of the Art Deco. The ceilings in the ballrooms display metal medallions and the walls feature metal low-relief panels that depict cherubs, birds, and fruits, which were typical Art Deco motifs. Metal was frequently used in ornament at the time because there were new alloys and technologies discovered, and architects experimented with their possibilities.

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<sup>104</sup> "333 North Michigan Building," Commission on Chicago Landmarks (1986)



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The Hotel Schroeder exhibits many character-defining features of the Art Deco style, particularly in the ornament, which were directly influenced by the firm's changeover to Holabird & Root in the 1920s. However, its overall form and bulky massing are more indicative of Holabird & Roche's earlier, more conservative architectural tendencies. The combination of the founders' and the new partners' typical design motifs designate the Hotel Schroeder as a unique part of the transitional era between Holabird & Roche and Holabird & Root. As such, the Art Deco style was an apt choice for the hotel. As Gebhard writes, the style was a modernization of past architectural traditions. Holabird & Roche/Holabird & Root employed the Art Deco style in the late 1920s, just as the younger generation was experimenting with how to modernize the founders' traditional influences.

*Hotel Schroeder within Holabird & Roche/Root's Body of Work*<sup>105</sup>

The Hotel Schroeder was constructed during the transitional era between Holabird & Roche and Holabird & Root, and opened the year that the reigns of the firm officially transitioned to the new partners. Below, some of Holabird & Roche and Holabird & Root's most well-regarded designs are analyzed to pinpoint the Hotel Schroeder's place within the evolution of their significant works.

Marquette Building: Built in 1895, the Marquette Building in Chicago is considered a premier example of Holabird & Roche's Chicago Style. It is a sixteen-story, early steel frame, terra-cotta clad skyscraper. It appears to be a large, solid mass, but the plan is actually E-shaped with a courtyard facing the interior of the block. The Marquette Building's elevations feature the distinct "Chicago windows," fixed windows flanked by narrow sash windows. The fenestration pattern of Chicago windows is regular, with the horizontal windows set within the grid of the steel structure. The building features a terracotta cornice and unusual ornamental detailing for the Chicago Style at the entry and interior that depict the life of Jacques Marquette, an early Illinois explorer. The Marquette Building was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1976.

Chicago Building: Also known as the Chicago Savings Bank Building, the Chicago Building is a 15-story skyscraper completed in 1905 in Chicago. Like the Marquette Building, it is an early steel frame skyscraper clad in terracotta with Chicago windows set within the grid of the frame. The Chicago Building represents a later evolution of the Chicago Style. In particular, the building is designed according to a tripartite system, so it is visually organized into three sections (base, shaft, capital), just like Classical columns. The Chicago Building is rectangular in plan with a limited ornamental program. It also features bay windows on the north elevation, another common element in Chicago style buildings. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975.

Chicago City Hall/County Building: The Chicago City Hall, which houses both city and county government, was completed in 1911 and takes up an entire city block. It is a prime example of Holabird & Roche's Classical Revival architecture as influenced by their experience with the

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<sup>105</sup> The following building descriptions and histories are adapted from the corresponding National Register of Historic Places nominations and Robert Brueggman, *Holabird & Roche/Holabird & Root, Catalog of Work 1910-1940*, vol. 1-3 (New York: Garland Publishing Co, 1991).

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Chicago style. The massive limestone building features a tripartite design, emphasized by the fact that the shaft contains a series of monumental Corinthian columns, a regular grid of windows, and a flat roof. Unlike the architect's Chicago Style buildings, however, City Hall is not a skyscraper, and it features a grand Classical ornamental program that highlights the state and city's history. The building has strong massing to emphasize the strength and function of the local government. It was designated a City of Chicago Landmark in 1982.

Nicollet Hotel: Holabird & Roche began designing hotels in the early 1900s, eventually becoming the most prolific hotel designer in the Midwest in the early-twentieth century period. The Nicollet Hotel opened in 1924 in Minneapolis. Many of its features indicate it was an early iteration of the Hotel Schroeder, still strongly influenced by the traditions of the firm's founders. The Nicollet Hotel was a twelve-story building with strong massing and a tripartite design: a square base, an H-shaped shaft, and a rectangular tower capital with two mechanical penthouses. Unlike the Hotel Schroeder, however, this was designed in a restrained Classical Revival style and the lobby featured ornament inspired by the English Renaissance rather than Art Deco motifs.<sup>106</sup> The Nicollet Hotel was demolished in 1991.<sup>107</sup>

Palmer House: In the late-1920s, with the handover to the younger generation, Holabird & Roche/Holabird & Root hotels became larger and more complex with ornate interiors.<sup>108</sup> Built in 1926, the Palmer House was, at the time, the largest hotel in the world at twenty-five stories and with 2,000 rooms.<sup>109</sup> Similar to the Hotel Schroeder, the Palmer House has strong massing and brick facades with stone bases. Both hotels have ornate lobbies with gilded ceilings, but the Hotel Schroeder features linear ornament inspired by advancements in technology and materials, and the Palmer House features murals of classical figures inspired by French chateaus. Overall, though, it has a limited ornamental program and the design is indicative of classically-inspired architecture. Palmer House is a contributing resource to the Loop Retail Historic District (NR 1998).

Hotel Schroeder: Holabird & Roche's hotel architecture emphasized function, favored engineering and used modern technologies. Their designs typically featured boxy forms and flat, stylized exterior ornament.<sup>110</sup> Their hotels used an architectural formula for efficiency that had public rooms on the lower levels and guest-room towers, as well as symmetrical corridor layout with few turns to facilitate guest circulation and lightwells to allow for light and ventilation in as many rooms as possible.<sup>111</sup> All of these elements are present at the Hotel Schroeder, which has a boxy form, public spaces on the lower levels and guest room in the upper levels and tower, and symmetrical, accessible circulation in the corridors and vertical access points. But instead of the

<sup>106</sup> Brueggman, *Holabird & Roche/Holabird & Root* vol 1.

<sup>107</sup> "The Nicollet Hotel: A Landmark of Minneapolis Cooperation," Hennepin History Museum.

<https://hennepinhistory.org/the-nicollet-hotel-a-landmark-of-minneapolis-cooperation/>. Accessed April 27, 2023.

<sup>108</sup> Brueggmann, *Holabird & Roche/Holabird & Root*, vol. 1, xvi.

<sup>109</sup> Lisa Pfueller Davidson, "Early Twentieth-Century Hotel Architects and the Origins of Standardization." *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts* 25 (2005): 90.

<sup>110</sup> Lisa Pfueller Davidson, "Early Twentieth-Century Hotel Architects and the Origins of Standardization." *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts* 25 (2005): 91.

<sup>111</sup> Lisa Pfueller Davidson, "Early Twentieth-Century Hotel Architects and the Origins of Standardization." *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts* 25 (2005): 76.

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series of lightwells of the same height and depth seen at the Palmer House, the setbacks at the Hotel Schroeder are vertically sequential, stepping back according to the zoning laws that came to define the Art Deco form. They feature the tripartite form the Holabird & Roche developed in their Chicago Style buildings, but it has evolved as Holabird & Root explored modern aesthetics during the 1920s transition period. The Hotel Schroeder stretches the shape of the Hotel Nicollet into a true skyscraper, and further emphasizes the building's verticality with piers and spandrel panels. In addition, the Hotel Schroeder features the modernization of typical Classical ornament like fluting and reeding that is common on Art Deco elevations and not seen on earlier Holabird & Roche designs. The setbacks of the Hotel Schroeder, however, are generally boxy, and later iterations of Art Deco skyscrapers, built after Holabird & Root officially take the helm and hone their vision, exhibit a more mature, delicate version of the style.

333 N Michigan: 333 N Michigan Avenue in Chicago is the first example of mature Art Deco architecture from the firm, and the design is attributed to Holabird & Roche/Holabird & Root, cementing the younger architects' influence on the project. Finished in 1928, the same year as the Schroeder, the thirty-five-story commercial and office building, features a main block of 24 stories with the tower rising to the thirty-fifth floor. Designed to be one of the preeminent "modern" office buildings in Chicago, the steel framed construction featured stone and brick cladding, alongside terra cotta trim. The building features setbacks, vertical emphasis, and a low-relief figural ornamental program that depicts the early history of Illinois. Unlike the Hotel Schroeder, though, the setbacks on 333 N Michigan are elegantly tapered rather than bulky, showcasing the younger Holabird & Root's interest in modern forms over strong massing. 333 N Michigan is a contributing resource to the Michigan-Wacker Historic District (NR 1978).

Chicago Board of Trade: The Chicago Board of Trade building is perhaps Holabird & Root's most well-known Art Deco design and was finished in 1930. The forty-five-story skyscraper features a vertical emphasis highlighted by limestone piers and contrasting spandrels. The form of the building is evolved from the Hotel Schroeder. It includes a tripartite configuration reminiscent of the earlier Chicago school and Hotel Schroeder, including rectangular base, an H-form shaft, and a tower capital, although the tower features delicate Art Deco setbacks rather than the blocky forms of the Hotel Schroeder. There is a statue of Ceres, the Roman goddess of grain, at the top of the tower. Though three-dimensional, her appearance is machine-made rather than hand-carved, a modernization of classical sculpture. The ornamental program throughout reflects agricultural and manufacturing processes in metal. The Chicago Board of Trade Building was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1978.

Central National Tower: The Central National Tower in Battle Creek, Michigan was completed in 1931. The twenty-one-story limestone skyscraper exhibits the mature Art Deco style of Holabird & Root in its vertical emphasis and delicate setbacks. Overall, the building's aesthetic is more streamlined and without the clear tripartite divisions of earlier works. Because both the cladding and the ornament are limestone, the few decorative low-relief carvings do not stand out on the elevations, and the metal decorations are limited. At the interior, the architects embraced the modern machine aesthetic over the ornate lobbies of Holabird & Roche or Holabird & Roche/Root buildings. The lobby of the Central National Tower features metal paneling and trim, but it rejects traditional ornament in favor of simplicity. There is no gilding, decorative

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molding, or figurative panels, putting the intricate lobbies in the past. The Central National Tower was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2008.

The Hotel Schroeder is truly indicative of the transitional era between Holabird & Roche and Holabird & Root in the 1920s. It features the boxy massing and tripartite designs established by Holabird and Roche in the early 1900s as well as some the modern elements of Holabird and Root, like the vertical emphasis and modernized low-relief ornament. Still, it is also clearly an early iteration of the younger architects' Art Deco skyscrapers, since their later buildings feature streamlined tower forms and delicate setbacks at the top with elegant tapering unlike the major, blocky setbacks of the Hotel Schroeder. As such, the Hotel Schroeder is a significant Holabird & Roche/Root design that highlights the evolution of the firm during the 1920s.

### *Art Deco Architecture in Milwaukee*

The use of the Art Deco style was short-lived in Milwaukee, and the few high-rise buildings that were built in the city center were constructed in the late 1920s and early 1930s. There are several Milwaukee Art Deco buildings that are worth considering in comparison to the Hotel Schroeder because of their height, years of construction, downtown location, and distinct Art Deco features.

Milwaukee Gas Light Company Building: The Milwaukee Gas Light Company Building (now known as the Wisconsin Gas Building) was designed in 1930 by Eschweiler & Eschweiler. The twenty-story office building was finished just after the Hotel Schroeder and took advantage of the increased height limit on new construction. Like the hotel, it features a series of setbacks at the mid-level and upper stories to average out the total area. Also similar to the Hotel Schroeder, the building has an H-shaped plan at the base of the building with a tower above, and the base of the building is clad in granite while the upper stories are brick with stone or metal ornamentation. The Gas Light Building features additional prominent Art Deco characteristics such as the vertical emphasis in the piers and uninterrupted cornices and a distinct ornamental program with bronze and copper metalwork on both the exterior and the interior.<sup>112</sup> The exterior ornament is more rectilinear than that of the Hotel Schroeder, featuring chevron and sunburst designs rather than the curvilinear florals and figures on the hotel. The flame-shaped beacon atop the Gas Light Building was added in 1956, emphasizing the Art Deco themes, and it changes color to denote the weather each day.<sup>113</sup> According to the Wisconsin Historical Society's Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory, the Milwaukee Gas Light Company Building was determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places in 2018.

Mariner Tower: The Mariner Tower (now the Wisconsin Tower) was designed by Weary & Alford for prominent businessman John Mariner and completed in 1929. Like the Hotel Schroeder and the Gas Light Building, the Mariner Tower took advantage of the increased height limit on new construction at the time and features a series of setbacks at the upper levels. As was typical of Art Deco, the building emphasizes verticality with slightly projecting piers and

<sup>112</sup> "Property Record: 626 E Wisconsin Ave," Wisconsin Historical Society, <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Property/HI16199>. Accessed April 10, 2023.

<sup>113</sup> "Property Record: 626 E Wisconsin Ave," Wisconsin Historical Society, <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Property/HI16199>. Accessed April 10, 2023.

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uninterrupted cornice, and it is clad in masonry with a granite base. Compared to other examples of Art Deco skyscrapers, the Mariner Tower has a relatively subdued ornamental program at the exterior, with just geometric metal grilles above the entrance and cast metal window surrounds at the lower levels. The upper levels are simple limestone, and architectural historian Marsha Weisiger describe the exterior as made of simplified forms characteristics of the Art Deco.<sup>114</sup> At the interior, there are marble panels in the lobby and some Art Deco ornamentation in the lobby.

Ambassador Hotel: The Ambassador Hotel was built as a hotel in 1929 and is located approximately one mile west of the Hotel Schroeder. The architects were Backes & Uthus. Like the Hotel Schroeder, it was designed in the Art Deco style with a base-shaft-capital arrangement, but the Ambassador Hotel's design is more muted. The eight-story, U-shaped brick building features a terracotta base with ornamental friezes, as well as additional terracotta ornament at the cornice. Though it is a shorter building, there is vertical emphasis in the slightly projecting piers between the window bays. At the interior, the public spaces retain Art Deco elements such as the patterned marble floors, decorative bronze elevator doors, and plaster ceiling molding. Similarly, the Hotel Schroeder retains the patterned marble floors, intricate decorative elevator doors, ornate plaster ceiling and crown molding in the main lobby. Also like the Hotel Schroeder, the Ambassador Hotel still operates as a hotel today. According to the Wisconsin Historical Society's Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory, the Ambassador Hotel was determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places in 2015.

Catholic Knights Insurance Society Hotel: The Catholic Knights Insurance Society Hotel was built in 1930 and designed by A. Keymar & G.W. Mack. The former hotel is located half-a-mile west of the Hotel Schroeder. Like the Hotel Schroeder, the fifteen-story brick building was designed in the Art Deco style with a base-shaft-capital arrangement. It features a limestone base, brick shaft, and capital adorned with limestone panels. Throughout the building, the ornamental program primarily consists of chevron-patterned limestone panels. In 1956, Marquette University began leasing the former hotel for use as a dormitory, and the building is still used as a residence hall for students, now called Carpenter Tower. To accommodate offices and other administrative rooms, many of the Art Deco elements no longer remain at the interior. As such, it is primarily recognizable as an Art Deco building from the exterior, while the Hotel Schroeder retains character-defining features at the interior, such as the gilded crown molding and decorative metal panels, as well as the exterior ornament. According to the Wisconsin Historical Society's Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory, the Catholic Knights Insurance Society Hotel was determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places in 2001.

The Hotel Schroeder is locally significant as an early iteration of a Holabird & Root design and as an excellent example of an Art Deco skyscraper in Milwaukee. It exhibits character defining features of the style, including setbacks, spandrel panels, and piers that emphasize its verticality. Further, the setbacks, most notably at the tower, are boxier in form than the other examples in Milwaukee, marking the Hotel Schroeder as an earlier example of Art Deco. As such, it is clearly

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<sup>114</sup> Weisiger, Marsha et al. "Wisconsin Tower (Mariner Tower)," Society of Architectural Historians Archipedia, <https://sah-archipedia.org/buildings/WI-01-MI51>. Accessed April 14, 2023.

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divided into a tripartite design that recalls an abstracted Classical column. Hotel Schroeder also features an exterior ornamental program distinct from the other examples of Art Deco architecture in the city, with low-relief stone carvings of figures, shields, florals, and fluting which are more Classically inspired motifs than the geometric patterns on the Milwaukee Gas Light Company Building and the Catholic Knights Insurance Society Hotel, or the more muted programs of the Mariner Tower and the Ambassador Hotel. Therefore, the Hotel Schroeder clearly exhibits the “modernization” of traditional architectural styles that characterized the Art Deco.

### **Concluding Significance Statement**

The Hotel Schroeder was built to be the flagship of Walter Schroeder’s successful hotel chain. In the 1910s and 1920s, there was a need for new modern hotel rooms in many Wisconsin cities, and Schroeder capitalized on this need. He constructed hotels with a wide array of amenities throughout the state so that travelers on work or vacation could always find premium lodging and services at a Schroeder hotel. The Hotel Schroeder fulfilled Schroeder’s dream to build a large, luxurious, modern hotel in Milwaukee to bring the city’s hospitality industry on par with other cities in the country. As such, the Hotel Schroeder is locally significant under Criterion A in the category of Commerce, representing Schroeder’s success in the hotel business across the state and the prominence of the Hotel Schroeder in downtown Milwaukee. The Hotel Schroeder is also locally significant under Criterion C as a work of Art Deco architecture in Milwaukee, constructed during the height of the style’s popularity in the United States. Additionally, the skyscraper was designed by Holabird & Roche/Holabird & Root during a transitional period for the firm. It embodied the founders’ approach to modern hotels, which emphasized function and technology and used strong massing. As such, public rooms were located on the lower levels and guest rooms were on the upper levels, and the corridor layout was symmetrical with few turns to facilitate circulation. Further, the hotel exhibits character defining features of the Art Deco style likely inspired by the interests of Holabird & Root, such as emphasis on verticality, simple bands of ornament at the cornice, and low-relief ornament. At the interior, the lobby and public spaces embody the opulence of the style with gilded decorative elements and metal panels and grilles, an example of the architects experimenting with the new technologies and materials of the time. Therefore, the Hotel Schroeder exhibits tendencies of both Holabird & Roche at the end of their careers and Holabird & Root at the beginning of theirs, a distinct period in the firm’s history.

### **Land Acknowledgement (will be reviewed by the Office of the State Archaeologist)**

This nomination recognizes the depth of human presence here, the ancestral homeland of American Indians for millennia. From as early as the seventeenth century, Euro-American exploration and settlement, military campaigns, and government programs, all had the effect of repeated displacement of Indians of many tribal affiliations. This continuous tribal movement resulted in Wisconsin being home to many tribes who originated from other parts of the country, generating a pattern of immigration, relocation, and formation of a new homeland. Some of these tribes remain in Wisconsin but others may not. We acknowledge that the property that is the subject of this nomination is located on land long occupied by American Indians.

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**Archaeological Potential** (will be drafted and reviewed by the Office of the State

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The land associated with the hotel was inhabited by pre-historic and historic period Native Americans, as well as by eighteenth and nineteenth century European and American immigrants. In the late-nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century, heavy development took place throughout the subject site and surrounding area. As such, there is minimal likelihood for the property to yield archaeological information.

**Preservation Activities** (for properties in CLGs)

This nomination to the National Register of Historic Places was prepared in advance of a planned rehabilitation that will occur through the historic tax credit program. As such, the rehabilitation will be completed to the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. This rehabilitation will be the first planned rehabilitation to preserve and maintain the hotel.

The Hotel Schroeder was evaluated as potentially eligible for the NRHP during a survey of Milwaukee conducted in 2017. Eligibility was re-affirmed prior to the writing of this nomination. As a partner with the Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the National Park Service (NPS) participating in the Certified Local Government (CLG) program, Milwaukee is required to maintain a system to survey and inventory historic properties. That entails regular surveys with updates every 20-25 years to identify properties that appear potentially eligible for the NRHP.

END OF STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE DO NOT DELETE

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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

**Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory # 41850  
and/or Archaeological Site Inventory #: \_\_\_\_\_**

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END OF BIBLIOGRAPHY DO NOT DELETE

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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreeage of Property:** 3.7 acres

Provide either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude:	<u>43.03869</u>	Longitude:	<u>-87.91763</u>
2. Latitude:	<u>43.03815</u>	Longitude:	<u>-87.91765</u>
3. Latitude:	<u>43.03797</u>	Longitude:	<u>-87.91876</u>
4. Latitude	<u>43.03870</u>	Longitude:	<u>-87.91878</u>

**Or**

### UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

1. Zone:	<u>16T</u>	Easting:	<u>425225.446</u>	Northing:	<u>4765478.449</u>
2. Zone::	_____	Easting:	_____	Northing:	_____
3. Zone::	_____	Easting:	_____	Northing:	_____
4. Zone:	_____	Easting:	_____	Northing:	_____

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

The nominated boundary consists of City of Milwaukee tax parcel #3610719112, located at 509 W Wisconsin Avenue. The property is bounded by Wisconsin Avenue to the north, 5<sup>th</sup> Street to the east, Michigan Street to the south, and 6<sup>th</sup> Street the west. The City of Milwaukee Assessor's Office website was accessed on April 4, 2023.

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

The boundary encompasses the full historic parcel associated with the Hotel Schroeder.

**END OF GEOGRAPHIC DATA DO NOT DELETE**

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### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Jen Davel/Mariana Melin-Corcoran  
organization: Heritage Consulting Group  
street & number: 15 W. Highland St.  
city or town: Philadelphia State: PA zip code: 19118  
Email: jdavel@heritage-consulting.com  
Telephone: (608) 609-6856

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### Additional Documentation

#### Figure Log

- Provide a list of all maps, plans, and additional documentation provided

Figure 1. Boundary Map  
Figure 2. c. 1929 Rendering  
Figure 3. Exterior Photo Key Plan  
Figure 4. First Floor Photo Key Plan  
Figure 5. Second Floor Photo Key Plan  
Figure 6. Third Floor Photo Key Plan  
Figure 7. Fourth Floor Photo Key Plan  
Figure 8. Fifth Floor Photo Key Plan  
Figure 9. Typical Floor Plan, Floors 6-19  
Figure 10. Fourteenth Floor Photo Key Plan  
Figure 11. Nineteenth Floor Photo Key Plan  
Figure 12. Typical Upper Floor Plan, Photos 20-23  
Figure 13. Twenty-second Floor Photo Key Plan  
Figure 14. Twenty-fourth Floor Photo Key Plan  
Figure 15. Twenty-fifth Floor Photo Key Plan  
Figure 16. Mechanical Penthouse and Roof Photo Key Plan  
Figure 17. Basement Photo Key Plan  
Figure 18. West Wing, Second Floor Photo Key Plan  
Figure 19. West Wing, Third Floor Photo Key Plan  
Figure 20. West Wing, Fourth Floor Photo Key Plan  
Figure 21. West Wing, Fifth Floor Photo Key Plan  
Figure 22. West Wing, Typical Floor Plan, Floors 6-14

Hotel Schroeder

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

Figure 23. West Wing, Seventh Floor Photo Key Plan

Figure 24. West Wing, Ninth Floor Photo Key Plan

Figure 25. USGS Map (Milwaukee Quadrangle, Wisconsin, 7.5-Minute Series)

### Embed figures

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or digital 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:** such as floor plans of representative spaces, photo keys, historic images, etc.(Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

DRAFT

Hotel Schroeder  
Name of Property

Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
County and State

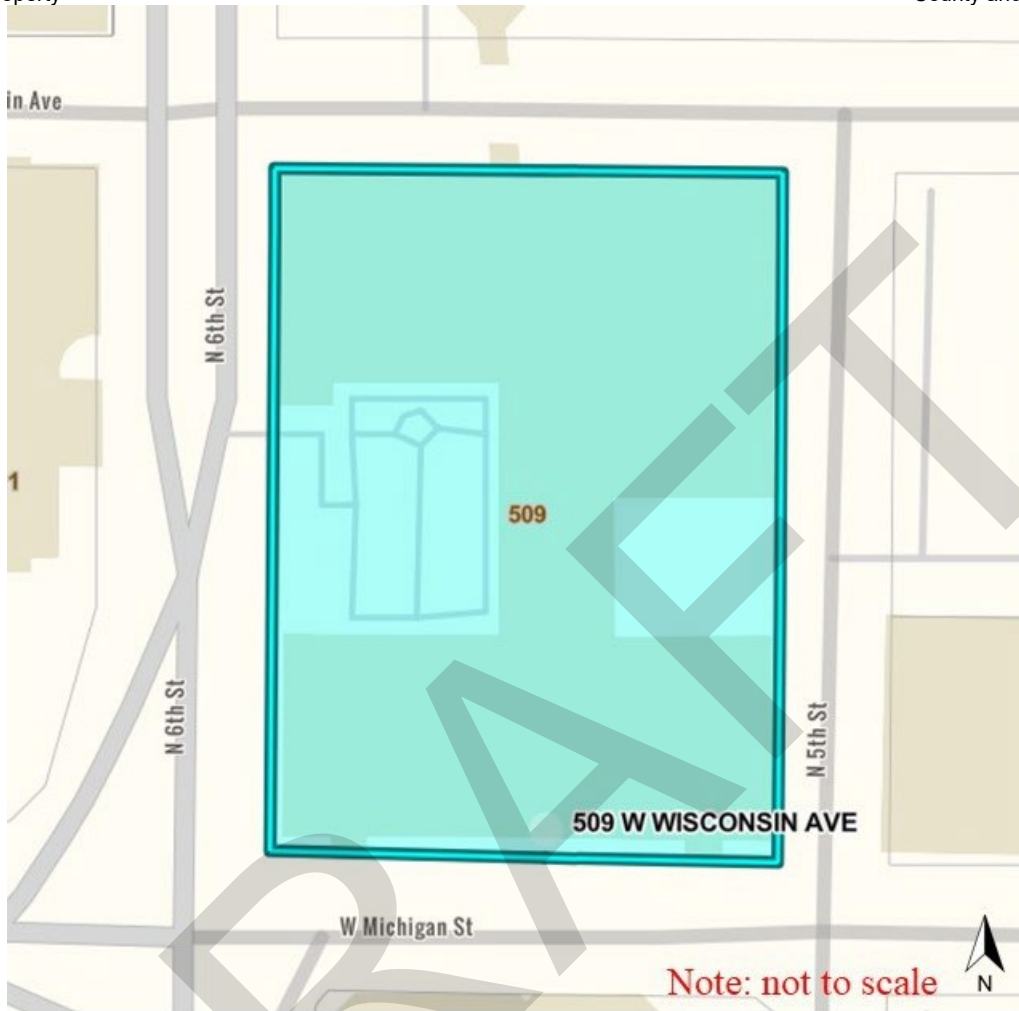


Figure 1: Site boundary (Source: Milwaukee County GIS and Land Information Interactive Map)



Hotel Schroeder  
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Figure 2. c. 1929 rendering  
from R. W. Sexton, *American apartment houses, hotels and apartment hotels of today: exterior  
and interior photographs and plans*

**Hotel Schroeder**  
Name of Property

**Milwaukee, Wisconsin**  
County and State

**Exterior**  
**Photos 1-4,6-9**  
*Yellow arrow indicates starting point*  
*Note: not to scale*

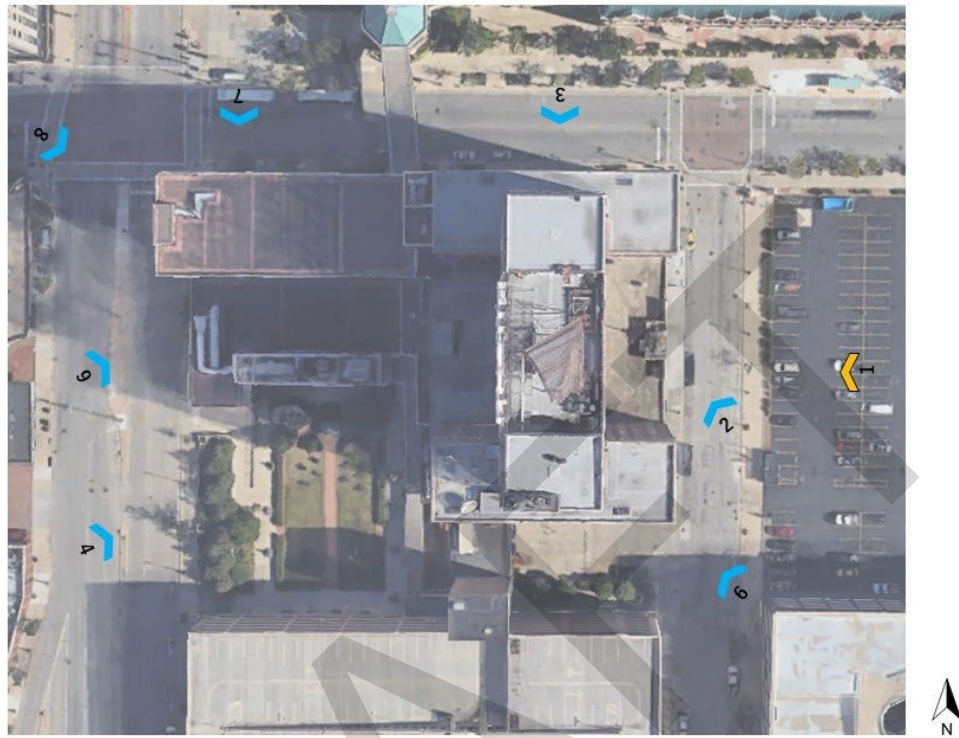


Figure 3. Exterior Photo Key Plan

**First Floor**  
**Photos 10-12**  
*Yellow arrow indicates starting point*  
*Note: not to scale*

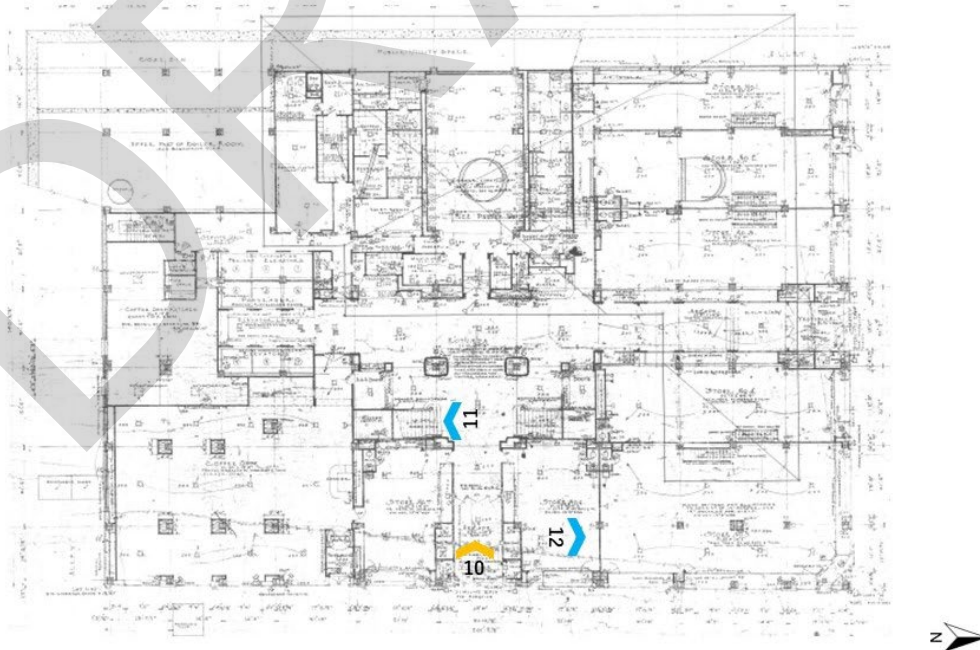


Figure 4. First Floor Photo Key Plan

**Second Floor**  
**Photos 13-17**  
*Yellow arrow*  
*indicates starting*  
*point*  
*Note: not to scale*

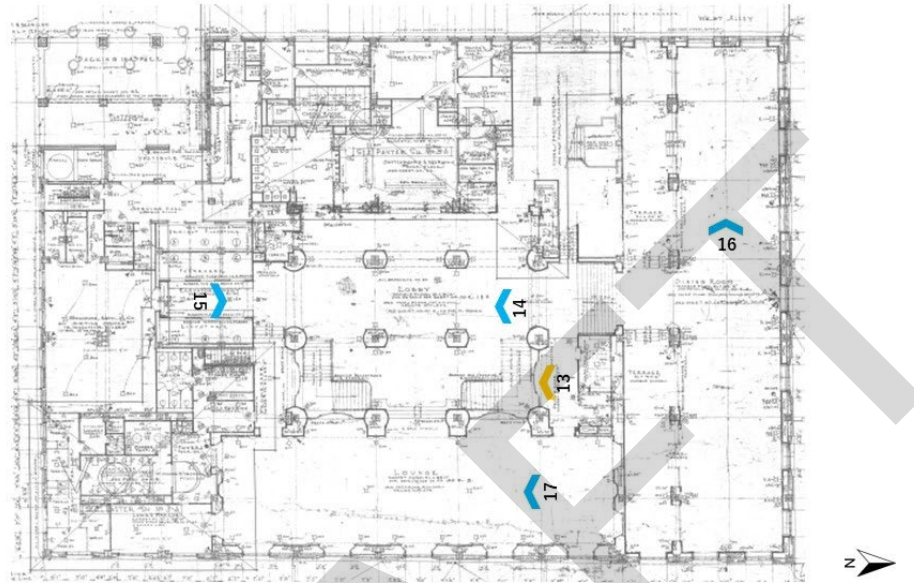


Figure 5. Second Floor Photo Key Plan

**Third Floor**  
*Note: no photos at*  
*this level*  
*Note: not to scale*

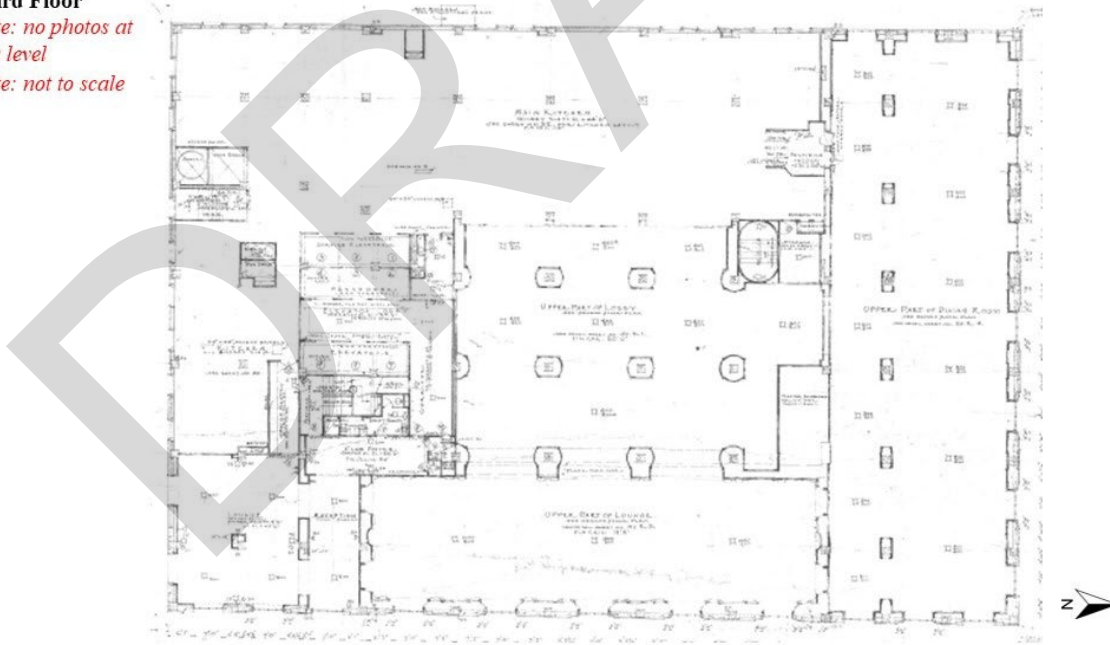


Figure 6. Third Floor Photo Key Plan

Hotel Schroeder

Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
County and State

Name of Property

**Fourth Floor**

*Note: no photos at  
this level*

*Note: not to scale*

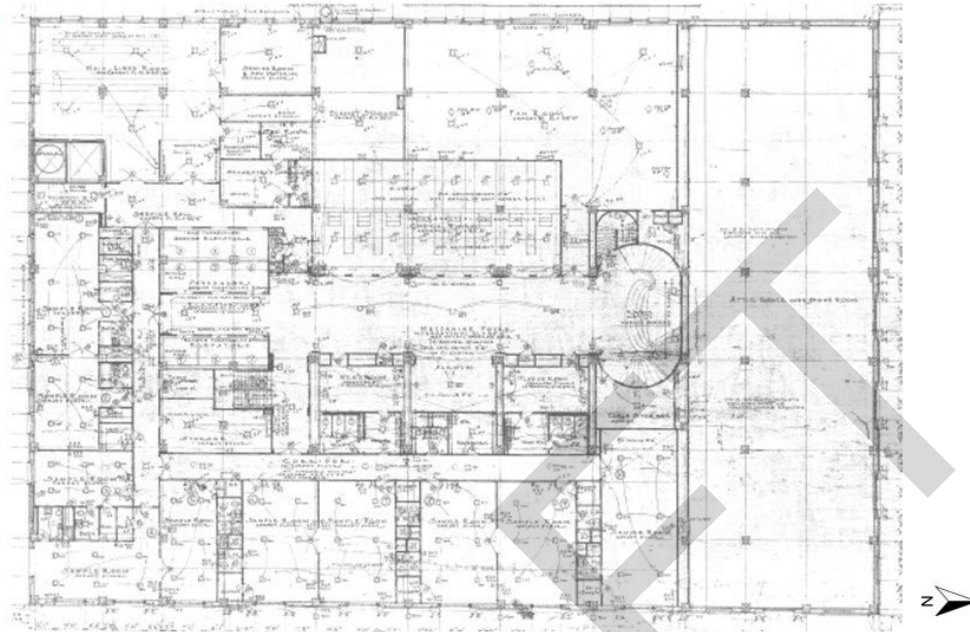


Figure 7. Fourth Floor Photo Key Plan

**Fifth Floor**

**Photos 18-20**

*Yellow arrow  
indicates starting  
point*

*Note: not to scale*

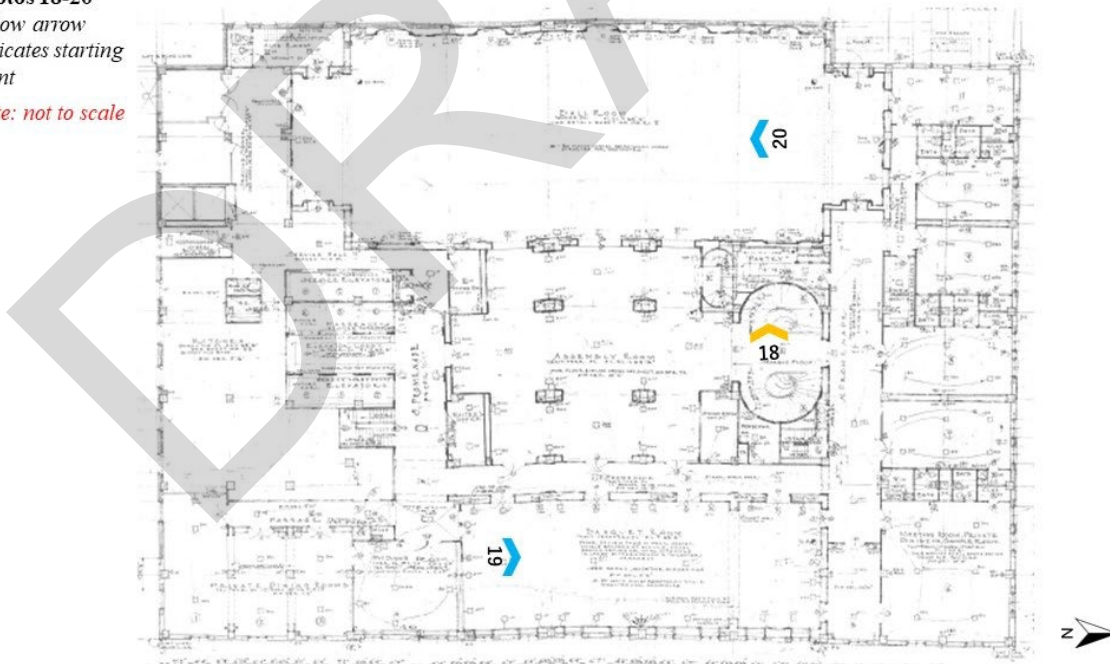


Figure 8. Fifth Floor Photo Key Plan

**Hotel Schroeder**

**Milwaukee, Wisconsin**  
County and State

Name of Property

**Typical Floor Plan**

Floors 6-19

*Note: not to scale*

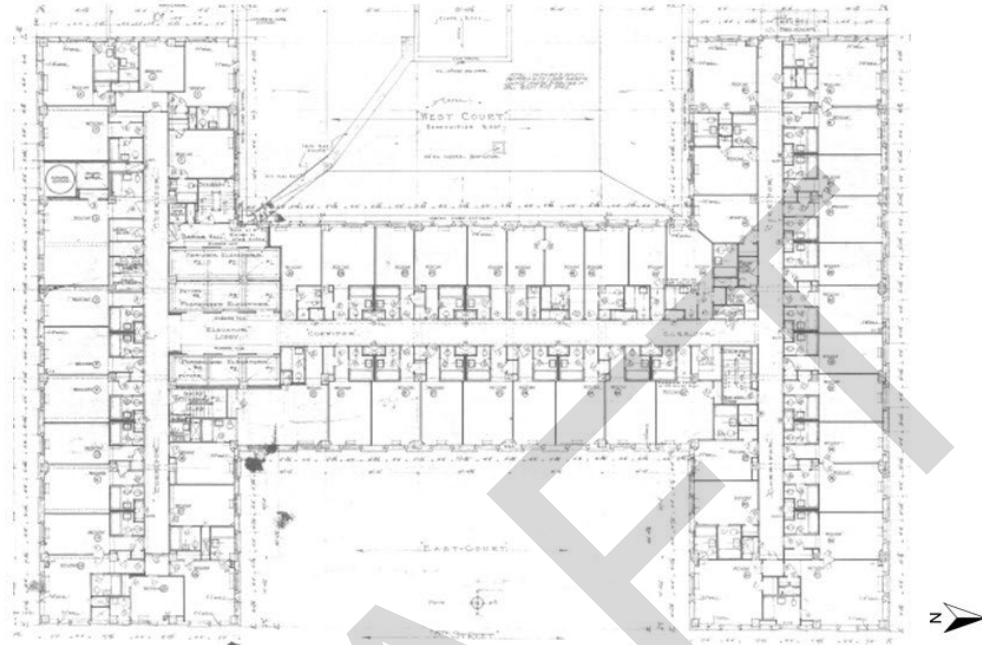


Figure 9. Typical Floor Plan, Floors 6-19

**Fourteenth Floor**

Photos 21-24

*Yellow arrow indicates starting point*

*Note: not to scale*



Figure 10. Fourteenth Floor Photo Key Plan

Hotel Schroeder

Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
County and State

Name of Property

**Nineteenth Floor:**

**Photo 25**

*Yellow arrow  
indicates starting  
point*

*Note: not to scale*

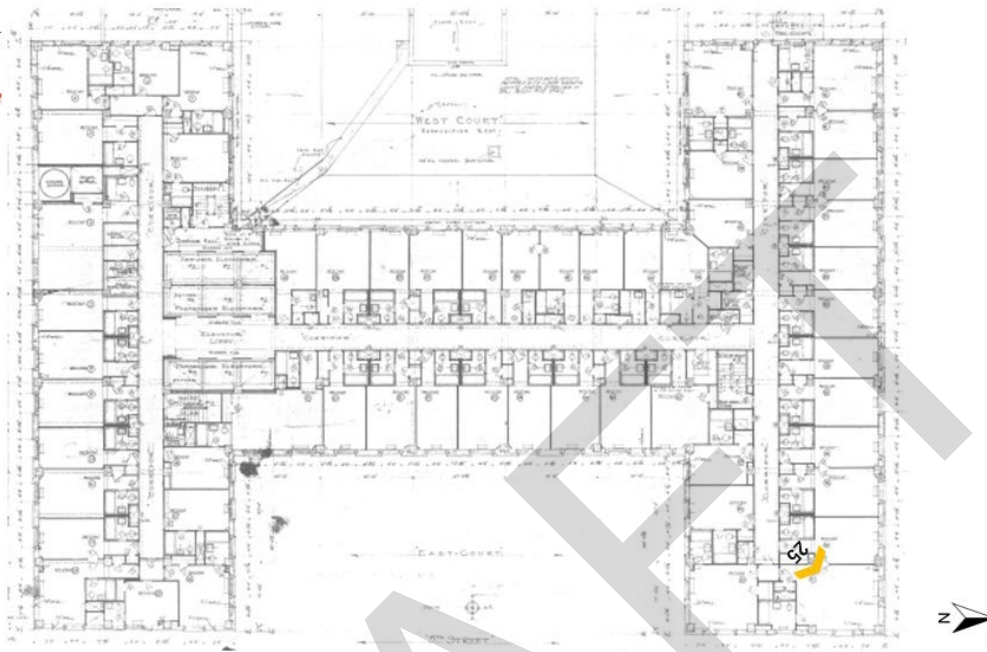


Figure 11. Nineteenth Floor Photo Key Plan

**Typical Upper Floor Plan**

*Floors 20-23*

*Note: not to scale*



Figure 12. Typical Floor Plan, Floors 20-23

Hotel Schroeder

Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
County and State

Name of Property

**Twenty-second Floor**

**Photos 26-28**

*Yellow arrow indicates starting point*

*Note: not to scale*

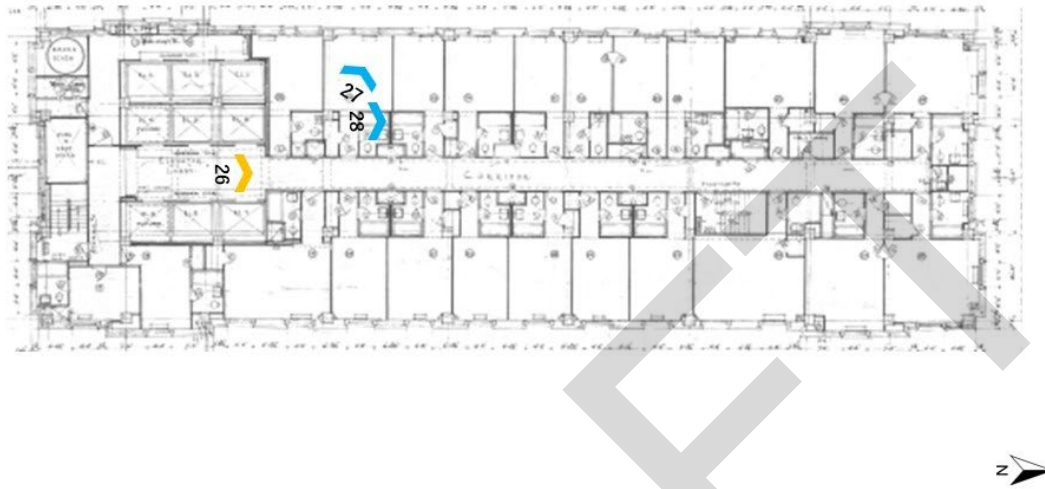


Figure 13. Twenty-second Floor Photo Key Plan

**Twenty-fourth Floor**

**Photos 29-30**

*Yellow arrow indicates starting point*

*Note: not to scale*

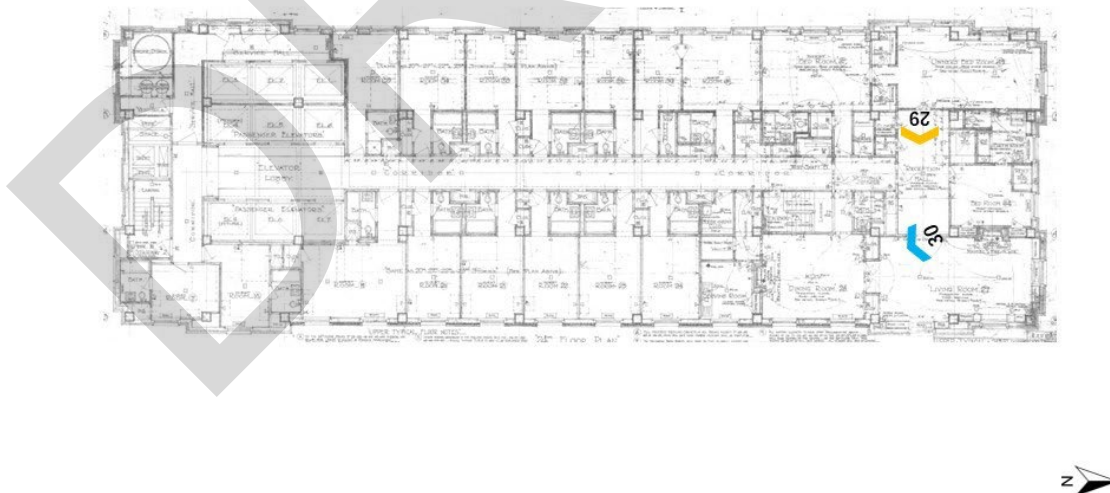


Figure 14. Twenty-fourth Floor Photo Key Plan

**Twenty-fifth Floor**

**Photo 31**

*Yellow arrow indicates starting point*

*Note: not to scale*

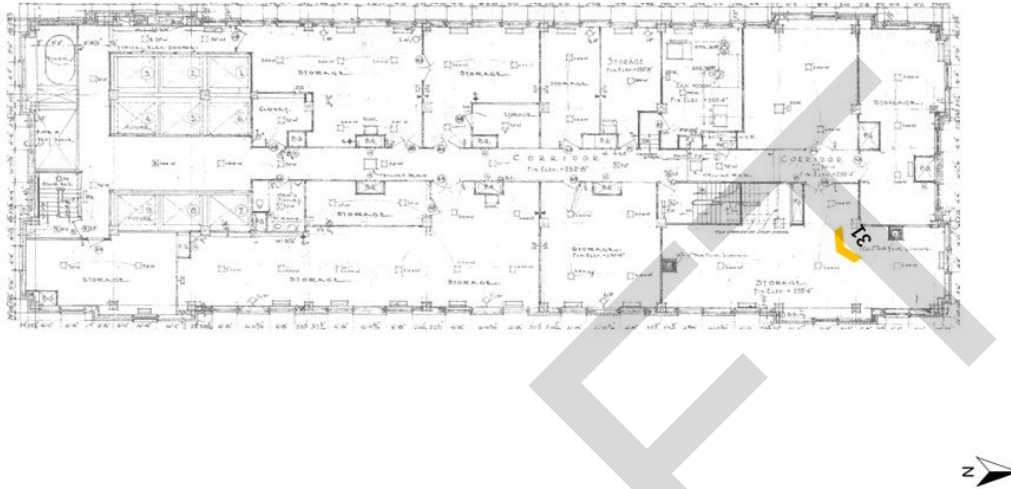


Figure 15. Twenty-fifth Floor Photo Key Plan

**Mechanical Penthouse and Roof**

**Photo 5**

*Yellow arrow indicates starting point*

*Note: not to scale*

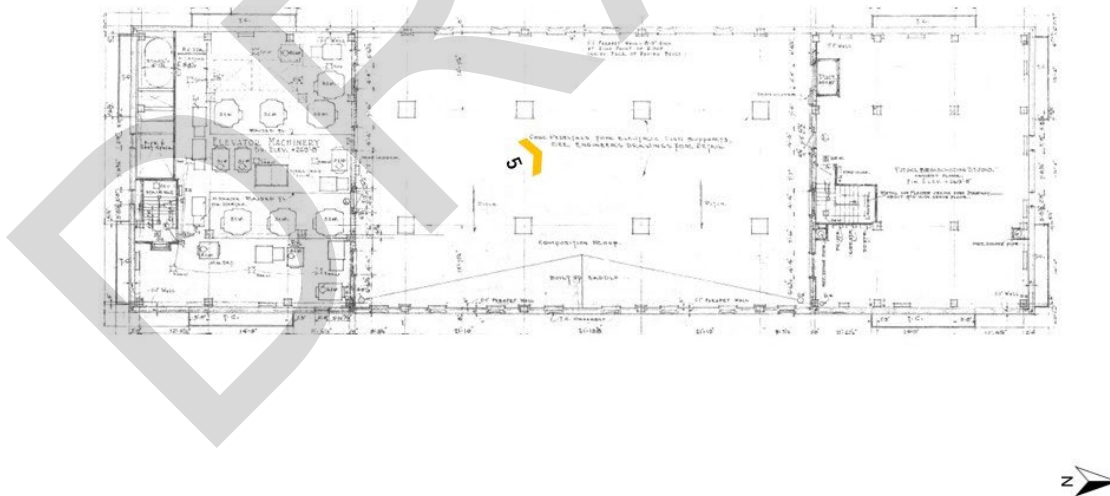


Figure 16. Mechanical Penthouse and Roof Photo Key Plan



Hotel Schroeder

Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
County and State

Name of Property

**Basement**

**Photo 32**

*Yellow arrow indicates starting point*

*Note: not to scale*



Figure 17. Basement Photo Key Plan

**West Wing, Second Floor**

**Photo 33**

*Yellow arrow indicates starting point*

*Note: not to scale*

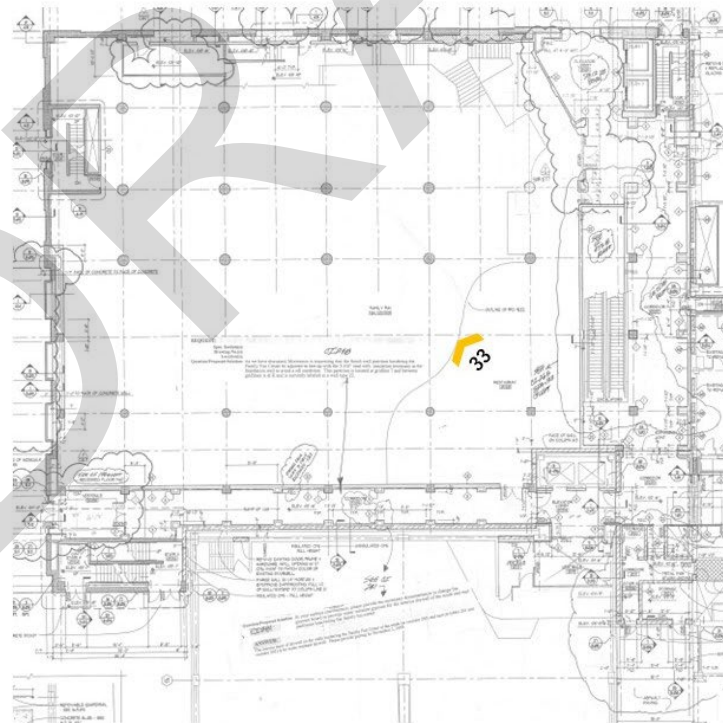


Figure 18. West Wing, Second Floor Photo Key Plan

**Hotel Schroeder**  
Name of Property

**Milwaukee, Wisconsin**  
County and State

**West Wing, Third Floor**

*Note: no photos at this level*

*Note: not to scale*

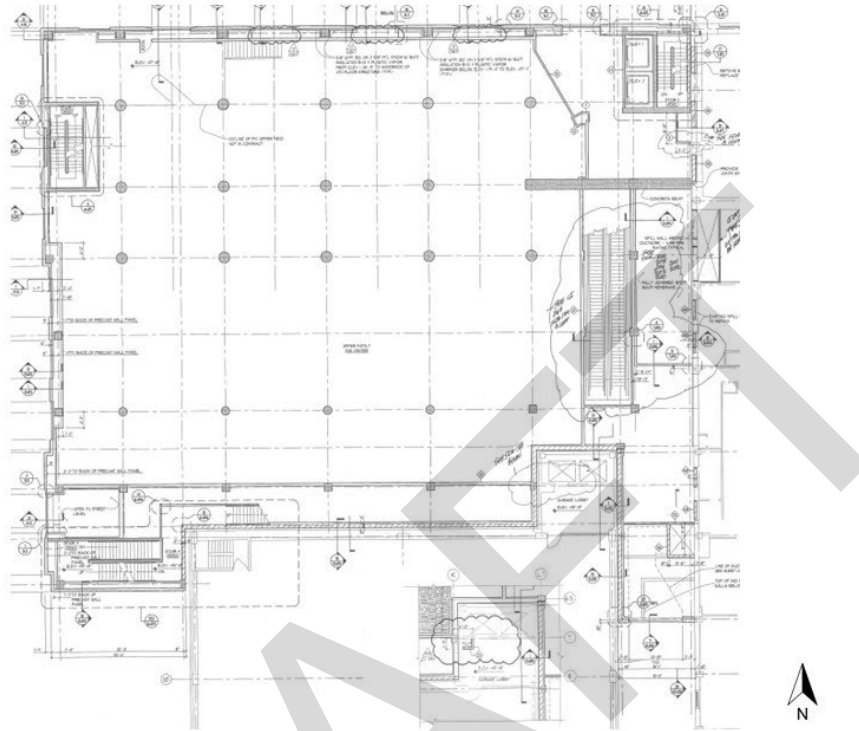


Figure 19. West Wing, Third Floor Photo Key Plan

Hotel Schroeder

Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
County and State

Name of Property

**West Wing, Fourth Floor**

**Photo 34**

*Yellow arrow indicates  
starting point*

*Note: not to scale*

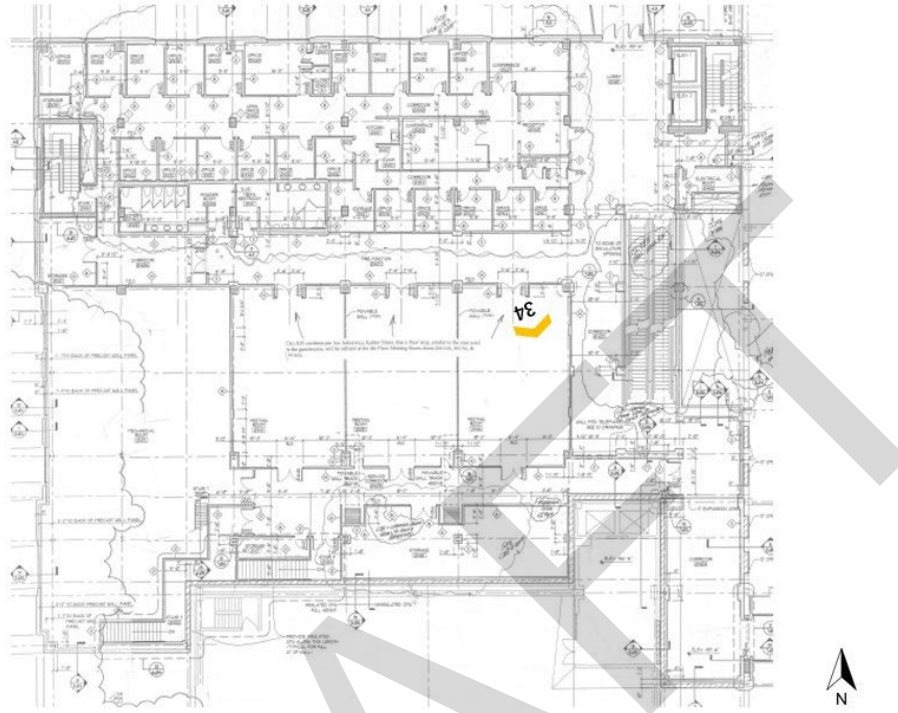


Figure 20. West Wing, Fourth Floor Photo Key Plan

Hotel Schroeder

Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
County and State

Name of Property

**West Wing, Fifth Floor**

*Note: no photos at this level*

*Note: not to scale*

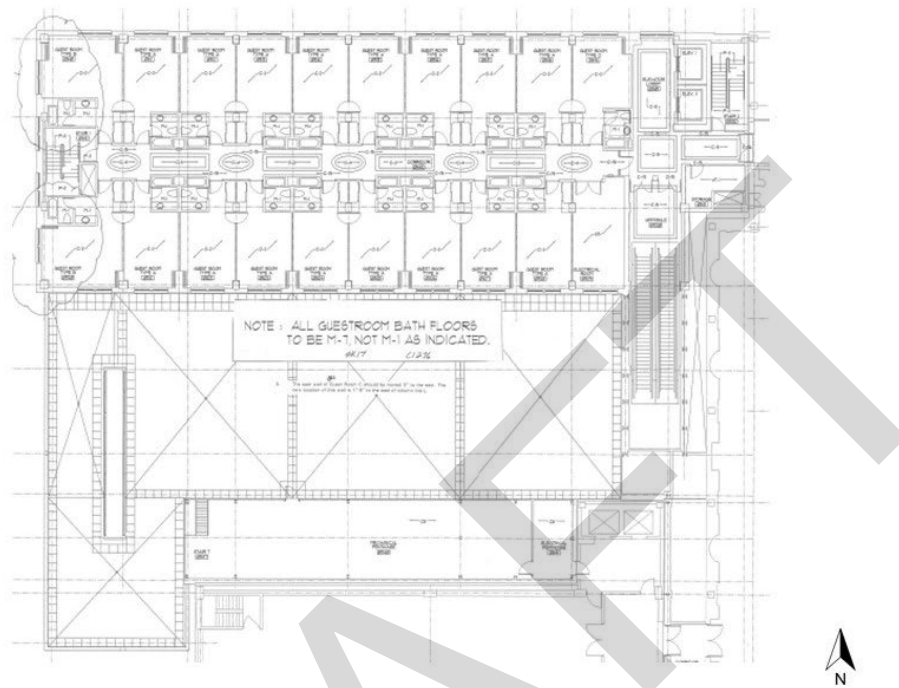


Figure 21. West Wing, Fifth Floor Photo Key Plan

**West Wing, Typical Floor Plan**

Floors 6-14

*Note: not to scale*

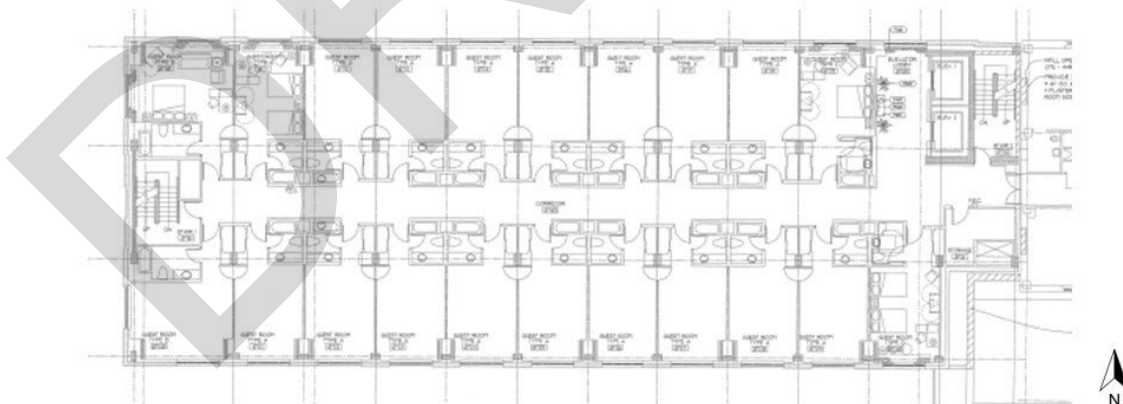


Figure 22. West Wing, Typical Floor Plan, Floors 6-14

Hotel Schroeder

Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
County and State

Name of Property

**West Wing, Seventh Floor**

**Photos 35-36**

*Yellow arrow indicates starting point*

*Note: not to scale*

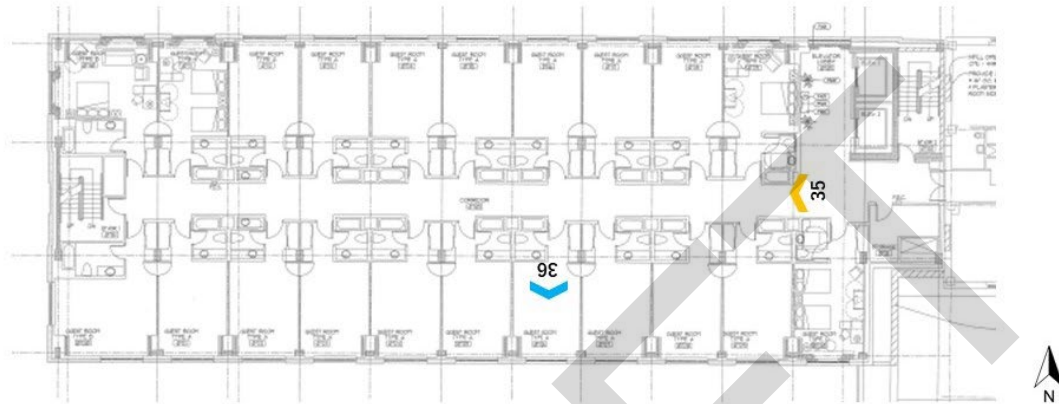


Figure 23. West Wing, Seventh Floor Photo Key Plan

**West Wing, Ninth Floor**

**Photo 37**

*Yellow arrow indicates starting point*

*Note: not to scale*

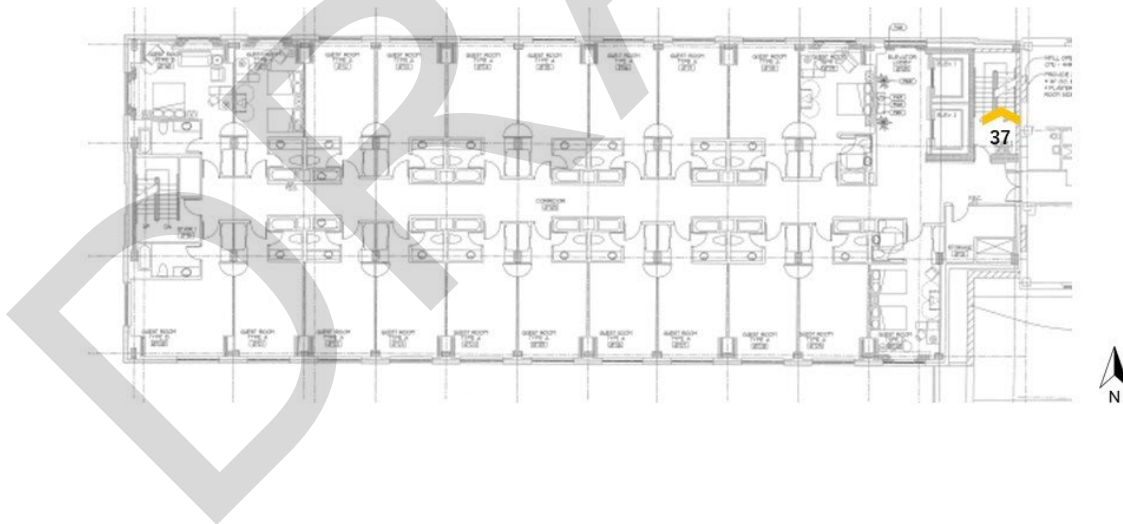


Figure 24. West Wing, Ninth Floor Photo Key Plan

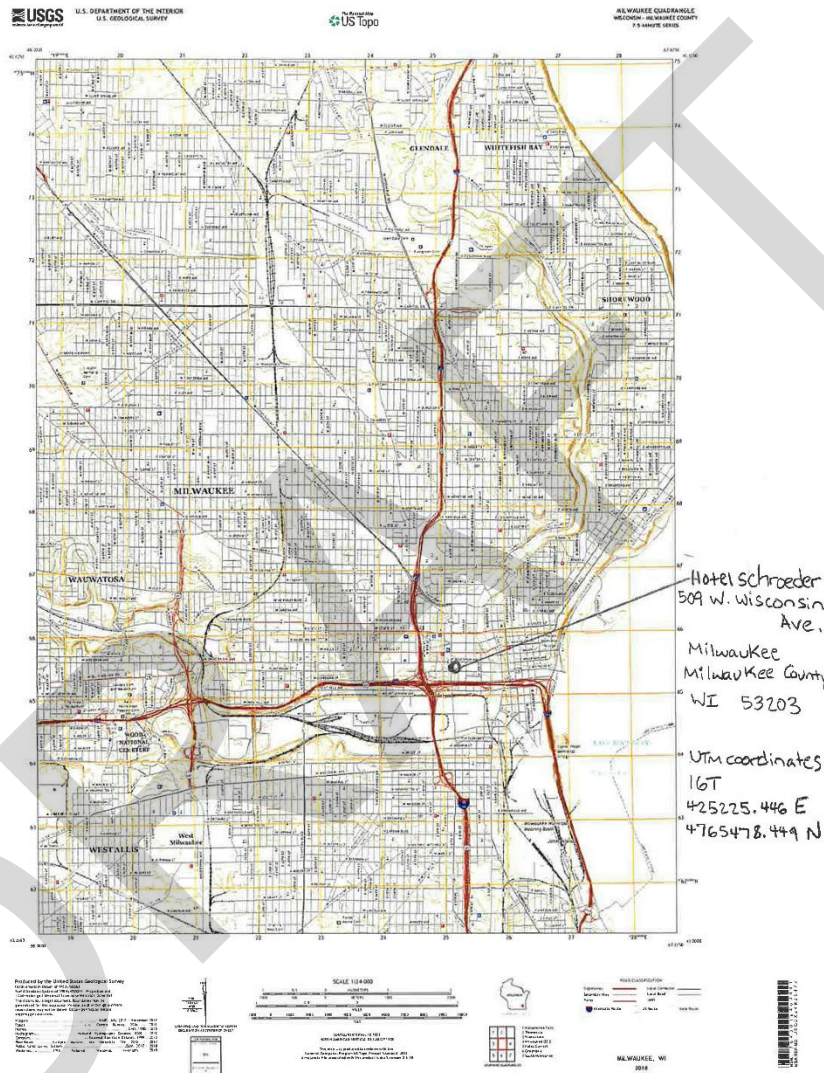


Figure 25. USGS Map (Milwaukee Quadrangle, Wisconsin, 7.5-Minute Series)

END OF FIGURES SECTION DO NOT DELETE

Hotel Schroeder  
Name of Property

Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
County and State

## Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once in the photograph log. The photograph order must correspond with the photograph log.

## Photo Log

Name of Property: Hotel Schroeder  
City or Vicinity: Milwaukee  
County: Milwaukee State: WI  
Photographer: Jen Davel/Mariana Melin-Corcoran  
Date photographed: 4/11/2023

Please see attached pre-rehabilitation photographs.

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

- 1 of 37. East Elevation, looking west.
- 2 of 37. East Elevation, looking northwest at entrance.
- 3 of 37. North Elevation, looking south.
- 4 of 37. West Elevation, looking northeast.
- 5 of 37. Roof, looking northwest.
- 6 of 37. South and East Elevations, looking northwest.
- 7 of 37. West Wing, North Elevation, looking south.
- 8 of 37. West Wing, North and West Elevations, looking southeast.
- 9 of 37. Site view, looking northeast.
- 10 of 37. First Floor, looking west.
- 11 of 37. First Floor, Lobby, looking south at stairs.
- 12 of 37. First Floor, looking north.
- 13 of 37. Second Floor, Lobby, looking south.
- 14 of 37. Second Floor, Lobby, looking south.
- 15 of 37. Second Floor, looking north at lobby.
- 16 of 37. Second Floor, Dining Room, looking west.
- 17 of 37. Second Floor, Lounge, looking south.
- 18 of 37. Fifth Floor, looking west at stairs.
- 19 of 37. Fifth Floor, Banquet Hall, looking north.
- 20 of 37. Fifth Floor, Ballroom, looking south.
- 21 of 37. Fourteenth Floor, looking north.

Hotel Schroeder

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

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- 22 of 37. Fourteenth Floor, looking northwest at elevators.  
23 of 37. Fourteenth Floor, Room 1403, looking southeast.  
24 of 37. Fourteenth Floor, Room 1403, looking west.  
25 of 37. Nineteenth Floor, Room 1932, looking northeast.  
26 of 37. Twenty-second Floor, looking north.  
27 of 37. Twenty-second Floor, Room 2218, looking northwest.  
28 of 37. Twenty-second Floor, Room 2218, looking north.  
29 of 37. Twenty-fourth Floor, Room 2432, looking east.  
30 of 37. Twenty-fourth Floor, Room 2432, looking southeast.  
31 of 37. Twenty-fifth Floor, looking southeast.  
32 of 37. Basement, looking east.  
33 of 37. West Wing, Second Floor, Family Fun Center, looking northwest.  
34 of 37. West Wing, Fourth Floor, Meeting Room, looking southeast.  
35 of 37. West Wing, Seventh Floor, looking west.  
36 of 37. West Wing, Seventh Floor, Room 752, looking south.  
37 of 37. West Wing, Ninth Floor, Stairwell, looking north.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for nominations 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.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.



Hotel Schroeder

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

**Property Owner**

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

<b>name/title</b>	Jeff Peterson				
<b>organization</b>	Marcus Hotels Inc			<b>date</b>	December 2023
<b>street &amp; number</b>	100 E Wisconsin Ave, Suite 1900			<b>phone</b>	414-905-1776
<b>city or town</b>	Milwaukee	<b>state</b>	WI	<b>zip code</b>	53202

If there are other interested parties that should be noticed, please provide in the tables below

<b>name/title</b>	_____				
<b>organization</b>	_____			<b>date</b>	_____
<b>street &amp; number</b>	_____			<b>phone</b>	_____
<b>city or town</b>	_____	<b>state</b>	WI	<b>zip code</b>	_____

<b>name/title</b>	_____				
<b>organization</b>	_____			<b>date</b>	_____
<b>street &amp; number</b>	_____			<b>phone</b>	_____
<b>city or town</b>	_____	<b>state</b>	WI	<b>zip code</b>	_____

<b>name/title</b>	_____				
<b>organization</b>	_____			<b>date</b>	_____
<b>street &amp; number</b>	_____			<b>phone</b>	_____
<b>city or town</b>	_____	<b>state</b>	WI	<b>zip code</b>	_____

