

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

**1. Name of Property**Historic name: Stroppel Hotel and Hot Mineral BathsOther names/site number: Stroppel Inn, Bastion House

Name of related multiple property listing:

n/a

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

**2. Location**Street & number: 602 Main StreetCity or town: Midland State: SD County: HaakonNot For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐**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

Applicable National Register Criteria:

  x   A      B      C      D

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Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

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State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Stroppel Hotel and Hot Mineral Baths

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Dakota

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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

#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

☒

Public – Local

☐

Public – State

☐

Public – Federal

☐

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**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)

☒

District

☐

Site

☐

Structure

☐

Object

☐

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

buildings

sites

structures

objects

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register n/a

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/hotel

HEALTH CARE/resort

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/hotel

HEALTH CARE/resort

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

No Style

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Foundation: Concrete; Walls:  
Wood/Asphalt/Asbestos; Roof: Metal

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

### Summary Paragraph

The Stroppel Hotel and Hot Mineral Baths is located on the 600 block on the north side of Main Street in Midland, South Dakota. It was moved to this location in 1907. Originally, it was built along Mitchell Creek, which runs approximately 250 meters east of the current location.

The hotel is a gable-front, wood-framed building with a smaller cross-gabled addition and shed-roofed addition at the rear. The east elevation also has a shed-roofed addition built in 1940 to house the plunge baths. Masonite siding (c.1960s) covers the original wood siding (except on some dormers) on the west and south elevations (which face Main Street and Midland Avenue); the north and east elevations are clad in asphalt shingles that mimic a masonry pattern. The foundation is concrete and the roof is clad in non-historic metal. Windows are a combination of double-hung and fixed-pane. Interior walls are lath and plaster; some are clad with wood paneling. Ceilings are tin, lath and plaster, and modern fiberboard. A mixture of wood, linoleum, and carpet is present for flooring.

Midland's Main Street is comprised primarily of one-story, pole-type buildings and vacant lots. There are trees on the west side of the hotel. The Stroppel Hotel and Hot Mineral Baths stands out as a prominent two-and-one-half-story building in the commercial/business district.

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Integrity of location, setting, design, feeling, and association is good to the period of significance. The building retains its form and massing along with its indoor concrete plunge baths which allow it to convey its significance as a spa.

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## Narrative Description

### Hotel (Contributing, built 1905, moved 1907)

#### South Elevation (front façade)

This is the front of the building. It features a storefront with a pent roof and an enclosed porch on the second floor. Above the porch is a gabled dormer on the roofline; it is clad in Masonite siding with the original wood clapboard visible on the east side.

Concrete steps run the length of the storefront and lead to the main entrances. Pipe railings are found on the western corner. The west side of the storefront has two recessed entryways under a colonnade separated by a small, infilled partition with paired fixed-pane windows. Doors are paneled wood; the westernmost has three recessed panels with a singular glass windowpane, and the other is a wood-framed glass door with a transom. The east side of the storefront has been enclosed with wood infill and arched windows. The enclosure is accessed via a screen door and a six-light wood-paneled door. Inside the enclosure, is a wood-paneled door with an ovoid window. Flanking the door is a cottage-style window.

The second-floor porch is enclosed with wood and one-over-one double hung windows. A wood trim overlay at the top of the windows gives the appearance of arched upper sashes. Porch windows wrap around onto the west and east elevations; the northernmost opening on each elevation has been infilled with wood and Masonite siding.

The elevation contains a sign that reads "Hotel," with a smaller sign dropping down that reads "FOR YOUR HEALTHS SAKE Hot Mineral Baths STROPPEL HOTEL MIDLAND SO. DAK." There are two signs from the same era affixed to the south and west elevations that meet at the corner of the building and read "STROPPEL INN HOT MINERAL BATHS."

#### West Elevation

An irregular pattern of window openings characterizes this elevation. The first floor features five one-over-one wood windows with aluminum screens, as well as a rectangular fixed-pane wood window. The second floor has four one-over-one wood windows with aluminum screens and four fixed-pane wood windows. All windows have simple wood trim. Three air conditioning units are also punched into the wall on the second floor. On the northern third of the elevation is a hipped-roof dormer covered in Masonite siding.

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## North Elevation

This is the rear of the building. A 1909 one-story, shed-roof addition is attached to the elevation.<sup>1</sup> The second floor of the elevation is clad in asphalt shingles that mimic a masonry pattern. Centered on the elevation is a one-over-one double-hung window. The addition is also clad on the east elevation and the eastern portion of the north elevation in asphalt shingles that mimic a masonry pattern. The west elevation and the western portion of the north elevation are clad in Masonite siding. The north elevation of the addition contains a wood door with a single-light window. The west elevation of the addition contains a small one-over-one wood window with wood trim. The east elevation of the addition has no openings.

## East Elevation

The east elevation has a one-story lean-to addition with a shed roof located on the southern half of the building. The addition dates to 1940 and was constructed to house hot mineral baths after John Stroppel purchased the property in 1939. The addition is clad in Masonite and is roofed with asphalt shingles. The remainder of the east elevation is clad in asphalt shingle siding that mimics a masonry pattern.

The east elevation has five one-over-one wood windows on the first floor and eight one-over-one wood windows on the second floor. One window on the second floor is boarded, and one contains an air conditioning unit. Three additional air conditioning units are punched into the second-floor wall. A wood staircase accesses the northernmost second-floor window, and a hipped roof dormer is located in the southern third of the roof. The dormer has a one-over-one wood window and retains its original wood clapboard cladding.

The south elevation of the addition has a two-pane, modern window (possibly slider) and a one-over-one wood window with wood trim. The east elevation of the addition contains three window openings comprised of glass blocks. The north elevation of the addition has a wood, two-pane window covered by a modern metal storm window. The north elevation of the addition is also clad in a particle-board material. The roof has two vents and a small skylight.

## Interior

### General Materials

Like many business spaces, the interior is an amalgamation of historic and new materials. For example, tin, plaster, and modern acoustical tile ceilings are found throughout the building. Likewise, wood, linoleum, carpet, concrete, and tile are also used for flooring and date from the historic to modern period. Walls are generally plaster, though many were clad in circa 1960 with

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<sup>1</sup> Photo South Dakota State Digital Archives, Bastion House and Pioneer Livery Feed, Midland, Haakon County, (Identifier 2009-12-11-016), <https://sddigitalarchives.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/photos/id/11918/rec/3>, accessed 1 January 2025.

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wood panel siding common of the era. Wood paneled doors and cabinets typically remain. Wood surrounds are a combination of historic and midcentury.

Public Spaces

The main front room is the reception area. Character-defining features of the space include wood beadboard wainscoting, trimmed door and window openings, a drop ceiling, and carpet. The reception area also contains a historic wooden phone booth. Three doors access other parts of the hotel from the reception area. The historic circulation path and layout remains.

The reception area's central door accesses a common area with wood cabinetry on most walls. From this common area, another door leads to the kitchen and pantry. Like the common area, the kitchen/pantry retains wood cabinets. Linoleum clads the floor and a decorative crown molding caps the room.

Private Spaces

The second floor is accessible via a stairway at the reception area. The staircase walls are wood on one side and plaster on the other. The second floor is comprised of hotel rooms on either side of a central hallway. A decorative wood railing cordons the staircase landing. The hallways have wood plank walls, plaster ceilings, and carpeted floors. Simple polished wood trims the door openings. A small, wood staircase in the hallway leads to the attic. Bedroom walls have a variety of wall materials including plaster, vertical wood planks, and wood paneling. Doors are a combination of wood panel and modern, interior composite wood. Ceilings are predominantly plaster. The second floor also accesses the patio through a decorative wood door with a wood screen door. Patio walls are a mix of Masonite siding, wood paneling, and asphalt siding that mimics brick. The patio ceiling is comprised of wood planks and the floor is wood.

The plunge baths are located on the eastern side of the building. Concrete masonry units comprise the baths which have concrete floors and plaster ceilings. Windows are glass blocks and metal railings provide access to the baths.

**Garage (Noncontributing, circa 1940)**

The garage is constructed of concrete masonry units and has a rectangular footprint. The hipped roof with exposed rafter ends is wood-framed and clad with seam metal. The west elevation has paired, wood-paneled garage doors. The east elevation has a pair of two-pane, fixed wood windows. The south elevation has a wood door. The north elevation has no openings, and "STROPPEL INN HOT MINERAL BATHS" is painted on the side.

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## 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.

### 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 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

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Health/Medicine

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**Period of Significance**

1939-1975

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**Significant Dates**

1939

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**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

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**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

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**Architect/Builder**

N/A

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Stroppel Hotel and Hot Mineral Baths is eligible under **Criterion A** for **Health/Medicine**. Its period of significance is 1939 to 1975. It begins in 1939 when John Stroppel purchased the property, drilled artesian wells, and converted the building into a hotel and mineral baths. It ends in 1975, the standard fifty-year cutoff for the National Register. The level of significance is local.

The garage (ca.1940) was likely built in the period of significance but considered non-contributing because it does not relate to the documented health/medicine significance of the property.

The property is a rare example of a hydrotherapeutic business in South Dakota. Located in a geothermal artesian belt, the facility has provided medicinal relief through mineral baths, chiropractic care, and Swedish massage since 1939. Few properties in the state related to hydrotherapy remain and possess adequate integrity to convey their significance in the disciplines of health and medicine.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

### **History of Hydrotherapy**

Humans have pursued hydrotherapeutic treatments for centuries. Cultures across the world have sought out springs, lakes, and rivers for physical and spiritual purification since at least antiquity. The benefits of thermal cures were well-known in the ancient world and their efficacy was attributed to both natural and supernatural powers.<sup>2</sup>

The Greeks believed that mineral springs were gifts from the gods and made extensive use of warm and cold waters as curative agents for skin, muscular, and joint diseases. Physicians Galen and Asclepiades promoted water cures for a variety of ailments and the philosopher Hippocrates studied the benefits of hydropathic therapy. The Greeks also developed the foundation of what would become modern spa culture. At Serangeum, an early Greek balneum (bathhouse),

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<sup>2</sup> Melanie Smith and Laszlo Puczko, *Health and Wellness Tourism*, (Burlington, MA: Elsevier Ltd., 2009), 23; Suzanne Julin, "South Dakota Spa: A History of the Hot Springs Health Resort, 1882-1915," *South Dakota Historical Collections*, v.41, (1982), 207; Serena Gianfaldoni et al, "History of Baths and Thermal Medicine," *Macedonia Journal of Medical Science*, (July 2017), 1-3; John C. Paige and Laura Soulliere Harrison, *Out of the Vapors: A Social History and Architectural History of Bathhouse Row, Hot Springs National Park*, National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, (1987), 1.

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chambers were cut into hillsides to form natural baths, and the mineral springs at Epidaurus, the most well-known healing center in the ancient world, were integral parts of its treatment regime.<sup>3</sup>

The Romans adopted Greek water-cure culture and spread it across their vast empire beginning in the early years of the Common Era (CE). Legionnaires constructed spas well into the late fifth century CE as recuperation centers for soldiers, and archaeology has revealed pools, steam rooms, and recovery stations at these facilities. Roman physicians prescribed thermal water treatments to cure rheumatism, arthritis, and overindulgence in food and drink along with other physical deficiencies. During the period of Roman rule, water-cures and spa treatments reached a level of sophistication that would not return to Europe until the late nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup>

When the Western Roman empire collapsed in 476 CE, hydrotherapy treatments in former Roman territories subsided. Goth and other non-Roman peoples disrupted established lifeways, while the growth of Christianity, which professed a belief that public bathing was immoral and spread disease, hastened the decline of water cures. During the Renaissance, a resurgence in scientific-based medical knowledge occurred across Europe as the printing press and moveable type allowed for the dissemination of forgotten Greek, Roman, and Islamic ideas. As a result, hydrotherapy was revalued as a legitimate treatment for a number of maladies.<sup>5</sup>

In the 1300s, the development of chalybeate springs (natural mineral springs containing iron salts) in Spa, Belgium initiated a revived water-cure movement. During this period, individual springs across Europe became associated with curing specific ailments. In the eighteenth century, another revival of hydrotherapeutic treatments occurred amongst Italian, German, and English doctors. Scientific academies focused on water cures while the spa industry continued to grow by incorporating herbal baths, mud packs, massages, physical exercises, and specific diets into medical treatments. In Europe and the United States, regular bathing also became more popular for cleanliness and disease prevention, which further increased public acceptance of hydrotherapy.<sup>6</sup>

The first modern hydrotherapeutic spa was developed in Germany in the early nineteenth century. Americans, who had been visiting mineral springs since the colonial days, were also embracing hydrotherapy and imitating the emerging European spa culture. By the 1850s,

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<sup>3</sup> David Clay Large, *The Grand Spas of Central Europe: A History of Intrigue, Politics, Art, and Healing*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015), 14; Gianfaldoni et al, 1-3; A. van Tubergen and S. van der Linden, "A Brief History of Spa Therapy," *Ann Rheum Dis*, 61, (2002), 273; Paige and Soulliere, 1; John Connell, *Medical Tourism*, (Cambridge, MA: CAB International, 2011), 13.

<sup>4</sup> Gianfaldoni et al, 1-3; Paige and Soulliere, 1; Large, 12; van Tubergen and van der Linden, 273.

<sup>5</sup> Gianfaldoni et al, 1-3; Paige and Soulliere, 5; van Tubergen and van der Linden, 273.

<sup>6</sup> Gianfaldoni et al, 1-3; Paige and Soulliere, 7; Smith and Puczek, 26; Connell, 7.

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mineral springs resorts existed in twenty states. In 1851, the first United States medical school based on water cure theories, the American Hydropathic Institute, opened in New York.<sup>7</sup>

The nineteenth century was the golden age for mineral springs and spa culture in the United States. People visited popular spas like Hot Springs (AR), Saratoga Springs (NY), French Lick (IN), Warm Springs (GA), and other locations not only for their health benefit but also for tourism and social purposes. The development of spas in the western United States after the Civil War remained firmly rooted in providing medical relief and recovery, particularly for tuberculosis patients.<sup>8</sup>

In the late 1930s, more than 2,000 hot and cold mineral spring spas were operating in the United States. By the 1950s, this number had declined significantly, a trend that continued throughout the postwar period. Today, hydrotherapeutic businesses constitute a niche health industry.<sup>9</sup>

### Water Cure History in South Dakota

Artesian aquifers underlay most of South Dakota. A few regions of the state produce well waters with a temperature of ninety degrees or more. These hot mineralized waters flow from the Dakota Sandstone aquifer. The hottest waters are in the middle part of the state, approximately from Pierre west to Philip, and from Dewey County south to the White River, an area roughly one hundred miles north to south and seventy miles east to west. The southern tip of the Black Hills is also a hotspot for warm water wells.<sup>10</sup>

American Indians have used warm water springs and mineral-rich water lakes in South Dakota for centuries. Tribes attributed healing qualities to the waters, and sites were often ascribed sacred powers. Indigenous use of curative waters is known to have happened, but recorded accounts are often unattributable to a specific tribal source. One unattributable account claims that American Indians gathered at what would become Hot Springs, South Dakota during an epidemic in the early sixteenth century because the healing waters found there were touched by the Great Spirit. The Cheyenne and Lakota also reportedly used these springs, which they called Wi-wi-lah-kahto (springs-hot) and/or Minnekahta (water-hot), for healing purposes. Legend further recalls that the Cheyenne and Lakota fought a great battle over the springs before declaring a truce that allowed both to use the waters. This story, written down in the early

<sup>7</sup> Smith and Puczko, 37; Connell 14; Julin, 207.

<sup>8</sup> Loring Bullard, *Healing Waters: Missouri's Historic Mineral Springs and Spas*, (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2004), 17; Connell, 13; Paige and Soulliere, 10; Anne Williams, *Spa Bodywork: A Guide for Massage Therapists*, (Baltimore: Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins, 2007), 6; Smith and Puczko, 37.

<sup>9</sup> Paige and Soulliere, 28.

<sup>10</sup> United States Department of the Interior, "Progress Report on Wells Penetrating Artesian Aquifers In South Dakota," *Geological Survey Water-Supply Paper 1534*, (1958), 1-16; South Dakota Natural Resources Commission, *Medical Waters of South Dakota*, (1946), 1; John Paul Gries, *Roadside Geology of South Dakota*, (Missoula, MT: Mountain Press Publishing, 1996), 9.

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twentieth century by non-Indians, is plausible but conjectural. It mirrors other stories recorded about indigenous peoples in North America who fought and declared truces over therapeutic waters.<sup>11</sup>

Mineral springs were also of interest to Euro-American explorers and settlers who entered the northern plains in the last half of the nineteenth century. In 1875, Walter P. Jenney and Henry Newton led an expedition into the Black Hills on the Sioux Reservation in Dakota Territory. Jenney reported the presence of warm water springs in the southern hills, and when he returned in 1879, he found settlers who had cut bathtubs out of rock with pickaxes. One of the men, Joe Larive, claimed the waters had cured his rheumatism. When news of the curative properties reached Deadwood in the northern Black Hills, local businessmen formed the Hot Springs Town-Site Company and began developing the mineral springs.<sup>12</sup>

Hot Springs grew rapidly with a steady clientele from Deadwood. By 1886, a health resort and medical district had developed in the upper town area spurring the erection of hotels. Bathhouses and plunges, including Evan's Plunge, Stewart Bath House, Kidney Springs, Phernatton's, and others were built in the early 1890s. The State Soldiers Home and Battle Mountain Sanitarium (a division of the federal National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers) were also located in Hot Springs to take advantage of the mineral springs and temperate climate.<sup>13</sup>

Hot Springs became the epicenter of medicinal water practices in South Dakota, but it was not alone. Cascade Springs, located fifteen miles south of Hot Springs, also developed in the early 1890s. Offering many of the same warm-water spring opportunities as its neighbor to the north, its lack of railroad access stymied development. Cascade Springs' population never exceeded 400 and the would-be-rival to Hot Springs faded away. Edgemont, located south of the Black Hills, also had a sulfur bath sanitarium fed by a well that reached 120 degrees Fahrenheit. The sanitarium remained in use at least through the 1960s.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> South Dakotas State Historical Society Markers, [https://history.sd.gov/preservation/docs/MarkersMaster\\_Jan2025.pdf](https://history.sd.gov/preservation/docs/MarkersMaster_Jan2025.pdf), accessed 1 January 2025; Bullard, 11.

<sup>12</sup> Donald Mueller and Noreen Petty, compilers, *Early Hot Springs*, (Hot Springs, SD: A Star Publication, 1983), 1; Suzanne Julin, *A Marvelous Hundred Square Miles: Black Hills Tourism, 1880-1941*, (Pierre, SD: South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 2009), 8-14; Julin, "South Dakota Spa: A History of the Hot Springs Health Resort, 1882-1915," 208-219.

<sup>13</sup> Julin, *A Marvelous Hundred Square Miles: Black Hills Tourism, 1880-1941*, 8-14; Julin, "South Dakota Spa: A History of the Hot Springs Health Resort, 1882-1915," 219; Mueller and Petty, 24 & 34 & 90.

<sup>14</sup> Julin, "South Dakota Spa: A History of the Hot Springs Health Resort, 1882-1915," 272; Barney Curl, *Looking Back at Edgemont*, (self-published, 1984), 178-181; Edgemont Centennial Book Committee, *Edgemont: The River, The Rails, The Ranch Lands*, (Edgemont, SD: 1989), 66; M. Lisle Reese, editor, *A South Dakota Guide*, (Pierre, SD: South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 2005), 349.

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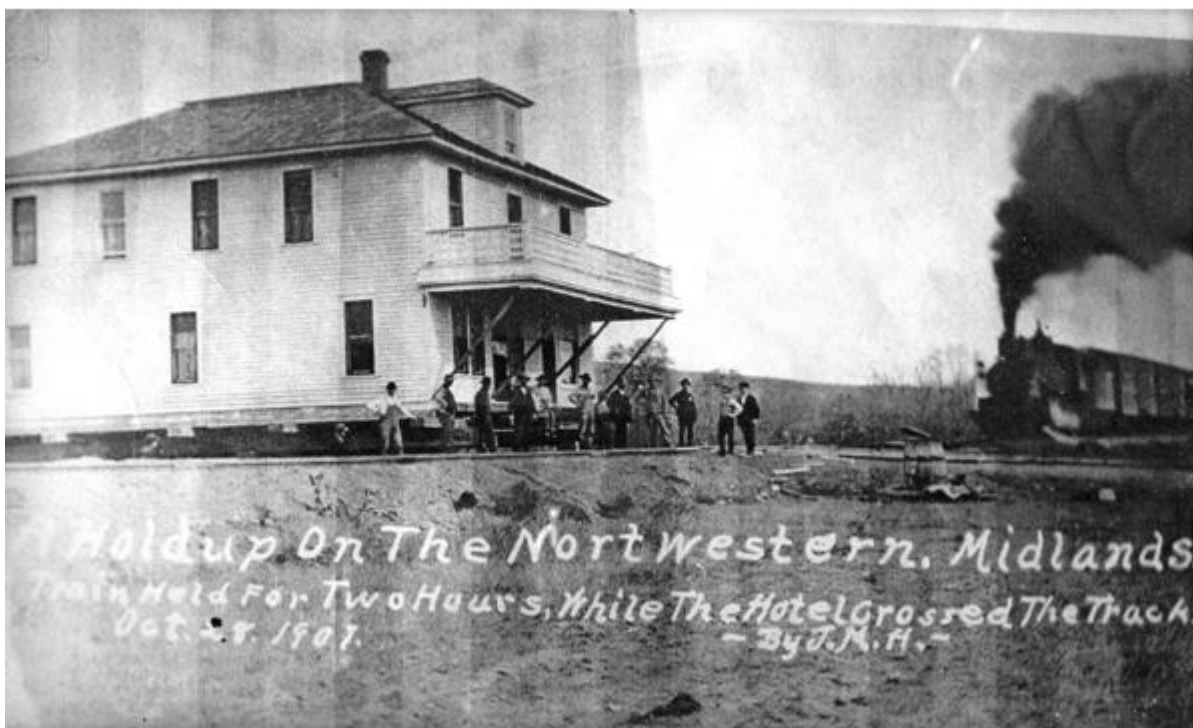
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The discovery of an artesian belt in west-central South Dakota occurred in the early twentieth century as the railroad pushed west following reductions of the Sioux Reservation. Capa, located east of Midland in Jones County, became well-known for its medicinal mineral baths. Warm artesian water was piped to the Capa Hotel (aka Thorne Hotel) as well as a public bathhouse. The soothing waters were espoused to treat rheumatism and various muscular pains. Though popular amongst locals, the hard times of the 1930s and the failure of the highway to pass through town doomed Capa's chance of developing its spa industry.<sup>15</sup>

### The Stroppel Hotel

In 1890, shortly after statehood and the reduction of the Sioux Reservation in western South Dakota, J.C. Russell established a trading post along the Spotted Tail Trail that would become known as Midland. Growth was sluggish until 1906 when the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad extended west from the Missouri River. After the arrival of the railroad, Midland boomed.<sup>16</sup>



Building being moved in 1907. Mikkel J. Pates, "A Spa At Midland," <http://www.southdakotamagazine.com/a-spa-at-midland>, accessed 1 November 2024.

<sup>15</sup> Nancy Haigh, "The Townskeeper," <http://www.southdakotamagazine.com/the-townskeeper>, accessed 1 November 2024; Book and Thimble Club, *Proving Up: Jones County History*, (Murdo, SD: 1969), 79; Reese, 257.

<sup>16</sup> Jeanne Kilen Odde, "South Dakota Then and Now: A Photographic Essay," *South Dakota History*, v.19, no.4, (Winter 1989), 520; Midland Pioneer Museum, *Historic Midland: 1890-1986*, (Midland, SD: 1986), 1.

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In 1905, the Bastion Road House was built on the west side of Mitchell Creek in what was called "East Midland." Don Bastion constructed the 33-room structure to serve the stagecoach business that preceded the railroad. In 1907, the building was moved a few hundred meters west into the Midland townsite because its original location was too close to the railroad tracks. An addition was added after relocation, along with a raised, wooden sidewalk. The Bastions ran the boarding house until 1917, and from 1917 to 1937, it had several owners, operators, and lessees before closing during the Depression.<sup>17</sup>



Bastion House, circa 1909. Photo courtesy of South Dakota State Archives,  
<https://sddigitalarchives.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/photos/id/11918/rec/6>,  
accessed 1 December 2024.

In 1939, John Stroppel purchased the property for back taxes. Stroppel was born in Cedar Valley, Iowa, in 1886 and homesteaded south of Midland in 1907 using the Homestead Act of 1862 and the Land Act of 1820 to increase his holdings. He married Violet Miller in 1914, and the couple raised five children on a ranch that they expanded to 5,000 acres. Since childhood, Stroppel had struggled with a lung ailment and coughed regularly. After hearing about a local man who had found relief from arthritis at the mineral baths in the neighboring town of Capa, Stroppel visited a local doctor and undertook treatments. The impact of these visits changed the course of his life.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Midland Pioneer Museum, 44-45; Mikkel J. Pates, "A Spa At Midland," <http://www.southdakotamagazine.com/a-spa-at-midland>, accessed 1 November 2024.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid; *Find A Grave Index*, accessed at *Ancestry Library*, <https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/60525/records/31329154>, accessed 1 January 2025; *1920 United States Census*, accessed at *Ancestry Library*; *Capital Journal* (Pierre, SD), 24 September 2015.

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Stroppel became interested in hydrotherapeutic medicine. He made an offer on a spa in Capa but could not reach an agreement with the owner on price. He was also concerned that the railroad owned the water at Capa, which made him hesitant to invest in the project. On a trip to Midland, a local businessman suggested that the same warm waters under Capa should also be under Midland. Stroppel remembered that conversation, and after visiting a hot springs mineral bath in Thermopolis, Wyoming, he purchased the Bastion Road House and hired the Norbeck Company to drill an artesian well.<sup>19</sup> The original well descended 1780 feet and produced a hot, soft water that flowed to the surface at the rate of thirty-three gallons per minute.<sup>20</sup>

In 1940, Stroppel began offering mineral baths in his hotel, which he converted from 33 rooms to 20 rooms. Treatment regimens ranged from twenty-one days to single sessions and up to seventy-five people a day sought therapy. A session typically started with a plunge bath in the artesian waters followed by a sweat session in a blanket wrap. Stroppel employed a chiropractor in the early years and later learned Swedish massage. His methods were well-known for the treatment of alcohol and tobacco problems.<sup>21</sup>

When John retired in 1949, his chiropractor son Jack stepped in to help run the business. After John passed away in 1959, Jack ran the business with his mother Violet, until he moved to Rapid City in 1966. Another son, George, moved back to Philip in 1969 with his wife, Alice, and their family. They had been living in Pierre where George worked on the Oahe Dam and later built stock dams. George became the spa's masseuse.<sup>22</sup> The peak demand for massages was in 1974-75, before Medicare was established. After that, customers were reluctant to pay for treatments not covered by insurance.<sup>23</sup>

George and Alice formerly purchased the business in 1973 for \$10,000. In 1977, Sather Drilling Inc. drilled a new well that reached 1794 feet and produced 115-degree water.<sup>24</sup> In recent years the water temperature increased by four degrees to 119 degrees.<sup>25</sup> George and Alice ran the business for 32 years. Around 2002, Jill O'Neill of Pennsylvania bought the hotel and owned it until 2015. O'Neill later sold the hotel to Vicki Droze. Wallace and Laurie Cox are the current owners.<sup>26</sup>

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<https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/6061/records/53130869>, accessed 1 January 2025; *General Land Office Records*, <https://glorerecords.blm.gov/search/default.aspx?searchTabIndex=0&searchByTypeIndex=0>, accessed 1 January 2025.

<sup>19</sup> "Formation Log of Well Drilled For John Stroppel, Midland," (Pierre, SD: Office of the State Engineer, 1940).

<sup>20</sup> *Capital Journal* (Pierre, SD), 24 September 2015.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> "Notice of Well Construction," George Stroppel. South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources document, 1977.

<sup>25</sup> *Capital Journal* (Pierre, SD), 24 September 2015.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

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## Comparative Properties

Never abundant, historic structures associated with hot springs, mineral baths, plunges, spas, and bathhouses are rare in South Dakota. Only two are listed in the National Register. The plunge bath (1907) is a contributing building within the Battle Mountain Sanitarium National Historic Landmark at Hot Springs. In the late 1940s or early 1950s, it was converted into a Protestant chapel. Two inoperable plunge baths and the original tile remain in the basement, however. The Evans Sanitarium (1892-93), a mineral springs bathhouse built attached to a hotel that offered “needle” and “electrical” baths as part of a treatment regime, is a contributing structure in the Hot Springs Historic District. The facility is now used as apartments.<sup>27</sup>

Hot Springs was the spa center of South Dakota and had the most mineral-bath facilities. However, historic buildings with architectural integrity associated with these businesses are rare due to fires, change of use, and demolition due to the decline of hydrotherapy practices. The Evans Plunge building, constructed over a hot spring in 1890 by Fred Evans, has been rebuilt several times over the years and now appears as a modern building. Moccasin Springs, originally organized in 1881 as the Black Hills Spa and later operated as the Hot Springs Hotel and Minnekahta Bath, closed in 1963. At the time of the 2016 resurvey of the Hot Springs Historic District, only the ruins of the bathing pools and chambers remained. In 2019, it was rehabilitated and reopened with modern buildings that respect and incorporate the stone and concrete ruins. Other buildings associated with hydrotherapy in Hot Springs have been razed or changed to the point where they are no longer identifiable.

Other spa-related areas of South Dakota also lack extant resources. Cascade Springs retains a few buildings and ruins, but none directly linked to hydrotherapy. The Edgemont Block in Edgemont, which housed a hot sulfur sanitarium for years, was razed in 2002. The hot mineral bath facilities in Capa have deteriorated or been razed as the town disappeared after the 1930s. The Hotel Locke in Pierre, which had a warm mineral water plunge bath drilled in 1894-95, was demolished in 1980.

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<sup>27</sup> Suzanne Julin, *Battle Mountain Sanitarium, National Home For Disabled Volunteer Soldiers National Historic Landmark Nomination*, NHL#11000561, listed 17 June 2011; C.B. Nelson, *Hot Springs Historic District National Register of Historic Places Amendment*, NRIS#100002634, amended 24 August 2018; Mueller and Petty, 1-11.

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Haigh, Nancy. "The Townskeeper," <http://www.southdakotamagazine.com/the-townskeeper>, accessed 1 November 2024.

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Pates, Mikkel J. "A Spa At Midland," <http://www.southdakotamagazine.com/a-spa-at-midland>, accessed 1 November 2024.

**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):** \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** less than one

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

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**Or**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☒ NAD 1983

- |             |                    |                      |
|-------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Zone: 14 | Easting: 327502.63 | Northing: 4881985.86 |
| 2. Zone:    | Easting:           | Northing:            |
| 3. Zone:    | Easting:           | Northing:            |
| 4. Zone:    | Easting :          | Northing:            |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Lot 1, Block 3, Midland, Haakon County, South Dakota

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This is the parcel historically associated with the Stroppel Hotel and Hot Mineral Baths.

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### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Duncan Trau & CB Nelson  
organization: South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office  
street & number: 900 Governors Drive  
city or town: Pierre state: SD zip code: 57501  
e-mail: duncan.trau@state.sd.us  
telephone: 605-773-6005  
date: 1/22/2025

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Stroppel Hotel and Mineral Baths

City or Vicinity: Midland

County: Haakon

State: SD

Photographer: Duncan Trau

Date Photographed: 12/06/2022

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: (See below)

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours  
Tier 2 – 120 hours  
Tier 3 – 230 hours  
Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

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SD\_HaakonCounty\_StroppelHotelandHotMineralBaths\_0001. Photo looking east at south and west elevations.

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SD\_HaakonCounty\_StroppelHotelandHotMineralBaths\_0002. Photo looking northwest at east and south elevations.

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SD\_HaakonCounty\_StroppelHotelandHotMineralBaths\_0003. Photo looking north at south elevation.

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SD\_HaakonCounty\_StroppelHotelandHotMineralBaths\_0004. Photo looking southeast at west elevation.

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SD\_HaakonCounty\_StroppelHotelandHotMineralBaths\_0005. Photo looking east at west elevation.

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SD\_HaakonCounty\_StroppelHotelandHotMineralBaths\_0006. Interior view of a plunge bath.

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SD\_HaakonCounty\_StroppelHotelandHotMineralBaths\_0007. Interior view of a plunge bath.

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SD\_HaakonCounty\_StroppelHotelandHotMineralBaths\_0008. First floor interior view.

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SD\_HaakonCounty\_StroppelHotelandHotMineralBaths\_0009. Interior close up of tin ceiling.

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SD\_HaakonCounty\_StroppelHotelandHotMineralBaths\_0010. Interior view of kitchen.

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SD\_HaakonCounty\_StroppelHotelandHotMineralBaths\_0011. Interior view of second-floor room.

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SD\_HaakonCounty\_StroppelHotelandHotMineralBaths\_0012. Interior view of second-floor hallway.

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SD\_HaakonCounty\_StroppelHotelandHotMineralBaths\_0013. Interior view of plunge bath door.

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SD\_HaakonCounty\_StroppelHotelandHotMineralBaths\_0014. Photo looking southwest at east elevation.

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SD\_HaakonCounty\_StroppelHotelandHotMineralBaths\_0015. Photo looking southwest at east and north elevations.

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Photo Key Map. Exterior photos, 1-5 & 14-15.