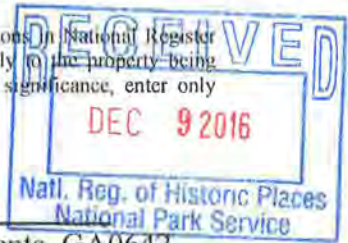


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

SG 552

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.



1. Name of Property

Historic name: Aristocrat Motor Inn

Other names/site number: The Aristocrat Hotel, Aristocrat Manor Apartments, GA0642

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 240 Central Ave.

City or town: Hot Springs State: AR County: Garland

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

 A B X C D

	<u>11-29-16</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<u>Arkansas Historic Preservation Program</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property <u> </u> meets <u> </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title :	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

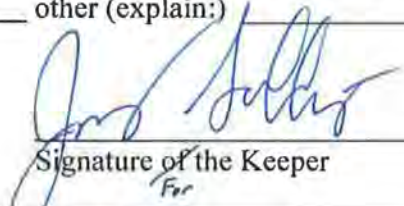
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4. National Park Service Certification

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:)


Signature of the Keeper
For

1-24-2017
Date of Action

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

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: hotel

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT

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Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Foundation: Concrete; Walls: Concrete, Glass, Metal, Aluminum; Roof: White TPO Membrane

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Aristocrat Motor Inn, now known as the Aristocrat Manor Apartments, is a seven-story structure that was original built as a hotel in 1963. The property was converted into a Section 8 apartment complex in 1978. Located at 240 Central Avenue in the heart of downtown Hot Springs, Arkansas, the structure is located within the boundaries of the Hot Springs Central Avenue Historic District (NR 6.25.1985) in Hot Springs, Arkansas (Hot Springs National Park) but was constructed outside of the district's period of significance. This Mid-Century Modern structure is composed primarily of concrete, glass, metal, and aluminum.

Narrative Description

The Aristocrat Motor Inn is a unique Mid-Century Modern building in the heart of downtown Hot Springs, AR. The building forms a triangle with the Arlington Hotel and the Medical Arts Building in the center of the downtown historic core of the city. The hotel is located at 240 Central Avenue. The streetscape along Central Avenue is a mix of late 19th to early 20th century architecture including various revival-style bathhouses and commercial structures. This Mid-Century Modern structure stands in contrast with the other more traditional late 19th and early 20th century structures that make up the majority of the Central Avenue Historic District. The first level features a covered drive thru with commercial shops along the front. The interior on the first level features a large lobby with a sitting area, offices, public restrooms, a large meeting room, and other amenities.

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It is unknown who the architect was for the Aristocrat Motor Inn, but it is known that P.W. Jameson Construction Company of Memphis, Tennessee, was the contractor in 1963.¹ The building sits on a concrete foundation, while multiple stacked cinder blocks in the basement area support the rest of the “V” shaped building. The inner part of the overall “V” plan of the building contains a saw-tooth window pattern that creates another unique attribute in the design of the building. The structure is topped with a flat roof with a large overhang over the top-story.

The ground floor is the largest, in terms of area; while the second through seventh floors create the unique elevated “V” shape with saw-tooth window pattern. This creates the impression of two tower masses that connect at the rear of the structure creating a “V” shape in plan. This allows for the lobby area, restaurant, lounge (bar), and convention hall to be covered by the slab of the second floor while also creating a second floor exterior recreation space. A unique original feature of the lobby was a set of special “handsome” glass panels arranged in the lobby ceiling, near the bar, that permitted a view into the pool from below.²

East (Front) Elevation

The East elevation is dominated at the street edge by the large concrete band of the second floor cantilever and pull-through porte-cochere, supported by four evenly-spaced cast-concrete columns. A small cantilevered concrete awning protrudes from the porte-cochere over the circle entrance and exit way. This cantilevered section of the second floor supports two original neon Aristocrat signs. The second floor wall serves as the enclosure for the pool and exterior recreation areas. The first floor is recessed under the overhang of the second floor. There is a large single-pane glass window centrally located beneath the porte-cochere. The front elevation is symmetrical on either side of this large single pane of glass. Located on either side of the centrally located glass window is a set of aluminum frame, glass, double doors. To the right of the double doors on the north side and to the left of the glass on the south side of the recessed porte-cochere, there are glass display windows that terminate at the front sidewalk. Along each of the two streetscape storefronts there is a single pane of glass, then a recessed entranceway, before protruding back out to the sidewalk. Unlike the north storefront, where the corresponding floor above cantilevers out over the first floor, the south storefront is enclosed and contains a small recessed steel door.

The exterior of the second floor contains sliding glass doors in the saw-tooth pattern rather than the corner windows found on floors three through seven on the inner section of the “V”. The exterior of the third through seventh floors along the street include massing of the concrete walls

¹ “Kirsch’s Faith in Spa’s Future Lauded at Hotel Groundbreaking,” *Hot Springs New Era*, 12 May 1962, 2.

² *Ibid.*

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with a vertical band of adjacent single-pane windows above a spandrel panel which are all in alignment on both the north and south edges of the eastern facing streetscapes. Located within the inner section of the “V,” is the saw-tooth window design, which includes alternating aluminum-framed, single-pane corner windows with small flat concrete-faced walls. The pattern alternates ten times on the inner section of both the north and south elevated tower portion of the “V”. At the far end of the inner-section of the “V” is a flat wall space containing four single-pane windows with spandrel panels below each window. The window arrangements are repeated on each floor above. Located on the roof, at the back of the inside of the “V” there is a cast-concrete extended elevator service space that provides access to the control panel and hoisting machinery. Located on the front exterior of this service structure is another neon Aristocrat sign.

South (Side) Elevation

The south elevation contains no ornamentation and no window openings as it was meant to have a shared wall with the building to the south. The exterior wall has been painted and is constructed of poured concrete.

West (Rear) Elevation

Like the south elevation, the west elevation also contains no ornamentation, due to its location against the rock bluff just to the rear (west) of the building. Just like the south elevation the west elevation is also constructed of poured concrete and painted.

North (Side) Elevation

The first floor of the north elevation is recessed below the cantilevered floors above. Working left to right, there is a small, flat concrete wall space, followed by a vertical support beam, followed by a steel door that allows for access to the basement. To the right of the basement access door is a long unadorned concrete area before the first floor elevation steps out twice. On each of the areas that step out, there is a single steel access door. At the termination of the second area that steps out, the wall turns to the right and ends flush with the cantilevered second story. On the area that steps back out to align with the cantilevered second story is another single steel door before the elevation turns and heads back to the west. Also, the north facade doesn't include any window openings.

Integrity

The building retains a high level of integrity because of the construction materials used. The integrity has remained through many renovations. When originally constructed the Aristocrat

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Motor Inn consisted of 150 units. The structure was renovated in 1978 by architect William “Bill” Canino of Little Rock, who supervised various updates to the building systems as well as renovations to the interior living spaces. Today the current arrangement has 101 units because a few of the units have been incorporated into other units to make larger spaces due to the need to accommodate elderly residents and satisfy handicap accessibility requirements. The other changes that have taken place include the covering of the pool in the 1970s with concrete to create one large flat outdoor area on the second floor. The late 1970s renovation included mostly updates to the interior of the structure. The public spaces were redesigned and repurposed to accommodate services such as laundry and gathering spaces for the now long-term residents. The original interior layout of spaces is mostly still evident, including the front entry and curved circulation space that leads to the rear ground level elevator bay. Also, the hallways within the upper floor towers still create a “U” of service space around the inner rooms of the structure that overlook the central open recreation space. The interior finishes have been updated due to the continued use of the space as long-term residences. During a renovation in 2000, some windows along the 2nd floor outdoor deck were replaced with sliding glass doors. Also, during this renovation, the street windows were replaced; however, the window styles was replicated with updated window units.

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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.

Criteria Considerations

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

- 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

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Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance
1962 - 1963

Significant Dates
1963

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

P.J. Jameson Construction Company (Builder)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Aristocrat Motor Inn, now known as the Aristocrat Manor Apartments, is a seven-story Section 8 apartment complex which was converted from a hotel in 1978. Located at 240 Central Avenue in the heart of downtown Hot Springs, Arkansas, the structure is located within the boundaries of the Hot Springs Central Avenue Historic District (NR 6.25.1985) in Hot Springs, Arkansas (Hot Springs National Park) but was constructed outside of the district's period of significance. The hotel was constructed in 1963. This Mid-Century Modern structure is composed primarily of concrete, glass, metal, and aluminum. The Aristocrat Manor is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion C**, with **local significance**, as an excellent example of Mid-Century Modern hotel design in downtown Hot Springs, Arkansas.

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

Elaboration

The City of Hot Springs

The city of Hot Springs sits at the base of the Ouachita Mountains southwest of the Arkansas state capitol of Little Rock. The water from the hot springs soon became known for having medicinal qualities and attracted visitors from all over the region. The area developed into a well-known resort nicknamed "The American Spa". In 1830, the first bathhouses were constructed in Hot Springs. The area thrived on the business created by containing and distributing the heated waters in therapeutic bathhouses. By the 1870s Hot Springs was advertised across the nation as "The Nation's Health Sanitarium".³ Bathhouse Row (NR 11.13.1974, NHL 5.28.1987) along Central Avenue became the centerpiece of bathing culture in Hot Springs during the late 19th century. Throughout the 20th century the baths faded as medical treatment with the advent of modern medical science, but people still came by the thousands for relaxation and recreation.⁴

After early European exploration, the land surrounding the springs was used mostly by travelers and early settlers as a source of healing thermal water. In 1804, a four-week expedition by

³ Shugart Sharon, *Hot Springs National Park: A Brief History of the Park* (National Park Service, 2003).

⁴ *Ibid.*

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George Hunter and William Dunbar was undertaken to the thermal springs.⁵ These early explorers were unable to discover the source of springs, but they did note the few rudimentary shelters that had been built for visitors to the springs and the area's interesting geology. In 1807, local planter Emmanual Prudhomme became the first settler of modern Hot Springs National Park.⁶ Over the next few decades, new homes and even a few early hotels started to draw new residents and travelers to the area.⁷

In 1820, the Arkansas Territorial Legislature requested that the springs and adjoining mountains be set aside as a federal reservation.⁸ In 1832, the 22nd United States Congress formed the national reservation at Hot Springs, granting federal protection to the local thermal springs.⁹ The Hot Springs Reservation was designated for public use as a park in 1880. In 1921, an act of Congress changed the name officially to Hot Springs National Park with its designation as the 18th National Park.¹⁰ Before the town was officially established, the area surrounding the springs was reserved for federal use by the United States Congress in 1832.¹¹ The town of Hot Springs was incorporated in 1851 as a health spa and resort area, catering to invalids and leisure seekers who hoped to find relief in the area's thermal springs at the local bathhouses.¹² The first bathhouses to utilize the thermal springs along Hot Springs Mountain were small cabins and frame buildings.¹³ After the federal government began controlling the springs in the 1870s, major improvements were made to the area. This included covering the nearby Hot Springs Creek with stone arches and a wide park area, cleaning up rubbish, and starting a centralized plumbing system to provide water to the bathhouses.¹⁴

As the popularity of thermal water treatments for various ills and afflictions grew during the end of the 19th century through the mid-20th century, the town of Hot Springs came to depend on the tourists and patients attracted by the springs. After 1877, when Benjamin F. Kelley was appointed by Congress as the first superintendent of the Hot Springs Reservation, new engineering projects and the construction of a rail connection from the Rock Island Railroad transformed the area into a major resort destination that would continue to grow for decades.¹⁵

⁵ Isabel Burton Anthony, *Garland County, Arkansas: Our History and Heritage* (Hot Springs National Park: Garland County Historical Society, 2009), 13-14.

⁶ Guy Lancaster, "Hot Springs (Garland County)", *Encyclopedia of Arkansas*, November 12, 2014.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Sharon Shugart, *Hot Springs National Park: A Brief History of the Park* (National Park Service, 2003).

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Shugart Sharon, *Hot Springs National Park: A Brief History of the Park* (National Park Service, 2003).

¹² Lancaster, "Hot Springs (Garland County)".

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Lancaster, "Hot Springs (Garland County)".

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The Central Avenue Historic District (NR 6.25.1985) possesses one of Arkansas's richest collections of historic commercial buildings, centered on Bathhouse Row.¹⁶ Historically, Central Avenue offered a wide variety of hotels, stores, restaurants and office buildings, all constructed to serve the needs of the visitors to the adjacent Bathhouse Row. As the area became more popular, the bathhouses and hotels became more lavish to cater to their wealthy clientele. As visitors increased, new hotels and boarding houses replaced the smaller and less sophisticated structures of the previous decades. Several important hotels were constructed during the latter part of the 19th century that attempted to surpass the quality of earlier establishments thus perpetuating a culture of continual competition among the area hotels. From its earliest days, the strength of the downtown business area in Hot Springs was underpinned by the quality and quantity of available accommodations for the tourists who visited.¹⁷

During the 19th and 20th century, the town of Hot Springs had grown out of the small valley between Hot Springs Mountain to the east and West Mountain to the west. The bathhouses, now all situated along Bathhouse Row, running along the eastern side of Central Avenue were improved, remodeled and rebuilt through the 1930s. The history of the city was also tied to various natural or man-made disasters including floods and devastating fires. The placement of the hotels and bathhouses allowed them to easily cater to the tourist trade while taking advantage of the spring water that flowed through the National Park's water supply system. By the end of the 1930s all of the major bathhouses had been transformed into large palaces for healing and relaxation.

Although the Great Depression years of the 1930s did affect the profitability of the bathhouses and park, a cut in the general hours of operation for the bathhouses helped to divert too heavy a financial blow.¹⁸ Through the 1950s, several bathhouses and spas successfully enticed new and returning visitors to sample the thermal waters of the springs through various updates, renovations, gimmicks and the illicit gambling industry. The tourist trade, however, did begin to slowly diminish by the 1970s. Open gambling was an institution in Hot Springs during the 1950s and early 1960s and this illicit recreation did help to shore up the flagging recreational economy of the area. However, the gambling in Hot Springs came to a quick end in 1967 when the newly elected governor Winthrop Rockefeller and the State Police led a campaign to clean up

¹⁶ Goodman, Bernard. Bathhouse Row. National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form. Files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program. Listed 13 November 1974. Hot Springs Central Avenue Historic District. National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form. Files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program. Listed 13 November 1974.

¹⁷ Shugart Sharon, *Hot Springs National Park: A Brief History of the Park* (National Park Service, 2003).

¹⁸ "1933: ... Park concession business dropped off because of the Great Depression, but early closing to decrease operating costs stopped the decline." Sharon Shurgart, *The Hot Springs of Arkansas the the Years: A Chronology of Events* (Hot Springs National Park: Department of the Interior: National Park Service, 2004).

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the city.¹⁹ This signaled the true downturn for the tourist trade in the city during the following decades. The great bathhouses that had been constructed in the late 19th century and early 20th century closed one by one. By 1985, only the Buckstaff Bathhouse was still operating on Bathhouse Row.²⁰ By the turn of the 21st century, new interest in heritage tourism and the previous listing of Bathhouse Row as a National Historic Landmark in 1987 led to a revival in Hot Springs National Park and the surrounding city of Hot Springs.

The Jewish Community's Large Role in Hot Springs.

The Jewish community in Hot Springs has been an active participant in the Central Avenue area in Hot Springs since before 1905, when the first temple was built in town around 1905.²¹ Throughout the years between 1905 and the early 1940s, the Jewish population slowly diminished as older more prominent Jewish family members passed away and younger generations left the city and the state. Although there was a slow decline in the native Jewish population of Hot Springs and the rest of Arkansas, Jewish tourists continued to visit Hot Springs, Arkansas, for the bathhouses located along Central Avenue. According to Carolyn Gray LeMasters in her book *A Corner of the Tapestry* "Hot Springs was almost an exception to what was occurring in the Jewish communities in other parts of the state outside of central Arkansas. As a spa city, its main resource was tourism, and thousands came yearly for the baths."²² While tourism slowly dropped off in small increments between 1945 and 1960. Yet, LeMasters states that, "many Jewish businesses flourished in Hot Springs into the 1970s."²³ By the end of World War II there was a new energy in the Jewish community in and around Hot Springs. This new energy seems to have come from the new up and coming community members that were making a name for themselves both in the community and in the local congregation. A few of the new leaders in the Hot Springs Jewish community included Rabbi W. Kaelter, Rabbi Martin M. Weitz, Morris Ostrow, and Samuel Kirsch.

Samuel Kirsch would become one of the new community leaders both in the congregation and in the business area long Central Avenue.²⁴ Samuel Kirsch was born in Warsaw, Russia, on December 6, 1895.²⁵ Apparently, at the age of six, Kirsch immigrated to the New York/New

¹⁹Clay Farrar, "Garland Anthony: Hot Springs Motel Entrepreneur," *The Record*, Garland County Historical Society, 2007. p 164.

²⁰ Sharon Shugart, *Hot Springs National Park: A Brief History of the Park* (National Park Service, 2003).

²¹ Carolyn Gray LeMasters, *A Corner of the Tapestry: A History of the Jewish Experience in Arkansas, 1820s-1990s* (Fayetteville, Arkansas: University of Arkansas Press, 1994), 361.

²² *Ibid*, 448.

²³ *Ibid*.

²⁴ Susan C. Nieman, "From the Editor," *Jewish Living of the South* (August 2007), 3.

²⁵ Warsaw was handed to Russia in 1815 as part of the Congress of Vienna between 1814 and 1815. Warsaw would become part of Poland in 1918 when Poland became an independent nation. Therefore,

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Jersey area.²⁶ He stayed in this area until around 1940, when he moved to Hot Springs, Arkansas, where he is said to have become a cattle rancher, while also owning three auction houses and art galleries as well as a jewelry store along Central Avenue.²⁷ One of these art galleries and auction houses was the Esskay Art Gallery while the jewelry store, known as Lauray's, is still in operation on Central Avenue.

Sometime around 1960, even with all of his other business ventures, Samuel H. Kirsch purchased the Waukesha Hotel. The Waukesha Hotel was located across the street from the Arlington Hotel at the corner of Central Avenue and Fountain Street. By 1960, Mr. Kirsch owned and operated the Edwards Art Gallery, Lauray's Jewelers, and the Waukesha Hotel.²⁸ In c. 1960, Mr. Kirsch demolished the former Waukesha Hotel to make way for the construction of a new modern hotel along Central Avenue.

The Aristocrat Motor Inn

The construction of the new hotel on the site of the Waukesha Hotel and Bath began sometime in early 1962. Although foundation work was already underway, a ceremonial groundbreaking for what would become the Aristocrat Motor Inn was held on Friday, May 11, 1962, at 2:30p.m. The ground-breaking ceremony was officiated by William Yauch, president of the Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce. Of those helping to break ground on the new "ultramodern seven-story, 150-unit motor hotel"²⁹ were the five grandchildren of Samuel Kirsch: Susane Kirsch, 19; Michele Kirsch, 16; Stephen Kirsch, 14; Mark Fleischner, 12; and Stewart Fleischner, 7.³⁰

This new "ultra-modern" motor hotel would be one of the first construction projects along Central Avenue to incorporate a new contemporary modern style of building into the very traditional late 19th and early 20th century streetscape.

The Aristocrat Motor Inn was designed as a six story V-shaped tower over a larger rectilinear first story. The inner courtyard is defined by the sawtoothed sides of the tower, with the street side left open. This inner sawtoothed sides allowed for a large amount of light into each of the rooms. This is especially important due to the fact that the only windows for most of the rooms

Samuel Kirsch was born in Warsaw, Russia. The date of Samuel Kirsch's birth is much debated. His World War II draft card stated December 6, 1895, as his birth date while other documents and his tombstone reflect a date of December 6, 1897.

²⁶ There are several Samuel Kirsch's in the New York and New Jersey area between 1905 and 1930.

²⁷ Nieman, "Jewish Hot Springs," *Jewish Living of the South* (August 2007), 10.

²⁸ R.L. Polk & Co. *Hot Springs, Arkansas, City Directory 1960*. Kansas City, Missouri: R.L. Polk & Co, 1960, 182.

²⁹ "Ground-breaking at Aristocrat Motor Hotel Scheduled Friday," *The Sentinel-Record*, May 10, 1962.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

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are located along the inner edge of the courtyard. The south and north facades do not include window openings. The overall design of the hotel, with its wide “V” shape, white wall planes, large glass panels, and use of large neon-lighted signs; is also reminiscent of earlier Googie style structures. The Googie style was often associated with an exaggerated form of mid-century modern concepts with characteristics such as bright colors, iconic symbols such as starburst and rocket fins and the use of reflective materials. Googie Style architecture was also heavily influential in roadside structures such as hotels, gas stations, restaurants, coffee shops and other commercial structures. The Googie Style was popular from the 1950s through the 1960s and helped to anchor the tenets of Mid-Century Modern style characteristics, although in an exaggerated mode, in popular culture of the time. The Aristocrat Motor Inn’s unusual sawtoothed walls and the use of large neon-lighted signs are definitely characteristics of the Googie Style, which is considered a subset of the larger Mid-Century Modern style.

Down the street from the Aristocrat Motor Inn is another, much older, V-shaped building known as the Dugan-Stuart Building. The Dugan-Stuart Building (Hot Springs Central Avenue Historic District, NR Listed 6.25.1985) was constructed in 1904 as a medical office building for the booming health and recreation industry in Hot Springs. This structure serves as an interesting comparative structure in its use of its inner courtyard space as only service space. The Dugan-Stuart Building’s inner courtyard was designed as a light well and for air circulation for the upper floor offices. In comparison to the more sculptural design of the later Aristocrat Motor Inn, the Italianate front facades of the Dugan-Stuart Building read as two separate towers separated by a shallow alley rather than a unifying aspect of the overall design. The Aristocrat Motor Inn’s form celebrates the inner courtyard as an integral part of its overall design.

The typological history of the V-shaped plan seen in various Mid-Century Modern Style hotels can also be traced to city plan concepts designed by early 20th century modernist architects such as Le Corbusier. In the book on the history and architecture of hotels entitled *Hotel Lobbies and Lounges: The Architecture of Professional Hospitality*, editors Tom Avermaete and Anne Massey tie the rise in hotel tower concepts, especially the V-shaped plan, to the Y-Type plans developed by Le Corbusier in his ever evolving Voisin Plan for Paris.³¹ This V-shaped plan was copied and spread across the United States throughout the 1950s and 1960s due in part to its usefulness “when integrating the public space of a large building with the traffic patterns of a modern city, requiring a drop-off in front.”³²

The concept of a motor inn, in which the booming car culture of the American south and west took precedent over the more traditional downtown hotel concepts of arrival by train or other public transportation, was in large part shaped by the Holiday Inn chain of hotels that were

³¹ Tom Avermaete, *Hotel Lobbies and Lounges: The Architecture of Professional Hospitality* p. 153-155

³² *Ibid.*

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created by Kemmons Wilson of Memphis, Tennessee. The first of the Holiday Inns was opened in 1952 and by 1968 there were 1,000 Holiday Inns.³³ The new types of automobile-focused motels that appeared across the United States in the mid-20th century were often located along highways at the edges of cities.³⁴ These new motels were also focused on low rates, easy access and self-parking. The new motor inns that started to appear across the mid-south during the 1950s and 1960s were an experiment that combined the low-rates and clean sparseness of new suburban motels with the convenience and traditions of service of older downtown hotels.³⁵ The contemporary Downtowner Motor Inns, created by Luther F. Matthews in Memphis in 1955, may have been the originator of the term “Motor Inn”. Matthews used the term “Motor Inn” to imply the hybrid of the motel with its minimal services with the traditional service expectations of the older hotel type.³⁶ The Aristocrat Motor Inn’s design accommodated the arrival of visitors by car through their curved port-cochere space at the front of the hotel. After visitors arrived and unloaded their luggage, the cars would be parked in an off-site parking structure.

The irregular shaped lot on which the former Waukesha Hotel and Bath sat allowed for the new seven-story Aristocrat Motor Inn to have 121 feet of street frontage along Central Avenue, while allowing for the hotel to maximize space through the use of all of the 178 feet of depth on the site. It is noted in the ground breaking ceremony by P.J. (Jerry) Poe, member of the Hot Springs City Council and past president of the Chamber of Commerce, that...

“a few years ago Mr. Kirsch started what no other person has done before....There was not enough room to build his motor hotel as hoped, he excavated into the mountainside and after much hard work and expense we stand on the site of a new ultra-modern hotel that will accommodate approximately 250 persons. It is a landmark of architectural beauty and culture, rising seven stories and with two swimming pools, one for adults and another for children. Mr. Kirsch had to have a belief in the future of Hot Springs. Evidence of his long-range thinking is the fact that the structure will be so erected that additional floors may be added later.”³⁷

³³ “Ground-breaking at Aristocrat Motor Hotel Scheduled Friday,” *The Sentinel-Record*, May 10, 1962.

³⁴ Keith A. Sculle, “Production of the Downtowner Motel Chain in Memphis,” *The West Tennessee Historical Society Papers*, 54: 94-108, 2000.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ “Kirsch’s Faith in Spa’s Future Lauded at Hotel Groundbreaking,” *Hot Springs New Era*, May 12, 1962, 2. (Only four years after excavating the mountainside behind the Aristocrat Motor Inn, the hillside partially collapsed after heavy rains causing extensive damage to the neighboring Southern Club and caused a large beam to crash through the wall of the Aristocrat. “Three Narrowly escape When Dirt Smashes Club,” *Northwest Arkansas Times*, April 26, 1966, 6.)

Aristocrat Motor Inn

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Although possibly designed to accommodate additional floors, the hotel was never enlarged.

Following the ground-breaking ceremony, cocktails and refreshments were served at another one of Hot Springs local modern attractions, The Vapors, located at 315 Park Avenue. The Vapors was built as a bar and club in 1960 using modern materials including cast-concrete screen blocks and Googie-Style signage, which was a popular style in advertisement and roadside architecture during the 1960s.

The new “ultra- modern hotel” was to contain 150 units, a restaurant, a lounge, card and television rooms, and a convention hall with a seating capacity of around 200. The swimming pool would be constructed on the second floor with glass panels arranged in the lobby to permit a view into pool.³⁸ At the time of the ground-breaking, Mr. Kirsch stated that his new Aristocrat Motor Inn would be completed and open for business by New Year’s Eve 1962-63 for a New Year’s Eve party.³⁹ By December 6, 1962, the date quickly changed with the hiring of J. Robert Southwood as manager of the Aristocrat Motor Inn. In announcing the new hire, it was reported that the hotel would be open by February 15, 1963, for the opening of racing season at Oaklawn Park.⁴⁰

The first real attraction to come to the Aristocrat came on April 27-28, 1963, when the hotel held the Arkansas Retail Jewelers Association meet and luncheon. Following the Jewelers Association meeting, the hotel was able to promote itself as the headquarters hotel for five of the Miss Arkansas Pageant contestants between July 15-20, while also promoting itself as a hotel to be used by those attending the Hot Springs Open Invitational PGA Golf Tournament, July 11-14, 1963.⁴¹ While Mr. Kirsch called for the hotel to be open for a New Year’s Eve party at the start of 1963, the party was finally held only a year later on December 31, 1963. The party included dinner, music and entertainment by “the Flames” and the “Wayfarers”, a complimentary bottle of champagne and party favors all for \$10 per person.⁴²

By late 1964, the Aristocrat Motor Inn was already beginning its first renovation project when it contracted with M.J. Groves Construction Company and Ace Plumbing for a \$75,000 - \$100,000 modern bathhouse in the hotel. This new bathhouse would include a 10-tub bathing facility and message department, which would occupy one wing of the seventh floor. This new bathhouse is noted as being the “first bathhouse to be opened in a hotel in many years.”⁴³ At the same time

³⁸ “Kirsch’s Faith in Spa’s Future Lauded at Hotel Groundbreaking,” *Hot Springs New Era*, May 12, 1962, 2.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ “J. Robert Southwood,” *The Camden*, December 6, 1962, 3.

⁴¹ “Welcome to Hot Springs,” *The Camden*, July 8, 1963, 2.

⁴² “New Year’s Eve Party: Advertisement,” *Northwest Arkansas Times*, December 21, 1963, 3.

⁴³ “Spa Firms Get Contract For Bathhouse,” Unknown Newspaper, September 13, 1964, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, National Register and Survey Files, Aristocrat Motor Inn File.

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that the Aristocrat was undergoing its bathhouse renovation, another new modern hotel was being constructed by architect Noland Blass, Jr., for Hill Wheatley another prominent businessman in Hot Springs. Mr. Wheatley set out to construct the Hill Wheatley Downtowner Motor Inn in 1963, with the nearby hotel nearing completion in 1965. The Modernist design of both the Aristocrat Motor Inn and the Downtowner Motor Inn communicated that the older bathhouse and hotel typologies could be combined and have a prominent place in the contemporary streetscape of Hot Springs.

After a seemingly profitable first few years, the good luck quickly faded for the Aristocrat Motor Inn. In May 1966, Mr. Samuel H. Kirsch passed away leaving the ownership of the hotel in dispute. Shortly thereafter, the hotel was owned and operated by a consortium of trustees of the Central, Southeast and Southwest States Pension Fund, which was a teamster union operated fund.⁴⁴ The Central, Southeast and Southwest States Pension Fund purchased the Aristocrat Motor Inn for \$1,777,706 sometime between 1966 and 1968. The sale price covered the amount of the mortgage held by the pension fund trustees together with interest and court cost.⁴⁵ At the time of the sale, General Electric Credit Corporation held a second mortgage on the property for \$230,712.79. With all of the debt that came with the property and the slowdown in the tourism business the end of the Aristocrat Motor Inn appeared to be near. On March 31, 1968, the Aristocrat was set to close its doors for the first time. In an article from March 27, 1968, it states that the Aristocrat “is scheduled to close Sunday at noon because of a lack of business and cooperation of community leaders.”⁴⁶

Following the closure in 1968, the hotel was purchased by Winfield Moon, of Birmingham, Alabama. Between 1970 and 1973, the Aristocrat was back up and running a healthy business offering events such as “Fun’ N Football” before the Oklahoma State University vs. Arkansas Razorback Football Game at War Memorial Stadium in 1972.⁴⁷ As part of the attraction for the game the hotel offered transportation to and from the game as well as accommodations for two days and two nights for \$20.00 per person.

Just as the hotel seemed to be prospering, the rise was cut short by a flood in downtown along Central Avenue in 1973 and the hotel was forced to close again. Two years later the Aristocrat re-opened. Although it seemed to be thriving following the re-opening in 1975, the hotel would only last another two years before going into foreclosure. Following the foreclosure the property

⁴⁴ “Plush Spa Motel to Close Doors,” *Northwest Arkansas Times*, March 27, 1963, 25.

⁴⁵ “Pension Fund Trustees Buy Aristocrat,” Unknown Newspaper, Unknown Date, Possibly 9/20/66?68?, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, National Register and Survey Files, Aristocrat Motor Inn File.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ “Fun’N Football: Advertisement,” *Northwest Arkansas Times*, September 16, 1972, 2.

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was sold at auction on November 9, 1977.⁴⁸ The Paramount Properties development firm purchased the property after setting up an Aristocrat Manor Limited Partnership in 1976, and then amending the partnership to include Marshall B. Coffman as the General Partner. Currently, Coffman Investment Company, Inc. is the management company for the property. At the time of purchase the company received grant money to help turn the Aristocrat into an apartment complex for the elderly.⁴⁹ In 1977, the building was substantially rehabbed and converted from a hotel into a HUD Section 8 property for the elderly and disabled. This renovation was led by Architect William Canino of Little Rock. The newly renovated residential tower was opened in 1978 and continues to operate through 2016.

Although the structure is located within the Hot Springs Central Avenue Historic District, this structure was originally noted as non-contributing due to the age of the structure. The property had not reached 50 years of age when the historic district was initially surveyed. The property also falls outside the Period of Significance for the surrounding historic district. An extension to the surrounding district's Period of Significance was not pursued due to the lack of development after the 1930s in the area for several decades and the number of non-contributing structures that would still exist even if an extended period of significance was warranted.

Statement of Significance

The Aristocrat Motor Inn, now known as the Aristocrat Manor Apartments, is a seven-story Section 8 apartment complex which was converted from a hotel in 1978. Located at 240 Central Avenue in the heart of downtown Hot Springs, Arkansas, the structure is located within the boundaries of the Hot Springs Central Avenue Historic District (NR 6.25.1985) in Hot Springs, Arkansas (Hot Springs National Park) but was constructed outside of the district's period of significance. The hotel was constructed in 1963. The Aristocrat Manor is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion C**, with **local significance**, as an excellent example of Mid-Century Modern hotel design in downtown Hot Springs, Arkansas.

⁴⁸ Coffman, Marshall. "Aristocrat Motor Inn: Determination of Eligibility" Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, National Register and Survey Files, Aristocrat Motor Inn File.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

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Name of Property

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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

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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): GA0642

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property >1 acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Aristocrat Motor Inn
Name of Property

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Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 15 S | Easting: 495047 | Northing: 3819403 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

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

A tract of land lying in Lots 13 and 14 and parts of Lots 12 and 15 of Block 89 of the U. S. Hot Springs Reservation.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary contains all of the remaining land and buildings historically associated with the Aristocrat Motor Inn.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Marshall Coffman
organization: Coffman Holdings, LLC

name/title: Edited by Travis Ratermann, Survey Historian
organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

name/title: Edited by Callie Williams, National Register Historian
organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
street & number: 1100 North Street
city or town: Little Rock state: AR zip code: 72201
e-mail callie.williams@arkansas.gov
telephone: 501-324-9880
date: September 1, 2016

Aristocrat Motor Inn
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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Aristocrat Motor Inn

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Photo Log

Name of Property: Aristocrat Motor Inn

City or Vicinity: Hot Springs

County: Garland

State: Arkansas

Photographer: Callie Williams

Date Photographed: August 25, 2016

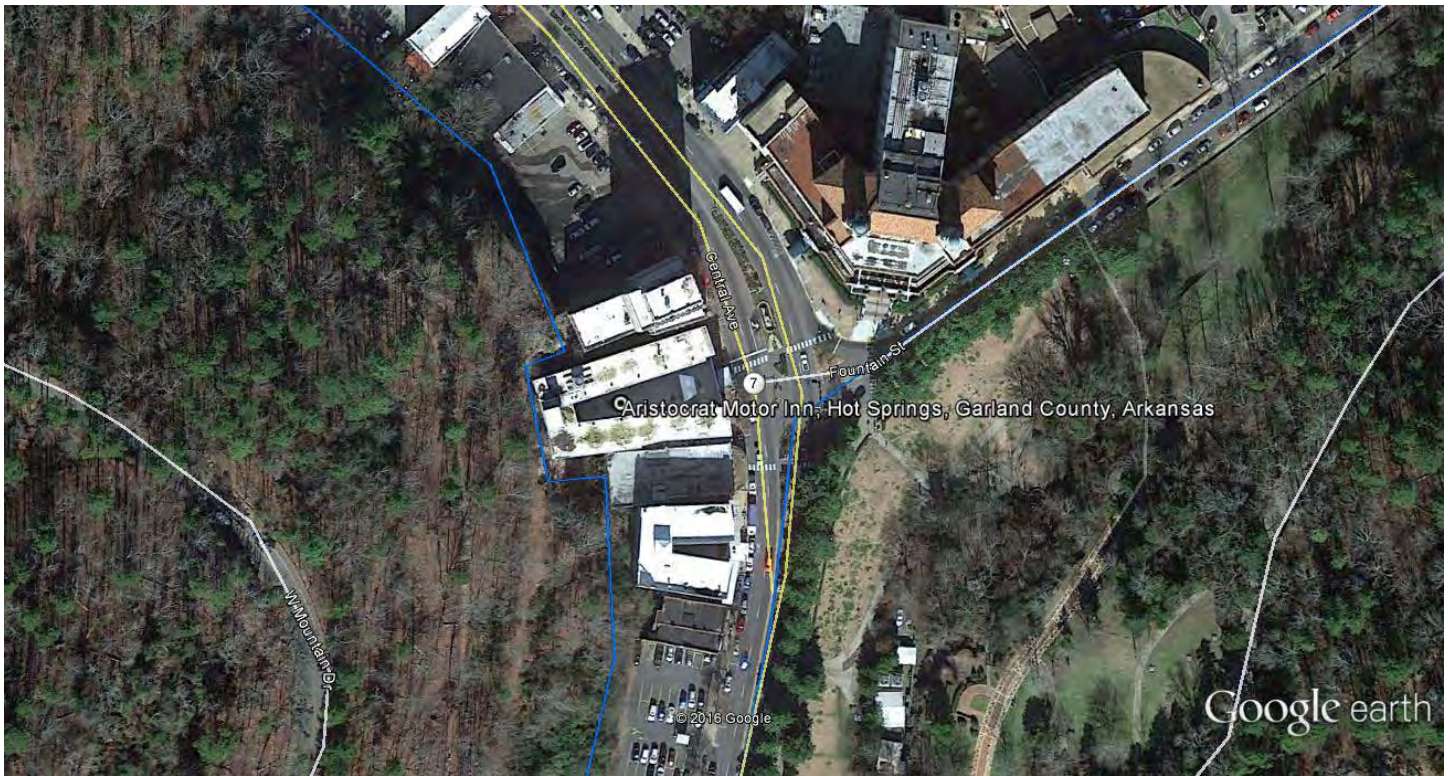
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 9: Front (East) Elevation of the Aristocrat Motor Inn, camera facing west.
- 2 of 9: Front (East) Elevation of the Aristocrat Motor Inn, camera facing southwest.
- 3 of 9: Front (East) Elevation of the Aristocrat Motor Inn, camera facing northwest.
- 4 of 9: Detail of the Side (North) Elevation of the Aristocrat Motor Inn, camera facing southwest.
- 5 of 9: Side (North) Elevation of the Aristocrat Motor Inn, camera facing southwest.
- 6 of 9: Detail of Front (East) Elevation, original neon signage and entry port-cochere of the Aristocrat Motor Inn, camera facing south.
- 7 of 9: Detail of Front (East) Elevation entry port-cochere of the Aristocrat Motor Inn, camera facing northwest.
- 8 of 9: Detail of the second floor exterior courtyard of the Aristocrat Motor Inn, camera looking to the southwest from the 4th floor.
- 9 of 9: Interior lobby detail of the Aristocrat Motor Inn, camera facing northeast.

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 100 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.

Aristocrat Motor Inn, Hot Springs, Garland County, Arkansas



Google earth

feet
meters



UTM

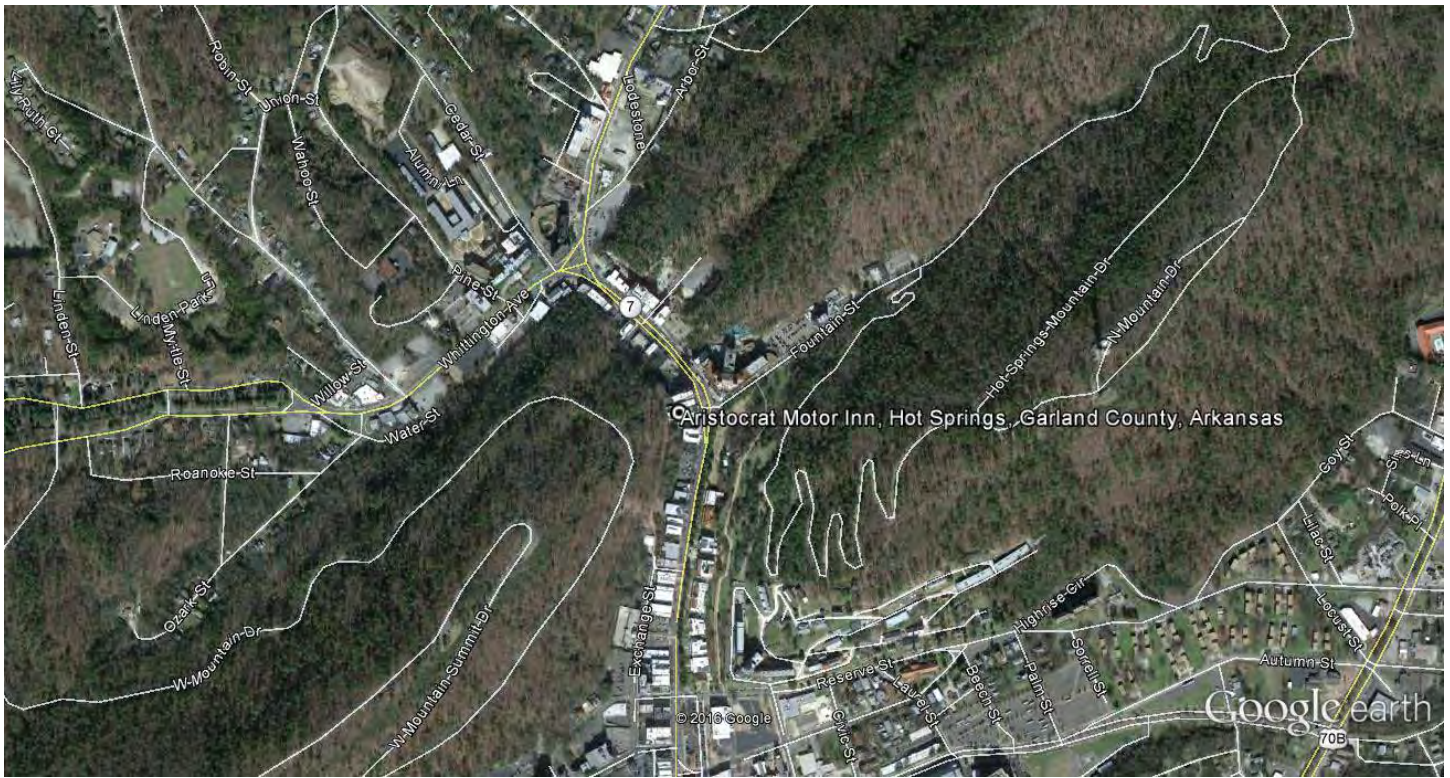
NAD 1983

Zone: 15 S

Easting: 495047

Northing: 3819403

Aristocrat Motor Inn, Hot Springs, Garland County, Arkansas



Google earth



UTM

NAD 1983

Zone: 15 S

Easting: 495047

Northing: 3819403



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236



Josephine Tussaud
WAX MUSEUM

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WORLD OF WAX
TICKETS INSIDE

T-REX GOLF
A 900sq. ft. South of This Location
Dough Boys
TOURIST GOLD OPEN

Bristarout

Fountain

Central Av







Aristocrat

Josephine Cussano
MUSEUM

LAST
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National Park

ARTS



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EXIT

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 12/9/2016 Date of Pending List: 1/11/2017 Date of 16th Day: 1/26/2017 Date of 45th Day: 1/24/2017 Date of Weekly List: 2/1/2017

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject 1/24/2017 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria:

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



THE DEPARTMENT OF ARKANSAS
HERITAGE

Asa Hutchinson
Governor

Stacy Hurst
Director

September 30, 2016

Mr. Rick Stauder, Planning Coordinator
City of Hot Springs
P.O. Box 700
Hot Springs, AR 71902

Re: Aristocrat Hotel – Hot Springs, Garland County

Dear Mr. Stauder *Rick*

We are pleased to inform you that the above referenced property will be considered by the State Review Board of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, an agency of the Department of Arkansas Heritage, for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register of Historic Places is the federal government's official list of historic properties worthy of the preservation. Listing in the National Register of Historic Places provides recognition and assists in preserving our nation's heritage.

Listing of this property provides recognition of the community's historic importance and assures protective review of the federal projects that might adversely affect the character of the historic property.

Listing in the National Register does not mean that limitations will be placed on the property by the federal government. Public visitation rights are not required of property owners. The federal government will not attach covenants to the property or seek to acquire it.

We have enclosed a copy of the National Register nomination for your review. If you have any comments on the proposed nomination, please submit a letter with your comments, concerns, or concurrence to the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program at least 24 hours prior to the date of the State Review Board meeting.

You are invited to attend the State Review Board meeting at which the nomination will be considered. The board will begin meeting at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, December 7, 2016 at the Old State House Museum at 300 West Markham Street, in Little Rock.

If you have any questions regarding the State Review Board meeting feel free to call Ralph Wilcox, Callie Williams or Travis Ratermann at (501) 324-9880.

Sincerely,

Frances McSwain

Frances McSwain
Director

Arkansas Arts Council

Arkansas Natural
Heritage Commission

Arkansas State Archives

Delta Cultural Center

Historic Arkansas Museum

Mosaic Templars
Cultural Center

Old State House Museum



ARKANSAS HISTORIC
PRESERVATION PROGRAM



National Historic
Preservation Act 1966-2016



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HERITAGE

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Governor

Stacy Hurst
Director

Arkansas Arts Council

Arkansas Natural
Heritage Commission

Arkansas State Archives

Delta Cultural Center

Historic Arkansas Museum

Mosaic Templars
Cultural Center

Old State House Museum

December 7, 2016



J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief
National Register and National Historic Landmark Programs
National Register of Historic Places
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Fl.
Washington D.C. 20005

RE: Aristocrat Motor Inn – Hot Springs, Garland County,
Arkansas

Dear Mr. Loether:

We are enclosing for your review the above-referenced nomination. The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the Aristocrat Motor Inn to the National Register of Historic Places. The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program has complied with all applicable nominating procedures and notification requirements in the nomination process.

If you need further information, please call Callie Williams of my staff at (501) 324-9789. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Stacy Hurst
State Historic Preservation Officer

SH:clw

Enclosures



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