

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

received SEP 17 1986

date entered SEP 18 1986

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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

## 1. Name

historic WHITE CASTLE BUILDING # 8

and/or common WHITE CASTLE

## 2. Location

street & number 3252 LYNDALE AVE SOUTH N/A not for publication

city, town MINNEAPOLIS N/A vicinity of

state MINNESOTA code 22 county HENNEPIN code 053

## 3. Classification

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

## 4. Owner of Property

name Castlettes Property Company C/O Kristin Wilson

street & number 4544 Chowen Avenue South

city, town Minneapolis N/A vicinity of state Minnesota 55410

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Registry of Deeds, Hennepin County Government Center

street & number 300 South Sixth Street

city, town Minneapolis state Minnesota

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes  no

date N/A N/A federal N/A state N/A county N/A local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved	date 1950, April 1st 1984
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The White Castle Building is a fantasy structure modeled after the medieval Chicago Water Tower. The structure is small, yielding only 804 sq feet. Bolted to the basic 28' x 28' white porcelain and steel structure are porcelain enameled octagonal buttresses, crenelated towers and a parapet wall. Its skin was composed of white porcelain on steel panels which had vertical and horizontal stainless steel banding at panel junctions. Below the white body of the Castle was a horizontal band of black porcelain on steel panels running between the turrets. The Castle had six operable stainless steel doors with glass windows. At a height of approximately four feet above grade, the white panels give way to glass windows. A leaded glass window with the name "White Castle" existed above the large window above the service counter. On all four sides of the building White Castle signs in black Hollywood Gothic type announced the product sold within, and reminded people to "Buy 'em by the 'Sack' ". These signs ran horizontally just below the crenelated roofline. The framework of the building consists of rolled steel channel studs with rockwool insulation placed between them and the exterior panels. The interior of the building was almost completely created out of stainless steel appliances and storage areas in addition to the customer seating area.

White Castle #8 was built in the White Castle Corporation's steel fabricating plant in Columbus Ohio and was erected in Minneapolis on September 27, 1936. It was originally erected at 616 Washington Ave S.E. It operated until the land lease expired in 1950. At that time, the design intentions of this moveable structure were first realized. The building was moved to a corner location at 329 Central Ave S.E. The Castle was set back three feet from each curb in order to realize a second design feature; outdoor advertising. A full basement with a bathroom and a 6' by 28' addition were added at the time of this move. The addition area was used for a customer pickup area, and the balance of the space was devoted to a stainless steel kitchen and front eating area complete with a stainless steel eating bar. The restaurant was renumbered as White Castle # 16 at this time.

In October 1983 the White Castle Corporation closed #8 as an operating restaurant and scheduled it for demolition. In December of 1983 the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission located a group willing to purchase and preserve the building. The building had to be moved from the site which it had occupied for 34 years since the land lease had again expired. On April 1, 1984, the building was moved again to a northwest corner site at 33rd and Lyndale Ave South in Minneapolis. The area in which the building now

(see continuation sheet)

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White Castle Building #8, Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Minnesota

Continuation sheet

Item number 7 Description Page 1

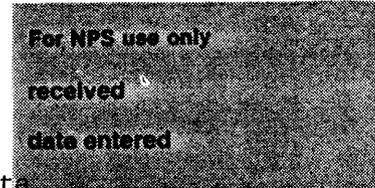
resides is a mixed commercial and residential area in south Minneapolis. The White Castle building #8 is again located on a main thoroughfare and oriented to foot traffic as it was on Central Ave. It is set back 4 feet from the curbs (which was as close as was permitted by code), so as to replicate its former locational environment.

The building was deteriorating badly before it was moved. Because of extensive rusting of the metal bottom plate and connecting floor joists, only the exterior walls and roof were moved. The entire interior was gutted to accommodate the elaborate cross bracing and timbers necessary to move the structure without a floor. The building was moved successfully with no damage to the exterior panels, framework or glass panels. The building exterior appears as it did originally. All of the original windows still exist except the leaded glass panel which was removed and exchanged for a white opaque glass panel by the White Castle Corporation. The turrets are present as are most of the merlons. Some of the original merlons were removed to accommodate conduit for lighting, but these are in storage and in excellent condition. The exterior porcelain panels are in good condition as are the stainless steel channel bands which hold them in place. The original signs are on the building, still advertising hamburgers for 5 cents.

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White Castle Building # 8, Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Minnesota



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Continuation sheet      Resource Count      Item number      7      Page      2

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The White Castle Building # 8 Nomination contains 1 contributing building.

## 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1936 **Builder/Architect** L.W. Ray

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The White Castle Building #8 represents an era and a national phenomenon. Fast food is an invention of American culture and the White Castle Corporation holds primary responsibility for the invention of the industry. The White Castle Building #8 is architecturally significant because it is one of the few remaining early examples of what is now an American institution, the fast food hamburger stand. Moreover, the White Castle Building represented the first successful use of porcelain enamel over steel as an architectural material.

In 1921 E.W. Engram started the first fast food chain in Wichita, Kansas. He chose the name "White Castle" because the name created the image of purity and strength that he felt was necessary to be successful in the new business. As the pioneer company of this industry, White Castle needed products which previously did not exist, such as square buns, large quantities of fresh ground beef, disposable linens, special kitchen appliances and stainless steel fixtures. In order to fill its own needs, White Castle developed its own meat packing company, a bakery, a paper linen company, and a steel fabricating company to produce its own buildings.

The building which White Castle developed had to meet certain basic design criteria. The building had to be portable, since an obstacle to the development of the chain was the reluctance of land owners to lease small sites for long term usage. The movable Castle allowed White Castle Corporation to locate its building in prime urban locations which otherwise may not have been available to them.

Secondly, the design and production of the building filled the need of the Company to project the desired image in the marketplace and to control their costs by producing the building themselves. The White Castle Corporation was an early subscriber to the American cultural belief that problems are best solved thru efficient use of resources and the creative use of technology. White Castle was the first mass producer of hamburgers and hamburger stands.

White Castle today has 168 locations nationally. The rolled steel and porcelain Castle has become universally recognized as the trademark of the White Castle hamburger chain. Fifty five of the portable style Castles were produced between 1926 and 1942. White Castle #8 is the only

(see continuation sheet)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Ingram, E.W. Sr.

All This from a 5-Cent Hamburger! The STORY OF THE WHITE CASTLE SYSTEM. New York: The Newcomen Society in North American, 1964.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less Than one Acre

Quadrangle name Minneapolis South, Minnesota

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 

1	1	5
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4	7	7	2	6	0
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Zone Easting Northing

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property is all that which is located on the westerly 84.8 feet of Lots 6 and 7, Block 32 of Remington's Second Addition to Minneapolis, consisting of a parcel measuring 72.75 feet east/west by 84.8 feet north/south.

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 Kristin L. Wilson And Nella L. Bean, partners

organization Castelettes Property Company

date 5 June 1986

street & number 4544 Chowen Avenue South

telephone 612-455-1166 (Kristin Wilson)

city or town Minneapolis

state Minnesota 55410

## 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

Russell W. Fridley

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 9/11/86

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

Entered in the National Register

date 10-16-86

John Allourey Byers  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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remaining example of an early White Castle building in Minnesota and one of 5 or 6 nationally. The remaining White Castle structures represent a corporation which introduced a major dining habit to Americans; getting food-to-go, or, as the corporate slogan atop the building states, "Buy 'em by the Sack".