

DEC 28 1989

NPS Form 10-900  
 (Rev. 8/86)  
 NPS/GHS Word Processor Format  
 (Approved 03/88)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior  
 National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
 REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable". For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries. Use letter quality printers in 12 pitch. Use only 25% or greater cotton content bond paper.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name: The Lett Hotel  
 other names/site number: The Tumbleweed Hotel 5YM85

**2. Location**

street & number: 204 South Ash (NA) not for publication  
 city, town: Yuma (NA) vicinity  
 state: Colorado code: CO county: Yuma code:125 zip code:80759

**3. Classification**

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
(X) private	(X) building(s)	1	2
( ) public-local	( ) district		buildings
( ) public-State	( ) site		sites
( ) public-Federal	( ) structure		structures
	( ) object		objects
		1	2
			Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

No. of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this (x) 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 (x) meets ( ) does not meet the National Register criteria.  
( ) See continuation sheet.

Barbara Sudler 12-21-89  
Signature of certifying official Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Colorado Historical Society  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

**5. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

Entered in the  
National Register

(x) entered in the National Register.  
( ) See continuation sheet

Alvina Byers 1/25/90

( ) determined eligible for the National Register. ( ) See continuation sheet

( ) determined not eligible for the National Register.

( ) removed from the National Register.

( ) other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

for \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**6. Functions or Use**

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Historic Functions  
(enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Hotel  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Current Functions  
(enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Hotel  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Other: Vernacular  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Materials  
(enter categories from instructions)

foundations concrete  
walls wood  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof asphalt shingles  
other wood trim  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The Lett Hotel, located on a corner lot, is a two story hipped roof frame building faced with clapboards. It has a rectangular plan with 2400 square feet on each floor. The attic has the same dimensions as the other floors and is used for storage. The building is constructed close to the sidewalk and has no yard space. There are mature Chinese elms in the parking strip along the north side and east front of the building. There is also an evergreen tree in the front.

The building has a long columned wraparound porch that extends across the east front and down the full length of the north side. The shed porch roof is supported by a series of evenly spaced Tuscan columns. The porch does more to enhance the appearance of the building than any other feature and makes it one of the most distinctive buildings in Yuma. The porch floor and entrance steps are of wood. The floor is supported underneath by brick piers with wood panels between. The ends of the porches are covered by wooden latticework.

The one-over-one windows are tall and narrow with double hung, wood sash. The windows flanking the central front door are wider than the rest. All windows are framed in wood painted brown and have small cornices at the tops. The front door has two narrow side lights on either side and has a non-original screen door.

The exterior of the hotel is almost exactly as it was originally built in 1916. The roof was resingled with asphalt shingles in 1978 and the building has been painted from time to time. There is a small, one story frame sleeping room addition which extends across half of the rear elevation that was added at an

(x) See Continuation Sheet

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  Lett Hotel  

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unknown date. The roof of the addition is a combination of flat and shed roof. The walls are faced with wide siding. On the south side of the hotel there is a carport with a sloping wood roof faced with rolled asphalt roofing. The original front entry door, which opens onto an entry hall, has a vertical rectangular glass pane covering more than half of the door height. In the entry hall is the stairway to the second floor which has a carved newel post and stair railing on one side. Below the hand rail are solid wood panels instead of balusters. The plaster walls of the entry hall have contemporary wood paneling.

On the interior, the two original dining rooms on the first floor have been converted to living quarters, and some of the sleeping rooms on the second floor were joined to make apartments in the 1960s. Each floor has two bathrooms. Showers have been added to one of the bathrooms on each floor. The other two have been modernized but they still retain the original claw-foot tubs. The hallways have the original paneled doors to the rooms, the wide baseboards and door surrounds, and all are painted white. The plaster walls of some of the rooms have been covered by wood paneling and the ceilings with acoustical tile. Most of these interior alterations were made in 1980-1981.

At the west rear of the hotel, there are two small frame houses which were constructed at an unknown date after the hotel was completed. There is no information on these two buildings and it is not known if they were part of the original hotel operations or not. The fronts of the two houses face each other with a walkway between. The smallest (#1 on the sketch map) appears to have retained much of its original integrity. It is rectangular in plan with wood frame construction and horizontal wood siding. The roof is side gabled with the front door on the long side of the building. There is a gabled canopy supported by brackets over the front door. A wooden lattice extends from the eaves to the ground on either side. House #2 may originally have been a twin to #1, but it has been altered with an addition to the front and the east side. The whole building has been faced with wide siding similar to the hotel addition. Because there is a lack of information about building #1 and the original integrity of building #2 has been covered by alterations, both buildings are non-contributing.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:      ( ) nationally      ( ) statewide      (X) locally

Applicable National Register Criteria      (X) A      ( ) B      (X) C      ( ) D  
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)      ( ) A      ( ) B      ( ) C      ( ) D      ( ) E      ( ) F      ( ) G

**Areas of Significance**

(enter categories from instructions)

Areas of Significance	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
<u>Commerce</u>	<u>1916-1939</u>	<u>N/A</u>
<u>Architecture</u>	<u>1916</u>	<u>N/A</u>

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Significant Person**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Lett, John Andrew, builder

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

The Lett Hotel meets criterion C for its architectural significance. Its vernacular design makes it one of the most prominent buildings in Yuma. People admire its architecture and it is particularly popular with photographers and painters. The hotel is noted as being among the first of its kind in northeastern Colorado with modern conveniences of steam heat and hot and cold running water. The hotel appears essentially the same today as when it was finished by John Andrew Lett, the builder and owner. The Lett Hotel, now known as the Tumbleweed Hotel, meets criterion A for its historic significance as a commercial hotel in Yuma because it has operated longer than any hotel in Yuma. It has been a place of accommodation and continuous service for both travelers staying overnight and the town residents who wanted rooms instead of houses over its entire 73 year existence. The hotel has seen a broad spectrum of society from the wealthy to the indigent who sometimes evaporate at night before the rent is due.

John A. "Jack" Lett constructed the building in 1916. In spite of time and weather, the building retains its original integrity without any major repairs or major additions. John Andrew Lett was one of Yuma County's earlier settlers. Born in County Galway, Ireland on November 15, 1872, Lett came to the Yuma area in 1888 with his parents, Edward G. and Letitia, and a younger brother and sister. They joined two older brothers on homesteads they had taken some 18 miles northwest of Yuma. Jack kept the homestead going when his brothers had

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Lett Hotel

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to find work in Denver in order to survive. He was an excellent Irish musician who could build a good time around music from a tin whistle and a \$3.50 fiddle his brothers bought for him on Larimer Street in Denver. The Lett family members played for many barn dances. In 1904 he met and married Josephine Dohoney, a school teacher. Jack bought the family farm a few years later, but sold it in 1915 to move to Yuma where he ran a grocery store in partnership with William Vincent. He sold his interest to build the Lett Hotel, which opened April 4, 1916.

As described by the weekly Yuma Pioneer on April 7, 1916, the hotel was a dandy. "No expense has been spared by Mr. and Mrs. John A. Lett, the proprietors, to make Yuma's latest caravansary as pleasant as possible to the traveling public as well as to the citizens who make their homes in hotels. The bedrooms, of which there are 19, are of exceptional large size, well lighted, ventilated and furnished. Every room in the building has electric lights and is steam heated, and many of them are supplied with hot and cold running water. There are three bath rooms, one on the first floor, and two on the second. The two dining rooms have a number of large windows, which open on Valley street. The citizens of Yuma may well be proud of its hotels."

In an advertisement taken by the hotel in the same April 7 issue of the paper, Jack proclaimed the virtues of the hotel's steam heat and hot and cold running water, available for the low price of from \$1.75 to \$2.00 per day or special rates by the week.

Unfortunately for the proud new owners, a tornado swept through Yuma a month after they opened the business, and the May 20 winds moved the large building off its foundations. According to the May 26, 1916 Yuma Pioneer, "There was an indescribable moaning sound in the air, somewhat as if thousands and thousands of swarms of bees were approaching, making the hearts of the hearers shrink appalled and their limbs tremble with fear, while the brain could conceive no cause for trepidation. Then, with a shriek as if all the imps of hell were suddenly loosened, a cyclone, or tornado, or whatever you choose to call it, struck Yuma Saturday afternoon at 2:02 o'clock." Damage was extensive, the building was badly twisted, but the guests were not injured. The building was moved back on its foundation and repaired.

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Lett Hotel

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Fred Tarrant, one of the hotel's more prestigious, and first permanent resident came to Yuma with plenty of money from his family back east. He went broke in Yuma, losing his investment in land and a farm machinery business during the depression of 1929. He refused to die here, and returned to the family business in Sarasota Springs, New York. He made his fortune inventing improvements on highway machinery, and selling them through the Tarrant Manufacturing Company. He died May 30, 1989 in Sarasota Springs at the age of 95. Tarrant's inventions made him a great deal of money after he left Yuma. Before he left, he married Jack Lett's sister. He also left a rich legacy in letters to Yuma friends over the years. In a letter to Sandra Engel dated December 15, 1988, he gives quite an extensive account of the Lett Hotel, describing the furnishings, dining rooms, and meals. "Fifty cents each for a 'tee boned' steak, thirty five cents for regular meals." He describes the food as "head and shoulders" above the other hotels in Yuma. Tarrant's opinion of the hotel was shared by many people, including trail cowboys who stopped over while their herds watered and rested and suitcase farmers who would live there while they developed their homesteads so their families could eventually join them.

It is interesting to note that Jack Lett made the curtains, sheets and napkins for the hotel. A versatile Irishman who was adept at farming, running a grocery store or playing at barn dances, Lett owned the hotel a little less than three years and he was the only owner to sell at a substantial profit, receiving \$12,000 when he sold it to B. M. Wear on November 4, 1918. There have been several hotels built to serve the Yuma community, but the Lett has outlived them all.

The Lett Hotel has architectural significance because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type and period of construction. The early 20th century, vernacular building illustrates the simplicity of design prevalent during this period. Both the construction materials, white painted clapboard, and the hotel's predominant feature, a large wraparound porch, were common features found in the hotels of the small prairie towns of eastern Colorado, but is the only building in this distinctive style in Yuma.

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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Yuma Pioneer, April 7, 1916

Fred Tarrant, a letter, December 15, 1988 in possession of Dick Gillespie, Yuma, CO. West Yuma County Historical Book

( ) See continuation sheet

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- ( ) preliminary determination of individual listing ( 36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ( ) previously listed in the National Register
- ( ) previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ( ) designated a National Historic Landmark
- ( ) recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- ( ) recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- ( ) State Historic Preservation Office
- ( ) Other State agency
- ( ) Federal agency
- ( ) Local government
- ( ) University
- ( ) Other

Specify Repository:  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

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Acreeage of property: Less than one

**UTM References**

A	<u>1</u> <u>3</u>	<u>6</u> <u>9</u> <u>3</u> <u>8</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>3</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	B	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u>	<u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u>	<u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u>	D	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u>	<u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

( ) See continuation sheet

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

Block 5, Lot 1, Town of Yuma, Colorado

( ) See continuation sheet

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**Boundary Justification**

The boundary encompasses the property historically associated with the Lett Hotel.

( ) See continuation sheet

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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Name/Title: Bette Weickum

Organization: Owner of the Lett

Street & Number: 204 South Ash

City or Town: Yuma

Date: August 27, 1989

Telephone: (303) 848-5630

State: CO Zip Code: 80759



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Section number Photo Page 1 Lett Hotel

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Photo Log: Black and white 8 x 10

The Lett Hotel

Yuma, Colorado

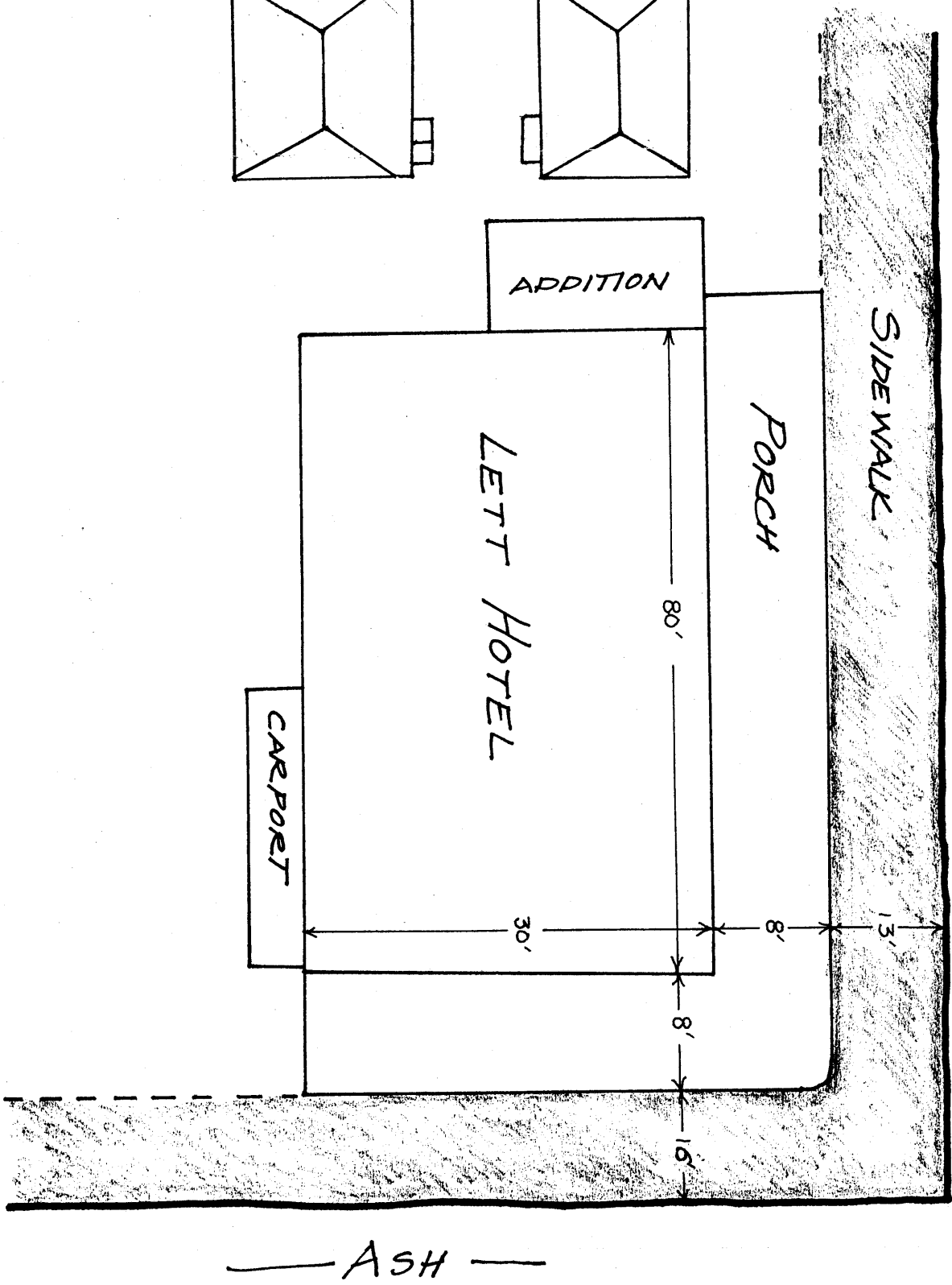
Photographer: Dick Gillespie

Date: July 1989

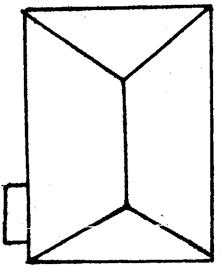
Location of negatives: Bette Weickum, Rt. 1, Yuma, Colorado 80759

- Photo #1 NE facade
- #2 NW facade
- #3 Upstairs hall
- #4 Downstairs bedroom
- #5 Downstairs bedroom (same as #4)
- #6 Bathroom on first floor (iron claw foot tub)

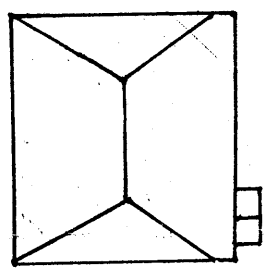
— 2ND —



SMALL HOUSE #1 →



SMALL HOUSE #2 →



Noncontributing

N ↑

SKETCH MAP OF

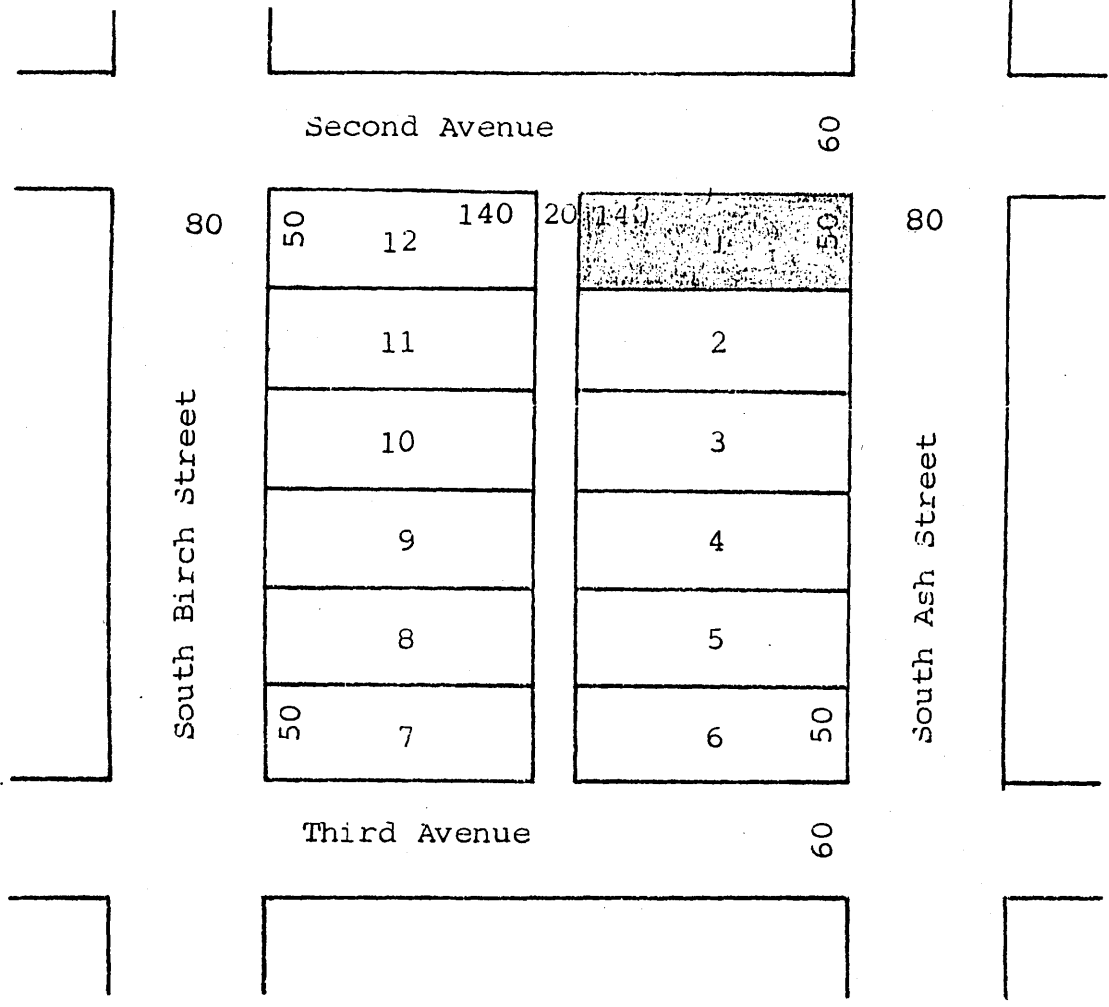
LETT HOTEL

TUMA, COLORADO

NOT TO SCALE

OCTOBER 15, 1989

Map 2 of 3



PLAT OF BLOCK 5, ORIGINAL TOWN OF YUMA, COLO.

Boundaries of Lett Hotel

Map 3 of 3