United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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

1. Name

historic Mobley Hotel

and/or common The Mobley Hotel, the First Hilton Hotel

2. Location

street & number 4th Street and Conrad Hilton Ave. (former Avenue D) ___ not for publication
city, town Cisco ___ vicinity of ___ congressional district 17
state Texas code 048 county Eastland code 133

3. Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Present Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>__ district</td>
<td>__ public</td>
<td>_ occupied</td>
<td>_ agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X building(s)</td>
<td>__ private</td>
<td>_ unoccupied</td>
<td>_ commercial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>structure</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>_ X work in progress</td>
<td>_ educational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ site</td>
<td>Public Acquisition</td>
<td>Accessible</td>
<td>_ entertainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ object</td>
<td>___ in process</td>
<td>yes: restricted</td>
<td>_ religious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ in process</td>
<td>___ being considered</td>
<td>yes: unrestricted</td>
<td>_ government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ in process</td>
<td>___ being considered</td>
<td>yes: unrestricted</td>
<td>_ scientific</td>
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<tr>
<td>___ in process</td>
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<tr>
<td>___ in process</td>
<td>___ being considered</td>
<td>yes: unrestricted</td>
<td>_ transportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>___ in process</td>
<td>___ being considered</td>
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<td>_ military</td>
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<tr>
<td>___ in process</td>
<td>___ being considered</td>
<td>yes: unrestricted</td>
<td>_ other</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4. Owner of Property

name The University of Houston Foundation

street & number 4800 Calhoun

city, town Houston ___ vicinity of ___ state Texas 77004

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Eastland County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Eastland ___ state Texas

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>title</th>
<th>Historic Sites Inventory Cisco Historical Society Survey</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>has this property been determined eligible?</td>
<td>__ yes X no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>date</td>
<td>___ federal X state ___ county X local</td>
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depository for survey records Texas Historical Commission

city, town Austin ___ state Texas
7. Description

<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>original site</td>
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</table>

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Mobley Hotel is typical of the vernacular commercial and institutional architecture of the southern frontier found throughout west central Texas. It is a two-story building of solid brick construction. The parapet, pedestal and other features of stucco over brick decorate the exterior. Alterations and time have changed the original structure, but current restoration efforts seek to recreate some of its former appearance as well as turn it into a museum.

The Mobley Hotel is a two-story building of solid brick construction situated at the end of Conrad Hilton Ave. (former Avenue D) on the south side of the Texas and Pacific Railroad. The hotel was built in two stages as demonstrated by the roof parapet wall—in the interior west side, where the original exterior wall is noticeable and on the front and rear exterior wall surface on the west side, where the joining of the two moments of its construction is evident.

This building is typical of the vernacular commercial and institutional architecture of the southern frontier found throughout west central Texas. The building has a flat roof, a parapet of stucco over brick, two belts of brick and stucco over brick, ledges and pedestal also of stucco over brick and sash type windows. It front entrance consists of a wooden porch leading to double doors with four lights on the upper part and two molded panels at the bottom. On the side facing the original site of the Cisco Railway Station is the entrance to the original cafe. This door is surmounted by a four-light transom. It has four lights on the upper part and a molded paneled moveable apron. This same type of door is also found in the rear of the hotel.

The entrance lobby leads directly to the cafe, the kitchen area, the restrooms and the coats and baggage storeroom, which are in the east wing of the building. A stairway leading to the upper floor and a narrow multi-level corridor leading to the downstairs rooms are to the left of the lobby. Another stairway is situated in the west wing of the building. Some of the original solid oak doors to the guest rooms (with numbers on them) have been found on the premises. These doors consist of five molded panels on solid frame and a top-hung transom light with clear glass. The ceiling in the lobby and restaurant area is of pressed metal which is in a deteriorated state. The ceilings throughout the rest of the building are of plaster over wood laths. The perimeter of the building is brick cavity wall plastered inside. All interior walls are of wood frame construction with plaster finish on wood laths. The floors are of pine on bridging joists with herring-bone strutting. Because of previous remodelling by past owners who used unskilled workers, much of the wooden structure of the building is in a state of decay.

The interior timber structure will be replaced with a fire resistant structure of light metal and pre-stressed concrete. The few rooms which still remind us of the original hotel will be reconstructed, and the lobby and stairway. The remainder of the space will be reorganized into display areas, theater, meeting room and archives. The area at the rear of the building, which was used for outside storage and deliveries, will be roofed over and glassed-in to be used as a meeting room for civic groups in Cisco. Dr. Rinaldo A. Petrini di Monforte, a restoration architect from Italy will direct the rehabilitation of the building.

A modern metal shed standing on the grounds of the property is a nonconforming intrusion which detracts from the integrity of the site. Few of the original trees planted by Mr. Lee Lieske, gardener of the hotel from 1916 to 1925 still flourish. French mulberries and two 100 year old mesquite trees still stand. In the garden are the remains of a gold fish pond and fountain which used to be called a gazebo. The streets surrounding...
the property on the north, west and south sides are of red brick paving. All other buildings in the immediate vicinity contribute to the period and atmosphere of the Mobley Hotel.
8. Significance

<table>
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<td>other (specify)</td>
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Specific dates Built in 1916 Builder/Architect A.J. Olsen Construction

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

A.J. Olsen Construction built the Mobley Hotel in 1916 for Henry Mobley. Conrad Hilton purchased the hotel in 1919, during the time it catered to the participants of the Ranger oil field boom in west central Texas. The building is significant for being the first Hilton Hotel. It was the birthplace of not only one of the world's leading hotel chains, but also of the modern hospitality industry itself.

Henry Mobley of Cisco built his hotel on property purchased from A.J. Olsen, who had purchased it from the Texas Central Railroad Company in 1914. The Mobley Hotel opened its doors in 1916. Most of its guests came from the railway station across the road. The major feature of the hotel was its cafe which catered to railway passengers who had short stopovers in Cisco. When the oil boom began in the Ranger field, Cisco attracted a large population of oil field workers, itinerant salesmen, businessmen, gamblers, and other professionals who usually flocked when sudden riches amassed. Mobley, taking advantage of this sudden demand for beds transformed his 40 room hotel into a 120 room establishment by renting his rooms for eight hour periods that coincided with the shifts in the oil fields.

In 1919 a young banker from New Mexico, Conrad Nicholson Hilton, arrived in Cisco in order to purchase a bank for $75,000. When the deal fell through, the 32 year old Hilton went to the Mobley Hotel to get a room for the night. He discovered that the hotel was renting its rooms three times over. After inspecting the books, Hilton offered to buy the hotel for $40,000 cash. Mobley accepted, for despite his hotel's success, he too was taken with oil fever and wanted to try his luck in the oil fields.

Hilton's first partner and hotel manager was L.M. Drown, a banker from San Diego. According to Hilton, the Mobley Hotel was the "ideal hotel to practice on." He regarded it as his "first love; a great lady." "She taught us the way to promotion and pay, plus a lot about running hotels." Two principles which are basic to all Hilton hotels were first tried in the Mobley: maximum reduction of wasted space and "esprit de corps" among the employees. He was the first to put a novelty shop in the lobby thus initiating the boutiques trend in hotels as an added service for guests and as a new source of revenue and space usage. Hilton realized the need for hotels that catered to middle and upper middle class patrons by providing maximum services and comforts with a minimum of cost. Hilton even coined and copyrighted a word to express his philosophy—minimax—which meant minimum cost and maximum comfort.

Hilton conceived of a systematic approach to hotel planning based on the economic use of space (columns in the hotel lobbies became showcases for high fashion designers, jewellers, craftsmen), sophisticated planning, innovative management, and a deep understanding that an atmosphere of comfort, luxury, and taste could be provided at an economical cost. These ideas became a basic blueprint that revolutionized the planning and architecture of hotels the world over from the siting of the entrance, lobby, front desk, and restaurant, to all parts of the hotel that catered unobtrusively to the comfort of the guests. He polished these concepts at the Mobley and then expressed...
9. Major Bibliographical References


10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property: approximately one acre

Quadrangle name: Cisco North, Tex.

UTM References

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</table>

Verbal boundary description and justification: Tract of land lying in section 84, block 4 of the H & T.C.R.R. Co. Survey. Beginning at the north corner of 4th St. and Conrad Hilton Av.; N 29°, 30 min. W 115 ft. along Conrad Hilton Av.; then N 60°, 30 min. E 250 ft.; then S 29°, 30 min. E 115 ft.; then S 60°, 30 min. W 250 ft. along 4th St. to beginning.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>state</th>
<th>code</th>
<th>county</th>
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</table>

11. Form Prepared By

Rinaldo A. A. Petrini di Monforte, Ph.D. Professor of Architecture & project director

Katherine L. Smith—Contract historian

University of Houston College of Architecture

September 22, 1980

March 16, 1981

2612 W. 48th St.

(713) 749-1188 or 528-0141

(512) 451-2684

Houston

Athens

Texas 77004

Texas 78731

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

X national

state

local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature:

April 6, 1981

For HCRRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the National Register

5/13/81

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

Chief of Registration
them with total success when he personally designed the first Hilton Hotel in Dallas in 1924.

Hilton sold the Mobley Hotel in 1929. During the Depression it fell into disrepair. In 1956 after several changes in owners it was purchased by Mrs. Prissy Springer, who transformed it into a senior citizens home. Some rooms were turned into apartments, mechanical heating and cooling were added, corridors were ramped, and some of the larger rooms were subdivided so that the original 40 rooms became 46 rooms. In May 1970 Harold Martindale, a gold prospector from Alaska, bought the Mobley for $5,000 to turn it into apartments. That same year, the Cisco Historical Society gave the hotel an historical marker. Martindale sold the building on December 15, 1977 to G.H. Glanville who, acting on behalf of Eric Hilton, transferred the deed that same day to the University of Houston Foundation. In February 1979 the University of Houston Foundation, the Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management, and the Hilton family designated the Mobley Hotel in Cisco, Texas as a memorial museum to house a collection of memorabilia that belonged to the late Conrad Hilton, who died on January 3, 1979 at age 91.

Hilton's genius in hotel administration and design, together with his philosophy of honesty and hospitality became the seed of modern hotel and restaurant management practices in the world today. Today there are 250 Hilton Hotels, employing 25,000 people in the United States and 23,500 in the rest of the world. In 1977 the gross revenue of the Hilton Corporation was $376 million; net profit after taxes was $40 million. C.N. Hilton is regarded as the father of the hospitality industry today. He had deservedly earned the title by which he was known the world over; "the world's finest innkeeper."
I. Evaluation of Resource (cont. on back if necessary)

II. Evaluation of Nomination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Descriptive Statement
   Short Format: [Yes] [No]

2. Significance Statement
   Short Format: [Yes] [No]

3. Concepts/Integrity

4. Concepts/Criteria

5. Concepts/Boundaries

6. Contextual Evaluation

General Comments (cont. on back if necessary):

Reviewer/Date: ____________________________

See Attached: ____________________________

National Park Service

U.S. Department of the Interior
Mobley Hotel
4th Street and Conrad Hilton Avenue
Cisco, Eastland County, Texas

Photo by Danny Hardy, November, 1979.
Negative on file at Texas Historical Commission

East oblique, camera facing west.

Photo 1 of 3.
Mobley Hotel
4th Street and Conrad Hilton Ave.
Cisco, Eastland County, Texas

Photo by Danny Hardy, November, 1979.
Negative on file at Texas Historical Commission.

West oblique, camera facing east.

Photo 2 of 3.
Mobley Hotel
4th Street and Conrad Hilton Avenue
Cisco, Eastland County, Texas

Photo by Linda Flory, 1980.
Negative on file at Texas Historical Commission

North oblique, camera facing south.

Photo 3 of 3.
ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE TEXAS

Date Entered MAY 13 1981

Name Location

Mobley Hotel Cisco
Eastland County

Also Notified

Honorable Lloyd M. Bentsen
Honorable John G. Tower
Honorable Charles W. Stenholm
South Central Region, HCRS

State Historic Preservation Officer
Mr. Truett Latimer
Executive Director
Texas State Historical Commission
P.O. Box 12276, Capitol Station
Austin, Texas 78711

For further information, please call the National Register at (202)343-6401.
May 19, 1981

Mr. Jerry Rogers, Acting Keeper
National Register of Historic Places
Historic Conservation and Recreation Service
Pension Building
440 G. Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20243

Re: NOMINATION FOR LISTING ON THE "NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES" FOR THE FOLLOWING PROPERTY:
Mobley Hotel
4th Street and Conrad Hilton Avenue
City of Cisco
County of Eastland
State of Texas

Dear Mr. Rogers:

Regarding the above referenced property, please be advised of the following:

1. The University of Houston Foundation is the owner of the Mobley Hotel.

2. The University of Houston Foundation is fully aware of both the incentives and disincentives stipulated in Section 2124 of the Tax Reform Act of 1976 and other ramifications of Register listing.

3. The University of Houston Foundation respectfully requests that any waiting period be waived and that the process be expedited.

Thank you for your cooperation and attention in this matter and we look forward to receiving the notices of official listing.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Virginia Barnett
Secretary-Treasurer
University of Houston Foundation

cc: Elliott A. Johnson
John W. Leslie
Rinaldo Petrini
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE RECD</th>
<th>MAY 28 1981</th>
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- INDIVIDUAL RESPONSE (ATTACHED)
- INFORMATION MATERIAL SENT
- TELEPHONE CALL (ATTACHED)

DATE ACTION TAKEN

INITIALS