

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0685062
FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED SEP 25 1978
DATE ENTERED NOV 15 1978

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Shaffer Hotel
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Broadway St. NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CITY, TOWN Mountainair, CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
STATE New Mexico VICINITY OF CODE COUNTY CODE
New Mexico 35 Torrence 57

3 CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | PRESENT USE |
|---|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT | <input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC | <input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> BOTH | <input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SITE | PUBLIC ACQUISITION | ACCESSIBLE | <input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT | <input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED | <input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: |

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Jettie Sullenger
STREET & NUMBER P.O. Box 632
CITY, TOWN Mountainair, STATE New Mexico
VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Torrance County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER
CITY, TOWN Estancia, STATE New Mexico

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE New Mexico Register of Cultural Properties
DATE 7-15-77 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS New Mexico Historic Preservation Program
CITY, TOWN Santa Fe, STATE New Mexico

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Shaffer Hotel, a two-story flat roof masonry building, was constructed in 1923. Two stones along the second floor facade are inscribed "Shaffer" and "1923". When it was built, the first floor consisted of a lobby and a garage occupied by a Ford dealership. The garage was later used for parking by hotel guests. The second floor consisted of three rows of rooms built along two corridors. Within the central section of rooms were the kitchen and a skylighted dining room. The lobby has an elaborate pressed metal ceiling, but the original chandeliers have been replaced with florescent light fixtures. The building has a steam heating system with radiators hung along the walls of the lobby. From the lobby a single flight of stairs rises to the second floor. The stairs are now equipped with an elevator chair. Below the stairs is a rock-faced fireplace.

In 1928 a two-story masonry and frame addition was built along the east side of the hotel, the front of which was ornamented with Indian designs. The first floor of the addition consists of a large dining room and kitchen and the second floor added another section of rooms along the third corridor. The lobby and garage remained unchanged. After the kitchen and dining room were removed from the second floor those rooms were converted to hotel rooms. The hotel then had a total of 33 rooms, two with private baths, six with semi-private baths and three public baths, with a total of 7000 square feet in the building.

The dining room, the most distinctive room in the hotel, has stained glass panels above the two picture windows. The stained glass transom above the door has the inscription "Dining Room." The ceiling of the room, designed by Shaffer and said to have been inspired by Indian rugs, is painted in bright colors on Celotex. The chandeliers were also specially designed for the room. A rock and brick fireplace is located along the wall opposite to one in the lobby.

Along the west side of the hotel was Pop Shaffer's garden. At one time the Shaffer residence stood on this site. The cellar of the residence is all that remains of it today. In 1931 Shaffer built an elaborate concrete fence enclosing the garden along the street. The horizontal elements of the fence were precast, the uprights cast in place, the entire fence inlaid with dark rock representations of Pop Shaffer's "animals." In the center of the fence, worked in dark rock, is the inscription, "Built by Pop Shaffer 1931."

The first floor of the building is in good condition with the second floor in need of repairs. Today the hotel is closed, the dining room having remained in operation until early 1977. The new owners of the hotel are making plans for the reopening of the restaurant and are considering the opening of a lounge in what is now the garage.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

| PERIOD | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW | | | |
|--------------------|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| ___PREHISTORIC | ___ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC | ___COMMUNITY PLANNING | ___LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | ___RELIGION |
| ___1400-1499 | ___ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC | ___CONSERVATION | ___LAW | ___SCIENCE |
| ___1500-1599 | ___AGRICULTURE | ___ECONOMICS | ___LITERATURE | <u>X</u> SCULPTURE |
| ___1600-1699 | <u>X</u> ARCHITECTURE | ___EDUCATION | ___MILITARY | ___SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN |
| ___1700-1799 | ___ART | ___ENGINEERING | ___MUSIC | ___THEATER |
| ___1800-1899 | ___COMMERCE | ___EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | ___PHILOSOPHY | ___TRANSPORTATION |
| <u>X</u> 1900-1923 | ___COMMUNICATIONS | ___INDUSTRY | ___POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | ___OTHER (SPECIFY) |
| | | ___INVENTION | | |

SPECIFIC DATES 1923 to present

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Clem "Pop" Shaffer

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The ephemeral nature of the work of the folk environmentalist and the general public mistrust of such unusual works of art has often resulted in their destruction. Simon Rodia's Watts Towers, a major American monument, and James Hampton's Throne barely escaped destruction but are now recognized by the National Register and the Smithsonian Institution, respectively, as highly significant works by American folk artists. Although the environmental creations of Clem "Pop" Shaffer located in Mountainair, New Mexico have been relegated to the status of benign neglect, the visual evidence strongly suggests that we are faced with a folk art monument of major proportions and the responsibility for its preservation.

Clem "Pop" Shaffer was born in 1880 in Harmony, Indiana and moved with his new wife to Mountainair in 1908. Like many folk artists the heart of his life's work began later in life. In the 1920's he began work on the Hotel Shaffer at the urging of his wife. As he says in his autobiography, "In 1929 I built a dining room on the hotel also 8 more rooms; the dining room is my unusual piece of work." By 1931 he had built the fence which runs along beside the Hotel Shaffer. "Then in 1937 I started to build my tenant a house and barn on the ranch. I also built a show house for my wooden animals. I also built a work shop where I make all my wooden animals." Today these buildings -- the Hotel Shaffer, the cow barn, the show house, and the tenant's -- remain remarkably intact. The creatures that inhabit their walls as unusual ornaments haven't been vandalized but serve to give an impression of the total universe, a very private universe, that "Pop" Shaffer created in this small, dying town.

At one time Mountainair was the "Pinto Bean Capital of the World." The Hotel Shaffer was an attractive and popular place to visit and we have evidence that as many as 12,000 people a year went on to Rancho Bonito to see the rest of Pop Shaffer's Wooden Zoo. In addition to his architectural work and ornament, Pop created hundreds of wooden, fantasy creatures or root monsters which were shown in the show house; larger animals were shown outside at the edge of the lake which once bordered the show house at the Rancho Bonito. Today seven examples of Pop Shaffer's root monsters are housed at the Museum of International Folk Art, a division of the Museum of New Mexico, and approximately twenty-five other creatures are still in the Hotel Shaffer. In addition, scrapbooks, an autobiography, professional photographs and perhaps even a technicolor film allow reconstruction and interpretation of the not too distant past when Pop Shaffer orchestrated his special utopia.

Like other artists, the folk art environmentalist seems to be driven by the need for expression, but in this case the expression often takes the form of a lifetime, single project which is guided by the desire to form an environment over which the artist has complete control. The unity of the artist's vision is readily apparent but the underlying motivation is much more difficult to discern. On the whole, works by American folk environmentalists seem to share no direct relationship with the art of the past or awareness of developments in the art of their contemporaries. They work outside the

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Hemphill, Herbert W., Jr., editor. Folk Sculpture USA, The Brooklyn Museum, New York, 1976.

Hemphill and Weisman, Herbert W., Jr. and Julia. Twentieth-Century American Folk Art and Artists, E.P. Dutton and Co., Inc., New York, 1974.

Horwitz, Elinor Lander. Contemporary American Folk Artists, J.P. Lippincott Co., (cont'd) pg. 2

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.00 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A 13 | 386000 | 3820200
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B _____ | _____ | _____
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

lots 3 through 8 of block 19, original townsite.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Ellen Threinen, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

New Mexico Historic Preservation Program

DATE

September 5, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 1629

TELEPHONE

(505) 827-2108

CITY OR TOWN

Santa Fe,

STATE

New Mexico 87503

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Thomas W. Reed

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

9/20/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

William L. Gove

DATE

11/15/78

DATE

Nov 13, 1978

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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mainstream, intently focusing on an inner vision, the content, scope, and style of which is the sole product of the artist. What the forces were that motivated Pop Shaffer to begin work on his animals and decorated buildings are not known, nor do we know what guided the creation of such a unified vision. We do know that there are no other examples of folk environments on this scale in New Mexico and that efforts should be made to preserve this humorous and impressive monument to one man's vision.

prepared by Christine Malher, Curator
Museum of International Folk Art

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (con't) Item #9 Page 2

Philadelphia and New York, 1975.

Kresge Art Gallery. Michigan Folk Art, Michigan State University Board of Trustees, East Lansing, 1976.

Walker Art Center. Naives and Visionaries, E.P. Dutton, New York, 1974.

SUMMIT AVE & Highway to Gran Quivira

THIS LOT NOT INCLUDED

BLUAD WAY, (1 street south of highway 60)

SHAFFER HOTEL
&
DINING ROOM.

75'

75'

50'

ALLEY

24' X 24'
LAUNDRY

ORNAMENTAL STONE FENCE
75'

100'

several large
trees this yard

PLOT PLAN FOR
HOTEL SHAFFER.

LOCATED ON LOTS.

3-4-5-6-7-8

BLOCK 19 ORIGINAL

TOWN SITE MOUNTAIN AIR

-TORRANCE CO.

-NEW MEXICO

Hotel NOT INCLUDED

ADJOINING