

CHISOS BASIN STORE  
Big Bend National Park  
Castolon Vicinity  
Brewster County  
Texas

HABS No. TX-3399

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28-CASTV,  
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REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS  
PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

CHISOS BASIN STORE

HABS No. TX-3399

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Location: Green Gulch, Big Bend National Park, Castolon vicinity, Brewster County, Texas.

Significance: The Chisos Basin Store, built as a temporary structure in 1941 or early 1942, is constructed of adobe in a vaguely Spanish style, part of a larger complex with this architectural theme. After the war, two prefabricated Dallas huts were added to the building.

Description: The original building is one story in a T-shaped plan. The roughly coursed limestone foundation is held together with a simple mud mortar. Stuccoed walls of 10" x 15" adobe bricks were laid in common bond, and not keyed into each other at the corners, but simply butt-jointed. The roofs of the intersecting wings were low-sloped gable and shed roofs. A rounded adobe chimney poked out of the shed roof on the northern wing. The recessed porch at the front entrance provided shade from the hot desert sun. The windows consist of paired ten-light casements, and a band of four-light casements on the north wall. The flooring of the recessed porch and the steps up to the front of the building are flagstone laid in a cement-amended mortar.

The original portion consists of two rooms. The walls are plastered. The ceilings have 4" x 6" exposed rafters laid 2' on center, with 1" x 8" decking above. The floors are 6"-wide tongue-and-groove boards. Painted baseboards have a quarter-round molding and a 1" x 3-1/2" board.

The two Dallas huts added to the rear are prefabricated, stressed-skin boxes used for motel units, restaurants, and housing. Built in 16' modules, they are of wood frame and plywood construction. Portions of their walls have been removed to turn them into one room. They have pyramidal roofs. They stand on a concrete slab foundation.

History: National Park Service architects Lyle Bennett and Del Jones designed the Chisos Basin Store, constructed in 1941 or early 1942 by the Civilian Conservation Corps. The building was designed as a temporary store for campers and a residence for the manager until more permanent structures could be built. Plans for a more elaborate building, dated May 1941, were replaced with a simpler version in July 1941 (copies of drawings in field notes).

When Big Bend became a national park in 1944, the store was expanded to accommodate the park's post office, lodge manager's office, and a seven-stool lunch counter in addition to the store. Two Dallas huts -- prefabricated housing modules -- were added to the rear of the store. At some time, the southernmost section of the huts was converted to restrooms accessible only from the exterior.

Sources: Laura Soullière Harrison, "Architectural and Historical Assessment: Chisos Basin Store, Big Bend National Park," 1991.

Historian: Alison K. Hoagland, HABS Senior Historian, July 1993.