NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property

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historic name Riviera Courts / Holiday Motel

other names/site number

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2. Location

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street & number 1 mile west of Main on U.S. 69A not for publication N/A
city or town Miami vicinity N/A
state Oklahoma code OK county Ottawa code 115 zip code 74354

NATIONAL REGISTER
LISTED

MAY 27 '04

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3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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 ___ nationally ___ statewide X locally. (N/A See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Bob Blackburn 4-12-04

Signature of certifying official Date

Oklahoma Historical Society, SHPO
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

_____ _____

Signature of commenting or other official Date

_____

State or Federal agency and bureau

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4. National Park Service Certification

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I, hereby certify that this property is:

____ entered in the National Register _____ _____
___ 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): _____

_____ _____ _____

Signature of Keeper Date
of Action

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5. Classification

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Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

_x_ private
___ public-local
___ public-State
___ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

_x_ building(s)
___ district
___ site
___ structure
___ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2	1	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) Route 66 and Associated Historic Resources in Oklahoma

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6. Function or Use

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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
Cat: DOMESTIC / Sub: hotel

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
Cat: VACANT / NOT IN USE Sub:

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)
LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Mission Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)
foundation CONCRETE
roof ASPHALT
walls BRICK

other

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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8. Statement of Significance

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

_x_ 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.

_x_ 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.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

____ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

____ B removed from its original location.

____ C a birthplace or a grave.

____ D a cemetery.

____ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

____ F a commemorative property.

____ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance 1937-1954

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8. Statement of Significance (Continued)

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Significant Dates 1937

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder UNKNOWN

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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
_x_ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
____ Other
Name of repository: Miami Public Library

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property less than 2 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	15	330609E	4081437N	3			
2				4			

N/A See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Michael Cassity

organization Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office date December 13, 2003

street & number 304 W. Albuquerque telephone 918 451-8378

city or town Broken Arrow state OK zip code 74011

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Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:
Continuation Sheets
Maps
A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs
Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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Property Owner

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

name Kenneth P. and Kenneth G. Cass

street & number 25 H Street NE telephone 918 542-4856

city or town Miami state OK zip code 74354

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Description

Located directly west of the city of Miami, less than a mile beyond the Neosho River Bridge constructed in 1937, the Riveria Courts with its white walls and blocked parapets stills seems to wait conspicuously for travelers leaving the town and offering the promise of an easy, comfortable stop for those arriving into the Miami area on Route 66. Although most of the Miami motels were located to the north of town, operating on the prevailing assumption that most traffic is west-bound, this motel was able to make the most of its position at the south and west end of the Miami's built up area. Its fortress-like appearance and its white color make it conspicuous when the sun catches it, and its sprawling size catches the eye any other time. Positioned precisely where the highway curves gives it maximum visibility from both directions.

This motor court—a distinct form of lodging in which the units are integrated under one roofline—is a long series of units arranged in a wide V with the operator's house and office in the center. Constructed in 1937, this is a single story structure made of oversize brick with lodging units generally separated by garages. A gravel drive encircles the house and allows automobile access to each motel unit. Cultivated trees also encircle the house, inside the drive, and are the only trees in or near the property. It is not known if there were additional trees on the west side in a field that has since been cultivated. An additional building is located behind and north of the motel and was not part of the motel and is noncontributing.

A long, low building that opens toward the southeast, the motor court has a roof that slopes from the parapet lining the front to the rear (to the west on the west wing and north on the east wing). Each of the fifteen units in this motor court has a single entrance next to a tall window, both recessed in the brickwork, and small concrete stoops are positioned at each entrance. The windows have been covered temporarily with a form of siding as protection; the siding can be removed. The garage bays also have doors, a feature uncommon for those motor courts that have garages; in most instances the doors are the original sliding doors mounted on an overhead track. A few have modern overhead doors, but all are painted white to match the building and the newer replacement doors do not mar the integrity of the building. Although the brick elevations (on the front and the ends of the building) have been painted, thus obscuring the bond, one distinct masonry ornament shows through: the recessed brick course in the fourth course from the top. The evenly spaced blocked parapets also reveal the distinction that went into the masonry of the building. The rear of the building on the west elevation is a simple concrete wall punctuated with small windows. These are double-hung windows of the same size as those in the front elevations, but these have been reduced in size with the application of a form of siding as a cover to the lower two-thirds. The north elevation is obscured by the addition of a shed roof that covers equipment in storage. Adjacent to the motel to the north, but not attached, is a modern metal building that has been added since the period of historic significance and which is a noncontributing feature. Because that building, except for the ridge of its gable, is almost impossible to see from the front of the motel complex, it does not impact the integrity of the historic features.

The building in the center of the complex is a single story, rectangular gable-roofed house made of the same oversize brick as the motor court. This building served as the office and residence. A shed roof extends as a canopy over the entrance on the west elevation and low brick walls enclose the steps leading to the entrance. A small double hung

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window is on each side of the entrance and two larger double-hung windows are positioned asymmetrically to the north. All the windows have brick sills. A similar entrance is located on the south elevation with two large double-hung windows to its east. The east elevation of the house includes two large double-hung windows and one smaller window located to the north. A set of children's play swings is located near the house.

The Riviera Courts / Holiday Motel retains integrity of structure, materials, workmanship, location, appearance, feeling, and association.

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Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary

The Riviera Courts / Holiday Motel is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places within the Multiple Property Nomination, "Route 66 and Associated Historic Resources in Oklahoma." The Riviera Courts, built in 1937, was a tourist court located at a point where it could capitalize on growing Route 66 traffic and the business provided lodging for travelers along U.S. Highway 66 throughout the period of historic significance. Moreover, in the rise of the highway, and then subsequently in its decline, it reflected fundamental contours of the role of transportation in twentieth century American history as a force generating social change. In this way, the motel qualifies under that multiple property nomination. The motel is significant under Criterion A because it represents the property type, "Motels / Tourist Courts" in the area of significance of Commerce on Route 66. It is also significant under Criterion C because it represents a distinct type and period of construction.

Historical Significance

The tourist court known at different times in its life as Riviera Courts (the earliest found name) and Holiday Motel (a long time name familiar to locals) is eligible within the Multiple Property Nomination, "Route 66 and Associated Historic Resources in Oklahoma." Eligibility under Criterion A in that context requires that "a motel show a clear association with, and convey a feeling of, personal and commercial traffic along Route 66 in Oklahoma. Physically, the motel must be located adjacent to, or near and obviously accessible from, Route 66 and must retain its appearance from the period of historic significance. Besides physical integrity, it is important that the pattern and layout of the cabin groups or motel units be clear."

This tourist court meets these requirements. The association with Route 66 is clear. Physically, the motel is located directly adjacent to Route 66 one mile west of Miami, at a point where the highway curved and traffic slowed. In fact the motel was constructed in 1937 and appears to have opened that year at the exact time that this particular alignment of Route 66 was completed. Previous to this, when Route 66 went through the city of Miami, it continued south on Main Street to follow a nine-foot wide section of highway to the town of Afton. Constructed in 1922 as part of the Ozark Trails network of roads, this at one time had been one of the better roads in the state since it was paved. But it, like other roads, was narrow and followed the section lines creating a path that turned sharply at the corners, thus zigzagging across the countryside instead of following the most direct course. When Route 66 was designated by the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads in 1926, that narrow roadway became part of a national highway that stretched from Chicago to Santa Monica and traffic pressures increased steadily in the following years. Although the state of Oklahoma embarked upon an ambitious road building and paving program across the state, the widening and paving of Route 66 would not be complete until September 1937. As it happened, the last link in that effort was the highway alignment west of Miami that would replace the narrow road that led south. And the last part of that specific link,

between Miami and Afton, was the bridge over the Neosho River at the edge of town as the new Route 66 alignment headed west. [1] About a half mile farther west from the bridge, at a point where the new highway turned south, was the freshly built tourist court located next to the right of way, welcoming the anticipated flow of Route 66 travelers.

The date of construction of this tourist court, as with many motels, is difficult to specify with precision. The property records indicate when the property changed hands but make no mention of construction. The newspapers tend not to make mention of business openings unless those businesses are also advertisers, and motels, not dependent upon local traffic, tend not to advertise. Local memories sometimes vary widely about motels; since local people would be unlikely to use a motel, and if they did they were unlikely to admit such use, even neighbors and people otherwise acquainted with local history tend to lack specific knowledge about the origin and operation of this tourist court. There are clues, however. The owner recalls that a WPA project was underway in the area at the time that it was constructed. From 1935 to 1941, a variety of Works Progress Administration programs in the region were in fact in progress. Plus, the property records reveal the 1934 granting of an easement to the state of Oklahoma for road construction and after that, in 1936 and 1936 transfers of the property within the family, and in January 1937 the filing of a mortgage—nine months before the new highway opened. Finally the records in the Ottawa County Assessor office have a note in the file on this property indicating "50 years old"—a note filed in 1986.

During the late 1930s Route 66 became a national icon and carried an ever-increasing volume of traffic. After World War II the use of Route 66 increased enormously with the availability of some element of prosperity, widespread access to automobiles, and the opportunity to travel that had been sharply limited by depression and war. These were the people who traveled past the Riviera Courts at the end of the 1940s and early 1950s. Although statistics are not available to measure this flow, one minor incident reveals a little of the magnitude of Route 66 traffic. At 8:30 in the morning on July 8, 1951 a traffic accident occurred a mile and a half southwest of Miami on Route 66. This would place the accident approximately one half-mile south of the motel. The news account of that accident reported that "the accident snarled coast-to-coast traffic for 45 minutes while members of the Miami police force [and a long list of other public safety agencies] re-routed cars and trucks around the point of impact."[2] The traffic was indeed, "coast-to-coast" and there was plenty of it. The motel was in a good position to draw upon some of that traffic.

In the early 1950s, however, the forces were at work that led to the shifting of the traffic away from Route 66 and to the decline of the independently owned motels along that highway. As the traffic increased, so too did pressure for wider safer roads, much of which the promoters of Route 66 welcomed, hoping that the existing highway would be widened. The result, however, was not the improvement of Route 66, but its replacement. The opening of the Will Rogers Turnpike in 1957, which provided a faster alternative to Route 66, undermined local tourist traffic and the number of automobile - travel related businesses declined. In 1956 the Riviera Courts was listed in the Miami city directory, and in the telephone directory the following year. In the late 1950s it appears to have changed its name to

[1] "U.S. Highway 66 Opening Monday Links Interesting State Areas," Tulsa *Tribune*, September 12, 1937.

[2] Miami *Daily News Record*, July 9, 1951.

Holiday Motel, a fairly common pattern hoping to take advantage of the advertising and popularity of the new Holiday Inn chain of motels. After that it seems to have faded from the historical record, slight though its appearances had ever been. Although the motel closed finally around 1978, in subsequent years it was used occasionally as a temporary (not overnight) lodging facility, but is now vacant.

The origin of the motel with the rise of Route 66 is clear, and the pattern of its decline with the departure of Route 66 traffic is likewise firm.

Summary

It is difficult to imagine this impressive motel without Route 66, just as it is hard to conceive Route 66 without the multitude of motels, gas stations, and cafés lining its roadway to serve the needs of its travelers. That relationship was vital to both parties—travelers and merchants alike—and properties such as this are essential for an understanding of the significance of Route 66. The Riviera Courts / Holiday Motel qualifies for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as a representative of the property type "Motels / Tourist Courts" in the area of significance of Commerce, within the Multiple Property Nomination, "Route 66 and Associated Historic Resources in Oklahoma" under Criterion A.

Architectural Significance

The Riviera Courts / Holiday Motel is also significant under Criterion C because it represents a distinct type and period of construction. The requirement for eligibility under Criterion C in the Multiple Property Nomination, "Route 66 and Associated Historic Resources in Oklahoma" is simply that "they are a good example of a type, style, or period of construction." This property meets that requirement.

The motor court was a specific kind of lodging in the evolution of buildings that became modern motels, and comes at a point following the tourist camps and cabins, where camping facilities had evolved into separate cabins arranged in a pattern. As the standard account of the motel in America notes, "Motor courts were structured like cottage courts except that room units were totally integrated under single rooflines usually as a single building."[3] When they were arranged in a U or V, the interior courtyard served as a common space for interaction with other guests or for play for the children.

[3] John A. Jakle, Keith A. Sculle, and Jefferson S. Rogers, *The Motel in America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 43.

In the Riviera Courts / Holiday Lodge, the units are arranged in a single structure with a continuous roof, although the arrangement is that of a wide V. The units are separated from each other by garages. In the center of the courtyard formed by the V is the residence of the operator and the motel office; nearby is also a set of swings for children. This arrangement, in fact, was so designed that one wing of the motel would be clear to travelers approaching from the east and the other wing visible to travelers approaching from the south.

The connection to Route 66 and the qualification as a member of the property type "Motels / Tourist Courts" with Route 66 are both clear. As a representative of the property type "Motels / Tourist Courts," within the Multiple Property Nomination, "Route 66 and Associated Historic Resources in Oklahoma" this motel is eligible under Criterion C in the area of significance Architecture.

Summary

The Riviera Courts / Holiday Motel outside Miami, Oklahoma, has been historically associated with Route 66 and qualifies for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places because of its historical significance under Criterion A and because of its architectural significance under Criterion C, both within the Multiple Property Nomination, "Route 66 and Associated Historic Resources in Oklahoma."

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Major Bibliographical References

Anderson, Kathy, Jim Ross, and Gary Ray Howell, Oklahoma Route 66 Association, *Oklahoma Route 66 Roadbed Documentation Project (1926-1970): A Survey of Roadbed and Integral Structures* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma SHPO, 2002).

Belasco, Warren James, *Americans on the Road: From Autocamp to Motel 1910-1945* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979).

Interviews, members of Ottawa County Historical Society, December 17, 2003.

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

Land Records, Office of the County Clerk, Ottawa County Courthouse, Miami.

Miami Daily *News Record*, 1951-1954.

Property Assessment Records, Office of the County Assessor, Ottawa County Courthouse, Miami.

Rittenhouse, Jack D., *A Guide Book to Highway 66* (Los Angeles: privately published, 1946; reprint, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989, 2000).

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Verbal Boundary Description

This property consists of the area in the northwest corner of the intersection of U.S. 69A and County Road N4545 for a distance of 250 feet north from the corner and three hundred feet west along old U.S. Highway 66.

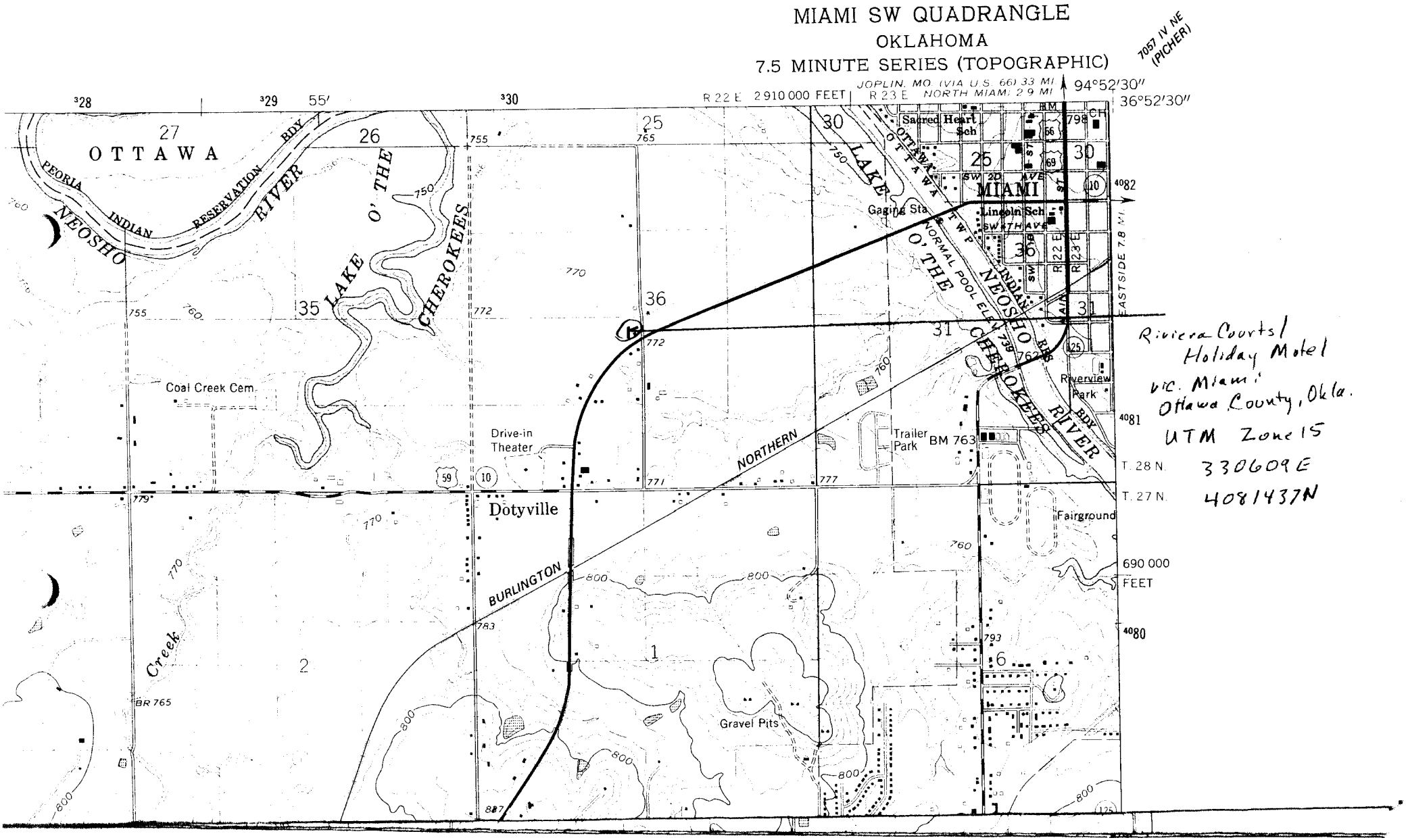
Boundary Justification

This boundary includes the property historically associated with the Riviera Courts / Holiday Motel.

Riviera Courts – Holiday Motel

Riviera Courts – Holiday Motel

Riviera Courts – Holiday Motel



Riviera Courts/
Holiday Motel
vic. Miami
Ottawa County, Okla.

UTM Zone 15
330609E
4081437N