

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

36
JUN 12 1989

NATIONAL
REGISTER

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.

1. Name of Property MAYER APARTMENTS

historic name Mayer Apartments

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number S/W side of Central Avenue opposite Ash (abandoned); N/A not for publication

city, town Mayer vicinity

state Arizona code AZ county Yavapai code 025 zip code 86333

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

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

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>2</u>	_____ buildings
_____	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
None

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register None

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

Shirley Keener
Signature of certifying official

6/6/89
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Arizona State Historic Preservation Office
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. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:) _____

Alvina Byer

7/13/89

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/multiple dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and Early 20th Century

American

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Brick

roof tar and gravel

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.**SUMMARY:**

The Mayer Apartments consist of two identical, separate, one-story brick apartment buildings each containing three apartments. These structures occupy a 1.37 acre site on the south side of Central Avenue (formerly Old Black Canyon Highway) south and west of the Mayer Business Block in the unincorporated community of Mayer, Yavapai County, Arizona. The property is part of the original townsite laid out by Joe Mayer (born Hoffmayer) after 1881 and is located on land which was immediately across the street from the original site of the Mayer Stage Stop built in 1890 (now demolished). The buildings, constructed circa 1902, retain a high degree of integrity of location, setting, architecture and interior detail.

DESCRIPTION:Site:

At an elevation of approximately 4400 feet, Mayer is situated in the level valley floor of Big Bug Creek approximately 60 miles northwest of Phoenix and 32 miles southeast of Prescott. The basin is surrounded by high desert mountains covered with chaparral. These mountains have been the site of considerable mining activity from the 1880's to the present. The Mayer Apartments are located in old downtown Mayer, accessible from Arizona Highway 69 and Main Street, just south of the bed of Big Bug Creek. Large cottonwood trees line the stream bed, which is dry most of the year but carries seasonal water. Sumac trees, mostly in the form of scrub, are prevalent. Streetscape plantings are for the most part natural and not maintained. Central Avenue is paved, without curb or gutter. The Mayer State Bank building (built in 1917),

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and Mayer Hotel (built 1897) stand next to the Mayer Apartments to the east. Across the street to the northeast stands the Mayer Business Block. The Prescott and Eastern (P & E) railroad right-of-way lies immediately to the south. In recent years, the community of Mayer has spread into the foothills, however the main local business area remains in the areas of Main Street and Central Avenue, though there is more recent business development along Highway 69, which opened in 1953.

Construction and Design:

These two identical small apartments or rooming houses were built circa 1902 by Joe Mayer. Each building is 38 by 27 feet (1,026 square feet) and contained three apartments. Each building has three entry doors on the front, one exit door on each side and one exit door to the rear. There are two wooden outhouses or privies at the rear of the property.

Exterior:

Both buildings are constructed of red brick, probably manufactured locally by W. S. Deeds at Joe Mayer's brickyard. Both buildings have decorative brick trim on parapet walls. Both window openings and doorways typically have segmental arch openings. Windows are typically one-over-one double hung sash, though several are multi-paned double hung sash. Entry, exit and interior pass-through doors are topped by transom windows. Several original doors remain, including the six front entry doors. These doors are paneled wood with single fixed windows and dentil molding details. Roofs are flat and built-up. Foundations are stone rubble. Floors are supported by joists. Doorways are flush and are 30" above grade, indicating there were originally steps at front, side and rear doorways.

Interior:

The original interior configuration of both apartment buildings consisted of three small apartments running parallel, front to back, with two rooms each, one in the front and one in the rear. There are chimneys and openings for stovepipes in each apartment. Both buildings have original, intact pressed metal ceilings, plastered interior walls and some wainscoting. Floors are covered with many layers of linoleum and carpet, but appear to be wood. Bathrooms and kitchens have been added to the interiors of the apartments and doorways have been cut to provide interior access from one apartment to the next. All interiors are in fairly good structural condition with few serious alterations.

Functions:

There is very little documentation available for these structures. In Philip Varney's Arizona's Best Ghost Towns: A Practical Guide, Varney refers to the apartments as "brothels". This may have been one of the uses for these structures at some point in time, however their location next to the Mayer Hotel, built in 1897 also by Joe Mayer, and across

(see continuation sheet)

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the street from the Mayer Stage Stop indicates that they may have been originally built by Joe Mayer for use as temporary housing for extra hotel guests, miners or mine executives or freighters. They were probably built in conjunction with or at approximately the same time as the Mayer Business Block.

Alterations:

Overall, there are minimal structural alterations to these buildings and most are reversible. Most visible alterations are to the interior and include the addition of plumbing and fixtures and the conversion of the buildings from three apartments each to one apartment each by cutting doorways through the interior dividing walls. Structurally, the buildings are relatively sound, with some settling cracks, some of which have been poorly repaired at some point, probably with portland cement. Originally, wooden steps would have afforded access to all doorways. These are missing or have been replaced with small porches on the front. The interiors have not been well kept and are in need of some repair.

INTEGRITY:

Due in part to the rural character and small size of the community of Mayer, along with a relative lack of demand for commercial residential space in recent times and the Mayer family's unwillingness to modernize, these buildings have remained essentially structurally unchanged since their construction at the turn of the century. With the exception of the conversion of the apartments from three units each to one unit each, the Mayer Apartments retain their original configuration, location, setting, architectural design and materials. Trees (probably cottonwoods) which were originally planted along the street are now gone. Vegetation to the rear is quite thick and unkept.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Exploration and Settlement

Period of Significance

1902-1909

Significant Dates

1909

Cultural Affiliation

Significant Person

Joseph Mayer

Architect/Builder

Joseph Mayer (builder)

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

SUMMARY :

This property is considered eligible for nomination to the National Register under criterion B for its association with and representation of Joseph Mayer, the founder and developer of Mayer, Arizona. The Mayer Apartments represent the peak of the development of the community of Mayer by its founder and are representative of typical small-town development and design in rural western America at the turn of the century. Built of locally manufactured brick from the builder's own brickyard, the Mayer Apartments are constructed in a zero-setback commercial style similar to and in keeping with the Mayer Business Block across the street. These apartments are an unusual example of commercially constructed residential housing which were undoubtedly intended not for long-term, family use, but for short-term temporary lodging and as such remain as one of the significant residential structures built and owned by Joe Mayer. The apartments have retained their original location, setting, configuration, basic use and interior details. The period of significance for the Mayer Apartments dates from their construction in 1902, to 1909, the year of Joe Mayer's death. Even after Joe Mayer died, his family members continued to be significant contributors to the community of Mayer, Arizona.

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Mayer, Arizona, was established as Big Bug Station about 1877 on Big Bug Creek, 32 miles southeast of Prescott, in Yavapai County. It was established as a stop for the Phoenix-Prescott stage and as a refuge from the Apache Indians. The Black Canyon Stage Company habitually located stage stops approximately every ten miles between Phoenix and Prescott and named them after nearby creeks and waterholes. When permanent stops were established, they were renamed after agents, thus Big Bug became "Mayer's" and, later, Mayer.

The community known as Big Bug Station consisted of a small shack, corral and a grove of trees on Big Bug Creek when Joe Mayer and his wife settled there in 1881. Joe Mayer had come over the mountain at Tip Top, where he had owned a restaurant and store. Seeing that the economy was playing out along with the mining at Tip Top, Joe was headed for Prescott to look for a business and home. He stopped at Big Bug to spend the night, and seeing the "utopia" he was searching for, had made a deal by morning to buy the station and land from Bill Muncy for \$3,500 in gold. Big Bug was a daily stop on the Phoenix-Prescott stage and was a supply and "jumping-off" place for many of the local miners and ranchers, and Joe felt he could take good advantage of the opportunities presented by Big Bug Station.

As soon as possible, Joe began to construct his "utopia", building a new stage stop and a restaurant and opening a general merchandise store. He bought horses (branded "BM") and cattle (branded with the pine tree) and planted a vegetable garden and orchard. He sold the excess produce in his store, and soon became famous for his home cooked meals and generous hospitality. Mayer employed both Indians and Chinese, and developed great respect for the local Indians (Apache and Yavapai). His collection of their baskets, received primarily in barter, remains in the possession of his descendants.

Joe Mayer developed many mining interests, including the Henrietta, the French Lily and the Miner (he gave his interest in the Miner to his daughter, Mamie), not to mention the Onyx mine, a very profitable local industry spearheaded by Joe Mayer. He grubstaked many miners and prospectors, some who paid him back and some who didn't, but he was always willing to offer a grubstake, a square meal and a bed for the night.

Sarah Belle "Sadie" Mayer, Joe's wife, was the first postmistress of Mayer, commissioned in 1884. A corner in the Mayer household was set aside for the post office and there were no regular hours or days off, as people might come for their mail on any day at any time. Joe Mayer had the contract for mail to Stoddard, and made the trip on horseback. Sadie was also the town "doctor", as the closest physician was in Prescott (or, later, Humboldt) and she was very capable at first aid, even setting broken bones when necessary.

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In February, 1890, the Big Bug Creek flooded. When the dam upstream broke, huge boulders, uprooted trees, bodies of cattle and swirling black water rushed down the creek and folded the Mayer Station up like a cardboard box. The spot where it stood is now in the middle of the stream bed. Mayer immediately began to rebuild, salvaging what materials he could and building piecemeal as supplies came from Phoenix and Prescott. At the same time, more and more freight was coming through Mayer, including large, 14 team freight wagons, some hauling dynamite for the mines. Concerned about the dynamite, Joe built a powder house about a mile from town.

Mayer as a community was growing fast, so in 1897 Joe built the Mayer Hotel across the street and to the south of the Stage Stop. It had a general merchandise store on the ground floor and six sleeping rooms upstairs. Joe also built the first school, and provided wagon transportation and sometimes boarding for children of families settling on the Lower Agua Fria river.

In March, 1898, work began on the Prescott and Eastern Railroad (the P & E). Its stock and operations were controlled by the Santa Fe.*Many felt the railroad would mean doom to Joe Mayer, but he seized upon the opportunity and offered to provide the right-of-way through Mayer with the provision that it would revert to his estate if it were ever abandoned (a common practice at the time). The construction and opening of the rail line to Prescott brought many new changes and Mayer became a prominent commercial center for Central Arizona. There was much coming and going of Mayer residents to and from Prescott, for the ride now took only several hours (Timetable No. 25 lists departure from Prescott at 7:15 a.m. and arrival at Mayer at 10:25 a.m.) instead of all day. Twice a year, Mayer became a major sheep-shipping point and was the major shipping point for mines and ranches in the area. By 1900, cattle were being shipped regularly to Phoenix.

About 1900, Joe Mayer formed a company to bring water by pipeline from Crystal Springs, eight miles away. Built in 1902, it provided Mayer with 800,000 gallons of water per day. In 1904, Joe Mayer, George Treadwell and his son and George B. Scammel subdivided the town, laid out streets and sold lots. The townsite consisted of 160 acres and sales were brisk, with lots selling for from \$100 to \$500. In 1902, Joe Mayer donated the building site on a hill for a new, larger school, to be built of brick (undoubtedly the bricks were from his brickyard). The building has recently been restored and modernized and is again in use as a school.

*Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe
Railroad

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Joe Mayer died on Nov. 28, 1909, age 59, the result of an accidentally self-inflicted gunshot wound. The family stayed on in Mayer, with Joe's son W. B. running the businesses, and today Mayer's descendants remain as residents of Mayer. At the time of Joe's death, Joe Mayer's town was one of the most prosperous and progressive in central Arizona.

Significance:

In its March 14, 1900 issue, the Arizona Weekly Miner reported Joe Mayer to be "probably as well known today as any living Arizonan" and that "[t]hrough all the long years he has been a resident of that particular section his citizenship has been of the highest order - a benefactor, in short - and nothing good should be denied him." By the time of his death, Joe Mayer had founded and built a community with a population of about 600 people with a well established business district, a busy rail line and a solid, though fluctuating, economy based on mining and ranching. For 30 years he had held and controlled all of the real estate, resulting in a slow but steady planned growth, which was somewhat stilted by Mayer's holding of undeveloped property. That was the way he wanted it - it was his "town" and he wanted it to be perfect.

In October, 1908, the (Prescott) Courier printed an "eyewitness" account of the then current activities in Mayer, noting "Mayer appears to be well named, for it is (Joe) Mayer on all hands". After the reporter observed Joe Mayer's warehouse south of the depot, his hotel, "fine brick stores across the way" (the Mayer Business Block), his six new buildings, two of them brick (probably the Mayer Apartments), and the brickyard, which was turning out 10,000 bricks daily, the reporter concluded Joe Mayer was "it" in Mayer.

The March, 1918 issue of Yavapai magazine reported at length on the economic and business climate of Mayer, reviewing the status and production of the numerous mines (the article lists 41 mines) and businesses (referring to the Mayer Business Block as "the big store in town") in the area and predicting an era of prosperity for Mayer. This article characterized Mayer's economic base as being "more and more associated with mining", stating that the "future, of course, will be associated with mining with cattle playing a negligible part." Indeed, this prediction proved to be predominantly true, though ranching and farming continued to survive in the area, through World War I. After the war and for the next three decades, Mayer was characterized by a lack of development, and gradually became a community of retirees and summer residents. The truly prosperous times for Mayer were around the turn of the century, when Joe Mayer was building a community and a dream. At the present, Mayer enjoys a steady small-town economy, still partially based on mining. Bypassed by State Highway 69, it has grown slowly since the 1940's with many of the current residents moving to Mayer to retire and enjoy small-town life.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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 (County Seat)
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Private collection of Lucretia Thorpe,
property owner;

10. Geographical Data

Acres of property 0.44 acres

UTM References

A

1	2
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3	8	6	5	9	5
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3	8	0	6	8	2	1
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 Zone Easting Northing

C

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B

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 Zone Easting Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the nominated property are the same as those of Tax Parcel Number 500-14-082, representing part of Mamie No.2 Mining claim within the unincorporated Town of Mayer, Yavapai County, Arizona, being 125' x 126.29' x 154' x 150' approximately.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries include the entire parcel as defined when mapped for tax purposes. This is the present extent of the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Nancy L. Burgess, Consultant
 organization _____ date December 28, 1988
 street & number P. O. Box 42 telephone 602-445-8765
 city or town Prescott, state AZ zip code 86302

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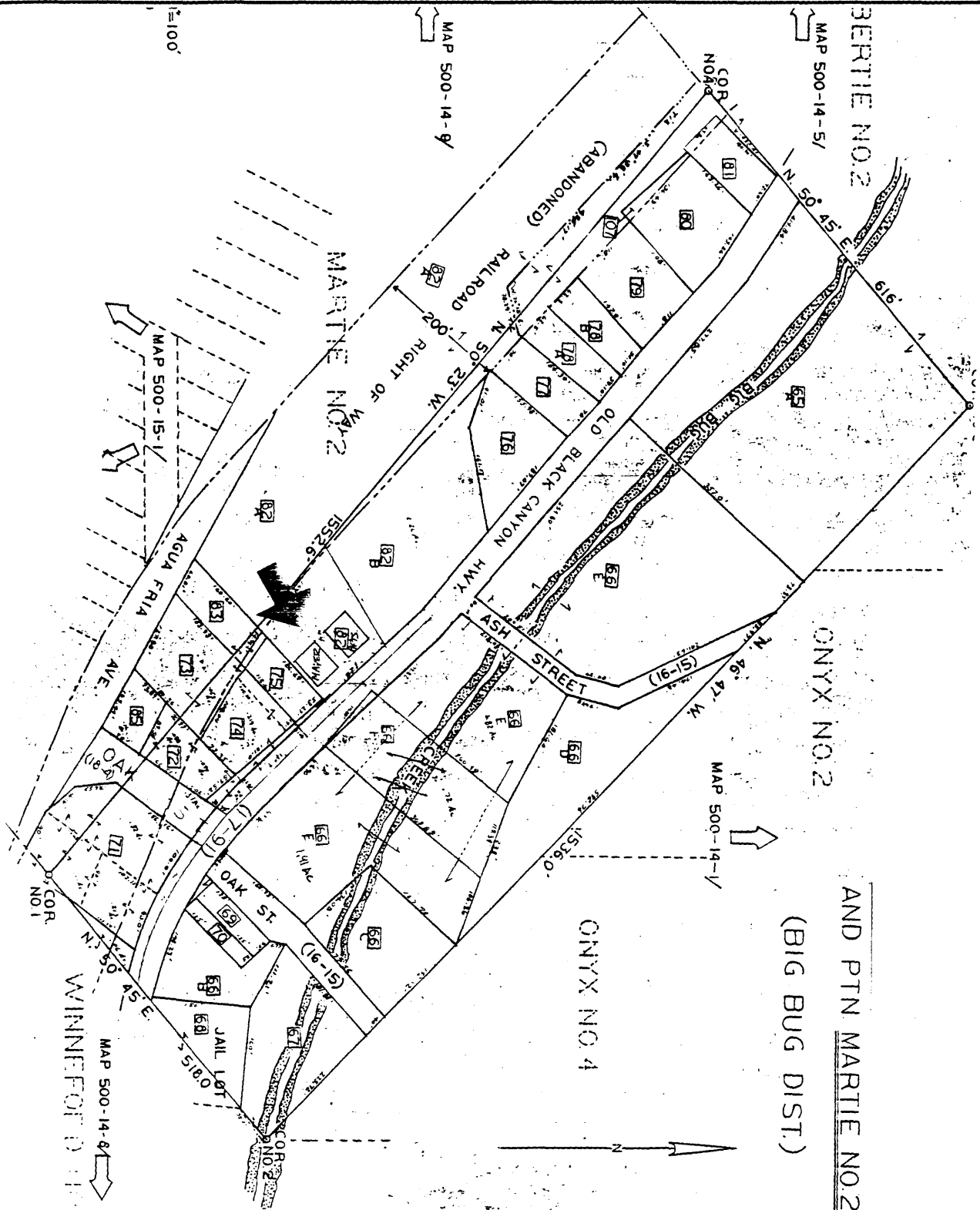
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AND PTN MARTIE NO.2
(BIG BUG DIST.)

SEC 22-12-1E

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Section number Photos Page 1

MAYER APARTMENTS
MAYER, ARIZONA

All photographs were taken August 8, 1988 by Nancy L. Burgess.
The Arizona SHPO has negatives and copies of all photographs.

1. East Building facing southwest (front)
2. West Building facing southwest (front)
3. West Building facing Northwest (side and rear)
4. West Building facing west (side)
5. West Building facing northeast (rear)
6. West Building facing west (front and side)
7. West Building facing south (door and window detail)
8. West Building facing south (door detail)
9. East Building interior pass-through door
10. East Building interior ceiling detail
11. Streetscape facing southeast with Apartments and Mayer Hotel
on the right