Neon Sign Survey

Description of sign(s)

1. Name: Desert Moon Motel

2. Owner: Jerzy and Celina Kosla

3. Address: 1701 E. Fremont, Las Vegas, Nevada 89101-5414

3b. Additional Site Details (information on site, site history, owner comments):

The building was constructed in 1942 (Assessor). According to one commentator, the Desert Moon motel opened on the site in 1952 (Roadside Architecture.com). The cars on a vintage postcard of the motel appear to date from the late 1940’s or early 1950’s (Ebay).

The same vintage postcard (Ebay) shows the motel as a member of United Motor Courts, an early motel referral chain founded in 1933 which published a travel guide until the early 1950’s (Wikipedia). Based in Santa Barbara, California, United Motor Courts was made up of “a friendly group of independent owners of motor lodges…” (Historic Highways). The Quality Inn motel franchise was a spinoff of United Motor Courts (Wikipedia).

The motel has been renovated by its current owner, Polish immigrant George (Jerzy) Kosla (Glionna, 2017)

4. Condition (1-5 scale, with 5 being excellent, written description):

The sign is Condition 4, good. The paint appears slightly faded but there is no flaking or peeling. The cabinets, readerboards, and fiberglass moon are all in good condition. The neon is intact.

5. Form (pylon, blade, porte cochere, etc): Pole sign

6. Specific Description:

The sign pole and metal cabinets are painted pink. The design and lettering are the same on both sides of the sign.

The trapezoid-shaped lower cabinet extends horizontally toward the street. It contains a rectangular white plastic lightbox which states “FREE ADULT MOVIES” in red sans serif letters and “FLAT SCREEN TV’S” in smaller black san serif letters. To the left of the letters is the black silhouette of a female figure. On the metal below the plastic screen are clear sans serif neon letters which spell out, “NO VACANCY” in red when illuminated.

The upper metal cabinet hangs from the streetside of the pole. White painted san serif letters, covered by clear sans serif neon letters which glow red when illuminated, run vertically down the cabinet to spell out, “XXX MOVIES”.

Five metal cabinets attached to the streetside of the sign run vertically to spell out, “M-O-T-E-L” in white painted sans serif letters covered by yellow sans serif neon letters.

On top of the pole is a white painted sphere, possibly made of fiberglass. Black painted sans serif letters, covered by yellow san serif skeleton neon letters which glow green when illuminated, spell out “DESERT MOON”.

7. Type of Display (neon, incandescent, etc): Neon, lightbox

8. Media (steel, plastic, fiberglass, etc): Steel, plastic and fiberglass.

9. Non-neon treatments: Lightbox

10. Animation: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

11. Environment (surrounding properties, neighborhood): East Fremont Street

Artistic Context

1. Manufacturer: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. Designer: Architect of Record: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. Date of Installation:

A postcard circa early 1950’s features a different sign with a saguaro cactus and quarter moon (Ebay). The current sign appears to have taken the Western/Lunar theme from the previous sign and transformed it into a Space Age/Lunar theme, which may indicate that the sign dates from the date from the late 1950’s or 1960’s.

4. Date(s) of any major redesign/move:

The now pink or faded red sign cabinets were painted blue in a 2003 photograph (RoadsidePeeek.com).

5. Thematic Influence (design elements found on similar signs, elements related to the property, linkage to previous themes, trends, context):

Desert, Space Age, Western

6. Artistic Significance (themes and representation, era: time and design, trends, context):

The current sign appears to have taken the Western/Lunar theme from the previous sign and transformed it into a 1950’s/1960’s Space Age/Lunar theme,

Surveyor Notes

1. Research locations (archives, library, recorder’s office, etc)

Clark County Assessor, parcel no. 139-35-315-004. Retrieved from <http://www.clarkcountynv.gov/assessor/Pages/PropertyRecords.aspx?H=redrock&P=assrrealprop/pcl.aspx>

Ebay. Las Vegas NV Desert Moon Motel roadside Nevada vintage linen postcard ca 1940s. Retrieved from <https://picclick.com/LAS-VEGAS-NV-Desert-Moon-Motel-Roadside-Nevada-141923576051.html>

Glionna, J. M. (2017 April 23). Motel, once a haven, now a crime-ridden jungle in downtown Las Vegas. Las Vegas Review Journal. Retrieved <https://www.reviewjournal.com/local/local-las-vegas/downtown/motel-once-a-haven-now-a-crime-ridden-jungle-in-downtown-las-vegas/>

Historic Highways. (2007 July 14). Archive for the ‘Motel Associations’ category: Looking for a motel in 1933. Retrieved from <https://historichighways.wordpress.com/category/motel-associations/>

Roadside Architecture. com (n.d.). Las Vegas Signs: Desert Moon Motel. Retrieved from <http://www.roadarch.com/signs/nvvegas.html>

RoadsidPeek.com. (n.d.). Downtown motels Las Vegas: Desert Moon Motel. Retrieved from <http://www.roadsidepeek.com/roadusa/southwest/nevada/vegas/lvmotel/lvdownmotel/index5.htm>

Wikipedia. (n.d.). Motel: 2.6 Referral chains. Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motel>

2. Research notes

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3. Any other relevant surveyor remarks

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Surveyor: Mitchell Cohen Date: August 22, 2017

\*Please attach a map from the assessor’s site when possible.