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JAN 27 1994

National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

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This form is for use in documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL PROPERTIES IN THE BENSON, ARIZONA

SURVEY AREA

B. Associated Historic Contexts

ARCHITECTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN BENSON, ARIZONA FROM 1880-1942

C. Geographical Data

The Benson Multiple Property Area is located in the city of Benson, in southeastern Arizona, fifty miles north of the Mexican border. The greatest concentration of historic properties is in the Town of Benson, Bryan's Addition and Walker's Addition which are in the SW 1/4 of Section 10, Township 17S and Range 20E.

See continuation sheet

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Planning and Evaluation.

James Francis AZSAPD

Signature of certifying official

ARIZONA STATE PARKS

State or Federal agency and bureau

1/6/94

Date

I, hereby, certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

[Signature]

Signature of the Keeper of the National Register

3/11/94

Date

E. Statement of Historic Contexts

Discuss each historic context listed in Section B.

The Benson Multiple Property Area relates to the historic context of National Register Criterion C: Architectural Development in Benson, Arizona, from 1880 to 1942.

ARCHITECTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN BENSON, ARIZONA, FROM 1880 TO 1942

In reflecting its economic, social, political and cultural institutions, Benson's architecture mirrors the city's role as a secondary transportation and trade center for southwestern Cochise County. Benson's architectural development reflects its early history as a railroad town between 1880 and 1910 and, from the 1920s, as an important junction point within the national and state highway system. Prior to the railroad era, which began in 1880, a stage depot just north of the present town marked the beginning of Benson's role as a transportation link. The fact that Benson underwent a renaissance in agriculture and ranching in the 1920s and 1930s was also significant, as was the arrival of the Apache Powder Company which brought manufacturing to the region.

A variety of property types have been selected for this nomination to represent Benson's developmental periods. Two Colonial Revival Style residences, the Smith/Beck house at 425 Huachuca Street and the Redfield/Romine house at 146 East 6th Street, relate to the railroad era. Two commercial buildings, the Hi Wo Company Grocery at 398 East 4th Street and Max Treu Territorial Meat Company/Zearing's Mercantile at 305 East 4th Street, pertain to Benson's railroad-era "Main Street" commercial strip. A typical auto court, the Oasis Court at 363 West 4th Street, represents the post-railroad era after 1910, when Benson became an important junction point within the national and state highway system. A neighborhood-related, isolated commercial building, the W. D. Martinez General Store/Benson Museum, also pertains to the post-railroad era.

Railroad Era (1880-1910)

Benson's architectural development dates from the arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1880. Benson was the only town in the area with transcontinental connections and the introduction of regular train service brought rapid growth. The railroad is considered to have been directly responsible for the town's economic growth in three important ways. First, Benson served as the passenger clearing house for southeastern Arizona from which passengers could take stage coaches directly to Tombstone or other regional towns. Second, employment and trade for Benson were produced by the mining operations in the towns of Clifton and Bisbee and the mining districts in the Galluro and Rincon mountains. Mining products were sent via wagon train to Benson, where they were shipped by rail. Third, Benson became a "hub city" with the arrival of two additional railroads, the New Mexico and Arizona Railroad in 1882 and the Arizona Southeastern Railroad Company in 1894. The Arizona Southeastern Railroad Company, financed by the Copper Queen Consolidated Mining Company in Bisbee in 1888, was constructed to ship freight to the Southern Pacific connection at Benson. At this time Benson was unique as the only point in Arizona served by three independent railroad lines (see map).

The railroad traffic created a need for retail trades and services, hotels, saloons, livery stables, merchandising establishments, restaurants and housing, as the population grew fourfold from approximately 300 people in 1880 to 1200 people in 1910. The railroad brought imported materials and an influx of people with American mainstream building traditions, especially lightweight, wood frame construction techniques. The

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 2

introduction of dimension lumber, especially redwood which was shipped by rail from California, contributed greatly to Benson's building boom. The use of redwood as a structural and finish material was widespread. The original townsite buildings in Benson were constructed of dimension lumber with wood siding. The size of these "boom town" structures was modest. Houses averaged 12 X 25 ft. and commercial buildings ranged from 20 X 40 ft. to 25 X 60 ft.

Benson suffered three major fires (in 1883, 1886 and 1904) which destroyed many of its earliest buildings. In addition, many of the early residences were moved once or even several times, since these modest frame buildings were easily relocated, reoriented and incorporated into larger remodelings. However, there are still some intact examples of these early vernacular frame dwellings in Benson, which take the form of the front-gabled shot gun, the side-gabled hall and parlor and the front-facing "L" (see illustration). Examples of front-gabled dwellings are located at 436 East 5th Street and in the Railroad District (223 and 267 East 3rd Street). An example of a side-gabled vernacular frame dwelling in Benson can be found at 435 San Pedro Street. Examples of "L" shaped vernacular frame dwellings can be found at 278 and 288 East 5th Street and in the Railroad District at 235 and 241 East 3rd Street.

In contrast to other pre-railroad Arizona communities, there was very little adobe construction in Benson. Because of the expansive soil problem which exists there, light (wood) construction has been more successful since differential settlement is less of a problem with lighter buildings. However, in 1886 some vernacular adobe houses did appear with the construction of a commercial adobe block factory on the northwest corner of 4th and San Pedro Streets. These dwellings reflected northern Mexican typologies in which there was commonly little or no front setback and buildings were often built across the full width of the lot. An example in Benson is the carriage house, which is along the alley immediately east of the Arnold Hotel in the Railroad District. Another example of adobe construction is the Hi Wo Company Grocery at 398 East 4th Street.

The Queen Anne Style was introduced to Benson prior to 1900. Queen Anne, an eclectic style in England, was a term used to describe buildings that were inspired by transitional architecture of the pre-Georgian period when classical ornament was grafted onto buildings of medieval form. The success of the Queen Anne Style in America dates from the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876, where it was considered to be a very adaptable style for use in this country. A Queen Anne Style house can be identified by a steeply pitched roof of irregular shape, a dominant front-facing gable, patterned shingles, cutaway bay windows and other devices used to create a textured-walled appearance. Although the only remaining example of the Queen Anne Style in Benson is the Roadmaster's house at 305 East 3rd Street, certain elements from this style can be observed in Colonial Revival Style buildings which followed.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 3

Around the turn of the century the Colonial Revival Style was a very popular housing style in southeastern Arizona from Patagonia to Willcox. Replacing the more elaborate Queen Anne Style, the Colonial Revival Style was popularized in this country following the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The greatest number of Benson's historic houses are of Colonial Revival Style and most were constructed between 1898 and 1910 when Benson was still a major railroad junction. The style was also popular in early duplex construction, in which two front-gabled shotgun houses could be joined at the property line under one pyramidal roof to form an economical house form. Although elsewhere the preferred material for the Colonial Revival Style was masonry, in Benson, wood frame construction was common, with adobe used occasionally. In general, Colonial Revival Style buildings are symmetrical and have square plans and pyramidal roofs. Good examples of Colonial Revival Style frame buildings in Benson include houses at 146 East 6th Street (the Redfield/Romine house), 425 Huachuca Street (the Smith/Beck house), 201 East 3rd Street, 258 East 6th Street, 371 and 372 San Pedro Street, 378 East 4th Street, and 256 East 5th Street. An example of a Colonial Revival Style adobe house is located at 183 East Pearl Street. Unique Colonial Revival Style houses can be found at 298 East 7th Street, and 285 East 3rd Street (a double roofed house). The Arnold Hotel, at 253 East 3rd Street is the only hotel among the above-mentioned residences.

In addition to housing, the railroad encouraged the development of commercial and industrial buildings in Benson. These buildings were concentrated along the south side of East 4th Street, facing and immediately south of the railroad tracks (which were parallel to East 4th Street). The focus of commercial development in Benson has always been 4th Street since the original townsite was platted. Between 1880 and 1910 there was a strong relationship between the freight and passenger depot (on the north side of East 4th Street) and the nearby commercial structures. Businesses were clustered in this central district, which provided a focus for its activities. Facades served as advertisements for the businesses within. Some examples along 4th Street which appear to predate 1910 and are railroad related include 398 (Hi Wo Building), 196, 264, 301, and 305 (Max Treu Territorial Meat Company/Zearing's Mercantile) East 4th Street.

In addition to the high concentration of commercial buildings along East 4th Street, there were some isolated commercial buildings as well, which related to adjacent residential neighborhoods. A railroad era example of an isolated commercial building can be found in the Railroad District on North San Pedro and the alley which is north of 3rd Street.

Post-Railroad Era (1910-1942)

The thirty year railroad era ended in 1910 when the Southern Pacific Railroad opened a direct line from Tucson to Nogales. This caused a significant, negative impact on

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 4

business interests in Benson since passengers and freight no longer had to travel through Benson to reach Mexico. In addition, the former Arizona Southeastern Railroad Company, having been incorporated into the El Paso and Southwestern Railroad Company in 1901, also changed its route leaving Benson with only one railroad and a great decrease in traffic. As a result, construction activities in Benson greatly diminished. For several years following 1910 architectural development was apparently at a standstill.

In the 1920s Benson underwent significant changes as it responded to certain factors which stimulated the town's economy. These factors related to the automobile, ranching, agriculture and the opening of the Apache Powder Company which brought manufacturing to Benson at that time. These factors prevented Benson from declining further in the years which followed the railroad era, and played a strong role in the architectural development which followed.

Most significant was the growing development and availability of the automobile. Private automobile registration in Arizona, which numbered only ten in 1900, increased to 69,000 by 1925. This substantial growth in the use of the automobile fostered road and highway improvement both in Arizona and nationally. In 1921 federally funded work on Route 80 (now State Route 80 and previously U.S. 80) began, thereby improving an existing principal route through the state of Arizona to gravel road status. Route 80 was the national highway which connected Washington D.C. and San Diego, passing through southern Arizona via Douglas, Bisbee, Benson, Tucson, Phoenix, Gila Bend and Yuma (see map). Paving constituted the second stage of road improvement, with the majority of Route 80 from Tombstone to Tucson via Benson paved by 1935. By 1940 almost all of Route 80 in Arizona had been paved. Due to these improvements, Benson became an important junction point within the national and state highway system. As a result, Benson's economic development was stimulated. In addition, new building types resulted which were automobile-related, such as auto camps/courts, gas stations and garages.

The second factor bringing growth and change to Benson in the 1920s and 1930s was the increase in ranching and agriculture activities in the area owing to improvements in irrigation technology. Water was obtained from artesian wells and the San Pedro River through a system of canals, dams and irrigation ditches. This increase in importance of ranching and agriculture brought many people to the region, creating a demand for both residential and commercial building and construction.

Third, the opening of the Apache Powder Company a few miles southeast of Benson in 1922 brought manufacturing to the Benson area, further stimulating the economy. It was the largest producer of nitroglycerin explosives in the country and one of the best examples of a cooperative industry in the United States. Its primary objective was to furnish high quality explosives to the mining industry of Arizona, New Mexico, northern

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 5

Mexico and other adjacent territories. It was located near Benson because of proximity to the majority of customers and because the dry climate was considered beneficial to the production of high grade powder. With approximately 140 buildings scattered over 700 acres, the Apache Powder Company was a community in itself, and employed hundreds of people even during the Depression. Many of them lived on-site in accommodations provided by the company, as well as in Benson. The Apache Powder Company was responsible for the development of Benson's Apache Powder Residential District, a row of Craftsman Bungalow and Period Revival Style homes plus a park on West 6th Street.

Benson's architectural development was affected by the events described above. Following the railroad era, which came to a close in 1910, the domestic architecture in Benson shifted from the Colonial Revival Style to the Craftsman Bungalow Style which remained popular until the mid 1920s. The Craftsman Bungalow Style is considered to have been inspired by the work of two California brothers, Greene and Greene of Pasadena. The Greenes were strongly influenced by the English Arts and Crafts movement, interested in oriental buildings, and trained in the manual arts. The word "bungalow" originally came from Great Britain, where it had been derived from an East Indian word meaning a house in the Bengal tradition. It referred to a gabled roof structure with a wide veranda. The Craftsman Bungalow Style combined influences from Craftsman houses and Japanese architecture to create an elaborate hand-crafted structure. One reason the style was so popular was that it allowed for a tremendous variety of details. Pattern books, such as those by Gustav Stickley and The Wilson Bungalow Book, promoted the style, which spread throughout the country as the first mass produced style to be employed by contractor builders. The most popular form of the Craftsman Bungalow Style in Benson is front gabled with a front gabled porch. Examples of the Craftsman Bungalow Style in Benson include those found in the Apache Powder Residential District, which was developed by the Apache Powder Company in the mid-1920s. These include 143, 157, 161, 173, 189 and 193 West 6th Street. Other examples are found at 225 West 6th Street, 230 East 8th Street, and 101 East 6th Street.

During this era, eclectic period houses based on regional and European prototypes became popular in Benson. Referred to as "Period Revival" or "Period" houses, they reflected a wide variety of styles, at first based upon regional Pueblo, Spanish Colonial or Mission architecture and later upon English, French or Mediterranean types. Period Revival houses were popular in America during the first third of the twentieth century and, while they showed allegiance to one or another design heritage, their components, such as site orientation, plan and scale, were similar. Period Revival houses were a distinctly American architectural development. Architects used such references as the White Pine Series or books on various historical prototypes in order to design an earlier style. Most models for Period Revival houses were farm or rural structures such as English cottages, Spanish haciendas or New England farmhouses. Modest examples of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number E Page 6

Period Revivals were spread across the country by contractor builders. The Spanish Colonial Revival Style (Spanish Eclectic) used decorative details borrowed from the entire history of Spanish architecture, and was inspired by Moorish, Byzantine, Gothic, and Renaissance prototypes. An example of Spanish Colonial Revival Style is located at 243 West 6th Street. The Mission Revival Style (which actually predates the Period Revivals, having become popular around 1893) also borrowed and freely adapted typically Hispanic design elements to adorn traditional shapes. A vernacular example of Mission Revival Style is located at 209 West 6th Street. Another example of Period Revival can be seen at 167 West 5th Street. This is a Tudor Revival Style house in which stylistic elements of English Tudor architecture were employed.

In the 1920s, the automobile was responsible for the creation of several building types. The auto camp appeared in Benson in the 1920s and represented, along with service stations and garages, one of the most visible signs of the automobile's impact on land use. In its earlier stages (between 1910 and 1920), autocamping in America began as a vacation alternative for the comfortable middle class, as people enjoyed the adventure and freedom of camping along the road while touring the countryside. They delighted in traveling "off the beaten track", often camping in a different spot along the road each night, sleeping in cars or in tents, and cooking meals over the campfire. Autocampers referred to this stage as "gypsyng." With the increase in car ownership, problems developed as more and more Americans enjoyed "gypsyng" and littered the countryside. In the early 1920s, regulatory authority and private economic interest combined to create free campgrounds in towns along major touring routes. These towns became very competitive, offering such conveniences as electric lights, central kitchens and hot showers. In 1923 some towns began to charge a small fee to defray expenses and screen out transients. This opened the door to private entrepreneurs, who began to offer more and more services. In 1925 individual cottages appeared for the more discriminating traveler, and in the late 1920s such conveniences as good beds, linen, stoves, and indoor plumbing were added. Before long, houses, diners, grocery stores and service stations were frequently added to the properties. As remodeling occurred, "auto camps" evolved into "auto courts" with elaborate and exotic names such as the King's Rest, Cozy Court, White Way or Oasis. Examples of these auto courts in Benson include the Oasis Court at 363 East 4th Street, and the adjacent property to the east, the Benson Court.

The commercial area along East 4th Street, which was also federal Route 80 (now State Route 80), underwent changes and improvements in the 1920s and 1930s. East 4th Street, Benson's "Main Street", was the spine for commercial development. This was typical of other commercial developments in small towns throughout the United States, where the central core, or in this case, the strip, was instrumental in giving the town its identity and providing a focus for its activities. Main Street became a dominating theme throughout America. Commonly, the street served as an anchor with buildings abutting the sidewalk and adjacent buildings. Post-railroad era examples in Benson include a

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 7

commercial building on the southwest corner of East 4th and San Pedro Streets, and the adjacent building at 292 East 4th Street.

Several isolated commercial buildings, "neighborhood" structures which related to residential Benson rather than to the East 4th Street commercial strip, were built during the post-railroad era. Examples include the W.D. Martinez General Merchandise Store (now the Benson Museum) on the northwest corner of 5th and San Pedro Streets, a building at 498 East 5th Street, and a vernacular structure on the southwest corner of East 5th and Catalina Streets.

Examples of three modest industrial-related buildings, built during the 1920s and 1930s, include a corrugated metal storage garage at 6th Street and Adams (probably constructed by the Apache Powder Company prior to 1931), a small, post-1931, corrugated metal storage garage near the railroad tracks, and the 1920s storage building for the Texaco Oil Depot, also found along the railroad tracks near Adams Street.

Historic architecture in Benson, while subdued in overall expression, offers good representative examples from nearly all of Benson's development periods. A variety of residential architectural styles and building types remains, as well as some good examples of construction techniques and materials. Excellent examples of early vernacular frame buildings, Colonial Revival, Craftsman Bungalow and Period Revival Style resources are scattered throughout the survey area. Because of economic pressure, many of Benson's older, 4th Street commercial buildings have been altered, usually by facade and interior modifications. Some of these changes which occurred during the historic period (from 1880-1942) may be viewed as a significant part of the community's history. However, recent changes generally reflect a compromise in historic integrity.

F. Associated Property Types

I. Name of Property Type: Colonial Revival Style Buildings in the Benson, Arizona, Survey Area

II. Description

Around the turn of the century the Colonial Revival Style was very popular in southeastern Arizona. The greatest number of Benson's historic houses and buildings are of the Colonial Revival Style and most were constructed between 1898 and 1910 when Benson was still a major railroad junction point. Although elsewhere the preferred material for the Colonial Revival Style was stone, in Benson, wood frame construction was common, with adobe used occasionally. In general, Colonial Revival Style buildings are symmetrical and have square plans and pyramidal roofs. Facades normally have symmetrically balanced windows and a centrally located door. Accentuation of the entry is common, either with a decorative crown or in the form of a porch supported by slender columns. Doors commonly have overhead fanlights or sidelights. Windows with double-hung sashes are common and usually have multi-pane glazing in one or both sashes. Windows are often found in adjacent pairs. Some variations and unique examples of the Colonial Revival Style can be seen in Benson.

At present two examples of the Colonial Revival Style in the Benson survey area are being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. These two residences are located at 425 Huachuca Street, the Smith/Beck house, and at 146 E. 6th Street, the Redfield/Romine house. They are wood frame examples of the style with the characteristic square plans and shingled, pyramidal roofs with dormers and boxed eaves. The Redfield/Romine house has a front gablet and the Smith/Beck house has centrally placed dormers on the north, west and east roof slopes. Walls are sheathed with wood siding. Both houses feature shingle roofed verandas supported on turned posts. Windows are one-light double hungs and entry doors are centrally located, panelled and contain leaded glass.

III. Significance

The two Colonial Revival Style houses in the Benson survey area are locally significant under National Register Criterion C as excellent examples of this style. The Colonial Revival Style played an important role in the architectural development in Benson from the 1890s to 1910 and reflects the height of Benson's importance as a major railroad junction point. The houses convey the dominant design characteristics of the Colonial Revival Style, and, owing to very few exterior or interior alterations, convey a high level of architectural integrity.

IV. Registration Requirements

The above mentioned Colonial Revival Style residences qualify for National Register listing based on their integrity of location, design, workmanship, materials and association.

Location, Design, Workmanship and Materials: The Smith/Beck house and the Redfield/Romine house are in their original locations and remain sufficiently unaltered

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 2

so that their massing, materials and workmanship reflect the original architectural qualities for which they are considered significant.

Association: The properties have been part of the Benson survey area in its historic period and are associated with the architectural development of Benson during the height of its importance as a railroad hub.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 3

I. Name of Property Type: Commercial Buildings in the Benson, Arizona Survey Area

II. Description:

Commercial structures in Benson were strongly related to the railroad during the railroad era (1880-1910), and later, in the 1920s and 1930s, to the automobile. Benson's commercial structures were concentrated along the south side of 4th Street, initially to form a strong relationship with the railroad passenger and freight depot across the street. Later, this commercial core/strip was related to the automobile and federal Route 80 (now State Route 80). There were also several isolated commercial buildings, not located on 4th Street, which related more to Benson's residential neighborhoods, during both the railroad and post-railroad eras.

As was typical elsewhere in the United States, Benson's commercial core/strip was instrumental in giving the town its identity and served as a focus for its activities. In most cases, as is typically American, the street frontage for commercial architecture was narrow. The street was the anchor, abutting the sidewalk and often the adjacent buildings. Pedestrian access was often covered. The lots were typically rectangular and of standard dimensions, deeper than they were wide. A common size in this country was 25 X 125 ft.; in Benson they were typically 25 X 150 ft. On the exterior, the facade served to give commercial architecture its distinctive qualities and helped to distinguish one building from the next; parapets were often stepped in front in order to create a separate facade for each establishment. The facade normally consisted of plate glass windows and an entry. It was customary for a large wall area to exist high above the windows to provide a place for advertising and to make the facade appear to be larger and more urban. This false-front arrangement was especially common in small, new American towns during their early period of development. In Benson, wood frame construction was common in its commercial buildings; however, other materials were sometimes used, such as adobe, brick and concrete. The commercial buildings generally had large display windows, either wood clad or stuccoed walls, and a central entry with transom.

At present, three examples of commercial architecture in the Benson survey area are being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. The first is the Hi Wo Company Grocery, which is located at 398 East 4th Street in the commercial core/strip area and opened in 1896, during the railroad era. It is located on the site of the original Rogers Brothers General Merchandise Store. An indication that the structure is early is the unusual configuration of the frame attic story atop mud adobe side walls. Redwood is the common finish material on the interior. On the ground floor is a large open space, which is the public area and there is a basement below with some cool storage. Upstairs are private areas, such as offices. There are large display windows and a central door with transom at the main entry along East 4th

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 4

Street. The second property to be nominated is Max Treu Territorial Meat Company/Zearing's Mercantile at 305 East 4th Street. This is also located in Benson's commercial core/strip area and dates from the late 1800s. It serves as another excellent example of a commercial building which was important to Benson's development. This brick structure features a large two-story interior space and a centrally located wooden entry door with a transom above and storefront windows on either side. Clerestory windows are directly above and consist of a row of three six-light fixed windows. The third property to be nominated is the W. D. Martinez General Merchandise Store/Benson Museum on the northwest corner of East 5th and San Pedro Streets in a primarily residential area. This is an example of a post-railroad era isolated commercial building. This building has cast-in-place concrete exterior walls. It was constructed in 1921 to replace an earlier structure on the site, which had been destroyed in a fire. The building is stuccoed and features a wrap-around veranda with a corrugated metal roof. There are wood frame windows and a diagonal entry at the corner.

III. Significance

The three commercial buildings in the Benson survey area are locally significant under National Register Criterion C as excellent examples of this type. The commercial buildings played an important role in Benson's history as a transportation hub, two dating from the railroad era and the other from the post-railroad era. Each building maintains a high level of architectural integrity since very few interior or exterior alterations have been made.

IV. Registration Requirements

The above mentioned vernacular commercial buildings qualify for National Register listing based on their integrity of location, design, workmanship, materials and association.

Location, design, workmanship, materials and association: The Hi Wo Company Grocery building, Max Treu Territorial Meat Company/Zearing's Mercantile and the W.D. Martinez General Merchandise Store/Benson Museum are in their original locations and remain sufficiently unaltered so that their massing, materials and workmanship reflect the original architectural qualities for which they are considered significant.

Association: The properties have been part of the Benson survey area in its historic period and are associated with the architectural development of Benson during the height of its importance as both a railroad hub and as an automobile hub.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 5

I. Name of Property Type: Auto Courts in the Benson, Arizona, Survey Area

II. Description:

The auto camp represents, along with service stations and garages, one of the most visible signs of the automobile's impact on land use. In Benson "auto camps" appeared in the 1928-1931 period, and remodeling began in the 1930s at which time they began to be called auto courts. They were located along the major route through town (U.S. Route 80, which was also 4th Street). Easy accessibility to the automobile, informality, economy and natural settings were important to users of the auto camps and later of the auto courts. Buildings were spread out and set back from the street, often occupying more than one block. Ample parking was provided along with immediate access to the building's entry. The simple frame structures were generally one-story and modest in size. They were often stuccoed. Architecture was used as a means for advertising, and popular themes, which motivated vacation travel, were commonly used. Spanish, Pueblo and Indian themes were widespread in the Southwest. Familiar, comfortable decor was common, and helped promote a family-oriented image, which was popular in the 1920s and 1930s.

At present, one example of an existing auto court in the Benson survey area is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. It is known as the Oasis Court at 363 West 4th Street. It features stucco-walled and flat-roofed buildings based on the Pueblo Revival Style tradition. There are carports between the cottages and a neon sign, which is also representative of the early auto camp movement. The Oasis Court offered overnight accommodations for travelers as well as a gift shop specializing in Native American and Mexican crafts. There were also residential quarters for the owner.

III. Significance:

The Oasis Court in the Benson survey area is locally significant under National Register Criterion C as an excellent example of auto court architecture. The auto court played an important role in the architectural development in Benson dating from the 1920s and reflects Benson's importance as a junction point in the national and state highway system, being located on Route 80. The Oasis Court conveys the dominant design characteristics of the auto camp movement, and although there have been some exterior and interior modifications, it conveys a high level of architectural integrity.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number F Page 6

IV. Registration Requirements

The above mentioned Oasis Court qualifies for National Register listing based on its integrity of location, design, workmanship, materials and association.

Location, Design, Workmanship and Materials: The Oasis Court is in its original location and remains sufficiently unaltered so that its massing, materials and workmanship reflect the original architectural qualities for which it is considered significant.

Association: The property has been a part of the Benson survey area in its historic period and is associated with the architectural development of Benson during the height of its importance as a junction point in the national and state highway system.

G. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.

The Benson Multiple Property listing was developed by Johns & Strittmatter Inc. The Multiple Property format was chosen to enable the Benson Historic Preservation Commission to nominate additional, eligible properties in the future. Field visits were undertaken which included evaluation of both interior and exterior building features of many of Benson's historic structures. Properties were photographed, owners were interviewed and existing report information and base map information were reviewed. Efforts of the Benson Historic Preservation Commission volunteers were coordinated in regards to archival, town record and anecdotal research. Additional historic research was undertaken by both Johns & Strittmatter, Inc. and the Benson volunteers at the Arizona Historical Society Library in Tucson, University of Arizona Architecture and Main Libraries, San Pedro Valley Arts and Historical Society Museum of Benson, Cochise County Assessor's Office in Bisbee and the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office. In most cases approximate dates were assigned to the structures after normal methods for identifying dates were exhausted.

See continuation sheet

H. Major Bibliographical References

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See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional documentation:

- State historic preservation office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency

- Local government
 University
 Other

Specify repository: San Pedro Valley Arts & Historical Society Museum, Benson
Arizona Historical Society Library, Tucson

I. Form Prepared By

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number H Page 2

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