

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



772

# 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. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Blue Gables Motel  
other names/site number Blue Gables Court

### 2. Location

street & number 662 North Main Street  not for publication  
city or town Buffalo  vicinity  
state Wyoming code WY county Johnson code 019 zip code 82834

### 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

Mary Ann Hopkins, WY SHPO 9/12/11  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

### 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:)

Linda McCellas 11/01/11  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**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 count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
13	3	buildings
		district
		site
1		structure
		object
14	3	<b>Total</b>

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

Historic Motor Courts and Motels in Wyoming,  
 1912-1975

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

**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.)

Other: Picturesque Log  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Concrete  
 walls: Log  
           Other  
 roof: Metal  
 other: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

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### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

#### Summary Paragraph

The Blue Gables Motel is a property that has a cabin court component, multi-unit buildings, and other features that were added as it was converted from a motor court into a motel. Nine small cabins, an office cabin with an addition and adjacent swimming pool and canopy, two three-unit buildings, and a residence comprise the historic buildings on the property; three buildings that post-date the period of significance of 1941-1967 are non-contributing. The three non-contributing buildings are in the service area of the property. Located just off U.S. Highway 16, a major route across the Big Horn Mountains and to the national parks, the property is oriented to North Main Street. The individual cabins are constructed of logs flattened on the top and bottom and laid without chinking; extensions of the logs beyond the notching emphasize the picturesque log appearance. Gable roofs are edged with blue-painted boards at the rake that provide the property with its identity.

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### Narrative Description

The Blue Gables Motel property is located on the west side of North Main Street. The property is bounded by North Main, West Hart Street on the south, an alley on the west, and an adjacent commercial property on the north. While the property was north of the developed area of Buffalo at the time it was established in 1938, the area to the west is now in residential use and the properties further north on Main Street are in a mix of commercial and light industrial use. An open field across North Main Street opposite the Blue Gables is a remnant of the earlier landscape.

The buildings are positioned to have an overall U-shaped arrangement with cabins and two three-unit buildings enclosing the main area of the property, which is open to the east. The office cabin and its adjacent small swimming pool are roughly centered in the enclosed area adjacent to North Main Street. The residence, one duplex unit, the laundry building, and a greenhouse are separated from the southern, guest portion of the property by the two multi-unit buildings. The circulation pattern through the property consists of access points off of North Main Street both north and south of the office, a narrow drive under the porte-cochere portion of the canopy east of the office, a U-shaped drive through the main cabin area of the property, and a drive between the two multi-units into the service area of the property. This graveled area widens adjacent to the multi-unit buildings. Vegetation on the property includes lawns between the cabins and near the office and a row of deciduous trees between the southern row of cabins and West Hart Street. The residence yard is landscaped with one mature tree and some newer plantings.

The office complex on the North Main Side of the property serves as the entrance to the property. The office has a cabin component that is the same size and design as the lodging cabins and several additions. The approximately 14 x 18-foot building has a steeply-pitched gable roof with slightly overhanging eaves that is now covered with brown ribbed sheet metal roofing. The door is located in the north side of the gable end facing the road, and is flanked by a window on the south. The walls of the building are logs flattened on the top and bottom, and have extensions beyond the notching that are longer at the bottom than at the top. A picture window is located in the south wall. A shed-roofed addition extends from the north side of the building. This addition, which is approximately the same size as the original cabin and built in 2002, is clad with horizontal log siding. Horizontal windows set high in the wall have sliding sash. A small extension from the addition with a shed roof is a service window to the driveway and has a window in the east wall. A small addition at the rear of the complex is clad with board-and-batten siding and appears to date from the 1960s.

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A sheet-metal canopy that extends from two sides of the cabin brings a 1960s modern feel to the office complex. The flat canopy, tucked under the eaves of the cabin, is supported by slender steel poles. Sturdier poles support the portion of the canopy that covers the driveway and serves as a porte-cochere. A metal coping that covers nearly half of the canopy face creates a shadow line. The Blue Gables Motel sign is held above the roof of the canopy by a steel pole. The internally lit sign has the form of a front-gabled building with blue-painted barge boards that depicts the name of the business; this sign appears in late 1960s photographs of the property. A side canopy covers the north side of the concrete deck that surrounds the in-ground swimming pool that is south of the office. The 16 by 34-foot pool and deck are enclosed with a chest-height chain-link fence. The west side of the office serves as an outdoor gathering area; a section immediately west of the building is paved with concrete and covered with a wood pole-framed shade canopy. The area to the north is a lawn and is furnished with benches.

Cabins 1 through 4 that line the south side of the property were the last group of cabins to be erected, in circa 1955. They are positioned with identical spacing between and facing the interior of the property. All of the cabins have a concrete pad that separates the cabins from the parking area and a one-step stoop in front of the cabin door. Though the last cabins to be built on the site, they maintain the architectural presence established by the earlier units. All of the 14 by 18-foot cabins have exterior walls of logs flattened on the top and bottom and with extensions beyond the notching that are approximately 12 inches long at the bottom and taper to 3 inches at the top. The logs are coated with a dark brown stain. The pattern of the doors and windows in the gable-front ends of the cabins alternates though each has a single door and window. All openings have flat, unmolded board frames, painted blue, as are the barge boards at the edge of the roof gables. Windows in the side walls include both single and paired units with 1/1 double-hung wood sash fitted with full-height screens in the manner of storm windows. The differences in the cabins are minimal. The lower portion of the front of Cabin 1 has been faced with a cobblestone veneer, presumably to conceal damaged lower logs. Cabins 2 and 3 have their original pine plank doors; cabins 1 and 4 have modern paneled hollow-core doors. Cabins 1, 2, and 4 have original roofing of wood shingles; the roof of cabin 3 is covered with brown ribbed sheet metal. All of the roofs have exposed rafters at the minimal side overhangs and a wider soffit at the gable ends is enclosed with boards. The interiors of the cabins have a bathroom and a small bathroom window is located in one of the long side walls. These two-room cabins have partitions of knotty pine boards; the ceilings are plywood.

Cabins 5 through 9 are located at the west side of the property and are also positioned with equal spacing and face the interior of the property. Cabin 8 was the first one built (1938) and differs from the rest of the units by having walls of round logs and chinking. This cabin retains its original five-panel wood door. Cabins 5, 6, 7, and 9, built in 1941, are nearly identical to Cabin 8 except that they are slightly larger and the logs in the walls are flattened on the top and bottom and laid without chinking; these cabins have the extension beyond the notching that was replicated in cabins 1 through 4. Windows in these cabins are all single units and have 6/6 double-hung sash and screens. Cabins 5 and 6 have plank doors, cabin 7 has a modern hollow-core door, and cabin 9 also has its original five-panel wood door. These cabins all have the concrete pads and stoops. The roofs of all of the cabins are covered with brown ribbed sheet-metal roofing; both the barge boards and the door and window trim on these cabins are painted blue.

The two multi-unit buildings, each of which has three units (10-12 and 14-16), were identical when built and remain quite similar. Logs flattened at top and bottom form the south façades and divide the units into thirds; thus the façades are divided into thirds by the log construction notches possibly due to the short extensions of logs that have been added to form the prominent notched corners. Board-and-batten siding covers the two end walls and the north walls; some of these angled forms created by the notching detail have been enclosed with board siding. The long façades facing south have a pattern of alternate doors and windows and the trim is painted blue. The single windows have 6/6 double-hung wood sash; five of the six doors are five-panel wood units. The concrete pad and stoop elements appear here as well. The roofs are covered with brown ribbed sheet-metal roofing; the barge boards are also painted blue. These buildings are thought to have been erected between 1951 and 1953.

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Two nearly identical units stand along the western boundary in the northern portion of the property. The building with lodging units 17-18, built in 1976, is a side-gabled building with the porch under the shorter length of salt-box form gable roof clad with brown ribbed sheet metal roofing. The building enclosed with board-and-batten siding has a raised foundation and the porch skirting is horizontal log veneer. Wood steps lead to the wood porch; squared wood posts that support the roof edge are spanned with wood poles as a balustrade. Small windows have sliding sash; the doors at the outer ends of the façade are plain modern hollow core units. A shed-roofed garage attached to the north side of the west multi-unit building is part of the service area of the property. It is clad with board-and-batten siding and has an overhead garage door in its east wall. The adjacent building to the north is the laundry facility erected in circa 1975, though it looks much like the lodging unit. The smaller building has the same porch, roof, and board-and-batten siding; its façade has two doors. The grounds north of this building are used as a small playground. A small greenhouse was placed in this area in 2007.

The residence on the property is located in the northeast corner, surrounded by a yard. Built in 1951, the dwelling has log siding on its south, east, and west sides; the north wall is clad with board-and-batten siding. The house was damaged by a fire and its interior has been altered somewhat due to that event. The entrance has been moved to the south wall and the windows, a mix of original and new openings, have replacement sash. A carport on the north end of the house has been converted to a porch. An at-grade deck extends from the south and west sides of the building; the deck and the yard between the house and the east multi-unit building is enclosed by a fence.

Most of the buildings on the property and the swimming pool are contributing resources. Three buildings, the two-unit building erected in 1976, the laundry building, and the greenhouse are non-contributing resources.

Resource	Age	Status
Cabin 8	1938	Contributing
Cabins 5, 6, 7, 9	1941	Contributing
Three unit building, rooms 10-12	Circa 1951	Contributing
Three unit building, rooms 14-16	Circa 1951	Contributing
Cabins 1-4	Circa 1955	Contributing
Office	Circa 1955	Contributing
Swimming Pool	Circa 1967	Contributing
Residence	1951	Contributing
Units 17-18	1976	Non-contributing
Laundry Building	Circa 1975	Non-contributing
Greenhouse	2007	Non-contributing

## INTEGRITY

The Blue Gables Motel has very good historic integrity in location, setting, feeling, and association. The location, once at the very northern edge of Buffalo, is now within the developed area, yet the cabins face an open field across the road from the property that maintains the feeling of the historic setting. The feeling and association for the property are strong, due mainly to the very good integrity of the design and materials of the property, but also to the continued use of the property as a motel. The changes to the cabin exteriors have been limited to new ribbed sheet-metal roofing, although the namesake barge boards remain painted blue. The addition of masonry sheathing to the lower portion of the façade of Cabin 1 likely conceals deteriorated materials. Many of the historic doors and the original wood window sash in the rental units remain in situ. The interiors of the cabins also have very good integrity with changes made mainly in the bathrooms. The natural woods – logs, knotty pine paneling, and plywood ceilings – set the tone for the cabin interiors. The design and materials of the residence are slightly more altered with door and window opening changes, but the overall

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integrity is still good. Two of the non-contributing buildings were designed to be compatible with the multi-unit buildings and have board-and-batten siding; their location minimizes their presence in the property. The greenhouse in the service area of the property is not an intrusion. Though the buildings are of log construction, the use of milled, flattened logs represents a modernized type of cabin construction and workmanship is not an important part of the historic integrity of this property.

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**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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Commerce \_\_\_\_\_

Recreation/Entertainment \_\_\_\_\_

Architecture \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1941-1967 \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown \_\_\_\_\_

**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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance, from 1941 to 1967, represents the early growth of the property and the height of the Post World War II travel boom. The period begins with the construction of four cabins (units 5, 6, 7, 9), which expanded the property from a single cabin (unit 8) into a cabin court. During the period of significance it was transformed from a small cabin court property into a 15-unit court and then modernized in order to

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compete for the patronage of vacationing families. The ending of the period in 1967 encompasses the additional post war buildings and the completion of the swimming pool. The motel is little changed from that period.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

The continued expansion and growth of the Blue Gables until 1967 provides the logical end for the period of significance. The property achieved its historical significance during a period prior to fifty years ago and the use, association, and history of the property continued slightly beyond fifty years ago; therefore, an argument for exceptional significance is not needed.

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

**Summary Paragraph**

The Blue Gables Motel is eligible under criteria A and C at the local level of significance. The roadside accommodation is located in Buffalo, where motor courts and motels were an important part of the local economy due to the town's location on U.S. Highway 16 (US 16), a route for recreational travelers across the Big Horn Mountains and to the national parks further west. It is therefore eligible under Criterion A in the areas of commerce and recreation/entertainment. The use of log cabins and "western design," as well as the eponymous name that referred to the gable-roofed cabins, makes the property an example of where architecture was used to capture the attention of the traveling public. For this reason, the property is also eligible under Criterion C for architecture. It is an excellent example of the cabin court expanded to provide the amenities of a more modern motel. The property conveys the early period of construction and the expanded motor court during the 1950s and 1960s and, more importantly, a roadside accommodation during the height of the post World War II travel boom. Therefore the period of significance is from 1941 to 1967.

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

**Criterion A**

Buffalo businessman Carl Kube established the Blue Gables Court during a period of significant expansion of the motor court business in Buffalo. Between 1937 and the early 1940s, the Blue Gables Court, the Big Horn Tourist Court, and the Tip Top Cabins & Service Station were opened and joined two existing operations, the Log Cabin Camp and the Mountain View Cabin Camp. During the late 1950s, the nine motels in Buffalo offered over 130 rooms to the recreational traveler. Harold Platt's expansion and modernization of the property with a swimming pool, metal canopy, and name change to the Blue Gables Motel occurred in the heyday of the post World War II travel boom. The completion of I-90 circa 1960 cut 30 miles off of the highway between Gillette and Buffalo and increased travelers' overnight stays in Buffalo. By the mid-1960s the number of motels in Buffalo increased to thirteen. None of the operations offered swimming pools in 1964, but by 1967 three businesses did: the Blue Gables, Wyoming, and Foothills motels. The Blue Gables Motel is representative of the roadside accommodation businesses in Buffalo during the expansion of this commercial sector, which was driven by recreational travel in Wyoming.

The establishment, and later expansion and modernization of the Blue Gables Motel, relates to both common patterns noted in the state-wide context of the Historic Motor Courts and Motels in Wyoming Multiple Property Documentation Form, as well as local circumstances in the roadside accommodation business. The origin of the property as a tourist court with small, free-standing cabins was typical of the period just before World War II. The increase in recreational travel after the war, particularly trips through Wyoming to the national parks in the northwest corner of the state, was reflected in the expansion of many older cabin court operations. Buffalo's location on US 16, a widely used east-west route to Yellowstone National Park, caused a steady growth in the motor court and motel businesses in the town. The number of rental units at the Blue Gables

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more than doubled during the early 1950s. The owner advertised the property's name-brand mattresses and the modernity of the bathrooms, as part of the national trend to do so as a means of Mom and Pop operations to meet a standard set of expectations. In addition, they promoted its western quality. After the property was essentially "built-out," Platt added an important amenity that appealed to traveling families, a swimming pool, and was among the first group of motels in Buffalo to have one.

The Blue Gables Motel, as expanded in the early 1940s and then modernized during the post World War II travel boom, reflects the most common patterns in an important commercial property type in Wyoming, the roadside motel, as well as recreational travel. Its high degree of historical integrity conveys that earlier era in automobile travelers' accommodations.

### Criterion C

The architectural presence of the Blue Gables Motel represents one of the most popular themes used in roadside overnight accommodations in Wyoming, the "log cabin" type of tourist cabin. The log walls, exposed on the exterior and interior, provided the "western design" the owner advertised and an opportunity for a western experience that captured the attention of many travelers. The use of both a color and architectural feature in the name of the business insured that the cabins would be prominent in the image of the property. This use of picturesque architecture and a particular feature to establish an identity for the property is the basis of this property's significance under criterion C.

The log cabins, built of flattened logs, had prominent corner notching elements that emphasized the log construction. This feature overshadowed the modernized form of log construction that used milled lumber and no chinking; the effect of the identical cabins was picturesque as much as rustic. The importance of the log construction in the image of the rental units is evident in the multi-unit buildings in which the walls that separate the units are of log construction and, even though the side and rear walls are sheathed in board-and-batten siding, the notching detail of the earlier units was replicated.

The layout of the property, with cabins and multi-unit buildings enclosing a central landscaped area, highlighted the individual presence of the small, free-standing cabins and the visibility of the blue-painted barge boards. The very good integrity of these cabins, including the interior knotty pine walls, plywood ceilings, and formica and vinyl flooring in the bathrooms, reinforces the historic design and materials of the cabins.

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### Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

#### Buffalo Develops a Tourism Economy

By 1920 it was clear that Buffalo was on its way to becoming a tourist center. Due to its geographical location, road system, and the scenic beauty of the Big Horns, the town became an appealing stopping point for travelers on their way to Yellowstone. The Chicago, Black Hills, and Yellowstone Park Highway, also known as the Black and Yellow Road, led to Yellowstone, which was opened to automobiles in 1915. By the mid-1920s, the route was established as U.S. Highway 14 (US 14), which passed north of Buffalo. The Big Horn Mountains on the route provided the mountain scenery that did not exist in Yellowstone National Park and US 16, through Buffalo, was a second route that provided such scenery. Moreover, the motorists lingering in the Buffalo area could enjoy fishing, hunting, or for the "tourist historically inclined ample land marks can be found..."<sup>1</sup> During this period, travelers could stop at the tourist camp provided in Buffalo or camp at sites in the mountains. A 1920 newspaper article mentions cabins at Camp Comfort, as well as the log cabins at the

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<sup>1</sup> "Buffalo – A Tourist Center – Gateway to Yellowstone," *The Buffalo Bulletin*, 26 August 1920, p. 1.

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North Fork of Clear Creek (11 miles from town), and the cabins for rent at the South Fork Inn. A plan for building a chain of hotels throughout the mountains was noted.<sup>2</sup>

The motorists traveling on US 16 across Wyoming to Yellowstone National Park also stayed in Buffalo's hotels until several tourist courts were opened for business during the 1930s. The first two such operations were combinations of filling stations and auto camps, those operated by Mrs. Clyde Tyler (original business name is unknown) and the Star Filling Station and Tourist Camp, established by 1920. By 1937 Mrs. Tyler's operation, located one mile south of town, was known as the Log Cabin Camp and the Mountain View Cabin Camp at the west edge of town was also open for business. Between 1937 and the early 1940s, four additional tourist courts were opened, Blue Gables Tourist Court, Big Horn Tourist Court, the Tip Top Cabins & Service Station, and Keahey's Motor Court. The rapid increase in travelers during the summer of 1948 resulted in greater demand for rooms than could be met; the Commercial Club operated an office in the summer evenings to direct travelers to rooms in private homes. The increase in travelers continued and in 1951 the 2,500 average daily number of non-resident travelers across the Big Horns on US 16 was up 44 percent from the previous summer. By 1950, the Z-Bar Cabins had also opened and the Canon Motor Court opened by 1953 to meet the demand for rooms. By 1950 the Buffalo Chamber of Commerce was operating a tourist information bureau in a sheep wagon staffed by girls in western dress. Buffalo used the slogan "Beautiful Buffalo" and the tag line of "most picturesque town in the West" during the post war travel boom.<sup>3</sup>

Buffalo, like the other larger towns located on US 16, continued to have more overnight facilities. The nine motels in Buffalo offered over 130 rooms during the late 1950s. The Big Horn Court, Blue Gables, Keahey's Motor Court, and the Mansion House were located on North Main, US 16, and the Canon Court, Mountain View Motel, and the Z-Bar Motel were also on the highway, at the western edge of town. Only the Star Court was not visible to highway travelers with its location on South Main Street. The Mansion House was the only property that offered both rooms in the converted house and nineteen motel rooms. The converted residence cost \$4-6 per night while the motel rooms were more expensive, from \$6 to \$10 per night. The completion of I-90 incrementally during the early 1960s cut 30 miles off of the highway between Gillette and Buffalo and was considered "a shot in the arm" to the local economy. With half the direct I-90 route complete from Gillette by June 1963, tourists again were filling up all the motels and residents were asked to provide rooms to travelers. During the mid-1960s improved roads and more off-road vehicle use increased recreational use of the Bighorn National Forest and there were 13 motels in Buffalo for recreational travelers to choose from. None of the operations offered swimming pools in 1964, but by 1967 the Blue Gables, Wyoming, and Foothills motels had pools. By 1969, the new Crossroads Inn had a pool, dining room and cocktail lounge, the only motel that offered all three of these more modern amenities.<sup>4</sup>

As noted in the state-wide context, the period of significance for cabin court and motel operations, businesses that were locally-owned and operated, continued to the beginnings of the interstate travel era. The few large cities in Wyoming, as well as the distances to be covered, kept travelers in Wyoming more dispersed than in states where motels became more concentrated in urban areas. The completion of I-90 helped Buffalo maintain its role as a place where travelers stayed overnight on the route to the national parks and as a gateway to Bighorn National Forest. New motels were built and existing ones were enlarged and upgraded with amenities. By circa 1970, however, the comfort level of the independent motel owner was being

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> *Wyoming State Directory of Business and Industry*, Rocky Mountain Directory Co., Colorado Springs, Co., 1930, 1937, 1941-42, 1950, 1953, and 1955; *Buffalo Bulletin* 19 February 1950; undated photocopy, Johnson County Vertical File, Wyoming State Archives; Robert A. Murray, *Johnson County, 175 Years of History at the Foot of the Big Horn Mountains* (Buffalo Chamber of Commerce, 1981), pp. 152, 179.

<sup>4</sup> *Casper Tribune Herald*, 22 February, 1959; *Directory of Wonderful Wyoming Motels, Hotels, Dude Ranches, and Camp Sites for 1958*; *Wyoming Accommodations, 1965*; *Hotels and Motels in Big Wyoming, 1969-1970*; Murray, p. 180.

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challenged by the competition of national and regional chains. The end of the period of significance for this property type throughout the state of 1975 is adjusted for this property due to the history of the property.

### **Blue Gables Motel History**

Carl Kube platted the block on which the Blue Gables stands as the second Kube Addition in 1938 at what was then the north end of Buffalo and across the street from his residence and near the gas station that he operated. That same year he built a single cabin, now Cabin 8. Carl and Inez Kube built the cabins that are now units 5-7 and 9 in 1941 and operated the facility as the Blue Gables Court. The location was just a short block north from the turn of US 16 south onto North Main Street, and the neon sign installed helped make the property visible to motorists.

Harold Platt purchased the property in 1947, the year after Carl Kube's death. Platt, tired of driving a bus in Toledo, Ohio, took a trip west and found a business to purchase in Buffalo. The property was significantly expanded during the Platt ownership period, which lasted until 1971. Platt built the residence, the office, the two multi-unit buildings, and the four south cabins. By 1959, Platt boasted of hosting "everyone from dignitaries from the diplomatic corps to steamship line executives."<sup>5</sup> A postcard from this era notes that the Blue Gables Court was "beside the beautiful Big Horns" and offered 14 units "of western design." The units had all tile baths and Beautyrest brand mattresses. At that time the lawn south of the office was shaded with trees.<sup>6</sup> During the mid-to-late 1960s Platt transformed the office with the addition of the swimming pool, canopy, and current sign. Platt's mortgages recorded in 1955 and 1961 suggest that this work was done in two stages. Platt changed the name of the business from the Blue Gables Court to the Blue Gables Motel, moved the original sign, then raised it higher, and ultimately installed the sign with the gable roof form on top of the new canopy.

The Schroeder family moved from Vermont to Buffalo to operate the Blue Gables from 1971 until 1979. The Schroeders built the laundry building. Gary Bybee owned the property for nearly twenty years and the current owner acquired it in 2006.

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### **9. Major Bibliographical References**

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**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

*Buffalo Bulletin*. 1920, 1959.

*Directory of Wonderful Wyoming Motels, Hotels, Dude Ranches, and Camp Sites for 1958*.

*Casper Tribune Herald*, 22 February, 1959

*Hotels and Motels in Big Wyoming, 1969-1970*.

Murray, Robert A. *Johnson County: 176 Years of History at the Foot of the Big Horn Mountains*. Buffalo: Buffalo Chamber of Commerce, 1981.

*Wyoming Accommodations, 1965*.

*Wyoming State Directory of Business and Industry*. Colorado Springs, Co.: Rocky Mountain Directory Co. 1930, 1937, 1941-42, 1950, 1953, and 1955.

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<sup>5</sup> "Blue Gables Owners Liked West – So Stayed," *Buffalo Bulletin* 2 July 1959.

<sup>6</sup> Undated postcard, image available at Cardcow.com.

Blue Gables Motel  
Name of Property

Johnson County, Wyoming  
County and State

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

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 2 acres  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>13</u> Zone	<u>364610</u> Easting	<u>4912525</u> Northing	3	<u>          </u> Zone	<u>          </u> Easting	<u>          </u> Northing
2	<u>          </u> Zone	<u>          </u> Easting	<u>          </u> Northing	4	<u>          </u> Zone	<u>          </u> Easting	<u>          </u> Northing

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

This property consists of Block 1, Lots 1-7, the Kube Second Addition in Buffalo. It is bounded by North Main Street on the east, West Hart Street on the south, an alley on the west, and an adjacent property on the north.

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

This boundary includes all of the property originally and currently occupied by the Blue Gables Court and Blue Gables Motel.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Betsy H. Bradley, Historic Preservation Specialist  
organization Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office date January 10, 2011  
street & number 2301 Central Avenue telephone 307 777-8594  
city or town Cheyenne state Wyoming zip code 82001  
e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Blue Gables Motel

Name of Property

Johnson County, Wyoming

County and State

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

**Name of Property:** Blue Gables Motel

**City or Vicinity:** Buffalo

**County:** Johnson

**State:** Wyoming

**Photographer:** Richard Collier

**Date Photographed:** 2/23/2011

**Description of Photograph(s) and number:**

- 1 of 10: Overview, view to northwest
- 2 of 10: Office, view to northwest
- 3 of 10: Rear of office and swimming pool, view to northeast
- 4 of 10: Cabins 1-4, view to west, southwest
- 5 of 10: Cabin 2, view to south, southeast
- 6 of 10: Cabins 5-9, view to southwest
- 7 of 10: Cabins 5-9, view to north, northwest
- 8 of 10: Units 10-12 and 14-16, view to northwest
- 9 of 10: Units 17-48, laundry, and greenhouse, view to northwest
- 10 of 10: Residence, view to northeast

**Property Owner:**

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

name Karen and Jim Henry

street & number 662 North Main

telephone 307 684-2574

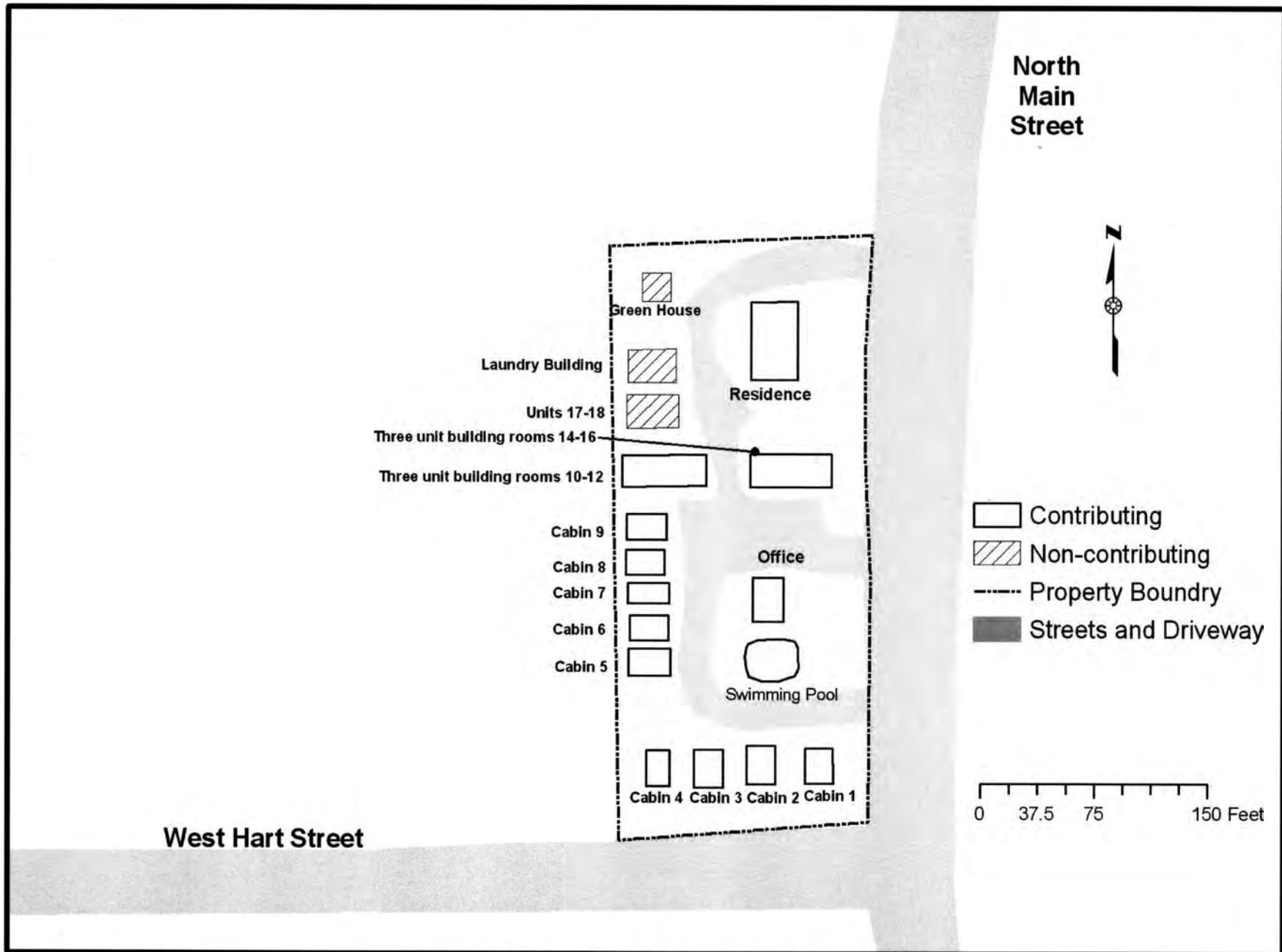
city or town Buffalo

state WY

zip code 82834

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications 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.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



**Blue Gables Motel**  
**Buffalo, Johnson County, Wyoming**  
**Sketch Map Showing Contributing and Non-contributing Properties**

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Blue Gables Motel  
NAME:

MULTIPLE Motor Courts and Motels in Wyoming MPS  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: WYOMING, Johnson

DATE RECEIVED: 9/16/11 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 10/07/11  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 10/24/11 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 11/01/11  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 11000772

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

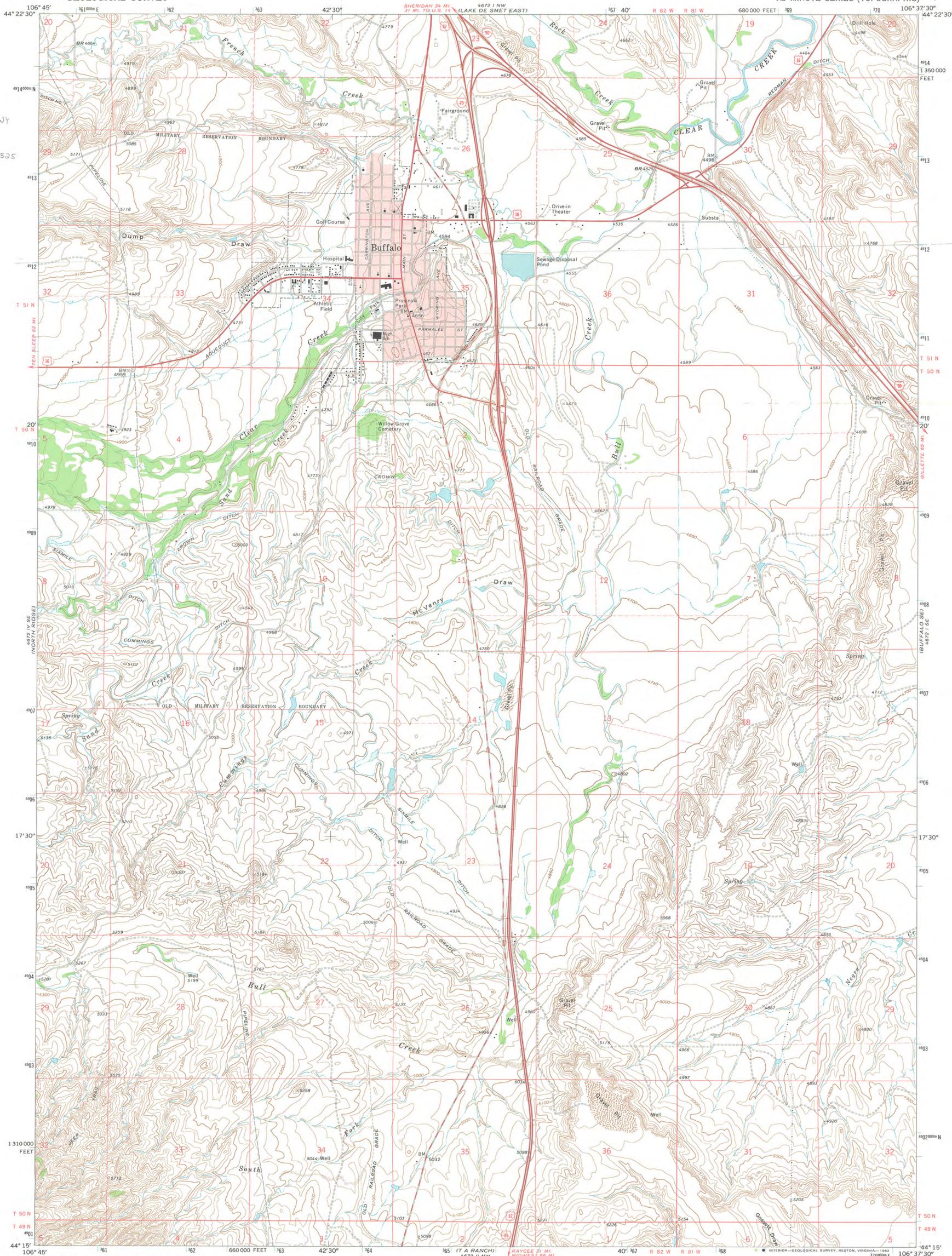
     ACCEPT      RETURN      REJECT      DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*Well-documented nomination for a small historic district representing cabin-courtyard to motel transition common in mid-20th century along Wyoming's tourist highways. Begun in 1938-41, this cluster of log construction expanded and by 1967 had taken on the "motel" identity with the addition of a swimming pool and new sign. P.O.S. approved in 1967 - all contributing buildings pre-date 1960. Strong integrity is apparent.*

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept A7C  
REVIEWER JM Clelland DISCIPLINE History  
TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE 11/1/11  
DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N Y

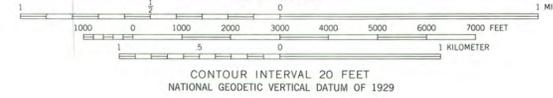
If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



Blue Gables Motel  
Buffalo, Johnson County, WY  
UTM Reference  
213, E 364610, N 4912525

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

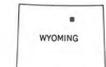
Control by USGS and USC&GS  
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1969. Field checked 1970  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum 10,000-foot grid based on Wyoming coordinate system, east central zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 13, shown in blue  
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown  
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence lines



SCALE 1:24,000  
CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET  
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road
Interstate Route	U. S. Route
	State Route



QUADRANGLE LOCATION  
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 8 meters north and 50 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks

BUFFALO, WYO.  
N4415-W10637.5/7.5  
1970  
DMA 4672 1 SW—SERIES V874

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

# ARTS. PARKS. HISTORY.

Wyoming State Parks & Cultural Resources



State Historic Preservation Office  
Barrett Building, 3rd Floor  
2301 Central Avenue  
Cheyenne, WY 82002  
Phone: (307) 777-7697  
Fax: (307) 777-6421  
<http://wyoshpo.state.wy.us>

12 September 2011

Paul Loether  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
1201 Eye Street, NW (2280)  
Washington, DC 20005

Re: Submission of the Historic Motor Courts and Motels in Wyoming, 1912-1975  
Multiple Property Documentation Form and the Blue Gables Motel Nomination

Dear Mr. Loether:

The Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office is submitting the Historic Motor Courts and Motels in Wyoming, 1912-1975 Multiple Property Documentation Form and the Blue Gables Motel nomination for National Park Service review. The State Review Board reviewed and Mary Hopkins, the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Officer, approved and signed the nomination.

Please contact me at 307-777-7828 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Kara Hahn

National Register Coordinator  
Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office  
2301 Central Avenue  
Cheyenne, WY 82002  
307-777-7828



Matthew H. Mead, Governor  
Milward Simpson, Director