

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received **NOV 2 1983**

date entered **DEC 13 1983**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Hotel Metlen

and/or common Hotel Metlen

2. Location

street & number 5 South Railroad Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town Dillon N/A vicinity of

state Montana code 030 county Beaverhead code 001

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Dorothy L. Alley

street & number 5 South Railroad Avenue

city, town Dillon N/A vicinity of state Montana

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Beaverhead County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Dillon state Montana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Dillon Historical/Architectural Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1981 federal state county local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office/Montana Historical Society

city, town Helena state Montana

7. Description

Condition

excellent deteriorated
 good ruins
 fair unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Hotel Metlen is located at 5 South Railroad Avenue in Dillon, Montana. It is separated from the main business district of the community by the right-of-way of the Union Pacific Railroad.

The Hotel Metlen exhibits the stylistic features of the Second Empire Style, which enjoyed widespread popularity in the United States during the third quarter of the Nineteenth Century. The mansard roof with projecting dormers, decorative patterned shingles, and the central pavilion are features generally associated with the style. With the Hotel Metlen, the Second Empire Style has been compressed into a compact rectangular plan. The central tower, projecting a story-and-one-half above the cresting line of the roof, and the central focus of the facade create the illusion of the characteristic pavilion plan without its space wasting projections on the street front. It makes full use of the city lot while still being grand in scale and rich in detail.

The hotel is two stories in height, with an additional story tucked under the gentle concave curve of the mansard roof. The overall massing of the elements has considerable solidity, contrasting with delicate brick detailing above the window arches. The flat wall plane is further articulated by the juxtaposition of sandstone and brick. The street facade is organized in balanced units symmetrical around the central tower (with one deviation) and is divided into five bays.

The body of the hotel sits upon a low, random-coursed, rusticated, ashlar foundation, quarried at the Daly's Spur Quarry. Pairs of single-paned windows at sidewalk level are located beneath each of the first floor windows. A sandstone water table encircles the building, also functioning as flat lintels for the basement windows.

At the first story, beneath the tower, is located the original entrance to the hotel. Steps from the sidewalk lead to a pair of entrance doors. The recessed entry is topped with a compound, semi-circular arch of four vertical header courses and a projecting course of horizontal header bricks cut in a radius the width of the brick. The arch is filled with a three-lite fan window. Encircling the building at the spring point of the entry arch is a three course, projecting string course. At the bays to either side of the entry are a pair of tall, double-hung windows separated by a brick pier. These windows are topped with a continuous, rusticated sandstone lintel and surround dropping to the string course. The windows and central brick pier rest on a continuous sandstone lug sill. Each end bay opening on the first story is topped with a semi-circular arch identical in size and detailing to the one at the hotel entry. The left hand bay has a large single-paned window with a recessed brick panel beneath the lug sill. The opening to the right provides a secondary entrance to the building identical to the one in the center.

A narrow terra cotta string course, fashioned in a twisted rope pattern, defines the division between the floors. This detailing is repeated beneath the bracketed cornice. At the second floor level, a pair of double-hung windows beneath the central tower is flanked by two doorways with transoms. A simple balcony with iron railing projects at each of the doors. A large double-hung window is located in each end bay. All openings on the second floor are topped with segmental dripstone arches of two courses and an additional projecting course of horizontal header bricks cut in a radius the width of the brick. A two course string course encircles the building above the window heads.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 1

The square, central tower rising above the cornice is faced with a decorative tinplate. A pair of double-hung windows is topped with a broken pediment. Four gabled dormers with double-hung windows project from the mansard roof. The decorative tinplate on the roof has been replaced with wooden shingles. The central tower roof is reflective of the mansard roof on the main building. It is faced with the same decorative tinplate as the tower below, and a single, gabled dormer with double-hung window projects from each of the four sides.

The interior of the hotel is finished in plaster with all of the woodwork being of Michigan pine, originally oiled and rubbed to a gloss. The floors are of Oregon pine. The interior is divided down the center by a ten foot wide corridor, connected at the front and rear by stairways. As originally constructed, the first floor contained the lobby, bar and billiard room, sample rooms, dining room, double parlors, kitchen, pantries, and the proprietor's rooms. The ladies' parlor was located on the second floor along with twenty-seven guest rooms. Many of the rooms were "en-suite" connected by rolling doors and featuring fireplaces. The third floor contained twenty-nine rooms identical in size and finish to those on the second floor. From the third floor, a stairway leads to the tower which is furnished with seats, providing guests with a view of the town and countryside. The interior remains much as when the hotel was completed. The function of many of the first floor rooms has changed, but the only major alteration has been the removal of a partition between the lobby and lounge.

Later alterations to the facade indicate an attempt at advertising gimmickry, using the entire facade of the building to attract attention to the business. A pair of neon tubes stretches across the building terminating in an "M" above the central entry. Additional multi-colored neon tubes radiate from the second floor corners at each end. A large neon sign with the name of the hotel stretches across the roof. Flat canopies that extend from the two facade entrances possibly indicate the lessening importance of the hotel trade by the 1930's and 1940's. The canopy at the central entry is faced with a simple neon sign reading "Hotel." The canopy at the side entrance is topped with a more flamboyant neon sign advertising the Metlen Bar and Lounge. Again, a simple neon sign reading "CAFE" faces the canopy.

The Bannack Street side of the building exhibits typical Second Empire detailing with the mansard roof, but the remainder of the facade more nearly reflects functional concerns rather than stylistic pretense. The openings are irregularly spaced and grouped, and a corbelled brick string course defines the division between the first and second floors.

Later alterations include the painting of the entire building white. A penthouse was constructed on the roof during World War II which functioned as an aircraft warning facility.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 1

Joseph C. Metlen was born in Juanita County, Pennsylvania, April 2, 1834. He arrived in Montana in 1867 via Illinois and California. He and his brother settled on Horse Prairie and engaged in freighting from Corrine, Utah to Bannack. In 1871, Metlen represented Beaverhead County in the territorial legislature. He later followed the miners to Glendale where he engaged in business until March 1, 1883 when he moved to Dillon having been elected county treasurer. In 1884, he unsuccessfully ran for sheriff, but was again elected county reasurer in 1888 and re-elected in 1889 in the first state election.

Metlen purchased the Corrine Hotel in 1884 and operated it until it was destroyed by fire in 1892.

The Hotel Metlen was formally opened to the public on February 11, 1898. A public reception was held in the afternoon with a formal ball in the evening. Metlen's stature in state politics is clearly evidenced by the evening guest list. Governor R.B. Smith and Chief Justice Pemberton both addressed the more than 200 guests. Additional guests included Attorney General Nolan, State Auditor T.W. Poindexter, Hon. L.A. Walker and Hon. T.E. Collins of Helena, and Hon. H.J. Wilson of Butte.

Metlen continued to operate the hotel until his death in 1906.

The Hotel Metlen has remained open as a hotel with restaurant and lounge facilities, playing a prominent role in the social and economic life of the City of Dillon. Besides operating as Beaverhead County's finest hostelry, it has served the local residents as a meeting place and dining and entertainment center.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1897

Builder/Architect Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Hotel Metlen has for ninety years played a prominent role in Dillon, Montana, as an architectural landmark dominating the downtown skyline and in the social lives of the local citizens. One of the finest extant examples of commercial architecture built in the Second Empire Style in the state, it pays tribute to a time when its owner and the community envisioned Dillon's rapid growth and development. All of the indicators were there --- an important railroad stop, expanding agriculture and ranching in the surrounding area, and renewed mining activity --- when Joseph Metlen, a pioneer of the county and community and a prominent local businessman and politician, displayed his civic pride, not with the common verbal boosterism of the day, but by undertaking the construction of the sixty room Hotel Metlen. The expectations for growth faltered, and the Hotel Metlen settled comfortably into its role as a local hostelry and social center.

The Hotel Metlen occupies a prominent location in Dillon, separated from the main business district by the right-of-way of the Union Pacific Railroad. The overall treatment of the facade is restrained, but the detailing embodies the characteristics of the Second Empire Style. Although constructed almost a full decade after the style had generally fallen from favor across the nation, it bears witness to the sense of permanence, stability, and wealth which westerners still perceived in the style.

The Hotel Metlen was constructed on the site of the Corinne Hotel, the first hotel in Dillon, which was described as "a flimsy structure, a combination of thin lumber, cloth-lined partitions, and other combustible materials. It had been transported along the railroad, having originally been down in Utah or Idaho."¹ By the time of the construction of the Hotel Metlen, Dillon was enjoying a position as the most significant railroad stop between Butte and the Idaho line and was well established as a ranching and agricultural center. The recent invention of the gold dredge was also spurring a resurgence of gold production in the county. Weekly news accounts reported the progress of the dredges and partially attributed the "flourishing" of local business to the gold mining.

With the promise of a bright future for Dillon, Joseph Metlen began the construction of a sixty room, \$30,000 hotel in 1897. Metlen was lauded in the local newspaper for his enterprising effort. The completion of the new hotel was seen as marking "the dawn of an era of better things for the city. Next to good, live local newspapers, good schools and churches, a respectable hotel is one of the most important factors in attracting attention to a place and is a powerful aid in establishing a permanency to the community."²

1. Frank Eliel, Our Little Old Home Town, (no publisher, 1925).

2. "Our Man About Town," Dillon Examiner, October 20, 1897, p. 1.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Dillon Examiner, September 8, 1897, October 20, 1897, December 19, 1906.
Dillon Tribune, December 25, 1897, February 18, 1898, December 21, 1906.
Eliel, Frank, Our Little Old Home Town. no publisher, 1925.
Quivik, Frederick, Historic Bridges of Montana. National Park Service, 1982.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Dillon West

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	2	3	7	1	8	6	0	5	0	0	8	2	8	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C

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D

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E

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet

SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 18 and NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 19; Township 7S; Range 8W.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lon Johnson, Historical Architect

organization Montana Historical Society date July 20, 1983

street & number 225 North Roberts Street telephone (406) 449-4584

city or town Helena state Montana

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Marcella Shafiq

title Deputy SHPO date 10-24-83

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Ann Duhon

date 12/13/83

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 10

Page 1

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

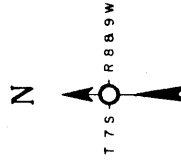
North 23 feet of lot 8, all of lots 9 and 10, block 23 of the Original Townsite of the City of Dillon, Montana.

Also, an irregular tract of land lying in Fraction "K" of the Original Townsite of Dillon, more particularly described as follows:

Beginning at the northwesterly corner of lot 10, block 23 of the Original Townsite of Dillon, which said point lies N 50°15' W 115 feet from the intersection of the southerly sideline of Bannack Street with the westerly sideline of Railroad Avenue; thence first course N 50°15' W 87.3 feet; thence second course S37°11' W 73.10 feet; thence third course S 50°15' E 84 feet more or less to a point on the westerly end line of lot 8 of said block 23 which said point is 2 feet northerly of the southwesterly corner of said lot 8; thence fourth course northerly along the westerly end lines of lots 8, 9, 10 of said block 23, 73 feet more or less to the point of beginning.

LEGEND

- PROPOSED ROAD
- GRAVEL AND DRAINED ROAD
- GRAVEL OR STONE ROAD
- LOW TYPE BITUMINOUS ROAD
- PAVED ROAD
- DIVIDED ROAD - TRAFFIC FLOW
- FEDERAL AID INTERSTATE SYSTEM
- FEDERAL AID PRIMARY SYSTEM
- FEDERAL AID SECONDARY SYSTEM
- INTERSTATE ROUTE MARKER
- U.S. NUMBERED ROUTE MARKER
- STATE ROUTE MARKER
- OTHER ROUTE MARKER
- CORPORATE BOUNDARY LINE
- NON-EXISTENT DEDICATED STREET
- CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
- URBAN EXTENSION BOUNDARY
- RAILROAD AND STATION
- POST OFFICE
- COURT HOUSE
- ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
- HIGH SCHOOL
- HOSPITAL
- ELEVATION

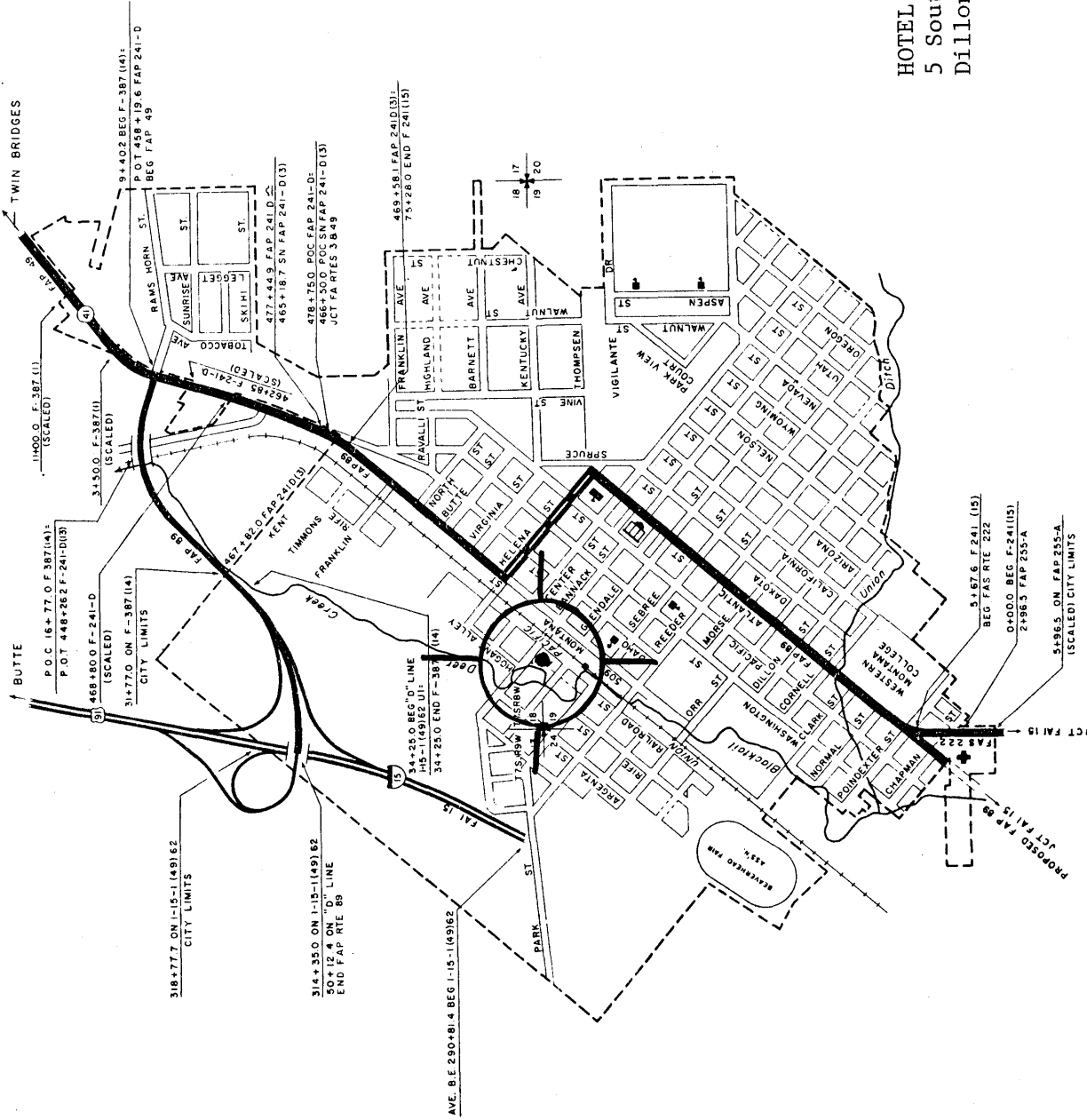


HOTEL METLEN
5 South Railroad Avenue
Dillon, MT

CITY PLAT
DILLON
 BEAVERHEAD COUNTY
 MONTANA
 1970 CENSUS 4,548



REVISED DEC 31, 1976



Copies of this map are available for a nominal cost at the Montana Department of Highways—Helena, Montana 59601.