

RECEIVED

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

FEB 05 1988

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. 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. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Wigwam Village No. 2  
other names/site number BN-328

2. Location

street & number NW side Highway 31W, 1.6 miles NE of junction with Hwy. 70  not for publication  
city, town Cave City  vicinity  
state Kentucky code KY county Barren code 009 zip code 42127

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>19</u>	<u>          </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>1</u>	<u>          </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>20</u>	<u>          </u> objects
			<u>          </u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
Barren County M. R. A.

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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.  See continuation sheet.

David L. Meyer 2-6-88  
Signature of certifying official Date  
State Historic Preservation Officer, Commonwealth of Kentucky  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
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. Patrick Andrews 3/16/88  
 See continuation sheet. \_\_\_\_\_  
 determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet. \_\_\_\_\_  
 determined not eligible for the National Register. \_\_\_\_\_  
 removed from the National Register. \_\_\_\_\_  
 other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Pat Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic

Hotel

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic

Hotel

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other

Novelty/roadside vernacular

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Concrete

roof N/A

other Steel—"sticks" at top of tepee

**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

Wigwam Village No. 2 is perhaps the most whimsical and eye-catching architectural landmark in Barren County. Featuring 18 steel and concrete tepees, the 1937 motor court in the northern outskirts of Cave City occupies a site bordered on the front (east) and back (west) by new Highway 31W and old Highway 31W, respectively. The newer two-lane Highway 31W, a major north-south route in the southern Pennyrile region of Kentucky, connects Cave City with the towns of Horse Cave, approximately three miles to the northeast in Hart County, and Park City six miles to the southwest. In downtown Cave City, Highway 31W intersects with Highway 70, the principal access to Mammoth Cave National Park. Just outside of Cave City, Highway 70 crosses I-65, the favored route of the millions of tourists who visit Mammoth Cave and the scores of private recreational attractions, motels and gift shops lining Highway 31W and 70 in Barren County. Currently, Barren County has 23 individual properties and three districts listed in the National Register. All were listed in 1983 as part of the Barren County Multiple Resources Area nomination except for Fort Williams in the county seat of Glasgow which was listed in 1975.

Wigwam Village No. 2 is notable for its immaculately maintained appearance. Its pristine quality also is due to the symmetrical and very precise placement of every element. As a motor court, Wigwam Village No. 2 is typical of the early phase of motels in its composition of numerous small buildings, each dedicated to a single function such as a sleeping room or office. At Wigwam Village No. 2 there are 18 units in the identical conical design of a tepee, or wigwam: 15 sleeping rooms and a gift shop/office flanked by two restrooms. In addition, a small frame building stands next to the southwest side of the gift shop, and, in front of the gift shop, a concrete island formerly supporting gasoline pumps features a tall metal and neon sign.

The gift shop/office, small frame building, and two flanking restrooms (one marked "Squaws" and the other "Braves") stand in a row parallel to the highway. Between these four buildings and the highway, an approximately 40-foot-wide asphalt apron runs the full length of the complex and serves as a parking area for gift shop patrons and visitors not spending the night. The 15 sleeping rooms are arranged in a wide arc beginning and ending at the edge of the parking area. A manicured lawn surrounds each unit and descends inside the arc to a large flat area dotted with park benches and brightly painted metal playground equipment. A driveway outlines the outer edge of the arc and an asphalt walkway close to the front doors forms the inner edge. In the space between each unit, a one-car parking pad connects to the driveway. Low, carefully trimmed evergreen hedges define the circular foundations of all 18 tepees. Three mature hardwoods are symmetrically arranged across the lawn and very tall spruces and cedars are clustered to form a backdrop behind the gift shop and restrooms. Numerous hardwoods are scattered across the rear or west end of the property, between the driveway and the old 31W highway.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Wigwam Village No. 2, Barren County, Kentucky

Section number 7 Page 2

---

The exteriors of the 18 "wigwams" vary only in size and number of windows. At 52 feet tall and approximately 35 feet in diameter, the gift shop/office (originally a lunch room and office) is the largest. It has four windows, two windows on each side closer to the entrance, which is protected by a gabled metal canopy. The fifteen sleeping rooms are approximately 20 or 25 feet in diameter and have two windows. The smaller units contain one double bed and the larger units, number six through ten, contain two. The two restroom buildings flanking the gift shop are approximately 15 feet in diameter and have no windows.

All of the wigwams are identical in their conical shapes and proportions. Their structural systems consist of steel angle irons on which metal bands spaced one foot apart are wrapped horizontally and "on the bias" and welded. The frames are covered in a concrete-like stucco which is molded at the entrances into rounded forms intended to simulate open flaps. Wooden doors holding tall jalousie windows are recessed, as are the small square jalousie windows. On the surface of the cone, the window frames also are square but they are turned 45 degrees so that they "rest" on a corner. White paint covers the walls, accented in bright red—at the top of the cone with a jagged lower edge; about halfway up the wall in a bold zig-zag band encircling the building; around the window openings in a narrow zig-zag band with small triangles along the inner edge and marks similar to exclamation points at the corners. The sleeping room numbers above the doors and on the sides next to the respective parking spaces also are red. Four slender metal poles in imitation of the ends of branches project from the top of each wigwam. Two Art Deco-inspired tubular metal and plywood chairs sit at the edge of the lawn opposite the door to each sleeping unit. Pole-mounted floodlights are located between the chairs in front of five of the units.

The interior of the units are sheathed in panels of plywood that give the walls a bevelled effect. Dropped flat ceilings are located at a level above that of the exterior zig-zag band. In the narrow bathrooms created by a partition at the rear of the sleeping units, red and white tiles on the floor, walls and stall shower repeat the zig-zag motif.

The small frame building southwest of the office was the original gift shop and now houses ice and drink machines. It is a one-story pyramidal-roofed form sheathed in board and batten. On the narrow concrete platform in front of the gift shop, tall poles with neon "vacancy" and "office" signs suspended in between support a tall metal, two-sided sign in the two-dimensional shape of the units with the slogan "sleep in a wigwam" traced in neon.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation  
Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

1937  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

1937  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder

Frank Redford  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Wigwam Village No. 2 is nationally significant as the hallmark of a type of hostelry that developed in direct response to the proliferation of the automobile during the 1930s. In its fanciful emulation of an Indian encampment executed in steel and concrete, Wigwam Village No. 2 also exemplifies a unique type of architecture created for automobile services along the American roadside. The motor court's transportation and architecture areas of significance are intertwined because the cultural message evoked by its architectural form is integral to the profits made by the enterprise it houses. Wigwam Village No. 2 is one of the most historic forerunners of a practice now known as place-product-packaging--the commercial use of architectural imagery by automobile service-oriented establishments along the American roadside.

A primary impact of the automobile was its broadening of the concepts of recreation and leisure. Unlike travel by train, for decades the most common means of long-distance transportation used by the majority of Americans, automobile motoring permitted the travel itself to be part of a vacation, not just the means of reaching a destination. In the early 1920s, "autocamping" became the rage and campgrounds sprang up all over the country. By the end of the decade, however, the camps' latrines, common showers and increasing patronage by itinerants brought about by the onset of the Depression had led to a loss of desirability to many motorists. The next step was the cabin or cottage camp, or the proto-motel.

In a March 1986 Smithsonian article entitled "The Great American Motel," Phil Patton explains that the word "motel" (first coined by Arthur Heinemann in 1926 for his Mo-tel Inn in San Luis Obispo) encompasses three phases of roadside hostelries--the motor court, the classic motel, and the chain motor inn. The first phase, equivalent to the cabin or cottage camp, appeared in a variety of materials and styles limited only by the imagination. The tiny individual tourist cabins could be mock Colonial New England houses or adobe huts and usually emphasized the attractions of the region. Carports eventually were added to many units in a transitional stage leading to the reign during the 1940s and 1950s of the classic motels, long one-story buildings of rooms attached in a string and bordered by parking spaces. Although a few companies built chains of motor courts and classic motels, most of the early motels began as mom-and-pop operations incorporating gas stations and restaurants. The 1960s boom in chain motor inns, characterized by standardized units, an emphasis on family values, and the financial resources of franchising, accompanied state and national highway programs and soon rendered most of the classic motels obsolete.

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Andrews, J. J. C. The Well-Built Elephant and Other Roadside Attractions. 1984. Barren County Registry of Deeds. Barren County Courthouse, Glasgow, Kentucky.  
California Crazy: Roadside Vernacular Architecture. Introduction by David Gebhard. 1980.  
Jakle, John A. "Roadside Restaurants: The Evolution of Place-Product-Packaging." Journal of Cultural Geography. III:1, Fall-Winter 1982.  
Patton, Phil. "The Great American Hotel." Smithsonian. March 1986.  
Nunn, Toby. "Wigwam Village is 50 Years Old." Newspaper article (source and date unknown) reprinted as flyer by Wigwam Village No. 2 proprietors.  
Redford, Mrs. Frank. Telephone interviews conducted by Keith Sculle on 30 December 1985, 22 January 1986, and 5 March 1986.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Kentucky Heritage Council

**10. Geographical Data**

Acresage of property approximately 3.5 acres

UTM References

A 

1	6
---	---

5	9	3	6	8	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	1	1	1	2	3	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

  
Zone Easting Northing

C 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

B 

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

  
Zone Easting Northing

D 

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

As shown on the accompanying Site Plan & Photo Key, begin at Point A on the southeast side of old Highway 31W approximately 1,050 feet northeast of the junction of old Highway 31W and new Highway 31W; proceed along a straight line in a southeasterly direction 350 feet to Point B at the north corner of the northeast end of the driveway; follow the north edge of the driveway

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The described boundary encloses all of the property contributing to the historic character of Wigwam Village No. 2. Although property to the northeast and southwest is part of the legally defined parcel containing the motel, these areas contain non-contributing resources (a 1950s frame house and a mobile home park, respectively).

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Claudia R. Brown, N.R. Coordinator / Keith A. Sculle, N. R. Coordinator  
organization KY Heritage Council/Illinois Hist. Preservation Ag. date January 1988  
street & number 12th Floor, Capital Plaza Tower telephone 502/564-7005  
city or town Frankfort state Kentucky zip code 40601

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Wigwam Village No. 2, Barren County, Kentucky

Section number 8 Page 2

Patton characterizes the Wigwam Village chain as "the most famous of the old protomotels." These complexes combining motel, gas station and restaurant originated in 1933 in Horse Cave in Hart County, Kentucky. Of the seven Wigwam Villages eventually constructed, Wigwam Village No. 2, approximately three miles southwest of Horse Cave, is one of the few still in existence and the only one that has remained in continuous operation as a motel. Its imaginative concept of mock wigwams as the individual units represents a total design created by architectural setting, costumed personnel and packaged products.

The term "place-product-packaging" was first publicized by a 1978 Cooper-Hewitt Museum exhibit of the same name which focused on roadside building types as exemplars of total design. Later, the term was used by cultural geographer John Jakle to explain the uses of imagery by roadside restaurants and to provide a framework for further examination of such place-making. Equally strange-looking buildings such as the shell-shaped Shell Oil gas station in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and the duck-shaped poultry shop in Long Island appeared across the American landscape in the 1920s and 1930s and on through the 1950s, but most of the early ones have been lost or neglected and very few survive well preserved and serving their original purpose as Wigwam Village No. 2 has.

Frank Redford, a native of Horse Cave, created the first two Wigwam Villages and fully developed the Indian motif of their place-product-packaging. Redford was born February 17, 1899, to a farm family, but after high school graduation went to work for a banana company in Honduras. He remained with the company for three years and returned home to be with his mother when his father died. On a trip to California with his mother, Redford visited Long Beach where he saw a lunch stand shaped and painted like an Indian tepee with smaller but otherwise similar-looking structures outside for restrooms. This unusual collection of structures, built sometime in the 1920s at the corner of Covina and Fifty-Second Place and razed in 1950, featured the rolled flaps of the tepee front and the red zig-zag decoration that later would be featured in Wigwam Village. The impression of these curious California structures stuck in Redford's memory.

Upon his return to Horse Cave, Redford opened and briefly operated a tepee-shaped ice cream parlor. He wanted to make more money, however, so in 1933, on recently paved highway 31E, he opened the gas station and lunch room that would become the nucleus of his first Wigwam Village. The location was ideal as the heavily travelled Highway 31E led to several nearby tourist destinations, including the extremely popular Mammoth Cave, the world's longest known cave system and the focus of lore about the Native Americans who once populated the area. Doubtless snared by the stylized tepee, which housed a small office and a lunch counter seating 20, travelers flocked to Redford's roadside business. When customers began asking why motel rooms were not available, Redford built six in 1935. The 30-foot-tall conical, stuccoed wood-framed "sleeping rooms" (he preferred not to call them tepees or wigwams, or even cabins) were arranged in an elliptical arc. An open lawn separated the rooms from a new and taller office/lunch room tepee flanked by restrooms at the roadside, similar to the Long Beach restaurant Redford had seen in Long Beach. A small, four-sided wooden stand, or "trading post," augmented the Indian setting with its sales of real Indian jewelry as well as ice cream, cold drinks and souvenirs.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Wigwam Village No. 2, Barren County, Kentucky

Section number 8 Page 3

---

The improvised roadside business prospered, and in 1936 Redford made bigger plans involving construction under patent of "Wigwam Villages" throughout the country. The following year he set up Wigwam Village No. 2 outside of Cave City on Highway 31W as the model for the system's operation. Although the site plan was similar to that of the Horse Cave business, there were fifteen sleeping facilities and a larger lunch room, all constructed with steel frames covered in concrete. The location even closer to Mammoth Cave on the heavily travelled interstate road connecting Louisville, Kentucky, and Nashville, Tennessee, assured good business. The difference between the interstate traffic and traffic through Horse Cave on Highway 31E also was related to the distinct characters of the two "Villages": the smaller lunch room with curbside service in Horse Cave became a favorite spot for local teenagers while the heavy interstate traffic, including truckers, rendered Wigwam Village No. 2 a stop for adults.

Typical of the mom-and-pop management mode of the majority of early motels, Mr. and Mrs. Redford worked as a team to dispel the stigma of uncleanness, bad food and debauchery attached to many early motor courts and to make their place desirable in every regard. According to Mrs. Redford, she was in exclusive charge of the lunch room where she only allowed women to work in keeping with the prevailing sexual division of labor. She believed customers regarded the preparation of food in plain view at Wigwam Village No. 2 as certification of its purity. Only men cleaned the rooms, made the beds, and pumped the gas. Drinking was permitted, but not to boisterous excess. The wholesome results were advertized by Duncan Hines, headquartered in nearby Bowling Green, Kentucky, who carried information about Wigwam Village No. 2 in his nationally circulated publications Adventures in Eating and Adventures in Sleeping. Mrs. Redford recalled that Hines was gratified to find high quality examples which embodied the standard he hoped to set for the new automobile travel industry.

Respectability bred more respectability. The good reputation of Wigwam Village No. 2 helped Mrs. Redford to recruit young farm girls to work in the lunch room with the consent of their protective fathers. There also was a policy of employing young marrieds just out of high school, perhaps because the young partners' mutual dependence for prosperity ensured industry. These employment practices yielded an attractive group of young adults who must have subliminally reinforced the consumers' assurance of a reliable product. This image was enhanced in the early years by the employees' wearing uniforms, which tend to convey the impression of order; the women's beige dresses were trimmed in red rick-rack similar to the design on the wigwams. Perhaps the most dramatic touch in labor practices was the occasional employment of Indian dancers from Oklahoma to perform in the so-called "arena" or space encircled by the sleeping rooms.

Labor practices were only an adjunct to the core of Wigwam Village's place-product-packaging, namely, its architecture. The large, almost abstract geometric forms of the tepee sleeping rooms, with their metal "twigs" at the top, "flaps" folded back to reveal the door, and bright paint scheme of white with red zig-zag accents, surely lured the fun-seeking and curious. The buildings' image was especially dramatic after dark when floodlights were beamed on them. Moveable and decorative items augmented the architecture. Authentic Navajo rugs and blankets purchased

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Wigwam Village No. 2, Barren County, Kentucky

Section number 8 Page 4

---

by the Redfords during trips to Arizona decorated each tepee sleeping room. Because an actual Indian bed would have been unacceptable to most auto travellers, the furniture of hickory complete with bark was chosen as sufficiently rustic to connote a frontier or wilderness setting and thus appropriately enhance the village's special atmosphere.

The Redfords fully conceived and executed the place-product-packaging of the Wigwam Villages Indian motif. Only Paul Young, who purchased the motel in 1946 when the Redfords moved to California, extended the technique by stocking items intended for easy removal and long-time retention by travellers. These included handbills simulated as checks and ashtrays embossed with tepees. Young also erected along Kentucky's highways tepee-shaped motel signs advertising the Wigwam Villages.

Place-product-packaging seems never to have been as fully developed elsewhere in the Wigwam Villages as at its points of inception by Frank Redford in Horse Cave and Cave City. Redford himself opened the largest village, with 19 sleeping rooms, in 1947 on Route 66 in San Bernadino, California, but this motel lacked a restaurant. Interior decor did replicate the rustic furniture, Indian rugs and blankets, and zig-zag bathroom tiles of the earlier Kentucky motels. Place-product-packaging is not known to have been fully examined at the other four villages. Located in Holbrook, Arizona, New Orleans, Birmingham and Orlando, they were owned and operated by other individuals in return for one percent of the gross annual income paid to Redford under the patent he obtained in 1937 for his tepee design.

Of all of the seven Wigwam Villages, only Wigwam Village No. 2 in Cave City has been carefully preserved and continually operated as a motel. (The first Wigwam Village of frame and stucco in Horse Cave was razed a few years ago after a prolonged period of deterioration. The Orlando, Birmingham, and New Orleans Wigwam Villages also have been destroyed. The deteriorated Arizona motel currently is the target of a tax act project.) After Paul Young's tenure of ownership, title passed in 1953 to H. H. and William G. Proffitt, whose relatives, Roger and Elizabeth Proffitt, own and operate Wigwam Village No. 2 today. Although the uniforms and Indian rugs and blankets have been gone for years, a certain degree of place-product-packaging survives. The lunch room has been converted to a large gift shop with a good deal of merchandise in an Indian theme. Wigwam Village souvenirs include tee shirts and miniature plaster statues identical to the tepee sleeping rooms (the customer may select one with the number of the unit he stayed in). The Proffitts also have retained the letterhead stationery with the Wigwam Village motif and have reprinted as a flyer a 1987 article celebrating the fiftieth birthday of Wigwam Village No. 2. Mr. & Mrs. Proffitt are proud of their motel and have taken steps to ensure that it is preserved after they retire.

Before 1970 when I-65 was completed a few miles southwest, the "no vacancy" sign at Wigwam Village No. 2 was lit every night. After I-65 came, business tapered off for awhile, but now the "vacancy" sign is lit less often and the motel is full every weekend, its novelty and low rates (\$10.00/night for one double bed, \$15.00 for two) attracting a steady clientele. Knowledge of the history of a creation such as Wigwam Village No. 2 is essential to an understanding of the cultural landscape engendered by the automobile. The enduring popularity of this proto-motel

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Wigwam Village No. 2, Barren County, Kentucky

Section number 8 Page 5

---

demonstrates that novel commercial concepts merging the product and architectural form continue to capture our imaginations by providing escape from the mundane which has become all too pervasive in our culture. As the Proffitts like to ask, "When was the last time you slept in a tepee?"

---

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

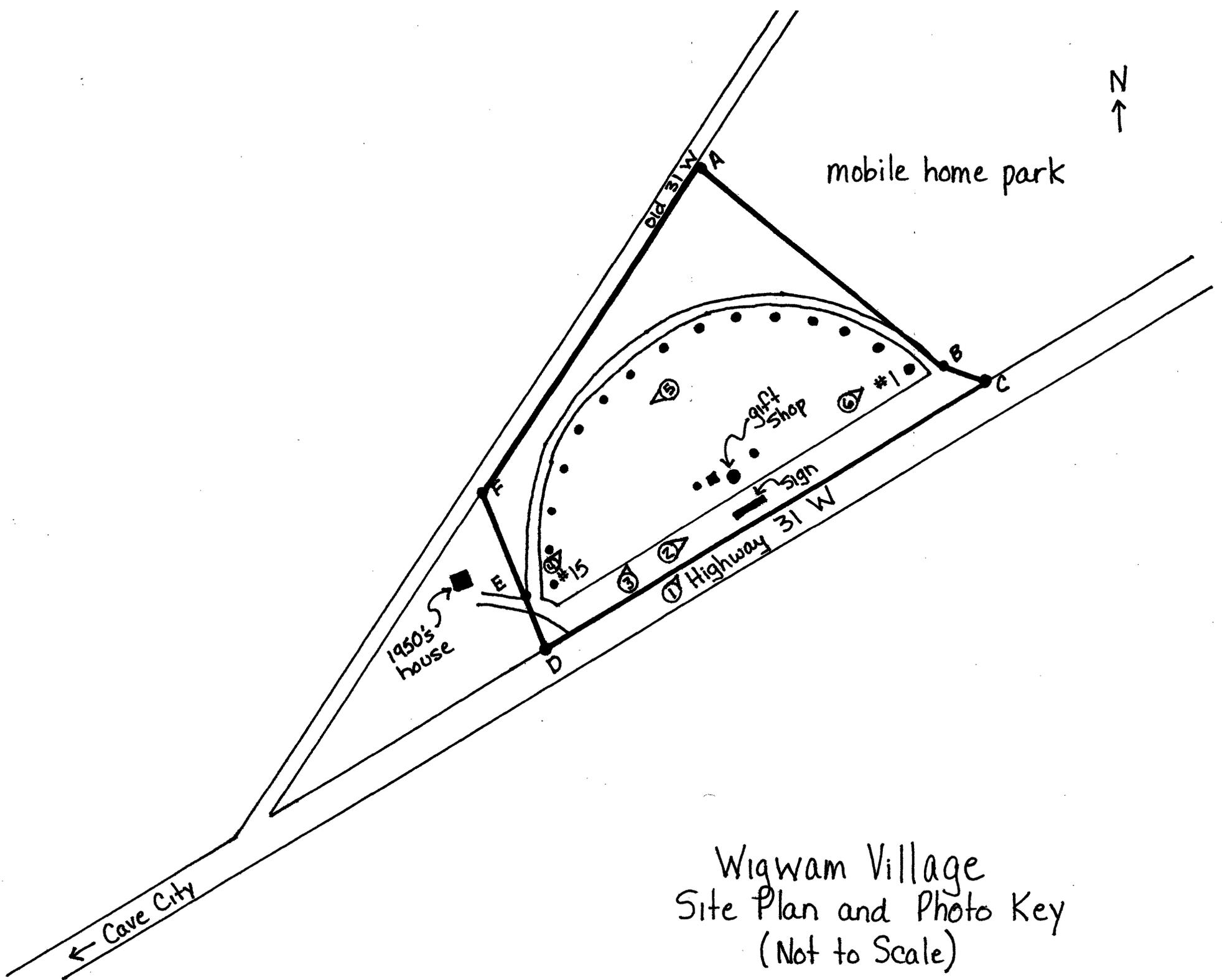
---

**Verbal Boundary Description (Continued)**

50 feet to Point C at the northwest edge of new Highway 31W; proceed in a southwesterly direction along the northwest side of new Highway 31W approximately 550 feet to Point D; then follow a straight line in a northwesterly direction 210 feet through Point E at the west corner of the southwest end of the driveway and on to Point F at the southeast side of old Highway 31W; follow the southeast side of old Highway 31W in a northeasterly direction 450 feet to Point A, the place of beginning.



PHOTOCOPY OF POST CARD:  
AERIAL VIEW OF WIGWAM VILLAGE NO. 2



Wigwam Village  
 Site Plan and Photo Key  
 (Not to Scale)

RECEIVED

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

FEB 05 1988

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. 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. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Wigwam Village No. 2  
other names/site number BN-328

2. Location

street & number NW side Highway 31W, 1.6 miles NE of junction with Hwy. 70  not for publication  
city, town Cave City  vicinity  
state Kentucky code KY county Barren code 009 zip code 42127

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>19</u>	<u>          </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>1</u>	<u>          </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>20</u>	<u>          </u> objects
			<u>          </u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
Barren County M. R. A.

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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.  See continuation sheet.

David L. Meyer 2-6-88  
Signature of certifying official Date  
State Historic Preservation Officer, Commonwealth of Kentucky  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
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. Patrick Andrews 3/16/88  
 See continuation sheet. \_\_\_\_\_  
 determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet. \_\_\_\_\_  
 determined not eligible for the National Register. \_\_\_\_\_  
 removed from the National Register. \_\_\_\_\_  
 other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Jan Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic

Hotel

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic

Hotel

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other

Novelty/roadside vernacular

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Concrete

roof N/A

other Steel—"sticks" at top of tepee

**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

Wigwam Village No. 2 is perhaps the most whimsical and eye-catching architectural landmark in Barren County. Featuring 18 steel and concrete tepees, the 1937 motor court in the northern outskirts of Cave City occupies a site bordered on the front (east) and back (west) by new Highway 31W and old Highway 31W, respectively. The newer two-lane Highway 31W, a major north-south route in the southern Pennyrile region of Kentucky, connects Cave City with the towns of Horse Cave, approximately three miles to the northeast in Hart County, and Park City six miles to the southwest. In downtown Cave City, Highway 31W intersects with Highway 70, the principal access to Mammoth Cave National Park. Just outside of Cave City, Highway 70 crosses I-65, the favored route of the millions of tourists who visit Mammoth Cave and the scores of private recreational attractions, motels and gift shops lining Highway 31W and 70 in Barren County. Currently, Barren County has 23 individual properties and three districts listed in the National Register. All were listed in 1983 as part of the Barren County Multiple Resources Area nomination except for Fort Williams in the county seat of Glasgow which was listed in 1975.

Wigwam Village No. 2 is notable for its immaculately maintained appearance. Its pristine quality also is due to the symmetrical and very precise placement of every element. As a motor court, Wigwam Village No. 2 is typical of the early phase of motels in its composition of numerous small buildings, each dedicated to a single function such as a sleeping room or office. At Wigwam Village No. 2 there are 18 units in the identical conical design of a tepee, or wigwam: 15 sleeping rooms and a gift shop/office flanked by two restrooms. In addition, a small frame building stands next to the southwest side of the gift shop, and, in front of the gift shop, a concrete island formerly supporting gasoline pumps features a tall metal and neon sign.

The gift shop/office, small frame building, and two flanking restrooms (one marked "Squaws" and the other "Braves") stand in a row parallel to the highway. Between these four buildings and the highway, an approximately 40-foot-wide asphalt apron runs the full length of the complex and serves as a parking area for gift shop patrons and visitors not spending the night. The 15 sleeping rooms are arranged in a wide arc beginning and ending at the edge of the parking area. A manicured lawn surrounds each unit and descends inside the arc to a large flat area dotted with park benches and brightly painted metal playground equipment. A driveway outlines the outer edge of the arc and an asphalt walkway close to the front doors forms the inner edge. In the space between each unit, a one-car parking pad connects to the driveway. Low, carefully trimmed evergreen hedges define the circular foundations of all 18 tepees. Three mature hardwoods are symmetrically arranged across the lawn and very tall spruces and cedars are clustered to form a backdrop behind the gift shop and restrooms. Numerous hardwoods are scattered across the rear or west end of the property, between the driveway and the old 31W highway.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Wigwam Village No. 2, Barren County, Kentucky

Section number 7 Page 2

---

The exteriors of the 18 "wigwams" vary only in size and number of windows. At 52 feet tall and approximately 35 feet in diameter, the gift shop/office (originally a lunch room and office) is the largest. It has four windows, two windows on each side closer to the entrance, which is protected by a gabled metal canopy. The fifteen sleeping rooms are approximately 20 or 25 feet in diameter and have two windows. The smaller units contain one double bed and the larger units, number six through ten, contain two. The two restroom buildings flanking the gift shop are approximately 15 feet in diameter and have no windows.

All of the wigwams are identical in their conical shapes and proportions. Their structural systems consist of steel angle irons on which metal bands spaced one foot apart are wrapped horizontally and "on the bias" and welded. The frames are covered in a concrete-like stucco which is molded at the entrances into rounded forms intended to simulate open flaps. Wooden doors holding tall jalousie windows are recessed, as are the small square jalousie windows. On the surface of the cone, the window frames also are square but they are turned 45 degrees so that they "rest" on a corner. White paint covers the walls, accented in bright red—at the top of the cone with a jagged lower edge; about halfway up the wall in a bold zig-zag band encircling the building; around the window openings in a narrow zig-zag band with small triangles along the inner edge and marks similar to exclamation points at the corners. The sleeping room numbers above the doors and on the sides next to the respective parking spaces also are red. Four slender metal poles in imitation of the ends of branches project from the top of each wigwam. Two Art Deco-inspired tubular metal and plywood chairs sit at the edge of the lawn opposite the door to each sleeping unit. Pole-mounted floodlights are located between the chairs in front of five of the units.

The interior of the units are sheathed in panels of plywood that give the walls a bevelled effect. Dropped flat ceilings are located at a level above that of the exterior zig-zag band. In the narrow bathrooms created by a partition at the rear of the sleeping units, red and white tiles on the floor, walls and stall shower repeat the zig-zag motif.

The small frame building southwest of the office was the original gift shop and now houses ice and drink machines. It is a one-story pyramidal-roofed form sheathed in board and batten. On the narrow concrete platform in front of the gift shop, tall poles with neon "vacancy" and "office" signs suspended in between support a tall metal, two-sided sign in the two-dimensional shape of the units with the slogan "sleep in a wigwam" traced in neon.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation  
Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

1937  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

1937  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder

Frank Redford  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Wigwam Village No. 2 is nationally significant as the hallmark of a type of hostelry that developed in direct response to the proliferation of the automobile during the 1930s. In its fanciful emulation of an Indian encampment executed in steel and concrete, Wigwam Village No. 2 also exemplifies a unique type of architecture created for automobile services along the American roadside. The motor court's transportation and architecture areas of significance are intertwined because the cultural message evoked by its architectural form is integral to the profits made by the enterprise it houses. Wigwam Village No. 2 is one of the most historic forerunners of a practice now known as place-product-packaging--the commercial use of architectural imagery by automobile service-oriented establishments along the American roadside.

A primary impact of the automobile was its broadening of the concepts of recreation and leisure. Unlike travel by train, for decades the most common means of long-distance transportation used by the majority of Americans, automobile motoring permitted the travel itself to be part of a vacation, not just the means of reaching a destination. In the early 1920s, "autocamping" became the rage and campgrounds sprang up all over the country. By the end of the decade, however, the camps' latrines, common showers and increasing patronage by itinerants brought about by the onset of the Depression had led to a loss of desirability to many motorists. The next step was the cabin or cottage camp, or the proto-motel.

In a March 1986 Smithsonian article entitled "The Great American Motel," Phil Patton explains that the word "motel" (first coined by Arthur Heinemann in 1926 for his Mo-tel Inn in San Luis Obispo) encompasses three phases of roadside hostelries--the motor court, the classic motel, and the chain motor inn. The first phase, equivalent to the cabin or cottage camp, appeared in a variety of materials and styles limited only by the imagination. The tiny individual tourist cabins could be mock Colonial New England houses or adobe huts and usually emphasized the attractions of the region. Carports eventually were added to many units in a transitional stage leading to the reign during the 1940s and 1950s of the classic motels, long one-story buildings of rooms attached in a string and bordered by parking spaces. Although a few companies built chains of motor courts and classic motels, most of the early motels began as mom-and-pop operations incorporating gas stations and restaurants. The 1960s boom in chain motor inns, characterized by standardized units, an emphasis on family values, and the financial resources of franchising, accompanied state and national highway programs and soon rendered most of the classic motels obsolete.

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Andrews, J. J. C. The Well-Built Elephant and Other Roadside Attractions. 1984. Barren County Registry of Deeds. Barren County Courthouse, Glasgow, Kentucky.  
California Crazy: Roadside Vernacular Architecture. Introduction by David Gebhard. 1980.  
Jakle, John A. "Roadside Restaurants: The Evolution of Place-Product-Packaging." Journal of Cultural Geography. III:1, Fall-Winter 1982.  
Patton, Phil. "The Great American Hotel." Smithsonian. March 1986.  
Nunn, Toby. "Wigwam Village is 50 Years Old." Newspaper article (source and date unknown) reprinted as flyer by Wigwam Village No. 2 proprietors.  
Redford, Mrs. Frank. Telephone interviews conducted by Keith Sculle on 30 December 1985, 22 January 1986, and 5 March 1986.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Kentucky Heritage Council

**10. Geographical Data**

Acres of property approximately 3.5 acres

UTM References

A 

1	6
---	---

5	9	3	6	8	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	1	1	1	2	3	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

  
Zone Easting Northing

C 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

B 

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

  
Zone Easting Northing

D 

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

As shown on the accompanying Site Plan & Photo Key, begin at Point A on the southeast side of old Highway 31W approximately 1,050 feet northeast of the junction of old Highway 31W and new Highway 31W; proceed along a straight line in a southeasterly direction 350 feet to Point B at the north corner of the northeast end of the driveway; follow the north edge of the driveway

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The described boundary encloses all of the property contributing to the historic character of Wigwam Village No. 2. Although property to the northeast and southwest is part of the legally defined parcel containing the motel, these areas contain non-contributing resources (a 1950s frame house and a mobile home park, respectively).

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Claudia R. Brown, N.R. Coordinator / Keith A. Sculle, N. R. Coordinator  
organization KY Heritage Council/Illinois Hist. Preservation Ag. date January 1988  
street & number 12th Floor, Capital Plaza Tower telephone 502/564-7005  
city or town Frankfort state Kentucky zip code 40601

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Wigwam Village No. 2, Barren County, Kentucky

Section number 8 Page 2

Patton characterizes the Wigwam Village chain as "the most famous of the old protomotels." These complexes combining motel, gas station and restaurant originated in 1933 in Horse Cave in Hart County, Kentucky. Of the seven Wigwam Villages eventually constructed, Wigwam Village No. 2, approximately three miles southwest of Horse Cave, is one of the few still in existence and the only one that has remained in continuous operation as a motel. Its imaginative concept of mock wigwams as the individual units represents a total design created by architectural setting, costumed personnel and packaged products.

The term "place-product-packaging" was first publicized by a 1978 Cooper-Hewitt Museum exhibit of the same name which focused on roadside building types as exemplars of total design. Later, the term was used by cultural geographer John Jakle to explain the uses of imagery by roadside restaurants and to provide a framework for further examination of such place-making. Equally strange-looking buildings such as the shell-shaped Shell Oil gas station in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and the duck-shaped poultry shop in Long Island appeared across the American landscape in the 1920s and 1930s and on through the 1950s, but most of the early ones have been lost or neglected and very few survive well preserved and serving their original purpose as Wigwam Village No. 2 has.

Frank Redford, a native of Horse Cave, created the first two Wigwam Villages and fully developed the Indian motif of their place-product-packaging. Redford was born February 17, 1899, to a farm family, but after high school graduation went to work for a banana company in Honduras. He remained with the company for three years and returned home to be with his mother when his father died. On a trip to California with his mother, Redford visited Long Beach where he saw a lunch stand shaped and painted like an Indian tepee with smaller but otherwise similar-looking structures outside for restrooms. This unusual collection of structures, built sometime in the 1920s at the corner of Covina and Fifty-Second Place and razed in 1950, featured the rolled flaps of the tepee front and the red zig-zag decoration that later would be featured in Wigwam Village. The impression of these curious California structures stuck in Redford's memory.

Upon his return to Horse Cave, Redford opened and briefly operated a tepee-shaped ice cream parlor. He wanted to make more money, however, so in 1933, on recently paved highway 31E, he opened the gas station and lunch room that would become the nucleus of his first Wigwam Village. The location was ideal as the heavily travelled Highway 31E led to several nearby tourist destinations, including the extremely popular Mammoth Cave, the world's longest known cave system and the focus of lore about the Native Americans who once populated the area. Doubtless snared by the stylized tepee, which housed a small office and a lunch counter seating 20, travelers flocked to Redford's roadside business. When customers began asking why motel rooms were not available, Redford built six in 1935. The 30-foot-tall conical, stuccoed wood-framed "sleeping rooms" (he preferred not to call them tepees or wigwams, or even cabins) were arranged in an elliptical arc. An open lawn separated the rooms from a new and taller office/lunch room tepee flanked by restrooms at the roadside, similar to the Long Beach restaurant Redford had seen in Long Beach. A small, four-sided wooden stand, or "trading post," augmented the Indian setting with its sales of real Indian jewelry as well as ice cream, cold drinks and souvenirs.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Wigwam Village No. 2, Barren County, Kentucky

Section number 8 Page 3

---

The improvised roadside business prospered, and in 1936 Redford made bigger plans involving construction under patent of "Wigwam Villages" throughout the country. The following year he set up Wigwam Village No. 2 outside of Cave City on Highway 31W as the model for the system's operation. Although the site plan was similar to that of the Horse Cave business, there were fifteen sleeping facilities and a larger lunch room, all constructed with steel frames covered in concrete. The location even closer to Mammoth Cave on the heavily travelled interstate road connecting Louisville, Kentucky, and Nashville, Tennessee, assured good business. The difference between the interstate traffic and traffic through Horse Cave on Highway 31E also was related to the distinct characters of the two "Villages": the smaller lunch room with curbside service in Horse Cave became a favorite spot for local teenagers while the heavy interstate traffic, including truckers, rendered Wigwam Village No. 2 a stop for adults.

Typical of the mom-and-pop management mode of the majority of early motels, Mr. and Mrs. Redford worked as a team to dispel the stigma of uncleanness, bad food and debauchery attached to many early motor courts and to make their place desirable in every regard. According to Mrs. Redford, she was in exclusive charge of the lunch room where she only allowed women to work in keeping with the prevailing sexual division of labor. She believed customers regarded the preparation of food in plain view at Wigwam Village No. 2 as certification of its purity. Only men cleaned the rooms, made the beds, and pumped the gas. Drinking was permitted, but not to boisterous excess. The wholesome results were advertised by Duncan Hines, headquartered in nearby Bowling Green, Kentucky, who carried information about Wigwam Village No. 2 in his nationally circulated publications Adventures in Eating and Adventures in Sleeping. Mrs. Redford recalled that Hines was gratified to find high quality examples which embodied the standard he hoped to set for the new automobile travel industry.

Respectability bred more respectability. The good reputation of Wigwam Village No. 2 helped Mrs. Redford to recruit young farm girls to work in the lunch room with the consent of their protective fathers. There also was a policy of employing young marrieds just out of high school, perhaps because the young partners' mutual dependence for prosperity ensured industry. These employment practices yielded an attractive group of young adults who must have subliminally reinforced the consumers' assurance of a reliable product. This image was enhanced in the early years by the employees' wearing uniforms, which tend to convey the impression of order; the women's beige dresses were trimmed in red rick-rack similar to the design on the wigwams. Perhaps the most dramatic touch in labor practices was the occasional employment of Indian dancers from Oklahoma to perform in the so-called "arena" or space encircled by the sleeping rooms.

Labor practices were only an adjunct to the core of Wigwam Village's place-product-packaging, namely, its architecture. The large, almost abstract geometric forms of the tepee sleeping rooms, with their metal "twigs" at the top, "flaps" folded back to reveal the door, and bright paint scheme of white with red zig-zag accents, surely lured the fun-seeking and curious. The buildings' image was especially dramatic after dark when floodlights were beamed on them. Moveable and decorative items augmented the architecture. Authentic Navajo rugs and blankets purchased

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Wigwam Village No. 2, Barren County, Kentucky

Section number 8 Page 4

---

by the Redfords during trips to Arizona decorated each tepee sleeping room. Because an actual Indian bed would have been unacceptable to most auto travellers, the furniture of hickory complete with bark was chosen as sufficiently rustic to connote a frontier or wilderness setting and thus appropriately enhance the village's special atmosphere.

The Redfords fully conceived and executed the place-product-packaging of the Wigwam Villages Indian motif. Only Paul Young, who purchased the motel in 1946 when the Redfords moved to California, extended the technique by stocking items intended for easy removal and long-time retention by travellers. These included handbills simulated as checks and ashtrays embossed with tepees. Young also erected along Kentucky's highways tepee-shaped motel signs advertising the Wigwam Villages.

Place-product-packaging seems never to have been as fully developed elsewhere in the Wigwam Villages as at its points of inception by Frank Redford in Horse Cave and Cave City. Redford himself opened the largest village, with 19 sleeping rooms, in 1947 on Route 66 in San Bernadino, California, but this motel lacked a restaurant. Interior decor did replicate the rustic furniture, Indian rugs and blankets, and zig-zag bathroom tiles of the earlier Kentucky motels. Place-product-packaging is not known to have been fully examined at the other four villages. Located in Holbrook, Arizona, New Orleans, Birmingham and Orlando, they were owned and operated by other individuals in return for one percent of the gross annual income paid to Redford under the patent he obtained in 1937 for his tepee design.

Of all of the seven Wigwam Villages, only Wigwam Village No. 2 in Cave City has been carefully preserved and continually operated as a motel. (The first Wigwam Village of frame and stucco in Horse Cave was razed a few years ago after a prolonged period of deterioration. The Orlando, Birmingham, and New Orleans Wigwam Villages also have been destroyed. The deteriorated Arizona motel currently is the target of a tax act project.) After Paul Young's tenure of ownership, title passed in 1953 to H. H. and William G. Proffitt, whose relatives, Roger and Elizabeth Proffitt, own and operate Wigwam Village No. 2 today. Although the uniforms and Indian rugs and blankets have been gone for years, a certain degree of place-product-packaging survives. The lunch room has been converted to a large gift shop with a good deal of merchandise in an Indian theme. Wigwam Village souvenirs include tee shirts and miniature plaster statues identical to the tepee sleeping rooms (the customer may select one with the number of the unit he stayed in). The Proffitts also have retained the letterhead stationery with the Wigwam Village motif and have reprinted as a flyer a 1987 article celebrating the fiftieth birthday of Wigwam Village No. 2. Mr. & Mrs. Proffitt are proud of their motel and have taken steps to ensure that it is preserved after they retire.

Before 1970 when I-65 was completed a few miles southwest, the "no vacancy" sign at Wigwam Village No. 2 was lit every night. After I-65 came, business tapered off for awhile, but now the "vacancy" sign is lit less often and the motel is full every weekend, its novelty and low rates (\$10.00/night for one double bed, \$15.00 for two) attracting a steady clientele. Knowledge of the history of a creation such as Wigwam Village No. 2 is essential to an understanding of the cultural landscape engendered by the automobile. The enduring popularity of this proto-motel

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Wigwam Village No. 2, Barren County, Kentucky

Section number 8 Page 5

---

demonstrates that novel commercial concepts merging the product and architectural form continue to capture our imaginations by providing escape from the mundane which has become all too pervasive in our culture. As the Proffitts like to ask, "When was the last time you slept in a tepee?"

---

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

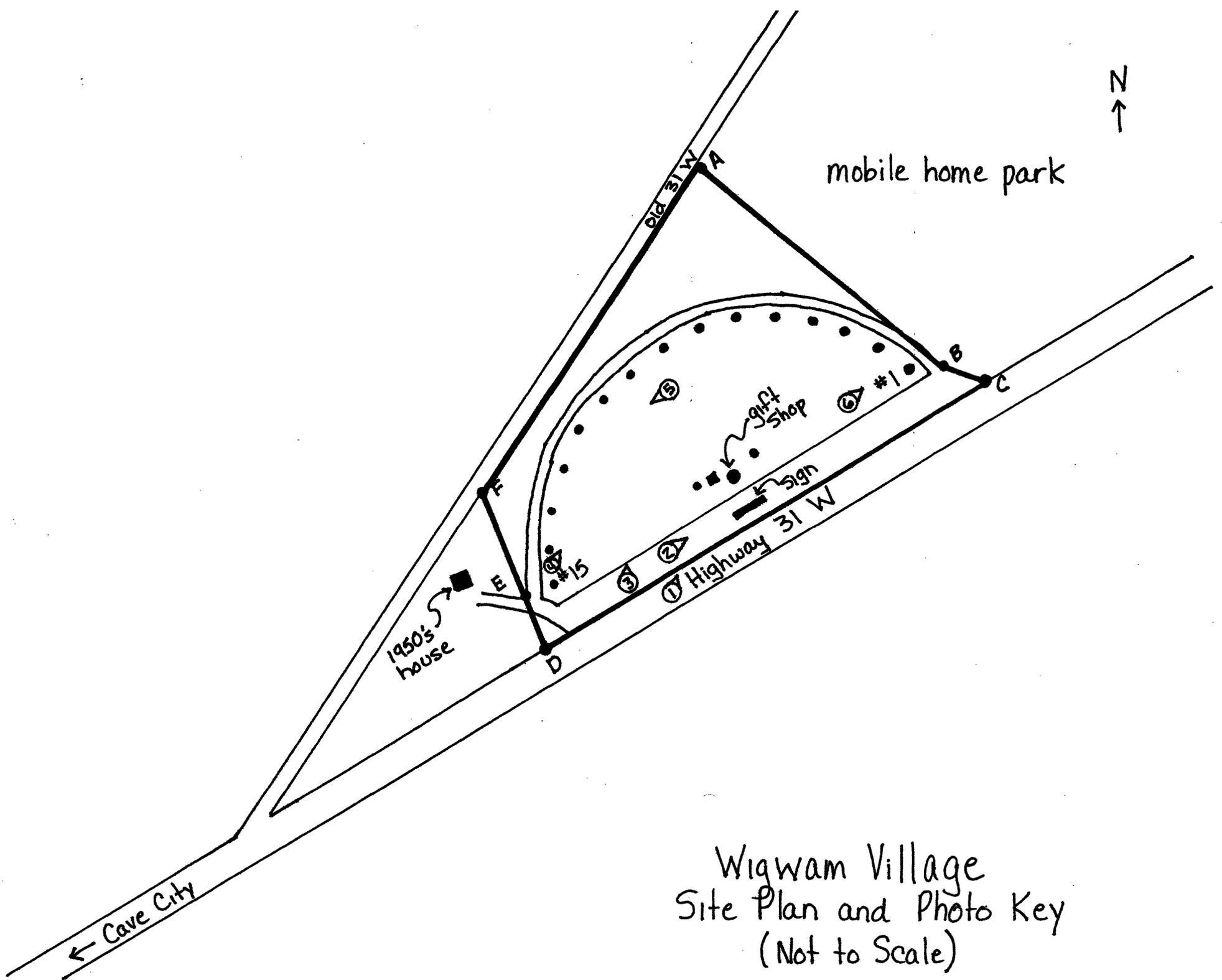
---

**Verbal Boundary Description (Continued)**

50 feet to Point C at the northwest edge of new Highway 31W; proceed in a southwesterly direction along the northwest side of new Highway 31W approximately 550 feet to Point D; then follow a straight line in a northwesterly direction 210 feet through Point E at the west corner of the southwest end of the driveway and on to Point F at the southeast side of old Highway 31W; follow the southeast side of old Highway 31W in a northeasterly direction 450 feet to Point A, the place of beginning.



PHOTOCOPY OF POST CARD:  
AERIAL VIEW OF WIGWAM VILLAGE NO. 2



Wigwam Village  
 Site Plan and Photo Key  
 (Not to Scale)