

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



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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 an 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 Apache Motel

other name/site number _____

2. Location

street & town 166 S. 400 East ☐ not for publication

city or town Moab ☐ vicinity

state Utah code UT county Grand code 019 zip code 84532

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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.)

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official/Title

12-31-07
Date

Utah Division of State History, Office of Historic Preservation
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 certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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]
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Edson H. Beall
2-19-08

Apache Motel
Name of Property

Moab, Grand County, Utah
City, County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(check as many boxes as apply)

- ☐ public-local
☒ private
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(check only one box)

- ☐ district
☒ building(s)
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	2	buildings
		sites
1		structures
1		objects
4	2	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: hotel/motel
COMMERCE/TRADE: restaurant

Current Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: hotel/motel

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT: other

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
walls BRICK, WOOD/Weatherboard
CONCRETE (concrete block)
roof ASPHALT (shingle), OTHER: built-up
other

Narrative Description

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

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. 7 Page 1

Apache Motel, Moab, Grand County, UT

Narrative Description

The Apache Motel, located at 166 S. 400 East in Moab, Utah, is a two-story, 33-unit motel built of brick between 1954 and 1955. An extension, covered in wood siding, was built circa 1958 at the south end. The motel complex includes two contributing buildings (motel and pool house), two non-contributing buildings (mobile home and shed), two contributing structures (pool and wall), and one contributing object (sign). All contributing resources were built between 1954 and 1955. The non-contributing resources dated from the 1980s. The exterior and interior of the motel has had some minor modifications since the period of significance from 1954 to 1958. The property is 0.95 acres with landscaping around the pool area, and parking areas in front of the units and to the south.

Motel

Construction on the Apache Motel was begun in the fall of 1954 and completed by the spring of 1955. The original building has a roughly rectangular footprint measuring approximately 50 feet by 121 feet with the long side facing 400 East. The building is frame and sheathed in multi-colored brick.¹ The brick is laid in a running bond with flush, light-colored mortar joints. The foundation is concrete, but not visible above grade. The motel originally had a flat, built-up roof. The exposed rafters are original and extend the entire depth of the building to support the over-hanging eaves on the east and west elevations. The current roof has a low gable with the ridgeline parallel to the street. It is covered in asphalt shingles with wide vertical boards covering the gable ends. The roof line was rebuilt possibly in 1963 during a remodeling noted on the tax cards. The original construction included a patio at the south end with a carport underneath. Around 1958, the patio and carport were enclosed to expand the original dining room.² This addition extended the building footprint fifteen feet in length to the south. It wrapped around the southwest corner extending the width of the footprint five feet to the west for a distance of 40 feet. The two-story addition is sheathed in wide clapboard siding painted beige with turquoise accents.

The façade is the east elevation parallel to 400 East. The lower level has nine units and an office. The upper level has ten units. The original portion of the motel has nine room doors on each level. The doors are paired with the exception of the single doors at the north end. Each unit has a newer security door painted either turquoise or dark brown with a kick-plate. There is an additional unit on the upper level of the south addition. The office door is full-glass (circa 1990). The windows are the original wood sash windows. Each window has a central picture window flanked by casement windows with a five-light transom. The upper window in the addition is identical to the 1954-1955 windows and may have been moved from one of the rear units during the

¹ Oral tradition suggests that the brick dates from the 1930s and was salvaged from the demolition of another building; however, there is no primary evidence to support this statement and newspaper accounts of the construction do not mention the origin of the brick. The brick has a soft-edged, weathered look, but is consistent with similar brick produced in the 1950s.

² Liens placed on the property in 1958 indicated there was some construction work at the time. Interviewees for the nomination were fairly certain the addition/extension was built prior to 1960. The tax records note a remodeling in 1963, but there is no lien or other record that would indicate the type of remodel work.

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Apache Motel, Moab, Grand County, UT

expansion. The window sash is painted either turquoise or dark brown depending on the location. Below each window is a vent.

The exposed rafters, soffits and fascia are painted turquoise. The balcony deck and the three-pipe rail are original, although the wire infill does not appear in a 1955 photograph and is a later addition (date unknown). The rail is painted white. There are two metal stairs, one at each end of the elevation. The west (rear) elevation is similar, although only six unit doors are visible on each level. A few were obscured by the addition, which enclosed the south one-third of the elevation. The north elevation is a blank brick wall except for the turquoise-painted gable trim, the rainspouts at each corner and the lettering Apache Motel just under the gable on the east (street) side.

The two-story addition was essentially the enclosure of the second floor patio and a carport on the main level wrapping around the rear of the building. The main feature of the addition is a pair of large octagonal windows on the main level, one each on the east and south elevations. On the south elevation, the four upper windows match the original windows and may have been moved from the rear (west elevation) when the addition was built. The window sash is painted turquoise and the windows have metal awnings. On the lower level of the south elevation are four pictures windows on the west half. Five of the south elevation windows have vents. Originally there was a set of double doors leading to the pool-patio from the when the current lobby was part of the dining room. When the dining room was converted to the lobby in 1977, the doors were blocked. The former doors are marked by two sets of aluminum sliding windows (circa 1977) and three concrete steps (circa 1958). The rear of the addition extends 55 feet across the west (rear) elevation.

There are two rear doors on the main level of the rear elevation. The upper level features one original window (moved in 1958, now with awning), a rear door, a side door, and two small windows. A plain metal stair leads from the rear door of the additional to the ground level. The rear elevation of the addition is fairly utilitarian and includes access from the former kitchen (now part of the manager's apartment). A large round chimneystack, painted black, is placed above the former kitchen area.

The interior of the Apache Motel includes approximately 14,262 square feet of space divided equally between the two floors. There is a small cellar in the southwest corner where the defunct boiler is located.³ The main floor is divided into sixteen units and the upper floor is divided into seventeen units for a total of thirty-four. There is a manager's apartment and office at the south end. The motel includes a variety of room sizes, including one-and two-bedroom suites with kitchenettes. The larger suites were part of the original design as the building was advertised with only twenty-eight units in 1955. The 1958 expansion added at least one room, but most of the addition was part of an expansion of the two-level dining room (café) and kitchen. The remaining units were added when the dining room closed in 1977. Although most of the furniture and fixtures dated from a complete interior remodel in 1977, the rooms have not changed much since the 1950s. For example, the exposed rafters continue as box beams running the length of the upper rooms. When the dining room was in operation, the motel office was housed in unit 10 just north of the current lobby. The lobby was

³ The original boiler used for thirty years was a locomotive boiler adapted for the motel's use. The boiler was replaced by a newer HVAC system around 1992. The original boiler was left in place mainly due to concerns about asbestos.

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Apache Motel, Moab, Grand County, UT

moved to the south end when the dining room closed. The lobby has since been remodeled circa 1990 in a rustic look with knotty-pine wainscoting and textured paint on the walls.

Pool House and Pool Area

According to a lien placed on the property in September 1955, the pool complex was probably completed a few months after the motel opening in April 1955. The pool complex includes three contributing resources: the pool house (building), pool (structure) and wall (linear structure). The five-foot-high walls surrounding the pool are constructed of concrete block with an integrated design of pattern blocks. The pattern blocks have a stylized star opening and are painted turquoise to contrast with the rest of the wall, which is painted white. The patio surrounding the pool is approximately 2,500 square feet. The pool is a rectangle measuring sixteen by thirty-one feet with steps at the shallow end. The pool house is faced with the same brick as on the motel. The pool house measures thirty-three by nine feet with one of the long sides (west elevation) also functions as the back wall of the pool complex. The pool house has three doors on the east elevation. The roof is flat with an overhang supported on exposed rafters sheltering the east elevation. The cornice, rafters and window sash are painted turquoise. The doors are dark brown. There are five square, screened windows on the rear (west) elevation. The wood gate in the rear (circa 1980) and the wrought-iron gate near the lobby (circa 1995) are newer, but not significant alterations to the pool complex.

Sign

The original Apache Motel sign has been an iconic part of the motel complex since 1955 and is therefore a contributing object. The sign is located just east of the motel lobby entrance. The sign post is an arrow-shaped pole pointing into the ground at an approximate 75 degree angle. The "arrow" is over twenty feet high with a stylized "feathered" tip. The lighted sign bubble features the profile of an Indian (Native American) head wearing a band with a single feather. The sign now simply reads "Apache Motel." The original lettering included a list of amenities: dining room, pool, air-conditioned. It was repainted around 1977 when the dining room closed. A lighted AAA sign and vacancy indicator have also been added (date unknown, circa 1980s). Of note are two other signs for the Apache Motel located in Moab. One is another arrow, pointing directly into the ground at the southwest corner of the intersection of Main Street and 100 South. This sign points the traveler to the Apache "4 blocks then turn right." Another sign is located on 100 South between Main and 100 East. This sign does not include the "arrow" pole, but more of a marquee with directional arrow. These two signs are not included in this nomination because they are off-site and were installed when the Highway 160 was redirected after the historic period.

Site and Non-contributing Buildings

The site is an upside-down L-shaped parcel of 0.95 acres. The motel and pool run nearly the length of the property on the east side. There is an asphalt parking area at the south end in addition to the parking in front of the individual units. A row of evergreen shrubs provides a measure of privacy to the parking area. The concrete retaining wall (circa 1990) and a pipe rail (circa 1958) separate the motel proper from the backyard (northwest corner). The area was once a grassy picnic area with large shade trees used by motel patrons; however, in recent years, the trees were cut down and the grass died in order to provide more parking spaces for patron jeeps, RVs, and boat trailers, etc. On the west side of the property is a circa 1980 mobile home and

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Apache Motel, Moab, Grand County, UT

several lamp posts. The asphalt driveway extends back to the mobile home. The mobile home is rented out by the motel management and not occupied full-time. There is a small wood shed associated with the mobile home. Both of these buildings are non-contributing. There are several mature trees just behind the mobile home. The pool area is landscaped with a small flower and rock garden.

In the 1950s, State Highway 160 through Moab entered the city from the south on 400 East, turned on Center Street, and left at the north end on Main Street. After the implementation of zoning ordinances and a highway reconstruction project, the Apache Motel became the lone commercial structure in a primarily residential neighborhood. There is a variety of housing stock in the immediate area, from pioneer-era dwellings to nearly new condominiums. The nearby Apache trailer court was formerly associated with the motel property. Because of its location, integrity and iconic sign, the Apache Motel is a unique historic resource and contributes to the history of Moab, Utah.

Apache Motel
Name of Property

Moab, Grand County, Utah
City, County and State

8. Description

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 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.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

ARCHITECTURE

COMMERCE

OTHER: Tourism

Period of Significance

1954-1958

Significant Dates

1954, 1955

Significant Persons

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(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: _____

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 9

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Apache Motel, Moab, Grand County, UT

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Apache Motel, built in 1954-1955 and expanded in 1958, is locally significant under Criterion A for its association with the development of Moab, Utah, in the mid-twentieth century. The motel complex includes two contributing buildings (motel and pool house), two non-contributing buildings (mobile home and shed), two contributing structures (pool and wall), and one contributing object (sign). The period of significance for the Apache Motel is only four years (1954-58), but during this time, the building was directly associated with two of the most critical events in the historical development of Moab: the uranium mining boom and the rise of the movie-making industry.

Moab was first settled as a permanent outpost in 1878 and for five decades remained a small town with a population less than one thousand. During the uranium mining boom, which lasted approximately a decade between 1954 and 1964, the population of the town quadrupled. The Apache Motel was a popular destination for company executives, who stayed in Apache Motel suites on numerous trips to inspect mining company holdings in the late 1950s. The first major motion picture filmed near Moab was John Ford's *Wagon Master*, in 1949, and immediately after, a film commission for the Moab area was conceived. After its opening in 1955, the Apache Motel hosted several film companies and their stars. For example, John Wayne stayed there while filming, but also brought his family to stay at the Apache on vacation. While the uranium boom has faded into history, the Apache Motel continues to promote its association with the film industry both past and present.

Since 1955, the Apache Motel has provided continuous service, including the most recent rise in tourism that began in the 1980s. Of the half-a-dozen motels constructed in Moab in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Apache Motel retains the most historic integrity, even with the alteration to the roof line. The Apache Motel is also locally significant under Criterion C as an excellent example of mid-twentieth century American motel architecture. The architecture represents the transition between the pre-1950s motor courts and the emergence of the motor inn in the 1950s. The two-story brick building and its pool complex has had minimal modifications since 1958. The motel's iconic sign post, shaped like a giant arrow, and representative of its historic period, is also included in the nomination. The Apache Motel and its associated resources contribute to the history of Moab, Utah.

History of Moab

Within a few months of entering the Salt Lake Valley, Brigham Young, leader of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS or Mormon Church) had sent groups of settlers to explore southern Utah. In April 1855, forty-one men were called by Brigham Young to establish the Elk Mountain Mission at present-day Moab. The mission had two objectives: to carry out missionary work among the natives of southeastern Utah and to control the crossing of the Colorado River. The valley had long been occupied by Sabuagana Utes, who used the river crossing. The mission was unsuccessful and the Mormon company left in September 1855 after several conflicts with the natives. It was not until 1878 that a permanent settlement was established by Mormon

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Apache Motel, Moab, Grand County, UT

farmers and ranchers. The biblical name Moab was adopted in 1880 when the postal station was established. Moab became the county seat when Grand County was created in 1890. The city was incorporated in 1903. Transportation was very important to the success of the remote settlement. The Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad between Salt Lake and Denver had a station at Thompson Springs, bringing the railroad within thirty-five miles of Moab. By 1885, a ferry across the Colorado River was in operation. For most of the first half of the twentieth century, the population of the community was about 1,000. The economy was primarily agricultural and the land was particular good for fruit crops, such as peaches, apples, and grapes. As early as 1906, the *Grand Valley Times* began promoting the natural scenic wonders of the area. The designation of Arches National Monument in 1929 provided an important boost to the tourism for the town of Moab. Although few visitors came to Moab during the depression years through World War II, tourism increased significantly between the time war ended and the Canyonlands National Park was created in 1964, particularly with the rise of the river running craze in the 1950s.⁴ In the last quarter of the twentieth century, tourism has become Moab's primary industry. Each year the town welcomes one million visitors, who enjoy a host of recreational opportunities including sight-seeing, rafting, hiking, mountain biking, jeep safaris, sky-diving, etc. The complete transformation of Moab from agricultural outpost to tourist mecca took nearly a century with the most dramatic changes occurred in the 1950s as the result of two unrelated events: the first motion picture to be filmed in the area (1949) and the discovery of uranium (1952).

The first major motion picture to be filmed in southern Utah was *Deadwood*, a 1922 silent movie. The movie was filmed near Kanab, Utah. The Parry brothers, who owned a tour bus service to Zion's National Park and the Grand Canyon, were able to offer their vehicles to the production company.⁵ They spent the next two decades actively promoting the scenic wonders of southern Utah to the film industry. Another popular location for film companies was Monument Valley on the Utah-Arizona border. Legendary director John Ford had already made four westerns in Monument Valley in the 1940s, when he decided he needed a change of scenery for his next western. A cattle rancher named George White helped Ford scout locations for the movie, *Wagon Master* in 1949. Later that year, George White with the help of other Moab businessmen organized the Moab Film Committee.⁶ The next year, John Ford was back in town, to film *Rio Grande* with John Wayne and Maureen O'Hara. There were limited accommodations for the movie crew in 1949 and 1950. According to the local newspaper, the cast and crew completely took over Moab's one motel and three auto-tourist camps.⁷ Many of the film people stayed in private homes or a tent city.⁸ When the *Son of Cochise*, starring Rock Hudson, began filming near Moab in 1953, the local newspaper noted the production company of 95 would

⁴ Margaret S. Bearson, "Moab" in *Utah History Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan Kent Powell, (Salt Lake City, Utah: University of Utah Press, 1994): 371.

⁵ Numerous production companies stayed at the brothers' hotel, Parry Lodge in Kanab. The Parry Lodge was listed on the National Register in 2003.

⁶ They included Cap Maxwell (rancher), Johnnie Johnson (farmer), Stan Peck (restaurantier), Bish Taylor (*Times-Independent* editor), Jack Corbin (Midland Telephone), and Bates Wilson (superintendent of Arches National Monument). Bette L. Stanton, *Where God Put the West: Movie Making in the Desert*, (Moab, Utah: Four Corners Publications, Inc., 1994): 9.

⁷ *Moab Times-Independent*, December 28, 1950.

⁸ Stanton, 8.

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Apache Motel, Moab, Grand County, UT

need nearly every available room.⁹ Over the next decade, nine major features were filmed in the Moab area. The break-up of the studio system and the public's waning interest in the western genre eventually led to the decline of the film industry in Moab by the 1970s. Though movies and television programs continued to be filmed near Moab, the number is much less than during the industry's heyday in the 1950s.

Many historians believe the uranium boom of the mid-1950s actually hurt Moab's potential as a film location because so much of the town's infrastructure was monopolized by a population explosion. Although various mineral claims had been explored in the area, it wasn't until the post-World War II period when the United States government began looking for a secure and reliable domestic source of uranium that Moab's experienced its own atomic boom. By the early 1950s, prospectors of all kinds were "prowling Moab's wildlands in war-surplus jeeps with Geiger counters and Atomic Energy Commission pamphlets on the recognition of uranium-bearing strata."¹⁰ On July 6, 1952, geologist and self-proclaimed dirt-poor prospector, Charlie Steen, Struck the largest ore body of uranium-producing pitchblende ever found on the plateau.¹¹ Seemingly overnight, the population of Moab exploded from 1,200 to 6,000. Moab was transformed into a mining boomtown where "For lack of sufficient housing, destitute dreamers with dollar signs in their eyes lived with their families in tents and hastily constructed shacks."¹²

Between 1952 and 1956, the municipal government frantically tried to keep pace with the population by paving roads, building schools and enacting the town's first zoning ordinance.¹³ Building permits increased exponentially as contractors attempted to meet housing needs with trailer courts, apartment buildings, and Moab's first subdivision, platted in 1954.¹⁴ The Apache Motel was one of half-a-dozen motels to be constructed or expanded in Moab within a few years of Steen's discovery. Although the demands of the influx were strenuous, the town prospered during the so-called Uranium Boom period. Charlie Steen built a reduction mill near Moab for processing that initially employed over two hundred residents. However, the boom period lasted only a few years. In 1956, the Atomic Energy Commission announced that the "supply of uranium had reached the saturation point."¹⁵ By time of the 1960 census, the population of Moab had decreased to 4,682. The uranium boom went bust after only a decade and in 1962 Charlie Steen was forced to sell his mill to the Atlas Corporation. The mill was later converted for potash processing. By 1970, the United States was completely out of the uranium business and in 1984 the former uranium mill was closed. Though times were difficult, the community of Moab weathered the loss of its "bloated tax base" of the early 1950s and re-invented itself as the recreation paradise of today. The Apache Motel is one of the few remaining commercial buildings in Moab constructed during the early uranium boom years.

⁹ *Moab Times-Independent*, June 4, 1953.

¹⁰ José Knighton, *Coyote's History of Moab*, (Moab, Utah: Compost Press, 1994): 26.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Moab Times-Independent*, May 27, 1954 and August 5, 1954.

¹⁴ *Moab Times-Independent*, July 22, 1954.

¹⁵ Faun McConkie Tanner, *The Far Country: A Regional History of Moab and La Sal, Utah*, (Salt Lake City, Utah: Olympus Publishing Company, 1976): 221.

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Apache Motel, Moab, Grand County, UT

History of the Apache Motel

The land where the Apache Motel is located was first patented to Leonidas L. Crapo in 1887 just one year after the town of Moab was platted. Lot 1, Block 10 was located at the eastern edge of the town site and along the main transportation route into town from the south. The property changed hands six times before it was sold to Ross Thompson in 1940. Around 1900, a former owner, Louisa Moore built a small cottage on the southwest corner of the block that stands today, but it was sold to Eliza and Lester Burr in 1944, and is not currently associated with the motel property.

On June 21, 1954, Ross and Hazel Thompson, along with co-owners, James and Hazel Luster, sold the remaining L-shaped portion of Lot 1 to the Alexander Investment Company. The company was owned by a Salt Lake business-man, Ken P. Alexander. That month the Alexander Investment Company obtained a mortgage on the property for \$75,000 from the Alexander Building Corporation, the entity that had obtained a building permit for a motel to be valued at \$50,000.¹⁶ By July 1, 1954, the *Times-Independent* reported that Alexander Investments had started construction on an "ultra-modern 60-unit motel" with the following description:

It is to be one of the show places of the whole country with the very latest kinks built in for luxurious living. It will incorporate a year-round swimming pool, heated during the winter, an outdoor patio—truly a show place of which Moab can be proud.¹⁷

Construction proceeded slowly and final construction details were not provided to the public until February 1955. The proposed sixty-unit motel had been downsized according to the newspaper: "The structure is two story containing twenty-nine units, complete with dining room. The units will vary from doubles to facilities for larger groups."¹⁸ It is not known whether the lower number of units reflects a change in the original footprint, the addition of suites or dining room, or a combination of several factors. The name "Apache Motel" was noted in the February article. The name was probably chosen by Ken Alexander, but the name was used in the area for the first Technicolor movie to be filmed near Moab, *Battle at Apache Pass* in 1952, or the Apache Uranium Company, one of the hundreds of companies formed during the boom to mine, mill and promote the uranium industry.¹⁹

The grand opening was originally planned for February 25, 1955, but was postponed until Sunday, March 27, 1955. On March 24, 1955, the *Times-Independent* published a lengthy description of the "completely ultra modern swanky 28 unit" motel:

¹⁶ *Moab Times-Independent*, June 24, 1954.

¹⁷ *Moab Times-Independent*, July 1, 1954.

¹⁸ *Moab Times-Independent*, February 3, 1955.

¹⁹ Stanton, 46. *Green River Journal*, October 6, 1955. It is not known whether there is a corporation connection between the motel and the uranium company; however, it is not improbable since at least twelve other investors had interest in the property in addition to Ken Alexander. There was an Apache Motel in Las Vegas with a similar logo. Barbara Brady, interview by author, July 2007.

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Apache Motel, Moab, Grand County, UT

The rooms complete with wall to wall carpeting and modern furnishings have phone and room service in each. Free ice service is available. The two story motel has a dining room on each level and the two are capable of serving 60 guests at a time. In the summer, meals will be served outside on the terrace. . . . The brick faced motel [has] outside stairways and a balcony running completely around the second floor level . . . The modern structure is completely air conditioned.²⁰

The March 31, 1955, edition of the *Times-Independent* ran two photographs of the motel taken during the grand opening. The first was an exterior shot that included the "unique and attractive neon sign that will attract motorists traveling along Highway 160." The second shot was showed the lobby (Unit 10 north of current office) with managers Jim and Kaye Lee, and receptionist Mary Byrd behind the desk ready to receive guests.²¹ The swimming pool was not completed in time for the grand opening, but was finished that summer. The phone service in each room was the first of its kind in Moab. The switchboard operator phone system was in use until the 1980s. The Apache Motel also featured a radio in each room, although there was only one station available in southeastern Utah at the time. The Apache Dining Room, later called the Apache Café, was a popular restaurant in Moab during the uranium boom period, particularly after its expansion in 1958. The opening touted its menu: "Homemade pies, rolls, and cakes are a specialty. Steaks may be charglowed and broiled. Candle light dinners are featured every evening."²² In 1955, one could enjoyed the Apache Special (rice and tomato soup, beef pot pie, salad, dessert) for \$1.00, or the Apache Lunch (soup, salad, potatoes, vegetable, beverage, and choice of fried chicken, veal cutlets, pork chops or chicken fried steak in gravy) for \$1.50.²³

The Apache Motel was originally designed to cater to the uranium-boom travelers. The photograph of the lobby desk shows a placard with information on the jeep rental service offered by the motel. The *Times-Independent* description of the services provided by the motel included this paragraph: "Drive it yourself travel accommodations are available for business and scenic tours. Jeeps can be rented by those wanting to rough it in Moab's rugged scenery and *perhaps do a little prospecting* [italics added]."²⁴ The Apache Motel routinely accommodated uranium company executives in town for meetings and inspections, including executives of the U-Tex Corporation, Standard Uranium, and the Cord Mining Company, to name a few. After the motel's expansion in 1958, executives of the Atlas Corporation would rent Suite A (above the current office) for months at a time.

Very few remember the Apache Motel's association with the uranium companies between 1955 and the early 1960s, but the motel's current management aggressively promotes the Apache's famous patrons from the film industry. Many of the motel's larger suites have been named for the celebrities who stayed there. The lobby

²⁰ Moab *Times-Independent*, March 24, 1955.

²¹ Moab *Times-Independent*, March 31, 1955.

²² Moab *Times-Independent*, March 24, 1955.

²³ Moab *Times-Independent*, May 5, 1955, advertisement.

²⁴ Moab *Times-Independent*, March 24, 1955.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. 8 Page 6

Apache Motel, Moab, Grand County, UT

has a wall of fame with inscribed photographs of some of the most famous names in movies from Hollywood's golden age of westerns: Henry Fonda, Stuart Whitman, Dorothy Malone, Richard Widmark, Anthony Quinn, Yvonne DeCarlo, Ricardo Montalban, and John Ford. The Apache Motel has several photographs of its most famous patron—John Wayne. John Wayne was a regular visitor to the Apache Motel in the 1950s and 1960s. The Duke stayed in one of the smaller rooms at the back when he was in town filming. When he came with his family, either to film or on vacation, they stayed in Suite A.

Vesta Hartley, who worked as a housekeeper and server at the Apache, remembered John Wayne as a polite, but unkempt patron; adding that his boys were often rowdy.²⁵ Suite A has been named in his honor and each year visitors from all over the world contact the Apache management and ask to stay in the room where the popular movie star slept. The John Wayne suite has been featured in international travel and magazines. The suite is especially popular with European visitors; for example, when British actresses, Pauline Quirke and Linda Robson, who played Sharon and Tracey on the BBC sitcom, "Birds of a Feather" came to Moab to film a segment.²⁶

However, before the Apache Motel earned its international reputation, it struggled through the economic depression that hit Moab at the end of the uranium boom. The restaurant closed and though the motel remained open, it suffered damage and vandalism during period of high vacancy rates. Ken Alexander's Apache Motel Corporation sold the property to Western States Thrift in 1962. Western States held the property until 1972 when it was sold to an investment group headed by Lloyd Venable. By 1977, the Apache Motel was on the market when Jyan-Jen "J.J." Wang saw a classified ad in the *Los Angeles Times*. J.J. Wang had been a lawyer in Taiwan, who had immigrated with his family in early 1977. Within a few months of their arrival in the United States and a few days of the initial contact with the Apache's owners, J.J. Wang, his wife, Shou-Yu and their young children were in a car bound for Moab, Utah. The Wangs purchased the motel property in April 1977. Many of the Apache Motel's current furnishings date from the late 1970s remodeling undertaken by the Wang family. For two decades, the family managed the motel while living in an apartment on site. According to their son, Steven Wang, the family was well-liked and respected in the Moab community.²⁷ Barbara Brady, the current manager, took over as the on-site manager when the J.J. and Shou-Yu Wang moved out and transferred ownership of the property to the Wang Organization LLC in 2002. The current owners, Ralph and Rosetta Smith, purchased the property from the Wang Organization in 2004.

Although off the main highway since Highway 160 was redirected down Main Street, the Apache Motel has a loyal patron base and is at full occupancy most of the tourist season. Many of the motel's guests return year after year for annual events such as the Easter Jeep Safari, Moab Music Festival, and Moab Sky Dive. The Apache Motel is significant in the history of Moab, particularly relating to the uranium boom and the film industry during the period of significance from 1954 to 1958. The motel property includes two contributing buildings (motel and pool house), two non-contributing buildings (mobile home and shed), two contributing structures (pool and wall), and one contributing object (sign).

²⁵ As told to Barbara Brady.

²⁶ Brady interview.

²⁷ Steven Wang, telephone interview by author, August 8, 2007.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Apache Motel, Moab, Grand County, UT

Architectural Significance

The Apache Motel is also architecturally significant as the best example of a motel complex from the period of significance, between 1954 and 1958. The exterior of the Apache Motel has been modified only slightly since the original construction in 1954-1955 and the subsequent expansion in 1958. The multifaceted resource includes many features that were characteristic of the motel's period of significance. On the original motel building, these 1950s elements include the brick masonry, part-casement wood-sash windows, exposed rafters, and pipe-rail. The addition features wide wood clapboard siding and large hexagonal picture windows. Although the roof line has been altered, the low gable is not out of character for the period and is not unlike ranch houses of the mid-1950s. The pool house matches the motel building and the pool wall was built of patterned concrete block, popular in the period. The "arrow" signage is characteristic of the over-sized icon used commercially in the 1950s.

On the other hand, the entire configuration of the motel complex represents a transition between the motor courts of the 1920s and 1930s, and the larger multi-story motor inns of the mid-1950s. Two-story motel buildings with back-to-back rooms sharing "core connection" plumbing, such as the Apache, were typical of the period and at the beginnings of the motel franchise movement across America.²⁸ The Apache Motel differs from the franchise-type motel in the variety of room sizes and suites available. The current roof line as rebuilt (circa 1963) was also typical of the multi-story motel inn. However, the poolside courtyard accessible from the dining room is more reminiscent of the more intimate motel courts of the pre-World War II era.

Prior to 1954, there were three major motels in Moab. The Canyon Motel (demolished), Moab Motel (demolished) and the Utah Motel (replaced by the Best Western Canyonlands Motel). When the Apache Motel was completed in 1955, it was largest and most modern motel in town. Three other motels were built about the same time that are extant: 100 North and 100 West (current Red Rock Lodge?), 72 S. 100 East (current Kokapelli Lodge), 570 N. Main Street (current Inca Inn). All three are one-story motel courts that have been altered on the exterior since the 1950s. The smallest of the three, the eight-unit Kokapelli Lodge, was originally known as the Atomic Motel. By 1956, the number of "air-conditioned" motel rooms in Moab had jumped to 181.²⁹ Two more extant hotels appear to have been built in the early 1960s: the Virginian Motel (70 E. 200 South) and the two blocks of units for the Best Western Greenwell (125 S. Main, office and lobby remodeled circa 1990). The majority of Moab's currently operating motels were built after 1970.³⁰ Because of its high degree of integrity, the Apache Motel is historically and architecturally significant as the best extant example of motel architecture from Moab's boom period in the mid-1950s.

²⁸ John Jake, et al, *The Motel in America*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 76-77.

²⁹ Richard Firmage, *The History of Grand County*, 335.

³⁰ A 1987 reconnaissance level survey of Moab listed only two contributing motels, one without an address (status unknown) and another that has since been demolished. The Apache Motel was not included in the 1987 survey.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. 9 Page 1

Apache Motel, Moab, Grand County, UT

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Firmage, Richard A. *A History of Grand County*. Utah Centennial County History Series. Salt Lake City, Utah: Utah State Historical Society and Grand County, [1996].

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Parry Lodge. National Register of Historic Places, Registration Form. Prepared by Korral Broschinsky, July 2002. Photocopy on file at the Utah State Historic Preservation Office.

Ringholz, Raye C. *Uranium Frenzy: Boom and Bust on the Colorado Plateau*. [Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press: 1991.

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Smith, Ralph C. Telephone interviews conducted by author, July 5, 2007.

Stanton, Bette L. *Where God Put the West, Movie Making in the Desert: A Moab-Monument Valley Movie History*. Moab, Utah: Four Corners Publications, Inc., 1994.

Tanner, Faun McConkie. *The Far Country: A Regional History of Moab and La Sal, Utah*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Olympus Publishing Company, 1976.

Taylor, Raymond W. and Samuel W. Taylor. *Uranium Fever or No Talk Under \$1 Million*. [New York]: MacMillan Company, [1970].

Times Independent (Moab). Various issues.

Title Abstracts and Plat Maps. Available at the Grand County Recorder's Office.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. 9 Page 2

Apache Motel, Moab, Grand County, UT

United States Census, Kanab Precinct, 1900-1930.

Utah State Gazetteers, 1921-1931.

Wang, Steve. Telephone interview conducted by author, August 2007.

Apache Motel
Name of Property

Moab, Grand County, Utah
City, County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.95 acres

UTM References

(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

1 1/2 6/2/6/9/6/0 4/2/6/9/9/6/0
Zone Easting Northing

2 / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

3 / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

4 / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

BEG AT NE COR LOT 1 BLOCK 10 MOAB TOWNSITE, TH W 171 FT, N 11 FT, W 60 FT; S 134.5 FT; E 107.5 FT; S 107.5 FT; E 123.5 FT; N 231 FT TO POB.

Property Tax No. 01-0B10-001

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries are those currently associated with the property and that were associated with the property during the period of significance.

☐ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Korral Broschinsky, Preservation Documentation Resource
organization _____ date November 29, 2007
street & number P.O. Box 58766 telephone (801) 913-5645
city or town Salt Lake City state UT zip code 84158

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

name/title Ralph C. Smith
street & number 5100 N. 6th Street, Unit 171 telephone (559) 360-6393
city or town Fresno state CA zip code 93710

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 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 Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. PHOTOS Page 1

Apache Motel, Moab, Grand County, UT

Common Label Information

1. Apache Motel
2. Moab, Grand County, Utah
3. Photographer: Korral Broschinsky
4. Date: August 2007
5. Digital images on file at Utah SHPO.

Archival Photographs (Printed using archival paper and ink at the Utah SHPO)

Photo No. 1:

6. East & north elevations, view of site. Camera facing northwest.

Photo No. 2:

6. East & north elevations. Camera facing northwest.

Photo No. 3:

6. East elevation. Camera facing west.

Photo No. 4:

6. South elevation. Camera facing northwest.

Photo No. 5:

6. West elevation. Camera facing east.

Photo No. 6:

6. Pool & pool house. Camera facing northwest.

Photo No. 7:

6. Sign. Camera facing northeast.

Supplemental Photographs

Photo No. 8:

6. East & north elevations, view of site. Camera facing southwest.

Photo No. 9:

6. East & north elevations. Camera facing west.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. PHOTOS Page 1

Apache Motel, Moab, Grand County, UT

Photo No. 10:

6. East elevation, façade detail. Camera facing northwest.

Photo No. 11:

6. West elevation, south side detail. Camera facing east.

Photo No. 12:

6. Interior, second floor, unit 20 (John Wayne Suite). Camera facing west.

Photo No. 13:

6. Pool area wall & south elevation. Camera facing northwest.

Photo No. 14:

6. Mobile home (non-contributing outbuilding). Camera facing west.

Photo No. 15:

6. Shed (non-contributing outbuilding). Camera facing southwest.

Photo No. 16:

6. Scan of postcard currently used for advertising—note original flat roofline.



Apache Motel Tax Photo
c.1962?

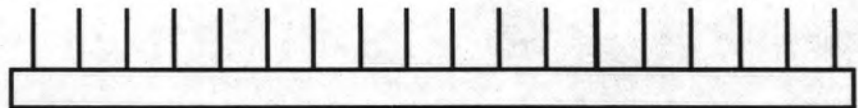
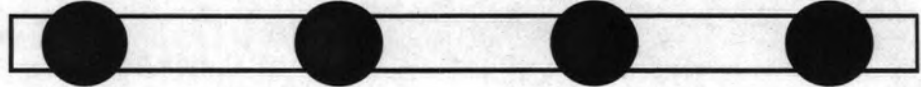
ROOM LOCATOR

APACHE MOTEL

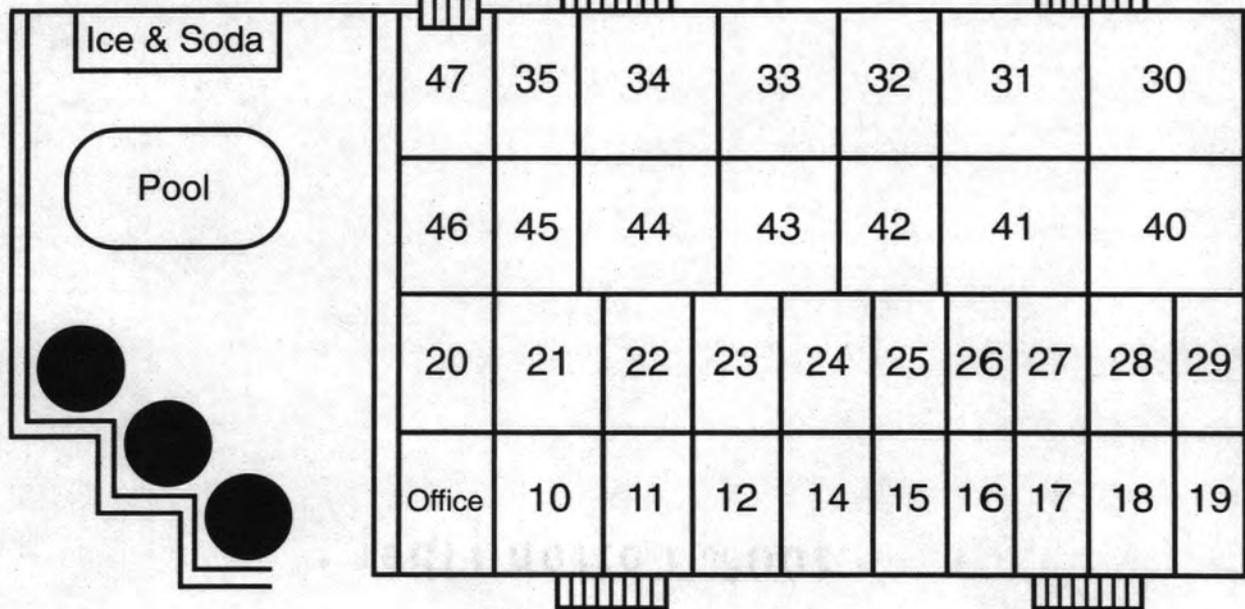


"Where John Wayne Stayed"

54



Stairs for
47



166 S. 400 East, Moab, UT 84532
1-800-228-6882
435-259-5727

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Apache Motel
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: UTAH, Grand

DATE RECEIVED: 1/08/08 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/30/08
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 2/14/08 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 2/21/08
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 08000062

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 2.19.08 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

red in the
National Register

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



①

Apache Motel
Mozk, Grand Co., UT



②

Apache Motel
Moab, Grand Co., UT



③ Apache Motel
Moab, Grand Co., UT



④

Apache Motel
Moab, Grand Co., UT



⑤ Apache Motel
Moab, Grand Co., UT



⑥

Apache Motel

Moab, Grand Co., UT



⑦

Apache Motel

Moab, Grand Co., UT



APACHE MOTEL
166 S. 400 EAST
MOAB, GRAND CO., UT

PHOTO 8



APACHE MOTEL
166 S. 400 EAST
MOAB, GRAND CO., UT

PHOTO 9



APACHE MOTEL
166 S. 400 EAST
MOAB, GRAND CO., UT

PHOTO 10



APACHE MOTEL
166 S. 400 EAST
MOAB, GRAND CO., UT

PHOTO 11



APACHE MOTEL
166 S. 400 EAST
MOAB, GRAND CO., UT

PHOTO 12



APACHE MOTEL
166 S. 400 EAST
MOAB, GRAND CO., UT

PHOTO 13



APACHE MOTEL
166 S. 400 EAST
MOAB, GRAND CO., UT

PHOTO 14



APACHE MOTEL
166 S. 400 EAST
MOAB, GRAND CO., UT

PHOTO 15

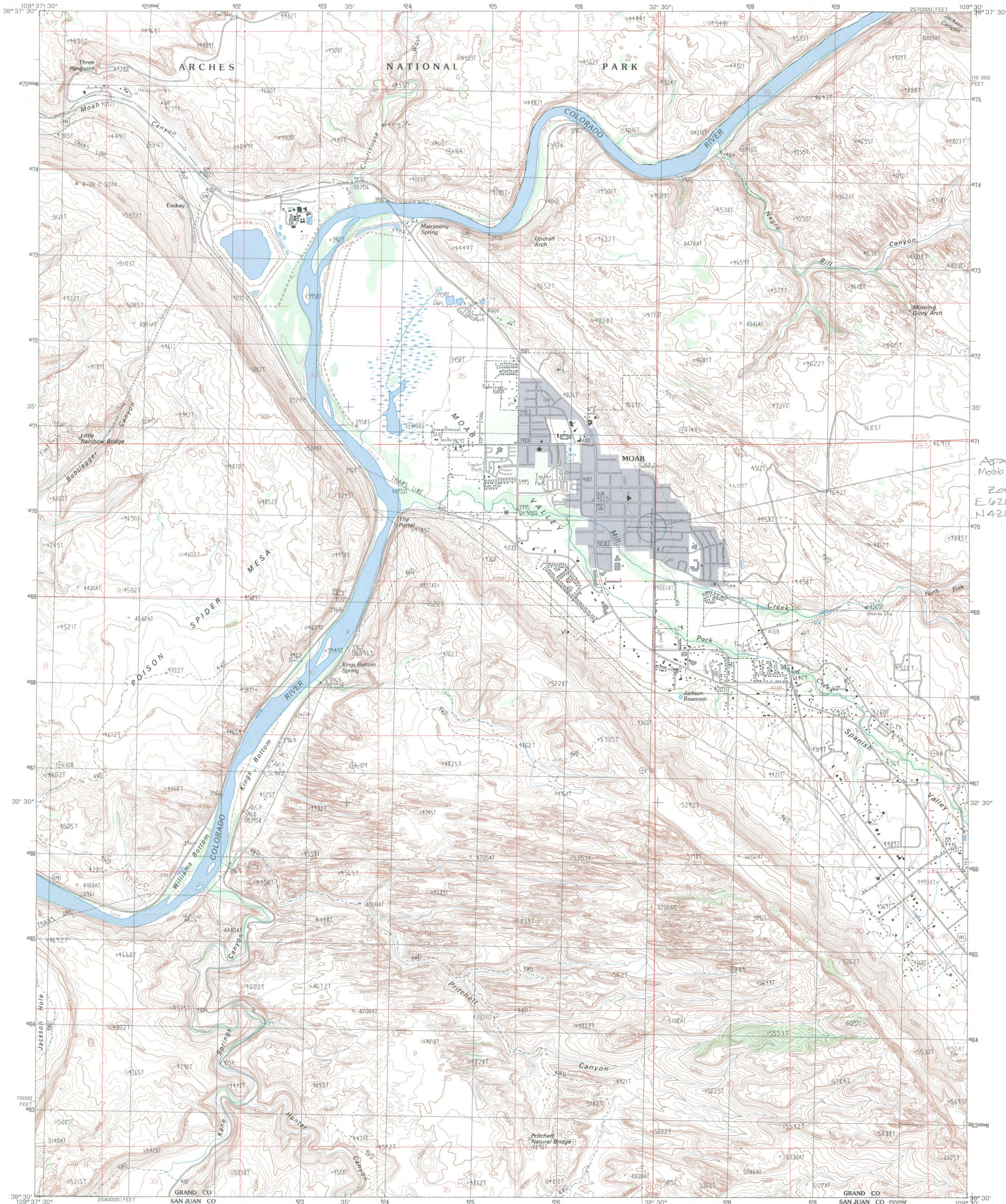
The APACHE

Motel in Moab



16

Apache Motel Postcard
Moab, Grand Co., UT



PRODUCED BY THE UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
CONTROL BY USGS, NOS/NOAA
COMPILED FROM AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN 1980
FIELD CHECKED 1981 MAP EDITED 1985
PROJECTION LAMBERT CONFORMAL CONIC
GRID: 800-METER UNIVERSAL TRANSVERSE MERCATOR ZONE 12
800-METER STATE GRID TICKS UTAH CENTRAL ZONE
UTM GRID DECLINATION 0°54' EAST
1983 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION 13° EAST
VERTICAL DATUM NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
HORIZONTAL DATUM 1927 NORTH AMERICAN DATUM
To place on the predicted North American Datum of 1983,
move the projection lines as shown by dashed corner ticks
(5 meters north and 60 meters east)
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of any
Federal and State Reservations shown on this map.
Gray tint indicates area in which selected buildings are shown

PROVISIONAL MAP
Produced from original
manuscript drawings. Infor-
mation shown as of date of
field check. 2

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225
OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092

1	2	3	1 Merrimac Route
4	5	2 The Window Section	
6	7	3 Big Bend	
		4 Gold Bar Canyon	
		5 Bill Creek	
		6 Shale Butte	
		7 Through Spring Canyon	
		8 Kane Springs	

ADJOINING 7.5' QUADRANGLE NAMES

ROAD LEGEND
Improved Road
Unimproved Road
Trail
Interstate Route U.S. Route State Route

MOAB, UTAH
PROVISIONAL EDITION 1985

38109-E5-TF-024





State of Utah

JON M. HUNTSMAN, JR.
Governor

GARY R. HERBERT
Lieutenant Governor

Department of Community and Culture

PALMER DePAULIS
Executive Director

State History

PHILIP F. NOTARIANNI
Division Director



TO: Janet Matthews, Keeper,
National Register of Historic Places

FROM: Cory Jensen, National Register Coordinator
Utah State Historic Preservation Office

SUBJECT: National Register Nomination

The following materials are submitted on this 3rd day of January, 2008,
for the nomination of the Apache Motel
to the National Register of Historic Places:

1 Original National Register of Historic Places nomination form

 Multiple Property Nomination form

7 Photograph(s) (archival)

9 Photograph(s) (supplemental)

1 CD-R w/Image Files

1 Original USGS Map

1 Sketch map(s)/figure(s)

 Pieces of Correspondence

1 Other Photocopy of photograph

COMMENTS: Please review

UTAH STATE
HISTORY

UTAH STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ANTIQUITIES

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

RESEARCH CENTER & COLLECTIONS

For questions please contact Cory Jensen at 801/533-3559, or coryjensen@utah.gov