

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property

=====

historic name Y Service Station and Café

other names/site number Kobel's

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number 1733 Neptune Drive not for publication N/A

city or town Clinton vicinity N/A

state Oklahoma code OK county Custer code 039 zip code 73601

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3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _____ nationally _____ statewide locally. (N/A See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Bob Leachman 4-12-04
Signature of certifying official Date

Oklahoma Historical Society, SHPO
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

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4. National Park Service Certification

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I, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register Edson H. Beall 5/27/04

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): _____

Jan
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

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

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing Route 66 and Associated Historic Resources in Oklahoma)

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6. Function or Use

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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: COMMERCE/TRADE Sub: specialty store

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: COMMERCE/TRADE Sub: specialty store

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Mission Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

roof ASPHALT

walls STUCCO

other

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

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8. Statement of Significance

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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 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

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance 1937-1954

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8. Statement of Significance (Continued)
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Significant Dates 1937

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder UNKNOWN

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

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9. Major Bibliographical References
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(Cite the 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: Oklahoma Route 66 Museum, Clinton Public Library

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10. Geographical Data

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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>14</u>	<u>501835E</u>	<u>3926346N</u>	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

N/A 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.)

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11. Form Prepared By

=====

name/title Michael Cassity, Ph. D.

organization Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office date December 12, 2003

street & number 304 West Albuquerque telephone 918 451-8378

city or town Broken Arrow state OK zip code 74011

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Additional Documentation

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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)

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Property Owner
=====

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

name Charles and Teresa Belter

street & number 1740 Neptune Drive telephone (580) 323-1396

city or town Clinton state OK zip code 73601

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 9

Y Service Station and Café
Name of property
Custer County, Oklahoma
County and State
"Route 66 and Associated Historic
Resources in Oklahoma"
Multiple property listing



Description

As the eastbound traveler approaches the Y Service Station and Café from the north, the building suddenly appears like a castle, rising above the open terrain and standing apart from the scattered buildings in the semi-rural area south of Clinton, Oklahoma. For six decades this striking building has appeared so. If anything, the dramatic bearing of the building is enhanced by the configuration of the roads next to it. Route 66, an extension of 10th Street as it leaves Clinton, becomes Walton Road, and then Neptune Drive. When it reaches this point, a Y in the road directs traffic to the west, Route 66, or to the south, U.S. Highway 183. The Y Station is located strategically in the Y so that traffic passes both to the east and west of it. The pump islands, no longer present, were located north and east of the station.

Appropriately, the building conforms to the lines of the triangular piece of land on which it is placed, although it assumes a generally trapezoidal shape since the northern corner of the triangle is blunted with a fourth elevation. (Even that description must be modified, however, since some of the corners are clipped to provide entrances.) The north point is two-stories, the top of which includes office space, but then drops to a single story in the south two-thirds of the building. This building included the service station at the north, with washing and service bay in the center of the west elevation, and the café in the south portion of the building; about one hundred feet to the south a separate building containing a string of motel unit stretched across the island formed by the Y. That motel operation was part of the same business, but that building is now gone.

Built in the Mission Revival style in 1937, the parapet curves gracefully around the building slightly elevated at the corners, but at the northwest corner the piece of the parapet is missing where it originally rose to a pronounced height. The building is white stucco with blue metal tile mansard canopies, a flat roof, and coping of bricks in rowlock painted blue.

The north elevation is two stories, with the ground level dominated by a large plate glass window under a blue tile mansard overhang. This is framed by plain pilasters on the corners. Above the mansard tile, the elevation is asymmetrical. On the east, recessed metal casement windows wrap around to the east elevation. Because of the windows, the pilaster on the east is only on the ground floor, whereas the pilaster on the west continues to the coping that formerly held the elaborate parapet. The large plane on the second story once was used for advertising with the sign painted announcing "The Y Modern Cottages" for years. Now the sign recalls the earlier days explicitly: "The Y on" and then presents a huge U.S. Route 66 shield sign. The northwest corner is truncated, thus creating a short diagonal elevation that includes an entrance on the ground level and casement windows above. Another mansard tile awning hangs over the entrance.

The west elevation, after the truncated corner, includes another plate glass window and tile awning beneath a set of metal casement windows on the second floor. A pilaster forms the end of this bay of the building and rises all the way to the coping on the second floor, and also makes a corner, and end, to the second floor. In the next bay south, which is the center of the building, the service bay has been enclosed with only a pair of small windows providing an

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opening. Another pilaster separates this bay from the remainder of the building to the south, the old restaurant. The building has changed in this area in some subtle ways. A row of casement windows and door have been replaced by plate glass windows. Above, a row of decorative tile was inlaid forming a band of vertical pieces; that row has been replaced by a signboard and a metal awning formed like tile stretching over the windows. But the appearance generally conforms to the original.

The south elevation now enters the automobile dealership with interior passages to the enclosed service bay and the service station office / retail area to the north. With pilasters on each corner the elevation is stucco with a doorway on the west end; a horizontal fixed window is immediately east of the door. As with the west elevation, the panel of decorative tile has been replaced with a signboard and an awning that resembles tile covers the door and window. The east elevation is an irregular configuration that generally served as the rear of the building adjacent to a narrow strip of parking. This elevation includes four components; the south-most bay is defined by pilastered corners and that section projects beyond the original elevation to the north and includes a centered multi-light (3x3) metal window. North of that bay, tucked into the corner formed by the projecting south portion, a shed-roof enlargement of the kitchen for the restaurant was added to the original building during the period of historic significance. Above the addition, the original lines of the building remain clear and the section, which includes a canopied window on its south and a service entrance on the west, does not detract from the integrity of the structure. Another pilaster frames this section and the third section, to the north, includes the west entrance to the service bay which went completely through the building. As on the west elevation, that has now been enclosed with concrete blocks painted to match the rest of the building and also includes two horizontal fixed windows in the blocked area. The fourth section of the west elevation includes the side of the service station office / retail area and is two stories. The smallest part of the building, this is recessed to the west even farther, so that the building becomes progressively smaller, and narrower, to the north. Two entrances to restrooms and a window opening to the retail area are on the ground floor. A wooden stairway rises past the window to the landing at the entrance directly above one below. Metal casement windows on north of the door wrap around to join those on the north elevation.

The café and service station were located in this building while the motel was located to the south in an open box configuration. The motel was destroyed in 1991 or 1992.

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Significance

Summary

The Y Service Station and Café at Neptune Park in Clinton, Oklahoma is significant within the Multiple Property Nomination, "Route 66 and Associated Historic Resources in Oklahoma." Constructed in 1937, this service station was located directly on Route 66 and served the traffic on that important highway for over a quarter century. Because of this association with Route 66, the building qualifies under that multiple property nomination under Criterion A and represents the property type, "Gasoline / Service Stations" and "Restaurants / Diners" in the area of significance of Commerce on Route 66. Moreover, because the property also is significant for its architectural qualities and associations as specified under that multiple property nomination, it also meets the requirements of Criterion C.

Historical Significance

When Route 66 was designated in November 1926, the roadway consisted of a patchwork of pre-existing roads in various states of improvement, mostly unpaved in Oklahoma, and the towns along the new highway anticipated significant benefits from the traffic between Chicago and Los Angeles. That traffic indeed surged dramatically in the late twenties and into the 1930s as tourists, truckers, and a powerful migration flocked to this highway that was rapidly becoming an icon of American culture. And the benefits likewise came to the towns that had wanted to be on the main route, at least for a while. When the traffic came, however, it spawned other developments that had not been anticipated. This can be seen in the case of the Y Service Station at Neptune Park in Clinton, Oklahoma.

Route 66 west of Oklahoma City was almost completely unpaved at the birth of the road. The highway from the east entered the city of Clinton and coursed through town on Choctaw until it reached Tenth Street where it turned south. This was a common pattern in two ways: it reflected the desire to have the commerce channeled through the business district where the stores were lined up awaiting the commerce of the highway, and the road frequently turned sharp corners, traversing as it often did the section lines, and thereby zigzagging or stair-stepping its way across the state. As the road went south out of Clinton, it meandered slightly through an undeveloped agricultural area, but soon made an arc at a Y in the road where the east branch was a highway that went to Cordell and the other, U.S. 66, went straight west to Foss, Canute, Elk City, and Sayre. It was about that time that Albert P. Sights acquired the land in that Y, an area that he named Neptune Park. Shortly after the designation of Route 66, Sights subdivided his land, creating the Neptune Park Subdivision, and also granted the state an easement of forty feet from the center line of the highway as it made the arc past his Neptune property. In the coming several years the town of Clinton began to move south, gasoline stations lining parts of Tenth Street south of the business district. In 1935 Sights sold the lot at the corner of the property to D. L. Kelly and Ralph Kobel, although Kobel became the sole owner in 1937.¹ Prior to this, Kobel had operated a service station in town at 221 E. Choctaw—right on Route 66—and he also evidently owned another station a dozen miles west on Route 66 in the town of Foss, the shell of which still stands, bearing the ghost

¹ See especially the records in the Office of the County Clerk, Custer County, Arapaho. The sale of the property to Kelly and Kobel in 1935 is in deed Book 56, page 587. Kelly's sale to Kobel is at book 60, page 583.

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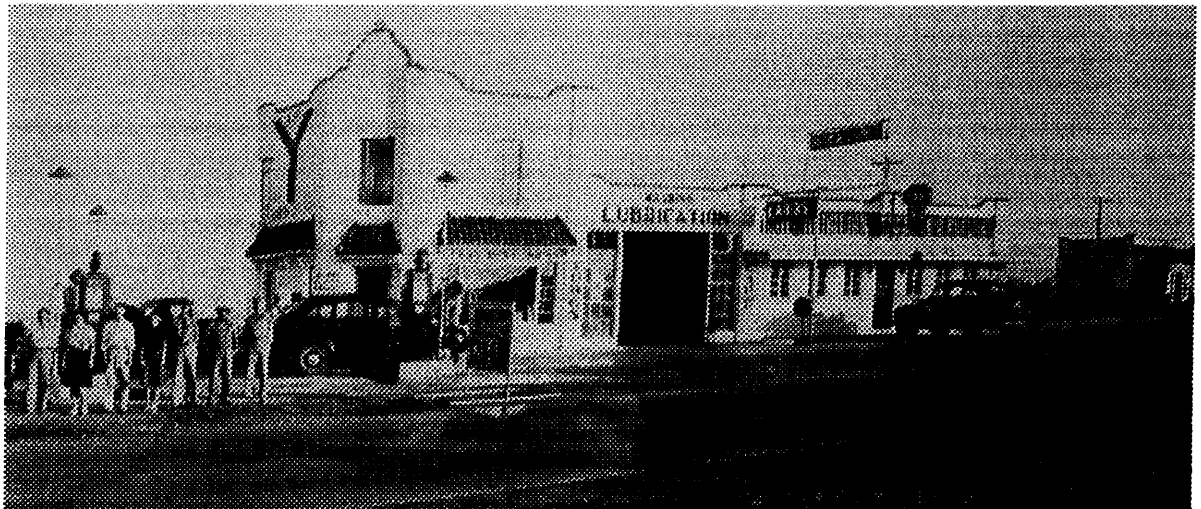
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sign "Kobel's Place." In 1937 the city of Clinton, moving its city limits southward, used a WPA project to extend the city water lines south as far as Neptune Park. The previous year, another WPA project had actually developed the opposite end of the Y on Route 66 into a municipal park—the official Neptune Park on land Sights donated to Clinton—as a convenience to townspeople and travelers alike, and the development of the Neptune Park area had begun. It appears that Kobel built his station that same year, although the documentary record is not conclusive on that point. Moreover, two photographs located in the Oklahoma Route 66 Museum in Clinton suggest that an earlier, similar, building may have existed at this location, at one time a Black Gold Oil Station and at another time a Phillips 66 Station. It is clear, at any rate, that the gas station enlarged in the 1930s and soon came to be the hub of a commercial center in the Neptune Park area. In this process, however, one of the basic trends of development along the highway became clear: business growth was especially inviting on the peripheries of towns where property was available for large, concentrated operations where clusters of related businesses could emerge. The business districts lacked the space for expansion and thus what would be called urban sprawl in more populated areas, or suburbanization in some locations, took shape as well along the highway in the heartland of the nation.

By the end of World War II, the Y Service Station appears to have flourished sufficiently that it was known for more than just the gasoline and automobile repair service it provided. The Kobel Oil Company office was located on the second floor of the Y Service Station at Neptune Park, the Y Café (variously "featuring sizzling steak" and "Best Steaks in the USA") was in the yellow



Y Service Station and Café at Neptune Park, undated photo courtesy of Oklahoma Route 66 Museum, Clinton, Oklahoma. Uniformed attendants and other employees stand beside Route 66. Tourist courts are to the right.

pages of the telephone book, and the Neptune Courts at Neptune Park formed an open box arrangement south of the station. In fact, two other tourist courts were located on both sides of the highway north of the station and at least two other service stations operated nearby on Route 66.

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The Y Service Station at Neptune Park was positioned admirably to capture some of the heavy tourist traffic of the post World War II years, but that traffic also unleashed other forces that would be less benign. Pressure mounted to route the traffic that had once wound its way through downtown Clinton and other towns on Route 66 to the outskirts of the cities, and to widen and straighten the highway. This was going on elsewhere in Oklahoma, but that path of the future was more the replacement of Route 66 than it was the improvement or upgrading of it. In 1953 the Turner Turnpike between Oklahoma City and Tulsa was opened, bypassing the smaller towns on Route 66 that ran beside it. In 1957 the Will Rogers Turnpike completed the divided highway between Tulsa and Missouri, and road construction was in the works for western Oklahoma too. In 1956, the alignment of Route 66 changed and no longer followed Tenth Street south in Clinton, and therefore no longer passed in front of the Y Service Station. In 1957 the Clinton telephone book listed the Y Café, and the tourist court—now in the "motel" classification—still operated, but the service station appeared to have a new manager. It was still owned by Kobel, but in the coming several years the business was no longer part of the Route 66 corridor and appears to have entered a different phase of its existence. While the new Interstate 40 was being constructed, governor Raymond Gary committed to the cities along Route 66 in the western part of the state (Weatherford, Clinton, Elk City, Sayre, and Canute) that no one of the towns would be disadvantaged by the new road's bypassing one before the others. Thus Route 66 through Clinton became the business route of I-40 before the interstate was opened and Route 66 in Clinton followed Gary Boulevard, as Choctaw was renamed, but still missed the service station and café at the Y south of town. In 1970 I-40 was opened, and it was then possible to drive completely through Oklahoma without stopping at a stop sign or pausing for gasoline at one of the roadside stations, but Route 66 had ceased to bring customers to the Y south of Clinton well before then. In 1968 Glenna Kobel sold the property to another family and by the 1970s a series of other businesses had begun in this building. In all of this the other pattern was painfully evident. That pattern was the reverse of the boom years that came when U.S. Highway 66 brought an unprecedented volume of traffic to the towns; now, the improved road and then the interstate took that business away from the operations that had built up alongside the highway.

Summary

The Y Service Station and Café at Neptune Park reflected the powerful historical forces associated with Route 66 in Oklahoma both in its origins and in its demise. Once Route 66 held out the promise of commercial success, countless small businesses emerged along the highway to serve the traffic it carried. Some like this gasoline station expanded to a full service operation and even provided a combination of businesses that made them more competitive and more attractive, offering in this case a café and a tourist court to complement the other aspects of the business. Yet what Route 66 had brought, it could also take away, and when the alignment changed, and then when Route 66 itself was replaced with the interstate, the business transformed and declined, soon to fade into the same landscape as the highway it once served. The building stands today, however, as a constant reminder of that past for all who will pause and ponder. For this reason, the Y Service Station and Café qualifies for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as a representative of the property type "Gasoline / Service Stations," and "Restaurants /

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Diners" within the Multiple Property Nomination, "Route 66 and Associated Historic Resources in Oklahoma" under Criterion A in the area of significance Commerce.

Architectural Significance

In addition, the Y Service Station and Café is also significant under Criterion C in the area of significance Architecture because it is a good example of an architectural type or style in its design, materials, workmanship, association, feeling, setting, and location as it once appeared on Route 66 in Oklahoma.

Before the chains of service stations became the dominant form of such enterprise along Route 66, the stations often reflected individuality and even architectural interest in their very construction, and certainly the Y Service Station and Café is such a building. The building generally conforms to the type of construction associated with the Mission Revival, although one part of its distinguishing characteristics is the way it also draws upon modernistic elements. The building includes the mission revival parapet, the stucco finish, and simulated tile in the roofs cantilevered from the wall surface over the front entrance and windows. Although the building has no arcaded porch, the pilasters suggest the feel of piers rising, and indeed at the northwest corner where the parapet reached an especially pronounced height the corner was reminiscent of a bell tower.

The architect, whose name we do not know, was not content to follow the exact formula for a Mission building and also introduced elements of modernistic style to the service station and café. The smooth stucco wall surface provided a common point for both styles, but the flat roof with coping around its perimeter indicates a futuristic vision for this station, though rooted in southwest tradition. The coping is red brick that has been painted blue, but one historic photograph indicates that the brick originally was unpainted and speculation is that the building's red cornice originally matched the red simulated tile on the roof overhangs at the windows and entrances. (As late as 1997 the awnings over the windows were described as "brown-tiled."²) Moreover, the metal windows, especially the multi-lights that wrap around the northeast corner on the second floor office section, also provide modern touches without negating the general impression of Mission style. In both styles, the asymmetrical appearance fits, the most important element being the main entrance at the beveled northwest corner that rises to the parapet. Thus the combination is a successful blending to create a building in the Mission style that is, appropriately enough for a building along the highway to the future that Route 66 represented, also streamlined and modern.

Moreover, the structural element of the station and café combination should not be taken for granted. The replacement of filling stations (where only gasoline and minimal service was available) with service stations (where lubrication and repairs could also be secured) was followed by the addition of cafés and motels which made the stations that much more attractive as one-stop emporiums. Emerging in the late 1930s, and especially in the post war

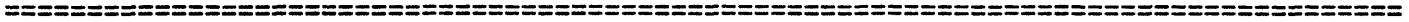
² Scott, Quinta, *Along Route 66* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000). 148.

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years, the special combination of a service station and café in one building, like the Y Service Station, was a brief phenomenon. As John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle explain in their study of roadside restaurants, "Highway cafés were frequently linked with motels, and often with both motels and gas stations—offering thus 'one-stop accommodation.'" They continue, however, to note that "After 1960, restaurants and gas stations, save in truckstops, rarely shared buildings."³ In this way, the cluster of businesses that Ralph Kobel operated at the Y at Neptune Park stands out because of the architectural design linking them together—the café and gas station under one roof, and the motel just to the south, which matched the main building in its style.

Thus both functionally and stylistically, the Y Service Station and Café at Neptune Park represents a distinct period and type of construction. As a representative of the property type, "Gasoline / Service Stations" and "Restaurants / Diners" within the Multiple Property Nomination, "Route 66 and Associated Historic Resources in Oklahoma" this station is eligible under Criterion C in the area of significance Architecture.

Summary

The Y Service Station and Café at Neptune Park in Clinton, Oklahoma, has been historically associated with Route 66 and qualifies for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places because of its historical significance under Criterion A and because of its architectural significance under Criterion C, both within the Multiple Property Nomination, "Route 66 and Associated Historic Resources in Oklahoma" as a representative of the property type, "Gasoline / Service Stations" and also "Restaurants / Diners"

³ Jakle, John A., and Keith A. Sculle, *Fast Food: Roadside Restaurants in the Automobile Age* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 46-47.

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Major Bibliographical References

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- Jakle, John A., and Keith A. Sculle, *Fast Food: Roadside Restaurants in the Automobile Age* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999),
- Jakle, John A., and Keith A. Sculle, *The Gas Station in America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).
- Jakle, John A., Keith A. Sculle, and Jefferson S. Rogers, *The Motel in America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).
- McAlester, Virginia and Lee, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000).
- Margolies, John, *Pump and Circumstance: Glory Days of the Gas Station* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1993).
- Moorhead's Clinton Oklahoma Directory, 1956 (Clinton Public Library).
- Office of the Custer County Clerk, property records.
- Oklahoma Route 66 Museum, Clinton, Oklahoma, photograph collections.
- Polk's City Directory for Clinton, Oklahoma, 1940-1941 (Clinton Public Library).
- Rittenhouse, Jack D., *A Guide Book to Highway 66* (Los Angeles: J. D. Rittenhouse, 1946; reprinted by University of New Mexico Press, 1988).
- Scott, Quinta, *Along Route 66* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000).
- Vieyra, Daniel I., *"Fill'er Up": An Architectural History of America's Gas Stations* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1979).

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Verbal Boundary Description

This property includes the building and triangular parcel within the Y formed by the intersection of Neptune Drive (also known as Historic Route 66) and U.S. Highway 183 for a distance of 200 feet south from the intersection measured on the east side.

Boundary Justification

This boundary includes the property historically associated with the Y Service Station and Café.