

DATA SHEET

PH 0685909

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED OCT 10 1978
DATE ENTERED MAR 13 1979

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

Billings Historic District

HISTORIC HISTORIC RESOURCES OF BILLINGS, MONTANA
(PARTIAL INVENTORY - BILLINGS TOWNSITE HISTORICAL DISTRICT)

AND/OR COMMON HISTORIC AND ARCHITECTURAL PROPERTIES

*located at 111-114
N. 23rd & 7. 25th Sts, etc.
and 111-114 N. 26th St.*

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER BLOCKS 111 THRU 114, ORIGINAL PLAT OF BILLINGS, MONTANA, PLUS
ONE-HALF BLOCK NORTH OF BURLINGTON NORTHERN TRACKS BETWEEN 22ND
AND 26TH STREETS.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN BILLINGS VICINITY OF EASTERN 2

STATE MONTANA CODE 30 COUNTY YELLOWSTONE CODE 111

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME MULTIPLE OWNERSHIP (SEE ATTACHED ENCLOSURE)

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN STATE
VICINITY OF

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. RECORDER'S OFFICE, YELLOWSTONE COUNTY

STREET & NUMBER 3RD AVENUE NORTH AND NORTH 27TH STREET

CITY, TOWN BILLINGS STATE MONTANA

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE BILLINGS TOWNSITE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMITTEE REPORT

DATE FEBRUARY 1976
FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS BILLINGS PUBLIC LIBRARY, MONTANA ROOM

CITY, TOWN BILLINGS STATE MONTANA

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Billings Townsite Historic District comprises four full city blocks of commercial masonry structures, one to four-and-one-half stories and a large turn-of-the-century railroad depot near the center of Billings, Montana.

The bulk of the structures in the district are of brick with either cast stone or terra cotta ornamentation typical of the Victorian Italianate style. Most are three stories, the lower floor originally devoted to lobby, office and (sometimes) bar and restaurant. The upper floors housed sleeping rooms.

A relatively homogenous assemblage of structures of a definite period and character is evident in the district. That character derives mainly from the architectural treatment of the facades, accentuated by bay and oriel windows, decorative cornices and ornamental parapets.

Following is a description of individual "key" structures in the district. These are designated as "Ia" in the Building Classification Schedule.

BLOCK 111
BUILDING 4
2507 Montana Avenue

Western Storefront; 1918(ca.) Builder unknown. Presently the Bargain City Antique store (vacant). One story red brick with buff-colored brick inserts, original facade intact, characterized by buff-colored brick patterns and corbelling. Original cast iron window frames intact.

BLOCK 111
BUILDING 5
2505 Montana Avenue

Western Storefront Style; 1918(ca.). Builder unknown. Presently the McIntosh Art Company. One story dark brown brick characterized by an inset panel and corbelled entablature and parapet. Storefront is original except for bulkhead which has been recently shingled.

BLOCK 111
BUILDING 6
Carlin Hotel
2501 Montana Avenue

Second Renaissance Revival style; 1905(ca.). Name of builder is J. Crowe. Three story tan brick, with strong horizontal cast stone banding and lintels. The windows of each facade are organized into simple bold design elements creating a secondary vertical pattern of piers are further accentuated by distinctive cast stone cornice brackets. Original cast iron storefront window frames including leaded glass relites and defined by brick piers with tuscan cast stone capitals are in good condition. Original solid oak entry doors are in equally good condition.

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BLOCK 111
BUILDING 9
Johnson Building - 17 North 26th

Victorian Italianate style; 1918(ca.). Builder unknown. Presently, the Moose Hall and Prior Hotel. This is a two story river-colored brick building, the floor has been surfaced with stucco. This building is unique in the way the windows are treated; a typical "Gibbs-surround": rusticated cast stone quoin-like blocks and flat arch voussoirs. It has a cast stone bracketed cornice and a stepped parapet.

BLOCK 111
BUILDING 10
Hotel Albany - 15 North 26th Street

no photo

Victorian Italianate style; 1918(ca.). Builder unknown. Presently the Rescue Mission. This is a three story olive grey brick building, the lower floor altered with tile facing and glass block. The upper windows are uniquely ornamented with cast stone keystones and continuous cast stone sills across the entire facade. The windows are further articulated by recessed brick reveals. It has a pressed metal bracketed cornice at the parapet line.

BLOCK 112
BUILDING 2
McCormick Hotel - 2417 Montana Avenue

An adaption of Renaissance Revival style; 1905(ca.). Builder unknown. Three story grey brick with raised patterns of buff-colored brick and cast stone window lintel keystones. Pressed metal bracketed cornice stepped parapet. Square windows are equally spaced. Original cast iron window frames still intact in both lower storefronts.

BLOCK 112
BUILDING 3
Eagle Hotel - 2415 Montana Avenue

Victorian Italianate Style; 1918, built by Matt Thomas. Three story grey brick. Top floor oriel windows are sheathed in stamped metal and flanked with corbelled piers. Directly below each oriel window is a pair of arched windows with a continuous cast stone sill. A dentilled corbelled band of brick is located at the springline of the arches. Original storefront including ornate pressed metal canopy is still intact. Canopy consists of a Tiffany glass frieze which is backlighted at night. Centered on each side of the canopy is a metal arch surmounted by metal eagles on spheres. Three metal lion's heads support

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PAGE

Three

the canopy's chain ties at the building wall.

BLOCK 112 *in photo #1*
BUILDING 4
Yellowstone Hotel - 2413 Montana Avenue

Victorian Italianate Style; 1912(ca.). Builder unknown. Two story brick with recently applied coat of textured paint. Original storefront has been replaced in original style. Building has a pressed metal cornice.

BLOCK 112 *in street view, photo #1*
BUILDING 5
New Oxford Hotel - 2411 Montana Avenue

Victorian Italianate Style; 1918(ca.). Builder unknown. Two story red brick with pressed metal cornice. Two pairs of second floor windows are treated with raised buff brick arched lintels tied together with a continuous raised brick band. Storefront intact with original detail.

BLOCK 112 *photo #1*
BUILDING 8
Billings News - 2405 Montana Avenue

Victorian Italianate Style; 1918(ca.). Builder unknown. Two story orange colored brick with pressed metal cornice. Original storefront altered. Second floor windows characterized by cast stone keystones and sills. A buff brick raised panel separates the two pair of windows.

BLOCK 112 *photo #1*
BUILDING 9
Rainbow Rooms and Bar - 2403 Montana Avenue

Victorian Italianate Style; 1912(ca.). Builder unknown. Two story buff brick with bracketed pressed metal cornice. Original storefront altered. Second floor windows are square with upper relite sections of leaded glass and a continuous cast stone sill.

BLOCK 112 *photo 1 & 2*
BUILDING 10
Rex Hotel - 2401 Montana Avenue

Eclectic Style; 1912. Built by Alfred Heimer. Three story red brick. Facades are characterized by pairs of two story high wooden bay windows at the upper floors. A strong horizontal emphasis is created by continuous bands of cast stone sills and lintels. These are further articulated

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by projected brick soldier courses. A Flemish rococo flavor is interjected into the east facade by semi-circular stepped pseudo-gable parapets. A bracketed red tiled wooden awning exists at the head of the third floor windows. A cantilevered red tiled gabled canopy covers the entrance to upper floors on Montana Avenue. It is characterized by a finely detailed periment, frieze and ridge tiles. Original storefront is intact and has been recently refurbished.

BLOCK 112
BUILDING 11
Fargo Hotel - 14 North 24th Street

photo #2

Victorian Italianate Style; 1917. Builder unknown. Originally a grocery store, currently being renovated. Two story red brick with white brick details. Pairs of second story windows are defined by arched white brick lintels with projected white brick keystones. The plane of the front facade is broken up with corbelled bands of white brick at storefront lintel, window sills and top and bottom of parapet.

BLOCK 113
BUILDING 3
Brewery Garage - 2303 Montana Avenue

photo 9

Eclectic style; 1899. Builder unknown. Currently houses T.V. electronic supply office and warehouse. Two story red brick with mansard-like roof. Pressed metal boxed cornice on all sides. Central mass is distinguished by an elliptical archway with cut stone voussoirs. The building is set upon a cut stone base. The facades are given interest by horizontal corbelled banding.

BLOCK 114
BUILDING 2
United Glass Warehouse - 2217 Montana Avenue

photo 10

Industrial style; 1907(ca.). Builder unknown. One and one half stories, red brick. Facade is characterized by a thick band of corbelled brick beneath the parapet.

Addition ?

NORTHERN PACIFIC DEPOT
2320 Montana Avenue

photo 5

Beaux Arts Eclectic style; 1909. Designed by the chief engineer, Northern Pacific Railway Co., St. Paul, Minnesota. A pair of buff colored single story brick buildings, one the main terminal, the other a restaurant. Exterior intact, interiors altered. Both buildings have steeply pitched gabled roofs with red asphalt tile roofing in a diamond pattern. The main building has two gabled dormers on each side. The main dormer window is arched. A small single window

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Five

occurs on either side. The east and west facades have arched windows with stepped gable parapets with sandstone caps and rusticated sandstone piers at the corners. Main entrance canopy is an ornately decorated stone pediment with rusticated stone piers and eaves. A continuous band of sandstone at the window sills ties the facades together.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
—PREHISTORIC	—ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	—COMMUNITY PLANNING	—LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	—RELIGION
—1400-1499	—ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	—CONSERVATION	—LAW	—SCIENCE
—1500-1599	—AGRICULTURE	—ECONOMICS	—LITERATURE	—SCULPTURE
—1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	—EDUCATION	—MILITARY	—SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
—1700-1799	—ART	—ENGINEERING	—MUSIC	—THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	—EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	—PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	—COMMUNICATIONS	—INDUSTRY	—POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	—OTHER (SPECIFY)
		—INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES	BUILDER/ARCHITECT
1882-1920	MULTIPLE

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The City of Billings was born with the coming of the Northern Pacific Railroad. As the tracks pushed across eastern Montana, a group of investors formed the Minnesota and Montana Land Improvement Company and purchased this land from the railroad. The townsite was platted in March, 1882; in May, there were three buildings on the townsite. Within four weeks, 5,000 lots had been sold; and by fall, 155 business houses had been built, as well as 99 homes and one church, the Congregational. In the meantime, the railroad itself had reached the new town and continued westward.

Much of the activity of those frantic early days was centered in the area proposed as the Townsite Historic District of Billings. This area is comprised of Blocks 111 through 114 of the original plat of the town, plus the strip opposite along Montana Avenue along the railroad tracks. The starting point for the original survey of the Minnesota and Montana Land Improvement Company is located at the intersection of Montana Avenue and N. 25th St., between Blocks 111 and 112.

Although this was the center of early development of Billings, the buildings there now date from the early twentieth century. Businesses grew and departed, wooden stores were built, then razed and replaced by masonry structures. The present buildings are successors, rather than original occupants of the area. Here stood the headquarters (Northern Pacific) Hotel (1885), in this area was located the site of the first bank in Billings, and the Commercial Hotel (1885). All these are gone, but the railroad tracks remain, and it was the railroads that molded the character of this area.

The Northern Pacific built its tracks through Billings in 1882, and the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy came in 1894, followed by a spur line north connecting to the Great Northern. Thus, Billings became a rail center at the junction of three major railroad networks. The Polk's City Directory of 1914 described it this way: "So Billings is now the hub of Railroads extending in ten directions; the Northern Pacific east and west; the Great Northern, north; the Burlington and Northern Pacific with four branches, south and southwest; the Burlington, southeast; a railroad twenty miles long extending northeast, known as the Billings and Central Montana, and a Northern Pacific Branch 100 miles long, extending northwest. Trains departing each morning for the terminus of these branches and returning each evening give Billings a constant transient population probably numbering 1,000 or more." At this time, there were 24 passenger trains a day in and out of the Billings Depot. By 1931, the number of daily passenger trains had increased to 26. By way of contrast, Billings is now served by six (6) passenger trains per week, three going east and three west.

The first depot was built in 1883, but for some reason, it failed to meet the standards of the Northern Pacific Railroad. Instead, the trains stopped to discharge passengers at the Headquarters Hotel, a few hundred yards up the track. The present Union Depot was con-

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- 1) K. Wright, THE MAGIC CITY AND HOW IT GREW, 1953
- 2) Billings Public Library, Montana Room, photos and records
- 3) Carp Photo Studio, photo collection
- 4) BILLINGS GAZETTE, 1905-1915
- 5) Various prominent citizens, including Peter Yeagen, Jr. (photo collection, maps and drawings.)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 14.6 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME Billings East, Billings West

QUADRANGLE SCALE 7.5

UTM REFERENCES

D	1,2	694150	5072790	B	1,2	694150	5072790
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	
C	1,2	694220	5072670	A	1,2	694550	5073060
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
E				F			
G				H			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Blocks 111 thru 114 original plat of Billings, Montana, including adjacent city street to centerlines plus the northern half of the three and one-half blocks on the south side of Montana Avenue terminating at North 22nd Street on the east.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	MONTANA	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
		30	YELLOWSTONE	111
STATE		CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

SAMUEL M. THOMAS AND JOHN M. DEVITT, A.I.A., PRESERVATION ARCHITECTS

ORGANIZATION

DATE

ACTING ON BEHALF OF LANDMARKS OF BILLINGS HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMITTEE 1 DEC. 1977.

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

37 CLARK AVENUE

245-8914

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

BILLINGS

MONTANA

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

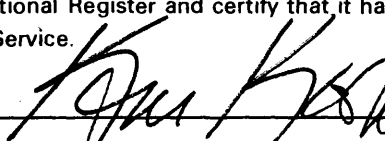
NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL XX

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



KENNETH L. KORTE

TITLE

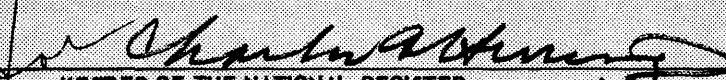
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

DATE

SEPTEMBER 29, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER



DATE

3.15.79

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

1.19.79

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

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BILLINGS TOWNSITE HISTORIC DISTRICT

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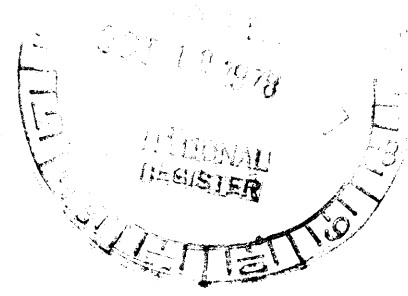
structed in 1909, near the site of the earlier depot. Plans for the building came from the Northern Pacific Chief Engineer's Office, St. Paul, Minnesota.

The railroads and their passengers had a great deal of influence on the types of businesses that grew up along Montana Avenue. The only major manufacturing company was the Billings Brewery (1899-1959), but more than a dozen hotels flourished, with accompanying restaurants, saloons, curio shops and pool halls. In addition to the Headquarters Hotel (1885-1920), there were the Commercial Hotel (1885-1950), the Carlin, the McCormick, the Eagle, the Dallas (later named the Wax), Yellowstone, Oxford, Fargo, Rex, Gage, Albany, El Niblo, and Onyx. All were within two blocks of the depot and served both the passengers of the railroad and the workers on it.

The history of the Rex Hotel is typical of many of the others in the area. It stands at the corner of Montana Avenue and N. 24th Street. The land was purchased February 21, 1910, by Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Heimer. The architect for the building was Curtis Oehme, a local architect, and the contractor was E. O. Blais. The hotel was built in 1916 and served the depot area for 58 years, until the end of 1974, when it finally closed.

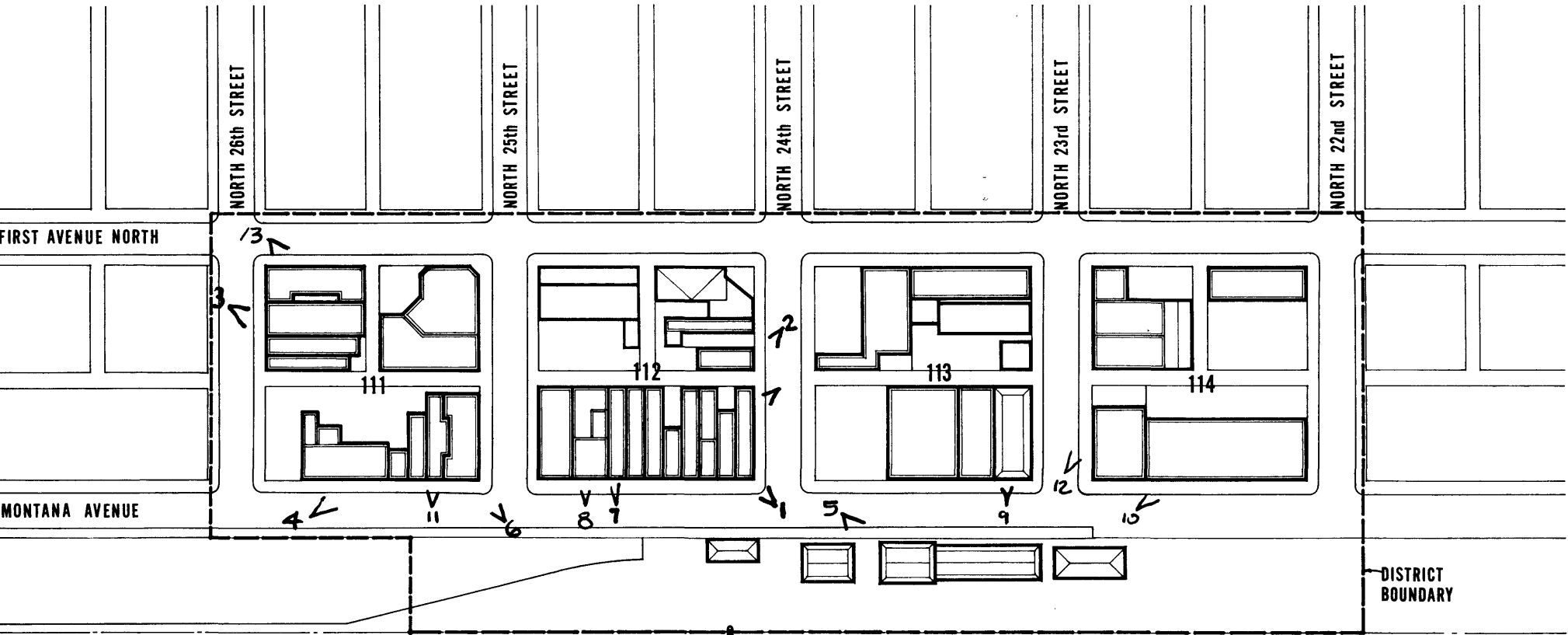
The Billings Townsite area has been chosen for designation as a Historic District because it contains a unified architectural representation of an important period (1900-1920) in the development of Billings, and because it embraces the original blocks of the first frantic years of the city's growth. Although the area has begun to decay, with much of the commercial activity represented by second-hand stores, there is renewed interest in revitalizing the area as an anchor for one corner of Billings' Central Business District. The Rex Hotel, for example, now houses an architectural firm and a restaurant. Plans are being made for other adaptable uses in other buildings.

BILLINGS TOWNSITE HISTORIC DISTRICT
 BILLINGS, MONTANA
 BUILDING CLASSIFICATION SCHEDULE



BLOCK 112

BLDG. NO.	CLASS	BUILDING NAME	BUILDING ADDRESS	OWNER NAME	OWNER ADDRESS	YEAR BUILT	NO. STORIES
✓ 1	Ib	Rummage Sale Bldg.	2421 Mont. Ave. Billings, MT.	Bruce Ennis	3000 Walden Billings, MT	ca 1900	1
✓ 2	Ia	McCormick Hotel	2417 Montana Ave. Billings, MT.	Max & Ruth Slayton	224 Clark Ave. Billings, MT.	1905	3-1
✓ 3	Ia	Eagle Hotel	2415 Montana Av. Billings, MT.	Mr. & Mrs. Albert Thomas	24 Yellowstone Billings, MT.	1918	3
✓ 4	Ia	Yellowstone Hotel	2413 Mont. Av. Billings, MT.	% Bernice Friez	331 Lewis Av. Billings, MT.	1912	2
✓ 5	Ia	Oxford Hotel	2411 Mont. Ave. Billings, MT.	Frank Alfors	2411 Mont. Av. Billings, MT.	ca 1918	2
✓ 6-8	Ib Ib Ia	Billings News	2405 Mont. Ave. 2407 Mont. Ave. 2409 Mont. Ave.	Billings News	Box 2544 Billings, MT.	ca 1918	1 2 2
✓ 9	Ia	Rainbow Bar	2403 Mont. Ave. Billings, MT.	Frank Pirtz	2403 Mont. Av. Billings, MT.	1915	2
✓ 10	Ia	Rex Hotel	2401 Mont. Ave. Billings, MT.	Rex Hotel Co.	2401 Mont. Av. Billings, MT.	1912	3
✓ 11	Ia	Fargo Hotel	14 North 24th Billings, MT.	Phil & Donna Monrow	5240 Rowland Drive, Billings	1917	2
✓ 12	II	Plaza Apartments	16 No. 24th Billings, MT.	Frank Alfors	2411 Montana Billings, MT.	ca 1922	1
✓ 13	III	Lobby Bar & Store	2402 1st. Av. N. Billings, MT.	Mr. & Mrs. Everett North	2402 1st. Av. Billings, MT.	ca 1950	1
✓ 14	IIb	Lobby Lounge	2406 1st. Av. N. Billings, MT.	% George Sasich	2402 1st. Av. Billings, MT.	ca 1930	1
✓ 15	IV	Vegas Club	2420 1st. Av. N. Billings, MT.	Mr. & Mrs. Everett Terpenning	934 Yale Billings	burned 1977 ca 1950	1



FIRST AVENUE NORTH

MONTANA AVENUE

NORTH 26th STREET

NORTH 25th STREET

NORTH 24th STREET

NORTH 23rd STREET

NORTH 22nd STREET

DISTRICT BOUNDARY

B.N. R.O.W.

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