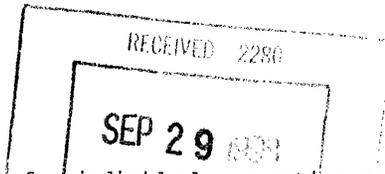


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



1303

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name: Landrum's Hamburger System No. 1
other names/site number: Chili Cheez Cafe

2. Location

street & number 1300 S. Virginia Street not for publication N/A
city or town Reno vicinity N/A
state Nevada code NV county Washoe code 031 zip code 89501

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Ronald M. Jones, SAPO
Signature of certifying official/Title

24 September 1998
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. 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):

[Signature] 10/30/98

Signature of Keeper

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

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: COMMERCE/TRADE Sub: Restaurant

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: COMMERCE/TRADE Sub: Restaurant

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Moderne

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

roof Asphalt

walls Porcelain-enameled steel panels

other _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration

Landrum's Diner - Reno

Washoe County, Nevada

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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.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE; SOCIAL HISTORY
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance 1947-1948

Significant Dates 1947

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Valentine Manufacturing Inc.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

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

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>11</u>	<u>258860</u>	<u>4377100</u>	3	___	___
2	___	___	___	4	___	___

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Revised by Mella Rothwell Harmon, Historic Preservation Specialist
organization State Historic Preservation Office date 7/15/98
street & number 100 N. Stewart St. telephone (702) 687-7601
city or town Carson City state NV zip code 89701

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

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

name Christine Ceccarelli
street & number 1320 S. Virginia Street telephone (702) 882-3931
city or town Reno state NV zip code 89502

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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Landrum's Hamburger System No. 1
Washoe County, NV

7. Description

Located on the main street of Reno, Nevada, Landrum's Hamburger System No. 1 is situated on a tiny triangular lot at 1300 South Virginia Street. The diner sits at the extreme northwest corner of the parcel, with no setbacks or landscaping, and a small parking area at the rear. It was intended to have been the first in a chain of hamburger restaurants. Manufactured by Valentine Manufacturing, Inc. of Wichita, Kansas, this Art Moderne-influenced diner was shipped to Reno via flat car and assembled at its current location in 1947. Valentine's smallest model of sandwich shop was called the Little Chef and was designed to accommodate from 6 to 10 customers. The restaurant was described as, "... absolutely the most fool proof operation in the world. The only thing the customer had to do was run the foundation and hook up the electricity, gas, and sewer" (Tanner 1994). Valentine's design was intended to allow a single operator to make a reasonable living from one unit (Gutman 1993).

Landrum's is a small (10 feet by 24 feet), one-story rectangular Art Moderne diner that seats eight customers at a curved stainless steel counter with a pink Formica top. Its flat roof, smooth walls, rounded corners, and horizontal emphasis give it the moderne or streamlined look commonly associated with the 1930s and early 1940s. The smooth exterior envelope is composed of white porcelain-enameled steel panels, with the entry pavilion, diminutive corner buttresses, and foundation/floor slab accentuated with green porcelain-enameled steel panels. The entryway is a vertical, curved upper-edge pavilion that extends slightly higher than the flat roof. It has an unpainted, stainless steel door with a single glass-pane insert. A slightly protruding bull-nosed canopy is located above the door. A neon sign with the Landrum name was centered at the crest of the pavilion, but this has recently been removed.

Fenestration on the primary facade is a large rectangular fixed-pane window located to the left of the entry, and centered between the roofline and the foundation. A smaller square window is set immediately to the right of the entry. Side-window fenestration has been changed to aluminum sliders, and the windows are smaller than the front ones and rectangular in shape. The windows have green metal awnings that match the green porcelain-enameled steel panels. A protruding neon belt wraps around the front of the building immediately above the windows and extends halfway on either side of the entry facade.

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Landrum's Hamburger System No. 1
Washoe County, NV

Mechanical and HVAC systems are located on the flat roof. A 216-square-foot concrete block addition, which extended the storage area, was added to the rear of the building circa 1970. Original character-defining interior architectural features include: the eight stools, the stainless steel counter, back wall and door, the front windows, and the porcelain-enameled walls. The linoleum floor, a clock replacement, and a new grill are the only visual interior changes.

8. Statement of Significance

Landrum's Hamburger System No. 1 is significant under criterion A for its role in Reno's post-war development of expanded neighborhoods and increasing tourist trade, and in the history of prefabricated hamburger diners in the United States. It is also significant under Criterion C as the only example of a prefabricated diner in Reno, Nevada, and as the embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of its type, period, and method of construction. It is typical of a large number of such diners built across the United States, incorporating the Art Moderne style of the 1930s and early 1940s. These diners were pre-cursors to the fast food franchises such as McDonald's and Burger King, which became American icons during the 1950s. Landrum's, although its style was set by the manufacturer, conforms to the general manner in which Art Deco and Art Moderne styles were manifested in Reno during the 1930s and 1940s.

Criterion A

Historical Background and Significance - Reno

Reno initially developed in the 1860s as a mercantile center for the distribution of supplies to the Comstock Lode in Virginia City, and to nearby ranches. In 1869, with the completion of the transcontinental railroad, Reno grew in importance and, in 1872, it successfully captured the seat of Washoe County government from Washoe City to the south. Reno is bisected by the Truckee River that runs roughly east-west through town, and Virginia Street running north-south. The railroad was established on the north side of the river, and the community began growing in that direction, with the earliest neighborhoods developing in the northwest and northeast quadrants. When the decision was made to establish the courthouse on the south side of the river, there were

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Landrum's Hamburger System No. 1
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complaints because many felt the community would never grow in that direction. Nevertheless, that act established a trend for Reno to eventually grow to the south.

The southeast section of town, where Landrum's Hamburger System No. 1 is located, began as an industrial and warehouse district. It was also the location of the Virginia and Truckee Railroad right-of-way. Residential growth in the southeast began in earnest after World War II. The area attracted young families, who were able to purchase the contemporary ranch-style homes with the help of Veterans Administration financing. The neighborhood grew so rapidly after the war that a new elementary school was needed. The southeast was the recipient of Reno's first post-war school, appropriately named Veterans Memorial School. The school, which was considered ultra-modern when it opened, was built in the Art Moderne style and was listed in the National Register in 1995.

In addition to being part of the actively-growing southeast quadrant of town, Landrum's was situated along Reno's main thorough-fare, Virginia Street, which was also the highway to Lake Tahoe and Nevada's capital, Carson City. In the 1930s, Reno's economy was driven by the divorce trade, but after World War II, Las Vegas eclipsed Reno as a divorce destination. Reno turned to automobile tourism and casino gambling (which had been re-legalized in 1931) for its economic livelihood. The Lincoln Highway, which ran through Reno, opened up an active automobile-related tourist industry. According to the 1950 city directory, Reno catered to the tourist trade with 62 hotels and 80 motels, plus numerous auto camps and guest ranches. Mid-twentieth-century commercial buildings in Reno's downtown core generally focused on the gambling industry, and a number of building projects were undertaken following the war. The most well-known of the post-war hotel/casinos was the Mapes Hotel, a twelve-story Art Deco beauty that dominated Reno's skyline. The Mapes Hotel was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1984 for its architectural and historical significance.

Along Virginia Street, between downtown and the city limits at Airport Road (now Plumb Lane), commercial activity in the 1940s and early 1950s was on a smaller scale and directed toward the surrounding neighborhoods and the automobile tourist. Motels, many of which had been auto camps in the 1930s, catered to travelers along Virginia Street. Polk's 1950 Reno city directory identified

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Landrum's Hamburger System No. 1
Washoe County, NV

the following business types operating within two blocks of Landrum's: the Circus Potato Chip Company; a frozen food locker; a barber shop; two beauty salons; two used car lots; a super market; a drug store; a liquor store; two hardware stores; a variety store (Sprouse-Reitz); a dry cleaners; a bakery and candy store; a furrier; and a soda fountain. The commercial structures that housed these businesses were utilitarian, single-story "store front" buildings, generally modest in size. The commercial block immediately north of Landrum's, which exists today, was built in 1946 in a simplified Art Moderne style with green tile-covered engaged columns separating each unit. The diner, built a year later, complemented the style and color scheme of this store block.

Landrum's was brought to Reno on a flat car, off-loaded from the Virginia & Truckee Railroad tracks behind the property, and assembled on its present site in 1947 by Eunice Landrum, who named her new diner, "Landrum's Hamburger System No. 1." The system was intended to be a chain of hamburger shops, but the original expansion plans never developed. Eunice Landrum sold the diner to Olive Calvert in 1953, who operated it until 1986. It has had a series of owners since then. Landrum's was an "all-night" diner, where a traveler or swing-shift casino worker could get a meal at any time around the clock. It was reported to have been a popular hang-out for policemen. Reno's 1950 police force consisted of 76 men and seven radio cars. With so small a force, a restaurant the size of Landrum's was more than adequate to accommodate patrolmen on their lunch and dinner breaks. Over the years, the police used the diner as a place to sober up drunks so they would not have to be jailed (Fisher 1978). The diner was also a popular destination for teenagers seeking a late night meal after a party or the movies. Landrum's had a good reputation and the stools were always filled.

Besides hamburgers, favorite menu items included bacon and eggs, and omelets. Landrum's famous chili-cheese omelet was created by long-time waitress, Daisy Mae Wright, who claimed, "A bar owner came in one day and said he wanted a chili bean omelette, so I fixed him one. He started telling everybody about it, and soon the word spread. We even had to hire somebody to come in and grate the cheese" (Farley 1986). Daisy Wright introduced another element to dining at Landrum's, her personal philosophy on dealing with customers: "I yell and scream at them all the time. If I am not screaming, they think I am sick or something. I really give them hell if they use bad language,

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Landrum's Hamburger System No. 1
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especially if there are women around" (Farley 1986). One waitress can handle a full house at Landrum's. Although there are eight stools at the counter, veteran customers know that only six of them will accommodate humans. "The one at the north end has no knee room, and the cigarette machine pokes you in the back, and the one at the bend in the counter wobbles" (Farley 1986). The wobbly stool may have contributed to one unfortunate incident when a drunk fell off his stool and broke one of the two large windows (Fisher 1978). A metal-frame roof sign announces that Landrum's is "Reno's Original Diner." Research indicates that Landrum's was Reno's only diner of its type, which made it somewhat of a novelty and contributed to its popularity.

Historical Background and Significance - Diners

The original concept for the sandwich diner is attributed to Walter Scott of Providence, Rhode Island, who began serving prepared food from his horse-drawn wagon in 1872. The laws of the town required that restaurants close by 8 P.M., leaving factory graveyard shift workers with no place to eat. Mr. Scott became an instant success with his cart full of sandwiches and coffee. Soon late night lunch wagons were set up all over town (Deco Echoes 1998). A wagon specifically designed to be a "night lunch," where patrons could sit down to eat, was created by Samuel Jones and built by a Worcester, Massachusetts wagon maker in 1887. In 1891, Jones sold his wagon to Charles H. Palmer, who took out the first patent for a lunch wagon. Soon there were three manufacturers of lunch carts in Massachusetts: Tierney, Worcester Lunch, and the Jerry O'Mahoney Company (Sacchi 1997). Innovations and refinements in the lunch wagon concept developed into the dining car and manufacturers proliferated throughout the east. Inventive marketing schemes during the 1920s changed the course of lunch wagon/dining car designs and diner manufacturing spread to the Midwest.

Roadside diners became fixtures across the country and symbols of American life, which was becoming steadily more mobile. From the 1920s through the 1940s, the diner business flourished, and prefabricated, self-contained diner/sandwich shops, like the ones made by Valentine Manufacturing, became an entrepreneurial fad. Diners began to lose their desirability by the 1950s, however, when the concept of the fast food franchise changed America's way of dining. Diners could

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not compete with the low prices, quick service, and name recognition of the fast food franchise, and by the 1970s diners were shut down and hauled away in record numbers. In the recent wave of nostalgia, diners are once again becoming popular, and several companies are producing state-of-the-art reproduction stainless steel diners in the fashion of Valentine's Little Chef (Deco Echoes 1998).

Whereas, the diner had its earliest roots in Providence, Rhode Island, Wichita, Kansas was the birth place of the American hamburger and the hamburger stand. White Castle Hamburger System was founded in 1921 by Walt Anderson, a Wichita fry cook who is credited with the invention of the hamburger. Mr. Anderson had ties with Nevada, having moved here while working as a cook for the Southern Pacific Railroad. He returned to Kansas in 1912, where he worked in a series of low-paying jobs before he went into the hamburger business. His original hamburger "shack," which opened in 1915, was a refurbished shoe repair shop with three stools, a counter, and a cast-iron griddle. The sign above the door announced, "Hamburgers 5¢." By 1920, Anderson ran four stands and adopted the slogan, "Buy 'em by the Sack." In 1921, Anderson took on a partner, Billy Ingram, who proved to be a marketing genius. Under Ingram's direction, the partnership was legally organized under the corporate name White Castle System of Eating Houses (Hogan 1997).

On the strength of standardization, quality control, a commitment to cleanliness, and conservative financial practices, White Castle is credited with developing America's passion for hamburgers and pioneering the take-out food business. In addition, White Castle is responsible for the development of portable all-metal buildings with porcelain-enamel coated exteriors, which became White Castle's architectural corporate symbol. These were built by White Castle's manufacturing division, the Porcelain Steel Building Company (PSB), which began in Wichita, but moved to Columbus, Ohio, along with White Castle's corporate offices, in 1935 (Hogan 1997). The first portable steel building was designed by White Castle's construction engineer, Lloyd W. Hay, and erected at Hillside and Douglas in Wichita in 1928. The building was 24 feet by 12 feet and its standardized parts were interchangeable (*Wichita Beacon* 1928). The portable steel building industry burgeoned in Kansas in the 1930s as a result of PSB's developments and was the home of such portable metal building manufacturers as Valentine Manufacturing, Inc., Butler Manufacturing Company (known for its popular military buildings), and Beech Aircraft Company, which worked with Richard Buckminster

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Fuller in 1944 to develop his concept of portable, inexpensive, light-weight housing, called the Dymaxion House (Snyder 1980).

A number of "hamburger systems" copied the White Castle concept. The most blatant imitator was the White Tower Hamburger System, established in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1926. White Tower was based on the same concepts of cleanliness and economy, and where White Castle enjoined its customers to "buy 'em by the sack," White Tower directed theirs to "buy a bagful." Even the architectural styles employed by the two companies were strikingly similar, both boasting a tower and crenelated rooflines. Following a trade infringement lawsuit lodged against White Tower by White Castle, White Tower's castle design became stylized and streamlined in the Art Moderne fashion in order to distinguish it from White Castle (Hogan 1997). Most White Tower shops were small, and sited on busy street corners in urban areas. By the late 1940s, in keeping with the general post-World War II architectural trend for abstraction, White Tower buildings had developed into simple cubes that emphasized signs and glass, and the pure form of the building (Hirshorn and Izenour 1981:20).

In their book, *White Tower*, Paul Hirshorn and Steven Izenour (1981:21) describe the most successful of White Tower's pure cube buildings. These were fifteen prefabricated buildings built by the Valentine Manufacturing Company of Wichita, Kansas. White Tower's chief architect, Charles Johnson, modified the basic Valentine frame into the most efficient White Tower ever built. The Valentine Company built the steel shell to White Tower's plan and window arrangement and sent it to the site, where the foundation and utilities had been prepared. White Tower then arranged for the erection of the tower (their corporate symbol) and the porcelain enamel cladding. The Valentine buildings offered size to fit the tightest urban location, as well as the visual impact needed for highway sites. Since they were prefabricated, the Valentine buildings allowed for ease of transport to a more profitable location. The Valentine building's main value to White Tower was the operational efficiency of the tight plan and the economy of construction. The Valentine buildings were originally intended to give ten years of service, but, in fact, many lasted far longer than that.

Valentine Manufacturing, Inc. was founded by Arthur H. Valentine, a Wichita restaurant owner and promoter. A. H. Valentine had been operating the Valentine System of hamburger stands in Wichita, and in 1933 opened a new all-porcelain structure on the corner of Beacon Lane and Market Street,

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which he named Valentine Lunch. The building was said to be the largest porcelain structure ever built and was finished inside and out with porcelain-covered steel, and was built in sections that were bolted together. Valentine Lunch was manufactured by the Metal Building Company of Wichita and the Martin Perry Company of York, New York (*Wichita Beacon* 1933). By 1938, Valentine had decided to manufacture his own design of small diners. He opened his plant in 1938 with six employees, building prefabricated, stainless steel buildings for a variety of uses. Valentine's most popular diner model was the Little Chef, which came in six-stool, eight-stool, and ten-stool sizes. The idea was for the unit to be complete and ready for business. All one needed was a piece of land on which to lay the foundation, and provide utility hook-ups. It was the perfect entrepreneurial activity for a country coming out of a devastating depression. These small diners made good economic sense, since they were one-man operations with limited menus. After World War II, small prefabricated diners offered ready investment opportunities for returning veterans (Gutman 1993:105). Valentine's sandwich shops were stainless steel and advertised as "new and modern." Valentine Manufacturing, Inc. has been described as, "The only major manufacturer west of the Mississippi. Practically all of the surviving handful of 'real' diners located in the West were built by Valentine" (Gutman 1993:110).

Valentine Manufacturing, Inc. continued to make diners after Arthur's death in 1953, but the product line was expanded to include ice cream stores, liquor stores, portable dry cleaning stations, turnpike toll booths, and filling stations. The diner design was enlarged from the original six-to-ten-stool models costing about \$3,300 in the 1940s, to a 40-seat model priced at over \$30,000 in the 1960s. The company closed in 1971, having fallen victim to competition from up-and-coming fast food chains and changes in building codes. In the 33 years it was in operation, Valentine Manufacturing sold more than 2,200 sandwich shops to buyers in every state except possibly Washington (Gutman 1993:110).

Landrum's Hamburger System No. 1 represents Reno's participation in "diner fever" that swept the United States in the 1920s through the 1940s. Landrum's was built in the image of the popular and successful hamburger diners of the Midwest and East. Even its siting, on a busy street corner with no setbacks or landscaping, copied the proven arrangements of White Castle and White Tower properties. Reno has long been known as "The Biggest Little City in the World," and with a "new

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Landrum's

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and modern" stainless steel diner, Renoites could share a cultural connection with larger urban centers. Landrum's is also one of a very few Valentine Manufacturing sandwich shops remaining intact, and as such deserves special recognition.

Criterion C

The "lunch wagon" diner established its place in American culture with the rise of the industrial revolution. It provided a place to grab a quick meal at a reasonable price, and later as a place to socialize. Since it began as a mobile unit, its architectural style was utilitarian and functional. In the post-World War I era, as mass production gained acceptance and workers had greater disposable incomes, these diners became fixed structures, and were mass produced and sold to entrepreneurs around the nation. New building materials, such as stainless steel and aluminum, in combination with inventive manufacturing techniques such as prefabricated, enameled porcelain-on-steel panels, gave way to creativity and new building types.

During the 1920s to 1940s, American society became captivated with modernism and technology. The coming of the Machine Age gave rise to consumerism, as machine-made items became widely available. Between 1920 and 1930, private automobile ownership rose to over 26 million and 80 percent of American urban dwellings were electrified. Radios, washing machines, toasters, refrigerators and the movies became a part of American culture. The Art Deco/Art Moderne style of architecture was one manifestation of this interest (Trapp 1993).

Although the Reno unit originated in Kansas, the modest proportions and simple applications of the Art Moderne style, as embodied in Landrum's Hamburger System No. 1, are consistent with the style's expression in Nevada. Several Reno structures were rendered in this style, including the store block north of Landrums, built in 1946. The Art Moderne Veterans Memorial School, located in the same southeast neighborhood as Landrum's, was Reno's first post-war school, built in 1949 and listed in the National Register in 1995. The Veterans Hospital, located two blocks from Veterans Memorial School, was built in 1947 in a similar style (*Nevada State Journal* 1947). The El Cortez Hotel (1931) and the Mapes Hotel-Casino (1947), two excellent examples of Art Deco architecture, were listed in the National Register in 1984. Additional northern Nevada

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Landrum's Hamburger System No. 1
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properties in the Art Deco tradition include the Nevada State Supreme Court Building in Carson City (built 1935 and listed in 1987), Las Vegas High School, a Mayan Revival/Art Deco design, (built 1930-31, listed in 1986), the Lincoln County Courthouse (1938), considered eligible for the National Register, and several simplified examples in Lovelock, Winnemucca, and Hawthorne, Nevada.

Landrum's is typical of the popular small diners of its era, which were designed to offer efficiency, cleanliness, and economy. It is an eight-stool, prefabricated unit designed and manufactured by Valentine Manufacturing, Inc. of Wichita, Kansas, which began marketing the diners in 1938. Landrum's is representative of the standard Valentine design, which incorporates the following elements: a two-color porcelain enamel skin/envelope; small yet space-efficient interior; and diminutive buttresses. Valentine units were used primarily as diners, but also found service as liquor stores, shoe repair shops, and bakeries. Landrum's, with its fluid Art Moderne lines, rounded corners, and unique use of building materials, is the last remaining small dinette left in Nevada. In addition to its significant association with Reno's post-war suburban expansion and its developing tourist industry, Landrum's is significant as a singular representative Valentine diner (the leading supplier of prefabricated diner buildings to the West) in Nevada, and one of but a few remaining in the region.

The diner's significance, both architectural and historical, is being recognized today. Several diners have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and the American Diner Museum was established in 1996 in Providence, Rhode Island, where it and twelve other historical organizations, comprise the Heritage Harbor Museum and Library. Landrum's Hamburger System No. 1 shares a diner heritage that dates to the 1870s, and a style that was embraced by the evolving diner industry as a symbol of cleanliness, efficiency, and modernity. Landrum's has been a landmark for three generations of Reno citizens. In 1984, when Landrum's was but 37 years old, it was listed in the Nevada State Register of Historic Places. The consensus at the time was that Landrum's would be eligible for nomination to the National Register once it achieved 50 years of age. In honor of the State's recognition, Nevada's Governor Richard Bryan, a self-proclaimed hamburger aficionado, visited Landrum's and sampled the fare. His comments at the time described his opinion of both the hamburgers and the diner. Of the hamburger Bryan said, "The bun is fresh. The beef is tasty. The

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lettuce is crispy. The tomato is firm. And the onion is tangy." He sang the diner's praises by stating, "This is a Reno legend. In the 1920s and 1930s, diners like this were everywhere. This is the last of its kind. It is a part of Americana and I hope they keep it here forever" (Griffith 1984). Landrum's is, and always has been, the only diner of its kind in Nevada, and there has long been popular recognition of its significance. It now deserves recognition of its significance through listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

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10. Geographical Data

Verbal boundary description

The legal parcel number is 14-137-06

Verbal boundary justification

The nominated property includes the parcel historically associated with Landrum's Diner.

Photographs

The following information applies to the photographs 1-4:

Name of Property: Landrum's Diner

Location of Property: Reno, Washoe County, Nevada

Location of Negatives: State Historic Preservation Office
100 N. Stewart Street
Carson City, NV 89701

Photograph 1: Landrum's Diner, now called Chili Cheez Cafe, facing east
Name of Photographer: Mella Rothwell Harmon
Date of Photograph: April 16, 1998

Photograph 2: Landrum's Diner, now called Chili Cheez Cafe, facing south, note sign reading
"Reno's Original Diner"
Name of Photographer: Mella Rothwell Harmon
Date of Photograph: April 16, 1998

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Photographs, continued

- Photograph 3: Rear of Landrum's Diner, now called Chili Cheez Cafe, facing west
Name of Photographer: Mella Rothwell Harmon
Date of Photograph: April 16, 1998
- Photograph 4: Landrum's Diner entrance, facing southeast
Name of Photographer: Ana Beth Koval
Date of Photograph: August 1983