

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 _____ wood _____

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.)

- Criteria A, B, C, D with checkboxes and descriptions.

Areas of Significance

Commerce
Architecture

Period of Significance

c. 1949-1955

Significant Dates

Significant Persons

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- Criteria A through G with checkboxes and descriptions.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

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):

- Checkboxes for preliminary determination, previously listed, landmark, etc.

Primary location of additional data:

- Checkboxes for State Historic Preservation Office, Other State agency, etc.

Jackson Hole Historical Society

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 9

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property less than 5 acres

UTM References

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

1 1/2 5/1/9/7/2/1 4/8/1/4/0/0/4
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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Al's Motel

Narrative Description

Al's Motel, or, as it is now known, The Alpine Motel, is located at the northeast corner of Jean and Pearl, in an area that is now predominantly residential but with noticeable pockets of commercial buildings. The motel is about three blocks east and one block south of the Town Square. Although other lodging facilities were more advantageously situated on the primary transportation arteries in Jackson, the very location suggests the inchoate status of the tourist industry at the time the motel was started shortly after World War II.

*(only partly in existence
(incomplete))*

This property consists of three buildings (two motel lodging buildings, with the motel office attached to one of those buildings, and the utility shed near the swimming pool), and three structures (swimming pool, fountain, and sign).

The motel is an example of the kind of lodging known as motor courts, or more simply as motels after World War II, especially because of the integration of all the units into a single structure with a single, continuous, roof over the one-story building. The motel is arranged in an open square with the individual units opening to the inside of the square which includes parking and a swimming pool. The motel consists of two L-shaped buildings with the break between the two buildings on the west (Jean Street) constituting the main entrance. The L-shaped building on the south continues to the east. The L-shaped building on the north is separated from the other building by a short (non-vehicular) passageway and then stretches along the north and turns south to form an enclosure on the west as well, separated from the south building by the main entrance and pool. The south wing of that building houses the motel office with its entrance at the south corner on the west elevation.

The sign for the motel is in front of the office, on Jean Street, and while changed from Al's Motel to Alpine Motel, it still holds its original appearance—a red ball and two panels held high by a log pole. The distinctive element of that sign is the large red ball above the two panels with the name Alpine (originally, Al's) and Motel. The precise origins and symbolism of this red ball are unknown, but it may derive from a conscious appeal to tradition when inns used a large ball hoisted on a pole to signal passing stages to stop or continue on.

The original part of the motel—the south building—was constructed first and is clearly indicated on the 1954-1955 USGS maps. A portion of the east wing of that building was added later—after the period of significance—and the roof line, which was originally continuous with the south wing, was raised, also after the period of significance. The units in the north wing were also added after the period of significance (1955). Those units may be the portion of the Antler Motel that was removed when the Antler Motel began a program of expansion and remodeling in the 1960s.

The rectangular swimming pool was an early feature of the motel and gave it a claim to modernity and convenience that was certainly uncommon, and possibly unique, in the community.

Teton County Historic Site Survey Continuation Sheet

Section No. 7 Page 16

Al's Motel

The buildings all have gable roofs except for the small utility structure located next to (west of) the swimming pool. While the elevations are now clad with board and batten siding, originally the motel units had stone wainscoting between the doors.

Although the motel has changed significantly over the years, as it had to in the competitive market of providing lodging for tourists, and while major portions of the motel are thereby no longer contributing to the significance of the property, parts of the operation retain their original appearance. The contributing features include especially the parts on Jean Street. The house that served as office and quarters for the owner / manager, retains its stone wainscoting and general appearance; while the rest of the building that was attached to it subsequently is a noncontributing part of this building, this front part is contributing. The swimming pool and utility shed also retain their stonework (quite extensive around the pool). The decorative elements of the motel remain too, including notably the circular fountain on Jean Street and the nearby sign on the pole, still with the original red ball.



Al's Motel, Jackson, Wyoming. This postcard probably dates from the mid or late 1950s and shows the operation as it originally appeared, looking to the southeast, including the sign, fountain, wainscoting (note this especially on the motel units beyond the pool), and office. Postcard from personal collection of Michael Cassity.

Teton County Historic Site Survey Continuation Sheet

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Al's Motel



Al's Motel, Jackson, Wyoming. Office, looking northeast. Photo: Michael Cassity, 2005.

Teton County Historic Site Survey Continuation Sheet

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Al's Motel



Al's Motel, Jackson, Wyoming. Swimming pool and lodging units, looking southeast. Photo: Michael Cassity, 2005.

Teton County Historic Site Survey Continuation Sheet

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Al's Motel



Al's Motel, Jackson, Wyoming. Lodging units, south wing, looking southeast. Photo: Michael Cassity, 2005.

Teton County Historic Site Survey Continuation Sheet

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Al's Motel



Al's Motel, Jackson, Wyoming. Sign at Jean Street, looking north. Note also edge of fountain to right. Photo: Michael Cassity, 2005.

Teton County Historic Site Survey

Continuation Sheet

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Al's Motel

Narrative Statement of Significance

Al's Motel, or, as it is known today, The Alpine Motel, in Jackson, Wyoming is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A and Criterion C, although parts of the building and associated features are no longer contributing because of alterations in their appearance, materials, and design.

The motel is eligible under Criterion A in the area of significance Commerce because of its role in the emerging tourist trade that became a vital part of the Jackson Hole economy and social structure in the post-World War II period.

The precise origins of this motel, as with so many in that property type, are clouded only by the usual mists of time, but available records, however, suggest that this motel had its beginnings in that period following World War II when tourism in the United States, especially in the West, soared in volume and in places visited. Ben Goe, the prominent local merchant on the Town Square and who also developed Ben Goe's Astoria Hot Springs, had acquired this property from James McInelly in 1938, but it is not clear if Goe ever built on the lot. In 1947 Albert Hakonson and his wife Lydia purchased the property from Goe and soon afterwards constructed this business, labeling it the obvious, "Al's Motel." The 1948 telephone directory does not carry a listing for Al's Motel, and other issues of the directory are missing, but by 1955 the motel was listed prominently in the directory of that year. Moreover, the USGS map (Jackson 7.5' quad) surveyed in 1954 and 1955 indicates the presence of the L-shaped building on the south and east and what appears to be the swimming pool near the street, as well as two buildings that were located where the north building was later placed. Hakonson entered into an agreement to sell the property in 1957 at nearly six-times the value he had paid for the lot ten years earlier—an indication both of the extent of improvements he had added to the property and also the increase in the tourist market in Jackson. In 1964 the telephone directory indicates that it was still known as Al's Motel. At some point after Hakonson sold it, the name was changed to Alpine Motel, and in 1982 it became the property of Old West Corporation.

The motel is located off the main traveled roads of today, and in a quiet residential neighborhood, but at the time that it was built and began to operate the pattern of lineal strip development along the main highway into and out of town was still in the future. The motel was, after all, just a few blocks from the Town Square, and it boasted modern conveniences that the more rustic lodging enterprises could not compete with. Indeed, the motel still operates at that location and obviously it prospered sufficiently to allow the owner to expand and modernize.

Because of the pattern of its origin in the postwar tourist boom of Jackson, because of its location in an area that held as much promise as other places where the flow of traffic was not yet channeled, and because of its development of distinctive features, such as the outdoor swimming pool (in the Jackson climate!), that would hold a striking appeal for tourists, this motel reveals important contours of the local economy during its period of significance.

Teton County Historic Site Survey

Continuation Sheet

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Al's Motel

The motel is also significant under Criterion C because of the architectural features it possesses. At first glance this cluster of buildings may strike some as so ordinary, or so modern, as to be outside the realm of architectural significance, yet if one considers the history of the motel industry it is clear that this type of property falls into a stage of the evolution of that enterprise that is historically discrete and discernible.

Al's motel represents a distinct type and period of lodging industry construction. The evolution of the motel industry reveals a series of stages, moving from the Auto Camp (where motorists would literally camp) and Tourist Home (private homes that would take in lodgers), to the Cabin Camp with its cluster of cabins but slightly removed from the predecessor Auto Camps. As the Cabin Camps became more developed, they tended to take on the configuration of cottages, buildings that were more substantial than the primitive "cabins" they replaced, usually offering winter accommodations as well as summer. The Cottage Court was a specific kind of lodging in the evolution of buildings that became modern motels, and came at a point following the tourist camps and cabins where camping facilities had evolved into separate cottages or cabins arranged in a pattern. In time, the cottage court was followed by the motor court. As the standard account of the motel in America notes, "Motor courts were structured like cottage courts except that room units were totally integrated under single rooflines usually as a single building." When they were arranged in a U or V, the interior courtyard served as a common space for interaction with other guests or for play for the children.

Al's Motel was such a motor court. Although not all the buildings were arranged under a single roofline, the two separate, L-shaped, lodging buildings each consisted of such integrated, linear lodging units. The residence at the front of the motel, and which was probably originally separate, at one time served as the operator's residence and motel office. A courtyard was thus formed by the three buildings on three sides of a wide U facing Jean Street on the west.

While Al's Motel reveals an important element of American commercial architectural history, providing a link between the days of the tourist camps and cottages on the one hand and the modern motel on the other, even within its own design it indicates subtle elements of this evolution. Although the motel's buildings are generally consistent in style, it is clear that the south building (parallel to Pearl) was built earlier than the north building. The ultimate movement of lodging units from The Antler to this motel helped complete the open box configuration, reminiscent of the cottage courts (indeed, those units are still referred to by the owners as cottages) in an open U, while the swimming pool offers the promise of modern conveniences so essential to post-war lodging in the nation.

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Al's Motel

Bibliography

- Belasco, Warren James, *Americans on the Road: From Autocamp to Motel 1910-1945* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979).
- Jakle, John A., Keith A. Sculle, and Jefferson S. Rogers, *The Motel in America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).
- Land Records, Office of the County Clerk, Teton County, Wyoming.
- Sloane, Eric, *Our Vanishing Landscape* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1955).
- Telephone Directories, Mountain States Telephone Company, 1946, 1948, 1953, 1955, 1964.

Teton County Historic Site Survey Continuation Sheet

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Al's Motel

Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

This property consists of lot 6, block 2, Van Vleck Addition, Town of Jackson.

Boundary Justification

This boundary includes the property historically associated with Al's Motel / Alpine Motel.

Al's Motel

