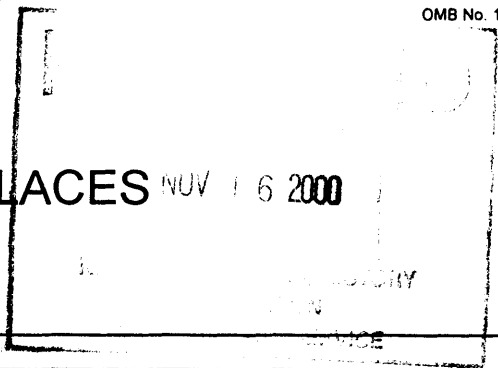


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM



**1. Name of Property**

historic name: Branscombe Automobile Machine Shop

other name/site number: Brewery Antiques & Western Montana Fur Center

**2. Location**

street & number: 125 West Commercial not for publication: n/a

vicinity: n/a

city/town: Anaconda

state: Montana      code: MT      county: Deer Lodge      code: 023      zip code: 59711

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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    nationally    statewide X locally. (    See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Mark T. Faucher 11/09/2000  
Signature of certifying official/Title      Date

Montana State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal agency or bureau

In my opinion, the property    meets    does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register <u>  </u> see continuation sheet	<u>  </u> Signature of the Keeper	<u>  </u> Date of Action
<u>  </u> determined eligible for the National Register <u>  </u> see continuation sheet	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>
<u>  </u> determined not eligible for the National Register <u>  </u> see continuation sheet	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>
<u>  </u> removed from the National Register <u>  </u> see continuation sheet	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>
<u>  </u> other (explain): _____	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>

Branscombe Machine Shop  
Name of Property

Deer Lodge, Montana  
County and State

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### 5. Classification

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Ownership of Property: Private	<b>Number of Resources within Property</b>	
Category of Property: Building	Contributing	Noncontributing
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0	<u>  1  </u>	<u>    </u> building(s)
Name of related multiple property listing: Historic and Architectural Properties of Anaconda, Montana	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> sites
	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> structures
	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> objects
	<u>  1  </u>	<u>    </u> TOTAL

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### 6. Function or Use

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**Historic Functions:**

COMMERCIAL/Specialty Store  
DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling

**Current Functions:**

COMMERCIAL/Specialty Shop  
DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling

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### 7. Description

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**Architectural Classification:**  
LATE 19TH & EARLY 20TH  
CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/Commercial Style

**Materials:**  
foundation: CONCRETE  
wall: BRICK  
roof: TAR  
other: NONE

### Narrative Description

The Branscombe Machine Shop, located at 125 West Commercial in downtown Anaconda, is a blocky, rectangular, two-story, brick, commercial building. The building features a stepped parapet wall and is three bays wide and five bays long. Brick pilasters define each bay. Built in 1916, the building has a full basement, concrete foundation, and symmetrical fenestration. Tar covers the roof, which retains six interior and end-wall chimneys. The original window units of the upper level of the façade remain intact, and at street level, modern display windows replace the original display windows and transoms on the north (front) and west sides of the building. Flat-brick relieving arches, brick sills, and brick surrounds outline the window openings and doorways. Decorative brick work caps the tops of the pilasters, and a centered, diamond-shaped brick panel appears in parapet wall each bay. An historic, two-story brick addition conceals the south elevation.

The north facade features a pair of 6/6 double-hung windows in the upper story of each bay. The central bay slightly projects and, at the lower level, houses a pair of modern metal and glass panel doors with sidelights and transoms. A portion of the opening above the modern entrance has been boarded closed. The entrance originally housed a pair of swinging garage doors. A modern two-light display window appears in the west bay, while a modern wood overhead garage door appears in the lower level of the east bay.

The east elevation retains few openings. A replaced 1/1 double-hung window is located in the upper story, south-end bay. The opening was reconstructed and displays a segmental brick relieving arch. Just north of the window is an inaccessible modern metal door. The west elevation features pairs of 6/6 double-hung windows in the upper level the four north bays, with a single 6/6 double-hung in the southernmost bay. The flat-brick relieving arches above these windows extend beyond the window openings and connect, forming a brick belt course. At the first story level, the three bays on the north end of the elevation each house a modern two-light display window. The fourth bay retains a pair of 6/6 double-hung windows and an original wood door. There is a 6/6 double-hung window in the lower level of the southernmost bay.

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A large, two-story brick addition was constructed on the south elevation of the building prior to 1930. The lower level of the west elevation features a pair of wood double doors flanked by single window openings. An original five panel wood door is located to the south. Both the windows and entry door feature segmental brick relieving arches. A portion of the garage door opening has been infilled with brick. The upper level of the west elevation of the addition features four pairs of 1/1 double-hung windows with segmental brick relieving arches and brick sills.

The lower level of the south (rear) elevation contains a large, wooden, sliding door with vintage hardware. An original, single, fixed, 15-light window is located on either side of the sliding door. The original opening at the east end of the elevation has been replaced with an historic wood replacement door. There are three window openings at the second story level of the south elevation, each of which contain wood-frame 1/1 double-hung replacement windows. The western opening houses a pair of window units. The central opening contains a single window, and features a segmental brick relieving arch. The eastern opening also contains a single window, and has a wood lintel.

The east elevation contains four window openings at the second story level, each features flat, brick arches, and 1/1 double-hung window units. The openings at the north and south sides of the elevation contain pairs of units, while the two central openings contain single window units.

There are no outbuildings associated with the property. Prior to the construction of the Branscombe Automobile Machine Shop, a large frame and iron-clad livery building and blacksmith shop, known as the Warm Springs (French) Livery, occupied the site. Built in approximately 1885, the livery building housed a number of businesses over the years, including a paint shop, a tailor shop and a saloon, in addition to the stable and blacksmith businesses. In January 1914, the Warm Springs Livery, which was being rented as a stable and carriage house by the Anaconda Company with lodging rooms in the upper story, was severely damaged by a fire caused by an overheated stove. It was demolished in August 1914.<sup>1</sup>

The historic building at 125 West Commercial Avenue remains intact and is an excellent example of the many large automobile-related properties that opened in Anaconda during the 1910s. The original Branscombe Machine Shop is one of the only automobile-related resources in Anaconda that has not been substantially altered. It is in excellent condition and is an excellent example of vernacular commercial architecture in Anaconda.

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<sup>1</sup> *Anaconda Standard*. 1/19/14, 5:6; 8/9/14.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

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Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C

Areas of Significance: Transportation, Architecture

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): n/a

Period(s) of Significance: 1916-1950

Significant Person(s): n/a

Significant Dates: 1916

Cultural Affiliation: n/a

Architect/Builder: Clifton, Applegate & Toole

### Narrative Statement of Significance

The Branscombe Machine Shop and Garage is one of the most significant historic garages in Anaconda. Located just outside of the Anaconda Historic Commercial District boundaries, the building serves as a transitional property--a combination residential and commercial building that links the Commercial District with the West Commercial Avenue residential neighborhood. The building qualifies for listing under Criterion A as a significant, early automobile-related resource. In addition, the building is eligible for listing under Criterion C for its architectural integrity. 125 West Commercial is an excellent example of vernacular commercial architecture in Anaconda.

### Background History

The Branscombe Machine Shop and Garage at 125 West Commercial Avenue and 109 Hickory is one of the few remaining, largely unaltered transportation-related resources in Anaconda built before 1920. The invention of the automobile had a significant impact on the commercial environment in Anaconda. The car opened up a whole new field of services and shops from tire shops and repair services to dealerships and taxi offices. While transportation in Anaconda played a key role in the community's development, neither the Butte, Anaconda & Pacific Railroad nor the Anaconda Street Railway had as significant an impact on the historic-built environment as did the invention of the automobile.

The automobile drastically altered the lifestyles of Anaconda residents and industrialists. On July 22, 1900, John Gillie of Butte brought the first car into town. The novel "horseless carriage" purportedly was only one of two automobiles owned in state of Montana and had made the twenty-six mile trip between Butte and Anaconda in approximately two hours.<sup>2</sup> In 1901, a motorcycle made its first appearance in town, and residents confidently predicted that it would "do away with the bicycle."<sup>3</sup>

Although only a handful of wealthy residents could afford to purchase one, automobiles became a common sight in Anaconda by 1904. Nearly seventy automobiles were reported to be on the streets by 1910, and a number of owners were building garages near their residences or converting barns and woodsheds into garages. Charles Branscombe, a local bicycle repairman, opened the town's first automobile repair shop in 1905 at 304 East Park Avenue (now demolished) with partner William Sheen. Not long after, George H. Merhoff opened an automobile repair shop and gasoline station in the original Auditorium theater building, built in 1884, at 227 East Commercial.

During the early 1910s other small automobile-related stores and shops opened in Anaconda. Surprisingly, one of the first public chauffeur services, garages, and repair shops was operated by a woman. Miss Mildred Perry opened a garage and office at 510 Spruce Street in July, 1914, offering a full-scale taxi and repair business.<sup>4</sup> In 1916, local resident R. S. Mentrum constructed a full-scale garage and dealership at 300 Main Street, adjoining the Margaret Theater. This building, which now houses the Montana Standard office, originally housed a main garage, a basement workshop and repair shop with an electric freight elevator for the automobiles, a storage room, and a show room.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *Anaconda Review*. 7/23/1900.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*. 4/1/01.

<sup>4</sup> "Woman Chauffeur Starts a Garage". *Anaconda Standard*. 7/15/14, 5:3.

<sup>5</sup> "Garage of R.S. Mentrum Company". *Anaconda Standard*. 5/14/1916, 5:1-3.

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Charles Branscombe, who had severed his partnership with William Sheen by 1909, renamed his garage the Branscombe Garage and Novelty Works, and moved his entire business to 118 West Park Avenue (now demolished). He upgraded his garage and shop in 1916, constructing the brick building and garage at 109 Hickory Street (now addressed as 125 West Commercial Avenue,) behind his West Park Avenue repair shop. The new building cost \$9,000 and was built by the local firm of Clifton-Applegate Company. It was constructed of brick, tile and concrete, featured the first substantial freight elevator in town. The building housed Branscombe's machine shop and Ford dealership. Branscombe had expanded his business to meet the demands of motorists, who were increasing in number daily in Anaconda.

The Branscombe shop remained open until approximately 1930, when Branscombe left the automobile business to start a hardware shop. After Branscombe abandoned the building, a number of other motor companies occupied the property and used it as a machine shop and show room, including the Sewell Motor Company in 1930, Dee Motors in 1947, Central Motors in 1952, the Auto Mart Body Shop in 1956 and McLean Motor Supply in 1980. Between approximately 1938 and 1945, the building was vacant. Other businesses that have occupied the building in more recent times include Roach and Smith, Inc. in 1970, as well as a Montgomery Ward's Catalog Agency, and Sun & Sno Sport Vehicles in 1985. The present occupants, who were associated with the building prior to 1990, include a discount store, antiques store, and book/magazines shop.

Branscombe Automobile Machine Shop  
Name of Property

Deer Lodge, Montana  
County and State

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### 9. Major Bibliographic References

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See continuation sheet

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Location of Additional Data:**

State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other -- Specify Repository: Anaconda-Deer Lodge County Preservation/Planning Office

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### 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreage of Property:** Less than one.

**UTM References:**

Zone	Easting	Northing
12	349063	5110377

**Legal Location (Township, Range & Section(s)):** SW1/4SW1/4NE¼ of Sec. 3, T4N, R11W, MPM

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

The Branscombe Garage and Machine Shop is located on Lots 19, 20, 21, and 22 of Block 24 in the Original Townsite of Anaconda, Montana.

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**Boundary Justification**

The lots upon which 125 West Commercial is located have been associated with the building since its construction in 1916.

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### 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title: Kimberly Morrison, Historian/Community Surveyor  
organization: MT SHPO  
street & number: P.O. Box 201202, 1410 8th Ave.  
city or town: Helena

date: March, 1996  
telephone: (406)444-7715  
state: MT zip code: 59620-1202

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**Property Owner**

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name/title: George Kortum  
street & number: 107 Hickory Street  
city or town: Anaconda

telephone: (406)563-7926  
state: MT zip code: 59711

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Anaconda City Directories. 1900, 1905, 1906, 1909, 1910, 1912, 1916, 1918, 1925, 1930, 1939, 1944, 1947, 1952, 1964, 1970, 1980, 1985, 1990.

Anaconda-Deer Lodge County Property Ownership Records.

*Anaconda Review.* 7/23/1900; 4/1/01.

*Anaconda Standard.* 7/15/14; 1/19/14; 8/9/14; 5/14/16; 11/12/16; 12/10/16.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. 1884-1930.