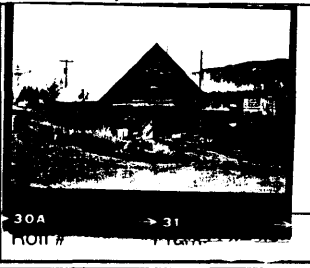


# MONTANA HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL INVENTORY

Site # 18

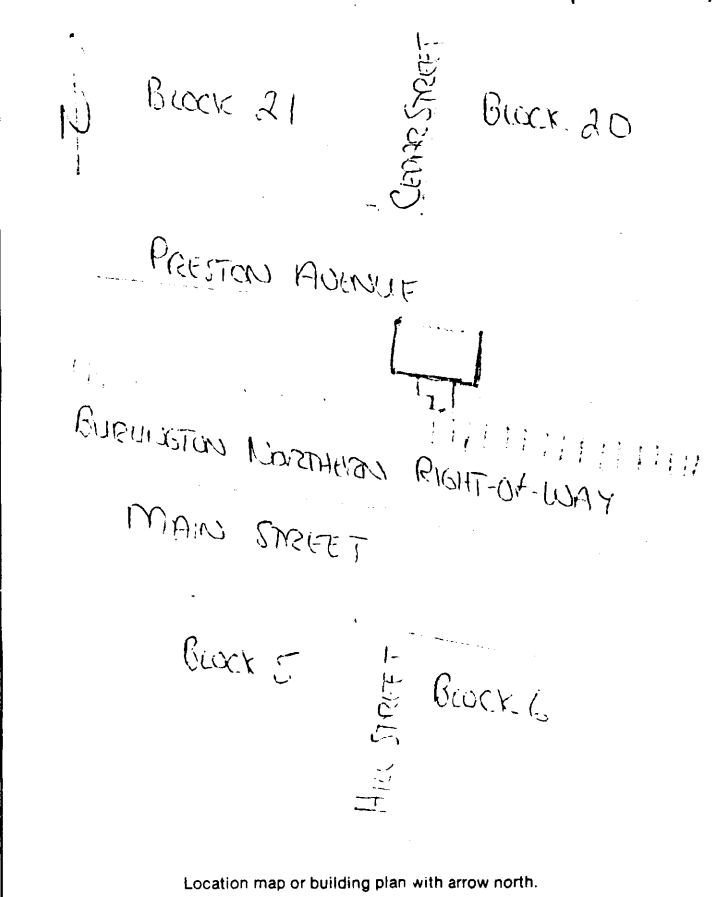


Legal Description: S8, T21n, R29w; bounded on north by Preston Ave, south by Main St. and 5' to the east and west

Address: Burlington Northern Right-Of-Way

Ownership: Name: Robert Butte

private address:  public address: P.O. Box 846 Thompson Falls, MT 59873



Location map or building plan with arrow north.

Historic Name: Northern Pacific Warehouse

Common Name: Burlington Northern Warehouse

Date of Construction: c. 1900  estimated  documented

Architect: N/A

Builder: Unknown

Original Owner: Northern Pacific Railroad

Original Use: warehouse

Present Use: warehouse

**RESEARCH SOURCES:** Note all records consulted to determine dates of construction, original owners, builders, uses, etc.

Abstract of Title: Deedbooks: 57, p. 237; 31

Plat Records: Sanders County

Tax Records: 1910 Assessment Book

Building Permits: \_\_\_\_\_

Sewer/Water Permits: \_\_\_\_\_

City Directories: \_\_\_\_\_

Sanborn Maps: 1910, 1914, 1927

Newspapers: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: Photos of early Thompson Falls

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** Describe present appearance of structure/site, then contrast and compare that with it's original appearance, noting additions, alterations, and changes in materials. Discuss significant architectural features.

The Northern Pacific warehouse is a rectangular-shaped, metal-covered, gable roofed building sheathed with horizontal plank siding. Centered in the west gable end are a pair of wide hinged doors fashioned in a Chevron pattern, and a 2/2 double hung window in the upper floor. The loft area in the east gable end also has a 2/2 double hung window. The north elevation has no openings. The south facade, paralleling the railroad right-of-way, has a set of large doors that open onto a wooden loading dock.

**HISTORICAL INFORMATION:** Describe the persons, important events, and/or historical patterns associated with the structure/site and surrounding area.

In 1883 the Northern Pacific Railroad completed its tracks along the Clark's Fork River valley in then western Missoula County. Stations were initially placed at Paradise, Plains, and east of Thompson Falls (which at that time did not exist.) The combination of the coming of the railroad and the gold strike in the Coeur d'Alene Mountains that year gave rise to the town. Other towns sprung up along with Thompson Falls. The rail line went through the town and established stations at Belknap, Whitepine, Trout Creek, Big Cut, Summit, and Noxon farther up the valley. The railroad, like in so many other places in America, became the lifeline to these communities. In Thompson Falls during the boom years of the mid and late 1880s, buildings were erected so fast that the only private property recognized belonged to the railroad right-of-way through town. This explains the irregularities and chronic problems the community later faced in constructing a viable Main Street. The railroad moved the station into town by the 1890s and constructed station houses, repair shops, and warehouses along its right-of-way through the heart of the town. While many have been destroyed, including a watertower, this structure has survived the years.

**Footnote Sources:** Burlington Northern, Thompson Falls  
Sanders County Ledger: 1/2/58.  
K. Ross Toole Archives, University of Montana  
Interview with Ernest "Fat" Brauer by John Lazuk

**INTEGRITY:** Assess the degree to which the structure/site, and surrounding area accurately convey the historical associations of the property.

The building retains its original integrity except for its incompatible metal roof.

**HISTORICAL and/or ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:** Justify how the persons, important events, or historical patterns associated with structure/site lend the property significance and/or describe the ways in which the structure embodies the distinctive characteristics of a particular period, building type, or style.

The Northern Pacific warehouse is significant as the only extant structure remaining from the railroad industry in Thompson Falls, Montana. As in many other western communities, the railroad helped to provide the much-needed impetus for growth in Thompson Falls during the initial boom period during the mid- to late-1880s. In 1880 The Northern Pacific Railroad began construction of a line in western Missoula County from the city of Missoula to Lake Pend d'Oreille by paralleling the Clark Fork River. By November, 1881, most of the route was cleared of timber, and two years later, in an area near Thompson Falls, the railroad built a sub-station house three miles outside of the present townsite of Woodlin Flats, which became known as Thompson Prairie. Stations were also placed in the nearby communities of Paradise and Plains. Even with the development of Thompson Falls, the railroad maintained the nearest passenger station outside of town at Thompson Prairie. Notices were posted by the railroad to its employees not to stop or even slow down the trains when going through Thompson Falls in 1883

**FORM PREPARED BY:**

Name: John Lazuk

Address: 350 Strand, Missoula, MT

Date: October 5, 1984

**GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:**

Acreage: Less than one acre.

USGS Quad: Thompson Falls, MT

UTM's: 11/624600/5272400

Significance (cont.)

and early 1884. The railroad finally agreed to enter and stop in the community in the spring of 1884. They ultimately took over the warehouse owned by the Minneapolis firm of Glidden, Griggs & Company for conversion to a station, and eventually built a repair shop, water-tower and other warehouses for their use. These facilities, however, were removed at a later date, with the warehouse remaining as the last vestige of the Northern Pacific Railroad.

