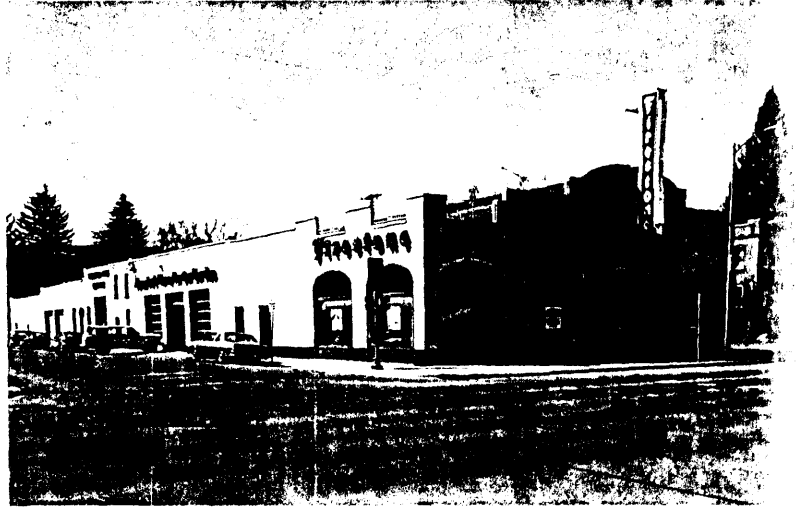


MONTANA HISTORICAL/ARCHITECTURAL INVENTORY #4

HISTORIC NAME: Story Motor Company
(nee: Story Iron Works)
ADDRESS: 202 W. Main, Bozeman
LEGAL BOUNDARY: Story's Addition, Blk C,
Lots 1-4 and Alderson's
Addition, east 60' of
lots 1-4
OWNER'S NAME: Gerard S. Burkhart
OWNER ADDRESS: 8330 Kagy Rd., Bozeman
SPECIFIC DATE: c.1900/c.1925
ARCHITECT: Fred Willson (remodel)
BUILDER: Unknown
ORIGINAL OWNER: Nelson Story, Jr.
ORIGINAL USE: Story Iron Works
PRESENT USE: tire sales
UTM REFERENCE: 12/496940/5058240
ACREAGE: less than one
U.S.G.S. QUAD: Bozeman, 1953



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Applicable Criteria: C

Number of Contributing Properties: 1

This large, one-story building is an excellent example of early 20th century automobile showroom architecture. The underlying structure, which was extensively remodeled in about 1925 under the direction of architect Fred Willson, may have been the original Story Iron Works, a significant early 20th century business run by two sons of Nelson Story, who was Bozeman pioneer and millionaire. The building is significant as the only intact, distinctive representation of automobile showroom architecture in Bozeman. The likelihood that the present structure reflects the work of locally important architect Fred Willson adds to the building's significance.

A building of similar dimensions although without the easternmost bay, housed the Story Iron Works and is shown on the 1904 Sanborn map. In that building, a machine and pattern shop occupied the front section, while the foundry occupied the rear. By 1910, the Story Iron Works had become the Story Motor Supply Company. With Nelson Story, Jr. as proprietor, the shop advertised: "Everything for the Auto; Best Equipped Shop in Montana."

The building was remodeled with the present shaped parapet, segmented arched showroom windows and stucco walls by 1927. The Sanborn map of that year labels the building "garage", with a capacity of fifty cars and a steel truss roof. On the 1912 Sanborn Map, the building is also labeled "garage", had a wood truss roof. The easternmost bay of this asymmetrical building was used as an auto parts store, as shown on the 1927 map.

By 1927, the Bozeman Auto Co. had taken over the building, although this was likely a new name for the Story Motor Co., for T. Byron Story was the president. The company sold Buick cars and G.M.C. trucks. By 1933 and into the 1940's, the Northern Auto Co. was located here, with Dean Chaffin as president and manager. Chaffin sold Chevrolet and Oldsmobile cars, in a quite formal showroom, as seen in photographs in the collection of the Museum of the Rockies. The building currently is occupied a Firestone sales and service business.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

The Story Motor Co. building is a large rectangular brick building that occupies the eastern third of the block. Physical evidence persists to indicate that the present building has its origins at the turn of the century as the Story Iron Works and was extensively remodeled during the late 1920's to become a Mission Revival automobile showroom, parts store, and garage. The central portion of the eastern elevation is a full two stories in height and features nine-over-nine, wood frame, double hung windows. It appears that an open garage with a steel truss roof was built between the original front portion of the building and this two-story section prior to 1927.

The present four-bay facade features a decorative stepped parapet and four arched window openings. The windows are composed of metal, fixed commercial glazing with vertical 8-light, arched transoms above. The entrance is a raw aluminum door set in the third bay from the east. The facade is covered with stucco.

The building extends back from Main street nearly the full length of the block. Behind the front auto showroom/parts room is the open garage section noted above. Three large overhead aluminum garage doors on both the east and west elevations provide through access to the garage. The next section back is the two-story brick portion that likely dates to ca.1900. The rear portion of the building is also of brick and features double overhead wooden garage doors and two small fixed windows.

The architectural significance of this building rests with the 1920's remodeling that transformed a late 19th Century industrial building into an elegant, gracefully detailed automobile saleroom, an excellent period example of the high quality of design afforded the showcases for the new automobiles.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Sanborn Maps: 1904, 1912, 1927

City Directories: 1904, p. 166; 1910, p. 159; 1912, p. 155; 1916-17, p. 157; 1927, p. 33; 1933, p. 103; 1935, p. 113; 1940, p. 110; 1942

Historic Photo Collection: Museum of the Rockies

FORM PREPARED BY: James R. McDonald, P.C. (1983-84); Matthew Cohen (1985-86 revision); Patricia Bick (1987 revision), State Historic Preservation Office, 225 No. Roberts, Helena, Montana 59620 (406) 444-7715