

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Wilson Motel

other names/site number Wilson Tourist Court; KHC Individual Survey No. NEB 133, NEB-133.1

2. Location

street & number 530 N. Third Street

NA
NA

not for publication

city or town Bardstown

vicinity

state Kentucky code KY county Nelson code 179 zip code 40004

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this x 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 x meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide x local

Signature of certifying official/Title Mark Dennen, SHPO Date _____

Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official _____ Date _____

Title _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

 entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register

 determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register

 other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

Wilson Motel
Name of Property

Nelson County, KY
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
		district
		site
		structure
1	0	object
3	0	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/hotel

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/hotel

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Bungalow

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE; STONE/limestone

walls: BRICK

roof: ASPHALT; METAL

other:

Wilson Motel
Name of Property

Nelson County, KY
County and State

Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The Wilson Motel (NEB-133 and NEB 133.1) is located at 530 N. Third St. in Bardstown, Nelson County, Kentucky. The motel is situated on .43 acres at the southwest corner of the intersection of U. S. Highway 31-E (North Third Street) and Barber Avenue. The property is located in the Bardstown Local Historic District, in a mixed-use neighborhood that includes single family residences to the south and commercial establishments to the north and east. The Bardstown National Register District adjoins the property on the south and the motel property is the northern gateway to historic Bardstown. The Wilson Motel includes a residence/office, an L-shaped motel building, and a pole-mounted sign. All of these features remain in their historic setting.

Setting

Bardstown experienced rapid growth in population in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries due to the presence of the Louisville & Nashville (L & N) Railroad and the expansion of local industries and trades. By 1910 there remained only one large tract of land within the Bardstown city limits that was available for residential development. This 12-acre tract was part of the P. S. Barber estate and was located at the northwestern limits of the city along North Third Street and West Beall Avenue. On December 17, 1910, the executors of the Barber estate sold the tract to a real estate investor and developer named Cap Carden, who divided the property into fifty-one lots.ⁱ Carden offered these lots, known as the Carden Addition, for sale at public auction in July, 1911.ⁱⁱ

The Wilson Motel property is situated on Lot 13, Block A, in the northeast corner of the Carden Addition. The lot extends sixty-three feet along North Third Street on the east, two hundred and seventeen feet on the south, two hundred and twenty-five feet along Barber Ave. on the north, and one hundred and ten feet along Mulberry Alley on the west. By 1925 houses had been built on Lots 1-12 in Block A, but Lot 13 remained undeveloped. On December 12, 1925, A. Cameron Wilson purchased Lot 13 and completed construction of a residence there in 1926.ⁱⁱⁱ The residence was set back forty feet from North Third Street, in line with the setbacks of residences on Lots 1-12. In 1934, Wilson built an L-shaped tourist court at the rear of the property, access to which was via an entrance from Barber Avenue. The property included mature canopy trees along North Third Street and Barber Avenue. The area in front of the tourist court along Barber Avenue was retained as green space. In the late 1940's Wilson altered the design of the tourist court by reducing green space to accommodate parking and a swimming pool. He also installed a pole-mounted motel sign at the corner of the property.

The setting is little changed since 1926, except for the construction of a modern motel directly across North Third Street. The old L & N depot is now the office for My Old Kentucky Dinner Train, which runs on a section of the old L & N Railroad; the lumber yards have been replaced by other commercial enterprises; and the residences south of the property all retain their historic character and are contributing buildings in the Bardstown Historic District.

Motel Residence/Office

The Wilson Motel residence/office was the last residence built on the Carden Addition lots that fronted on North Third Street. It is obvious that A. Cameron Wilson, who owned a prosperous automobile dealership, desired to construct a distinctive dwelling that contrasted with the modestly-styled residences to the south of his property. The residence/office is a one-and-a-half-story Tudor style dwelling that has 2,065 square feet of living space and is constructed on a double-pile T-plan. Wilson designed the interior to include two separate

ⁱ *Nelson County Deed Book 77*, p. 472; *Nelson County Deed Book 78*, p. 15.

ⁱⁱ *Nelson County Deed Book 78*, p. 10.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Nelson County Deed Book 94*, p. 625.

Wilson Motel
Name of Property

Nelson County, KY
County and State

rooms on the west side for guests and one small room on the north side for an office. The building rests on a poured concrete foundation and includes a 1,389 square-foot concrete basement. The structural system consists of balloon frame construction with brick veneer walls laid in common bond. A continuous soldier course separates the house walls from the foundation. The roof is multi-gabled and is covered in asphalt shingles. The main block of the house features a pyramidal roof with a dominant front gable. The office on the north elevation also features a pyramidal roof. Hooded demi-lune vents face north and south nearest the highest peak of the roof centered over the main block.

The dominant features of the façade include the projecting front gable, recessed doorway, limestone chimney, dormer, and asymmetrical fenestration. The steeply-pitched projecting front gable is located on the south side of the building and includes triple fifteen-light casement windows on the first floor, and a single six-over-six round-headed double-hung window at the gable with a segmented head in the upper sash and brick segmented arch above. The extended eave of the gable is boxed and molded. The recessed doorway entrance is located to the right (facing the building) of the triple window and includes a brick segmented arch. The wood door consists of two vertical panels with nine lights. The limestone chimney is located right of center. It is laid in regular courses and tapers from the left after it projects through the overhanging eave and it includes a large wrought iron "S" brace near the top. A gabled dormer with paired six-over-six double-hung windows is located on the second story to the left of the chimney. Paired ten-light casement windows are located on each side of the chimney on the first floor. The windows on the first floor include soldier course lintels. The triple casement window is topped with a white-painted keystone and the recessed entrance and round-headed window are each accented with white-painted stone springers and a keystone.

The south elevation includes two paired ten-light casement windows on the first floor near the front and one small paired, six-light casement kitchen window at the rear. The west elevation includes four bays with two four-over-one sash windows, each of which is flanked by a wooden six-paneled door. Each door provided individual access to the two separate rooms which functioned as the earliest rooms of the Wilson Tourist Court. There is also a central gabled dormer that matches the dormer on the façade. The north elevation includes an 8' x 15' extension with a pyramidal roof that serves as the motel office. This room has paired casement windows that match those on the right side of the façade. The west end of the north elevation includes a small six-over-one sash window and paired eight-over-one sash windows.

The floor plan results from the dual function of the building as the residence and office for The Wilson Motel. The interior of the first floor is arranged in six rooms: The front doorway leads to the dining room, to the rear of which is located the kitchen; the living room, dominated by a large brick fireplace, is located to the north of the dining room; at the rear of the living room are located two separate rooms which were included as guest rooms when the house was built in 1926. These rooms were accessible only through the two exterior doors described above. Each spacious room included a bath and kitchen.^{iv} The motel office is located in a wing on the north side of the building, described above, access to which is via a door on the west end. The interior features hardwood floors, crown-molding, chair rails, and arched doorways.

The residence/office retains its original architectural elements and is in excellent condition. The original arrangement of the interior has been retained, including the guest rooms. The residence/office continues to possess a high degree of integrity in terms of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Motel Units

In 1932 A. Cameron Wilson applied for a building permit "to erect a Tourist Court on the rear of his lot at Third and Barber."^v An aerial photograph shows that the tourist court was near completion in early 1934.^{vi}

^{iv} Oral Interview with Sue Carol Cornell, 13 April 2011, Bardstown (Joint City-County Planning Commission of Nelson County office).

^v Sarah Smith, *Historic Nelson County* (1983 ed.), 325.

^{vi} Aerial Photograph of Bardstown, 1934.

Wilson Motel

Name of Property

Nelson County, KY

County and State

The tourist court was a one-story L-shaped building with an integrated roofline. The building extended west from the residence/office along the south property line and then extended north along Mulberry Alley to Barber Avenue. It appears from early postcard views that there were originally nine units, each of which was separated by an enclosed parking space.^{vii} This was a typical layout for tourist courts during the 1930s.^{viii} Around 1950, Wilson modernized the building to accommodate changing tastes and replaced the enclosed parking spaces with additional or enlarged units. He changed the name of the business to The Wilson Motel and the motel then included fifteen units.

The motel building was constructed of concrete block and had a gable roof covered with asphalt shingles. The eaves were interrupted by a small gable over each doorway. The building originally included six-light wood windows. In the late 194's, a walkway was constructed in front of each wing and the roof was extended over the new walkway, thereby eliminating the doorway gables. The concrete walls were clad in brick veneer at this time. The building has undergone only minor alterations since 1950.

Motel Sign

The Wilson Motel sign is located on the corner and was erected around 1950 when the name changed from Wilson's Tourist Court to the Wilson Motel. The sign is 18' high and pole-mounted with a red neon arrow pointing toward the motel. The sign has experienced some damage from vandalism, but, overall, is in good condition.

^{vii} Color postcard, Wilson's Tourist Court, late 1940's

^{viii} Jakle, Sculle, and Rogers, *The Motel in America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 37, 43.

Wilson Motel
Name of Property

Nelson County, KY
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

1926-1961

Significant Dates

1926; 1934

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Period of Significance (justification)

The residence was built for A. C. Wilson in 1926 and the Wilson Motel was built for A. C. Wilson in 1934. Both buildings continued to have importance through 1961 and no earlier date can be assigned to end the historic period.

Criteria Considerations NA

Wilson Motel
Name of Property

Nelson County, KY
County and State

Statement of Significance

Summary Paragraph

The Wilson Motel (NEB-133, NEB-133.1) meets National Register Criterion A because the property is associated with the historic development of transportation and commerce in central Kentucky. This property is significant within the historic context of "Automobile Travel and the Growth and Development of Tourism in Central Kentucky, 1926-1961." It began operation in 1926 with the construction of a residence that included two guest rooms on the west elevation. In 1934 the owner added a one-story tourist court on the property. The development of automobile travel, public highways, and tourism made significant contributions to the economic and social history of Bardstown during this period. These developments spurred the establishment of new types of lodging that were designed to meet the needs of the traveling public. The design of The Wilson Motel is an excellent example of how the design of lodging for tourists changed from the early cottage court of the 1920s to the modern motel of the 1950s.

Historic Context – Automobile Travel and the Growth and Development of Tourism in Central Kentucky, 1926-1961

Bardstown is located in north central Kentucky in the western Bluegrass Region, about thirty-five miles southeast of Louisville. It is situated near the Beech Fork River, which historically provided access to the Ohio River, and it is bisected by historic highways U. S. 31E and U. S. 62. It is a 4th class city and had a population of 11,700 in 2010. Bardstown was founded in 1780 and has served as the county seat of Nelson County since the founding of the county in 1785. Most of the core area of Bardstown is included in the Bardstown National Register District and there are 246 buildings that contribute to the historic character of the District. The establishment of My Old Kentucky Home (Federal Hill) as a state shrine in 1923, the survival of such a large number of historic buildings, and the preservation of much of Bardstown's historic setting have made the city a popular tourist destination for decades.

The construction of lodging for tourists was a response to the growth of tourism and the needs of tourists. Tourism is not a twentieth-century phenomenon. In fact, entrepreneurs developed scenic places such as Niagara Falls into national tourist destinations in the early-nineteenth century. In central Kentucky, Mammoth Cave, located on the Louisville and Nashville Road, became the most popular tourist site in the state by the 1830s. Spurred by the celebration of the nation's centennial in 1876, many Americans in the late-nineteenth century took a renewed interest in their history and heritage. One result was the outpouring of hundreds of published county and state histories, atlases, reminiscences, military histories, and other historical works. Another result was the formation of numerous historical societies and heritage organizations, such as the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Mount Vernon Ladies Association, and the Hermitage Ladies Association. The renewed interest in, and remembrance of, American history resulted in the development by 1900 of national heritage tourism sites such as Mount Vernon and The Hermitage. By the early-twentieth century, Americans were eager to visit not only scenic wonders but also places associated with national, state, and local historic persons and events.

The centennial of the birth of Abraham Lincoln was honored not only by the minting of the Lincoln penny, but also by efforts to develop his birthplace near Hodgenville, Kentucky, as an historic shrine. In 1909 a group of private citizens established the Lincoln Birthplace Memorial at Hodgenville. By 1911 the historic Bardstown & Louisville Turnpike and the Bardstown & Green River Turnpike—linking Louisville and Bardstown with Hodgenville and Mammoth Cave—were renamed the Central Lincoln Road. While most tourists visited these places via rail, advances in automobile technology made it possible for adventurous tourists to travel by auto over the gravel and stone road to Lincoln's birthplace, Mammoth Cave, and other heritage and scenic sites. Local groups in central Kentucky quickly seized the opportunity to take advantage of these new opportunities by promoting road improvements and tourism. On April 29, 1911 the Central Lincoln Road

Wilson Motel
Name of Property

Nelson County, KY
County and State

Association was established in Bardstown for the purpose of reconstruction of “this great historic highway,” and expressed the hope that travelers would “gladly linger” in Bardstown “since it alone can link the Civil War to the Revolution – the days of Lincoln to the days of Washington.”^{ix} The Association’s booklet suggested a number of sites in Bardstown that tourists could visit, including St. Joseph Cathedral, the Ben Hardin House, Federal Hill, John Fitch’s grave, Lover’s Leap, and, finally, the Town Creek gristmill. The booklet reminded tourists that they could drive through a covered bridge as they traveled out of Bardstown to Lincoln’s birthplace.

The Central Lincoln Road Association was short-lived and was replaced in 1915 by two ambitious national highway development associations. The Jackson Highway Association conceived of a paved route, which they named the Jackson Highway, which ran over established historic roads from Niagara Falls via Nashville to New Orleans. Branch associations were formed in each state and the Kentucky branch was incorporated in Bardstown on May 28, 1915 by a local group that included the County Judge and a bank director.^x The Kentucky portion, formerly the Central Lincoln Road, was finally paved in 1925^{xi} and was designated U. S. Highway 31-E by 1932. The same Bardstown group formed a local branch of the Dixie Central Highway Association in 1915.^{xii} The proposed Dixie Central Highway ran from the Straits of Mackinac via Louisville to Miami. From Bardstown, the highway traveled east over the old Springfield Turnpike (now U. S. Highway 62). The goals of the local association branch in Bardstown were to aid in the construction of a paved surface, promote roadside beautification, and to assist in “the preservation and development of historic and watering places.” The Jackson Highway and the Dixie Central Highway enabled travelers to reach comfortably the growing number of tourist sites in central Kentucky. In 1922 the first tour buses carried tourists on excursions over the new Jackson Highway.^{xiii} By 1932, travel by auto and bus had increased sufficiently for *The Kentucky Standard* to run a front-page story touting Bardstown as the “biggest hub of state routes” and exclaiming that “tourists spend their time devouring local historic and scenic treasures.” The article concluded by stating “tourists follow highways” and that highways brought “a stream of tourists into Nelson County.”^{xiv}

The completion of paved highways made possible the development of new tourist destinations in the region. By 1910, Federal Hill, the ancestral home of Judge John Rowan, Sr., had become well known as the place where Stephen Foster wrote “My Old Kentucky Home” and it became known as My Old Kentucky Home. Although not open to the public, Federal Hill was already a popular tourist attraction in Bardstown. In 1920 the state of Kentucky established the Old Kentucky Home Commission and completed the purchase of My Old Kentucky Home in 1922.^{xv} Officially known as My Old Kentucky Home, the property became the first Kentucky state shrine in 1923. The celebration of this event July 4-5, 1923 was attended by over 15,000 visitors.^{xvi} My Old Kentucky Home quickly became the preeminent tourist attraction in Kentucky and became the first Kentucky state park in 1936. The celebration there of Foster Day, honoring Stephen Foster’s birthday, drew huge crowds from all over the region between 1916-1932.^{xvii} On June 26, 1959, *The Stephen Foster Story* opened in the newly built outdoor amphitheater on the grounds of My Old Kentucky Home. Over 17,000 visitors, some arriving by tour buses from New York City, attended the opening day parade and festivities. In 1926 the Federal government appropriated \$15,000 for the erection in the Bardstown court square of a

^{ix} *Central Lincoln Road to the Lincoln Home Park* (Bardstown Commercial Club, 1911)

^x *Nelson County Record of Articles of Incorporation, 1871-1926*, page 374.

^{xi} *The Kentucky Standard*, July 9, 1925.

^{xii} *Nelson County Record of Articles of Incorporation, 1871-1926*, page 376; *Automotive Industries*, Vol. 33, September 9, 1915, page 496.

^{xiii} “A New Field for the Motor Bus?” *The Commercial Vehicle*, February 1, 1922, p. 18.

^{xiv} *The Kentucky Standard*, June 30, 1932.

^{xv} *Nelson County Deed Book 88*, page 580; *Nelson County Deed Book 90*, page 269.

^{xvi} *The Kentucky Standard*, July 5, 1923; Young E. Allison, *The Old Kentucky Home: Its Song and the Story* (My Old Kentucky Home Commission, 1923)

^{xvii} *The Kentucky Standard*, July 8, 1926, June 3, 1932.

Wilson Motel
Name of Property

Nelson County, KY
County and State

monument in Bardstown to steamboat inventor John Fitch. The bronze monument was unveiled in 1927 and also became a major tourist attraction in the region.^{xviii}

Tourists traveling over the new highways to the new tourist destinations in central Kentucky took advantage of a plethora of guidebooks that described road conditions and “must see” historic sites along the way. The 1918 *Automobile Blue Book* described Bardstown as a “quaint old southern town” where the traveler could visit Federal Hill (“Stephen Foster wrote ‘My Old Kentucky Home Here in 1852’”) and St Joseph Cathedral (“first Catholic church west of the Alleghenies”). The book suggested cheerfully that tourists travel over the covered bridge on their way south from Bardstown to Gethsemane Abbey.^{xix} A 1926 local guidebook, complete with photographs, suggested that tourists in Bardstown visit not only My Old Kentucky Home but also St. Joseph Cathedral, the covered bridge, and nearby Nazareth College, Gethsemane Abbey, and the Lincoln Home Park Memorial in Hodgenville.^{xx} In the 1930s *The WPA Guide to Kentucky* added pioneer-era Cox’s Station and the Tom Moore distillery in Bardstown to a growing list of tourist destinations.

Still, with all this promotion, tourism in early-twentieth century central Kentucky was far from fully developed. There were few good roads, and the number of tourists was small. Until the 1920s, downtown hotels in Bardstown were the only types of lodging available to meet the needs of the small number of automobile travelers. There was ample parking, tourist sites were few, and, consequently, travelers did not stay in town for extended periods. The two main hotels were the Talbott Hotel and the Old Kentucky Home Hotel. The circa 1795 Talbott Hotel, located on the Court Square, offered a “colonial” ambience for tourists and it was featured in the several issues of the *Automobile Blue Book*.^{xxi} In 1938 a new owner capitalized on the desire of tourists to visit Bardstown’s historic sites by renaming it the Old Talbott Tavern.^{xxii} In 1959 it touted itself as “The Oldest Hotel West of the Alleghenies”^{xxiii} and the business continued to thrive as it adapted to the needs of tourists to connect with their heritage. The Old Kentucky Home Hotel was built in 1914 and was located just north of the Court Square, sandwiched between a commercial building and City Hall. It remained popular with tourists for some years, helped, no doubt, by the association of its name with the growing popularity of My Old Kentucky Home. It was torn down in the 1960s.

The development of paved national highways such as the Jackson Highway and the Dixie Central Highway in the 1920s, the establishment of the Federal highway system, and the growth and promotion of now-accessible tourist sites, resulted in a great increase in automobile travel. Tourists desired accommodations that fit their new mode of travel and met their increased desire for new amenities in their lodging. The old downtown hotels were not able to meet these needs and entrepreneurs developed new types of lodging styles and design to attract the mobile tourist.

Tourists wanted lodgings that they could reach easily by automobile and the core areas of cities and towns lacked easy access, available land for development, and had limited parking facilities. The availability of undeveloped land just outside these areas, and along the new highways, made possible the construction of new types of lodging that were specifically designed for the automobile traveler. There were numerous attractive sites available just outside the core of Bardstown, including the Carden Addition (1911), Cathedral Manor subdivision (1937), Maple Hill Addition (1920s-1930s), Foster Heights (1928), Halstead Addition (1930s), and Beechwold subdivision (1950).

^{xviii} *The Kentucky Standard*, May 26, 1927.

^{xix} *Automobile Blue Book*, 1918.

^{xx} *Souvenir Edition of Historic Bardstown and My Old Kentucky Home* (Bardstown Chamber of Commerce, 1926)

^{xxi} *Automobile Blue Book*, 1918, 1920.

^{xxii} *The Kentucky Standard*, March 17, 1938.

^{xxiii} *Ibid.*, June 25, 1959.

Wilson Motel
Name of Property

Nelson County, KY
County and State

Resources for Tourist Lodging

The earliest lodging design was the cottage court, which was generally a grouping of small, one-story frame units adjacent to a general store or campground. These individual units usually included a kitchenette and bath with parking next to the building.^{xxiv} Many of the later cottage courts connected the individual units with wall-to-wall sheltered parking spaces.^{xxv} The earliest cottage court in the Bardstown area was built in 1937 and was located about three miles north of Bardstown on the Jackson Highway next to what is now known as Olde Delaney's Country Store.^{xxvi} It continued in operation until the 1950s.

The popularity of the cottage court design was supplanted by the development in the 1930s of the tourist court, also referred to as a motor court. The tourist courts "were structured like cottage courts except that room units were totally integrated under single rooflines usually as a single building."^{xxvii} The tourist court units were arranged in a row or in an L-shaped building. Most were constructed of concrete block or brick veneer and had gable roofs. The owner or manager lived in an adjoining residence that also served as an office. The area in front of, or surrounded by, the tourist court units was landscaped in grass, flowers, and shrubs to provide an attractive location for the traveler. The popularity of tourist courts lasted well into the 1950's and competed, for a time, with motels. The Wilson Motel was the first tourist court (1934) in Bardstown. It was followed in succession by Baldwin's Tourist Court (1939) on West Stephen Foster Avenue in the Maple Hill neighborhood; Hahn's Tourist Court (c. 1945), located on North Third Street above the railroad in the Halstead Addition; and Irvine's Tourist Court (c. 1945), located across the street from the Wilson Motel.

Tourists continued to desire more accessibility and amenities, and business owners desired more space to accommodate tourists. The result was the development of the modern motel, which offered ample parking, more open space, patios and a large courtyard that often included a swimming pool.^{xxviii} Motels looked more inviting to the traveler than the older tourist courts, and their design in the early 1950s drew upon the "colonial" theme popular with tourists. The first motel in Bardstown was the Old Kentucky Home Motel, built in 1955 on West Stephen Foster Avenue, just west of Baldwin's Tourist Court. Its one-story, brick-veneered U-shaped building faced a spacious lawn, included a swimming pool in the rear, and provided 35 units with ample parking for its guests. The Bardstown-Parkview Motel was constructed in 1959 on East Stephen Foster Avenue, directly across from My Old Kentucky Home in the Beechwold subdivision. It was constructed as a stone-veneered one-story L-shaped motel and in 1960 a matching two-story building was constructed just east of the original unit. Both the Old Kentucky Home Motel and the Bardstown-Parkview Motel feature projecting gabled porticos that are supported by wood columns. Motels were more attractive to tourists because they offered more room space and parking, green space, and central air conditioning.

The tourist courts and motels marketed their locations and amenities to tourists in a variety of ways, including color postcards, newspaper advertising, membership in lodging associations, advertisements in highway maps, and signage in front of their businesses. Their competition for the national and regional tourist dollar directly influenced their building design and the emphasis on the amenities that they provided. As lodging design changed from L-shaped tourist courts to bi-level motels, so did amenities change from steam heat and small rooms to central air and heat, more parking, and larger rooms with better furnishings.

^{xxiv} Jakle, Sculle, and Rogers, *The Motel in America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 41.

^{xxv} *Ibid*, 43.

^{xxvi} *The Kentucky Standard*, 12 August 1937; WPA photo, 1937.

^{xxvii} *The Motel in America*, 43.

^{xxviii} *Ibid*, 45.

Wilson Motel
Name of Property

Nelson County, KY
County and State

Evaluation of the historic significance of Wilson Motel within the context Automobile Travel and the Growth and Development of Tourism in Central Kentucky, 1926-1961

The Wilson Motel is significant within its historic context because its site, setting, and building design teach us about the changes that have occurred in the lodging industry for the entire period of significance 1926-1961. The residence/office, constructed in 1926 for A. Cameron Wilson, included two separate rooms on the west side for guests. This arrangement harkened back to the older tourist home concept. In 1934 Wilson completed the construction of the one-story building that exists today. He named his new business Wilson's Tourist Court. Located on the Jackson Highway at the entrance to historic Bardstown, it provided an easily accessible site for the automobile traveler. The L-shaped, integral roof building arrangement, with its interior parking spaces, was typical of early tourist court design. In the late 1940s, Wilson responded to market changes in the lodging industry and filled in the parking spaces with more rooms, moved the parking area to the front, and renamed the business The Wilson Motel. He also extended the roofline to create a sheltered porch-like area for his guests, and added a swimming pool in the 1950s. The Wilson Motel is still in operation and is the last surviving tourist court in Bardstown. It is an excellent example of how building design changed over time in response to changes in the development of public highways, transportation, and tourism.

Evaluation of the Integrity of Wilson Motel's Historic Significance Location and Setting

The Wilson Motel retains a high degree of integrity of location and setting. The original parcel that includes the motel – Lot 13 of the Carden Addition to Bardstown – remains unchanged and is part of the legal description today. The location of the motel at the fringe of the core area of Bardstown is unchanged and it continues to be surrounded by the same residences as when the residence/office was constructed in 1926. The motel property is still the northern gateway to historic Bardstown. The setting is little changed since 1926, except for the construction of a modern motel directly across North Third Street.

Design

The motel retains a high degree of integrity of design. The residence/office was designed in 1926 to provide living quarters and a business office and this design and function remains unchanged. The L-shaped tourist court, constructed in 1934, retains the same footprint and appearance with the exception of the above-noted changes made in the late 1940s. These changes took place during the period of significance and indicate Wilson's choice to adapt the building's design to the changing tastes of the touring public.

Materials and Workmanship

The residence/office retains a high degree of workmanship and original materials. The building continues to exhibit the imagination of the original owner, A. C. Wilson, and the craftsmanship of the builder. The building has been well-maintained and contains excellent design in the façade and placement of the stone chimney. The residence/office is as distinctive now as it was when it was constructed in 1926. The tourist court building was constructed originally of concrete block, which was a typical building material for the period. When Wilson changed the design of the building in the late 1940s, he added a brick veneer wall to the front of the building. This change served to mask the filling-in of the enclosed parking spaces and also was consistent with changes in more modern materials and appearances that were being popularized elsewhere.

Association

The Wilson Motel retains a high degree of integrity of association with transportation and the development of public highways and tourism. It was built at this location precisely to attract tourists traveling along the Jackson Highway to Bardstown, Lincoln's birthplace, Mammoth Cave, and points south. The L-shaped tourist court building design and associated green space accommodated the need to provide parking, more room, and a more pleasing environment for tourists. The motel continues to provide these services today.

Feeling

Wilson Motel
Name of Property

Nelson County, KY
County and State

The location, arrangement of buildings, open space, and shady trees convey a strong sense of integrity of feeling. The setting of the immediate area has changed little since 1926, and the surrounding railroad depot, railroad tracks, street layout, and residences impart a strong feeling of continuity and historic character to The Wilson Motel.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Oral Interview with Sue Carol Cornell, 13 April 2011, Bardstown (Joint City-County Planning Commission of Nelson County office).

Kentucky Standard, 12 August 1937.

Kentucky Standard, 20 November 1952.

Kentucky Standard, 27 May 1954.

Kentucky Standard, 5 June 1955.

Kentucky Standard, 18 June 1959.

Kentucky Standard, 25 June 1959.

Nelson County Records (deeds, plats, marriages, wills), Nelson County Clerk's Office.

US Population Census for Nelson County, Kentucky, 1910, 1920, and 1930.

Sanborn Map Co., *Insurance Map of Bardstown* (1925, 1951).

USGS Topo Map, Bardstown Quadrangle, 1953.

USGS Topo Map, Bardstown Quadrangle, 1987.

Aerial Map of Bardstown, 1969.

Aerial Photograph of Bardstown, 1934.

Central Lincoln Road to the Lincoln Home Park (Bardstown Commercial Club, 1911).

Record of Articles of Incorporation, 1871-1926 (Nelson County Clerk's Office).

Automotive Industries, Vol. 33, September 9, 1915, page 496.

The Commercial Vehicle, February 1, 1922, page 18.

Automobile Blue Book, 1918.

Wilson Motel
Name of Property

Nelson County, KY
County and State

Automobile Blue Book, 1920.

Federal Writers' Project, *The WPA Guide to Kentucky*.

Standard Oil Company, "1934 Road Map, Kentucky and Tennessee."

Kentucky Progress Commission, *Kentucky Highways at a Glance* (Frankfort, 1935).

"Kentucky Highways," 1942, Kentucky State Highway Department.

Secondary Sources

Young E. Allison, *The Old Kentucky Home: Its Song and the Story* (My Old Kentucky Home Commission, 1923).

Bardstown Chamber of Commerce, *Souvenir Edition of Historic Bardstown and My Old Kentucky Home* (n.d.).

Herbert Gottfried and Jan Jennings, *American Vernacular Design, 1870-1940* (Iowa State University Press, 1985).

Herbert Gottfried and Jan Jennings, *American Vernacular Buildings and Interiors, 1870-1960* (W. W. Norton, rev. 2009).

Dixie Hibbs, *Bardstown Hospitality, History, and Bourbon* (Arcadia Publishing, 2002).

Virginia & Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2006).

Jakle, Sculle, and Rogers, *The Motel in America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

Sarah B. Smith, *Historic Nelson County, Its Towns and People* (Bardstown, 1983).

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 # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

NEB-133; NEB 133.1

10. Geographical Data

Wilson Motel
Name of Property

Nelson County, KY
County and State

Acreage of Property .43 acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

Bardstown Quad

UTM Coordinate Values Calculated via GIS

UTM Coordinate Values expressed according to 1927 NAD

1	<u>16</u> Zone	<u>635 129</u> Easting	<u>4186 388</u> Northing	3	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing
2	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing	4	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Said lot [Lot 13, Block A, in Carden's Addition] has a frontage of 63 ft. on Third Street extending back 217 ft. to an alley with a width on said alley of 110 ft. (*Nelson County Deed Book 94*, p. 625; *Plat of Carden's Addition, Nelson County Deed Book 78*, p. 15.).

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary encloses all of the original property that contributed to the historic character of the Wilson Motel.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Pen Bogert
organization Joint City-County Planning Commission of Nelson Co. date 25 April 2011
street & number One Court Square telephone 502-348-1805
city or town Bardstown state KY zip code 40004
e-mail pbogert@bardstowncable.net

Photographs:

Photo Log

Name of Property: Wilson Motel (NEB-133, NEB-133.1)
City or Vicinity: Bardstown
County: Nelson County
State: KY
Name of Photographer: Pen Bogert
Date of Photographs: April 11, 2011
Location of Original Digital Files: Kentucky Heritage Council

Wilson Motel
 Name of Property

Nelson County, KY
 County and State

300 Washington St.
 Frankfort, KY 40601

Number of Photographs

21

Photo #	Description and Camera Direction
0001	Streetscape, facing south.
0002	Streetscape, facing southwest.
0003	Motel sign, facing south.
0004	Residence/office, east façade, facing west
0005	Residence/office, doorway, east façade, facing west.
0006	Residence/office, arched window, east façade, facing west.
0007	Residence/office, south façade (left) and east elevation (right), facing northwest.
0008	Residence/office, north façade, facing south.
0009	Residence/office, west façade, facing east.
0010	Residence/office, guest addition, west façade, facing east.
0011	Residence/office, north façade (left) and west façade (right), facing southeast.
0012	Streetscape, facing southwest.
0013	Streetscape, facing southwest.
0014	Streetscape, facing southwest.
0015	Motel, west wing, north façade (left) and west elevation (right), facing south.
0016	Motel, west wing, west façade, facing south.
0017	Motel, west wing, west façade, facing southeast.
0018	Motel, west wing, west façade (left), and south elevation (right), facing east.
0019	Motel, west wing, east façade, facing southwest.
0020	Motel, south wing, north façade, facing south.
0021	Streetscape, facing southeast.

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Dwight I. Cornell
 street & number 530 N. Third St. telephone 502-348-3364
 city or town Bardstown state KY zip code 40004

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

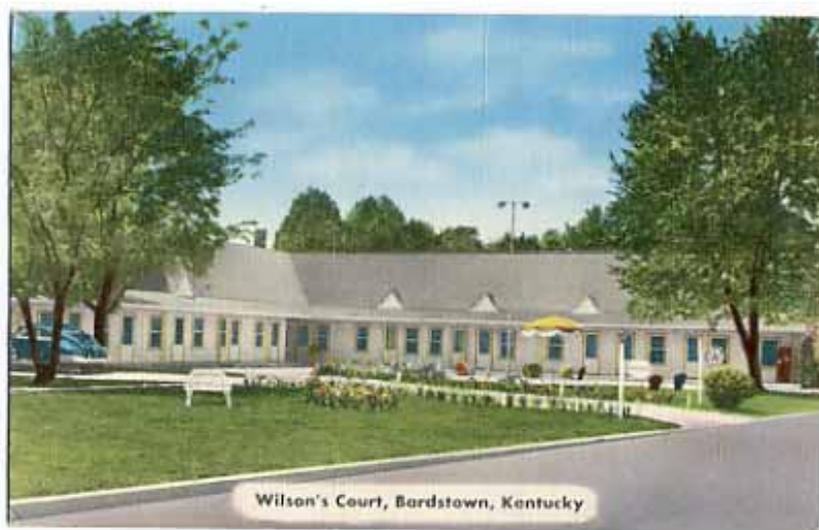
Wilson Motel
Name of Property
Nelson County, KY
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 1

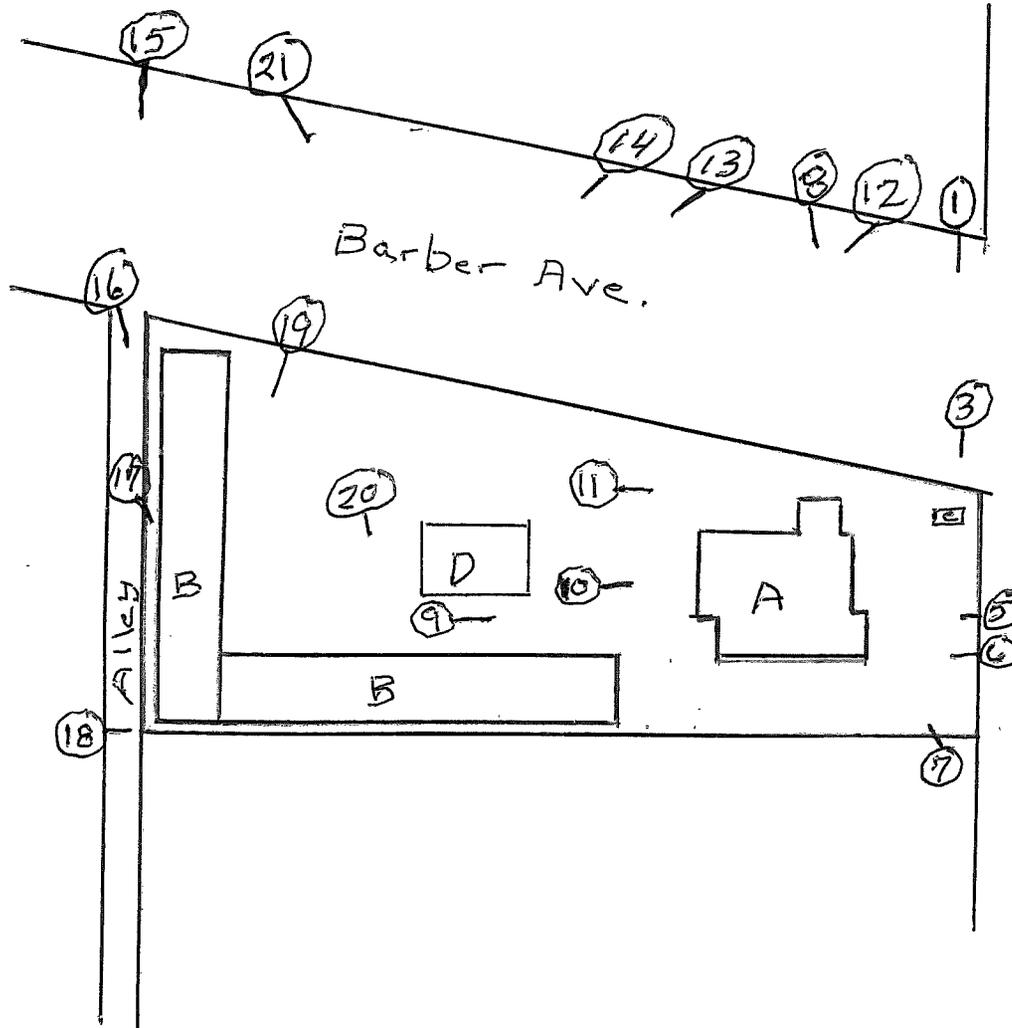
Historic Images



Postcard view facing southwest from Barber Ave., showing original enclosed parking spaces and roofline (c. 1945).



Postcard view facing southwest from Barber Ave., showing alteration of parking spaces (late 1940's).



Site Plan
Wilson Motel
April 2011 1"=50'

- A - office/Residence
- B - Motel units
- C - Motel sign
- D - Pool





WILSON
MOTEL
WEEKLY RATES

NO LEFT TURN
ON RED LIGHT
348-3211

Days Inn
DAILY & WEEKLY



WILSON
MOTEL

WEEKLY RATES

WILSON ST



WILSON
MOTEL

WEEKLY RATES

WELCOME

CAVANAUGH







530







OFFICE







OFFICE

STOP



ENTRANCE

OFFICE



ENTRANCE ←

















