

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED OCT 24 1978

DATE ENTERED NOV 15 1978

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 BELTON CHALETS

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

U.S. 2

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN WEST GLACIER NWL/4NWL/4, Sec. 36, T.32N, R.19W. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF WESTERN MONTANA

STATE MONTANA CODE 30 COUNTY FLATHEAD CODE 29

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME BELTON CHALETS, INC.

STREET & NUMBER P. O. BOX 188

CITY, TOWN WEST GLACIER VICINITY OF STATE MONTANA

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. FLATHEAD COUNTY COURTHOUSE

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN KALISPELL STATE MONTANA

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Belton Chalets consist of a group of four structures designed in a style reminiscent of the architecture of the Alps of Europe.

Belton, elevation 3,219 feet above sea level, lies on the west side of Glacier National Park. The Flathead River that forms the western boundary of the Park flows within 100 yards of this small visitor-oriented town nestled amid snow-capped mountains and vast evergreen forests.

The original hotel was built ca. 1907 by the Great Northern Railway. It has a steep gable roof, a second floor balcony and a first floor veranda. It faces north toward the Great Northern tracks and Belton Station depot to which it was once linked by a trellis-covered path. A highway built in 1932 somewhat paralleling the railroad wiped out the path.

In 1911, the railroad began the construction of a chain of chalets and hotel within and near the park to provide accommodations for the tourists it was bringing in. The first Belton Chalet was remodeled and made part of the system. In 1913, two cottages were built to the east of the first building and a large 24 room hotel was erected to the south, above and beyond the first hotel. All of the buildings are standing today, but not all are in use.

The first hotel building has undergone further remodeling since the 1911-13 era. It now houses a dining room and tap room with large stone fireplace. There are private living quarters on the second level. The first floor veranda was removed when the highway was updated a number of years ago. The highway right-of-way proved to be too close to the porch to allow for parking in front of the building.

The buildings of the complex are similar in design. All have steep gable roofs and are built of native lumber and stone. The siding is of rough sawn clapboard stained brown. The structural timbers are of 10" to 14" planking; the walls are 6" to 8" thick and plastered. The heavy 6' eaves are supported by 8" square beams designed to complement the carved railings on the verandas and porches. The casement windows have leaded panes, with the exception of those units which have had to be replaced. The floors are of maple and the wainscot is dark stained fir.

The newer 24-room hotel has large stone columns supporting the main floor porch on the north and west. The steep roof, large overhanging eaves with their supporting timbers and the heavy structural members harmonize with the ornate railings of the balconies of the main and second floors. This building has one large lobby running across its narrow dimension. It has a large stone fireplace, lobby desk and a staircase in the northeast corner leading to the second floor. A long hallway runs the length of the building. It is centrally located with rooms on either side. The level below the elevated main floor contained the kitchen and dining room, storage rooms, etc. In the dining room, there is another large stone fireplace.

Today, the hotel is not open to the public. The lack of private baths probably discourages many of the travelers of today. Yet the buildings are in sound condition. The present owners plan to rehabilitate the complex and hope to find a financially profitable use for the hotel by renting it to church groups, companies or universities wishing to hold workshops in this picturesque setting.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Tourism
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1907-1913 BUILDER/ARCHITECT CUTLER & MALGREN, ARCHITECTS

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The history of the Belton Chalets is closely linked to the completion of the Great Northern Railway and to the establishment of Glacier National Park. The small town of Belton had its origin as a temporary stop during the railroad's construction and drew its name from Andrew Belton, the camp cook.

The development of the entire northwest region of Montana was closely associated with the building of this railroad and with the career of James J. Hill. In 1878, Hill and several associates purchased a bankrupt railroad in Minnesota known as the St. Paul and Pacific. They renamed the land grant railroad the "St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Railway Company". Later the name was changed to the "Great Northern Railway Company". By the year 1883, the rapidly growing railroad had begun to push its tracks west toward the coast under the direction of Mr. Hill, the company's general manager.

Hill chose a northern route to reduce the rail distance from St. Paul to the coast and to try to avoid the high grades in the Butte, Montana, region of the Rockies. He hired a young engineer, James F. Stevens, to locate a usable pass through the mountains. The pass he found is known as Marias Pass; in the town of Summit on the pass a statue commemorates Steven's exploration. Survey parties started for the pass in the spring of 1890, followed by grading crews. The track layers started from the town of Cut Bank on April 24, 1891. They reached the pass on September 14, 1891, and got to Kalispell on the last day of that year. The railroad crossed the western borders of Montana in April, 1892, and the first continental trains were traveling to and from the coast by the following year.

Upon completion of the railroad through Marias Pass, the development of the area was rapid. News of the great splendor of this wilderness area soon reached the outside world and the "dudes" began to arrive in steadily increasing numbers. The little town of Belton began to cater to the summer visitors. A post office was established here in 1900; its name was changed to West Glacier in 1949, although the railroad retained the name Belton Station.

As more and more people recognized the beauty of the area, pressure began to develop to have it declared a national park. On May 11, 1910, President Taft signed the bill establishing Glacier National Park. Even before the park came into being, however, the Great Northern Railway actively encouraged and aided the establishment of tourist traffic. Louis W. Hill succeeded his father as president of the railroad in 1907 and about this time, the first building in the Belton Chalet group was constructed. After the Park was established the hotel was used for a time as administrative offices until buildings could be constructed for this purpose within the Park.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- James W. Sheire, Glacier National Park Historic Resource Study, Office of History & Historic Architecture, U. S. Dept. of the Interior, N.P.S., Sept., 1970.
- Flora Mae Fellefleur Isch, "The Importance of Railroads in the Development of Northwestern Montana," Pacific Northwest Quarterly. 41 (1950) 19-29
- O. J. McGillis, "The Glacier Park Hotels and Chalets", Glacier Drift, X (1937), 8-11, 17-19.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 3.2 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME WEST GLACIER, MONTANA

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 12 280180 53175570

B
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION Lot 11, Section 36, Township 32 North, Range 19 West, Lying Southeasterly of the Southeasterly Boundary Line of U.S. Highway #2 and Northeasterly of a line parallel with and 165 ft. distant Northeasterly from the Southwesterly Line of said Lot 11.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

JOHN N. DeHAAS, JR., ARCHITECT AND KAY LUDING, MARTIN CITY, MT. 59926

(KAY LUDING- 387-5362)

ORGANIZATION

DATE
FEBRUARY 5, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

1021 S. TRACY

TELEPHONE
406-586-2276

CITY OR TOWN

BOZEMAN

STATE
MONTANA

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE XX

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

[Handwritten Signature]

TITLE

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

DATE

10-18-78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

[Handwritten Signature]

DATE

11/15/78

ATTEST

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

[Handwritten Signature]

DATE

Nov 13, 1978

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

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In 1911, Louis Hill started a project of building a series of hotels, chalets and public services within the new park. Within the next four years, the railroad had expanded the Belton group by adding two cabins and a 24-room hotel and had constructed a series of Swiss Chalet-style accommodations along a scenic route for a distance of 100 miles within the park. The chalets were constructed according to a standard plan designed by the Spokane architectural firm of Cutter and Malgren, which also practiced in the northwest section of Montana. Another of their noteworthy buildings is the Davenport Hotel in Spokane, Washington, which opened in 1917, a product of Kirkland Cutter's architectural imagination.

The chain of chalets and hotels was first operated by the railroad and later by the Glacier Hotel Company. In recent years, Belton Chalets has been operated by private citizens. The large hotel of the complex has not been open to the public for the past half dozen years, although it appears to be in good condition.

Louis Hill was apparently influenced by the architecture of the Alps and brought the idea of it to the Montana mountains. He wanted to provide comfortable accommodations for the tourists his railroad brought to the area, but did not want these accommodations to be intrusive. The Belton Chalets are indeed compatible with their setting.