

# MONTANA HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL INVENTORY

Site # 3

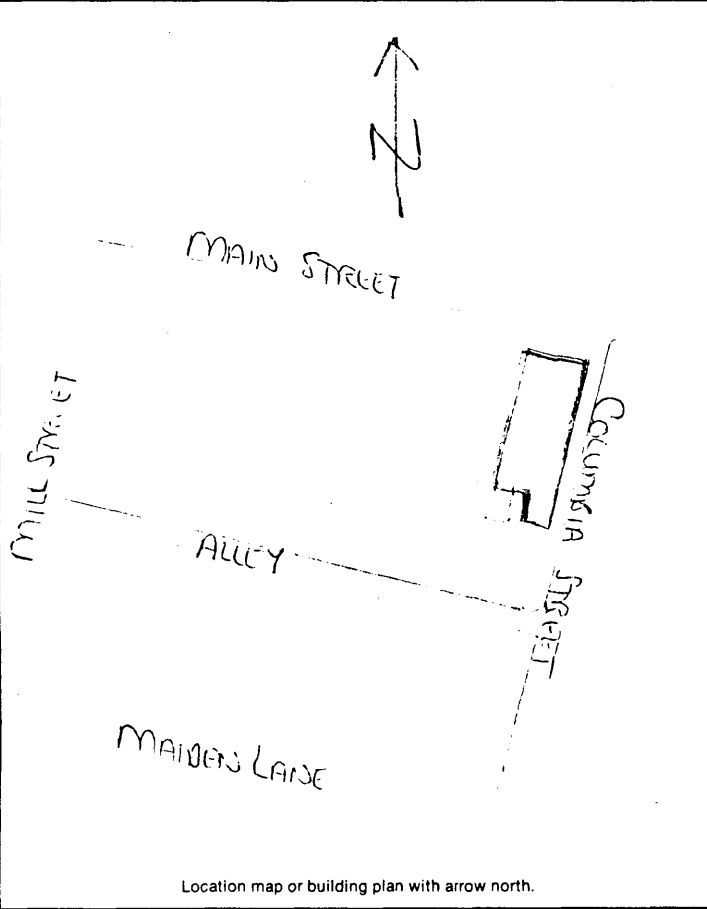


Legal Description: Block 3, lot 1

Address: 101 Main Street, Thompson Falls, MT

Ownership: Name: Glen G. & Dale R. Reller c/o Louis T. LaRock

private address: Box 21, Route 3, Thompson Falls, MT 59873  
 public



Location map or building plan with arrow north.

Historic Name: Tourist Hotel

Common Name: Hotel Bar

Date of Construction: 1911  estimated  documented

Architect: N/A

Builder: C.H. Finley

Original Owner: William Cummings

Original Use: saloon/hotel

Present Use: bar

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

Abstract of Title: Deedbook 17, p. 206

Plat Records: Thompson Falls Original Townsite

Tax Records: Assessment Book 1911, p. 106

Building Permits: not applicable

Sewer/Water Permits: not applicable

City Directories: Polk, Missoula County, 1913, p. 570

Sanborn Maps: 1914 and 1927

Newspapers: Sanders County Ledger: 9/8/11; 1/5/11

Other: Photograph of Main Street, 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.

This rectangular, two story, American bond laid, brick building has a flat roof of built-up composition and a concrete foundation. The full basement exposes tamarack floor beams supporting a 10 inch concrete ground floor. The front (north) facade is of tan, pressed brick and tile. A recessed entranceway leads to the bar. A fixed window is to its left. To the right of the entryway is a door leading in to the interior stairway to the second floor. Three original doublehung windows look into the second floor on that side. Right below them, a lighted sign juts out reading "HOTEL BAR." There are five modern doublehung windows on the second story east side. Sheet metal brackets above and below fit them snugly into the larger, original window area. Below, wave glass blocks and concrete fill original sash areas. The largest has 7 rows of 14 panes, the remaining three 7 of 11. Another old window area and a door are boarded up. A black and white sign printed on the bricks near the NE corner reads "HOTEL." The original one story and back kitchen may have been added onto in 1948. If so, all is now covered with cement. A cinder block addition from 1963 extends the east side further, and, along with a similiar cinder block addition on the west side, turns the south end into a metal covered, slant roofed open porch of decorative flat brick and concrete. Two fixed windows, a doublehung, another fixed window, and two entrances from the porch face out. On the second story, two doublehung windows (altered) are split by an exit door now boarded up. The west side roof is crow gabled. An interior chimney stack stands just off the west wall. Two small

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

William and Mattie Cummings arrived in Thompson Falls in the spring of 1906. William had left his position with the Oxford Bar in Missoula to co-own the Exchange Saloon, the wood-frame, one-story original occupant of lot 1. Mattie took the proprietess position at the nearby Thompson Hotel that year. By 1909, William had branched out to become proprietor at the Ward Hotel. After a fire damaged the Thompson Hotel in August, 1910, Cummings bought out his saloon partner and made plans for constructing a new hotel. He hired Eugene Preston to move his wood saloon building across the street, so to continue business, while a new, two-story brick replacement could be erected by contractor C.H. Finley of Missoula. When it was finished in late 1911 and opened in early January, 1912, the main building stood 27 x 62 ft., with a one-story kitchen added on its south and east end. The bottom floor was separated into a saloon area up front, which sported a 20 ft. long mahogany bar, a mahogany (cont

Miscellaneous Records Book 1, p. 323; 2, p. 487; 1, pp. 408 & 463.  
Deedbook 5, pp. 5, 72, 240, 136; 17, p. 206; 31, p. 95; 32, p. 161.  
Sandborn Maps: 1910, 1914, 1922, 1927.

Sanders County Ledger: 4/20/06; 11/16/06; 8/12/10; 9/8/11; 9/29/11;  
11/24/11; 1/5/12; 1/3/13; 7/31/14; 2/8/17; 3/18/20; 1/3/34; 12/14/38.  
Polk City Registers, Missoula County: 1907, p. 499; 1909, p. 704; 1913,  
p. 570; 1915-16, pp. 544, 558; 1917-18, pp. 554, 562.

Footnote Sources:

Interview with Rich Wollaston by John Lazuk.  
Interview with Louis LaRock by John Lazuk.

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

The image of an old hotel remains despite the many changes. The original wide display windows have made way for a modern tile and pressed brick finish. All windows, save the front second story, have either been altered to fit old window areas or the window areas altered to fit the modern sashes. On the west side, windows were added, the rear additions do take away from the spirit of the old hotel. Inside, the bar extends through to where the separate restaurant once operated. Upstairs, some alterations to rooms have been made for comfort over the years.

**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 Tourist Hotel is significant under Criterion A for its contribution to the historical development of Thompson Falls during the most important phase in the community's growth, when the hydroelectric dam project was about to begin and the town realized its permanence and stability. It may have been constructed in anticipation of the influx of workers hired to build the dam who required food and lodging in the community.

The original owner of the Tourist Hotel, William Cummings, came with his wife to Thompson Falls in the spring of 1906 from Missoula, Montana where he worked at the Oxford Bar. Cummings became co-owner of the Exchange Saloon, a one story wood frame building that was formerly located where the Tourist Hotel presently stands. By 1909 Cummings had become the proprietor of the Ward Hotel, and in 1910, after assuming full ownership of the Exchange Saloon, he had the frame building moved across the street in

**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: 11/624440/5272325

## Description (cont.)

doublehung and a casement-style window have been built into the original dead wall. A painted sign reads "HOTEL" near the corner. There are brick retaining arches over all original windows. A band of protruding brick work marks the roof level on the north and east sides. Its interior composition is that of inlaid headers among stretcher laid brick.

The first floor interior houses the bar in an area once divided into two rooms. The 1963 one-story cinder block addition off the original kitchen had probably been used as a sleeping room during the 1970s. Interior walls and ceilings are mainly done in lathe and plaster. Original second floor is similarly done. Some remodeling has taken place in a few of these rooms. Below, the basement holds a 6.5 x 11.5 ft. cooler. Unplaned tamarack floor beams and columns support the main floor.

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## Historical Info. (cont.)

liquor case, and a double cash register, and the back dining room. The second floor held 12 living and sleeping rooms and the whole building was wired for electric fixtures. Cummings put in a 10 inch concrete ground floor to fireproof his full basement. The Cummings named their establishment The Legal Tender Bar and Hotel. Since their time, the building has been used for a variety of purposes. In 1920 it became a dormitory for a year, housing county students attending the high school. During the 1930s, its upstairs rooms housed the offices of Dr. C.T. Kindall, a dentist, and the physician Dr. Earl Madden. New owners changed the name to The Tourist Hotel probably during the 1920s. It remained a hotel until the 1970s. Currently, the upstairs rooms are vacant, and the bar occupies the entire ground floor of the original two-story building.

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## Significance (cont.)

order to construct his new hotel. When it opened in early 1912, the two story Tourist Hotel had a small one story kitchen attached to the southeast corner. The main floor had a dining room at the rear and a spacious saloon in the front which featured a 20 foot long mahogany bar and liquor case. The second story included twelve rooms which were available to travelers and local residents. The entire building had electric light fixtures, and a ten-inch concrete ground floor served to fireproof the basement. In 1920 the building was used as a dormitory to house area high school students, and in the 1930s, the upstairs rooms functioned as offices for Dr. C.T. Kindall, a dentist, and Dr. Earl Madden, a physician. It remained in use as a hotel until the 1970s; currently the first floor serves as a bar while the second story is vacant.

The Tourist Hotel is one of only five commercial buildings that remain in Thompson Falls from the community's early sustained period of growth, and despite the alterations of the storefront and side wall windows, it retains good architectural integrity. The upper windows of the primary facade remain intact. The brick arcaded corbelling along the parapet wraps around the north and east sides of the building and remains one of the strongest architectural decorative elements in the community. Since it was constructed in 1911, the Tourist Hotel has served as one of only two hostelries in Thompson Falls, also functioning as student housing and commercial office space.