1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Great Northern Railway Buildings

Other Name/Site Number: Many Glacier Hotel, Sperry Chalet, Granite Park Chalet, Two Medicine Store, Belton Chalet

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: Not for publication:___

City/Town: Vicinity:___

State: County: Code: Zip Code:

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property		Category of Property	
Private:	X	Building(s):	___
Public-Local:	___	District:	___
Public-State:	___	Site:	___
Public-Federal:	X	Structure:	___
		Object:	___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
5	___ buildings
___	___ sites
___	___ structures
___	___ objects
5	___ Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 6

Name of Related National Historic Landmark theme study: Architecture in the Parks

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ____ nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ Entered in the National Register
___ Determined eligible for the National Register
___ Determined not eligible for the National Register
___ Removed from the National Register
___ Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: Domestic Sub: Hotel

Current: Domestic Sub: Hotel

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: Swiss Chalet

Materials:

Foundation: Stone
Walls: Wood
Roof: Shingle
Other:

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Summary

As defined in 1986, the nationally significant discontiguous historic district "Great Northern Railway Buildings" included six buildings divided between four sites, all located within the boundaries of Glacier National Park in northwestern Montana. Established by railroad developer Lewis Hill, the Belton Chalet, comprises five buildings located just outside the park boundaries, south of the Middle Fork of the Flathead River that were not included in the original nomination.

Belton Chalet consists of the original chalet, flanked 100 yards to the southwest by a studio building and immediately to the northeast by two four-room cottages. These four buildings front Montana State Highway 2 and the Great Northern (GN) tracks (now Burlington Northern). A large three-story dormitory is located at the rear of the complex, at the base of a steep slope. Terraced gardens and a narrow access road link the dormitory with the chalet and cottages. Although long abandoned, remains of a rock-lined path connecting the chalet and the studio remain visible.

Integrity

The chalet, dormitory, and two cottages, owned by Still Back There, LLC, have been restored to Secretary of Interior standards and are currently being used as a hotel, bar, and dining room – as originally designed. They retain remarkable integrity of material, workmanship, and design. The studio building, owned by Highland Incorporated, Inc., is currently used as a residence. It has been modified through changes in fenestration and fret-work and is stained red-brown, rather than brown. However, the building retains the wide eaves, shallow- gable roofline, front porch, and exposed rafter ends characteristic of the Swiss Chalet style; it continues to reflect the original design ethic and remains recognizable as a component of the larger complex. Moreover, by its inclusion within the site boundaries, the studio contributes to our understanding of the size and scale of the original complex, thereby protecting integrity of setting and of association of the property as a whole.

Completion of Montana State Highway 2 in 1932, running directly between the chalet and the tracks, physically broke the historical link between the chalet and rail travel and resulted in removal of much of the historic landscaping. The historic Belton Depot, once located immediately northeast of the chalet group and connected to the chalet by an 8'-wide trellis-covered path ("pergola") was moved in the modern period to a site approximately ¼ mile to the northwest. Although moved, the depot is still visible from the chalet complex, and the direct historical and architectural association between the buildings remains evident, thereby protecting the Chalet's integrity of setting, feeling, and association.

Narrative Description

As constructed in Glacier National Park, the Chalet style blends Swiss massing, roof patterns, and exterior design elements with the hallmarks of American Rustic style, particularly the use of stone and log. Both styles, in company with the Arts and Crafts movement, were founded on the

premise that there is beauty in functional elements; that these elements revealed become "an object of decoration and harmony." Traditional Swiss features evident in Great Northern Railway buildings include presentation of gable ends to the street (or, more accurately, trail or rail line); wide eaves supported by dominant corbels; liberal use of balconies; and fret-work of uncomplicated design. Interiors largely eschew Swiss detailing and incorporate, instead, vertical and gnarled unpeeled timbers, taxidermy, and American Indian elements.

Of the Swiss-style chalets and hotels in Glacier National Park, Belton Chalet shows the least appropriation of this Rustic tradition. Balustrades and structural columns are milled, as is exterior siding. There are no soaring interior spaces supported by heavy exposed timbers. Rock work, in the foundations and exterior columns, is symmetrical river rock, appropriate to the Chalet's location near the Middle Fork of the Flathead River yet in contrast to the rubble stone used with abundance in the mountain, trail-side chalets, Lewis Hotel, Many Glacier Hotel, and Glacier Park Lodge. This restrain may be owed in part to Belton's early construction, before developer Lewis Hill had fully developed his vision of the park. It may also reflect its setting distant from the mountain views that defined the other accommodations. Belton was the most purely Swiss, the most traditional, of Hill's creations.

The buildings at Belton all have shallow-pitched gable roofs and are built of milled lumber, log, and river rock. Rough-sawn clapboard, stained dark brown, sides the dormitory and chalet. The wood-frame "cottages," recently named "Lewis" cabin and "Clark" cabin, are sided with milled half-log siding, also stained dark brown. Massive, 8"- square brackets support the wide 6' to 12' overhanging eaves. Green composition (asphalt) shingles cover the roofs, which feature multiple gables (some with clipped ends). River-stone columns and footings support the cottage porches, the second-level balcony of the dormitory, and the first-level balcony/deck of the chalet. Flat, cut-out balustrades line the cottage porches and the chalet and dormitory balconies. Limited patterned stickwork decoration is located under the eave lines. Windows are most-often multiple-light casement-sash, with leaded panes. Many are original; those that are not were reconstructed, during a recent restoration, in-kind, with salvaged antique glass. The cottage windows are less elaborate and more-fitting to the buildings' smaller scale: nine-over-one, double hung.

Interiors are largely defined by this extensive fenestration and by the liberal use of fir: in five-panel or board-and-batten doors, board-and-batten wainscoting, flooring, and wide (5") window and door trim (painted or stained). Walls and ceilings are plastered, with the exception of the acoustic tile used in the lounge of the chalet. Structural beams are exposed in both the chalet dining room and the dormitory lobby ceilings. Detailed cornices, both original and modern replacements in-kind, top the door frames, window frames, and wainscoting. Traditional "rustic" interior elements are limited to the uncoursed stone fireplaces in the lobbies of the main chalet and of the dormitory. Cottage fireplaces are brick. Private baths have been added to all guest rooms, through construction of non-bearing walls that enclose a corner of each room. Base and door trim on this new construction matches the original, as do the new board-and-batten bathroom doors. The original wall-mounted porcelain sinks remain in the main rooms, outside the bathroom space.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
Nationally: X Statewide:__ Locally:__

Applicable National Register Criteria:	A__ B__ C__ D__
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):	A__ B__ C__ D__ E__ F__ G__
NHL Criteria:	4
NHL Theme(s):	III. Expressing Cultural Values 5. architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design
Areas of Significance:	Architecture; Entertainment/Recreation
Period(s) of Significance:	1910-1913
Significant Dates:	n/a
Significant Person(s):	n/a
Cultural Affiliation:	n/a
Architect/Builder:	Great Northern Railway

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

Summary:

In 1986, the National Park Service evaluated the national architectural significance of private or federal buildings 1) within boundaries of an area of the National Park System and 2) constructed for visitor-use, interpretive, or administrative purposes. The resultant NHL theme study *Architecture in the Parks* (Soulliere Harrison 1986) concluded with the NHL designation of 30 buildings and districts, spread throughout 16 western NPS units and including Glacier National Park's "Great Northern Railway Buildings" (Many Glacier Hotel, Granite Park and Sperry Chalets, Two Medicine Store).

Belton Chalet, Glacier Park Lodge (formerly Glacier Park [or Midvale] Hotel), Belton Depot, and Glacier Park Depot lie just outside Glacier National Park and, therefore, outside the geographic boundaries of the theme study. Soulliere Harrison, however, noted that these buildings share historic association and architectural significance with the in-park Great Northern buildings and recommended that they be added to the NHL listing as funding came available.

As the earliest Great Northern building to be built at Glacier Park, Belton Chalet stands as a benchmark, marking the beginning of tourist accommodations. From this foundation, we gain a better understanding of the evolution of style and identity that took place with construction of subsequent Great Northern buildings in the park and the ways in which the Swiss style helped define visitors' perceptions of the park, and their place in that controlled "wilderness" setting.

Glacier Park Incorporated, owner of Glacier Park Lodge, declined evaluation of the lodge. Funding has not been secured to evaluate the railroad depots. This addendum addresses only the Belton Chalet property.

In her statement of significance for Great Northern Railway Buildings, Souilliere Harrison established that:

> The development funded by the Great Northern Railway in Glacier National Park is unique in National Park Service architecture. The Great Northern, under directions from its [chairman of the board] Louis Hill, chose a distinct architectural style – the Swiss Chalet – and constructed all of its development within the park in that style. The buildings that remain are one of the largest collections of Swiss Chalet structures in the United States.

Similarly, NPS historian William Tweed argued that "no national park owes more to its early concessioner than Glacier."[1] Here Hill spearheaded construction of a chain of mountain hotels and chalet groups linked by roads and trails constructed by the National Park Service, always at the Great Northern's urging, often with Great Northern funds. Great Northern promotional

---

[1] William Tweed. *National Park Service Rustic Architecture, 1916-1942*. National Park Service Western Regional Office. 1977, p. 10.

literature advertised the trail/chalet network as one of Glacier Park's "most interesting features, remarkably in rhyme with this mountain land."[2]

Great Northern Railway Buildings within Glacier derive their architectural significance from this carefully constructed cadence between the natural and the cultural environments. As America's upper class turned their attention from European travel destinations toward the American West, Hill seized upon not only our cultural nostalgia --christening Glacier "America's Alps" and constructing a system of hostelries in the Swiss tradition – but also upon a growing cultural self-confidence -- urging Americans to "See America First" and blending Swiss design with Rustic (western) elements and Native American motifs. The Chalet architectural style both reflected America's European past and proceeded beyond it, to a uniquely American vernacular.[3]

In choosing a single architectural theme, Hill acted in the tradition established by the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad with construction of fantasy pueblos at Grand Canyon. Hill, however, would more effectively integrate this architectural theme into the complete park experience, fully realizing "the enormous potential for using architecture as a marketing strategy." As established in *Architecture in the Parks,* Great Northern Railway Buildings extant within Glacier National Park represent the only instance in which one distinct architectural style is used on such a massive scale for a concessions development.[4]

In *Architecture in the Parks* Soulliere Harrison writes "the identifiable landscapes of those . . . areas [west of the Mississippi], the exotic lure of the romantic west, the westward emphasis of the railroads encouraged romantic resort architecture in western national parks."[5] In Glacier National Park, on land bordered by a transcontinental railroad and by the reservation lands of the Blackfeet (who displayed "much better than the Sioux"),[6] the lure of the romantic West met a mountain landscape reminiscent of America's European cultural roots. Hill effectively manipulated this cultural/geographic fusion.

Hill appropriated Glacier National Park as the Great Northern's own and deliberately cultivated a marketable image that melded the built, natural, and cultural environments. The Blackfeet he christened "The Glacier Park Tribe," representatives of which he hired to ride the train back to Chicago and to entertain hotel guests, in full traditional regalia. ("I think," he wrote in 1923, "we ought to have two or three old Indian families at the Glacier Park Hotel grounds, for newspaper

---

[2] Great Northern Promotional Division quoted in Tweed. *NPS Rustic Architecture.*

[3] See Earl Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West: The Tourist in Western America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957), for a more complete discussion of the See America First campaign.

[4] Tweed, *National Park Service Rustic Architecture*, p. 16; Harrison, *Architecture in the Parks*, pp. 3, 11.

[5] Harrison, *Architecture in the Parks*, p. 19.

[6] Fred R. Meyer to L. W. Hill, December 17, 1912, File 34, Box 2, Chairman's Files, President's Office, Great Northern Railway Collection, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota [MHS].

men, until after July 4."[7]) In an effort to encourage traffic between Spokane and the park, particularly by those staying at the Great Northern's luxury Davenport Hotel, he urged his publicity department to select a "fine photograph of Glacier Park, of some unknown mountain, and we will name it 'Mount Davenport', and if we can find another one, we will name it 'Mount Spokane'."[8]

Working from a blueprint of Swiss building tradition, as defined in such works as *Native Houses in Switzerland* and *Characteristic Swiss Style Buildings from the 16th to the 19th Century*, Hill also manipulated the Swiss chalet style to his vision of Glacier National Park.[9] With the 1914 completion of Granite Park Chalet, accommodation links in this network included Glacier Park Hotel at the east entrance to the park, Belton Chalet at the west entrance to the park, Many Glacier Hotel at the foot of Lake McDermott, Two Medicine, Cut Bank, St. Mary, Going-to-the-Sun, Gunsight, Sperry, and Granite Park Chalets in the park interior, and tent camps at Belly River and Red Eagle Lake.[10]

In 1920, when the Glacier Park Company (the concession subsidiary of the Great Northern Railway) paid its park stenographer $87.50 per month, room and board at the hotel rooms ranged from $5 to $10 per night. Chalet rooms were $4.50, meals included.[11]

At each of the chalets and hotels (though particularly at Glacier Park Hotel), furnishings were inspired not by the Swiss but by the western Rustic/pioneer tradition: taxidermy, unpeeled logs,

---

[7] Louis W. Hill to G. S. Wilson, July 18, 1923, Louis W. Hill [LWH] Personal Papers, James J. Hill [JJH] Reference Library.

[8] Louis W. Hill to G. S. Wilson, July 23, 1923, LWH Personal Papers. JJH Reference Library.

[9] Hill was not the first to recognize the appropriateness of the Swiss style to the western environment or to link Swiss and Rustic details. In 1893, at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, judges awarded architect Kirkland Cutter top prize for his "Idaho Building," a stone and log building that displayed a "type of architecture and construction which expresses the character of the state erecting it." Architectural historian Henry Matthews writes "although clearly derived from the chalets of the Bernese Oberland of Switzerland [the Idaho Building] spoke eloquently of the rugged nature of Idaho . . . ; indeed, it seemed far removed from the neat and orderly settlements of the Swiss Alps." Henry Matthews, "The Search for a Northwest Vernacular: Kirkland Cutter and the Rustic Picturesque, 1888-1920," Cheney Cowles Museum. Spokane, Washington, p. 71.

[10] There were commercial hazards to the architectural experiment: in the infant years of the marketing effort Swiss chalets remained outside the main stream of American architecture and accommodations. In 1910 the Belton manager noted the need for a sign "of some kind indicating it as a stopping place for the public as a great many of the travelling public do not comprehend the meaning of the word chalet." Superintendent Dining and Sleeping Cars, to Louis W. Hill, September 2, 1910, 132.F.2.1(B), Great Northern Railway President's Subject Files, Box 136, File 4672, MHS.

[11] H. H. Parkhouse to Noble, January 16, 1920, LWH Personal Papers, JJH Reference Library.

American Indian motifs, and open hearths provided a "forest and camp atmosphere."[12]

Employees provided not only service but also design appeal: in addition to the Blackfeet paid to grace the lobby and grounds of the Glacier Park Hotel, the cigar girls dressed in kimonos in the geisha tradition, bell boys mimicked those in urban grand hotels, in gray uniforms trimmed with green cloth and red soutache braid, waitresses at all hotels and chalets, including Belton, dressed in "Swiss-style" bodices. Years before Walt Disney, Hill deliberately created a "theme park."[13]

The chalets served those willing to venture to the backcountry and "content with less service than is found in the hotels." In its publicity literature, the Great Northern described the chalets as:

> Artistic chalet groups consist[ing] of rustic log or stone buildings, attractively grouped, in the vicinity of a central structure used for a dining and lounging room. Most of the sleeping chalets have one or more attractive lounging rooms, equipped with large stone fireplaces. The service is plain and simple, the object of the management being to furnish clean, comfortable beds, plain food, well cooked, plenty of it, and served in family style. The chalets are usually attractive and comfortable and those desiring a vacation of several weeks will find them very economical.[14]

Rudimentary access to relatively well-appointed facilities highlighted the contrast between eastern comfort and the western experience. "Dudes" embarking on one-day to two-week circle tours of the Glacier back country were guided by "cowboys," lunched near glacial lakes and then dined in comfort on chinese linen and blue-willow china.

Belton Chalet played a confused role in this ordered and deliberate system. By its location on the rail line and the road network it functioned as a hotel. Elsewhere in the park, at Lake McDonald, Many Glacier, and East Glacier, hotels offered entertainment, soaring luxury spaces, dramatic architecture and furnishings. Belton's clean comfortable beds, plain and simple service, and small unassuming spaces echoed the backcountry chalets, yet gained little through juxtaposition with remote, wild surroundings.

Belton Chalet Site-Specific Development

---

[12] John Wily, "A Week in Glacier National Park," *The Hotel Monthly*, August 1915, quoted in Michael Ober "Enmity and Alliance: Park Service-Concessioner Relations in Glacier National Park." Master's thesis, University of Montana, Missoula, Montana, 1973, p. 63.

[13] L. W. Hill to Mr. Bagley, March 27, 1913, LWH Personal Papers, JJH Reference Library.

[14] United States Railroad Administration, Great Northern Railroad, "Hotel and Transportation Rates and Arrangements in Glacier National Park, June 15th to September 15, 1920, Circular No. 8227. Box 6, Glacier National Park Archives, Ruhle Library, West Glacier, Montana [GNPA], pp. 10-11.

In 1909, while lobbying for passage of the Glacier National Park enabling legislation, Louis Hill described "one of the most beautiful bodies of water to be found anywhere," Lake McDonald, "ten and one-half miles long and three miles wide, . . . in a valley surrounded on the east, west and south by virgin and unscarred forests extending up to the snow line, while the head of the lake presents a panorama of the most rugged, sharp mountain peaks."[15] Belton Station on the Great Northern line lay just three miles from the head of this remarkable lake, at the west entrance to the park. Here, in 1909, Hill constructed the central building of Belton Chalet, his first Glacier Park complex. That same year, Hill also funded construction of a rough wagon road from Belton to Lake McDonald, an improvement critical to Belton Chalet's commercial success (and a first venture in Hill's funding of much of Glacier's early road/trail system).[16]

Preliminary drawings of the main chalet, attributed to Cutter & Malmgren, show a three-story chalet similar to the current chalet (see Additional Documentation).[17] As constructed, the chalet complex appropriated these principal design features, yet deviated slightly in fenestration and footprint. There is no record in the Cutter archives, however, that Cutter & Malmgren received the commission for Belton Chalet design. As at Many Glacier Hotel, Hill appears to have rejected Cutter's proposals before proceeding to construct buildings of remarkably similar design.

By 1913, the complex consisted of a main chalet with ten bedrooms, lobby, dining room, and kitchen (37' x 42'); a studio with five bedrooms and a large upstairs work space (53' x 32'); two three-bedroom cottages, each with sitting room (26' x 27'); a dormitory with 24 bedrooms and a large lobby (104' x 35'), a pump house and tank; a lighting plant; and a septic tank. Together, these 45 bedrooms contained a total of 39 double and 40 single beds for a maximum occupancy of 118. Each bedroom had running hot and cold water. Bathrooms were communal, located "down the hall." The improvements were built on forest-service land, secured through yearly lease until 1919 when the Great Northern purchased the 5.09-acre building site for $1,274.[18]

---

[15] Louis Hill to H. V. Jones, Minneapolis Journal, February 22, 1909, 132.E.17.4, Great Northern Railway President's Subject Files. Box 106, File 4325, MHS, p. 2.

[16] W. E. Ward to L. W. Hill, May 12th, 1906, File 4021, Box 73. President's Subject Files, Great Northern Railway Collection, MHS.

[17] The noted Spokane Architecture Firm of Cutter & Malmgren played a significant role in the introduction of the Swiss style to America. Kirkland Cutter developed the original plans for Hill's Many Glacier Hotel and designed the Swiss style Lewis Hotel (now known as Lake McDonald Lodge). Interestingly, the exterior of Cutter's own home in Spokane, designed in 1904, bears a striking similarity to the ca. 1908 renderings for Belton Chalet. The similarity between these 1908 renderings, and the chalet as constructed again points to the influence that Kirkland Cutter had in setting the direction for the Glacier Park's Rustic and Swiss architectural style.

[18] H. C(?). Carroll to L. W. Hill, October 16, 1913, File 91, Box 4, Chairman's Files, President's Office, Great Northern Railway Collection, MHS; H. A. Noble to H. F. Bayer, December 20, 1917, File 231, Box 21, Subject Files, GN Ry GPC Corporate Records, MHS; handwritten untitled note, ca. Oct. 1919, File 165, Box 11, "Old" Subject Files, GN Ry GPC Corporate Records, MHS; L. W. Hill to W. R. Logan, May 20th 1911, 132.F.2.1(B), Great Northern Railway President's Subject Files, Box 136, File 4672,

In company with Glacier Park Lodge, at the east entrance to the park, Belton played a unique role in the accommodations network. Its placement was defined not by scenic beauty but by proximity to the Great Northern tracks that lie less than 50 yards north of the complex and its location at the head of the rough road system leading to Lake McDonald and the park interior. The site is wooded and pleasant but void of mountain or river views; Belton Chalet was constructed as a demarcation point and staging station. Unlike Glacier Park Hotel, it was never developed beyond this pragmatic role.

Staff included to a manager, first cook, and a "yardman" who cared for the gardens while pulling double duty as bellman, meeting all trains and moving luggage to the chalet. In 1913-1914, the complex served as winter headquarters for the National Park Service. With this exception, and despite limited discussion of remaining open to local traffic during the winter season, the complex was closed from ca. October 1st until its annual opening ca. June 1.

A 1912 furniture inventory lists "rustic" rockers and chairs in all bedrooms and in the lobby areas. Additional public-room furnishings included settees, writing desks, book cases, cuspidors, Morris chairs, and a player piano. Bedrooms contained slop jars, chamber pots, and granite or willow-patterned porcelain wash basins. Beds were brass or iron (with white-iron folding cots available for children and overflow traffic), made-up with white sheets, bed felts, and quilts; at Belton, as throughout the Great Northern holdings, blankets were commissioned from a Portland, Oregon plant and were patterned after more-expensive Hudson Bay blankets determined by Hill "to go well with the country and add interest for the tourists." "Swiss" curtains dressed the casement windows. Plain white china, mixed with blue-willow, graced the tables, holding vegetables and fruits from the Flathead Produce company, milk and cream from Kelly and Biggs, Kalispell, fresh meats ordered from Spokane, non-perishables and salt meats ordered from St. Paul, all shipped along the GN line. News, periodicals, pictures, cigars, tobacco and other miscellaneous and sundry items were available for purchase at the registration desk in the main chalet.[19]

MHS; W. P. Kenney to Louis W. Hill, October 24, 1923, LWH Personal Papers, JJH Reference Library; Folder 9, Box 63, GNPA.

[19] L. W. Hill to Mr. Bagley, March 27, 1913, LWH Personal Papers, JJH Reference Library; Great Northern Railway Company, Passenger Traffic Department, "Hotel and Transportation Rates and Arrangements, Season June 15th to September 15th, 1918," March 15, 1918, LWH Personal Papers, JJH Reference Library, p. 3; Special Representative, Great Northern Railway Company, to A.B. Fisher, Acting Auditor Misc. Acc'ts, May 28, 1914, LWH Personal Papers, JJH Reference Library; Superintendent Dining and Sleeping Cars to Miss Fiammetta Fery, Manager Belton Chalet, June 1, 1911. File 165, Box 11, "Old" Subject Files, GN Ry GPC Corporate Records, MHS; T. D. McMahon to J. A. Shoemaker, February 13, 1915, File 165, Box 11, "Old" Subject Files, GN Ry GPC Corporate Records, MHS; Superintendent Dining and Sleeping Cars to Fery, May 28, 1911, File 165, Box 11, "Old" Subject Files, GN Ry GPC Corporate Records, MHS.

Meals were served "family style" and, in 1911, consisted of breakfast with fruits, cereal with cream, a choice of ham, bacon, steak, or fish, eggs, potatoes and griddle cakes. Dinner consisted of soup, fish or meat entrée, relish, potatoes and second

Historic photographs and correspondence show that landscape elements were a critical component of Belton design. In 1912, Hill ordered that the west end of the building site be filled and graded, at the same contour as the main chalet and the depot. This work was completed by an "Italian Extra Gang" of 18 men ("Italians are all we could furnish on account of the present condition of the labor market"), furnished with mattocks, axes, shovels, picks, and wheelbarrows with which they hauled the twelve railroad cars of "good, black soil brought in from the Kalispell Stock Yards."[20] By October 1912, a "beautiful lawn ha[d] been laid out and seed[ed] to grass, creating "a delightful spot. [21] A trellis-covered, 8'-wide, stone-lined path linked the Chalet with Belton Depot and the tracks of the Great Northern. Hill took personal responsibility for the design and maintenance of all gardens and for the integration of native and exotic plants in chalet decorations. The task was not always an easy one. In 1923, he complained "formerly we had plenty of flowers and evergreen trees in the buildings - all of which cost us practically nothing to furnish. . . . . We have [decorations] for the cost of gathering, but our people are too negligent to make use of the advantages at hand."[22] By 1914, Holm and Olson, florists, had planted "a lot of shrubbery," Beta grape vine along the arbor, and unidentified flowers - "not . . . too many varieties." Shipping orders, to Belton and Glacier Park Hotel, included Peonies, Iris, and Eidelweiss seed.[23]

In the first year of chalet operation "the bulk of travel" to Glacier National Park came through the west entrance where Belton Chalet "met with the universal satisfaction" of the "high-class travel" patrons. [24] Drawbacks were limited to the lack of sufficient rooms to accommodate the potential demand; at the conclusion of the inaugural season Great Northern's Superintendent of Dining and Sleeping cars recommended construction of an addition or of cottages in the vicinity of the central chalet.[25] The two cottages, the studio, and the large dormitory were completed in 1912

---

vegetable, and pie. Supper was less elaborate with potatoes steak, and/or cold meats and/or eggs. Within these general guidelines the chef was granted certain discretion but was ordered to see that the food was well prepared, well served, and provided in sufficient quantity to satisfy all guests (Superintendent Dining and Sleeping Cars to Miss Fiammetta Fery, Manager Belton Chalet, June 1, 1911).

[20] Anonymous to Louis W. Hill, October 6, 1912, 132.F.2.1(B), Great Northern Railway President's Subject Files, Box 136, File 4672, MHS.

[21] Superintendent Dining and Sleeping Cars, to Louis W. Hill, September 2, 1910. 132.F.2.1(B), Great Northern Railway President's Subject Files, Box 136, File 4672, MHS.

[22] Louis W. Hill to W. P. Kenney, July 21, 1923, LWH Personal Papers, JJH Reference Library.

[23] L. W. Hill to J. A. Shoemaker, February 26, 1914, ; W. R. Mills LWH Personal Papers, JJH Reference Library.

[24] William R. Logan, Annual Report to the Secretary of the Interior, 1912, Superintendent's Annual Reports, GNPA, p. 9.

[25] Superintendent Dining and Sleeping Cars, to Louis W. Hill, September 2, 1910, File 4672, Box 136, Great Northern Railway President's Subject Files, MHS.

and 1913. However, by 1914, with completion of Glacier Park Station on the opposite side of the park, the inner-park trail/chalet network, and Lewis Hotel (Lake McDonald Lodge) on the northeast shore of Lake McDonald, tourists foreswore Belton in search of more spectacular scenery.[26]

The Great Northern acquiesced in this abandonment, advertising circle tours from "Glacier Park Station" on the east side of the park. From here, tourists embarking on the most complete and recommended circle tour proceeded by auto coach to Many Glacier; by saddle-horse across Swiftcurrent Pass to Granite Park, to Lewis' Hotel on Lake McDonald, across Lincoln Pass to Sperry Chalet, Gunsight Pass to Going-to-the-Sun Chalets; by launch down St. Mary Lake to St. Mary Chalets; by saddle-horse across the Triple Divide to Cut Bank Chalets, thence to Two Medicine, returning by auto coach to Glacier Park Lodge. Belton, isolated at the west edge of the park, outside the boundaries of this circle tour, languished as forgotten "stepsister," relegated to the less profitable task of entertaining local residents who used the lounge and dining room, to a limited amount of spontaneous traffic from those disembarking at Belton Station, and to the infrequent arranged party.

In July of 1925, 6137 passengers disembarked at Glacier Park Station, compared to 516 at Belton. That same month, Glacier Park Hotel entertained 7993 guests, compared to Belton's 704. In June of 1925, Belton entertained only 114 guests, down from 204 guests in June of 1923.[27] Increasingly, Belton was excluded from all promotional discussions of the park's chalet system and, as importantly, from maintenance orders.[28] By the early 1920s, Hill and others described the chalet and attendant gardens as "in quite a run down condition." The carefully planted lawn and shrubbery were dry, brown, and weed-ridden; irrigated gardens were limited to a "small bed of flowers" near the main chalet. The buildings needed to be stained, windows needed to be painted, floors needed to be painted, roofs demanded repair.[29]

In June 1925, Hill recommended that in lieu of further capital investment the Great Northern lease the complex to a private party, pending completion of the auto road "when it should be profitable for us to operate ourselves."[30] Offers were limited to an unsuccessful bid of $10,000 from Belton Mercantile Inc, representing 10 cents on every dollar that the Great Northern had

---

[26] "Report July 14 – 20, 1914," Folder 1, Box 76, GNPA.

[27] House Counts, 1919-1925, File 199,

[28] See, for example, Hill to A. J. Dickinson, February 4, 1921. Hogeland to Hill, Sept. 16, 1921, and Hill to Hogeland, September 18, 1921, LWH Personal Papers, JJH Reference Library.

[29] George W. Dishmaker to C. O. Jenks, June 27, 1925, LWH Personal Papers, JJH Reference Library.

[30] Louis W. Hill to W. R. Mills, June 25, 1925, LWH Personal Papers, JJH Reference Library.

invested in Belton to date.[31] Belton Chalet was either closed or leased to a private party in 1927 and 1928, when company records include no revenue totals for the complex. Beginning in 1930, no meals were served.

The much-anticipated completion of Montana State Highway 2, running directly between the chalet and the tracks, physically broke the link between the chalet and rail travel, a link that in fact had failed much earlier. Completion of the highway, however, coincided with Depression-era decrease in park traffic and Belton Chalet continued to operate at a loss. In company with the entire backcountry chalet system, Belton was closed during WWII. Following the armistice and the return of economic prosperity, in a trend begun in the 1930s, those who traveled to the national parks traveled by car. In large numbers these auto tourists chose campgrounds and low-cost cabin courts over the Great Northern's expensive Swiss hostelries. The Great Northern abandoned the Swiss waitress costumes, closed the backcountry tent camps, discontinued the circle tours, razed Cut Bank, St. Mary, and Going-to-the-Sun Chalets, and sold Belton to Belton Chalet, Inc. thereby dismantling the hotel-chalet-trail network.[32] Belton and East Glacier train stations, Glacier Park Hotel, Many Glacier Hotel, Sperry, Granite, Belton, and Two Medicine chalets, however, remain as largely-unaltered examples of Hill's interpretation of the Chalet style and as evidence of Glacier's history as a Swiss theme park, in America's Alps.

---

[31] General Manager [Glacier Park Hotel Company] to W. P. Kenney, Vice President Building, January 14, 1925 and Comptroller to H. A. Noble, January 27, 1925, File 356, Box 25, Subject Files, GPC Corporate Records, GN Ry Collection, MHS.

[32] LWH Personal Papers, JJH Reference Library, passim.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Ober, Michael. "Enmity and Alliance: Park Service-Concessioner Relations in Glacier National Park." Master's thesis, University of Montana, Missoula, Montana, 1973.

Pomeroy, Earl. *In Search of the Golden West: The Tourist in Western America.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957.

Rinehart, Mary Roberts. *Through Glacier Park: Seeing America First with Howard Eaton.* New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1916.

Soulliere Harrison, Laura. *Architecture in the Parks: National Historic Landmark Theme Study,* "Great Northern Railway Buildings," USDI NPS, November 1986.

Tweed, William. *National Park Service Rustic Architecture, 1916-1942,* National Park Service Western Regional Office, 1977.

Archival Collections

Concessions, Glacier National Park Archives, Ruhle Library, West Glacier, Montana.
Belton Chalet Inc. owned Sperry, Granite Park, and Belton Chalets. Because Belton Chalet is located outside the park boundaries, there is little information available in park files; with rare exceptions, park files address administrative matters related to NPS oversight of Sperry and Granite Park operation.

Great Northern Papers, Glacier Park Hotel Co. Papers, , Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota.
Record groups reviewed include "Old" Subject Files; Subject Files; President's Subject Files; Chairman's Files. Belton Chalet's status as "stepsister" is readily apparent upon review of this voluminous collection. Detailed construction information and maintenance orders on the other hotels and chalets is extensive. Information on Belton is limited.

Louis H. Hill Personal Papers, James J. Hill Library, St. Paul, Minnesota
Hill's personal papers reveal that he directed construction, furnishing, and management of the Glacier National Park hostelries, paying attention to small details such as lighting fixtures, the brand of tea served, and the type and location of flowers planted. This collection does not, however, include correspondence identifying the Belton Chalet architect, builder, or design/construction details. The collection is arranged chronologically rather than thematically, complicating site-specific review of the enormous collection.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

___ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
_X_ 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:

_X_ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State Agency
___ Federal Agency
___ Local Government
___ University
___ Other (Specify Repository):

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property:

UTM References:	**Zone**	**Easting**	**Northing**
	A12	279180	537560

Verbal Boundary Description:

Lot 11, Section 36, Township 32 North, Range 19W Lying southeasterly of the southeasterly boundary line of US Highway 2 and Northeasterly of a line parallel with and 165 ft distant northeasterly from the southwesterly line of said lot 11

Boundary Justification:

These boundaries conform to the original land transfer between the United States Forest Service and Glacier Park, Inc., minus the US Highway 2 right of way. They incorporate all buildings that historically comprised the Belton Chalet complex: the chalet, the dormitory, the studio, and the two cottages.

The historic Belton Depot, not evaluated in the course of this study, was moved in the modern period to a site approximately ¼ mile to the northwest. At a later date, the depot should be evaluated for NHL significance.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: Ann Emmons/Historian

Address: Historical Research Associates, Inc.
PO Box 7086
Missoula, MT 59807-7086

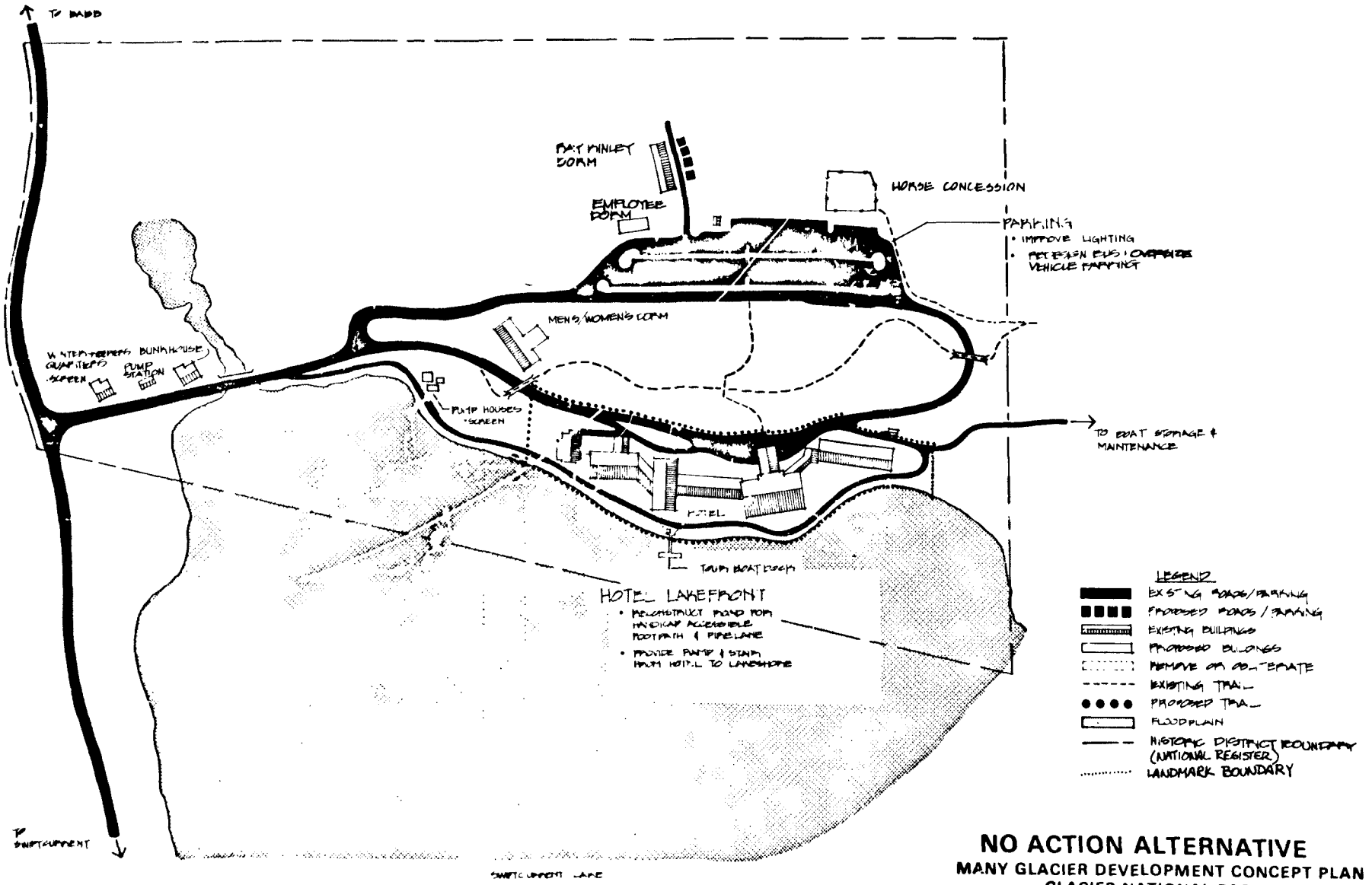
Telephone: 406-721-1958

Date: September 20, 1999

Edited by: John H. Sprinkle, Jr.
National Park Service
National Historic Landmarks Survey
1849 C St., N.W.
Room NC-400
Washington, DC 20240

Telephone: (202) 343-8166

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS SURVEY
February 1, 2000



NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

MANY GLACIER DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLAN
GLACIER NATIONAL PARK

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

N 100 0 100 200 FEET