

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received **SFP 30 1982**
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Sweetwater Brewery

and/or common Green River Brewery

2. Location

street & number ~~48 West~~ Railroad Avenue _____ not for publication

city, town Green River _____ vicinity of

state Wyoming code 56 county Sweetwater code 037

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. Robert H. Lewis (875-7398)

street & number PO Box 1135

city, town Green River _____ vicinity of state Wyoming 82935

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Sweetwater County Courthouse

street & number 50 West Flaming Gorge

city, town Green River _____ vicinity of state Wyoming 82935

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Wyoming Recreation Commission has this property been determined eligible? _____ yes no

date 1967 revised 1973 _____ federal state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records 1920 Thomes Avenue

city, town Cheyenne _____ vicinity of state Wyoming 82002

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Green River Brewery is a 1900 structure constructed of native sandstone laid in ashlar courses with a rock-faced finish. The existing structure was once part of a three building complex that consisted of the Office/Saloon, the Engine House, and the Brewhouse but only the Office/Saloon remains today. The building is two stories, with a square plan, four bay front, with a single story section on the north wall. A one story, concrete block, addition was recently construction on the west side of the brewery. This recent construction is not particularly compatible with the existing building. The principle facades are the south and west walls.

The first floor of the south facade consists of two, wood infill, storefronts with the east or right portion of the facade having been the saloon while the west part was the office. The infilled area consists of raised and molded panels and is capped by a large, pressed metal, cornice with raised letters spelling 'office' and 'saloon' over the appropriate area.

The windows on the second story west and south facades were originally double hung fixtures. Recently, new windows that are not similar to the original ones were added. The current windows are rectangular and are topped by large stone lintels.

By far the most significant part of the structure is its castellated appearance. The south and east facades are composed of four towers with merlons, crenelles and coping. The largest tower is located on the southwest corner and it supports a flagpole topped by a large ball. Both the west and south facades have raised center portions with identical crenellation. This center portion is flanked by two inner towers. The western facade contains carved scrollwork that surrounds a keg. The south facade has decorative scrollwork with the inscription "Erected 1900." Each raised center portion is capped by a large stone urn.

This building is an interesting blend of architectural styles which, is architecturally significant to Green River, as well as, to the State of Wyoming. Unlike any other Wyoming structure, the castellated Green River Brewery is a distinctive and unique portion of Wyoming's past.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1900 **Builder/Architect** Hugo Gaensslen

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The significance of the Green River Brewery in Green River, Wyoming stems from two sources. First, the Green River Brewery is significant for being one of the pioneer industries in Green River and the first brewery in Wyoming as well. Through the years Green River beer gained a nationwide reputation for its quality. Also, the brewery is architecturally significant for its interesting blend of architectural styles reminiscent of castles along the Rhine River in Germany and patterned after the famous Chicago water tower. It is also unique in that it is the only known structure of its kind in the State of Wyoming.

**Addendum

From the beginning, the brewing business was operated by German immigrants who had the necessary know-how to run a brewery. The first brewery was opened in 1872 even before a school or courthouse had been constructed. It was operated by Adam Braun but unfortunately was washed away by a flood.

In 1875 Otto Rauch took over the business, building a one-story wooden structure on Front Street (later Railroad Avenue), which is the location of the present structure today.

It was after Karl Spinner purchased the business in 1879 that the fine reputation for Green River beer became widespread. Spinner had come to Green River in 1873 from Germany and after his purchase was able to increase business to the point where the brewery was producing 5,000 barrels of beer a year. It was at this time that the name Green River Brewery was adopted. As the reputation for Green River beer expanded, Spinner began shipping the beer throughout the country. This beer became known as "Columbia Beer" after placing second in the 1890 Columbia Exposition competition.

The period of development which produced the present structure was begun in 1891 when Hugo Gaensslen purchased the brewery. He was a quality brewmaster who had graduated from the United States Brewers' Academy in New York City. Under his management, the brewery continued to prosper along with many additions and changes to the facilities. His first project was to construct a three-story frame building with tin siding. As Mr. Gaensslen expanded the operations, he had it incorporated and the name officially changed to the Sweetwater Brewery Company. Gaensslen adopted the slogan "The Pioneer Wyoming Brew" which it continued to use throughout its existence. The beer continued its fine tradition by winning medals at both the 1905 St. Louis Exposition and the Portland Exposition one year later.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Newspapers:

Green River Star. Green River, Wyoming June 30, 1976, June 29, 1977, Nov. 15, 1977.
 Rock Springs Rocket-Miner. Rock Springs, Wyoming January 8, 1980
 Green River Brewery, Vertical File, Sweetwater County Historical Museum

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Green River, Wyoming

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	2	6	2	7	8	1	0	4	5	9	8	3	9	5
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property only includes the original Saloon/Office building that is part of Lots 10-11, Block 17, Green River, Wyoming

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state n/a code n/a county n/a code n/a

state n/a code n/a county n/a code n/a

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Brian Werner Henry Chadey
Survey Historian Director
 organization Wyo. Rec. Comm. Sweetwater County Historical Museum DATE: April, 1982
 street & number 1920 Thomes Ave. 50 W Flaming Gorge telephone 777-6301
 city or town Cheyenne Green River state Wyoming 82002 82935

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Jan H. Wilson

title State Historic Preservation Officer date September 24, 1982

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Linda M. Cullard date 11/1/82
 for Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet Statement of Significance

Item number 8

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In 1900 Gaensslen, a native of Chicago, built the stone structure which still stands today. It was patterned after the famous Chicago water tower which he had been so taken with in his youth. The new building was constructed of native sandstone quarried behind Tollgate Rock and then transported in horsedrawn wagons the mile and a half to the building site. Other stones used were quarried in the Spring Canyon area north of the town. With the completion of this building program, the brewery house built between the old plant and the old three story plant brewhouse building.

Usually Gaensslen leased the saloon to a separate individual so that he could concentrate solely on the work that went into brewing. He also operated an ice house which was essential to keeping beer fresh before pasteurization became a common brewing practice.

With the passage of the Volstead Act in 1919, the beer making operations were closed down and the name changed to the Sweetwater Beverage Company. The brewery sold non-alcoholic near beer, which became known as "Wyoming Beverage", a lemon-lime drink named "Green River", and various citrus crushes. However, due to the moon-shining going on in the area the near beer never took hold and the business faltered. In 1931, two years before Prohibition ended, Mr. Gaensslen died and the operation was closed.

The brewery remained closed until 1936 when an Irishman, Tom Flaherty, made the pretense of reopening the business. He was primarily a con man interested in making some quick money and as things got worse, (for one thing the beer was of extremely poor quality), Flaherty skipped to Canada. This was the last time that the brewery ever operated in such a capacity.

The stone building has since been used for other commercial endeavors including a plumbing shop and the present fencing company. Despite the fact that many of the buildings have been destroyed, the surviving stone structure is an exceptionally interesting and unique piece of architecture which retains its significance even today.