

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JAN 11 1994

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

NATIONAL
REGISTER

1. Name of Property

historic name North Casper Clubhouse

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number 1002 East "L" Street not for publication N/A
city or town Casper vicinity N/A
state Wyoming code WY county Natrona code 25 zip code 82601

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

John L. Keck
Signature of certifying official

11/12/93
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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Number of Resources within Property

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

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

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6. Function or Use

=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Social</u>	Sub: <u>Clubhouse</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Social</u>	Sub: <u>Clubhouse</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th century revivals: Pueblo

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Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

roof red clay tile

walls rammed earth

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)

Architecture
Entertainment/Recreation

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Period of Significance 1938-39 to 1943

Significant Dates 1938-39 (date of construction)

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation _____

Architect/Builder National Youth Administration
Goodrich and Krusmark

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: _____

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreeage of Property 2.3 acres

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	13	392845	4746110	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.)

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11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title Robert G. Rosenberg, Historian
organization Rosenberg Historical Consultants date June 28, 1993
street & number 739 Crow Creek Road telephone (307)632-1144
city or town Cheyenne state WY zip code 82009

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

name: City of Casper

street & number 200 North David

telephone 235-8400

city or town Casper

state WY zip code 82601

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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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7. Description

The North Casper Clubhouse was constructed in 1938-1939 by the National Youth Administration. It is a one-story rammed earth building that represents the Pueblo Revival style. The massing of the building is more the result of construction technique than stylistic design. The building is located near the south bank of the North Platte River in Riverview Park. It faces south and is in a north-south alignment with North McKinley Street, which intersects with K Street in front of the building. The building is surrounded by an open grassy park area with hand-planted junipers, evergreens, hedges, and cottonwood and willow trees. There is a playground to the west of the building. There are no other buildings in the immediate vicinity of the clubhouse on the north side of K Street. The south side of the street consists of a residential area with modest, wood frame one-story homes and small yards.

The North Casper Clubhouse is a one-story, flat-roofed building (39' N-S X 50'9") resting on a concrete foundation with no basement. The two-foot thick walls are constructed with rammed earth covered with white painted stucco. The foundation extends beyond the building lines forming a low water table around the building. There is an enclosed, flat-roofed vestibule (10' N-S X 24' E-W) built onto the south elevation, forming the main entrance. There is a bathroom built on either side of the entryway. The vestibule has a lower roofline than the remainder of the building. There is a metal plaque mounted in a recessed panel to the west of the main entrance that bears the following legend: "Built by the National Youth Administration 1938." There is a matching recessed panel to the east of the entrance where a glass covered bulletin board has been mounted.

There is a flat-roofed addition (11'4" N-S X 22'9" E-W) built onto the rear or north elevation of the building that contains the kitchen area. These additions appear to be part of the original layout. However, a third addition of cement block has been built onto the northwest corner of the building, filling in an L-shaped area (11'4" N-S X 14' E-W). This area is now used for storage. The exterior of this addition has been covered with stucco painted white so that it blends in with the rest of the building, but the interior still shows the raw cement blocks. The roofs of the kitchen and storage additions are slightly lower than the main portion of the building. The overall flat roof of the building is covered with red clay tile that contrasts nicely with the white stucco walls.

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The main entrance (south elevation) has a heavy wood plank door with a single diamond-shaped window and three strap hinges. The entrance has a concrete stoop with steps and a metal railing. A handicapped ramp with a railing constructed from welded steel reinforcing rods has been added to the west side of the entrance. There is also an outside entrance to the kitchen area in the east elevation of the building with a one-light wood panel door. Windows consist of 12-light units with metal sash and concrete sills. The six middle lights open on hinges. There are two nine-light windows in the north elevation of the kitchen addition. All windows are covered with screens. The window openings are recessed and extend below the sills to the water table and above for an equal distance. There is an interesting gable-roofed chimney protruding from the roof in the kitchen area. It has a red tile roof and an arched opening so that it resembles a small belltower. There are two boxed rain gutters on the north elevation of the building that are fed through small rectangular openings below the roofline.

The interior of the building consists of a large open room, two bathrooms in the vestibule, a furnace room behind or north of the west bathroom area, a kitchen in the rear, and a storage area in the northwest corner. The interior walls are plaster painted white with four-foot high dark colored wood paneling and trim around the base of the walls. All building corners around windows and doors are rounded. Fluorescent lighting has been installed in the main room. The floors are finished with tile. There is a stone fireplace built into the north wall between the open room and the kitchen. It appears that the original floor level has been raised, as the bottom of the fireplace is now below grade. There are built-in wooden cupboards next to the fireplace. It appears that the west portion of the open room may once have been partially enclosed or had sliding partitions that have since been removed. This area now has a pool table and piano. The remainder of the open room has tables and chairs and is used for serving lunch to senior citizens. Church services are also held in the open room. The kitchen area has a stainless steel triple sink, Formica counter tops, wooden cabinets and cupboards, and refrigerator and stove. The water heater is walled in with an access door.

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8. Significance

The North Casper Clubhouse was constructed in 1938-1939 by the North Casper Improvement Association, a local organization composed of interested neighborhood citizens. The clubhouse was built by utilizing labor provided by the National Youth Administration, an agency of the Works Progress Administration, which was a major component of the Roosevelt Administration's New Deal program. The building was designed by the prominent Casper architectural firm of Goodrich and Krusmark. It was built using rammed earth construction, an old European building practice utilized by German-Russians on the high plains of North Dakota in the 1880s and advocated by many federal government agencies as a low cost and durable building technique during the Depression era. It is one of only a few examples of rammed earth construction currently identified in Wyoming. Therefore, the North Casper Clubhouse is eligible under National Register Criteria A as an example of the New Deal programs of the Roosevelt Administration and of local community organization and cooperation to combat the Great Depression. It has been used continuously as an important community center for over fifty years. It is also eligible under National Register Criterion C, as it embodies the distinctive characteristics of the rammed earth method of construction, and it also represents the work of the prominent Casper architectural firm of Goodrich and Krusmark.

The North Casper Improvement Association was organized in January 1938 by the residents of that section of Casper "...to secure home improvement loans, FHA or otherwise, and to improve the living conditions and the general welfare of the community." The organization soon boasted 350-500 members. The membership planned several major projects, including a public park, a playground, sidewalk and curb and gutter, a "Circle Drive" along the North Platte River, and a boys' clubhouse. It was the latter project that became the North Casper Clubhouse. Other activities included house painting, tree planting, and general cleanup. A portion of the funding for these projects came from the Works Progress Administration. The remainder came from City funds and fund raising activities held by the Association, including card parties, dances, bingo games, boxing matches, and donations.

Plans for the construction of the boys' clubhouse began to take shape in April 1938. Albert W. Park, state WPA project planner, met with the officers of the North Casper Improvement Association and stated that some funds and a certain amount of material were available for the construction of the

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clubhouse. The building was to be constructed of rammed earth and would include a kitchen, a workshop, a gameroom, and a room with a stage that could be used for meetings and plays. The cost of the material for such a building was estimated at \$1,000, and the work was to be carried out using National Youth Administration labor. Although the clubhouse was to be used primarily by young people, it was stated that everyone would be welcome to use it. Leon C. Goodrich of the Casper architectural firm of Goodrich and Krusmark agreed to furnish the plans at no charge. It was anticipated that construction would begin by May 16, 1938.

A site was chosen for the clubhouse inside the new park on North McKinley Street and facing south. Further discussions on the specific construction costs of the clubhouse led to an estimate of between six and seven thousand dollars. The plan was approved in a letter from Ernest Marshall, state NYA director, and ground was broken for the new clubhouse on May 16, 1938. Alvah Todd, an officer of the North Casper Improvement Association, became the supervisor of the construction, assisted by L.L. Mattucks. The men oversaw the work force supplied by the National Youth Administration (NYA) composed of local youths who tamped the earth into the forms. A building permit for \$6,500 was issued by the City on June 1, 1938.

As the clubhouse was being constructed, the North Casper Improvement Association continued to hold fund raisers such as dances, box suppers, and amateur boxing matches to finance the construction of the building. On September 13, 1938, the North Casper Community Hall (as it was called in a newspaper article) was formally dedicated by Mayor J. Frank Cowan. A cornerstone that had been quarried at Alcova was laid. At this time, the foundation for the new building was completed, and the walls were rising. However, a considerable amount of construction remained.

Optimistic newspaper accounts quoted Alvah Todd as saying that the building would be ready for occupancy by Christmas. However, the work was in fact suspended for the winter and not continued until the following March. The clubhouse was officially opened on November 8, 1939, when the first meeting of the North Casper Improvement Association was held in the new facility, attended by a large crowd.

Since it was constructed, the North Casper Clubhouse has been maintained by the North Casper Improvement Association under a lease to the City of Casper, the property owner. In addition to club activities, the building is

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utilized to serve meals to senior citizens, to hold church services, and is often rented out for such social engagements as wedding receptions. In 1980, the North Casper Clubhouse underwent a \$10,000 renovation. This renovation included repairing exterior cracks in the stucco; repairing interior walls; installing a roof drainage, new light fixtures and wiring, and interior wood paneling along the bottom of the walls; refinishing the floors in the main room; painting the interior and exterior; and remodeling the kitchen and restrooms. It is not known when the cement block addition was added to the building.

The North Casper Clubhouse is a representative of the Depression Era and the New Deal programs designed by the Roosevelt Administration to combat the Great Depression. The labor used in the construction of the clubhouse came from the National Youth Administration (NYA). The NYA was an agency of the Works Progress Administration, a work relief program. The NYA provided part-time employment needed to keep thousands of young people in school and also aided a large number of youth who were not in school. This age group found it especially difficult to find employment and self worth during the Depression. Ernest P. Marshall was the state NYA administrator. In 1939, the NYA provided \$14 per month for 50 hours of work to 550 youths who were out of school and between the ages of 18-24; \$3-\$6 per month to 475 youths who were still in school and between the ages of 16-24; and \$10-\$20 per month to 185 college students. Student jobs were often of a clerical nature, but the NYA also sought to tailor the work to the students' majors in college. The high school and college students had to prove to the NYA that the part-time wages helped to keep them in school. The NYA was later separated from the WPA and placed under the Federal Security Agency.

The North Casper Clubhouse also represents an example of community organization and cooperation in the face of the Great Depression. The North Casper Improvement Association carried out a number of community improvement programs utilizing local volunteer labor and fund raising projects, as well as city, state, and federal funding. A large portion of the cost of the North Casper Clubhouse was raised by the Association and through donations. Such a level of dedicated community involvement and commitment has seldom been seen since the Great Depression.

The North Casper Clubhouse is also an example of the work of Goodrich and Krusmark, a prominent Casper architectural firm. Leon Goodrich attended the University of Wyoming and subsequently worked with William Dubois, a well

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known Cheyenne architect. He moved to Casper in 1917 during the oil boom. Karl Krusmark came to Casper as an architect with the Midwest Oil Company. In addition to the North Casper Clubhouse, the pair collaborated on the Natrona County Courthouse and numerous schools in Casper, Riverton, and Mills. Individually, Goodrich designed the Casper National Guard Armory, and Krusmark designed the Casper Women's Clubhouse. Goodrich was also one of the founding members of the Wyoming Chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

The North Casper Clubhouse represents rammed earth construction, a building technique unique in Wyoming and of which there are only a few known remaining examples. Briefly stated, the term "rammed earth" describes both the material and the process of wall building by which earth was tamped into the shape of a wall. The tamped earth assumed the shape of the form into which it was pressed, and when the moisture dried out it hardened into a permanent shape suitable for use as a building material.

The actual technique involved utilizing common soil free of excessive amounts of clay or sand and sifted of gravel above walnut size. The soil was moistened to a 10-12% moisture content and shoveled into movable wooden forms (generally 30 inches high by 6 feet long) and spread evenly to a depth of about 4-5". The soil was then tamped by hand with a heavy, flat-faced rammer. Layers were added and tamped until the form is full. The form was then removed, and the process repeated until the wall was completed. The form was positioned so that each wall segment was staggered as in the laying of a brick wall, so that there were no continuous vertical seams. It was preferable to tamp fresh segments over newly laid segments rather than over dry segments in order to remove horizontal seams and prevent damage to the lower segments from tamping.

Rammed earth walls were generally protected with coverings of cement plaster, dogga plaster (a mixture of sandy clay, fine sand and water), linseed oil and paint, creosote oil, or wood fiber plaster. Many rammed earth walls were also constructed using soil-cement, a mixture of 10 % Portland cement and soil. Apparently this obviated the need for additional surface protection from rain and wind.

Rammed earth construction is a very old building technique, originated by sixteenth century peasants in Germany and France. The French term for rammed earth construction, "pise' de terre," means "earth pick," a reference

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to the tamper used in this method of construction. In the late eighteenth century, a French agriculturalist named Francois Cointeraux revived interest in the practice, and several published pamphlets circulated through Germany and England. An Englishman named Henry Holland adapted the technique to his country, and his articles were even published in America. Rammed earth construction was also encouraged in American farm journals as early as the 1840s.

Therefore, the concept of rammed earth construction was not new to America. S.W. Johnson of New Brunswick, New Jersey, published a book on the subject in 1806 based on his own research and experience in building a small farm building. The Church of the Holy Cross near Sumter, South Carolina, was constructed between 1840 and 1850 using rammed earth techniques and inspired by Johnson's book. This large building (105' x 27') proved the strength and durability of rammed earth construction with end walls that rose to 43 feet at the peak of the roof and a 40-foot high bell tower. The church and the bell tower both survived an earthquake in 1886 and a three-day hurricane in 1895; however, the bell tower was finally destroyed by a cyclone in 1903 and was rebuilt with cement.

German-Russian emigrants brought rammed earth construction traditions to North Dakota and the High Plains region in the 1880s. Starting in 1762, Germans from the southwestern provinces of Baden, Alsace and Wurtemberg were recruited by Catherine the Great of Russia to immigrate to south Russia to improve agricultural practices and populate the southern borders with Turkey. It is not known whether the German-Russians who ultimately emigrated to America learned rammed earth construction in Germany or from the native Ukrainians and Hungarians in south Russia, although existing evidence seems to indicate the former. In North Dakota, the rammed earth techniques were often modified to include vertical or horizontal studs in the earthen walls so that horizontal siding could be applied. Other buildings were merely whitewashed with clay plaster. The wood clad buildings had the advantages of insulation from cold and stability in high prairie winds while still resembling the typical American wood frame building. In North Dakota, rammed earth appeared to be the technique of choice where timber or building stone were not readily available.

Rammed earth construction came to the attention of the U.S. Government in 1926, when the Hill Crest Plantation, of which the above-mentioned Church of the Holy Cross was a part, contacted the Division of Agricultural

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Engineering of the U.S. Department of Agriculture for advice on repairing a crack in the rammed earth wall of the church. The subsequent investigation of the problem by T.A.H. Miller of the Division of Agricultural Engineering led to the 1926 publication of Farmer's Bulletin No. 1500, a basic primer on low cost rammed earth construction. The government quickly recognized the value of a readily available low cost building material that could be used by farmers to build agricultural buildings and structures. At about the same time, Dr. Harry Baker Humphrey, chief plant pathologist of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, became intrigued by the concept of rammed earth construction and used the technique to build a substantial home, which became one of the pilot models for the government Bulletin No. 1500.

In 1936, Thomas Hibben, an architectural engineer with the Resettlement Administration, convinced the agency to build several rammed earth dwellings and outbuildings on allocated subsistence homestead tracts on the outskirts of Birmingham, Alabama. Other successful rammed earth projects were carried out in the 1930s by Dr. Ralph Patty of the South Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station and by Elbert Hubbell, a vocational instructor at the Turtle Mountain Indian School in Belcourt, North Dakota. Patty conducted carefully monitored scientific experiments on test walls, farm buildings, and garden walls constructed with rammed earth. These experiments lent more credibility to rammed earth building techniques. Meanwhile, Elbert Hubbell recognized the potential for rammed earth construction on Indian reservations and actually built a number of structures, barns, schoolhouses, and Indian dwellings at the Turtle Mountain Indian School. He also built a school and large barn on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

At present, there are only a few examples of rammed earth construction other than the North Casper Clubhouse that have been identified in Wyoming. However, the fact that it can easily resemble other more conventional construction techniques when the walls are covered indicates that more research should be conducted in an attempt to identify additional examples. It appears that the main reason for the use of rammed earth construction in the North Casper Clubhouse is the connection with the Works Progress Administration and the National Youth Administration. Some of the government agencies interested in and actively advocating rammed earth construction during the Great Depression Era included the Department of Commerce, the United States Public Roads Administration, the Federal Works Agency, the National Youth Administration, the United States Housing Authority, and the Department of Agriculture, under which was included the Resettlement

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Administration, the Farm Security Administration, and the Bureau of Plant Industry.

Despite some problems with moisture seeping from the ground into the earthen walls and some stucco cracking, the North Casper Clubhouse today is well maintained and retains good physical integrity. The 1980 renovation did not substantially change the overall exterior appearance; it helped stabilize the building that has now stood for fifty-five years, providing a focus for community activity in North Casper.

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10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The property is located at 1002 E. "L" Street, Block 20, Lots 26-30 in Riverview Park on the north side of the street and facing the intersection of N. McKinley Street.

Boundary Justification

The boundary is defined by the south bank of the North Platte River on the north, the north curb line of East L Street on the south, and the extension of imaginary north-south lines from St. Mary Street on the west and North Jackson Street on the east. These lines extend from the curb line of East L Street on the south to the south bank of the North Platte River on the north. This boundary encompasses the building, the immediately surrounding trees and shrubs, and an adequate portion of Riverview Park to provide an overall setting. This area is approximately 500 feet east-west by 200 feet north-south.