

# Teton County Historic Site Survey

## 1. Name of Property

historic name 6 — K Motel (Six Bar K Motel)

other name/site number Elk Country Inn

## 2. Location

street & number 480 W. Pearl  not for publication

city or town Jackson  vicinity

state Wyoming code WY county Teton code 039 zip code 83001

## 3. Ownership of Property

(check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

## 4. Category of Property

(check only one box)

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

## 5. Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

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

## Property Owner

name/title Lasting Legacy

street & number P. O. Box 575 telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Jackson state WY zip code 83001

## Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

## Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_

## National Register Status:

- Eligible
- Not Eligible
- Unevaluated
- District Potential

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Function**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: hotel

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Function**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: hotel

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: commercial

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls brick / stone

roof asphalt shingle

other

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

**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.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Areas of Significance**

Commerce \_\_\_\_\_

Architecture \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1952-1955 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Persons**  
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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 Name of repository:

Jackson Hole Historical Society \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 9

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** less than 2 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

1 1/2    5/1/8/7/2/6    4/8/0/3/9/5/8  
 Zone    Easting    Northing

2 1/2    //////    //////  
 Zone    Easting    Northing

3 1/2    //////    //////  
 Zone    Easting    Northing

4 1/2    //////    //////  
 Zone    Easting    Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10

**11. Form Prepared By**

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Maps**
- **Photographs:** Representative photographs of the property.



# Teton County Historic Site Survey

## Continuation Sheet

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6 — K Motel

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### Narrative Description

The 6 – K Motel once included two large buildings and several smaller structures with a total of 25 lodging units. Now a part of the Elk Country Inn, one of the 6 – K large buildings is the main, and perhaps only, remnant of the original operation. The adjacent new two-story building to the west replaces the building that served as the office for the 6 – K and the other lodging buildings—brick cabins with multiple units—have been removed. The extant 6 – K building still serves as lodging and has retained its physical integrity although the surrounding structures have changed. Since it was originally intended to be a stand-alone building, separate from the other parts of the motel, since it is a large building housing multiple units, a building as large as some other entire motel operations, and since its appearance and materials have been carefully maintained, the loss of the associated buildings has not seriously compromised the integrity of this building.

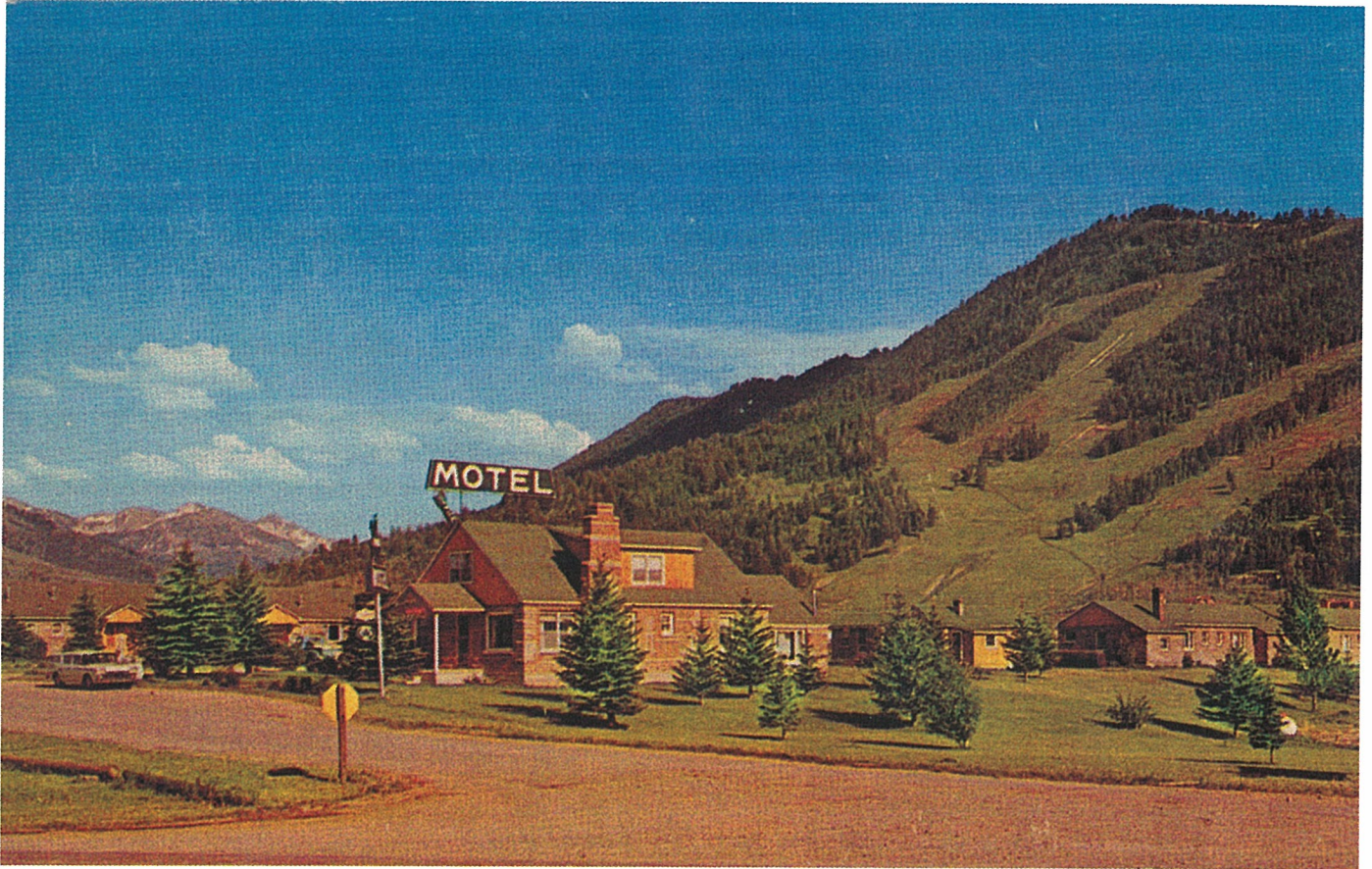
The remaining part of the 6 – K is a long rectangular building with a gable roof on a north-south axis that fronts to the north on Pearl. The building is made of brick and stone; the north elevation uses a decorative ashlar, rose and tan, cut in long slabs while the other elevations use primarily brick but with geometric and whimsical stone ornamentation in the brick, some of the ornamentation representing initials or brands. With stone sills and brick lintels at the windows and with careful attention to the bond at the base of the building, the masonry in this building is exceptional. The building has two entrances paired on both the north and south elevation (each entrance leading to an individual room, not to a common hallway) and two pairs of entrances each on the east and on the west elevations, each pair of entrances with its own gabled canopy overhead.



# Teton County Historic Site Survey Continuation Sheet

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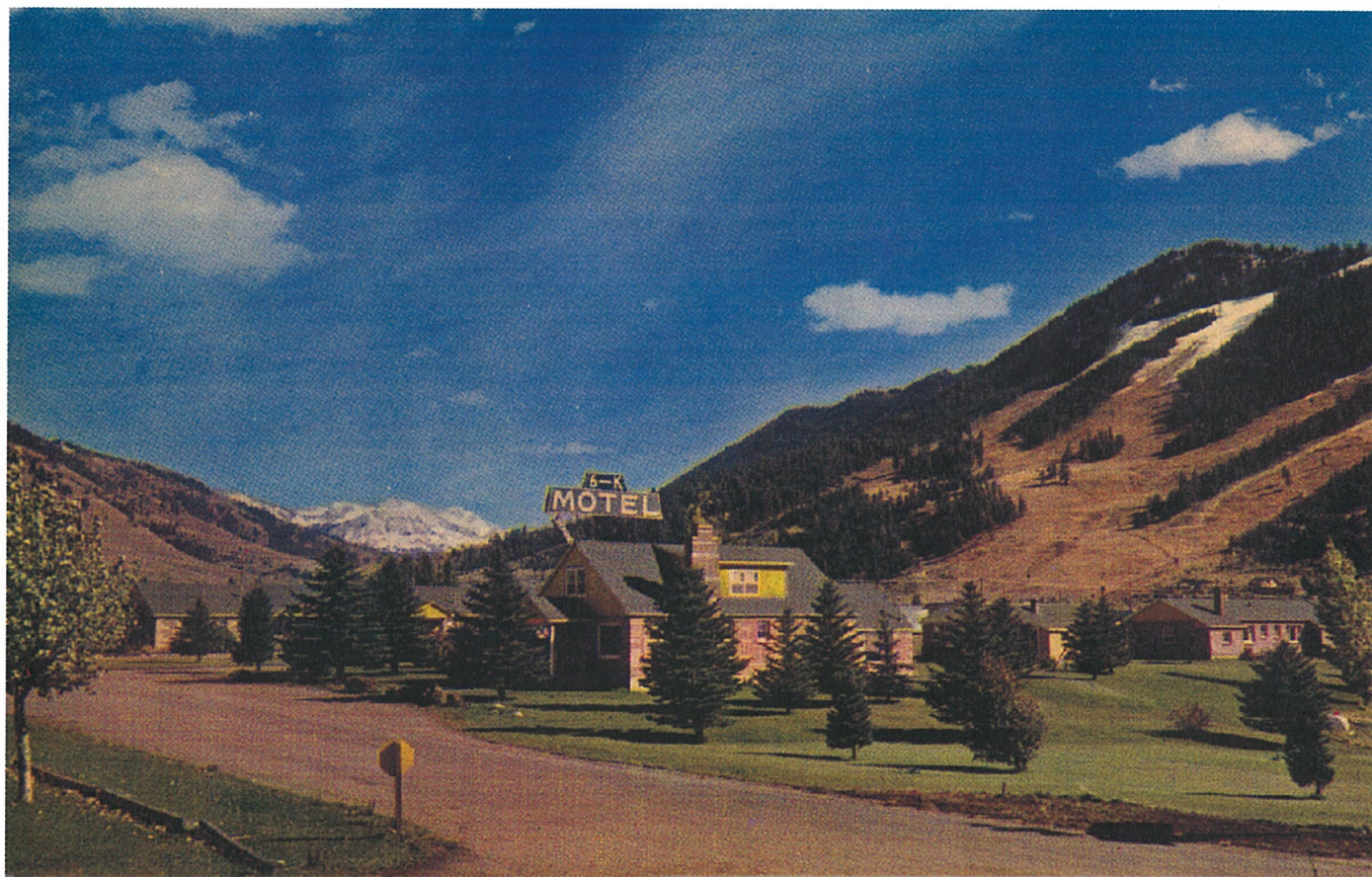
6 – K Motel, Jackson, Wyoming. Undated advertising postcard, probably about 1958. Main building with sign is no longer present; contributing building is to left beyond the office. Postcard from collection of Michael Cassity.



# Teton County Historic Site Survey Continuation Sheet

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6 — K Motel, Jackson, Wyoming. Undated advertising postcard, probably 1960. Remaining building is building obscured by trees to left. Postcard from collection of Michael Cassity.



# Teton County Historic Site Survey Continuation Sheet

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6 – K Motel, Jackson, Wyoming. Remaining building, looking southwest. Photo: Michael Cassity, 2005.



# Teton County Historic Site Survey Continuation Sheet

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6 – K Motel, Jackson, Wyoming. Remaining building, looking southeast. Photo: Michael Cassity, 2005.

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# Teton County Historic Site Survey Continuation Sheet

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6 – K Motel, Jackson, Wyoming. Remaining building, looking northeast. Photo: Michael Cassity, 2005.



# Teton County Historic Site Survey

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### Narrative Statement of Significance

The 6 — K Motel is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of significance Commerce and under Criterion C in the area of significance Architecture.

The motel was built around 1952 after its owners, Cleyo and Betsy Karns, had operated the Quality Cleaners in Jackson for two decades. They apparently chose the name for the business using the initial of the family name and adding to it the number 6 for the two parents and four children. The motel seems to have started with the family house, moved from elsewhere on Pearl to this location, providing a three-bedroom facility with a kitchenette. Bert and Harry Taylor as well as Dean Driskell and Bob Wiley added the rest of the buildings, including this building, so that the motel reached a capacity of 25 units. The motel was operating and listed in the 1953 telephone book.

The historical significance of this motel rests on the way it exemplified fundamental contours of economic change in the town of Jackson. This change can be seen in the nature of the business that emerged here and in the way the motel represented a physical and architectural change from previous forms of lodging. It was a new kind of business and it was a new building type.

In the years after World War II Jackson began to thrive. Historian Robert Righter notes that at the end of the war, it was clear that “the future prosperity of Jackson Hole was in tourism, not the cattle industry,” a discovery that proved the naysayers and opponents of Jackson Hole National Monument wrong as they often acknowledged. Where some had been adamantly opposed to the creation of the monument, and the expansion of the park, fearing the devastating blow to the economy the removal of land from the private market and closing it off as public park land would generate, the opposite was happening. And so the economy itself not only grew but also shifted to accommodate the rising tide of tourism. And the expansion of Grand Teton National Park in 1950 contributed to this growth and change. The business of choice, the business of the future, in Jackson Hole—and that meant especially in the town of Jackson since the removal of opportunities for starting a new business farther north in the shadow of the Tetons themselves was exactly what the Rockefeller purchase of lands had meant to achieve—was the tourist business. Tourist courts and motels began to spring up all over town, especially within hailing distance of the major highway through Jackson. The lodging business had once been an entry-level business that could be started with minimal capital, and while that still remained true, more of the competition was offering better (and not so rustic) accommodations with greater amenities. For someone in another business, however, who could sell that business and invest it into a new operation, it was possible to offer new “modern” accommodations that would offer the desirable features. When Cleyo and Betsy Karns set up the 6 — K Motel, their motel could offer “25 modern brick units with individually controlled heat and steel or tile showers, some with tub combination, mak[ing] it one of Jackson’s finest. Close to famous Snow King Mountain ski chair lift, it is clean, quiet and comfortable with modern furnishings and wall to wall carpeting. Housekeeping units available.” At the same time, though, the business remained very much a family business—living up to the cryptic name of the motel. As one of the Karns daughters

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recalled, "Some summers we cleaned motel rooms and then we rented them again." (This was not the only Karns family in the motel business; across the street to the north Cleyo Karns' brother Peter Rochdale "Dale" and Edythe Karns operated the Pines Motel.)

One final aspect of the 6 — K indicates another feature that is worthy of note, although it reaches beyond the period of historic significance which currently ends at 1955 (the 50 year National Register threshold). In 1956 Cleyo Karns died. On the advertising postcards for the 6 — K after his death, the proprietor is indicated simply as "Mrs. Betsy Karns, Owner." This represented continuity with the past, but it also represented a distinctive feature of the lodging industry. Ever since Ma Reed operated her hotel in town it was clear that the lodging industry provided an opportunity for women not to be found in all callings, like the banking or retail business, and there were even few, if any, instances of women running commercial cattle ranches in the valley. And after she married Bob Hecht in 1960, the proprietorship on the postcards indicated "Mrs. Betsy K. Hecht." It was a mom and pop industry, but it was especially a mom industry.



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## Bibliography

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- Jakle, John A., Keith A. Sculle, and Jefferson S. Rogers. *The Motel in America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).
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- Telephone Directories, Mountain States Telephone Company, 1946, 1948, 1953, 1955, 1964.
- "Van Leeuwen Karns Hecht Embodied Jackson Hole," *Jackson Hole News & Guide* (February 26, 2003).

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## Geographical Data

### Verbal Boundary Description

This property consists of part of the NW  $\frac{1}{4}$ , NE  $\frac{1}{4}$  section 33, T 41, R 116.

### Boundary Justification

This boundary includes the property historically associated with the 6 — K Motel.

# 6 -- K Motel

