

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Roads Hotel
other names/site number

2. Location

street & number 150 East Main Street N/A not for publication
city, town Atlanta N/A vicinity
state Indiana code IN county Hamilton code 057 zip code 46031

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
2	
	buildings
	sites
	structures
	objects
2	0
Total	

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/ANumber of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official *Robert Hart for J. M. Reber*

11-10-87

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the National
Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.
☐ removed from the National Register.
☐ other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: hotel

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Queen Anne

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls WOOD: weatherboard

WOOD: shingle

roof STONE: slate

other METAL

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Roads Hotel stands on level terrain at the southwest corner of Main and Broadway Streets in the small town of Atlanta, Indiana. The site is one half block from the railroad line which bisects the town north and south, and the immediate environment is mixed commercial and residential in character.

The hotel was built in 1893. It is a two story frame structure with a low pitch hip roof, and a two story porch across the front. The building is about 36' by 60' in size. A small gabled outbuilding is located behind the hotel towards the southwest corner of the lot. The main building is of frame construction with tulip poplar clapboards and a brick foundation.

A fine example of the late Victorian carpenter's art, the hotel reflects the Queen Anne architectural style. The overall design of the structure as well as the shingled cross gable and interior and exterior window and door moldings are in the late Queen Anne style. The jigsaw cross gable brace and ornate porch turnings and braces also display the style, while window and door trim reflect the Eastlake mode.

The north elevation of the Roads Hotel is the main facade of the building. (Photo 1) A two story porch and a cross gable are the most appealing elements of this facade. (The porch will be discussed separately later.) The exterior wall of the north facade has three evenly spaced, vertically aligned openings on the first and second stories. The center openings on both stories are transomed doors. The exterior door and window surrounds are consistent on all facades. The side moldings are plain. The header molding is in the form of an entablature with bull's-eye corner blocks and a pointed fringe frieze. (Photo 10)

The main entry of the hotel is centered on the first story, and has an ornate screen door with turned spindles. The main door has a large single light with two rectangular wood panels below. The panels have raised moldings with small bull's-eye corner blocks.

The windows are one-over-one double hung sash. This is the window type found on all facades of the hotel. Wider windows are located on the first floor of the main facade. The exterior walls have corner boards and beaded corners.

The wall/roof junction has an exposed rafter system which is partially obscured by the porch roof on this facade. The house has a shallow, truncated hip roof with a center deck. The roof is broken by a medium pitch centered cross gable on the north facade.

☒ See continuation sheet

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Fishscale-cut brown and grey slate with metal ridge caps is used for roofing the building.

A cross gable has a wide plain frieze and is sheathed with sawtooth shaped shingles. A one-over-one sash window with plain moldings is in the center of the gable. An ornate, delicately detailed gable truss or brace partially overlaps the gable window. The truss consists of an arch-shaped wood plank with intricate jigsawn floral designs. Two small arched braces are located under the main brace which meet beneath the arch shape. These small braces are incised with decorative designs and have drop finials.

A highly decorative two story wood porch is attached to the front of the main or north facade of the Roads Hotel. Originally, the first story porch floor was of wood flooring over supporting joists, but now the entire porch rests on a brick platform built by the current owner. Both the first and second stories of the porch are supported by turned wood posts. The veranda has five decorative wood arched braces on the first floor. The center "arch" is wider in span than the other flanking arches. The four pointed wood arches flanking the center arch have a frieze of bobbin-like spindles. Below this, jigsawn wood arch/braces with scalloped edges form arches with turned drop finials at the apex. In the spandrels, a jigsawn roundel with a decorative motif and small brace is found. The center arch of the first story is essentially identical to the other arches, except that there is no frieze and the center arch is round and taller. The balustrades on the first and second stories of the porch are recent additions. The second story of the veranda has small jigsawn brackets with scalloped edges and finials at the ends. The porch has a shallow hip roof with open rafters.

The east elevation faces Broadway Street and has irregularly placed openings. (Photo 11) A wide water table board separates the foundation from the clapboard wall. The first story has six bays; the second and fifth openings from the south (left) are paneled transomed doors with new door hoods. The hipped door hoods with wood shake roofing are additions to the building.

A three-sided projecting bay window is found approximately in the center of the first story of the east facade. The bay window has typical window moldings with panels above the windows. The bay has a frieze composed of alternately long and short vertical boards, and a hipped roof covered in slate.

There are three typical windows on the first story of this facade.

The second story of the east facade has five typical windows, two of which are aligned vertically with the first floor doors; others to the far north (right) end and far south end are aligned vertically with first floor windows; and one other window is located just to the south and above the bay window.

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A frieze, identical to the bay window frieze, runs across the upper wall of the east facade. The hotel has exposed, scroll shaped rafter ends. The long side of the truncated hip roof is shown on this facade.

The west elevation has unevenly spaced openings with the usual moldings. (Photo 2. Note: This photo was reversed when printed.) The third opening from the north (left) is a paneled door. The other first story openings are windows. There are five windows on the second story. The frieze and other details of the west facade match the east facade.

The interior of the Roads Hotel is arranged around a central stair hall with rooms on either side on both floors. Interior walls are of lath and plaster, and most rooms have ash floors.

The main entry, which has been described, leads to the stair hall. The stairs are a straight flight with a square newel post, turned balusters and a molded handrail. (Photo 3). The newel post has an ornate gas fixture supported by three female figures.

Doors which lead to first floor parlors from the stair hall have single light segmental arched windows with panels on the lower half. (Photo 12) The panels have raised moldings with small corner blocks.

Doors facing halls throughout the hotel have transoms. Door surrounds throughout the hotel have plain moldings with decorative plinth blocks and bull's-eye corner blocks that extend above the lintels. Windows have similar details with extended bull's-eye corner blocks in each corner.

Pocket doors separate the front east parlor from another parlor directly to the south. The pocket doors have the usual door surrounds with paneled doors. Another set of pocket doors leads to the central dining area. (Photo 13) This area has kitchen fixtures and appliances. An old kitchen sink with iron hand pumps has been found in a first story room, which may have been the original kitchen sink.

Several bedrooms are located south of the dining room. These rooms have been carpeted, and the southwest room has a dropped ceiling. There are also two bathrooms on the first floor, both of which have been modernized. One bathroom has retained an apparently original marble sink, while the other still has an antique claw-footed tub.

The second floor has three rooms across the north end of the building and a central hall flanked by eight additional bedrooms. The center hall has nine typically detailed transomed doors. (Photo 15) The hall floor has been carpeted. There are two bathrooms on the second floor which have been remodeled with modern fixtures and vinyl flooring. A claw foot tub remains in one bath and a marble sink is probably original to another. Studio apartments on the east and west

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sides of the building's second floor have modern kitchen appliances.

The grounds surrounding the hotel are not extensive. Two large trees are found in the corners of the front yard. To the rear, there is a one story frame shed structure. (Photos 7, 8) The shed has a gable roof with ends facing north-south and is sided with vertical boards. This building has a paneled door and a four-paned single sash window. The interior has a brick floor. The shed appears to date from the same time as the hotel and the owner believes the building was a summer kitchen.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce

Architecture

Period of Significance

1893-c.1925

Significant Dates

1893

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Roads Hotel is an unusually intact example of a small town hostelry, dating from Atlanta's gas boom era. Built in 1893, the Roads was considered the leading hotel in the area. In terms of architecture, the building exhibits significant examples of late 19th century carpentry and has a high level of integrity. Both the function and details of the Roads Hotel are strong reminders of the sudden burst of prosperity central Indiana experienced during the late 19th century as a result of the discovery and exploitation of natural gas. While many of the commercial and residential buildings remaining in Atlanta date from this era, many have been remodeled or damaged by recent fires, leaving the Roads Hotel as one of the most intact buildings remaining from this period.

The history of Atlanta really began with the platting of the town of Shielville in 1839, and of Buena Vista in the 1850's along the new Indianapolis, Peru and Chicago Railroad line. The two shared a post office, and in 1883 or '84, the name was changed to Atlanta. In its earliest days the town had a modest economy, with a saw mill and flour mill as major employers. But the discovery of natural gas in 1886 rapidly transformed many central Indiana communities into industrial centers. Wells were producing gas in the immediate vicinity of Atlanta by 1888, and the town grew and prospered with the construction of a plate glass factory and a tin plate mill. Census figures indicate that in 1880 the town had a population of 31, but by 1900, that figure had increased to 1,900. The town's location on a major rail line and its supply of cheap fuel no doubt both contributed to its sudden growth. However, the practice of open flambeaux at the wells and in the cities had its toll: the natural gas supply gave out rapidly and, for all practical purposes, permanently by 1905.

The effects of the gas boom on Atlanta are obvious in the physical evidence that remains, since most of the commercial structures found today date from the 1890's, as do many of the residences. Although Atlanta's Main Street area has several structures from this era, its integrity was diminished by a fire in August of 1987, which resulted in the destruction of one storefront and removal of the upper stories of several others. Consequently, the Roads Hotel has increased in importance as a representative of the gas boom era.

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Early local sources described Atlanta as "a center for travel," and the Roads Hotel as "the leading hotel in this section of the country."¹ The Roads was preceded by a number of taverns in the community, the first opening in 1854.² An 1866 map of Buena Vista indicates in its business directory that H. Gasho was the proprietor of the Buena Vista Hotel,³ and an 1880 county history lists J. A. Matthews as proprietor of the Buena House Hotel.⁴ An 1899 article, however, indicates that after the tavern of Samuel Phillips was closed, "the town was without the convenience of a regular hotel for a number of years, until 1893, when Newton Rhoads built a commodious two-story frame building east of the railroad and christened it the 'Rhoads House.'"⁵ Another hotel appears to have operated a block west of the Roads until the 1920's,⁶ but it is no longer standing. Thus the Roads Hotel is a unique resource in the town of Atlanta today. Although a complete survey has not been conducted, it is also thought that small 19th century frame hotels are fairly uncommon statewide, particularly in as close to original condition as is the Roads.

Architecturally, the Roads Hotel is significant for its Queen Anne detailing and its high integrity. The Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory for Hamilton County located only a handful of comparable examples of the style in the county. The Roads is somewhat unusual in that most of its exterior detailing is two-dimensional, having been scroll-sawn rather than turned. The exterior retains significant features such as slate roofing, poplar siding, and the porch and gable detailing. The integrity of the interior is seen in its retention of the original plan of several guest rooms opening off a central hallway upstairs with the more public rooms downstairs, as well as the survival of original woodwork and detailing.

The Roads hotel operated until the early 1920's, but was occupied by Newton Roads' widow Clara and their daughter until 1940. Thereafter it remained vacant for seven to ten years, then was converted into apartments. The property was recently purchased by its present owner, and is currently undergoing rehabilitation.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Haines, John F. History of Hamilton County, Indiana.
(Indianapolis: B.F. Bowen, 1915) pp. 232-235.

Helm, Thomas B. History of Hamilton County, Indiana.
(Chicago: Kingman Brothers, 1880.) page 126.

"Hotel Rhoads," Atlanta Herald, November, 1895. (transcribed newsclipping, collection of Jackson Township Library, Atlanta, Indiana.)

"Map of Hamilton County, Indiana." Waterloo, Indiana: C.A.O.
McClellan and Carl S. Warner, 1866.

"Story of Atlanta," Daily and Weekly Tribune, c. 1899. (transcribed newsclipping, collection of Jackson Township Library, Atlanta, Indiana. Article is from a Tipton, Indiana newspaper.)

☒ See continuation sheet

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less Than One Acre

UTM References

A

1	6	5	8	2	9	4	0	4	4	5	1	9	5	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lot 1, Block 7, in the town of Atlanta

☐ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

This Parcel includes the hotel and a contributing outbuilding.

☐ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Philip L. Conklin

organization --

street & number 5751 Crestview Avenue

city or town Indianapolis

date June 15, 1987

telephone 317/257-5588

state Indiana zip code 46220

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U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population Census, 1880 and 1900.

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FOOTNOTES

1. "Hotel Rhoads," Atlanta Herald, November 1895. Note that the name is variously spelled "Roads" and "Rhoads." Legal documents indicate that "Roads" is the correct spelling of the family name.
2. "Story of Atlanta," copied from Laws of Indiana, etc., published by Daily and Weekly Tribune, Tipton, Indiana, c. 1899.
3. "Map of Hamilton County, Indiana." (Waterloo, Indiana: C.A.O. McClellan and Carl S. Warner, 1866).
4. Thomas B. Helm, History of Hamilton County, Indiana. (Chicago: Kingman Brothers, 1880), page 126.
5. "Hotel Rhoads," Atlanta Herald, November 1895.
6. It is not known whether this hotel is the same as one of those previously mentioned.

